

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

FORMER ST. GILES AND ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

For Kier Property

Rebecca Jones MA ACIfA

L-P:ARCHÆOLOGY

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

FORMER ST. GILES AND ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

Client: Kier Property

Local Authority: Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council

NGR: 385030,346080

Planning App: 15/01077/FUL

Author(s): R Jones

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Site Code: LP2114C

L-P: ARCHAEOLOGY

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Abstract

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during groundworks at the former St. Giles's and St. George's School, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire. The Watching Brief was implemented because of the potential for archaeological remains on the site. The work was carried out by L - P : Archaeology. This report has been prepared by Rebecca Jones of L - P : Archaeology on behalf of Kier Property.

No finds or features for the Prehistoric to Roman periods have been recorded on site or within the search area. Newcastle-under-Lyme was not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the township, conducive to its name, seems to have formed in association with the construction of a motte and bailey castle in the mid 12th century.

Whether the full extent of the site lay in the suburbs of the Medieval town or on former marshland remains uncertain but map regression, as available from 1692, and results from a geotechnical scheme of works, suggests the latter until the building of the school in 1895.

The objectives of the Watching Brief were to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains and to record the character, date, location and preservation of any remains.

No archaeological features were recorded during the groundworks, however a small assemblage of Post Medieval finds was garnered from the upper deposits.

The results show that the strata of the site comprises a series of natural deposits which were truncated by the construction of the school and then sealed by the rubble from the school's demolition.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This report details the results of an archaeological Watching Brief carried out at the former St. Giles's and St. George's School for Kier Property. The local authority is Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council.
- 1.2. The fieldwork was carried out by Chris Matthews of L - P : Archaeology from the 19th April until the 20th May 2016. This report was written by Rebecca Jones of L - P : Archaeology.
- 1.3. The site is located in at the former St. Giles's and St. George's School, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, ST5 1LF within Staffordshire (FIGURE 1). The site is centred on NGR 385030,346080.
- 1.4. The site code allocated by L - P : Archaeology is LP2114C.
- 1.5. The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by Ann Johnson (2016) of ArchaeologyCollective.

2. Site Background

2.1. PLANNING

- 2.1.1. Planning consent has been granted for the demolition of the former school as the first stage in the future redevelopment of the site as a purpose-built public services civic hub, providing space for departments of the county and borough councils, library and police force. The application reference is 15/01077/FUL.
- 2.1.2. The site does not lie within any locally designated areas of interest or conservation areas, nor is it a scheduled monument or occupied by any listed buildings.
- 2.1.3. The Local Planning Authority is the Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, which, on matters of archaeology, takes advice from Stephen Dean, Principle Archaeologist of Staffordshire County Council.
- 2.1.4. When considering an application, Newcastle-under-Lyme is bound by the Newcastle-under-Lyme Local Plan (2011) together with the adopted Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Core Spatial Strategy. Regarding archaeology and planning the Local Planning Authority has the following policy:

Where nationally important archaeological remains, whether scheduled or not, and their settings, are affected by proposed development there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation in situ. There are also a large number of archaeological sites in the Borough of lesser importance. Where development is proposed for any known archaeological site developers may be required to submit the results of desk based assessments and field evaluation before the application is determined. To ensure that these sites are protected and/or recorded in advance of construction work, the Council will attach conditions to any grant of planning permission or seek a planning obligation entered into voluntarily by the developer. Developers will be expected to make provision for assessments and field evaluations and any subsequent excavation and recording however in certain instances, grants and advice may be available from English Heritage and/or the Council.

- 2.1.5. As such, the condition 2 was attached to the development:

2: ...prior to the commencement of the development hereby permitted, a written scheme of archaeological investigation ('the Scheme') shall be submitted for the written approval of the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide details of the programme of archaeological works to be carried out within the site, including post-excavation reporting and appropriate publication. The Scheme shall thereafter be implemented in full in accordance with the approved plans.

- 2.1.6. Kier Property and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council have agreed the

methodology for these works in a WSI provided by ArchaeologyCollective (JOHNSON, 2016).

2.1.7. This document seeks to satisfy the condition by describing the results of the watching brief and clarifying the status and location of the project archive.

2.2.GEOLOGY

2.2.1. The British Geological Survey GeoIndex for the site records the superficial (drift) deposits as Diamicton Till, and the solid deposits as Halesowen Formation made up of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. This data is at relatively low resolution and does not give site specific data ([HTTP://WWW.BGS.AC.UK/GEOINDEX](http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex)).

