



BRISTOL & WEST ARCHAEOLOGY

Land to the Rear of Nos 21 - 31
Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol.

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Client: Magenta Properties Ltd

20 June 2014

Bristol & West Archaeology

Planning Authority:

Bristol City Council

Planning Ref: BCC App 12/03493/F

National Grid Reference:

NGR ST 355410 175950

Author: Raymond K Ducker

Report Status: Draft

Issue Date: 20 June 2014

BWA Ref: 13/2442

© Bristol & West Archaeology Limited

No part of this report is to be copied in any way without prior written consent.

© Ordnance Survey maps reproduced by consent of the Controller of H M Stationery Office.

Licence No. WL1005476

Parkfield House, Parkfield, Pucklechurch, Bristol BS16 9NS. Tel. 0117 9372450

Email bruce.williams@bristolandwestarchaeology.co.uk

Land to the Rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol.**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

1.	INTRODUCTION	1
2.	OBJECTIVES AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY	2
3.	HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	2
4.	RESULTS.....	2
5.	CONCLUSIONS.....	4
6.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	4
7.	THE FINDS	4
8.	APPENDIX 1 LIST OF CONTEXTS.....	7

Figures

Figure 1. Detail of the study area, with the approximate boundary outlined in red.....	10
Figure 2. Layout of the Development Site House Plots 1 - 4 with the approximate boundary outlined in red.	11
Figure 3. Layout of archaeological features within the foundations of House Plot 2.....	12
Figure 4. Layout of archaeological features within the foundations of House Plots 3 & 4. 13	

Plates

Plate 1. General view of House Plot 1 during reduced level excavation, looking W, scale 2 x 1m	14
Plate 2. Section in House Plot 2 showing the Stratigraphy, looking N, scale 1 x 2m.....	14
Plate3. Ditch Cut [107] Fill (108) in the north facing section of House Plot 2, Trench 1, looking N, scale 2 x 1m	15
Plate 4. Ditch Cut [105] Fill (106) in the east facing section of House Plot 2, Trench 5, looking W, scale 1 x 1m	15
Plate 5. Ditch Cut [305] Fill (304) in the east facing section of House Plot 3, Trench 2, looking SE, scale 2 x 1m	16
Plate 6. General view of House Plot 3 excavation of the foundation trenches, looking S, scale 1 x 2m	16
Plate 7. Ditch Cut [403] Fill (404) in the east facing section of House Plot 4, Trench 2, looking SE, scale 2 x 1 m	17
Plate 8. General view of House Plot 4 excavation of the foundation trenches, looking SW, scale 2 x 1m	17

Land to the Rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol.

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Summary

A watching brief was carried out by Bristol and West Archaeology during groundworks connected with the construction of four detached properties at the rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol. Deposits and features observed comprised recent made ground, garden soil and subsoil sealing five possible ditches of uncertain date cut into the natural limestone.

Land to the Rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol.

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The project was commissioned by Magenta Properties Ltd who also funded the work. Thanks are owed to Andrew and Sally Ann Egginton of Magenta Properties Ltd for their co-operation and Pete Insole, Principal Historic Environment Officer for Bristol City Council.

1. INTRODUCTION

Project background

- 1.1 Magenta Properties Ltd received planning consent (BCC App 12/03493/F) to construct four detached dwellings on land to the rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol (NGR ST 355410 175950). Attached to the consent were three planning conditions (8, 15 and 16) for the implementation of a programme of archaeological monitoring (watching brief) in accordance with a written scheme of investigation requiring that all groundworks were monitored and recorded by an archaeologist or archaeological organisation approved by the Local Planning Authority.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (BWA 2013) approved by Pete Insole, Principal Historic Environment Officer for Bristol City Council and followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE: The Project Managers' Guide* (EH 2006).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was conducted by Raymond Ducker during six site visits between 9 January and 3 June 2014.
- 1.4 This report was written by Raymond Ducker. The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery under the accession number 2013/15. A digital copy of the report will be provided to Bristol City Council for inclusion in the Historic Environment Record database as BHER 25220. The project has been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as bristola3-148848. Paper copies of the report will be provided to Bristol Record Office and Bristol City Museum.

