

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS AT
ST. CUTHBERT'S RC HIGH SCHOOL, GRETNA ROAD,
BENWELL, NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE, TYNE AND WEAR**

**Archaeological Investigations at St. Cuthbert's RC High School, Gretna Road,
Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear**

Central National Grid Reference: NZ 2087 6497

Site Code: SCB 08

Commissioning Client:
Sir Robert McAlpine Limited
Tyne House
26 The Side
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Tyne and Wear
NE1 3JD



Tel: 0191 261 1821

Contractor:
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Northern Office
Unit N19a, Tursdale Business Park
Tursdale
Durham
DH6 5PG



Tel: 0191 377 1111

**© Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
January 2009**

This report is protected by copyright. The report and the information contained herein are and remain the sole property of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited and are provided on a single site multi-user basis. If provided in paper form, the report may be utilised by a number of individuals within a location, but copying is prohibited under copyright. If provided in an electronic form, the report may be utilised in a shared server environment, but copying or installation onto more than one computer is prohibited under copyright and printing from electronic form is permitted for own, single location, use only. Multiple printing from electronic form for onward distribution is prohibited under copyright. Further distribution and uses of the report either in its entirety or part thereof in electronic form is prohibited without prior consent from Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the content of this report. However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from, errors, inaccuracies or omissions herein contained.

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	1
2. INTRODUCTION	3
3. PROJECT AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	15
4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY	17
5. RESULTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	20
6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	29
7. REFERENCES	31
8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS	33

APPENDICES

- Appendix A Stratigraphic Matrices
- Appendix B Context Index

List of Figures

Figure 1	Site location	5
Figure 2	Trench and Test Pit location	6
Figure 3	Trench 1, plan and section	24
Figure 4	Trench 2, plan and section	25
Figure 5	Trench 3, plan and section	26
Figure 6	Test Pits (TPS-TPZ), sections	27
Figure 7	Test Pits (H1-H3), sections	28

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 Archaeological investigations were undertaken July-October 2008 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at St. Cuthbert's RC High School, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The work was commissioned by Sir Robert McAlpine Limited and was undertaken ahead of further development of the school as part of the Newcastle Building Schools for the Future Project.
- 1.2 The main elements of the proposals involve demolition of the earliest structural element of the original grammar school, 'the 1922 Building', and construction of a new language block in approximately the same area within the heart of the school campus, as well as adding extensions to existing buildings, most notably the Sports Hall in the southern portion of the complex of school buildings.
- 1.3 The site is located in an area of considerable archaeological sensitivity since the postulated line of the Vallum – the massive earthwork defences forming the southernmost element of the Hadrian's Wall frontier - runs through the school grounds. The corridor occupied by the Vallum at the site has statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, with the scheduled area delimited to the south by the northern elevation of the 1922 Building.
- 1.4 The archaeological investigations comprised a trial trenching evaluation and monitoring of a programme of geotechnical investigations, undertaken across an area covering approximately 2.4 hectares with central National Grid Reference NZ 2087 6497. The evaluation comprised three trenches (Trenches 1–3), while monitoring was undertaken of three geotechnical test pits (H1–H3) around the perimeter of the Sports Hall and of eight geotechnical test pits (TPS–TPZ) on a cricket field in the northern portion of the school grounds, including two test pits (TPS and TPT) sited within the scheduled area.
- 1.5 Evaluation Trench 1 was located on a playing field, at the south-western corner of the proposed extension to the Sports Hall. Probably undisturbed natural clay was encountered throughout the trench at a depth of up to 0.30m below the existing ground surface. Three features were recorded, all of late 19th century or later origin. The uppermost deposit was topsoil, up to 0.30m thick.
- 1.6 Evaluation Trench 2 was located upon a landscaped grassed area, at the eastern end of the footprint of the proposed new language block. Natural clay was encountered at a depth of approximately 2m below the existing ground surface and was directly overlain by modern levelling deposits, with a combined maximum thickness of 1.75m. A modern service was recorded and the uppermost deposit comprised topsoil up to 0.20m thick. The trench indicated that significant ground raising had occurred in this area, most likely during landscaping at the time of the construction of the school.

- 1.7 Evaluation Trench 3 was located in an area of demolition rubble, within the footprint of the demolished 1922 Building, at right angles to the postulated line of the Vallum and immediately adjacent to the scheduled area. Natural silty sand was encountered at a depth of 0.70m below the existing ground level and was directly overlain by 'made ground', presumed to be material dumped at the time of construction of the 1922 Building. The foundations of the building itself were recorded. The trench indicated that landscaping ahead of construction of the 1922 Building may have removed potential archaeological deposits in this area.
- 1.8 No natural deposit was exposed within Test Pit H1, while natural clay was encountered in both Test Pits H2 and H3, at a depth of 0.40m and 0.60m below present ground level, respectively. In both cases natural clay was overlain by a developed soil, up to 0.40m thick and of uncertain date. Remains of recent origin, including the foundations of the Sports Hall, were recorded in each of these test pits.
- 1.9 Test Pits TPS, TPX and TPY each encountered sandstone bedrock at an average depth of 0.33m below ground level. It was overlain by modern levelling/dump deposits, which in turn were overlain by topsoil. In the remainder of the cricket field test pits, modern levelling/dump deposits up to 0.25m thick were encountered, overlain by topsoil. These findings indicate that creation of the level area of the field required some degree of landscaping, including along the assumed line of the Vallum, so that truncation of potential archaeological deposits is likely to have occurred.
- 1.10 In summary, no deposits or features of proven archaeological significance were encountered during the archaeological investigations.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

- 2.1.1 This report details the results of a programme of archaeological investigations undertaken between 31 July and 31 October 2008 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) at St. Cuthbert's RC High School, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The work was undertaken ahead of further development of the school as part of Phase 2 of the Newcastle Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Project. The work was commissioned by Sir Robert McAlpine Limited (SRM), the Principal Contractor for the BSF Project.
- 2.1.2 The school site is of considerable archaeological interest as it lies alongside the stretch of Hadrian's Wall that runs westwards from *Condercum*, the Roman fort on the line of the Wall at Benwell. The line of the Vallum, the huge earthwork defences that ran to the south of the Wall, crosses the school grounds, with much of the corridor potentially occupied by the feature an area afforded statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 2.1.3 The archaeological investigations were undertaken on the recommendation of the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist, taking advice from the English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, due to the proximity of the development to a scheduled area. No archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken prior to the investigations, although previous development at the school, in 2003, was preceded such an assessment.¹
- 2.1.4 The archaeological investigations were undertaken according to a Project Design² prepared in advance of the work by PCA. The broad aim was to assess the impact of the development proposals upon the archaeological resource. The investigations comprised a trial trenching evaluation and monitoring and recording ('watching brief') during a programme of geotechnical investigations by test pitting.
- 2.1.5 The completed Site Archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records, will be deposited at Tyne and Wear Museum Archive, Arbeia, South Shields, under the site code SCB 08. The Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) reference number is: preconst1-53303.

¹ Tyne and Wear Museums 2003c.

² PCA 2008.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The site lies within the grounds of St. Cuthbert's RC High School, off Gretna Road in Benwell, c. 4km west of the centre of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Immediately to the north-west of the school grounds, Gretna Road runs at right angles roughly southwards from West Road, the A186 (Figure 1). The overall investigation area was irregularly-shaped, covering c. 2.4 hectares, with central National Grid Reference NZ 2087 6497 (Figure 2).
- 2.2.2 Prior to its demolition in the summer of 2008, the original building of St. Cuthbert's Grammar School, 'the 1922 Building', stood at the heart of the overall complex of school buildings. Aligned east-west, it was evidently constructed upon an artificial terrace created on ground that slopes away naturally to the south, away from West Road. Its northern elevation formed the southern limit of the aforementioned scheduled portion of the Vallum corridor at the site. The building is to be replaced by a new language block, aligned WNW-ESE and thus running parallel with, but not extending into, the scheduled area.
- 2.2.3 To the south of the area in which the 1922 Building stood is a playground, this set at a lower level, with hard terracing between. The playground is bounded to the west by the Science and Technology Building, constructed in 2003. South-east of this building is a car park, also part of the 2003 development, but to be re-developed under the current proposals as the site of an extension to the Science and Technology Building. To the east of the playground there is further evidence of landscaping activity, particularly in the artificial slopes of a grassed area overlooking the playground. The eastern end of the proposed new language block is to occupy this area.
- 2.2.4 The south-easternmost element of the existing complex of school buildings is the Sports Hall, with an extensive area of sports pitches set out to the south. The Sports Hall is to be extended at its southern end as part of the current scheme.
- 2.2.5 Immediately to the north of the area in which the 1922 Building stood is an expanse of open ground, which, due to its relatively level form, was evidently created as a result of landscaping. Adjacent to West Road and with mature trees around much of its perimeter, this area is currently utilised as a cricket field. From the field, the ground rises to the north-east and east, while it falls away to the north-west, west and south-west, these features underlining the extent of the aforementioned landscaping. The assumed line of the Hadrian's Wall Vallum crosses the southern portion of this open area, running in a NW-SE direction (Figure 2).

