

Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**SOUTH BRISTOL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SITE,  
HENGROVE PARK, BRISTOL.**  
for  
Bristol Infracare LIFT Ltd



Report No. 2237/2010  
BHER No. 24891



**Bristol and Region Archaeological Services**

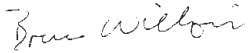

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Archaeological Watching Brief  
at  
**SOUTH BRISTOL COMMUNITY HOSPITAL SITE,  
HENGROVE PARK , BRISTOL.**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 59510 68296

Client: Bristol Infracare LIFT Ltd.

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<i>Date Issued:</i>	9 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 for a new hospital building (South Bristol Community Hospital) with associated access roads, car parking and services at Hengrove Park, Bristol.

The groundworks revealed topsoil sealing subsoil deposits that directly overlay archaeologically sterile clays. A rectangular rubble spread possibly representing the location of a former modern building, and a number of land-drains cut into the underlying clay were also observed.

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

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- Cover      General view of topsoil stripping in the area of the new hospital building, looking north, 1m scale
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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Mark Richardson of Bristol Infracare LIFT Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of a new hospital building with associated services, access roads and car parking at the proposed South Bristol Community Hospital Site, Hengrove, Bristol.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent (Bristol City Council Planning Reference Number 07/05332/F) and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS 2009).
- 1.3 The fieldwork was undertaken between February 24 and May 6 2010 under the supervision of Ray 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 2010/43 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 24891 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-77759.

## **2. THE SITE**

- 2.1 The site (centred at NGR ST 59510 68296) lies off the north side of Whitchurch Lane on an area of relatively flat lying ground, at around 60m aOD, situated to the north-east of the Hengrove Park Skills Academy.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area comprises largely Lower Liassic clay with limestone (British Geological Survey 1962)

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 A desk based assessment of the general area of Hengrove Park was carried out by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (Burchill 1994). The full historical and archaeological background to the site is contained within this document. Relevant details are summarised below:
- 3.2 The site lies in an area of South Bristol where there is known evidence of agricultural activity and settlement dating from the Romano-British period, approximately the 2nd - 4th centuries. Most notable of these was an excavation in 1982 by R. Williams on the opposite side of Hengrove way to the north. The site produced evidence of a settlement which included stone founded buildings, cobbled surfaces and boundary ditches. The settlement was suggested to extend in the direction of Hengrove Park, though nothing of it was observed during the development of the Hengrove Community Skills Academy (Coe, 2009b).
- 3.3 At the time of the Domesday Survey (1086) the site was part of Filton manor (alias Whitchurch). After this the Abbey of Keynsham is recorded as holding the land until the dissolution when the Abbey was surrendered and its lands confiscated by the crown in 1539. Throughout the 17th century the area was used as an enclosed park or deer park known as Filwood Park. After this the land appears to have been used for mixed farming from at least the 1730s with the 1730 "Survey of the Manor of Whitchurch" showing that Filwood Park had become Filwood Farm by this date.
- 3.4 Between the wars an airfield was established on the site (the runway of which still survives in part to the north of the site) together with associated structures. During the Second World War, this was the principal British Airfield for civilian flights. After the war the site became Bristol's airport until the advent of larger aircraft and the new facilities opened at Lulsgate in the 1950s led to its closure in 1957. In more recent times parts of the former airfield has been turned over to commercial and leisure usage. The runway is still used for some non-aeronautical activities, e.g. vehicle rallies.
- 3.5 Spotfinds of Romano-British material are also recorded from the vicinity of houses fronting Bamfield some way to the southeast of the site. The spotfinds include NGR ST 600 690: coins, NGR ST 6006 6878: coin hoard and ring, NGR ST 600 688; pottery and NGR ST 601 689: millstones.
- 3.6 Two archaeological watching briefs have been undertaken in the vicinity of the study area. The first, (BHER 24777) was undertaken between September 2008 and February 2009 for the widening of Whitchurch Lane and construction of infrastructure roads for a proposed Skills Academy and community hospital (Coe 2009a). During these works, nothing of archaeological significance was observed. The other site was the Skills Academy (Coe *ibid*) where groundworks were undertaken during November and December 2008. During these works a possible machine gun pit, associated with the World War II use of the airfield, was located but no other features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded.



