

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT:**

**TRIAL TRENCHING AT ST. BEDE'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY, COLLUM AVENUE,  
SCUNTHORPE, NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Reference: PA/2011/1545  
NGR: SE 8970 0892  
AAL Site Code: SCSB 12  
Museum Accession Number: SCAI  
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-130599



Report prepared for Niven Architects  
on behalf of  
St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number 2012059

July 2012



The  
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Planning  
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### **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Niven Architects to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching on land at St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire.
- Two trial trenches each 30m long were located within the school playing field of the Academy, adjacent to Collum Avenue, on the site of a proposed new sports hall and car park. A boundary ditch and a field drain were encountered in Trench 1 but Trench 2 proved to be devoid of features.
- The presence of buried soil layers in both trenches suggests that although the playing field has been heavily landscaped there remains a potential for deposits pre-dating the modern period to survive.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Niven Architects to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenching at St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Collum Avenue in Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire. The work was undertaken on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012.
- 1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), and a specification prepared by this company (AAL 2012).
- 1.3 The documentary and physical archive will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum and will be stored under the Museum Site Code SCAI.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Scunthorpe is situated approximately 13km south-west of the River Humber, in the unitary authority of North Lincolnshire. The school grounds comprise a sub-rectangular block of land of c.4.3 hectares to the south of Scunthorpe town centre and to the west of Collum Avenue. School buildings currently occupy the south-east corner of the site, with playing fields to the west and north (Figure 2). The site lies at a height of approximately 35m above Ordnance Datum and the central NGR is SE 8970 0892.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises bedrock deposits of Frodingham Ironstone with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey 1982). However, superficial windblown sand deposits were recorded in several locations on the site during geotechnical investigations (Williams 2012).

## 3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application was submitted to North Lincolnshire Council '*to demolish part of existing school, construct new entrance, sports hall and temporary building together with modernisation of areas of existing*' (Planning Application Reference PA/2011/1545). The planning application was granted with conditions in April 2012, including a condition for the undertaking of a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the groundworks. In order to minimise the risks associated with encountering features and deposits of archaeological significance that may cause delays to the construction programme, the developer opted to undertake a programme of evaluation trenching in advance of development however. The extent of these works was agreed following discussions between the client and the North Lincolnshire Historic Environment Officer.
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Statement 5* (PPS 5, Department for Communities and Local Government 2010), which was in place when the planning condition was issued, and with the guidelines set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, which superseded PPS 5 in March 2012 (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

#### **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment (AAL 2010) was prepared and submitted in support of the planning application, a summary of which is presented below.
- 4.2 Prehistoric and Romano-British activity is well represented within the wider landscape, but only a single fragment of Bronze Age beaker pottery was recorded in the vicinity of the site.
- 4.3 The desk-based assessment identified no evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the study area, although an undated loom weight has since been dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Williams 2012).
- 4.4 It seems likely that the site was open agricultural land during the Anglo-Saxon period, a situation that persisted into the medieval and post-medieval periods, until the school was constructed on the site in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **5.0 Methodology**

- 5.1 The trial trenching programme consisted of two trenches, each measuring 30m x 1.6m. The trenches were opened using a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless bucket. All mechanical excavation was undertaken under the supervision of the author and machine excavation ceased at the first archaeological horizon or natural geology, whichever was encountered first. A sondage was machine excavated in each trench to ensure that no archaeological deposits had been sealed by windblown sand. All further excavation was undertaken by hand.
- 5.2 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Archaeological features and deposits were drawn to scale, in plan and section (at scales 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100). Photography formed an integral part of the recording strategy. All photographs incorporated scales, an identification board and directional arrow, and a selection of these images has been included in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Each archaeological feature or deposit was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 3. Three digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (e.g. ditch [104]).

#### **6.0 Results**

##### **6.1 Trench 1 (Figure 3)**

- 6.1.1 The uppermost deposit in Trench 1 was a 0.2m thick layer of topsoil, 101, which comprised moderately loose dark brown silty sand. This sealed 0.34m thick layer 102 which consisted of moderately compact dark brownish orange and yellow silty sand with bands of yellow sand, most likely a levelling deposit associated with the construction of the school playing field. A 0.06m thick layer of dark brown silty sand 100 which may have been the remains of a buried topsoil, was sealed by layer 102 at the eastern end of the trench but only continued along the trench for a distance of c.2.5m.

