

Archaeological Watching Brief
of land at
**TURTLEGATE AVENUE,
WITHYWOOD, BRISTOL.**
for
Halsall Construction Limited



Report No. 2201/2010
BHER No. 24868



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

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of land at
**TURTLEGATE AVENUE,
WITHYWOOD, BRISTOL.**

Centred on
N.G.R. ST 56444 67992

Client: Halsall Construction Limited

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<i>Signature:</i>	
<i>Date Issued:</i>	14 June 2010 

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Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	Km	Kilometre
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	m	Metre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	NGR	National Grid Reference
BC	Before Christ	NMR	National Monuments Record
c.	Circa	OS	Ordnance Survey
HER	Historic Environment Record		

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.

May, 2010.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with construction of 11 new residential properties at the junction of Turtlegate Avenue and Four Acres Road, Withywood, Bristol.

The groundworks revealed only topsoil sealing redeposited clay and demolition rubble over archaeologically sterile clays. A number of modern services and land-drains were also observed.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the project.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Paul Griffiths of Halsall Construction Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of 11 new residential properties at Turtlegate Avenue, Withywood, Bristol.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent (Bristol City Council Planning Reference Number 09/03863/F) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2010).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between Monday 12 April and Monday 17 May 2010 initially under the supervision of Hefin Meara and later Raymond K. Ducker who also compiled this report.
- 1.4 The project archive will be deposited with Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery under the Accession Number BRSMG 2010/28 and a copy of the report will be made available to the National Monuments Record maintained by English Heritage. The project has been entered in the Bristol Historic Environment Record as: BHER 24868 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-74850.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 56444 67992) lies on the western extremity of Bristol's outer suburb of Withywood, approximately 5km to the south-west of the city centre. The site itself is situated on an irregularly shaped plot of land between Four Acres Road and Turtlegate Avenue that slopes gently upwards from the southeast at approximately 77m aOD to the northwest at a maximum of 82m aOD but averages around 80m aOD. The site comprises approximately 1420 square metres of open ground with the foundations of the former church hall in the north-west corner.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area comprises the Lower Lias (mainly clay with bands of limestone [0-350 feet]) (g1) of the Jurassic System (British Geological Survey 1967).

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Prior to the present project the study area formed part of an archaeological desk-based assessment (BaRAS 2006). The full historical and archaeological background to the site is contained within this document. Relevant details are summarised below:
- 3.2 The study area originally formed part of Highridge Common and appears to have undergone late enclosure after which the evidence suggested that the land was used for agricultural purposes until the mid-1950s when the area was developed for housing. The site itself was developed for Withywood Parish Hall (St Peter's Church Hall), which was completed in 1957. A detached building (No. 63 Turtlegate Avenue) was constructed immediately to the southwest of the study area in the early 1960s, during which nothing was found.
- 3.3 The report summary concluded that there was no historic evidence for significant archaeological features on the study area but that development was likely to have an impact on possible archaeological remains that might be preserved below the surface of the study area.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2010) and the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (1999). The aim of the watching brief was to record any archaeological features or deposits revealed during the course of intrusive groundworks.
- 4.2 The watching brief involved the monitoring of the mechanical excavation of a site access road and foundation trenches for 11 residential properties. In addition the topsoil strip of the majority of the study area was also monitored.

5. RESULTS

5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator using both toothed and toothless buckets.

5.2 **Initial Topsoil Strip** (Plate 1)

Initially, up to 100mm of topsoil (2001) was removed and the upper surface of a lower deposit of mixed yellowish-brown clay (2002) with frequent inclusions of modern rubble (mainly brick and other ceramic building material) and rubbish was exposed. Deposit (2002) is thought to represent material dumped during the construction of the surrounding estate in the 1950's.

5.3 **Site Road** (Fig. 2, Plates 2 & 3)

A reduced level platform was excavated for a short length of road to give access to the new residential properties. The road-line was orientated south-west to north-east, with an adjoining stub on the south-east, edge orientated southeast to north-west.

