

2020

---  
Northumberland  
---  
Archaeological  
Evaluation

V  
I  
N  
D  
O  
M  
O  
R  
A  
S  
O  
L  
U  
T  
I  
O  
N  
S  
L  
T  
D

LAND EAST OF HILLCREST  
Tow House, Bardon Mill  
Northumberland

NGR 376717 564353

Archaeological Evaluation

Project 297-20-EVA | April 2020

for Architectural Design & Planning Limited  
on behalf of Mr Brian Dodd

**VINDOMORA SOLUTIONS LTD**  
Archaeological Practice

PROSPECT HOUSE  
PROSPECT BUSINESS PARK, VALLEY VIEW, LEADGATE  
CONSETT, COUNTY DURHAM DH8 7PW

✉ CONTACT@VINDOMORA.INFO

☎ 01207 390010

🌐 VINDOMORASOLUTIONS.CO.UK





# Archaeological Evaluation

## Land east of Hillcrest

Tow House, Bardon Mill  
Northumberland

NGR 376717 564353

*April 2020*



**VINDOMORA SOLUTIONS LTD**  
Archaeological Practice

Registered in England & Wales | Company Registration No. 9505415  
Registered office: Prospect House, Prospect Business Park,  
Valley View, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham DH8 7PW

*This report and the text/illustrations/imagery contained therein are copyright, with the copyright resting with Vindomora Solutions Ltd. The client retains permission, and Northumberland County Council is granted permission to use the content of the report for purposes of the HER, including photocopying or digital copying of the report in part or in whole by third parties. Any other use of this report is prohibited unless permission is granted in writing by a representative of Vindomora Solutions Ltd.*

## CONTENTS

---

<b>CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>CONCISE SUMMARY OF REPORT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1. SCOPE OF PROJECT.....</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 Project location.....	5
1.2 Circumstances of the Project.....	5
1.3 Written Scheme of Investigation.....	6
1.4 Timetable of works.....	6
1.5 Professional standards.....	6
1.6 Health and safety.....	6
1.7 Project personnel.....	6
1.8 Archive.....	6
<b>2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORIC BACKGROUND.....</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 The proposed development in its wider context.....	8
2.2 The archaeological potential of the proposed development area.....	8
<b>3. THE EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>11</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	11
3.2 The trench.....	11
<b>4. DISCUSSION.....</b>	<b>14</b>
4.1 Overview.....	14
4.2 Discussion.....	14
<b>5. REPOSITORIES AND SOURCES.....</b>	<b>15</b>
5.1 Repositories.....	15

### Figures

<i>Figure 1. Location of the site, regionally.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Figure 2. Location of the site, locally.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Figure 2. Trench location plan.....</i>	<i>11</i>

## Plates

<i>Plate 1. Aerial view of the site courtesy of Google Earth (dataset © 2020 Infoterra Ltd &amp; Bluesky) with the proposed development area outlined in red.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Plate 2. LIDAR plot showing ridge and furrow earthworks in the fields to the south of the development area (located with a red spot) with further earthworks to the west/southwest of the site (dataset © 2020 Defra).....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Plate 3. The development area looking northeast.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Plate 4. The long arm of the trench looking north. The concrete foundation and remains of the drystone wall can be seen.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Plate 5. The short leg of the trench looking southeast.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Plate 6. The short leg of the trench looking northeast during cleaning.....</i>	<i>13</i>

## SUMMARY

---

<b>Name of location:</b>	Land east of Hillcrest
<b>Address of location:</b>	Tow House, Bardon Mill, Northumberland NE47 7EQ
<b>National Grid Reference:</b>	NGR 376717 564353, Grid Square NY7664
<b>Client:</b>	Architectural Design & Planning Limited on behalf of Mr Brian Dodd
<b>Project Type:</b>	Archaeological evaluation
<b>Local Authority Conservation Team:</b>	Northumberland Conservation
<b>Planning Application Reference:</b>	PREAPP
<b>Project Site Code:</b>	HTH-20
<b>Vindomora Solutions Reference:</b>	297-20-EVA
<b>Report Author:</b>	Tony Liddell
<b>This Report Version/Date:</b>	V1 / Monday, April 20, 2020
<b>This document datestamp:</b>	20 April, 2020
<b>OASIS Identifier:</b>	vindomor1-392188
<b>Ordnance Survey Licence Reference:</b>	100053142
<b>Google Earth Pro:</b>	Licensed 2015-20

