

JOHN MOORE HERITAGE SERVICES

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

ON A

PIPELINE ADJACENT TO

IDBURY CAMP HILLFORT, IDBURY,

OXFORDSHIRE

SP 22882 19408 - SP 23018 19543

On behalf of

Scottish & Southern Energy

JANUARY 2008

REPORT FOR Scottish & Southern Energy
Distribution Major Projects
Ferrybridge C Power Station
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Summary

John Moore Heritage Services carried out a watching brief during the excavation of part of a trench for a new electricity supply. Nothing of significance was found.

1 INTRODUCTION

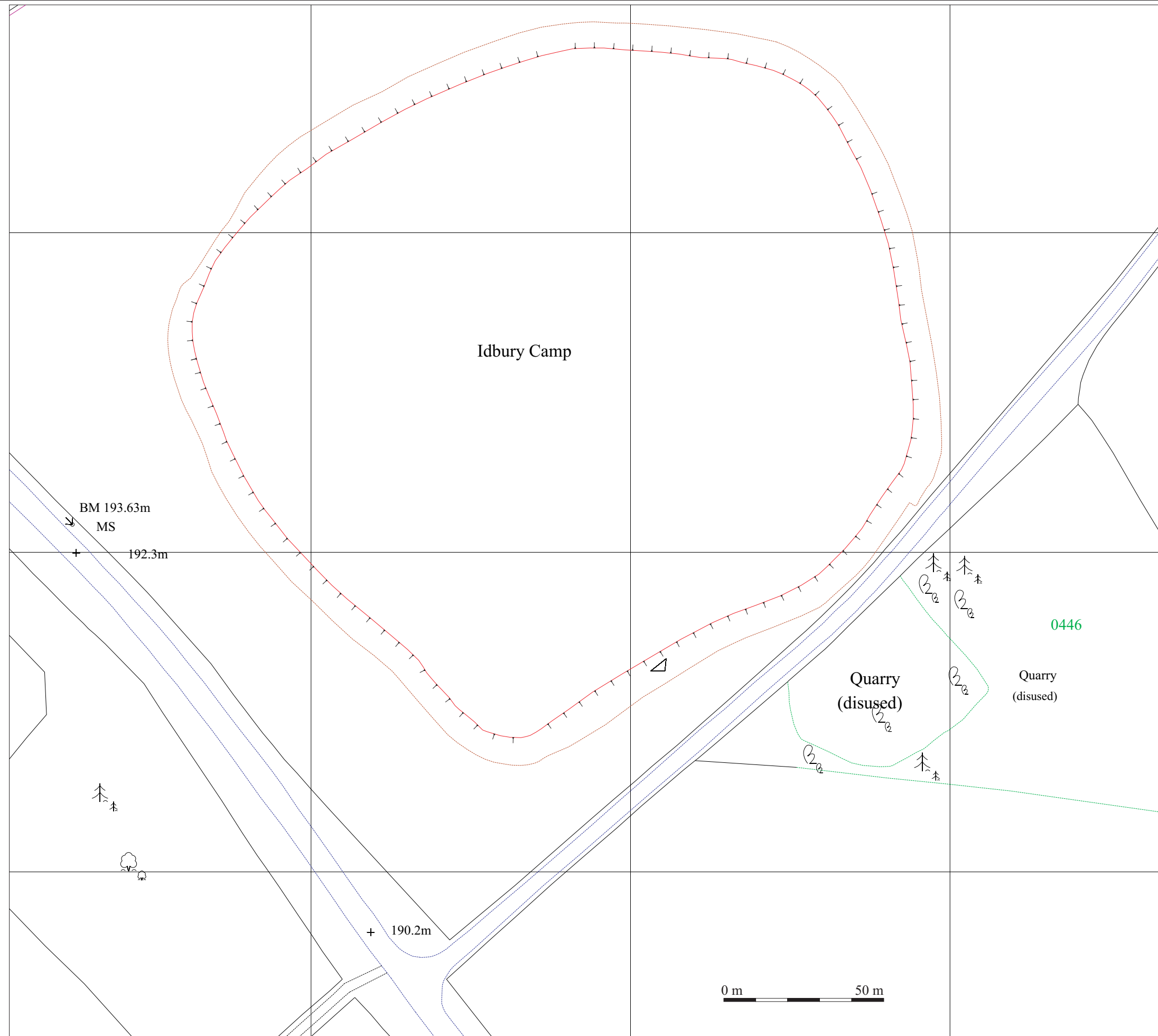
1.1 Site Location (Figure 1)

Part of the pipe trench ran from the A424 to Idbury along the lane immediately south of Idbury Camp hillfort. The lane runs in a north easterly direction to the village from the junction with the A424 Stowe to Burford trunk road (NGR SP 2284 1936). The lane is single track and there is a small quarry on the south eastern side approximately 170m from the A424. The track rises from 190m OD at the junction with the A424 to about 195m OD at the quarry. From here the land falls away to Idbury. The geology is Inferior Oolitic Limestone.