Site Location

- 1.5 The site is centred on NGR ST 355410 175950 and is triangular in shape. It is bordered by Roman Way to the south, Avon Way to the northeast and Branscombe Road to the northwest. The site lies within the Sea Mills Conservation Area.

Geology and Topography

- 1.6 The British Geological Survey (BGS) 1:50,000 scale geological map of the area indicates the site to be underlain by Dolomitic Conglomerate of the Triassic Formation.
- 1.7 Access to the site was via a lane off Avon Way. The southern part of the site was relatively flat whereas the northern half sloped from southeast to northwest. Small sections of tarmac from former tennis courts were present, as were a number of small trees around the periphery of the site.

2. OBJECTIVES AND RECORDING METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The watching brief followed the methodology outlined in the Written Scheme of investigation (BWA 2013) and involved monitoring all groundworks. Features of archaeological potential were cleaned and investigated by hand.
- 2.2 A handful of modern sherds of pottery were collected, together with one worked flint, but the pottery was not retained in the site archive. Archaeological deposits and features were recorded on standard BWA proforma sheets. The records, drawings and photographs have been prepared as a standard archive according to English Heritage MAP2 standards.

3. HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Although no previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the land, it does lie in close proximity to the known Roman settlement and port of *Abonae* located a short distance to the south west. The actual extent of the settlement is unclear, but the focus of Roman activity eg. buildings and occupation lies a short distance to the south west towards the confluence of the rivers Trym and Avon. The settlement appears to have been occupied between the 1st – 4th centuries AD.
- 3.2 The higher ground overlooking the settlement has provided evidence for inhumation burials and cremations and appears to have been utilised for quarrying, perhaps providing the building stone and limestone for mortar production for use in the Roman buildings and trackways (Bennett 1985).

4. RESULTS

- 4.1 Construction works during the project comprised excavation of reduced level platforms for four houses followed with standard strip foundations. All excavation was carried out with a 180 degree tracked excavator with a toothless bucket.

House Plot 1

- 4.2 Owing to the sloping ground the depth of the reduced level dig varied from 100 – 400mm. Excavation of footings reached a maximum depth of 1m depending on the depth down to the solid substrate. Beneath the topsoil (deposit 200) lay a probable subsoil (202) which in turn overlay the natural yellow sand and limestone (203).
- 4.3 No features or deposits of archaeological interest were observed.

House Plot 2

- 4.4 Owing to the sloping ground the depth of the reduced level dig varied from 0 – 800mm. Most of the material excavated comprised modern made-ground recently deposited to level the area during clearance works (100).

- 4.5 Depth of excavations for footings varied but reached a maximum depth of 1.8m. Below topsoil 101 were a probable subsoil deposit (102) and a possible earlier topsoil horizon (103) overlying the natural yellow sand and limestone.
- 4.6 Subsoil 102 overlay three possible ditches (cuts 105, 107 and 109), each containing a single inclusion-free fill composed of compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay (106, 108 and 110), which cut the earlier topsoil (103). No dating evidence was recovered from any of the ditches.

House Plot 3

- 4.7 Owing to the sloping ground the depth of the reduced level dig varied from 0 – 500mm. Most of the material excavated comprised modern made-ground (300) recently deposited to level the area during clearance works.
- 4.8 Depth of excavations for footings varied but reached a maximum depth of 1.4m. Below topsoil 301 was a probable subsoil deposit (302) overlying the natural yellow sand and limestone (303). A single soil-cut feature, (305) probably a ditch, was recorded near the southwest corner of the Plot in Trench 1.

House Plot 4

- 4.9 Owing to the sloping ground the depth of the reduced level dig varied from 0 – 500mm. The uppermost deposit comprised a thin topsoil (406). Most of the material excavated comprised modern made-ground (400) recently deposited to level the area during clearance works. This overlay a deposit of topsoil (401).
- 4.10 Depth of excavation for footings varied but reached a maximum depth of 2m. Below topsoil 401 was a probable subsoil (402) overlying the natural yellow sand and limestone (405).
- 4.11 A possible ditch was also located during the work, (Cut [403], Fill (404)). The northwest side of the ditch was truncated by the excavation for a foundation trench leaving only part of that side of the ditch visible.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Excavations for footings revealed five possible ditches, three of them cutting an earlier topsoil layer and sealed with subsoil, and two of the ditches sealed by the same topsoil.
- 5.2 The ditches were all filled with a similar, clean, compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay that resembled the subsoil. None of the ditches produced any finds.
- 5.3 The only find of any note was a possible worked flint from a recent topsoil layer, which may date to the Bronze Age.
- 5.4 All the other deposits on the site were of recent date and of no archaeological significance.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bennett, J., 1985 Sea Mills The Roman Town of Abonae: Excavations at Nazareth House 1972. City of Bristol Museum & Art Gallery Monograph No 3.