## CONCISE SUMMARY OF REPORT

---

*In March 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Architectural Design and Planning Limited on behalf of their client, Mr Brian Dodd, to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation on land to the east of Hillcrest, Tow House, Northumberland. The Local Planning Authority identified the need for the recording project during consultation on a proposed planning application to construct a single dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. The work was undertaken in accordance with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 194, 195, 196, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the development area was deemed to be of archaeological/historical interest: The site lies directly between two potentially contemporary 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century buildings and within an area assumed to lie within the medieval settlement.*

*A single mirrored 'L' shaped trench was excavated within the proposed development area covering an area of 49.6m<sup>2</sup>. The overburden was found to be shallow and contained numerous modern items such as glass sherds, brick fragments and plastic. Beneath this, the natural glacial geology comprised mostly loose gravels and sandy clay. While the modern concrete foundation for a drystone wall was noted near the land frontage onto Hillcrest, no archaeological remains were found within the trench. No background artefacts were recovered. As such for the purposes of the planning application, it can be suggested that the proposed development area is devoid of heritage assets.*

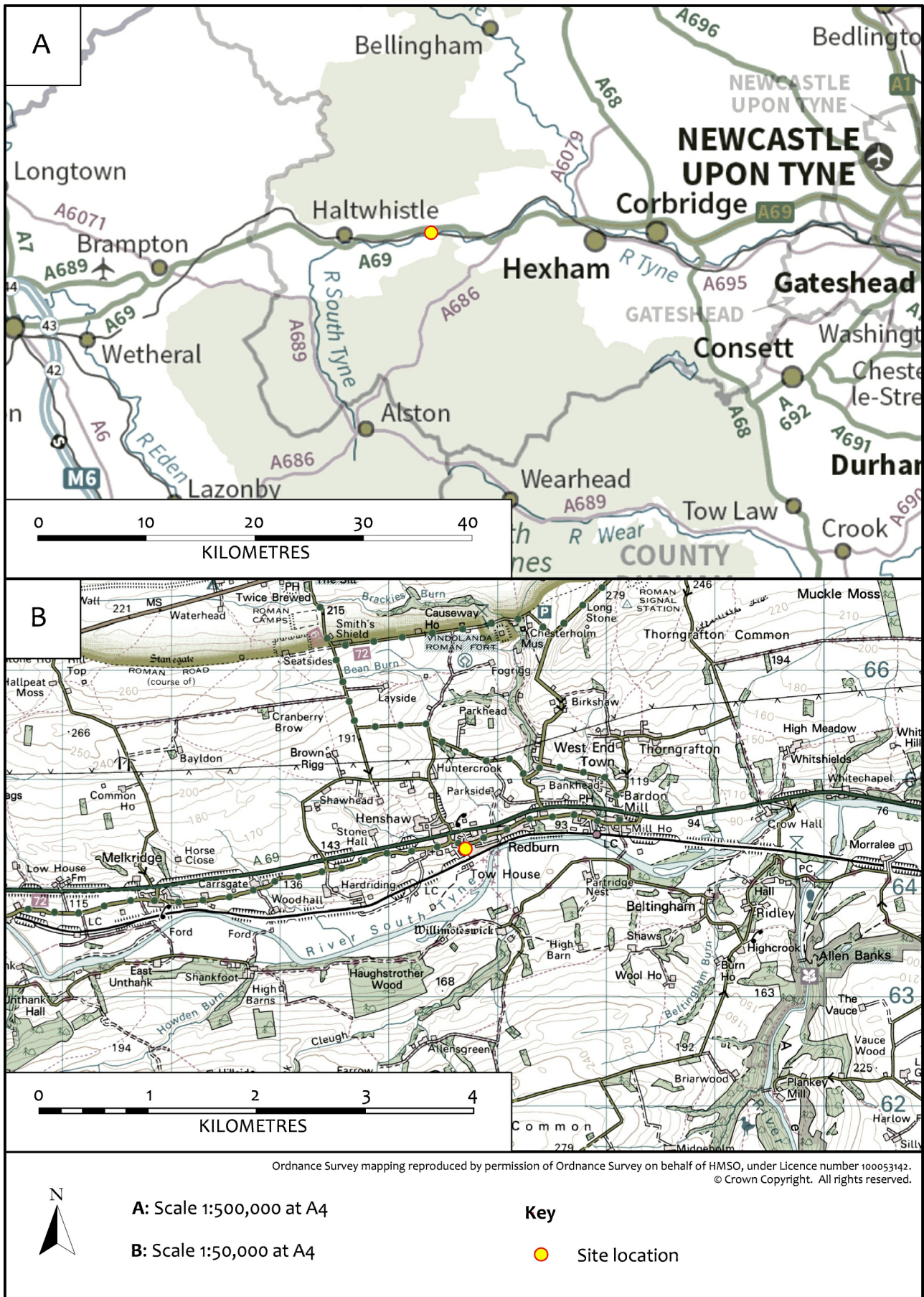


Figure 1. Location of the site, regionally.



