

**The Duchess
Community High
School, Alnwick,
Northumberland**

**Archaeological Field
Evaluation**

Client: GALLIFORD TRY

AB Heritage Project No:10453

Date:27/01/2015

The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick, Northumberland Archaeological Field Evaluation

Client Galliford Try
Project Number 10453
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an Archaeological Field Evaluation carried out at The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick, Northumberland on behalf of Galliford Try. The archaeological investigations were carried out in support of a planning application for the development of a new secondary school.
- 1.1.2 An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment has been carried out on the site previously (The Archaeology Practice 2014). This report identified no overriding historic environment constraints which are likely to prohibit development although possible low-level activity on the site was considered as being likely (ibid).
- 1.1.3 Subsequently a geophysical survey was carried out over the entire site (AB Heritage 2014b). The purpose was to confirm whether any geophysical anomalies of possible archaeological origin may survive within the site limits, at the earliest possible opportunity, to better guide future works and the decision making process. No significant geophysical anomalies were identified in the survey.
- 1.1.4 The layout of the trial trenches was agreed in advance with Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team. All work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by AB Heritage Ltd (AB Heritage 2014a) in response to a brief supplied by Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team.
- 1.1.5 Site work was carried out between the 6th and 9th of January 2015, by elected sub-contractor Rubicon Heritage Services UK Ltd. A total of 14 trenches were excavated totalling 852 linear metres. A number of areas could not be investigated due to access restrictions imposed by the client due to the use of the site as playing fields.
- 1.1.6 The evaluation has demonstrated that no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts are present in the excavated sample.
- 1.1.7 In light of the findings no further archaeological work is recommended in relation to this development.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

- 2.1.1 AB Heritage Limited (herein AB Heritage) was commissioned by Galliford Try, to undertake a programme of archaeological investigations at a site at The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick, Northumberland.
- 2.1.2 The archaeological investigations were carried out prior to an application for permission to develop the site as a secondary school. A geophysical survey (AB Heritage 2014b) was carried out as an early risk guidance tool. The purpose was to confirm whether any geophysical anomalies of possible archaeological origin may survive within the site limits, at the earliest possible opportunity, to better guide future works and the decision making process.
- 2.1.3 Rubicon Heritage Services UK Ltd (hereinafter Rubicon Heritage) was commissioned by AB Heritage to undertake a limited programme of Archaeological Evaluation Trenching to supplement the results of a geophysical survey that has been undertaken at the site.
- 2.1.4 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was submitted to the Local Authority Planning Archaeologist in December 2014 (AB Heritage 2014a) and approved. Fieldwork was carried out in January 2015.

2.2 Site Location & Description

- 2.2.1 The Duchess Community High School is situated to the south of Alnwick town with the A1 approximately 0.5 Km to the west of the site (Figure 1). Centred at NU 18984 11843 the current surrounding landscape is primarily rural with modern housing and industrial units to the north.
- 2.2.2 Occupying an area of c. 8 hectares (Ha) the development is split into three fields with two currently being used as sports pitches with the third being left to fallow.
- 2.2.3 Across the site the underlying bedrock is shown to be Carboniferous Limestone which has the potential to impact geophysical survey results. The remaining superficial deposits across the fields are known to be Devensian till (BGS 2014).

3. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

3.1 Aims of Works

3.1.1 The aims of the evaluation as proposed in the WSI were to:

- Establish the archaeological significance or otherwise of any anomalies highlighted on the geophysical survey [n.b. none were identified].
- Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
- Establish the nature of the activity on the site.
- Identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site.
- Provide further information on the archaeology of the site from any archaeological remains encountered.