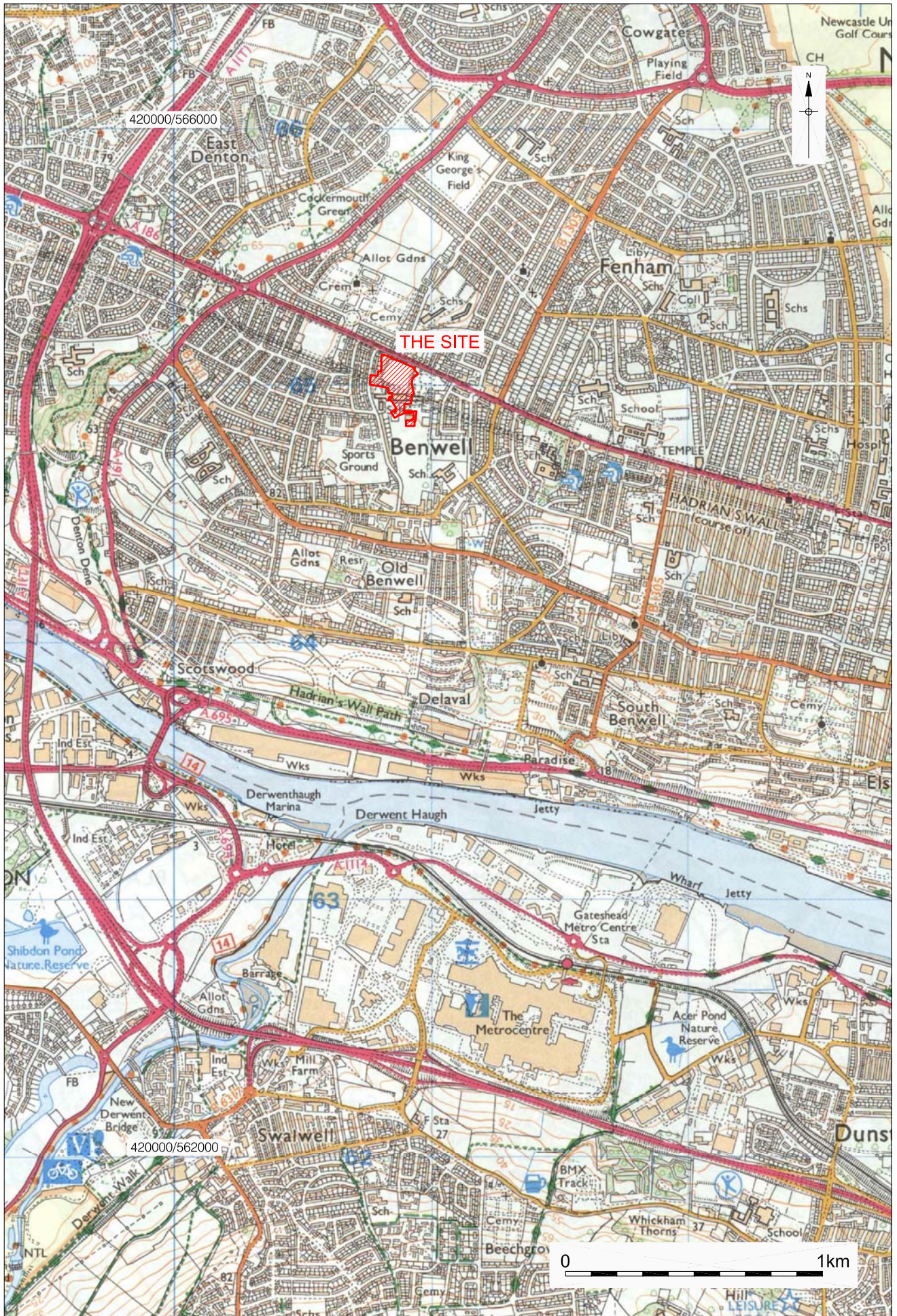


Figure 1. Site location
Scale 1:20,000

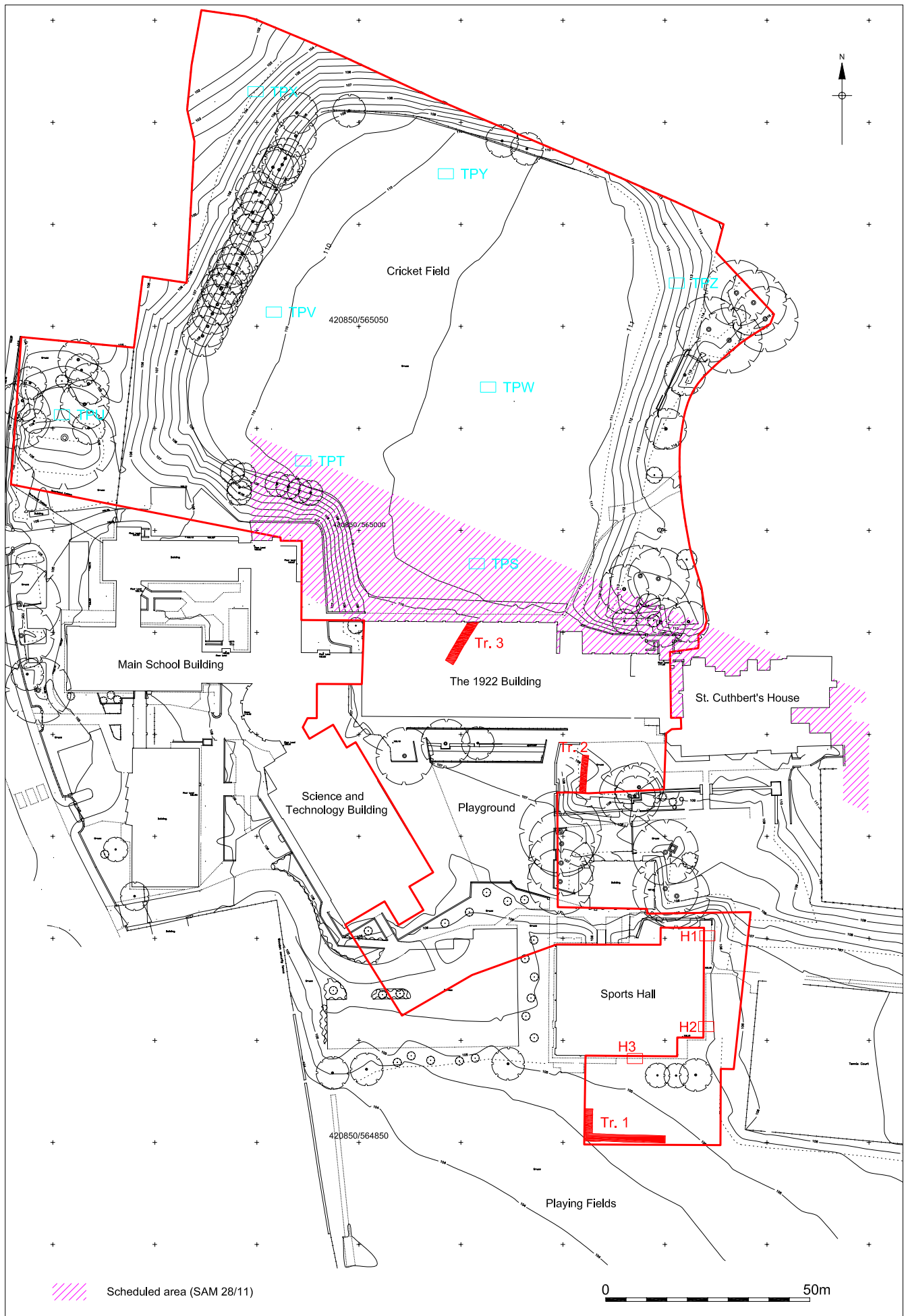


Figure 2. Trench and testpits location
Scale 1:1,250

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 Benwell lies in the eastern sector of Hadrian's Wall where the Roman frontier crosses the Westphalian Coal Measures of the Upper Carboniferous.³ St Cuthbert's RC High School lies on the western side of Benwell Hill a distinctive feature formed by the High Main Post, a sandstone that outcrops between the High Main Coal and the High Main Marine Band of the Westphalian B Middle Coal Measures. Further east, on the hilltop, at c. 126m OD, the Roman fort of *Condercum* was founded. The drift geology of much of the eastern sector of the Wall is characterised by Glacial Till (Boulder Clay).
- 2.3.2 Lying towards the western side of Benwell Hill, which also forms the west-facing valley side of Denton Burn, but towards the ridge line of the south-facing valley side of the River Tyne, the site has, in broad terms, a gently sloping, south-facing aspect. On West Road, immediately north of the site, ground level falls from c. 120m OD to around sea level at the river, which lies c. 1.4 km to the south. The highest part of the school site is its north-eastern corner, at the top of the bank overlooking the cricket field, where ground level rises to c. 114m OD. Along the Gretna Road frontage of the school, ground level is generally c. 105m OD, while the continuation of Gretna Road, adjacent to the southern sports pitches, falls away to the south, from a height of c. 105m OD in the vicinity of the existing Sports Hall.
- 2.3.3 As mentioned above, there is evidence of extensive localised landscaping within the school grounds, most notably on the northern cricket field and in the area to the south that was occupied by the 1922 Building. For example, the area occupied by the cricket field is roughly level, at 110m OD to 111m OD, the land along its western side has been landscaped to fall sharply to c. 106m OD and the bank along its eastern side rises to sharply to between 113m OD and 114m OD, this in the north-eastern corner of the grounds, as mentioned.

2.4 Planning Background

- 2.4.1 The archaeological investigations herein described were commissioned by SRM in advance of further development of St. Cuthbert's RC High School. The scheme is an element of Phase 2 of the Newcastle BSF Project and will be funded as part of the Newcastle Schools PFI Project, which is being delivered and partly funded by Newcastle City Council's private sector partner, Aura. SRM is Principal Contractor for the Newcastle BSF Project.
- 2.4.2 Government guidance on archaeology and heritage conservation is set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: 'Archaeology and Planning'* (PPG16).⁴ At a local level, the Local Planning Authority (LPA), Newcastle City Council, has various policies within its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) concerning archaeology and cultural heritage. Of particular relevance are:

POLICY C04. DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD HARM SITES OR AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST AND THEIR SETTINGS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED

and

POLICY C04.1. THE FOLLOWING SITES AND AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST IDENTIFIED FOR THE PURPOSE OF POLICY C04 INCLUDE:

Scheduled ancient monuments

7. Hadrian's Wall, Vallum and associated works

³ Johnson 1997.

⁴ Department of the Environment 1990.

Other sites and areas of archaeological interest, as defined on the Proposals Map

18. *Unscheduled areas of the known and presumed line of Hadrian's Wall, Vallum, Ditch and fortifications.*

This policy not only deals with sites, monuments and areas which have scheduled monument status - these being worthy of preservation because of their national significance – but also other important known sites, monuments and areas and sites and areas which have considerable potential archaeological interest.

POLICY C04.2. WHERE A PROPOSAL MAY AFFECT A SITE OR AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST, THE DEVELOPER WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND WHERE NECESSARY UNDERTAKE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION.

This policy highlights the need to take archaeological considerations into account at the pre-planning stage before the development control process and stresses that potential conflict between the needs of archaeology and development can be reduced if developers discuss their preliminary plans with the City Council and County Archaeologist in advance.

