



TEST PIT SUMMARY

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CORBRIDGE ROAD BARRIER REPLACEMENT

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CORBRIDGE ROAD BARRIER REPLACEMENT

TEST PIT SUMMARY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report represents a brief summary of the results of test-pitting associated with the replacement of road barriers on the A69 at Corbridge, Northumberland (Figure 1; NY 986 653). The section of barrier will be installed along the southern side of the westbound slip-road leading from the A69 onto the B8529 Stagshaw Road (Figure 2).
- 1.2 The A69 to the north of Corbridge passes through the site of the Roman town of *Corstopitum* and its immediate surroundings, which are a Scheduled Monument (Historic England list no. 1006611; old ref. ND 23) and part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall) World Heritage Site. The slip road was believed to run within a cutting, below the original land surface, but had then been built-up along either side to a height of several metres. It was therefore agreed with Historic England (M Collins, pers. comm.) that three pits would be excavated along the intended line of the road barrier in order to establish the nature of the ground within which the barrier would be installed, and evaluate the potential for installation works to impact on buried archaeological remains.
- 1.3 The work was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) on behalf of Road Link (A69) Ltd in accordance with Scheduled Monument Consent (ref. S00142627) and an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (NAA 2016).

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 Each test pit was excavated using a small 'mini-digger' 360° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, operating at all times under the supervision of an archaeologist. Excavation continued until archaeological deposits / features or natural horizons were encountered.
- 2.2 A photographic record of the test-pitting was maintained. Un-stratified artefacts were identified but not retained.

3.0 RESULTS

Test Pit A

- 3.1 This pit was located next to a lamp post on the edge of the Stagshaw Road roundabout, close to the intended southern end of the road barrier. It measured 1.5m by 0.9m and was excavated to a depth of 0.7m below modern ground level (BGL).
- 3.2 Natural dark grey, stiff boulder clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m (Plate 1), overlying which was 0.3m of mixed, light brown sandy clay with frequent stoney lenses and stone fragments. This was sealed by 0.2m of topsoil.

Test Pit B

- 3.3 This pit was excavated approximately mid-way between two road signs (the Corbridge/Jedburgh junction sign and a tourist information sign) on the southern side of the slip road, approximately 65m from Test Pit A. Measuring some 1.2m by 0.9m, the pit was excavated to a depth of 0.9m BGL.
- 3.4 As with Pit A, the natural boulder clay was encountered at a depth of 0.5m BGL, and there was a subsoil of sandy clay (Plate 2). This layer produced three sherds of pottery of medieval and later date, and was sealed by 0.15m of topsoil.

Test Pit C

- 3.5 Test Pit C was located immediately to the north-east of the junction sign, some 30m to the north-east of Test Pit B. The pit was of the same general dimensions as Test Pit B, but was cut back into the embankment to avoid a power cable supplying the road sign. Consequently, on the up-slope side, the pit had a maximum depth of 1.3m.
- 3.6 Some 0.7m BGL there was a dark grey heavily compacted clay, overlain by 0.2m of dark grey brown clay with frequent stones and then 0.35m of mixed yellow-brown sand and clay (Plate 3). All of these deposits were disturbed by electric cables; the western side of the pit intersected a coarse aggregate filter drain, which apparently extended out to the kerb. Again there was 0.15m of topsoil.

4.0 DISCUSSION

- 4.1 There were no archaeological features or deposits in any of the three pits. The deepest deposit was a stiff dark grey clay, encountered at a depth of around 0.5m and extending to at least 0.9m BGL. This was likely to be the natural boulder clay described by British Geological Survey (online) as *glaciolacustrine clay*.... derived from *moraines of till with outwash sand and gravel deposits from seasonal and post glacial meltwaters*.
- 4.2 Overlying the boulder clay was a mixed yellow-brown sandy clay- in one pit producing sherds of medieval and later pottery- that probably represented the erosion products from the adjacent embankment.
- 4.3 During the construction of the slip-road in the 1970s, the original topsoil would have been removed, and it appears likely that at the same time the ground level was reduced. Evidence of this can be seen on the street level views on Google Earth (online- not reproduced here), where the field on the west of the roundabout is clearly at a higher level than the road.
- 4.4 It is therefore considered that the installation of road barriers using piling to a depth of 1m would not impact on archaeological features or deposits, and therefore further archaeological mitigation would not be required.