3.1.2 These aims were to be achieved through pursuit of the following specific objectives:

- To define and identify the nature of archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible; with particular regard to features identified in the geophysical survey. Interpretation should address themes outlined in the relevant sections of the North Eastern Archaeological Research Framework;
- To attempt to characterise the nature and preservation of the archaeological sequence and recover as much information as possible about the spatial patterning and extent of features present on the site;
- To recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence which will attempt to determine the complexity of the horizontal and vertical stratigraphy present, and to recover coherent artefact, ecofact and environmental samples;
- To determine the potential of the site to provide palaeoenvironmental and/or economic evidence and the forms in which such evidence may be present;
- To define any research priorities that may be relevant should further field investigation be required; and
- To establish the significance of the archaeology encountered on site. The aims of the archaeological evaluation were to gather high quality data from the direct observation of archaeological deposits in order to provide sufficient information to establish the nature, extent, preservation and potential of any surviving archaeological remains; as well as to make recommendations for management of the resource, including further archaeological works if necessary. In turn this will allow reasonable planning decisions to be taken regarding the archaeological provision for the areas affected by the proposed development, including the development of suitable research themes.

3.2 Methodology of Works

- 3.2.1 Trial trenching was undertaken between the 6th and 9th October 2014 by one 20 tonne excavator equipped with a 1.8 m wide flat-bladed grading bucket supported by a JCB3CX with a 1.55 m wide flat-bladed grading bucket. Soil was removed in shallow spits until the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed geological levels were exposed. Any identified deposits were cleaned by hand to define their extent, nature, form and, where possible, date.
- 3.2.2 Trenches were excavated to the upper surface of the clay till but a number of deeper sondages were excavated in localised areas in order to investigate the nature of the till. One sondage at the east end of Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of over 2 metres (as far as the machine would reach) to examine the formation of the ground at the site. This indicated that substantial depths of clay interspersed with clean yellow/orange sand lenses underlie the playing fields. No solid geology was encountered.
- 3.2.3 The WSI allowed for up 1200 linear metres of trenching to be excavated across the site. As no significant geophysical anomalies were identified, the trench layout was random. The only traces of above ground archaeology was an extensive spread of ridge and furrow which covered the majority of the site and was best preserved in the central rugby pitches.
- 3.2.4 All information identified in the course of the site works was recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. It should be noted that, where possible, data was collected and stored digitally and in a format suitable for long term storage by the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).
- 3.2.5 The survey and recording works adhered to the following requirements:
- All levels were recorded and reduced to OS datum.
 - All trench locations were electronically surveyed with National Grid references.
 - The locations of trenches were plotted on appropriate scale plans related to the National Grid and labelled with six figure eastings and northings.
 - The electronic survey record is retained with the project archive.
- 3.2.6 Site photography was by high resolution (7 megapixel or greater) colour DSLR photography. Photography includes general site shots, shots of each trench, and shots of individual features and groups of features. All photographs include a suitable photographic scale and will be recorded on a photographic register detailing as a minimum the subject, feature number, location and direction of each shot.
- 3.2.7 The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IfA in the organisation's code of conduct (IfA, 2010). The final deposition of the archive will be placed with the County Museum Service.
- 3.2.8 Once the final report has been accepted by the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team, AB Heritage Limited will complete an OASIS fieldwork summary form and submit it to the Archaeology Data Service. The form and related guidance can be found at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/first.html>.

3.3 Limitations

- 3.3.1 It should be noted that the report has been prepared under the express instruction and solely for the use of Galliford Try and associated parties/agents they elect to share this information with.
- 3.3.2 All the work reported in this document was carried out based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (January 2015) and relevant United Kingdom standards and codes, technology and legislation. Changes in these areas may occur in the future and cause changes to the conclusions, advice, recommendations or design given. AB Heritage does not accept responsibility for advising Galliford Try or associated parties of the facts or implications of any such changes in the future.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE BASELINE

4.1 Historic Baseline Data (after The Archaeological Practice 2014)

- 4.1.1 An archaeological Desk Based Assessment was undertaken by The Archaeological Practice Ltd in July 2014. This concluded that there is no direct evidence for human activity within the bounds of the assessment area from the prehistoric, Roman or early medieval periods, although intermittent, possibly low-level human activity within the site during these periods is considered likely (The Archaeological Practice 2014).
- 4.1.2 Although an earlier settlement at Alnwick is possible, records indicate that the castle and town originated in the later 11th century and that associated land-use, including extensive farming, rapidly spread out from the town. The Cawledge deer park was established east of the assessment site, perhaps overlapping its eastern fringe, in the 13th century and survived until the 18th century; this had the effect of curtailing major development in and upon the fringes of the park, including the area of the current assessment site (The Archaeological Practice 2014).
- 4.1.3 Also militating against development or intensive land-use was the position of the site a considerable distance outside the medieval town walls, rendering it vulnerable to Scottish raiding from the 14th century until the early 17th century, following which, historic map evidence shows that it remained undeveloped, with no features other than field boundaries shown on historic maps. One of these boundaries (forming the northern site boundary), a western extension of a feature named on the first edition Ordnance Survey Series as the *Aln Dyke*, is a possible medieval boundary feature of local interest (The Archaeological Practice 2014).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Summary results

