Archaeological Watching Brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne

View facing south east of test Pit 6

ARS Ltd Report 2020/17
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ARS Ltd Report 2020/17

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Executive Summary

Project Name: Archaeological Watching Brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne
Site Code: WRDP19
Planning Authority: Newcastle City Council
Geology: Alston Formation – Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation – Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian Till
NGR: NZ 21576 64819
Date of Fieldwork: 26 June 2019 – 06 August 2019
Date of Report: 9th April 2020

In June 2019 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. was commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne. The watching brief monitored groundworks associated with the installation of a new connection onto the mains within West Road prior to development at the Fenham Reservoir site. The site is located adjacent to West Road, which is known to follow the line of Hadrian's Wall, a Scheduled Monument and part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire UNESCO World Heritage Site (NHLE 1000098; HER 207). Fenham Reservoir is located within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site and is thought to lie within the presumed northern extent of Condercum Roman Fort (NHLE 1003499; HER 208). Consequently, Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeological Officer, requested that a watching brief project, monitoring groundworks, be undertaken so that sufficient information to establish the extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits and structures could be recorded in accordance with current legislation as outlined in paragraph 199 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019, 55).

The works comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks during the excavation of two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) and eight test pits in advance of a new water pipe connection onto existing pipework to a maximum depth of 1.20m below the present ground level. The monitored works identified evidence associated with the Roman Fort of Condercum substantially truncated by 19th and 20th century suburban development of Benwell particularly the construction of Fenham Reservoir and its associated utilities. Fenham Reservoir was believed to have significantly impacted on earlier in-situ archaeological remains though the observed remains of a probable Roman road and gate tower within its bounds indicates that elements of Condercum Fort have survived in the immediate vicinity.

The watching brief was undertaken by Ana Rodrigues, Project Officer at Archaeological Research Services Ltd, and managed by Rupert Lotherington, Project Manager at Archaeological Research Services Ltd.

1 Introduction

1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 In June 2019 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. was commissioned by Ben Ralston at Northumbrian Water Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

1.1.2 The watching brief monitored groundworks associated with the installation of a new connection onto the mains within West Road prior to development at the Fenham Reservoir site. The site is located adjacent to West Road, which is known to follow the line of Hadrian's Wall, a Scheduled Monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site (NHLE 1000098; HER 207). Fenham Reservoir is located within the buffer zone of the World Heritage Site and is thought to lie within the presumed northern extent of *Condercum* Roman Fort (NHLE 1003499; HER 208) which is integrated into Hadrian's Wall.

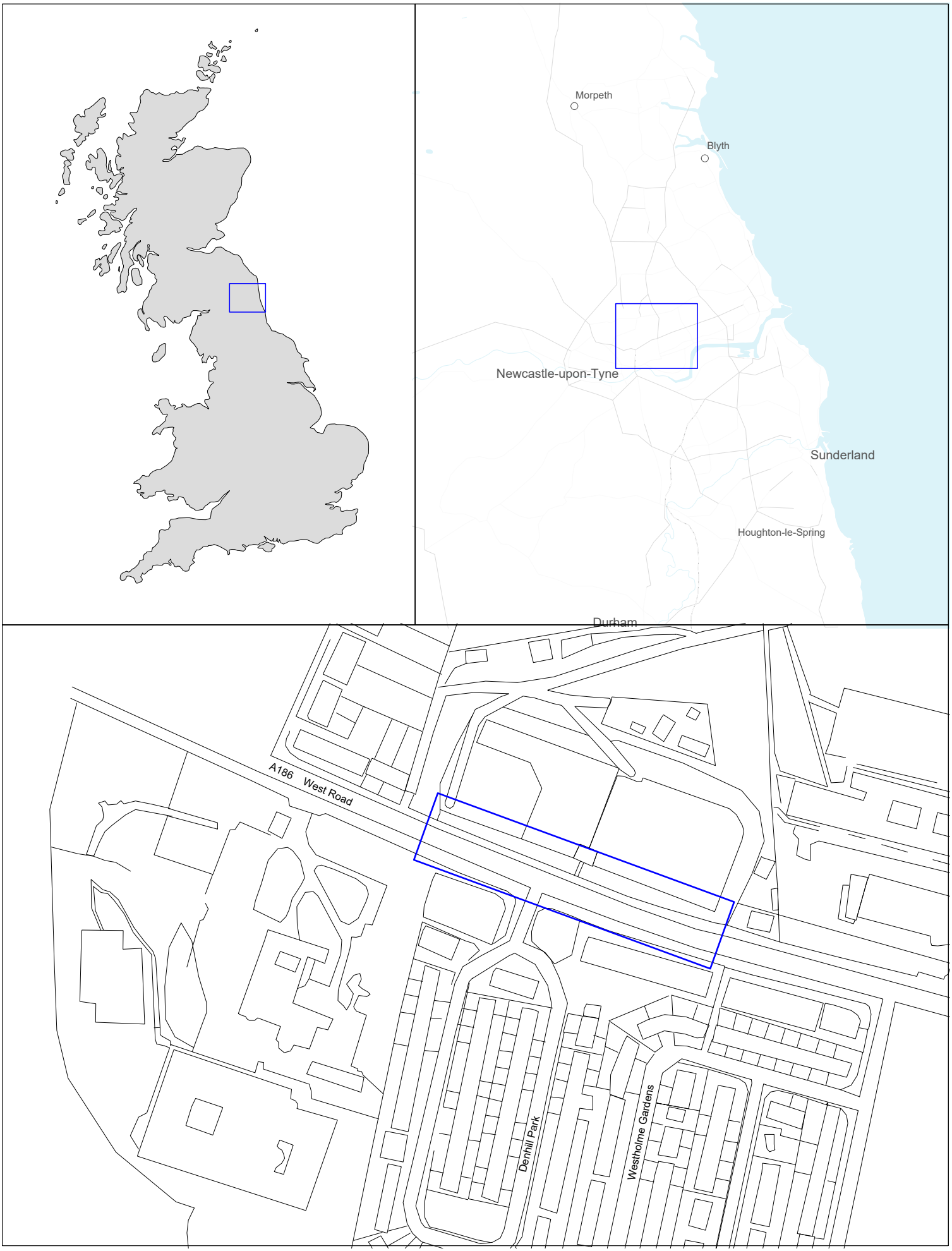
1.1.3 Consequently, Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeological Officer, requested that a watching brief project, monitoring groundworks, be undertaken so that sufficient information to establish the extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological deposits and structures could be recorded in accordance with current legislation as outlined in paragraph 199 of the *National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)* (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2019, 55).

1.2 Site Location

1.2.1 The site is centred on NGR: NZ 21576 64819 and lies in a residential area adjacent West Road, in close proximity to the projected route of Hadrian's Wall (NHLE No. 1000098) and within the presumed northern extent of *Condercum* Roman Fort (NHLE No. 1003499).

