

Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton. Archaeological Evaluation Data Structure Report

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May 2008



ARCHAEOLOGY

HERITAGE

CONSERVATION

Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton Archaeological Evaluation

Data Structure Report

On Behalf of: Hypostyle Architects,
49 Vincent Crescent
Glasgow
G3 8NG

National Grid Reference (NGR): NS 4031 7694

AOC Project No: 20841

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Abstract

AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Hypostyle Architects to undertake a programme of archaeological works within the site of a proposed housing development at Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton. The work required is in response to a planning condition set by Dumbartonshire Council. An 8% sample of the 1.5 ha area equated to trenching totalling 800 m². In total seventeen trenches totalling 835 m² were opened, representing just over 8% of the development area. The greenfield site proved to be archaeologically sterile with no significant features or artefactual material uncovered by the evaluation works.

0. NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 0.1 AOC Archaeology Group was commissioned by Hypostyle Architects to undertake a programme of archaeological works within the site of a proposed housing development at Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton. The work was required in response to a planning condition set by West Dunbartonshire Council.
- 0.2 West Dunbartonshire Council is advised on archaeological matters by the West of Scotland Archaeological Service (WoSAS) who recommended an intrusive archaeological evaluation of the proposed development. The work was required in accordance with NPPG 5 (SOEnd 1994) and PAN 42 (SOEnd 1994a), in order to determine the nature, extent, condition, date and significance of any archaeological remains within the proposed development area.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Site Location

- 1.1.1 The proposed development is centred on NGR: NS 4031 7694. It is bounded by to the east by Valeview Terrace, to the west by the Stirling Road (A813 trunk road), to the north by open fields and to the south by recreational playing fields. (Figure 1). The site lies within an area of existing agricultural land, most recently in use as rough pasture for cattle, and by occasional dog walkers.

1.2 Archaeological background

- 1.2.1 The proposed development contains only a single site of archaeological or historical interest, although the surrounding area is rich in sites ranging from the prehistoric period to the modern.
- 1.2.2 A single site lies within the proposed development and comprises a site of a limekiln (WoSAS 51582), labelled as 'Old Limekiln' and recorded as a circular structure. The design of limekilns varied with the scale of operation (Hume 1976). The main use of lime in the 18th and 19th centuries was as a fertilizer, an antidote to the acid soils prevalent in Scotland. Although larger kilns were used for mortar for building and in chemical and metallurgy, a kiln of this size was probably a farm kiln.
- 1.2.3 Additionally, the Stirling to Dumbarton Military Road (WoSAS 20372) lies within close proximity, and an archaeological evaluation and a programme of standing building recording were completed to the immediate west of the site at Strathleven (WoSAS 3277). The evaluation identified neither significant archaeological features nor artefacts.
- 1.2.4 Bellsmyre, a suburb named after a local farm, is located to the immediate north-east of Dumbarton. The modern development was established shortly after the end of the Second World War to meet a new demand for housing on farming land following an increase in population and the destruction and damage of many houses during the Second World War. Various stages of progress and additions (including the estates of Aitkenbar and Garshake) spanned the period from the late 1940s to 1973, when many of the streets were given the ancient names of farms and farmlands in the surrounding area. Over the years, schools and churches were erected within the housing scheme, including Aitkenbar Primary School (1959) and St Peter's Primary School (1966).

