



NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Pole Replacement (Pole 28) Roman Camp, 400m SSW of Sills Farm, Rochester, Northumberland

NGR NT 82612 00078

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Client: Northern Powergrid

Historic England Reference: S00207591

PCA Report Number: RN 13640

PCA Site Code: SFR19

Oasis ID: preconst1-347759

LOCATION

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council

Civil Parish: Rochdale

County: Northumberland

Site address: Roman Camp, 400m SSW of Sills Farm, Rochester, Northumberland

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

An appropriately specified programme of archaeological work was required in association with the replacement of a support pole for overhead electricity at Roman Camp, 400m SSW of Sills Farm, Rochester, Northumberland (Figures 1 & 2). The work was undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) and involved the archaeological monitoring and recording (watching brief) during all invasive groundworks at the location of the new support pole.

The new support pole lies within the eastern extent of a Scheduled Monument Roman Camp (Historic England Ref. 1011393; Roman Camp, 400m SSW of Sills Farm). The Roman Camp survives as a rectangular shaped earthwork situated on a gentle south-east facing slope located immediately to the west of Sills Burn and to the east of Roman Road that broadly follows the postulated line of Dere Street Roman Road. The camp itself has dimensions of c. 150m east-west by 130m north-south with an earth

bank 3.5m wide by 1.5m high and external ditch c. 3.5m wide. The eastern side of the Roman camp earthwork has been levelled by ploughing activity, the three remaining sides survive each with an entrance protect by internal claviculae.

The archaeological work comprised the monitoring and recording of a pole replacement trench (Trench 1) within the eastern extent of the Roman Camp. Trench 1 had dimensions of 3.00m north-south by up to 1.40m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.40m (Figure 2).

REASON FOR WATCHING BRIEF:

The work is of archaeological interest because it lies within a Roman Camp Scheduled Monument (Ref. 1011393).

Because the site has Scheduled Monument status, and thus has statutory protection under *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, any intrusive groundworks for the installation require SMC from DCMS prior to their undertaking. In accordance with the 1979 Act, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport consulted with Historic England before deciding whether or not to grant SMC after an application for the installation was submitted by Bell Ingram 22nd November 2018.

Accordingly, SMC was granted for the archaeological work by the Secretary of State, advised by Historic England, subject to a series of conditions set out in a letter dated 20th December 2018 to Mr Jason Oakley (Bell Ingram). Condition b) of SMC states *'No ground works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological monitoring during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by Historic England'*. Condition e) of SMC requires A report on the archaeological recording shall be sent to the Historic Environment Record and to Sarah Howard at Historic England within 3 months of the completion of the works (or such other period as may be mutually agreed).

As part of a Scheduled Monument, any archaeological remains affected by this scheme fall within the category of 'designated heritage assets' as defined within current guidance on the historic environment set out within Chapter 16 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012 (revised 2018))

The groundworks associated with the replacement of the support pole was undertaken within the area of the Scheduled Monument. Accordingly, the archaeological monitoring and recording of all groundworks were undertaken as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC ref. S002027591), on the advice of Historic England to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the work was prepared by PCA and approved by Sarah Howard (Historic England) prior to the commencement of any work.

DATES WORK UNDERTAKEN:

Archaeological work was undertaken at the site on the following dates:

- Thursday 28/03/2019

RESULTS:

During the watching-brief, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example [123].

The archaeological work involved the monitoring and recording of groundworks associated with the replacement of a support pole for overhead electricity cables (Trench 1). The trench was excavated by Northern Powergrid's team using a 7.5 tonne tracked mini-excavator utilising a toothless ditching bucket under continuous archaeological supervision. The trench was excavated within the eastern extent of the Roman camp, adjacent to existing pole 28 and had dimensions of 3.00m north-south by up to 1.40m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.40m. A total of three contexts were identified during the works. The table below summarises the contexts encountered within the trench:

Context	Type	Summary description	Thickness
[100]	Layer	Loose mid brown sandy silt, topsoil	0.22m
[101]	Layer	Soft mid grey silty clay, subsoil	0.23m
[102]	Layer	Soft light greyish blue clay, natural	

Summary of encountered strata descriptions

Superficial geological deposit [102] was encountered in the trench at c. 0.45m below present ground level. This was overlain by subsoil [101] up to 0.23m thick that in turn was overlain by topsoil [101] up to 0.22m thick.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered during the investigation.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION:

Figure 1 - Site Location

Figure 2 - Detailed Site Location

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:

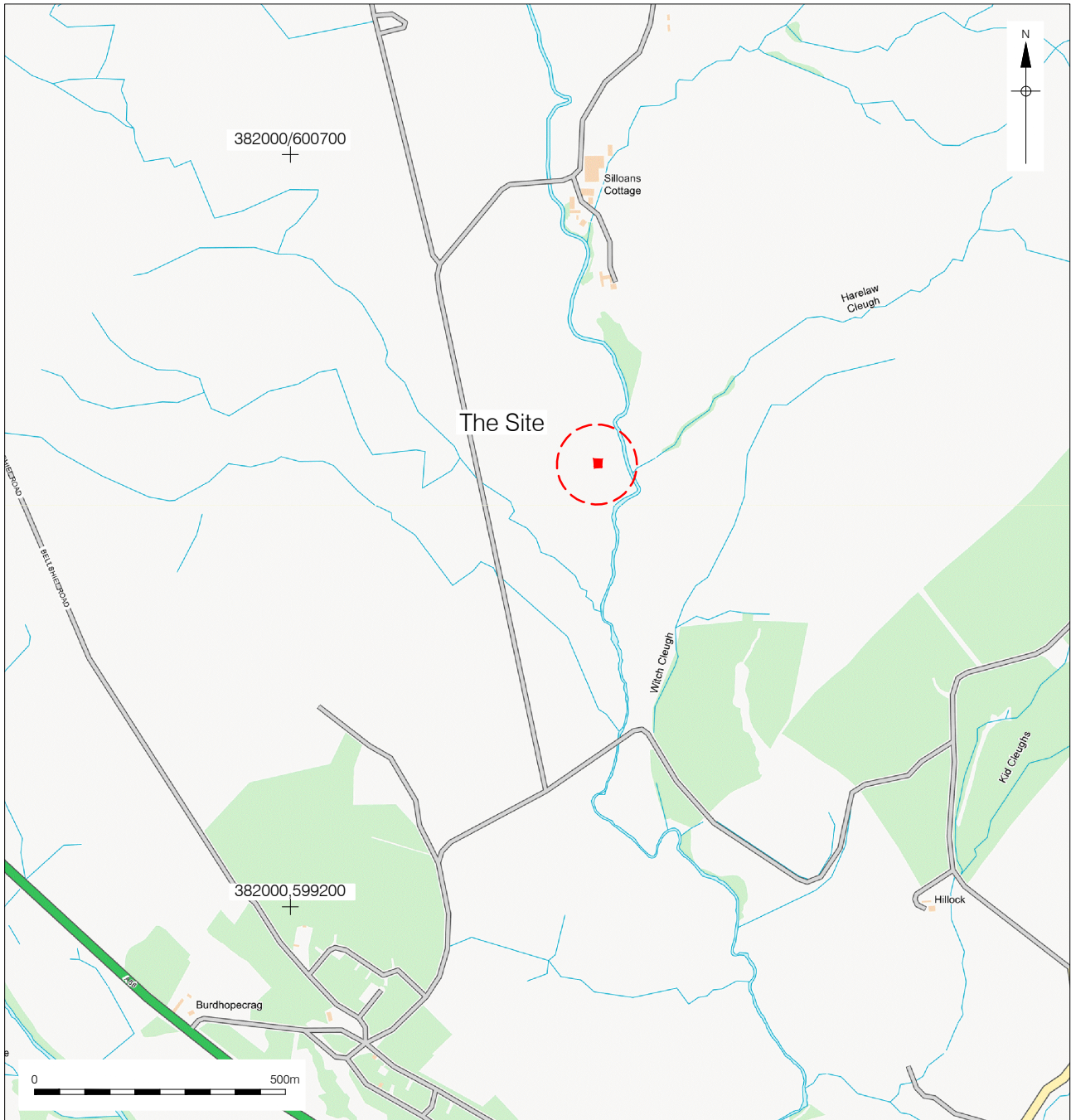
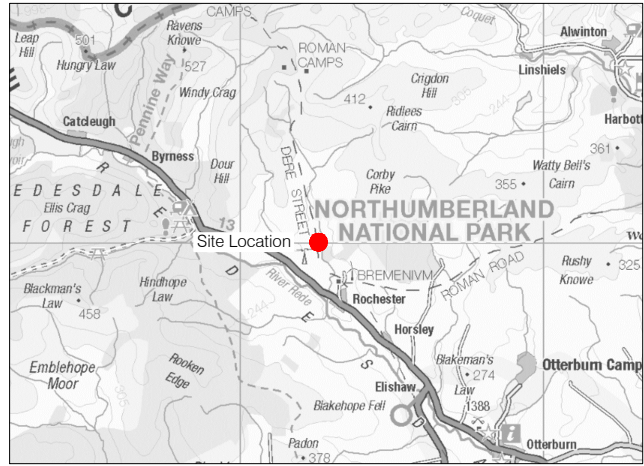
All documentation resulting from this project will be archived internally by PCA

