



LAND 16-18 HIGH TOWN, HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

commissioned by Hook Mason on behalf of Omaha Guernsey LP

May 2016





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PARISH Hereford LOCAL AUTHORITY Herefordshire PROJECT MANAGER Andy Boucher

Steve Thomson AUTHOR

FIELDWORK Steve Thomson

GRAPHICS Beata Wieczorek-Oleksy, Mano Kapazoglou **APPROVED BY** Andy Boucher — Project Manager



MIDLANDS & WEST

Headland Archaeology Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road, Hereford HR2 6JR

2016 by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd

01432 364 901

www.headlandarchaeology.com



PROJECT SUMMARY

Archaeological field evaluation, via trial trenching at 16–18 High Town Hereford, revealed evidence of a post-medieval path and brick wall foundations relating to a former cellar with associated dumped deposits.

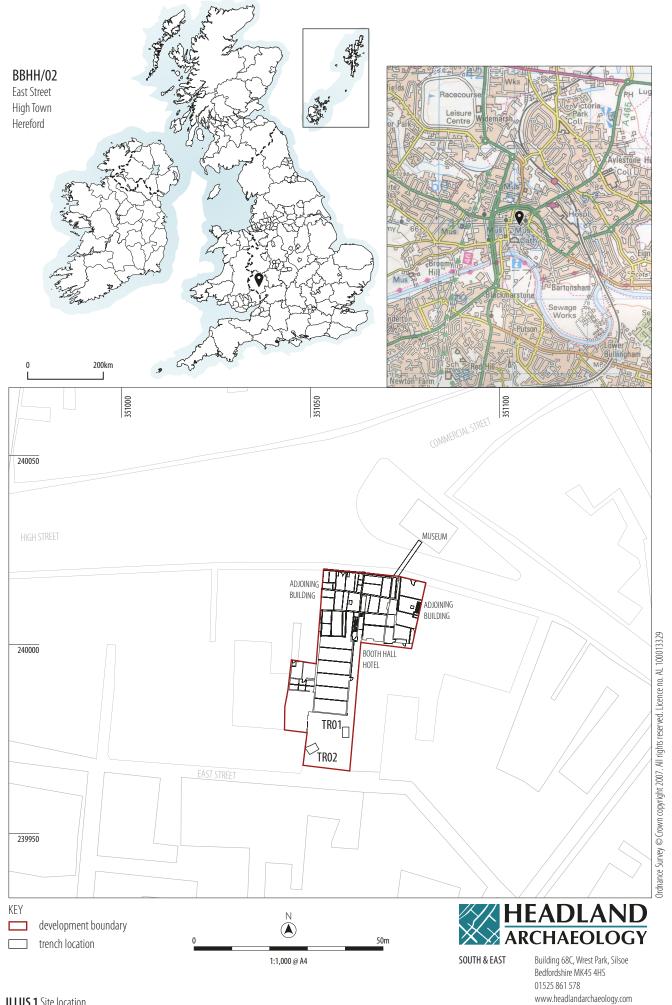
An earlier clay-bonded stone wall had been incorporated into the cellar walls and is possibly a remnant of a late-medieval or early post-medieval structure.

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LAND 16-18 HIGH TOWN, HEREFORD

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological site investigation on land at 16–18 High Town, Hereford. The site is proposed for commercial and residential development.

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES

The site represents a block of building land in central Hereford that was badly damaged as the result of an extensive fire. Planning permission is being sought to redevelop the site.

The proposal relates to a mixed residential and commercial development, with commercial development on the street frontage, a courtyard to the rear and residential property fronting East Street to the south.

An archaeological investigation was required to establish the potential impact of the proposed development upon the archaeological resource present within the southern extent of the site. Desk based work, combined with engineers bore holes, had already defined the extent and levels of preservation of archaeological features and deposits within the central and northern parts of the site.

Discussions with Julian Cotton of Herefordshire Archaeology in March 2016, agreed the scope of archaeological works required. In response to this, a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was prepared by Headland Archaeology (2016a) and approved by Julian Cotton.

1.2 SITE LOCATION, DESCRIPTION AND SETTING

The site is located in the core of central Hereford, centred at NGR SO 51058 39993 and is within the Hereford Area of Archaeological Importance.

