



Bristol and Region  
Archaeological  
Services

Archaeological Evaluation  
**LAND AT HIGH STREET  
HIGH LITTLETON  
SOMERSET.**

Simon Roper & Andrew Townsend





Archaeological Evaluation  
of  
**LAND AT HIGH STREET  
HIGH LITTLETON  
SOMERSET.**

Centred on NGR ST 6450 5838

Prepared for **Curo Group Ltd.**

BaRAS  
St Nicholas Church,  
St Nicholas Street,  
Bristol, BS1 1UE.

Tel: (0117) 903 9010  
email: [info@baras.org.uk](mailto:info@baras.org.uk)  
[www.baras.org.uk](http://www.baras.org.uk)

**Author & email contact:** Simon Roper, [simon.roper@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:simon.roper@bristol.gov.uk)

**Approved by:** Ian Greig

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### Abbreviations

AD	<i>Anno Domini</i>	IfA	Institute for Archaeologists
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	m	Metre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	NGR	National Grid Reference
BC	Before Christ	OASIS	Online Access to Archaeological Investigations
c	<i>Circa</i>	OS	Ordnance Survey
EHA	English Heritage Archives		
HER	Historic Environment Record		

### Adopted Chronology

Prehistoric	Before AD43
Roman	AD43-410
Anglo Saxon/Early Medieval	AD410-1066
Medieval	AD1066-1540
Post-medieval	AD1540-present

### NOTE

Notwithstanding that Bristol and Region Archaeological Services have taken reasonable care to produce a comprehensive summary of the known and recorded archaeological evidence, no responsibility can be accepted for any omissions of fact or opinion, however caused.

April, 2014

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological field evaluation of land adjacent to the High Street in the Somerset village of High Littleton was undertaken by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services.

Due to site conditions, it was not possible to excavate all the trenches.

Trench 1, adjacent to the junction of the High Street and the Chimes, only produced evidence for modern construction activities.

Trench 2, in the central portion of the redevelopment site, revealed a number of features including a stone-lined drain, stone slabs, and a masonry wall. The stone slabs and masonry wall appeared to be of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, but the date of the stone-lined drain was not ascertained.

The limited excavation that took place in Trench 3, also in the central portion of the redevelopment site, revealed a masonry wall in roughly the location of a postulated boundary alignment.

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Plate 3 Trench 2, including stone slabs under layer 200 (left of photo), from the north-east

Plate 4 Trench 2, south-east section at north-east end of trench (layers 200-205), from the north-west

Plate 5 Trench 2, stone-lined drain (in layer 205) in central portion of trench, from the north-west

Plate 6 Trench 2, masonry wall in north-east section of trench, from the south-west

## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The following report presents the results of a field evaluation undertaken by Bristol & Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) on land (the former Radstock Co-operative site) adjacent to the High Street in the Somerset village of High Littleton (BS39 6JD). The work comprised the excavation and recording of two trial trenches on the site of a proposed residential development, the planning application (13/04514/FUL) for which was submitted to Bath and North East Somerset Council on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2013 and approved, with conditions attached, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

1.2 Conditions 12-14 of the consent state that:

12 No development, other than above ground site clearance and above ground demolition, shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has implemented the programme of archaeological work (archaeological evaluation) in accordance with the submitted written scheme of investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (Project No. 3016, December 2013).

**Reason:** The site is within an area of significant archaeological interest and the Council will wish to examine and record items of interest discovered.

13 No development, other than above ground site clearance and above ground demolition, shall commence until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has presented the results of the archaeological field evaluation to the Local Planning Authority, and has secured the implementation of a subsequent programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has first been agreed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The agreed programme of archaeological work shall be carried out by a competent person and completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

**Reason:** The site is within an area of potential archaeological interest and the Council will wish to record and protect any archaeological remains.

14 The development shall not be brought into use or occupied until the applicant, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of post-excavation analysis in accordance with a publication plan which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme of post-excavation analysis shall be carried out by a competent person(s) and completed in accordance with the approved publication plan, or as otherwise agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

**Reason:** The site may produce significant archaeological findings and the Council will wish to publish or otherwise disseminate the results.