- 1.2.5 Evidence of prehistoric activity is rare in the immediate area. However a few flint scatters from the Mesolithic period have been discovered on a raised beach a short distance to the west of Dumbarton and there is some evidence suggesting activity in the Neolithic period within the Dumbarton area with one find of Neolithic date discovered in Dumbarton itself (Dennison & Coleman 1999). This was a stone adze found in the garden of a house in the Bellsmyre, located just east of the proposed development area. A further isolated find of Bronze Age date was discovered by the banks of the Leven at Dalmonach, west of the proposed development. It is thought to be a Bronze Age dirk or sword. In the Iron Age, the Dumbarton area is thought to have been part of the territory in the control of a tribe known as the Damnonii.
- 1.2.6 No evidence of Roman activity is known in the immediate area. However it is speculated that a harbour serving the Antonine Wall was situated in the Old Kilpatrick area or at Dumbarton, although there is no conclusive evidence to prove this at this stage (Dennison & Coleman 1999).
- 1.2.7 Dumbarton's name is said to derive from Dun Breatann meaning the 'fortress of the Britons'. This is a reference to the Clyde Rock which stands nearby to the south-east of the proposed development, and it is where the castle of Dumbarton is located. The rock was the stronghold of the Kings of Strathclyde and it was originally known as Alcluith or Al Clut which translates as the 'Rock of Clyde' (Taylor 1959; Alcock & Alcock 1990). The earliest reference to the stronghold dates from the 7th century and relates to an earlier period in history when St Patrick of Ireland wrote to the King of the Strathclyde Britons reprimanding them for their acts of piracy against his Irish converts (Dennison & Coleman 1999). This stronghold is also mentioned by Bede in *Historia Ecclesiastica* (AD 731) which reflects the political importance of this stronghold on the Dumbarton Rock. This account also makes reference to the Dalriada Scots north of the rock who controlled the local area at this time. However, no specific remains from this period are known in the immediate area.
- 1.2.8 Predating '*Dumbartonshire*' was the ancient region of Lennox, the name possibly a corruption of Levenaux or Levenach, 'the field of Leven'. The earldom of Lennox was created by William I in or around 1175. Dumbarton was established as a burgh in 1222 by King Alexander II, at a site approximately 1km to the north of Clyde Rock. It is thought that the main street was laid out, along the line of the present High Street and that burgage plots were established along this. Although it is thought that the settlement of Dumbarton remained largely self-contained within the bounds of the town throughout the medieval period some housing may have been situated outwith the formal street pattern. For example in 1480 there is reference to the house of John Fleming being 'on the common of Dumbarton' west of the proposed development site. However it must be remembered that the flood waters of the Leven have been increasingly controlled in recent years and that throughout the medieval and post-medieval period Dumbarton was surrounded on three sides by water and the proposed development site sat some way outside of the burgh, as demonstrated by Blaeu's map of 1654 (Figure 1). The River Leven is tidal to approximately two miles above the town. A high spring tide allied to conditions from melting snow from highland hills invariably meant floods.
- 1.2.8 It is possible that the proposed development site offered an attractive prospect for early settlers, located as it is on fertile plain in close proximity to the water course of the Leven. Until recently most of the parish of Dumbarton consisted of uninhabited moorland and rough grazing (Taylor, 1959). The River Leven has been prone to flooding throughout history and it is possible that the westernmost part of the proposed development site has been subject to flooding in the past. As such it may have been an unreliable location for settlement.



Plate 1: Extract from Blaeu 1654

- 1.2.9 In the 17th century Dumbarton was probably still small in size and rural in nature, not really very different from its medieval origins. The early 17th century witnessed a spate of activity by the residents of Dumbarton in an attempt to prevent further flooding of the town, in which members of the community were instructed to construct flood banks. Thus it is probable that the proposed development site remained entirely rural. The Statistical Account of Scotland (1792) makes reference to migration of people away from the town to the print and bleachfields to the north (Oliphant, 1792). The proposed development site is located adjacent to the main thoroughfare leading from the printfield on the east bank of the Leven to Dumbarton and further airfield to Glasgow. Furthermore this is also the line of the Dumbarton to Stirling military road constructed in the 1770s which would have increased trade and passage past the proposed development site. Despite dominance over its rural hinterland, it is reported in 1792 that Dumbarton had to import 10% of its goods from outwith the parish (Oliphant, 1792). In the early part of 1719 the embankments on the Broad Meadow were seriously damaged by storm and floods, and stones had to be brought from Jamestown quarry to repair them (Dennison and Coleman, 1999:34).
- 1.2.10 During the 18th and 19th centuries the bleaching and dyeing industry prospered along the banks of the Leven in close proximity to the proposed development area. The bleachfields at Dalquhurn were established in 1715 and expanded to become one of the largest and most profitable industrial ventures in the Vale of Leven textile industry. The site was largely demolished in the early 1900s and is now in the process of being re-developed following archaeological investigation of the area which identified the remains of Dalquhurn House (O'Hare pers comm.).
- 1.2.11 Ordnance Survey maps consulted from the 19th century depict the proposed development area as agricultural fields associated with Bellsmyre Farm, itself a small farmstead consisting of several adjacent structures (1st Edition OS Map). Little change is shown on the 1898 edition (OS Map).

