

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT THE DOVECOTE, DENNIS STREET,
HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE**



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by M. Hurford

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SUMMARY

- On 22nd November 2012 Trent & Peak Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief on trenches excavated at The Dovecote, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire, on behalf of Mr. D. Walker. Archaeological investigation was a requirement of Planning Application no. 12/00084/FUL, following a recommendation made by the Principal Planning Archaeologist to North West Leicestershire District Council.
- The village of Hugglescote is situated in north-west Leicestershire on the River Sence, approximately 1 mile to the south of Coalville, centred at Ordnance Grid Reference SK 4282 1262.
- The site is part of a residential development for the erection of a single dwelling.
- The key objective of the archaeological investigation was to establish the presence or absence, significance of, depth of and state of preservation of any surviving archaeology within the overall development.
- The study area lies immediately to the south-east of 48 Dennis Street, a post medieval former farmhouse, and to the south-west of its associated outbuildings. The site is within, or in close proximity to, the medieval core of Hugglescote, being located a short distance to the east of the former Church of St. James, an 18th century church which replaced a much earlier chapel. Buildings dating to the 16th and 17th centuries are present fronting Dennis Street to the west of The Dovecote. The former Hugglescote Manor, home of the Hastings family, was located to the south-west of the site.
- Examination of the trenches established that the underlying deposits over much of the site comprised clay loam topsoil above clay subsoil. The underlying natural substrata was Gunthorpe Member.
- No archaeological features or finds were encountered in the trenches. The absence of archaeological remains indicates that the site was probably located within agricultural land outside the farm complex.

THE DOVECOTE, DENNIS STREET, HUGGLESCOTE, LEICESTERSHIRE

A Report on an Archaeological Investigation 2012

M. Hurford

CONTENTS

| | |
|--------------------------------------|----------|
| Summary | 1 |
| Contents | 2 |
| List of Figures | 2 |
| List of Plates | 2 |
| Acknowledgements | 2 |
| | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2. SITE BACKGROUND | 3 |
| 3. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY | 4 |
| 4. RESULTS | 4 |
| 5. CONCLUSIONS | 4 |
| 6. REFERENCES | 5 |
| | |
| Appendix: Context Summary | 6 |

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Location plan (Scale 1:25,000).
Figure 2: Site plan (Scale 1: 500).
Figure 3: Extract from the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale map.
Figure 4: Plan of the foundation trenches and section locations (Scale 1:100).
Figure 5: Section 01 south-east facing section (Scale 1:20).
Figure 6: Section 02 north-east facing section (1:20).
Figure 7: Section 03 south-east facing section (1:20).
Figure 8: Section 04 south-west facing section (1:20).

List of Plates

- Plate 1: General view of the site with the former farmhouse, 48 Dennis Street, in the background, viewed looking north-west.
Plate 2: General view of the foundation trenches from the south-west corner of the development, viewed looking north-east.
Plate 3: Section 02, north-east facing, viewed looking south.

Acknowledgements

Fieldwork was directed by M. Hurford. The project was managed by R. Sheppard.

1. INTRODUCTION

On 22nd November 2012 Trent & Peak Archaeology conducted an archaeological watching brief on trenches excavated at The Dovecote, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire (Figures 1 and 2) on behalf of Mr. D. Walker. Archaeological investigation was a requirement of Planning Application no. 12/00084/FUL, following a recommendation made by the Principal Planning Archaeologist to North West Leicestershire District Council.

2. SITE BACKGROUND

Topography

The village of Hugglescote is situated in north-west Leicestershire on the River Sence, approximately 1 mile to the south of Coalville, centred at Ordnance Grid Reference SK 4282 1262. The village is focussed on the 150m contour.

Geology

The underlying geology is Gunthorpe Member, a red-brown mudstone with subordinate dolomitic siltstone and fine grained sandstone with greenish grey common gypsum veins and nodules (British Geological Survey 2012).

The Development

The site is part of a small residential development proposing to erect a single dwelling with landscaped gardens and a driveway.

Archaeological and Historical Background

The site is within, or in close proximity to, the medieval core of Hugglescote, being located a short distance to the east of the former Church of St. James, an 18th century church which replaced a much earlier medieval chapel (Hugglescote and Donington le Heath Parish Council 2013). The former Hugglescote Manor, home of the Hastings family, was located to the south-west of the site, the single surviving element being the remains of a wall which was once part of the c.1700 formal garden (English Heritage List Entry Number 1178089).