The ground is currently covered by a tarmac surface on relatively level land and is flanked by buildings to the east and west.

The underlying solid geology within the site comprises Triassic Mercia Mudstone overlain by glacial sands and gravels (British Geological Survey website; http://www.bgs.ac.uk).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

A preliminary heritage assessment was prepared for the site (Headland Archaeology 2016b). The background described here is derived from that document.

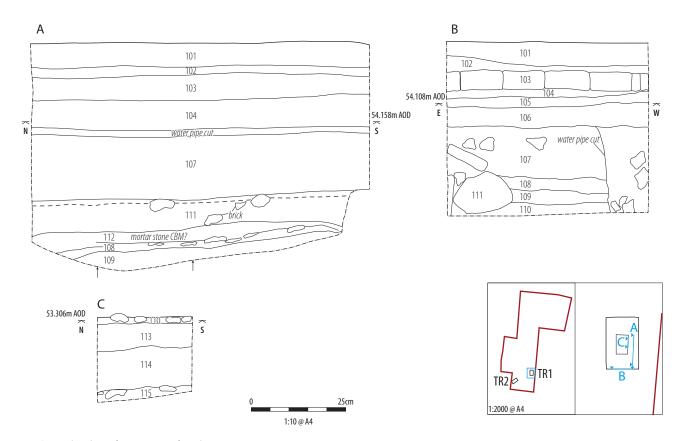
The proposed residential buildings straddle the buried former line of the Saxon bank which formed part of the city defences.

In May 1997 Archaeological Investigations recorded sections through the Saxon Defensive rampart, during engineering works associated with a sewer repair in East Street to the east of the proposed development (1997). The investigation recorded the top of the surviving rampart approximately 0.50 below ground level and below this, stratified sequences of phases of formation of the bank.

During the refurbishment of 16–18 High Town in 1992 a salvage excavation was mounted to record stratified levels going back to the Saxon defences, preserved beneath two bays of a 15th century building. Stratified archaeological deposits over 2m thick were identified. These deposits were identified to the north of the evaluation area.

1.4 THE SAXON RAMPART AND POSSIBLE ASSOCIATED WALL

The earliest known defences of the City of Hereford were built in the mid-9th century. The turf and clay rampart is believed to have been 9.5m in width and 2.5m high. Originally faced with timber, a stone revetment wall was added in the first half of the 10th century. An intramural communication road is thought to have been constructed to the rear of the rampart around this time. The defensive circuit was extended to include the northern part of the city at the end of the 12th century and the defences along the line of what is now East Street became redundant. Excavations have indicated that the defences fell into disuse and gradually deteriorated to a smooth bank and overgrown ditch. Some doubt remains whether East Street and West Street marks the line of the rampart or the course of the communication road which ran along the back of the defences.



ILLUS 2 North and west facing sections of Trench 1

In May 1997 excavations for a sewer repair in East Street (30m north-west of the south end of Offa Street) identified a sequence of alternating gravel and soil layers of varying thickness (Hoverd 1998). The top of this sequence only lay 200mm beneath the road surface in places although it is possible that deposits encountered down to 0.5–0.8m below modern ground level comprise make up for recent roads. If this was the case then the top of surviving archaeological deposits would be 56.7m AOD. The archaeological sequence was 2.2m thick with the top of what was believed to be the Saxon ground surface lying at 54.5m AOD.

Work prior to a new Cathedral Sports hall (Craddock-Bennett 2008) further east along East Street included the excavation of a trench across the road (Area 6) and investigation of deposits behind this to the south. Taking into account the topography of the site and the results of the watching brief, it would appear that Shoesmith (1982) is correct in his belief that the present East Street/West Street lies on the tail of the rampart, with the crest being beneath the plots to the north of the street. No evidence was found for a rampart face in the area 6 trench which revealed what are believed to be rampart deposits. The uppermost of these deposits was interpreted as a metalled trackway whose surface lay at 55.63m AOD. This and the deposits beneath it are very similar to the layers 1013, 1014 and 1015 in the Sewer repair trench on East Street and lie at a similar height, implying continuity of the sequence over quite a distance. On the Cathedral School investigation natural gravels lay at 53.7m AOD about 0.5m deeper than those observed to the west in the sewer repair trench (54.2m AOD) implying the natural ground levels slope downwards to the east.

