

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:  
EASTHORPE MILL, BOTTESFORD, LEICESTERSHIRE**

Planning Reference: 14/00763/FULHH  
NGR: SK 8112 3895  
AAL Site Code: BOEM 15  
Museum Accession Number: pending  
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-211523



Report prepared for Vale Garden Houses

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number AAL 2015120

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Allenarchaeology



## Contents

Executive Summary .....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	2
2.0 Site Location and Description.....	2
3.0 Planning Background.....	2
4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background.....	2
5.0 Methodology .....	3
6.0 Results .....	4
7.0 Discussion and Conclusions.....	6
8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology.....	6
9.0 Acknowledgements .....	6
10.0 References.....	6

### List of Plates

Plate 1: Northwest view of the development area during excavation .....	4
Plate 2: Alluvial deposit 109, looking west. Scales 1m and 0.5m.....	4
Plate 3: Cut [108], truncating the alluvial deposit 109 on the right, looking south. Scales 2m and 0.5m .....	5
Plate 4: West facing view of wall 110 and cut [112]. Scale 0.5m.....	5

### List of Appendices

Appendix 1: Context Summary List .....	7
Appendix 2: Figures .....	8

### List of Figures

Figure 1: Site location outlined in red .....	8
Figure 2: Detailed map showing development area .....	9
Figure 3: Plan of extension footings showing pit [108] and wall 110 .....	10
Figure 4: Representative section and section showing wall 110 and cuts [108], [112] and [113].	11

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*Cover photograph: General view of the site looking north*

## **Executive Summary**

- Allen Archaeology Limited was commissioned by Vale Garden Houses to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the erection of a timber and double glazed garden room at Easthorpe Mill, Bottesford, Leicestershire.
- The development site itself lies in an area of archaeological interest, with prehistoric, Roman and medieval activity recorded nearby. The development area itself is located on the site of the former post-medieval Easthorpe watermill.
- The monitoring exposed alluvial deposits cut by a feature associated with the revetting of the eastern side of the former mill race, as well as an undated pit.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (AAL) was commissioned by Vale Garden Houses to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for the erection of a timber and double glazed garden room at Easthorpe Mill, Bottesford, Leicestershire.
- 1.2 The fieldwork, recording and reporting was carried out in a manner consistent with current national guidelines, as set out in the *'Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs'* (ClfA 2014), and *'Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment'* (English Heritage 2006) and a specification prepared by this company (Wood 2015).

## 2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Bottesford is located approximately 32km east of Nottingham and 26km north of Melton Mowbray, in the administrative district of Melton Borough Council. The proposed development site (hereafter referred to as 'the site') lies just to the east of the historic core of Bottesford and comprises a small extension to an existing building (Figure 1). The site is centred at NGR SK 8112 3895.
- 2.2 The site is located on a low lying area in the floodplain of the River Devon. The bedrock geology comprises Lias Group mudstone, siltstone, limestone and sandstone, and below river terrace deposits (alluvium: clay, silt and sand) (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

## 3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 A planning application was submitted for *'erection of a new erection of timber and double glazed garden room etc. at Easthorpe Mill, Bottesford'* 14/00763/FULHH. Permission was granted with conditions including:
  - 'No demolition/development shall take place/commence until a programme of archaeological work including a Written Scheme of Investigation has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority in writing.'
  - 'No demolition/development shall take place other than in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation.'
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012).

## 4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 There is no evidence of prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity of the site, but there is a cropmark of a possible Bronze Age barrow to the south of the site (LHER Reference 3405) as well as Iron Age settlement evidence and industrial activity recorded in advance of construction of the Bottesford Bypass (LHER Reference 3431), and cropmark evidence indicative of Iron Age occupation and field systems lying to the west of Bottesford (LHER Reference 3394).

