

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:**

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

Planning Reference: PA/2011/1545  
NGR: SE 8970 0892  
AAL Site Code: SCSB 13  
Museum Accession Number: SCAI  
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-155670



Report prepared for Engage North Lincolnshire  
on behalf of St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number 2013093

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Allenarchaeology



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*Cover image: Working shot of the development area, looking south*

### **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Engage North Lincolnshire to carry out a programme of monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the redevelopment at St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Collum Avenue, Scunthorpe in North Lincolnshire.
- Previous trial trenching of the site identified a recent linear boundary feature and a possible buried soil containing a single sherd of medieval pottery.
- The groundworks failed to identify any archaeologically significant remains, exposing only a sequence of topsoil and levelling layers overlying the recent boundary ditch identified during the preceding trial trenching.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Engage North Lincolnshire to carry out a programme of monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of school facilities St. Bede's Catholic Voluntary Academy, Collum Avenue, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The excavation, recording and reporting conformed to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief*' (IfA 1994, revised 2008) as well as a specification prepared by Allen Archaeology Limited (AAL 2012a). All relevant English Heritage guidelines on archaeological best practice were also followed.
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within six months of the completion of the report and stored under the Museum Site Code SCAI.

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Scunthorpe is situated approximately 13km southwest 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 southeast corner of the site, with playing fields to the west and north (Figure 1). The site lies at a height of approximately 35m above Ordnance Datum and is centred on NGR SE 8970 0892. The area of works is located on the eastern boundary of the school grounds, immediately to the north of the existing school buildings.
- 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 In support of a planning application for the scheme, an archaeological desk-based assessment was prepared, in order to determine the archaeological potential of the proposed development area (AAL 2010).
- 3.2 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, which was conducted in July 2012 (AAL 2012b).
- 3.3 The subsequent watching brief comprised the monitoring of all groundworks for the scheme, and the recording of any archaeological remains exposed, effectively 'preserving the

archaeology by record'. The approach adopted is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in the former Planning Policy Statement 5, which was in force at the time of the decision (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010), and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012), which superseded PPS5 in March 2012.

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

- 4.1 The preceding archaeological desk-based assessment (AAL 2010) identified a limited archaeological potential for the prehistoric and Roman periods, with only a single fragment of Bronze Age pottery being recovered from the vicinity of the site.
- 4.2 The desk-based assessment identified no evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity in the study area, although an undated loom weight from the study area has since been dated to the Anglo-Saxon period (Williams 2012).
- 4.3 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.
- 4.4 A programme of evaluation was undertaken on the site in July 2012, comprising two 30m long trenches (AAL 2012). The evaluation exposed a possible buried subsoil horizon that was tentatively dated by a single sherd of medieval pottery, as well as intermittent undated buried topsoil layers. A single boundary ditch was exposed that had been backfilled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a ceramic land drain.

#### **5.0 Methodology**

- 5.1 Groundworks were monitored by Maria Piirainen of AAL over three days: Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April, Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> April and Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2013. Machine excavation was undertaken using a tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. All exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and deposits to determine the stratigraphic sequence.
- 5.2 All archaeological deposits were recorded in plan and section and also photographically, with an identification number board, appropriate scales and a north arrow. General site shots were also taken to show the location of the groundworks.
- 5.3 Standard AAL context recording sheets were used to record all context information (for example deposits, archaeological features and stratigraphic relationships). Each deposit, layer or cut was allocated a unique identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 2.

## **6.0 Results**

- 6.1 The uppermost deposit throughout the site was a 0.22m thick layer of dark greyish brown sand topsoil 01. This overlay mottled yellow and orangey brown sand, 02, observed in the northern baulk section, interpreted as a levelling deposit. Below this, in turn, was a 0.14m thick buried topsoil layer comprising firm brownish grey sand, 03, and a light to mid orangey brown sand wind blown sand, 04, measuring 0.34m thick. The earliest deposit encountered was light orangey yellow sand, 05, with frequent ironstone inclusions and iron panning.
- 6.2 A single irregular shaped natural feature was exposed in the northern half of the site, to the east of which a ceramic land drain and modern boundary ditch were observed running on a north – south alignment, both previously identified during evaluation trenching.

