



**Bristol and Region  
Archaeological  
Services**

Archaeological Watching Brief  
**PRIOR PARK COLLEGE,  
RALPH ALLEN DRIVE,  
LYNCOMBE, BATH.**

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**FAME**  
Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers



Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**PRIOR PARK COLLEGE,  
RALPH ALLEN DRIVE,  
LYNCOMBE, BATH.**

Centred on NGR ST 76100 62740

Prepared for **Prior Park College**

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian Greig'.

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### Abbreviations

|       |  |       |   |
|-------|--|-------|---|
| AD    | Anno Domini                              | DCMS  | Dept. for Culture Media & Sport                             |
| aOD   | Above Ordnance Datum                     | EH    | English Heritage  |
| BANES | Bath & N E Somerset                      | EHA   | English Heritage Archive                                    |
| BaRAS | Bristol & Region Archaeological Services | HER   | Historic Environment Record                                 |
| BC    | Before Christ                            | IfA   | Institute for Archaeologists                                |
| BL    | British Library                          | Km    | Kilometre   |
| c     | Circa                                    | m     | Metre   |
| C     | Century                                  | NGR   | National Grid Reference                                     |
| CCF   | Combined Cadet Force                     | OASIS | Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations |
| G     | Dept. for Communities & Local Government | OS    | Ordnance Survey   |

### 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.

June, 2014

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with redevelopment at Prior Park College, Ralph Allen Drive, Lyncombe, Bath (NGR ST 76100 62740).

No significant archaeological features or finds were observed during the watching brief.

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) on behalf of Prior Park College during the site redevelopment (Planning Application No: 10/05094/FUL).
- 1.2 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 31st March and the 4th April 2014 and 8th May-16th May 2014.
- 1.3 The project archive will be deposited with Roman Baths Museum and Pump Rooms under the Accession Number BATRM 2014/190 and a copy of the report will be made available to the English Heritage Archive. The project has been entered in the Historic Environment Record as: EBN 3634 and in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as: bristola1-170279.

## 2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site, centred on NGR ST 76100 62740, is located near the intersection of Ralph Allen Drive and North Road, excluding the building known as Top Lodge and its garden (**Fig. 1**).
- 2.2 The site is situated within the City of Bath World Heritage Site and Bath Conservation Area, as well as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Historically, it lay within the parish of Lyncombe and Widcombe. There have been no known previous archaeological investigations on the site. The history of this part of the estate has been covered in more detail by the project Heritage Statement, dated November 2010. There have also been studies of the mansion and its environs.
- 2.3 The solid geology is Ooidal Limestone of the Combe Down Oolite Member, being of the Jurassic Period (BGS 2014). No superficial geological deposits are recorded. Ground levels within the site vary from just under 154m aOD at the northern end to just above 155m aOD at the southern end. The ground is raised further in the south-west corner, reaching to about 158m aOD.

## 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 3.1 Prior Park was first laid out in the late 11th century. Following the dissolution and nearly two centuries as agricultural land it was purchased, along with stone quarrying rights to Coombe Down and other land, by Ralph Allen in 1726-28. In order to transfer stone from the quarries to the quay on the River Avon a tramway was constructed along what is now Ralph Allen Drive, operating from about 1730 for a number of decades.
- 3.2 By the estate survey of 1828 the formal avenues previously laid out in the project area had disappeared and in the 1851-52 city survey it was recorded as '*Freestone Quarries*' with a narrow strip of trees along North Road. The site appears to have been neglected after this for a number of years before being shown as a well planted drive with the new and old quarry areas separated by a 'L' shaped bank on the 1884 OS large-scale survey. By the early 1900s quarrying had ceased and by the Post-War period these had disappeared too with trees only present alongside the two roads.
- 3.3 Subsequently, the CCF hut was erected to the west of the main playing field area, with a car park in front of it. Further south, other sports facilities were added (**Fig. 1**).
- 3.4 According to the HER records, No evidence has been found on the study area for any of the following:
- Scheduled monuments;
  - Statutory or locally listed buildings;
  - Historic battlefields;
  - Registered parks or gardens;
  - Ecclesiastical establishments, consecrated ground, faith buildings or places-of-worship;
  - Burial grounds (in use or disused);
  - Conservation Area (see § 1.4).