- 4.2 Roman settlement evidence was also recorded to the south of the site prior to construction of the bypass, comprising wall foundations, pits and postholes, and substantial quantities of pottery, coins and brooches extending throughout the Roman period (LHER Reference 3432, 16156, 16464). Further Roman pottery has also been recovered from the centre of the village to the northwest of the site (LHER References 16159, 17367).
- 4.3 There is little recorded evidence for Anglo-Saxon activity within the vicinity, apart from a small number of scattered finds (LHER References 9243, 9485 and 16466). However, Bottesford was documented as a populous settlement in the Domesday Book of 1086 and is likely to have been extant in some form during the Anglo-Saxon period. In the Domesday Book, the settlement was known as *Botesford* (Williams and Martin 2002), with the meaning likely derived from Old English elements for 'botl' meaning dwelling, and ford (Cox 2002). At the time of the survey there were a total of 110 households in Bottesford, including a priest. Land use was arable, and at least six mills are recorded (Williams and Martin 2002).
- 4.4 The current site lies on the eastern outskirts of Bottesford, in the area of the historic core of the medieval settlement of Easthorpe. Easthorpe does not appear in the Domesday Book and was probably included with Bottesford. The 'Thorpe' place-name element is generally Scandinavian in derivation and means secondary settlement (<http://kepn.nottingham.ac.uk>), in this case secondary to Bottesford. The earthworks of the shrunken medieval village and manor lie just to the south of the site, and are a Scheduled Monument (Reference 1009195).
- 4.5 The development site itself lies on the site of the former Easthorpe watermill (LHER Reference 3416), which was of post-medieval date and remained in use until the 1950s. The mill may have been built on the site of an earlier medieval mill (LHER 3415), as at least six are recorded in the Domesday Book for the parish.

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 Groundworks were monitored by an experienced field archaeologist over a period of three days; Monday 27<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> April and Friday 1<sup>st</sup> May 2015. Machine excavation was undertaken using a tracked mini-excavator fitted with a toothless bucket (Plate 1:). All exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and deposits to determine the stratigraphic sequence.
- 5.2 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard AAL context recording sheets. Each deposit, layer and cut was allocated a unique three digit identifier (context number), and accorded a written description, a summary of these are included in Appendix 1.
- 5.3 Deposits were drawn in section at an appropriate scale. All archaeological deposits and features were recorded photographically. General site shots were also taken to show the landscape context of the groundworks, a selection of these have been included in the report.



*Plate 1: Northwest view of the development area during excavation*

## 6.0 Results

- 6.1 The earliest deposit recorded on the site, within the southwestern section of the footings was a soft, brownish grey clay with occasional organic inclusions, and small brick and stone flecks 109. Measuring at least 0.8m thick this deposit is likely to be an alluvial deposit, mixed with demolition material.



*Plate 2: Alluvial deposit 109, looking west. Scales 1m and 0.5m*

- 6.2 Truncating 109 to the east was a steep sided cut feature [108] that contained a sequence of mixed and mottled clays containing occasional charcoal and brick fragments 105, 106 and 107.



*Plate 3: Cut [108], truncating the alluvial deposit 109 on the right, looking south. Scales 2m and 0.5m*

- 6.3 Deposit 109 was also truncated to the north by a wide shallow cut [112] containing a roughly hewn limestone block wall, 110, bonded with lime mortar. Orientated northwest-southeast, the exposed section of wall was recorded running for at least 2m at a height of 1.1m and width of 0.74m. The cut [112] had been backfilled with an undated firm, mid reddish brown clay, 104.



*Plate 4: West facing view of wall 110 and cut [112]. Scale 0.5m*

- 6.4 A construction cut [113] containing a mid yellowish brown clay fill, 102/103, was recorded in the southern footing and probably represents the footings for the previous conservatory.
- 6.5 Overlying the whole site was hardcore, 101, sealed by a 0.4m thick light grey concrete paving, 100.

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusions**

- 7.1 The watching brief identified a number of features of potential archaeological interest. A stone wall, apparently within a wide shallow cut was recorded, aligned north-northwest to south-southeast, truncating earlier alluvial layers. It is possible that this relates to an episode of ground reduction, levelling and revetting at the eastern edge of the mill race, which although undated, may relate to the 20<sup>th</sup> century conversion of the mill for residential use. Another steep sided cut feature was recorded, the date and function of which is unclear.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the size and type of project. It has identified a small number of features of archaeological interest, but the lack of dating evidence precludes any detailed interpretation.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Vale Garden Houses for this commission and for the cooperation of the groundworkers during the fieldwork.

