

**NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD**  
**LAND EAST OF ROSE COTTAGE, WARK-ON-TWEED, NORTHUMBERLAND**  
**Negative Watching Brief Report**

**Site name:** Wark-on-Tweed

**Grid reference:** NT 82569 38667

**Parish:** Carham

**County:** Northumberland

**Administrative authority:** Northumberland **Client:** DB Joiners and Builders

**Planning application reference:** 15/00202/FUL

**Site supervisor:** Steven Collison

**Project manager:** Matthew Town

**Fieldwork Date(s):** 24–25 April 2018

**NAA project number:** 1146

**Site code:** WOT18

**NAA report number:** 18/39

**Report date:** 26th April 2018

### **Reasons for watching brief**

This report concerns a residential development at land east of Rose Cottage, Wark-on-Tweed, Northumberland (Fig. 1). Prior site investigation has identified surviving archaeological deposits within the development boundary (Wardle and Nolan 1997; NAA 2015). As such, a planning condition outlining a program of archaeological monitoring was included by Northumberland County Council. This watching brief was intended to address the planning condition and was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted to, and approved by, Northumberland County Council (NAA 2018).

During the prior site investigation, archaeological deposits of potentially medieval date were observed and recorded that related to the nearby Wark Castle (NAA 2015). Post-medieval deposits and potential features were also encountered. A full archaeological background and results of the previous archaeological works are available within the evaluation report (*ibid.*).

### **Results**

Excavations for the foundation trench for the easternmost plot only (i.e. Plot 1) were undertaken between the 24th and 25th of April 2018. The excavations were carried out using a 5.5t back-acting mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless trenching bucket, which was under the supervision of the attending archaeologist at all times. Overall, the monitored trench was 16.8m east to west and 12.3m north to south (Fig. 2). The width of the foundation trenches was

generally 0.8m wide, though this did increase up to 1.1 m wide in places to allow for loose ground. The ground slopes gently downward on the site from the southeast to the northwest. To allow for this a series of steps within the trench footings were left in order to limit the depth of the trench and minimise the impact upon the deposits below. The northern end of the trench was excavated to a depth of 0.6m below ground level (bgl). To the south, the excavated depth increased to 0.8m bgl in places.

Context number allocation started at 56 to prevent confusion when attempting to integrate results from the earlier phases of site investigation.

The earliest deposit encountered in this phase of the monitoring was exposed in the north-eastern part of the trench (Fig. 2). Deposit **60** was a mid reddish brown silty sand and extended below the level of excavation. Undiagnostic clay pipe stems and coal fragments were observed in the exposed part of this deposit. In the northern part of the trench, deposit 60 was directly overlain by a dark buried soil horizon (**58**). This soil horizon was a dark brown sandy silt and was up to 0.65m in depth. In the north-west of the trench, a widespread stony (**62**) surface was observed sealed by the soil horizon. It comprised of river worn pebbles in a loose sandy matrix, and lay at 0.6m bgl. The surface was not impacted upon, as the required trench depth had been achieved in this part of the trench.

In the southern and eastern part of the trench, a widespread sandy layer (**59**) with large cobble, stone and gravel inclusions was recorded overlying **60** (Fig. 3). Upon exposing the upper part of this layer, mechanical excavation was stopped, and the deposit was investigated by hand. The deposit had no structural form, was widespread across a large part of the trench, and produced post-medieval artefacts (not retained). Mechanical excavation resumed up to 0.8m below ground level; part of this deposit survived in the base of the trench. Loose gravel deposit **61** overlay **59** in the far south-eastern corner of the trench. This was similar in nature to **59** but with no large cobble inclusions. Topsoil (**57**) of varying thickness (0.15m-0.3m) was recorded across the entirety of the trench. Deposit **56** represents the extant ground surface across the monitored area and consists of loose stone and construction debris compressed into the topsoil beneath; this deposit varied in depth between 0.05m and 0.1m.

