

2020

Northumberland

Archaeological
Excavation

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LAND NORTH OF FAIRFIELDS

Longframlington

Northumberland

NGR 412759 601369

Archaeological Excavation

Project 265-20-AEX | June 2020

18/03231/FUL (Condition 13)

for Tantallon Homes (Longframlington) Ltd

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 Excavation

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June 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

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SUMMARY

Name of location:	Land north of Fairfields
Address of location:	Longframlington, Northumberland NE65 8DS
National Grid Reference:	NGR 412759 601369
Client:	Tantallon Homes (Longframlington) Ltd
Project Type:	Archaeological Excavation (Strip, map and record)
Local Authority Conservation Team:	Northumberland Conservation
Planning Application Reference:	18/03231/FUL, Condition 13
Project Site Code:	FLN-20
Vindomora Solutions Reference:	265-20-AEX
Report Author:	Tony Liddell
Report Version/Date:	V1 / 03 July 2020
This document datestamp:	Wednesday, October 7, 2020
OASIS Identifier:	vindomor1-405024
Ordnance Survey Licence Reference:	100053142
Google Earth Pro Licence:	Licensed 2015-19

CONCISE SUMMARY OF REPORT

In May 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Nicholson Nairn Architects on behalf of their client, Tantallon Homes (Longframlington) Ltd, to undertake a scheme of archaeological excavation on land to the north of Fairfields, Longframlington, Northumberland. The development area lies within a known prehistoric and Roman landscape, as well as within the potential vicinity of the medieval village of Fremelintun. A 7% trenching exercise (2085m²) of the development area was undertaken in 2019 by Vindomora Solutions Ltd, revealing the presence of furrows relating to a ridge and furrow field system, a network of field drains, a large palaeochannel and a single undateable pit/post-hole. Northumberland Conservation proposed that the pit/post-hole feature may have been part of a larger structure, the extent of which was not present within the evaluation trenching, but may have represented a significant early medieval (or earlier) structure - and as such the need for the mitigation excavation was identified by the Local Authority as Condition 13 for planning application 18/03231/FUL, in line with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed application will see the construction of 58 residential units with associated access, landscaping and amenity space.

In late June 2020 the strip, map and record of a 20m x 20m area (400m²) was undertaken in land north of Fairfields, Longframlington, centred on the undated post-hole/pit identified in the previous 2019 archaeological evaluation of the proposed development area. The excavation took place over two days and identified no feature of archaeological interest within 20m of the post-hole, suggesting that the feature was a single intervention of no discernable date.



Figure 1. Location of the site, regionally.

1. SCOPE OF PROJECT



Plate 1. Aerial image of the site (dataset © 2020 Infoterra Ltd & Bluesky). The proposed area of development is outlined in red, with the archaeological strip, map and record area in orange.

1.1 Project location

- 1.1.1 The development site was located at on the west side of the A697, Longframlington, Northumberland (centred at NGR 412793 601392). The site lies north of Fairfields and south of Longframlington URC Church. The location of the development site regionally can be seen on Figure 1, with the site in its local context in Figure 2.
- 1.1.2 **Geology:** The development area lies over the Stainmore Formation, consisting of mudstone, siltstones and sandstone with a narrow band of limestone running northeast-southwest through the site. Over this lies Devensian Till mainly composed of clay, sand and gravel (British Geological Survey, 2020).
- 1.1.3 The site lies at an average of 158m OD (*Ordnance Datum*, above sea level).

1.2 Circumstances of the Project

- 1.2.1 On the 26th May 2020 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by Nicholson Nairn Architects on behalf of their client, Tantallon Homes (Longframlington) Ltd, to undertake a scheme of archaeological excavation on land to the north of Fairfields, Longframlington, Northumberland. The investigation was undertaken to fulfil Condition 13 of planning application 18/03231/FUL. The location and extent of the excavation area within the overall development area can be viewed on Figure 4 and Plate 1.