1.3 Landform Topography and Soils

1.3.1 The underlying geology of the site comprises Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation – Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone formed during the carboniferous period. This is overlain by superficial deposits of Devensian Till, formed during the quaternary period when the local environment was previously dominated by ice age conditions. (British Geological Survey 2020).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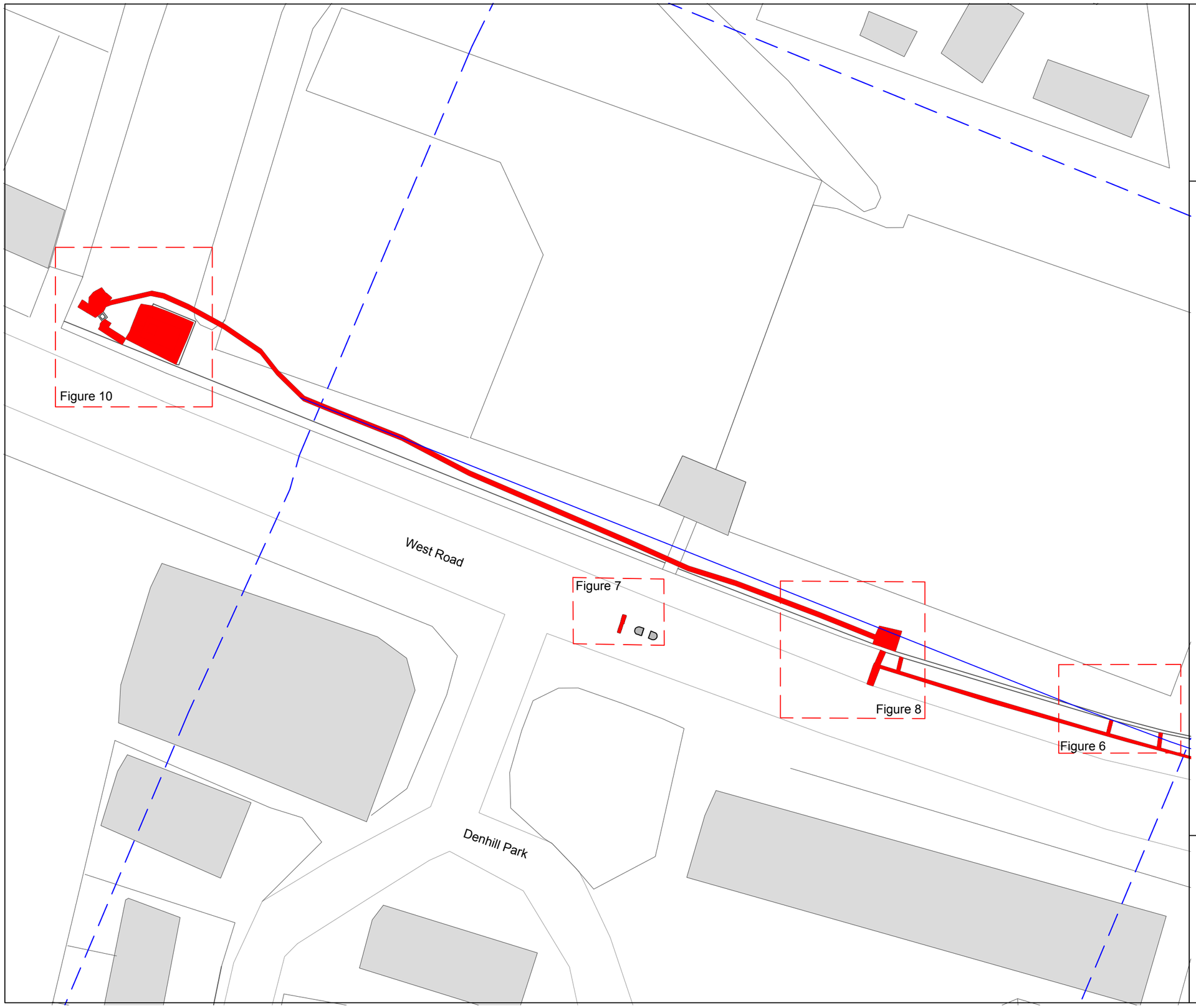
Newcastle-upon-Tyne
Sunderland
Houghton-le-Spring
Durham
A186 West Road
Denhill Park
Westholme Gardens



Site Name: Fenham Reservoir, Newcastle upon Tyne
Date: January 2020
Drawn by: AR and MN
Scale:

Figure 2. Plan of watching brief area.

Key:

- Building
- Proposed outline of *Condercum* Fort
- Area of excavation

N

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1.4 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.4.1 The site is located within an area of extensive archaeological activity principally associated with the Roman military occupation of Hadrian's Wall. This report will only attempt to provide information pertinent to past activity in the vicinity of the development area as it is beyond the scope of the project to provide a comprehensive account of the archaeological and historical background of the Hadrian's Wall corridor.

1.4.2 Hadrian's Wall is a Scheduled Monument and a UNESCO World Heritage Site (NHLE No. 1000098; HER 207). The Wall is considered likely to have multiple functions including both the control of movement across the border and preventing petty raiding and large-scale attacks across the northern frontier of the Roman Empire (Breeze and Dobson, 2000). The Wall also established an efficient route of communication between the east and western components of the northern militarised zone, extending westwards from Wallsend, North Tyneside to the village of Bowness-on-Solway in Cumbria (Breeze 2006). The construction of the Wall began under Hadrian's rule in AD 122 and was completed in AD 138 (Breeze and Dobson, 2000).

1.4.3 Hadrian's Wall was 80 Roman miles (73.65 Imperial Miles) or 117.5 km, long though its width and height varied. East of the River Irthing, the Wall is built of squared stone blocks and is 3m wide and 5-6m high, while west of the river the Wall was originally made of turf and was 6m wide and 3.5m high (Breeze and Dobson, 2000).

1.4.4 Fenham Reservoir is located within the northern third of *Condercum* Fort (NHLE 1003499; HER 208). The fort of *Condercum* covered approximately 2.3*ha* and was sited on a flat hilltop overlooking the Tyne to the south and the valley of Denton Burn to the west and was garrisoned during the reign of Hadrian by a cavalry regiment of 500 troops. The fort appears to have been constructed in tandem with Hadrian's Wall. At Benwell, the *vallum*, (earthworks principally associated with two banks and a ditch delineating a military zone in which civilians were excluded) was noted to change alignment to skirt around the southern limits of *Condercum* fort. This suggests the *vallum* is contemporary or postdates the forts construction. The construction of Fenham Reservoir in the 1850s is believed to have removed all trace of the fort north of West Road, and is subsequently covered to the south by Condercum housing estate, although trace elements of the fort are known to survive in this location (Taylor 1997).

1.4.5 Archaeological excavations conducted by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) in 2017 immediately north of the reservoir revealed that although construction activity relating to the reservoir had clearly disturbed the ground, elements of earlier activity has survived (Cooper 2018). A likely road of probable Roman date on a north-north east alignment appears to be the likely principal route leading away from the fort. No evidence for the fort was identified, however, small quantities of building material and pottery

compatible with a Hadrianic date and most probably derived from *Condercum* fort were recovered (Cooper, 2018).

1.4.6 Further investigations in 2018 by Northern Archaeological Associates revealed evidence of a multi-period site within the immediate area of the northern limits of *Condercum* Roman Fort. Tentative interpretations of the archaeological evidence, based on initial assumptions stated in a precis at the conclusion of the excavation, have revealed ring gullies, pits and roundhouses related to a native Iron Age settlement later integrated with the fort as the local population appears to have been Romanised (Town 2019). This is implied in part by Romano-British pottery, and other finds, recovered from pits and gullies associated with the native settlement. The report has yet to be realised at the time of writing.

