

**LAND AT VICTORIA BAPTIST CHURCH,  
SYLVIA AVENUE,  
BRISTOL.**

**NGR: ST 5950 7109 (CENTRED)**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

**ACCESSION CODE 2014/5**

Report No. 926  
January 2014



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**Quality Assurance**

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## **SUMMARY**

During October 2013 and January 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with a residential development on land at the Victoria Baptist Church, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol (NGR: ST 5950 7109). The work was commissioned by West of England Baptist Association in response to an archaeological condition which required an archaeological watching brief during the development works.

In the southern part of the site (Area 1) the groundworks reached into the natural in the footing trenches for one of the new buildings. With the exception of a late Post-medieval/Modern pit and an older ground horizon, no archaeologically significant deposits were present.

The groundworks reached the natural ground in the northern part of the site (Area 2), but no archaeologically significant features were present within this area. A possible former pond which had been backfilled with Modern material was found in the northern corner of the site and a large disturbed Modern cut was present to the south.

The monitoring of three service trenches northwest of the church building did not reveal any archaeological features or finds.

## **GLOSSARY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

### *Archaeology*

For the purpose of this project archaeology is taken to mean the study of past human societies through their material remains from prehistoric times to the modern era. No rigid upper date limit has been set, but AD 1900 is used as a general cut-off point.

### *CBM*

Ceramic Building Material.

### *Medieval*

The period between the Norman Conquest (AD 1066) and circa AD 1500.

### *Natural*

In archaeological terms this refers to the undisturbed natural geology of a site.

### *NGR*

National Grid Reference.

### *OD*

Ordnance datum; used to express a given height above sea-level.

### *OS*

Ordnance Survey.

### *Post-medieval*

The period from circa AD 1500 onwards.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 During October 2013 and January 2014 Foundations Archaeology undertook an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks associated with a residential development on land at the Victoria Baptist Church, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol (NGR: ST 5950 7109). The work was commissioned by the West of England Baptist Association in response to an archaeological condition which required archaeological monitoring during the development works.
- 1.2 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Foundations Archaeology (2013), which conformed to the principles set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012, the archaeological policies of Bristol City Council and the Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).
- 1.3 This document presents the findings of the archaeological monitoring.

## **2 PROJECT BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Planning permission (Ref. 12/03495/F) has been granted for a residential development on land at the Victoria Baptist Church, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol (NGR: ST 5950 7109). The consent required a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording to be implemented, in line with the approach set out in Paragraph 141 of the NPPF.
- 2.2 In regard to this development and after discussions with Bob Jones of Bristol City Council, it was noted that the site lay close to Lower Knowle Court and Redcatch Road, a historic route of early origin associated with the Medieval settlement of Brislington. The presence of a manor house in near proximity with other large buildings, including a fine 17<sup>th</sup> century structure, suggests that the site may have some archaeological potential.
- 2.3 The 1840 tithe map shows two small structures which appear to fall within the site area, prior to its use as a church during the 1930s (although it is believed that the chapel was originally located on the St. John's Road frontage), along with a possible pond-type feature on the St. John's Lane frontage.
- 2.4 On the basis of the available evidence, therefore, the study area has a general potential for the recovery of archaeological features and deposits. Any such features are likely to be of late Medieval or Post-medieval date. This did not prejudice the watching brief against the recovery of data relating to other periods.

### **3 AIMS**

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological watching brief were to make a complete record of all features of archaeological interest that were exposed during groundworks associated with the development, including the installation of services. The fieldwork, therefore, comprised a full record of the archaeologically significant activities that have taken place within the site.
- 3.2 These aims were to be achieved through pursuit of the following objectives:
- i) to define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible;
  - ii) to attempt to characterize the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning of and extent of features present on the site;
  - iii) to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
  - iv) to recover palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence.