The platform for the road was excavated to a maximum depth of 400mm through topsoil (2001) and redeposited clay and demolition rubble (2002) to expose the upper surface of the underlying natural clay (2003). At the south-west end of the road platform a linear feature (cut 2005/fills 2004 and 2006) orientated north-west to south-east was recorded. The feature was partly excavated but was found to contain pottery and organic material of modern date and therefore not fully explored. The feature was probably a service trench for one of the nearby houses. A second parallel feature with an identical fill was also observed and this also comprised a modern service, two further definite electricity cable trenches were later observed during the roadway excavation.

5.4 **Foundation Excavation** (Fig.2)

Footings for all, or part of, 11 adjoining houses were monitored during the watching brief.

5.5 **Plot A, houses 1 - 3** (Fig. 2, Plate 4)

These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8m. Up to 200mm of brown, silty clay topsoil (2001) was initially excavated. Below the topsoil up to 1m of a brownish-yellow clay (2002) was removed, below which the trench was excavated up to 700mm into archaeologically sterile steel grey/blueish-grey clay (2007).

5.6 **Plot B, houses 4 -7** (Fig. 2, Plate 5)

These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.80m into contexts 2002 and 2007.

5.7 **Plot C, houses 8 & 9** (Fig. 2, plate 6)

These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.9m. A very simple stratigraphy of up to 400mm of redeposited clay (2002) with inclusions of limestone and concrete fragments sealed natural clay (2007). The clay contained an intermittent band of limestone within it.

5.8 **Plot D, houses 10 & 11** (Fig.2)

These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 2m. A remnant of topsoil (2001) sealed brownish yellow clay (2002) and steel grey/blueish-grey clay (2007). A pair of 4'' diameter ceramic land-drains was noted but nothing of any archaeological significance was recorded.

5.9 No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed and no artefacts predating the modern period were recovered during intrusive groundworks at the site.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The results of the monitoring of the topsoil stripping, site road platform excavation and new house foundations revealed no features or deposits of any archaeological significance. Those deposits recorded comprised topsoil and redeposited clay with inclusions of modern building material overlying archaeologically sterile clays of a geological origin. One soil cut feature, (cut 2005) was partially excavated and was determined to be a modern service trench. A number of other modern service trenches were also observed as well as a small number of ceramic land-drains.
- 6.2 The lack of archaeologically significant deposits or structures would appear to support the negative results for the preceding desk-based assessment of the study area (BaRAS 2006).
- 6.3 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of the intrusive groundworks. The lack of archaeological deposits may indicate that any archaeological deposits or structural remains in the application area may have been truncated by previous development of the area.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Hefin Meara, Simon Roper and Raymond K. Ducker who also produced this report. The illustrations were prepared and the report compiled by Ann Linge. The archive was compiled and prepared for deposition by Raymond K. Ducker and the project was managed by Bruce Williams.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

IFA 1999 Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief (Institute of Field Archaeologists).

Maps

Ordnance Survey 1: 50,000 Bristol District, *Geological Survey of England and Wales, Solid and Drift* 1967.

Unpublished Material

BaRAS 2006[a] *Archaeological Desktop Study of Land at Four Acres, Withywood, Bristol*. Unpublished client report by A. Townsend.

BaRAS 2008 *Written Scheme of Investigation for a Recording Programme (Watching Brief) at Four Acres/Turtlegate Avenue, Withywood, Bristol. As Archaeological Mitigation for Redevelopment of the site for Residential purpose.s* Unpublished client report by A. Townsend.

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Paul Griffiths of Halsall Construction Limited for their assistance and co-operation during the project.

APPENDIX 1: Policy Statement

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

NATIONAL POLICIES

Statutory protection for archaeology is enshrined in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), amended by the National Heritage Act, 1983. Nationally important sites are listed in the Schedule of Ancient Monuments (SAM). Scheduled Monument consent is required for any work that would affect a SAM.