- 1.2.12 Successive later editions of the Ordnance survey maps reveal the increasing industrial nature of the town. Of particular note is the general alteration of the configuration of the town to the east of the development with the addition of stretches of linear residential tenement properties and associated amenities. These included the nearby cottage hospital constructed in 1889. The Dumbarton Combination Poorhouse was constructed in 1861. It was located on Townend Road, south of the proposed development. Its location and layout are shown on the 1898 Ordnance Survey map.
- 1.2.13 Although no prehistoric or early historic sites were identified within the proposed development area, the proximity of such monuments within the surrounding area indicates a possibility of encountering similar sites. In addition, the proposed development area appears to have remained relatively undisturbed during the past 500 years and therefore yields an enhanced opportunity for archaeological survival.

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;
 - 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 A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) proposed the excavation of trenches equating to at least an 8% sample of the proposed development area. The site covered 1.5 ha resulting in an evaluation requiring investigation of 800 m². The proposed trench location was agreed with WoSAS prior to the works starting. The positioning of the trenches were designed to not only avoid electricity, gas and telecommunication services but were also positioned on the flatter areas of the development area, avoiding the steep slopes in the north-western corner. During the evaluation it was also deemed necessary to avoid a water saturated area of ground land just to the east of Bellsmyre Cottage.
- 3.2 In total seventeen trenches were excavated totalling 835 m², representing just over the required 8% sample. Figure 2 shows the location of each trench.
- 3.3 The trenches were excavated with a JCB 3CX wheeled excavator using a 2.0 m wide ditching bucket, or a 360° tracked excavator using a 1.5 m wide ditching bucket. The trench details are summarised in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 Machine excavation was conducted in shallow units/spits through the made ground to the upper surface of the underlying geological deposits.

- 3.5 At all times the evaluation trial trenching was undertaken according to AOC Archaeology Group's standard operating procedures detailed with the WSI.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The works were conducted between 6th and 14th May 2008. The weather conditions during the evaluation were predominantly dry and sunny. Overall archaeological visibility was good.

- 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 reproduces the *Discovery & Excavation in Scotland* entry.

4.2 Overview

- 4.2.1 No significant archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were encountered during the evaluation. Examination of the spoil from trenches did not lead to the recovery of any significant unstratified artefacts. In the area where the limekiln was located a large area of scrub was cleared and a single trench was dug. No evidence for the kiln was seen. It seems probable that the limekin has been completely removed, possibly during construction of Valeview Terrace.

- 4.2.2 The remains of a modern trackway seen running across the site as a surface feature in a SW to NE direction (Figure 2) was recorded in the north and south-facing sections of Trench 14. This was seen as a layer of cinder, located 0.20 m below the current ground level, 0.25 m in depth and c.2 m wide. A sub-circular pit c.2 m wide and 0.18 m deep was also recorded in Trench 14 (Figure 2). The fill of this feature was sterile and it probably represents the fall of a substantial tree remembered by one of the elderly local residents.

- 4.2.2 The topsoil recorded was generally between 0.17 m and 0.40 m. In Trench 9 this depth increased dramatically to up to 1.50 m, although this is considered artificial, and is seen as a product of modern landscaping. Dumps of modern building material were noted in Trenches 2, 8 and 9. A single drainage feature was encountered in Trench 5.

