



**Bristol and Region
Archaeological
Services**

Archaeological Evaluation
**LAND AT SCOT ELM DRIVE,
WEST WICK, WESTON-SUPER-MARE.**

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Archaeological Evaluation
of land at

**SCOT ELM DRIVE,
WEST WICK, WESTON-SUPER-MARE.**

Centred on NGR ST 37492 61934

Prepared for **Wilmott Dixon Construction**

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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	NSC	North Somerset Council
c	Circa	OASIS	Online Access to Archaeological Investigations
EHA	English Heritage Archives	OS	Ordnance Survey
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.

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SUMMARY

Two archaeological trial trenches were excavated at the site of the proposed St Anne's Primary School on land off Scot Elm Drive, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare.

The area is considered to have good archaeological potential but no significant archaeological remains were observed in the trenches.

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- Figure 2 Plan showing location of trial trenches, with plate-orientations indicated, scale 1:1000

Plates

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- Plate 1 Evaluation Trench 1, from the north-east
- Plate 2 Sondage at north-east end of Trench 1 (north-west section) showing topsoil (100) subsoil (101) and geological deposits (102 & 103), from the south-east
- Plate 3 Evaluation Trench 2, from the north-west
- Plate 4 Sondage at north-west end of Trench 2 (north-east section) showing topsoil (200), subsoil (201 & 202) and geological deposits (203 & 204), from the south-west

1. INTRODUCTION

General

- 1.1 An archaeological evaluation of land off Scot Elm Drive, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare (NGR ST 37492 61934) was commissioned from Bristol & Region Archaeological Services by Wilmott Dixon Construction in relation to proposals to erect a new primary school.

Site Location

- 1.2 The development site is situated in the area of Westacres Farm immediately to the south-east of the Somerset village of West Wick (**Figs 1 & 2**). Further details concerning the site and proposed development are included in the Design & Access Statement prepared by Hunter & Partners South Ltd (Hunters 2013).

Planning History

- 1.3 A planning application for the proposed school (13/P/1992/RG3) was submitted to North Somerset Council in October 2013 and granted consent with conditions in January 2014. Condition 20 of the consent states that:

“No development shall take place until a programme of archaeological work under the supervision of an archaeologist provided by the Local Planning Authority during ground works on the site, or alternatively in accordance with a brief to be provided by the Local Planning Authority, with provision for excavation of any significant deposits or features encountered, has been carried out.”

- 1.4 An Internal Memorandum from the Archaeology Officer (Mr Vince Russett) for North Somerset Council states that the development site lies within an area of high archaeological potential, notably in relation to the late prehistoric, Romano-British and late Saxon/early medieval periods, although this is not mentioned in the Design & Access Statement (Hunters 2013).

Archaeological Field Evaluation (Trial Trenching)

- 1.5 In view of the development site's potential for the presence of significant archaeology, and in response to Condition 20 of the Consent (see § 1.3), a field evaluation comprising two trial trenches was requested by the Archaeology Officer for North Somerset Council, the details of which are included in a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the works prepared by BaRAS in January 2014 (BaRAS 2014). The WSI was approved by North Somerset Council prior to commencement.
- 1.6 The trial trenches were sited within the footprint area of the proposed building and were undertaken in March 2014 in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2013). The methodology employed on site was that detailed in the *BaRAS Site Manual* (BaRAS 2009).
- 1.7 The evaluation was undertaken under the supervision of Simon Roper MIfA who was assisted by Roy Krakowicz and the project managed by Ian Greig MIfA.

Project Details

- 1.8 The project archive will be deposited with the Somerset Heritage Centre at Taunton under an Accession Number and a copy of the report will be sent to the North Somerset Council for inclusion in the Historic Environment Record. The project has been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as bristola1-175671. A digital copy will also be made available to the English Heritage Archive at Swindon.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The solid geology of the development site comprises Triassic Mudstone and Halite-stone (Mercia Mudstone Group) (source: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>). In altitude the development site lies at approximately 4-6 m aOD and covers an area of 1.08 hectares.
- 2.2 Prior to the evaluation, the site had been cleared of stockpiled modern construction-debris and levelled off (**Cover Plate**).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

General

- 3.1 Historically the development site lay within the parish of Banwell. The parish is not yet covered by the *Victoria County History* for Somerset but an area of the village and discussion of the wider area is included in the Avon Extensive Urban Survey for Banwell (La Trobe-Bateman 1999). It has been suggested that the hamlet of West Wick to the north-west of the development site was founded in the mid-10th century AD when the area was being re-colonised following post-Roman alluviation; the village remained essentially rural in character until the 1990s (Vince Russett pers. comm. 06-02-14).

Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation

- 3.2 An extract from the Avon Historic Landscape Characterisation was provided Mr Vince Russett, Archaeology Officer for North Somerset Council, which attributes the evaluation site to post-medieval (15th-17th century) irregular fields enclosed from anciently reclaimed inland moors.

North Somerset Historic Environment Record

- 3.3 Prior the present evaluation no archaeological fieldwork had taken place on the redevelopment site.
- 3.4 An extract from the North Somerset Historic Environment Record was provided by Mr Daniel Smith, HER Officer for North Somerset Council, the results of which are included in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Extract from North Somerset Historic Environment Record (HER)

HER No.	Location	Description	Date/Period
9301	West Wick	Site of village green	medieval
9302	West Wick	Site of building (house)	Post-medieval
10587	Ploughman and Two Horses	Limestone slabs exposed	Unknown
40091	Locking Castle Business Park	Peat exposures	?Bronze Age
40092	Locking Castle	Pottery & bone finds	Roman
40093	Locking Castle Business Park	Peat exposures	?Neolithic/Bronze Age
40253	Ivy Cottage	Site of building (house)	Post-medieval
40824	Locking	Debris from Second World War Outer Lorenz Beacon	Modern
42512	Westacres Farm	Field system	?Romano-British
43188	West Wick	Core settlement	Unknown date but ?medieval or earlier
44926	Scot Elm Drive	Ditches/field system	Romano-British
44927	Scot Elm Drive	Cremation burial	Iron Age
45540	West Wick	Site of farmhouse	Post-medieval
45541	West Wick	Site of farmhouse	Post-medieval
46011	West Wick	Ditches	Romano-British
46012	West Wick	Ditch	Late prehistoric

- 3.5 The extract indicates substantive evidence for human activities in the environs of the development site from late prehistoric times. This includes a number of peat exposures (HER 40091 & 40093) of Neolithic/Bronze Age date and a cremation burial (HER 44927) of Iron Age date. Features and finds of Romano-British date are also known which includes a field system (HER 42512) on the development site. Added to this, the West Wick/St George's area incorporates the remains of late-prehistoric and Romano-British salt kilns.
- 3.6 Evidence for late-Saxon/early-medieval activities has been found at West Wick to the west/north-west of the development site.
- 3.7 The evidence contained in the HER extract, along with other known human activities in the area, led to the conclusion that the development site lay in an area of high archaeological potential and that a field evaluation would be required to establish if any remains with archaeological/historical interest were present (see § 1.4).

4. AIMS and METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the approved WSI (BaRAS 2014). As a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), BaRAS are required to comply with the IfA's Code of Conduct (IfA 2014) and in this respect ensured that the work complied with their *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (IfA 2013).
- 4.2 The core aims of the evaluation were:
- To establish, as far as practicable, the character, likely extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains exposed by the trial trenching;
 - Establish the significance of any archaeological remains including their implications for the South West Archaeological Resource Framework (Webster 2008) and with reference to the North Somerset HER;
 - Record and report the findings of the evaluation and, if necessary, make recommendations for further archaeological measures.

5. RESULTS

General

- 5.1 Two trial trenches (Trench 1 & Trench 2), each measuring 25 x 1.6 m, were excavated in the locations indicated on **Fig. 2**.

Trench 1 (see Plates 1-2 & Cover)

- 5.2 Generally, a layer of topsoil (100) approximately 0.50-0.60 m in depth directly overlay what appeared to be a layer of re-deposited subsoil (101) 0.60 m in depth containing modern construction material, which overlay an *in situ* geological deposit (102).
- 5.3 A sondage was excavated at the north-west end of the trench to prove the *in situ* nature of deposit (102) which demonstrated that this layer directly overlay a further *in situ* geological deposit (103) (**Plate 2**). No buried land-surfaces were identified.
- 5.4 Save for the construction debris observed in the topsoil (100) and subsoil (101) no other finds were recovered or observed.

Trench 2 (see Plates 3-4)

- 5.5 Generally, a layer of topsoil (200), approximately 0.50 m in depth, directly overlay a subsoil layer (201), 0.01-0.20 m in depth, which directly overlay a further subsoil layer (202) approximately 0.20 m in depth. The latter deposit directly overlay an *in situ* geological deposit (203). In the central portion of the trench two distinct deposits (205 & 206) underlying the

topsoil (200) filled what appeared to be a depression, or shallow cut, through soil layers 201, 202 & 203 (with a combined depth of 0.60 m) but this was not considered to comprise a significant archaeological feature (deposit 206 contained fragments of modern brick).

