

BAMBURGH RESEARCH PROJECT



WEST END GARAGE BEDLINGTON NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

Compiled for Mr. Barry Elliott by The Bamburgh Research Project: Commercial Projects Section

BRP 08/02b

March 2012

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SUMMARY

This report has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project on behalf of Mr Barry Elliott regarding monitoring carried out at West End Garage, Bedlington, Northumberland (NGR NZ 2595 8188) and sets out the results of the archaeological watching brief undertaken by The Bamburgh Research Project during March 2012. The proposed development comprised the construction of a 34 bed care home on the site of the former garage (Figures 1 and 2).

The monitoring was undertaken on Tuesday 6th March 2012. The foundation trenches for the new development were excavated by machine to a depth between 0.8m and 1m below ground level. The foundation trenches produced no features or finds of archaeological interest.

**WEST END GARAGE,
FRONT STREET WEST,
BEDLINGTON,
NORTHUMBERLAND**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
REPORT OF MONITORING AND RECORDING**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report was compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project, Commercial Section for Mr Barry Elliott. The document sets out the results of the archaeological monitoring and recording undertaken during groundworks associated with construction of a 34 bed care home on the site of West End Garage, Bedlington, Northumberland.
- 1.0.2 The work was undertaken in compliance with a Written Schedule of Investigation compiled by the Bamburgh Research Project in January 2008 in response to a brief issued by the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team. The Planning Authority reference number is: 06/00361/FUL and the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team reference number is: W2/2; 6612. The OASIS reference is: 121483.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the south side of the main east to west road (A193) that passes through Bedlington, Northumberland. The town lies on the A1068 in south east Northumberland (NGR NZ 2595 8188) (Figures 1 and 2).

2.2 Archaeological background

- 2.2.1 Bedlington formed a part of the wide estates in the ownership of the Community of St Cuthbert and is first mentioned in the works, attributed to Simeon of Durham, dating from the early 12th century. A reference within this work mentions that Bedlington was one of the resting places of St Cuthbert's coffin during the flight from Durham to Lindisfarne in AD 1069 (Stevenson Trans. 1858). For administration purposes Bedlingtonshire was part of County Durham throughout the medieval and early post medieval periods, only becoming incorporated into Northumberland in 1844. The earliest fabric within the church, which lies some 200m to the east of the site, is 12th century in date. Though it is very likely that the present structure replaced an Anglo-Saxon predecessor, given the 11th century visitation of St Cuthbert's remains and the presence of carved stones of 10th century date held in the present church. During the medieval period references to a bishops hall and a leper hospital are made.

- 2.2.2 Recent archaeological work within Bedlington has revealed evidence of medieval settlement. An evaluation to the rear of 72-84 Front Street, c.215m south-east of the development revealed a series of medieval and post-medieval ditches and gullies relating to land-division. The best interpretation of such features is as land boundaries associated with the division of the area into burgage plots. A watching brief to the rear of 34-38 Front Street East, 330m south-east of the development, also revealed a series of ditches and a dry stone wall, likely to represent successive phases of the same boundary starting from the late medieval period. In addition a small pit was also recorded to the south of this boundary. A recent evaluation at Spring Bank, c.420m south-east of the development revealed recent truncation along the street frontage, the remains of at least one stone wall of a building of late medieval or early post-medieval date set back from the street frontage, and successive medieval gullies. The archaeological work at 34-38 Front Street East and Spring Bank showed that archaeological remains survive beneath the foundations of later buildings.
- 2.2.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey map depicts numerous narrow plots radiating from Front Street, very likely representing burgage plots associated with the medieval village. The site itself is depicted as a substantial open plot on the 1st Edition and also on the Tithe Award of 1843.

2.3 Impact of the development

- 2.2.3 The development involved the construction of a 34 bedroom nursing home on the site of West End Garage. The new building will cover an area 32m east to west by 34m north to south. The foundations of the standing garage and the expected truncation associated with its terracing back into the natural slope will have impacted substantially on the potential survival of archaeological deposits on the site (Figure 2).
- 2.2.4 Although the site area is likely to have been substantially impacted by previous building work, it lies within the general area of the medieval settlement of Bedlington, and perhaps close to its focus around the area of the church and market place.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 In the light of the potential for the construction works to impact upon preserved archaeological remains, a continuous watching brief was conducted during the ground work.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Watching brief during excavation

- 4.1.1 During all excavation activity a suitably experienced archaeologist, familiar with the archaeological background to the site, was present to record any items of interest that were revealed by these excavations. All work was carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and followed the IFA Standards for Watching Briefs. This watching brief conformed to the following methodology.

