

**Land on Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-
by-the-Sea, Northumberland.
An Archaeological Evaluation**



Post-medieval culvert, or cundy, found within Trench 2 (scale = 2m).

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Project Name: An Archaeological Evaluation Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland

Site Code: WOOD18

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council

Geology: Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation comprised mudstone, siltstone and sandstone; superficial deposit of Devensian Till – Diamicton

NGR: NZ 31129 88045

Date of Fieldwork: August 2018

Date of Report: August 2018

In August 2018 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Gainford Hotels Ltd (the client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea (NGR NZ 31129 88045). The evaluation was carried out at the pre-determination stage of a planning application (18/01180/FUL) to construct 15 new dwellings.

A Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment was drafted in September 2016 (Cockburn 2016) which identified that the proposed development area is included within the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Conservation Area. The DBA concluded that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon the Conservation Area, whether positively or negatively, depending on whether the buildings are designed to be sympathetic to the historic nature of the village.

Trench 1 did not contain any archaeological features although the deposit sequence demonstrated that demolition deposits containing ash, clinker and broken stone had been spread across the site and then buried. Trench 2 contained a post-medieval stone-built culvert. Trench 3 did not contain any archaeological features although it too contained made ground deposits deriving from demolition material. A line of stones found near the base the trench are believed to have been laid in order to provide a stable, dry surface to walk on during the in-filling of the site.

No further work is recommended.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2018 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Gainford Hotels Ltd (the client) to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea (NGR NZ 31129 88045). The evaluation was carried out at the pre-determination stage of a planning application (18/01180/FUL) to construct 15 new dwellings.

1.2 A Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment was drafted in September 2016 (Cockburn 2016) which identified that the proposed development area is included within the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Conservation Area. The DBA concluded that the proposed development has the potential to impact upon the Conservation Area, whether positively or negatively, depending on whether the buildings are designed to be sympathetic to the historic nature of the village.

2. SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The boundary of the PDA is depicted by a red polygon on Figure 1 and is c.0.28 ha in area. It comprises a trapezoidal area of land located slightly to the north of Newbiggin-by-the-Sea village centre adjacent to Woodhorn Lane. It is bounded to the north by Woodhorn Villa and Arts Centre with a modern care home beyond and to the south by a row of commercial buildings with flats above. The site is bounded to the east by a garage business and residential bungalow and to the west by Woodhorn Lane and rows of terraced housing.

2.2 The underlying solid geology comprises Pennine middle coal measures formation sandstone over the southern and central areas of the PDA, with a band of Pennine middle coal measures formation mudstone, siltstone and sandstone at the north. This is overlain by a superficial deposit of Devensian Diamicton till (BGS 2018).

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 An archaeological and historical background for the site is included within the Desk-Based Assessment which was compiled in 2016 (Cockburn 2016). Although there are no known assets within the site, there was the potential for undisturbed archaeological remains to exist that date from the prehistoric to medieval periods.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Regional Research Aims and Objectives

4.1.1 The *North-East Regional Research Framework* (Petts and Gerrard 2006) provides both resource assessments and research aims and objectives for all periods of archaeological remains within the north-east. Considered to be the most relevant to this project include the following:

- ◆ MDi Settlement
- ◆ MDii Landscape

4.2 Project Aims and Objectives

4.2.1 The aim of the archaeological evaluation trenching was to gather sufficient evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about any archaeological remains existing within the area of investigation.

4.2.2 The objectives of the archaeological evaluation trenching were as follows.

- ◆ To establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits within the area affected by invasive development.
- ◆ To gather sufficient evidence to establish, supplement, improve and make available information about the archaeological resource existing within the areas of investigation.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 Coverage

5.1.1 The archaeological evaluation consisted of three trenches. Two of these trenches measured 2 x 20m while the remaining trench measured 2 x 25m (Figure 2).

5.1.2 The indicative location of the evaluation trenches was agreed with the Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council as sufficient to cover the proposed works. However, upon conducting a scan of the site for underground cables and finding the results to be inconclusive, it was decided to move Trench 2 c.10m to the west. In turn, this resulted in the southern end of Trench 3 having to be moved c.8m to the east.

6. RESULTS

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The following section presents a synthetic narrative of the results of the evaluation and should be read in conjunction with the figures presented in Appendix I: Figures. Contextual detail is presented in Appendix II: Context Summary Table.