2 Aims and Objectives

2.1 Regional Research Aims and Objectives

2.1.1 There is the potential for Roman archaeological material to survive within the boundary of the development area. Relevant research topics, applicable to this project are identified in *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (Petts ad Gerard, 2006):

- Ri - Iron Age to Roman transition: Further our understanding of the social impact of the Roman military occupation on the native population (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 146).
- Rii - Roads and Communication: The Roman communication network is only superficially understood, and a greater understanding of its development is listed as a key priority (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 147).
- Riii – Roman military presence: Improved understanding of the impact of the wall on the local environment both physically and socially (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 148).
- Rv – Material Culture: Despite the large quantity of ceramics recovered during previous excavations of Wall sites there is still further research to be conducted on trade mechanisms and ceramics production which can be gained from recovery and analysis of retrieved artefactual material. (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 150).

2.1.2 Additional research topics are identified within *Frontiers of Knowledge: A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall, Part of the Frontiers of the Roman Empire*

World Heritage Site. (Mason and Symonds, 2010) and may be addressed by the fieldwork as follows:

- 4.2 Structure – Further clarification as to what extent the later plans of forts reflect the original configurations observed at Wallsend (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 12).

- 4.2 Structure – Enable a critical analysis on the current interpretations of buildings within forts surrounding the identification and function of buildings interpreted as hospitals, workshops and storehouses. (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 12).

- 4.3 Garrisons - Fort refuse dumps would also be a valuable resource if they could be located, and may provide data for ethnicity, as well as food preparation within the forts, which, beyond the existence of ovens in the intervallum, remains little understood. (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 13).

- 4.5 – Infrastructure - There is a general need to understand forts within their landscape context. More specifically, the network of roads supporting the forts requires detailed attention. The extent of the individual forts' *territoria* is entirely unclear. (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 13).

- 4.9 Economy – Improved understanding of their function and evolvement in the growing local economy of the region and their roles within the frontier land (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 15).

- 7.1 – Locating the resource - It remains uncertain how many of the new Roman structures were green-field developments and how many overlay earlier settlement. This element is of particular interest when considering the urban zones. The ritual landscape is only poorly understood throughout all the periods under consideration but would have had an everyday significance to all those living and working in the region. (Mason and Symonds, 2010, Vol II, 23).

2.2 The Watching Brief

2.2.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief are as follows:

- Identify the presences/absence of archaeological features and deposits within the site.

- Record all archaeological features and deposits encountered.

- Gather sufficient information to establish the character, extent, form, function and likely status of any surviving archaeological deposits with a view to evaluating their

significance and potential to inform the aims and objectives as outlined in section 2.1.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The methodology for the watching brief is outlined in detail in the Written Scheme of Investigation Specification (Appendix III to this volume) but has been summarised here.

3.2 Professional Standards

3.2.1 The archaeological watching brief was carried out in accordance with the CIfA's *Code of Conduct* (2014a) and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2014b). Recording of the excavations followed the standards and conventions outlined by the *Archaeological Site Manual* (Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS) (2002).

3.2.2 A risk assessment was undertaken before commencement of the work. Health and Safety regulations were adhered to at all times.

3.3 Coverage

3.3.1 The works comprised the archaeological monitoring of groundworks during the excavation of two trenches (Trenches 1 and 2) and eight test pits in advance of a new water pipe connection onto existing pipework (Figure 2). The most direct route for the trench would have been from the centre of West Road directly north from the mains to pipework located within the south west corner of the Fenham Reservoir site. However, this route would intersect West Road at a particularly narrow junction and force the closure of the east bound lane, a major artery on the Newcastle Road network. After consultation with Jennifer Morrison from Tyne and Wear Archaeological Service regarding an acceptable route for the trench, resulted in its agreed placement, extending approximately 170m to the west and predominantly within the southern bounds of the former Reservoir site. As a result, test pits were initially excavated against the southern boundary wall of Fenham Reservoir to establish the likeliest point the water pipe could be inserted through the boundary wall. Once this was established, two trenches aligned broadly east to west were excavated north and south of the reservoir wall for the installation of the water pipe. The cumulative footprint of the area impacted by groundworks covered a total of 184.45m^2.

3.4 Archaeological Monitoring

3.4.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd from the 26th of July 2019 until the 6th of August 2019. All groundworks were monitored by a suitably qualified archaeologist.

3.4.2 The test pits were excavated, under continuous archaeological supervision, by a 360 mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket. The excavated material was removed in level spits until archaeological deposits were identified or the groundworks contractor had reached their maximum required depth. Where feasible, any archaeological deposits identified during the course of the watching brief project were hand excavated by a professional field archaeologist to allow their date, form and state of preservation to be ascertained. In addition, the two trenches were deliberately excavated to depths that did not penetrate the modern overburden present across the south limits of the site. As a result, continuous archaeological supervision was deemed unnecessary and following further discussions with Jennifer Morrison, the watching brief resumed intermittently within this location.

3.4.3 All archaeological features and deposits were recorded according to the 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 cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.

3.4.4 A photographic record was maintained including photographs of the trenches. All images were taken in digital format (10 Megapixel minimum) and contain a graduated photographic scale.

4 Results

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The following section provides an overview and synthesis of the depositional sequence and archaeological features encountered on the site. It highlights possible areas of archaeological sensitivity and the depth at which archaeological survival might be encountered. Depths of deposits are expressed as below ground level (BGL) and in metres above Ordnance Datum (aOD).

4.1.2 A context summary table of the depositional sequence of the trenches is presented in Appendix I: Context Summary Table. This should be viewed in association with the figures and the photographs presented in this section.

4.2 Test Pit 1

(Figures 2, 3, 4 and 21)

4.2.1 Test Pit 1 measured 1.7m long, 0.47m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.98m below present ground level and 124.45m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The test pit was located within the pavement, beyond the southern boundary of Fenham Reservoir, which fronts onto West Road (A186) approximately 88m east of the junction with Denhill Park.

4.2.2 The concrete pavement slabs (101) sealed a modern sand and gravel subbase (102), which was removed revealing the backfill ((108), (104), (106) and (111)) associated with modern utilities trenches ([114], [115], [103] and [116] respectively). The northernmost utility trench [103] was excavated against the external boundary wall [112] of the reservoir complex exposing roughly hewn sub-angular sandstone wall foundations [110]. These were initially interpreted as the remnants of an earlier phase of wall construction as the truncation of associated deposits by the service trench eliminated the adjacent stratigraphic sequence above the sandstone wall foundations [110].

4.2.3 Further investigation of these structures identified a dark brown yellow clay silt (113) sealed by reservoir wall [112] and overlying the sandstone wall [110] separating the two walls stratigraphically. No dating evidence was recovered from clay deposit (113) limiting interpretation. This clay-silt (113) might relate to either the removal of the sandstone wall associated with the foundations (110) or the initial construction of the reservoir wall (112). No dating evidence pertaining to the sandstone wall was recovered from its interstices. Although broadly south-east to north-west, the alignment of the sandstone wall foundations did not match that of the reservoir wall. This is further evidence that it is unlikely to represent foundations for the reservoir boundary wall or possible earlier iterations.