1.2.2 The development area lies within a known prehistoric and Roman landscape, as well as within the potential vicinity of the medieval village of Fremelintun. A 7% trenching exercise (2085m²) of the development area was undertaken in 2019 by Vindomora Solutions Ltd, revealing the presence of furrows relating to a ridge and furrow field system, a network of field drains, a large palaeochannel and a single undateable pit/post-hole. Northumberland Conservation proposed that the pit/post-hole feature may have been part of a larger structure, the extent of which was not present within the evaluation trenching, but may have represented a significant early medieval (or earlier) structure - and as such the need for the mitigation excavation was identified by the Local Authority as Condition 13 for planning application 18/03231/FUL, in line with paragraphs 8, 11, 184, 185, 187, 189, 190, 197 and 199 and footnote 63 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed application will see the construction of 58 residential units with associated access, landscaping and amenity space.

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:

Prehistoric:	iii. Settlement; iv. Material culture.
Roman:	Riv. Native and civilian life; Rv. Roman material culture; Rix. Landscape and environment.
Early medieval	EMi. Landscape; EMii. Settlement; EMiii. Architecture.
Later medieval:	MDi. Settlement; MDii. Landscape; MDvii. Artefacts.

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 Nick Best, Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland Conservation (Version 1, dated 29th May 2020).

1.4 Timetable of works

1.4.1 The fieldwork was undertaken between the 26th and the 29th June 2020.

1.4.2 The results of the inspection and survey were compiled into this report during the week commencing the 29th June 2020, with the report finalised on 3rd July 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 excavation* (2014). Standards were also in accordance with the British Archaeologists' and Developers' Liaison Group's *Code of Practice* (1988) and Northumberland County Council Conservation Team *site specific requirements*.

