

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD
A69 WEST DENTON BARRIERS, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
Negative Watching Brief Report

Site name: A69 West Denton Barriers **Grid reference:** NGR - NZ 2188 6678
Borough: Newcastle upon Tyne **District:** Tyne and Wear
Administrative authority: Newcastle City Council **Development:** Road barrier replacement
Client: Road link (A69) limited **Contractor:** Protek Fencing Ltd
Site supervisor: Eddie Dougherty **Project manager:** Oliver Cooper
Fieldwork Date(s): 07-05-2019 to 08-05-2019
NAA project number: 1494 **Site code:** WDB19
NAA report number: 19-65 **Report date:** 12 June 2019

Reasons for watching brief

Archaeological monitoring was carried out during essential upgrading of the central reservation crash barriers at West Denton, Newcastle up on Tyne (Fig. 1). The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation agreed with Historic England (NAA 2019).

The work was within the *Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall)* World Heritage Site (Historic England Heritage List for England UID 1000098) and involved excavation of trial holes in advance of barrier replacement. During discussions with Historic England, it was agreed that, due to the degree of groundworks for the construction of the A69 within a cutting, the only trial holes with any potential for encountering archaeological deposits were within the anticipated location of the ditch fronting Hadrian's Wall (Fig. 2).

Results

This work was undertaken during the night to minimize any disruption to the traffic flow along the A69. The agreed programme of works comprised the machine excavation of trial pits along the line of the central reservation, to a predetermined depth or the first archaeological deposits. These trenches were placed at locations close to or above known services.



Plate 1. East-facing view across west-bound A69 towards central barriers; a section of Hadrian's Wall has been consolidated on the south side of the road

During the archaeological monitoring six trial holes were examined over two nights (although one hole hit concrete and was abandoned). These were situated on both sides of the existing safety barrier fencing, which ran continuously along the central reservation. Four trial pits were located next to the east-bound carriageway, with the two next to west-bound. All the trenches were machine-excavated by small mini digger, fitted with a toothless bucket.

Natural horizons were not reached in any of the trial holes, and only modern deposits were observed. These included yellow dolomite, compacted mid-to-dark brown clays and grey sub-base for the road. Plate 2 illustrates a typical trial hole, and a summary of the deposits encountered in each trial hole is provided in Table 1. Given the absence of archaeological features, and the similarity between deposits encountered, the precise locations of each hole is not illustrated here.



Plate 2. Typical trial hole profile showing crushed dolomite layer overlain by redeposited clay and grey road sub-base

Table 1 Trial hole summary

Trial hole	Context	Dimensions	Depth of Deposit	Deposit description
5	50	0.9m x 0.65m	0.6m	Compacted grey sub-base
6	60	Abandoned	Abandoned	Modern grey concrete
7	70	1.1m x 0.65m	0.25m	Compacted grey sub-base
7	71	1.1m x 0.65m	0.4m	Compacted dark brown clay, made ground
8	80	0.9m x 0.65m	0.15m	Compacted grey sub-base
8	81	0.9m x 0.65m	0.35m	Compacted dark brown clay, made ground
8	82	0.9m x 0.65m	0.10m	Compacted yellow dolomite
9	90	1.4m x 0.7m	0.2m	Compacted grey sub-base
9	91	1.4m x 0.7m	0.5m	Compacted dark brown clay, made ground
9	92	1.4m x 0.7m	0.1m	Compacted yellow dolomite
10	100	1.5m x 0.30m	0.2m	Compacted grey sub-base
10	101	1.5m x 0.30m	0.15m	Compacted brown clay
10	102	1.5m x 0.30m	0.60m	Compacted dark brown clay, made ground