#### **4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with the methodology set out in a *Written Scheme of Investigation* (Bryant, 2014), *BaRAS Site Manual* (2009) and the Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (IfA 2008). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The groundworks were carried out using JCB and Hitachi 360° mechanical excavators fitted with toothed buckets. Photographs were taken as the works were monitored and records / plans of the soils exposed made where relevant.



## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 No archaeological features were observed during the groundwork between 31st March-10th April 2014 and the 8th-16th May 2014. Unstratified finds comprised of post-medieval pottery, predominantly post-1825 transfer print and Willow pattern. Stratified finds consisted a 'Fields Lavender Talcum' tin c.1910/30 (context 006); and a late 18th-century Gillard & Co. London glass preserve jar manufactured by B & Co., ref. 365 with post-medieval pottery fragments (context 008).
- 5.2 The watching brief can be broken down into two parts. Firstly the removal of the car park and building and levelling of the site in preparation for the piling mat (**Plate 2**) and secondly the digging of a sewer pipe trench along the western edge of the site (**Fig. 2, Plate 3**).
- 5.3 The lowest observed deposit during the levelling of the site was re-deposited homogenously mixed limestone pieces of varying size and shape with no soil inclusions, approx. 500mm thick (context 005). Above this was a redeposited backfill/levelling layer 200-500mm deep of homogenously mixed reddish brown silty clay & weathered limestone pieces/fragments of varying size and shape (context 002). Above this was either a reddish brown silty clay loam topsoil 100-150mm thick, or 150mm crushed stone (context 004) topped with 100mm tarmac (context 003)(**Appendix 2**).
- 5.4 The sewer trench varied in width due to the unstable nature of the site from between 1500-5000mm. The depth was approx. 3000mm. In the south-west section of the trench the floor of the quarry was observed (**Plate 4**) at this depth (context 009). In the rest of its length the lowest observed context was 005. Above this was buried topsoil between 100-180mm thick, which included *in situ* tree stumps (context 008). Post-medieval pottery fragments were present at the south-western end, nearest the house on the road junction, in this context. This was covered by context 002 to a depth of 1300mm and topped by 200mm of topsoil (context 001) or 150mm crushed stone (context 004) topped with 100mm tarmac (context 003). This trench also cut the earlier water main running north-south across the site (**Plate 5**), before being backfilled with the excavated material (**Plate 6**) (**Appendix 2**).

## 6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological remains were identified during the watching brief. The finds are suggestive of material brought in either through domestic dumping or during earlier levelling and backfilling of the quarries, tree planting and the site's later development. The dating of the finds, therefore, is not indicative of their deposition date. No finds were retained.
- 6.2 The sequence of deposits observed during the groundwork shows previous site-wide horizontal truncation of historical soil deposits, with any associated archaeological features being removed. The site was then backfilled using quarrying waste and redeposited topsoil.

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

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## 8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The archaeological work was managed by Ian Greig (Manager BaRAS). Plans, figures, and plates in this report were prepared by Ann Linge (Design and Production Officer BaRAS). The archaeological work was undertaken by Alistair Byford-Bates. The report was written by Alistair Byford-Bates (Project Officer BaRAS).

## **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 POLICIES**

The Planning Policy Statement of Archaeology and Planning (PPS 15) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the Local Authority Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district council archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the impact of a development on the archaeological resource to enable a reasoned planning decision to be taken. PPS 15 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan including waste and minerals policies Revised Deposit Draft 2007 as approved for used for Development Control purposes contains the following policies:

**Policy BH.11** – Development which would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments or any other sites of national importance, and their settings and does not preserve such sites in situ will not be permitted.

**Policy BH.12** – Development which would harm important archaeological remains or their settings outside the scope of Policy BH.11 will not be permitted unless the adverse impact of the development proposal on the remains can be mitigated.

**Policy BH.13** – Development which adversely affects significant archaeological remains within Bath will not be permitted unless the preservation in situ of these remains can be achieved through a detailed design and construction scheme.