2.2.2. Tier Environmental have conducted a geotechnical survey of the site (APPENDIX 1) which has recorded a varying strata across the two halves of site.

2.2.3. On the eastern half of the site Made ground overlies glacial tills which were exposed between 124.73m OD and 127.86m OD, the lowest elevation due to truncation during construction of the school. The natural bedrock, Halesowen Formation, was exposed between 118.79m OD and 121.22m OD suggesting a northeast facing incline of the natural bedrock.

2.2.4. Across the western half of the site the made ground overlay peaty deposits, which was exposed between 124.52m OD and 127.18m OD varying between 0.5m and 0.9m thick. The peaty deposits overlay glacial tills which were exposed between 124.92m OD and 126.28m OD. The natural bedrock, Halesowen Formation, was exposed at an average of 120m OD.

2.2.5. The watching brief recorded a sequence of natural subsoils, including bands of clays, sandy clays and peats, 3m+ thick, sealed by a rubble layer from the demolition of the school.

2.3.TOPOGRAPHY

2.3.1. The site is located off the western side of Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, approximately 3km to the northwest of Stoke-on-Trent (FIGURE 1).

2.3.2. The site is bounded by Barracks Road to the east, the Queen's Gardens to the north, the rear of buildings fronting Castle Walk to the east and a carpark to the south (FIGURE 2).

2.3.3. The site lies predominantly flat, with an average height of 128m OD.

2.4.ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

2.4.1. A Desk-Based Assessment (JOHNSON, 2015) and an Historic Building Recording (O'REILLY, 2016) have been undertaken for this site by Archaeology Collective and the results are summarised below.

2.4.2. No finds or features have been recorded for the Prehistoric to Roman periods within the site or the search area.

2.4.3. Newcastle-under-Lyme was not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the township, conducive to its name, seems to have formed in association with the construction of a motte and bailey castle in the mid 12th century. The earliest reference to the castle comes from 1149 and the town appears to have been a planned new town with sponsorship by Henry II who granted a royal charter before 1179.

2.4.4. Whether the site lay in the suburbs of the Medieval town or on former marshland remains uncertain but map regression, as available from 1692, suggests the latter until the building of the school.

2.4.5. The school was built and commissioned by the National Society in 1895 and was formed from two other school, being St. Giles and St. George's.

2.4.6. The school remained largely unaltered throughout its period of use with small additions made in the late 20th century. The school was closed in 2006.

2.5.SITE CONDITIONS

2.5.1. The demolition of the former school buildings was underway by the time of the Watching Brief and during monitored groundworks other works were underway to remove below ground remains such as basements and services. The site was partially overlain with demolition rubble.



Plate 1 - Continuing groundworks on site

3. Aims and Objectives

3.1. The general aims of the archaeological watching brief were to determine the presence or absence of archaeological deposits or remains; record the character, date, location, preservation, and extent of any archaeological remains on site exposed or disturbed during groundworks.

3.2. The specific aims of the archaeological watching brief, as defined by the WSI were to:

- ◆ Direct the machine excavation required for removal of foundations and concrete hard standing to allow for observation and recording.
- ◆ To observe and record any archaeological features so as to ascertain their extent, form, function and, where possible, date.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. For a full description of the archaeological methodology please refer to section 3 of the WSI (JOHNSON, 2016).
- 4.2. Groundworks were undertaken using a 360° tracked excavator with a toothless ditching bucket to expose the underlying strata. All ground disturbances were monitored by an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeologist.
- 4.3. All plan and section surfaces were examined for archaeological deposits and features, with each deposit being allocated a three digit identifier (context number) and recorded on standard L - P : Archaeology recording sheets. Digital photography played an integral part in the recording of this site with general shots taken to show wider site context.
- 4.4. All works were carried out in accordance with the Code of Conduct as set out by the Cifa (2014A). Accordingly the monitoring archaeologist abided by the Cifa's code of Professional Conduct (2014B) and Cifa's Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (2014C).

5. Results

- 5.1. Not all context numbers referred to in the text are illustrated, but all are in the archive. Deposit numbers are given in (parentheses) and cut numbers are given in [square brackets].
- 5.2. The stratigraphic sequence remains relatively consistent across the site with modern construction deposits, (01), overlying bands of natural subsoils.
- 5.3. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded, however a small assemblage of residual 18th and 19th century finds were collected from the demolition deposit, including 2 sherds of 18th century pottery and 1 fragment of clay tobacco pipe, and the buried soil horizon (see below).



