



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

LAND AT PARK ROAD

HALTWHISTLE

NORTHUMBERLAND

prepared for
Pod

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Location 2 parcels of land adjacent to Park Lane, Haltwhistle, Northumberland

Grid Ref NY 6946 6386 and NY 6915 6416

OASIS Ref northern1-429932

LAND AT PARK ROAD, HALTWHISTLE, NORTHUMBERLAND

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Summary

This document presents the results of a programme of two stages of archaeological evaluation carried out on land off Park Road, Haltwhistle, Northumberland in advance of a proposed housing development. The proposed development area consists of two fields (centred at NGRs NY 6946 6386 and NY 6915 6416). The evaluation comprised excavation of 22 trial trenches, each measuring 25m by 2m, and an additional 5m-by-5m area stripped around an archaeological feature.

The evaluation was carried out by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) on behalf of Pod. It was carried out between the 19th and of 29th July 2021 in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed in advance with Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT).

No archaeological remains were present in the four trenches excavated in the smaller north-eastern field. Natural subsoil deposits relating to a nearby watercourse were identified and recorded.

In the main field, fourteen trenches were initially excavated across three areas. No archaeological remains were found in twelve of these. The remains of a former field boundary known from historic mapping were identified in one trench near the eastern edge of the field. One of the trenches located on slightly higher ground towards the south-western corner of the field contained a small pit. This contained a large quantity of burnt stones and unidentifiable wood charcoal. Although the pit was undated, similar features containing dumps of burnt stones and charcoal are often of Neolithic or Bronze Age date. Following discovery of the pit, a second stage of the evaluation was required by NCCCT. This consisted of excavation of an extension area around the pit and four additional trenches nearby in order to establish the presence or absence of further archaeological remains in the vicinity. However, no further remains were identified and consequently no further archaeological mitigation is recommended for the proposed development area.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document presents the results of a two-stage scheme of archaeological evaluation carried out on two parcels of land off Park Road, Haltwhistle, Northumberland (centred at NGR NY 6946 6386 and NY 6915 6416; Fig. 1). The work was carried out by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) on behalf of Pod (the Client) in advance of a proposed residential development. It was completed in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by NAA (2021) and approved by Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT).

1.2 The evaluation comprised a two-stage programme of trial trenching across the two areas and was carried out between 19th and 29th July 2021. Stage 1 consisted of 18 trenches investigating the flatter, more elevated parts of the Proposed Development Area (PDA) which were considered most likely to contain archaeological remains. Following discovery of an archaeological feature in one of the trenches, Stage 2 comprised expansion of that trench and excavation of four additional trenches immediately to the north in order to test the extent of any remains (Fig. 2). The requirement for Stage 2 and its scope was agreed in consultation with the Client and NCCCP following a site visit.

2.0 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Location

2.1 The PDA is located immediately to the west of Haltwhistle (Fig. 1). The main site is sub-triangular and extends to c.10.06ha, centred at NY 6946 6386. It is bounded to the east by existing residential development, to the north-east by Park Road, to the west by pasture fields (except at the north-west corner where there is a belt of woodland and North Lodge) and to the south by the Newcastle to Carlisle railway line. The eastern and northern sides of the PDA are bounded by a stone wall.

2.2 A separate area (Area 1), to the north-west of the main PDA and North Lodge, is located in a field on the north side of Park Road. This extends to 0.48ha and is centred at NY 6915 6416.

Geology and soils

2.3 The solid geology below the PDA consists of Carboniferous mudstone, sandstone and limestone of the Stainmore Formation. In Area 1 this is covered by Devensian Diamicton Till. At the eastern edge of the main PDA, the bedrock is also overlain till. Elsewhere in the main PDA superficial deposits are mainly Devensian glacial fluvial sand and gravel

although to either side of the stream there is alluvial clay, silt, sand and gravel (BGS 2021).

Topography and land-use

- 2.4 In Area 1 the ground slopes gently down to a stream crossing the area from north-west to south-east. The main PDA is also crossed by the same water course running generally from north-west to south-east. Past mobility of the stream has impacted over a wider area through time leaving a narrow sunken floodplain. Near the south-eastern corner of the PDA the stream enters a culvert beneath the railway line. Beyond this small stream valley, the ground slopes up to flatter or gently sloping areas to the north, east and west.
- 2.5 Area 1 lies at an elevation of c.130-132m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). At its north-west corner the main part of the PDA lies at a height of c.125m aOD, sloping down into the stream valley to a height of c.120m AOD where the watercourse exits the southern site boundary. All fields comprising the PDA are currently in use as pasture.

3.0 SUMMARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Previous archaeological work

- 3.1 A rapid Desk Based Assessment (DBA) of the area surrounding the PDA was completed alongside the WSI for the programme of trial-trenching described in this report (NAA 2021) and is summarised below. No other archaeological investigations have been previously undertaken within the PDA or its immediate vicinity.

Prehistoric and roman period

- 3.2 Although numerous early prehistoric sites, most represented by lithic scatters, have been recorded along the Tyne Valley, none are known from the immediate vicinity of the site. Despite the PDA lying only c.1.5km south of Hadrian's Wall, only one certain late prehistoric or Roman site is recorded by the HER nearby. A probable Iron Age or Romano-British period circular structure, cremation burial and probable Roman potsherds recorded during construction of the A69 Haltwhistle Bypass c.1km south-east of the PDA (Fraser and Speed 1997).
- 3.3 Nearby earthworks of ditched enclosure located 230m south-east of Wydon could represent an enclosed farmstead of later prehistoric or Roman date, although they could equally be of more recent origin. Similarly, more distant earthworks at Castle Hill in

Haltwhistle are of uncertain origin and could be either Iron Age or have formed part of a Norman castle (Tynedale Council 2009).

Anglo-Saxon and medieval

- 3.4 No evidence dating to the early medieval period has been found within the vicinity of the site.
- 3.5 Haltwhistle is thought to have been one of a group of Anglian or pre-Norman settlements which grew up along a route on the north side of the South Tyne valley, each site only a few miles apart. Its name *Haut Whysile* or *Hautwysel* seems to derive from the early English words for 'a high place at a meeting of rivers' and reflects its strategic site (Tynedale Council 2009). The main road may originally have followed the line of Castle Hill/Fair Hill.
- 3.6 As noted above, earthworks at Castle Hill could represent an otherwise unrecorded Norman fortification. The earliest documentary evidence for Haltwhistle is from the 12th century in the Melrose Chronicle and King John granted the market a license in the early 13th century. The settlement included a mill, and there are records of a medieval lock-up. The only surviving medieval building is the 13th century Holy Cross church although it is believed that part of the some of the surviving property boundaries preserve those of medieval plots.
- 3.7 Bellister Castle, located to the south of the Tyne opposite Haltwhistle, consisted of a square tower-house (a bastle) set on a low mound of uncertain origin. Although of possible 13th century origin it was first recorded in 1471. The Scheduled remains of the bastle are adjoined by a Grade I listed house with a date-stone for 1669. Although there are records of an associated medieval settlement, no remains have been identified and its location is uncertain. A more certain deserted medieval settlement is located at nearby Wydon. It had eight taxpayers in 1296 and 27 adults were listed on a poll tax return of 1377, but it had dwindled to eight houses in 1749 and is now marked by a single farmstead. No visible remains of the medieval settlement remain. The Spital, a farm located opposite the entrance to Blenkinsop Hall, is believed to occupy the site of a medieval hospice founded in 1274, although no remains of the earlier institution are visible.
- 3.8 Earthworks of medieval or early post-medieval ridge and furrow cultivation have been recorded near Bellister Castle.