### **4 METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*.
- 4.2 The archaeological watching brief was aimed at recording the location, extent, date range, character and function of all archaeological features and deposits encountered within the area of the site. The on-site archaeologist had the authority to request an interruption to the works in the event that significant and/or unforeseen archaeological features were found that required detailed recording.
- 4.3 The project involved the detailed monitoring of all groundworks requiring excavation or reduction of ground level associated with the development. A photographic and, where appropriate, a drawn record were made of the features exposed by the groundwork.
- 4.4 Where significant deposits or features were encountered it was necessary to conduct archaeological excavation in certain areas of the site. Where total excavation of archaeological levels took place the recording followed the same techniques as set out in the WSI.

- 4.5 All archaeological deposits and features were subjected to appropriate levels of investigation. Where excavation was required for the satisfactory assessment of archaeological deposits, a minimum 20% sample of all linear features were excavated at appropriate intervals and all intersections, overlaps and terminals were investigated. A minimum 50% sample of all non-linear features was excavated.
- 4.6 Each excavation context was excavated, wherever possible, in such a way as to produce at least one representative cross-section of the deposit.
- 4.7 Decisions about the relative value of archaeological deposits and features were made in consultation with the City Archaeologist.
- 4.8 All artefactual and ecofactual remains, whether stratified or not, were collected, bagged and labelled. Artefacts were subject to preliminary study on site in order to help date archaeological features and contexts. All artefactual and ecofactual evidence was treated in accordance with the Foundations Archaeology Technical Manual 4 (Finds Manual).

## **5 RESULTS**

- 5.1 The watched areas were divided into Area 1 and Area 2, with three service trenches located northwest of the church building, as seen in Figure 2 and 3.

### **Area 1**

- 5.2 The footing trenches in Area 1 were excavated to an average depth of 1m below Modern ground level (19.78m OD). The red/orange clay natural deposits were present at an average depth of 0.6m below Modern ground level.
- 5.3 Cut into the natural deposits was pit [105]. The pit was 0.55m deep and 0.91m wide and had a fill (106) which consisted of a plastic grey black silty sand with occasional inclusions of charcoal, shell and late Post-medieval/Modern brick fragments.
- 5.4 The pit [105] was sealed by (104), a 0.22m thick layer which consisted of a grey brown, plastic, silty clay with occasional inclusions of charcoal and small stones. This layer may have been a former soil horizon, but no artefactual evidence was present within the deposit and the layer could not be dated.
- 5.5 Layer (104) was sealed by (103), a 0.2m thick bedding layer of loose, grey gravel. Layer (103) was then sealed by (102), a 0.15m thick bedding layer of loose, red and grey gravel, which was in turn sealed by tarmac layer (101). Layer (101) and (102) had both been removed prior to Foundations Archaeology arrived on site.



## **Area 2**

- 5.6 The footings in Area 2 were excavated to an average depth of 1m below Modern ground level (19.68m OD). The red orange, firm clay natural deposits were present at an average depth of 0.62m below Modern ground level.
- 5.7 Cut into the natural deposits was possible pond [206]. This pond was 0.85m deep, but as it extended beyond the northern limit of excavation its exact size and shape could not be defined. The possible pond contained a single fill (205) of gravel with frequent inclusions of charcoal and contained a glass beer bottle and fragments of late Post-medieval/Modern brick.
- 5.8 In the southern end of Area 2 was feature [208] which cut into the natural substrates and could possibly be associated with a recently demolished part of the Baptist Church. The cut contained (203), a 0.52m thick, black, plastic deposit with frequent inclusions of slag, charcoal and a Modern tin can.
- 5.9 Feature [208], pond [206] and the natural deposits were then sealed by (202), a 0.18m thick layer of plastic, grey black sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small stones. In the northern corner of the site a small area of 0.2m thick topsoil (207), was preserved, which sealed part of (202). The rest of deposit (202) was sealed by a Modern demolition layer (201).
- 5.10 Three trenches for new drainage services were excavated northwest of the old church building. These trenches were dug through the two Modern layers (201) and (202), described above and penetrated through the natural deposits. No archaeological features or finds were present in any of these trenches.

