



# University of Leicester

## Archaeological Services

An Archaeological Evaluation at  
346, Ashby Road, Coalville,  
Leicestershire

NGR: SP 413 148

Tim Higgins



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**An Archaeological Evaluation**

**346, Ashby Road, Coalville**

**Leicestershire**

**NGR: SP 413 148**

**Tim Higgins**

**For: Kier Partnership Homes Ltd**

Checked by:

Signed:



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## **An Archaeological Evaluation at 346, Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (SK 413 148)**

*Timothy Higgins*

### **Summary**

*University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out an archaeological trial trench evaluation at 346, Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (SK 413 148) in February 2013. This work was undertaken on behalf of the client Kier Partnership Homes Ltd. Five trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for a proposed new housing development.*

*The trenches contained no significant archaeological features apart from Pre-enclosure furrows and modern field drains. The site archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A25.2013.*

### **Introduction**

Planning permission has been granted for residential development at 346, Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (NGR SK 413 148, Figure.1).

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological trial trenching that was undertaken between 21st – 22nd February 2013. It addresses the requirements of a planning condition from the planning authority, North-West Leicestershire District Council (P.A 12/00154/FUL). Current plans for the proposed development included the demolition of all existing buildings within the application area, totalling c.1950 square metres of the c.6443 square metre site, and the erection of thirty-nine new dwellings with associated parking, services and landscaping.

A strategy for the work was set out in the Written Scheme for Investigation, (Clay 2012, hereinafter the ‘WSI’; Appendix 2). The trial trenching was undertaken to assess the impact from the proposed development in accordance with National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 12 Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment.

### **Geology and Topography**

The proposed development area is located at 346 Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (SK 413 148; Figures. 1-2). The site lies on the north-eastern side of Ashby Road approximately 1.5km north-west of Coalville town centre and 20km north-west of Leicester city centre, in the district of North-West Leicestershire (Figure 1). The site now consists of commercial buildings and warehouse space, waste ground



and paved yard areas. The British Geological Survey of Great Britain, Sheet 155 (Coalville), indicates that the underlying geology is likely to consist of superficial deposits of Mid Pleistocene Diamicton Till overlying bedrock deposits of Triassic mudstone belonging to the Mercia Mudstone Group (BGS 2010). The site lies on a gentle south-east facing slope between c.159.8m and c.161.4m above Ordnance Datum (OD).

