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Archaeological Watching Brief
Bavington Mount, Hallington

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Farm Energy Partnership

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ARS Ltd Report No. 2014/113

OASIS No. archaeol5-190558

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: An Archaeological Watching Brief at Bavington Mount, Hallington, Northumberland

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council

Location: NY 98657 78005

Geology: Sandstone Sedimentary Bedrock of the Alston Formation with overlying superficial deposits of Devensian Glacial Till

Date: 18 September 2014

In September 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Farm Energy Partnership to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Bavington Mount, Hallington, Northumberland. The watching brief monitored the removal of topsoil and subsoil deposits present within the proposed location of an access road and associated wind turbine. The excavation work was conducted under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket.

No finds or features of archaeological significance were encountered during the watching brief.

2 Introduction

- 2.1 In September 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Farm Energy Partnership to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Bavington Mount, Hallington Northumberland. The watching brief monitored the removal of topsoil and subsoil deposits present within the proposed location of an access road and associated wind turbine due to be constructed upon the site.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.2 The parish of Bavington is situated in southern Northumberland and stretches from Sweethope Moss in the north-west, through the crags of Sweethope, Bavington and Throckington, to the pastureland and parkland of Little Bavington in the south-east. Bavington Mount is located approximately 0.5km south of Little Bavington.
- 2.3 The earliest evidence for human activity, within Bavington parish, has been dated to the Late Neolithic and derives from the discovery of two polished stone axes at Throckington and Great Bavington. A Bronze Age settlement at Sweethope Crags and a burial cairn, located 500m north-west of Crookdene Farm, provides additional evidence for prehistoric activity occurring within the Bavington area (English Heritage, 2014).
- 2.4 Evidence for Iron Age and Romano-British settlement within Bavington parish has also been identified within the vicinity of both Bavington and Throckington. Furthermore, a potential Iron-Age or Romano-British earthwork enclosure is located, in close proximity to the site, at Dovecote Hill. The Iron Age or Romano-British settlements listed above are largely represented by sub-rectangular or sub-circular enclosures, defined by a simple earthen bank and ditch with associated field systems (Northumberland County Council, 2013).
- 2.5 There is little evidence for early medieval settlement present within Bavington parish and only villages post-dating the Norman Conquest have been positively identified. These include Little Bavington, Great Bavington, Hawick and Sweethope. The remains of medieval settlement structures are also present within the vicinity of Throckington Village and survive as earthworks in association with medieval ridge and furrow plough scarring (Northumberland County Council, 2013).

2.6 The Shafto family acquired the Bavington estate in the 15th century through marriage to the Bavington Heiress. In 1716 William Shafto and his son John were attainted for their part in the Jacobite rebellion of 1715 and the Bavington estate was forfeited and sold by the Crown to Admiral George Deval. Deval heavily modified the pre-existing country house owned by the Shafto's and he is regarded as being responsible for the majority of the structure visible at the grade II listed stately home Bavington Hall. Deval also embarked upon extensive landscaping of the parkland bordering Bavington Hall in the eighteenth century. Deval has been assigned responsibility for the formation of a number of lakes and avenues as part of his redevelopment of Bavington Hall. An eighteenth century, gothic style, eyecatcher at Dovecote Hill has also been attributed to Deval's formal landscaping of the land surrounding Bavington Hall (English Heritage, 2014).

METHOD STATEMENT

- 2.7 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks associated with the construction of an access road and wind turbine at Bavington Mount, Hallington, Northumberland.
- 2.8 The topsoil and subsoil deposits present within the bounds of the impacted area were removed by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed in level spits until the natural substrate was identified. All machine excavation was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 2.9 All deposits were recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Each context was recorded on pro-forma records which included the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.
- 2.10 A photographic record was maintained throughout the watching brief including post-excavation photographs of the excavated area.