4.1.2 A contingency of up to 10 person days of investigation was available to be invoked following consultation with the Assistant County Archaeologist, the client and the monitoring archaeologist.

4.2 General standards

4.2.1 All archaeological features identified during the monitoring were recorded and sample excavated according to their type and form.

4.2.2 A 40 litre bulk palaeoenvironmental sample was taken from all features recognised as suitable for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains.

4.2.3 Secure contexts were sampled for dating where appropriate, whether on site or as sub samples of bulk samples. Any concentrations of charcoal or other carbonised material recovered on site would have been retained.

4.2.4 Pottery and animal bone was collected as bulk samples whilst significant artefacts were three-dimensionally recorded prior to processing. All finds were recorded and processed according to the BRP system and submitted for post-excavation assessment. Finds recovery and storage strategies were in accordance with published guidelines (English Heritage 1995 and IfA Guidelines for Finds Work). Had artefacts of gold or silver, covered by the 1996 Treasure Act, been recovered appropriate procedures would have been followed.

4.2.5 In the event of Human burials being revealed they were to be left *in situ* and treated in an appropriate manner. After consultation with the County Archaeological Officer, if excavation was required, work would comply with the relevant Home Office regulations.

4.2.6 Any archaeological features encountered were hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded:

- A photographic record was taken using black and white print, colour slide film at 35mm format. In addition a digital photographic record was compiled.
- A written description of features was recorded using the BRP *pro forma* context recording system.
- All features were drawn at an appropriate scale using pre-printed permatrace. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10.

4.2.7 All archaeological features and horizons were accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. All levels were tied in to Ordnance Datum.

4.2.8 Arrangements will be made with the appropriate museum for the deposition of the site archive within 6 month of the completion of the post-excavation report.

5.0 MONITORING

- 5.1 Access was made available at all reasonable times to the archaeological representatives of the Northumberland County council Conservation Team to inspect the excavation site.
- 5.2 Access to the site was on the basis of prior notification and subject to relevant health and safety considerations.

6.0 RESULTS

- 6.0.1 The foundation trenches were excavated by machine under continuous archaeological monitoring. Brick and stone rubble, almost certainly derived from modern building works, was encountered to the full depth of the foundation trenches (Plate 1). At the southern end of the site evidence of cut bedrock was present (Plate 2), suggesting that the underlying bedrock had been quarried away in places. No archaeological stratigraphy of any significance was encountered within the area of the foundation trenches.

7.0 DISCUSSION

- 7.0.1 Although the location of the site is almost certainly within the boundary of medieval Bedlington the present work has revealed a significant level of disturbance, to a depth of 1m, and some degree of what is likely to be deliberate quarrying, indicating very little likelihood of the survival of medieval stratigraphy in the immediate vicinity.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.0.1 The presence of modern rubble and some degree of quarrying, extensive over the whole of the site area leaves no possibility of the presence of preserved medieval deposits within the site area. It is unclear, however, how extensive this disturbance is beyond the site boundary.

Text and Illustrations: Graeme Young

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March 2012

REFERENCES

BRP Finds Manual, 2000

BRP Health and Safety Document

English Heritage *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*, 1991.

English Heritage *A strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds*. Ancient Monuments Laboratory, 1995.

IFA 2010 Code of Conduct

IFA 2008 Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs.

APPENDIX I

LAND AT WEST END GARAGE, FRONT STREET WEST, BEDLINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF WRITTEN SCHEDULE OF INVESTIGATION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This Written Schedule of Investigation has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project for Barry Elliott Property Development, regarding the development of a 34 bedroom care home on land at West End Garage, Front Street West, Bedlington, Northumberland, during January 2008. The document sets out the project design for an archaeological watching brief to be conducted during groundworks associated with the new construction.
- 1.0.2 The *Written* Schedule of Investigation details the proposed scheme of works for the watching brief and has been prepared in order to fulfil a requirement for the planning application, as laid out in the brief issued by The Northumberland County Council Conservation Team. The NCCCT reference number: W2/2; 6612 and the planning reference is 06/00361/FUL.

