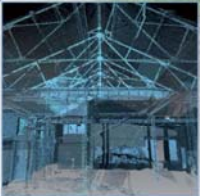


Medwyn Road, West Linton Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

AOC 21481
30th October 2009



ARCHAEOLOGY

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CONSERVATION

Medwyn Road, West Linton Archaeological Evaluation: Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: **Michael & Anne Waterston,**
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National Grid Reference (NGR): **NT 1413 5234**

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This document has been prepared in accordance with AOC standard operating procedures.

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Abstract

A programme of archaeological works was required by Mr. Michael Waterston within the proposed development site of a single house plot and access road at Medwyn Road, West Linton. Four trenches totalling nearly a 15% sample evaluation were opened across the development area. A single large pit interpreted as a 19th / 20th century sand quarry was the only feature encountered.

0 Non Technical Summary

- 0.1 A programme of archaeological works was required by Mr. Michael Waterston within the proposed development site of a single house plot and access road at Medwyn Road, West Linton. AOC Archaeology was commissioned to undertake an intrusive field evaluation in advance of submission of full planning application with the purpose of informing the planning process of the archaeological potential of the development site.
- 0.2 The proposed development lies within the administrative area of Scottish Borders Council, which is advised on archaeological matters by Dr. Christopher Bowles. It was anticipated that Dr. Bowles would recommend an evaluation be undertaken on the proposed development. The work required is in accord with SPP23 (2008) and PAN 42 (SOEnd 1994), in order to determine the nature, extent, condition and significance of any archaeological material within the development area.

1 Introduction

1.1 Site location

- 1.1.1 The proposed development area (NGR: NT 1413 5234) is located on the north-western edge of the conservation village of West Linton, c.100 m west of Medwyn House (Figure 1). The site is bounded to the west and south by Lynedale Road and Medwyn Road respectively, with established woodland forming the northern and eastern boundaries of the site. Topographically the ground is gently undulating with an overall gradual slope downhill from north-west to south-east.

1.2 Development proposal

- 1.2.1 The proposed development involves the construction of a single detached residential dwelling house with associated access road.

1.3 Archaeological background

- 1.3.1 There are no known archaeological sites within the development area, although Roman activity is attested in the local area, a Roman fortlet *Tocherknowe* (NMRS NT15SW 36, NGR NT 1417) lies to the north of the development area. Excavation confirmed part of the perimeter of a fortlet guarding the crossing of the Lyne Water. At roughly 70 m square, it was defended by two ditches on the south-west and on the west side of the Roman road from Clydesdale to the Forth, roughly half-way between Biggar and Elginhaugh (Keppie 1993).
- 1.3.2 West Linton, once known as Lintoun Roderick, was the birthplace of Bernard of Lintoun (b. 1270), the cleric who drafted the Declaration of Arbroath. It was chartered as a burgh of

barony in 1306. A mill at West Linton is mentioned in an early charter, before the year 1210 as belonging to William Comyn of Kilbride (Smith 2001). It was in the vicinity of Bridgehouse and was called Bridgehouse Mill in the 18th century (Buchan & Paton 1927). There are two buildings at the alleged site *Bridgehouse Mill* (NMRS NT15SW 7; NGR: NT 1425 5240) to the north-east of the development area. One is a small cottage and the other a hay barn. Neither appears to be of any great age and there are no features associable with a mill.

2 Objectives

2.1 The objectives of the archaeological works were:

- i) to determine the character, extent, condition, quality, date and significance of any buried archaeological remains within the development area by means of an intrusive field evaluation;
- ii) to advise and implement an appropriate form of mitigation, such as excavation, post-excavation analyses and publication, should significant archaeological remains be encountered.

3 Method

3.1 The Written Scheme of Investigation (AOC 2009) proposed the excavation of 4 trenches in total, two within the footprint of the dwelling house and two along the access route (Figure 1). The WSI stated the trenches were to total a minimum of a 10% sample of the development area.

3.2 All trenches were excavated with a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator using a 1.6 m wide ditching bucket. The trench details are summarised in Appendix 1. Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through topsoil to the upper surface of the underlying geological deposits. The evaluation trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures as detailed within the Method Statement (AOC 2009).

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The works were conducted between 27th October and 28th October 2009. The weather conditions during the evaluation were overcast with intermittent rain. Overall archaeological visibility was good. In total 4 trenches were opened with a combined basal area of approximately 146 m² (Figure 2).

4.1.2 The various data gathered from the excavation are presented as a series of appendices:

Appendix 1 contains trench summaries;

Appendix 2 contains the photographic register;

Appendix 3 contains the context register;

Appendix 4 reproduces the '*Discovery & Excavation in Scotland*' entry.

4.2 Overview

4.2.1 The proposed development was covered in a layer of dark brown silty topsoil, which varied in depth from 0.30 m to 0.47 m, according to the local topography of the land. The deeper areas of topsoil tended to occur in the low points of the field, and can be viewed as accumulated hillwash. The subsoil varied across the site between a loose coarse sand and a sand-rich gravel on the higher drier ground, to a more compact silty clay matrix in the low lying areas. In all trenches there was extensive evidence of plough scarring on the surface of the natural subsoil. No evidence for land drainage in the form of field drains, either modern or historic, was uncovered.