Post-medieval and modern

- 3.9 In the post-medieval period, Haltwhistle remained as a small market town serving the local agricultural area, and a river crossing was maintained as a ferry. The Haltwhistle Tyne bridge was opened in 1875 and is listed Grade II. Some buildings from the period survive in the area. Close to the 17th century house at Bellister Castle a group of 18th-19th century farm buildings are Listed Grade II. Blenkinsop Hall, located to the south-west of the PDA, dates from c.1800.
- 3.10 A major change in the prosperity of Haltwhistle came with the arrival of the railways in the 19th century. The Haltwhistle section of the Newcastle to Carlisle Railway, which bounds the southern edge of the PDA, was opened in 1838 by the Newcastle upon Tyne and Carlisle Rail-Road Company, which subsequently became part of the North Eastern Railway in the 1860s. During the site inspection, a linear mound was noted running along the interior of the southern boundary of the PDA. This may represent upcast from the adjacent railway cutting.
- 3.11 The arrival of better communications rapidly resulted in establishment of larger-scale industry in the town, much of which was fuelled by coal which could now be supplied cheaply and in bulk. The HER notes a paint factory established in 1837, a blacksmith's workshop, steam-powered mills for grinding corn, a sawmill, and terraces of workers' cottages.
- 3.12 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1861 (OS 1865) shows the field containing Area 1 in the form it retains today. The external boundaries of the main PDA were also as they remain today, as were most of the internal boundaries. During the site visit it was noted that remnants of an earlier wall remain within the hedge at the western side of the PDA. The area within the south-eastern part of the PDA where the stream has been canalised and follows a dog-leg was surrounded by an enclosure (the stream paralleling the sides of the enclosure) with an additional boundary connecting it eastwards towards Park Road (Fig. 3). This last boundary survives as a low linear earthwork identified during the site visit but not identified by the LiDAR survey. The low-lying ground representing the original course of the stream towards the southern edge of the PDA is portrayed as a strip of boggy ground.
- 3.13 By 1895 the site had attained its current form (OS 1898) and North Lodge had been built (Fig. 4). Subsequent maps (OS 1926; 1951) show no significant alterations within the PDA.

4.0 EVALUATION SCOPE OF WORKS

- 4.1 Following discussion with NCCCT it was determined that flatter or gently sloping areas on higher ground to the north, east and west (designated Areas 1-4) had the greatest potential for archaeological activity (Fig. 2). Lower lying areas were thought to have been more likely affected by the course of the stream which crosses through both PDA's and therefore to have less potential for archaeological remains.
- 4.2 It was agreed in discussion with NCCCT that the evaluation should be carried out in two stages. Stage 1 would focus on the previously identified areas thought to have the greatest potential for remains (Fig. 2). It would examine a 4% sample of the four areas, involving the excavation of 18 trial trenches, each measuring 25m long and 2m wide. In Area 1 (4,801m²) there were four trenches, in Area 2 (11,078m²) 9 trenches, in Area 3 (3,868m²) three trenches and in Area 4 (2,826m²) two trenches. The proposed Stage 1 programme included a 1% contingency to allow for unexpected discoveries which might extend beyond the limit of the initial trial trenches.
- 4.3 Stage 2 of the evaluation comprised an extension of the trial trenching outside of the initially identified areas of interest and was contingent upon the discovery of archaeological remains during Stage 1. Following the results of Stage 1, in consultation with NCCCT it was agreed that a Stage 2 evaluation was required. This comprised an expansion of the stripped area surrounding the identified remains and excavation of a further 4 trial trenches in their vicinity.

5.0 STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- 5.1 All work was carried out to the specification outlined in the WSI and in accordance with the following published standards and guidelines of practice:
- *Yorkshire, the Humber and the North East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process* (SYAS 2018)
 - Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Code of Conduct* (ClfA 2014a, revised 2019);
 - *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (ClfA 2014b, revised 2020);
 - *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (ClfA 2014c, revised 2020);
 - *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment: The MoRPHE Project Managers' Guide* (Historic England 2015);

- *A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds* (English Heritage 1995);
- *First Aid for Finds* (Watkinson and Neal 2001).

6.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

6.1 The main aim of the trial trenching was to systematically evaluate those areas considered to have the highest potential. If remains were identified, the evaluation aimed to determine the location, extent, nature, date and importance of remains in order that an informed assessment of the impact can be undertaken, and a suitable mitigation strategy agreed.

6.2 The objectives of the evaluation were to:

- establish the presence, nature, extent, preservation and significance of any archaeological remains within the site;
- provide a detailed record of any such archaeological remains;
- recover and assess any associated structural, artefactual and environmental evidence;
- determine which areas within the footprint of the proposed scheme require archaeological mitigation in the form of preservation in situ, open area investigation in advance of construction, or monitoring of soil stripping during construction works;
- prepare an illustrated report on the results of the excavation to be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) held by NCCCT and the Archaeology Data Service; and
- undertake a scheme of work that meets national and regional standards (Historic England 2015; South Yorkshire Archaeology Service 2018; DCCAS 2021).

6.3 Upon completion of the evaluation, the requirement for further mitigation was discussed in consultation between the Client and NCCCT.

7.0 METHODOLOGY

Topsoil and subsoil stripping

7.1 The trenches were located using survey-grade GPS equipment. The stripping of overburden (topsoil and subsoil) within each trench was carried out by a back-acting mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. Turf, topsoil and subsoil

where present were stacked separately in order to aid reinstatement. All soil removal was carried out under archaeological supervision.

- 7.2 Overburden was removed in even spits down to a level at which archaeological deposits were identified, or down to natural deposits, whichever was first. Thereafter, all archaeological work was done by hand unless either extensive or deep deposits required removal.
- 7.3 The trenches were backfilled only under appropriate conditions and following agreement by in consultation with NCCCT.

Hand excavation

- 7.4 Following initial stripping, the trenches were hand-cleaned in order to define archaeological features and deposits. An initial assessment was made of the archaeological features visible in order to determine in consultation with the client and NCCCT whether any variation to the proposed evaluation strategy was necessary.
- 7.5 Where features of archaeological interest were exposed, they were sample-excavated and recorded sufficient to fulfil the aims and objectives of the evaluation. Hand excavation was carried out in a controlled and stratigraphic manner in order to characterise the archaeology, ensure recovery of artefactual and environmental evidence and enable the date, character, form and stratigraphic relationships of features to be understood. The excavation strategy followed that laid out in the WSI and was discussed and agreed with the client and NCCCT.