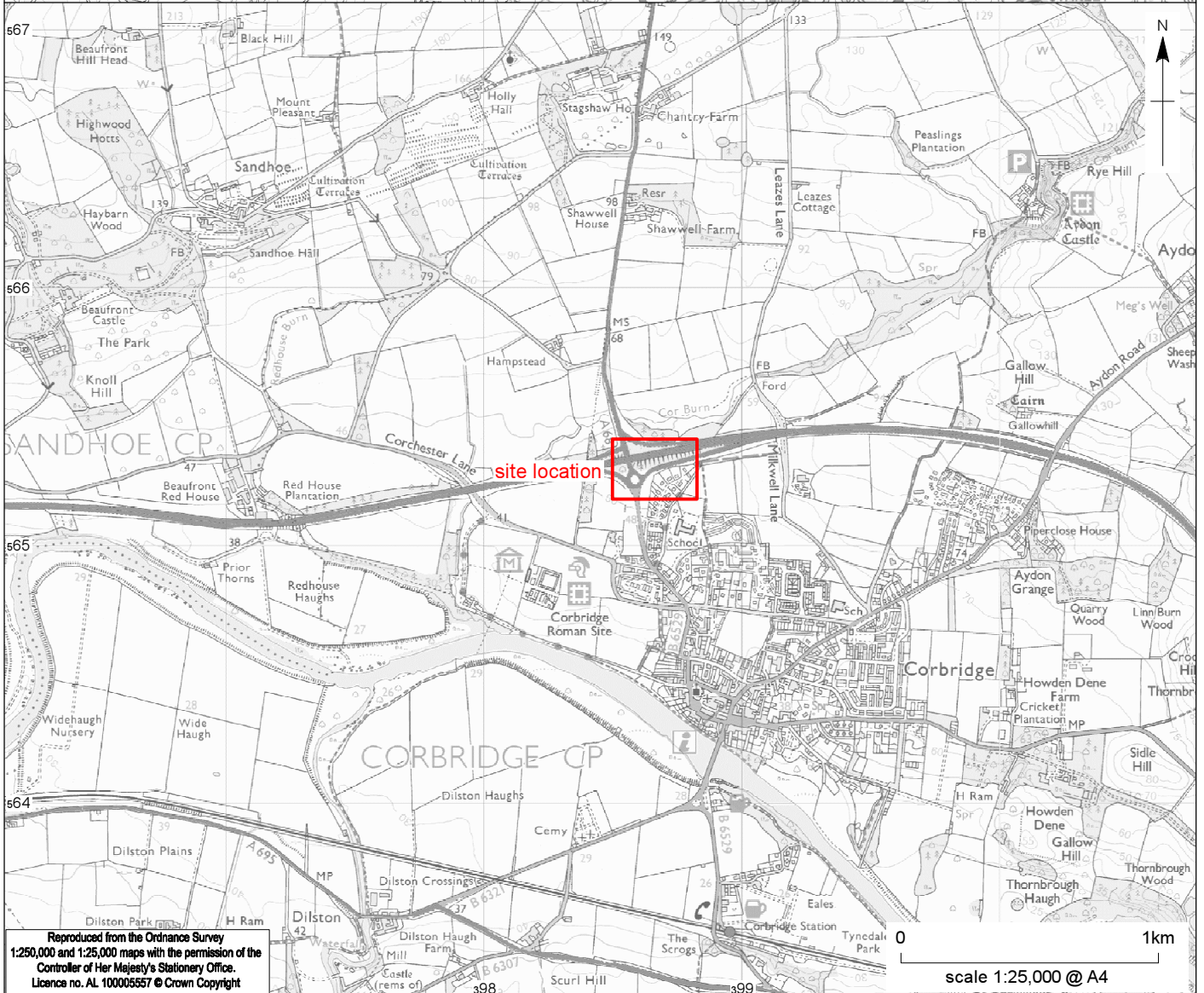
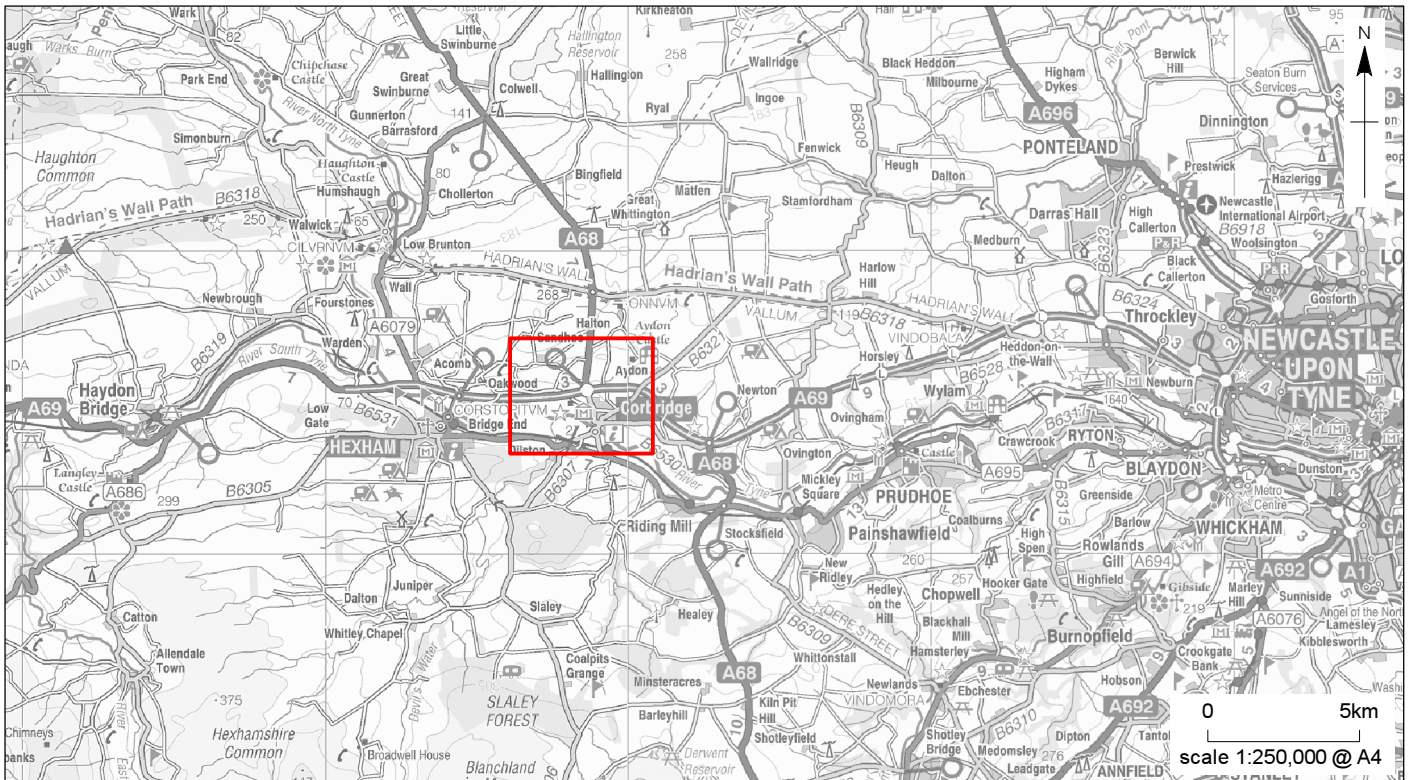
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British Geological Survey (online) *Map Viewer*