POLICY C04.3. WHERE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT A SITE OR AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST, DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU UNLESS THIS IS CLEARLY INAPPROPRIATE OR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE REMAINS IS DEMONSTRABLY UNAVOIDABLE, IN WHICH CASE A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO AND AGREED WITH THE COUNCIL BEFORE THE START OF DEVELOPMENT.

This policy deals with the category of site which includes the numerous known sites of archaeological interest and sensitivity which do not have the status of scheduled monuments but which may still be worthy of preservation because of their national or local significance. These may be known only from aerial photographs, or comprise sites of industrial or post-medieval archaeology such as collieries, railways or farm buildings (some of which may also be listed buildings).

The policy notes that when an application is made to develop such a site, the Council, in consultation with English Heritage and the County Archaeologist, will weigh up its relative importance (national/ local) against other material considerations including the actual need for the proposed development in that particular location. Should permission be granted and it is not possible to preserve the remains *in situ*, then the developer should make appropriate and satisfactory provision for their excavation and recording. If this has not already been secured through a voluntary agreement, planning permission may be granted subject to conditions that provide for excavation and recording before development takes place, again in consultation with the County Archaeologist.

POLICY C04.4. WHERE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD INVOLVE LARGE SCALE GROUND DISTURBANCE IN CURRENTLY UNDEVELOPED AREAS DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY ANY SITES OR POTENTIAL AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST.

This policy highlights that large-scale works, which cause extensive disturbance of ground such as open casting, the construction of major highways and substantial areas of new development may affect areas with as yet unidentified archaeological interest. The City Council will be guided by the advice of the County Archaeologist in this matter.

- 2.4.3 The Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team attached to the Historic Environment Section of Newcastle City Council undertakes archaeological development control in the City. Because of the archaeological sensitivity of the site, the County Archaeologist, as part of the Specialist Conservation Team, advised that a trial trenching evaluation should be undertaken. The input of the English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist was required in this instance due to the proximity of a scheduled section of the Hadrian's Wall frontier.
- 2.4.4 Statutory protection for archaeological remains is principally enshrined in the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, as amended by the *National Heritage Act 1983* and subsequent. Nationally important sites are listed in a schedule of monuments and are accorded statutory protection. Details of scheduling are held on the list maintained by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist advises on all development proposals in the vicinity of scheduled portions of the Hadrian's Wall frontier.

- 2.4.5 The site is crossed by an element of the Hadrian's Wall frontier that has statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, this being SAM 28(11), with full title 'Hadrian's Wall Vallum in Wall Mile 6 Benwell, Length of Vallum of Hadrian's Wall in Grounds of St. Cuthbert's School'. The scheduled area runs roughly NW-SE across the southern part of the northern cricket field, with part of its southern boundary formerly delimited, *i.e.* prior to the recent demolition, by the northern elevation of the 1922 Building (Figure 2).

2.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

A desk-based assessment was undertaken prior to a previous development at the school, in 2003. A summary of this information is included below, and the research and writing of those responsible is gratefully acknowledged. Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record (HER) numbers are included, as appropriate.

2.5.1 Prehistoric

- 2.5.1.1 A perforated axe-hammer of probable Neolithic or Early Bronze Age date (HER 1376) was once found in the vicinity of *Condercum* fort. However, a single object cannot be considered as evidence of significant prehistoric activity in the area.
- 2.5.1.2 Slightly further afield, along the River Tyne, there have been numerous discoveries – many recorded by antiquarians – of prehistoric burials and artefacts, including flint tools, bronze spear- and axe-heads and logboats, all giving a broad picture of utilisation of the river valley during the prehistoric eras.⁵

2.5.2 Roman

- 2.5.2.1 The main archaeological potential for the site relates to the Roman period due to its proximity to Hadrian's Wall. The significance of the Wall corridor in archaeological terms lies both in its complexity and the degree of survival of the Roman military and civilian remains. This was recognised by the designation of the Hadrian's Wall Military Zone as a World Heritage Site in 1987. A Management Plan, prepared by English Heritage, Local Authorities along the length of the Wall and other interested parties, identified three distinct areas: the 'archaeological core' of the Wall and Vallum (the World Heritage Site), the surrounding 'buffer zone' and the outer 'visual envelope'.
- 2.5.2.2 The site lies *c.* 300m to the west of the assumed western limit of the civilian settlement (*vicus*) (HER 5262) associated with *Condercum* fort (HER 208), while the fort itself lay *c.* 700m to the ESE of the site, atop Benwell Hill and astride Hadrian's Wall. The line of the southern earthwork defences of the frontier, the Vallum, is thought to have crossed the school site. As previously mentioned, much of the corridor likely to have been occupied by the Vallum within the school grounds has statutory protection as a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 28(11)).

⁵ Miket 1984.

- 2.5.2.3 The construction of Hadrian's Wall was undertaken on the order of Emperor Hadrian from AD 122 to consolidate the northern border of the Roman Empire. The Wall was built in stone between Newcastle and the River Irthing, the eastern 45 miles, with the remaining 31 miles constructed in turf. Benwell lies in a stretch of the frontier between Newcastle and the River North Tyne, where the Wall was of typical 'broad Wall' stone construction, c. 3m wide on a broad foundation of similar width and c. 5m high. The line of the Wall is closely reflected in the line of West Road through Benwell and remains of the Wall are visible along the south side of the road to the north-west of the study site. In 2002, monitoring of groundworks, c. 160m to the north of the study site, located the foundations of the Wall under the southern carriageway of West Road.⁶
- 2.5.2.4 From its inception, the Wall was planned with regularly spaced fortlets ('milecastles') at intervals of about 1 mile and the original design also planned for two equally spaced towers ('turrets') between each milecastle. At some point, a fundamental change of plan occurred and more substantial forts were constructed. Sixteen such forts are now known either attached to the Wall or in close association with it. *Condercum*, meaning 'place with the fine view, was a cavalry fort sited astride the Wall on the summit of Benwell Hill, the highest ground in the West End of Newcastle.
- 2.5.2.5 To the north of the Wall, at a distance of c. 6m, ran a substantial V-shaped ditch which varied from 8-12m in width and was around 3m deep.⁷ The berm was generally about 6m in width, although was much reduced in areas adjacent to the turrets.⁸ The material dug out from the ditch was mounded on the north side, known as the *glacis* mound, to heighten the outer scarp.
- 2.5.2.6 A further defensive element - the aforementioned Vallum - was added to the Wall after the decision had been taken to construct the forts. It comprised a broad flat-bottomed ditch flanked by a pair of linear banks, formed from the upcast from the excavation of the ditch. The ditch was c. 6.5m wide, up to c. 3m deep, with banks c. 6m across by 2m high. The standard width of the Vallum – including all the above elements – is 36.60m (this distance is the equivalent of 120 feet, the Roman surveying unit known as an *actus*). The commonly accepted interpretation for the function of the Vallum is that it represented a demarcation of the militarised zone from civilian land to the south. The Vallum was constructed at a variable distance to the south of the Wall, sometimes adjacent to it, and in some places up to 1km to its south. At many locations the Vallum is now buried below post-medieval and modern development. At this site, the postulated WNW-ESE course of the Vallum runs through the school grounds, across the southern part of the cricket field.
- 2.5.2.7 A road, known as the Military Way, was built to link all elements of the Wall defence; it ran from fort to fort across the corridor between the Wall and Vallum. An archaeological evaluation in 2003, in the grounds of Pendower Hall located c. 550m ESE of the site, encountered the Military Way, the work revealing a well-preserved road surface, running c. 30m south of West Road.⁹

⁶ Tyne and Wear Museums 2002.

⁷ Breeze and Dobson 2000, 30.

⁸ Bidwell 2008.

⁹ Tyne and Wear Museums 2003a.

- 2.5.2.8 All the forts along the Wall eventually had civilian settlements (*vici*) associated with them; they were usually positioned to the south of the Wall, within the area directly protected by the fort, Wall and Vallum. At *Condercum*, the *vicus* probably occupied land on both sides of the Vallum and, like the majority of *vici* along the Wall, it was probably abandoned after the end of the 3rd century AD. At *Condercum*, the *vicus* probably developed initially alongside the road (HER 5273) that ran southwards from the fort. Although the precise extent of the *vicus* here has not been established, the site is located c. 300m west of its presumed limit; to the east it is assumed to have extended as far as Condercum Road.¹⁰ It has been previously suggested that two parallel ditches (HER 5270) observed running southwards from the south-eastern corner of the fort delimited the eastern extent of the *vicus*.
- 2.5.2.9 *Condercum* fort covered 5.64 acres and was garrisoned during the reign of Hadrian by a cavalry regiment of 500 troops. It was occupied from the mid-late 2nd century by a 1,000 strong cavalry unit from the upper Rhineland. Known features within the fort include the Commanding Officer's house, the headquarters building, granaries, workshops, barracks and possibly stable blocks and a hospital. A reservoir was constructed over the northernmost third of the fort in 1858 and has since been enlarged, while much of the remainder is covered by West Road and, to the south, the Denhill Park housing estate.
- 2.5.2.10 In the area of *Condercum* fort, both the Vallum and Wall ditch were once visible as earthworks either side of a toll road, which has now been widened to form the modern West Road through Benwell. Various antiquarian records, including those of Horsley in 1732, Bruce in 1851 and MacLauchlan in 1852, give descriptions of the earthworks visible at the time. Excavations to the west of Condercum Road in 1928 located the Vallum and traced the line of its diversion around the southern boundary of the fort.
- 2.5.2.11 Recent investigations targeting the Vallum ditch or the *vicus* in Benwell have met with relatively little success. An archaeological evaluation in 2003 on land within the school grounds immediately west of the site found no evidence of the *vicus*.¹¹ Archaeological monitoring in 2004 on Springhill Gardens and Broomridge Avenue, did, however, identify the north side of the Vallum ditch.¹² Another programme of archaeological monitoring in 2005, on Weidner Road and Oakfield Gardens, found no evidence of the Vallum or the *vicus*.¹³ A field evaluation in 2004 at Bowland Lodge, Benwell, c. 1.6km east of the study site, tested the postulated line of the Vallum, but found no evidence of any Wall related features or any other Roman activity.¹⁴
- 2.5.2.12 Beyond the fort area of *Condercum*, significant Roman period structures to have been discovered include: a bath-house (HER 5263), c. 400m to the south-west of the fort, a mansio (lodgings for visitors to the fort) (HER 5265), c. 170m to the south-west, and a building foundation (HER 5269), c. 200m to the south-west. In addition, there have been numerous single finds in the wider area, including pottery and coins (HERs 5267, 5268, 5272) in the area to the south-west of the fort.

