

Archaeological Evaluation  
at  
**SOUTHLANDS, WESTON, BATH**  
for  
Somerset Community Housing Trust



Report No. 2273/2011

By Andy King



Bristol and Region Archaeological Services



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



Archaeological Evaluation  
at  
**SOUTHLANDS, WESTON, BATH**

Centred on  
N.G.R. ST 7257 6647

Client: Somer Community Housing Trust  
Agent: Lovell Partnerships Limited

<i>Author:</i>	Andy King
<i>email:</i>	BRTIAK@bristol.gov.uk
<i>Approved by:</i>	John Bryant
<i>Signature:</i>	 
<i>Date Issued:</i>	24 February 2011

## CONTENTS

Summary

List of Illustrations

1.	Introduction.....	1
2.	Methodology.....	2
3.	Archaeological & Historical Context.....	3
4.	Methodology .....	4
5.	The Evaluation.....	5
6.	Discussion.....	6
7.	Bibliography & Sources Consulted.....	7
8.	Acknowledgements.....	7

Appendix 1: Policy Statement

Appendix 2: Context Information

Illustrations and Plates

### Abbreviations

AD	Anno Domini	<i>c</i>	Circa
aOD	Above Ordnance Datum	Km	Kilometre
BaRAS	Bristol & Region Archaeological Services	m	Metre
B&NES	Bath and North-East Somerset	NGR	National Grid Reference
BC	Before Christ	NMR	National Monuments Record
BHER	Bath Historic Environment Record	OS	Ordnance Survey
BRO	Bath Record Office		

### 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.

February, 2011.

### COPYRIGHT NOTICE:-

Bristol and Region Archaeological Services retain copyright of this report under the *Copyrights, Designs and Patents Act, 1988*, and have granted a licence to Somer Community Housing Trust and their agents to use and reproduce the material contained within, once settlement of our account has been received.

Plans reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bristol City Council, Licence Number LA090551, 2011.

## **SUMMARY**

In January 2011 a programme of archaeological evaluation and monitoring commenced at Southlands housing estate, Weston, near Bath. Four evaluation trenches were excavated and initial groundworks were monitored. Post medieval and modern field drains were present in each of the four trenches. One trench contained a more substantial drain associated with an orchard depicted on the 1888 published edition Ordnance Survey plan.

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

### Figures

- Figure 1 Site location plan showing evaluation trenches, scale 1:1250
- Figure 2 Detail from 1888 Ordnance Survey plan showing location of feature 403 within orchard

### Plates

- Cover View across compound of Trenches 2 and 4, looking north-west
- Plate 1 Trench 4, looking east
- Plate 2 Feature 404, Trench 4, looking north
- Plate 3 Drain 403, Trench 4, looking south
- Plate 4 Trench 7, looking west
- Plate 5 Detail of Trench 7, showing feature (702) looking south-east

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Bristol and Region Archaeological Services (BaRAS) were commissioned by Lovell Partnerships Limited on behalf of Somer Community Housing Trust to undertake an archaeological evaluation at Southlands housing estate, Weston, near Bath, centred on NGR ST 7257 6647, prior to a housing renewal project (Planning Application no. 09/04259/FUL). Post-war pre-fabricated houses are to be replaced with blocks of flats with associated landscaping and car parking facilities.
- 1.2 The archaeological works were intended to comply with a planning condition for a watching brief requested by Richard Sermon the Bath and North-East Somerset Archaeological Officer and in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Bristol and Region Archaeological Services. It was agreed in January with the Archaeological Officer that instead of a watching brief, evaluation trenching could be carried out across the site.
- 1.3 Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, identifies the assessment of heritage assets as meriting consideration in planning decisions, in this case Policy HE6.1 is particularly relevant. Bath and North-East Somerset Local Plan, while stating that there should be a presumption in favour of the preservation of nationally important archaeological features and sites, outlines the process to be followed in order that the archaeological importance of a site may be determined and mitigation strategies put in place if necessary (see **Appendix 1**).
- 1.4 The site archive will be prepared in accordance with nationally accepted guidelines (Brown 2007) and deposited with Roman Baths Museum, Bath under the Accession Number BATRM 2011.1. All paper records will be marked with this Museum Accession Number. A digital copy of the report will be sent to the National Monuments Record in Swindon maintained by English Heritage. The project has also been entered in the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) as: bristola1 – 91023. It is the policy of Bath and North East Somerset Council not to assign HER numbers to archaeological evaluations until application proposals have been submitted and completed.
- 1.5 The fieldwork was carried out in January 2011 under the supervision of Andy King, Simon Roper was responsible for the site survey, Ann Linge produced the illustrations.