- 6.1.2 Towards the east end of the trench layer 102 sealed a north to south aligned linear feature, [104], which had steep sides and a concave base. It contained a single backfill of dark greyish brown clayey sand, 105, producing a small group of modern brick, tile and pottery (not retained). The ditch was cut into the underlying natural sand, 103.
- 6.1.3 To the west of the ditch was a clinker filled cut for a land drain, also running broadly north – south, and cut into the natural sand.

## **6.2 Trench 2 (Figure 4)**

- 6.2.1 Trench 2 was devoid of archaeological features. A 0.28m thick layer of topsoil, 200, formed the uppermost deposit. It sealed a 0.08m thick intermittent layer, 201, which comprised loose mottled orange and brown sand and is interpreted as a levelling layer likely to represent a continuation of layer 102 from Trench 1. The levelling layer sealed a 0.07m thick layer of loose dark grey sand, 202, which was only encountered at the southern end of the trench and may have been a buried topsoil layer, similar to layer 100 in Trench 1.
- 6.2.2 The possible buried topsoil sealed a 0.22m thick deposit, 203, which comprised mid orange brown sand. The deposit extended across the trench and has been interpreted as remnants of a buried subsoil which formed below layer 202. A single sherd of Humberware pottery dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century was recovered from this deposit.
- 6.2.3 A 0.36m thick deposit of loose light orange yellow sand with occasional natural clay patches, 204, was sealed by the buried soil layer and is interpreted as a natural geological deposit. This sandy material sealed a blueish grey sandy clay, 205, representing another natural geological horizon.

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 Natural geological deposits of sand and clay were encountered in each of the trenches. The earliest archaeological deposit was most likely a layer of buried subsoil encountered in Trench 2. A single sherd of pottery recovered from the layer has been dated to the 13<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century, perhaps hinting that the deposit represents a subsoil deposit underlying a ploughsoil that was being worked during the medieval and later periods. Whilst these soil layers themselves are of low significance their presence indicates that there is some potential for earlier deposits to have survived landscaping works associated with the creation of the playing fields.
- 7.2 The remains of possible buried topsoil horizons were encountered at the eastern end of Trench 1 and at the southern end of Trench 2. These layers were undated but were sealed by layers likely to have been deposited during 20<sup>th</sup> century landscaping of the playing fields and are likely to represent the ground surface immediately prior to the development of the school.
- 7.3 Only two cut features, a north to south orientated ditch and a parallel land drain, were encountered during the evaluation, and both were cut directly into the underlying geological deposits in Trench 1. The ditch is on the line of a boundary marked on Ordnance Survey maps from the 1880s through to the 1950s, and appears to have been infilled during the construction of the school. It is probable that this boundary had earlier origins however as the pre- and post-Enclosure mapping reproduced in Russell and Russell (1982), suggests that the area of the site had already been enclosed privately prior to the Act of Parliament for

enclosure of the parish in 1801. It produced only modern material however, suggesting that the ditch was regularly cleaned out and maintained until its final backfilling.

## 8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

8.1 The archaeological evaluation methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It showed that the development area has a limited archaeological potential, although the presence of a buried soil horizon suggest the possible survival of earlier archaeological deposits on the site beyond the areas excavated.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Niven Architects for this commission as well as the staff and students at St. Bede's Academy for their cooperation during the fieldwork.

## 10.0 References

AAL 2010, *Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment: St. Bede's Catholic School, Collum Avenue, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire*, Allen Archaeology Limited report number 2010053