1.2 Planning Background

At the south west end of the lane is Idbury Camp, an Iron Hillfort that is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 28110). The scheduled area includes a stretch of the lane. Whilst the road surface of the road is not scheduled the land beneath it is. English Heritage advised that the works might cause damage to significant archaeological deposits which could be mitigated through a programme of archaeological supervision and recording. Scheduled Monument Consent was granted on 4 January 2008 (ref. HSD 9/2/9925) subject to the following conditions:

- i) The works to which this consent relates shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Secretary of State, who will be advised by English Heritage. At least 4 weeks' notice (or such shorter period as may be mutually agreed) in writing of the commencement of the work shall be given to Christopher Welch, Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage, Eastgate Court, 195-205 High Street, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 3EH, in order that an English Heritage representative can have the opportunity to inspect and advise on the works and their effect in compliance with this consent.
- ii) Equipment or machinery shall not be used or operated in the scheduled area in conditions or in a manner likely to result in ground disturbance other than that which is expressly authorised in this consent.
- iii) No works shall take place until the applicant has secured a programme of archaeological work in accordance with *Pipeline Adjacent to Idbury Camp Hillfort, Idbury, Oxon; Archaeological Watching Brief; Written Scheme of Investigation* (John Moore Heritage Services).
- iv) Within six weeks of the completion of the works to which this consent relates, a plan at a scale of no greater than 1:1000 of the route of the excavated trench will be submitted to English Heritage.



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Figure 1. Site Location.

Prior to the application for Scheduled Monument Consent, Oxfordshire County Archaeological Services (OCAS), on behalf of English Heritage, prepared a Brief for the work.

1.3 Archaeological Background

Idbury Camp (SAM 28110) is an Iron Age univallate hillfort covering an area of c. 3.5 ha. The monument has been truncated through ploughing but the ditch and rampart are supposedly still discernible; viewed from the road during this recording they were not apparent. The rampart is reportedly about 0.4m high and 10m wide. The ditch has become infilled with the ploughed rampart material and is visible as a stain about 15m wide. The lane follows the line of the ditch on the south east side. There appears to have been a single entrance on the north west side of the hillfort. Iron Age and Romano British pottery and Romano British coins have been found across the site.

Prior to WWII early Anglo Saxon burials were found in the quarry that lies adjacent to the lane. The full extent of the cemetery is unclear.

The above information has been obtained from the OCAS's Brief.

2 AIMS OF THE INVESTIGATION

The aims of the investigation as laid out in the Written Scheme of Investigation were as follows:

- i) To identify and record any archaeological remains exposed during the groundworks
- ii) The particular aims will be to record any remains relating to the hillfort in the form of its construction and in its use in the Iron Age and Romano British periods. Also an aim will be to record any evidence of the Anglo Saxon cemetery or associated activity.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

John Moore Heritage Services carried out the archaeological watching brief to a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with English Heritage and OCAS.

The recording was carried out in accordance with the standards specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994) and the principles of MAP2 (English Heritage 1991).

3.2 Methodology

A trencher was used to cut a trench 250mm wide and 800mm deep through the road surface and the underlying geology. The northwest edge of the trench was a constant 1100mm from the northwest edge of the road. An archaeologist was present during this operation to monitor the sides of the trench for archaeological deposits or features. The extent of the trench that was monitored is shown in Figure 2.

Standard John Moore Heritage Services techniques were employed throughout, involving the completion of a written record for each deposit encountered, with scale plans and sections drawings compiled where appropriate.

4 RESULTS (Figure 2)

For most of the route the tarmac road surface had been laid directly on the Inferior Oolitic Limestone. In one area up to 120mm of roadstone had been laid on top of the limestone to infill a slight natural hollow.

A 9m long area of loose limestone rubble (average size 150x100x80mm) was encountered (Fig. 2, A). This extended to the base of the trench. The top 300mm appeared to have been compacted for the construction of the road. The material was clean and no clear edge was seen to either side. Other similar deposits had been seen by the groundworkers further to the east in the trench from Idbury village. This loose rubble is considered to be a natural occurrence within the geology.