Two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents 'Archaeology in Bath & North-East Somerset' and 'Archaeology in the City of Bath' (both 2004) have been adopted. Their principal purpose is to supplement Policies BH.11, BH.12 & BH.13 of the existing and emerging Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with these.

## APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

| Context No. | Type    | Description   | Stratigraphy            | Date          |
|-------------|---------|---|-------------------------|---------------|
| 001         | Deposit | Reddish brown silty clay loam topsoil and turf. 100-150mm. Redeposited.   | Above 002               | Post-Medieval |
| 002         | Deposit | Homogenously mixed reddish brown silty clay & weathered limestone pieces/fragments of varying size and shape. Redeposited backfill/levelling layer. 200-500mm.  | Above 003<br>Below 001  | Post-Medieval |
| 003         | Deposit | Tarmac, car park surface. 100mm.  | Above 004               | Post-Medieval |
| 004         | Deposit | Crushed stone/planings levelling layer. 150mm. Reddish brown and greyish brown lens visible in some sections.   | Above 002<br>Below 003  | Post-Medieval |
| 005         | Deposit | Redeposited homogenously mixed limestone pieces of varying size and shape with no soil inclusions. 500mm+   | Below 002               | Post-Medieval |
| 006         | Fill    | Greyish brown silty clay with bioturbation activity and two large stone blocks (400x350x170mm) and a smaller block (500x900mm). Truncated by 004.   | Above 007<br>Below 004  | Post-Medieval |
| 007         | Cut     | Irregular pit cut into 005 with poorly defined edges truncated by 004 and 360° excavator during levelling of site. Approx. 1500x750mm. Possible tree bole.  | Above 002<br>Below 006. | Post-Medieval |
| 008         | Deposit | Dark brown silty clay including tree stumps observed in sewer trench section, with buried tree stump <i>in situ</i> . Not recorded due to instability of trench sides. Approx. 1500-2000mm below surface and 100-180mm thick. | Above 005<br>Below 002. | Post-Medieval |
| 009         | Deposit | 'Natural' Bath stone floor of the quarry in bottom of sewer trench. Approx. 3000mm below surface in SW corner of site.  | Below 005               | Post-Medieval |