## **10.0 References**

CIfA, 2014, *Standard and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, Reading: Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Cox, B, 2002, *The Place Names of Leicestershire: Part Two Framland Hundred*, Nottingham: English Place Name Society

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2012, *National Planning Policy Framework*, London: Department for Communities and Local Government

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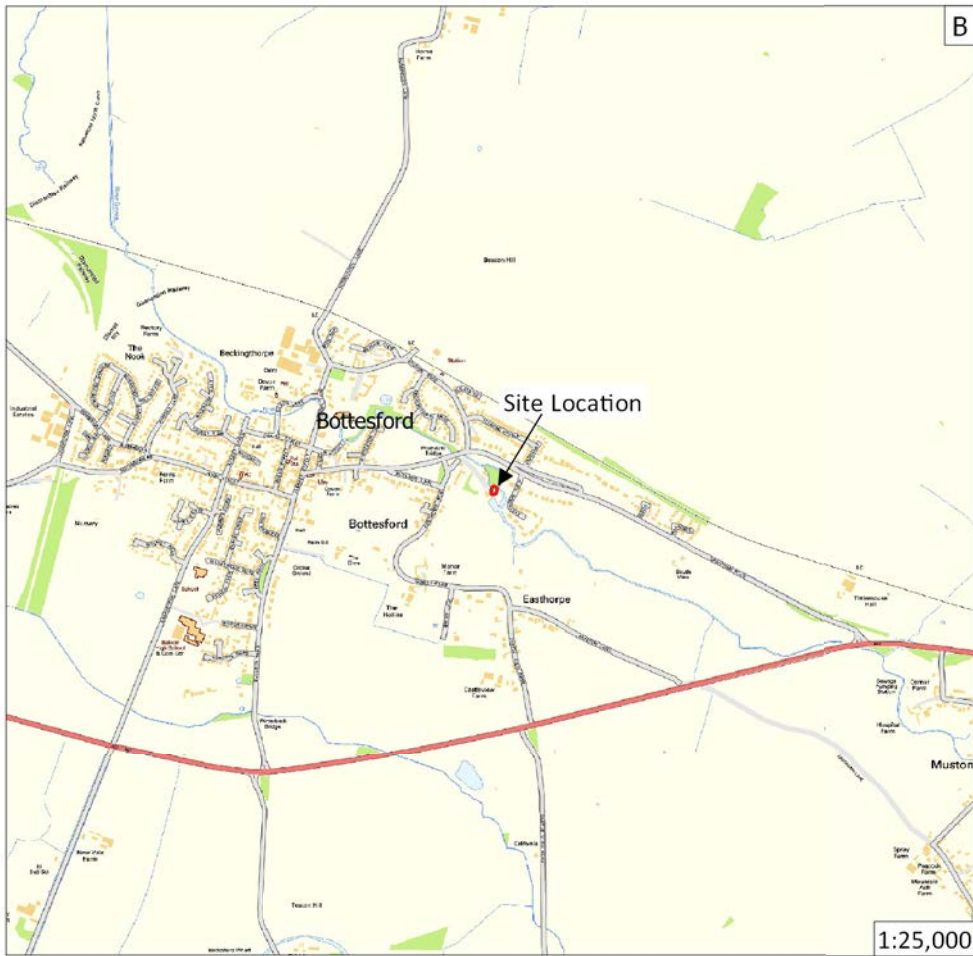
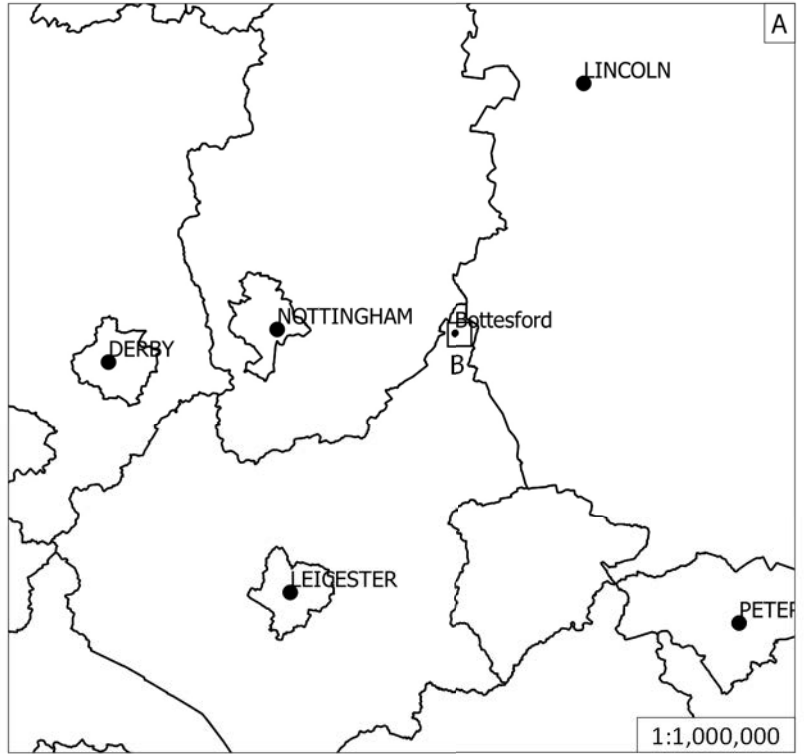
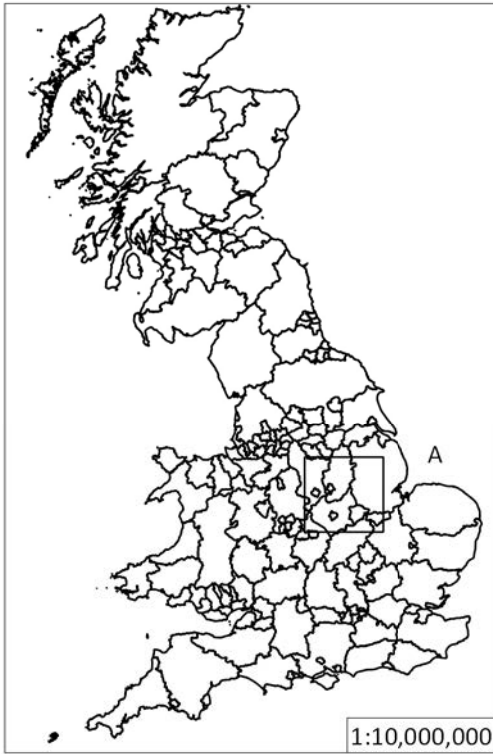
Williams, A, and Martin, G H, (eds), 2002, *Domesday Book: A Complete Translation*, London: Penguin Group Ltd