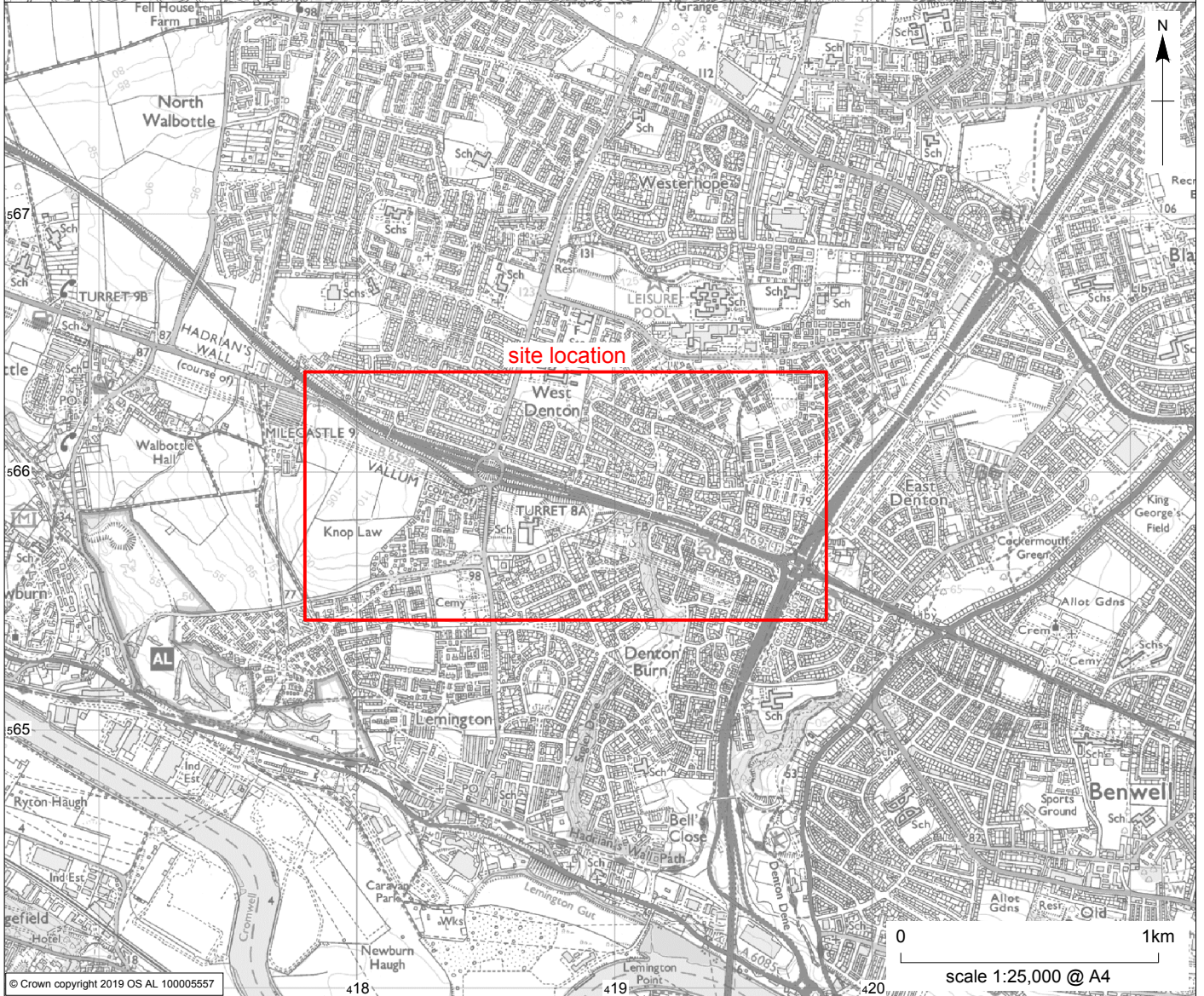