## 2. THE SITE

- 2.1 The housing estate of Southlands was constructed using the 'Cornish Unit' design in the late 1940s on the lower slopes of Penn Hill to the south of Weston village, approximately 3km north-west of Bath City centre (**Fig.1**). In plan the estate covers an area of 5.23 hectares and is situated almost entirely between the 61m and 69m contours. The north-west and south-west flanks of the estate are bounded by open fields and a recreation ground at the foot of Penn Hill, to the north-east are properties that front High Street, the main route through Weston.
- 2.2 The post-war house platforms and streets were partially terraced into the hillside. The depth of natural clays required the insertion of substantial footings for some of the Cornish Unit properties, depending on their location.
- 2.3 The housing renewal project for Southlands involves the demolition of Cornish Unit houses comprising 50 dwellings and their replacement with 78 dwellings of a different design. At the commencement of the archaeological works demolition was nearing completion.
- 2.4 The British Geological Survey map (*Bristol Region* 1:63,360, revised 1967), designates the solid geology of the study area as Lower Lias (White and Blue Lias and Liassic Clay) of the Jurassic era.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 An archaeological desk-based assessment was carried out for Southlands in 2008, this gave a broad historical and archaeological outline of the estate (King, 2008), the main points are summarised below.
- 3.2 The results of that assessment show that there have been Romano-British and medieval findspots around the village of Weston. Although the settlement of Weston has Saxon origins the area of Southlands comprised agricultural land during the medieval and post-medieval periods prior to construction of the estate in the late 1940s. A building cartographically depicted since the 1840s would today lie at the eastern end of the estate beneath the main road through Southlands and extending under housing not included in the present renewal project.
- 3.3 Terracing of the hillside would have been necessary for laying out of the streets and house platforms of much of the estate.



## **4. METHODOLOGY**

- 4.1 The location of the evaluation trenches were approved by the B&NES Archaeological Officer, Richard Sermon. The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluations (IfA 2008) and Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MORPHE) issued by English Heritage (EH 2006).
- 4.2 It was the aim of the fieldwork to establish if archaeological deposits lay within the development area and to determine their extent, date, preservation and character. The results of the evaluation will inform the subsequent conditional archaeological planning response for the site.
- 4.3 It was the intention to open eight evaluation trenches, numbered 1 – 8, however due to ground disturbance caused by construction of the estate in the 1940s it was only possible to excavate four of these. The four trenches were thus excavated to the first archaeological horizon or clean geological strata, using a 360° mechanical excavator utilising a 0.8m toothless grading bucket. After the machine excavation the trenches were recorded and exposed features cleaned using hand tools.
- 4.4 Geological and archaeological features were excavated and recorded in accordance with the BaRAS Site Recording Manual (BaRAS 2005). Recording was carried out using BaRAS' single context recording system. Plans were to be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at scales of 1:10. A full photographic record comprising all stratigraphic units and working shots was kept using 35mm monochrome film and digital media.
- 4.5 Trench locations were plotted topographically using a Topcon GPT-7505 total station and levels on site were related to the Ordnance Datum Mastermap.

## 5. THE EVALUATION

### Trench 2

- 5.1 Trench 2 measured 18.5m x 1.5m and was located in the garden area of the former Cornish Unit properties numbered 33-35. The top of undisturbed natural clay (200) was exposed at a height of 63.3m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). A mid-brown subsoil (201) up to 0.22m in depth was sealed by approximately 0.35m of humic topsoil (200). No anthropogenic material was recovered below the topsoil.