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 The groundworks exposed a natural feature, a single linear boundary feature, and an adjacent land drain. Both the ditch and land drain were previously identified during evaluation trenching on the site. Historic mapping indicates that the ditch was likely to have been infilled in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century immediately prior to construction of the school.
- 7.2 During evaluation trenching a layer was interpreted as a buried soil, tentatively dated to the medieval period based on a single sherd of medieval pottery. This deposit was exposed during the watching brief and it seems likely to be of a later date, possibly related to landscaping associated with the construction of the school and its surrounding land.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The archaeological watching brief methodology was appropriate to the nature and extent of the proposed development. It has demonstrated that the groundworks have had a negligible impact on the local archaeological resource.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Engage North Lincolnshire for this commission and to Clugston 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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British Geological Survey, 1982, *Brigg. England and Wales Sheet 89. Drift Edition. 1:50,000 Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham, British Geological Survey

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010, *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*, Department for Communities and Local Government, London

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Williams, A. 2012, *Environment Team – Planning Consultations. Planning Reference PA/2011/1545*, unpublished planning document

**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



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

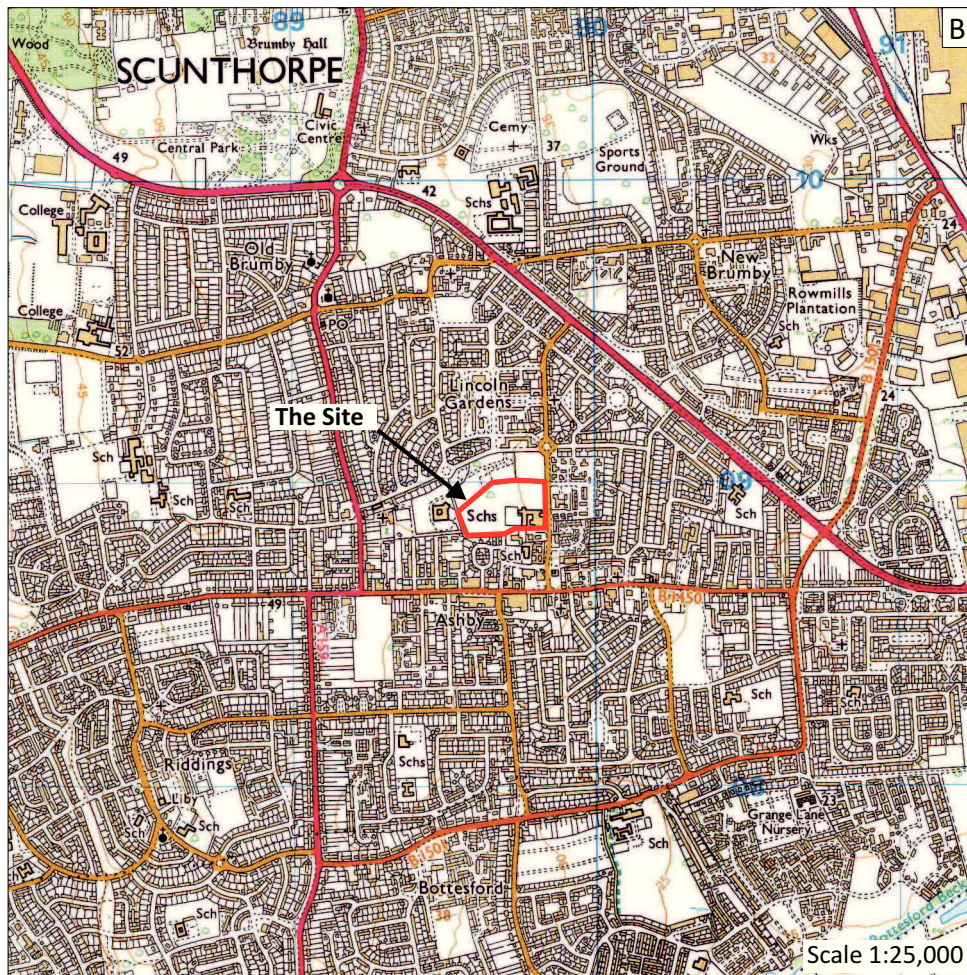
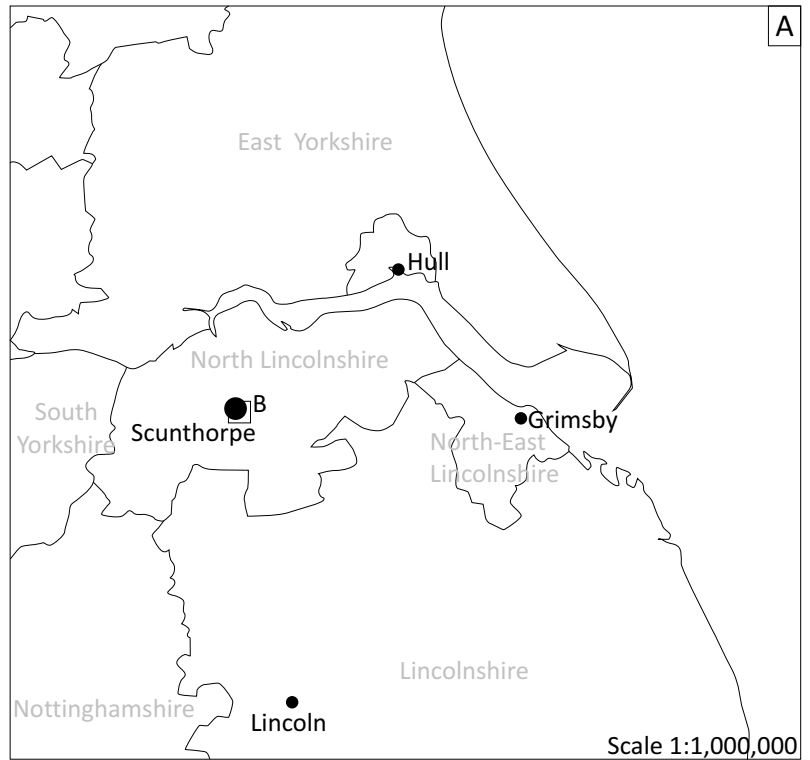
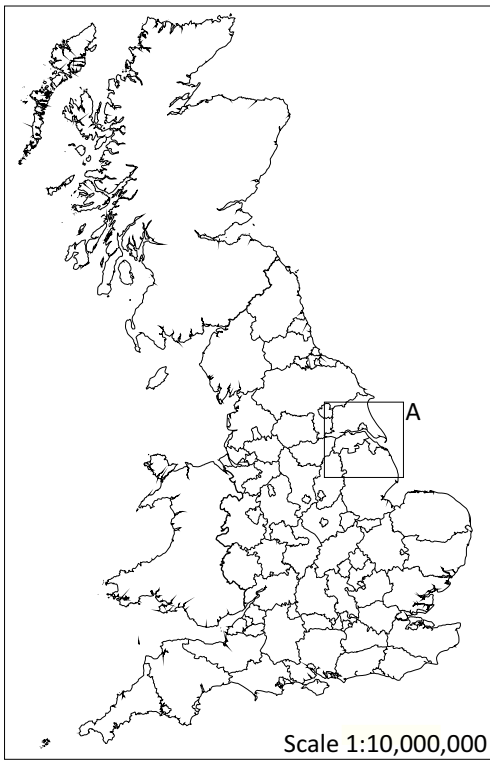