4.2.4 Given the constraints imposed by the small size of the test pit, a true alignment for the sandstone wall could not be ascertained but it appears to have an approximate co-axial alignment with the presumed orientation of the outer walls of Condercum Fort. Therefore it might represent the truncated remains of a contemporaneous structure sited within the fort. The base of the trench did not extend below the exposed upper limits of the sandstone foundations (110). The natural substrate was not observed within the trench.

Figure 3. Plan view of Test Pit 1, including sandstone wall foundations (110) within the base of the test pit (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations at top; 1 x 0.4m in 0.1m graduations at base).

Figure 4. South facing section of wall (112), deposit (113) and structure (110) within test Pit 1 (Scale = 1 x 0.4m in 0.1m graduations).

4.3 Test Pit 2

(Figures 2 and 5)

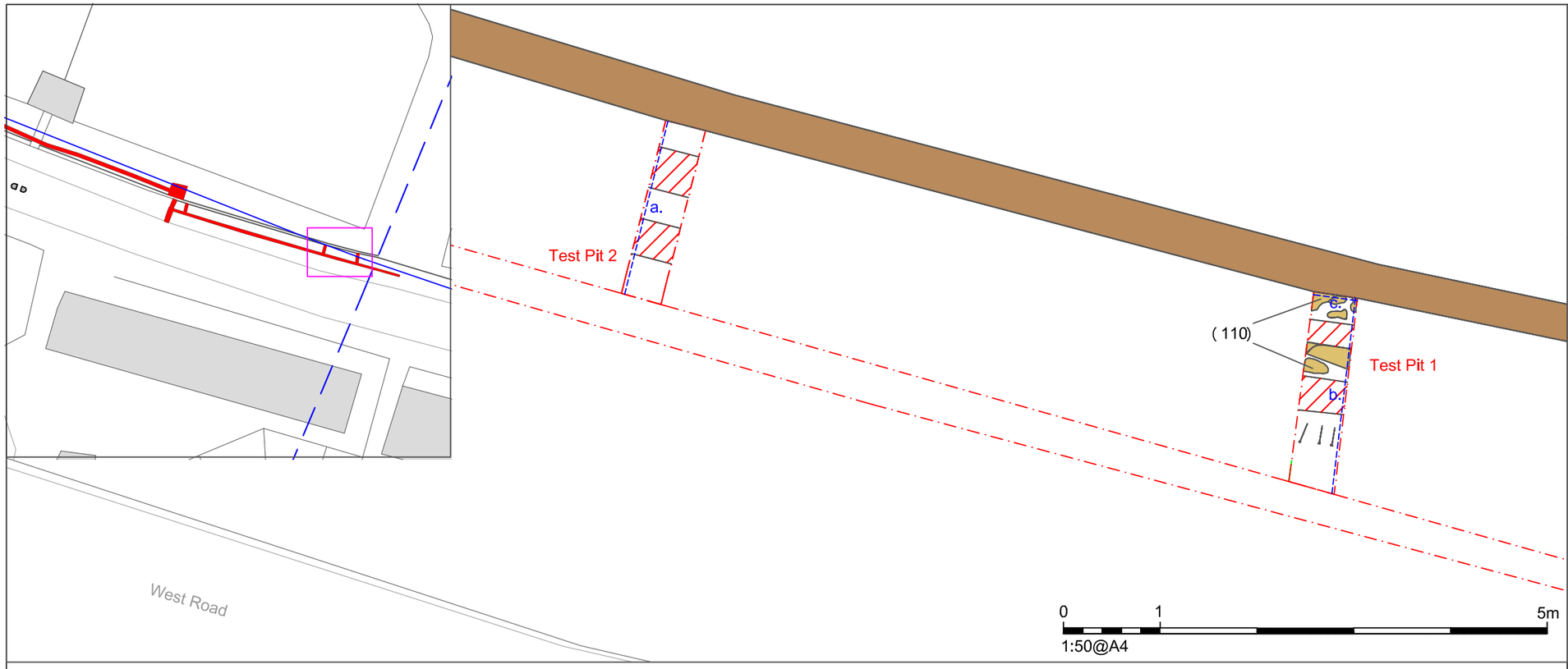
4.3.1 Test Pit 2 measured 1.6m long and 0.42m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.88m below the present ground surface and 124.42m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The test pit was site 6.6m west of Test Pit 1 within the pavement of West Road against the southern boundary of the Fenham Reservoir complex.

4.3.2 The depositional sequence within Test Pit 2 was broadly similar to the stratigraphy identified in Test Pit 1 detailed above. The test pit was excavated through modern concrete pavement slabs (201), followed by an underlying modern sand and gravel base layer (202), which in turn sealed a series of superimposed, mixed backfill deposits within modern service trenches abutting the southern external reservoir wall. The natural substrate, a mid-brown clay (215), was observed at the base of the trench. The sandstone wall foundations [110] observed within Test Pit 1 were not seen within Test Pit 2. The

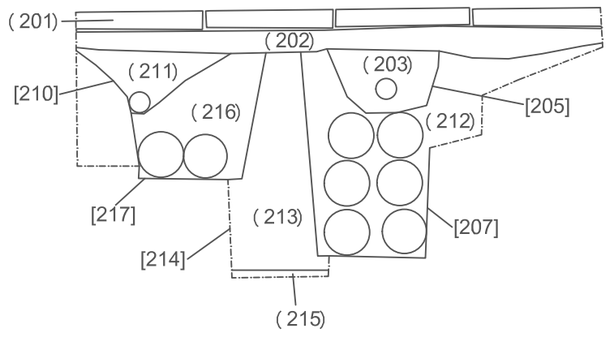
projected route of the wall foundations would place them further north of the footprint of Test Pit 2.

4.3.3 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 2.

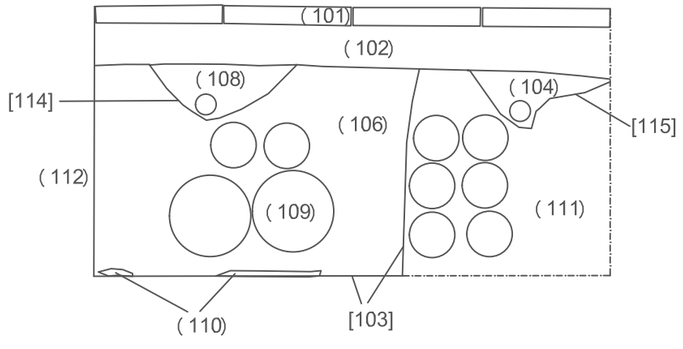
Figure 5. West facing section through Test Pit 2 (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).



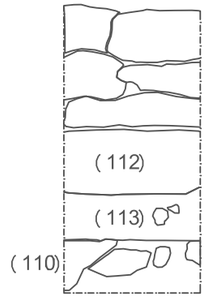
a. South-east facing section of Test Pit 2



b. North-west facing section of Test Pit 1



c. South facing section of Test Pit 1



0 0.2 1m
1:20@A4

Site Name: Fenham Reservoir, Newcastle upon Tyne
Date: January 2020
Drawn by AR and MN
Scale: Inset Plan = 1:1000 @ A3
Plan = 1:50 @A3
Sections = 1:20 @ A3

Figure 6. Plan and sections of Test Pits 1 and 2.