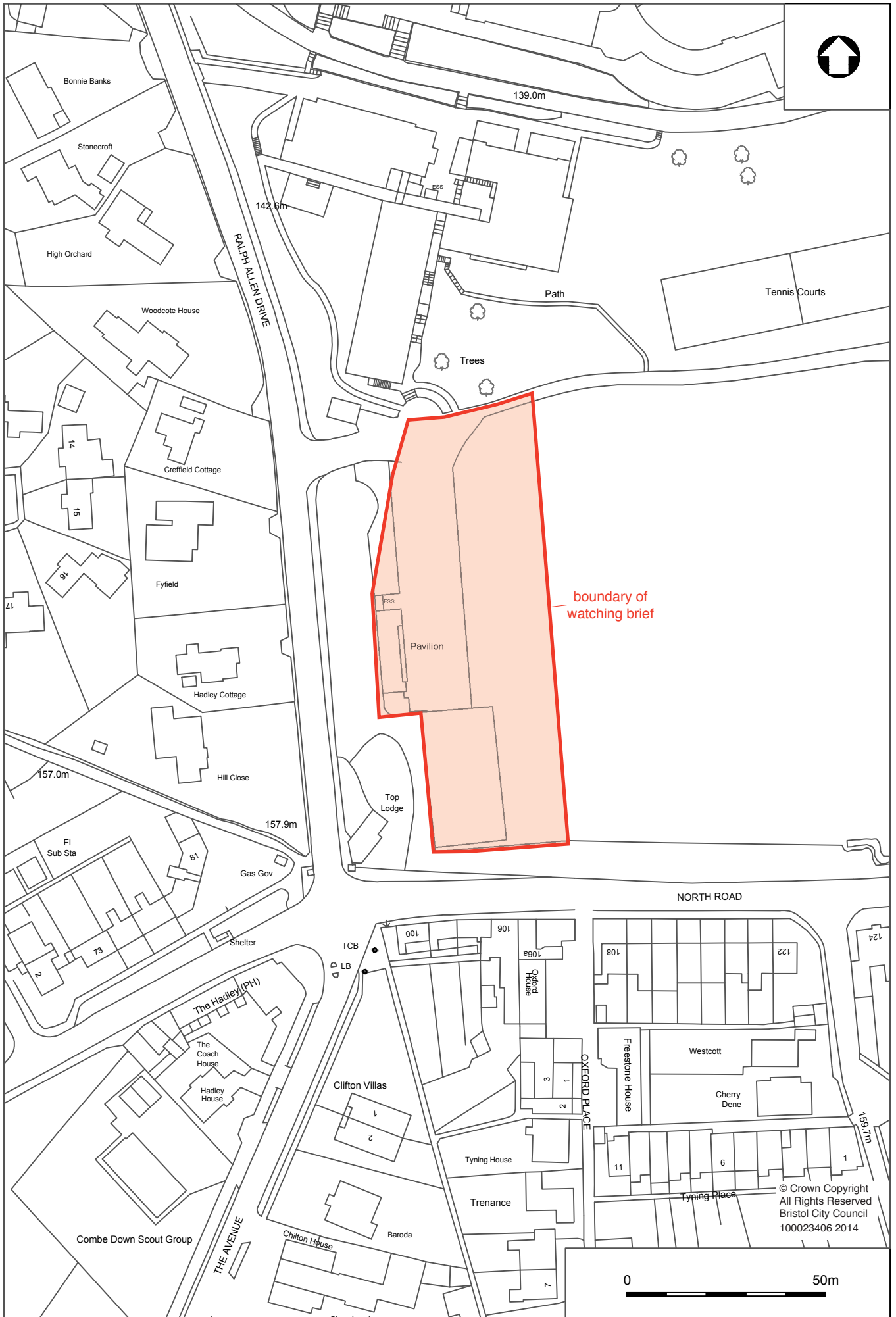


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250

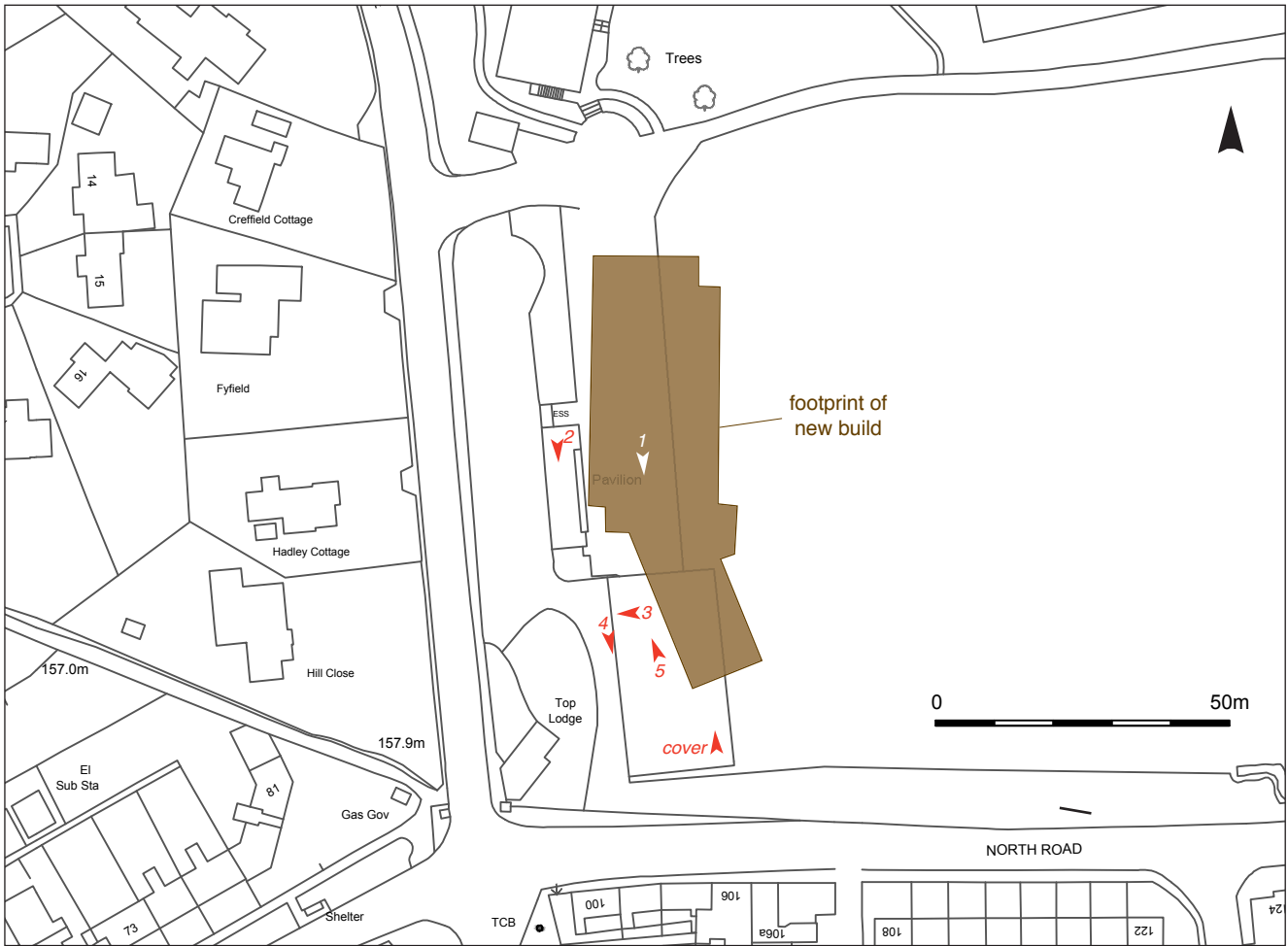


Fig.2 Plan of proposed new sports centre



Plate 1 Site reduction and levelling for piling mat