6.2 Trench 1 (Figure 3, Figure 6, Figure 7 and Figure 8)

6.2.1 Trench 1 was located at the south-eastern extent of the site and was orientated from north-east to south-west. The trench measured 20m in length and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the modern ground surface which was reached at the north-eastern end.

6.2.2 Trench 1 was excavated through very dark brown/black clay loam topsoil (101) that had a maximum depth of 0.5m and contained occasional stones. Sitting below the topsoil was a 0.2m deep deposit of made ground (102). This made ground consisted of ash, clinker and coal and was black/grey in colour. A further deposit of made ground (103), which consisted of very dark brown clay containing crushed stone, broken brick and broken pottery, sat beneath made ground (102). Made ground deposit (103) had a maximum depth of 0.5m. The natural orange clay (104) was encountered beneath made ground deposit (103) at a maximum depth of 1.2m. Towards the south-western

end of the trench, the depth of the made ground deposits was reduced so that the natural orange clay (104) was encountered at a depth of 0.5m.

6.2.3 There were no archaeological features or deposits encountered within Trench 1.

6.3 Trench 2 (Figure 4, Figure 6, Figure 9, Figure 10 and Figure 11)

6.3.1 Trench 2 was excavated centrally within the site, measured 25m in length and was orientated north-north-west to south-south-east. The trench was excavated through very dark brown/black topsoil (201) that had a maximum depth of 0.25m and contained occasional stones. Beneath the topsoil was a 0.15m deep deposit of orange/brown subsoil (202) which sat directly upon the natural orange clay (203). Located towards the northern end of the trench and cut into the subsoil (202) was a 3.9m long length of stone-built culvert orientated in a north-west to south-east direction. The sandstone culvert (205) had been laid within a straight-sided, shallow cut [204] measuring 0.2m deep and had been constructed using small, flat stones laid on their side to create the sides of the channel with further flat, capping stones laid on top. The base of the culvert had been left bare. Some sherds of white and blue, post-medieval willow-pattern pottery were recovered from within the culvert.

6.4 Trench 3 (Figure 5, Figure 6, Figure 12, Figure 13 and Figure 14)

6.4.1 Trench 3 was excavated towards the northern corner of the site and measured 25m in length. The trench was orientated from north to south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.24m. At its northern extent, the trench was excavated through a layer of tarmac (301) measuring 0.05m in depth which was overlying a layer of bedding (302) which had a depth of 0.1m. Beneath the bedding was a layer of levelling material (303) which consisted of crushed sandstone and brick and had a maximum depth of 0.2m. Below the levelling layer was a 0.5m deep layer of made ground which comprised ash, clinker and rubble (304), similar to made ground deposit (102) seen in Trench 1. Below made ground deposit (304) in Trench 3 was 0.25m deep deposit of grey clay containing very little no to inclusions (305). Encountered amongst this clay was a line of flat sandstone slabs (307). There was no bonding material between the stones and there was no visible cut, so it is unlikely that they were the remains of a wall. The natural orange clay (306) was encountered at a maximum depth of 1.24m below the modern ground surface.

6.4.2 Towards the trench's southern end, levelling and made ground deposits (303) and (304) graded out so that the stratigraphic sequence consisted of very dark brown/black topsoil (308) overlying grey clay (305) which was sat upon the natural orange clay (306). At its southern extent, Trench 3 had a maximum depth of 0.5m below the modern ground surface.

7. DISCUSSION

7.1 The archaeological evaluation at Woodhorn Lane did not reveal any features of significance. The stone-built culvert within Trench 2 is of a type that is very common to the region and, furthermore, it contained pottery dating to the post-medieval period.

7.2 Through conversations with local residents, it was determined that a small printing shop had once stood on the southern corner of the site and had subsequently

burnt down. The deposits of made ground encountered within Trench 1 and Trench 3 containing ash, clinker and broken sandstone are likely to have derived from the demolition of this building and the spreading of the material across the site.

7.3 Conversations with local residents also revealed that a row of stables had once stood at the very northern extent of the site where there is still an area of concrete hard-standing and a tarmac surface. During excavation the northern end of Trench 3 was found to be quite wet and therefore it is believed that the build-up of made ground encountered within the trench had been used to create a more stable, dry area for the construction of the stables. Due to the lack of a visible cut or any bonding material, it is unlikely that the line of stones found within Trench 3 were the remains of a wall. The stones were located at the northern extent of the trench where it was wetter and it is possible, therefore, that the stones had been laid during the levelling and building-up of this area of the site in order to provide a steady, dry surface for walking and standing on.

8. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

8.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

8.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

9. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

9.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards.

9.2 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.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

10.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Nick Best, Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council, for his advice and guidance.

11. REFERENCES

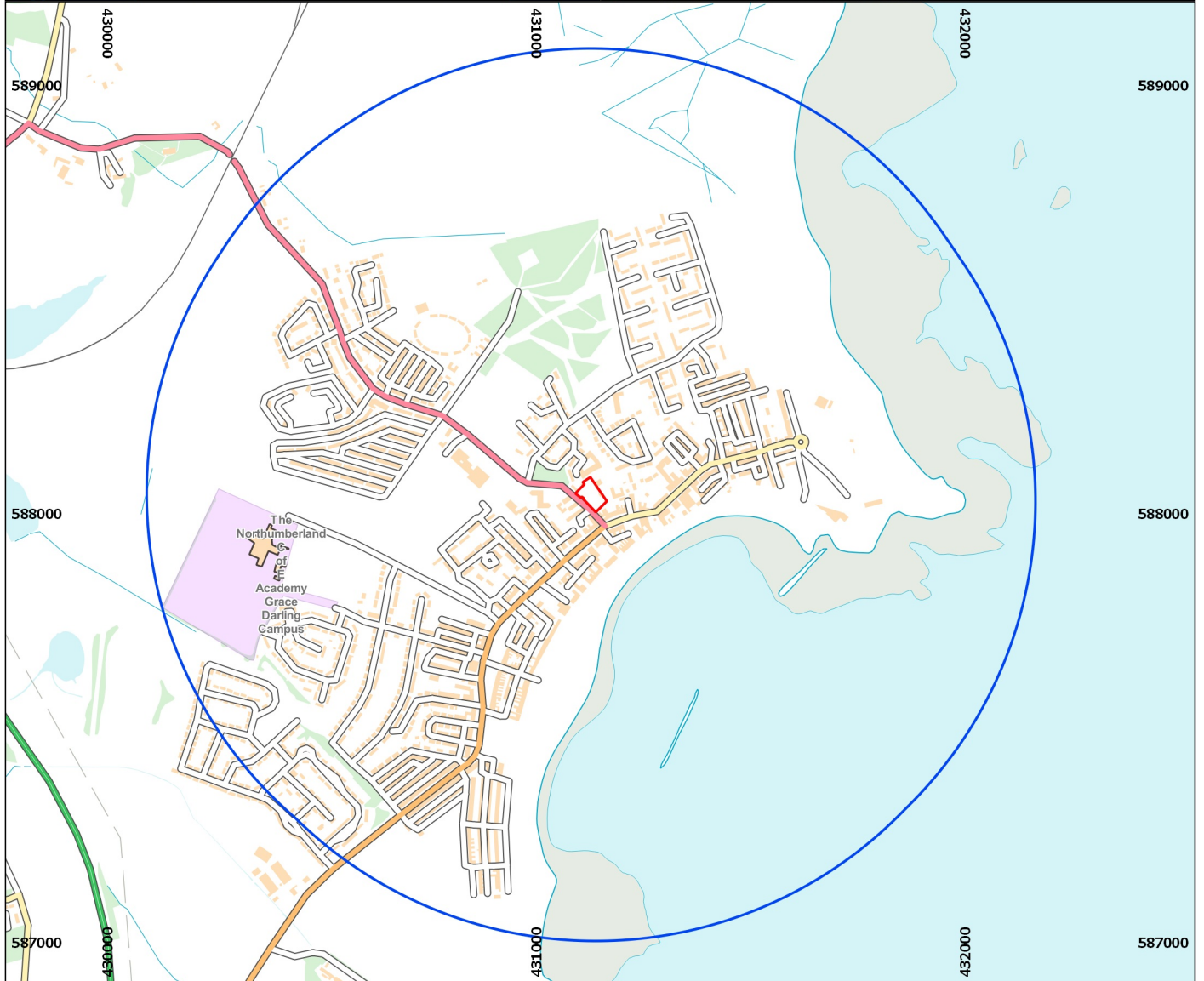
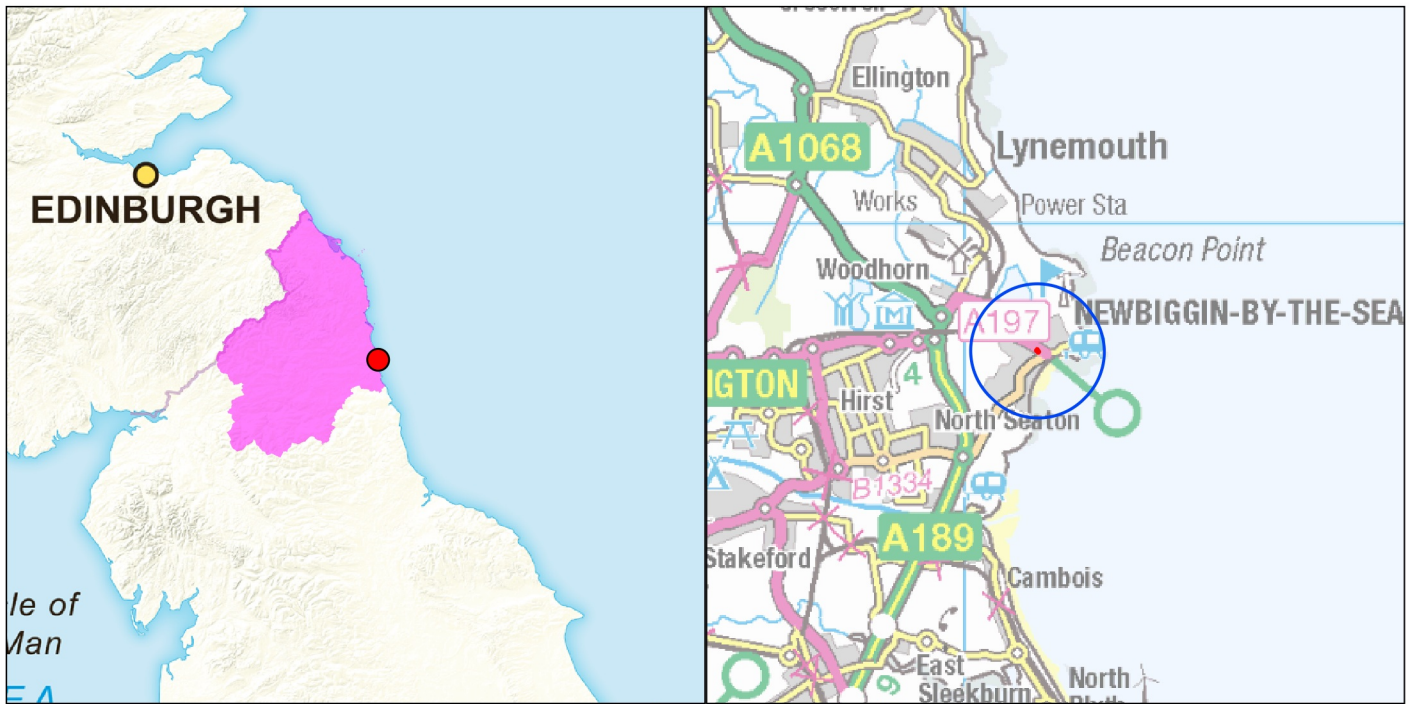
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Framework for the Historic Environment.