### Trench 4

- 5.2 Trench 4 measured 20m x 1.5m and was located in the garden area of the former Cornish Unit properties numbered 47-51 (**Plate 1**). The top of the undisturbed natural clay (402) was exposed at a height of approximately 65m aOD. There was minimal preservation of subsoil (401) in the area of Trench 4, which only survived to a maximum depth of 0.12m at the eastern end of the trench, this is likely to be due to disturbance caused by construction of the estate in the 1940s. Set within the natural clay at the western end of trench 4 was a single line of unworked stones (404), no artefactual evidence was present and this feature is likely to have been a form of field drain (**Plate 2**).

- 5.3 Cut through the surviving subsoil and into natural clay, at the eastern end of the trench, was a partially collapsed drain sloping downwards from south to north, and comprising three courses of rough-hewn stones to either side of a channel 0.124m in width, with capstones up to 0.17m x 0.08m in size (**Plate 3**). The fill of this drain (405) contained residual fragments of animal bone, clay tobacco-pipe stem, and both medieval (possibly Crockerton Ware) and 19th-century pottery sherds.

- 5.4 Topsoil up to 0.33m in depth sealed the greyish-brown, silty clay backfill (407) of drains 403 and 404.

### Trench 6

- 5.5 Trench 6 measured 20m x 1.5m and was located in the garden area of the former Cornish Unit properties numbered 78-84. The top of the undisturbed natural clay was encountered at a height of approximately 70.05m aOD. A light-brown, silty clay, representative of degraded natural (602) up to 0.3m in depth contained two modern ceramic land drains traversing the width of the trench. A mid-brown subsoil, 200mm in depth (601) was sealed by up to 300mm of humic topsoil (600). No anthropogenic material was recovered below the topsoil.

### Trench 7

- 5.6 Trench 7 measured 17m x 1.5m and was located in the garden of the former Cornish Unit properties numbered 100-104 (**Plate 4**). The top of the undisturbed natural (704) was exposed at a height of approximately 67m aOD. Above the natural clay was a pale brown, silty-clay, characteristic of degraded natural (703) up to 0.3m in depth. Roughly midway along the trench a modern ceramic land drain was partially exposed running diagonally from south-west to north-east.

- 5.7 At the western end of trench 7, cut into 703 and extending for 2.9m on a north-west to south-east alignment, was a linear feature comprising two courses of unworked stones (702), up to 0.49m in width and 0.2m in depth (**Plate 5**). Fragments of clay tobacco-pipe stems and 19th-century pottery sherds were recovered from 703 in the immediate vicinity of feature 702. It is likely that these stones represent a form of field drain, similar to feature 404 exposed in trench 4.

- 5.8 Above layer 703 was a dark-brown, silty subsoil (701) up to 0.3m in depth, this in turn was sealed by up to 0.3m of humic topsoil (700).

## 6. DISCUSSION

- 6.1 The evaluation identified no significant archaeological features within the excavated trenches. Each of the four evaluation trenches revealed a similar sequence of natural clays overlain by subsoil and topsoil. Two of the trenches contained features that were characteristic of rudimentary post-medieval field drains.
- 6.2 Trench 4 contained a more substantial stone-built drain. The location of this drain ties in with a pathway shown running through an orchard on the 1888 published edition OS plan of the site area (**Fig. 2**). Where such orchard pathways are depicted on OS plans of this epoch they usually coincide with drainage systems.
- 6.3 The lack of archaeological deposits and the common stratigraphy across the study area supports cartographic evidence that the area of Southlands had been under agricultural and horticultural usage at least since the mid 19th century and probably much longer.
- 6.4 It was evident from the results of the trenching that considerable disturbance had taken place to the natural progression of soil stratigraphy across the Southlands estate during its construction in the 1940s.

## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES CONSULTED

### Published Sources

Brown, D.H. 2007 *Archaeological Archives a guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation*. Archaeological Archives Forum publication.

Department for Communities and Local Government, 2010 *Planning for the Historic Environment Planning Policy Statement 5*: London, TSO.

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. Swindon.

Institute for Archaeologists, 2008 *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation*. Reading: IfA (Originally published in 1994; revised 2001 & 2008).