In total 14 trenches (1-14) were excavated within the proposed development between the 6th and 9th January 2015 (Fig 2). The location of these excavations was determined by AB Heritage and agreed to by Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team in consideration of the results of the desk-based assessment, the geophysical survey and the site topography. By design the 14 trenches are of varying size totalling 852 m in length.

5.2 Trench records

5.2.1 The trial trenches can be summarised follows:

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation	Description	Depth (m)	Archaeological Features identified
1	116	1.8	NW-SE	Topsoil: Brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.22	No significant archaeological features identified. Occasional faint traces of very shallow furrows.
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.34	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
2	29	1.8	SW-NE	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.3	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.3	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
3	93	1.8	E-W	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.32	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.41	

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation	Description	Depth (m)	Archaeological Features identified
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
4	85	1.8	E-W	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.3	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.3	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
5	90	1.8	N-S	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.23	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.31	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
6	25	1.8	N-S	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.3	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.22	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation	Description	Depth (m)	Archaeological Features identified
7	23	1.8	N-S	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.35	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.18	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
8	39	1.8	E-W	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.25	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.33	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
9	24	1.8	SW-NE	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.29	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.22	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
10	40	1.8	SW-NE	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.28	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.18	

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation	Description	Depth (m)	Archaeological Features identified
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
11	112	1.8	E-W	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.4	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.11	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
12	33	1.8	NW-SE	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.38	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.2	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		
13	97	1.8	N-S	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.4	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.25	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		

Trench No.	Length (m)	Width (m)	Orientation	Description	Depth (m)	Archaeological Features identified
14	46	1.8	N-S	Topsoil: brownish grey silty clay-loam	0.23	No archaeological features identified
				Subsoil layer: Brownish grey clay silt	0.31	
				Natural: grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand.		

Table 2 Summary of Trial Trenches

5.3 Trial Trench evaluation

- 5.3.1 The 14 trenches were spread across the entire site but with a concentration (12 trenches) in the central playing field area. Ridge and furrow was clearly visible at the surface across this central area. The furrows were quite broad (approximately 3 to 4 m between furrows) and aligned east to west. No other surface archaeology was visible.
- 5.3.2 All trenches encountered the same sequence of deposits (see table 2 for detailed trench descriptions). The topsoil (001) consisted of brownish grey silty clay-loam. Immediately below the topsoil was a grey brown clay silt subsoil (002). The natural (003) was a very mixed grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand. Frequent fragments of degraded black stone (shale or coal) were contained within this horizon. A machine sondage was excavated through this material at the north end of trench 5 to a depth in excess of 2 m at which point it was abandoned and backfilled due to health and safety concerns.
- 5.3.3 Sub-surface activity was restricted to a number of ceramic field drains and occasional very shallow linear features filled with orange silty sand which corresponded with the position of the surface cultivation markets. However the majority of the ridge and furrow cultivation was contained within the topsoil with no sub-surface remains surviving. The maximum depth of the furrows was 0.05 m.
- 5.3.4 The only finds recovered from the topsoil consisted of broken field drain fragments, numerous golf balls and a single fragment of 19th / 20th century pottery.

6. DISCUSSION

6.1 Archaeological Field Evaluation

6.1.1 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were identified during the investigation.

7. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE & MITIGATION

7.1 Known Heritage Resource

7.1.1 There are no known heritage assets within the proposed development area.

7.2 Potential Archaeological Resource and significance

7.2.1 Geophysical survey revealed no significant anomalies likely to represent archaeological activity within the site.

7.2.2 Overall the results of geophysical survey and evaluation trenching would suggest that the proposed development site is of low potential to contain archaeological remains.