3 Results

- 3.1 The monitored area was broadly orientated on a NW-SE alignment and measured 224.7m x 22m at its maximum extent (Figure 2). The excavated strip of land comprising the access road bisected two fields located south-west of the farm situated at Bavington Mount. The monitored excavations within the north field were bordered by a north-south orientated road which intersects with the B6342 1km north of the site (Figure. 1). The area excavated within the north field measured 17.22m x 11.9m x 0.39m at its maximum extent.

- 3.2 The watching brief area situated within the southern field ran 113m upslope on an E-W alignment before turning onto a NW-SE orientation and continuing for a further 83m to the summit of the hill. The area excavated within the southern field measured 168.2m x 22.1m x 0.29m at its maximum extent.
- 3.3 A loosely compacted, blackish-brown, topsoil (101) was identified as the uppermost deposit within the watching brief area and contained small, sub-angular, stony inclusions. Topsoil deposit (101) varied in thickness from a maximum depth of 0.30m at the north-west extent of the site to a depth of 0.18m within the south-eastern extent of the watching brief area. Topsoil deposit (101) sealed a yellowish-brown, silty-clay subsoil (102) with an average thickness of 0.12m. Subsoil deposit (102) overlay a dark, orangey-brown, sandy-clay natural substrate.
- 3.4 No finds or features of archaeological significance were identified within the watching brief area.

4 Discussion

- 4.1 The construction of a wind turbine and an associated access road necessitated the removal of overlying deposits of topsoil and subsoil from the natural clay substrate within the bounds of the proposed development area (Figure 2). The excavations were dug to a maximum depth of 0.38m and revealed no finds or features of archaeological significance.
- 4.2 No further archaeological work is recommended within the bounds of the watching brief area.

5 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

- 5.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

6 Statement of Indemnity

- 6.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

7 Acknowledgements

- 7.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work. In particular we would like to thank Farm Energy Partnership for commissioning this work.

