

Front Street, Whickham, Gateshead Archaeological Field Evaluation

Client: GALLIFORD TRY

AB Heritage Project No:10451

Date: 19/05/2015

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Project Number 10451

Prepared By Colm Moloney

Illustrated By Rubicon Heritage

Approved By Andy Buckley

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Enquiries To:

AB Heritage Limited (North & Scotland Office)

Office 8, North East Office Block,

Swan Hunter Yard, Station Road, Wallsend,

Newcastle upon Tyne, NE28 6EQ

Email: info@abheritage.co.uk

Tel: 03333 440 206



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of an archaeological field evaluation carried out at Front Street, Whickham, Gateshead on behalf of Galliford Try. The Archaeological Evaluation works were required in support of a planning application for the development of a new school and associated infrastructure.

A magnetometry survey was undertaken across the site of proposed development in advance of the evaluation. This covered an area of 1.3 hectares (ha) (AB Heritage 2015). This also included a report on the ridge and furrow that could be seen traversing the site.

The trench layout was agreed in advance with the County Archaeologist and was targeted to investigate the ridge and furrow previously identified crossing the site.

Site work was carried out on the 23rd of February and the 2nd of March 2015. Overall 115 linear metres of trench was excavated.

Archaeology was restricted to a series of linear features interpreted as the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, and a single isolated pit of unknown date. No finds or other datable material was recovered.

In line with email confirmation from the Tyne & Wear Archaeology Specialist & Monument Manager (David Heslop) on the 4^{th} of March 2015, no further archaeological works will be required at the site.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 AB Heritage Limited (herein AB Heritage) was commissioned by Galliford Try, to undertake a programme of archaeological investigations at a site in Whickham, Gateshead, Tyne and Wear.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological investigations are being carried out in support of a planning application for the development of a school and associated infrastructure. A geophysical survey was initially undertaken which did not identify any anomalies that were interpreted as indicating the presence of buried archaeological remains. A GPS survey was also undertaken to record the above ground evidence of ridge and furrow. The evaluation trenching was intended to investigate the sub-surface elements of the ridge and furrow.
- 1.1.3 AB Heritage working with Rubicon Heritage Services UK Ltd, under the banner AB Rubicon Heritage, progressed a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching to supplement the results of the geophysical and ridge and furrow survey.
- 1.1.4 The evaluation was undertaken in accordance with a specification supplied by Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team (Heslop 2015).

1.2 Site Location & Description

1.2.1 The proposed development site is located c. 5km to the northeast of Newcastle upon Tyne and 130m to the southwest of Front Street Primary School (Figure 1). The site is situated within Whickham residential estate at centre point NGR NZ 20524 61413.

1.3 Geology and Topography

- 1.3.1 The site is on a steep gradient that rises c. 10m from the north of the site to a height of c.100m Above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.3.2 The overlying soils are known as Diamicton, which is a sand and gravel Devensian Till. The underlying geology is a mix of mudstone, sandstone and siltstone (BGS, 2014).

1.4 Proposed Development

1.4.1 The proposed development comprises the construction of a new school building complex.

2. AIMS & METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims of Works

- 2.1.1 The aims of the evaluation were to:
 - Determine the extent, condition, nature, character, date and significance of any archaeological remains encountered.
 - Identify any artefacts relating to the occupation or use of the site.
 - Determine whether buried evidence survives to further elucidate the nature of the ridge and furrow that survive as earthworks on the surface of the site.
 - Determine the geological and soil formation at the site and establish the depths of topsoil.

2.2 Methodology of Works

- 2.2.1 Trial trenching was undertaken on the 2nd March 2015 by a 13-tonne 360° tracked excavator equipped with a flat bladed grading bucket. Overburden 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.
- 2.2.2 Three trenches were excavated across the site in locations agreed in advance with the Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team. The combined length of the trenches was 115 linear metres
- 2.2.3 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).
- 2.2.4 The recording included where appropriate:
 - The recording of individual contexts on pro-formas
 - Overall excavation plans at 1:50 scale; planning and section drawing of single contexts and features (1:20 scale for plans and 1:10 scale for sections)
 - Photographs; and other drawn and written records
- 2.2.5 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
- 2.2.6 Discrete features were half-sectioned in the first instance; linear features were sampled at a minimum of 20% along their exposed length (each sample section not less than 1m), or at a minimum of a 1m sample section if the feature was less than 10m long, with the excavation