- 4.2.3 The natural across the development area was recorded variously as light brown sands and gravels and clays.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1. The evaluation trenching provided comprehensive coverage across the site. However no archaeology was encountered. The lack of finds from the spoil would also suggest that no significant archaeology lies within the development area.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 We recommend that given the scale of the evaluation undertaken and the complete absence of any sort of archaeological material that no further works are required.

7. REFERENCES

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SOEnd 1994 *Planning Advice Note 42: Archaeology – the Planning Process and Scheduled Ancient Monument Procedures*. January 1994. The Scottish Office Environment Department.

SOEnd 1994a *National Planning Policy Guideline NPPG 5. Archaeology and Planning*. January 1994. The Scottish Office Environment Department.

Taylor, E, 1959 *The Burgh and Parish of Dumbarton*, in *Statistical Account of Scotland* III. Collins

7.2 Cartographic

1654 Blaeu's Atlas of Scotland

1854 Ordnance Survey Dunbartonshire Sheet XXII

1854 Ordnance Survey Dunbartonshire Sheet XXII scale 1:10560

1898 Ordnance Survey Dunbartonshire Sheet XXII 6 scale 1:10,000

APPENDIX 1: TRENCH SUMMARIES

Trench 1

Dimensions	50 m by 1.5 m
Total Area	75 m ²
Orientation	N-S
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.32 m and 0.41 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	No unstratified material.

Trench 2

Dimensions	30 m by 1.5 m
Total Area	45 m ²
Orientation	E-W
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.25 m and 0.40 m. This material included concrete, rubble and brick.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	No unstratified material.

Trench 3

Dimensions	50 m by 1.5 m
Total Area	75 m ²
Orientation	E-W
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.32 m and 0.45 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	Bricks.

Trench 4

Dimensions	30 m by 1.5 m
Total Area	45 m ²
Orientation	E-W
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.31 m and 0.41 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.
Finds	No unstratified material.

Trench 5

Dimensions	26 m by 2 m
Total Area	52 m ²
Orientation	N-S
Depth to Subsoil	Between 0.31 m 0.41 m.
Significant Features	No archaeological features.

Finds . No unstratified material.

Trench 6

Dimensions 22 m by 1.5 m
Total Area 33 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.17 m and 0.25 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 7

Dimensions 20 m by 2 m
Total Area 40 m²
Orientation N-S
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.23 m and 0.21 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 8

Dimensions 30 m by 2 m
Total Area 60 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.20 m and 0.40 m. Includes rubble dumps.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 9

Dimensions 7 m by 2 m
Total Area 14 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.40 m and 1.50 m. This material included hardcore and general rubble.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 10

Dimensions 17 m by 2 m
Total Area 34 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.17m and 0.25 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.

Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 11

Dimensions 31 m by 2 m
Total Area 62 m²
Orientation N-S
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.20 m and 0.25 m
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 12

Dimensions 25 m by 2 m
Total Area 50 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.40 m and 0.50m. Includes peat at W end.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 13

Dimensions 34 m by 2 m
Total Area 68 m²
Orientation NW-SE
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.25 m and 0.30 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 14

Dimensions 37 m by 2 m
Total Area 74 m²
Orientation E-W
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.20 m and 0.25 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 15

Dimensions 8 m by 2 m
Total Area 16 m²
Orientation NE-SW
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.25 m and 0.28 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.

Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 16

Dimensions 18 m by 2 m
Total Area 36 m²
Orientation NE-SW
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.20 m and 0.30 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

Trench 17

Dimensions 33 m by 2 m
Total Area 66 m²
Orientation NE-SW
Depth to Subsoil Between 0.25 m and 0.30 m.
Significant Features No archaeological features.
Finds No unstratified material.