## 1. SCOPE OF PROJECT

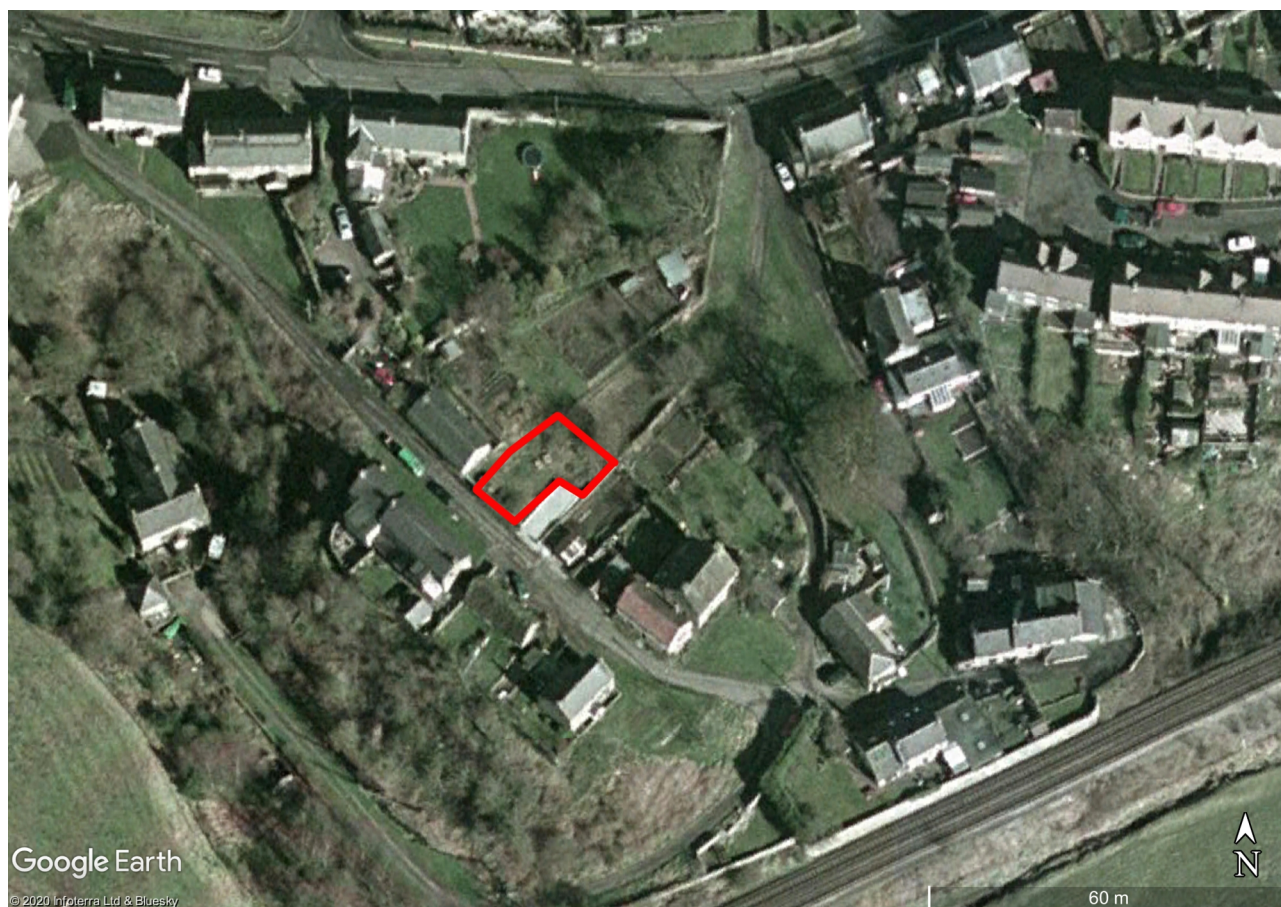


Plate 1. Aerial view of the site courtesy of Google Earth (dataset © 2020 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky) with the proposed development area outlined in red.