## **6 CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 In the southern part of the site (Area 1) the groundworks reached the natural ground in the footing trenches for one of the new buildings. A late Post-medieval/Modern pit and former soil horizon were seen in Area 1. The groundworks reached the natural ground in the northern part of the site (Area 2), but no archaeologically significant features were present within this area, with the exception of a possible backfilled pond was encountered in the northern corner of the site, which contained a single fill of late/Post-medieval/Modern material. Also present was a large disturbed cut to the south which was possibly associated with the recent demolition of a former building. No archaeological finds or deposits were present within the service trenches in the north western part of the site.
- 6.2 Frequent Modern disturbance was noted throughout the site, however, the presence of patches of intact former soil horizons could suggest good preservation of any potential archaeological deposits in any undisturbed areas.

- 6.3 The archive is currently held at the offices of Foundations Archaeology, but will be deposited within 12 months with the Bristol City Museum. A short report, which will combine the results of the previous evaluation and the current project, will be submitted for publication in the relevant local archaeological journal and an OASIS form will also be submitted to ADS.

## 7 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

IfA, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Institute for Archaeologists, Reading.

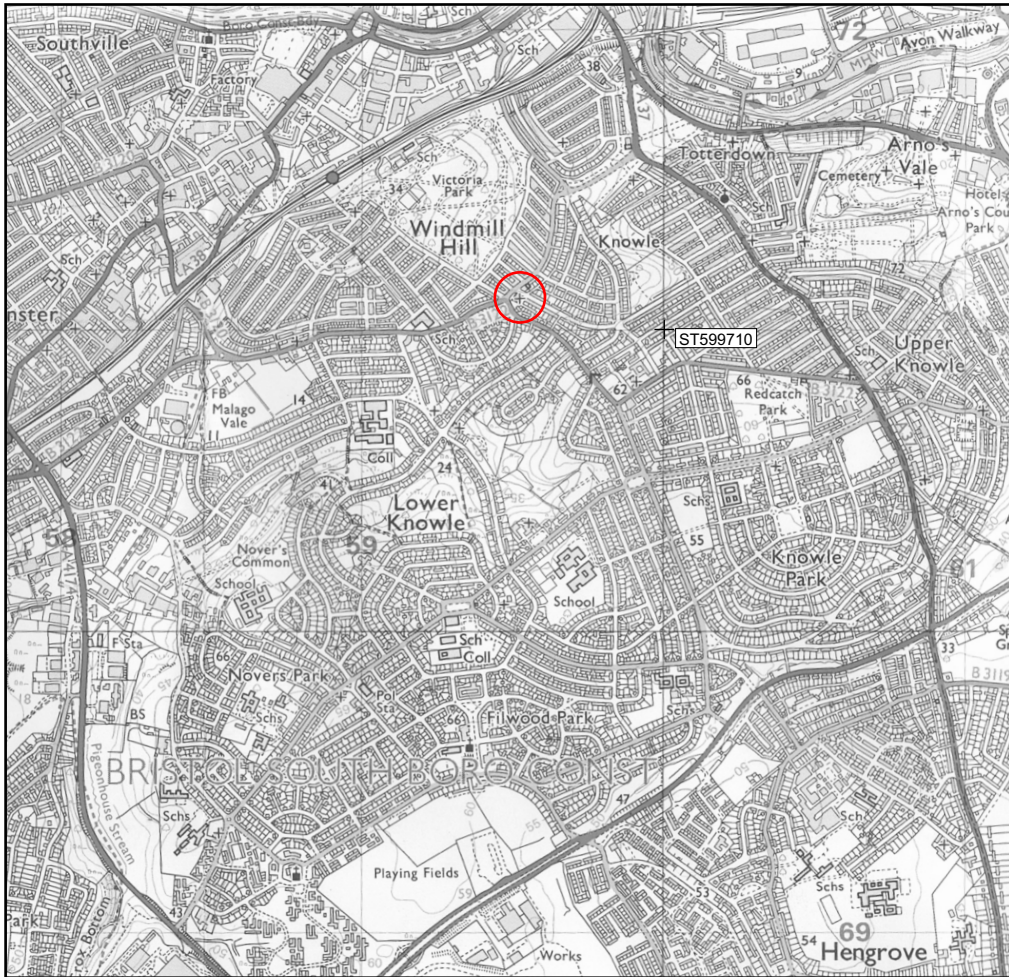
Foundations Archaeology, 2013, *Land at the Victoria Baptist Church, Sylvia Avenue, Bristol*. Written Scheme of Investigation.