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.1.1 The site is located on the south side of the main east to west road (A193) that passes through Bedlington, Northumberland. The town lies on the A1068 in south east Northumberland (NGR NZ 2595 8188) (Figures 1 and 2).

2.2 Archaeological background to the site

- 2.2.1 Bedlington formed a part of the wide estates in the ownership of the Community of St Cuthbert and is first mentioned in the works, attributed to Simeon of Durham, dating from the early 12th century. A reference within this work mentions that Bedlington was one of the resting places of St Cuthbert's coffin during the flight from Durham to Lindisfarne in AD 1069 (Stevenson Trans. 1858). For administration purposes Bedlingtonshire was part of County Durham throughout the medieval and early post medieval periods, only becoming incorporated into Northumberland in 1844. The earliest fabric within the church, which lies some 200m to the east of the site, is 12th century in date. Though it is very likely that the present structure replaced an Anglo-Saxon predecessor, given the 11th century visitation of St Cuthbert's remains and the presence of carved stones of 10th century date held in the present church. During the medieval period references to a bishops hall and a leper hospital are made.

- 2.2.2 Recent archaeological work within Bedlington has revealed evidence of medieval settlement. An evaluation to the rear of 72-84 Front Street, c.215m south-east of the development revealed a series of medieval and post-medieval ditches and gullies relating to land-division. The best interpretation of such features is as land boundaries associated with the division of the area into burgage plots. A watching brief to the rear of 34-38 Front Street East, 330m south-east of the development, also revealed a series of ditches and a dry stone wall, likely to represent successive phases of the same boundary starting from the late medieval period. In addition a small pit was also recorded to the south of this boundary. A recent evaluation at Spring Bank, c.420m south-east of the development revealed recent truncation along the street frontage, the remains of at least one stone wall of a building of late medieval or early post-medieval date set back from the street frontage, and successive medieval gullies. The archaeological work at 34-38 Front Street East and Spring Bank showed that archaeological remains survive beneath the foundations of later buildings.
- 2.2.3 The first edition Ordnance Survey map depicts numerous narrow plots radiating from Front Street, very likely representing burgage plots associated with the medieval village. The site itself is depicted as a substantial open plot on the 1st Edition and also on the Tithe Award of 1843.

2.3 Impact of the development

- 2.3.1 The development involves the construction of a 34 bedroom nursing home on the site of West End Garage. The new building will cover an area 32m east to west by 34m north to south. The foundations of the standing garage and the expected truncation associated with its terracing back into the natural slope will have impacted substantially on the potential survival of archaeological deposits on the site (Figure 2).
- 2.3.2 Although the site area is likely to have been substantially impacted by previous building work it lies within the general area of the medieval settlement of Bedlington, and perhaps close to its focus around the area of the church and market place. Nevertheless the potential for survival of archaeology in areas within the site clearly exists.

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.0.1 In the light of the potential for the construction work to impact, in places, upon preserved archaeological remains it is proposed that a continuous watching brief be conducted during the ground work in accordance with the specification laid out in the brief issued by the County Council Conservation Team.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Watching brief during excavation

- 4.1.1 During the excavation of the foundations, service trenches and access arrangements a suitably experienced archaeologist, familiar with the archaeological background to the site, will be present to record any items of interest that area revealed by these excavations. Where appropriate all excavation and stripping will be carried out by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket. All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and should follow the IFA Standards for Watching Briefs. This watching brief will conform to the following methodology.

4.2 Contingency

- 4.2.1 In the event of the discovery of unexpected archaeological remains over and above those predicted by previous archaeological work on the adjoining site, work will cease and the County Archaeological Officer/representative of the developer will be notified in order that an assessment of the importance of the remains and any provision for their recording may be made.
- 4.2.2 A contingency for excavation comprising up to 10 person days can be invoked following consultation with the County Archaeologist.

4.3 General standards

4.3.1 All archaeological features identified during the monitoring, or following the implementation of the contingency will be sample excavated according to their type and form:

- 50% of all discrete features.
- 50% of waterlogged deposits.
- 25% of stratified deposits.
- 25% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill
- 10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill

4.3.2 A 40 litre bulk palaeoenvironmental sample will be taken from all features recognised as suitable for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains.

4.3.3 Secure contexts will be sampled for dating where appropriate, whether on site or as sub samples of bulk samples. Any concentrations of charcoal or other carbonised material recovered on site will usually be retained.

