

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT: LAND OFF MAIN STREET, ROSLISTON, DERBYSHIRE

Planning Reference: 9/2008/0950/FM
NGR: SK 2440 1677
AAL Site Code: ROMS 10
Museum Accession Number: DBYMU 2010-22
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-82972



Report prepared for Davis Construction Ltd.

By
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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for the construction of three dwellings on land off Main Street in Rosliston, Derbyshire.
- The site is situated in an area of some archaeological potential. In the Domesday Book, Rosliston was assessed with the neighbouring settlement of Walton-on-Trent. Numerous earthworks and cropmarks survive around the village, reflecting medieval ridge and furrow ploughing.
- The watching brief identified few features or deposits of interest, other than a number of large shallow undated pits in Plot 3. No dateable material was recovered during the groundworks.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Davis Construction Limited to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for the construction of three dwellings on land off Main Street in Rosliston, Derbyshire.
- 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 watching briefs*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008). All appropriate English Heritage guidelines on archaeological practice were also followed (www.helm.org/server/show/nav.7740) as well as the methodologies set out in the specification prepared by this company (AAL 2010).
- 1.3 The documentary archive will be submitted to The Derby Museum within twelve months of the completion of the report, where it will be stored under the museum accession number DBYMU 2010-22.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Rosliston is situated approximately 6.5km south of Burton upon Trent, in the administrative district of South Derbyshire. The proposed development area is in the historic core of the village, on the north side of Main Street, centred on NGR SK 2440 1667. It was previously occupied by a single dwelling, which is to be demolished in advance of development.
- 2.2 The local geology comprises superficial deposits of Glacial Till, overlying a bedrock geology of Mercia Mudstone (<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/opengeoscience/home.html?Accordion1=1#maps>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Full planning permission was granted (Planning Application 9/2008/0950/FM) for the '*demolition of existing bungalow and redevelopment of three detached houses, 1 double garage and additional vehicular access*' on land off Main Street in Rosliston, Derbyshire. Permission was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief by a suitably competent archaeologist. The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of all groundworks for the scheme, and the recording of any archaeological remains exposed, effectively 'preserving the archaeology by record'. This approach is consistent with the guidelines that are set out in Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5). This has superseded *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (1990)*, which was in place when the archaeological condition was attached to the development.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 Evidence for archaeological activity predating the medieval period is scarce, although low density prehistoric flint scatters have been recorded approximately 900m to the south-south-west (Derbyshire Historic Environment Record Reference (hereafter DHER) 18303), and 1.1km to the south-south-west (DHER Reference 18304).
- 4.2 There is some suggestion for settlement activity prior to the Norman Conquest. The place name is Old English in origin, meaning 'Hrothlaf's farm/settlement' (<http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/~aezins/kepnp.php>). In the Domesday Book, Rosliston was assessed with the neighbouring settlement of Walton-on-Trent, and was in the ownership of Earl Aelfgar. The manor included a mill and a church with a priest, with a population of 33 villans, 10 bordars and three sokemen (Williams and Martin 1992).

- 4.3 The existing parish church is dedicated to St. Mary, and located less than 100m to the west. A chapel is documented in Rosliston in a taxation roll of 1291, as a chapelry of Walton. The early church was largely demolished and rebuilt in 1819, although the lower part of a 14th century tower survives (DHER Reference 25001).
- 4.4 Numerous earthworks and cropmarks survive around the village, reflecting ridge and furrow ploughing to the north-west, north and south of the village (DHER References 25004, 25005, 25006).

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out by Mike Jarvis on Monday 19th and Tuesday 20th July 2010, and by Maria Piirainen on Thursday 22nd July 2010. Groundworks were carried out using a tracked mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.6m wide toothless bucket.
- 5.2 All exposed plan and section surfaces were inspected for any archaeological features and deposits to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Each context was recorded on pro-forma AAL context record sheets, accompanied by plan and section drawings at appropriate scales. A photographic record was maintained in both colour digital and monochrome formats.
- 5.3 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. Two digit numbers within square brackets reflect cut features (for example cut [06]).

