

31 High Street, Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire

An Archaeological Watching Brief

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General view of the site prior to excavation, viewed looking west

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SUMMARY

During November 2014 Trent & Peak Archaeology carried out an archaeological watching brief on behalf of Ms Victoria Marcer at 31 High Street, Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire. prior to the building of a garage to the rear of the property. The work was required as a condition of Charnwood Borough Council planning permission P/12/0986/2.

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Barrow upon Soar, first mentioned in the Domesday Book in 1086 as Barhau. The earliest surviving building is the medieval Church of the Holy Trinity located to the north-east of the site. Extending down Beverage Street to the east are a number of post-medieval houses. Later buildings associated with the Midland Counties Railway which opened in 1840, are located to the south. The village has been linked to the production of lime since the medieval period. A limekiln is recorded to the south of the site on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map. Prehistoric through to Anglo-Saxon activity has been encountered within the parish. The former includes a Neolithic arrowhead which was discovered in a back garden to the north-west.

Historic maps indicate that the site has remained largely unchanged since 1884. The principal alterations occurred between 1884 and 1921 when the wooded area to the rear of the property was removed. During this time additional small outbuildings were erected to the south-west of the house. By 1971 these buildings had been remodelled and had been removed completely by 2014.

Despite the presence of significant archaeological remains within the vicinity of the development, the foundation trenches revealed no archaeological features or deposits with the exception of a former watercourse, or possible ditch, located in the western part of the site. It was north to south orientated and had become infilled by the publication of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884.

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December 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The archaeological work was undertaken by Pete Watkin. Matt Hurford managed the project. Ms Victoria Marcer is thanked for commissioning the work.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief that was carried out by Trent & Peak Archaeology (TPA) on behalf Ms Victoria Marcer. The work was undertaken in November 2014 at 31 High Street, Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire centred on National Grid reference SK 57453 17522 (Figures 1 and 2) prior to the building of a garage to the rear of the property as part of Charnwood Borough Council planning permission P/12/0986/2.

The archaeological work was conducted in compliance with a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted by TPA and approved by Richard Clark, Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council acting on behalf of Charnwood Borough Council. The WSI stated that the excavation be carried out in accordance with appropriate professional standards, as defined in the Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standards & Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (1999).

The overall study has employed the methodology developed by Trent & Peak Archaeology for use on similar projects in the region. This methodology conforms to the standard requirements of planning authorities where consent applications are made for development. These follow guidelines to be found in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) which replaces conservation planning document *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS 5, 2010).

The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council Museum Services under the Accession Number X.A57.2012 and a summary of the project has been entered into the OASIS online database under the OASIS ID code trentpea1-198620.

2. SITE BACKGROUND

Topography

The proposed development site comprises a rectangular block of land c. 118m x 16m bounded by High Street to the east and residential gardens to the north, south and west. The residence and its associated outbuildings are located in the north-east corner of the site with gardens and a driveway extending to the rear of the property. The site is located on a gentle west facing slope, with the Grand Union Canal located c. 350m to the south.

Geology

The underlying geology is Radcliffe Member Mudstone bedrock overlain by superficial deposits of glaciofluvial sands and gravels and Oadby Member Diamicton (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The proposed development site lies within the historic core of Barrow upon Soar (MLE488). The earliest reference to the place name Barrow in 1086, when it is recorded in Domesday as Barhau. The name derived from either *Bearhu*, meaning 'grove, wood' or *beorg*, meaning 'hill'. The earliest surviving building is the medieval Church of the Holy Trinity (MLE14617) located c. 250m to the north-east of the site. Extending down Beverage Street to the east are a number of post-medieval houses, one being a timber-framed property of late 16th century date (MLE14653). Later buildings associated with the Midland Counties Railway (MLE16078), which opened in 1840, are located to the south.

Barrow upon Soar has been linked to the production of lime since the medieval period and is first mentioned in 1396. An account in the 15th century records 55 lime-pits at Barrow upon Soar and that the lime was used in the construction of Kirby Muxloe Castle in 1481 (Hurford 2006, 4). Located 100m to the south of the site is a lime kiln (MLE16287) which was marked on the 1884 Ordnance Survey map.