- concentrating on any terminals and intersections with other features, which would provide important stratigraphic information.
- 2.2.7 Archaeological features were excavated and recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation, and were accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, summary scale drawings and written pro forma sheets. Sufficient EDM/Total Station survey was undertaken to allow all features to be located accurately with relation to the National Grid and Ordnance Datum. Sections and profiles of each feature sampled were drawn at 1:10 or 1:20, depending on the size of the feature. All plans, sections and profiles were related to Ordnance Datum, in metres.
- 2.2.8 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 were recorded on a photographic register detailing subject, feature number, location and direction of each shot.
- 2.2.9 No finds or samples were retrieved during the investigation.
- 2.2.10 Once the final report has been accepted by the Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation 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.

2.3 Limitations

- 2.3.1 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.
- 2.3.2 All the work reported in this document was carried out based upon the professional knowledge and understanding of AB Heritage on current (April 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.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Summary results

- 3.1.1 In total 3 trenches (Trenches 1 3) were excavated within the proposed development area (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 No archaeology was identified in Trenches 1 and 2.
- 3.1.3 A series of five parallel linear features were identified in Trench 3 (003, 005, 007, 009 & 011). These respected the alignment of the earthwork remains of the surface ridge and furrow and are believed to represent cultivation furrows. The furrows were aligned north to south. Five furrows were identified which measured between 1m and 2m in width and had a depth of between 0.05m and 0.1m. The fill was consistently grey brown silty clay in all furrows.
- 3.1.4 The only other feature identified was a small isolated pit at the west end of Trench 3. This was sub-rectangular in plan with a sharp break of slope from surface, and vertical sides which gradually sloped in to meet a flat base with a gradual break of slope. The single fill consisted of grey brown silty clay.

3.2 Trench records

3.2.1 The trial trenches can be summarised as follows:

Table 1: Summary of Trial Trenches

| Trench No. | Length (m) | Width (m) | Depth (m) | Orientation | Description | Features identified |
|---------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|--|--|
| 1 | 35 | 1.8 | 0.70 | N-S | Topsoil: Dark brown clay loam Subsoil: Light brown clay loam Natural subsoil: Yellow brown clay | A substantial deposit of hardcore and rubble was encountered at the south end of the trench which formed a platform for the nursery building and associated play ground immediately to the south of the proposed development site. |
| 2 | 30 | 1.8 | 0.25 | N-S | Topsoil: Dark brown clay loam Natural subsoil: Yellow brown clay | No archaeology. |
| 3 | 50 | 1.8 | 0.50 | NNW-SSE | Topsoil: Mid-brown silty clay Subsoil: Grey Brown silty clay Natural subsoil: Orangey yellow clay | Agricultural plough furrows and a small isolated pit (013). |

3.3 Trial Trench evaluation

- 3.3.1 Trenches 1 and 2 were aligned N to S and trench 3 was aligned NW to SE. Trench 1 measured 35m, trench 2 measured 30m and Trench 3 measured 50m giving a total trench length of 115m.
- 3.3.2 The south end of trench 1 was built up substantially with modern rubble, presumably as preparation for the construction of the nursery building located just outside the SW corner of the development site (Plate 2).
- 3.3.3 A number of linear features were identified in trench 3 running approximately N to S and corresponding with earthworks noted on the surface (Plate 7 and 8; Figure 2 and 3). These are interpreted as the remains of furrows relating to the system of ridge and furrow which crossed the site. Five furrows were identified which measured between 1m and 2m in width and had a depth of between 0.05m and 0.1m (003, 005, 007, 009 & 011). The fill was consistently grey brown silty clay in all furrows (004, 006, 008, 010 & 012).
- 3.3.4 An isolated pit (013) was also identified in trench 3 (Plate 6). This was sub-rectangular in plan with a sharp break of slope from surface, and vertical sides which gradually sloped in to meet a flat base with a gradual break of slope. The single fill (014) consisted of grey brown silty clay.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Archaeological Field Evaluation