6.0 Results

- 6.1 In Plot 1, the uppermost layer consisted of a brown silty sand modern topsoil horizon up to 0.15m thick, 01, which sealed a possible buried soil horizon of firm to friable mid brown silty sand with occasional small pebbles and roots c. 0.47m thick, 14. This sealed 03, a subsoil deposit of orangey brown coarse sandy silt c.0.45m thick which in turn sealed 04, a compact mottled yellowish grey and orangey brown clay and sandy clay natural at the limit of excavation.
- 6.2 In Plot 2 the topsoil 01 sealed 02, a c.0.3m thick layer of redeposited natural till of friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with abundant small pebbles and occasional roots. 02 sealed subsoil layer 03, which in turn sealed the natural geology 04. Layer 03 was cut by [13] a feature with moderate to steep sides and concave base. It was filled by 12, an undated friable pale greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles.
- 6.3 Within Plot 3 topsoil layer 01 once again sealed redeposited natural layer 02. This sealed layer 03, which was cut by a single feature, [06], defined by a steep sided “U” shaped cut 0.5m deep and 0.7m wide, and filled by 05, a mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. [09] was a feature with moderate to steep sides and a concave base partially visible in the east side of Plot 3, measuring c.5.2m long, c.2m wide and c.0.3m deep. It was filled by 17, also a mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles.
- 6.4 Layer 03 sealed the natural geology, 04, which was cut by a series of wide, shallow pit like features [08], [09], [10] and [11]. All four exhibited a wide, shallow profile, and contained largely identical fills of mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles, contexts 16, 17, 18 and 19 respectively.

- 6.5 Within the Garage Plot topsoil 01 sealed 15, a lens of possible buried soil of firm to friable very dark grey clayey sand with occasional charcoal. This overlay redeposited layer 02 which sealed 03, and 03 sealed natural geology 04 at the base of the sequence.
- 6.6 No artefacts were recovered from the site during the groundworks.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusion

- 7.1 The watching brief identified few features or deposits of interest. A series of four undated possible pit features containing similar fills were identified toward the east side of Plot 3. These were sealed by deep soil horizon 03 and therefore predated a fifth possible pit to the north of the plot which cut through layer 03, as did the single feature identified in Plot 2. The features were interpreted as pits of uncertain date and function, but clearly relating to two distinct phases of activity, interposed by the formation of layer 03. These were sealed by a number of redeposited layers used to raise and level the ground surface across the site, possibly prior to the construction of the former dwellings that occupied the site. The complete lack of finds from the site however precluded the absolute dating of any of these features or deposits.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 8.1 The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has shown that the development contains features and deposits of negligible archaeological significance.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Davis Construction Ltd for this commission and for the co-operation of the groundworkers during the watching brief.

10.0 References

AAL, 2010, *Specification for an archaeological watching brief: Land off Main Street in Rosliston, Derbyshire*. Allen Archaeology Limited unpublished project document

IfA, 1999 (revised 2001 and 2008), *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists

Williams, A. and Martin, G.H., 1992, *Domesday Book: A complete translation*, Alecto Historical Editions, London

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General view of site looking east-north-east from Main Street



Plate 2: General shot of Plot 3, looking south.