## 8 **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

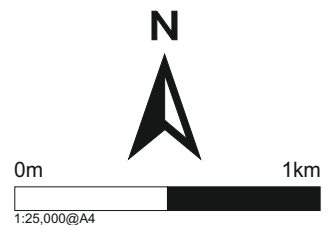
Foundations Archaeology would like to thank Bob Jones of Bristol City Council, the West of England Baptist Association and the on-site ground workers for their help during the course of this project.

**APPENDIX 1: STRATIGRAPHIC DATA**

CXT	L(m)	W(m)	D(m)	DESCRIPTION	CUTS/LATER THAN	CUT BY/EARLIER THAN
<b>Area 1</b>						
(101)	30+	20+	0.05	Black, solid tarmac.	(102)	-
(102)	30+	20+	0.15	Red grey gravel, loose. Bedding layer.	(103)	(101)
(103)	30+	20+	0.20	Grey gravel, loose. Bedding layer.	(104)	(102)
(104)	30+	20+	0.22	Grey brown, plastic silty clay with occasional inclusions of charcoal and small stones.	(106), Nat.	(103)
[105]	0.91	?	0.55	Cut of pit [105].	Nat.	(106)
(106)	0.91	?	0.55	Fill of pit [105]. Grey black, plastic, silty sand with occasional inclusions of charcoal, brick and shells.	[105]	(106)
Nat.	-	-	-	Red orange, firm clay with occasional inclusions of small stones.	-	(104), [105]
<b>Area 2</b>						
(201)	10+	5+	0.21	Red orange, compact demolition layer with frequent inclusions of brick and mortar.	(202)	(207)
(202)	10+	5+	0.18	Grey black, sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small stones.	(205)	(201)
(203)	9.5	8.52	0.52	Fill of [208]. Black, plastic with frequent inclusions of slag, charcoal, small stones and Modern material.	[208]	(202)
(204)	Void	Void	Void	Void	Void	Void
(205)	6.18+	4.6+	0.85	Fill of pond [206]. Gravel with frequent inclusions of charcoal, brick and Modern material.	[206]	(202)
[206]	6.18+	4.6+	0.85	Cut of pond [206].	Nat.	(205)
(207)	1.03+	0.78+	0.20	Mid dark brown topsoil of sandy silt with occasional inclusions of small stones.	(201)	-
[208]	9.5	8.52	0.52	Cut of deposit [208].	Nat.	(203)
Nat.	-	-	-	Red orange, firm clay with occasional inclusions of small stones.	-	(203), [206]



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**Site Code: VBC13**  
**Accession Code: 2014/5**