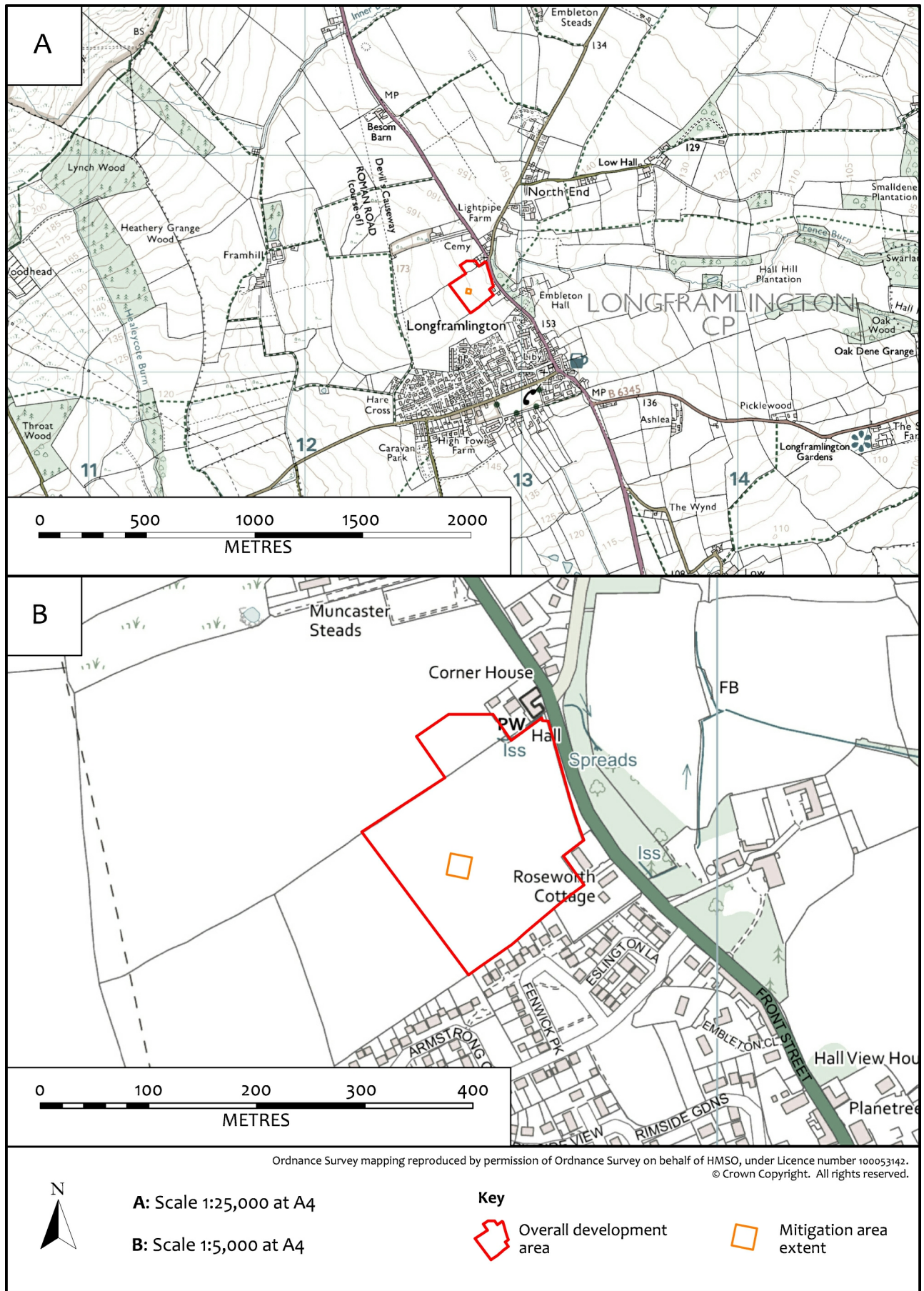


Figure 2. Location of the site, locally.

1.6 Health and safety

1.6.1 All work on site abided by the Health and Safety Act of 1974 and all its subsequent amendments. All fieldwork projects are undertaken in accordance with the Federation of Archaeological Managers & Employers (FAME) manual *Health and Safety in Field Archaeology*. Appropriate care and attention was taken during the works, and appropriate PPE worn.

1.6.2 **COVID-19 mitigation:** This project took place during COVID-19 lockdown, and as such the following restrictions were in place:

- *Distancing.* The field excavation team of Mick and Jack Coates are a father and son team from the same household and so were not required to maintain a 2m distance. The machine driver maintained social distancing from the archaeological staff;
- *Food and drink.* All staff were required to bring their own food and drink and also ensured distancing during breaks;
- *Tools:* Each archaeologist used his own tools and did not share equipment;
- *Archives/cameras:* Once the excavation was over, the site archive was be presented to the project manager. The cameras were be sanitised and the paper archive was not be touched until a period of 48 hours has passed;
- *Gloves:* Field staff wore gloves at all times and washed/sanitised their hands before and after after gloves were worn;
- **NOTE:** Quarantine times are based on data presented in "Aerosol and Surface Stability of SARS-CoV-2 as Compared with SARS-CoV-1" (N Engl J Med 2020; 382:1564-1567 DOI: 10.1056/NEJMc2004973).

1.7 Archive

1.7.1 A full archive has been compiled in line with the specification and current UKIC and English Heritage Guidelines. The project code is **FLN-20** (Fairfields Longframlington Northumberland 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 **vindomor1-405024**.

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND



Plate 2. The truncated pit in the 2019 evaluation Trench 13.

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This historical/archaeological background is based primarily upon data from the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Record (HER) as well as primary and secondary sources.
- 2.1.2 The development site is located within a known archaeological and historic landscape with human habitation in the wider area known from the prehistoric periods onwards.
- 2.1.3 *Place name:* ‘Longframlington’ is believed to be derived from Old English meaning *framela’s people’s settlement*, and was first referred to in AD 1166 as *Fremelintun*.