1.3 The evaluation was commissioned by the Curo Group Ltd behalf of the Radstock Co-Operative Society in meeting conditions 12-14 of the planning consent and undertaken in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation submitted as a supporting document of the planning application (BaRAS 2013).

1.4 The purpose of the evaluation was to provide data on the date, character, degree of survival, extent, significance, and location of any archaeological remains within the redevelopment site in order that an informed decision can be made with regard to any further archaeological work that might be required by the Archaeology Officer for BANES Council.

1.5 The trial trenches were excavated and recorded on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

1.6 The project archive will be deposited at the Roman Baths Museum and Pump Room in accordance with section 6.7 of the WSI and has been registered with the English Heritage OASIS project as: bristola1-165955.

## **2. THE REDEVELOPMENT SITE**

- 2.1 At the time of the evaluation the redevelopment site (centred on NGR ST 6450 5838) was occupied by the disused former Co-op store, surrounded on most sides by a combined car park and delivery yard; the rear part of the plot comprised disused and overgrown ground. The site is located on the south-west side of High Street, almost opposite the Methodist Church building, and is bounded by residential properties on both sides. There is a small field to the rear, which was under pasture.
- 2.2 The solid geology comprises Triassic Mercia Mudstone and Halite-stone (British Geological Survey 2013). No superficial deposits are recorded by the BGS, but geotechnical investigation has revealed clays, as well as a substantial depth of made ground in the rear half of the site.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to the present evaluation, no archaeological work had been undertaken specifically in relation to the redevelopment site.
- 3.2 The redevelopment site lies within the medieval settlement area of High Littleton. At the time of Domesday it was named Litelton, and, as before the Conquest, had land for five ploughs. Presumably, the village was centred around the parish church, which is about 400m south of the redevelopment site: the boundary with Farmborough parish until fairly recently ran less than 100m away.
- 3.3 The earliest detailed map, of the turnpike road and its environs (c 1786-87), shows a small group of buildings at the junction of the roads to Farmborough and Clutton Hill, astride the parish boundary, with one of the buildings being on the present redevelopment site. This was sited at the front of *Mr Lansdown's Land*, set back slightly from the road, almost square in plan, but with a rear wing and a small north-western extension. The entire plot was fronted by a wall or fence rather than the more usual hedges to be seen on either side, and in fact was the sole building on this side of the road for some distance north and 150m southwards.
- 3.4 A 1793 survey of the parish recorded the property as a House, Outbuildings, Barton & Garden, 2 roods and 24 perches in area, with a paddock of almost 3 acres adjoining (i.e. to the side and rear), all occupied by Lawrence Lansdown, who in total held 15 acres in the parish.
- 3.5 Census returns from the 19th century record the Gaby family resident in 1841, 1861 & 1871. In 1881 and 1891, George E. Cowen, High Bailiff and Assistant Overseer, was living at the house with his wife and four children, but it may have been sold after his death, in 1896. The first large-scale OS plan, surveyed in the 1880s, showed 'Lansdown Villa' with various outbuildings and a generous-sized garden, occupying a little over 1 acre. In both plan and location, the villa differed from the dwelling shown a century earlier, so the old house had presumably been rebuilt. Little had changed on the map by the early 20th century, but the 1901 Census listed the building as Lansdown House/Cooperative Stores, and uninhabited. The footprint remained constant through the decades, even into the 1960s, but by the mid-1970s the plan was the same slightly unusual shape that it is today.
- 3.6 At the time of the evaluation the buildings on the redevelopment site had been vacated.



#### 4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology outlined in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* approved by the Archaeology Officer for BANES Council (BaRAS 2013). The aim of the evaluation was to make, as far as practicable, a record (written, drawn, photographic) of the date, character, degree of survival, extent and location of archaeological remains encountered in the trial trenches.
- 4.2 The evaluation originally comprised three trial trenches (Trenches 1-3), each approximately 10 x 2 m in area (**Figs 1-2**). Due to the presence of asbestos, the excavation of Trench 3 had to be abandoned. Trenches 1 & 2 were initially opened using a machine fitted with a toothless grading bucket under the direction of a BaRAS archaeologist. With Trench 1 it was possible to enter the trench to undertake archaeological cleaning and recording; with Trench 2 site conditions (notably the possible presence of asbestos) prevented entry to the trench and recording in this instance was based on observations made standing outside the trench.
- 4.3 The site was recorded in accordance with the BaRAS *Site Manual* (BaRAS 2009). A photographic record of all features was made using digital colour photographs (**Plates 1-6 & Cover Plate**).