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

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2009) and also followed 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 foundation boxes for the new hospital building, trenches for services and reduced level platforms for a service yard, car parking and roads.

## 5. RESULTS

- 5.1 Some topsoil stripping in the footprint of the new hospital building was carried out using a tracked bulldozer that effectively prohibited useful observation in those areas. The majority of the groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator with a toothless grading bucket for larger reduced level excavation and toothed buckets for services and foundation trenches.

### 5.2 Footprint of the new Hospital Building (Figs. 2 and 3, Plate 5 and Cover)

The area of the footprint of the new Hospital Building was stripped of topsoil prior to deeper excavations for services and footings etc. Recorded deposits comprised topsoil (Context 1000) subsoil (Context 1001) and a rectangular spread of rubble approximately 3m x 4m in size (Context 1004) that was suggested to represent the location of a demolished building of 20th century origin. The building may have been associated with the former airfield but this remains uncertain. A small number of unstratified pottery and glass fragments of post-medieval and modern date were observed in the topsoil but not collected.

### 5.3 Service Trenches (Fig.3, Plate 1)

A small number of shallow (500mm deep) drainage trenches were excavated to link new manhole access chambers (S9 and S38) with existing drainage facilities. The trenches were excavated after the initial topsoil strip wholly into deposits of archaeologically sterile greyish yellow clay (Context 1008).

Between manholes S3 and S7 (**Fig.3**) deeper drainage runs and manhole pits were excavated that reached up to 2.4m deep. These were excavated through the developer's own work surfaces of hard-core/crushed demolition rubble into archaeologically sterile greyish-yellow clay (Context 1008) to a depth of up to 1m after which was dark blue-ish grey clay (Context 1009) that was excavated to 900mm deep.

Services were also monitored between manholes S36 and S38 (**Fig.3**) in the south-west corner of the site. The trenches were opened in an area that had already been stripped of topsoil and up to 500 mm of surfacing material laid. Below the modern surface the trench was excavated solely into deposits of blue-ish grey archaeologically sterile clay (Context 1009) to a depth of 1m.

### 5.4 Service Yard (Fig.3, Plate 3)

On the southeast side of the new hospital building an area was reduced in level as part of the creation of a service yard. The whole of the yard area was reduced in level by up to 1 m in depth after the removal of topsoil (Context 1001). All material removed comprised archaeologically sterile yellow clay (Context 1002).

### 5.5 New Car park (Figs.2 & 3, Plate 5)

A large area of ground between the Skills Academy and new hospital building sites (Fig 2) was stripped of topsoil then reduced in level prior to the formation of a new hospital carpark. Up to 200mm of topsoil (Context 1005) was removed exposing subsoil (Context 1006) and the upper surfaces of the archaeologically sterile underlying clay (Context 1007) as well as the cuts for modern land-drains. During the subsequent reduced level dig the clay was excavated to a maximum of 700mm but other than the land-drains nothing of archaeological interest was observed.

#### 5.6 **Site Access Road** (Fig.3, Plate 2)

This reduced level platform for a site road was excavated up to 1m in depth. Those deposits recorded comprised up to 100mm of modern, i.e. development deposited, disturbance material over archaeologically sterile clays (1008 and 1009).

#### 5.7 **Building Foundations** (Fig.3, Plate 6)

Foundations for the new building principally comprised deep rectangular boxes with some adjoining beam-slots. The footings were wholly excavated into previously exposed deposits of archaeologically sterile clays and were not intensely monitored. Those footings monitored could be demonstrated to have been excavated into clays 1002, 1008 and 1009.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 No deposits or features relating to the Romano-British activity in the vicinity were identified during the watching brief. Those deposits recorded comprised topsoil sealing subsoil and natural clay with a small spread of rubble recorded that may have represented the demolished remains of a modern building. It is suggested that the site has been largely levelled in the recent past, either as part of the infrastructure development in the vicinity or as part of the earlier development of the adjacent airfield.
- 6.2 The watching brief identified no archaeological remains within the area of the intrusive groundworks. The lack of archaeological deposits may indicate that any structural remains related to Romano-British settlement did not extend into the application area or that they may have been truncated by previous development of the area. A modern rectangular rubble spread suggested to represent the remains of a building that may have been associated with the 20th century airfield was observed but there was no further evidence to support this assumption. With only a thin topsoil and patchy localised subsoil recorded, evidence of intense agricultural activity was also not observed.