2.2 Previous investigations

- 2.2.1 In 2013, a scheme of archaeological evaluation was undertaken 600m to the southwest of the site at Harecross, though no archaeological remains or deposits were found. In 2014, a scheme of archaeological geophysical survey was undertaken in the fields directly to the south of the proposed development area, but failed to identify any features of interest. However, the field contains upstanding ridge and furrow earthworks, which are known to often mask archaeological remains beneath. In 2018, a scheme of archaeological evaluation uncovered an undated gully containing post-holes, approximately 70m to the northeast of the proposed development boundary. It was noted that the feature pre-dated the medieval field system, and as such could be Roman or prehistoric in origin. A scheme of archaeological geophysics was undertaken to the west/southwest of the proposed development area in 2018, though the upstanding earthworks associated with the medieval ridge and furrow system in the field prevented clear identification of anomalies, though the presence of pits, gullies and ditches was suggested. Interestingly, the survey also failed to identify the line of the Devil’s Causeway Roman Road, thought to run through the western extent of the site: the purported line of the Roman Road also runs only 235m to the west of the current proposed development’s western boundary. 500m southeast of the proposed development area lies the supposed Roman camp of Hall Hill, noted on historic mapping as holding the classic Roman military camp shape and outline. The ‘camp’ is formed by a single rampart earthwork with Hall Hill farm now residing in the southeast corner. St, Mary’s Church, located 433m southeast of the development site dates to the 12th century AD with 14th century additions

and also contains potentially earlier fabric. *Historic mapping evidence:* Historic mapping from 1867, 1897, 1923 and 1974: all showed the field as pasture with no notable post-19th century features.

- 2.2.2 **2019 archaeological evaluation:** In April 2019 Vindomora Solutions Ltd were commissioned by PCD (UK) Ltd on behalf of their client, Tantallon Homes Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation scheme on the proposed development area (41 trenches totalling an area of 2085m²). A study of aerial imagery within the development area had suggested a number of linear features as well as potential enclosures. Upon investigation through archaeological evaluation, most of the anomalies appeared to have been formed by the underlying geology lying so close to the surface, coupled with a large palaeo channel running northeast-southwest nearly centrally within the development area: the southwestern head of this natural feature had caused the cropmark anomaly suggesting an enclosure in that area. A network of medieval ridge and furrow again aligned northeast-southwest acting against an opposing line of post-medieval and modern field drains also created a number of seemingly angular anomalies. The trenching indicated that the medieval ridge and furrow system relating to the medieval village continued through the proposed development area, though highly truncated by modern ploughing.
- 2.2.3 *Trench 13* revealed one feature, a pit measuring 0.8m long, 0.75m wide and 0.35m deep. In form, it appeared to be a substantial truncated post-hole with its cut lined with clay on its eastern edge with three subsequent fills. The primary fill was a mid grey-brown silty clay containing sub-angular stones. The secondary fill was mid orange-brown silty sand, and the tertiary fill was again a mid grey-brown silty clay. The fill of the pit did not contain any archaeological material or palaeo-facts to provide a use or date for the feature.