Plate 2 Representative view of sewer excavation

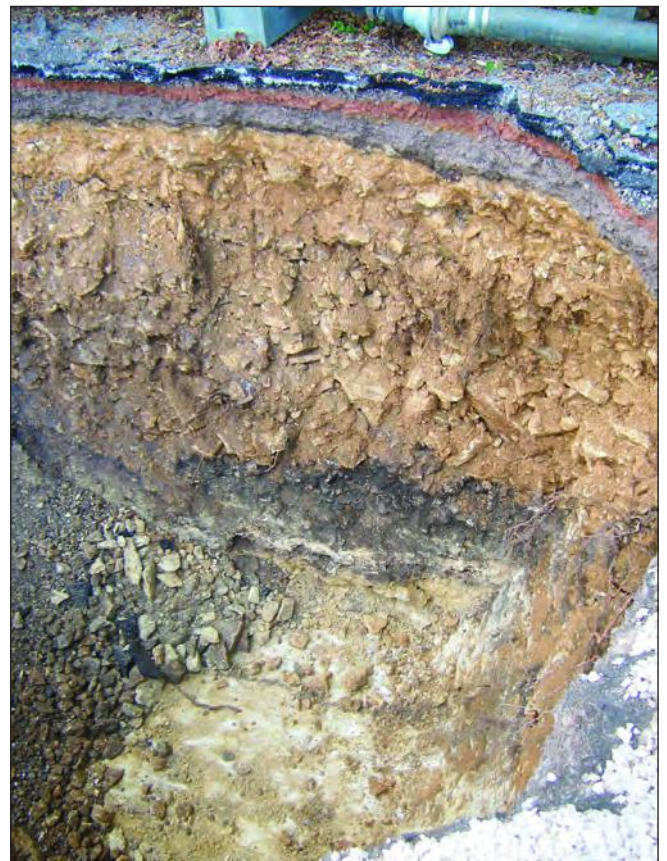


Plate 3 Quarry floor and representative section



Plate 4 Water main cut by sewer trench



Plate 5 Partially backfilled sewer trench