4.3.4 Pottery and Animal Bone will be collected as bulk samples whilst significant artefacts will be three-dimensionally recorded prior to processing. All finds will be recorded and processed according to the BRP system and submitted for post-excavation assessment. Finds recovery and storage strategies will be in accordance with published guidelines (English Heritage 1995 and IFA Guidelines for Finds Work). Should artefacts of gold or silver covered by the 1996 Treasure Act be recovered, appropriate procedures will be followed.

4.3.5 In the event of Human burials being revealed they will be left *in situ* and treated in an appropriate manner. After consultation with the County Archaeological Officer, if excavation is required, work will comply with the relevant home Office regulations.

4.3.6 Any archaeological features encountered will be hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded:

1. A photographic record of the site will be taken using black and white print, colour slide film at 35mm format. In addition a digital photographic record will be compiled.
2. A written description of features will be recorded using the BRP *pro forma* context recording system.
3. All features will be drawn at an appropriate scale using pre-printed permatrace. Plans will normally be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at a scale of 1:10.

4.3.7 All archaeological features and horizons will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. All levels will be tied in to Ordnance Datum.

4.3.8 Arrangements will be made with the appropriate museum for the deposition of the site archive within 6 month of the completion of the post-excavation report.

5.0 MONITORING

5.0.1 Access will be made available at all reasonable times to the archaeological representatives of the Northumberland County council Conservation Team to inspect the excavation site.

5.0.2 Access to the site will be on the basis of prior notification and subject to any relevant health and safety considerations.

6.0 POST-EXCAVATION WORK, ARCHIVE AND REPORT COMPILATION

- 6.0.1 On completion of the excavation an assessment of the site records and finds will be undertaken in accordance with English Heritage (1991) guidelines. This will include:
- collation of all site records
 - compilation of a report
 - production of context, photographic, finds and illustration databases
 - analysis of the finds assemblage by relevant specialists
 - environmental assessment of selected bulk samples
- 6.0.2 The assessment report, with each page and paragraph numbered and with cross referenced illustrations, will include:
- summary of the project background
 - site location
 - methodology
 - results of the watching brief
 - site location plans and illustrations of results at appropriate scales
 - interpretation of the results in an appropriate context
 - post-excavation assessment of the site archive
 - catalogue and assessment of the artefactual archive
 - catalogue and assessment of the faunal remains
 - catalogue and assessment of the palaeoenvironmental samples recovered
 - appendix containing a list and summary of each recorded context
- 6.0.3 A copy of the report should be submitted by the archaeologist to the commissioning client, and the County SMR within 2 months of completion of the work. A summary will be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' and an article will be submitted to a local or national journal if appropriate.
- 6.0.4 The site archive will be prepared to the standard specified in the Management of Archaeological Projects, appendix 3 (HBMC 1991) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). A summary account of the context record will be included and written by the supervising archaeologist. The archive will be deposited at the specified museum within 6 months of completion of the work on site.
- 6.0.4 An online OASIS form will be completed for the project as part of the post-excavation assessment process.

7.0 PERSONNEL

- 7.0.1 The designated project manager Graeme Young, is one of the five directors of the Bamburgh Research Project. A graduate of Newcastle University, with 18 years of experience in field archaeology including directing a number of excavations of urban medieval sites in Newcastle and Durham. He is an Associate Member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.
- 7.0.2 Additional field staff, with appropriate archaeological experience, will be engaged as required.

8.0 SUB-CONTRACTED SPECIALISTS

- 8.0.1 Although it is not possible to predict the range of artefacts that may be recovered provision has been made for

the analysis of the most common artefacts.

Material

Medieval pottery
Post-medieval pottery
Prehistoric pottery
Roman Pottery
Animal bone
Palaeoenvironmental
Conservation

Specialist

Jenny Vaughan
Jenny Vaughan
Blaise Vyner
Blaise Vyner/ John Dore
Durham University Archaeological Services
Durham University Archaeological Services
Karen Barker

9.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 9.0.1 The Bamburgh Research Project complies with the 1974 Health and Safety Act and its subsequent amendments in all its operations. The SCAUM manual and the Bamburgh Research Project Health and Safety Policy Document is followed for all site works. A designated and appropriately trained first aider is present at all times during working hours. A First Aid kit, Accident Book and telephone are provided for each project. Safety footwear is mandatory on all excavation sites. Where required safety helmets and reflective jackets are provided. It is policy for a vehicle to be present at an excavation and staff must be appropriately equipped for bad weather.
- 9.0.2 All staff undergo a safety induction prior to commencing work on site. A written risk assessment is undertaken specific for each site. The safety assessment is reviewed on a daily basis and changes to the working conditions monitored continually during adverse weather conditions.