A post medieval former farmhouse, 48 Dennis Street, is located immediately to the north-west of the development, and to the north-east its associated outbuildings, since converted to residential use. Further post medieval buildings are located to the west of The Dovecote fronting Dennis Street. They comprise numbers 26 and 28, originally a single property, dated 1583 on a collar beam and on a brick and granite plinth (EH List Entry No. 1178098) and number 16 dating to the 17th century or earlier (EH List Entry No. 1074358).

Though mining coal in the area had been well established by the 13th century (Palmer and Neaverson 1992 28) it was not exploited on an industrial scale until the 19th century when the first shaft at Long Lane was sunk in 1822 causing the hamlet to expand, becoming the town of Coalville, the borders of which eventually reached Hugglescote. Alongside coal mining activity there was also brickmaking, railway wagon construction, ironfounding and engineering. Elastic web and hosiery manufacture was also undertaken. The expanding population created a rise in the demand for flour which was met by the construction of watermills, especially along the River Sence. The area was served by the Leicester and Swannington Railway, opened in 1833 and closed in the 1960s, the dismantled remains of which can be viewed to the south-east of The Dovecote (Palmer and Neaverson 1992 112).

The development site on the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey 1:25 inch scale map (Figure 3) is located in the southwest corner of a complex of buildings, presumably agricultural in nature and associated with the former farmhouse 48 Dennis Street. A building is shown immediately north of the development and a further building, absent from the 1903 edition, to the south-west. There is no change to the buildings and boundaries of the area until the late 20th century when cartographic evidence indicates that the majority of the southern most buildings were demolished between 1960 and 1973, the exception being the building immediately north of the development. However, by the 1993 edition, this too had gone.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

Objectives

The key objective of the archaeological investigation was to establish the presence or absence, significance of, depth of and state of preservation of any surviving archaeology within the overall development.

Methodology

The site was visited after the foundation trenches for the building had been excavated.

All deposits were hand cleaned where appropriate and representative sections photographed and drawn at a scale at 1:20. Plans were drawn at 1:50 and 1:500. Archaeological features and natural deposits were given an individual four figure context number e.g. 0001.

4. RESULTS *Figures 4-8, Plates 1-3.*

The ground level of the site naturally sloped from the north to the south. This had been levelled prior to the excavation of the trenches with up to 0.70m being reduced from the northern end of the development. The foundation trenches extended across an area measuring 9.5m x 9.7m and measured 0.90m in depth and 0.50m in width. The southern trenches were waterlogged and could not be investigated.

No features or finds of archaeological significance were encountered. The underlying stratigraphy comprised dark grey clay loam top soil 0001, which was up to 0.9m in depth in the north of the site, above brown clay subsoil 0002 which was up to 0.52m thick. Gunthorpe Member was encountered beneath 0002.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The trenches produced no features or finds of archaeological significance. The absence of archaeology, combined with the stratigraphy present within the trenches, suggests that the site is probably located within former agricultural land, outside of the farm complex shown on earlier maps.

6. REFERENCES

<http://www.mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

<http://www.hugglescote.leicestershireparishcouncils.org>

Palmer. M, and Neaverson. P., 1992 *Industrial Landscapes of the East Midlands*
Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Ltd

APPENDIX

Context Summary

| Context | Description | Interpretation |
|---------|---|--|
| 0001 | Dark grey clay loam, up to 0.90m thick at the northern end of the site, 20% stones, rounded to angular, up to 40mm x 40mm in size | Top soil |
| 0002 | Brown clay, 25% motles yellowish brown clay, up to 25% stones rounded to angular, up to 80 x 100mm in size | Sub soil |
| 0003 | Reddish brown clay | Natural substrata Gunthorpe Member |