Prehistoric through to Anglo-Saxon activity has been encountered within the parish (BUSCA 2-10). The former includes a Neolithic arrowhead (MLE9389) was discovered in a back garden c. 200m to the north-west of the site.

Cartographic Analysis (Figures 3-5)

Historic maps that depict the development site were consulted. A cartographic date range of 1884 to the present was obtained showing that the development site had remained largely unchanged from the late Victorian period to the present day. The principal alterations occurred between 1884 and 1921 when the wooded area, probably an orchard, to the rear of the property, was removed. During this time additional small outbuildings were erected to the south-west of the house. By 1971 these buildings had been remodelled and had been removed completely by 2014.

4. THE WATCHING BRIEF

Objectives

The objectives of the fieldwork were in accordance with the WSI produced by TPA and agreed by Richard Clark, the Principal Planning Archaeologist for Leicestershire County Council.

All excavation and recording was carried out in line with Institute for Archaeologists' (IfA) *Standards & Guidance for an Archaeological Excavation* (1999). The overall study has employed the methodology developed by Trent & Peak Archaeology for use on similar projects in the region. This methodology conforms to the standard requirements of planning authorities where consent applications are made for development. These follow guidelines to be found in the *National Planning Policy Framework* (2012) which replaces conservation planning document *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment* (PPS 5, 2010).

Methodology

Topsoil and modern levelling material was removed using a tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The trenches were excavated at a level which archaeological features or deposits were encountered or, if not present, to the top of the natural substrata.

All deposits were hand cleaned and representative sections were photographed and drawn at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10. Plans were drawn at 1:50 or 1:100. Archaeological features and natural deposits were given an individual four figure context number e.g. 0001. All recovered artefacts were given an individual code e.g. AAA and bagged by context.

5. RESULTS

Trench 01 (Figures 2 and 6)

Trench 01 was located to the south of the west gable end of the house. It was north to south orientated and measured 4.6m x 0.42m and was up to 0.9m in depth. Removal of the modern tarmac path (0001) revealed a rubble bedding deposit (0002) above a clay levelling layer (0003), both relating to the modern path (0001). Natural clay substrata (0004) was encountered beneath (0003). The modern property boundary wall was present in the southern end of the trench. No archaeological remains were identified.

Trench 02-04 (Figures 2 and 7)

Trenches 02-04, the footings for the garage, were located at the western end of the site. Each trench was 5.5m x 0.42m and up to 3.1m in depth. Modern landscaping deposits (0005), (0006) and (0007) extended to a depth of 0.9m overlying natural substrata (0013) and (0010).

Linear [0012]

Cutting the natural substrata, and sealed by the modern levelling deposits, was a north to south orientated linear [0012]. The feature extended beyond the trench edges to the west and exceeded 2.2m in depth; the base not reached. Its sedimentary sequence was dominated by fill (0011) which was capped by (0008) and (0009) each of which had a bluish grey clay element of likely fluvial origin. No finds were recovered from the fills to assist with dating.

The linear is located towards the base of the sites west facing slope. The properties to the west have a corresponding gentle east facing slope forming a small valley. The position of 0012 within the local land form is suggestive of a water course or drainage feature. There was no evidence to suggest that it had been deliberately backfilled indicating that it had infilled through a process of natural sedimentation.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Despite the presence of significant archaeological remains within the vicinity of the development, the foundation trenches revealed no archaeological features. It is likely that the modern levelling of the area would have truncated any earlier deposits.

A former north to south orientated watercourse was located in the western part of the site which had become infilled up by the publication of the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884.

