

BAMBURGH RESEARCH PROJECT

LAND BEHND 21 FRONT STREET, BEDLINGTON



REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

Compiled for Evelyne Knight by The Bamburgh Research Project: Commercial Projects Section

BRP 13/03b

May 2013

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SUMMARY

This report has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project for Mrs Evelyne Knight, and sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation comprising a pair of trial trenches on the site of the proposed development of three new dwellings on land to the rear of 21 Front Street, Bedlington, Northumberland (NGR NZ NZ 2620 8167) (Figures 1 and 2) in May 2013.

This evaluation was conducted to inform the planning process regarding the potential for the groundworks associated with the development to impact on preserved archaeological remains. Trial Trench 1 measured 30m by 2m and Trial Trench 2 measured 10m by 2m and were laid out at right-angles to each other. The trenches were excavated by a mini-digger under archaeological monitoring in spits down to the subsoil. Only a single modern feature (002), of 19th century date was encountered and no finds were recovered from the rest of the trenching. It is unlikely therefore that a site of any significance lies within the immediate development area.

**LAND TO THE REAR OF 21 FRONT STREET,
BEDLINGTON
NORTHUMBERLAND**

**REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.0.1 This report has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project, Commercial Section for Mrs Evelyne Knight and sets out the results of the trial trench evaluation undertaken in advance of the development, comprising three new dwellings, on land to the rear of 21 Front Street, Bedlington, Northumberland in May 2013.
- 1.0.2 The work, comprised the excavation of two trial trenches, sited to investigate the development area, in order to assess the impact of the proposed development. The work was undertaken in compliance with a Written Schedule of Investigation compiled by the Bamburgh Research Project in May 2013 in response advice given by the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team. The planning Authority reference is: 13/00229/FUL and the OASIS reference is bamburgh1- 150529 .

2.0 THE SITE

2.1 Location

- 2.1.0 The development area lies within the town of Bedlington, Northumberland; in the eastern part of the town on an open lot some 40m to the southwest of the south side of Front Street. Front Street is the main street through the centre of the town and is part of the A193 that passes through the town (NGR NZ 2620 8167) (Figures 1 and 2).

2.2 Historical 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 manuscripts, 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 northwest 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.400m northwest 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, 550m northwest 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 watching brief by the Bamburgh Research Project undertaken at West End Garage, some 400m to the northwest identified a high degree of truncation of the ground. 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 planned work involves the construction of three new dwellings, representing 110m² in area, and the associated driveways, access routes and services. Details of which have not been made available at the present time (Figure 2).

3.0 OBJECTIVES

- 3.0.1 The objective of the evaluation was to investigate the area in the vicinity of the proposed new dwellings in order to determine if archaeological stratigraphy was preserved within the development area. It was proposed that one trial trench measuring 20m by 2m would be excavated, on a northeast to southwest alignment with a second trench measuring 10m by 2m at right-angles to the first extending to the southeast (Figure 3). Excavation was to be undertaken to subsoil or to the maximum safe depth.
- 3.0.2 The excavation of the trial trenches would identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the development area. Any archaeological remains encountered would be sampled in order to establish the location, extent, date and nature of any areas of archaeological activity and the degree of preservation of any remains encountered.
- 3.0.3 The results of the evaluation were intended to enable the impact of the proposed development on any deposits of archaeological significance to be more accurately assessed in order that an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised.

5.0 METHODOLOGY

- 5.0.1 As specified by the guidance provided by the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team the evaluation will comprise the excavation of two trial trenches.
- 5.0.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of

Field Archaeologists (IFA 2010) and will follow the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Excavation (IFA 2008).

- 5.0.3 Topsoil and unstratified modern material will be removed mechanically by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket, under direct supervision of an appropriate member of the archaeological staff. Machine excavation will be undertaken in successive shallow spits down to the first significant archaeological horizon or to the natural subsoil. Once significant archaeological deposits or subsoil is encountered the trench, including all relevant section, will be cleaned to an archaeological standard so that features can be identified. All further excavation will be conducted by hand.