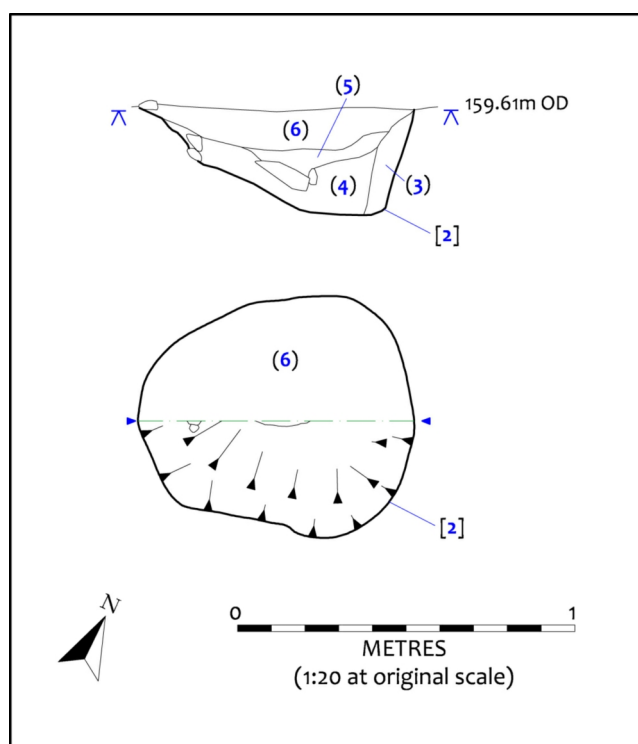


Figure 3. Section and plan of pit in Trench 13

3. THE EXCAVATION

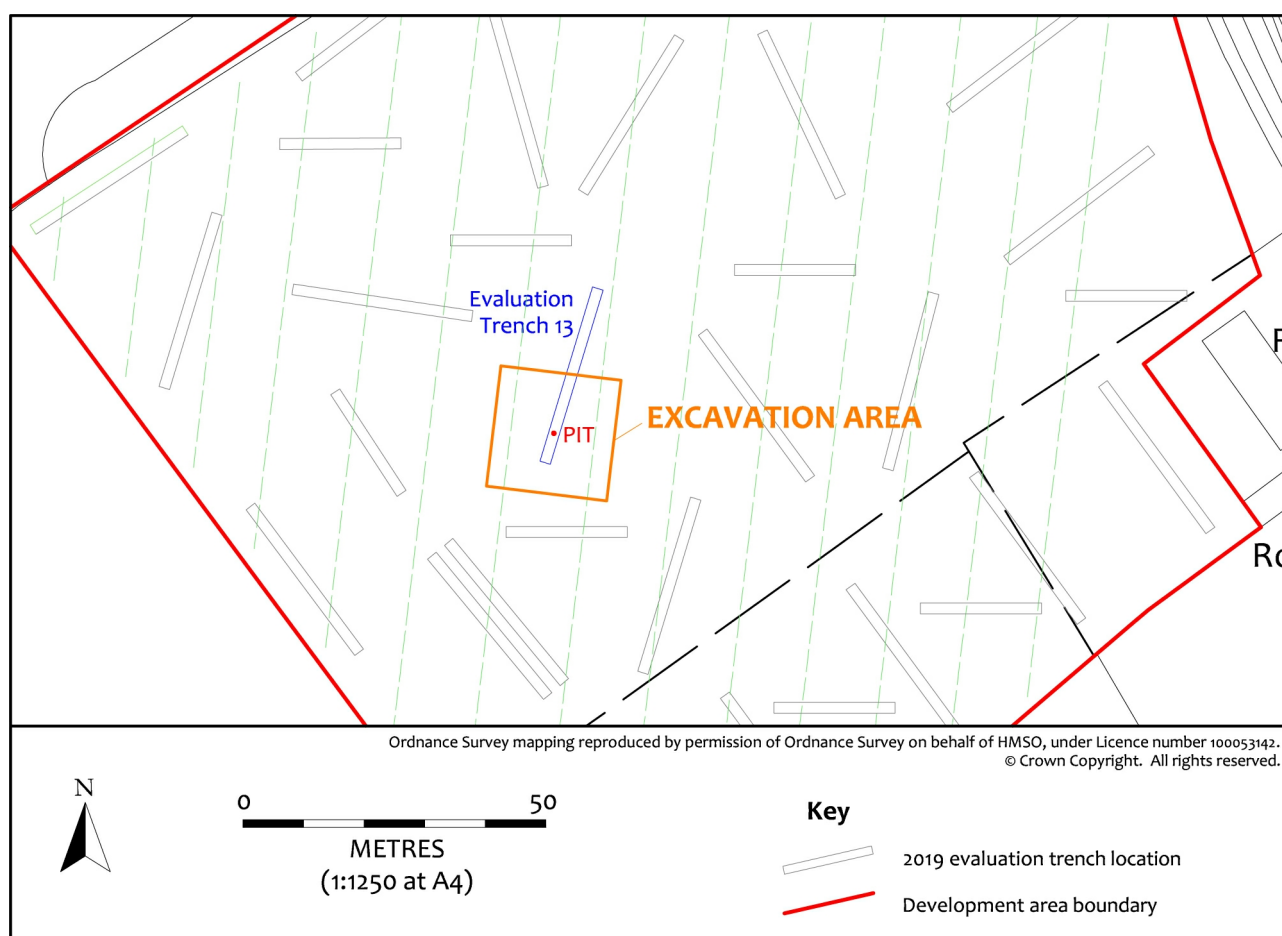


Figure 4. The location and dimensions of the excavation area.

3.1 Location of the investigation area

- 3.1.1 The scheme of works consisted of the strip, map and record exercise of a 20m x 20m square (400m²) centred on the 2019 evaluation Trench 13 post-hole/pit (NGR 412759 601369).
- 3.1.2 The location and orientation of the excavation area can be seen on Figure 4. The excavation area was plotted via Leica GPS Rover on the 22nd June prior to the excavation commencing, with the location of the pit also plotted as a control.

3.2 The excavation

- 3.2.1 The excavation area was stripped by a JS130 mechanical tracked excavator with a 1.8m wide toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. The strip was undertaken over two days, with one 10m x 20m length excavated, recorded and backfilled on Friday 26th June, and the remaining 10m x 20m strip completed on Monday the 29th June 2020. This was done to prevent the excavation area being open over the weekend, as torrential rain was forecast and uncertainty over the status of the Covid-19 lockdown suggested that having any area open for a period of time could be problematic from a health and safety aspect.
- 3.2.2 As noted in the 2019 evaluation, the ploughsoil context (1) was a mid-brown sandy clay and averaged between 0.25m and 0.30m deep across the excavation area. Central to the strip, map and record area was the pit, context [2] in the correct location according to the GPS control



Plate 3. The excavation area looking southeast on Friday 26th June.

Plate 4. The excavation area looking southeast on Monday 29th June.



reading. As this feature had been investigated, recorded and sampled in the evaluation exercise no further work was undertaken on it.