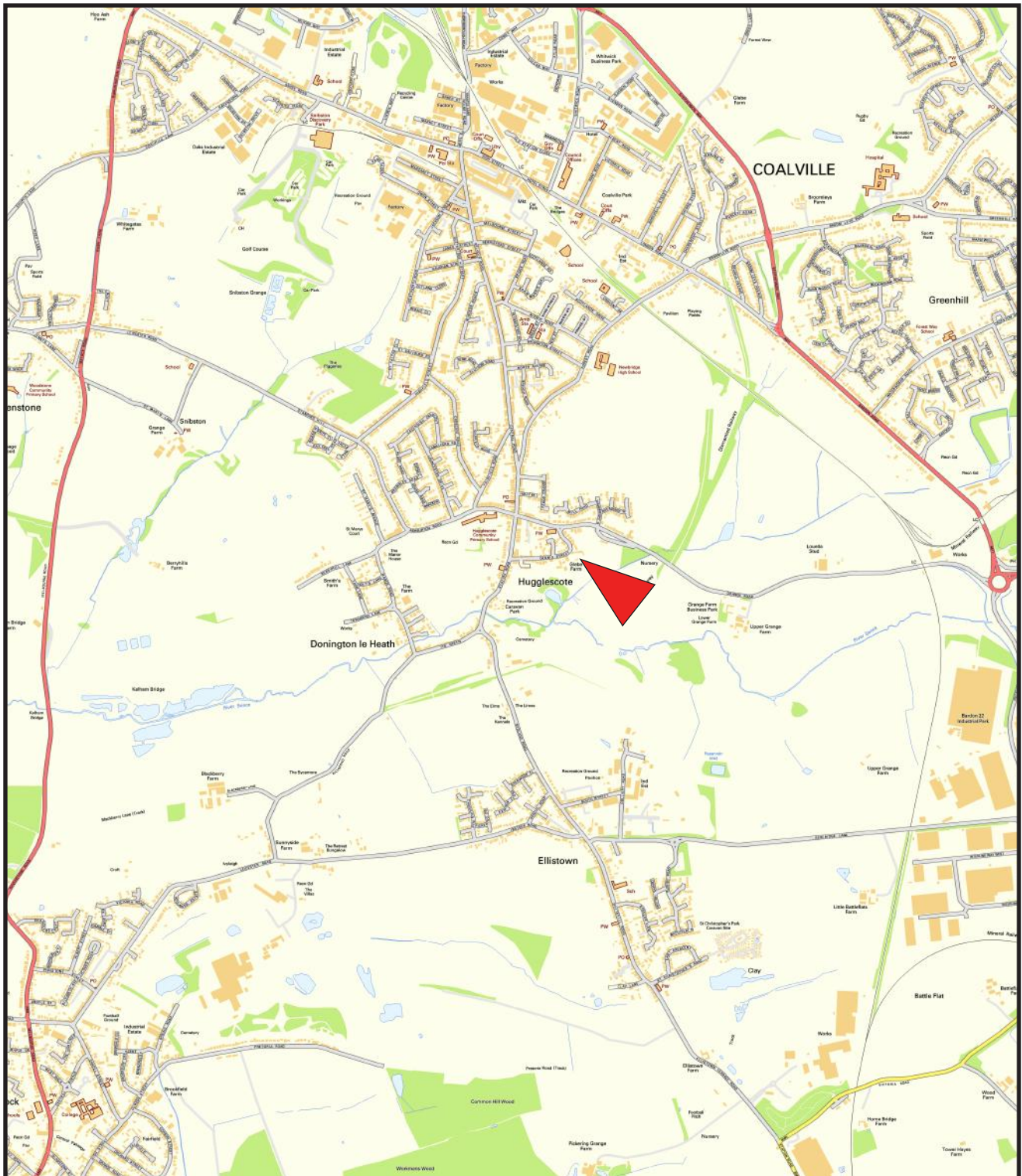


Figure 1: Location of the development, indicated by the red arrow at The Dovecote, Dennis Street, Hugglescote, Leicestershire. Scale 1:25,000.
Contains Ordnance Survey data (c) Crown Copyright and database right 2012.