Plate 3: South-east facing section in garage plot H-G. Looking north-north-east

Appendix 2: Context Summary List

Context No.	Type	Description	Interpretation
01	Layer	Friable light to mid brown silty sand with abundant small pebbles and occasional modern brick fragments and roots. Seals 14, 15	Topsoil
02	Layer	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with abundant small pebbles and occasional roots. Seals 05 and 07, sealed by 01, 15	Redeposited natural - ground raising/levelling layer
03	Layer	Firm to friable mid orangey brown coarse sandy silt with abundant small pebbles and gravel. Sealed by 02, seals 04.	Natural subsoil
04	Layer	Compact mottled yellowish grey and orangey brown clay and sandy clay with occasional pebbles. Sealed by 03	Natural geology
05	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 02	Fill of 06
06	Cut	Steep sided "U" shaped cut. Filled by 05	Tree throw pit
07	Void	Void	Void
08	Cut	Moderate to steep sided cut with concave base. Filled by 16	Tree throw pit
09	Cut	Moderate to steep sided cut with concave base. Filled by 17	Tree throw pit
10	Cut	Moderate to steep sided cut with concave base. Filled by 18	Tree throw pit
11	Cut	Moderate to steep sided cut with concave base. Filled by 19	Tree throw pit
12	Fill	Friable pale greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 02	Fill of 13
13	Cut	Moderate to steep sided cut with concave base. Filled by 12, cuts 03	Possible tree throw pit or ditch terminus
14	Layer	Firm to friable mid brown silty sand with occasional small pebbles and roots. Seals 03, sealed by 01.	Possible buried soil In Plot 1 only
15	Layer	Firm to friable very dark grey clayey sand with occasional charcoal. Seals 02, sealed by 01.	Possible buried soil in Garage Plot only
16	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 07	Fill of 08
17	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 07	Fill of 09
18	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 07	Fill of 10
19	Fill	Friable mid greyish brown coarse sandy silt with occasional small pebbles. Sealed by 07	Fill of 11

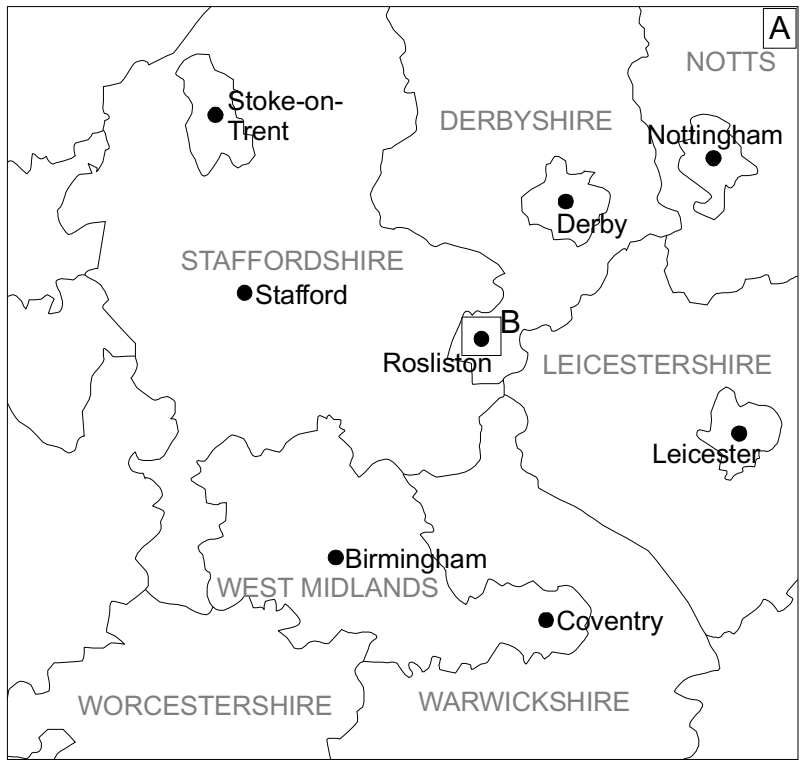
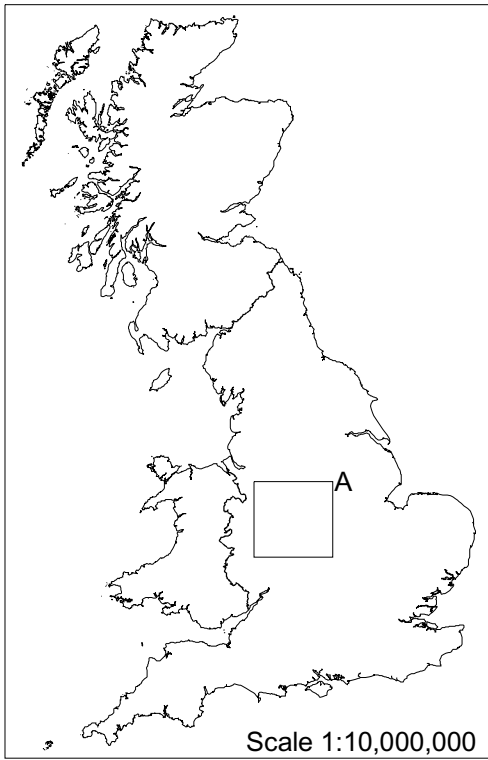