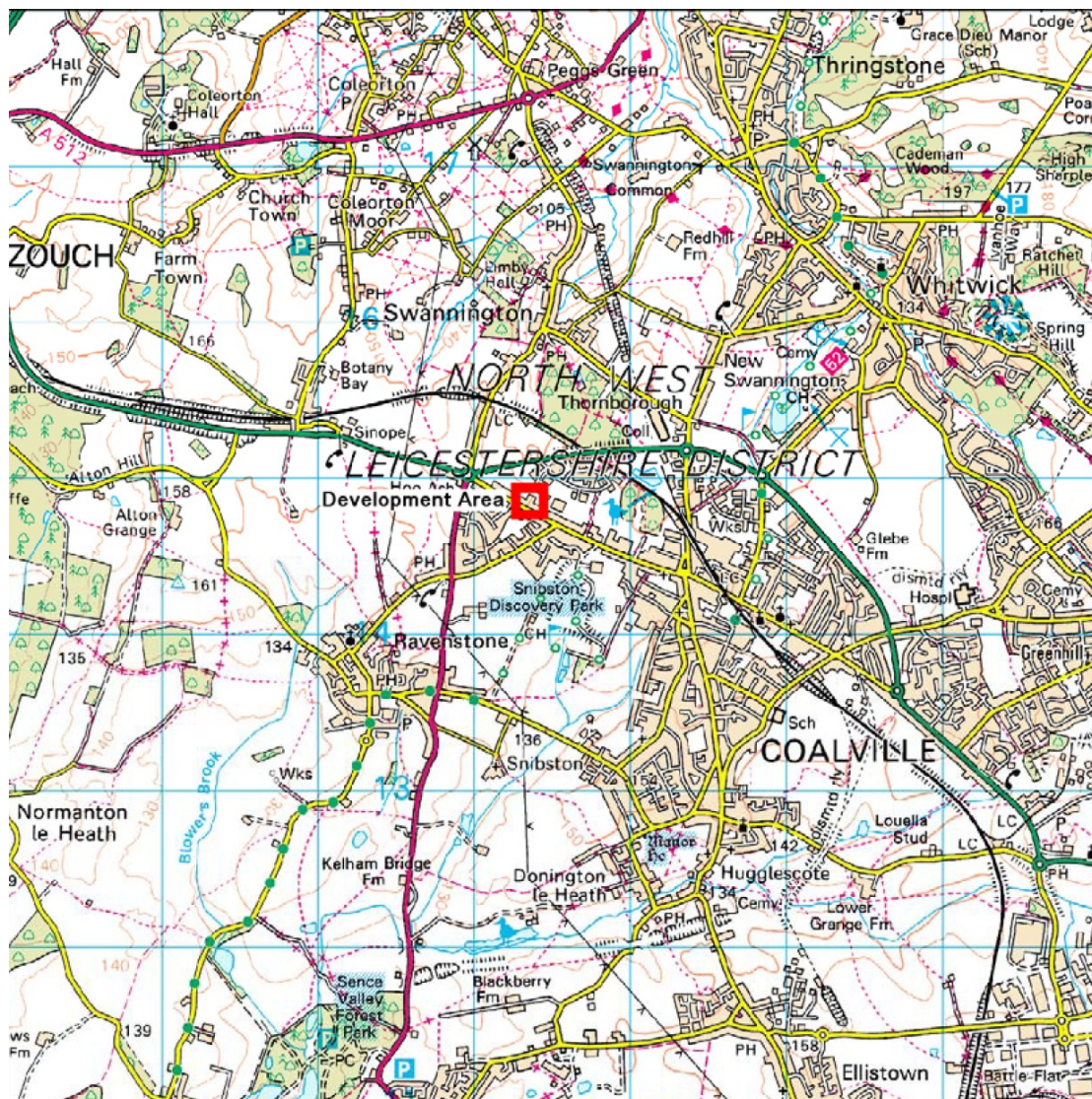


Figure 1. Location of site at Coalville. Scale 1:50,000

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## Historical and Archaeological Background

An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment, has been prepared (Morris 2010). The Historic Environment Record (HER) for Leicestershire and Rutland records that a number of archaeological sites have been identified in the vicinity of the development area including the projected course of a Roman road (HER Ref **MLE9876**), and the site lies within a short distance of the former Snibston Colliery, opened in 1832.



Figure 2 Location of the development area.