## **Discussion**

The monitored area was investigated by Trenches 7a and 12a from the 2016 trial trenching program. The results above concur with that report. The reddish brown sand **60** is the same as deposit **50** from Trench 12a. Although the clay pipe stems that were observed within it cast

doubt onto the interpretation of this deposit as natural, it may have been that the stems were simply intrusive, as they were also observed in the overlying rubble deposit 59. Rubble deposit 59 was recorded across the southern part of the trench. Although this deposit was impacted upon substantially, it is non-structural in nature and post-medieval in origin. It may relate to the use of the area for the dumping of waste from surrounding properties. In the south of the trench, surface 62 was partially exposed 0.6m bgl (this surface was also encountered in Trench 12a as surface 52). Beyond recording its extent, the monitoring described here cannot add to the interpretation of this deposit. The surface was not directly disturbed by the excavations for the foundations.

No structural remains were observed or disturbed during the excavations, and no evidence of any deposits pre-dating the post-medieval period was observed. The shallow nature of the foundations to the north prevented excessive disturbance of the deposits below. In the south, where the excavations were slightly deeper, the affected post-medieval deposits were recorded in full. In these regards, the mitigation strategy can be seen as being effective in this case.

**Documentation:** 1 trench sheet, 7 context sheets, 3 drawing sheets, 30 digital photographs.

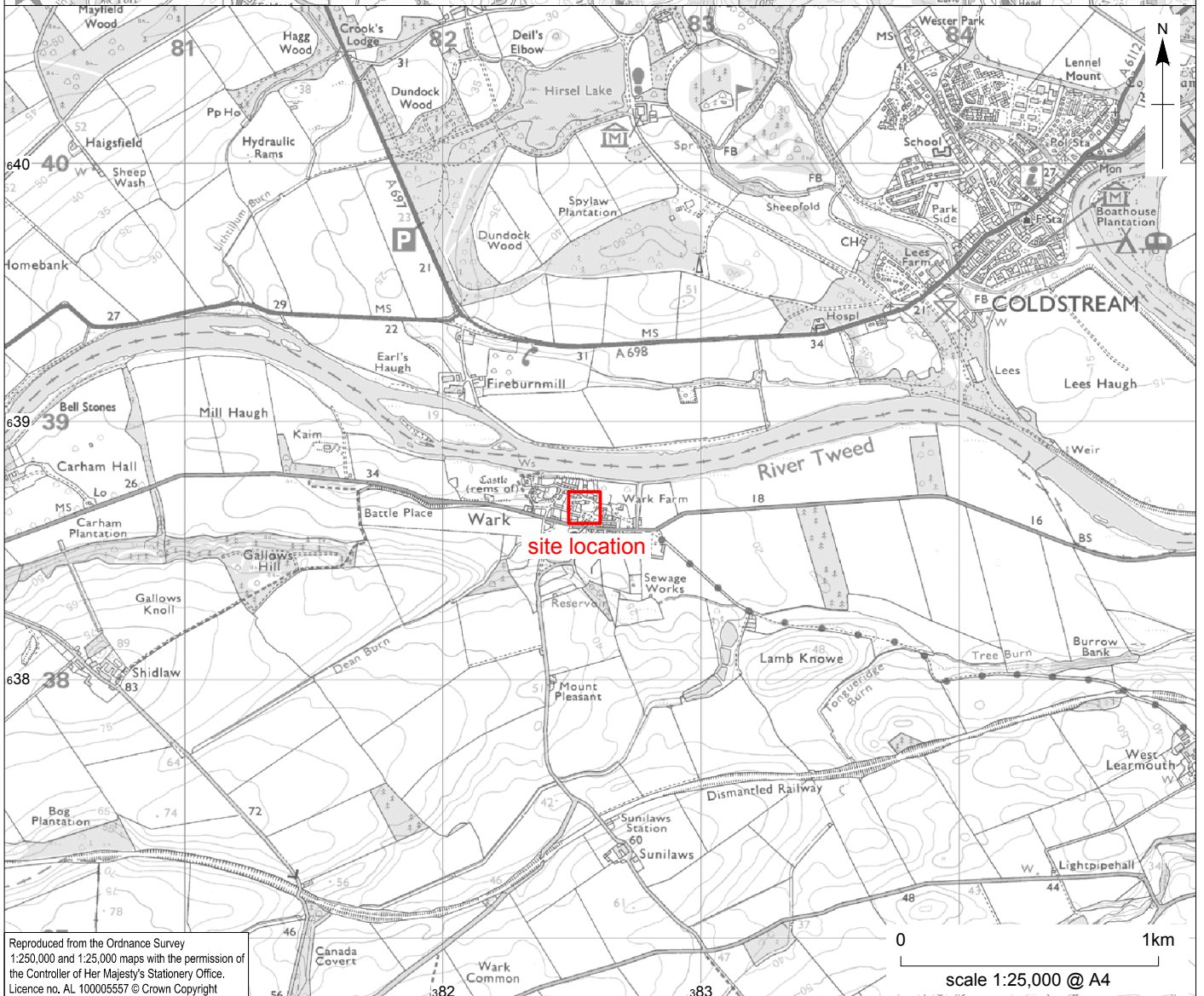
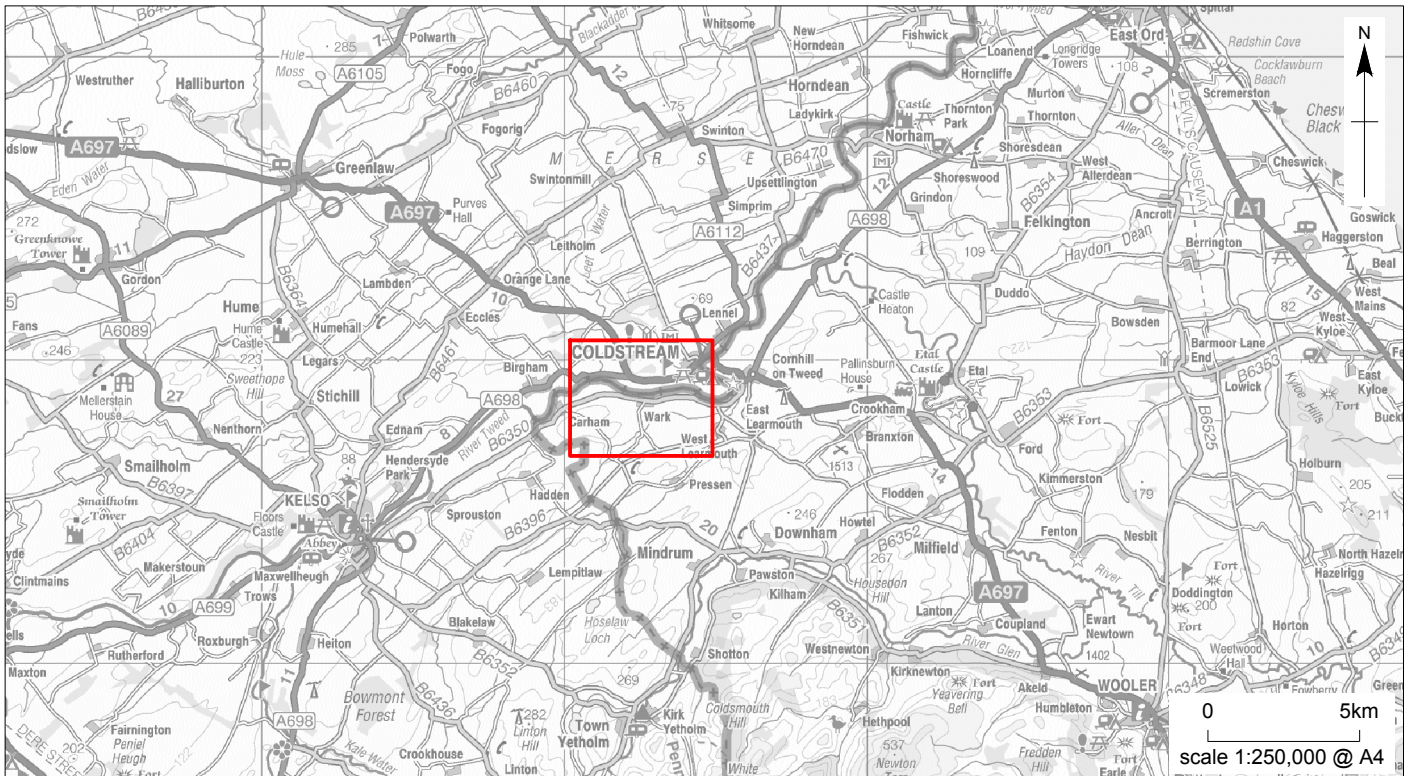
**Archive deposition:** Internal at NAA