APPENDIX 2: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Colour Slide and Black & White Print – FILM No.1

Shot No.	Area	Description	From
1	Tr.1	General view during excavation	S
2&3	-	General site views form S corner	S
4	Tr.2	Post excavation	E
5	Tr.3	During excavation	E
6	Tr.4	Post excavation	W
7	Tr.5	Post excavation	S
8	Tr.6	Topsoil at W end of trench	SW
9	Tr.6	General view – post excavation	W

Colour Slide and Black & White Print – FILM No.2

Shot No.	Area	Description	From
1&2	-	Registration shot	
3&4	Tr.7	Post excavation	S
5&6	Tr.8	Post excavation	S
7&8	Tr.9	Post excavation	SW
9&10	Tr5	Extension – post excavation	W
11&12	Tr.10	Post excavation	E
13&14	Tr.11	Post excavation	N
15&16	Tr.12	Post excavation	W
17&18	Tr.13	Post excavation	N/W
19&20	Tr.14	Trackway feature as seen in S facing section	S
21&22	Tr.14	Sub-rectangular feature	E
23&24	Tr.16	Post excavation	SW
25&26	Tr.17	Post excavation	NE

APPENDIX 3: DISCOVERY AND EXCAVATION IN SCOTLAND REPORT

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Dumbartonshire Council
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton Evaluation
PROJECT CODE:	AOC 20841
PARISH:	Dumbarton
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	Alan Duffy
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)	NS 4031 7694
START DATE (this season)	6th May 2008
END DATE (this season)	14th May 2008
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN DESCRIPTION: (NARRATIVE) (May include information from other fields)	In response to a planning condition set by Dumbartonshire Council, an evaluation was undertaken Valeview Terrace, Bellsmyre, Dumbarton prior to a housing development. The work required an 8% sample of the 1.5 ha area equating to trenching totalling 800 m ² . In total seventeen trenches totalling 835 m ² were opened. The greenfield site proved to be archaeologically sterile with no significant features or artefactual material observed.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	None
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	n/a
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Hypostyle Architects
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	C/o AOC Archaeology Group
EMAIL ADDRESS:	Alan.Duffy@aocarchaeology.com

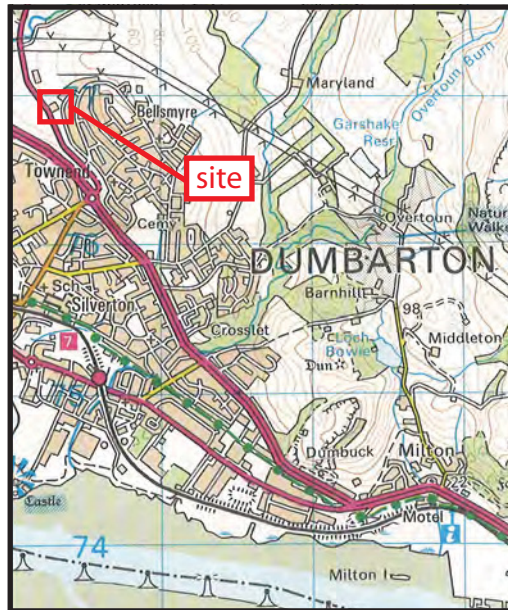
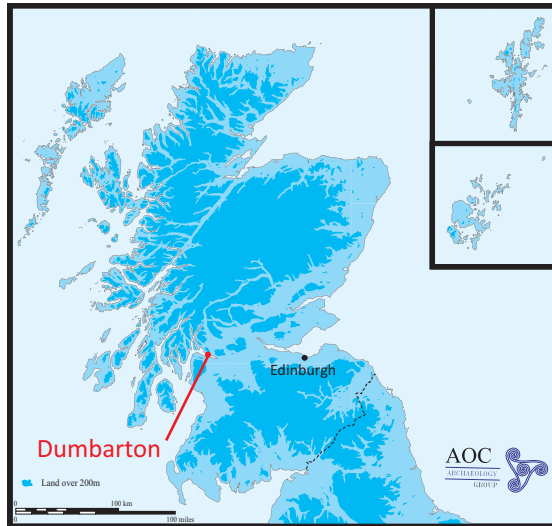