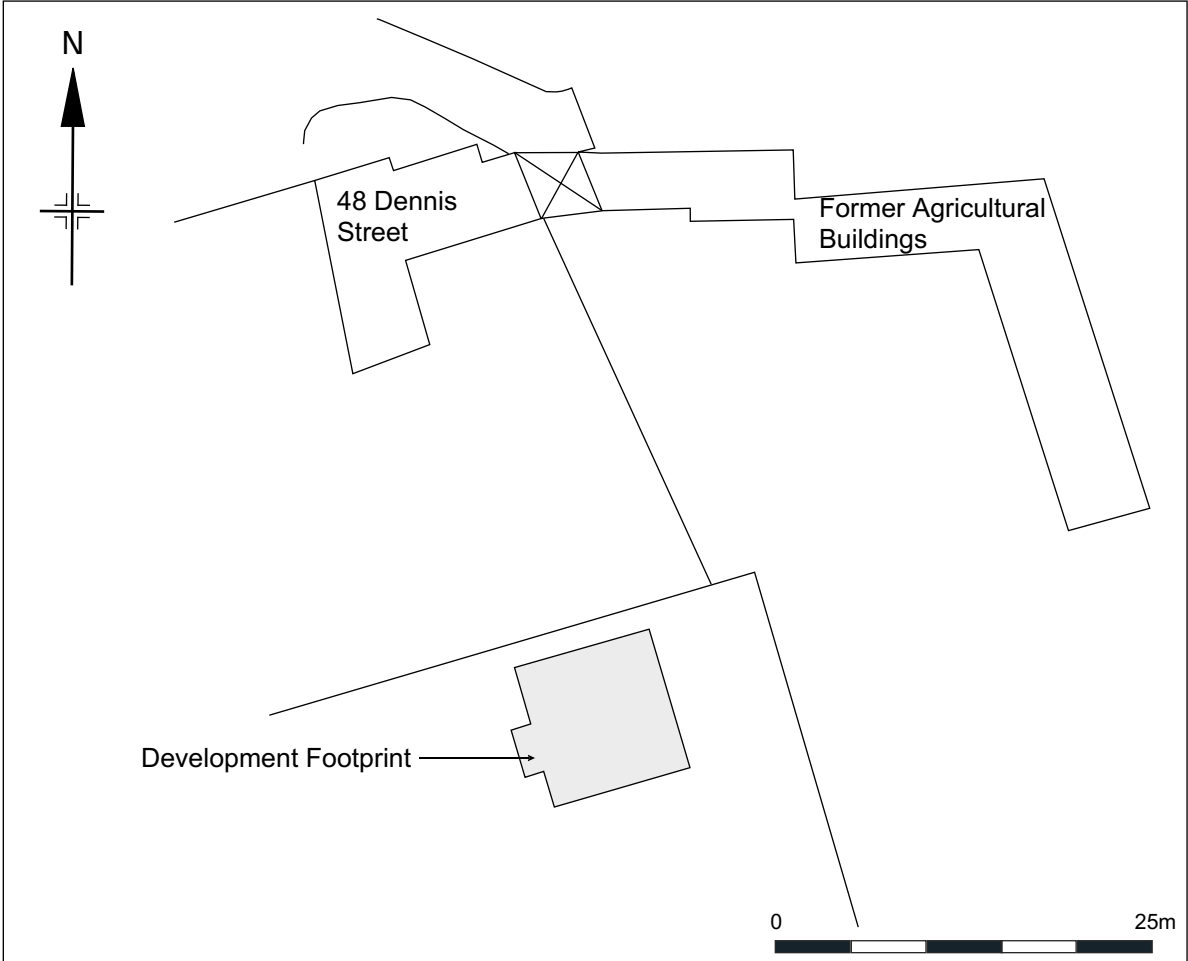


Figure 2: Location of the development. Scale 1:500.