Key:

Limit of excavation

Fenham Reservoir boundary wall

Utilities

N

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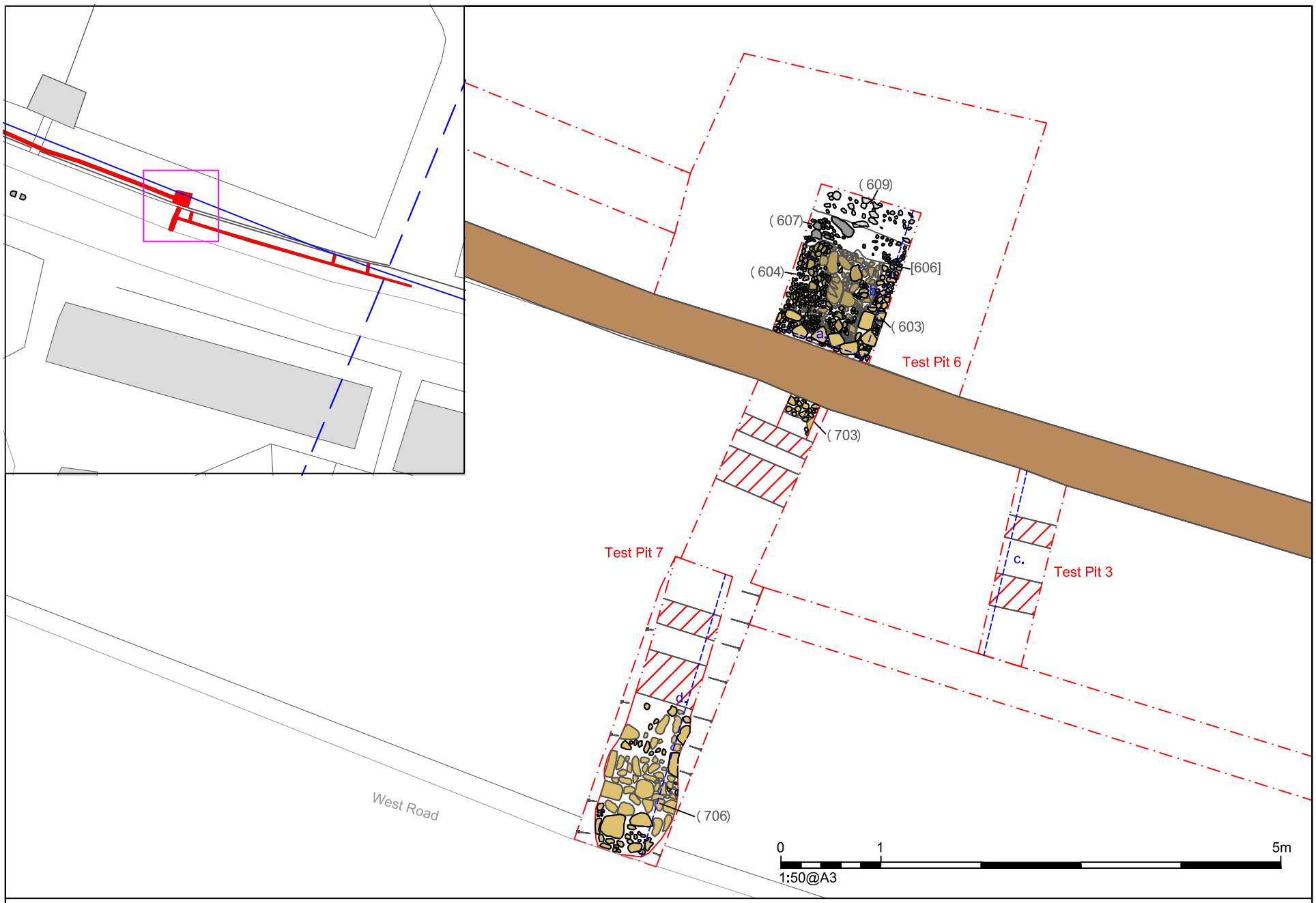
4.4 Test Pit 3

(Figures 2 and 6)

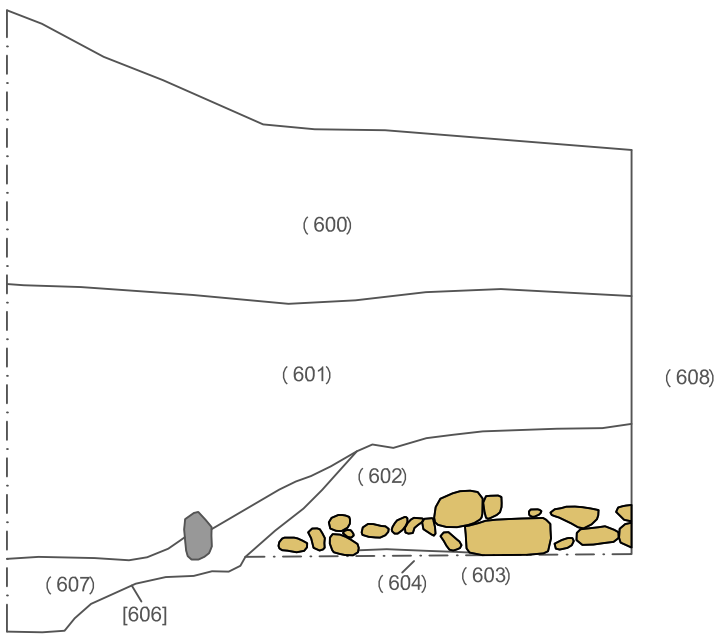
4.4.1 Test Pit 3 measured 1.86m long and 0.44m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.50m below the present ground surface and 124.49m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The test pit was sited 30m west of Test Pit 2, 2.5m east of Test Pit 7, within the pavement against the southern boundary of Fenham Reservoir complex. A similar depositional sequence to that encountered in Test Pits 1 and 2 was identified within Test Pit 3. The modern concrete pavement slabs (301), sealed an underlying modern sand and gravel base layer (302), which in turn sealed a series of superimposed, mixed backfill deposits within modern service trenches that abutted the southern external reservoir wall. The natural substrate was not observed within the trench.

4.4.2 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 3.

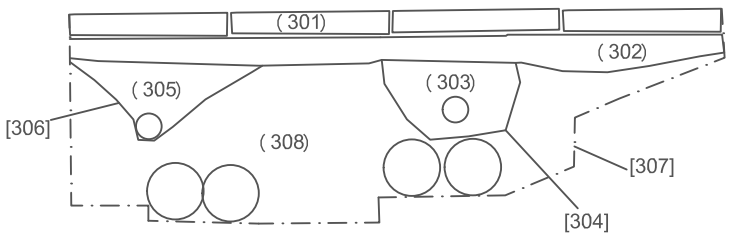
Figure 7. West facing section through Test Pit 3 (Scale 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).