BWA (Bristol & West Archaeology) 2013. Land to the Rear of Nos 21 – 31 Avon Way, Stoke Bishop, Bristol: *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Building Recording and Watching Brief*.

7. THE FINDS

A small assemblage of finds was recovered from the site during the initial reduced level excavation.

Pottery

Five sherds of pottery were recovered from Plots 1 and 2. They all dated to the 19th century and were of no significance.

Pottery type	Context	Count	Weight (g)	Date
Whiteware BPT 202	101	2	24	19th
Whiteware BPT 202	201	1	11	19th
Stoneware BPT ?277	101	1	4	19th
Blue Transfer Printed Ware BPT 278	101	1	3	19th

Flint

Introduction

One piece of flint was recovered from a deposit of topsoil (context 101) and is therefore unstratified.

Flaking and Manufacture

The piece can be ascribed to the tertiary flaking phase of the core reduction sequence. The bulb of percussion is evident on the ventral surface where the flake was struck from the core. The piece has a flat base with a top left oblique edge. There is a small amount of cortex remaining on the top left oblique edge. The piece is entirely patinated, suggesting that it has been in the ground for a considerable time. There is no evidence of plough damage.

There is evidence of some original retouch on the right leading edge, probably carried out by indirect percussion, using bone or antler. This is now patinated, as is the rest of the tool, but its original use could have been as a cutting piece, or scraper, or even an awl, as the tip of the piece has been broken in antiquity.

Raw Material

Flint does not occur naturally within the Bristol area, or within Somerset or Gloucestershire. The nearest good quality flint source is the Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire (Green, 1992). Flint of the quality such as this recovered from Avon Way, may have travelled some distance before it was deposited in river gravels around the Bristol area. As this is the only piece recovered from the watching brief and the fact it comes from the topsoil, suggests that it is a casual loss.

Chronology

The thickness of the piece (10mm), its length (59mm) and the oblique top edge, suggests that it might belong to the Bronze Age, but this is a tentative suggestion in the absence of any other chronological indicators.

Discussion

This piece is unclassifiable, but may have had a deliberate use in Prehistory. Its presence at Avon Way in the topsoil, suggests it was a casual loss by a hunter/farmer passing by. It was a piece that was deliberately brought into the area having been knapped into a tool elsewhere, with the raw material being derived either from the Marlborough Downs, Wiltshire or from a more local source, e.g. river gravels. Although little can be said about the piece, it does indicate a presence in the Bristol area at some point in Prehistory.

Bibliography

Green, G.W., 1992, *British Geological Survey, Bristol and Gloucester region, 3rd Edition*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Saville, A. , 1980. 'On the measurement of struck flakes and flake tools'. *Lithics* 1: 16-20.

Other Finds

A single copper alloy object was recovered also from the buried topsoil in House Plot 4 (Deposit 401). The object is thin and round and may be a coin, though it was too heavily corroded to be certain.