### 1.1 Project location

- 1.1.1 The proposed development site is located on the east side of Hillcrest, Tow House, Bardon Mill, Northumberland (centred at NGR 376717 564353, Grid Square NY7664), opposite 1 Hillcrest. Figure 1 shows the location of the site regionally with Figure 2 showing the location locally. Plate 1 shows an aerial view, with the development boundary outlined in red.
- 1.1.2 **Geology:** The development area lies over the Yoredale Group, comprising sandstone, limestone, mudstone and siltstones. Over this lies clay, silt, sand and gravel alluvium (British Geological Survey, 2020).
- 1.1.3 The site lies at an average of 99m OD (Ordnance Datum, above sea level).

### 1.2 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.2.1 In early March 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Architectural Design and Planning Limited on behalf of their client, Brian Dodd, to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation on land to the east of Hillcrest, Tow House, Northumberland.
- 1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority identified the need for the recording project during consultation on a proposed planning application to construct a single dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. The work was undertaken in accordance with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 194, 195, 196, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the development area was deemed to be of archaeological/historical interest.

1.2.3 Archaeological and historical research objectives are built into developer funded archaeological schemes of work. This is the result of a number of English Heritage national policy frameworks: *Exploring our Past* (1991), *Frameworks for our Past* (1996), *Research Agenda* (1997) and *Policy Statement on Implementation* (1999). The research priorities proposed initially to have potential direct relevance to this project are set out in *Shared Visions: North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (2006), in particular:

Later Medieval: MDi - Settlement  
MDvii. Medieval ceramics and other artefacts  
MDxi. The medieval to post-medieval transition

### 1.3 Written Scheme of Investigation

1.3.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this project was produced by Tony Liddell, Principal Archaeologist for Vindomora Solutions Ltd and approved by Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland Conservation (Version 3, dated 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020).

### 1.4 Timetable of works

1.4.1 The fieldwork was undertaken on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020.

1.4.2 The results of the inspection and survey were compiled into this report during the week commencing the 13<sup>th</sup> April 2020, with the report finalised on Monday, April 20, 2020.

### 1.5 Professional standards

1.5.1 The work undertaken was in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (2014) and their *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological evaluation* (2014) as well as the British Archaeologists' and Developers' Liaison Group's *Code of Practice* (1988).

### 1.6 Health and safety

1.6.1 Standard PPE was utilised for health and safety purposes throughout the fieldwork. All issues of on-site health and safety were undertaken in accordance with the Vindomora Solutions Limited *Health and Safety Manual* (updated 2018).

1.6.2 The fieldwork was also undertaken in compliance with Vindomora Solutions Ltd's *COVID-19 Mitigation Policy* (2020).

### 1.7 Project personnel

1.7.1 The project was managed by Tony Liddell and the field evaluation undertaken by Mick Coates (supervisor) and Jack Coates. This report and its digital archive were produced by Tony Liddell.

### 1.8 Archive

1.8.1 A full archive has been compiled in line with the specification and current UKIC and English Heritage Guidelines. The project code is **HTH-20 (Hillcrest Tow House 2020)**. Vindomora Solutions support the **Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS** project (OASIS). As a result, this report will be made available to the project under the unique identifier **vindomor-1392188**.

