Archaeological Evaluation and Recording of land adjacent to Pennymead, Main Road, Milfield



Opening of Trench One

ARS Ltd Report No. ARS3/39 June 2007

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ARS Ltd Report ARS3/39 2007

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Archaeological Research Services Ltd

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In June 2007 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Peter Forrester to undertake an archaeological evaluation and recording of land adjacent to Pennymead, at Milfield, Northumberland. The work was carried out prior to planning permission being granted for development of housing on the site.

The site lies within a landscape of considerable archaeological importance. However, the only feature identified was a palaeochannel and no archaeological remains were uncovered.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1 In June 2007, Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Peter Forrester to undertake an archaeological evaluation on the land adjacent to Pennymead, off the A697 in the village of Milfield, Northumberland (Fig. 1). The site is centred at NT93573385 and is to be developed for residential use.

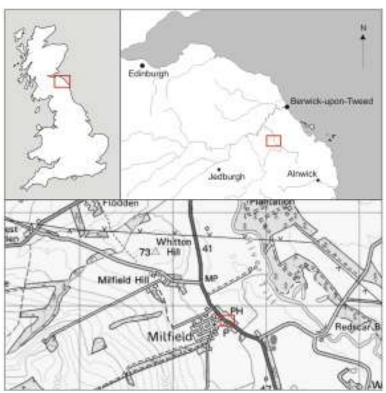


Fig. 1 Location of site. Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence no. 100045420

1.1.2 The site lies approximately 20.7km south of Berwick-Upon-Tweed and approximately 4km north of Wooler, on land at *c*.45m aOD.

1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The Milfield plain is an area of low-lying ground which contains a complex sedimentary sequence, with glaciodeltaic and glaciofluvial sand-and-gravel deposits fanning out from the valley of the River Glen to form a series of terraces (Passmore *et.al.* 2002).

2. METHODOLOGY

- An archaeological evaluation was carried out in order to determine whether there were any archaeological remains within the proposed development area. This involved the excavation and recording of one trench measuring 8m by 1.8m, and one test-pit measuring 1m by 1m. The trench was targeted to assess whether any archaeological remains survived outside the previous building footprint and whether or not the previous buildings had destroyed any archaeological features. The test-pit was located within the footprint of the access road to assess the level of truncation close to the site boundary (Fig. 2).
- 2.2 The trench was opened up by machine using a 1.5m wide, toothless ditching bucket. The earth was removed in successive spits, and the process was monitored by an archaeologist in order to assess whether any significant archaeological features were exposed. Each separate deposit encountered was given a unique context number (a Harris matrix can be found in Appendix I and a full context register can be found in Appendix II)
- 2.3 The trench was photographed using colour transparency film and black and white print film, as well as digital format (a photograph register is shown in Appendix III). The trench was recorded with above Ordnance Datum (aOD) levels and a section drawing and plan was completed at a scale of 1:20.