- 4.1.1 No archaeology was identified in trenches 1 and 2.
- 4.1.2 Trench 3 was positioned to intersect at right angles with the ridge and furrow system that survives as earthworks on the site. The bases of five furrows were identified in this trench. These were sealed by a deep and homogenous deposit of colluvial silt, which contained modern finds throughout (not retained).
- 4.1.3 The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment or NERFF (2006, 170) identifies a strategic objective as mapping surviving areas of ridge and furrow. This work was undertaken during the initial phase of work by AB Heritage (2014), although the homogenous nature of the colluvial silt did not allow for a more detailed investigation of the ridge and furrow in section during evaluation works. Only the base of the furrows could be seen cutting in to the subsoil, as they were filled with the same colluvial material.
- 4.1.4 Two research questions are posed in NERFF regarding ridge and furrow (2006, 170). The first pertains to chronology, specifically whether they have a pre-conquest origin. Although no finds were recovered from within the fills of the furrows at Whickham, the artefactual evidence from the colluvial deposit that sealed them was exclusively 18th century or later. It would therefore seem probable that these furrows are a later example of this type of agricultural activity and do not provide any evidence to support the question of early chronology.
- 4.1.5 The second question posed by NERFF relates to patterns of regional variation. From the available evidence it would appear that the Whickham examples consist of parallel furrows with an average spacing of about 6m. They follow the slope which runs approximately S to N in this case with a slight curve towards the north end.
- 4.1.6 The only other archaeological feature that was identified was a small, undated and isolated pit (013) with a sterile fill (014). This was completely excavated and fully recorded.
- 4.1.7 In general it would appear that the field, which is set on a significant slope, has seen significant ground slippage in the past. There is very little topsoil on the upslope (south) side of the site with over a meter built up at the base of the slope. The ground has been significantly built up in recent times at the southwest corner presumably in preparation for the construction of the nursery school.

5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE & MITIGATION

5.1 Potential Archaeological Resource and significance

5.1.1 Overall the results of geophysical survey and evaluation trenching would suggest that the proposed development site is of low potential to contain archaeological remains besides those associated with agricultural activity.

5.2 Predicted Impact of Proposed Development

5.2.1 Given the low baseline value of the identified features it is considered that the impact of the development on archaeology is negligible

5.3 Outline Recommendations

5.3.1 In line with email confirmation from the Tyne & Wear Archaeology Specialist & Monument Manager (David Heslop) on the 4th of March 2015, no further archaeological works will be required at the site.

6. REFERENCES

AB Heritage 2015 Front Street Primary School, Whickham, Geophysics and Ridge and Furrow Report. Unpublished report for Galliford Try Ltd.

BGS (British Geological Society) 2013. *Geology of Britain viewer*. http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html.

Heslop, D. 2015 Specification for Archaeological Evaluation at North View, Whickham, Gateshead. Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team

Petts, D and Gerrard, C 2006 Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment

7. APPENDIX 1 ARCHIVE STATEMENT

The site archive is comprised of the following materials:

| ltem | Quantity |
|--|-----------|
| Trenching and field recording sheets | 18 |
| Plans | 1 Digital |
| Sections | 7 |
| Photographs | 17 |
| Registers (Context, finds, drawing, sample, photo) | 4 |

The archive material is contained within one box.

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

8. APPENDIX 2 PHOTO REGISTER

| Photo No. | Direction Facing | Description | |
|--------------|---------------------|--|--|
| 1 | S | Trench 1 | |
| 2 | N | Trench 1 | |
| 3 | s | Made ground in Trench 1 | |
| 4 | S | Trench 2 | |
| 5 | N | Trench 2 | |
| 6 | NW | Working shot showing trenches 1 and 2 | |
| 7 | SE | Trench 3 | |
| 8 | NW | Trench 3 | |
| 9 | NW | Trench 3 | |
| 10 | S | Pre-excavation view of pit (013), Trench 2 | |
| 11 | s | Section through pit (013), Trench 2 | |
| 12 | NW | Section through pit (013), Trench 2 | |
| 13 | NW | Section through furrow (005) | |
| 14 | NW | Section through furrow (005) | |
| 15 | NW | Section through furrow (009) | |
| 16 | NW | Section through furrow (009) | |