4.3 Large feature [301] (Plate 2)

4.3.1 Trench 3 revealed a large negative feature that crossed the eastern end of the trench. From the visible edges the feature appeared to be irregular on plan with a width of nearly 6.0 m. The single fill, [302], was a topsoil rich soil and a small hand dug slot revealed sloping sides with a depth of 0.52 m. Finds from the fill included a few pieces of mortar, some ceramic building material fragments and modern white glazed 19th/20th century pottery.

4.4 Peat Deposits

4.4.1 Trench 4 lay at the lowest point on the site and the depth of topsoil in this trench was significantly deeper than all of the others (averaging 0.45 m compared to 0.35 m). Near the base of the topsoil it became apparent that there was a rich organic peaty deposit directly overlying natural subsoil. At this point water seepage into the trench hindered progress. No artefacts or features were visible and as the trench was extended westwards the peat layer thinned out and it was clear that this was a localised drainage issue.



Plate 1 Plough scarring across Trench 1 base



Plate 2: Sand quarry pit feature [301 in Trench 3]

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The large pit within Trench 3 lay on the break of slope between the plateau where Trenches 1 and 2 were positioned and the low lying area where Trench 4 was situated. The subsoil at the edges of the pit and through which the pit was cut, as evidenced by the section, was a stone-free coarse sand. The large pit is therefore interpreted as a sand quarry which given the presence of mortar, brick fragments and glazed white ceramics is of a relatively modern date, 19th to 20th century.
- 5.2 The evaluation exceeded the 10% sample specified in the evaluation method statement and even with this additional trenching no features of archaeological significance were uncovered. Also close examination of the topsoil and spoil from the trenching did not lead to the recovery of any unstratified material.
- 5.3 The evaluation trenching also showed that the area has been subjected to deep modern ploughing and as such has suffered a degree of truncation which may have already destroyed any previously extant *in situ* archaeological features, should such features have ever been present.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The evaluation has revealed that the greenfield site directly impacted upon by the development appears to be free from any significant archaeological material. The large percentage of the site examined by this evaluation exceeds the levels usually specified and this coupled with the complete absence of any features or even unstratified topsoil finds strongly suggests the area is archaeologically sterile
- 6.2 The balance of probability is that the house plot development area is archaeologically sterile. We would consider any further archaeological investigation, should the development proceed, as unnecessary. This recommendation will require confirmation by Dr Bowles of behalf of Borders Council.

7 REFERENCES

AOC 2009 *Medwyn House West Linton Archaeological Works: Written Scheme of Investigation* AOC Archaeology Client Report

SPP23 2008 *Scottish Planning Policy SPP23. Archaeology and Planning*. Nov.2008.

SOEnD 1994a Planning Advice Note 42. Archaeology – the Planning Process and Scheduled Ancient Monument Procedures. The Scottish Office Environment Department.