- 5.6 A sondage was excavated at each end of the trench to prove the *in situ* nature of deposit (203) which demonstrated that this layer directly overlay a further *in situ* geological deposit (204) (**Plate 4**). No buried land-surfaces were identified.
- 5.7 Fragments of construction debris were observed in the topsoil (200), and fragment of brick in deposit (206), but no other finds were recovered or observed.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Two trial trenches were excavated on the evaluation site but no significant archaeological remains were observed.
- 6.2 It is possible that the area of land in the vicinity of the trenches was reduced in level down to the natural geology in modern times and the ground subsequently made-up.
- 6.3 No evidence was found for the Romano-British field system included in the North Somerset HER (HER 42512).
- 6.4 The project records will now be archived in accordance with the WSI (BaRAS 2014).
- 6.5 Copies of this report will be disseminated as detailed in the WSI (BaRAS 2014).

7. REFERENCES

BaRAS (2009) *Site Manual*. Unpublished.

BaRAS (2014) *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation at Proposed St Anne's School, West Wick, Weston-super-Mare* prepared by Ian Greig on 30-01-14.

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Webster, C, ed. (2008) *The Archaeology of South West England (South West Archaeological Research Framework Resource Assessment and Research Agenda)*. Taunton: Somerset County Council.

Websites

British Geological Survey <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/> (accessed 25-03-14).

North Somerset Council <https://www.n-somerset.gov.uk/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed 25-03-14).

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services wish to thank the following for their help and advice: Mr Vince Russet, Archaeology Officer for North Somerset Council; Mr Daniel Smith, HER Officer for North Somerset Council; Simon Williams and colleagues, Wilmott Dixon Construction.

The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Roper and Roy Krakowicz of Bristol & Region Archaeological Services. This report was compiled by Simon Roper and Andrew Townsend.

The project was managed by Ian Greig MIfA.

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

CS5: Landscape and the historic environment

The council will conserve the historic environment of North Somerset, having regard to the significance of heritage assets such as conservation areas, listed buildings, buildings of local significance, scheduled monuments, other archaeological sites, registered and other historic parks and gardens.

Particular attention will be given to aspects of the historic environment which contribute to the distinctive character of North Somerset, such as the Victorian townscapes and seafronts in Weston and Clevedon.

Historic Environment

- 3.81 Policy CS5 also reflects the importance of North Somerset's historic environment, and the need to conserve it in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework paragraphs 126-141.
- 3.82 There are 34 Conservation Areas in North Somerset, plus a proposed Conservation Area at Barrow Gurney, and 1,079 listed buildings. Particularly interesting is Birnbeck Pier, Weston-super-Mare, (Grade II* listed), the only pier in Britain linked to an island.
- 3.83 Historic parks and gardens are important in historical and landscape terms and may also be of wildlife and recreational value. North Somerset has several designed landscapes on the English Heritage Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest at Ashton Court (Grade II*), Barrow Court (II), Clevedon Court (II*), Leigh Court (II), Tyntesfield (II*), Barley Wood (II), Bristol University Botanic Gardens and Rayne Thatch (II) and Grove Park (II), Weston-super-Mare. Other designed landscapes of local historic interest include Abbot's Leigh House, Abbot's Leigh, Alexandra Gardens, Clevedon and Coombe Lodge, Blagdon.
- 3.84 Buildings need not be listed to be of importance to the historic environment. The council is proposing to introduce a scheme by which buildings of local or regional importance are identified, using specific criteria. It is envisaged that this status would be a material consideration in assessing planning applications affecting such buildings.

- 3.85 Archaeological remains are important for their historical and educational interest and may also be important features in the landscape. The Historic Environment Record (HER) contains details of all known sites, structures, landscapes or other areas of archaeological interest in North Somerset. They include Scheduled Monuments such as Worlebury Camp, a large hillfort on Worlebury Hill.

The Core Strategy approach

- 3.86 Policy CS5 sets out a broad policy framework for protection and enhancement of the landscape and historic environment, which will be reinforced by detailed development management policies in the Sites and Policies Development Plan Document.

How and where the policy will be delivered

- 3.87 The policy will apply across the whole of North Somerset in order to respect the quality and character of the landscape, and the historic environment.
- 3.88 Much will depend on careful development management to ensure sensitive design and location of development to protect, enhance and respect the landscape and historic environment. This will require formulation and implementation of detailed development management policies, to be included in the Site and Development Plan Document.
- 3.89 Effective delivery will require close liaison with landscape, conservation and archaeology experts and consultation with bodies such as English Heritage and the Mendip Hills AONB Unit.

Monitoring and review

- 3.90 Monitoring will assess indicators which reflect the impact of development on both the landscape and historic environment.

APPENDIX 2: Context Summary

Context No.	Description
Trench 1	
100	Topsoil (containing building debris).
101	Subsoil (containing modern construction material).
102	Geological deposit (clay); top of deposit 4.78 m aOD.
103	Geological deposit (clayey silt); base of Sondage 2.99 m aOD.
Trench 2	
200	Topsoil (containing building debris).
201	Boundary layer between topsoil (200) and subsoil (202).
202	Subsoil.
203	Geological deposit (clay); top of deposit 4.96 m aOD.
204	Geological deposit (clayey silt).
205	Made-ground/fill to depression/shallow cut.
206	Made-ground/fill to depression/shallow cut.