8. APPENDIX 1 LIST OF CONTEXTS

Table of Contexts						
No	Type	Description	Length	Width	Depth	Date
100	Deposit	Modern made-ground deposit. Loose, Topsoil (Deposit 111) and redeposited Subsoil (Deposit 102). Frequent inclusions of tarmac, brick and limestone rubble. Pieces of scrap Iron and broken glass. Lenses of black ash-like material also within the deposit.	Area of House Plot 2, up to 700mm thick			C20
101	Deposit	Soft but compact, pale – mid brown fine sandy silt with occasional root disturbance, buried topsoil	Area of House Plot 2 up to 200mm thick			-
102	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Subsoil	Area of House Plot 2 up to 150mm as excavated			-
103	Deposit	Compact/ firm, mid-brown silty clay with rare charcoal fleck inclusions.	Area of House Plot 2, varies from 200 – 400 mm thick.			-
104	Deposit	Yellow sand and limestone. Geological deposit	At base of all footings in House Plot 2. Excavated to maximum of 300mm depth			-
105	Cut	Steep, convex-sided linear cut. Splayed “V” shape in section. Orientated from NW to SE with very slight curve to the southeast.	500mm wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x 6m long as excavated			-
106	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Similar to (102)	500mm wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x 6m long as excavated			-
107	Cut	Shallow, concave-sided, bowl-shaped linear cut. Orientated approximately NE to SW.	1.4m wide at top x maximum 250mm deep x 1m long as excavated			-
108	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Similar to (102)	1.4m wide at top x maximum 250mm deep x 1m long as excavated			-
109	Cut	Full extent of cut not exposed. S side of cut is steep and of irregular shape. Base flat where visible, orientated from NW to SE.	1.5m wide at top x maximum 400mm deep x recorded in section only			-
110	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Similar to (102)	1.5m wide at top x maximum 400mm deep x recorded in section only			-

111	Deposit	Thin, soft, greyish brown/ dark greyish brown sandy silt with abundant small stone/gravel inclusions, topsoil	Edges of House Plot 1, 150mm thick. Previously removed from area of the plot during site clearance	C20
200	Deposit	Thin, soft, greyish brown/ dark greyish brown sandy silt with abundant small stone/gravel inclusions, topsoil	Area of Plot 1, 150mm thick	C20
201	Deposit	Modern made-ground deposit. Loose, Topsoil (Deposit 200) and redeposited Subsoil (Deposit 202). Frequent inclusions of tarmac, brick and limestone rubble. Pieces of scrap Iron and broken glass. Lens of black ash-like material also within the deposit. Same as (100)	Area of Plot 1, 200mm thick	C20
202	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Subsoil same as (101).	Area of Plot 1, 150mm thick	-
203	Deposit	Yellow sand and limestone. geological deposit	At the base of all footings in House Plot 1. Excavated to maximum of 800mm	-
300	Deposit	Modern made-ground deposit. Loose, Topsoil (Deposit 301) and redeposited Subsoil (Deposit 302). Frequent inclusions of tarmac, brick and limestone rubble. Stray pieces of scrap Iron and broken glass. Lens of black ash-like material also within the deposit. Same as (100)	Area of Plot 3, up to 750mm thick	C20
301	Deposit	Soft but compact, pale – mid brown fine sandy silt with occasional root disturbance, buried topsoil	Area of House Plot 3 up to 200mm thick	-
302	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Subsoil	Area of House Plot 3 up to 150mm as excavated	-
303	Deposit	Yellow sand and limestone. Geological deposit	At base of all footings in House Plot 3. Excavated to maximum of 820mm depth	-
304	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent, similar to subsoil. Forms fill of Cut [305]	2m wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x recorded in section only	-
305	Cut	Irregular linear cut, has shallow shelf on N side before break of slope to V-	2m wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x recorded in	-

		shaped base and gently, slightly concave S side. Orientated approximately NE to SW.	section only	
400	Deposit	Modern made-ground deposit. Loose, Topsoil (Deposit 406) and redeposited Subsoil (Deposit 402). Frequent inclusions of tarmac, brick and limestone rubble. Pieces of scrap Iron and broken glass. Lens of black ash-like material also within the deposit. Same as (100)	Area of Plot 4, up to 400mm thick	C20
401	Deposit	Soft but compact, pale – mid brown fine sandy silt with occasional root disturbance, buried topsoil	Area of House Plot 4 up to 200mm thick	-
402	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent. Subsoil	Area of House Plot 4 up to 400mm as excavated	-
403	Cut	N side, steep sided linear cut with double “V” shaped base. Orientated approximately NE to SW. Part of S side of the ditch truncated by foundation trench but initially appears similar in profile to N side (above).	1.4m wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x recorded in section only	-
404	Deposit	Compact/firm, reddish brown silty clay. No inclusions apparent, similar to subsoil. Forms fill of Cut [403	1.4m wide at top x maximum 500mm deep x recorded in section only	-
405	Deposit	Yellow sand and limestone. Geological deposit.	At base of all footings in House Plot 4. Excavated to maximum of 800mm depth	-