Plate 2 - Shot of excavation for groundworks, looking north

- 5.4. The strata in the eastern half of the site is made up of a 2m+ thick compact natural grey clayey lower subsoil, (04), overlain by a 0.85-1.55m thick moderately loose yellow sand (03). The lower natural subsoils are sealed by 0.4-1.09m thick layers of relict topsoil, made up of dark brown organic silt (02) which were then affected and sealed by the construction and subsequent demolition of the school.
- 5.5. Ground excavations in the western half of the site revealed a strata of the natural grey clayey lower subsoil, (04), directly overlain by a 0.8-1.6m thick deposit of

organically rich peaty soils, interpreted as a buried soil horizon (06), and most likely the remnants of the former marshland. Deposit (06) garnered 1 sherd of pottery and 3 sherds of clay tobacco pipe, all Post Medieval in date.

5.6. The buried soil horizon has been sealed by a 0.85-1.2m thick layer of redeposited yellowy sand natural (05).



Plate 3 - Overhead shot of soil horizon (06) being exposed

5.7. Given the presence of the redeposited sand directly below deposits from the school, this may allude to a former variation in landscape level across the site. If the site sat on a west facing incline, this would explain how earlier buried soil horizons survive at the greater depth in the west and the need to raise the western portion to create a flat terrace prior to construction of the school.

6. Finds

BY DAN GARNER BA FSA MCIFA

6.1. A small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from the strip and map exercise. The objects recovered are summarised below:

6.2. Pottery:

6.2.1. 3 sherds of pottery weighing 45 grams were recovered from contexts encountered within the watching brief.

6.2.2. The pottery included a body sherd of grey/white salt-glazed stoneware from peaty soil context (6); which possibly represents a German import. There was also a large Creamware body sherd (c.AD 1760+) and a rim sherd from a Pearl ware bowl decorated with dark blue transfer printing imitating Chinese porcelain (c.AD 1790+); both from the demolition soil in Transect 1.

6.3. Clay tobacco pipe:

6.3.1. Three clay tobacco pipe stem fragments were recovered from context (6); one fragment bears a partial stem stamp of 18th century date. One clay tobacco pipe stem fragment was recovered from the demolition soil in Transect 1.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

- 7.1. Planning consent was granted for the demolition of the former school on site as the first stage in the redevelopment to a purpose-built public services civic hub.
- 7.2. A Watching Brief was undertaken on the ground disturbances, footing and service excavations as part of the condition of the development. The ground works exposed a series of modern demolition deposits overlying a strata of natural subsoils.
- 7.3. Map regression, as available from 1692, suggested the site lay on former marshland on the periphery of the Medieval town. The presence of peat deposits and absence of settlement features supports this.
- 7.4. There was likely a variation in elevation across the site. If the site sat on a west facing incline, this would explain how buried soil horizons survive at the greater depth in the west and creating a need to raise the western portion of the site to create a flat terrace prior to construction of the school.

8. Archive

8.1. The paper archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x Drawing Register
- ◆ 3 x Drawing Film
- ◆ 1 x Photographic Register
- ◆ 1 x Context Register
- ◆ 6 x Context sheets

8.2. The finds archive consists of:

- ◆ 1 x box artefacts as described in Section 6 (all materials).