¹⁰ Tyne and Wear Museums 1991.

¹¹ Tyne and Wear Museums 2003b

¹² Tyne and Wear Museums 2004.

¹³ Tyne and Wear Museums 2005.

¹⁴ PCA 2004.

2.5.3 Anglo-Saxon

- 2.5.3.1 There is no documentary evidence to suggest settlement or exploitation of the land in the vicinity of the site during this era.
- 2.5.3.2 Further afield, two separate isolated finds of brooches (HERs 1497, 1498) of Anglo-Saxon form were recovered by workmen to the east of *Condercum* fort in the first half of the 20th century. However, isolated finds like this cannot be considered as evidence for significant Anglo-Saxon activity in the area.

2.5.4 Medieval

- 2.5.4.1 Benwell, originally a small village (HER 140) in its own right prior to absorption into the urban west end of Newcastle, lay further down the side of the Tyne valley, c. 0.5km SSE of the school site. The earliest reference to the village of 'Bynewalle' (referring to its position on Hadrian's Wall) comes from c. AD 1050, the time immediately before the Norman Conquest. The settlement certainly formed part of the Barony of Bolbec after the Conquest and the village was of 'two-row' form, with the rows separated by a wide street or green running west from the manor house. While the overall street pattern survives today, no medieval buildings remain. Mining is known to have been important in the area as early as the 14th century.
- 2.5.4.2 There are relatively detailed documentary records of the ownership of Benwell estate up to the Dissolution, when it passed to the Crown, before it was bought by Robert Shafto in 1625. Benwell estate and Benwell Manor (HER 1361) consisted of 1,159 acres and included a chapel (HER 138) and the manor farm. The earliest reference for the chapel dates to 1663. Demolished c. 1780 its precise location and appearance are unknown. An original Benwell Tower is documented in 1538-39 in bailiffs' accounts listing property belonging to Tynemouth Priory, where it is described as the manor house. Having been largely rebuilt in the mid 18th century, the tower was demolished in 1831, with the present Benwell Tower built in its place (HER 139).
- 2.5.4.3 The course of the ancient roadway (HER 3945) from Newcastle to Carlisle lies beyond the northern limit of the site, effectively following the course of Hadrian's Wall. The earliest reference to 'Westgate' is 1163-80 and by the late 13th century, following construction of the Newcastle town wall, the West Gate provided access to this main route. In 1751, a toll road - the Military Road - was constructed on roughly the same alignment as the ancient roadway.

2.5.5 Post medieval and Modern

- 2.5.5.1 A post-medieval or early industrial site, a quarry (HER 1359), lay c. 200m north-east of the site. Mentioned in a survey of Benwell c. 1578, it was described as '...a stone quarry in the tenure of Toddericke and others...'. Its location is probably reflected in an area of quarrying shown on an estate map of Benwell dated 1677 and it was likely subsumed into the extensive Bank Top Quarry (HER 4067), which developed either side of West Road in the late 18th or early 19th century. Extensive workings are depicted, as 'Quarry Hole', south of the toll road on an estate map of 1834.

- 2.5.5.2 A building of likely 18th century origin once lay within the western limit of the school grounds. Benwell Lodge (HER 6368) was built by Robert Shafto in the mid 18th century and was demolished in the mid 20th century as part of development of the land along Gretna Road as the school expanded. Another building of this era, Benwell Hall (HER 1863), lay c. 300m to the SSW of the site and was also of mid 18th century origin.
- 2.5.5.3 The general area is most likely to have been utilised primarily as agricultural land during the post-medieval period and it is possible that the earthworks of the Vallum were levelled at an early date, possibly because of the proximity to Benwell village which would mean that farmland here would have been at a premium. A map of Benwell dated 1637 clearly depicts the agricultural nature of the area in which the site lies, with defined fields and meadows set out south of the Wall. The line of the Vallum may be depicted on this map in the form of field boundaries, but this is not certain. A similar arrangement of land parcels appears, in rather less detail, on the aforementioned estate map from 1677.
- 2.5.5.4 A composite plan showing the Benwell estates c. 1800 shows the northern part of the school grounds probably lying within two land parcels, 'North King's Chambers' and 'Middle King's Chambers'. Immediately to the west, 'Cottage Plantation' ran to the SSE from the line of the Wall down to Benwell village. The aforementioned map of 1834 shows the northern part of the school grounds lying within a single extensive field, 'North King's Chambers', with the aforementioned quarry shown in some detail immediately to the north-east, on the south side of the toll road.
- 2.5.5.5 In terms of the position of the Hadrian's Wall frontier, much mapping from the late 16th century to the late 18th century, such as the plans of Saxton (1576), Speed (1610), Horsley (1732), Kitchen (1767) and Armstrong (1769), shows only the general line of Hadrian's Wall and Vallum in Benwell. Subsequent maps, such as that of Greenwood (1828) and MacLauchlan (c. 1858), are at scales sufficient only to show significant features, such as the Newcastle to Carlisle road. However, the cartographic evidence of the early-mid 19th century is of note in that it continues to convey what was still - despite increasing industrialisation along the Tyne - generally an agricultural landscape south of the line of the Wall in Benwell.
- 2.5.5.6 The Ordnance Survey 1st edition map of 1858 shows the current school grounds still within what remained an essentially rural landscape on the south side of the portion of the toll road running down 'Benwell Bank', that is the eastern valley side of Denton Burn. Benwell Lodge and its associated grounds are shown in detail, alongside a road, later Gretna Road, and the extensive workings of Bank Top Quarry are depicted either side of the toll road. The postulated course of the Vallum is depicted running through Benwell Lodge, c. 120m south of the toll road, which, as previously mentioned, closely follows the line of Hadrian's Wall.
- 2.5.5.7 The Ordnance Survey 2nd edition from 1897 shows substantial development across the overall area, annotated as 'Benwell Hill'. Much of the current school grounds remained open fields, with the substantial Benwell Hill House (HER 6367) (now St. Cuthbert's House) and its grounds now in place to the east, although the building is not annotated in any way. Built in the second half of the 19th century by the engineer Percy Westmacott, it appears on the 'Local List of Buildings, Structures, Parks and Gardens of Special Interest' maintained by Newcastle City Council.

- 2.5.5.8 By the time of the 4th edition in 1936, 'St. Cuthbert's Grammar School' (the 1922 Building) was in place at the site, abutting the western end of St. Cuthbert's House, which became incorporated into the school in the 1920s. The area around the site is shown as far more urbanised than on previous editions with residential dwellings along the north side of West Road, the former toll road, and along both sides of Gretna Road, although Benwell Lodge remains in place. The probable course of the Vallum is depicted in the location generally accepted today.
- 2.5.5.9 Since the Second World War the school grounds have been developed in piecemeal fashion, with Benwell Lodge giving way to new buildings along Gretna Road, including the existing main school building, and other buildings and facilities added, including the playground south of the 1922 Building, the Sports Hall and, in 2003, the Science and Technology Building.

3. PROJECT AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project Aims

- 3.1.1 The project is threat-led with potential to disturb or destroy important sub-surface archaeological remains of the Roman period in particular. The broad aim of the project was therefore to inform on the character, date, extent and degree of survival of archaeological deposits in the proposed development areas with particular emphasis on evidence of Roman military activity associated with the Hadrian's Wall frontier.
- 3.1.2 Archaeological trial trenching was chosen as the investigative tool to test directly the archaeological potential of the proposed development areas. Three trenches (Trenches 1-3) investigated locations to be affected by:
- Demolition of the 1922 Building and construction of a new language block immediately to the south of the assumed line of the Vallum. Trenches 1 and 2 both aimed to evaluate the potential for remains of this element of the Hadrian's Wall frontier to survive.
 - Construction of a southern extension to the existing Sports Hall. Trench 3 aimed to investigate what was potentially an undisturbed portion of the site, where remains or pre-Roman, Roman or later origin may survive.
- 3.1.3 By monitoring the programme of geotechnical work associated with the scheme, a further aim of the investigations was to collect additional archaeological data from geotechnical exposures to further inform on the archaeological potential of the site.
- 3.1.4 Additional aims of the project were:
- to compile a Site Archive consisting of all site and project documentary and photographic records, as well as all artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material recovered.
 - to compile a report that contains an assessment of the nature and significance of all data categories, stratigraphic, artefactual, etc.

3.2 Research Objectives

- 3.2.1 The project had the potential to make a significant contribution to archaeological knowledge of the area. *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF)¹⁵ identifies the following key priority within the research agenda for the Roman period which is of direct relevance to the project:
- Riii – The Roman military presence.
- 3.2.2 Given that a scheduled portion of the Hadrian's Wall corridor, comprising the postulated course of the Vallum, lies immediately to the north of the site, the specific objective of the archaeological investigations was to assess whether any sub-surface archaeological remains were present that could provide evidence of the position of the Vallum in this area.

¹⁵ Petts and Gerrard 2006.