7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barrow Upon Soar Community Association (BUSCA) *The Archaeology of Barrow upon Soar*

Hurford, M., 2006 *An Archaeological Evaluation at 136, Cotes Road, Barrow upon Soar, Leicestershire (SK 570 185)* ULAS Report 2006/110

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context	Description	Interpretation	Date
(0001)	Compacted dark black modern tarmac	Driveway	Modern
(0002)	Loose mid to light grey brown fine silt with clast supported rubble	Bedding for drive derived from demolished outbuildings	Modern
(0003)	Firm mid to light grey brown silty clay disturbed sub soil	Subsoil re-deposited during levelling for drive	Modern
(0004)	Firm mid to light orange brown clay	Natural substrata	Geological
(0005)	Very loose mid to light grey brown crushed concrete and rubble	Levelling	Modern
(0006)	Loose mid to dark grey black slightly sand silt	Buried topsoil	Modern
(0007)	Loose mid to light gray silt and rubble	Subsoil re-deposited during levelling for drive	Modern
(0008)	Firm mid to dark grey silty clay	Fill of [0012] watercourse	Fluvial
(0009)	Very firm mid to light laminated blue grey clay.	Fill of [0012] watercourse	Fluvial
(0010)	Very compacted mid to light yellowish brown clay.	Natural substrata cut by 0012	Geological
(0011)	Firm mid to light blue grey slightly sandy clay	Fill of [0012] watercourse	Fluvial
[0012]	North to south aligned linear, exceeds 3m in width, 2.2m in depth, sharp break of slope at top, irregular concave sides base not exposed. Cuts 0010 and 0013	Former water course	Fluvial
(0013)	Firm mid to light grey brown silty clay	Possible upper layer of natural substrata	Geological