8.3. The archive is to be deposited at the Staffordshire Museums Service.

SOURCES CONSULTED

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

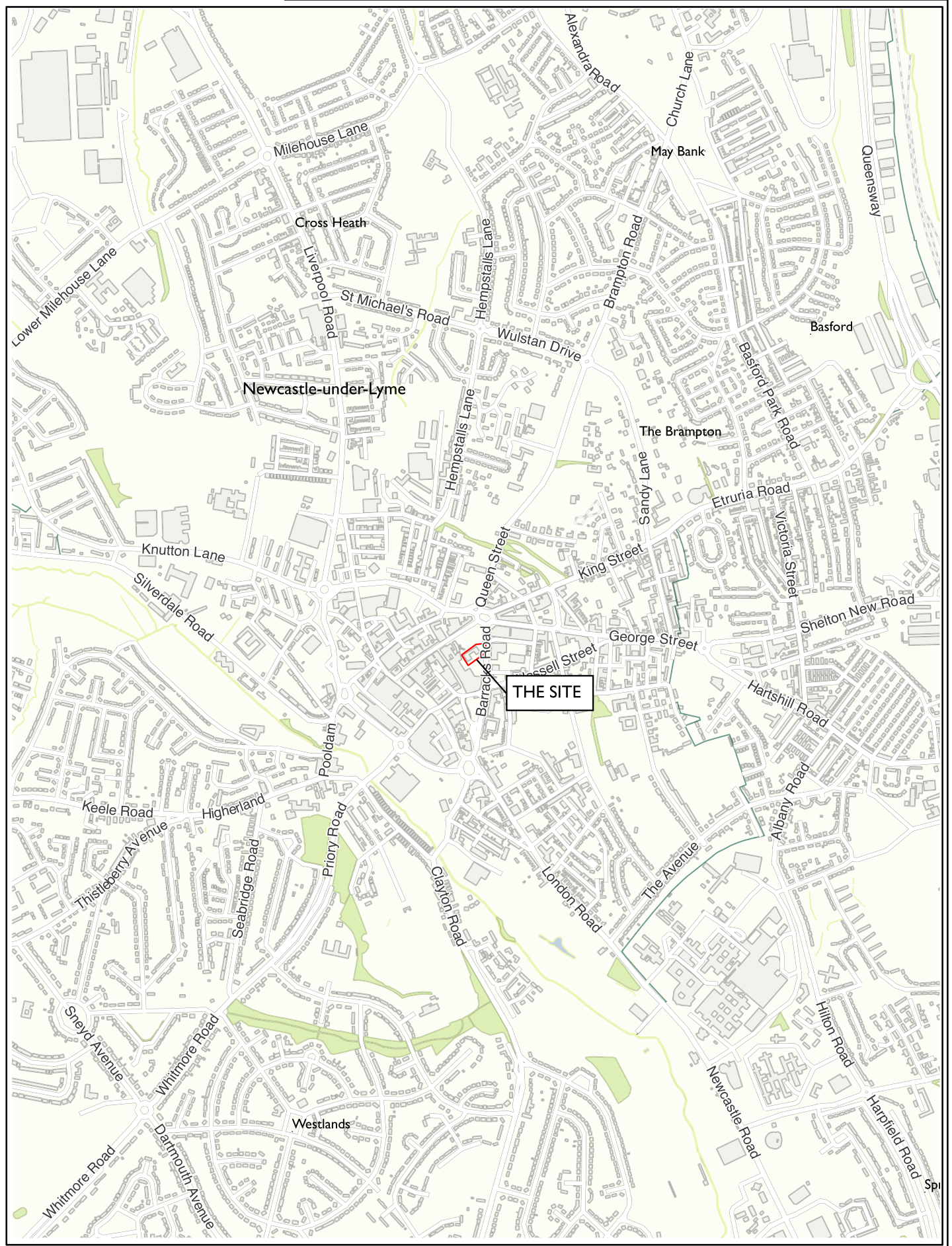
- JOHNSON, A. 2016, *Written Scheme of Investigation (Archaeological watching Brief: Observation and Recording)*, Former St Giles's and St George's School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, unpublished, ArchaeologyCollective
- JOHNSON, A. 2015, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: Civic Hub*, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, unpublished, ArchaeologyCollective
- O'REILLY, J. 2016, *Historic Building Record*, Former St. Giles and St George's School, Newcastle-under-Lyme, unpublished, ArchaeologyCollective

STATUTORY AND GUIDANCE

- Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, London, Department for Communities and Local Government
- CIFA, 2014A, *Code of Approved Conduct*, Reading, CIFA
- CIFA, 2014B, *Code of Professional Conduct*, Reading, CIFA
- CIFA, 2014c, *Standards and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief*, READING, CIFA