- 3.2.3 Two field drains were noted running roughly north-south at the western and eastern extremes of the area, as predicted from the evaluation results. **No archaeological remains of interest besides the post-hole/pit identified in the evaluation were noted within the strip, map and record area.**
- 3.2.4 The height of the natural geological clay horizon averaged between 159.5m OD (*Ordnance Datum*) and 159.8m OD.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 In late June 2020 the strip, map and record of a 20m x 20m area (400m²) was undertaken in land north of Fairfields, Longframlington, centred on an undated post-hole/pit identified in the previous 2019 archaeological evaluation of the proposed development area.
- 4.1.2 The feature measured 0.8m long, 0.75m wide and 0.35m deep. In form, it appeared to be a substantial post-hole with its cut lined with clay on its eastern edge with three subsequent fills. No artefacts were found within the feature, and subsequent analysis of the palaeoenvironmental sample taken from the feature found no ecofacts of note. As such, Northumberland Conservation deemed that the feature may have been part of a bigger structure not identified within the evaluation, and outlined the need for the strip, map and record exercise as Condition 13 for planning application 18/03231/FUL.
- 4.1.3 The excavation took place over two days in June 2020 and identified no feature of archaeological interest within 20m of the post-hole, suggesting that the feature was a single intervention of no discernable date.

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 excavation.* 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

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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*

Ordnance Survey mapping: 1867, 1898, 1919, 1940 and 2019 editions

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

Liddell, T. (2019) *Archaeological Evaluation: Land north of Fairfields, Longframlington, Northumberland.* Project 265-19-EVA. Vindomora Solutions Ltd.