

Archaeological Watching Brief
at
**LAND TO THE REAR OF NO. 42 BROOK ROAD,
FISHPONDS, BRISTOL.**
for
Acton Homes Ltd.



Report No. 2323/2011
BHER No. 24950

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Centred on
N.G.R. ST 63538 75700

Client: Acton Homes Ltd.

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CONTENTS

Summary	
List of Illustrations	
1. Introduction.....	1
2. The Site.....	2
3. Archaeological and Historical Context.....	3
4. Aims and Methodology	4
5. Results.....	5
6. Conclusion.....	6
7. Project Team.....	6
8. Bibliography and Sources Consulted.....	6
9. Acknowledgements.....	6

Appendix 1: Policy Statement

Appendix 2: Context Descriptions

Illustrations and Plates

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, 2011.

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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during groundworks associated with excavation of foundations for two semi-detached houses at the rear of No 42 Brook Road, Fishponds, Bristol. Four further houses were constructed by piling, of which no monitoring was undertaken.

The groundworks revealed modern demolition rubble, topsoil, subsoil and archaeologically sterile clay deposits of geological origin. Additionally modern services and remaining footings for a block of recently demolished garages were also observed.

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

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

- Figure 1 Site location plan, scale 1:1500
- Figure 2 Plan showing study area in detail

Plates

- Cover General view of the foundation excavation, looking west
- Plate 1 Completion of Trench 3, looking south, scale 0.5m
- Plate 2 Modern concrete foundations and concrete block wall exposed in the west-facing section of Trench 4, looking south-east, scale 0.5m
- Plate 3 Excavation of Trench 5 in progress, looking south-west, scale 0.5m
- Plate 4 General view across the footings as excavated, looking south-east

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Michelle Cake of Acton Homes Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the construction of two semi-detached houses.
- 1.2 The watching brief was commissioned to comply with the condition of planning consent (Bristol City Council planning consent reference 08/01252/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 on April 19th 2011 under the supervision of R 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 2010/63 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 24950 and in the OASIS Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations as: bristola1-83723.

2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The site (centred on NGR ST 63538 75700) lies on the south side of Brook Road, behind No. 42. The site is bounded to the east by Nos. 44 & 46 Brook Road, to the west by the rear of Nos. 1 – 19 Tyndall Avenue and to the south by Fishponds Postal Delivery Office. The site occupies an area of approximately 2,200 square metres sitting on the 60m a.O.D. contour but with a slight fall towards the east.
- 2.2 The geology of the study area comprises Pennant Sandstone Measures of the Carboniferous Period (British Geological Survey 1967).
- 2.3 At the time of writing the study area comprises open ground with a few trees along the west and southern boundaries. A block of garages that had stood in the north of the site had been demolished prior to the commencement of work.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 No previous archaeological assessment has been carried out on the site or within close proximity to the site and there has been no previous archaeological work on the site. Timothy Longman of BaRAS undertook an archaeological watching brief for the nearby Health Centre Site in Beechwood Road in 2004/5, and the background to this is outlined below.
- 3.2 Historically the site lay in the parish of Stapleton, on the edge of the forest of Kingswood. Older maps show that the eastern edge of the site was partly defined by a small watercourse that flowed north-westwards under the lane that is now Brook Road and continued on to the fishponds after which this area is named. Part of this watercourse now runs beneath the site.
- 3.3 In 1881 the open watercourse was still shown on the OS 1: 2,500 plan, with an orchard to its west and a small paddock to its east. There appears to have been a small structure in the north-west corner of the orchard at this date. A short time prior to the outbreak of the First World War, most of the present site was shown as orchard by the OS, again with some small structures in the north-west corner, behind Nos. 1 – 7 Tyndall Avenue. The 1951 OS 1:1250 plan showed a block of six garages in the centre of the site and these remained there until recently.

4. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The fieldwork complied with the methodology contained within the Written Scheme of Investigation (BaRAS 2010). The fieldwork also followed the *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (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 watching brief involved the monitoring of the mechanical excavation of standard strip foundations for two semi-detached houses. A further two pairs of semi-detached houses were constructed by piling and no archaeological monitoring of these was deemed necessary.

5. RESULTS

- 5.1 All groundworks were carried out using a 360° mechanical excavator using a 500mm toothless grading bucket. Five trenches, comprising approximately 70% of the area of footings for the pair of houses were monitored during the project.

Trench 1

- 5.2 The trench was excavated to depth of between 1.9 and 2.1 m deep. A simple sequence of stratigraphy was exposed comprising a modern crushed demolition rubble surface (100) over a thick topsoil (101), subsoil (102) and subsequently archaeologically sterile clay (103). A modern service trench was also noted in the trench.

Trench 2

- 5.3 This trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.2m through a sequence of contexts identical to that exposed in Trench 1. At the south end of the trench however remnants of the former garages that had been demolished prior to this study were also removed. A pad of concrete supported 1 – 3 courses of concrete blocks.

Trench 3

- 5.4 This trench was excavated to a maximum of 1.9 m deep. The trench was excavated through a sequence of contexts identical to that exposed in trench 1 and the same modern service recorded in that trench was also identified in Trench 3.

Trench 4

- 5.5 This trench was excavated to between 1.9 and 2.1m deep. The section of the trench revealed a simple sequence of deposits. The uppermost deposit comprised modern crushed demolition rubble (101) up to 200mm thick. Below this was a made-ground deposit in which bricks were particularly abundant (104). Up to 300mm of subsoil (102) sat below the made-ground and itself sat directly over archaeologically sterile clay with sandstone inclusions (103). In the southern part of the west-facing section, up to 3m of modern concrete foundation supported between 1 and 3 courses of modern concrete block wall. The wall extended across Trench 5 and continued outside the area of excavation.

Trench 5

- 5.6 This trench was excavated to a maximum of 1.9m deep. The stratigraphy recorded was identical to that exposed in Trench 1. The trench was twice crossed by parts of the modern concrete pad and concrete block walls of the recently demolished garages that existed in this part of the site.
- 5.7 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 watching brief were entirely negative with only deposits of modern made-ground, topsoil and subsoil sealing archaeologically sterile clay being recorded. Remnants of recently demolished modern garages and service trenches were also observed.
- 6.2 No trace of the culverted watercourse said to remain under the site was observed during the work. Similarly nothing was observed of the small buildings said to have existed in the north-west corner of the site but the new foundations did not extend fully into this corner and they may still remain outside the area of the excavation.

7. PROJECT TEAM

- 7.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by 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 the Author. The project was managed by John Bryant.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

Published Works

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Maps

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

Unpublished Material

BaRAS 2010. *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief for Land at the rear of No. 42, Brook Road, Fishponds, Bristol*.

Longman, T, 2004 *Archaeological Watching Brief of land at the NHS Primary Healthcare Centre, Beechwood Road, Fishponds, Bristol* (BaRAS Report No. 1317/2005).

9. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Mr Mark Atkinson and Andrew and Michelle Cake of Acton Homes 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
100	Modern deposit of demolition rubble, mostly crushed on the north and west sides of the foundation block. Concrete, brick and tile up to 400mm thick.
101	Very dark, greyish-brown, soft, sandy silt. Frequent to abundant lime mortar and charcoal flecks and occasional small brick/tile fragments – topsoil.
102	Soft, mid brown silty clay with occasional charcoal flecks, up to 300mm thick – subsoil.
103	Strong brown/yellowish brown, soft – wet clay with sandstone inclusions. Archaeologically sterile clay of geological origin.
104	Made ground deposit in section of Trench 4, approximately 300mm thick. Comprises bricks in a matrix of redeposited topsoil (101).