5.1 General Standards

- 5.1 All archaeological features identified will be sample excavated according to their type and form.

50% of all discrete features.

25% of the area of a linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill.

10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill.

- 5.1.2 A 40 litre bulk palaeoenvironmental sample will be taken from all features recognised as suitable for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains.
- 5.1.3 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.
- 5.1.4 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.
- 5.1.5 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.
- 5.1.6 Any archaeological features encountered will be hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded:
- A photographic record will be taken using black and white print, colour slide film at 35mm format. In addition a digital photographic record will be compiled.
 - A written description of features will be recorded using the BRP *pro forma* context recording system.
 - 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.

- 5.1.7 All archaeological features and horizons will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. All levels will be tied in to Ordnance Datum.
- 5.1.8 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.

6.0 RESULTS

- 6.0.1 The site was heavily overgrown with trees and shrubs that narrowed the area available to trial trench. In addition a CAT survey prior to the laying out of the trenches indicated the presence of a service running parallel to the southeast site boundary. The longest of the two trenches (Trial Trench 1) was located as far to the northwest as possible and the second trench (Trial Trench 2) excavated as a perpendicular extension to the trench for 10m to the southwest. The trenches measured 20m by 2m and 10m by 2m respectively (Figure 3).
- 6.0.2 The trenches were excavated by a mini-excavator using a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision in subsequent spits down to subsoil level. The subsoil comprised a red-brown to dark red-brown clay silt with a substantial gravel content (Plate 1). A single sub-circular pit, 0.8m in diameter, 0.24m deep (49.28m OD) and U-shaped in profile was identified in the central part of Trial Trench 1, 11m from the northeast end of the trench and close to the junction with Trial Trench 2. It contained a single fill of a dark grey-brown sandy silt with small to medium rounded pebbles. The fill contained slag, coal fragments pottery of 19th century date and, oddly, what appeared to be either an iron tyre from a cartwheel, or more likely, given its diameter, a hoop from a barrel. The base of the feature being rounded and clearly defined would rule out the possibility of the feature resulting from a barrel having been buried in the ground and the timber elements rotting away (Plate 2). A thin layer of a buried topsoil, 0.1 to 0.15m thick, formed from a dark red-brown sand silt and gravel sealed the feature and was in turn overlaid by the topsoil a dark grey-brown silt with some sand up to 0.4m thick.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.0.1 Only a single relatively modern feature of archaeological interest was encountered within the trenches and, with the exception of the pit, no finds were recovered from the trenches or the surrounding topsoil. It is unlikely therefore that a site of any significance lies within the immediate development area.

REFERENCES

- BRP Finds Manual, 2000
BRP Health and Safety Document 2009
BRP 09/06b Land at link House Farm, Blyth, Northumberland. Desk-Based Assessment and Standing Building Assessment. 2009.
English Heritage Management of Archaeological Projects 2, 1991.
IfA Standard and Guidance for Excavation.1996
IfA Code of Conduct. 2010

APPENDIX I

Context list

Trial Trench 1

- 001 Fill within sub-circular pit 002
- 002 Cut for sub-circular pit
- 003 Clay silt and gravel subsoil
- 004 Silt and gravel buried topsoil
- 005 Silt with some sand topsoil

Appendix II

Pottery recovered from context 001

1 body sherd of transfer printed white earthenware.

2 sherds of white china

2 rim sherds of a cream glazed earthenware dish

2 sherds of a white glazed earthenware jar

1 roof tile fragment

APPENDIX III

LAND AT 21 FRONT STREET, BEDLINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

1.0 Introduction

- 1.0.1 This document has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project for Evelyn Knight during May 2013. The document sets out the written scheme of investigation for the trial trench evaluation in advance of the development of three new dwellings on a vacant plot on land to the rear of 21 Front Street, Bedlington, Northumberland.
- 1.0.2 The outlined work will be undertaken by The Bamburgh Research Project (BRP) during May 2013. The written scheme of investigation details the proposed scheme of work to be undertaken as part of the evaluation of the proposed development areas as part of the planning application. The work will be undertaken in accordance with the guidance from the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (Appendix I). The Northumberland County Council Planning reference is 13/00229/FUL .