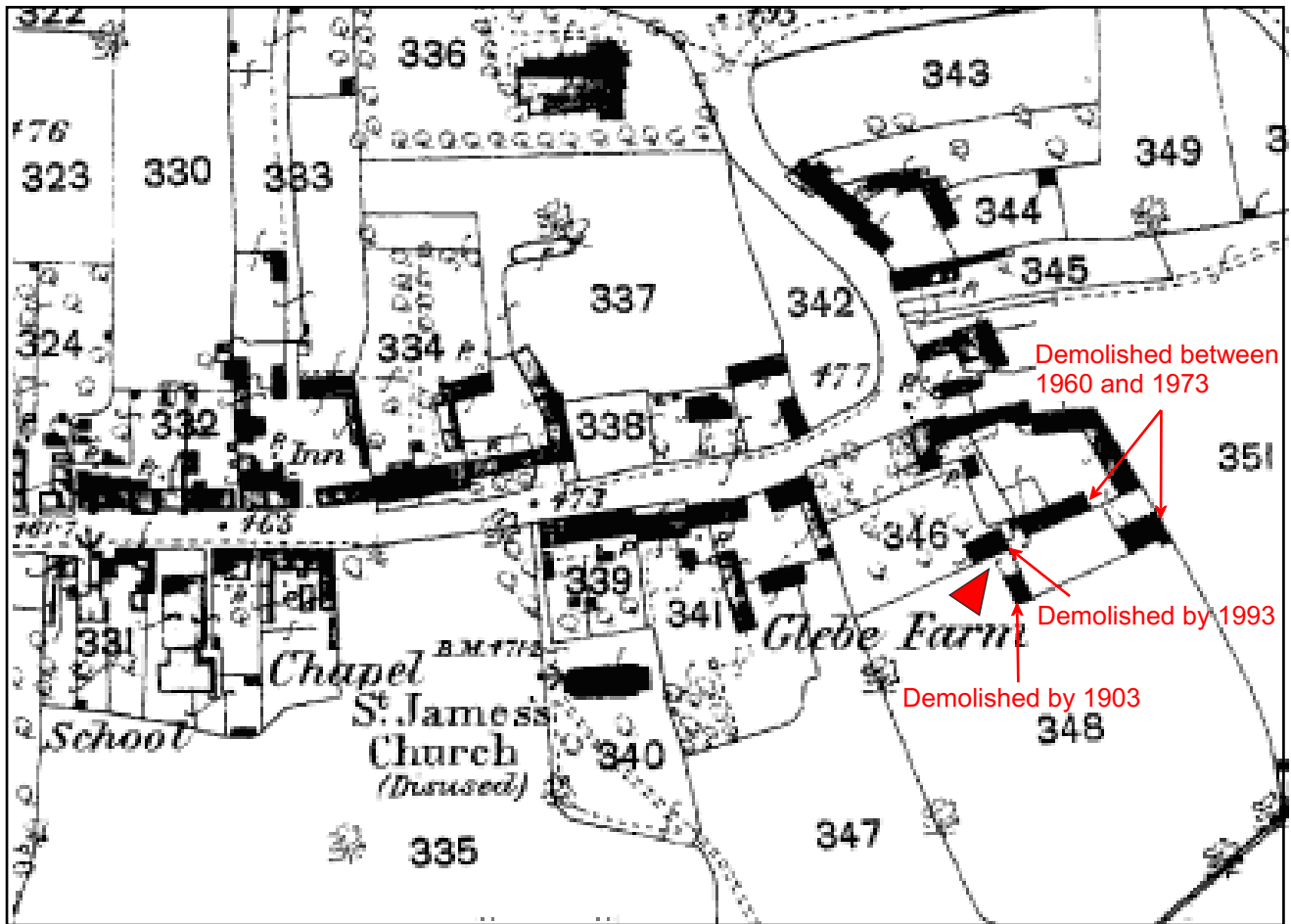


Figure 3: Extract from the 1884 First Edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch scale map showing the area. The site is indicated by the red triangle.