FIGURES

FIGURE 1 // Site Location - General



PROJECT // 2114C - St Giles' and St George's School

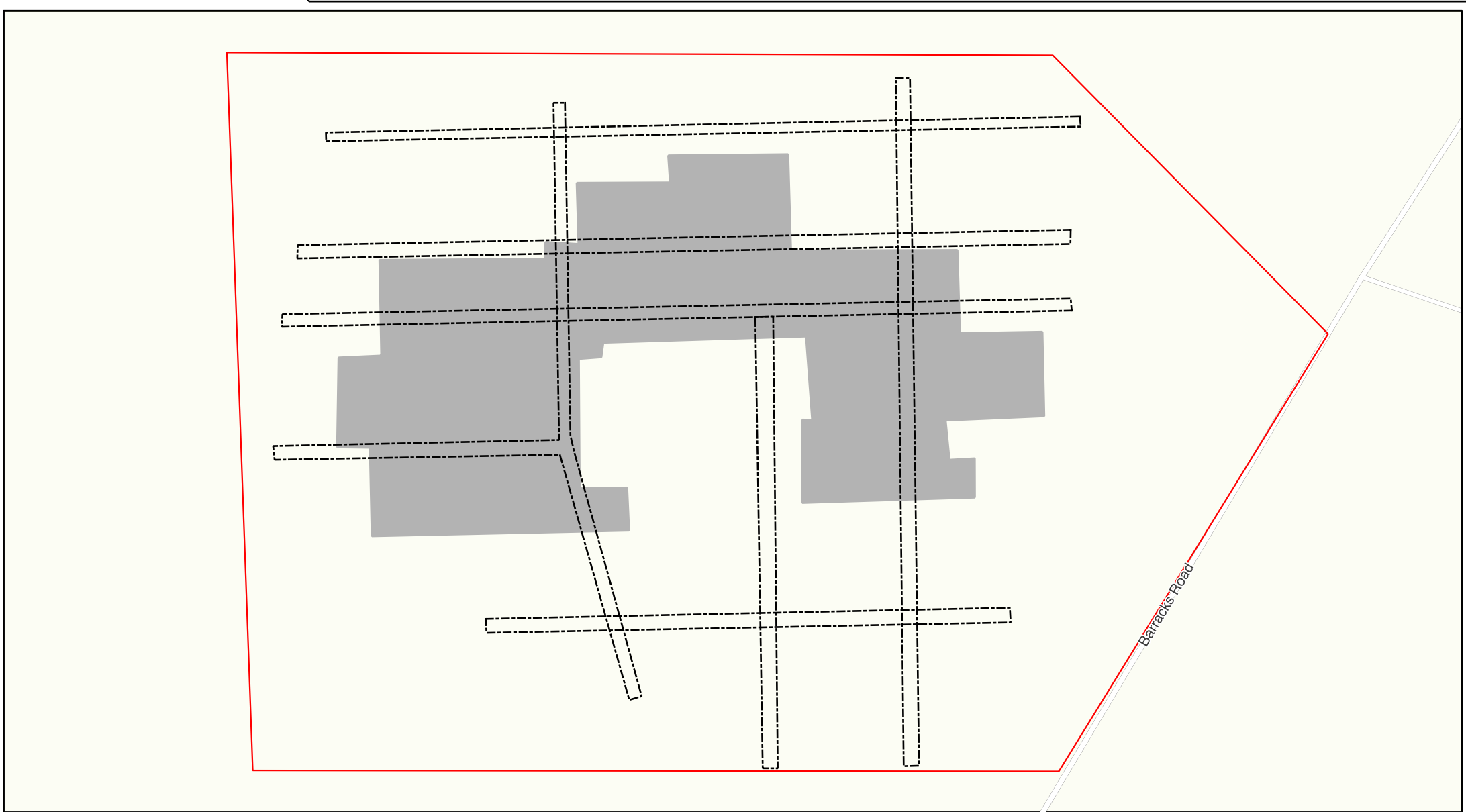
DESCRIPTION // Site Location

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DOC REF: LP2114C-WSI-v1

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FIGURE 2 // Site Details