No evidence for the earliest, 9th century, stage of the defences was found during the excavation of the Area 6 trench, in fact six previous

archaeological observations made on the line of the northern defences to the east of the Berrington Streethave failed to reveal this. The earliest deposit encountered was a light brown silty clay which extended the full length of the trench. The appearance of the deposit is consistent with descriptions of the second stage, 10th century, rampart material from other sites along the line of the defences. The deposit also contained pottery dated to the 10th century. A loosely compacted gravel deposit overlay the rampart material.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the investigation were set out in the WSI.

The primary objectives were identified as follows:

- > to identify the extent and preservation of surviving Saxon deposits associated with the defensive ramparts;
- > to record the nature of such deposits;
- to produce and deposit a satisfactory archive and disseminate the results of the work via grey-literature reporting and publication as appropriate.

Additionally the evaluation sought to:

- determine the character, date, extent and distribution of any archaeological deposits and their potential significance;
- > determine levels of disturbance to any archaeological deposits





ILLUS 3 General view Trench 1, looking north, showing surface [110]
ILLUS 4 Plan view surface [115] Trench 1

from plough damage or from any other agricultural/industrial practices or later building activities;

- investigate and record all deposits and features of archaeological interest within the areas to be disturbed by the current development;
- determine the likely impact on archaeological deposits from the proposed development.

3 METHOD

The fieldwork was conducted in accordance with the above mentioned WSI's and method statement and in accordance with the following documents:

- > Code of Conduct (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014a)
- Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014b)

Prior to excavation, utility plans were consulted and a cable avoidance tool was used to check the presence of potential buried services. Hand excavation of potential service trenches was undertaken to ensure any identified services were left undisturbed.

Trenches were excavated using a 360° 3-tonne mini-digger using a toothed bucket to remove demolition debris and a toothless bucket to reveal deposits below this. A small sondage was excavated in Trench 1 via a combination of machine and hand excavation.

All recording followed standard archaeological guidelines as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). The recorded contexts were assigned unique numbers and recording was undertaken on Headland Archaeology pro forma trench and context record sheets.

Drawings of significant archaeological remains and the general stratigraphy of the site were produced at a scale of 1:10 with plans of the exposed remains produced at 1:20. Levels were taken on exposed remains and surfaces using a dumpy level with a benchmark recorded using a Trimble DGPS.

Digital and black and white photographs were taken of trenches and identified features, with a graduated metric scale clearly visible. An overall site plan of the trenches and recorded features was produced.

4 RESULTS

4.1 TRENCH 1

The trench was excavated to a depth of approximately 1.10m deep with a small sondage located towards the centre down to a depth of 1.49m revealing a sequence of stratified deposits (ILLUS 2).

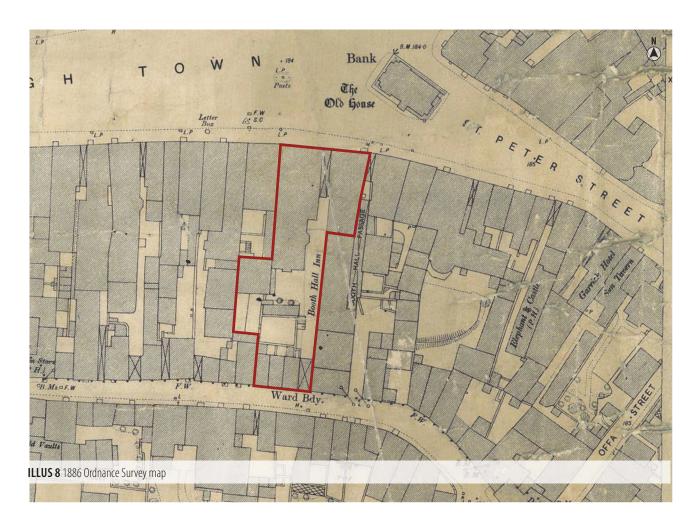
The earliest deposit encountered was recorded in the sondage at 53.31m AOD, and comprised a metaled surface [115] incorporating stone, tile and gravel (ILLUS 3 and 4) from which a sherd of pottery and fragments of tile of post-medieval to modern date were recovered.

