

Archaeological Watching Brief  
at the former  
**WITHYWOOD CHURCH CENTRE,  
WITHYWOOD, BRISTOL.**  
for  
Halsall Construction Ltd.



Report No. 2200/2010  
BHER No. 24867



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services

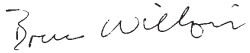

St. Nicholas Church, St. Nicholas Street, Bristol, BS1 1UE. Tel: (0117) 903 9010 Fax: (0117) 903 9011



Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**WITHYWOOD CHURCH CENTRE,  
WITHYWOOD, BRISTOL.**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 56444 67992

Client: Halsall Construction Ltd.

<i>Author:</i>	Ray Ducker
<i>Approved by:</i>	Bruce Williams
<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.

June, 2010.

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## **SUMMARY**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with the construction of 14 new residential properties and associated garages at Withywood Church Centre, Four Acres, Withywood, Bristol.

Other than a single, undated, small pit, the groundworks revealed a simple sequence of 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 intrusive groundworks.

## **LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS**

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- Figure 1 Site location plan, scale 1:5000
- Figure 2 Plan showing study area in detail, not to scale

### **Plates**

- Cover General view of the development site, looking south-east
- Plate 1 General view of the topsoil stripping, looking east
- Plate 2 Detail of the footings for Plot C, looking south-south-east, 1m scale
- Plate 3 General view of the reduced level excavation around garages 13 and 14, looking west-north-west
- Plate 4 General view of the reduced level platform around Plot E/F, looking south-west
- Plate 5 General view of the excavation of footings for Plot D, looking north-north-east
- Plate 6 Pit cut 1006 and fill 1005 in section, looking south-east, 1m scale

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by David Barr of Halsall Construction Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of 14 new residential properties.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent (Bristol City Council Planning Reference Number 09/03840/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 Tuesday 6 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 2010/27 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 24867 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-74852.

## **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 5kms to the south-west of the city centre. The site, which occupies approximately 1717 square metres, is relatively flat, sloping gently downhill from the west, *c*76m aOD to the east *c*72m aOD with an average height of 75m aOD. South of the study area the terrain rises steeply reaching the top of Dundry Hill at approximately 230m aOD.
- 2.2 The site is bounded by Four Acres to the west, Huntingham Road to the south, Millground Road to the east and semi-detached houses fronting Four Acres to the north. The site had been formerly occupied by the Withywood Church Centre (formerly Withywood Methodist Church) but this was demolished prior to development of the site. The building had previously been the subject of a RCHME Level 2 Building Recording exercise (BaRAS 2006[b]). The aim of that survey had been to make a photographic record of the church building and concluded that the structure had remained largely unchanged since its construction in 1957.
- 2.3 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[a]). The full historical and archaeological background to the site is contained within this document. Relevant details are summarised below:
- 3.2 The report is summarised as stating that the study area had formerly comprised a part of Highridge Common and appeared 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. In the late 1950s the site itself was developed for the Witywood Methodist Church, which was completed in 1959, and this remained largely unchanged until its demolition.
- 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 an initial topsoil strip followed by the mechanical excavation of foundation trenches for 14 residential properties and associated garages. The topsoil strip and the excavation of foundations for 10 of these were monitored archaeologically. For plots F & G (and the garages for Plot G) an initial reduced level excavation had already exposed the upper surface of the archaeologically sterile clays prior to the excavation of foundation trenches and no further monitoring was undertaken.