**FIGURE 1: Site Location**




Site Code: VBC13  
 Accession Code: 2014/5

N

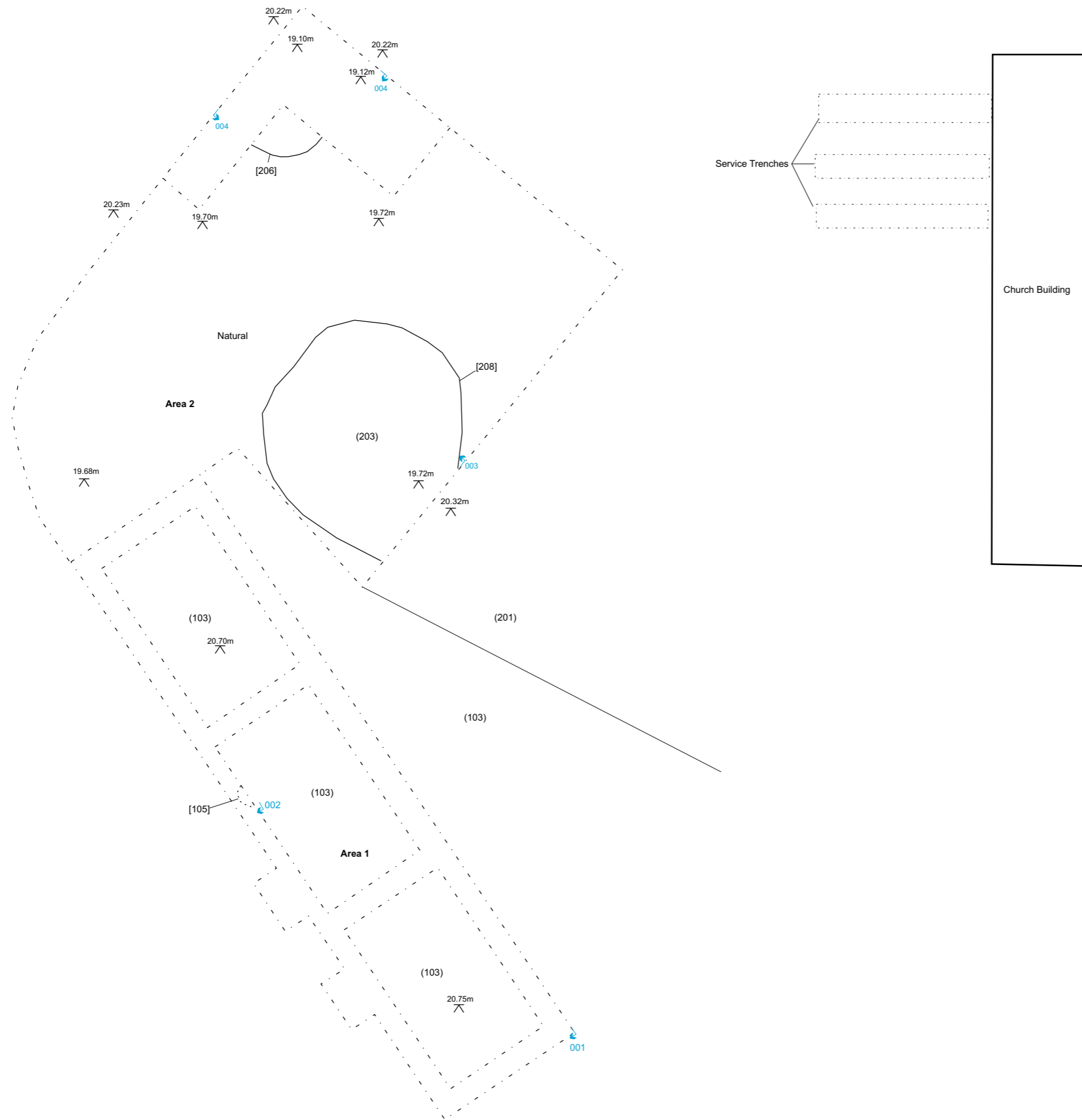


 Watched Areas

0m 20m  


1:500@A4

**FIGURE 2: Study Area**

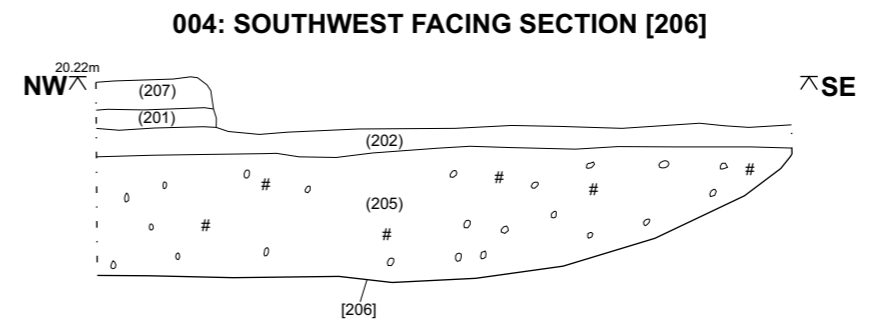
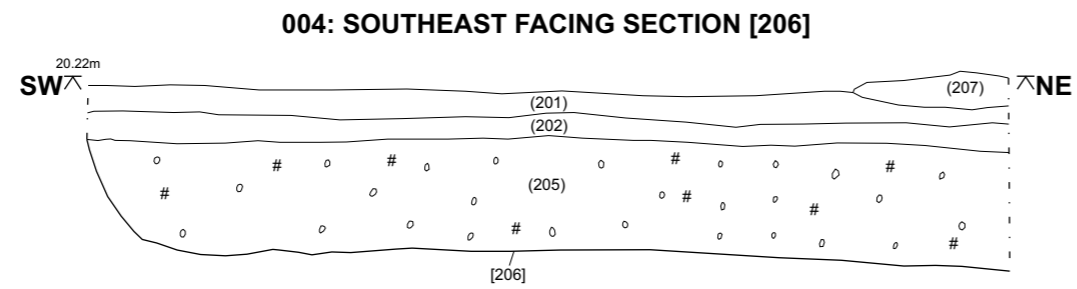
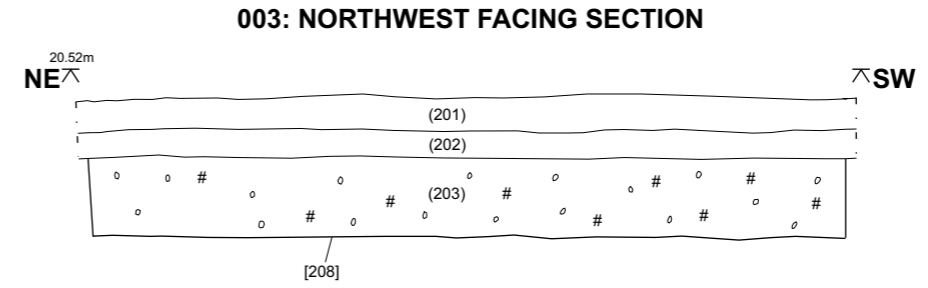