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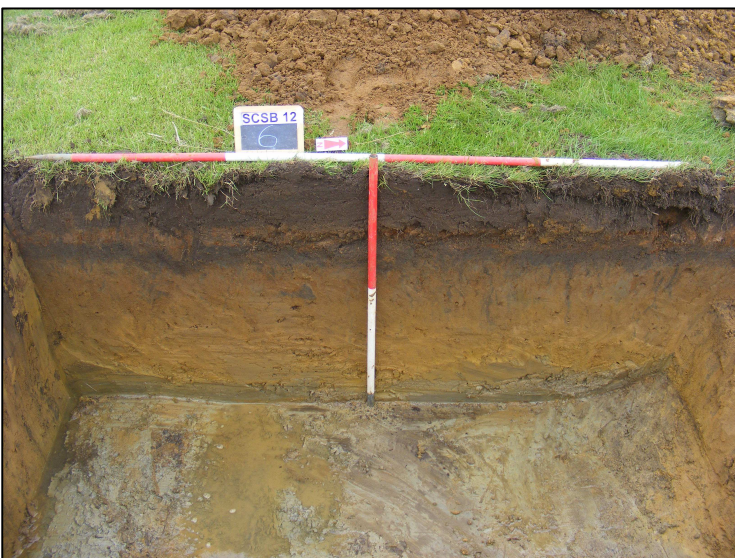
**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1:** General view of site, looking north



**Plate 2:** Ditch [104] looking north. Scales are 1m and 0.5m



**Plate 3:** East facing section at south end of Trench 2. Scales are 2m and 1m

## Appendix 2: Post-Roman Pottery Report

*Dr Anne Irving*

*Table 1, Pottery Archive*

<b>Cxt</b>	<b>Cname</b>	<b>Full name</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>NoS</b>	<b>NoV</b>	<b>W (g)</b>	<b>Part</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date</b>
203	HUM	Humberware	Jar/ bowl	1	1	10	BS	Worn	13th to 15th