Fig 2

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Numerous and extensive archaeological remains are known from the vicinity of the development site, particularly dating from the Mesolithic (Waddington 1999), Neolithic (Harding 1981; Miket 1981; 1987; Waddington 1999; Waddington 2000), Bronze Age (Northumberland HER) and Anglo-Saxon periods (Gates and O'Brien 1988; O'Brien and Miket 1991; Keeney 1935). Mesolithic material, characterised by worked stone tools, have been recovered from a large-scale field walking programme across the Milfield Basin (Waddington 1999), and the fluvioglacial terraces of the Milfield plain would have been extremely favourable for exploitation by Mesolithic groups. The Milfield Basin would have remained a significant focus of resources within the landscape throughout the Neolithic, the period from which the largest concentration of archaeological sites around the quarry is known. This includes the extensive 'ritual landscape' comprising mortuary enclosures, henges, burial monuments and other features, such as settlement sites. The henges include those at Milfield North (NT933349), Milfield South (NT939225), Coupland (NT940330), Marleyknowe (NT942322), Ewart Park (NT956317), Akeld (NT958307), Yeavering (NT92843042) and Wooler Cricket Pitch (NU00102781) of which Milfield South, Coupland and Marleyknowe appear to be linked by a bounded avenue or 'droveway' (Harding 1981; Waddington and Passmore in press). Excavations at Coupland, Thirlings, Cheviot Quarry, Lanton Quarry and Yeavering have produced early and late Neolithic ceramic assemblages. Field walking within the site of Lanton Quarry also produced Mesolithic and Neolithic/Early Bronze Age lithics as well as Grimston Ware ceramics (Waddington 1999).
- 3.2 Bronze Age activity from the vicinity of the development area is evidenced by the numerous ring ditches and burial mounds, which include a barrow cemetery at Whitton Hill (Miket 1985) and the recent discovery of two Bronze Age roundhouses at Cheviot Quarry (Johnson and Waddington in press). Within Cheviot Quarry early and late Beaker ceramic assemblages have been recovered.
- 3.3 There is good evidence for Iron Age settlement in the lowlands in the form of crop-marks of substantial, and often complex, fort sites, together with potential field systems and stock control boundaries. Romano-British settlement sites are also known from the surrounding vicinity in the form of both upstanding and crop-mark remains of enclosed rectangular farmsteads. Anglo-Saxon activity is well attested across the landscape, with the royal palace site of Yeavening (Hope-Taylor 1977) to the south-west and the replacement palace site at Maelmin (Gates and O'Brien 1988) to the east of the development area. Excavations at Thirlings, to the south-east, produced evidence for extensive early medieval settlement (O'Brien and Miket 1991) and two burials were found at nearby Galewood Farm in 1852. Excavations at New Bewick demonstrated the presence of a sunkenfeatured building amongst a crop-mark complex of many other such buildings (Gates and O'Brien 1988), and excavations at Lanton Quarry revealed evidence for six sunken-featured buildings and four post-built buildings, whilst the excavations at Cheviot Quarry found three post-built buildings which date to the late 5th or early 6th centuries A.D. (Johnson and Waddington in press). Later activity relates to the agricultural use of the plain, with nucleated settlements, one possibly near Milfield village and one beneath the present ornamental gardens at

Ewart Park, surrounded by a patchwork of ridge-and-furrow field systems that are still visible on aerial photographs.

3.4 Given the close proximity of this site to known archaeology, there was the possibility that the site contained significant archaeological remains. The site had previously been developed upon however, the area originally holding three houses and a byre. The construction, and subsequent demolition, of these buildings may have truncated or destroyed any previous archaeological features.

4 RESULTS

4.1.1 Evaluation Trench One

Trench One was located at the north-west end of the proposed development site at NT9357433851 and was orientated approximately north-south. It was positioned on a level area of ground, currently utilised as a car park for patrons of the Milfield Café. The stratigraphy consisted of six deposits and one intrusive feature, the foundations of a previous building. The trench was excavated to a total depth of 1.66m. The uppermost deposit was an imported gravel (001) used as the car park's upper surface, which measured 0.09m in depth. Directly beneath this was a deposit of hardcore (002) which measured 0.16m in depth. In the northern half of the trench, outside of the demolished building's footprint was a deposit of asphalt (003). This deposit was predominantly asphalt on the surface and in the lower level of this context was a mixture of asphalt and modern demolition debris, which measured 0.3m in depth. In the centre of the trench the former building's wall foundation (008) was revealed. This consisted of a trench 0.9m wide by 0.55m in depth, and contained large stones 0.5m in width within a dark black-brown matrix. In the southern end of the trench, internal to the former building, no asphalt was present. Running through the trench from approximately east to west was a palaeochannel. This consisted of three contexts. The upper deposit (004) consisted of dark-brown, coarse silty-sand, with large stone inclusions, measured 0.43m thick, and had been cut by the modern wall foundations. Lying below this deposit and grading into a second fluvial deposit was (005) which consisted of dark-brown silty-sand with some stone inclusions, which measured 0.4m in depth. This graded into a third fluvial deposit of fine, brown silty-sand, (006), which measured 0.29m in depth. A layer of fine clay (007) was revealed at the base of the trench (Fig. 3 and 4). This evaluation trench produced no features of archaeological importance.



Fig. 3. Evaluation Trench One, with the palaeochannel in the foreground, with foundation stones visible in section, indicated by arrows, looking south, scale = 2m

Fig 4

4.1.2 Test-Pit One

Test-Pit One was located approximately 10m south-west of Trench One. The stratigraphy consisted of five deposits and was excavated to a depth of 0.75m. The uppermost deposit was imported gravel (009) measuring 0.1m in depth. Below this was a deposit of hardcore (010) measuring 0.21m in depth. Beneath that was a layer of asphalt (011) measuring 0.18m in depth. Lying below this was a shallow layer of coarse dark brown subsoil (012) measuring 0.08m in depth. At the test-pit's base was the natural coarse light orange-brown gravel (013). There were no features of archaeological importance discovered in this test-pit (Fig. 5 and 6).