GOVERNMENT POLICY GUIDANCE

Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (1994) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (1990) have been replaced (23 March 2010) by Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (2010) which sets out the Government's national policies on conservation of the historic environment. Those parts of the historic environment that have significance because of their historic, archaeological, architectural or artistic interest are called heritage assets.

Of particular relevance within the Planning Policy Statement are:

Policy HE6: Information Requirements for Applications for Consent Affecting Heritage Assets

HE6.1 Local planning authorities should require an applicant to provide a description of the significance of the heritage assets affected and the contribution of their setting to that significance. The level of detail should be proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on the significance of the heritage asset. As a minimum the relevant historic environment record should have been consulted and the heritage assets themselves should have been assessed using appropriate expertise where necessary given the application's impact. Where an application site includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation.

Policy HE9: Additional Policy Principles Guiding the Consideration of Applications for Consent Relating to Designated Heritage Assets

HE9.1 There should be a presumption in favour of the conservation of designated heritage assets and the more significant the designated heritage asset, the greater the presumption in favour of its conservation should be. Once lost, heritage assets cannot be replaced and their loss has a cultural, environmental, economic and social impact. Significance can be harmed or lost through alteration or destruction of the heritage asset or development within its setting. Loss affecting any designated heritage asset should require clear and convincing justification. Substantial harm to or loss of a grade II listed building, park or garden should be exceptional. Substantial harm to or loss of designated heritage assets of the highest significance, including scheduled monuments, protected wreck sites, battlefields, grade I or II* listed buildings and grade I and II* registered parks and gardens, World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional.

Policy HE12: Policy Principles Guiding the Recording of Information Related to Heritage Assets

HE12.3 Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, local planning authorities should require the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost, using planning conditions or obligations as appropriate. The extent of the requirement should be proportionate to the nature and level of the asset's significance. Developers should publish this evidence and deposit copies of the reports with the relevant historic environment record. Local planning authorities should require any archive generated to be deposited with a local museum or other public depository willing to receive it. Local planning authorities should impose planning conditions or obligations to ensure such work is carried out in a timely manner and that the completion of the exercise is properly secured.

DISTRICT POLICY

Bristol City Council Supplementary Planning Document (2006) states (policy SPD No.7, p4):

- (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 desktop 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.

APPENDIX 2: Context Descriptions

Context No.	Description
2001	Firm, dark greyish-brown silty loam with frequent inclusions of modern glass and other domestic rubbish. Generally <100mm thick – topsoil.
2002	Firm, dark brownish-yellow silty clay with occasional brick fragment inclusions and glass sherds. Common inclusions of organic matter - twigs, bark etc. Redeposited natural clay, up to 300mm thick.
2003	Hard, dark yellowish-brown clay with occasional outcropping limestone up to 1m thick - similar to (2008) - natural clay
2004	Upper fill of service trench (cut 2005). Firm, pale green, silty clay 220mm thick x 900mm wide. Provisionally dated to 19/20th century.
2005	Linear Cut, 1.3m wide x 0.5m deep (not fully excavated). Orientated E/W and filled by (2006) lower fill and (2004) upper fill. Service trench cut of 19/20th century date.
2006	Firm, dark blueish-grey sandy clay with frequent inclusions of modern organic material and occasional limestone fragments. Maximum of 0.4m deep x 1.2m wide. Lower fill of cut 2005.
2007	Hard and compacted, dark blueish clay with intermittent band of limestone within it. Up to 1.5m thick as excavated in the lower portions of foundation trenches.