Figure 1: Site location

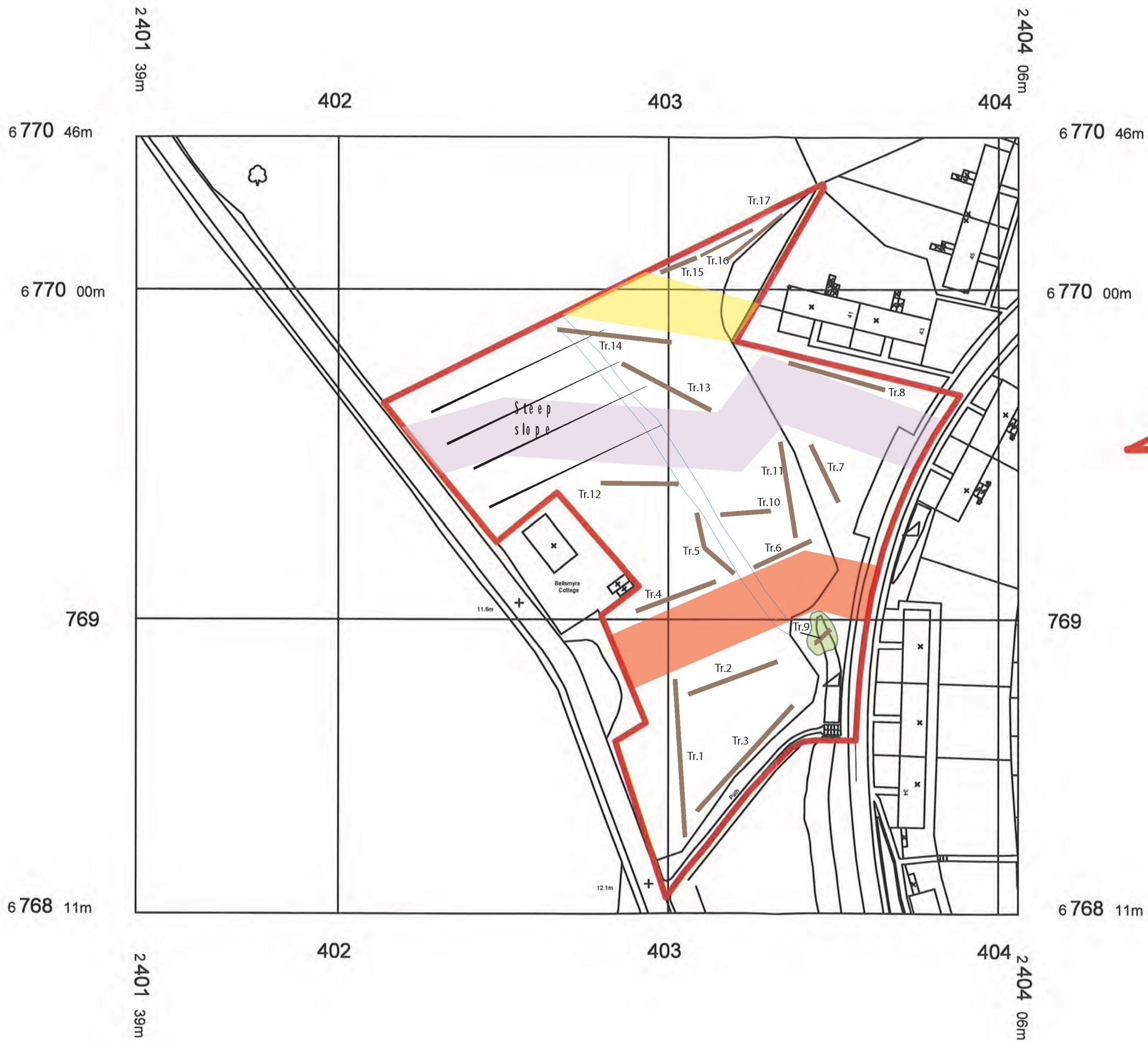
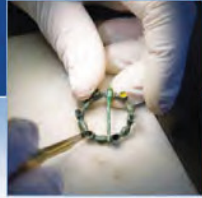


Figure 2:Trench location plan

- Buffer zone round BT services
- Buffer zone round Scottish Power services
- Buffer zone round Scottish Water services
- Proposed development area
- Area stripped of vegetation
- Evaluation trench
- Trackway



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