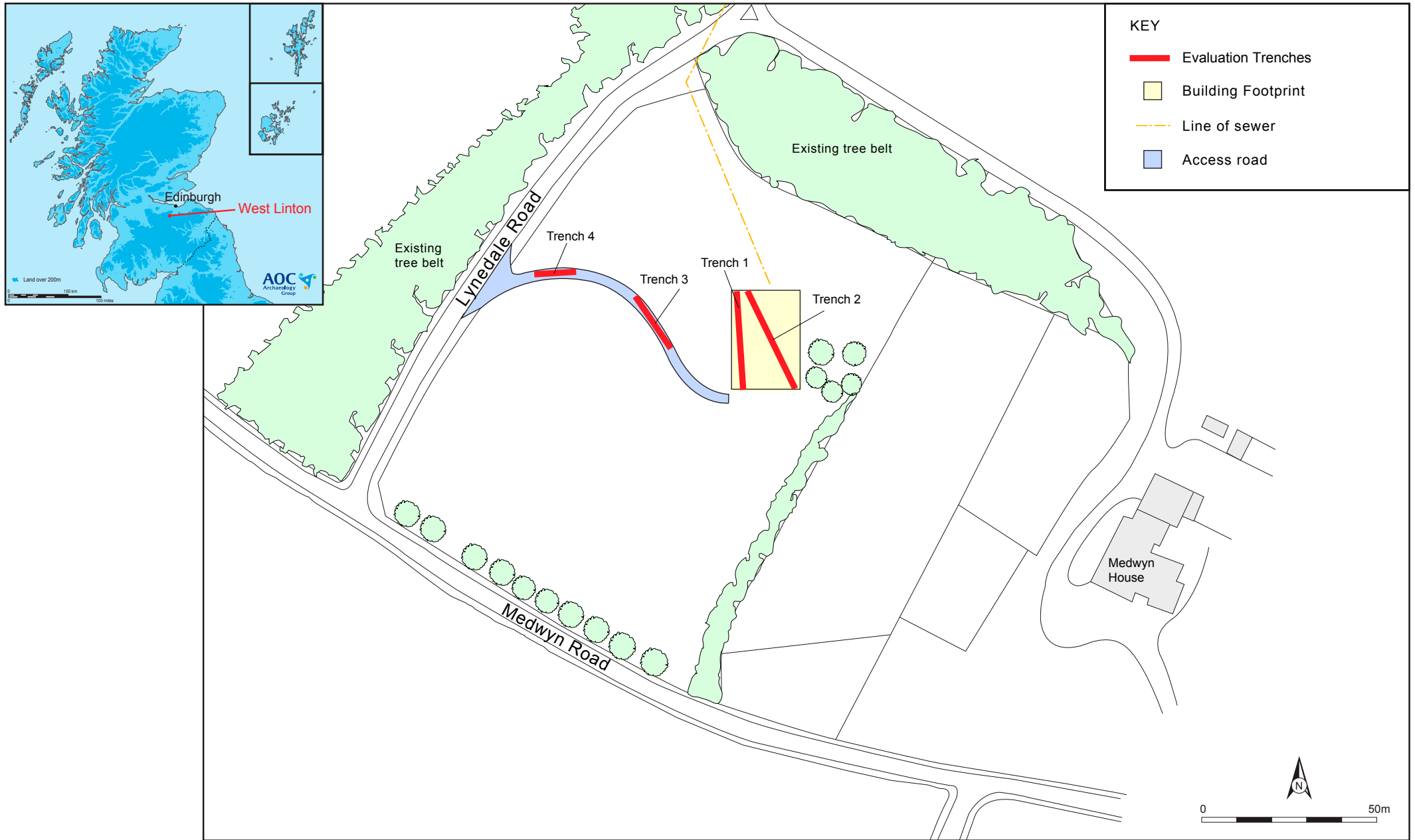


Figure 1: Location of Evaluation Trenches

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench 1

Dimensions	30.0 m by 1.6 m
Orientation	N-S
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.39 m
Features	Extensive, deep plough scarring, NW-SE parallel to field boundary.
Subsoil	Dark orange gravely sands, with occasional patches of sand
Finds	None

Trench 2

Dimensions	31 m by 1.6 m
Orientation	NW-SE
Depth of Topsoil	0.19 m to 0.20 m
Features	Extensive, deep plough scarring, NW-SE parallel to field boundary.
Subsoil	Dark orange gravely sands, with occasional patches of sand
Finds	None

Trench 3

Dimensions	18.0 m by 1.6 m
Orientation	NW-SE
Depth of Topsoil	0.21 m to 0.24 m
Features	Extensive, deep plough scarring, NW-SE parallel to field boundary.
Subsoil	Dark orange gravely sands, with eastern end very sandy.
Finds	None

Trench 4

Dimensions	12.0 m by 1.6 m
Orientation	E-W
Depth of Topsoil	0.30 m to 0.47 m
Features	Peat like rich waterlogged organic layer between topsoil and subsoil
Subsoil	Red/Pink sandy clay rich material
Finds	None

APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Area	Description
[301]	Tr.3	Large pit feature [301], present across whole width of trench. Irregular in plan c.6.0 m long with depths up to 0.52 m. Single fill [701].
[302]	Tr.3	Fill of feature [301], with dark brown topsoil like sandy silt matrix and a few stone inclusions of up to 0.30 m by 0.30 m in size. No charcoal. brick, mortar and 19 th /20 th century white glazed ceramics noted within fill.

APPENDIX 3: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Digital Record

Frame	Area	Detail	From
1	-	Registration	-
2	-	General view of house plot	N
3	-	General view of house plot	NW
4	-	General view of house plot	NE
5	-	General view of house plot	NE
6	Tr.1	General view of plough scarring in Trench 1	S
7	Tr.1	General view of Trench 1 post excavation	N
8	Tr.2	General view of Trench 2 post excavation	NW
9	Tr.3	General view of sand quarry [301]	NW
10	Tr.3	General view of sand quarry [301]	W
11	Tr.3	View of hand dug testpit through sand quarry	SW
12	Tr.4	View of Trench 4 during excavation showing peaty layer	E
13	Tr.4	View of Trench 4 during excavation showing peaty layer	E

APPENDIX 4: 'DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND' REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	Borders Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Medwyn Road, West Linton Archaeological Evaluation
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 21481
PARISH:	West Linton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Lindsay Dunbar
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	AOC Archaeology Group
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Archaeological Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	None
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	None
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	None
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NT 1413 5234
START DATE (this season)	27 ^h October 2009
END DATE (this season)	28 th October 2009
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN DESCRIPTION: (NARRATIVE) (May include information from other fields)	A programme of archaeological works was required by Mr. Michael Waterston within the proposed development site of a single house plot and access road at Medwyn Road, West Linton. Four trenches totalling nearly a 15% sample evaluation were opened across the development area. A single large pit interpreted as a 19 th to 20 th century sand quarry ceramics was the only feature encountered.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Mr & Mrs. Waterston
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