1.1 Location

- 1.1.1 The development area lies within the town of Bedlington, Northumberland, in the eastern part of the town on an open lot some 40m to the southwest of the south side of Front Street. Front Street is the main street through the centre of the town and is the A193 as it passes through the town (NGR NZ 2620 8167) (Figures 1 and 2).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

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- 2.1.1 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.400m northwest 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 burgrave plots. A watching brief to the rear of 34-38 Front Street East, 550m northwest 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 watching brief by the Bamburgh Research Project undertaken at West End Garage, some 400m to the northwest identified a high degree of truncation of the ground. 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 burgrave 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.

3.0 PREDICTED IMPACT OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT

- 3.0.1 The new build construction will comprise three detached houses representing 110m² in area not including the services and access routes, the impact of which no details have been currently supplied.
- 3.0.2 The buildings will occupy the north and western part of the site with parking and access on the south side.

4.0 OBJECTIVES

- 4.0.1 The objective of the evaluation is to investigate the area in the immediate vicinity of the proposed new dwellings in order to determine if archaeological stratigraphy is preserved within the development area. It is proposed that one trial trench measuring 20m by 2m will be excavated over the footprint of two of the dwellings with a second trench measuring 10m by 2m at right-angles to the first extending to the southeast (Figure 3). Excavation will be undertaken to subsoil or to the maximum safe depth.
- 4.0.2 The excavation of the trial trenches will identify the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the development area. Any archaeological remains encountered will be sampled in order to establish the location, extent, date and nature of any areas of archaeological activity and the degree of preservation of any remains encountered.
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- 5.1.7 All archaeological features and horizons will be accurately tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. All levels will be tied in to Ordnance Datum.
- 5.1.8 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.

6.0 CONTINGENCY

- 6.0.1 A contingency for an additional 5m by 2m of trial trenching is stipulated. The contingency can be invoked following consultation between the contracted archaeologist, client and Assistant County Archaeologist.

7.0 MONITORING

- 7.0.1 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.
- 7.0.2 Access to the site will be on the basis of prior notification and subject to any relevant health and safety considerations.

8.0 POST-EXCAVATION WORK, ARCHIVE AND REPORT COMPILATION

- 8.0.1 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:
- ii) collation of all site records
 - iii) compilation of a report
 - iv) production of context, photographic, finds and illustration databases
 - v) analysis of the finds assemblage by relevant specialists
 - vi) environmental assessment of selected bulk samples
- 8.0.2 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 evaluation
- 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

- 8.0.3 A copy of the report should be submitted by the archaeologist to the commissioning client, and the County Council Conservation Team within 15 working days 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.
- 8.0.4 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.
- 8.0.5 An online OASIS form will be completed for the project as part of the post-excavation assessment process.

9.0 PERSONNEL

- 8.0.1 The designated project manager Graeme Young, is one of the five directors of the Bamburgh Research Project. A graduate of Newcastle University, with 26 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.
- 8.0.2 Additional field staff, with appropriate archaeological experience, will be engaged as required.

9.0 SUB-CONTRACTED SPECIALISTS

- 9.0.1 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
Durham University Archaeological Services
Durham University Archaeological Services
Durham University Archaeological Services

10.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 10.0.1 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.
- 10.0.2 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.