## 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)  
The initial site strip revealed the topsoil (1001) to be a maximum of 100mm thick, overlying a mixed deposit of yellowish-brown clay (1002) with frequent inclusions of brick, concrete and modern rubbish. The lower deposit is thought to represent material dumped during the construction of the surrounding estate in the 1950s.
- 5.3 **Foundation Excavation** (Fig. 2)  
Footings for all of the 14 houses to be constructed were monitored during the watching brief.
- 5.4 **Plot A, Houses 1 & 2** (Fig. 2)  
  
These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8m. Up to 200mm of brown, silty, clay (1002) sealed up to 1m of context (1004) brownish-yellow natural clay. Below (1004) the trench was excavated up to 700mm into context (1009) an archaeologically sterile steel grey/blueish-grey clay. At the base of excavation was outcropping limestone bedrock (1010).
- 5.5 **Plot B, Houses 3 & 4** (Fig. 2)  
These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.80m into deposits (1004) and (1009).
- 5.6 **Plot C, Houses 5 – 7** (Fig. 2, Plate 2)  
These footings were excavated to a maximum of 1.8m deep. A sequence of contexts identical to plots A and B (above) was recorded.
- 5.7 **Plot D, Houses 8 – 10** (Fig. 2, Plates 5 and 6)  
These footings were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.8m. The uppermost deposit comprised up to 300mm of redeposited clay with modern brick and concrete rubble and rubbish inclusions (1002). Below 1002 were archaeologically sterile natural clays (1004) up to 1.2 m thick and (1009) which was excavated to a depth of 100mm.
- 5.8 **Plots E and F, Houses 11 – 14** (Fig. 2, Plate 4)  
The area of these footings was reduced in level by approximately 300mm to the upper surface of the archaeologically sterile clay prior to the excavation of footings. The same sequence of topsoil (1001) sealed redeposited brownish-yellow clay with frequent inclusions of modern rubble and rubbish (context 1002).
- 5.9 **Garages 13 & 14** (Fig. 2, Plate 3)  
The area of these garages was reduced in level to the top of the underlying, archaeologically sterile clay (1004) prior to the excavation of footings through a deposit of redeposited clay and modern rubble and rubbish (1002). Given the absence of archaeological features or deposits, excavation of the remaining garage foundations was not monitored.
- 5.10 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 and excavation of the 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. Features recorded comprised a small, undated pit and ceramic pipe 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 2006a).
- 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 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 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.* By Andrew Townsend. Bristol and Region Archaeological Services Report.

BaRAS 2006[b]                *Archaeological Building Survey of Withywood Church Centre, Four Acres, Bristol.* By Kevin Potter. Bristol and Region Archaeological Services Report.

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

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank David Barr and Paul Griffiths of Halsall Construction Limited for their assistance and co-operation.

## **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
1001	Firm, dark greyish-brown silty loam with frequent inclusions of brick and other ceramic building materials, concrete and rubbish. Overlay the majority of the site up to 100mm thick - topsoil
1002	Firm, mid-brownish-yellow clay with occasional inclusions of charcoal flecking, ceramic building material fragments and modern pottery sherds. Underlies (1001)
1003	Firm, pale greenish-brown silty clay with occasional inclusions of charcoal flecks, Ceramic building material and limestone fragments
1004	Hard-stiff, mid-brownish-yellow clay. Excavated to 1.2m depth, archaeologically sterile clay
1005	Firm, dark grey-black silty clay with high (up to 40%) content of organic material - mainly charred plant remains. Fill of small rubbish pit
1006	Cut for fill (1005)
1007	Redeposited clay stated to be excavated from one plot - dumped on another and then re-excavated
1008	Firm, Dark greyish brown clayey silt with frequent inclusions of modern ceramic building material and rubbish. Extends over all of plots 1 and 2 up to 400mm thick
1009	Hard, mid-blue clay with intermittent limestone layer interbedded within it
1010	Outcropping limestone bedrock recorded at the base of excavation