Wood, M, 2015, *Specification for an archaeological watching brief: Easthorpe Mill, Bottesford, Leicestershire*, Unpublished: Allen Archaeology Limited



## Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Light grey concrete, 0.40m thick. Seals 101	Concrete paving
101	Layer	Hard, light grey concrete, 0.16m thick. Sealed by 100, seals 102	Hardcore
102	Layer	Firm, dark greyish orange silty clay with frequent stones and charcoal flecks. Sealed by 101	Levelling layer
103	Fill	Firm, mid yellowish brown clay with occasional brick fragments, 0.45m thick. Sealed by 100. Fill of [113]	Dumped deposit
104	Fill	Firm, mid reddish brown clay, 1.10m thick. Fill of [112]. Cut by [113]	Dumped deposit
105	Fill	Soft, mid reddish brown/mottled mid grey clay, 0.5m thick. Seals 105. Fill of [108]	Re-deposited natural
106	Fill	Soft, mid grey clay with occasional charcoal and brick flecks, 0.2m thick. Sealed by 105, seals 107. Fill of [108]	Re-deposited natural
107	Fill	Soft, mid reddish brown clay, 0.6m thick. Sealed by 106. Fill of [108]	Re-deposited natural
108	Cut	N-S aligned linear with near vertical edges, 0.8m+ deep to limit of excavation.	Cut of pit
109	Layer	Soft, brownish grey clay with occasional organic, brick and stone inclusions, 0.8m+ thick. Cut by [108] and [112]	Alluvial deposit
110	Structure	NW-SE orientated limestone mortar bonded roughly hewn limestone blocks, 2m+ long x 1.1m high x 0.74m wide, contained by [112]	Wall
111	VOID	-	-
112	Cut	NW-SE orientated linear with vertical sides, 2m+ long x 1.1m high x 0.74m wide	Cut for wall 110
113	Cut	Feature seen in section only with g concave sides and uneven base, 1.6m+ wide x 0.44m deep. Cuts 105, filled by 103	Modern pit cut