Figure 1 Bedlington showing location of Figure 2

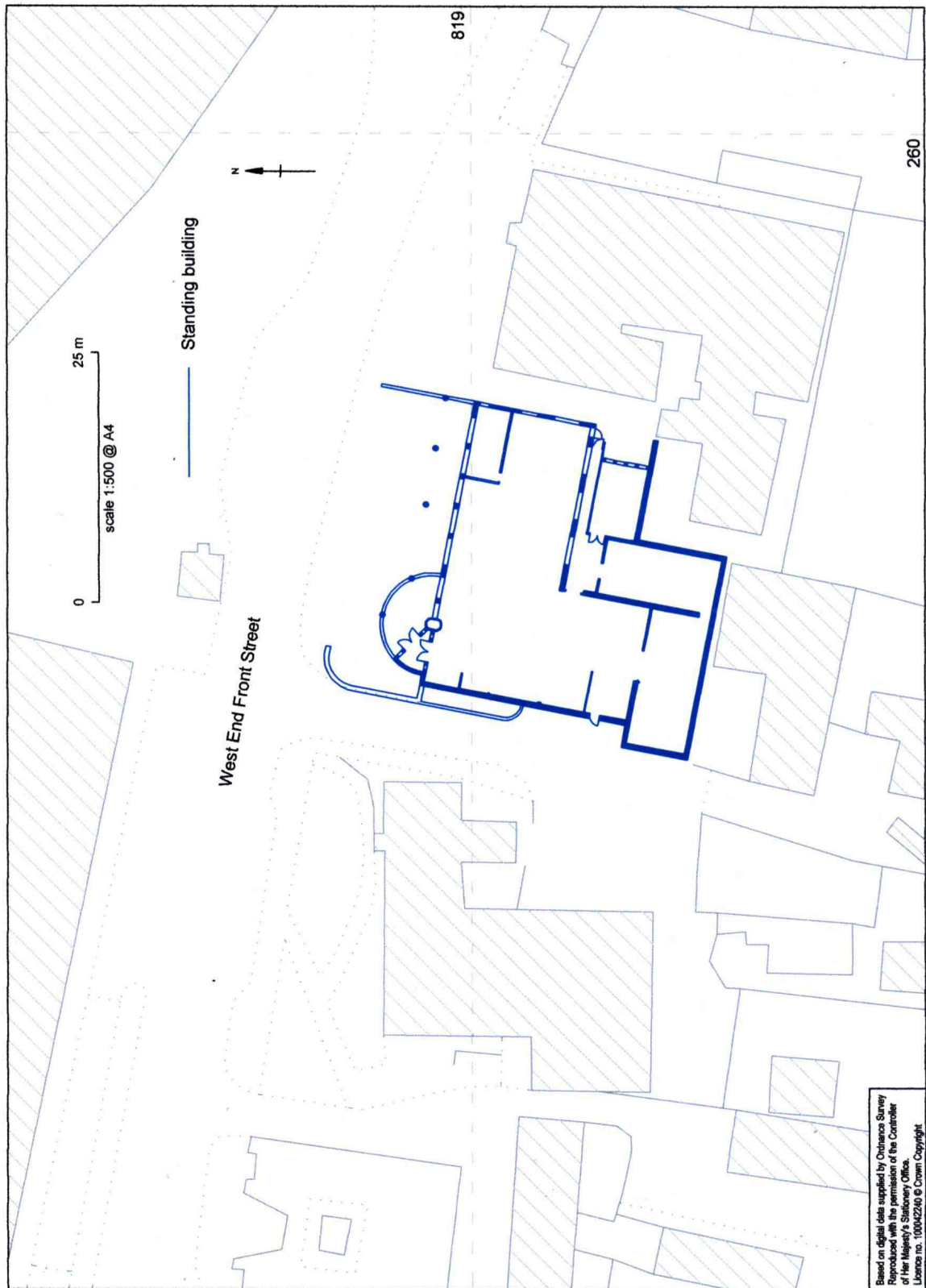


Figure 2 Plan of the new construction



Plate 1: Construction trench excavated through bricks and stone rubble , facing south



Plate 2: Possible quarrying, facing south