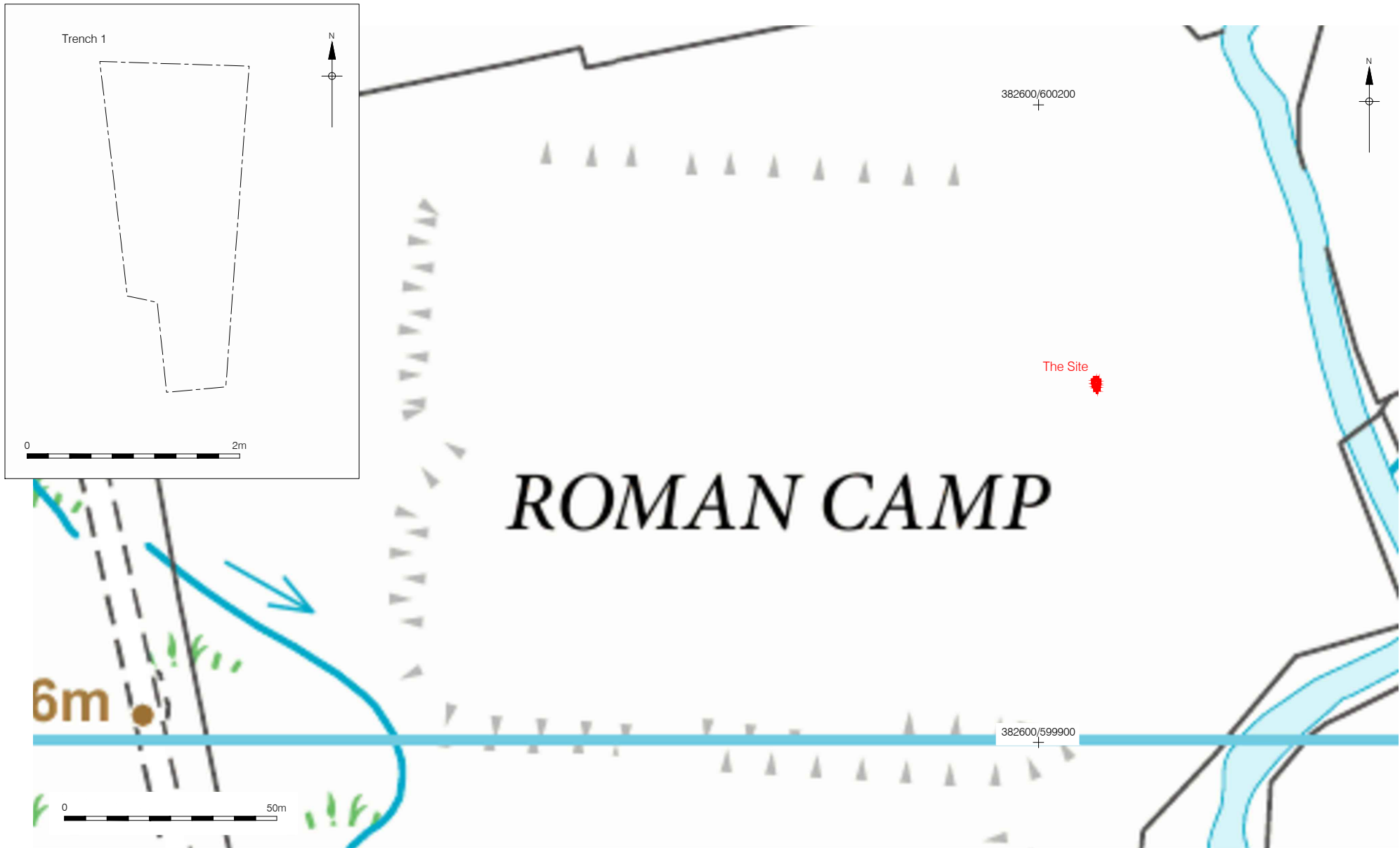
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