Recording

- 7.6 Written descriptions of archaeological features and deposits were recorded on NAA pro forma context sheets, employing standard archaeological recording conventions.
- 7.7 Significant features were surveyed by sub-centimetre accurate GPS. All levels were tied into Ordnance Datum and included on section drawings and site plans.
- 7.8 A drawn record of all archaeological features was made at an appropriate scale. Sections/profiles were drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20 where appropriate and their location accurately identified on the appropriate trench plan. Plans were drawn at a scale of 1:20, although trenches largely devoid of archaeological features were recorded at a scale of 1:50. Initially one long section of each trench was drawn at a scale 1:50. This methodology was altered following a site visit from NCCCT where it was agreed

that sample sections drawn at a scale of 1:20 would be more appropriate for trenches devoid of archaeological features. Drawings produced include appropriate levels relative to Ordnance Datum.

- 7.9 A photographic record of the site was taken using digital photography at a minimum resolution of 10 megapixels. The photographic record included a clearly visible, graduated metric scale, site code and context feature number(s) where relevant. A register of all photographs was kept, and the photographs will be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) for long-term archive storage.
- 7.10 No significant artefacts were recovered during the course of the work. A single bulk soil sample was recovered, processed and assessed its palaeoenvironmental potential. Recovery and sampling of the environmental remains were carried out in accordance with published guidelines (Campbell *et al.* 2011; HE 2015).

8.0 RESULTS

- 8.1 As described above, the trial trenching was carried out across the two fields comprising the PDA. The 18 trenches stripped during Stage 1 were located across four areas on higher, more level parts of the site considered to have higher potential for archaeological remains. An additional four trenches (**19-22**) were subsequently excavated in secondary stage of evaluation to the north of Area 2 (Fig. 2).

Stage 1 Evaluation

Area 1

- 8.2 Area 1 comprised part of a field to the north-west of the main PDA (Fig. 2). Four trenches (**1-4**) were located to either side of a stream bisecting the area. No archaeological deposits or features were identified within the trenches. Several fragments of 19th or early 20th century domestic wares including white and blue transferware derived from the topsoil were not retained. Naturally formed subsoil deposits encountered in Area 1 are described below in trench order.

Trench 1

- 8.3 Trench 1 (Plates 1 and 2; Fig. 4, Section 22) was orientated north-west to south-east across a fairly steep slope that follows the course of the stream to the west (Fig. 2). Natural mid yellowish brown boulder clay (**61**), with occasional pockets of sand and

gravel, was encountered at c.136.55m above Ordinance Datum (aOD) at the south-eastern end of the trench sloping down to c.135.16m aOD to the north-west.

- 8.4 In the north-western c.3m of Trench 1 the boulder clay was overlain by an alluvial deposit (47) presumably related to the nearby watercourse. This consisted of up to 0.35m of mid blueish grey clay with occasional manganese flecking. This was sealed by a layer up to 0.4m thick of colluvial subsoil (46) which consisted of mid slightly yellowish brown slightly sandy, clayey silt with occasional gravel inclusions. This was cut by a single unrecorded field drain crossing the trench c.10m from its south-east end. The subsoil was in turn sealed by 0.2-0.3m of mid brownish grey, sandy, clayey-silt topsoil (45) containing frequent stones.

Trench 2

- 8.5 Trench 2 crossed the hillslope east of the stream in Area 1 from north-east to south-west (Fig. 2; Plate 3). The natural boulder clay (62) was encountered along the north-eastern two-thirds of the trench at a level of c.136.61m aOD (Plate 4; Fig. 4, Section 23). To the south-west it was masked by a series of alluvial deposits related to the nearby stream.
- 8.6 The lowest of these, at a height of c.132.99m aOD, comprised mid grey clay (52) with carbon flecking and occasional shale inclusions. It was up to 0.2m thick and occurred in the south-western 3m of the trench, continuing beyond it down the slope of the hill.
- 8.7 Deposit 52 was sealed by deposit 51, composed of light to mid yellowish-brown laminated sand and clay up to 0.1m thick with occasional small stones. This extended across the south-western end of the trench for 5m. Above this was a layer light to mid brownish grey alluvial silty clay (50) with frequent manganese flecking. Deposit 50 was up to 0.34m thick and extended across the south-western c.8m of the trench. Above layer 50, and extending across the south-western c.20m of the trench, was a layer up to 0.25m thick of light greyish brown, slightly sandy, clayey silt colluvium (49) with occasional rounded stones. This petered out upslope to the north-east and was sealed by topsoil (48).

Trench 3

- 8.8 This was located to the west of the stream in Area 1, aligned from north-east to south-west (Plate 5). The natural deposit (37=39) was encountered at a height of c.135.4m aOD at the south-western end of the trench falling slightly to c.134.91m aOD at the south-west. It consisted of light brownish grey, gravelly clay with stripes of light

yellow/brown clay. It was sealed by up to 0.3m of mid brown/grey, slightly clayey, sandy silt topsoil (36) with frequent gravel inclusions.

Trench 4

- 8.9 Trench 4 was located to the west of stream crossing Area 1, orientated from north-west to south-east (Plates 6). A natural deposit (37=39) identical to that in Trench 3 was encountered at a maximum height of c.134.19m aOD at the north-western end of the trench dropping to a height of c.133.08 at the south-eastern end (Plate 7; Fig. 6, Section 15). Natural geology (37=39) was identical to that identified in Trench 3 and was sealed by up to 0.3m of similar topsoil (38).

Area 2

- 8.10 Area 2 was located within the south-western part of the main PDA. Nine trenches (5-13) were excavated on a relatively flat area of higher ground to the south-west of the stream.

Trench 5

- 8.11 Trench 5 was the northernmost trench in Area 2 and was orientated from east to west straddling the brow of the higher ground (Plate 5). Natural light brown/yellow, sand with occasional pockets of gravel (3) was encountered at a maximum height of c.130.63m aOD at the western limit of the trench sloping down to the east to c.129.11m aOD.
- 8.12 At the eastern end of Trench 5, the natural sand was cut by a shallow sub-circular pit (Fig. 4; Plate 8). Pit 4 had rounded uneven sides and a concave base (Fig. 4, section 23). The pit was oval, measuring 0.75m by 0.57m and up to 0.12m deep. It was filled by a single deposit (5) of soft dark grey, ashy sandy silt with frequent charcoal flecks and burnt or heat affected sub-angular stones; however, there was no evidence for in situ burning (Plate 9).
- 8.13 The pit was sealed by a 0.1m thick layer of light yellow/brown sandy silt subsoil with frequent gravel inclusions which extended across the whole area of the trench. This was in turn sealed by up to 0.3m of mid to dark brownish grey sandy silt topsoil (1) with frequent gravel inclusions.

Trench 6

- 8.14 This was located in the south-western part of Area 2 and was aligned from north-west to south-east (Fig. 2; Plate 10). Natural light brown/yellow sand with pockets of gravel (7) lay at a height of c.130.27m aOD at the north-western end of the trench, sloping gently down to c.129.86m aOD at the south-east end of the trench. It was directly sealed by 0.3m of mid to dark brown/grey sandy silt topsoil (6).

Trench 7

- 8.15 This was located to the south of Trench 6 and aligned from north-west to south-east (Fig. 2; Plate 11). The natural sand and gravel (9) lay at a level of c.129.85m aOD with little variation over the length of the trench (Plate 12) and was overlain by 0.3m of topsoil (8).