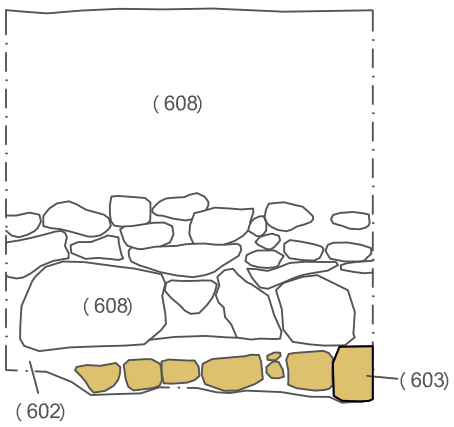
a. East facing section of Test Pit 6



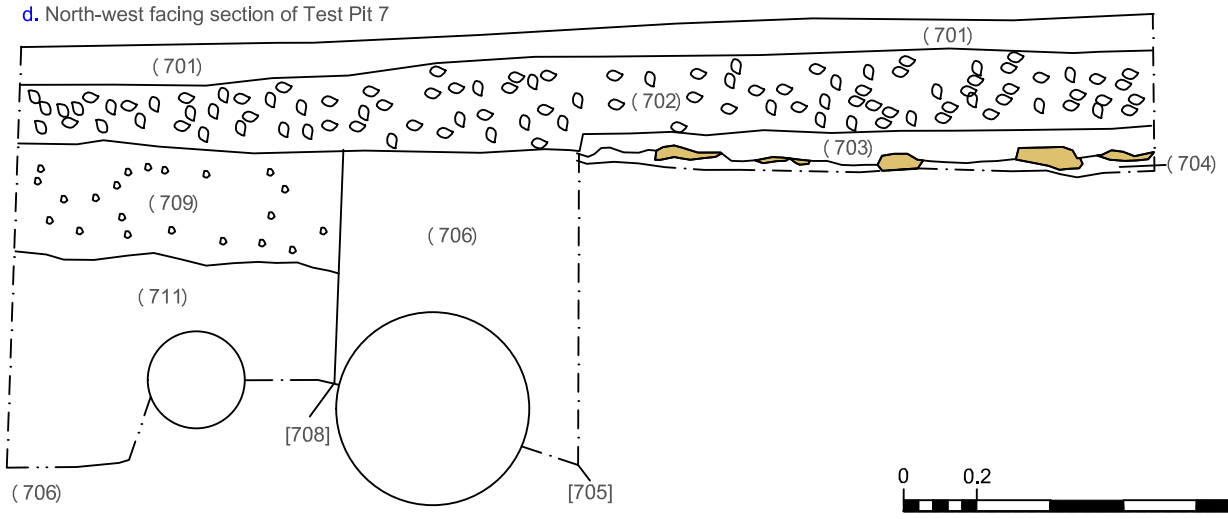
c. West facing section of Test Pit 3



b. North facing section of Test Pit 6



d. North-west facing section of Test Pit 7



Site Name: Fenham Reservoir, Newcastle upon Tyne
Date: January 2020
Drawn by AR and MN
Scale: Inset Plan = 1:1000 @ A3
Plan = 1:50 @A3
Sections = 1:20 @ A3

Figure 8. Plans and sections of Test Pits 3, 6, and 7.

Key:

Limit of excavation

Fenham Reservoir Wall

Utilities

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4.5 Test Pit 4

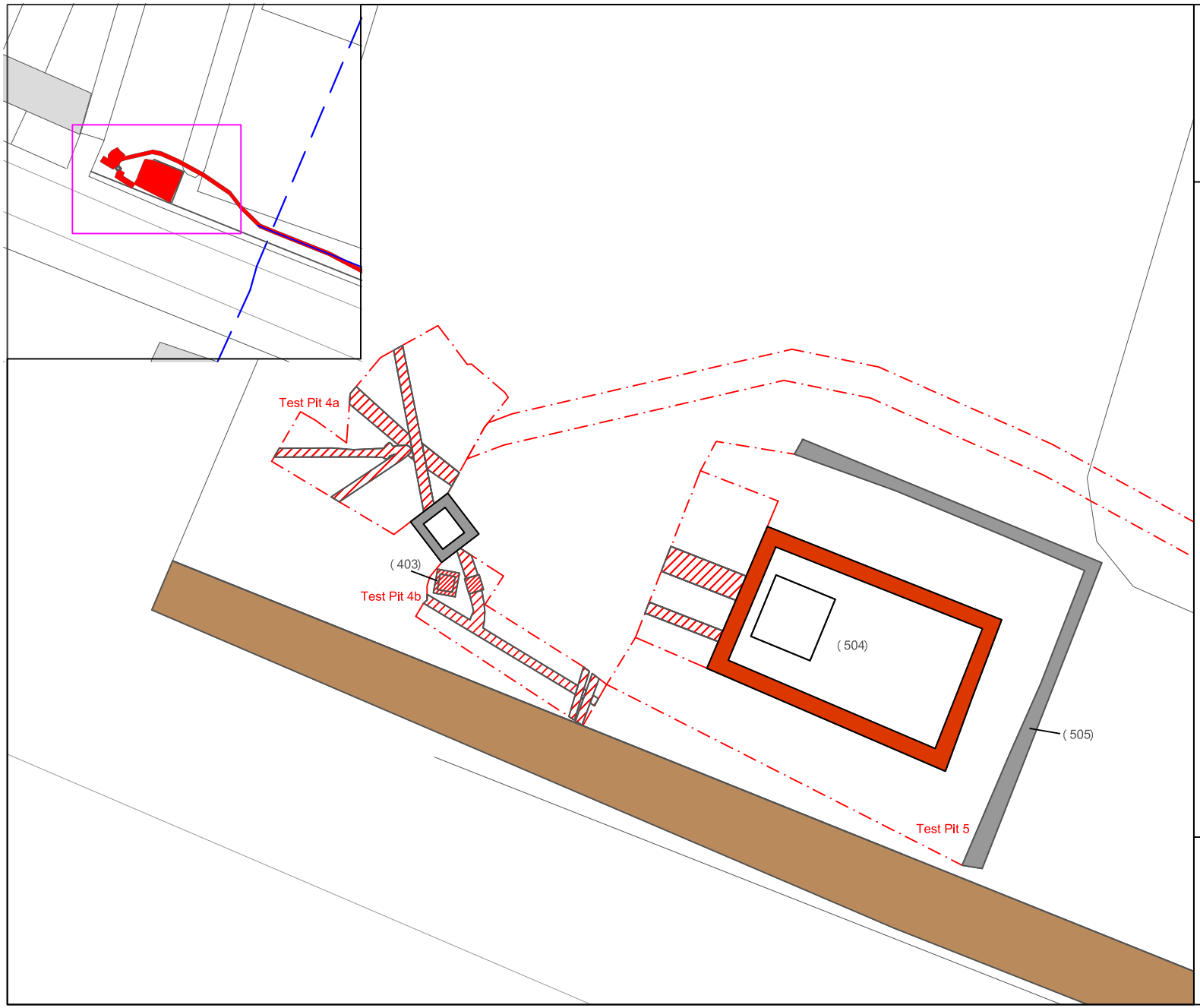
(Figures 2 and 7)

4.5.1 Test Pit 4 was excavated in two parts (Test Pit 4a and Test Pit 4b) against a square concrete utilities access point. Test Pit 4a measured 4.2m long, 02.9m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m below the ground surface. Test Pit 4b measured 3.8m long and 2.7m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.72m below the present ground surface. The test pit was sited within the southwestern extremity of the reservoir site directly west of Test Pit 5.