## 5. RESULTS

### General

- 5.1 Trench 1, adjacent to the junction of the High Street and the Chimes, only produced evidence for modern construction activities. Trench 2, in the central portion of the redevelopment site, revealed a number of features including a stone-lined drain, stone slabs, and a masonry wall. The stone slabs and masonry wall appeared to be of 19<sup>th</sup>-century date, but the date of the stone-lined drain was not ascertained. The limited excavation that took place in Trench 3, also in the central portion of the redevelopment site, revealed a masonry wall in roughly the location of a postulated boundary alignment.

### Trench 1

- 5.2 Trench 1 was situated adjacent to the junction of High Street and The Chimes (**Fig. 2; Plate 1 & Cover Plate**). The trench was aligned north-west to south-east, measured 10 m x 2 m wide, and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.90m from existing ground level.
- 5.3 The deposits encountered generally comprised a fairly uniform series throughout the trench, albeit with some variation.
- 5.4 The top of the natural geology, comprising a deposit of orange-brown clay (107), was encountered at approximately 0.50m below existing ground level and was excavated for a depth of 380 mm. This was overlain by a 90-mm thick deposit of grey-brown silty clay (106) which itself was overlain a 30mm-thick dark-coloured ash/clinker deposit (105), although these deposits were not visible in the eastern end of the trench (**Plate 2**). The layers possibly represent levelling associated with the construction of the modern surfacing.
- 5.5 The top four layers of the trench comprised sand blinding (103 & 104), scalplings (102) and tarmac surface (101), having a combined thickness of approximately 400 mm (**Plate 2**).
- 5.6 No finds were recovered from the trench.

### Trench 2

- 5.7 Trench 2 was situated in the central portion of the redevelopment site (**Plate 3**). The trench was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 10 m x 2 m wide. Due to site conditions it was not possible to enter the trench to undertake detailed recording.
- 5.8 Generally, a yellow-brown clay (205), was overlain by a series of deposits (201-204), some of which appeared to comprise re-deposited garden soil, although one of the deposits (202) comprised a grey-coloured mortar. A surface layer (200), comprising a mixture of demolition rubble and other dumped material of modern date, directly overlay deposit 201 (**Plate 4**).
- 5.9 A stone-lined drain formed within layer 205 was observed crossing the trench in a roughly north-west/south-east direction appearing to continue beyond the sides of the trench (**Plate 5**).
- 5.10 A layer of stone paving slabs was observed between the surface material (200) and garden-soil layer (201) in the south-east section of the trench (**Plate 3**).
- 5.11 A masonry wall of roughly north-west/south-east orientation was observed at the north-east end of the trench which roughly corresponded with a known property-boundary. The wall appeared to be founded on deposit (203). The lower (foundation) courses of the wall were constructed with roughly shaped stone blocks bonded with and off-white mortar. A single course of bricks laid on to of the stonework was observed at ground level (**Plate 6**).
- 5.12 Two modern ceramic drain-pipes were observed crossing the trench (north-east/south-west & north-west/south-east) leading from a brick-built chamber on the north-west side of the trench.

- 5.13 The only find recovered from the trench comprised a modern glass-bottle but this comprises and unstratified find.

**Trench 3**

- 5.14 The excavation of Trench 3 had to be abandoned due to site conditions (the possible presence of asbestos). The limited excavation that took place in Trench 3 revealed a masonry wall, of roughly north-west/south-east orientation, in roughly the location of a postulated boundary alignment.

## **6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

### **General**

- 6.1 The trial trenching revealed evidence for post-medieval activities on the redevelopment site although it has not been possible to date some of the features and deposits encountered in Trench 2.

### **Trench 1**

- 6.2 Trench 1 revealed evidence for modern construction activities as represented by a succession of layers directly overlying the natural geology.