### Appendix 3: Context Summary List

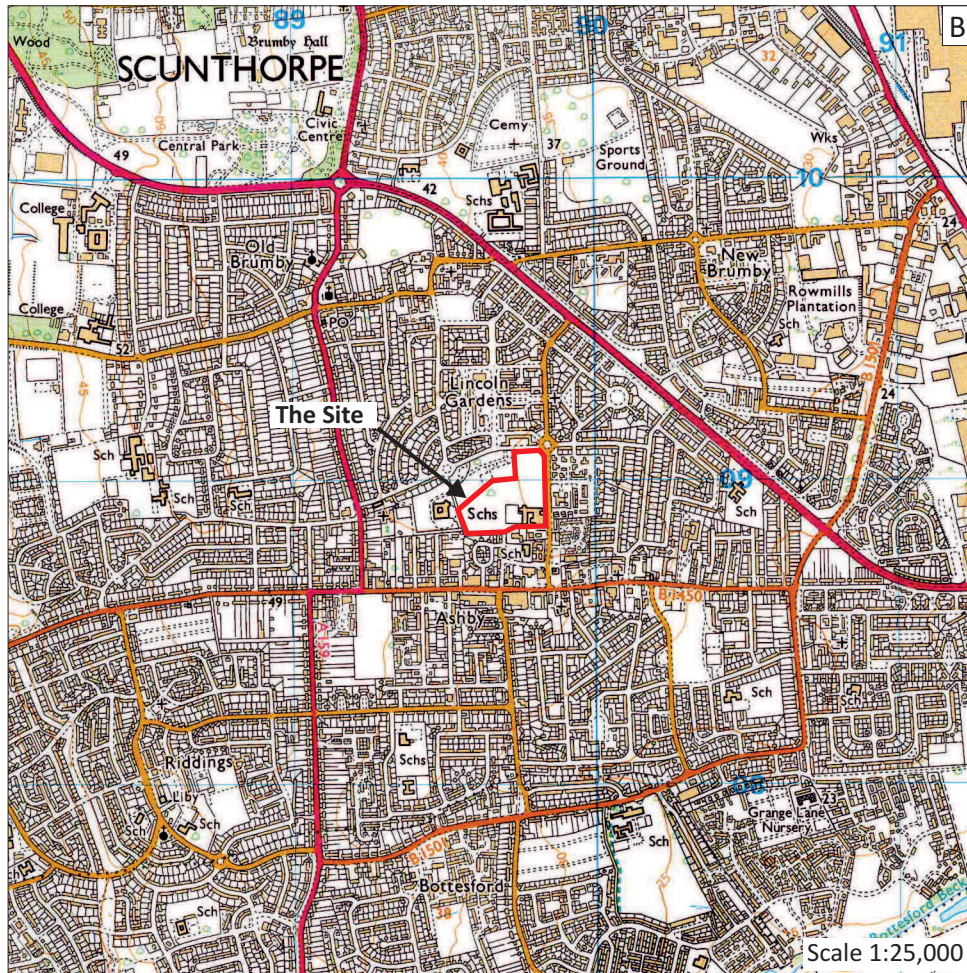
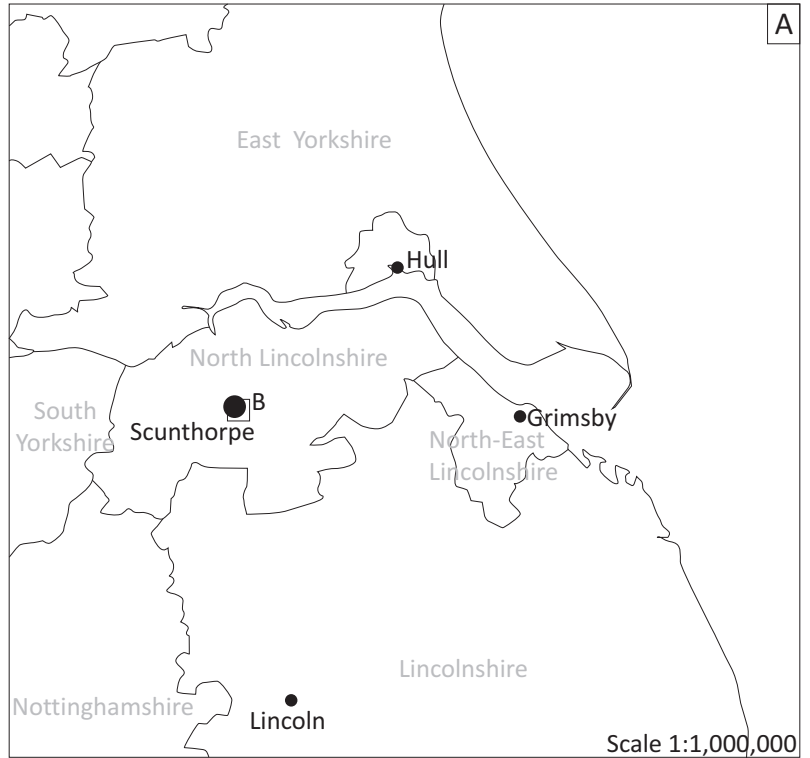
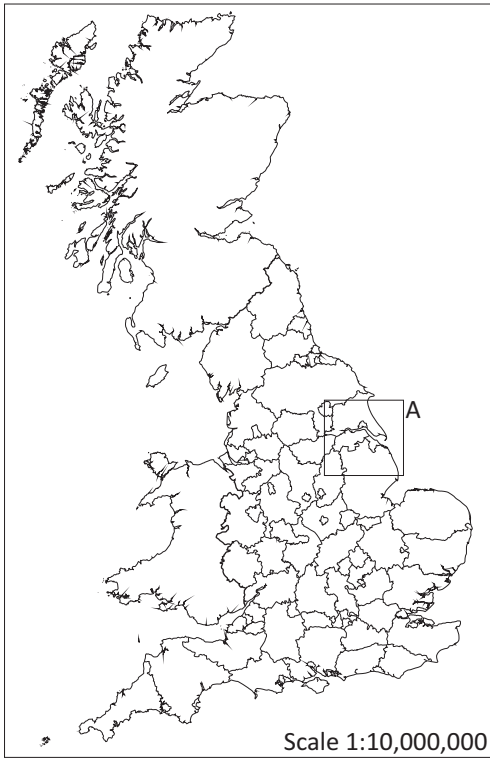
#### Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Loose dark brown sand	Buried topsoil
101	Layer	Moderately loose dark brown silty sand with occasional modern material and rootlets, seals 102	Modern topsoil
102	Layer	Moderately compact dark brown orange and yellow silty sand, sealed by 102 seals 103	Possible levelling layer for playground
103	Layer	Compact yellowish orange sand, sealed by 102	Natural sand geology with occasional clay patches
104	Cut	N-S aligned linear with steep sloping sides and rounded base, contains 105	Cut of modern ditch
105	Fill	Moderate compact dark brownish grey clayey sand with brick and limestone fragments and frequent modern material	Backfill of ditch [104]

#### Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Loose dark brown sand with occasional modern material, seals 201	Modern topsoil
201	Layer	Loose mottled orange and brown sand, sealed by 200 seals 202	Levelling layer for playground
202	Layer	Loose dark grey sand, sealed by 201 seals 203	Buried topsoil
203	Layer	Loose mid orange brown sand, sealed by 202 seals 204	Earlier subsoil
204	Layer	Loose light orange yellow sand with occasional natural clay patches, sealed by 203 seals 205	Natural sand geology
205	Layer	Firm plastic light to mid blue grey clay, sealed by 204	Natural clay geology





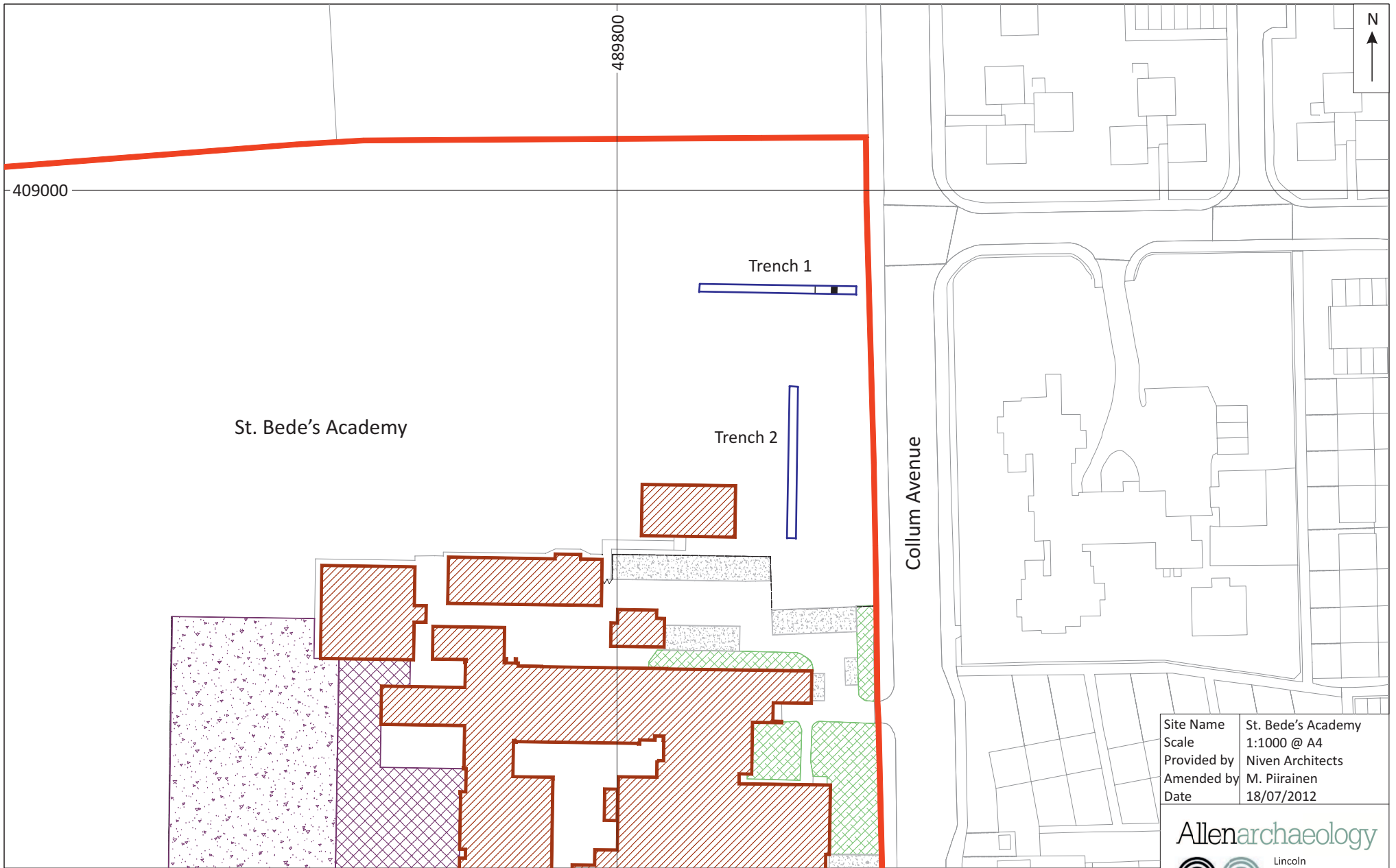
**Figure 1:** Site location with development site shown in red  
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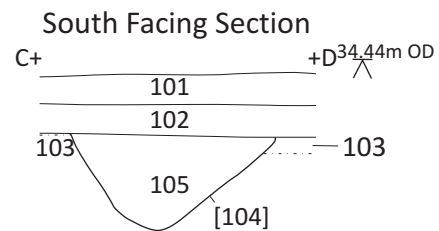
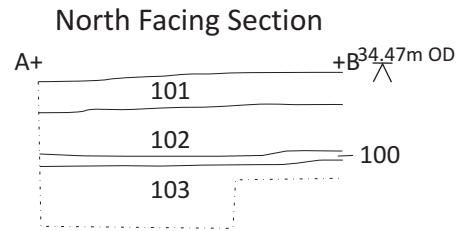
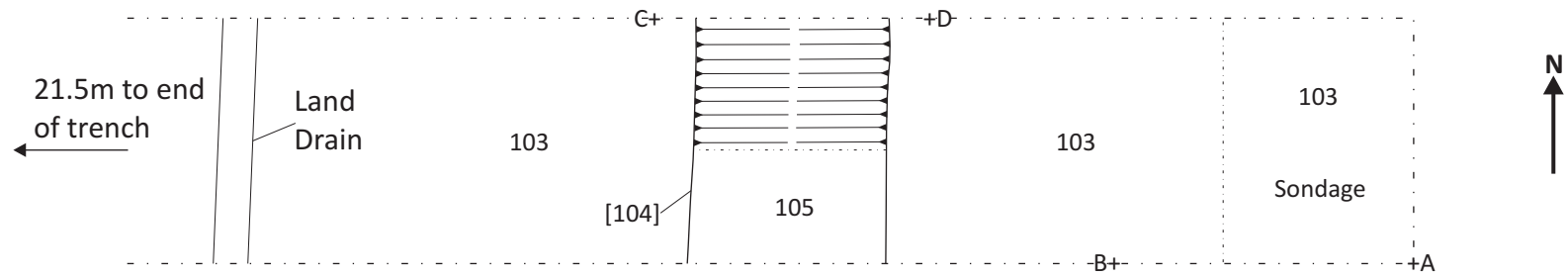