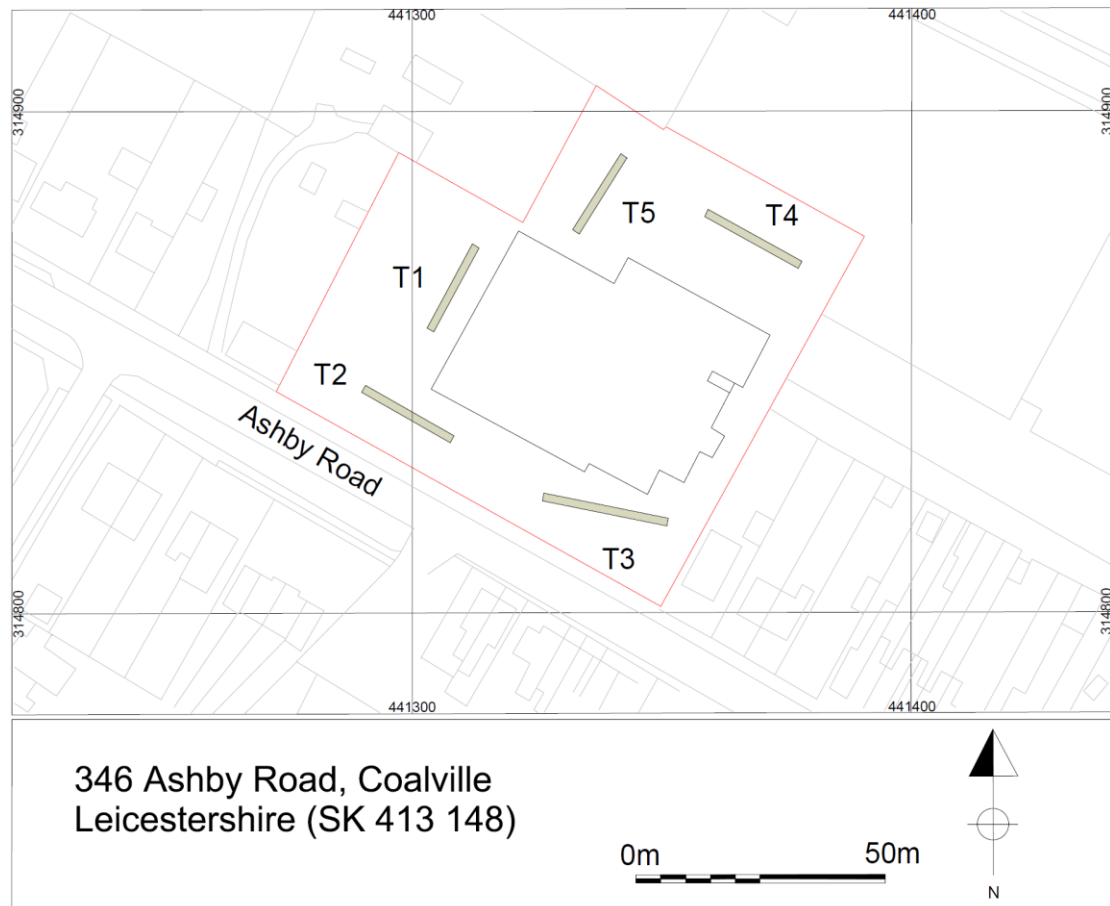


Figure 3. Trench Location Plan

## Archaeological Objectives

The main aims of the evaluation were:

- To identify the presence/absence of any archaeological deposits.
- To establish the character, extent and date range for any archaeological deposits to be affected by the proposed development
- To produce an archive and report of any results.

Within the stated project objectives, the principal aim of the evaluation was to establish the nature, extent, date, depth, significance and state of preservation of archaeological deposits within the southern area of the site in order to determine the potential impact upon them from the proposed development.

## Methodology

Prior to any machining of trial trenches general photographs of the site areas were taken.

Leicestershire County Council, Historic and Natural Environment Team (LCCHNET) as archaeological advisors to the planning authority have requested a *c.* 3.6% sample of the undisturbed area comprising *c.* 160 sq metres of trenching; the equivalent of five 20m by 1.6m trenches (Figs. 2-3).

Following the removal of the concrete surface the underlying overburden was removed under full archaeological supervision until either the top of archaeological deposits or natural undisturbed substratum was reached, or to a maximum safe depth given the specific site conditions.

The bases of the trenches were cleaned in areas where potential archaeology was observed. Archaeological remains were recorded and sample excavation was undertaken in order to determine the character and date of any remains. Bulk soil samples were taken as appropriate in order to evaluate the environmental potential of the site. Archaeological contexts as a cut are indicated by square brackets e.g [09], while those that are fills are indicated by round brackets e.g (07).

The trenches were located using a Topcon Hiper Pro GPS+ RTK System attached to a Topcon FC-100 controller. The data was processed using Topcon Tools GPS+ Post Processing Software and the final plans completed with the aid of TurboCad v.15 design software.

All the work followed the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Code of Conduct (2010)* *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (2008)*.