7.3 Predicted Impact of Proposed Development

7.3.1 As no below ground archaeology has been identified in either the geophysical survey or trial trenching, it is considered unlikely that the proposed development will have any impact on below ground archaeology.

7.4 Outline Recommendations

7.4.1 As the predicted impact on archaeological remains is deemed to be negligible, no mitigation measures are required. Therefore it is recommended that no further archaeological works are required in relation to the proposed development.

7.4.2 Please note that all recommendations are subject to consultation with and approval by the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team.

8. REFERENCES

The Archaeology Practice Ltd 2014 *Proposed School Site, Alnwick, Northumberland, Archaeological Assessment*. Unpublished report by The Archaeology Practice Ltd. for Miller Homes Ltd.

AB Heritage, 2014a. *The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick, Northumberland, Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished report for Galliford Try Ltd.

AB Heritage, 2014b. *The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick, Northumberland, Geophysics Report*. Unpublished report for Galliford Try Ltd.

9. APPENDIX 1 ARCHIVE STATEMENT

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

Item	Quantity
Trenching and field recording sheets	3
Drawings	1 Digital
Photographs	34
Registers (Context, finds, drawing, photo)	2
Notebooks	0

The archive material is contained within one box.

The archive is currently stored in the offices of Rubicon Heritage Services UK Ltd.

10. APPENDIX 2 PHOTO REGISTER

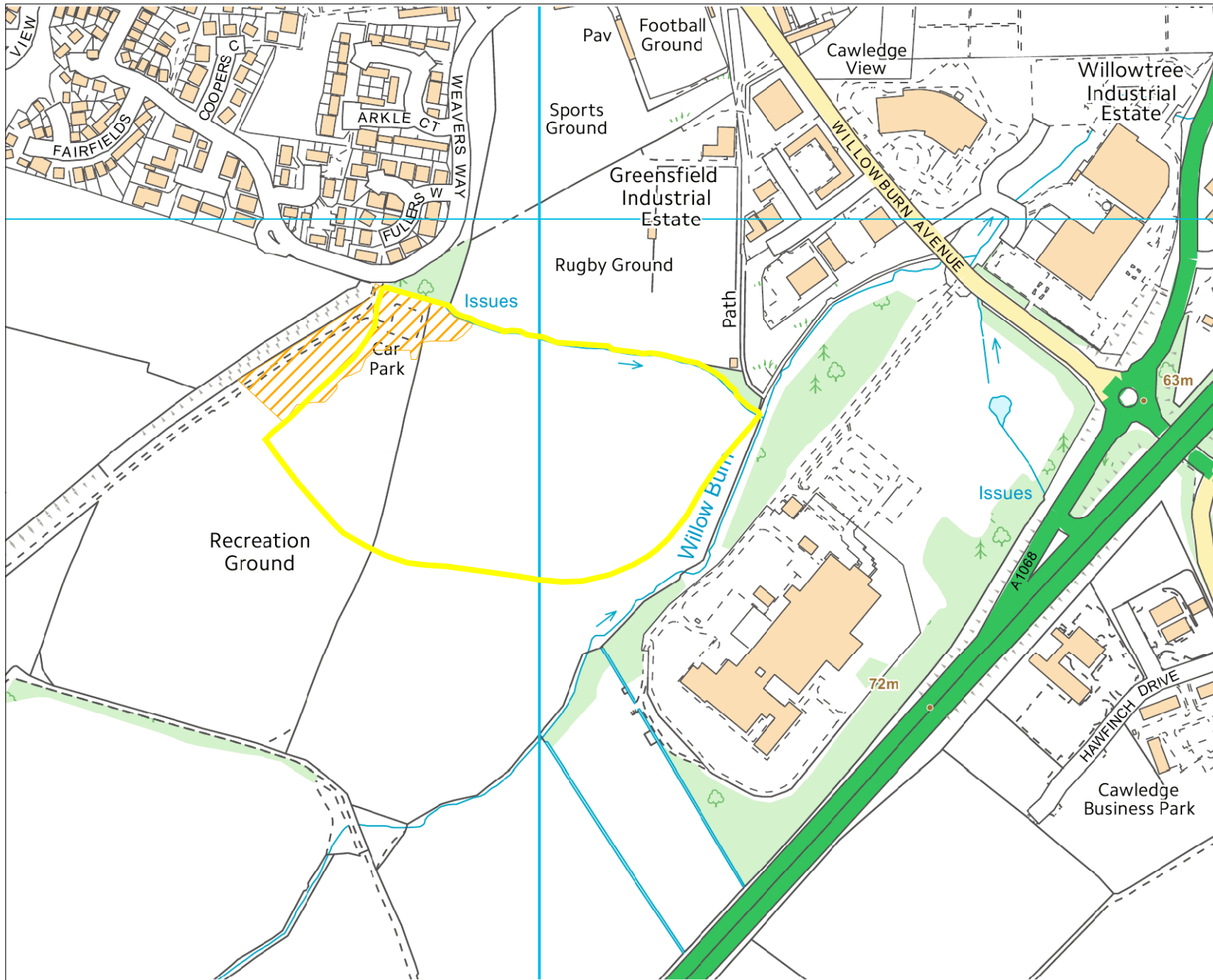
Photo No.	Direction Facing	Description
1	SE	Trench 1
2	NW	Trench 1
3	S	Trench 2
4	N	Trench 2
5	SE	Trench 1
6	NW	Trench 1
7	E	Trench 3
8	W	Trench 3
9	W	Trench 4
10	E	Trench 4
11	N	Trench 5
12	S	Trench 5
13	S	Trench 14
14	N	Trench 14
15	S	Trench 6
16	N	Trench 6
17	N	Trench 7
18	S	Trench 7
19	E	Trench 8
20	W	Trench 8
21	S	Trench 13
22	N	Trench 13
23	SW	Trench 9
24	NE	Trench 9
25	SW	Trench 10
26	NE	Trench 10
27	N	Trench 12
28	S	Trench 12
29	E	Trench 11
30	W	Trench 11
31	N	Overview of site
32	NE	Overview of site
33	E	Overview of site
34	NW	Overview of trench 14