8 References

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9 Appendix

9.1 Appendix A- Figures

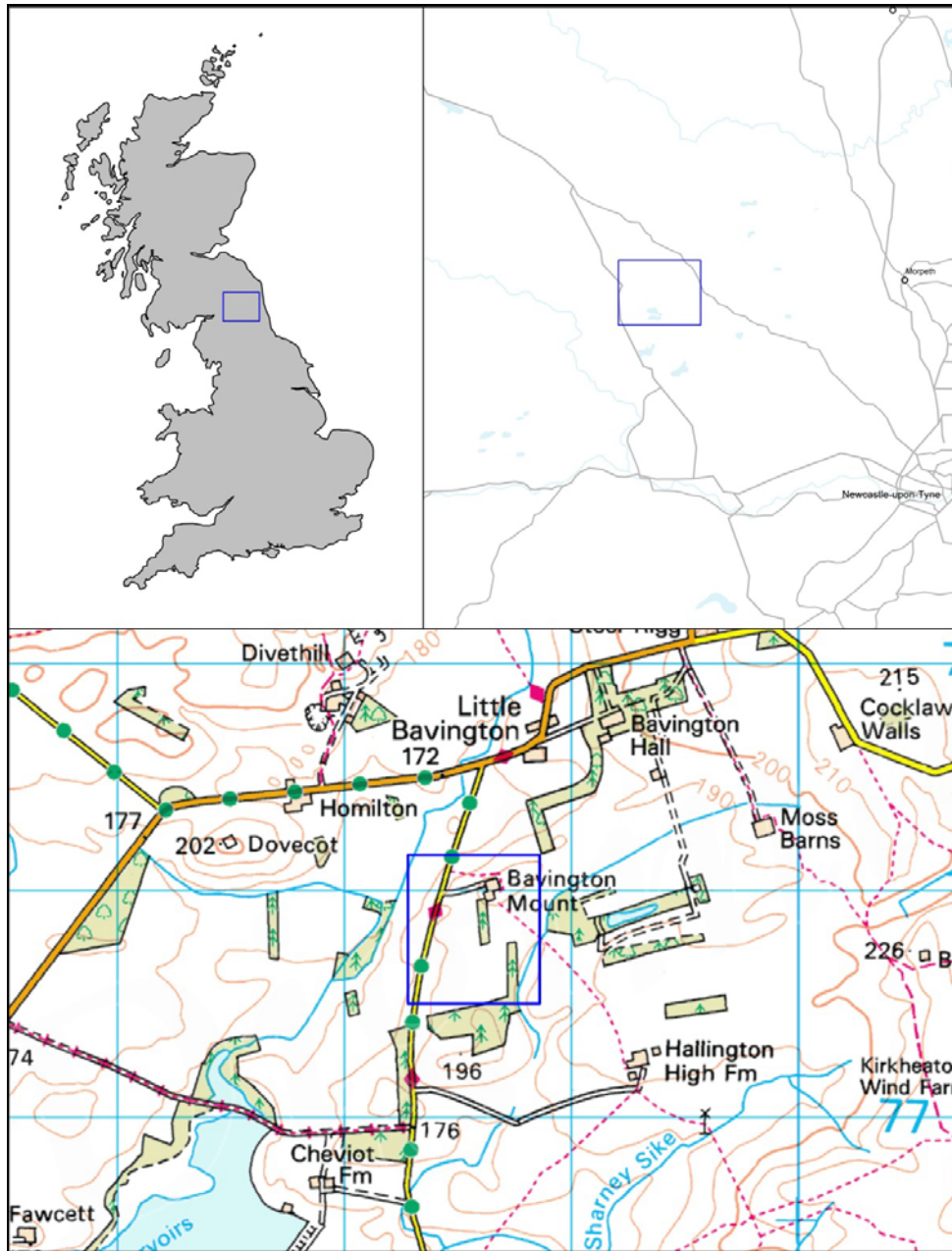


FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION PLAN

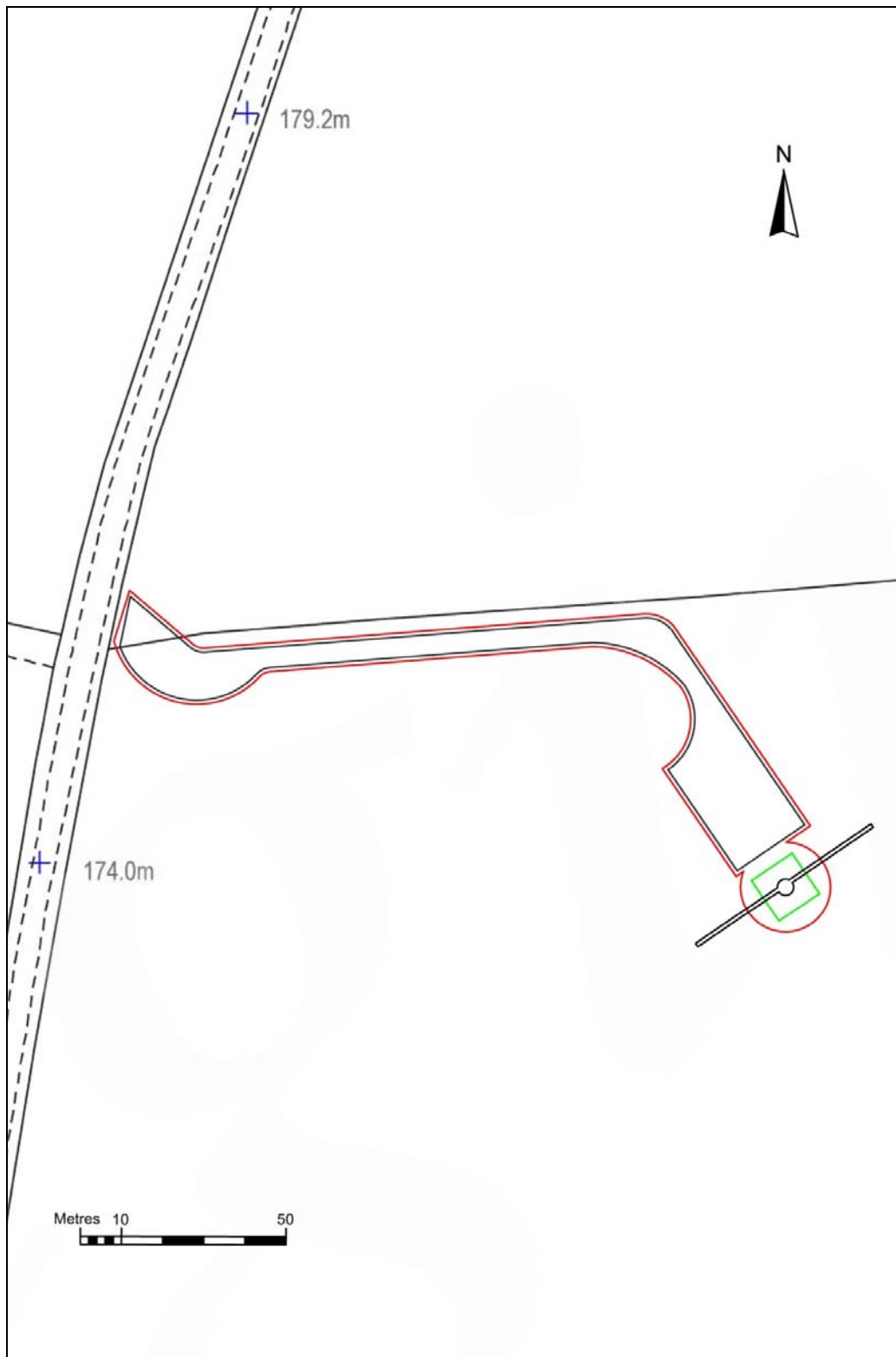


FIGURE 2: DETAILED PLAN OF WATCHING BRIEF AREA



FIGURE 3: NORTH-WEST FACING POST-EXCAVATION SHOT OF NORTH-WEST-WEST EXTENT OF WATCHING BRIEF AREA



FIGURE 4: NORTH-WEST FACING POST-EXCAVATION SHOT OF EASTERN EXTENT OF WATCHING BRIEF AREA LOOKING TOWARDS DOVECOTE HILL



FIGURE 5: NORTH-WEST FACING POST-EXCAVATION SHOT OF SOUTH-EASTERN EXTENT OF WATCHING BRIEF AREA LOOKING TOWARDS DOVECOTE HILL



FIGURE 6: WEST FACING POST-EXCAVATION SHOT OF SOUTH-EASTERN EXTENT OF WATCHING BRIEF, OVERLOOKING THE PROPOSED WIND TURBINE LOCATION



FIGURE 7: EAST-NORTH-EAST FACING REPRESENTATIVE SECTION DISPLAYING TOPSOIL (101), SUBSOIL (102) AND NATURAL CLAY SUBSTRATE (103)

9.2 Appendix B- Tables

TABLE 1- PHOTOGRAPH REGISTER

PHOTOGRAPH NO.	DIRECTION OF VIEW	DESCRIPTION
1	South	Area shot of north-west extent of watching brief area.
2	North-west	Area shot of north-west extent of watching brief area.
3	East-north-east	Representative section shot of topsoil deposit (101), subsoil deposit (102) and natural clay substrate (103) within watching brief area.
4	East-north-east	Representative section shot of topsoil deposit (101), subsoil deposit (102) and natural clay substrate (103) within watching brief area.
5	North-west	Area shot of eastern extent of watching brief area, looking towards Dovecote Hill.
6	South-west	Area shot of eastern extent of watching brief area.
7	South-west	Area shot of eastern extent of watching brief area.
8	North-west	Area shot of eastern extent of watching brief area, looking towards Dovecote Hill.
9	North-west	Post-excavation area shot of wind turbine location.

TABLE 2- CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Description
101	Dark, blackish-brown topsoil deposit.
102	Light, yellowish-brown, silty-clay subsoil deposit.
103	Dark, orangey-brown, sandy-clay natural substrate.