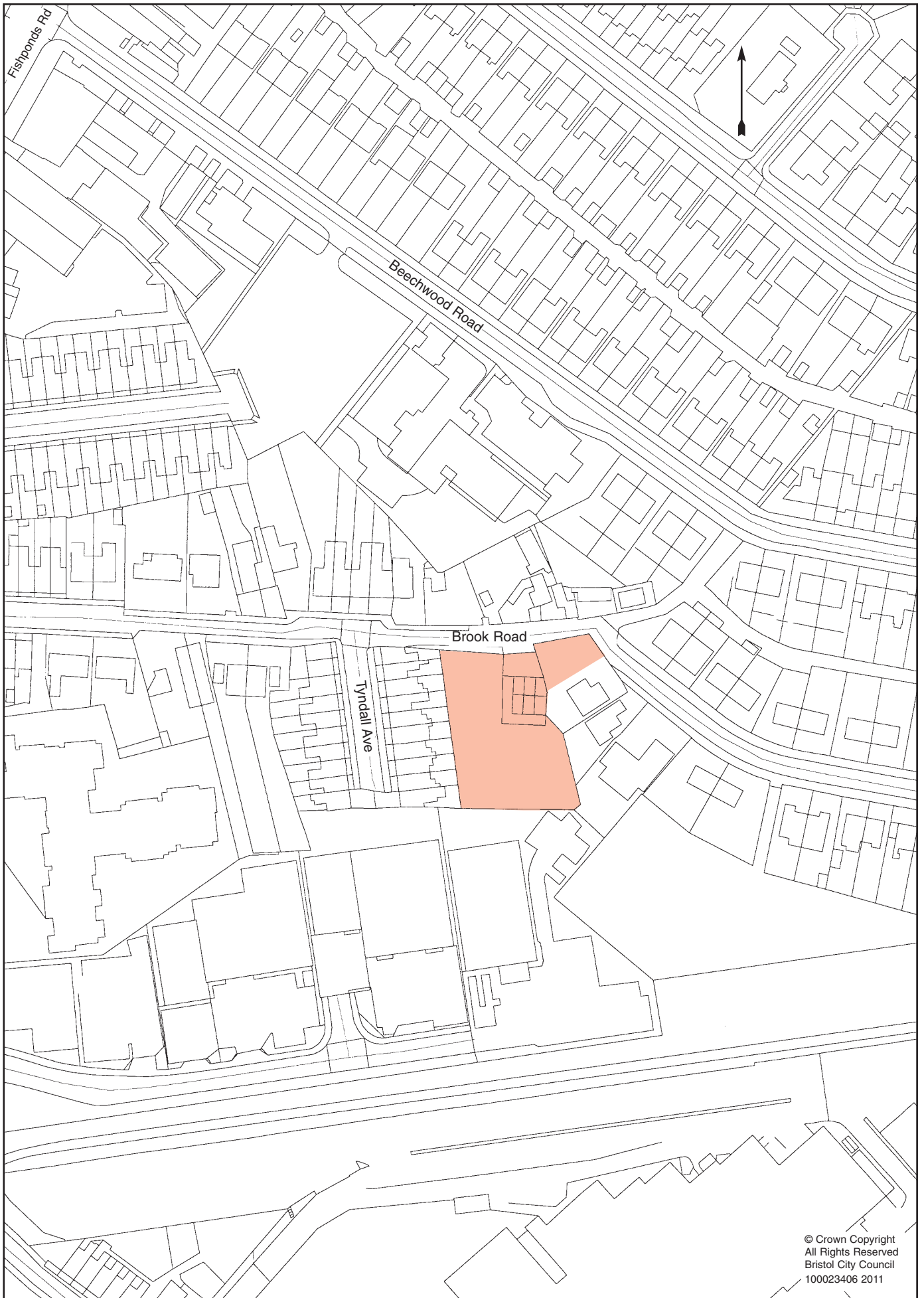


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250

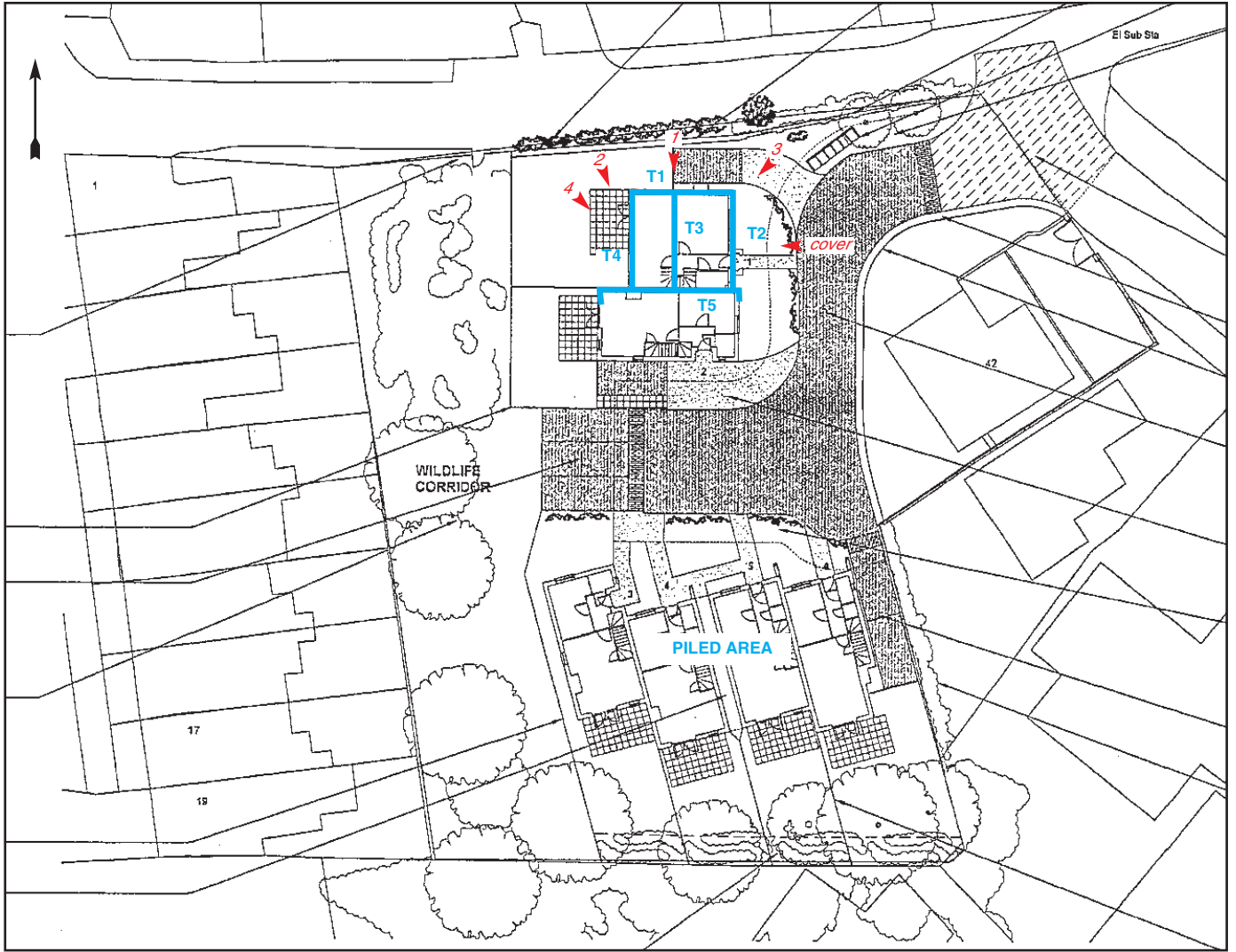


Fig.2 Plan showing study area in detail



Plate 1 Completion of Trench 3, looking south, scale 0.5m



Plate 2 Modern concrete foundations and concrete block wall exposed in the west-facing section of Trench 4, looking south-east, scale 0.5m



Plate 3 Excavation of Trench 5 in progress, looking SW, scale 0.5m



Plate 4 General view across the footings as excavated, looking south-east