0 25 m



PROJECT // 2114C - St Giles' and St George's School

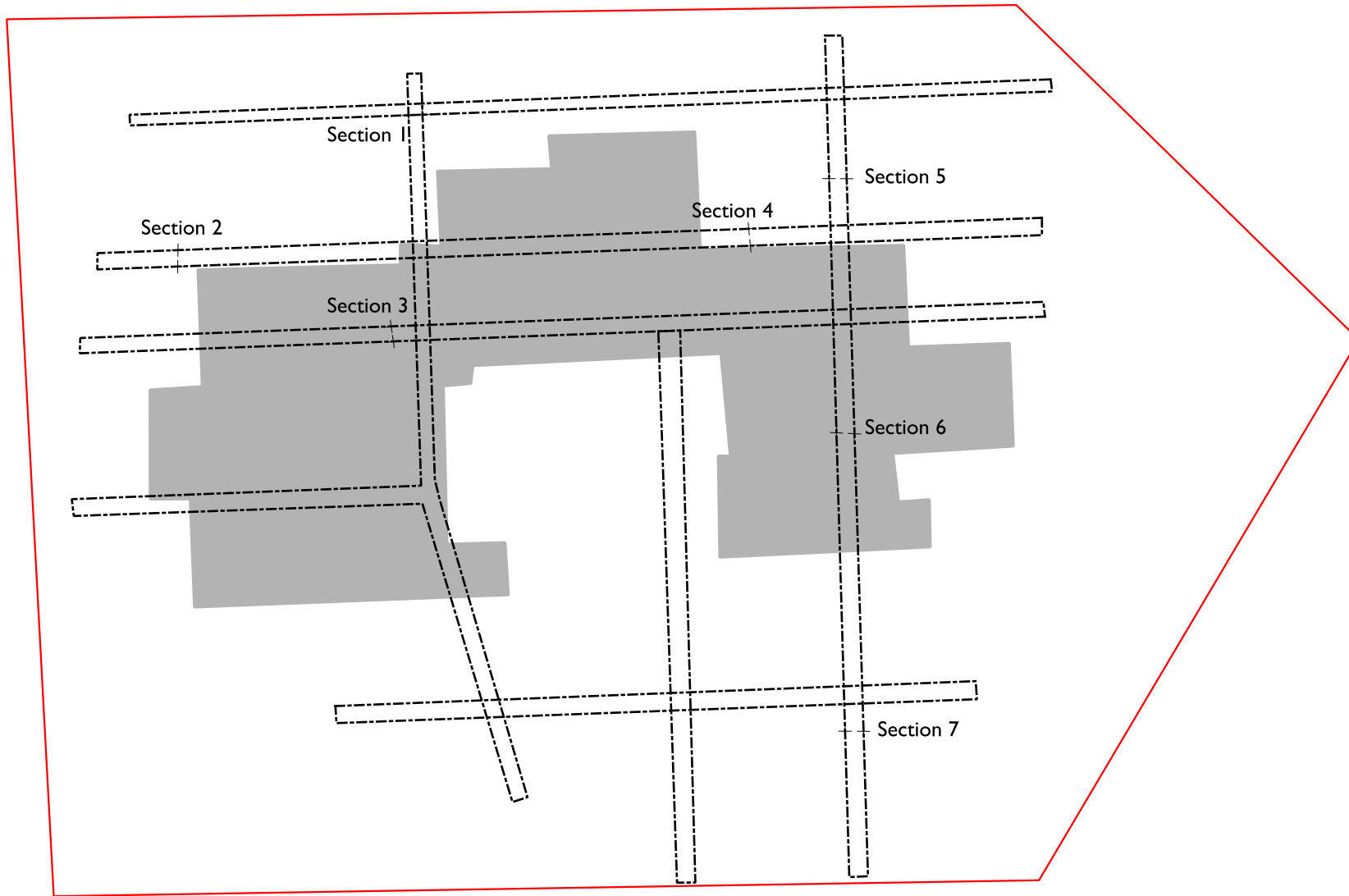
DESCRIPTION // Site Details

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FIGURE 3 // Groundworks



0 25 m



PROJECT // 2114C - St Giles' and St George's School

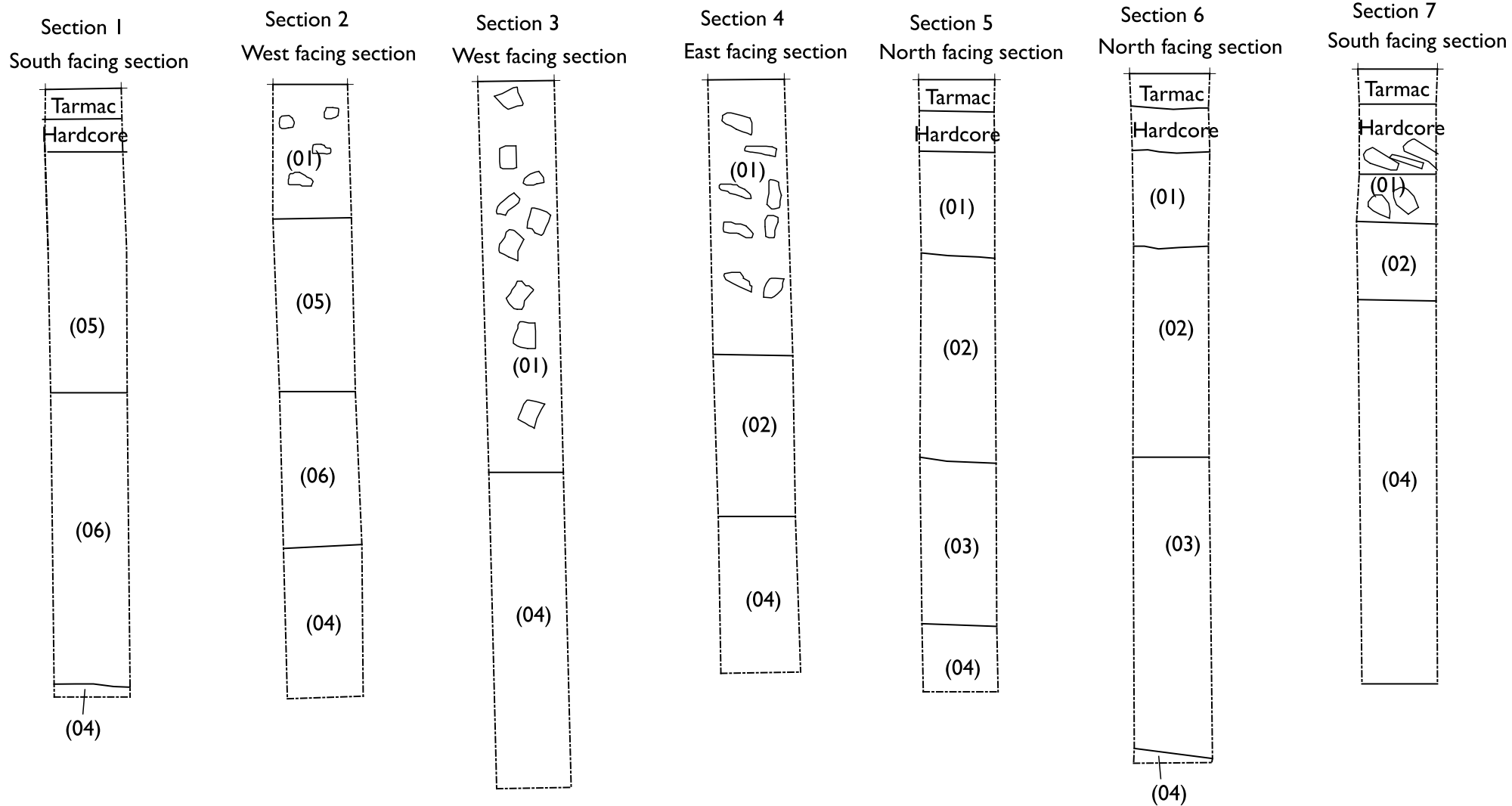