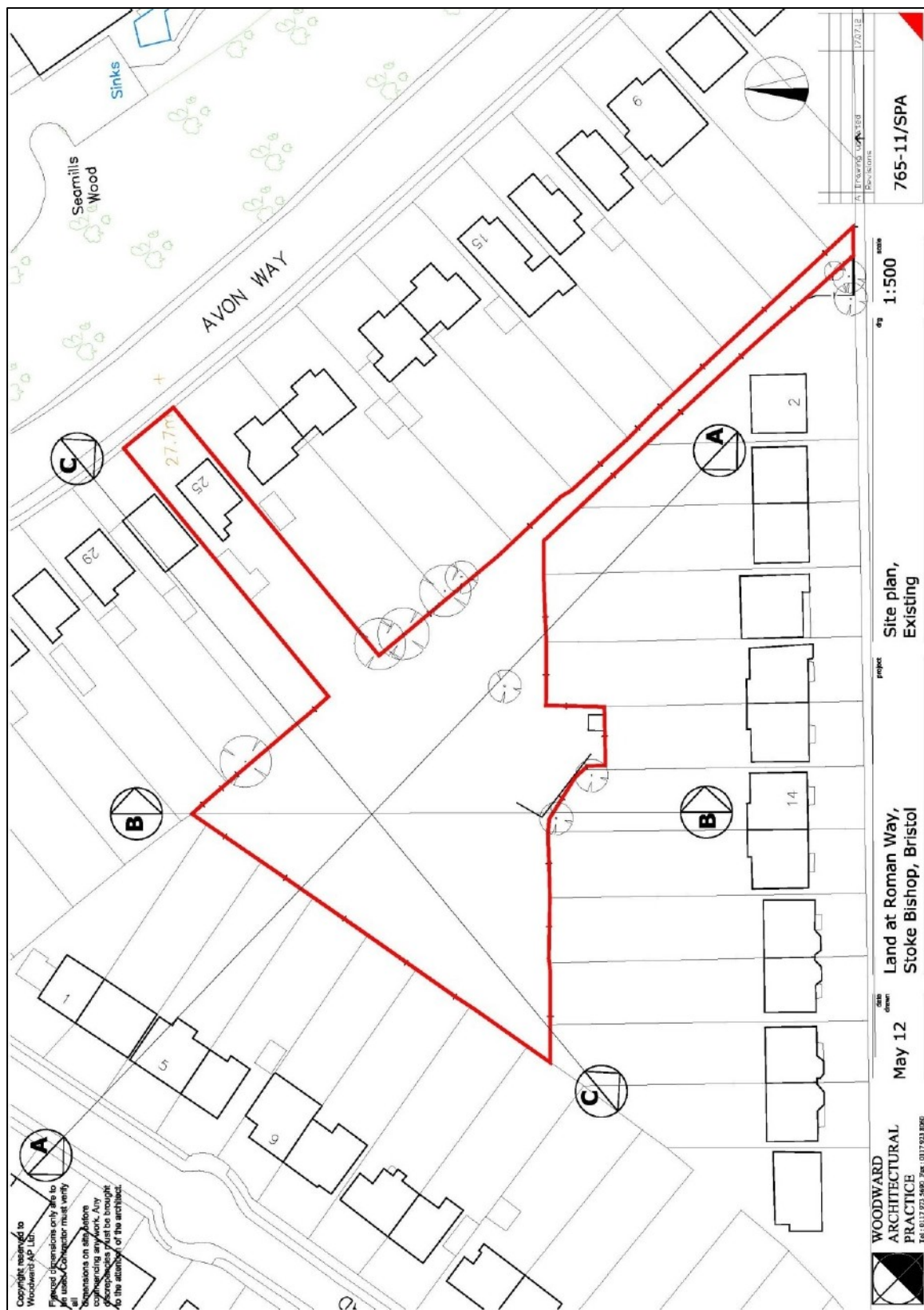


Figure 1. Detail of the study area, with the approximate boundary outlined in red.

Approximate scale 1: 870. Contains Ordnance Survey Data © Crown copyright and database
Right 2012.