### Unpublished Material

BaRAS, 2005 *Site Recording Manual*. Bristol and Region Archaeological Services.

King, A. 2008 *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment of land at Southlands, Weston, Bath*. BaRAS report No.1970B/2008. Unpublished client report.

### Maps & Survey Plans

1888 Ordnance Survey Somerset Sheet XIII.4 (1:2500) surveyed 1884.

1967 *Geological Survey of England & Wales, Solid and Drift (Bristol District)*. (Scale 1:63,360), Published in 1962. Reprinted (Second Impression) 1967.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

BaRAS would like to thank Nick Barrett, Lewis Coulson and Salvatore Gibilaro of Lovell Partnerships Ltd. for their assistance with this project and Richard Sermon (Archaeological Officer for B&NES) 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.

### **LOCAL POLICIES**

The Planning Policy Statement of Archaeology and Planning (PPS 15) consolidates advice to planning authorities. The Guidance stresses the non-renewable nature of the archaeological resource, details the role of the Local Authority Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), encourages early consultation with county and district council archaeological officers and sets out the requirement for developers to provide sufficient information on the impact of a development on the archaeological resource to enable a reasoned planning decision to be taken. PPS 15 also indicates the circumstances where further work would be necessary and outlines the use of agreements and conditions to protect the archaeological resource.

Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan including waste and minerals policies Revised Deposit Draft 2003 as approved for used for Development Control purposes contains the following policies:

**Policy BH.11** – Development which would adversely affect Scheduled Ancient Monuments or any other sites of national importance, and their settings and does not preserve such sites in situ will not be permitted.

**Policy BH.12** – Development which would harm important archaeological remains or their settings outside the scope of Policy BH.11 will not be permitted unless the adverse impact of the development proposal on the remains can be mitigated.

**Policy BH.13** – Development which adversely affects significant archaeological remains within Bath will not be permitted unless the preservation in situ of these remains can be achieved through a detailed design and construction scheme.

Two Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) documents '*Archaeology in Bath & North-East Somerset*' and '*Archaeology in the City of Bath*' (both 2004) have been adopted. Their principal purpose is to supplement Policies BH.11, BH.12 & BH.13 of the existing and emerging Bath & North East Somerset Local Plan and should be read in conjunction with these.

## APPENDIX 2: Context Information

Context Number	Context Type	Description
200	Deposit	Topsoil, present across area of trench 2, extends up to 0.35m below ground level
201	Deposit	Subsoil, mid-brown silty clay, maximum depth 0.22m
202	Natural	Undisturbed natural, light-brown clay substratum
400	Deposit	Topsoil, present across area of trench 4, up to 0.33m below ground level
401	Deposit	Subsoil, mid-brown silty clay, maximum surviving depth 0.12m
402	Natural	Undisturbed natural, light-brown clay substratum
403	Structure	Limestone drainage channel with capstone covering, north-south alignment
404	Structure	Linear stone field-drain, north-south alignment
405	Deposit	Fill within drain (403), blackish-grey silty clay, 0.17m in depth x 0.13m width
406	Cut	Construction cut for drain (403), 1.2m in width
407	Deposit	Backfill of construction cut for drain (403)
600	Deposit	Topsoil, present across area of trench 6, up to 0.3m below ground level
601	Deposit	Subsoil mid-brown silty clay
602	Deposit	Degraded natural clay, up to 0.2m in depth
603	Natural	Undisturbed natural, light-brown clay substratum
604	Feature	Modern ceramic land-drain pipe
700	Deposit	Topsoil, present across area of trench 7, up to 0.3m below ground level
701	Deposit	Subsoil, dark brown silty clay, up to 0.3m in depth
702	Structure	Linear stone field drain, exposed for 2.9m east-west alignment, 0.49m in width
703	Deposit	Degraded natural clay, up to 0.3m in depth
704	Natural	Undisturbed natural, pinkish- light-brown clay substratum
705	Feature	Modern ceramic land-drain pipe
706	Cut	Construction cut for modern land drain