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**Figure 2:** Site location plan, with the site boundaries in red and the trenches in blue. Archaeological features in black



Site Name	SCSB 12
Scale	1:50 @ A4
Drawn by	R Evershed
Date	18/07/12

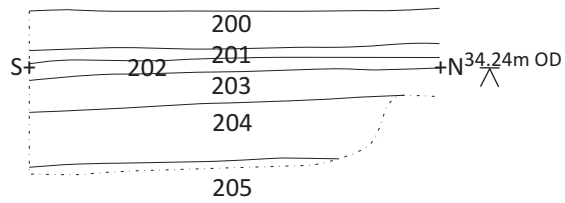
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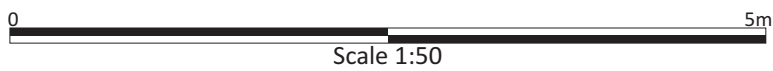
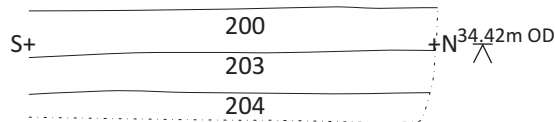
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**Figure 3:** Plan and sections of Trench 1

East Facing Section,  
South end of trench



East Facing Section,  
North end of trench



Site Name	SCSB 12
Scale	1:50 @A4
Drawn by	R Evershed
Date	18/07/2012

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**Figure 4:** Trench 2 sections



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