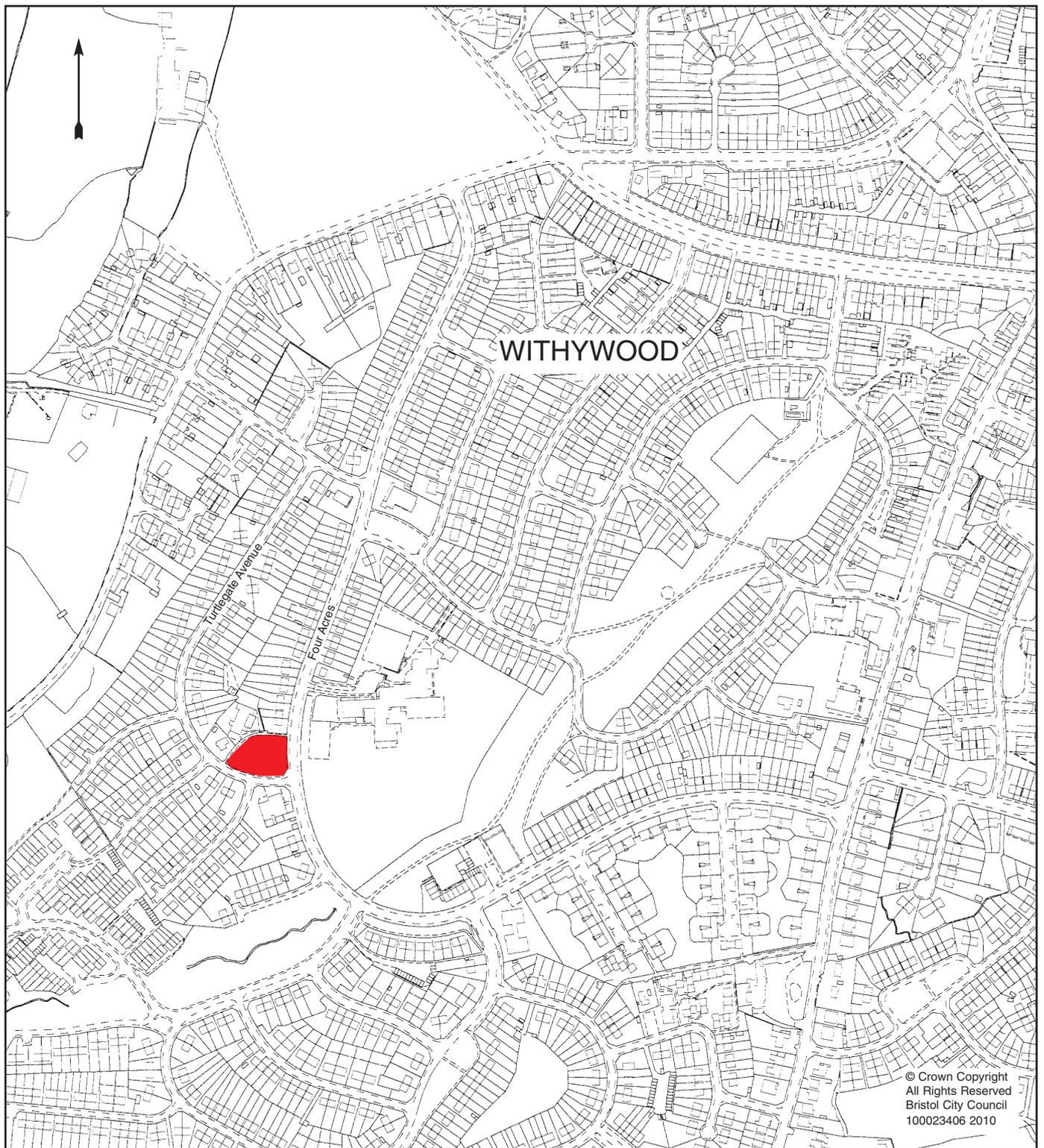
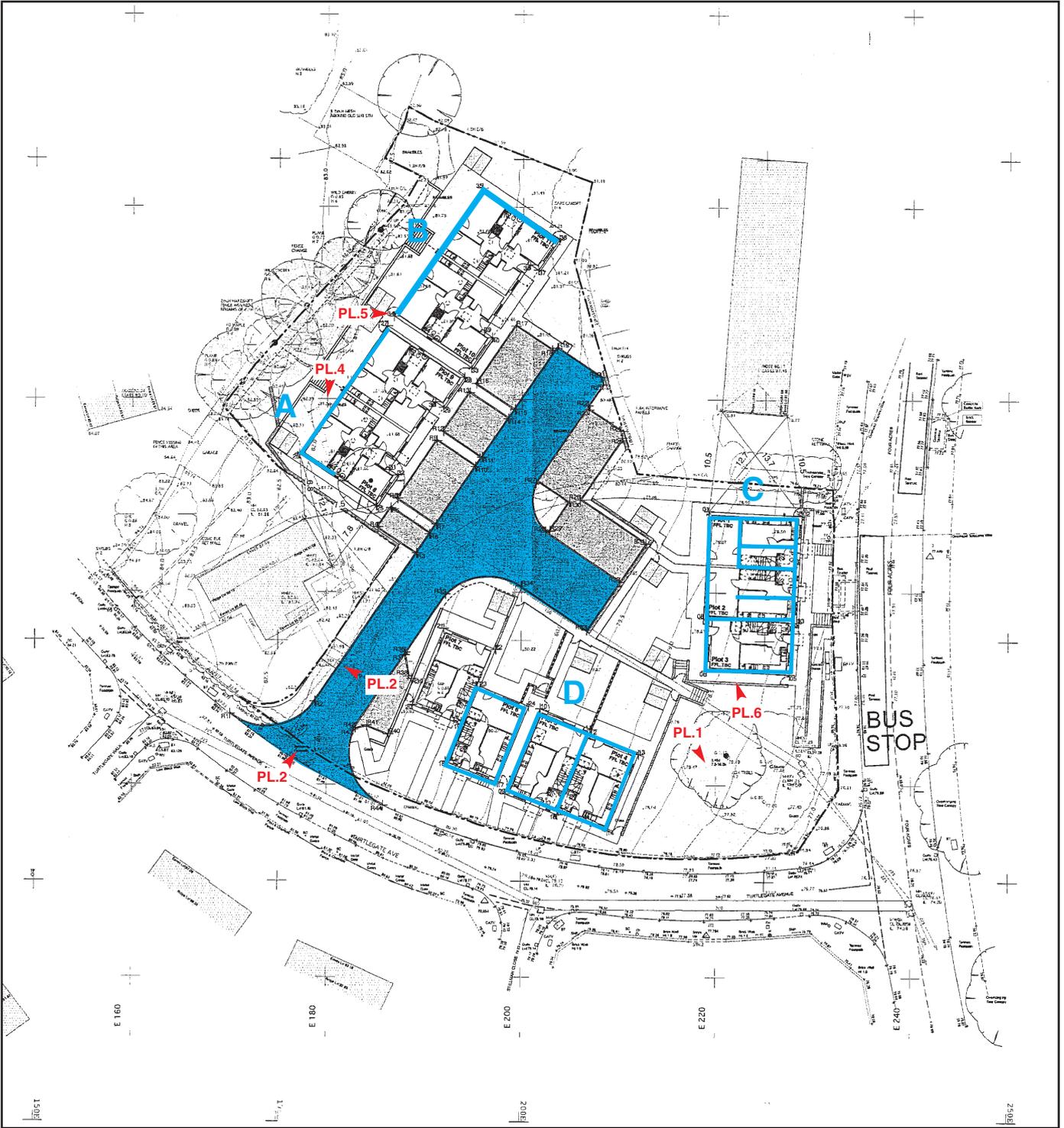


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:5000



— monitored trenches

Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail, plate directions in red, not to scale



Plate 1
General view of the topsoil strip in the south-east corner of the site, looking south-east



Plate 2
General view of the excavation of the site road, looking north-east



Plate 3
Cut 105 and fills 104 and 105 after partial excavation, looking north-west, 1m scale



Plate 4
Excavation of the footings for Plot A showing ceramic land drain pipe in section, looking south-west, 1m scale



Plate 5
General view of the excavation of footings for Plot B, looking east, 1m scale



Plate 6
General view of the excavation of footings for Plot C, looking north, 1m scale