11. APPENDIX 3 CONTEXT REGISTER



Context no.	Trench no.	Type	Fill of:	Filled by:	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Description	Interpretation
1	All	Deposit	-	-	-	-	0.22 – 0.4	Brownish grey silty clay-loam	Topsoil
2	All	Deposit	-	-	-	-	0.18 – 0.41	Grey brown clay silt	Subsoil layer
3	All	Deposit	-	-	-	-	>2m	Grey brown clay with inclusions of stone fragments and occasional lenses of grey clay and orange sand	Natural

12. APPENDIX 4 DRAWING REGISTER

Drawing No.	Description
1	Trench layout plan



Legend

-  Site Boundary
-  Not Accessible due to Current Construction

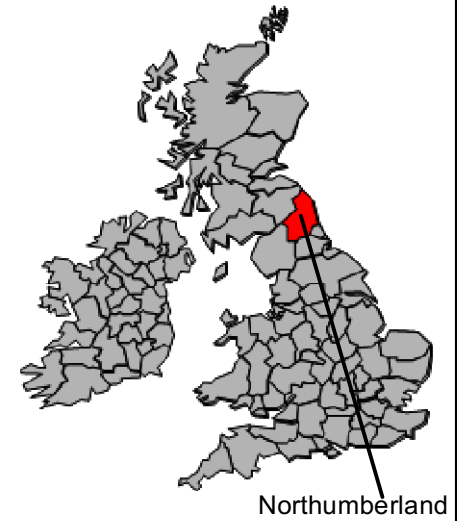
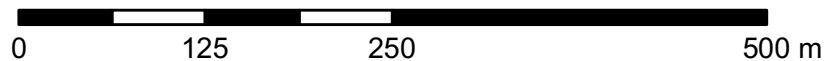