DESCRIPTION // Groundworks

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FIGURE 4 // Sections



PROJECT // 2114C - St Giles' and St George's School

DESCRIPTION // Sections

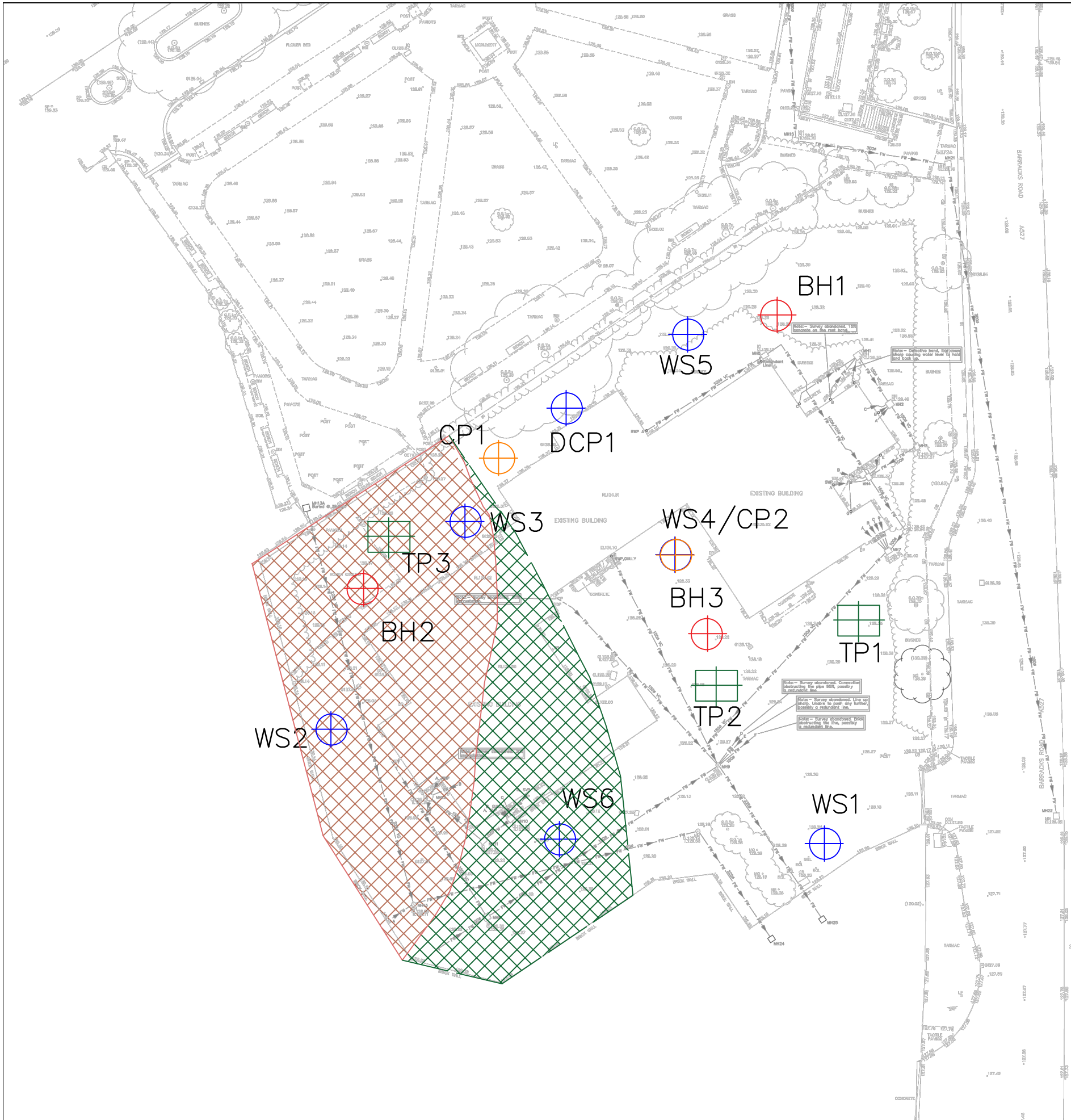
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GEOTECHNICAL SURVEY