## Results

<b>Trench</b>	<b>Orientation</b>	<b>Length(m)</b>	<b>Average depth (m)</b>	<b>Notes feature/context descriptions</b>	<b>Minimum depth to archaeology or natural substratum</b>
1	north-east to south west	20.00m	1.60m	negative	natural substratum 0.70m 159.95m OD
2	north-west to south-east	20.00m	1.60m	remnants of furrow	natural substratum 0.45m 159.88m OD
3	west to east	20.00m	1.60m	remnants of furrow	natural substratum 0.70m 159.31m OD
4	west-north-west to east-south-east	20.00m	1.60m	field drains	natural substratum 0.90m 158.80m OD
5	north-east to south west	20.00m	1.60m	field drains	natural substratum 0.90m 159.33m OD





Plate1 Trench 1 looking north-east

### **Trench 1 (Plate 1)**

Length: 20.0m

Width: 1.6m

Depth: 0.82m

Ground level: 160.65m O.D.

Top of natural substratum: 159.95m O.D.

Trench 1 was located within a vacant plot towards the west side of the development and was orientated north-east to south-west (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at an average depth 0.82m below the surface and comprised pale yellow-brown clay-sand mixed with orange and light grey clay. No pre-modern archaeological features were observed within this trench.

Overlying the natural substratum was a layer of made ground 0.30m deep, which consisted of dark clay mixed with abundant charcoal fecks. Towards the northern end of the trench a modern disturbance cut the subsoil and natural substratum below and running north-west to south-east. Sealing the layer of made ground was layer of demolition brick rubble up to 0.60m deep.



Plate 2 Trench 2 looking north-west

### **Trench 2 (Plate 2)**

Length 20.0m

Width 1.6m

Depth 0.54m

Ground level 161.00m O.D.

Top of natural substratum 159.88m O.D.

Trench 2 was located towards the south-west corner of the development and was orientated north-west to south-east and targeted the tarmac pavement area (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at an average depth 0.54m below the surface. The natural comprised orange and yellow-brown clay. A possible medieval furrow was observed cutting the natural substratum at the centre of the trench. The furrow was running in a north-west to south-east direction and contained pale yellowish grey clay-silt. Overlying was a layer of made ground 0.50m deep, which consisted of light grey clay mixed with abundant flecks of charcoal and occasional brick fragments. Sealing the layer of made ground was a layer of demolition 0.45m deep, which comprised brick rubble which supported the tarmac surface above.





Plate 3 Trench 3 looking south-west

### **Trench 3 (Plate 3)**

Length: 20m

Width: 1.6m

Depth: 0.70m

Ground level: 160.01m O.D.

Top of natural substratum: 159.31m OD

A third trench was excavated in the south-east corner of the site, running west to east, on an area of development that was formerly tarmac pavement (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at a depth 0.70m below modern ground level. The natural substratum was cut by two possible furrow features, located towards the centre of the trench. The furrows appeared to be running in a north-west to south-east direction in parallel with Ashby Road. Both furrows contained a fill that comprised pale grey silty-clay. This trench had been heavily disturbed by modern service trenches. Sealing the natural substratum was a layer of made ground that comprised grey clay mixed frequent charcoal flecks and measured 0.35m. Overlying was a layer of demolition 0.60m deep, which comprised brick rubble hard core that supported the tarmac surface above.



Plate 4 Trench 4 looking south-east

#### **Trench 4 (Plate 4)**

Length: 20m

Width: 1.6m

Depth: 0.90m

Ground level: 159.70m O.D.

Top of natural substratum: 158.80 m O.D.

A fourth trench was excavated on the northern side of the site, orientated north-west to south-east, on an area of land that was formerly a service yard for warehouses and garages (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at a depth 0.90m below modern ground level and comprised pale yellow-brown clay. Towards the centre of the trench a ceramic pipe field drain was seen cutting the natural substratum and was orientated north-east to south-west.

Overlying the field drain and natural substratum was a layer of made ground consisting of dark grey clay mixed with frequent charcoal flecks, up to 0.20m deep. In the western half of the trench a large trench for a sewer was present cutting the layer of made ground and natural substratum below. Sealing both the clay layer and sewer trench was a layer of brick and concrete rubble hard core, 0.80m deep.