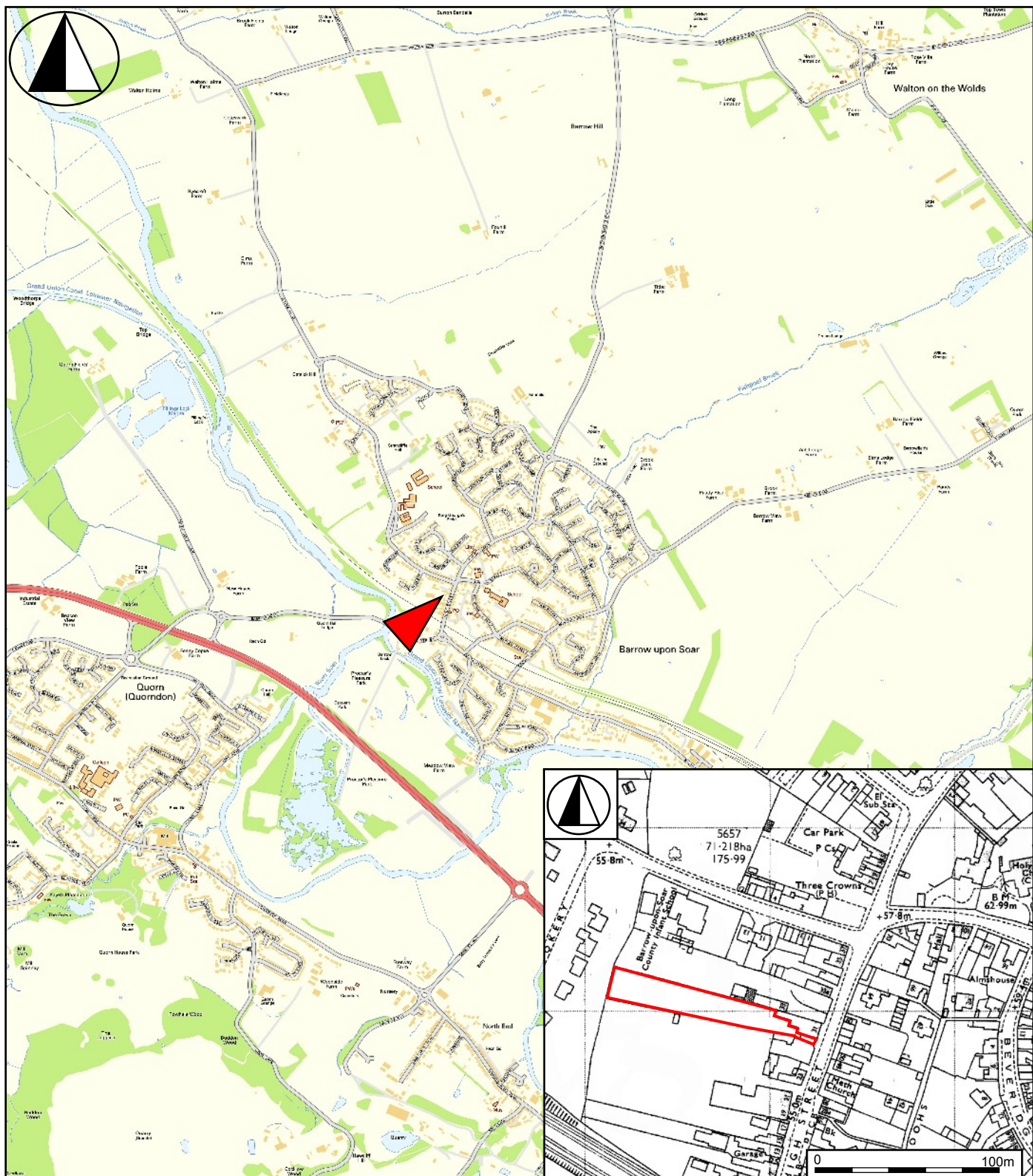


Figure 1: Site location 1:20,000. Insert depicts the site boundary in red
 Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown Copyright and database right 2014