### **Trench 2**

- 6.3 Trench 2 exposed a stone-lined drain at some depth. Although not firmly dated, this feature possibly relates to the construction of a building depicted on the redevelopment site on a late-18<sup>th</sup>-century map or, alternatively, could be associated with cultivation activities.
- 6.4 A layer of stone paving slabs was observed in the upper layers of the trench and possibly comprised the vestiges of a garden path or perhaps a base. This being the case, it is probable that the garden soil layer (201) onto which it was constructed comprised the original land-surface which has subsequently been covered over by modern material (layer 200).

### **Trench 3**

- 6.5 Due to site conditions the excavation of Trench 3 had to be abandoned. The limited excavation that did place revealed the vestiges of a stone-built wall, of roughly north-west/south-east orientation, in roughly the same location as a postulated boundary alignment.

## **7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED**

BaRAS (2009) *Site Manual*.

BaRAS (2013) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Evaluation at The Co-op Site, High Street, High Littleton*, prepared by John Bryant 04-12-13.

IfA (2013) *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (revised 2013).

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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## APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

This report is the result of work carried out in the light of national and local-authority policies.

### NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

The *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) for England published by the UK Government in March 2012 states that the historic environment, which includes designated and non-designated heritage assets, is an irreplaceable resource and, as such, should be taken into account by Local Planning Authorities when considering and determining planning applications. This is taken to form part of a positive strategy set out in the respective Local Plan (i.e. *Bristol Core Strategy*) to ensure the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment. The assigned significance of heritage assets will be key factor in terms of their conservation.

Given their irreplaceable nature, any harm to, or loss of, a heritage asset, or heritage assets, should be clearly and convincingly justified as part of a planning application. As part of this, applicants are required to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected by a proposal, including any contribution made by their setting. Where a heritage asset, or assets, are to be harmed or lost as the result of a proposal, the applicant will be required to record and advance the understanding of the significance of that asset or assets, to include making the evidence arising publicly accessible, but this will be in proportion to the significance of the asset/assets in question. While the NPPF takes into account the historic environment as a whole, additional protection is afforded to designated heritage assets under current English Law. Any proposal that would result in harm or loss of a designated heritage asset is also required to be justified by the applicant in meeting strict criteria set out in the NPPF.

### LOCAL POLICY

Bath and North East Somerset Council's Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) *Archaeology in Bath and North East Somerset, 2003* and *Archaeology in the City of Bath, 2004* state that:

- (i) There will be a presumption in favour of preserving any archaeological features or sites of national importance, whether scheduled or not;
- (ii) Development which could adversely affect sites, structures, landscapes or buildings of archaeological interest and their settings will require an assessment of the archaeological resource through a desk-top study, and where appropriate a field evaluation. Where there is evidence of archaeological remains, development will not be permitted except where it can be demonstrated that the archaeological features of the site will be satisfactorily preserved in situ, or a suitable strategy has been put forward to mitigate the impact of development proposals upon important archaeological remains and their settings; or, if this is not possible and the sites are not scheduled or of national importance, provision for adequately recording the site prior to destruction is made, preferably by negotiating a planning agreement to ensure that access, time and financial resources are available to allow essential recording and publication to take place.

The *BANES Core Strategy* (2011) retains some policies from the 2007 *Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan* including for the protection of the historic environment as Policies BH.11, BH.12 and BH.13, which state that development proposals will safeguard or enhance heritage assets and the character and setting of areas of acknowledged importance including:

- Scheduled ancient monuments
- Historic buildings both nationally and locally listed
- Historic parks and gardens both nationally and locally listed
- Conservation areas
- Archaeological remains

## APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Type	Description	Date
<b>Trench 1</b>			
101	Layer	Tarmacadam surface	Modern
102	Layer	Scalpings	Modern
103	Layer	Sand blinding	Modern
104	Layer	Sand blinding	Modern
105	Layer	Dark-coloured ash/clinker levelling deposit	Modern
106	Layer	Grey-brown silty clay levelling deposit	Modern
<b>Trench 2</b>			
200	Layer	Rubble and other dumped material	Modern
201	Layer	Re-deposited garden soil	(?)Modern
202	layer	Mortar spread/duped deposit	(?)Modern
203	Layer	Red silty clay	Unknown
204	Layer	Re-deposited garden soil	Unknown
205	Layer	Yellow-brown clay	Unknown
		Ceramic drain-pipes	Modern
		Stone-lined drain in (205)	Unknown
		Stone slabs in south-east section	Unknown, possibly 19 <sup>th</sup> cent.
		Wall in north-west section	Probably 19 <sup>th</sup> cent.