3.2.3 Additional objectives of the investigations were:

- to assist in the formulation of recommendations regarding further mitigation which may be necessary to preserve archaeological features *in situ*, or
- to assist in the formulation of recommendations that may be required to preserve archaeological features by record.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork

- 4.1.1 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA).¹⁶ PCA is an IfA-Registered Organisation.
- 4.1.2 Fieldwork comprised three phases of archaeological investigation, namely two phases of monitoring of geotechnical site investigations, conducted prior to a trial trenching evaluation. The aforementioned Project Design was compiled by PCA to set out fieldwork methodologies to be adopted.
- 4.1.3 The first phase of archaeological monitoring was conducted on 31 July 2008 in association with hand-excavation of three geotechnical test-pits (H1–H3) sited around the perimeter of the Sports Hall (Figure 2). Test Pits H1 and H2 measured 0.90m x 0.60m and 0.60m x 0.60m, respectively, and were sited adjacent to the east-facing elevation of the building. Test Pit H3 measured 0.60m x 0.60m and was sited adjacent to the south facing elevation.
- 4.1.4 The second phase of archaeological monitoring was conducted on 15 October 2008 in association with hand-excavation of eight test-pits to test for ground contamination. All eight pits were uniform in size measuring 0.30m x 0.30m and 0.30m–0.35m deep (TPS–TPZ). Six pits, TPS, TPT, TPV, TPW, TPY, TPZ, were sited on the cricket field in the northern part of the school grounds, including two pits (TPT and TPS) located within the scheduled area of the Vallum. One pit (TPU) was sited within a small area of woodland to the north-west, also along the postulated line of the Vallum, while the final pit (TPX) was sited at the base of a steep scarp to the north-west of the cricket field.
- 4.1.5 The trial trenching evaluation, undertaken 27-31 October 2008, involved machine excavation of three trial trenches (Trenches 1-3), these sited at specific locations to provide the most useful archaeological information and address the aims and objectives of the project.
- 4.1.6 Trench 1 was located to the south of the Sports Hall. It was L-shaped in plan, with arms measuring 19.0m east-west and 8.0m north-south and was uniformly 1.80m wide. This trench was sited on the northern margin of the extensive playing fields, at the south-western corner of the footprint of the proposed extension to the Sports Hall. Its purpose was to investigate an area of the site that may have been relatively undisturbed. Prior to excavation a Cable Avoidance Tool was used to detect the location of a live electricity cable, which runs across the northern part of the playing fields. With this cable located by initial hand excavation, the north-south arm of the trench was shortened from its intended (maximum) length of 15m, while the east-west arm was lengthened from its intended (maximum) length of 15m in compensation.

¹⁶ IfA 2001.

- 4.1.7 Trench 2 was located to the south of the area formerly occupied by the 1922 Building on a landscaped grassed area overlooking the central playground. It measured 9.0m north-south by 1.80m wide. It was sited within the easternmost portion of the footprint of the proposed new language block. Its purpose, given the general uncertainty regarding the precise location of the various elements of the Vallum, was to evaluate the potential for remains of the Vallum to survive at this location and to provide information regarding original ground level, prior to early 20th century development, in this part of the site.
- 4.1.8 Trench 3, which measured 12m NE-SW by 1.80m wide, was sited within the footprint of the demolished 1922 Building. It was situated immediately adjacent to the scheduled area covering the postulated course of the Vallum, at right angles to its course, and its purpose was essentially the same as that of Trench 2.
- 4.1.9 In the evaluation, Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated with a tracked 360° mechanical excavator and Trench 3 was excavated with a back-acting 180° wheeled mechanical excavator, both machines fitted with wide-blade ditching (non-toothed) buckets. This work took place under the direct supervision of the supervising archaeologist. Turf in the area of Trench 1 was removed prior to machine excavation to allow reinstatement of the ground surface. Overburden and archaeologically insignificant material was gradually removed by the machines, in spits of approximately 100mm thickness, down to the natural sub-stratum. Spoil was mounded away from the edge of each trench.
- 4.1.10 Subsequent excavation and recording was undertaken in accordance with recognised archaeological practice and following methodology set out in PCA's *'Field Recording Manual'*.¹⁷ Following machine clearance, the sections and the base of the trenches were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. Sections in each trench was drawn at a scale of either 1:10 or 1:20 and the base of each trench was planned at a scale of 1:50 relative to a baseline established along the trench, which was then located relative to the Ordnance Survey grid.
- 4.1.11 Archaeological deposits were recorded using a 'single context recording' system. Features and deposits were recorded on *pro forma* context record sheets. A 'Harris Matrix' stratification diagram to record stratigraphic relationships was compiled and checked during the fieldwork.
- 4.1.12 Within appropriate archaeological horizons, partial excavation, the recovery of dating evidence or cleaning and recording of deposits was preferred to full excavation, and was practised wherever possible.
- 4.1.13 A photographic record of the investigations was compiled using SLR cameras. This comprised black and white prints and colour transparencies (on 35mm film), illustrating in both detail and general context the principal features and finds discovered. All photographs included a graduated metric scale.
- 4.1.14 A series of Temporary Bench Marks (TBMs) was established at the site using existing survey data. All trenches were levelled and the heights of all principal strata and features were calculated in metres above Ordnance Datum (m OD) with the values indicated on the appropriate paperwork.

¹⁷ PCA 1999.

4.2 Post-Excavation

- 4.2.1 The stratigraphic data for the project is represented by the written, drawn and photographic records. A total of 39 archaeological contexts were defined during the evaluation (Appendix A). Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records and phasing the stratigraphic data. Written and tabulated summaries of the site data were then compiled, as described below.
- 4.2.2 No artefactual material was recovered during the work and no other categories of inorganic artefactual material were represented.
- 4.2.3 The projects palaeoenvironmental sampling strategy was to recover bulk samples where appropriate, from well-dated (where possible), stratified deposits covering the main periods or phases of occupation and the range of feature types represented, with specific reference to the objectives of the evaluation. To this end, no appropriate deposits were encountered and, therefore, no bulk samples were recovered. No other biological material was recovered.
- 4.2.4 The complete Site Archive, in this case comprising written, drawn and photographic records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation) will be packaged for long term curation. In preparing the Site Archive for deposition, all relevant standards and guidelines documents referenced in the Archaeological Archives Forum guidelines document¹⁸ will be adhered to, in particular a well-established United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) document¹⁹ and an forthcoming IfA publication.²⁰ No material was recovered that required specialist stabilisation or an assessment of potential for conservation research. The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the Tyne and Wear Museum Archive, Arbeia, South Shields, will be met in full.

¹⁸ Brown 2007.

¹⁹ Walker, UKIC 1990.

²⁰ IfA forthcoming.

5. RESULTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

5.1 Phase 1: Natural Sub-stratum

- 5.1.1 Natural sub-stratum, [109], comprising brownish soft, mid orange clayey sandy silt, was exposed across the extent of Trench 1 at a maximum depth of 0.30m below present ground level. This was encountered at highest and lowest levels of 104.62m OD and 104.33m OD, respectively.
- 5.1.2 Natural sub-stratum, [507], comprising soft, mottled mid yellowish brown and greyish brown clay, was encountered in Test Pits H2 and H3, these located to the north of Trench 1, at a depth of 0.40m and 0.60m, respectively, below present ground level.
- 5.1.3 Within Trench 2, natural sub-stratum, [208], was exposed across the northern portion of the trench at a maximum depth of 2.22m below present ground level, this at a highest level of 108.21m OD. In this area the natural sub-stratum comprised soft, mid yellowish brown clay.
- 5.1.4 Natural sub-stratum, [308], comprising soft, mid brownish orange silty sand, was exposed along much of the base of Trench 3, at a highest level of 109.19m OD. It was encountered at a depth of 0.70m below present ground level towards the northern end of the trench, but sloped away to lie at a depth of 1.10m below present ground level to the south, this slope probably simply reflecting the natural topography. Towards the northern end of the trench, the upper interface of the natural sub-stratum also sloped down slightly towards the north, with a low 'ridge' thus formed (Figure 5). This is probably most likely the result of landscaping activity prior to the construction of the 1922 Building.
- 5.1.5 All the natural sub-stratum exposed during the evaluation was consistent with the Glacial Till (Boulder Clay) drift geology that characterises much of the eastern sector of the Wall. The highest and lowest levels at which the natural sub-stratum was encountered during the evaluation - 109.19 m OD (in Trench 3 to the north) and 104.33m OD (in Trench 1 to the south), reflect the natural topography of this portion of the northern valley side of the Tyne.
- 5.1.6 During the second phase of watching brief, mostly conducted on the northern cricket field, natural bedrock was exposed at the base of Test Pits TPS, TPX and TPY. In TPX the material, mid brownish yellow sandstone, was encountered at a maximum height of c. 110.30m OD, at a depth of c. 0.30m below current ground level. The presence of this material broadly suggests that there has been substantial landscaping across this area to create the relatively level field, an. While landscaping has undoubtedly occurred, the extent to which possible drift deposits have been removed from this area is not certain, given that post-medieval and early modern quarrying of (probably outcropping) sandstone is well documented along West Road immediately to the north-east of this part of the site.

5.2 Phase 2: Developed Soil

Test pits (Figure 7)

- 5.2.1 A developed soil, [506], was encountered in Test Pits H2 and H3, directly overlying the natural sub-stratum. At each location the deposit comprised mid yellowish brown and greyish brown clayey silt. In Test Pit H3 it was recorded at a depth of c. 0.20m below present ground level and had a maximum thickness of c. 0.40m. The developed soil within Test Pit H2, which was c. 0.26m thick, was encountered at a depth of c. 0.16m below present ground level. The deposit is undated but maybe of relatively ancient origin.

5.3 Phase 3: Early Modern and Undated

Evaluation trenches (Figure 3-5)

- 5.3.1 A semi-circular feature, [102], was encountered towards the eastern end of the east-west arm of Trench 1, cutting into the natural sub-stratum (Figure 3). This feature measured 1.60m east-west by at least 0.50m north-south, continuing to the south beyond the limit of excavation, and was 0.45m deep. One fragment of 20th century roofing tile was recorded within its single silty clay fill, [603]. Based on form this feature has been interpreted as representing part of a possible refuse pit of early modern origin.
- 5.3.2 Located c. 4.60m west of pit [102], was a north-south aligned linear feature, [106], cutting into the natural sub-stratum (Figure 3). This feature measured at least 1.80m north-south, continuing beyond the limits of excavation to the north and south, and was up to 1.70m wide and 0.66m deep. No datable artefactual material was recovered from any of its three silty clay and sandy clay fills, [103], [104] and [105]. This feature had a rather irregular shape in plan, branching into two sections at its northern extent, and is interpreted as probably having formed as a result of tree root action.
- 5.3.3 At the western extent of the east-west arm of Trench 1, a NE-SW aligned linear feature, [108], truncated the natural sub-stratum. This feature, with vertical sides, measured at least 2.50m NE-SW by 0.30 wide and at least 0.50m deep. A cylindrical ceramic drain pipe was recorded at the base of this feature and it is therefore interpreted as a field drain.
- 5.3.4 In Trench 2, a series of variously coloured sandy silt, sandy clayey silt and sandy silty clay deposits, [207], [204], [206] and [203], were recorded in section overlying the natural sub-stratum. These deposits had a combined thickness of c. 1.75m, but their full extent was not established as they continued beyond all limits of excavation. Small pieces of coal, fragments of brick and sandstone debris were noted throughout the deposits and a single fragment of clay tobacco pipe stem was noted within the earliest layer, [207]. These deposits are interpreted as levelling dumps of early modern origin, probably associated with landscaping activity ahead of construction of the 1922 Building, to the north.