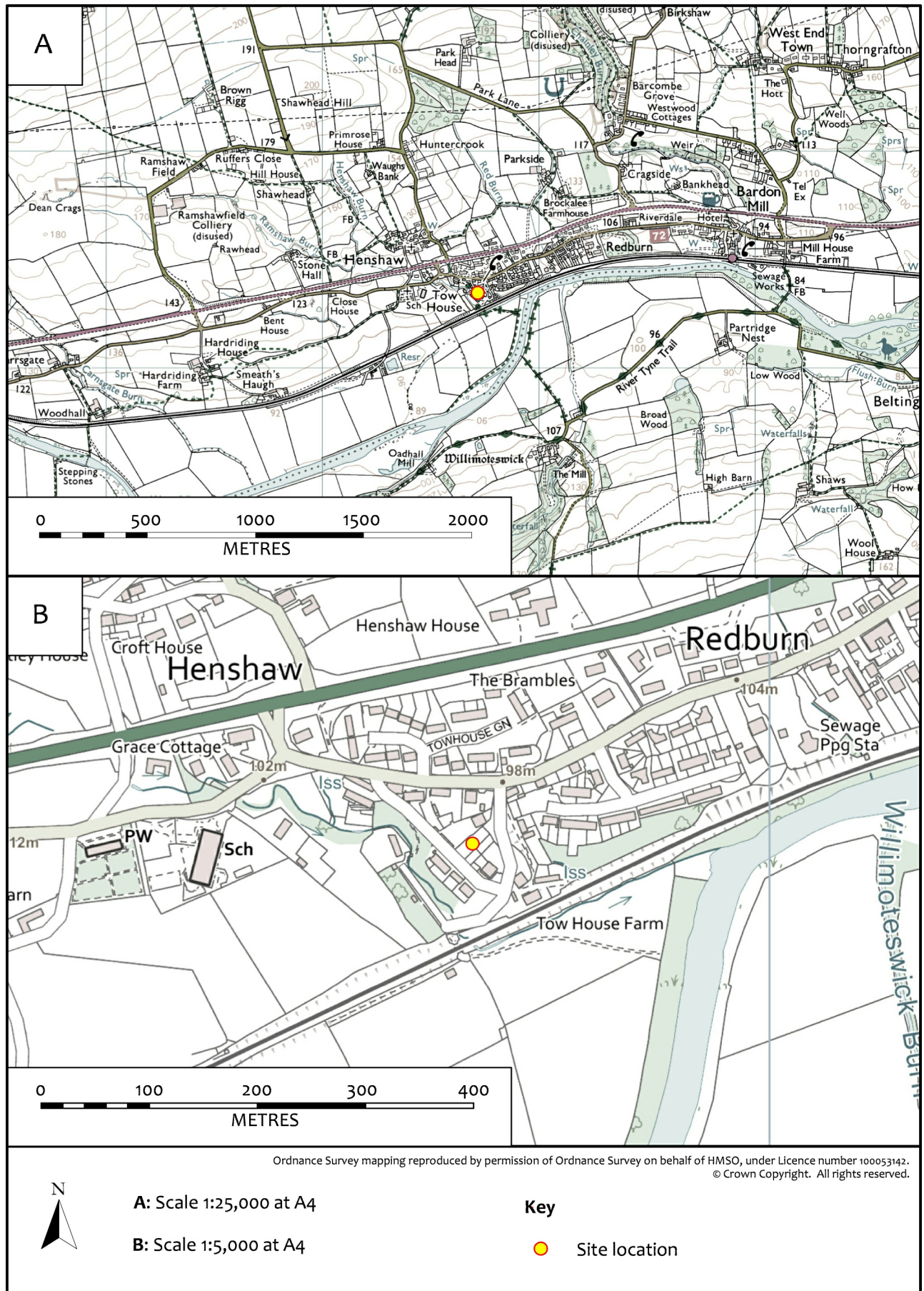
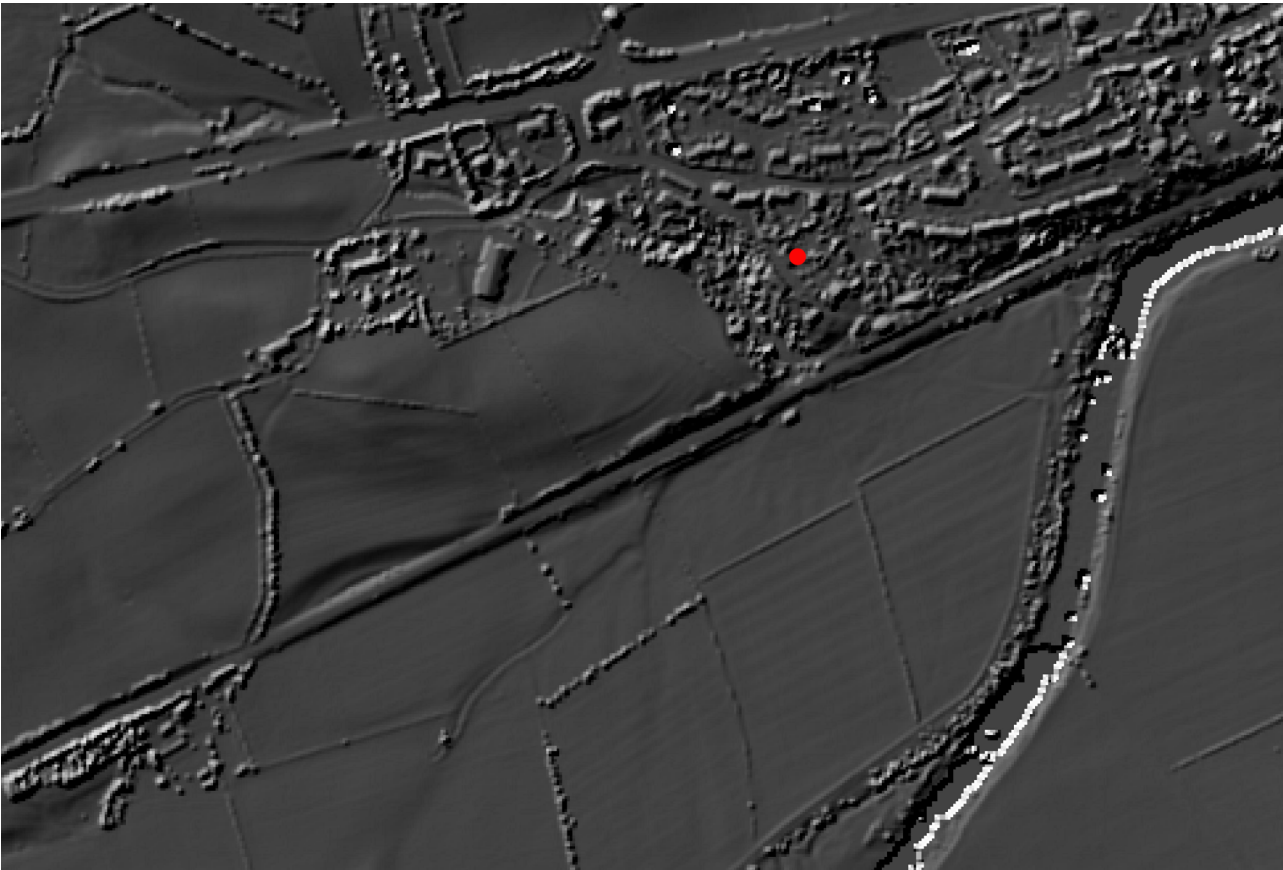