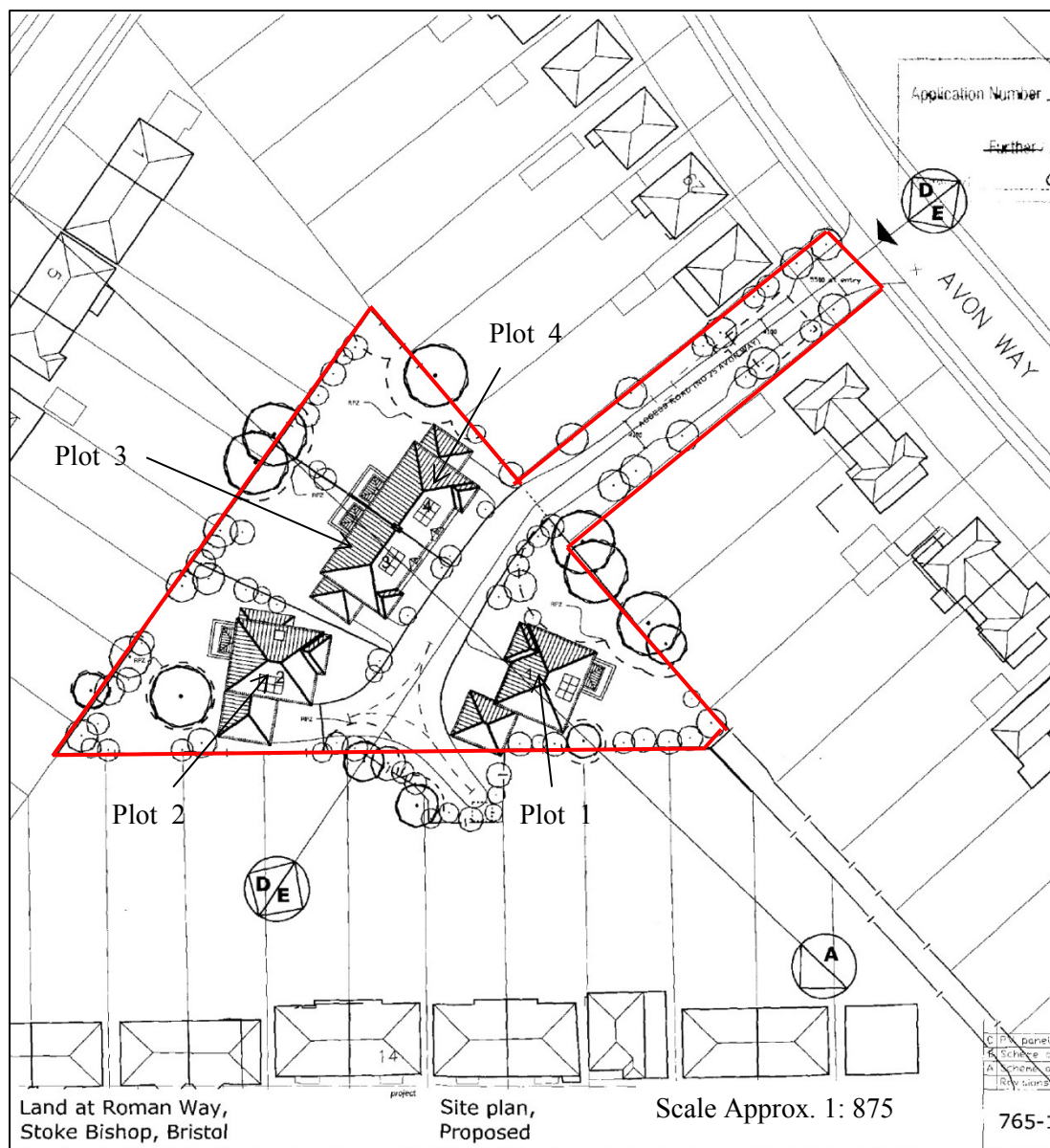


Figure 2. Layout of the Development Site House Plots 1 - 4 with the approximate boundary outlined in red.