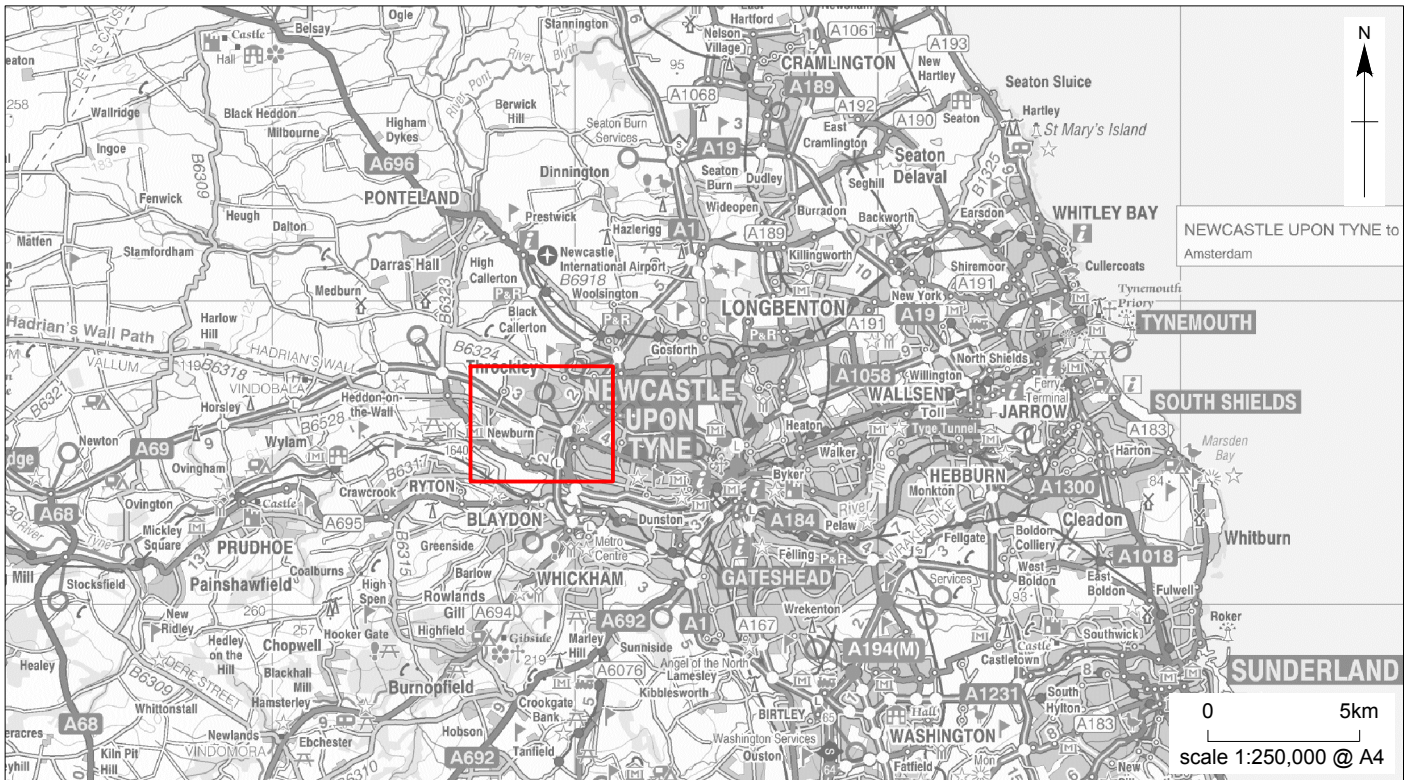
Discussion