Plate 5 Trench 5 looking north-east

### **Trench 5 (Plate 5)**

Length: 20m

Width: 1.60m

Depth: 0.90m

Ground level: 159.85m O.D.

Top of natural substratum: 158.95 m O.D.

This trench was located towards the north-west corner of the development within the former tarmac service yard located on the northern side of the warehouses and garages and was orientated north-east to south-west (Figure 3). The natural substratum was reached at an average depth 0.90m below the surface, and comprised pale yellow-grey clay. Two ceramic field drains were located cutting the natural substratum and running north-west to south-east across the trench. Overlying the substratum was a layer of made ground up to 0.70m deep, which consisted of light grey clay mixed with common flecks of charcoal and occasional brick fragment. Sealing the layer of made ground was a deposit of hard core rubble 0.60m deep, which comprised brick fragments and mortar that supported the tarmac surface.

## Discussion

The only archaeological evidence revealed during the trial trenching appeared to be furrows probably from the pre-Enclosure strip field system. Trenches 2 and 3 contained the truncated remnants of furrows that appeared to be running parallel with the Ashby Road. No dating evidence was recovered although these may be medieval in origin. Modern land drains were observed cutting the natural substratum within trench 4 and 5. There was no evidence of any surviving buried subsoil or topsoil within any of the trenches and it is likely that they were stripped away and replaced with layers of modern made ground.

The layers of made ground found in all the trenches contained modern glass and brick fragments, which suggests that it was probably deposited when the site was previously occupied by a row of six terraced cottages known collectively as Hoo Ash Terrace. These were probably constructed from the mid to late 1800s (Morris 2010). The layers of demolition found within all the trenches may have come from the demolition of these terraced cottages that were replaced with the current warehouse and garages in the early 20th century.

The trial trenching suggests that there are unlikely to be any significant archaeological deposits present within the proposed development area.

## Bibliography

Clay P., 2013, *Written scheme of investigation for archaeological work: 346, Ashby Road, Coalville Leicestershire (NGR: SK 413 148) ULAS Specification 13/542 (Appendix 2 of this report).*

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2010, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.*

Morris, M., 2010 *An archaeological desk-based assessment for land at 346 Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire (SK 413 148) ULAS Report No.2010-168.*

## Archive

The site archive consists of:

1 Unbound A4 copy of this report

5 A4 Trench recording sheets

1 A4 Photo record sheet

Black and white contact print Black and white picture negatives

A4 Colour digital contact print 1 CD of 13 digital photos



The archive will be held by Leicestershire Museum Service under the accession number X.A25.2013.

### **Publication**

Since 2004 ULAS has reported the results of all archaeological work to the *Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) database held by the Archaeological Data Service at the University of York (Appendix 1).

A summary of the work will also be submitted for publication in the local archaeological journal, the *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, in due course

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks are extended to the client for their co-operation and assistance on site. Fieldwork was undertaken Tim Higgins and Jon Coward. The project was managed for ULAS by Patrick Clay.

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04/03/2013

**Appendix 1: OASIS Database entry**

Project Name	346 Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire
Project Type	Evaluation
Summary	<p>University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) carried out archaeological Evaluation of 346, Ashby Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, (SK 413 148) undertaken on the 21st to 22nd February 2013. This work was undertaken on behalf of the client Kier Partnership Homes Ltd. Five trenches were excavated to evaluate an area for proposed new housing.</p> <p>All five trenches contained no archaeological features apart from Pre-Enclosure furrows in trenches 2 and 3; modern field drains in Trenches 4 and 5. The site will be archive will be held by Leicestershire County Council under accession number X.A25.2013</p>
Project Manager	Patrick Clay
Project Supervisor	Tim Higgins
Previous/Future work	None
Current Land Use	Warehouse garage
Development Type	Housing
Reason for Investigation	In accordance with National Planning Policy Guidance NPPF
Position in the Planning Process	Planning Condition
Site Co-ordinates	SK 413 148
Start/end dates of field work	21/02/2013 - 22/02/2013
Archive Recipient	Leicestershire County Council Heritage Services
Study Area	6443sq m