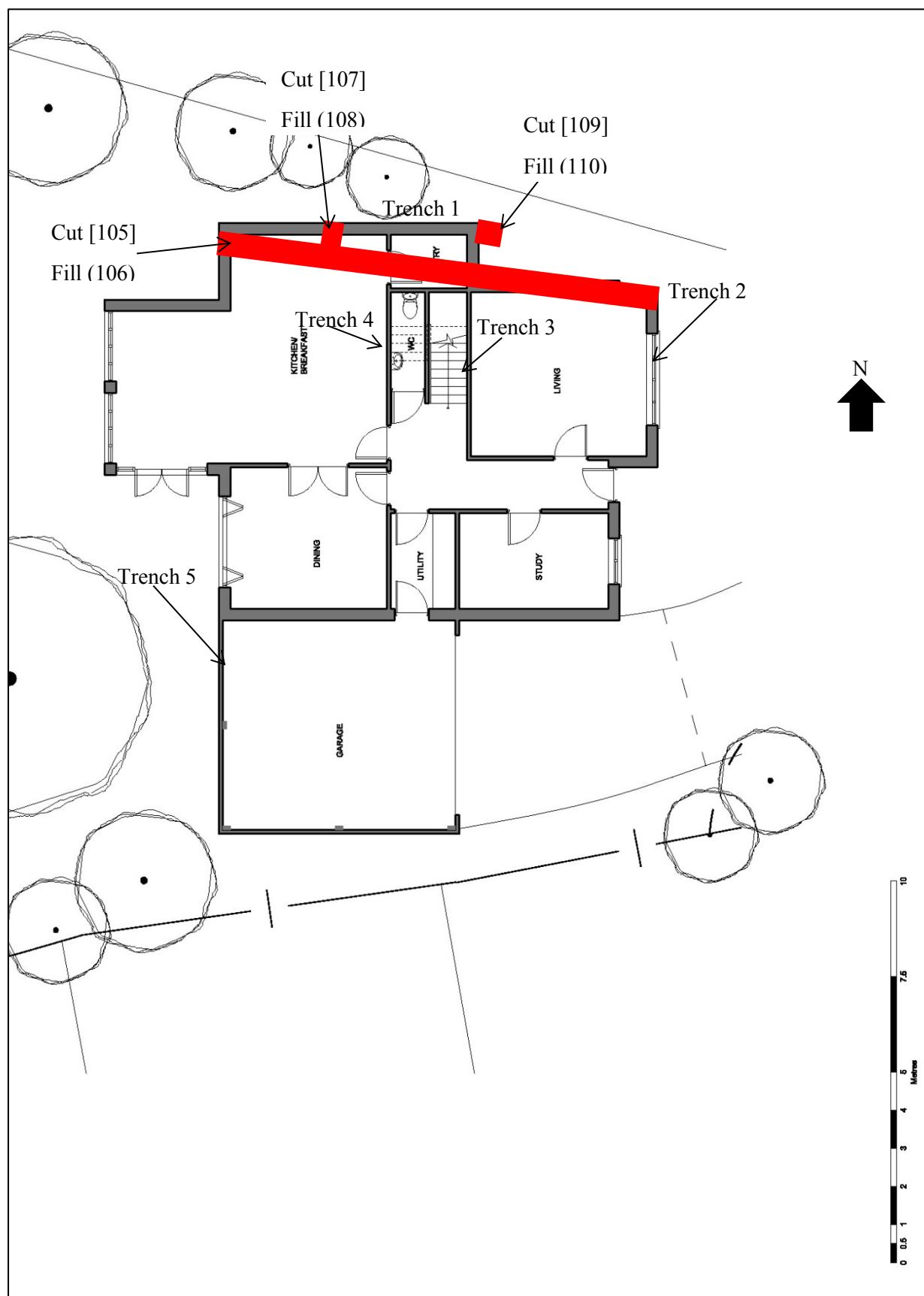


Figure 3. Layout of archaeological features within the foundations of House Plot 2.