ILLUS 5 Plan of Trench 2 features



ILLUS 6 General view features Trench 2





This surface was sealed by a reddish brown gravel and sandy clay levelling deposit (114) from which pottery of 19th Century date was recovered. This in turn was sealed by a reddish grey sandy clay gravel (113) which was interpreted as a setting deposit for a further metaled surface (110) which consisted of rounded cobbles of variable sizes, compacted within a sandy gravel matrix (ILLUS 3).

Overlying [110] were two further surfaces [109] and [108]/[111]. Deposit [109] largely consisted of gravels and stone and was heavily compacted. It was partially truncated at its southern extent by large cobbled stones in [111] which were set within gravels originally identified as [108] in the southern section of the trench. The two layers were identified as being different elements of the same phase of surface. The sequence of surfaces lay between 53.80 and 53.50m AOD.

Adjacent to these surfaces, at approximately 53.50m AOD was a reddish grey sandy clay and gravel (116) which was identified as likely to represent a former ground surface. Fragments of brick and charcoal were noted within the deposit.

Sealing these deposits was a layer of made ground comprising demolition debris and gravels (107) which in turn was sealed by a brick surface and make up layers [103], (104), (105) and (106), with the final deposits represented by the present tarmac and make up layer (101) and (102) respectively.

4.2 TRENCH 2 (ILLUS 5, 6 AND 7)

The earliest deposit encountered at 52.96m AOD, was a pinkish brown sandy clay (211) containing occasional charcoal and ceramic building material fragments and rounded and angular gravel. The deposit was identified as a former ground surface. Cutting (211) was a heavily truncated linear feature (213) exposed in a sondage, oriented south-east – north-west and lined with rounded stone cobbles. It was filled with a green, sticky sandy clay cess deposit (212) and the feature was identified as a cobble lined drain or culvert.

Overlying the culvert [204], was a stone wall foundation (ILLUS 7) oriented east-west and bonded with a red clay. The foundation extended beyond the limits of the excavation area and measured greater than 3m east-west and 0.60m wide, surviving to seven courses, 0.73m deep. The top of the wall was encountered at 53.98m AOD.

Abutting the northern face of [204] was a solid rectangular brick structure [205] bonded with a gritty mortar and measuring 0.84m long by 0.60m wide. To the east of this an associated stone slab surface [206] was partially exposed and to its west a ceramic tile surface [209] also abutted the rectangle of bricks and wall [204], indicating [204] had been incorporated or re-used in the structure defined by the rectangular brick structure and surfaces.

On its western side [204] had been cut away and truncated by a north-south oriented brick wall foundation [205] (ILLUS 7). The base of [204] was observed to continue west below [205].



ILLUS 9 View of moulded stonework from Trench 2 (2903)

Abutting the eastern face of [204] was a brick wall [207] which survived nine courses high and was laid in a stretcher bond, two bricks wide. The wall was interpreted as being a partition wall.

Lying against the eastern face of [204] was a dark grey gritty clayey sand dumped deposit (210) containing large amounts of broken bottle glass, ceramics, brick and tile fragments, occasional animal bone and iron nails and objects. Ceramics and a coin recovered from the deposit dated it to no earlier than 1860. The deposit was not excavated to its base and interpreted as a probable cellar backfill.

The upper deposits in the trench sealed the identified features and were represented by made ground (203) and the present tarmac and make up layer (201) and (202).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 LATE MEDIEVAL OR EARLY POST-MEDIEVAL

Two deposits (211) and (116) identified during the evaluation were recorded as possibly representing former ground surfaces. These were encountered at 52.96 and 53.50m AOD respectively. If they are former ground surfaces, then these are likely to lie within the upper fills of the Saxon ditch cut, or relate to material overlying and developed over the remnants of the Saxon bank. No dateable material was retrieved from either deposit with only intrusive brick and tile fragments noted. The general level of contamination from overlying made ground renders secure dating difficult from the top of the exposed deposits. However, it would seem likely that these deposits are of considerably later date than the Saxon defences.