Fig.1 Plan showing location of development site with locations of trial trenches indicated, scale 1:5000

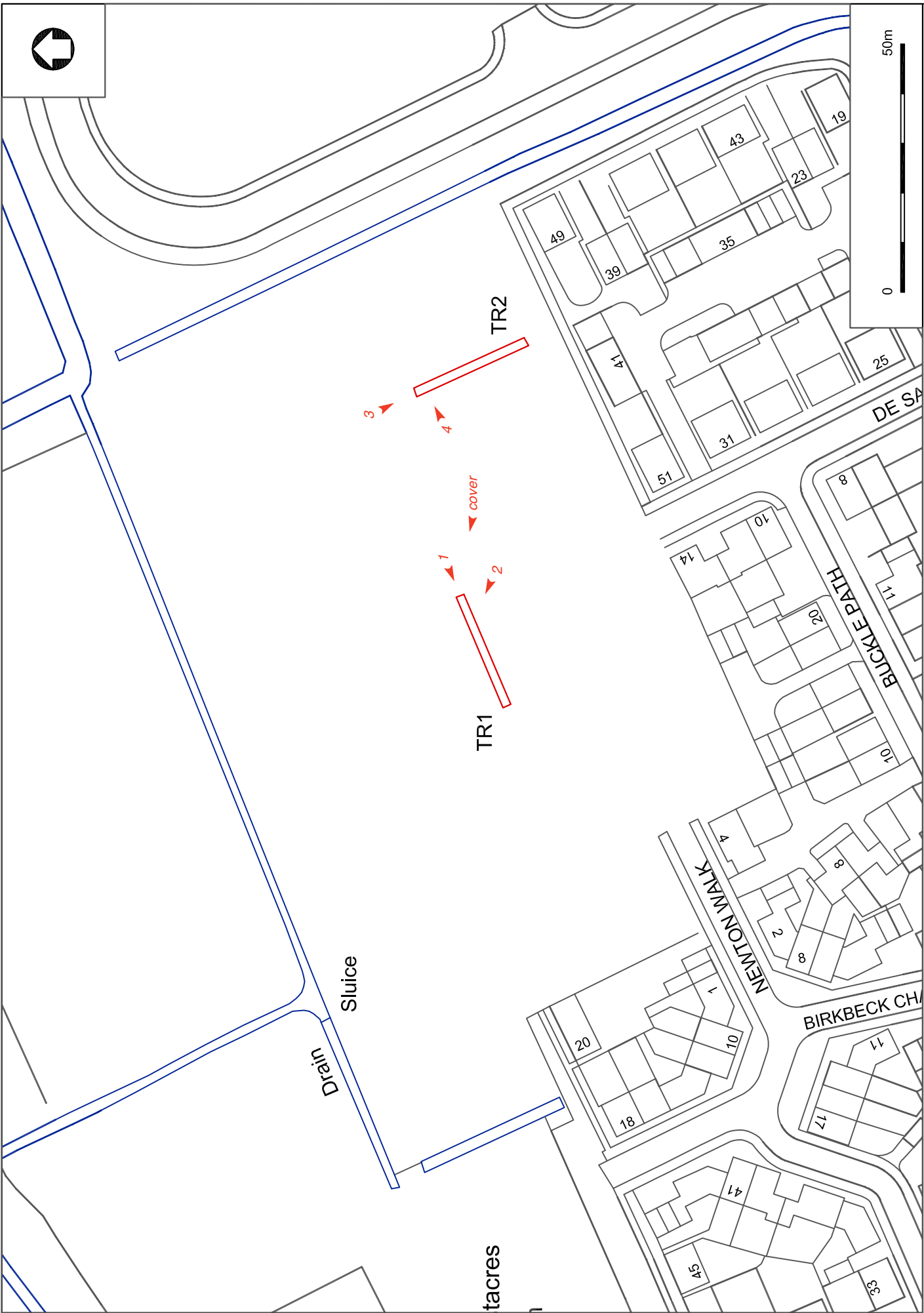


Fig.2 Plan showing location of trial trenches, with plate-orientations indicated, scale 1:1000



Plate 1
Evaluation Trench 1, from the
north-east



Plate 2 Sondage at north-east end of Trench 1 (north-west section)
showing topsoil (100) subsoil (101) and geological deposits (102
& 103), from the south-east



Plate 3 Evaluation Trench 2, from the north-west



Plate 4 Sondage at north-west end of Trench 2 (north-east
section) showing topsoil (200), subsoil (201 & 202) and
geological deposits (203 & 204), from the south-west