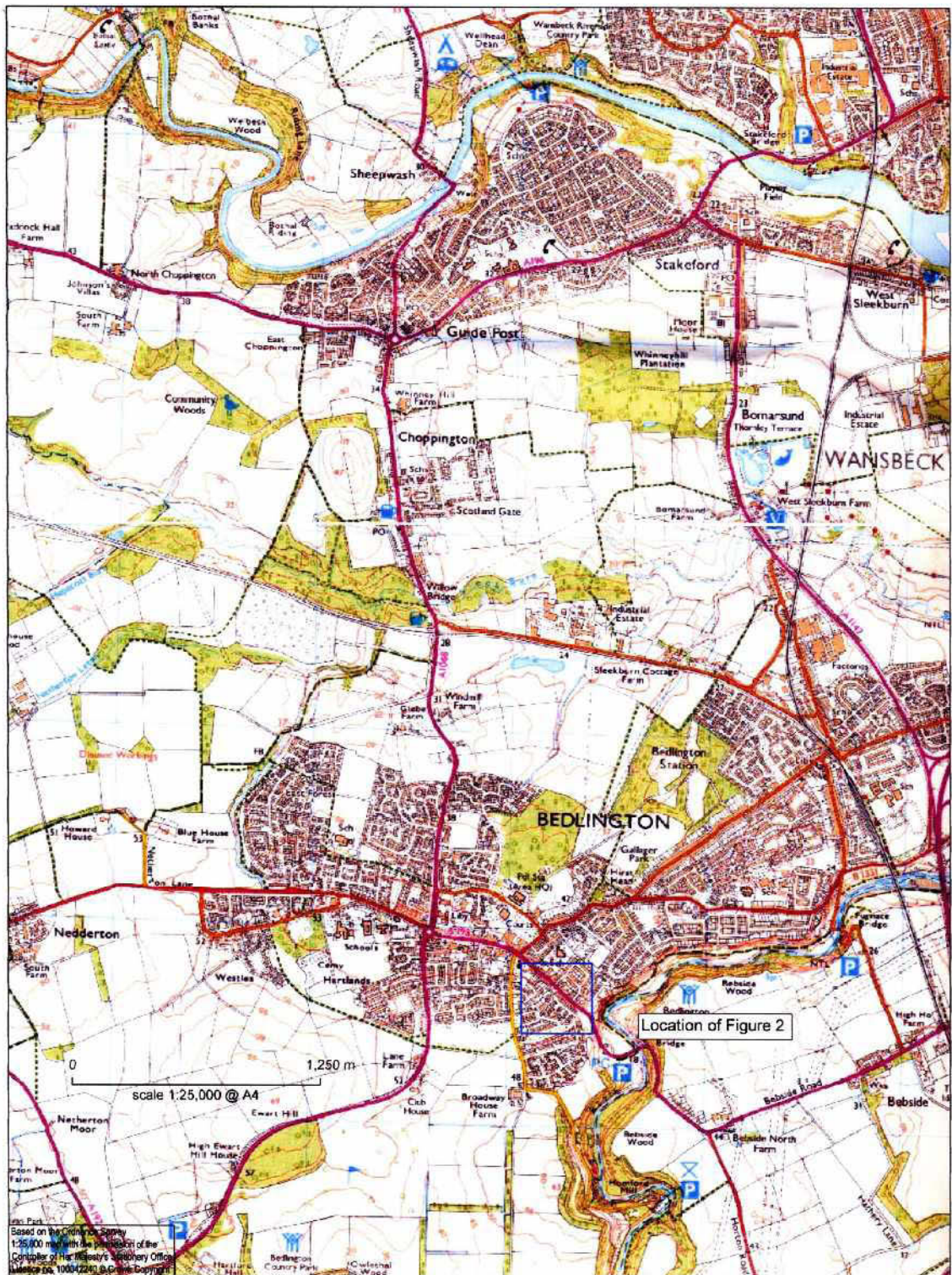


Figure 1 Location plan

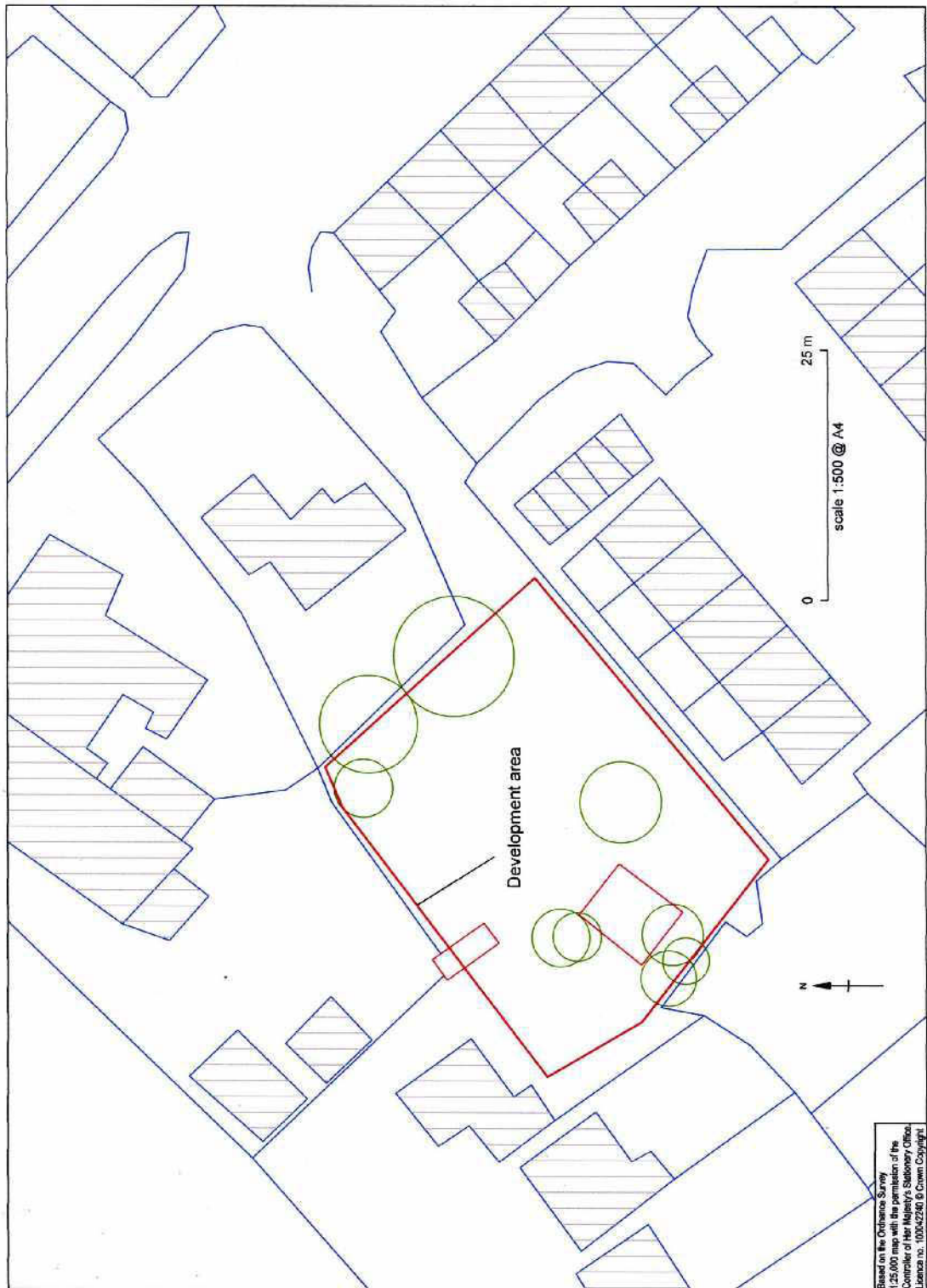