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

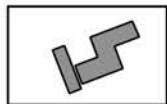
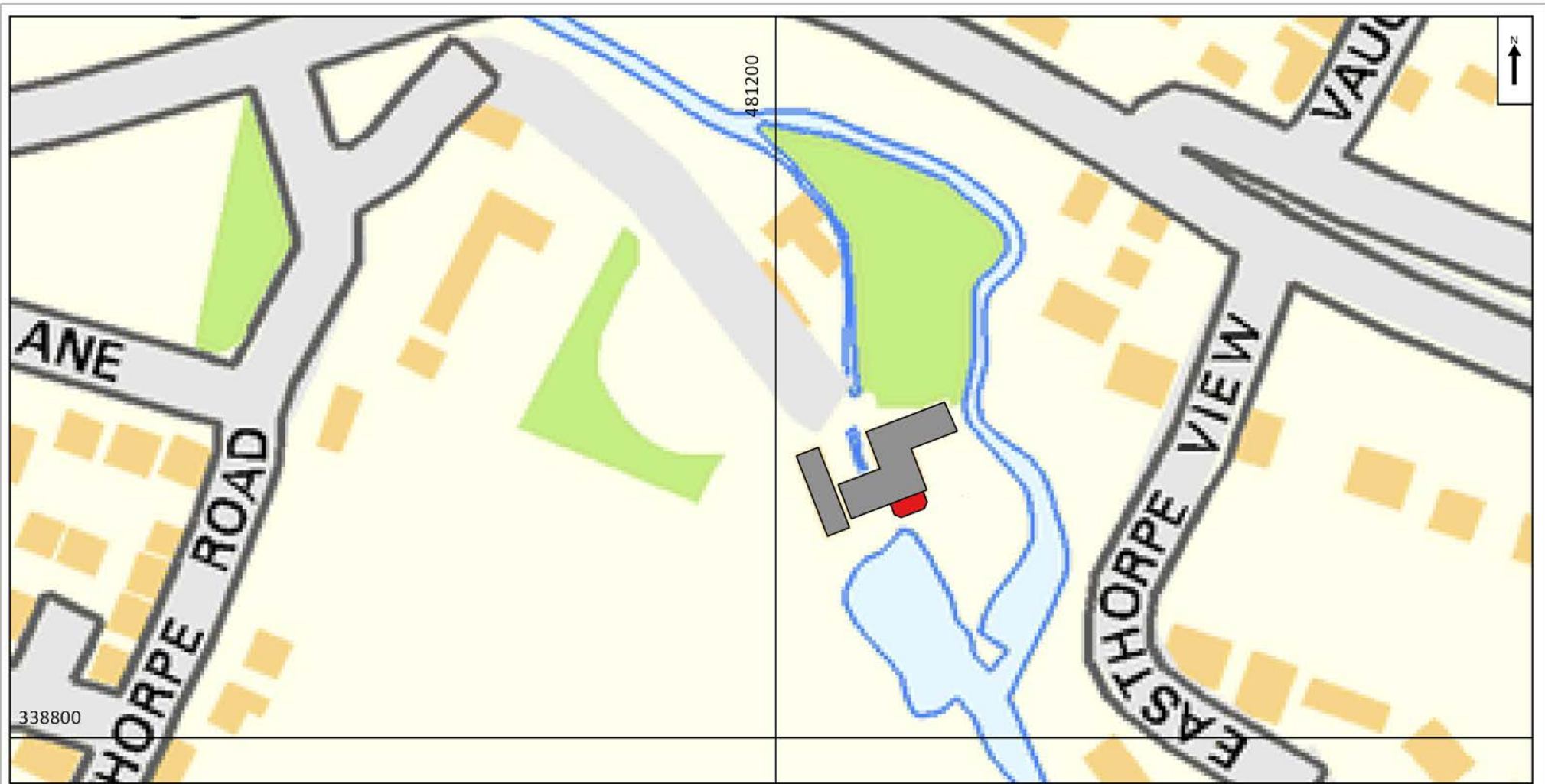
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Drawn by	IP
Date	19/05/15