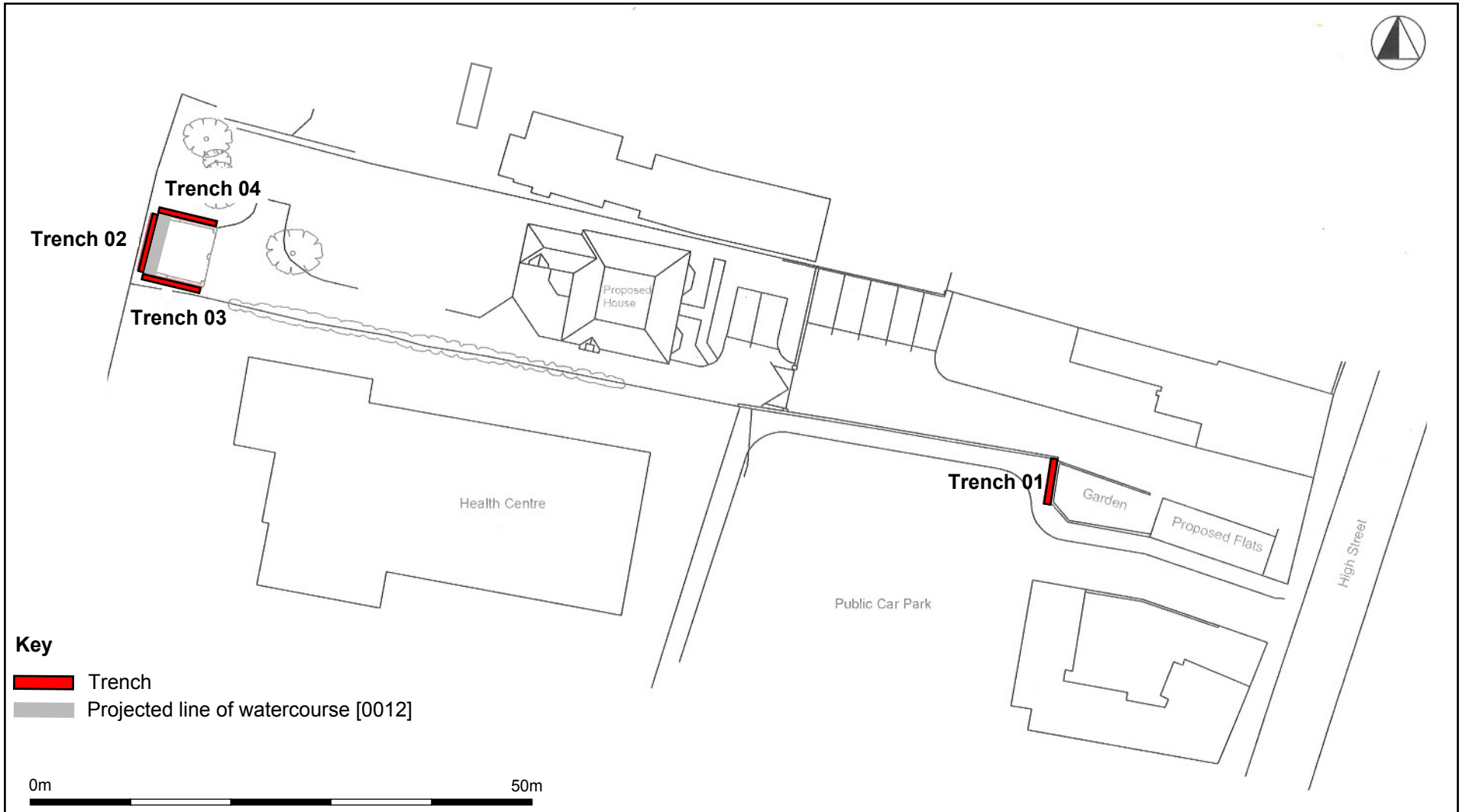


Figure 2: Trench location plan

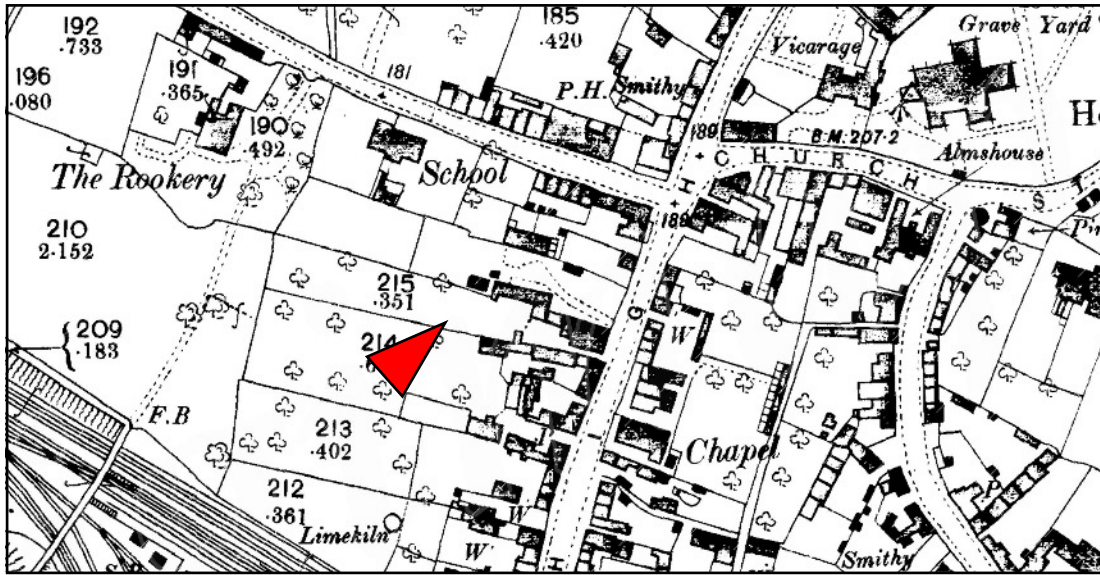


Figure 3: The development site at 31 High Street Barrow upon Soar, highlighted on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1884