Fig. 5. Test-Pit One, looking south, scale = 1m

Fig 6

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The excavations at Pennymead did not reveal any archaeology features. The only feature which was cut into the natural sand and gravel substratum was a foundation trench for a modern building which previously stood on the site.

6. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

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

7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 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.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1 ARS Ltd would like to thank Peter Forrester for his support during all phases of the work at the site. We are also grateful to Northumberland County Council Conservation Team for their assistance with the site. Thanks are also given to the JCB driver, Keith.

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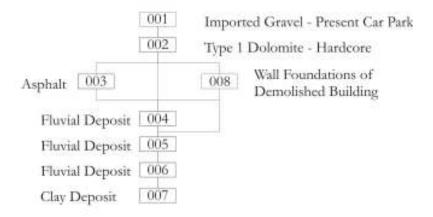
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APPENDIX I: HARRIS MATRICES

Pennymead Evaluation Trench One Stratigraphic Matrix



Pennymead Test Pit One Stratigraphic Matrix

Imported Gravel - Present Car Park	009
Type 1 Dolomite - Hardcore	010
Asphalt	011
Subsoil	012
Natural	013

APPENDIX II: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context no.	Trench	Finds	Description
1	1		Imported gravel bed of car park.
2	1		Type 1 hard core, compacted, light pink/brown, containing a large quantity of stones.
3	1	Ceramic tiles and stone inclusions in lower level of context.	Asphalt upper layer, with asphalt mixed with modern demolition below.
4	1		Coarse dark brown, silty sand with large stone inclusions
5	1		Dark brown silty sand, with medium sized stone inclusions
6	1		Fine brown silty sand with few small stone inclusions
7	1		Light pink/ brown fine clay
8	1		Dark black/ brown coarse foundation deposits, large boulder inclusions of modern building previously demolished
9	Test-Pit		Imported gravel bed of car park.
10	Test-Pit		Type 1 hard core, compacted, light pink/brown, containing a large quantity of stones.
11	Test-Pit		Asphalt layer
12	Test-Pit		Dark Brown silty sand subsoil
13	Test-Pit		Light Brown/orange silty sand, with few small stone inclusions

APPENDIX III: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Film One: Black and White

Shot Number	Photograph Content
1	East end of trench one, west facing section, looking east, scale = 1m
2	Trench one west facing section, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
3	Trench one west facing section, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
4	Trench one west facing section, close up, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
5	Trench one west facing section, close up, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
6	Test-Pit one, looking south, scale = 1m
7	Test-Pit one, looking south, scale = 1m
8	Test-Pit one east facing section, looking west, scale = 1m
9	Trench one, looking south, scale = 2m
10	Trench one, looking south, scale = 2m

Film Two: Colour Transparency

Shot Number	Photograph Content
1	East end of trench one, west facing section, looking east, scale = 1m
2	Trench one west facing section, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
3	Trench one west facing section, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
4	Trench one west facing section, close up, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
5	Trench one west facing section, close up, looking east, scale = 2m, 1m
6	Test-Pit one, looking south, scale = 1m
7	Test-Pit one, looking south, scale = 1m
8	Test-Pit one east facing section, looking west, scale = 1m
9	Trench one, looking south, scale = 2m
10	Trench one, looking south, scale = 2m

APPENDIX IV: SPECIFICATION

Written Scheme of Investigation: Land adjacent to Pennymead, Main Road, Milfield, Northumberland

