

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES  
*BOWES ROAD, STARTFORTH, BARNARD CASTLE*

Negative Watching Brief Report

**Site name:** Bowes Road, Barnard Castle    **Grid reference:** NZ 045 163

**District:** Teesdale

**Administrative authority:** Durham County Council

**Client:** Clancy Docwra Utilities

**Site supervisor:** Eddie Dougherty

**Project manager:** Oliver Cooper

**Development:** Service trenches

**Dates:** 3–7 September 2018

**NAA project number:** 1472

**Site code:** DUS18

**Report number:** NAA19/52

**Report date:** May 2019

**OASIS number:** northern1-327560

### Reasons for watching brief

The scheme of works entailed the excavation of trenches for the rerouting of existing LV and HV electrical power cables within the known proximity of the roman road which forded the River Tees at Barnard Castle and continued onto the roman fort at Binchester (*Vinovia/ Vinovium*), as well as being overlooked by the 12th-century medieval castle built by the de Balliol family.

### Methodology

Three road crossing trenches were planned, although only two were actually excavated (Fig. 1). These road crossings were in the form of service trenches to house new plastic ducting pipe. The excavation of these trenches was carried out in stages, firstly closure of one carriageway, the cutting of a trench, the installation of the new plastic duct and the reinstatement of the roadway. Then this sequence was followed for the other carriageway. Trench 1 was situated north-east of the road junction between Bowes Road (A67) and Corn Close, and Trench 3 was located east of the entrance to Bowes Way, which leads to Deerbolt Bank.

### Results

Two trenches (1 and 3), were machine-excavated within the in area covered by the Watching Brief. Trench 1 had a combined measurement of 9.7m x 0.55m to a depth of 1.1m, was aligned north-west to south-east. The road crossing was situated 20.5m east of the road junction at Corn Close (Plate 1), at the western extent of the investigation area. The trench ran from a grassed verge fronting a row of modern stone-built semi-detached houses, across the line of Bowes Road (A67) up to a boundary wall belonging to a new housing development.

Within Trench 1, natural subsoil was encountered at various depths ranging from 0.4m to 0.8m below present ground level. The increase in depth was recorded in a north-westerly direction along the line of both segments of the trench towards the modern boundary wall. This material consisted of a range of deposits from firm brown clay and stony outcrops to compact sandy gravels. These materials were in turn overlain by a consistently thin layer of discoloured gravel, and a thick deposit of limestone chippings representing the foundation/ bedding for the bitumen road surface of the present road (Plate 2). In the north-western end of the trench these deposits were cut by a narrow, deep foundation cut for the modern, pin kerbing and its concrete footing. The south-eastern end of this trench was also badly disturbed by two inter-cutting service trenches, one containing a modern plastic gas pipe, the other a metal water pipe. These were in turn protected by their respective concrete capping. Set within the concrete capping of the southern of these was the present-day pin kerbing.

Trench 3 also cut across the line of Bowes Road and was positioned 5m east of the entrance to Bowes Way (Plate 3). The trench measured 9.2m x 0.6m to a maximum depth of 0.8m and ran in a north-west to south-east direction. The road crossing extended from the roadside kerbing of the south-west bound carriageway to the previously mentioned boundary wall.

Natural subsoil in Trench 3 was encountered at a depth of 0.6m below present ground level. This was overlain by redeposited materials of identical consistency and thickness to that found in Trench 1 (Plate 4), and again these were cut through by three service trenches, although only one of these had also been identified in Trench 1. The service trenches were located at both ends of Trench 3. In the north-western section were two services; a narrow channel containing a fibre optic cable, and a wide cut situated under the roadside pin kerbing that contained a modern ceramic drain pipe. In the south-eastern part of the road crossing was a narrow cut which may have contained either of the existing water or gas supplies. These service trenches were subsequently sealed by the modern road materials.

During the ground impact works it became apparent that both Trenches 1 and 3 cut only through modern surfaces and redeposited materials, hence no archaeological features or deposits were encountered.