Figure 2. Location of the site, locally.

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL/HISTORIC BACKGROUND



*Plate 2. LIDAR plot showing ridge and furrow earthworks in the fields to the south of the development area (located with a red spot) with further earthworks to the west/southwest of the site (dataset © 2020 Defra).*

### 2.1 The proposed development in its wider context

- 2.1.1 The proposed development area lies within an area of assumed later medieval activity with broad medieval ridge and furrow noted in field 170m to the south and earthworks assumed to be of the same date 100m to the west, suggesting that the development area may lie within the heart of the later medieval settlement as the earthworks appear to be 'funnelling' toward the development area. *Plate 2* (above) shows the LIDAR data of the area, with the development area highlighted in red. The earthworks and ridge and furrow can clearly be seen in the fields to the south and southwest.
- 2.1.2 The proposed development lies directly adjacent to a Listed workshop, presumed to have been built in the 16<sup>th</sup> or early 17<sup>th</sup> centuries which has been identified as a rare example of a stone-walled cruck or cruck house: the single storey building originally had an upper floor and has walls 1m thick, with the cruck construction usually employed in tithe barns and houses in the late medieval period.
- 2.1.3 30m south east of the proposed development lies Tower House, a 16<sup>th</sup> centre bastle (fortified farmhouse) from which Tow House derives its name. This listed building was altered in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and is now a domestic home.

### 2.2 The archaeological potential of the proposed development area

- 2.2.1 The site lies directly between two potentially contemporary 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century buildings and within an area suggested by outlying extant earthworks to lie within medieval settlement. There was a **moderate-high** potential of late medieval and remains associated with 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century settlement

within the development area: historic mapping shows no development of the site from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to modern (apart from a field boundary) so it was deemed that any archaeological remains may also have had high survival levels.



Plate 3. The development area looking northeast.