<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>

Google Earth (online) <https://earth.google.co.uk>

Northern Archaeological Associates (2016) *A69 Barrier Replacement, Corbridge, Northumberland: Written Scheme of Investigation*. NAA report **16/80**

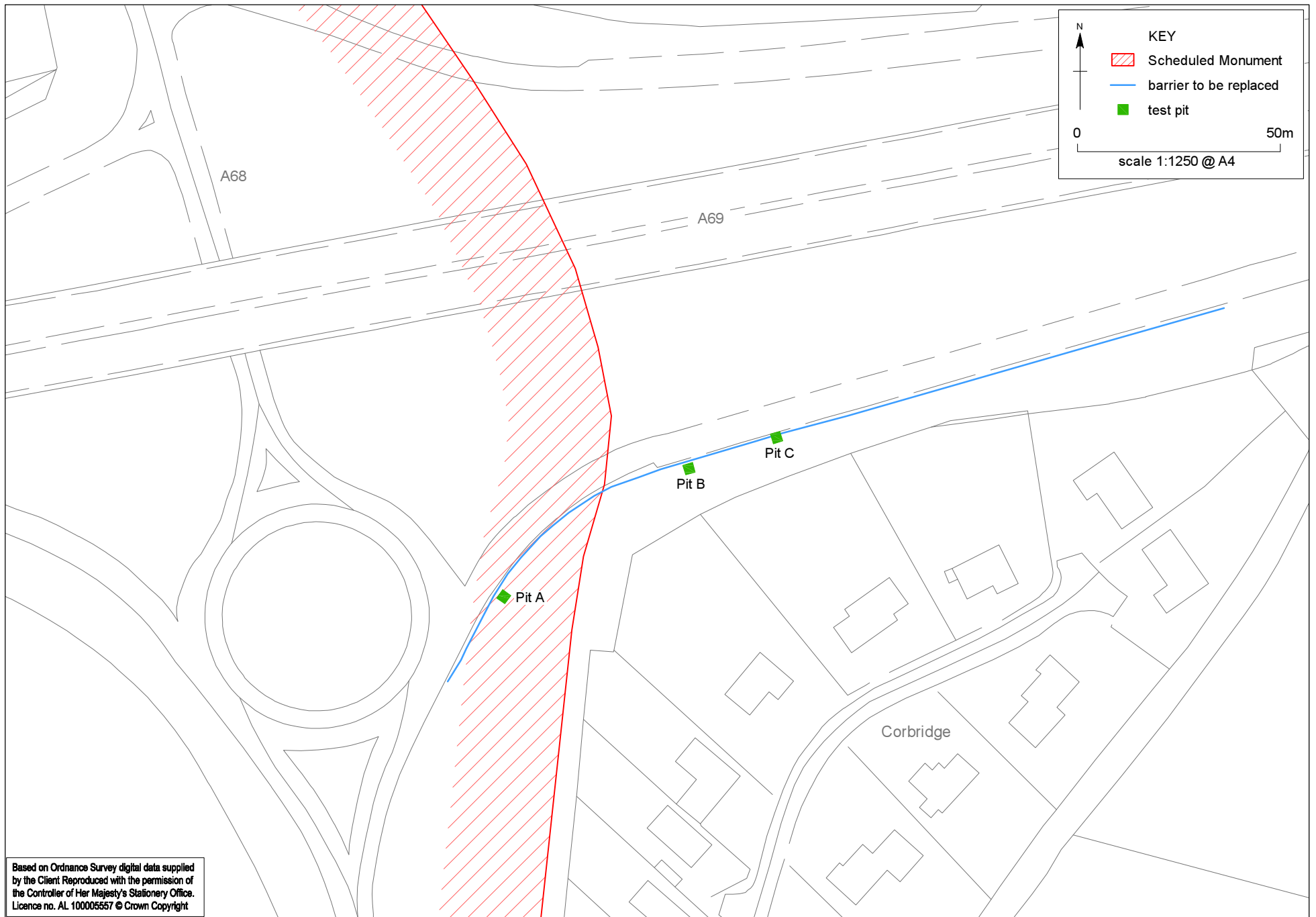


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A69 Road Barriers, Corbridge: site location

Figure 1



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A69 Road Barriers, Corbridge: test pit locations

Figure 2



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Plate 1: Test pit A



Plate 2: Test pit B



Plate 3: Test pit C

A69 Road Barriers, Corbridge