## **7. PROJECT TEAM**

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by Simon Roper, Timothy Longman, Hefin Meara and R. 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 Hefin Meara and R. K. Ducker. Overall project management was provided by Bruce Williams.

## **8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED**

### **Maps**

Ordnance Survey 1: 63,360 Bristol District, *Geology Survey of England and Wales, Solid and Drift* 1962.

### **Unpublished Material**

BaRAS 2008 Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief during Development at South Bristol Community Hospital Site, Hengrove, Bristol. (Unpublished client report by BaRAS)

Coe, 2009a Archaeological Watching Brief.

Coe, 2009b Archaeological Watching Brief of land at Hengrove Park (Phase 1) Whitchurch, Bristol. BaRAS Report 2062/2009.

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

## **9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

BaRAS would like to thank Greg Kemp of Carillion for his assistance and cooperation and the BCC Archaeological Officer for his advice.

## **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
1000	Dark brown clayey silt - topsoil
1001	Greyish-brown silty clay - subsoil
1002	Yellow archaeologically sterile clay
1003	Mottled clay similar to natural
1004	Rubble spread
1005	Topsoil in the new carpark, mid-brown clayey silt up to 200 mm thick
1006	Subsoil below (1005) pale-brown silty clay <100 mm thick
1007	Archaeologically sterile brownish-yellow stiff, plastic clay into which land-drains are cut
1008	Yellow/grey clay in deep excavations
1009	Blue-grey/steel grey clay in deep excavations