4.5.2 The same deposition sequence was noted in both Test Pits 4a and 4b and as such, the stratigraphy of both has been combined in the following description: the uppermost deposit comprised a dark brown topsoil and turf (401), which overlaid backfill (402) within a modern utilities trench [403]. In addition, three other utilities were noted bisecting the trench. The natural substrate was not observed within the trench.

4.5.3 A sherd of black burnished ware, dating from the late 2nd to late 3rd century AD, was recovered from topsoil (401). Although residual, this fragment is evidence of previous Roman activity within the vicinity of the site.

Figure 9. North-west facing section of Test Pit 4 (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).



Site Name: Fenham Reservoir, Newcastle upon Tyne
Date: January 2020
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Scale: Inset Plan = 1:1000 @ A4
Plan = 1:100 @A4

Figure 10. Plan of Test Pits 4 and 5.

Key:

Limit of excavation

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4.6 Test Pit 5

(Figures 2, 8, and 9)

4.6.1 Test Pit 5 measured 7.7m long and 5.6m wide in plan and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m below the present ground surface. The test pit was sited within the southwestern extremity of the site and immediately east of Test Pit 4.

4.6.2 Test Pit 5 was excavated through modern redeposited natural clays (501) that constituted a spoil tip to presumably bury two structures: an inspection pit (504) and concrete revetment (505). In addition, the redeposited clays (501) sealed topsoil (502) which abutted structures associated with the reservoir ((504) and (505)). The revetment (505) comprised the upstanding remnants of an L-shaped structure, approximately 1m high made of concrete, against which was abutted by the majority of redeposited clay dump (501). The concrete revetment (505) enclosed a rectangular brick-built inspection pit (504), which measured 2.2m long, 1.15m wide and 1m deep. This contained the *in-situ* remnants of pipework. The natural substrate was not observed within the trench.

4.6.3 No finds, features or deposits of archaeological significance were identified in Test Pit 1.

Figure 11. View looking west of concrete structure (505) (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

Figure 12. View looking east into inspection pit (504) (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

4.7 Test Pit 6

(Figures 2, 10, 11 and 21)

4.7.1 Test Pit 6 measured 3.11m long and 2.65m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.71m below the present road surface. The test pit was located within Fenham Reservoir, against the southern boundary wall, directly north of Test Pit 7.

4.7.2 The deposition sequence within Test Pit 6 consisted of a levelling-up layer of dark grey clay (600), which in turn sealed dark brown topsoil (601). This topsoil (601) contained four residual fragments of Roman and medieval pottery (Table 1). This buried topsoil (601) overlaid a mixed levelling deposit of dark grey black clay and clinker mix (602) interpreted as the result of 19th landscaping works but which contained a residual *sestertius* dated to the early to mid-2nd century and two fragments of late 2nd to 3rd century Roman pottery. The dark clay levelling (600) and buried topsoil (601) were observed abutting the northern elevation of the extant reservoir boundary wall (608) and were therefore considered likely to postdate the 19th century.

4.7.3 The mixed clay and clinker levelling deposit (602) sealed a sandstone floor/road surface (603) at a depth of 1.4m below the ground surface, which in turn sealed an earlier phase of construction (604). The uppermost Roman surface consisted sub angular roughly hewn sandstone with a total thickness of 0.13m which was identified across both Test Pits 6 and 7. The lowermost surface (604) consisted of a compacted layer of smaller sub angular sandstone fragments. This lowermost sandstone surface (604) was situated at the limit of excavation and any further construction deposits below could not be identified. Roman ceramic material was identified in associated with the surfaces: a single sherd of Dressel 20 olive-carrying amphora, dating from 1st to 3rd century AD, was recovered from the top of surface (603).

4.7.4 These surfaces were truncated by the construction of the reservoir wall (608) to the north and the installation of modern services. The reservoir tank construction cut [606] truncated this mixed levelling deposit (602) and the underlying surfaces (603 and 604). The reservoir tank itself was situated to the north beyond the bounds of Test Pit 6 but the construction cut was backfilled by two successive deposits of dark grey clay (607) and (609). The latter of which contained a small fragment of locally produced *mortarium*. The external reservoir boundary wall was constructed upon the truncated remnants of levelling deposit (602).

Figure 13. West facing section through Test Pit 6 (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

Figure 14. North facing section of wall (604) above Roman sandstone surface (603) (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

4.8 Test Pit 7

(Figures 2, 12 and 21)

4.8.1 Test Pit 7 measured 4.9m long and 0.47m wide in plan and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.15m, or 125.03m above Ordnance Datum (aOD). The test pit was located 0.53m south of Test Pit 6, in the pavement of West Road, against the southern boundary of Fenham Reservoir.

4.8.2 The stratigraphic sequence identified in Test Pit 7 mirrors that observed within Test Pits 1 and 2 described above: modern concrete pavement (701), overlaid modern sand and gravel sub base (702), which in turn sealed a series of superimposed, mixed backfill deposits within modern utilities trenches that abutted the southern external reservoir wall.

4.8.3 The base of a utility trench truncated a possible sandstone surface (703), similar to surface (603) observed in Test Pit 6 to the north. The surface overlay a bedding deposit of compacted sandstone fragments (704) which in turn sealed redeposited natural clay levelling layer (705).

Figure 15. Stone surface (704) within Test Pit 7 (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

4.9 Test Pit 8

(Figures 2, 13, 14 and 21)

4.9.1 Test Pit 8 measured 2.61m long, 0.53m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 2.24m below the present road surface. The test pit was situated west of a pedestrian island in the middle of West Road to minimise traffic disruption, 9.5m east of the junction between West Road and Denhill Park.

4.9.2 Test Pit 8 was excavated to ascertain the location of the water-main beneath West Road required for the new connection. The location of the test pit was identified because of its vicinity to a pedestrian island within the middle of West Road that separated the two lanes of traffic allowing the groundworks for the test pit to be conducted without the need for road closures.

Figure 16. East facing section through Test Pit 8 (scale = 0.5m graduations).