APPENDIX I: FIGURES



Site name: Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin
 Date: September 2016
 Drawn by: PC
 Scale: Varies

Key:
 PDA
 1km study area
 Northumberland District



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Figure 1:
Site location

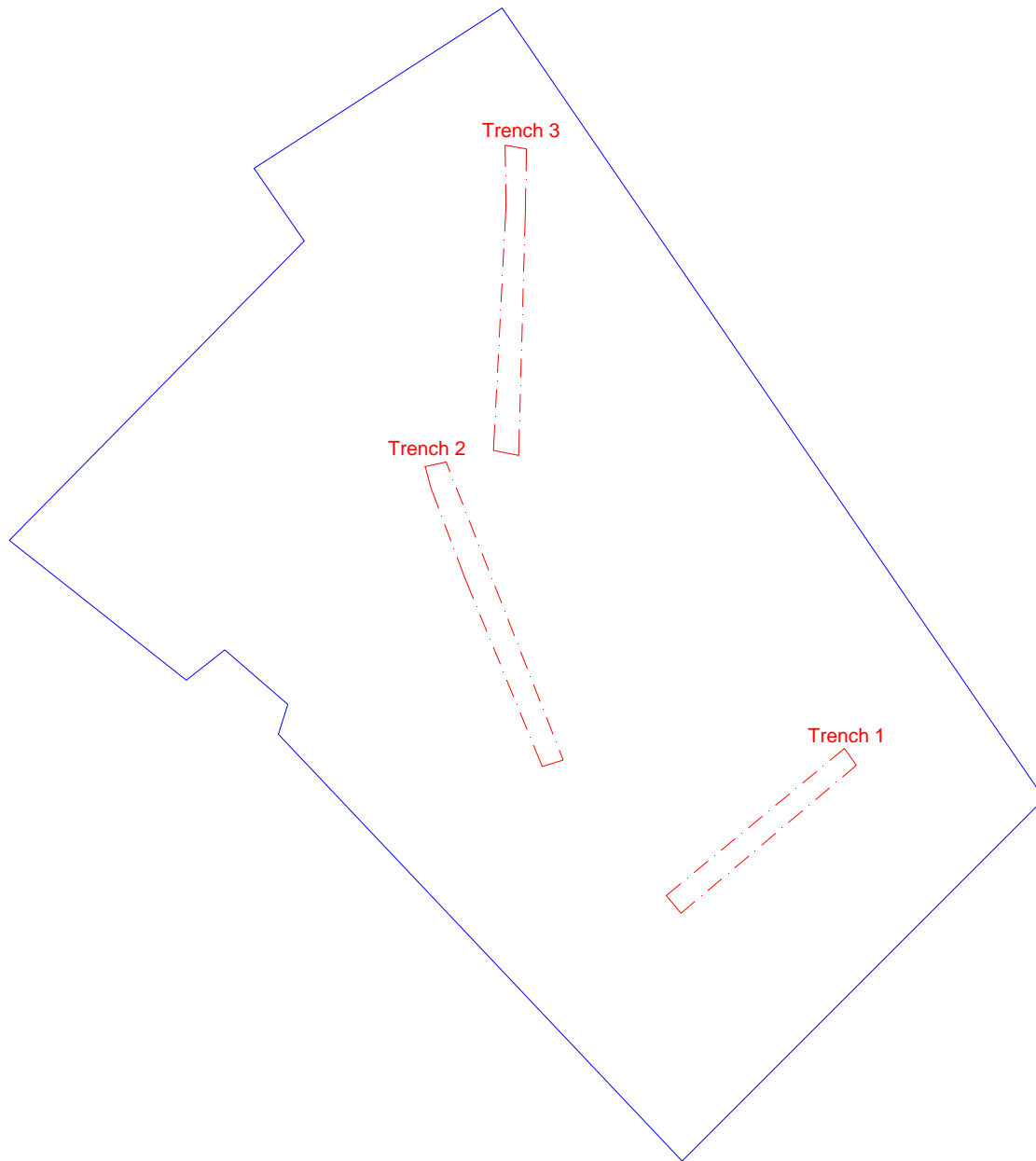