The remains of a clay-bonded stone wall was incorporated into a Victorian cellar construction. Although no directly associated dateable material was recovered, the nature of the construction would suggest an earlier date for the construction of the wall. Moulded masonry recovered from the made ground deposit (ILLUS 9) is of a style which suggests an earlier date, and the presence of

a building of medieval date in the vicinity. Mortar adhering to the stone implies its later re-use. It may derive from the demolition of structural remains associated with the stone wall foundation, though this cannot be unequivocally stated.

5.2 POST-MEDIEVAL

Trench one revealed a sequence of compacted, trampled and metaled surfaces sloping downward from the south to the north, none of which extended wider than 1m from the eastern edge of the trench. A passageway accessing the market area of Hereford from East Street is recorded as recently as 1886 (ILLUS 8) and dating from the surfaces identified shows a sequence of repair or resurfacing of a path during the post-medieval period.

From the evidence of the composition of the trampled and metaled surfaces and the known deposits of gravels forming the Saxon defences and associated road, it is probable that much of the gravel incorporated within the paths recorded has derived from an element of levelling and eroding of the rampart itself.

Trench two recorded a sequence of wall foundations and surfaces of brick construction which appear to be associated and are likely to relate to structures defined on the 1886 map (ILLUS 8). The dumped material sealed below made ground would also suggest the presence of a cellar in this area. A coin recovered from the cellar dump would suggest a date for its infilling of no earlier than 1860. A cess-filled culvert could be a later insertion beneath the early stone wall following abandonment of the cellar.

6 CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations at 16–18 High Town, Hereford revealed evidence of former path surfaces of post-medieval to Victorian date and structural remains of post-medieval date, incorporating the remains of an earlier structure.

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The presence of a possible cellar in the southwest of the site may well have truncated any surviving remains relating to the Saxon defences. However, the full extent of the Victorian deposits was not established during the evaluation beyond 1.35m below ground surface.

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8 APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 TRENCH AND CONTEXT REGISTER

DBGL = Depth below ground level

TR01	ORIENTATION	L(M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)
	N-S	3	1.6	1.10
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION	DBGL(M)		
101	Tarmac ground	0-0.12		
102	Mid brownish y	ellow sa	nd and gravel, make up layer for tarmac	0.12-0.17
103	Red brick surfac	e, yard s	urface	0.17-0.28
104	Reddish grey br surface 103	rown, sar	ndy clay and gravel, setting deposit for brick	0.28-0.32
105	Greyish white o	oncrete,	former setting deposit	0.30-0.35
106	Dark reddish broup for 105	own, cor	npacted pea gravel and sand, setting/make	0.35
107	Mid greyish red ground	0.45		
108	Compacted pea trampled pathy	0.75		
109	Compact gravel pathway	0.79-1.10		
110	Rounded cobble	es and g	ravel — mettled surface — pathway	0.85-1.13
111	Light greyish br	own clay	yey sand and gravel, levelling deposit	0.82
112	Levelling/settin 0.03-0.13m de	0.94		
113	Mid reddish gre	y sandy	clay gravel, probable setting deposit for 110	1.13
114	Reddish brown	1.26		
115	Stone and tile so pathway	1.49		
116			d sandy clay containing frequent brick — earlier ground surface	0.87

SUMMARY: Series of probable path/mettled surfaces N-S oriented underlying made ground and modern surfaces

TR02	ORIENTATION	L(M)	W (M)	AV. D (M)		
	-	_	1.6	_		
CONTEXT	DESCRIPTION			DBGL(M)		
201	Tarmac ground	surface		0-0.12		
202	Mid brownish y	ellow sa	nd and gravel, make up layer for tarmac	0.12-0.23		
203	Mid greyish red	-brown	sandy clay and demolition debris — made	0.23-0.94		
204			oughly hewn blocks, 7 random courses, ong, 0.60m wide	0.48		
205	Brick plinth, 0.8	4 x 0.60i	m x > 0.15deep, 2 courses stretchers	0.47		
206	Stone slab surfa north	0.60				
207	Brick wall found	0.23				
208	Brick wall found	0.28				
209	Ceramic tile floo	0.60				
210	Dumped depos ceramic, CBM fr Fe Nails, bolts, o	0.94				
211	Pinkish brown s fragments fragr or subsoil	1.18				
212	Green sticky sar deposit, fill of [2	1.18				
213	Heavily disturbe	1.18				
SUMMARY: Wall foundations, floor surfaces, dumped deposits						