Trench 8

- 8.16 Trench 8 was located in the centre of Area 2 and was set out on a north to south alignment (Plate 13). Natural sand and gravel 11 occurred at a height of c.130.98m aOD at the southern end of the trench, sloping down c.130.21m aOD at the northern end. It was directly overlain by topsoil (10).

Trench 9

- 8.17 Trench 9 was aligned from north-east to south-west (Plate 14). As seen in the nearby trenches, natural sand and gravel (13), encountered at a height of c.130.43m aOD, was directly overlain by c.0.3m of topsoil (12).

Trench 10

- 8.18 This ran from east to west parallel to the southern field boundary (Plates 15). The natural sand and gravel (16), which occurred at a height of c.130.86m aOD, was partially overlain by subsoil 15 which was observed sporadically across the trench (Plate 16). Subsoil 15 consisted of up to 0.1m of light yellowish brown sandy silt with occasional sub-rounded gravel inclusions. It was in turn sealed by the topsoil (14).

Trench 11

- 8.19 Trench 11 ran from north to south to the east of Trench 10. The natural sand and gravel (18) occurred at a level of c.130.34m aOD with little variation in height across the trench (Plate 17). It was directly sealed by c.0.3m of mid to dark brownish grey sandy silt topsoil (17) with frequent gravel inclusions.

Trench 12

- 8.20 This lay across a slope at the eastern edge of Area 2 and was aligned from north-east to south-west (Plate 18). Natural yellow/brown sand and gravel (**21**) sloped from c.129.82m aOD at the south-western end of the trench down to c.128.25m aOD to the north-east limit of the trench. Across c.15m of the north-eastern end of the trench it was covered by up to 0.7m of a colluvial subsoil (**20**) which thickened downslope to the north-east. The subsoil (**20**) consisted of light to mid brown/grey, sandy silt with occasional sub-rounded and sub-angular gravel inclusions. The trench was sealed by 0.3m of modern topsoil (**19**).

Trench 13

- 8.21 Trench 13 was located to the north of Trench 12 and orientated from north-west to south-east (Plates 19 and 20). The natural sand and gravel (**24**) sloped from c.129.57m aOD at the north-western end of the trench down to c.128.98m aOD at the south-eastern end, where it was overlain by colluvial subsoil (**23**). This extended approximately 3m into the trench and consisted of mid greyish brown, sandy silt, with infrequent gravel inclusions. The whole trench was sealed by 0.3m of topsoil (**22**) which consisted of mid to dark brownish grey sandy silt with frequent gravel inclusions.

Area 3

- 8.22 Area 3 comprised an area of raised ground at the eastern edge of the PDA (Fig. 2). Three trenches (**14-16**) were excavated, one across the top of the hill, one down its south-west facing slope and the third down its south-east facing slope.

Trench 14

- 8.23 This was located in order to intersect a field boundary recorded by historic mapping which crossed the area as surviving low earthwork (Figs. 2 and 3). The trench was aligned from north to south (Plate 21). Light to mid yellowish brown natural sand and gravel (**26**) lay at a level of c.126.93m aOD at the northern end of the trench and sloped gently down to c.126.25m aOD at the southern end.
- 8.24 The earthwork bank (Group no. **60**; Plate 22; Fig. 4, plan and Section 24) crossed the trench 9m from its southern end, directly overlying the natural gravel. The bank consisted of a narrow line of stone (**54**) covered by a subsoil-like deposit (**53**) forming the low earthwork running from east to west. The stones (**54**) forming the core of the bank measured up to 0.25m in size and either represented the footings of a demolished

field wall or possibly derived from field clearance. The overlying deposit (53) comprised light grey/brown, slightly silty, sandy gravel. It was up to 0.18m thick and 1.8m wide. Overlying the bank, the whole trench was sealed by up to 0.3m of mid to dark brown/grey sandy silt topsoil 25.

Trench 15

- 8.25 This was located to the south of Trench 14 and ran down the south-west facing slope towards the stream valley (Plate 23). The natural sand and gravel (28) lay at a height of c.127.48m aOD at the north-eastern end of the trench sloping down to c.124.51m aOD at the south-eastern end. It was directly overlain by c.0.3m of mid to dark brown/grey sandy silt topsoil (27).

Trench 16

- 8.26 Trench 16 ran from north-northwest to south-southeast parallel with the eastern boundary of the field, descending the southern slope of the raised ground (Plate 24). The natural sand and gravel (31) was encountered at a level of c.125.07m aOD at the northern end of the trench, sloping down to c.122.86m aOD at the southern end. Across most of the trench it was covered by up to 0.1m of light to mid yellowish brown sandy silt subsoil (30) with frequent gravel inclusions. This was in turn sealed by up to 0.3m of topsoil (29).

Area 4

- 8.27 Area 4 comprise the fairly level raised area in the north-eastern part of the PDA. Two trenches were excavated in this area.

Trench 17

- 8.28 This was orientated from north-west to south-east (Plate 25). Natural mid yellowish brown, sandy gravel (33) sloped gently from c.129.66m aOD at the north-west end of the trench down to c.128.63m aOD at the south-eastern end. It was sealed by mid brownish grey, sandy silt topsoil (32) with frequent gravel inclusions which was up to 0.3m thick.

Trench 18

- 8.29 Trench 18 ran from north-east to south-west down a slope in the northern part of Area 4 (Plate 26). The natural gravel (35) lay at a level of c.129.05m aOD at the north-east end of the trench sloping down to c.126.96m aOD at the south-west end and was overlain by c.0.3m of topsoil (34).

Stage 2 Evaluation

- 8.30 Following the completion of Stage 1 of the evaluation works it was decided in consultation with the Client and NCCCP that the area surrounding the pit **(4)** identified in Trench 5 was not sufficiently understood and that a second stage (Stage 2) of evaluation works would be required. Stage 2 evaluation works focused on the area to the north of Area 2. It was determined by NCCCP that four more trenches (19-22) and an expanded 5m x 5m area around pit **4** would be needed to establish the presence or absence of additional pits or other associated archaeological remains in the area. No further archaeological remains were uncovered to the north of Area 2. Natural features (root holes and tree-throws) were investigated for their archaeological potential but were found to be sterile and not recorded.

Trench 19

- 8.31 Trench 19 was positioned crossing a shallow depression on the hillslope to the north-east of Area 2 (Plate 27). Natural deposits were encountered at a height of c.128.08m aOD at the south-west end of the trench sloping down to a height of c.127.27m aOD at the north-east end (Plate 28). The natural comprised light brown/yellow sand with occasional pockets of gravel **(42)** and was disturbed by rooting across the trench. It was sealed by up to 0.3m of mid to dark brownish grey, sandy silt topsoil **(41)** with frequent gravel inclusions (Plate 28).

Trench 20

- 8.32 Trench 20 ran north from the eastern end of Trench 5 (Plate 29). The natural sand and gravel **(3)** was encountered throughout the trench at a level of c.129.16m aOD and was sealed by topsoil **1** (Plate 30).