**Documentation:** Digital photographs and written NAA trench sheets.

**Archive deposition:** NAA internal archive only



*Plate 1: Overview of road crossing Trench 1 looking south-westwards, towards Corn Close.*



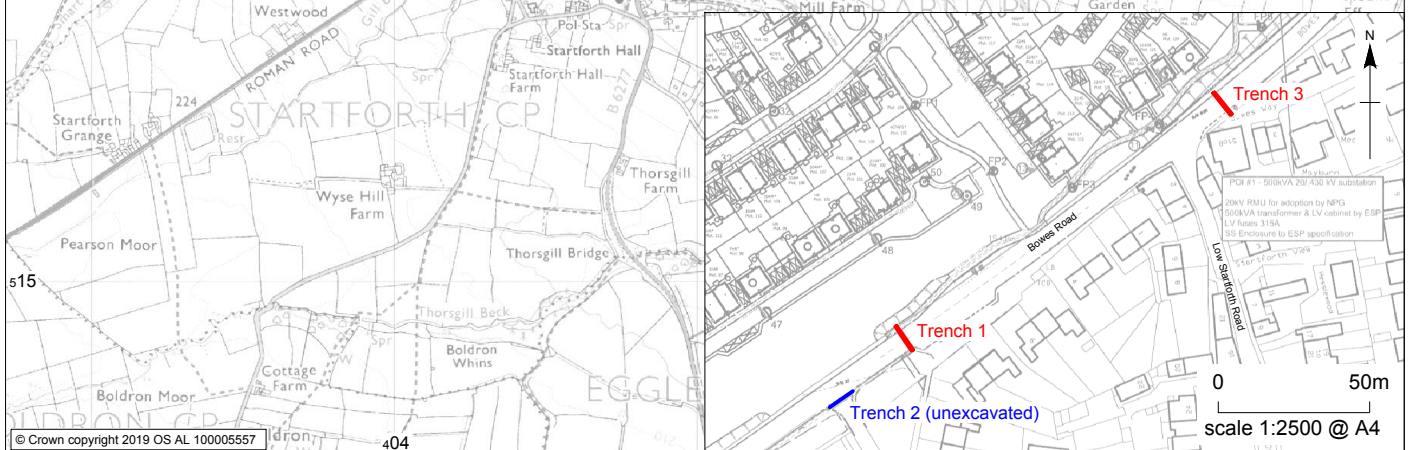
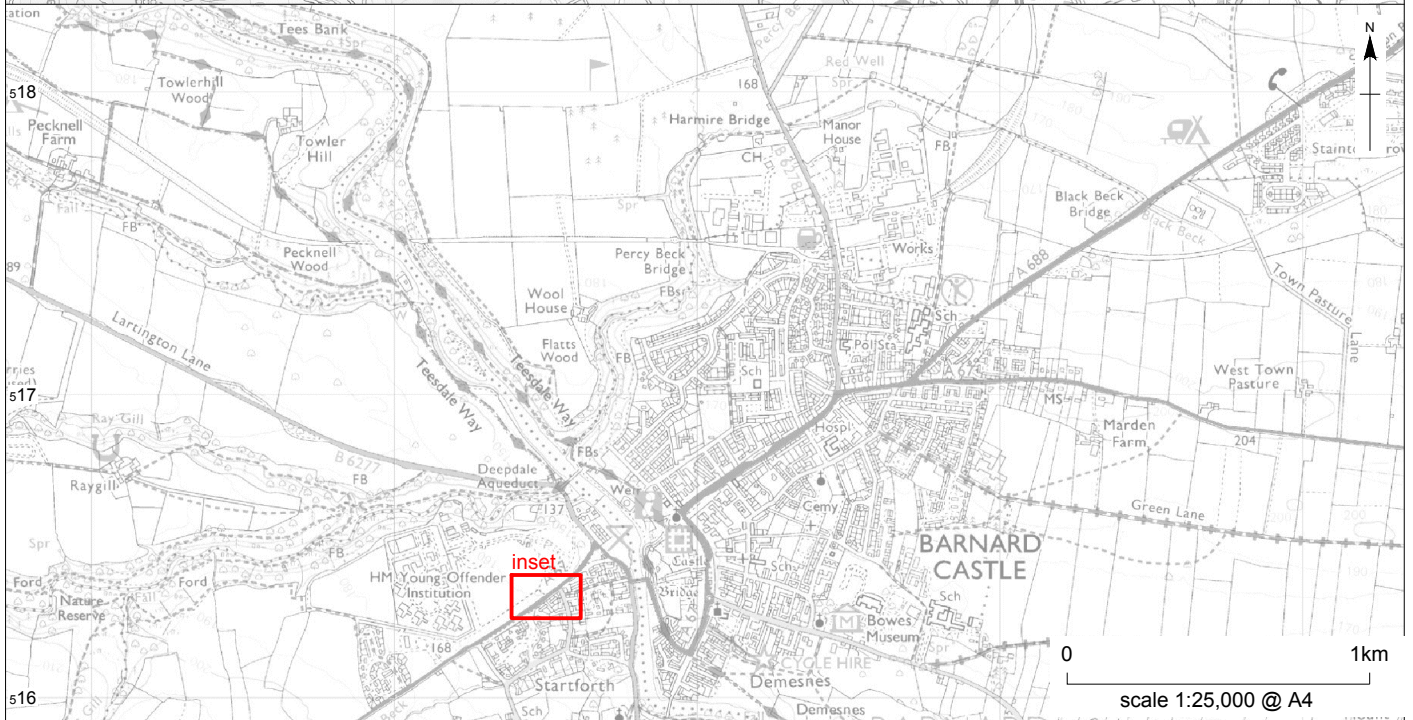
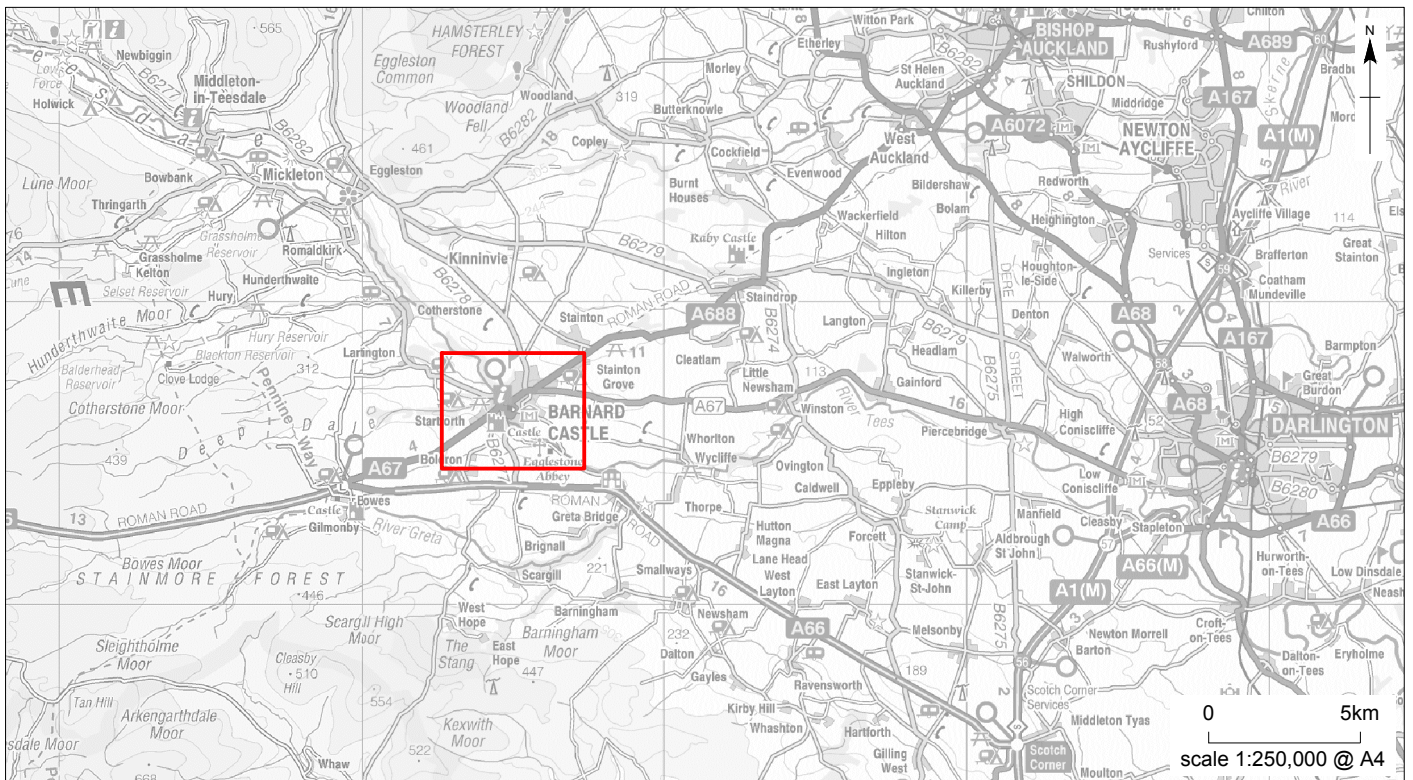
*Plate 2: North facing section of road crossing Trench 1, across the south-west bound carriageway of Bowes Road (A67).*



*Plate 3. Location of Trench 3, looking north-eastwards towards Barnard Castle.*



*Plate 4. East facing section of Trench 3, cut through the south-west bound carriageway of Bowes Road (A67).*



Bowes Road, Startforth: site location

Figure 1