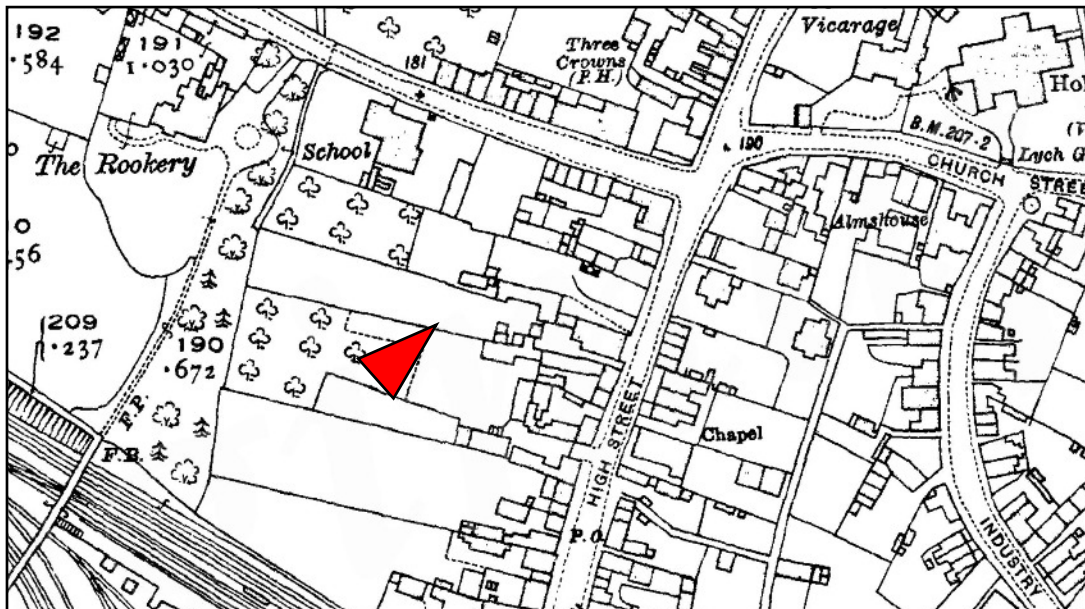


Figure 4: The development site at 31 High Street Barrow upon Soar, highlighted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1921

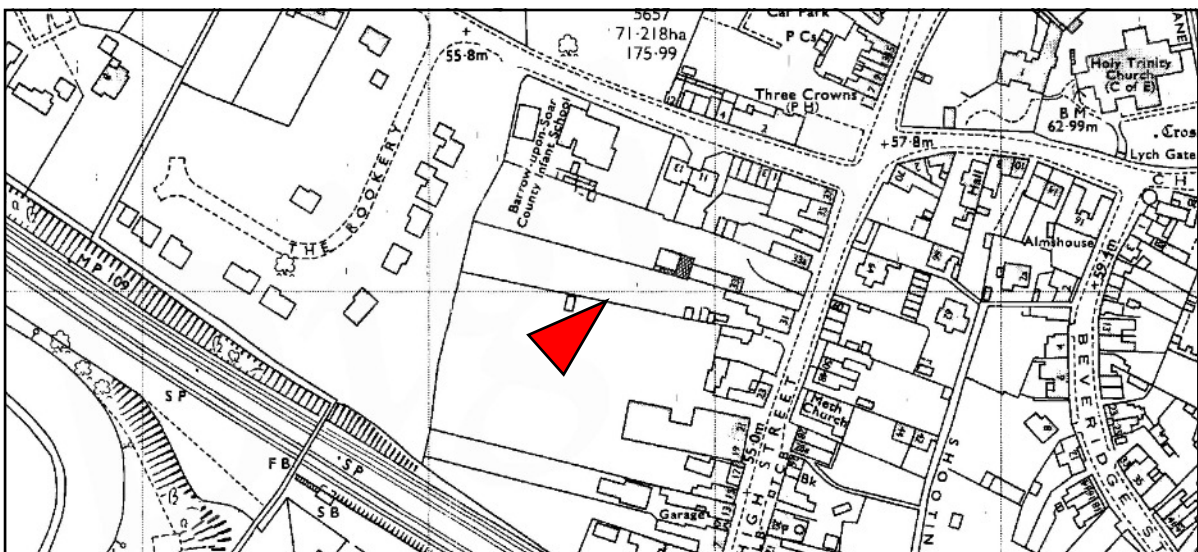


Figure 5: The development site at 31 High Street Barrow upon Soar, highlighted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1971