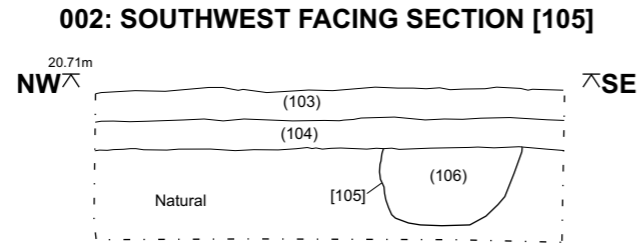
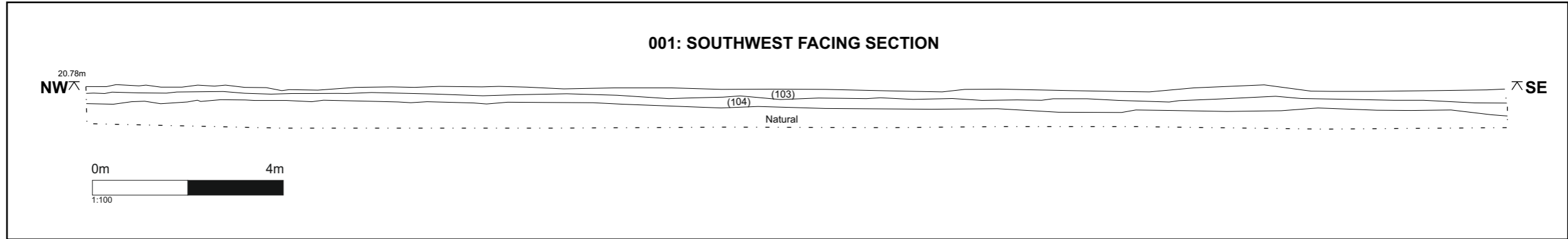


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N

0m 10m  
 1:200

**FIGURE 3: Watching Brief Area**



Site Code: VBC13  
Accession Code: 2014/5

# CHARCOAL

0m 2m  
1:50@A3

**FIGURE 4: Sections**