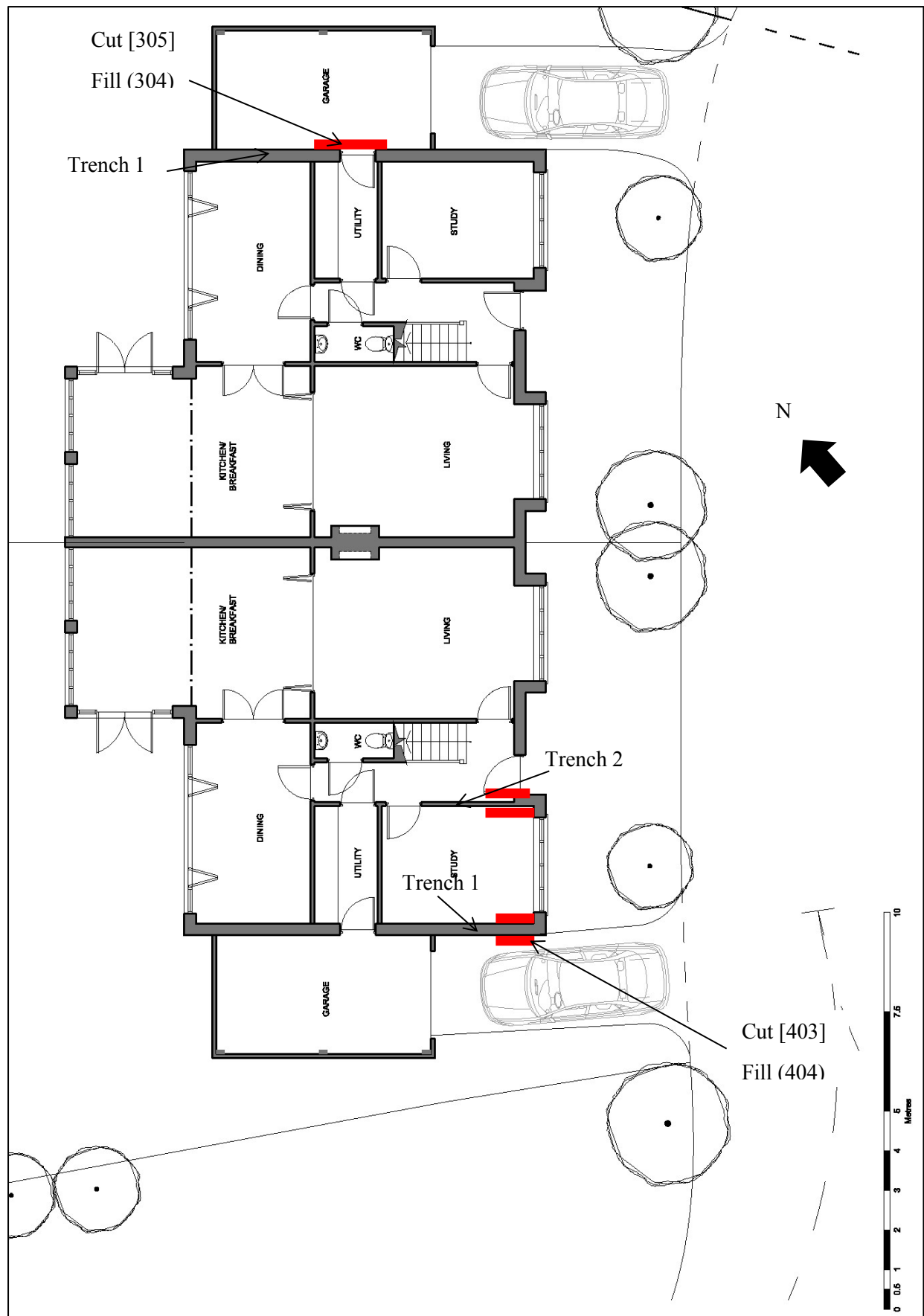


Figure 4. Layout of archaeological features within the foundations of House Plots 3 & 4.

PLATES



Plate 1. General view of House Plot 1 during reduced level excavation, looking W, scale 2 x 1m.



Plate 2. Section in House Plot 2 showing the stratigraphy, looking N, scale 1 x 2m.



Plate3. Ditch Cut [107] Fill (108) in the North facing section of House Plot 2, Trench 1, looking N, scale 2 x 1m.



Plate 4. Ditch Cut [105] Fill (106) in the east facing section of House Plot 2, Trench 5, looking W, scale 1 x 1m.



Plate 5. Ditch Cut [305] Fill (304) in the east facing section of House Plot 3, Trench 2, looking SE, scale 2 x 1m.



Plate 6. General view of House Plot 3 excavation of the foundation trenches, looking S, scale 1 x 2m.



Plate 7. Ditch Cut [403] Fill (404) in the east facing section of House Plot 4, Trench 2, looking SE, scale 2 x 1m.



Plate 8. General view of House Plot 4 excavation of the foundation trenches, looking SW, scale 2 x 1m.