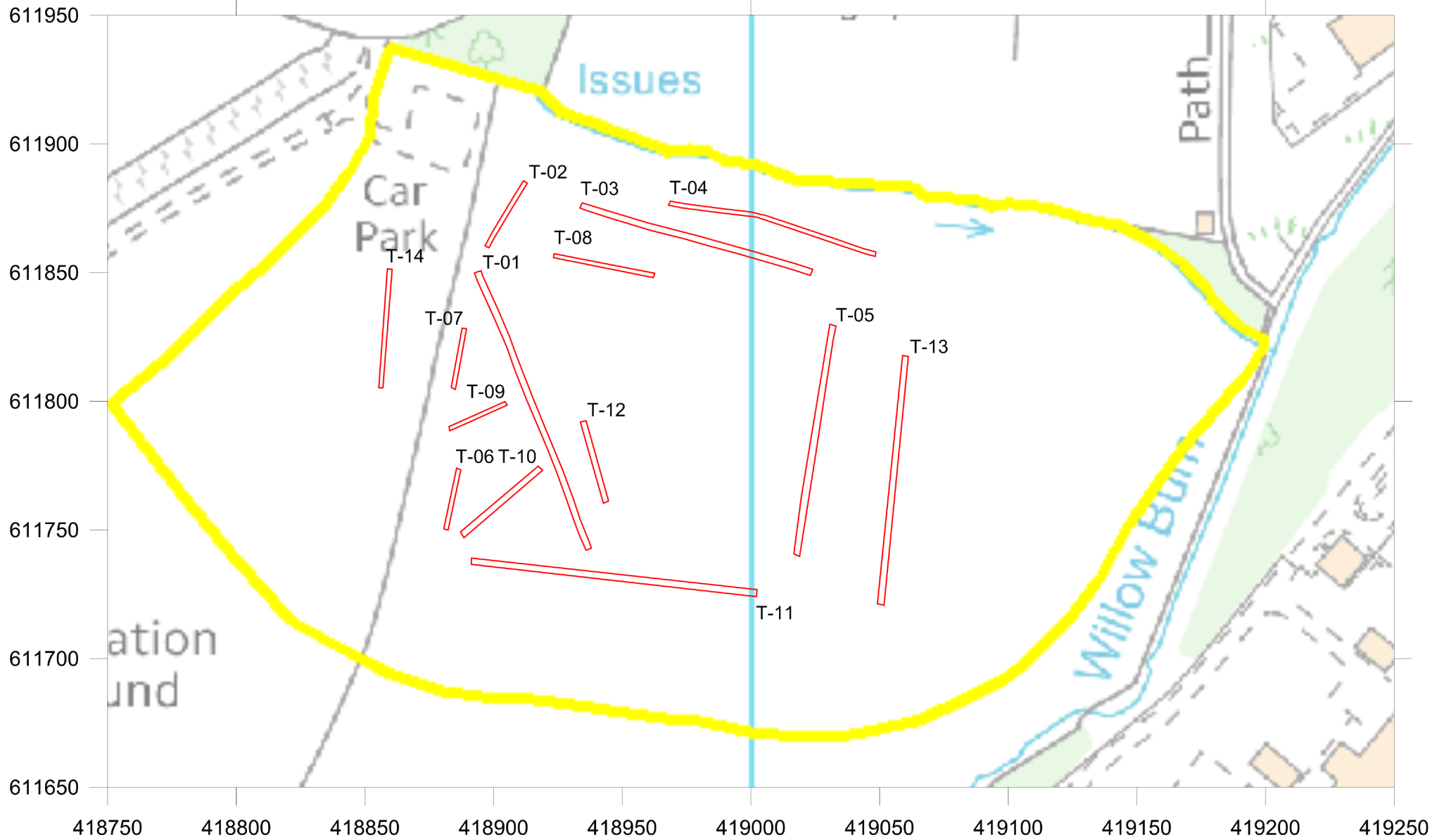
Figure 1: Site Location

Project: The Duchess Community High School, Alnwick


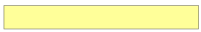
Date: 15/01/15 Job Number: 10485

Drawn by: ZE Approved by: GR





Key

Excavated trenches	
Site boundary	



Project Name:
The Duchess Community
High School Alnwick

Project Code: 10485

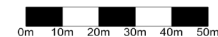


Figure 2 - Trench Layout

Drawn by: EOF	1st edit by:
2nd edit by:	Signed off:



Plate 1 - Working shot of trenches under excavation



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