No other variations in the limestone were present.

5 FINDS

No artefacts were seen.

6 DISCUSSION

The defensive ditch of the hillfort does not extend 1100mm into the road. It would appear that the cemetery does not extend as far north as the trench line.

7 BIBLIOGRAPHY

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 1994 *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief*. Revised Sept 1999

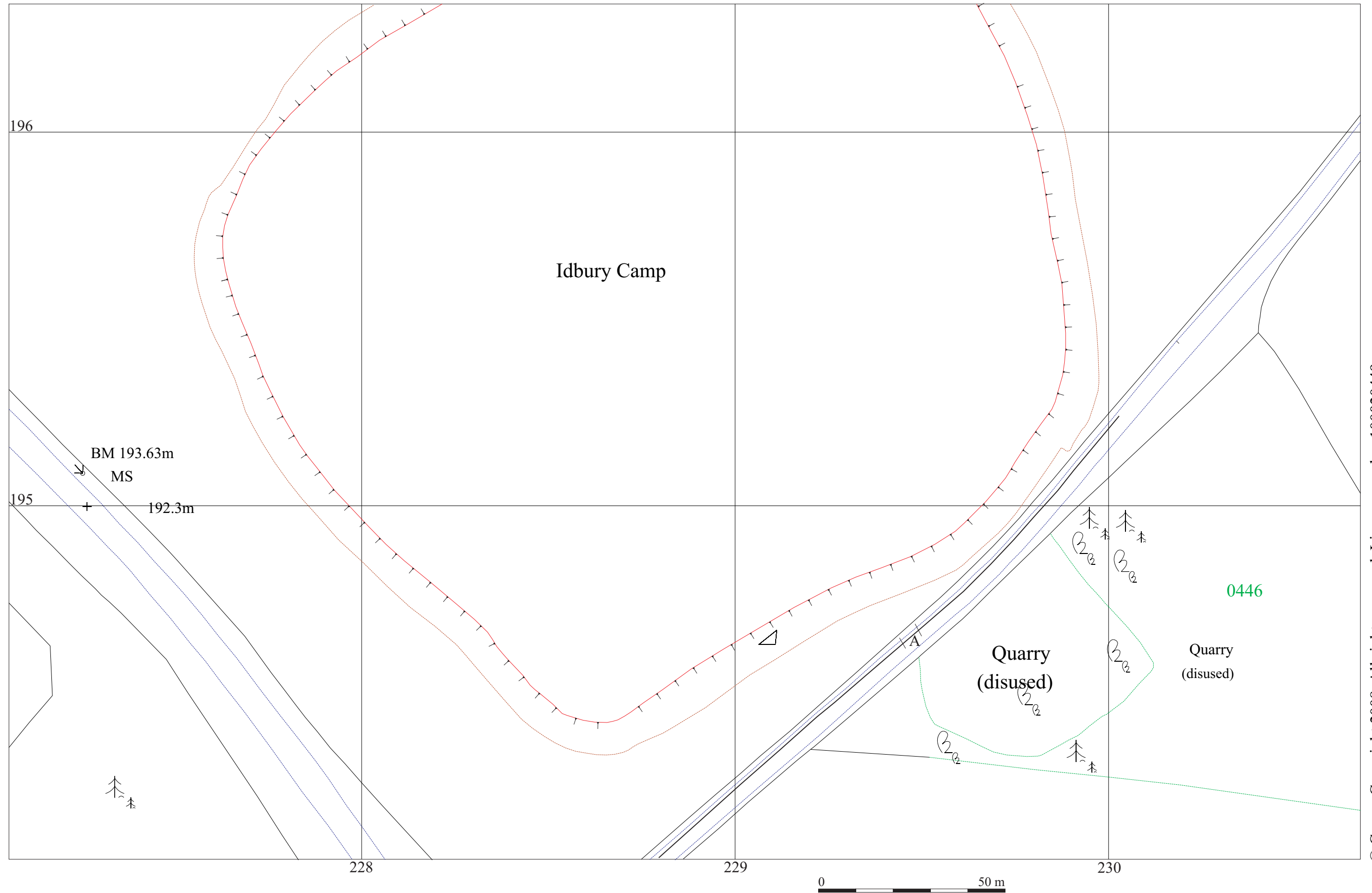


Figure 2. Extent of trench monitored