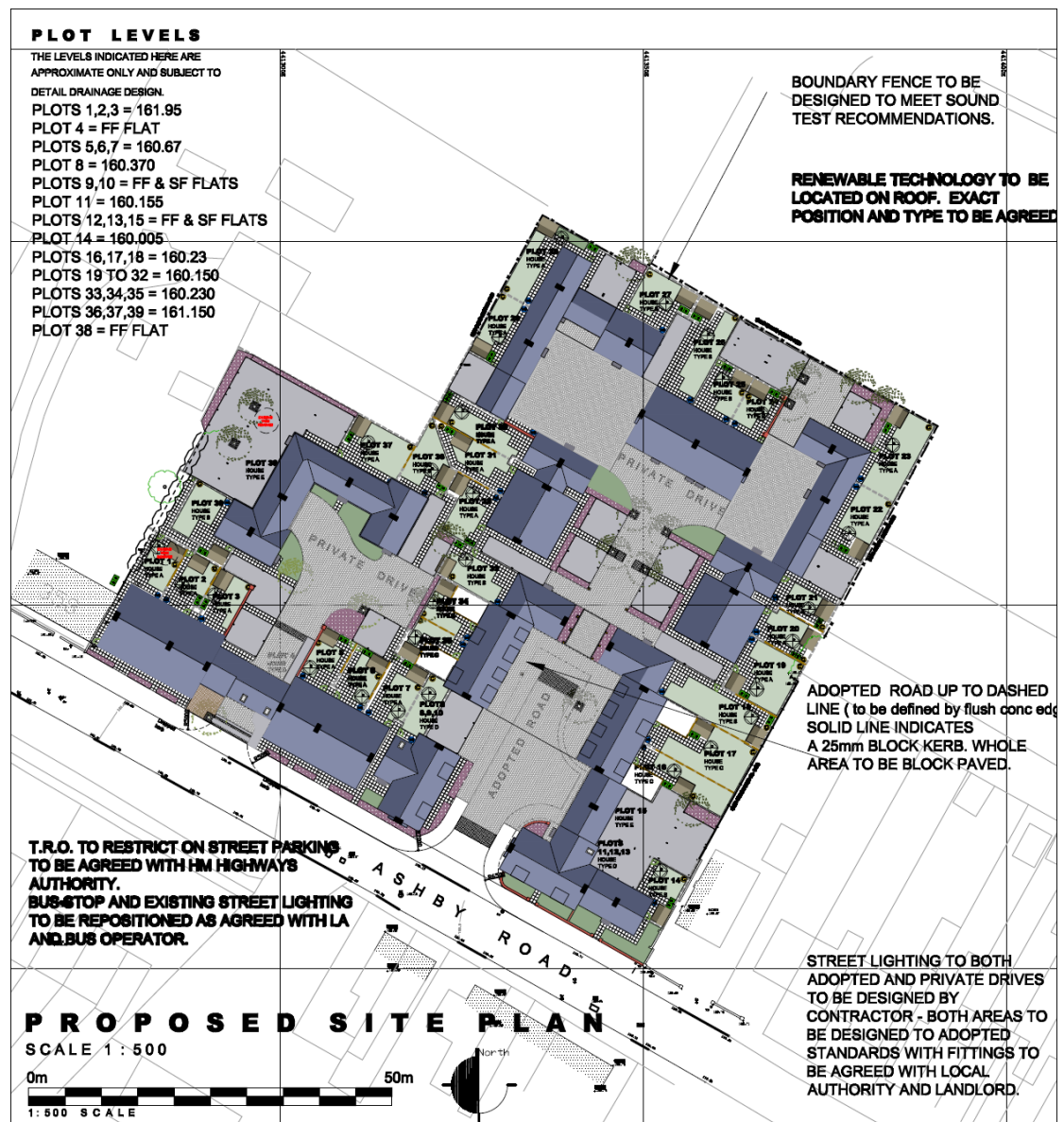


Figure 4. Layout of the proposed development

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