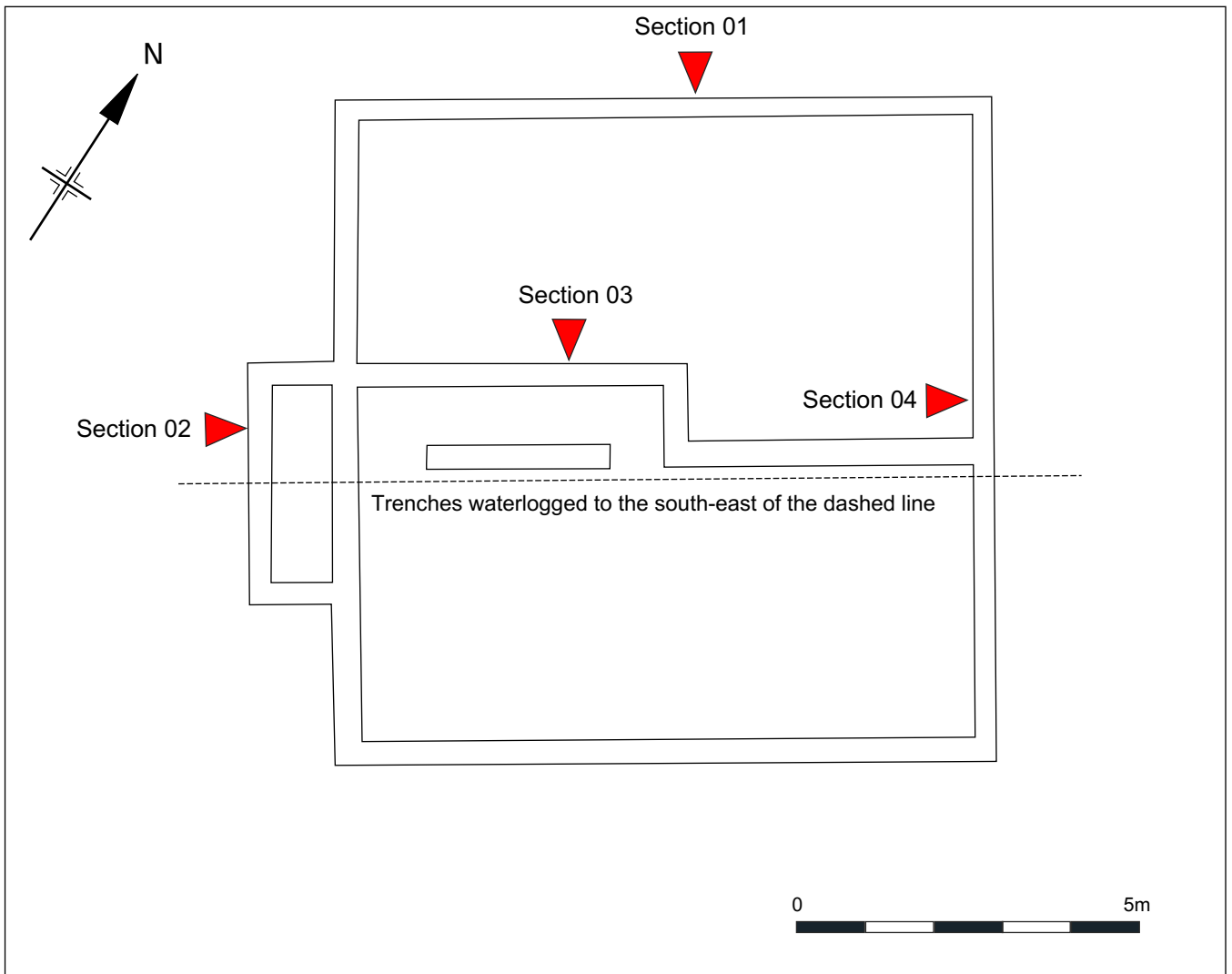


Figure 4: Plan of the foundation trenches and section locations. Scale 1:100.

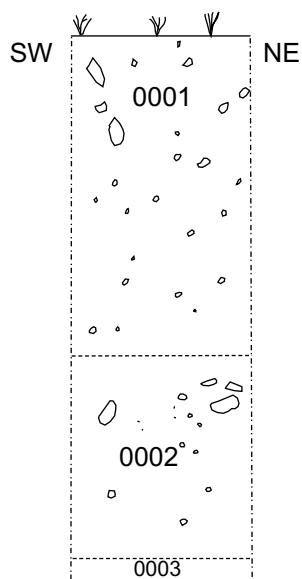


Figure 5: Section 01, south-east facing. Scale 1:20.

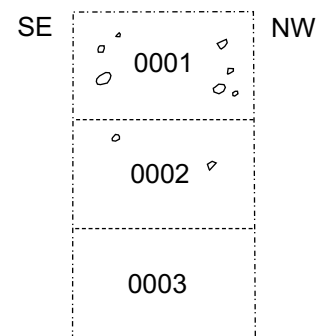


Figure 6: Section 02, north-east facing. Scale 1:20.

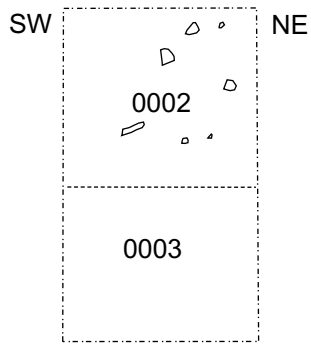


Figure 7: Section 03, south-east facing. Scale 1:20.

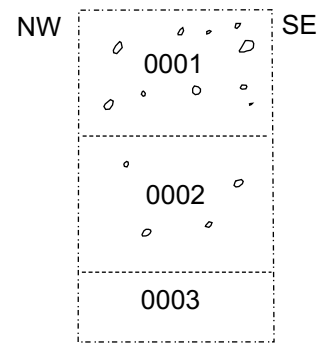


Figure 8: Section 04, south-west facing. Scale 1:20.



Plate 1: General view of the site with the former farmhouse, 48 Dennis Street, in the background, viewed looking north-west.



Plate 2: General view of the foundation trenches from the south-west corner of the development, viewed looking north-east.



Plate 3: Section 02, north-east facing, viewed looking south.