Figure 1: Site location in red at scale 1:25,000
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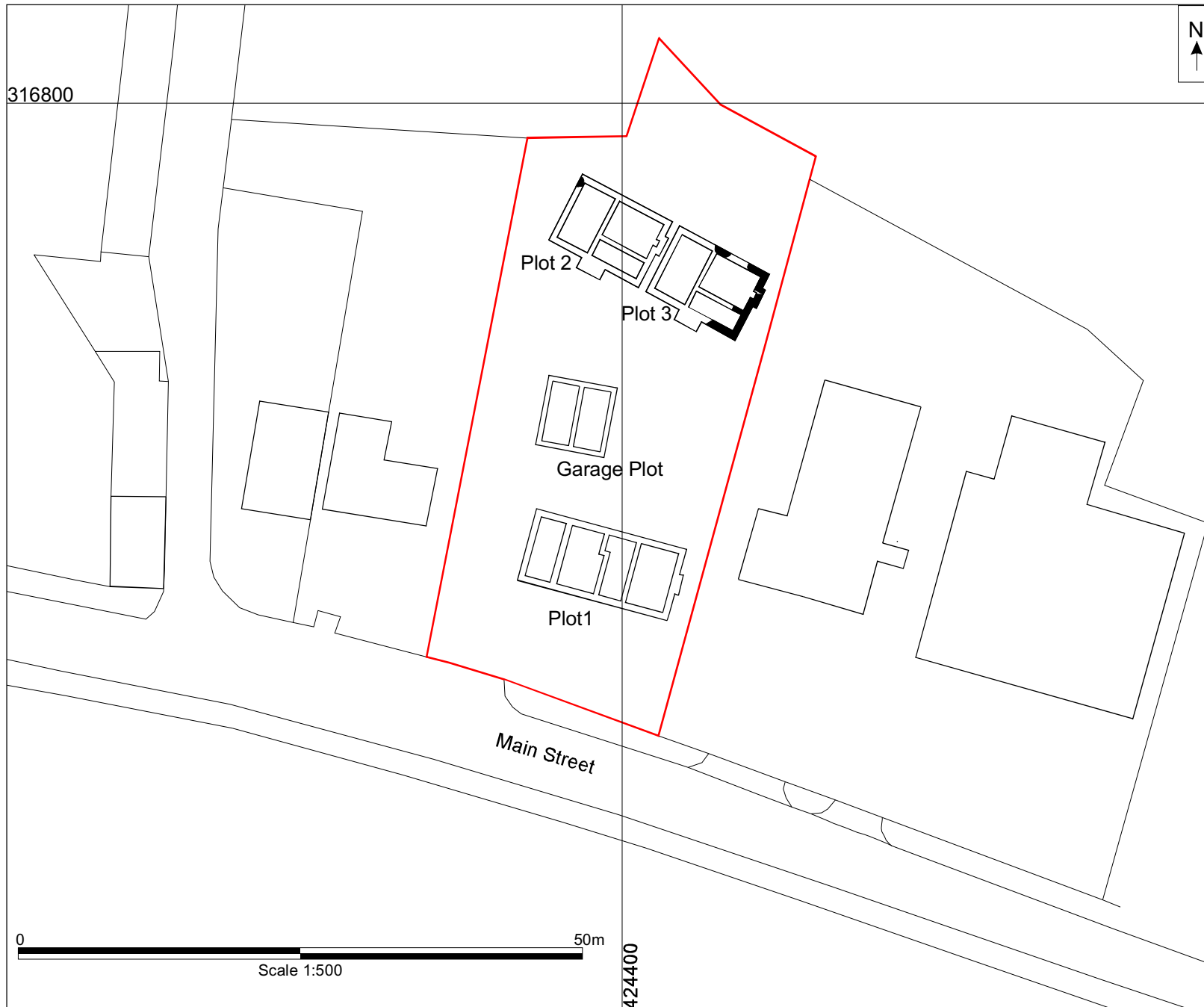