Trenches 21 and 22

- 8.33 Trenches 21 and 22 (Plates 31-34; Fig. 4, Section 20) were stripped at right angles to each other forming an L-shape to the north of Area 2. At the western end of Trench 21 the natural sand and gravel **(44)** was observed at a height of c.130.1m aOD. Trench 21 sloped gently down to the east where it met the southern end of Trench 22 where the sand and gravel lay at a height of c.129.16m, then continued to slope gradually down to a height of c.128.85m aOD at the northern end of Trench 22. Deposit **44** comprised light brown/yellow, sand with occasional pockets of gravel across both trenches and was extensively disturbed by rooting. A feature **(40)** cutting the natural subsoil in Trench 21 proved to be a tree-throw and was not recorded further. Both trenches were sealed

by up to 0.3m of mid to dark brown/grey, sandy silt topsoil (43) with frequent gravel inclusions.

Area around pit 4

8.34 The expanded area stripped between Trenches 5 and 20 (Plate 35; Fig. 2 and plan on Fig. 4) was devoid of archaeological features other than pit 4.

9.0 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Hannah Clay

Introduction

9.1 One 13 litre bulk sample (100% of the excavated fill) was recovered from the fill (5) of the pit (4) found in Trench 5. Following processing, the flot and residue were examined for environmental remains. The work was carried out in July 2021 following Historic England standards and guidelines (Campbell *et al.* 2011). The sample was found to contain charcoal, burnt stone and fragments of flint.

Method

9.2 The bulk environmental samples were processed by NAA with 0.5mm retention meshes using the Siraf method of flotation (Williams 1973). All sampling and analysis were carried out to conform to Historic England guidelines and standards (Campbell *et al.* 2011). The charcoal was in too poor condition to identify the species.

Results

Table 1: Finds recovered from the sample

Context	Charcoal (g)	Flint (g)	Burnt Stone (g)	Magnetic Material (g)
5	7.5	1.8	626.2	0.2

9.3 The sample contained degraded fragments of charcoal, three fragments of natural flint, ten pieces of burnt stone and some magnetic material.

Conclusion

9.4 The charcoal fragments were in poor condition and unidentifiable to species. Further investigation is not recommended. While the burnt stone was the most abundant material recovered from this sample, it is intrinsically undiagnostic and therefore has

no further potential for examination. Burnt stones of the size found have been proposed as 'pot boilers' (heated stones for boiling water) and are generally assigned a prehistoric date but are intrinsically undatable in their own right. The flint was small, unworked and may have been a natural component of the soil matrix. The negligible quantities of undiagnostic magnetic material also have no potential for further work.

10.0 DISCUSSION

- 10.1 The evaluation at Park Road, Haltwhistle produced largely negative archaeological results, and supported the indication from the rapid desk-based assessment (NAA 2021) that the site has always been essentially rural in character.
- 10.2 Some remains of former agricultural use of the site were recorded. These included evidence from LiDAR coverage for former ridge and furrow cultivation on the higher ground at the eastern edge of the main PDA, to the east of the stream and nearest the village. However, this could not be seen at ground level during the evaluation and corresponding furrows were not recorded within the trenches excavated in this part of the site, so it is possible that this evidence has been lost since the LiDAR survey was undertaken. Although only recorded cartographically in the later 19th century, the former field-bank (**60**) recorded in Trench 14 formed a division between differently aligned fields of ridge and furrow and therefore was presumably of a similar date, either medieval or early post-medieval.
- 10.3 The only potentially early archaeological feature which was identified during the evaluation was the pit (**4**) found in Trench 5. Despite additional trenching (Stage 2) in its vicinity, no further pits were identified and it appears to have been an isolated feature. No diagnostic finds were recovered from the pit despite full excavation and sampling. Although the current example remains undated, small pits of this size and form are commonly found across Britain and represent one of the commonest forms of evidence for Neolithic and Early Bronze Age activity (Anderson-Whymark and Thomas 2012, ix), Similar pit-digging has also been recorded during the Mesolithic period (e.g. Blinkhorn 2012) and continuing into the later Bronze Age (Speed 2021, 127). Such features are widely distributed across the landscape of most parts of Britain (*ibid*, 45), and can occur singly, in distinctive pairs or small groups. The pits often contain a deposit of burnt material including charcoal and food remains such as cereal grains and hazelnut shells, together with burnt or fire-shattered stone (Tavener 1996, 183) and, more rarely, artefacts such as potsherds and struck lithics. The form and contents (charcoal and burnt stones) of the pit (**4**) at Park Road therefore conforms well to this general type of

prehistoric feature. A recent study of such features in North Yorkshire, where a sample of 'undated' small pits without diagnostic artefacts were radiocarbon dated, indicated that a large proportion (c.90%) were Mesolithic to Bronze Age in date (Speed 2021, 107).

- 10.4 Following the largely negative results of the evaluation across the Park Road sites, and the apparent absence of further archaeological features in the vicinity of the pit (4), it was agreed with NCCCT that no further archaeological mitigation of the site was required in advance of development. In the absence of any pre-modern artefacts, and given the limited potential of the palaeoenvironmental remains, no further analysis of the site archive is required.

11.0 ARCHIVE DEPOSITION

- 11.1 The project has been allocated the OASIS reference: northern1-429932.
- 11.2 The physical archive from the archaeological investigation is to be deposited with the Great North Museum, Newcastle upon Tyne and the digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS).

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APPENDIX A
CONTEXT CATALOGUE

Context	Trench no.	Group no.	Equal to	Interpretative description
1	5, 20	56		Topsoil
2	5, 20			Subsoil
3	5, 20	57		Natural geology
4	5			Cut of pit
5	5			Fill of pit 4
6	6	56		Topsoil
7	6	57		Natural geology
8	7	56		Topsoil
9	7	57		Natural geology
10	8	56		Topsoil
11	8	57		Natural geology
12	9	56		Topsoil
13	9	57		Natural geology
14	10	56		Topsoil
15	10			Subsoil
16	10	57		Natural geology
17	11	56		Topsoil
18	11	57		Natural geology
19	12	56		Topsoil
20	12			Subsoil
21	12	57		Natural geology
22	13	56		Topsoil
23	13			Subsoil
24	13	57		Natural geology
25	14	58		Topsoil
26	14	59	28, 31	Natural geology
27	15	58		Topsoil
28	15	59	26, 31	Natural geology
29	16	58		Topsoil
30	16			Subsoil
31	16	59	26, 28	Natural geology
32	17	58		Topsoil
33	17	59	35	Natural geology
34	18	58		Topsoil
35	18	59	33	Natural geology
36	3	55		Topsoil
37	3		39	Natural geology
38	4	55		Topsoil
39	4		37	Natural geology
40	21			Natural feature (tree bole)
41	19	56		Topsoil
42	19	57		Natural geology
43	21, 22	56		Topsoil
44	21, 22	57		Natural geology
45	2	55		Topsoil
46	2			Subsoil
47	2			Alluvial deposit
48	1	55		Topsoil

Context	Trench no.	Group no.	Equal to	Interpretative description
49	1			Subsoil
50	1			Alluvial deposit
51	1			Alluvial deposit
52	1			Alluvial deposit
53	14	60		Deposit forming bank
54	14	60		Stone within bank 53
55	1, 2, 3, 4			Group number for topsoil in area 1
56	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 22			Group number for topsoil in area 2
57	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 22			Group number for natural geology in area 2
58	14, 15, 16, 17, 18			Group number for topsoil in areas 3 and 4
59	14, 15, 16, 17, 18			Group number for natural geology in areas 3 and 4
60	14			Group number for bank
61	1			Natural geology
62	2			Natural geology