APPENDIX I



DO NOT SCALE



-  Inferred Peat and silt
-  Inferred Silt
-  Trial Pit
-  Borehole
-  Window Sample
-  Cable Borehole

1	18/12/15	OH			
REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APD

DRAWING STATUS: FINAL



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CLIENT:

ARCHITECT: N/a

PROJECT: Newcastle Hub

TITLE: Inferred Extent of Peat and Silt

SCALE & SIZE: As shown @ A3	CHECKED: JS	APPROVED: JS
CAD FILE:	DESIGN/DRAWN: OH	DATE: Dec' 2015
PROJECT No: T/15/1686	DRAWING No: T/15/1686/GA/3	REV: 1

OASIS FORM

APPENDIX II

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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OASIS ID: Iparchae1-270750

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief, Former St. Giles and St. George's School
Short description of the project	An archaeological Watching Brief was carried out during groundworks at the former St. Giles's and St. George's School, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire. The Watching Brief was implemented because of the potential for archaeological remains on the site. The work was carried out by L - P : Archaeology. No finds or features for the Prehistoric to Roman periods have been recorded on site or within the search area. Newcastle-under-Lyme was not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and the township, conducive to its name, seems to have formed in association with the construction of a motte and bailey castle in the mid 12th century. Whether the site lay in the suburbs of the Medieval town or on former marshland remains uncertain but map regression, as available from 1692, suggests the latter until the building of the school in 1895. The objectives of the Watching Brief were to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains and to record the character, date, location and preservation of any remains. No archaeological features or finds were recorded during the groundworks. The strata of the site is a series of natural deposits which were truncated by the construction of the school and then sealed by the rubble from the school's demolition.
Project dates	Start: 01-04-2016 End: 31-12-2016
Previous/future work	Not known / Not known
Any associated project reference codes	LP2114C - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Monument type	NA None
Significant Finds	CLAY PIPE Post Medieval
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	STAFFORDSHIRE NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME NEWCASTLE UNDER LYME

Former St. Giles and St. George's School, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme
 Postcode ST5 1AW
 Study area 1000 Square metres
 Site coordinates SJ 85028 46083 53.011537750985 -2.223176313739 53 00 41 N 002 13 23 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeology Collective
 Project brief originator Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
 Project design originator Archaeology Collective
 Project director/manager Dan Garner
 Project supervisor Chris Matthews

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient Staffordshire Museum Service
 Physical Archive ID LP2114C
 Physical Contents "Ceramics","other"
 Digital Archive recipient Staffordshire Museum Service
 Digital Archive ID LP2114C
 Digital Contents "none"
 Digital Media available "Images raster / digital photography","Text"
 Paper Archive recipient Staffordshire Museum Service
 Paper Archive ID LP2114C
 Paper Contents "none"
 Paper Media available "Context sheet","Diary","Drawing","Report"

Project bibliography 1

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