Figure 2: Site location plan at scale 1:500 with development area outlined in red, and archaeological features in black

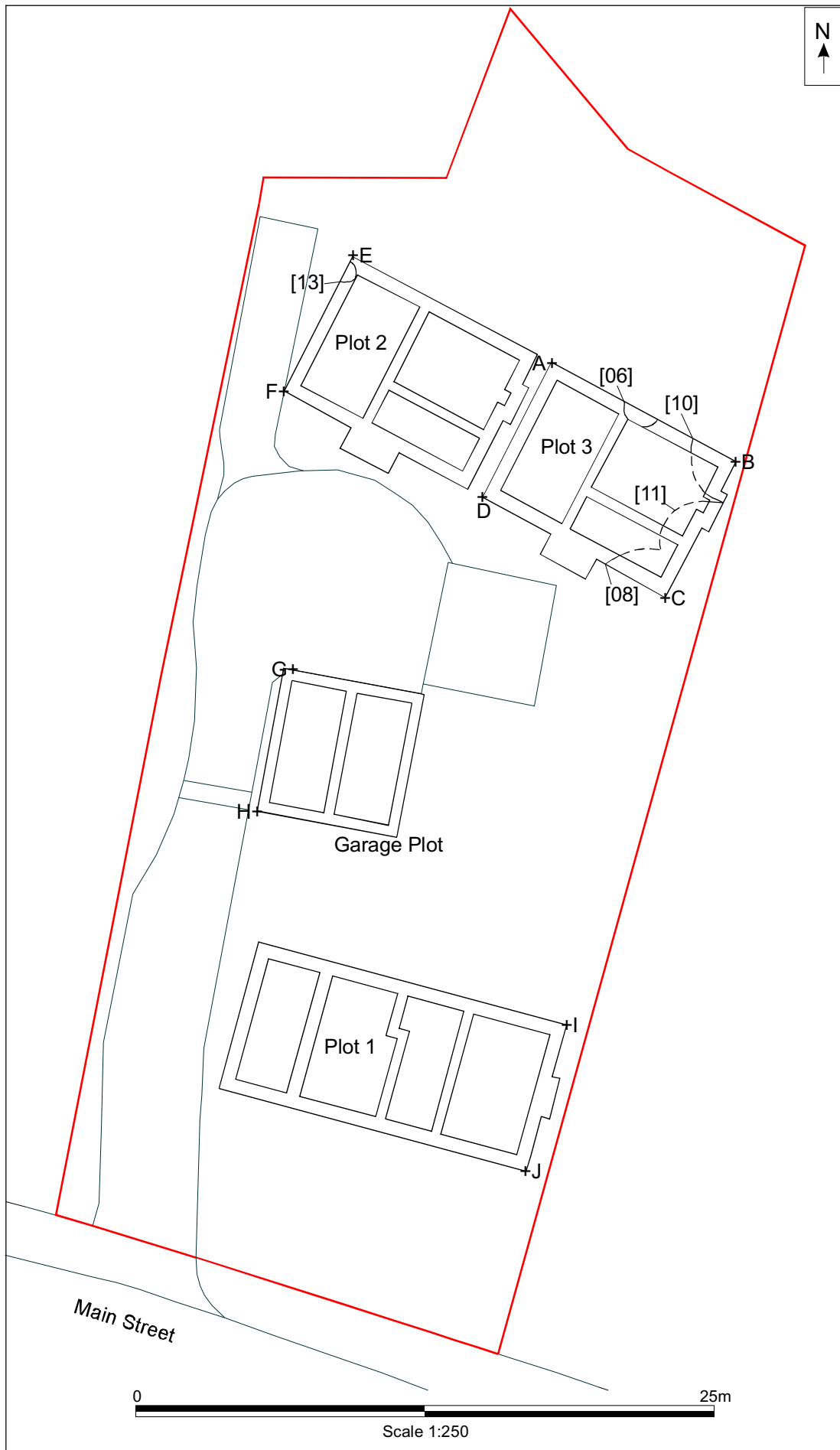


Figure 3: Development plan at scale 1:250, with the site outlined in red. Sections shown on Figure 4