### 3. THE EVALUATION

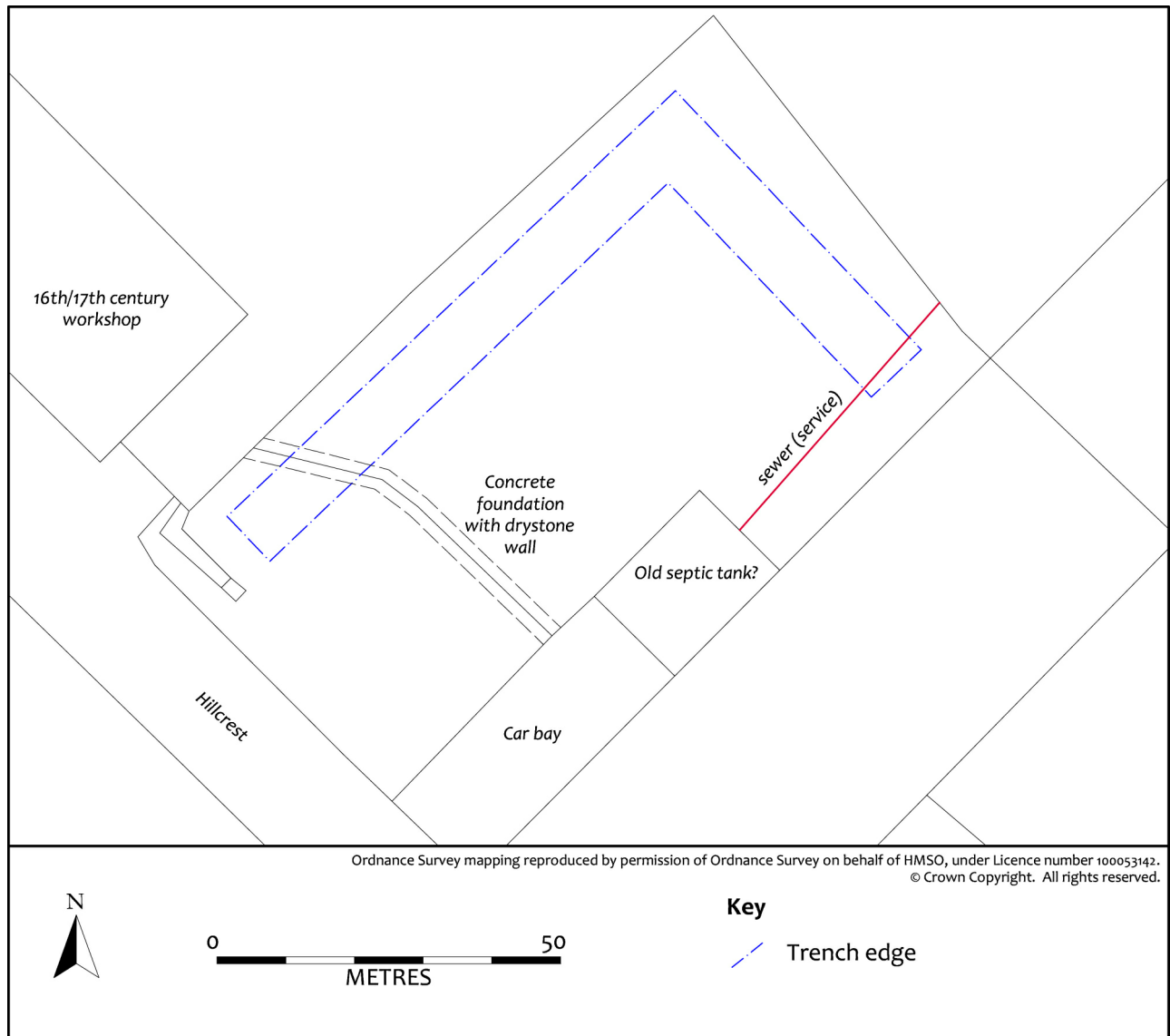


Figure 2. Trench location plan.

#### 3.1 Introduction

- 3.1.1 The scheme of works consisted of the excavation of one mirrored 'L' shaped trench. Initially, the WSI called for two separate trenches forming the 'L' shape, but due to space restrictions within the plot of land for the machine manoeuvrability, it was deemed a better use of space to form the single right angled trench.
- 3.1.2 The trench was excavated utilising a mechanical excavator with a wide toothless ditching bucket until constant archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.3 Once the trench was excavated by the machine, it was cleaned by hand and recorded.
- 3.1.4 Figure 3 shows the location of the trench within the proposed development area.

#### 3.2 The trench

- 3.2.1 The northeast-southwest aligned arm of the trench measured 18m long, 1.8m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.50m.



Plate 4 (above). The long arm of the trench looking north. The concrete foundation and remains of the drystone wall can be seen.

Plate 5 (below). The short leg of the trench looking southeast.