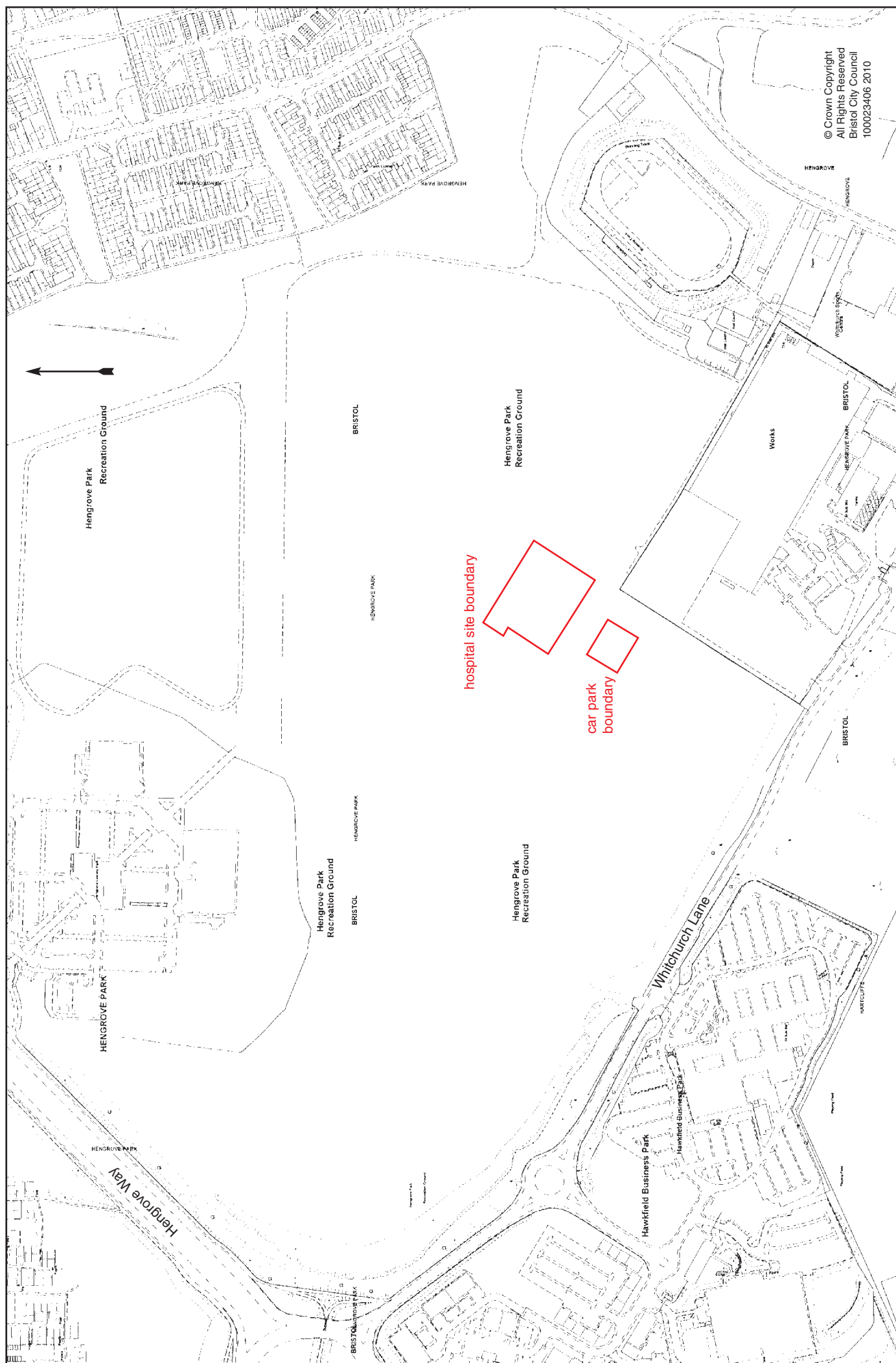


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:5000



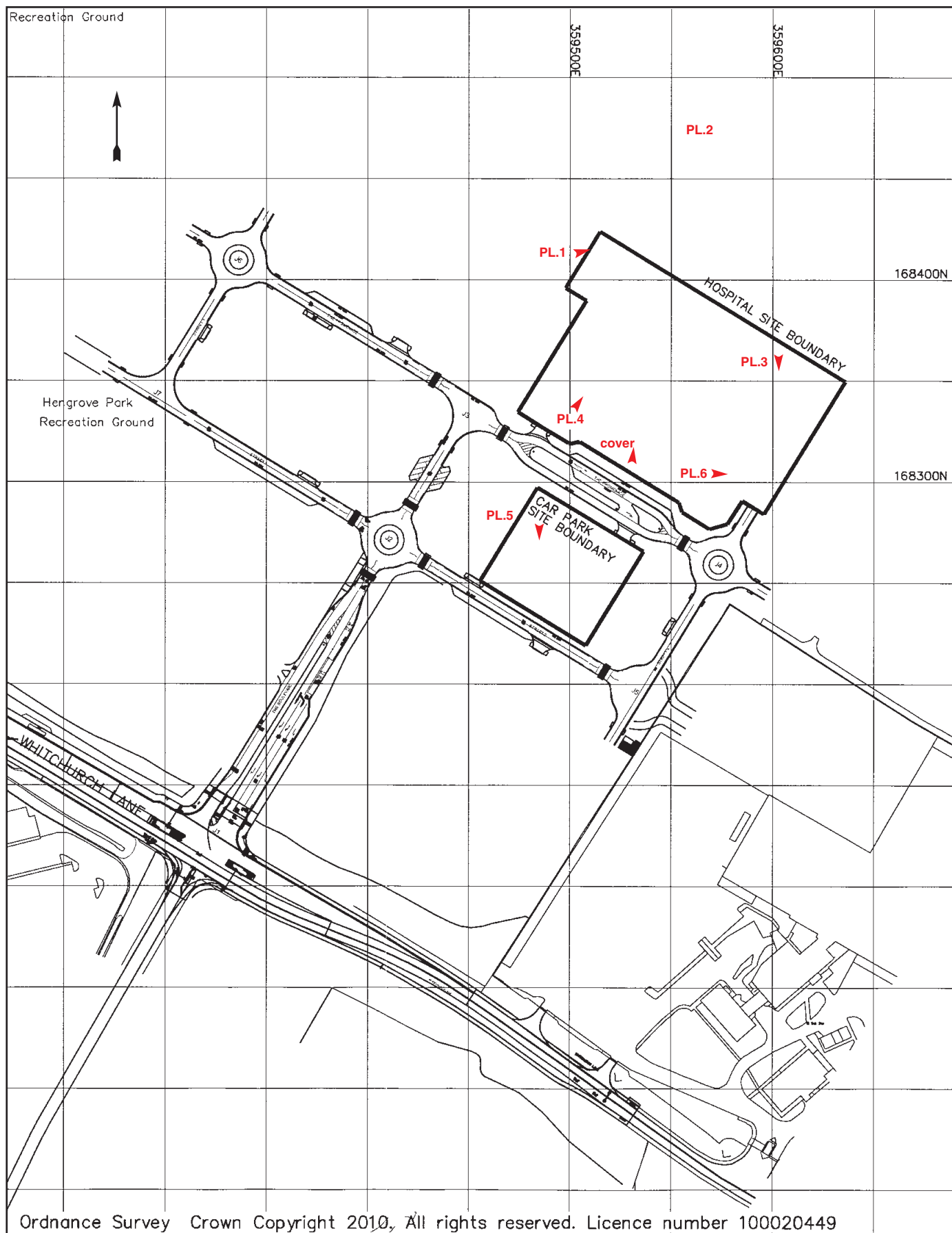


Fig.2 Outline of the new hospital building and car park, scale 1:2,500

whole area topsoil-stripped

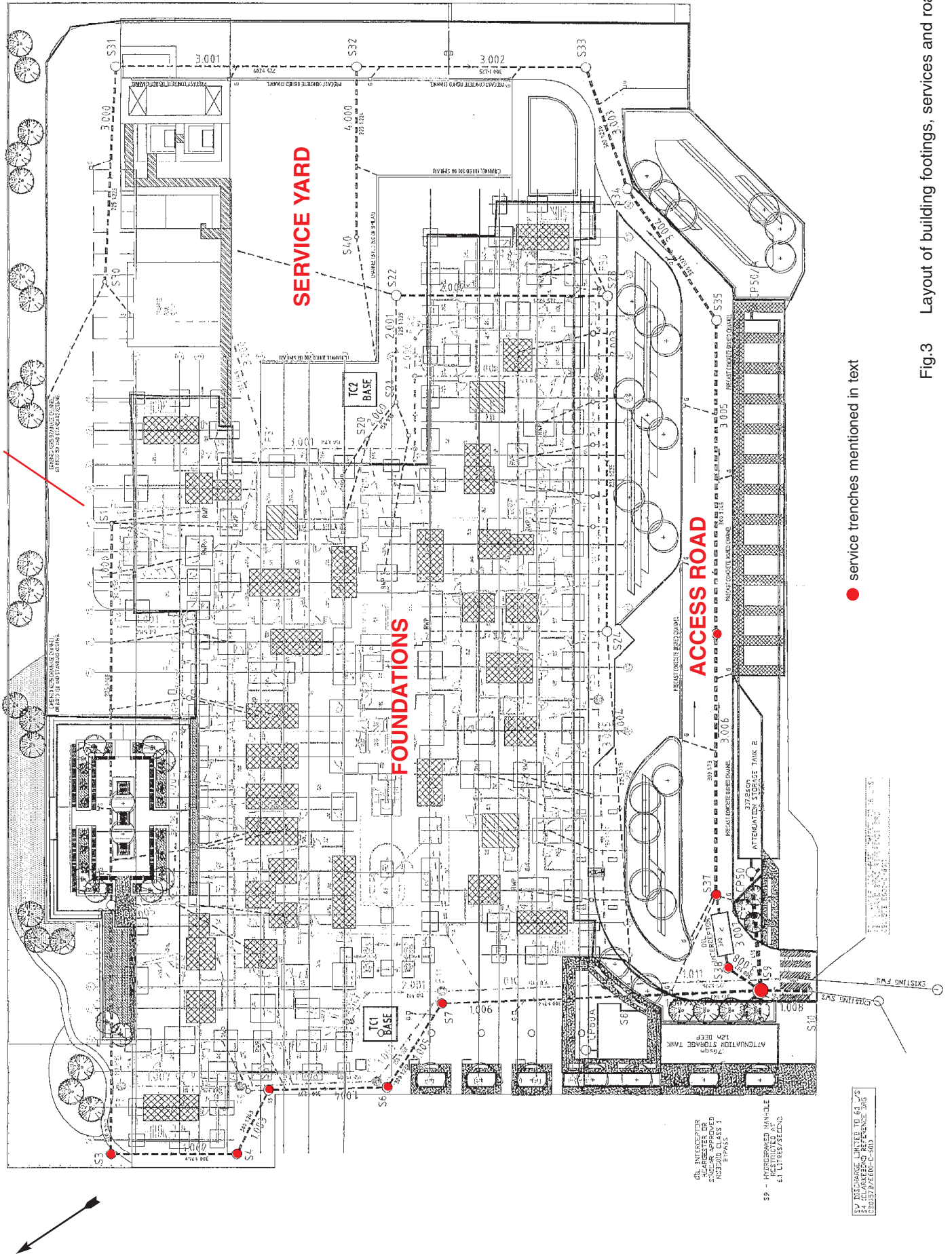