- 5.3.5 Trench 3 recorded, in section, a sandy silt deposit, [307], directly overlying the natural substratum. It extended beyond all limits of excavation and was up to 0.95m thick. Small pieces of coal, fragments of brick and sandstone debris were observed throughout the layer and it is interpreted as a levelling deposit of early modern origin. This in turn was overlain by a rubble layer, [306], up to 0.30m thick, which extended across the trench. This deposit is also interpreted as a levelling deposit, and it was probably laid down at the time of construction of the 1922 Building.
- 5.3.6 Two east-west aligned brick foundations, [300] and [302], were recorded in section within the central portion of Trench 3, both set within narrow, vertical-sided construction cuts, [301] and [303], respectively, both of which cut through levelling deposit [306] (Figure 5). Structure [300] measured 0.70m wide by 0.30m high and was constructed using stretcher courses of unfrosted red bricks (220mm x 120mm x 120mm) bonded with a concrete-rich mortar. Located c. 2.50m to the north-west was a similar foundation, [302], measuring by 0.38m wide by 0.35m high. Both structures were on the same alignment as the footprint of the demolished 1922 Building and are interpreted as representing internal wall foundations of that structure.
- 5.3.7 At the north-eastern extent of Trench 3, an east-west aligned concrete foundation, [304], built within a narrow, near vertical-sided construction cut, [305], truncated levelling deposit [306]. This measured 0.50m wide and 0.79m deep, and is interpreted as the foundation of the north wall of the 1922 Building.

Test pits (Figure 6–7)

- 5.3.8 A dark grey silty clay deposit, [505], was the earliest deposit recorded in section within Test Pit H1, encountered at a depth of 0.20m below present ground level. It was up to 0.55m thick and although only a small portion was exposed within the test pit, based on its composition and the presence of fragments of sandstone and flecks of coal, it is interpreted as a levelling or dump deposit of relatively recent origin.
- 5.3.9 A group of levelling or dump deposits, collectively [401], were recorded in all eight test pits sited within the northern portion of the site (TPS– TPZ). These deposits generally comprised dark brown to dark greyish brown sandy, gravely silt, with the exception of TPU, which comprised light yellowish brown silty clay, and TPX, which comprised mid brown clayey silt. Within TPS, TPY and TPX, this material was recorded directly overlying sandstone bedrock, and the maximum recorded thickness was 0.25m. The levelling or dump deposits recorded within the test pits likely derive from landscaping activity undertaken during the creation of the playing field, with the exception of Test Pit TPU, which was located within an area of woodland where the ground was noticeably disturbed.

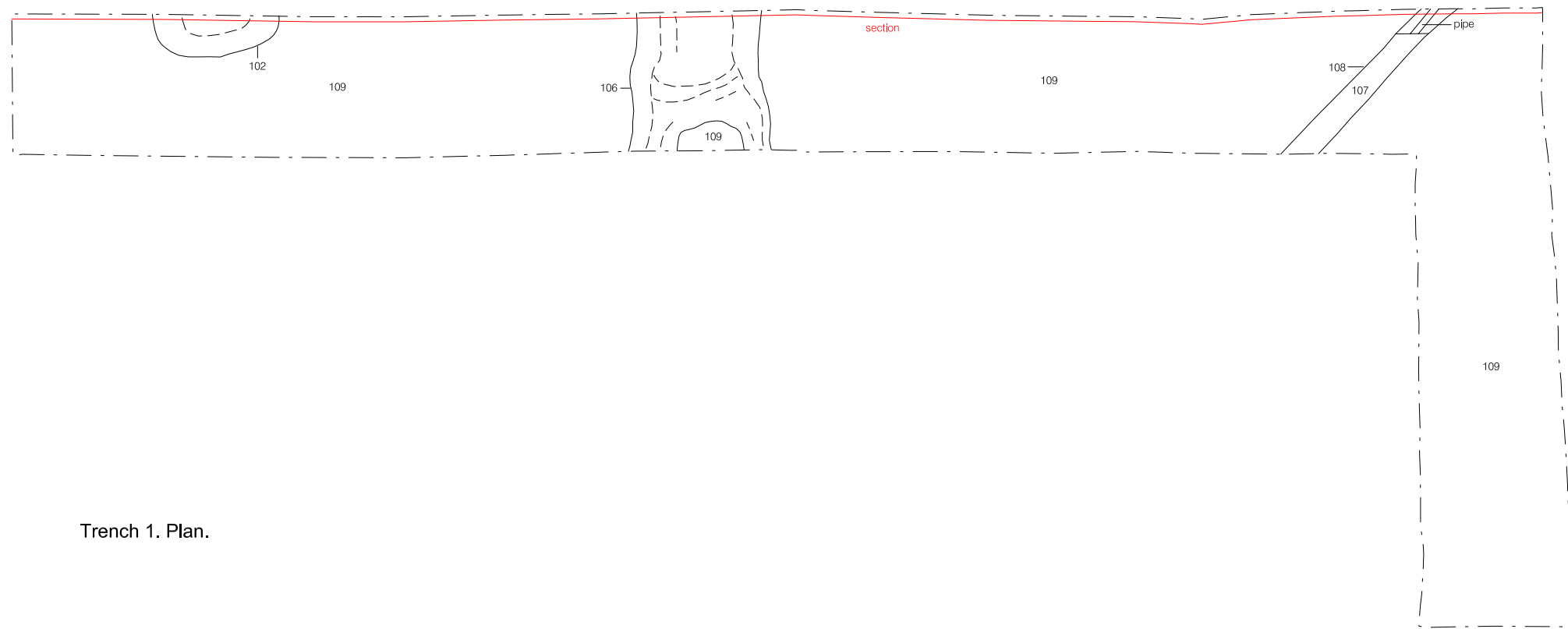
5.4 Phase 4: Modern

Evaluation trenches (Figures 3 - 5)

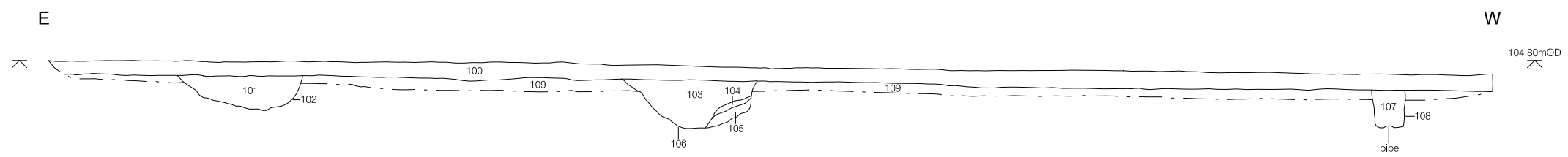
- 5.4.1 Part of a NE-SW aligned linear feature, [202], was encountered extending across the southern portion of Trench 2. It measured at least 2.50m NE-SW by 0.30m wide and cut into the uppermost of the group of Phase 3 levelling deposits, layer [203]. The depth of this feature was not established as it corresponded with the known line of a modern electricity supply cable. Although the service is known to have fed the demolished 1922 Building and was considered redundant, it was retained in section for Health and Safety reasons, meaning that the southern portion of Trench 2 could only be excavated to the level of the feature.
- 5.4.2 Topsoil was recorded in Trenches 1 and 2 and generally comprised friable, mid brown clayey silt. The maximum thickness recorded for any such deposit was 0.30m in Trench 2 and the minimum thickness was 0.10m, recorded in Trench 2.

Test pits

- 5.4.3 The concrete footing, [503], for the Sports Hall was recorded within a construction cut, [504], in each of Test Pits H1–H3. This feature measured at least 0.60m wide and at least 0.56m deep, as excavated to the top of the footing. In each case, the construction cut had been infilled with a mixed rubble deposit, [502], this in turn overlain by a bedding deposit, [501], comprising sand in Test Pit H1 and sand and dolomite hardcore in Test Pit H2, for concrete paving slabs, [500], forming the footpath which around the Sports Hall.
- 5.4.4 Topsoil was recorded in all eight Test Pits, TPS–TPZ, within the northern portion of the site and generally comprised friable, dark brown clayey silt or clayey sandy silt. The maximum thickness recorded for any such deposit was 0.12m and the minimum thickness was 50mm.



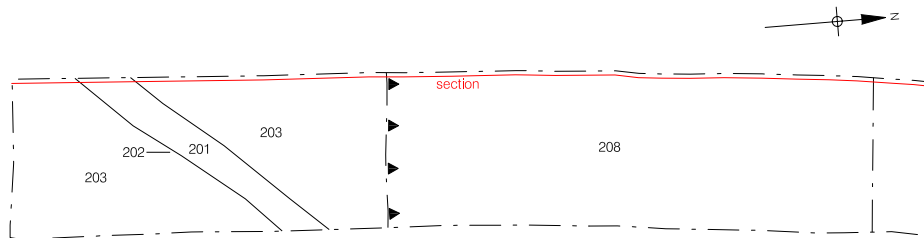
Trench 1. Plan.



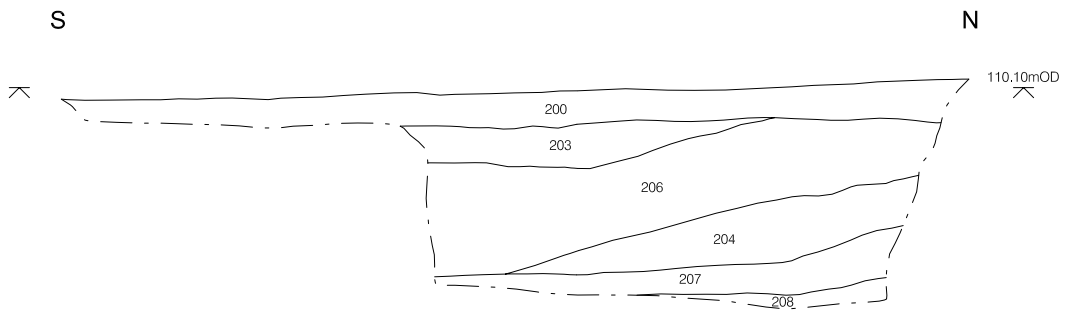
Trench 1. North facing section.