Figure 2 Location of the development plot

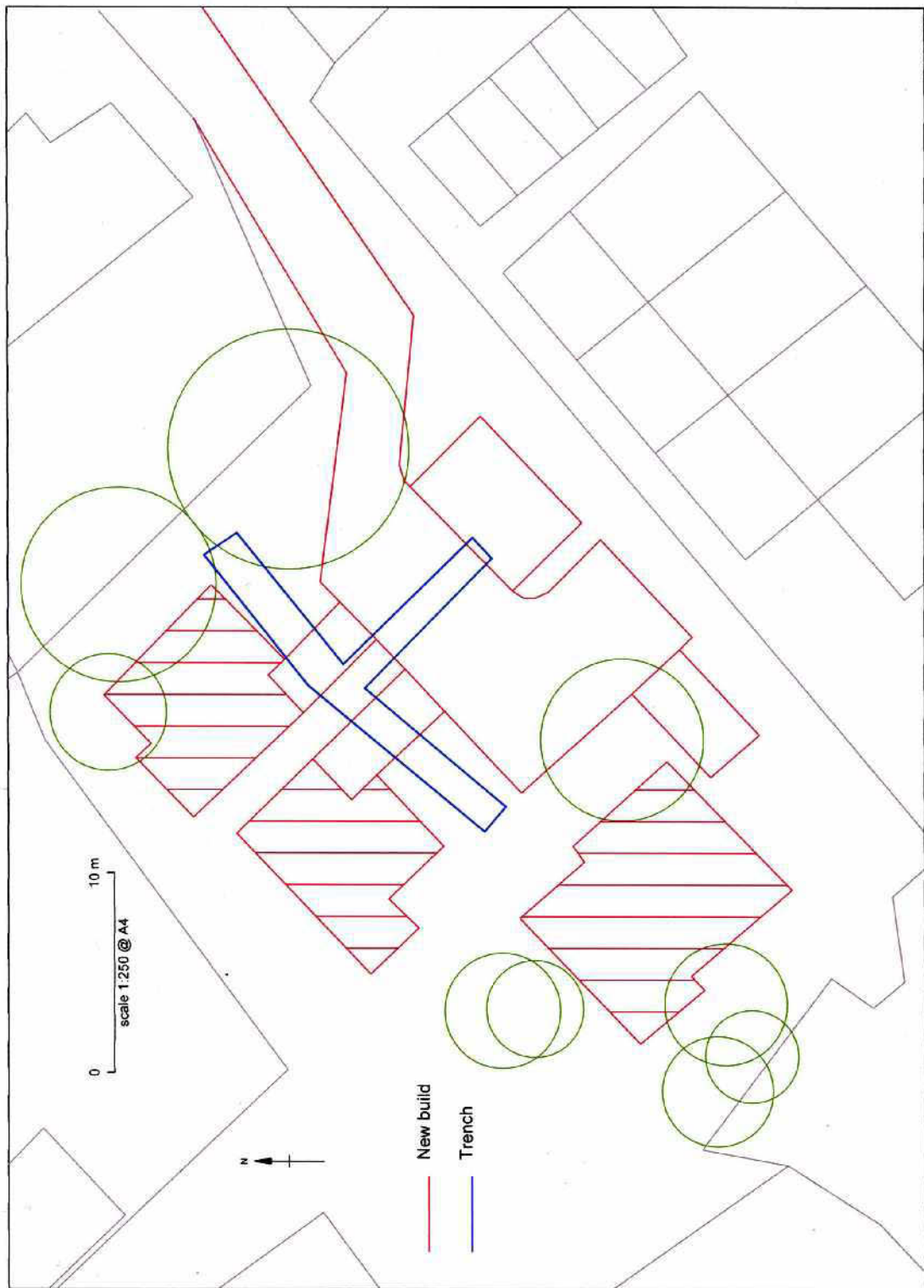