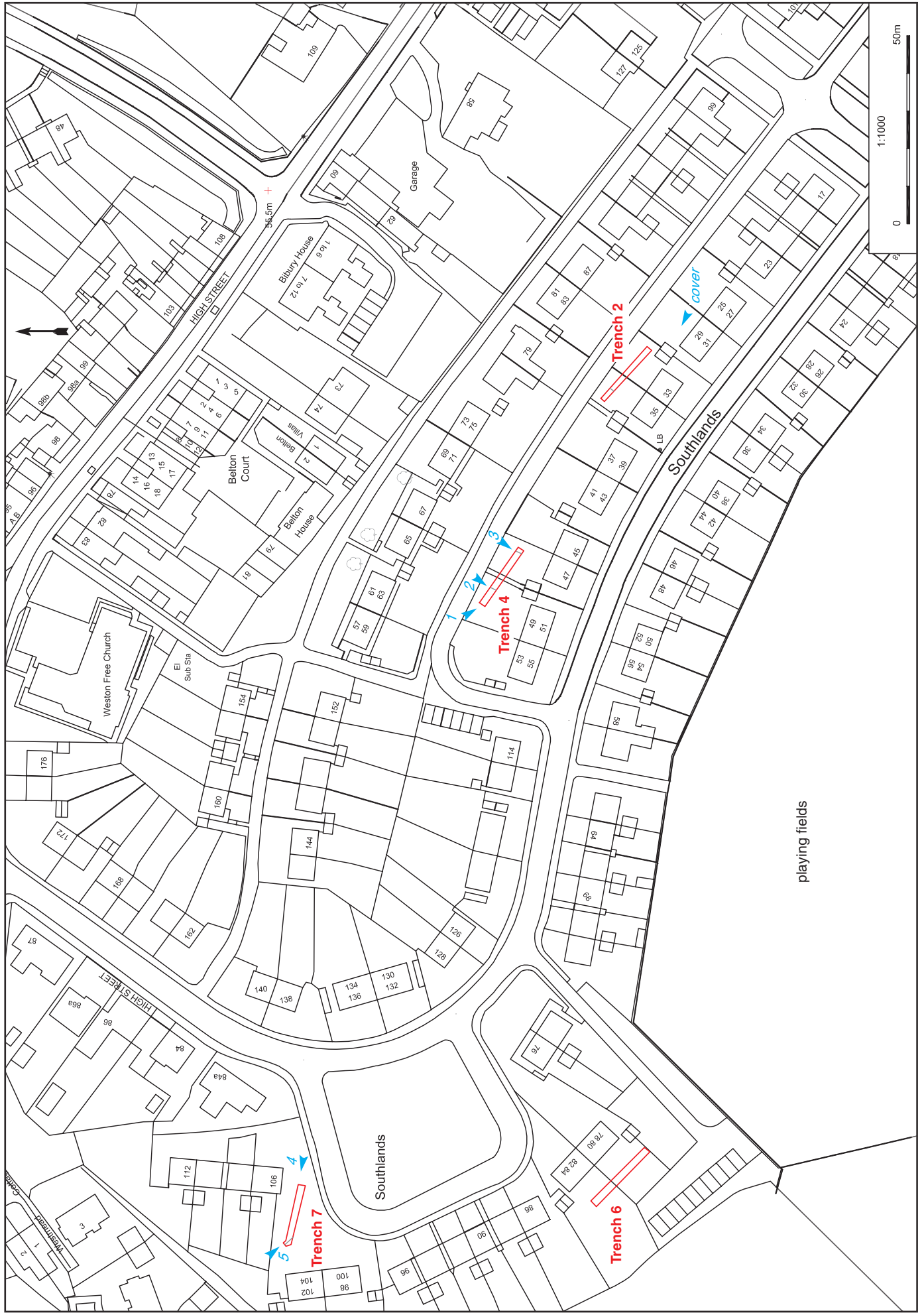


Fig.1 Site location plan, scale 1:1250

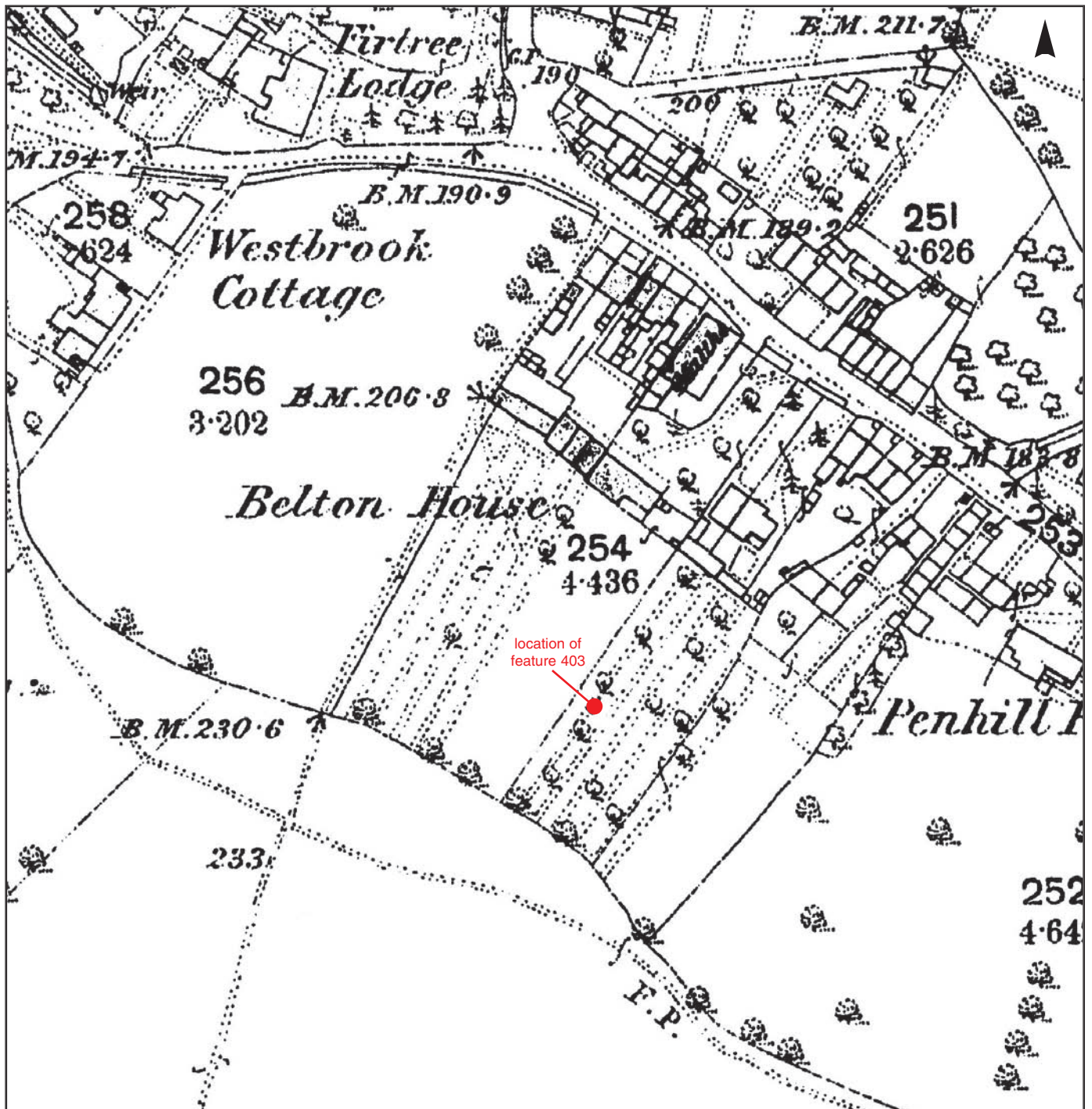


Fig.2 Detail from 1888 Ordnance Survey plan showing location of feature 403 within orchard





Plate 1  
Trench 4, looking east



Plate 2  
Feature 404, Trench 4,  
looking north



Plate 3  
Drain 403, Trench 4,  
looking south

Plate 4  
Trench 7, looking west



Plate 5  
Detail of Trench 7  
showing feature 702,  
looking south-east