Figure 2:
Trench plan.
Scale = 1:500 at A4

Key:
 Trench



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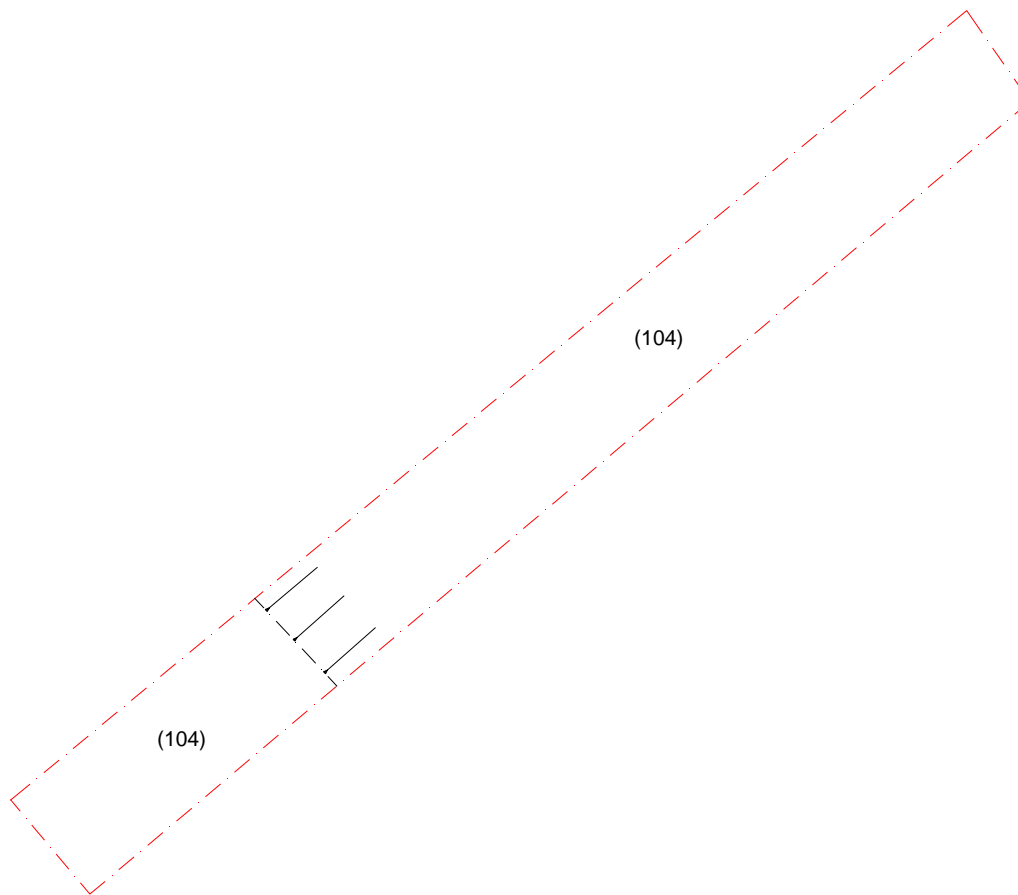
Figure 3:

Trench 1 plan.

Scale = 1:100 at A4

Key:

 Trench



0  5m



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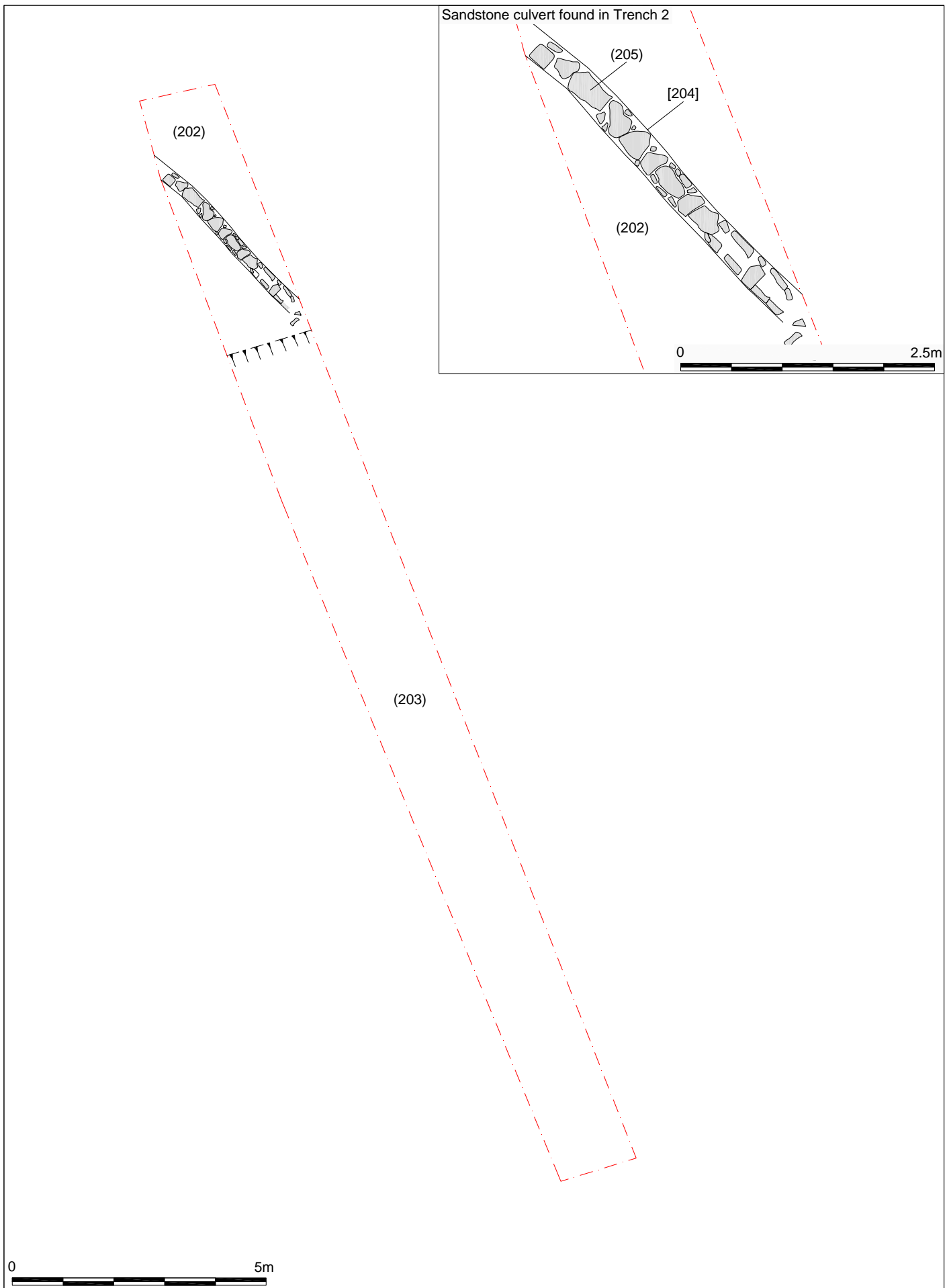