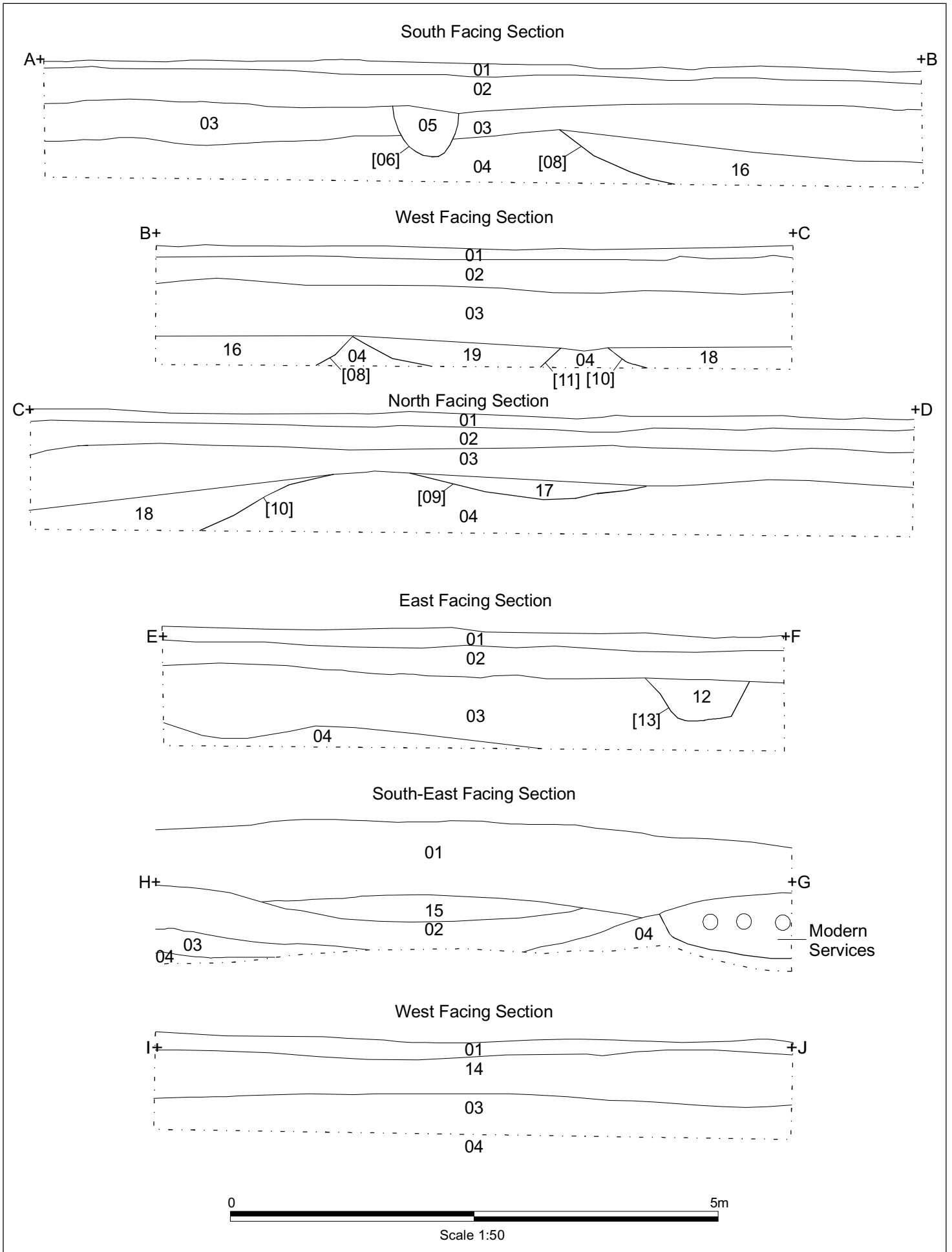


Figure 4: Sections at scale 1:50. Located on Figure 3