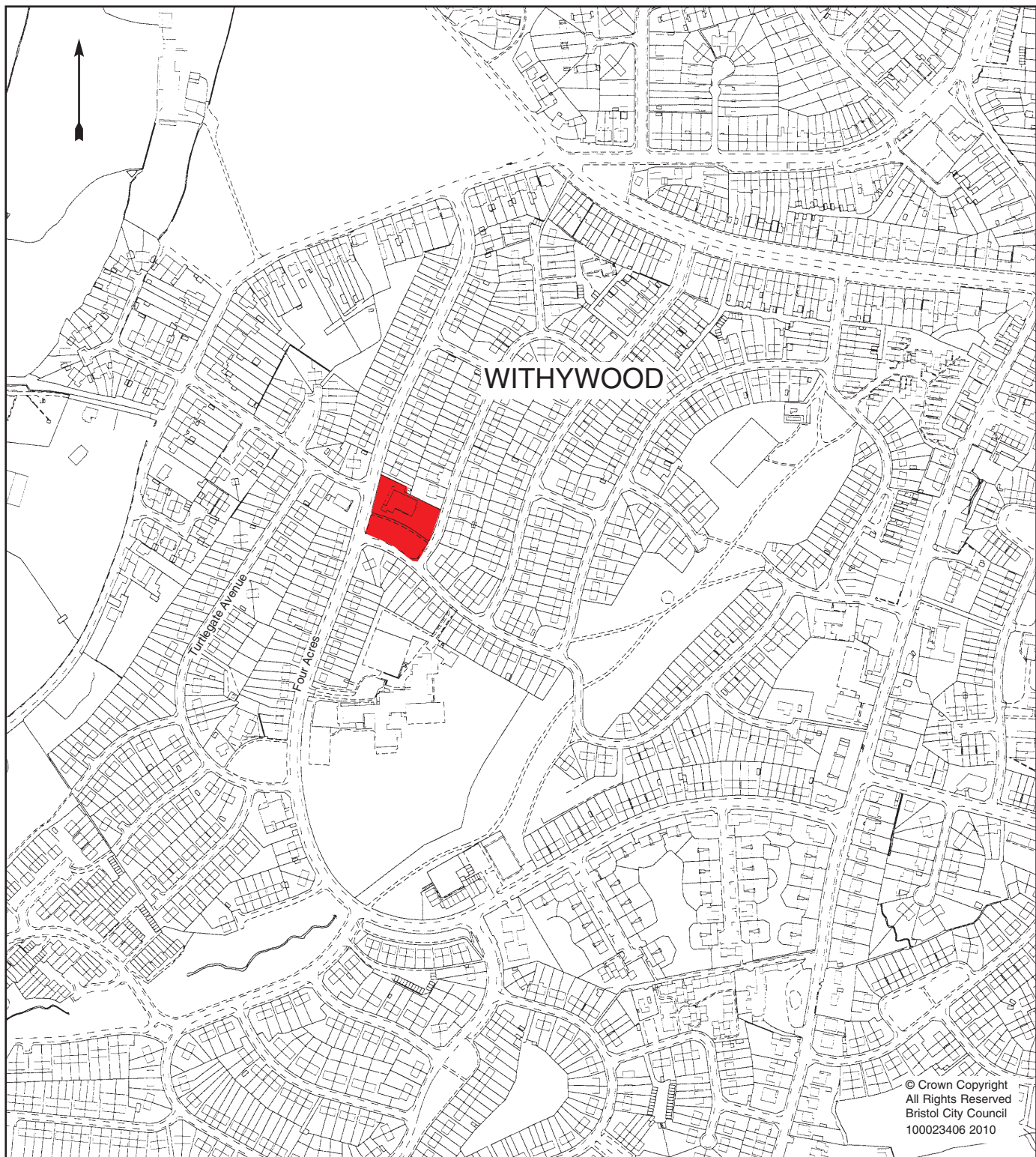
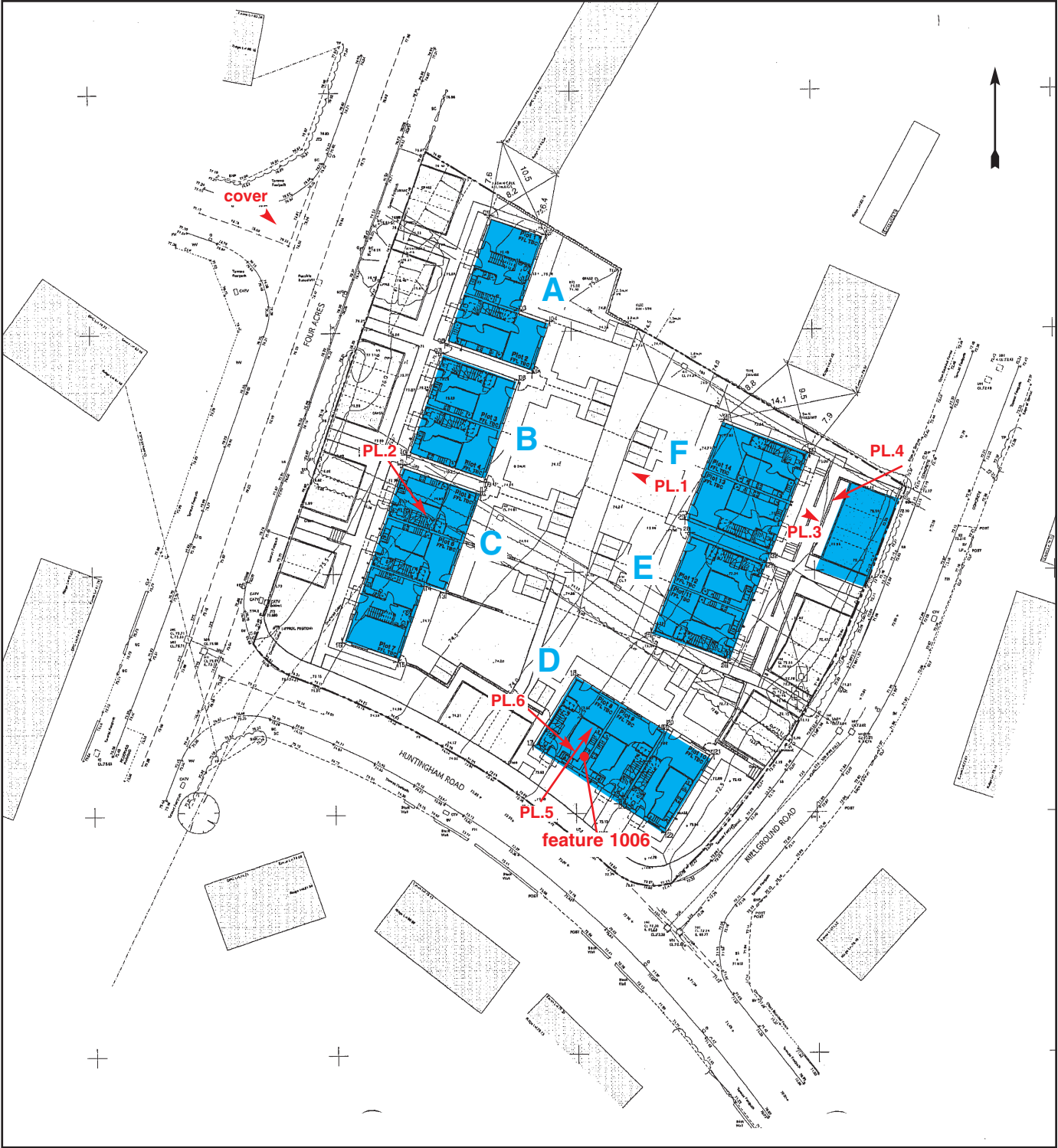


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:5000



areas monitored

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





Plate 1  
General view of the  
topsoil stripping, looking  
east



Plate 2  
Detail of the footings for  
Plot C, looking south-  
south-east, 1m scale



Plate 3  
General view of the  
reduced level excavation  
around garages 13 and  
14, looking west-north-  
west





Plate 4  
General view of the  
reduced level platform  
around Plot E/F, looking  
south-west



Plate 2  
General view of the  
excavation of footings for  
Plot D, looking north-  
north-east



Plate 3  
Pit cut 1006 and fill 1005  
in section, looking south-  
east, 1m scale