9. APPENDIX 3 CONTEXT REGISTER

| Context no. | Trench no. | Туре | Description | Interpretation |
|---|--|--|---|--|
| 001 | All | Deposit | Mid-brown silty clay | Topsoil |
| 002 | 2 Deposit Grey brown silty clay | | Grey brown silty clay | Colluvial deposit identified in down slope areas of the site |
| 003 | | | Furrow – Measured 2 m in width and 0.05m deep. | Furrow |
| 004 | 2 Fill Fill of furrow (003) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam Fill of furrow | | Fill of furrow | |
| 005 | 2 | Cut | Furrow – Measured 1 m in width and 0.05m deep. | Furrow |
| 006 2 Fill Fill of furrow (005) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | | Fill of furrow (005) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | Fill of furrow | |
| 007 | 2 | Cut | Furrow – Measured 1.8 m in width and 0.1m deep. | Furrow |
| 800 | 2 | Fill | Fill of furrow (007) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | Fill of furrow |
| 009 | 009 2 Cut Furrow – Measured 2 m in width and 0.1m deep. | | Furrow – Measured 2 m in width and 0.1m deep. | Furrow |
| 010 | 010 2 Fill Fill of furrow (009) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | | Fill of furrow (009) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | Fill of furrow |
| 011 | 2 | Cut | Furrow – Measured 1.5 m in width and 0.05m deep. | Furrow |
| 012 | 2 | Fill | Fill of furrow (011) consisting of dark grey brown clay loam | Fill of furrow |
| 013 | 2 | Cut | Sub-rectangular in plan with a sharp break of slope from surface, and vertical sides which gradually sloped in to meet a flat base with a gradual break of slope. Dimensions of 0.82 long by 0.64 wide and 0.2 deep | Pit |
| 014 | Pill Fill of pit (013) consisting of grey brown silty clay with no finds or inclusions | | | Pit fill |
| 015 | | | Yellow brown clay | Natural subsoil |

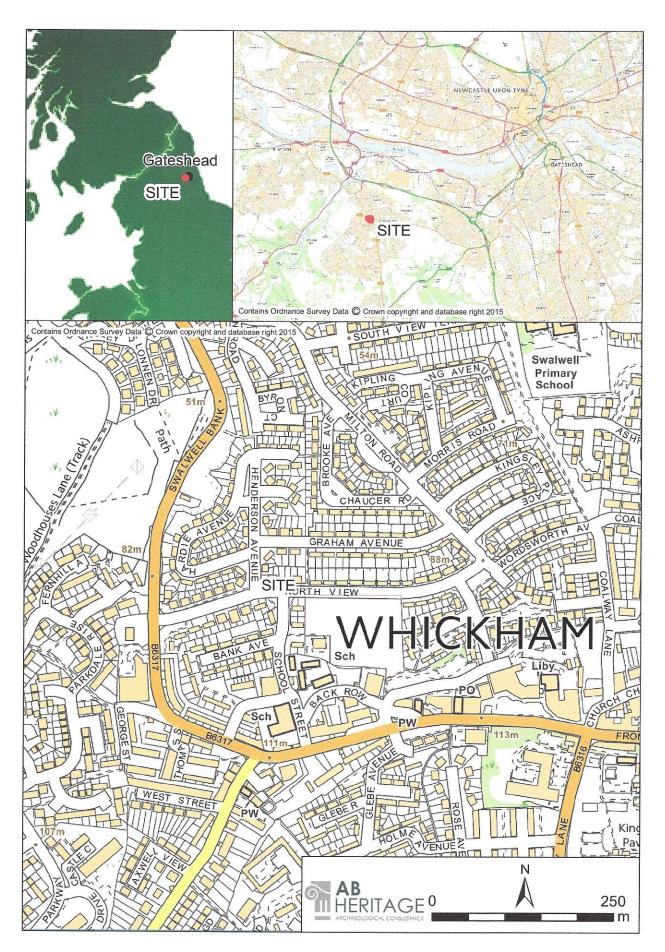


Figure 1 - Front Street, Whickham: Site location.