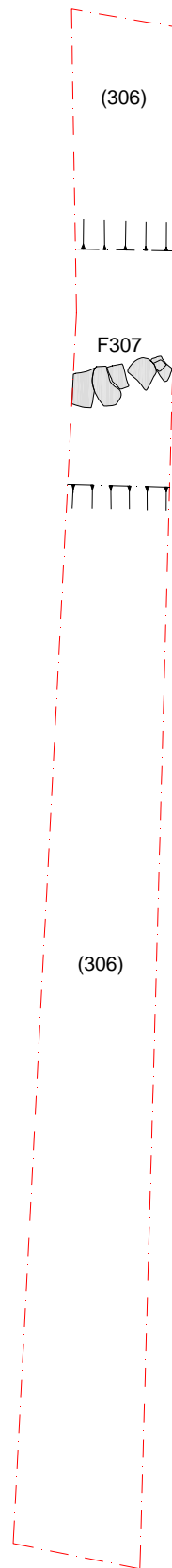
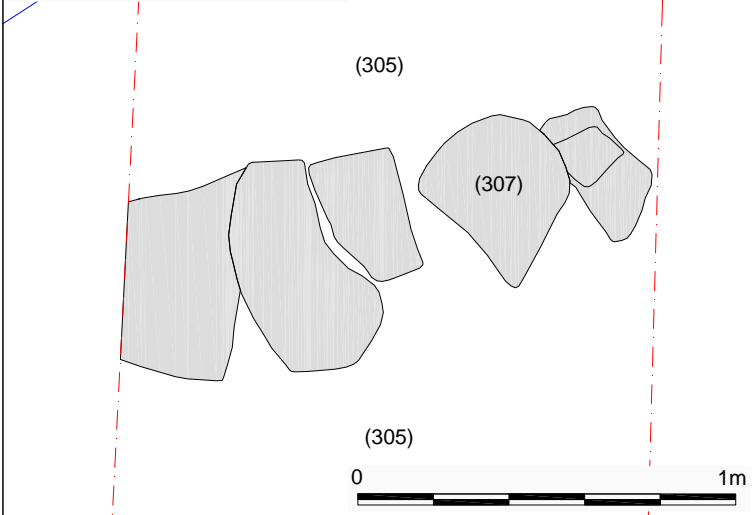
Figure 4:
Trench 2 plan.
Scale = 1:100 at A4

Key:
 Trench
 Stones



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Line of stones within Trench 3 F307



(202)

Figure 5:

Trench 3 plan.