**Plate 2:** South facing representative section. Scales are 1m and 0.5m



**Appendix 2: Context Summary List**

<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
01	Layer	Loose, dark greyish brown sand. Seals 02	Topsoil
02	Layer	Loose, mottled light yellow and mid orangey brown sand with occasional iron panning. Observed at the northern end of site. Sealed by 01, above 03	Made ground/levelling
03	Layer	Firm, mid brownish grey sand. Below 02, seals 04	Buried topsoil
04	Layer	Firm, light to mid orangey brown sand with occasional iron panning. Sealed by 03, seals 05	Windblown sand
05	Layer	Firm, light orangey yellow sand with frequent ironstone inclusions and iron panning. Sealed by 04	Glacial sand



**Figure 1: Site location outlined in red**

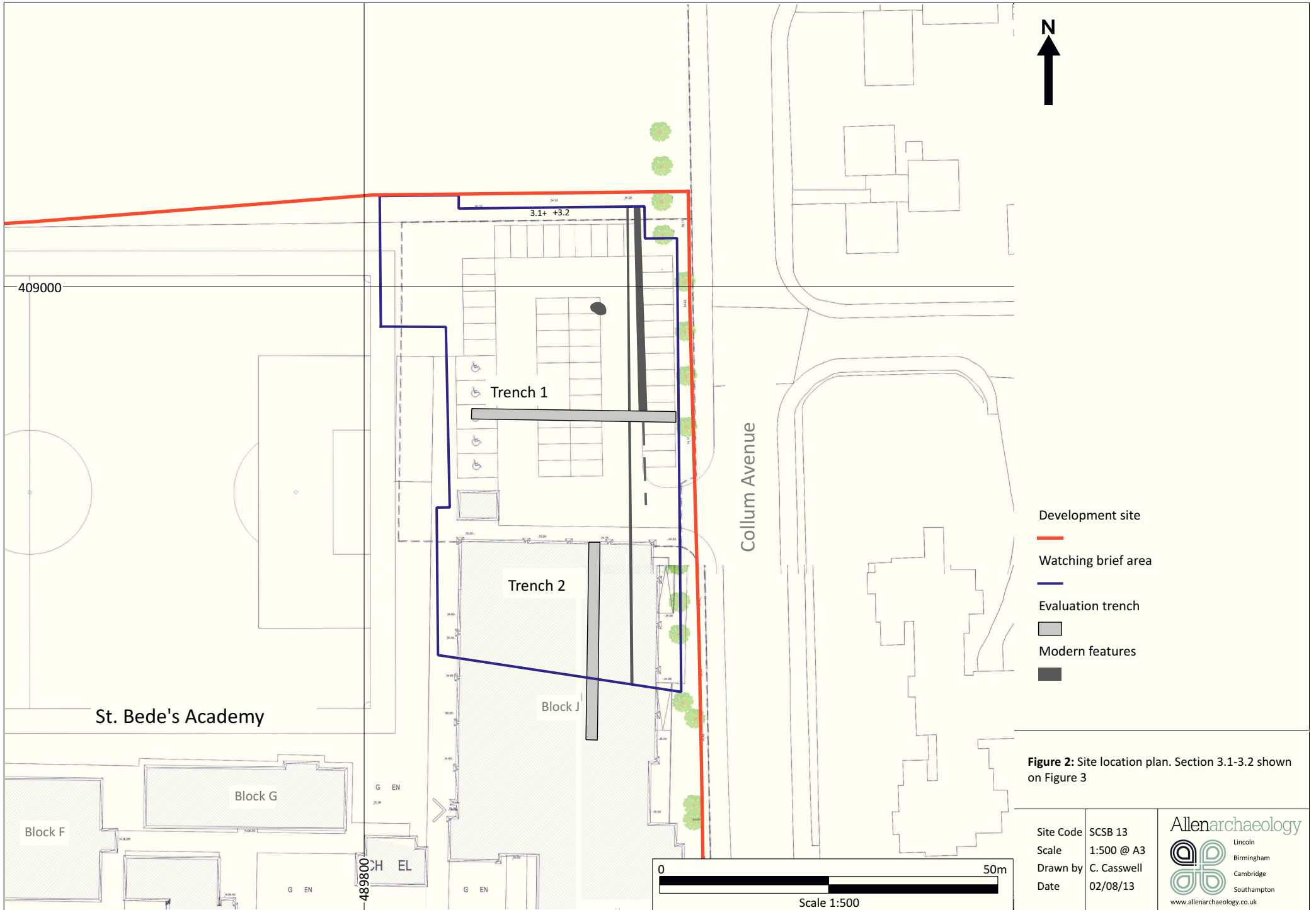
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Site Code	SCFG 12
Scales	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	C Casswell
Date	02/08/13

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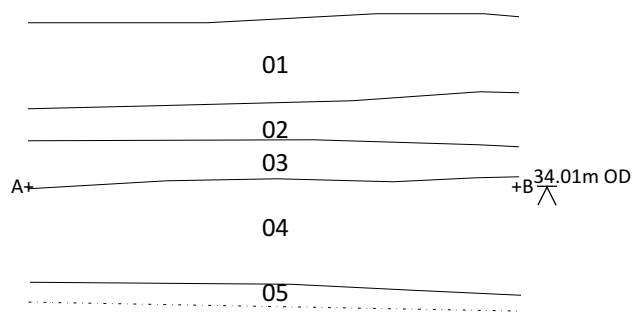
- Development site
- Watching brief area
- Evaluation trench
- Modern features

**Figure 2:** Site location plan. Section 3.1-3.2 shown on Figure 3

Site Code SCSB 13  
 Scale 1:500 @ A3  
 Drawn by C. Casswell  
 Date 02/08/13

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### South Facing Representative Section



Site Code	SCSB 13
Scale	1:20 @ A4
Drawn by	C. Casswell
Date	02/08/13

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**Figure 3:** Representative section, located on Figure 2



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