Figure 3. Trench 1, plan and section
Scale 1:75



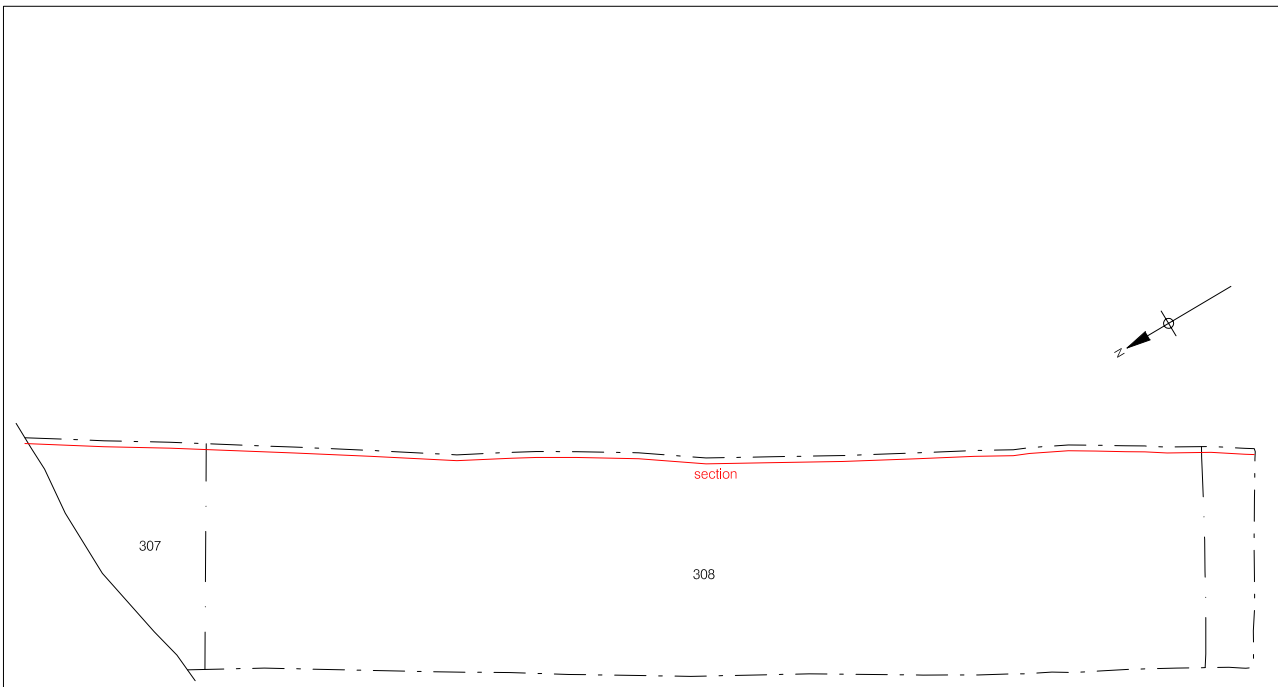
Trench 2. Plan.



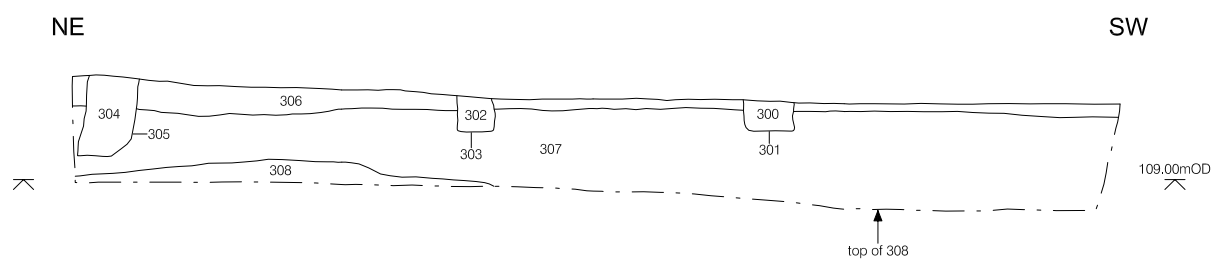
Trench 2. East facing section.



Figure 4. Trench 2, plan and section
Scale 1:75



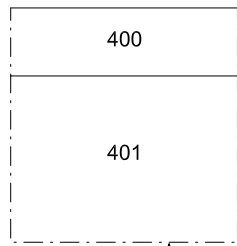
Trench 3. Plan.



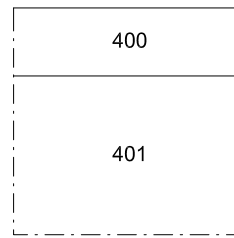
Trench 3. North-west facing section.



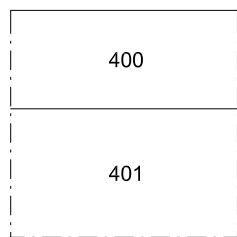
Figure 5. Trench 3, plan and section
Scale 1:75



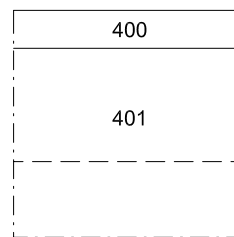
TPS top of 402



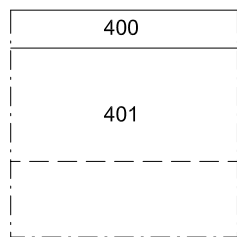
TPT



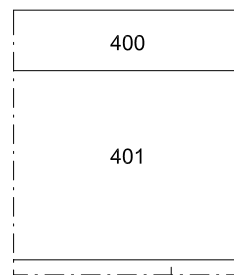
TPU



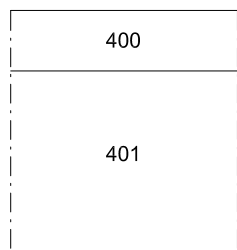
TPV



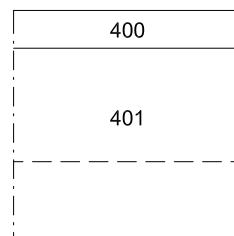
TPW



TPX 402



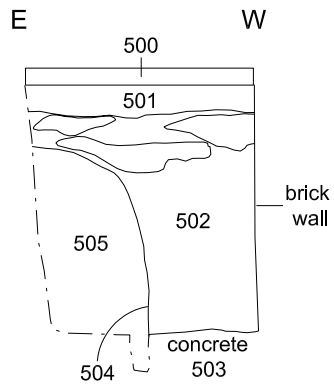
TPY top of 402



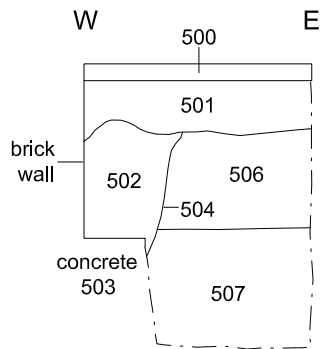
TPZ



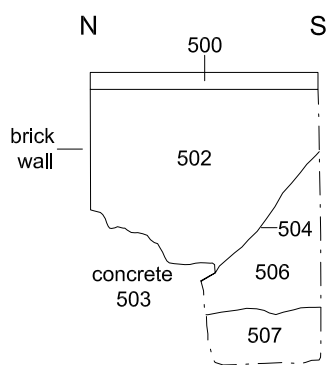
Figure 6. Test-pit (TPS - TPZ) sections
Scale 1:10



H1. North facing section.



H2. South facing section.



H3. West facing section.



Figure 7. Test-pit (H1 - H3) sections
Scale 1:20

6. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusions

- 6.1.1 No features of archaeological significance were recorded within any of the evaluation trenches or within any of the monitored test pits.
- 6.1.2 The main potential of the site was for sub-surface archaeological remains of the Roman period, specifically the Vallum of the Hadrian's Wall frontier and possible activity on land either side of those defences. Trench 3, sited within the footprint of the demolished 1922 Building, immediately south of the scheduled area of the postulated course of the Vallum, and Test Pits TPS and TPT, sited within the scheduled area, did not record any evidence of Roman period activity.
- 6.1.3 Features and deposits recorded within the evaluation trenches and monitored test pits have been assigned to four different phases of activity, ranging from the earliest, Phase 1, comprising naturally derived geological material, through to the latest, Phase 4, comprising deposits and features of modern origin.
- 6.1.4 Sandstone bedrock was exposed within Test Pits TPS, TPX and TPY, in the northern portion of the site, at a depth of c. 0.30m below present ground level. Exposure of bedrock, directly below early modern levelling deposits, with no drift material (Glacial Till) recorded, strongly indicates truncation, possibly extensive, of the natural, sloping ground level when the area was landscaped for creation of the, relatively level, playing field. It is worthy of note, however, that since outcropping sandstone is known to have been quarried in the vicinity of this part of the site during the post-medieval period and early modern era, it is possible that relatively little drift material was ever present across this area.
- 6.1.5 Natural, Glacial Till, was recorded within all three evaluation trenches (Trenches 1-3) and within Test Pits H2 and H3. The maximum depth below present ground level at which the material was encountered was c. 2.20m within Trench 2 and the minimum depth was 0.10m, this to the south, in Trench 1; this difference simply reflects early modern landscaping within the central eastern portion of the school campus. The Ordnance Datum height at which the Glacial Till was encountered in each of the three evaluation trenches broadly demonstrates a fairly gentle down slope from north to south, which represents the natural topography of this upper portion of the northern valley side of the Tyne
- 6.1.6 The natural sub-stratum in Test Pits H2 and H3 was overlain by a developed sub-soil, assigned to Phase 2, which ranged in thickness from 0.40m to 0.26m, although the deposit was truncated in both cases by modern development. It is of uncertain period of origin, but could be of post-medieval or earlier origin.