Planning ref: 07/B/0262 NCCCT ref: B31/1; 7084

1. Introduction

- 1.1. A planning application has been submitted for the construction of a new dwelling on land adjacent to 'Pennymead', Main Road, Milfield. This written scheme of investigation details the works to be undertaken during an archaeological evaluation at the site in accordance with the brief prepared by the Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council, and telephone and email communications between the client, Archaeological Research Services Ltd and the Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council.
- 1.2 The proposed development site is situated at OS grid reference NT93573385, and lies at *c*.45m AOD, within a rich archaeological landscape that contains some of the most notable archaeological sites in Northumberland. There have been no previously recorded archaeological works on this site.
- 1.3 Numerous and extensive archaeological features are known from the vicinity of the development site, particularly dating from the Mesolithic (Waddington 1999), Neolithic (Harding 1981; Miket 1981; 1987; Waddington 1999; Waddington 2000) and Anglo-Saxon periods (Gates and O'Brien 1988; O'Brien and Miket 1991; Keeney 1935). Mesolithic material, characterised by worked stone tools, have been recovered from extensive fieldwalking programmes across the Milfield Basin (Waddington 1999). Neolithic monuments include the extensive ritual landscape of henges at Milfield North (NT933349), Milfield South (NT939225), Coupland (NT940330), Marleyknowe (NT942322), Ewart Park (NT956317) and Akeld (NT958307), of which Milfield South, Coupland and Marleyknowe are linked by a double ditched causeway. Excavations at Coupland, Thirlings, and Yeavering have produced early and late Neolithic ceramic assemblages, and Thirlings produced evidence for Neolithic structures, as have excavations at Cheviot Quarry (Johnson and Waddington forthcoming), Lanton Quarry (Johnson and Stafford unpub.) and Whitton Park (Waddington 2006). Bronze Age activity from the vicinity of the development site is evidenced by numerous ring ditches and burial mounds, which include a barrow cemetery at Whitton Hill. Other later prehistoric sites include a palisaded enclosure, visible on aerial photographs, to the south of the development area. Anglo-Saxon activity is extensive across the landscape, with the royal palace site of Maelmin, the replacement for the palace site at Yeavering, to the east of the development area. Excavations at Thirlings, to the south-east, produced evidence of extensive early medieval settlement and two burials were found at Galewood Farm in 1852. Later activity in the vicinity relates to the agricultural use of the plain, with nucleated settlements, one possibly near Milfield village and one beneath the present ornamental gardens at Ewart Park
- 1.4 The archaeological potential of a number of nearby sites has recently been investigated in connection with earlier planning applications (Cheviot Quarry,

Lanton Quarry and Whitton Park) and have revealed evidence for significant archaeological remains. Given the proximity of this site to known archaeology, there is a possibility that this site will contain significant archaeological remains forming part of the important prehistoric and / or Anglo-Saxon landscape of this area. However the site has been previously developed upon, and the area originally held three houses and a cow byre, the building of which may have truncated or destroyed any previous archaeological features. Northumberland County Council Conservation Team has therefore advised Berwick Borough Council that the archaeological potential of the site should be further investigated prior to the determination of this planning application. In this instance, it has been agreed that this should take the form of an archaeological evaluation trench and test-pit.

2. Site Specific Requirements

- 2.1. The client for this work is Peter Forrester who is proposing to develop the site for residential use. The client has provided a plan of the layout of the residence and location of the access roads which has been consulted to determine the trench and test-pit locations.
- 2.2 The work to be undertaken is a single archaeological trench and test-pit which aims to ascertain whether there are any archaeological constraints which may affect the planned development. This will be done by establishing the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their quality, depth and preservation.
- 2.2. The evaluation will comprise an evaluation trench measuring 8m long by 1.8m wide, targeted at the area of least disturbance to the northern end of the new building. A 1m by 1m test-pit will be located within the footprint of the access road to assess levels of truncation close to the site boundary.
- 2.3. The overall aim of the trial trenching will be:
 - to establish the presence/absence, nature, depth and character of any possible archaeological features
 - to make suggestions, where possible, about further mitigation which may be necessary to preserve archaeological features *in situ*, or
 - to make suggestions to preserve archaeological features by record, where necessary
 - to determine if further archaeological interventions are required
- 2.4. Should any changes in the trench dimensions or location become necessary, they will be discussed with the County Archaeologist and approved prior to work commencing on the site.
- 2.5. Access arrangements for mechanical excavation equipment have been confirmed with the client. Utility information has been requested prior to work commencing on site, so that the utilities can be avoided.
- 2.6. Services trenches will be required at a future point. These could potentially be dealt with by a watching brief.

3. Project Management and Standards

- 3.1. The project will be carried out in compliance with the codes of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) (2000) and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Excavations (1995).
- 3.2. All staff employed on the project will be suitably qualified and experienced for their respective project roles and have practical experience of archaeological excavation and recording. All staff will be made aware of the archaeological importance of the area surrounding the site and will be fully briefed on the work required by this specification. Each member of staff will be fully conversant with the aims and methodologies and will be given a copy of this written scheme of investigation to read. All members of staff employed by Archaeological Research Services Ltd are fully qualified and experienced archaeologists, this will ensure that appropriate decisions regarding environmental and dating sampling will be made in the field.