APPENDIX 2 FINDS ASSESSMENT

JULIE FRANKLIN

The finds assemblage numbered nine sherds (623g) of pottery, six sherds (381g) of ceramic building material, a copper alloy coin and a single find of clay pipe. All the finds were of post-medieval or modern date. The assemblage is summarised in Table 2.1 and a complete catalogue is given at the end.

FEATURE	POTTERY (MOD)		COPPER ALLOY	CLAY PIPE	CBM	CBM	DATING
	COUNT	WGT	COUNT	COUNT	COUNT	WGT	-
Levelling 114	3	9g	-	1	-	-	19th
Surface 115	1	2g	_	_	6	381g	PM-Mod
Dump 210	5	612g	1	-	-	-	M-L19th
TOTAL	9	623G	1	1	6	381G	-

TABLE A2.1 Assemblage summary by feature

Pottery

The pottery includes some large sherds of blue transfer printed tablewares in dump (210). Smaller sherds of commonly found brownwares, yellow wares and stoneware were found in other deposits. The sherds are all of probable 19th century date, though the single brownware sherd found in surface (115) may be earlier.

Finds

The coin was a Victorian halfpenny. The date was illegible but the type was minted from 1860 to 1882, though may have been in circulation for much longer. The clay pipe was a small stem sherd of probable modern date. The ceramic building material was made up of flat roof tile sherds, some unusually thin at 9–12mm, others thicker at 20mm. They cannot be closely dated but are likely to be of postmedieval or later date.

Discussion

The most useful part of the finds assemblage in terms of dating was found in dump (210). The coin gives a clear terminus post quem of 1860 for this deposit but it could have been laid down at any point in the subsequent few decades. The pottery is consistent with this dating.

The dating of levelling deposit (114) also appears to be 19th century. Surface (115) contained only roof tile and a single pottery sherd and cannot be closely dated. It may be contemporary with other features or may stretch back into the 18th or even 17th centuries.

Appendix 2.1 Finds catalogue

TR	CONTEXT	QNT	WGT (G)	MATERIAL	OBJECT	DESCRIPTION	SPOT DATE
1	114	1	1	Clay Pipe	Stem	narrow stem, wide bore, near mouthpiece?	L18th—E20th
1	114	3	9	Pottery (Mod)	Various	whiteware willow plate rim; stoneware bottle fragment, yellow ware with white banding	19th
1	115	1	2	Pottery (Mod)	Brownware	small rim sherd	17th-19th
1	115	6	381	CBM	Roof tile	various flat tile sherds, red sandy fabric, some very thin, 9-12mm, some thicker, 20mm	PM-Mod
2	210	1	6	Copper Alloy	Coin	Victoria halfpenny, corroded and date illegible	1860-82
2	210	5	612	Pottery (Mod)	Whiteware	large blue transfer printed sherds, three plate rime, one willow, two other floral border designs; heavy rim and complete splayed base possibly from same tureen, landscape designs on exterior and inside of base, no makers marks	19th





SOUTH & EAST

Headland Archaeology Building 68C, Wrest Park, Silsoe Bedfordshire MK45 4HS

01525 861 578

MIDLANDS & WEST

Headland Archaeology Unit 1, Clearview Court, Twyford Road Hereford HR2 6JR

01432 364 901

midlandsandwest@headlandarchaeology.com

NORTH

Headland Archaeology Unit 16, Hillside, Beeston Road Leeds LS11 8ND

0113 387 6430

north@headlandarchaeology.com

SCOTLAND

Headland Archaeology 13 Jane Street Edinburgh EH6 5HE

0131 467 7705

scotland@headlandarchaeology.com

 $\underline{www.headlandarchaeology.com}$