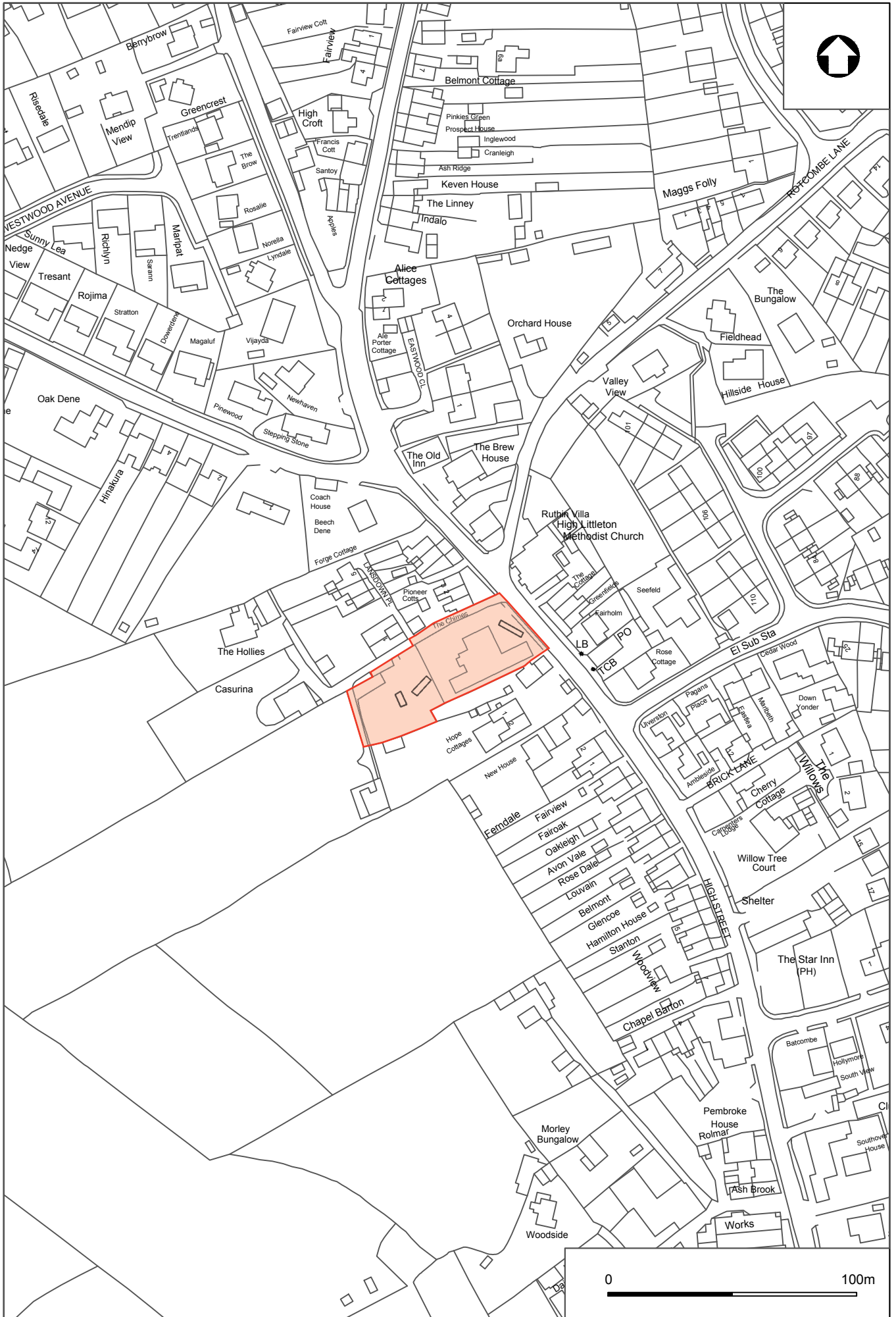


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:2000



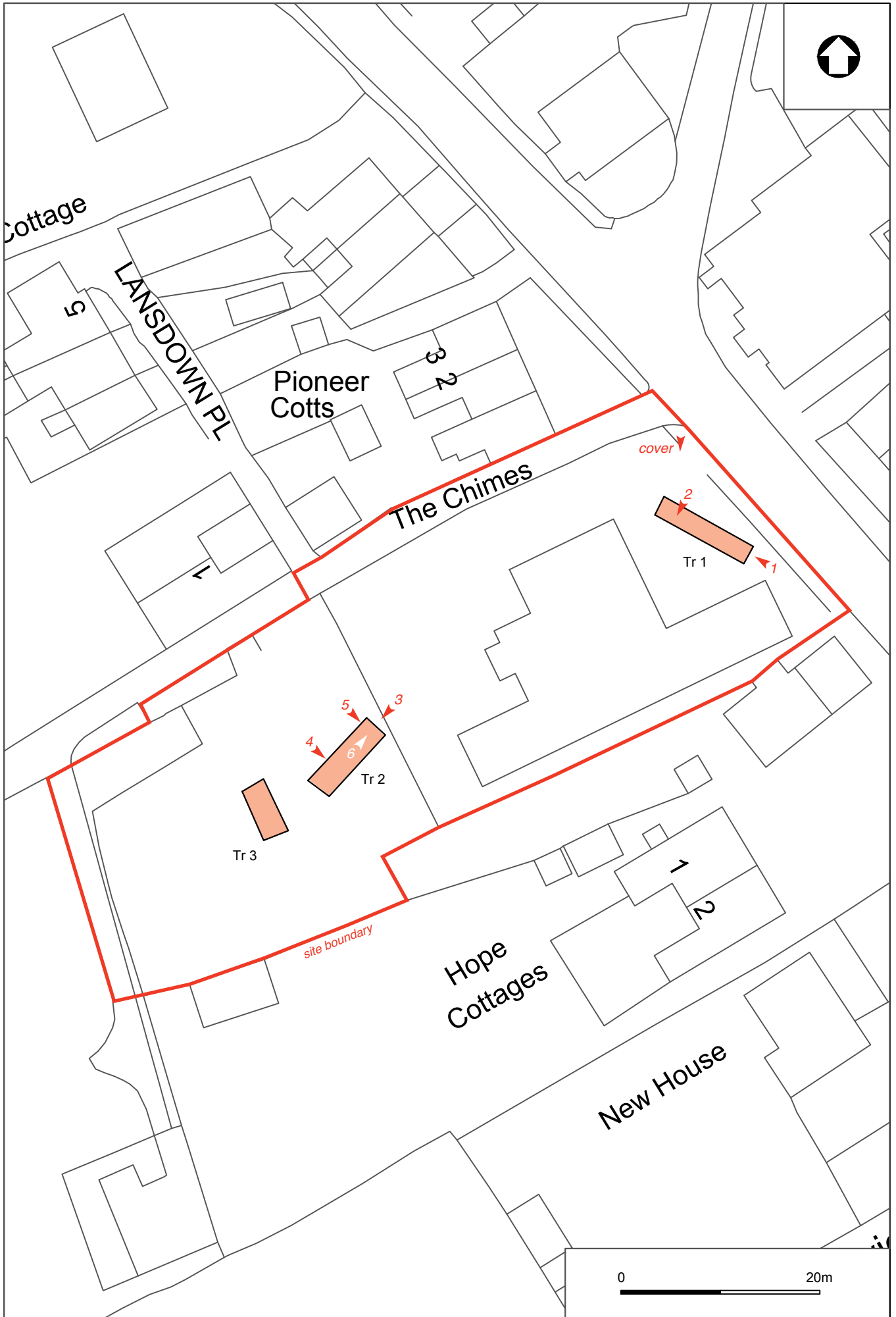


Fig.2 Trench location plan, scale 1:500

Plate 1  
Trench 1, from the south-east



Plate 2  
Trench 1, south-west section  
at north-west end of trench  
(layers 101-107), from the  
north-east



Plate 3  
Trench 2, including stone  
slabs under layer 200  
(left of photo), from the  
north-east



Plate 4 Trench 2, south-east section at north-east end of trench (layers 200-205), from the north-west



Plate 5 Trench 2, stone-lined drain (in layer 205) in central portion of trench, from the north-west



Plate 6 Trench 2, masonry wall in north-east section of trench, from the south-west