Scale = 1:100 at A4

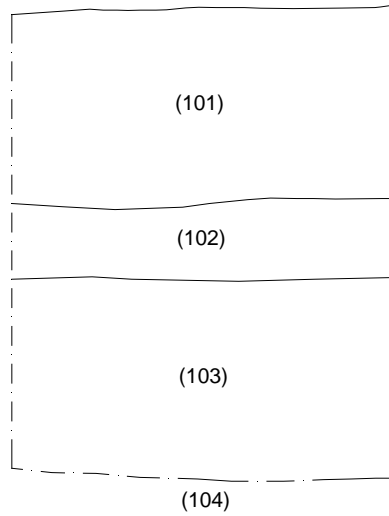
Key:



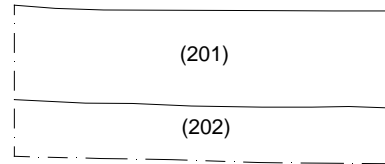
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Representative section of Trench 1



Representative section of Trench 2



Representative section of Trench 3

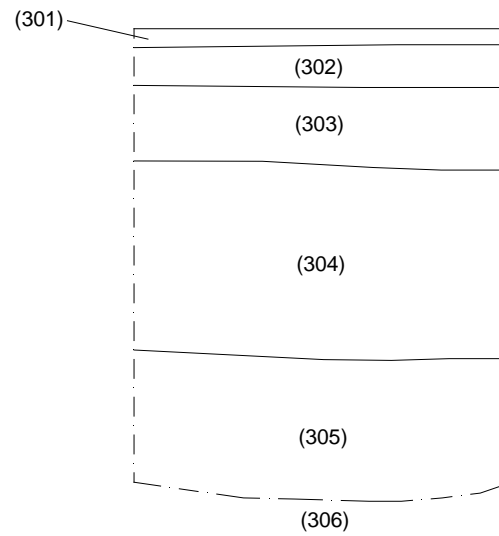


Figure 6:

Representative trench sections.

Scale = 1:20 at A4

Key:

--- Limit of excavation



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Figure 7. Trench 1 general shot, looking north-east (scale = 2m + 1m).



Figure 8. South-east facing section of Trench 1 (scale = 2m).



Figure 9. Trench 2 general shot, looking south-east (scale = 2m + 1m).



Figure 10. North-east facing section of Trench 2 (scale = 2m).



Figure 11. The post-medieval stone-built culvert found within Trench 2, looking north-west (scale = 2m).



Figure 12. Trench 3 general shot, looking north (scale = 2m).



Figure 13. east-facing section of Trench 3 (scale = 2m).



Figure 14. Line of stones within the base of Trench 3 (scale = 2m).

APPENDIX II: CONTEXT SUMMARY TABLE

An Archaeological Evaluation at Woodhorn Lane, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea, Northumberland

Context	Type/Interpretation	Description / Processual Interpretation	Thickness/extent (feature = length x width x depth) (m)	Depth to top (BGL)
101	Deposit/topsoil	Very dark brown/black topsoil	0.5	0m
102	Deposit/made ground	Black/grey made ground containing ash, clinker and broken stone	0.2	0.5m
103	Deposit/made ground	Very dark brown clay containing broken stone, pot and brick	0.5	0.7m
104	Deposit/natural clay	Natural orange clay	Beyond limit of ex.	1.2m
201	Deposit/topsoil	Very dark brown/black topsoil	0.25	0m
202	Deposit/subsoil	Orange/brown silty clay subsoil	0.15	0.25m
203	Deposit/natural clay	Natural orange clay	Beyond limit of ex.	0.4m
204	Cut	Cut for post-medieval stone-built culvert	0.3 (W) x 0.2 (D)	0.3m
205	Structure	Sandstone culvert drain	0.3 (W) x 0.2 (D)	0.3m
301	Deposit/tarmac	Tarmac surface	0.05	0m
302	Deposit/bedding	Bedding for tarmac surface	0.1	0.05m
303	Deposit/made ground	Made ground levelling layer for tarmac consisting of crushed stone and brick	0.2	0.1m
304	Deposit/made ground	Made ground containing ash, clinker and broken stone	0.5	0.35m
305	Deposit	Grey clay	0.25	0.85m
306	Deposit/natural clay	Natural orange clay	Beyond limit of ex.	1.1m
307	Structure	Line of stones	0.59 (W) x 0.1 (D)	0.73m
308	Deposit/topsoil	Very dark brown/black topsoil	0.2	0m

APPENDIX III: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

APPENDIX V: OASIS SUMMARY