Fig.3 Layout of building footings, services and roads



Plate 1  
Deep site service trench  
near manhole S3,  
looking north-east,  
1m scale



Plate 2  
Section through site  
service road, 1m scale



Plate 3  
Reduced level excavation  
in the Service Yard, look-  
ing south

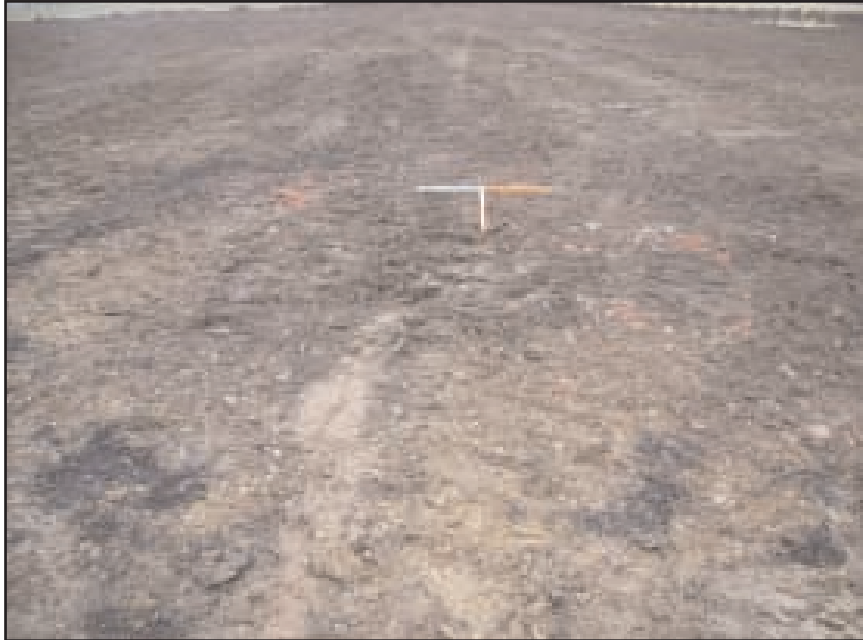


Plate 4  
Rubble spread 1004 during topsoil stripping, 1m scale



Plate 5  
Reduced level excavation in the new car park area, looking south



Plate 6  
Foundation excavation for the new hospital building after initial reduced level excavation, looking east