- 3.2.2 The southeast-northwest aligned arm measured 10.4m long, 2m wide and again averaged a depth of 0.50m.
- 3.2.3 The overburden across the site contained lumps of sandstone from the collapsed drystone wall, (localised around the wall line in the southwester extent of the trench) with loose mixed dark soils containing small stones, plastic, modern brick fragments and glass. The overburden averaged 0.50m in depth across the evaluation area.
- 3.2.4 The natural geology noted within the evaluation trench was orange to mid-brown in colour and comprised mainly loose gravels and sandy clay.
- 3.2.5 2.1m northeast of the southwestern extent of the trench was a concrete foundation for a drystone wall. The foundation cut into the natural geology and measured 0.7m wide. To the south of this wall was an old area of overgrown hardstanding.
- 3.2.6 The sewer inlet for an old septic tank crossed the trench in the northeast-southwest direction in the eastern extent of the trench.
- 3.2.7 **No archaeological deposits, features or background material was noted within the evaluation area.**

Plate 6 (below). The short leg of the trench looking northeast during cleaning.



## 4. DISCUSSION

---

### 4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 In early March 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Architectural Design and Planning Limited on behalf of their client, Brian Dodd, to undertake a scheme of archaeological evaluation on land to the east of Hillcrest, Tow House, Northumberland.
- 1.2.2 The Local Planning Authority identified the need for the recording project during consultation on a proposed planning application to construct a single dwelling with associated parking and landscaping. The work was undertaken in accordance with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 194, 195, 196, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as the development area was deemed to be of archaeological/historical interest. The site lies directly between two potentially contemporary 16<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> century buildings and within an area suggested by outlying extant earthworks to lie within medieval settlement. There was a *moderate-high* potential of late medieval and remains associated with 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century settlement within the development area: historic mapping shows no development of the site from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century through to modern (apart from a field boundary) so it was deemed that any archaeological remains may also have had high survival levels.

### 4.2 Discussion

- 4.2.1 A single mirrored 'L' shaped trench was excavated within the proposed development area covering an area of 49.6m<sup>2</sup>. The overburden was found to be shallow (averaging 0.5m) deep and contained numerous modern items such as glass sherds, brick fragments and plastic. Beneath this, the natural glacial geology comprised mostly loose gravels and sandy clay.
- 4.2.2 While the modern concrete foundation for a drystone wall was noted near the land frontage onto Hillcrest, no archaeological remains were found within the trench. No background artefacts were recovered. As such, it can be suggested that the proposed development area is devoid of heritage assets.

## 5. REPOSITORIES AND SOURCES

---

### 5.1 Repositories

**Beamish Museum People's Collection.** Online at <http://collections.beamish.org.uk/>

**Britain from Above Project.** Online at <http://www.britainfromabove.org.uk/>

**British Library.** Online at <http://www.bl.uk/>

**British Geological Survey.** Online at <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/discoveringGeology/geologyOfBritain/viewer.html>

**Durham Record Office.** County Hall, Durham DH1 5UL

**Google Earth Pro 2019**

**Historic England Archive.** Online at <http://archive.historicengland.org.uk>

**Keys to the Past.** Online at <http://www.keystothepast.info>

**Newcastle City Library.** Local studies section, Princess Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE99 1DX

**PastScape Project.** Online at <http://www.pastscape.org.uk/default.aspx>

**Portable Antiquities Scheme.** Online at <https://finds.org.uk/>

**Tyne and Wear Archives.** Blandford House, Blandford Square, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4JA

**ViewFinder Project.** Online at <http://viewfinder.english-heritage.org.uk/>

**Vindomora Solutions Ltd Archive.** Prospect House, Prospect Business Park, Leadgate, Consett, County Durham DH8 7PW

### 5.2 Sources

ClfA (2014) Code of Conduct. *Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for archaeological evaluation.* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists.

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.* Institute for Archaeologists

ClfA (2014) *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives.* Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

Department for Communities and Local Government (updated 2019) *Communities and Local Government: National Planning Policy Framework*

English Heritage (2008) *Conservation Principles - Policies and Guidance*

English Heritage (1991) *Managing Archaeological Projects.* Second edition

Historic England (2015) *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment - The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide*

Liddell, T. (2020) *Written Scheme of Investigation for an archaeological evaluation on land east of Hillcrest, Tow House, Bardon Mill, Northumberland.*

Ordnance Survey mapping: 1866, 1898, 1925, 1952 and 2020 editions

Petts, D. & Gerrard, C. (2006) *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment.* Durham