4. Methods

- 4.1. Topsoil and unstratified modern material will be removed by a machine using a wide, toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. No machinery will track over areas that have been stripped.
- 4.2. The trench and test-pit will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools in order to expose surviving archaeological features and deposits.
- 4.3. All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded on a pre-excavation plan before excavation, sampling and recording.
- 4.4. All features exposed will be excavated by hand. Sampling will typically comprise 50% of every discrete feature; 25% of linear/curvilinear features with non-uniform fill and 10% of linear features with a uniform fill.
- 4.5. In the event of human burials being discovered, they will be left *in-situ*, covered and protected and the coroners' office informed. If removal is essential, work will comply with relevant Home Office regulations.
- 4.6. Appropriate procedures under the relevant legislation will be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996.
- 4.7. Deposits that have the potential for providing environmental or dating evidence will be assessed while the work is in progress. An environmental sampling strategy has been agreed with the English Heritage Scientific advisor for North-East England, Jacqui Huntley. The sampling strategy comprises the following:
 - All intact archaeological contexts will be sampled. Small pit features will be 100% sampled while bulk samples of 40 litres will be taken from larger feature contexts, such as linear ditch fills.

- Any samples recovered will be floated on site in graduated sieves with the smallest being 500µm and the flots and residues collected. Samples will be analysed by B Johnson of Archaeological Research Services Ltd and an assessment report prepared in accordance with Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (HBMC 1991).
- 4.8. During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts and environmental samples will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this will include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions and immediate selection for conservation of valuable material).

5. Contingency

5.1. If the evaluation raises questions of an unexpected nature, attempts will be made to deal with the problem by agreed modification of this specification while the fieldwork is in progress. The client has been made aware that additional work may be required to properly characterise any features only partially exposed by the evaluation process.

6. Recording

- 6.1. The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
- 6.2. A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate.
- 6.3. The stratigraphy of the trench and test-pit will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 6.4. All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.
- 6.5. A photographic record of all contexts will be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept.
- 6.6. Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

7. Access

7.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will give the County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council 10 working days (or less if so agreed) notice of the commencement of fieldwork.

- 7.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will afford access to the County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council or their representative at all times, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological evaluation.
- 7.3. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will maintain regular communication with the County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council to ensure that the project aims and objectives are met.

8. Finds Processing and Storage

- 8.1. All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in compliance with the IFA guidelines for Finds Work (2001) and those set out by UKIC (1990).
- 8.2 Artefact collection and discard policies will be appropriate for the defined purpose.
- 8.3 Bulk finds which are not discarded will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labelling will be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded. This process will be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.
- All small finds will be recorded as individual items and appropriately packaged (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated. Prehistoric pottery will not be cleaned or be subject to any abrasion or loss of adhering residues.
- 8.5 During and after the excavation all objects will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (including controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will have appropriate security provision.
- 8.6 The deposition and disposal of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner and the Museum of Antiquities prior to the work taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner.
- 8.7 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

9. Site archive

9.1 The archive will be compiled in an orderly fashion to the standards and format set out in Management of Archaeological Projects 2 (HBMC 1991) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). The archive will be deposited with the Museum of Antiquities within 6 months of the fieldwork once all post-excavation work is completed and the final report produced.

10. Report

- 10.1 One copy of the report will be submitted to the client, and two hard copies (one bound and one unbound) and one digital copy will be submitted to the Northumberland SMR within fourteen working days of the completion of the fieldwork. Each report will be bound with each page and paragraph numbered and will include as a minimum the following:
 - executive summary
 - Planning Application Number, NCCCT reference number and OASIS reference number
 - a site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with 10 figure central grid reference
 - contractor's details including date work carried out
 - nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details
 - description of the site location and geology
 - a trench plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
 - discussion of the results of field work
 - context & feature descriptions
 - features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating & scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format
 - plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale
 - additional plans/map extracts to display noted and recorded archaeological features as appropriate
 - recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work, including publication
 - bibliography

11. OASIS

11.1 ARS Ltd will complete an on-line OASIS form for this evaluation. ARS Ltd is a registered contractor on the OASIS system and has uploaded archaeological reports before.

12. Dissemination/Publication

- 12.1 A summary will be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' and submitted to Sarah MacLean by the beginning of December of the year in which the work is completed.
- 12.2 A short article will be prepared for a local journal if appropriate.

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