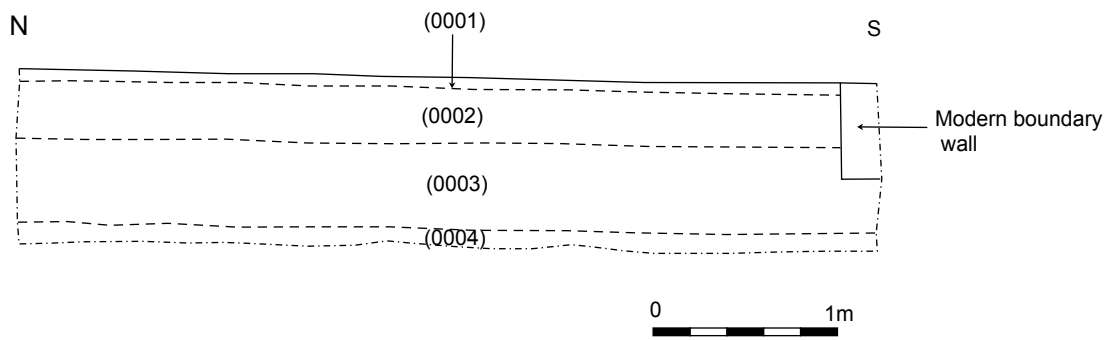


Figure 6: Trench 01 west facing section. Scale at A4 1:40

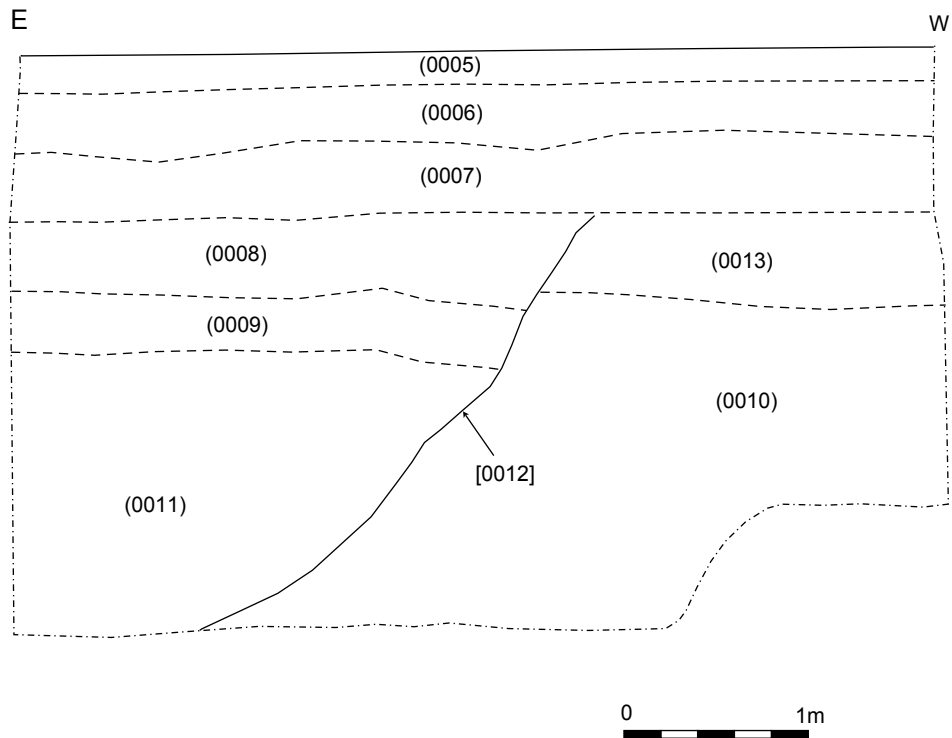


Figure 7: Trench 04 north facing section. Scale at A4 1:40