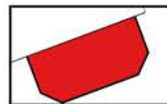
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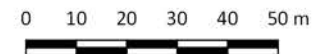
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Easthorpe Mill



Development Area



Site Code	BOEM 15
Scale	1:1500 @ A4
Drawn By	T Rayner
Date	16/09/15

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Figure 2: Detailed map showing development area

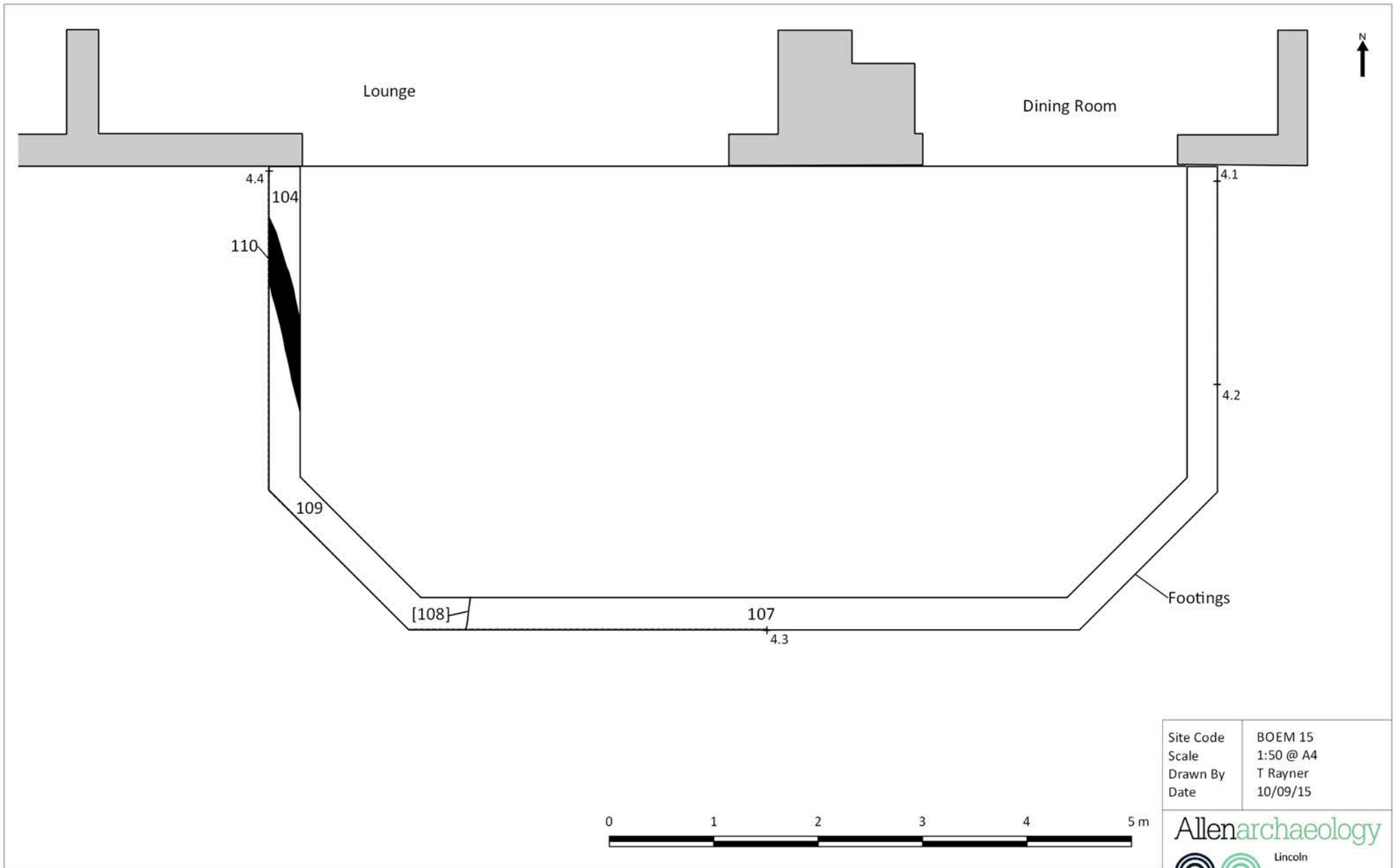
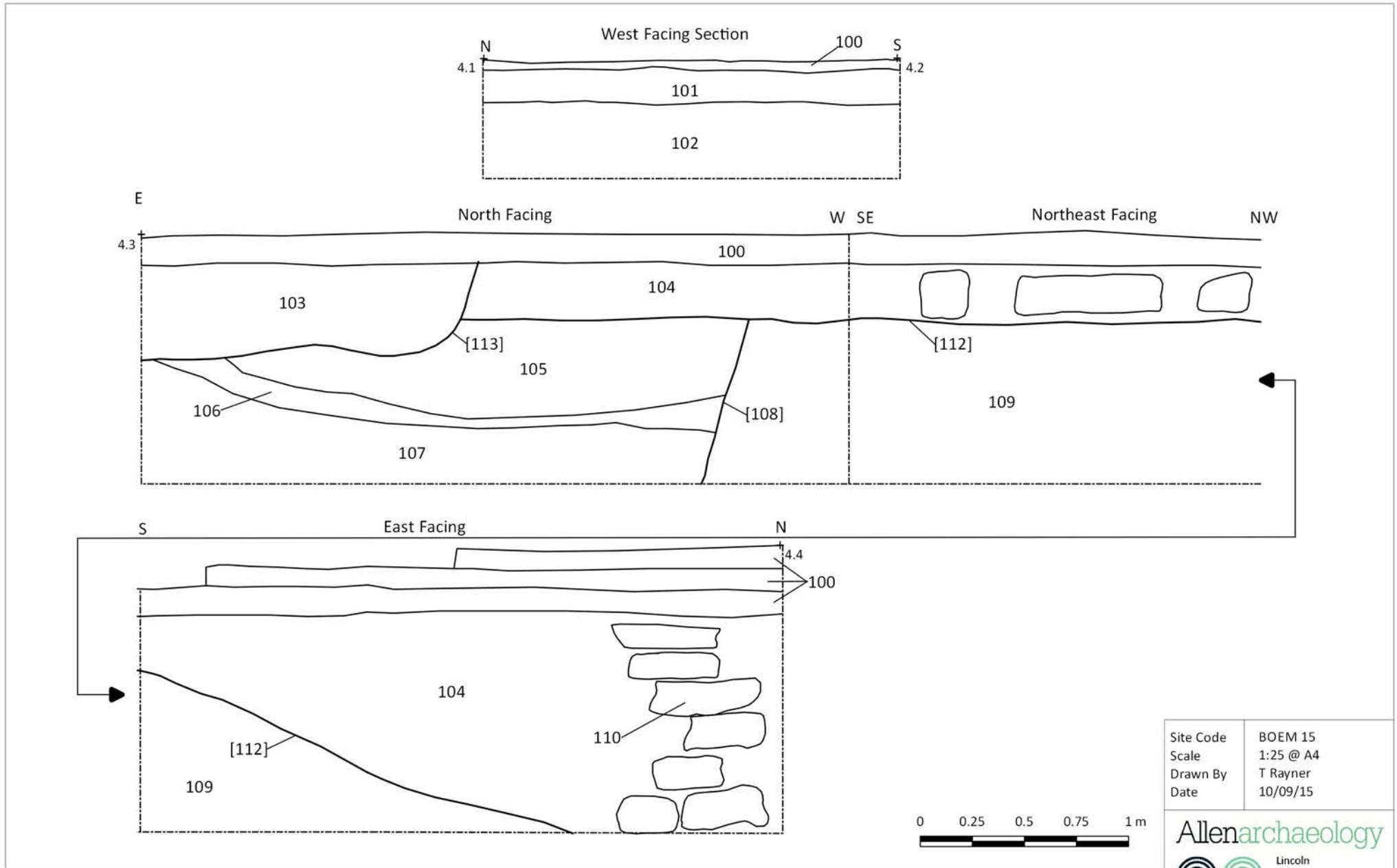


Figure 3: Plan of extension footings showing pit [108] and wall 110



Site Code	BOEM 15
Scale	1:25 @ A4
Drawn By	T Rayner
Date	10/09/15

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**Figure 4:** Representative section and Section showing wall 110 and cuts [108], [112] and [113]



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