Plate 1: Overview of Trench 1, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 2: Trench 1, north-east facing section, scale 0.5m



Plate 3: Overview of Trench 2, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 4: Trench 2, south-east facing section, scales 0.5m and 1m



Plate 5: Overview of Trench 3, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 6: Overview of Trench 4, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 7: Trench 4, south-west facing section, scale 1m



Plate 8: Overview of Trench 5, looking east, scale 1m



Plate 9: Pit 4, south facing section, scale 0.5m



Plate 10: Overview of Trench 6, looking north-west, scale 1m



Plate 11: Overview of Trench 7, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 12: Trench 7, south-west facing section, scale 1m



Plate 13: Overview of Trench 8, looking north, scale 1m



Plate 14: Overview of Trench 9, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 15: Overview of Trench **10**, looking west, scale 1m



Plate 16: Trench **10**, south facing section, scale 1m



Plate 17: Overview of Trench **11**, looking north, scale 1m



Plate 18: Overview of Trench **12**, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 19: Overview of Trench 13, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 20: Overview of Trench 13, looking north-west, scale 1m



*Plate 21: Overview of Trench **14**, looking south, scale 1m*



*Plate 22: Bank **60**, west facing section, scale 1m*



Plate 23: Overview of Trench 15, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 24: Overview of Trench 16, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 25: Overview of Trench 17, looking south-east, scale 1m



Plate 26: Overview of Trench 18, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 27: Overview of Trench 19, looking south-west, scale 1m



Plate 28: Trench 17, oblique view of south-east facing section, scale 1m



Plate 29: Overview of Trench 20, looking north, scale 1m



Plate 30: Trench 20, west facing section, scale 1m



Plate 31: Overview of Trench **21**, looking west, scale 1m



Plate 32: Trench **21**, south facing section, scale 1m



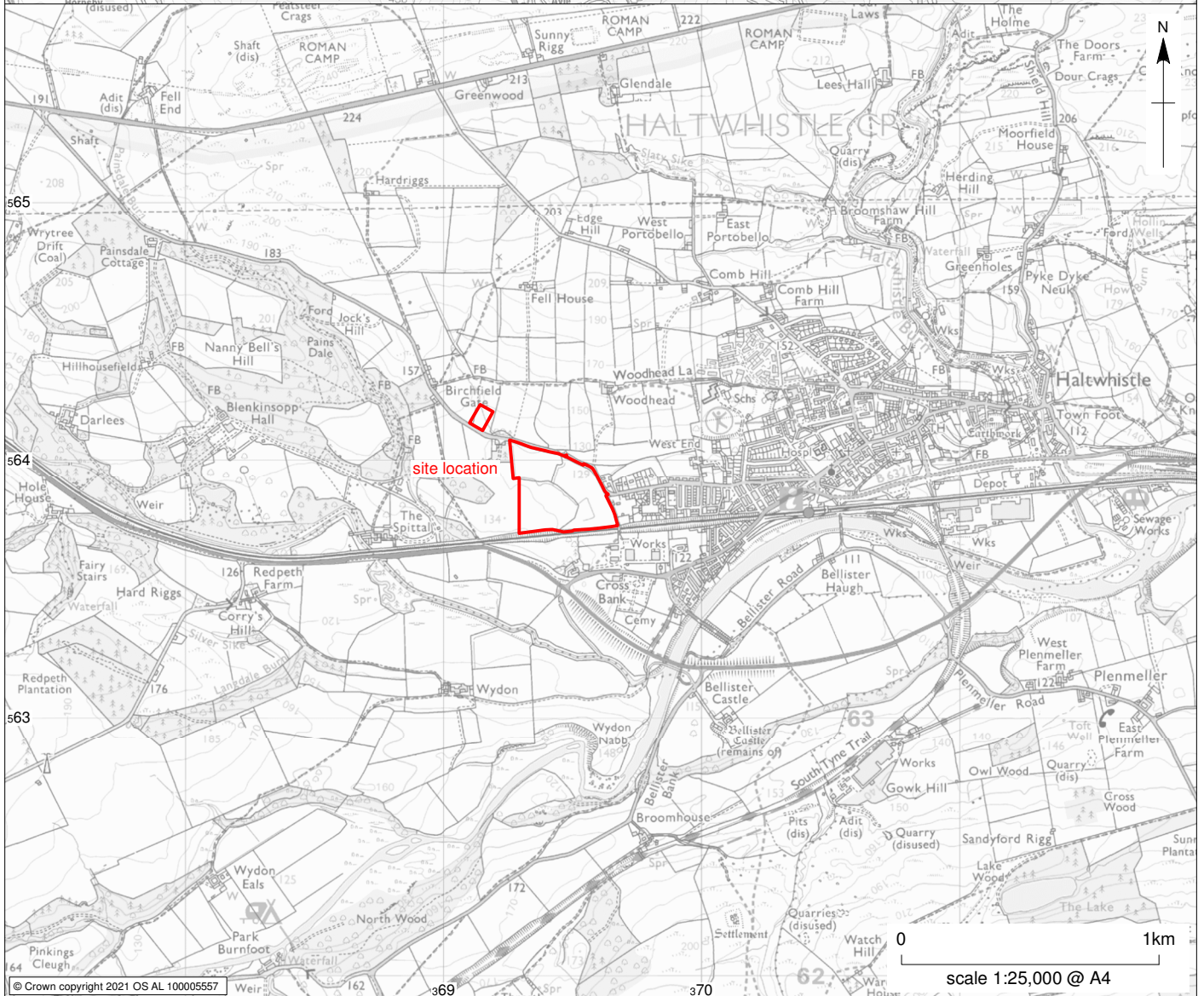
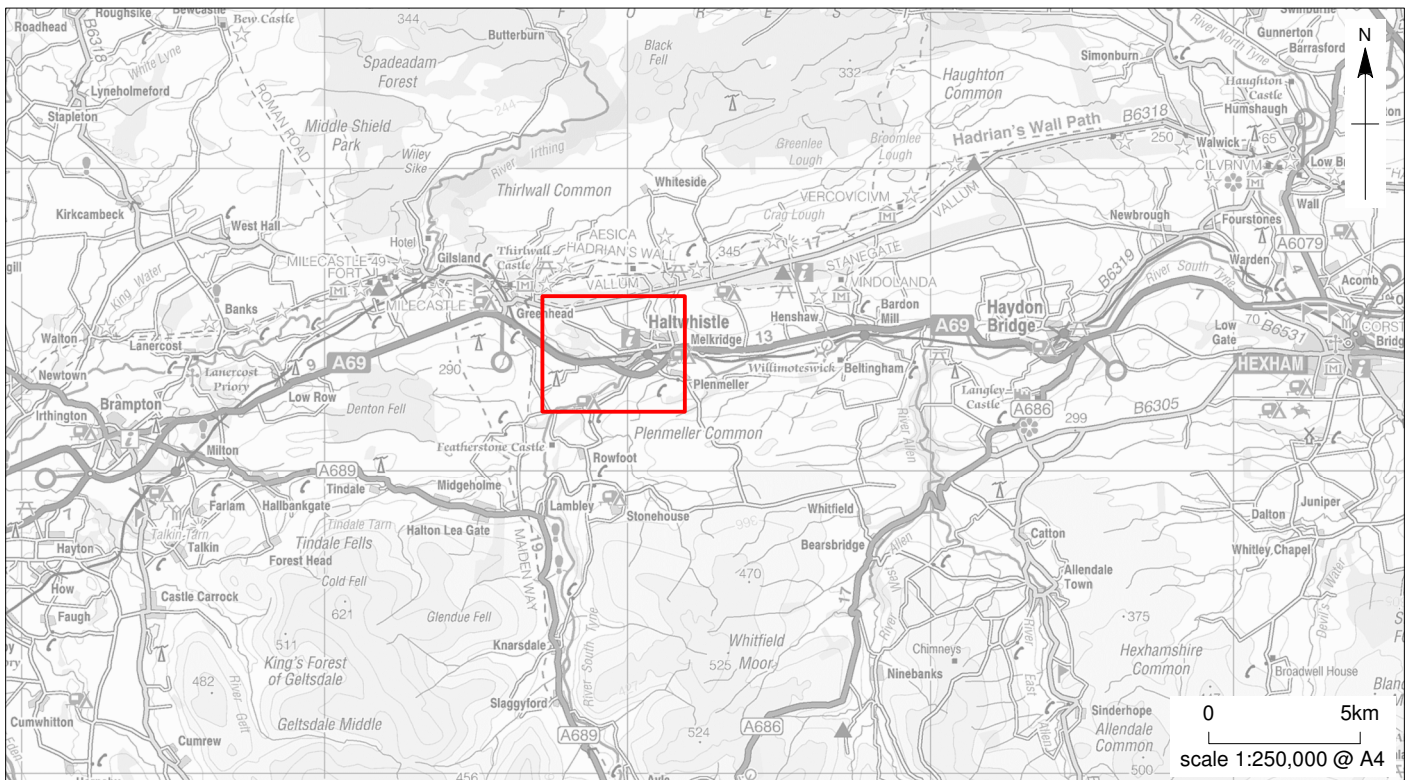
Plate 33: Overview of Trench 22, looking north, scale 1m