- 6.1.7 Features and deposits assigned to Phase 3 were recorded in all evaluation trenches and monitored test pits, with the exception of Test Pits H2 and H3. All are of early modern or later origin or are undated but considered likely to be of early modern origin. Part of a possible refuse pit was recorded within Trench 1, along with an area of likely root disturbance. A group of deposits, collectively up to c. 1.75m thick, was recorded in Trench 2, these probably dumped during landscaping at the time of construction of the 1922 Building, or later. Trench 3 recorded similar levelling deposits, with a combined maximum thickness of c. 1.10m OD. The foundations of the 1922 Building were also encountered.
- 6.1.8 A group of Phase 3 deposits recorded within Test Pits TPS–TPZ were probably dump layers associated with landscaping undertaken during the creation of the northern playing field. A deposit attributed to Phase 3 was recorded in Test Pit H2.
- 6.1.9 Phase 4 comprised modern remains, represented by a service in Trench 2 and remains associated with the foundations of the Sports Hall in Test Pits H1–H3. Topsoil was recorded in Trenches 1 and 2 and Test Pits TPS-TPZ, up to 0.30m thick.

6.2 Recommendations

- 6.2.1 Since no archaeological remains of the Roman period were recorded during the evaluation, it is recommended that no further work be undertaken on the data collected during the work herein described.
- 6.2.2 The presence of the scheduled area within the school grounds dictates that future elements of development at St. Cuthbert's RC High School will likely require additional archaeological investigation, depending on the nature and extent of intrusive groundworks.

7. REFERENCES

- Bidwell, P.T., 2008. 'Hadrian's Wall Overview', in *Hadrian's Wall Research Framework*, draft version published on-line.
- Breeze, D. J. and Dobson, B., 2000. *Hadrian's Wall*, fourth edition, Penguin.
- Brown, D. H., 2007. *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum.
- Department of the Environment, 1990. *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: 'Archaeology and Planning'*, HMSO.
- Institute for Archaeologists, 2001. *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation*, unpublished, IfA.
- Institute for Archaeologists, forthcoming. *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, IfA.
- Johnson, G. A. L., 1997. *Geology of Hadrian's Wall*, Geologists' Association Guide No. 59, The Geologists' Association.
- Miket, R., 1984. *The Prehistory of Tyne and Wear*, Northumberland Archaeological Group.
- Petts, D. and Gerrard, C., 2006. *Shared Visions: North East Regional Research Framework for the Historical Environment*, County Durham Books.
- Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 1999. *Field Recording Manual*, unpublished, PCA.
- Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 2004. *An Archaeological Evaluation at Bowland Lodge, Benwell Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear*, unpublished.
- Pre-Construct Archaeology, 2008. *Project Design for Archaeological Investigations at St. Cuthbert's RC High School, Benwell, Newcastle, Tyne and Wear*, PCA unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 1991. *The Roman Fort at Benwell and its Environs*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2002. *St. Cuthbert's House, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Watching Brief*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2003a. *Pendower Hall, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Evaluation*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2003b. *St Cuthbert's School, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Evaluation*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2003c. *St. Cuthbert's School, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2004. *Springhill Gardens and Broomridge Avenue, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Watching Brief*, unpublished.
- Tyne and Wear Museums, 2005. *Weidner Road, Benwell, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Archaeological Watching Brief*, unpublished.

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990. *Conservation Guidelines No.3. Environmental standards for the permanent storage of excavated material from archaeological sites*, Archaeology Section of the UKIC.

Walker, K., 1990. *Guidelines for the preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage*, UKIC.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Sir Robert McAlpine Limited for commissioning and funding the work described in this report. The liaison role of Eddie Dolphin is particularly acknowledged.

The curatorial roles of David Heslop, the Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist, and Mike Collins, English Heritage's Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, are also acknowledged.

PCA Credits

Fieldwork (evaluation): Aaron Goode (Site Supervisor), Mick Coates, Amy Roberts

Fieldwork (watching brief): Aaron Goode and Robin Taylor-Wilson

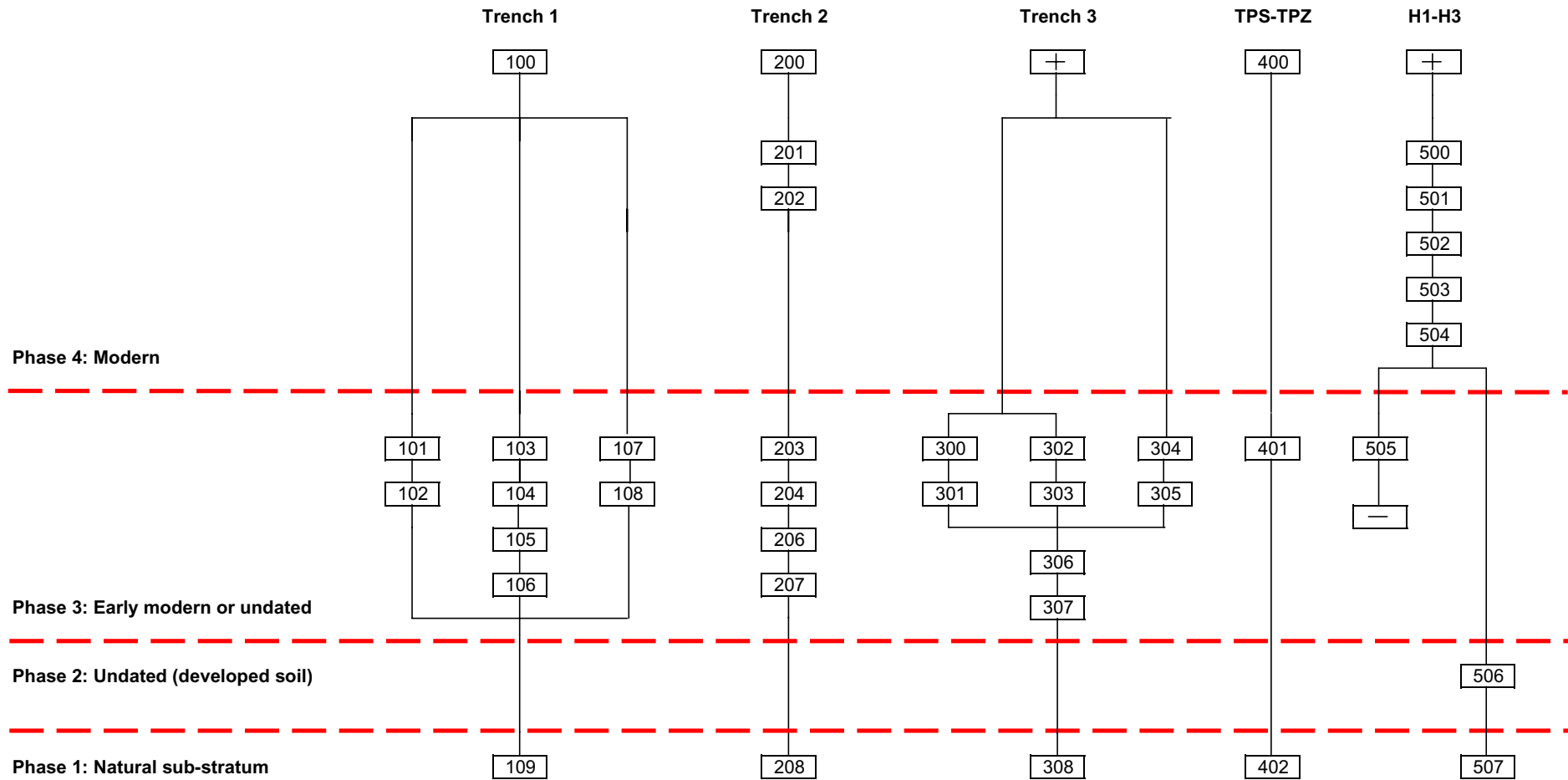
Report: Aaron Goode

Project Manager: Robin Taylor-Wilson

CAD: Adrian Bailey

APPENDIX A
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRICES

SCB 08: STRATIGRAPHIC MATRICES



**APPENDIX B
CONTEXT INDEX**

SCB 08: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Trench	Phase	Type 1	Type 2	Interpretation
100	1	4	deposit	layer	topsoil
101	1	3	deposit	fill	fill of pit [102]
102	1	3	cut	discrete	pit filled by [101]
103	1	3	deposit	fill	fill of tree root [106]
104	1	3	deposit	fill	fill of tree root [106]
105	1	3	deposit	fill	fill of tree root [106]
106	1	3	cut	discrete	tree root system filled by [103], [104], [105]
107	1	3	deposit	fill	fill of drain [108]
108	1	3	cut	linear	drain filled by [107]
109	1	1	deposit	layer	natural sub-stratum in Tr 1
200	2	4	deposit	layer	topsoil
201	2	4	deposit	fill	fill of service trench [202]
202	2	4	cut	linear	service trench filled by [201]
203	2	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
204	2	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
205	<i>void</i>	<i>void</i>	<i>void</i>	<i>void</i>	<i>void</i>
206	2	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
207	2	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
208	2	1	deposit	layer	natural sub-stratum in Tr 2
300	3	3	masonry	foundation	brick foundation
301	3	3	cut	linear	construction cut for foundation [300]
302	3	3	masonry	foundation	brick foundation
303	3	3	cut	linear	construction cut for foundation [302]
304	3	3	masonry	foundation	concrete foundation
305	3	3	cut	linear	construction cut for foundation [304]
306	3	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
307	3	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
308	3	1	deposit	layer	natural sub-stratum in Tr 3
400	TPS-TPZ	4	deposit	layer	topsoil in TPS - TPZ
401	TPS-TPZ	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
402	TPS, TPX, TPY	1	deposit	layer	sandstone bedrock in TPS, TPX, TPY
500	H1-H3	4	masonry	surface	paving slabs
501	H1, H2	4	deposit	layer	bedding for paving slabs [500]
502	H1-H3	4	deposit	fill	backfill of construction cut [504]
503	H1-H3	4	masonry	foundation	concrete foundation
504	H1-H3	4	cut	linear	construction cut for foundation [503]
505	H1	3	deposit	layer	dump layer
506	H2, H3	2	deposit	layer	developed soil
507	H2, H3	1	deposit	layer	natural sub-stratum in TPs H2 and H3