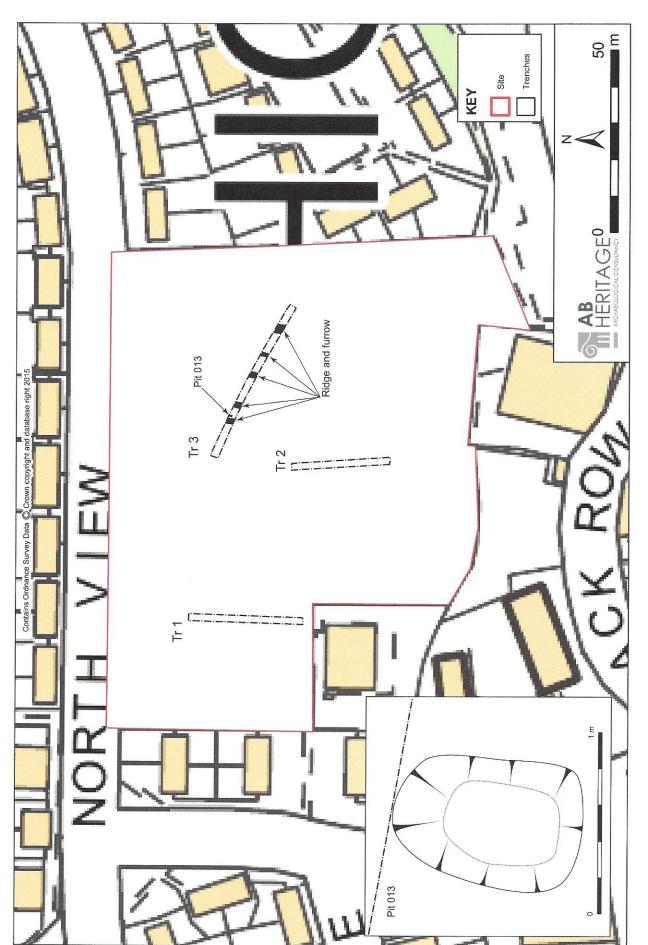


Figure 2 - Front Street, Whickham: Archaeological results.

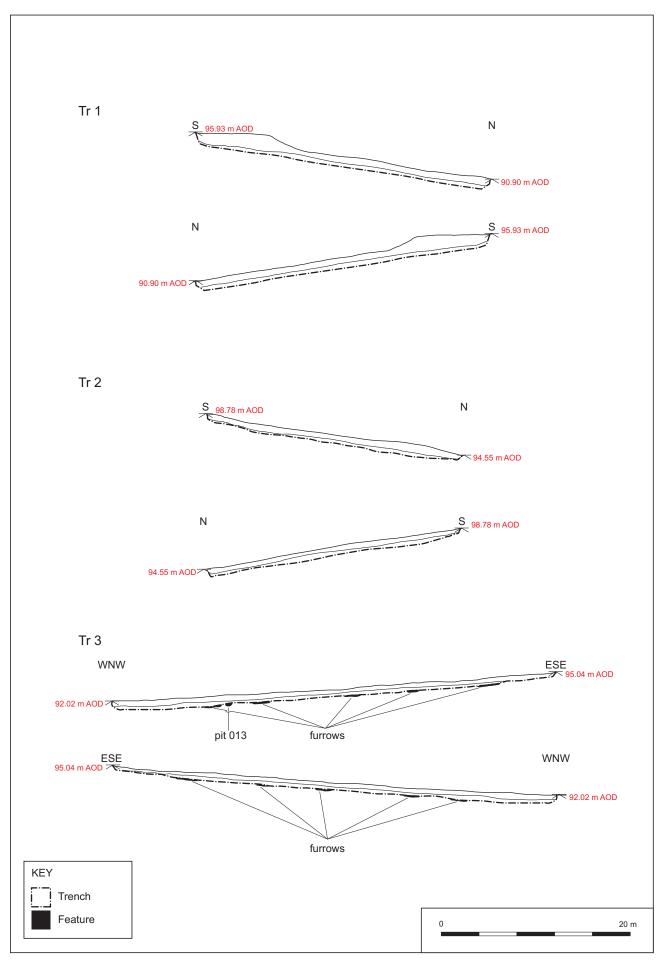


Figure 3 - Front Street, Whickham: Archaeological trench sections.



Plate 1 – Trench 1 looking south.



Plate 2 – Modern made ground in trench 1.



Plate 3 – Trench 2 looking south.



Plate 4- Working shot showing trenches 1 and 2.



Plate 5 – Trench 3 looking northwest.



Plate 6 - Section through pit (013), Trench 2.



Plate 7 - Section through furrow (005)



Plate 8 - Section through furrow (009)



AB Heritage Limited Caerus Suite, 150 Priorswood Road Taunton, Somerset, TA2 8DU Tel: 03333 440 206

e-mail: info@abheritage.co.uk