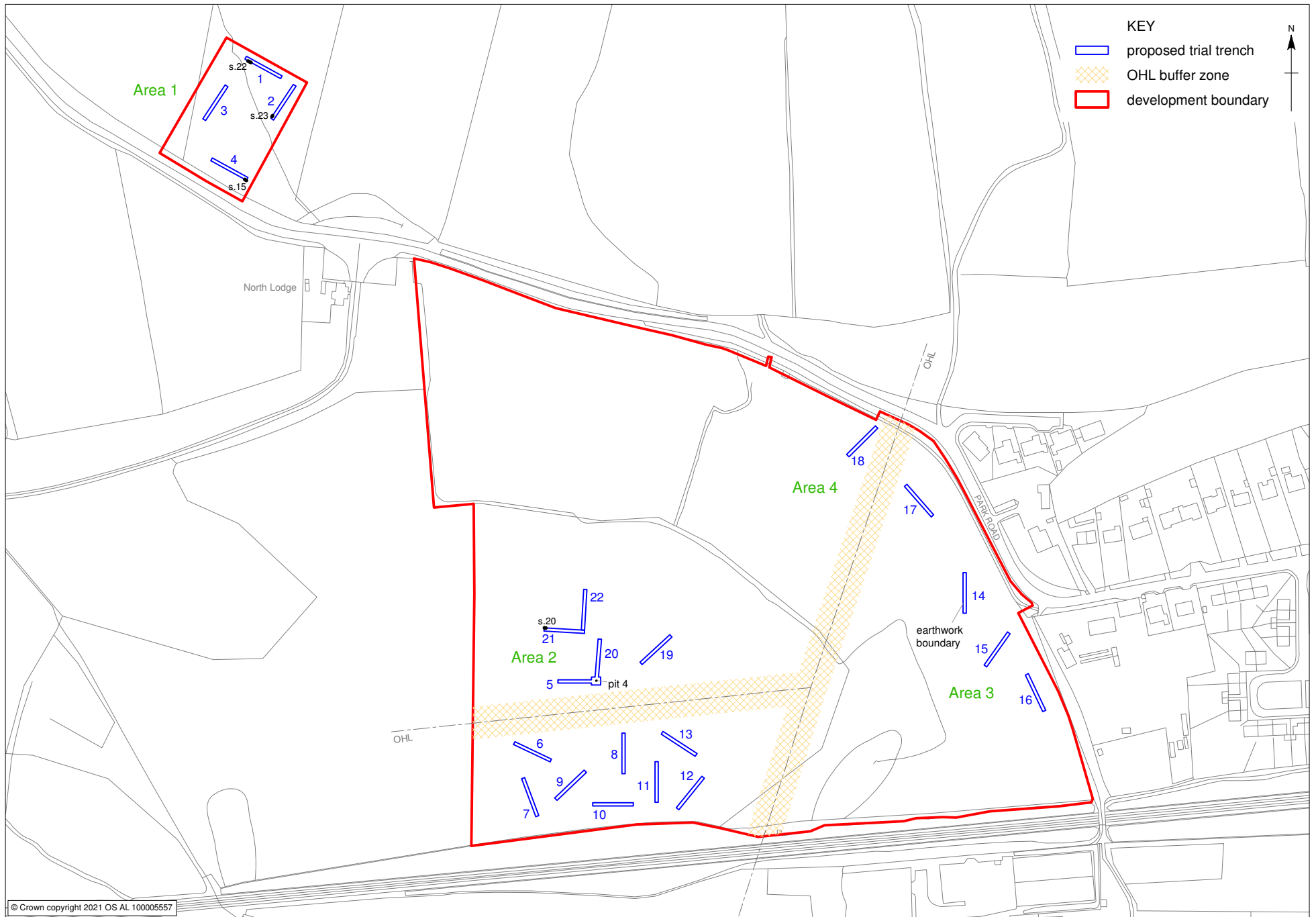


Plate 34: Trench 22, west facing section, scale 1m



Plate 35: Overview of area excavation around pit 4, looking west, scale 1m





Park Road, Haltwhistle: proposed trial trench locations

Figure 2

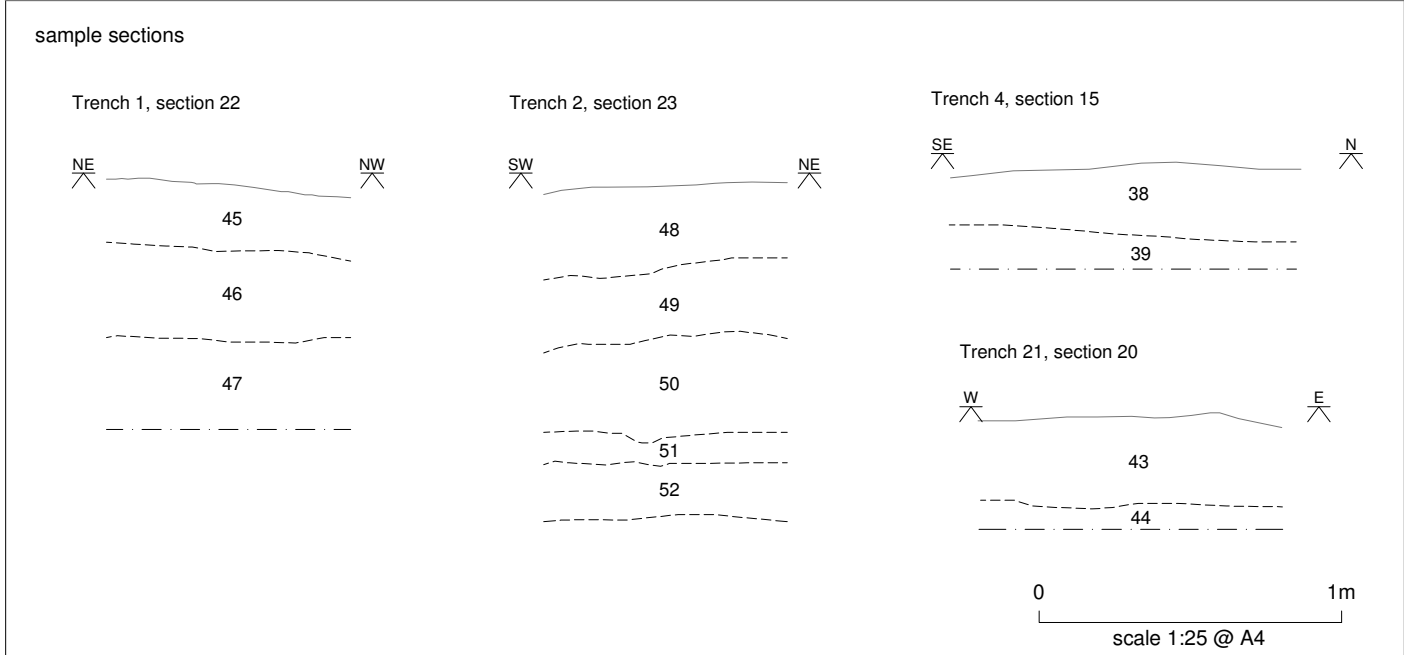
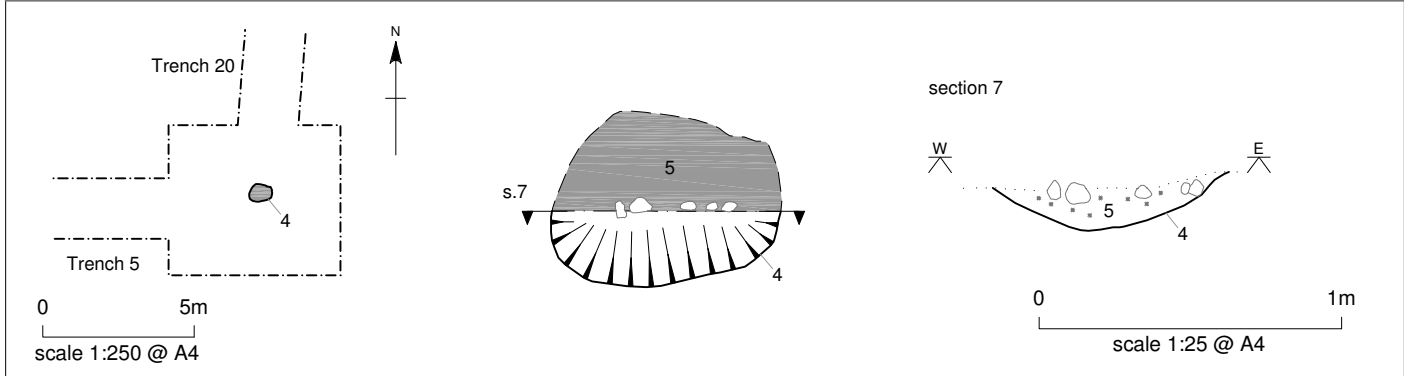
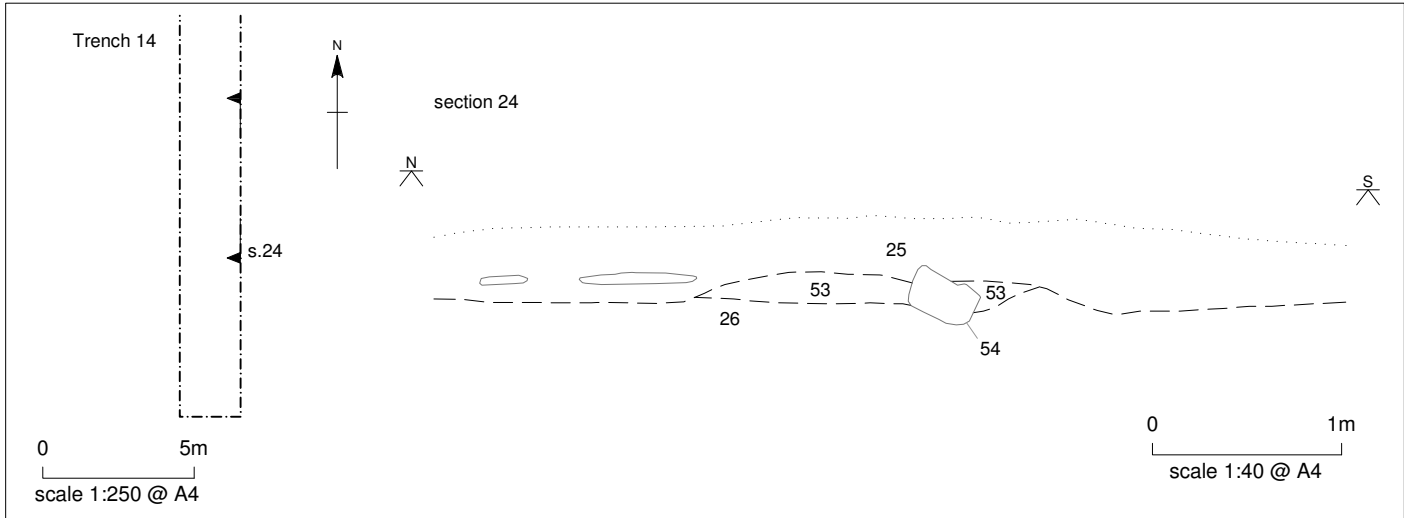


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Park Road, Haltwhistle: LiDAR and 1861 six-inch OS map showing earthwork boundary crossing trench 14

Figure 3



Matrix

Area 1				Area 2										Area 3				Area 4				
Tr.1	Tr.2	Tr.3	Tr.4	Tr.5	Tr.6	Tr.7	Tr.8	Tr.9	Tr.10	Tr.11	Tr.12	Tr.13	Tr.19	Tr.21	Tr.22	Tr.14	Tr.15	Tr.16	Tr.17	Tr.18		
Group 55	48	45	36	38	Group 56	1	6	8	10	12	14	17	19	22	41	43	Group 58	25	27	29	32	34
	49	46				2				15		20	23		40			30				
	50	47	37 = 39			5												53				
	51					4												54				
	52				Group 57	3	7	9	11	13	16	18	21	24	42	44	Group 59	26 = 28 = 31			33 = 35	