The trial holes provided sufficient data for the engineers to determine that the ground conditions were suitable for the barrier posts to be driven rather than excavated and concreted. Thus there was no further opportunity for archaeological investigation.

No archaeological deposits, features or artefacts were exposed within the trial holes, and it is likely that there is at least 1m of made ground across the entire width of the road corridor in this area, so only excavations exceeding this depth will be have any potential to encounter archaeological deposits or features.

Reference

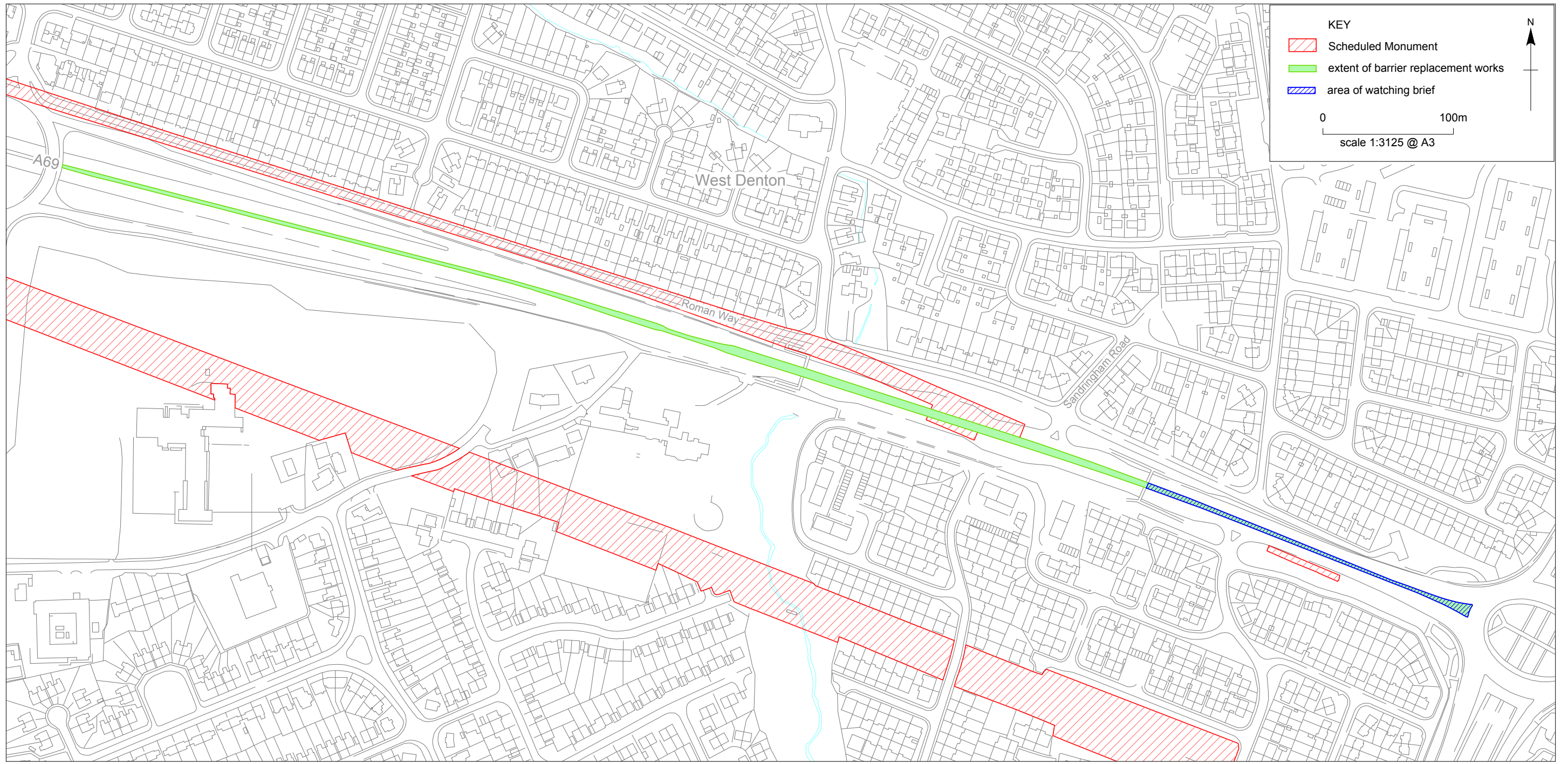
Northern Archaeological Associates (2019) *A69 West Denton Barriers: Written Scheme of Investigation*. Unpublished NAA report **19/12**



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A69 West Denton Barriers: site location

Figure 1



A69 West Denton Barriers: area of watching brief

Figure 2