Figure 3 Trench location and proposed new buildings

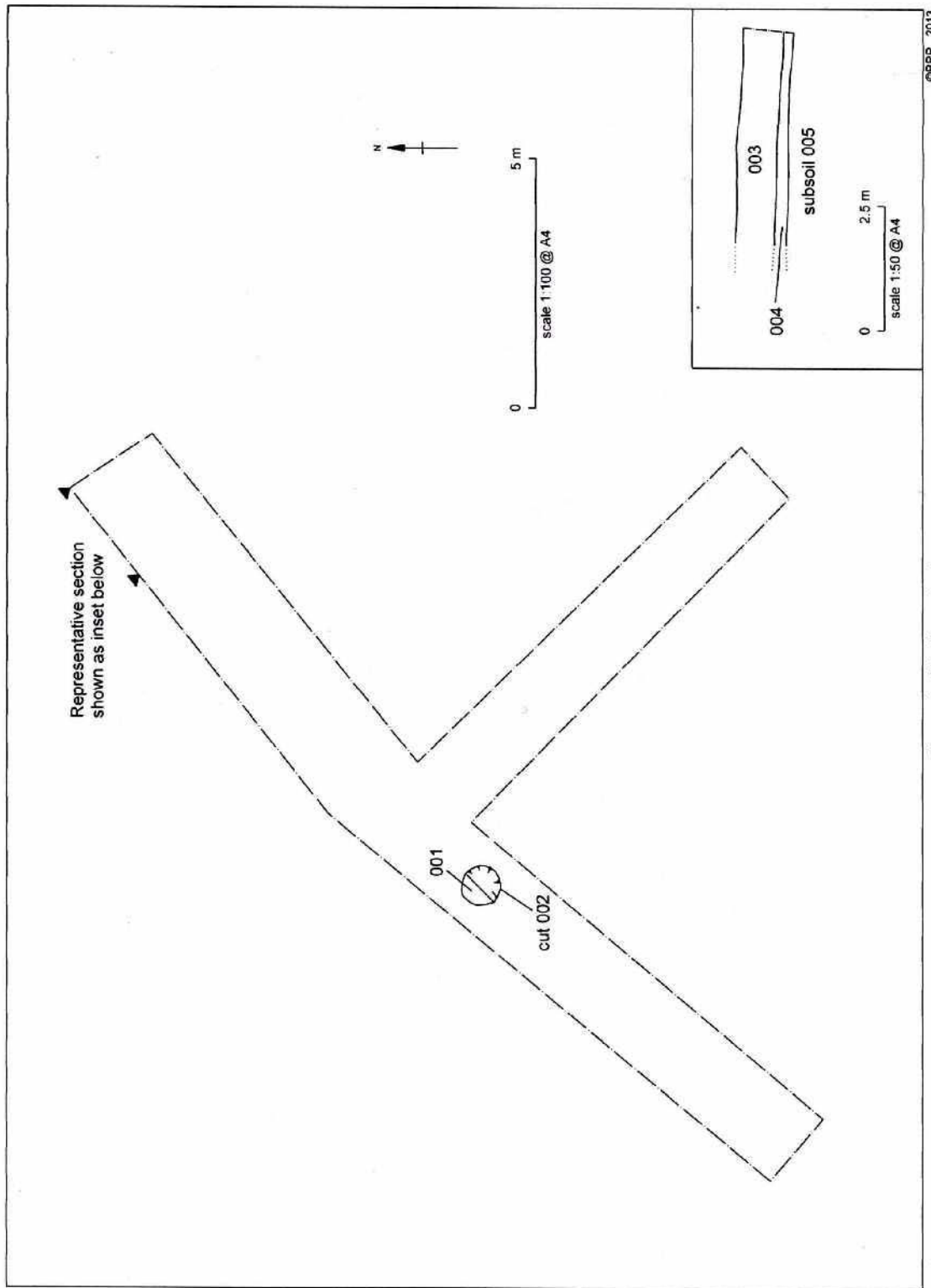


Figure 4 Trial trench plan



Plate 1: Trial Trench 1, facing northeast



Plate 2: Feature 002, facing northwest