## References

Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) (2016) Land at Wark-on-Tweed. Archaeological Evaluation. Unpublished NAA Report No. 16/84.

Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) (2018) Land East of Rose Cottage, Wark-on-Tweed, Archaeological Monitoring, Written Scheme of Investigation. Unpublished NAA Report No. 18/27.

Wardle, S. and Nolan, J. (1997) *Wark Castle Archaeological Recordings*. Unpublished Newcastle City Archaeology Unit/Northern Counties Archaeological Services report. [Online] Available at: <http://www.pastperfect.org.uk/sites/wark/archive/wardlenolan.html#> (accessed on 18/07/2016)

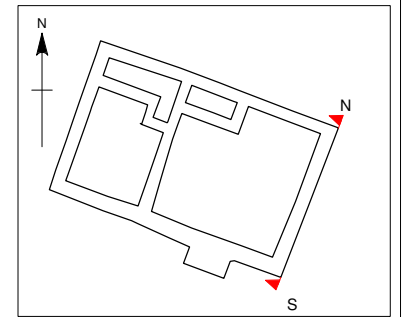
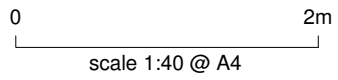
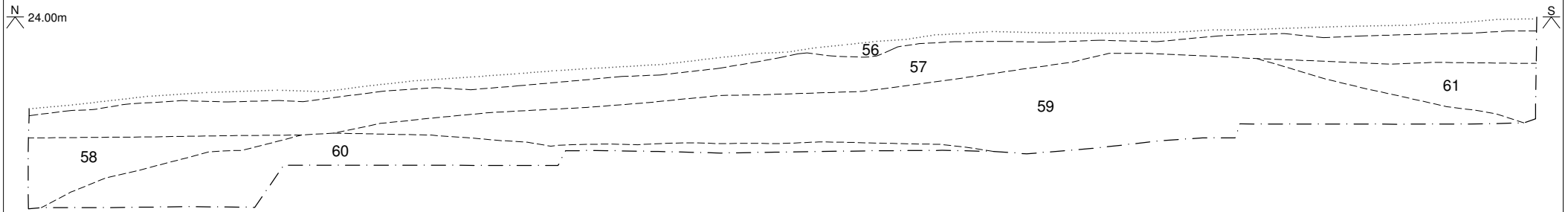


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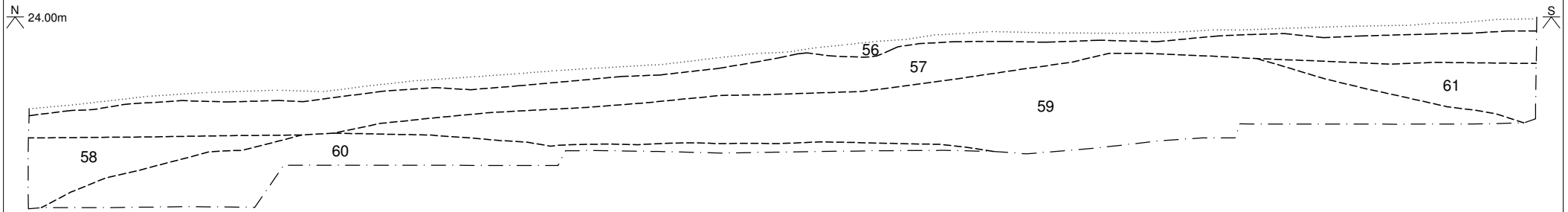
Wark-on-Tweed: site location

Figure 1

West facing section



West facing section



0 2m  
scale 1:40 @ A4