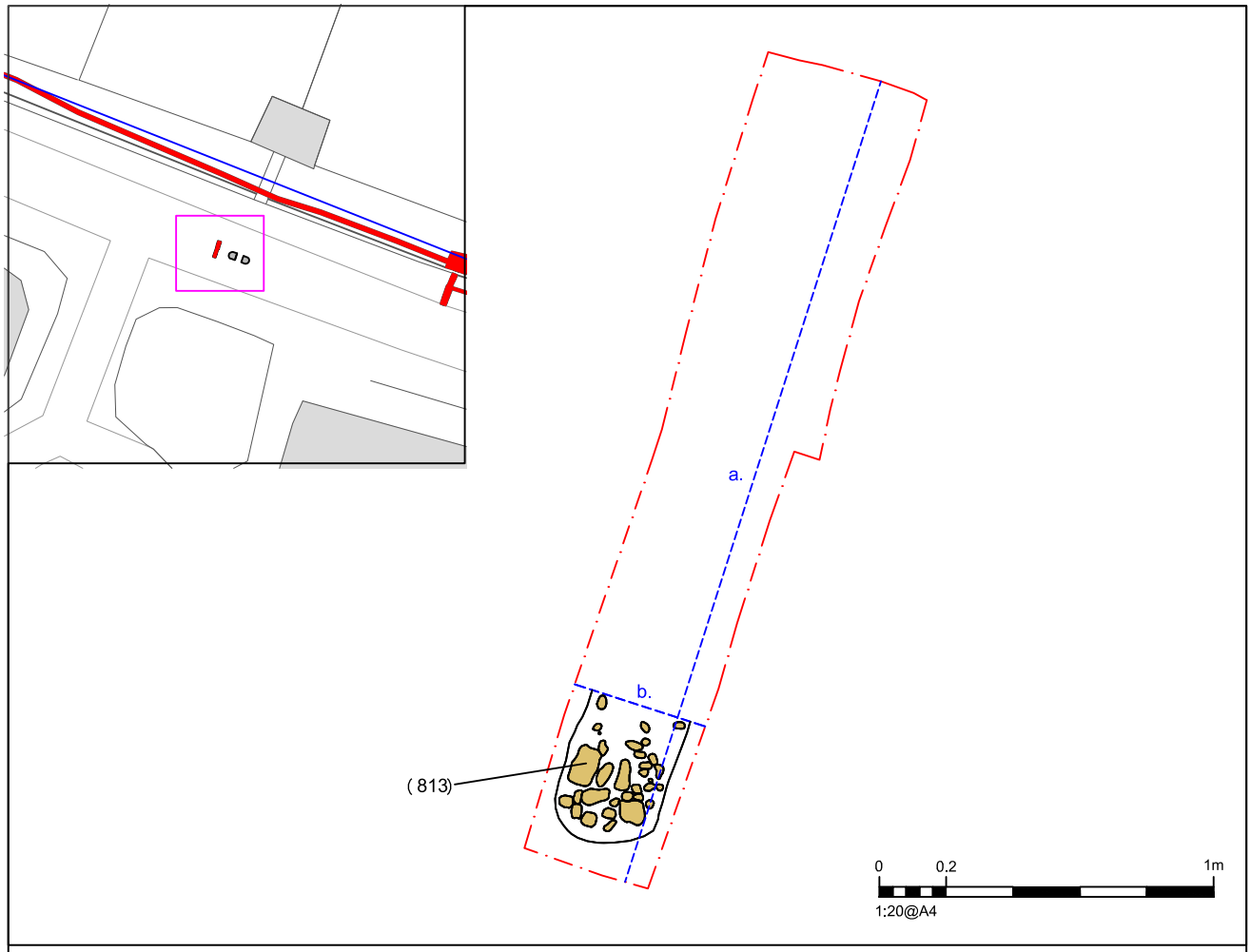
4.9.3 The depositional sequence consisted of the uppermost asphalt road surface (801) sealing a concrete bedding layer (802). This lower bedding layer (802) was truncated by a utility trench [807] containing the water main. Two further utility trenches were identified below the concrete bedding (802). The first [809] was truncated by the water main [807] and in turn truncated another utility trench [817]. All three utility trenches contained a sequence of successive mixed backfill deposits.

4.9.4 Below the concrete bedding (802) and truncated by one of the utility trenches [017], the sandstone rubble core of a structure (813) was identified. Based upon the remainder of the test pits and their relative location, Test Pit 8 likely falls within the bounds of *Condercum* fort and therefore this feature possibly represents the truncated

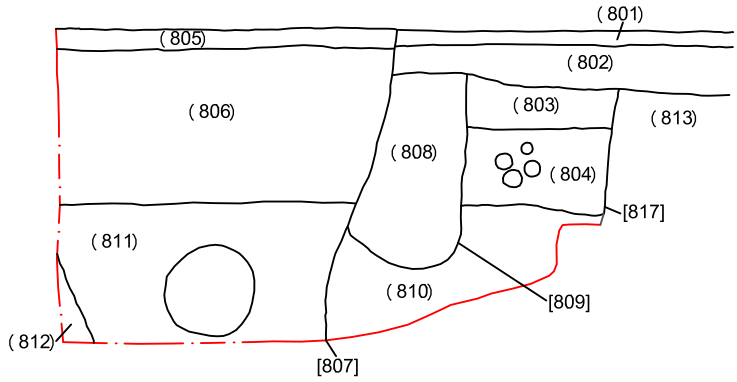
remains of an internal structure within the fort. This interpretation must remain tentative as no dating evidence was recovered from structure (813).

4.9.5 Below structure (813), a dark brown silty loam (814) was identified that may represent the burial of a former topsoil or occupational deposit. This dark brown silty loam (814) sealed redeposited clay natural (815), which contained inclusions of sandstone fragments. This material might represent a bedding/levelling deposit for subsequent surfaces. The redeposited natural substrate (815) sealed another levelling-up deposit of grey clay (816) that in turn overlaid the natural substrate (810), observed at a depth of 0.71m within the test pit. No dating evidence was recovered from this succession of deposits (814), (815) and (816).

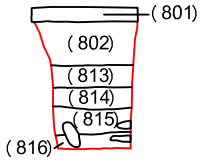
Figure 17. Plan view of structure (813) within test pit 8 (Scale = 1 x 0.4m in 0.1m graduations).



a. West facing section through Test Pit 8



b. North facing section through wall foundation/rubble core (813)



0 0.4 2m
1:50@A4

Site Name: Fenham Reservoir, Newcastle upon Tyne
Date: January 2020
Drawn by AR and MN
Scale: Plan = 1:20 @ A4
Section = 1:50 @A4

Figure 18. Plan and section of Test Pit 8.

Key:

Limit of excavation

Utilities

N

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Hebburn
Tyne and Wear
NE31 1SR

Tel: 0191 477 5111
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

Figure 19. North facing section through deposit (813) and associated levelling deposits (Scale = 1 x 0.4m in 0.1m graduations).

4.10 Trench 1

(Figures 2 and 16)

4.10.1 Trench 1 was aligned broadly south-east to north-west, located north of the boundary wall surrounding the reservoir complex with which it was largely parallel. It measured 117.6m in length, 0.56m wide and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.78m below present ground level.

4.10.2 The trench was excavated between Test Pits 5 and 6 with a limited depth of excavation so as to minimise the impact to potential in-situ archaeological remains. The uppermost deposit identified within the trench comprised mixed clay and clinker (1001), similar to the material identified in Test Pits 5 and 6. This likely represents the same depositional event which covered the inspection pit and revetment in Test Pit 5. As in those test pits, the mixed clay and clinker (1001) partially buried topsoil (1002). This topsoil (1001) sealed a mixed backfill of clay and soil (1002) likely deposited following the

installation of the reservoir tank directly to the north of the trench. This material extended below the limit of excavation for Trench 1 and the natural substrate was not encountered.

Figure 20. View looking west across Trench 1 (Scale = 1 x 1m in 0.5m graduations).

4.11 Trench 2

(Figure 2)

4.11.1 Trench 2 was excavated along the southern elevation of the boundary wall surrounding the reservoir complex to establish the location of an existing service trench between Test Pits 1 and 7. This trench aligned north-west to south-east within the pavement adjacent to the northern carriageway of West Road. It measured 48.14m in length, 0.52m wide, and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.78m below present ground level to reduce disturbance to potential archaeological remains associated with Condercum Fort. The stratigraphic sequence followed a similar pattern to that identified in Test Pits 2 and 3.

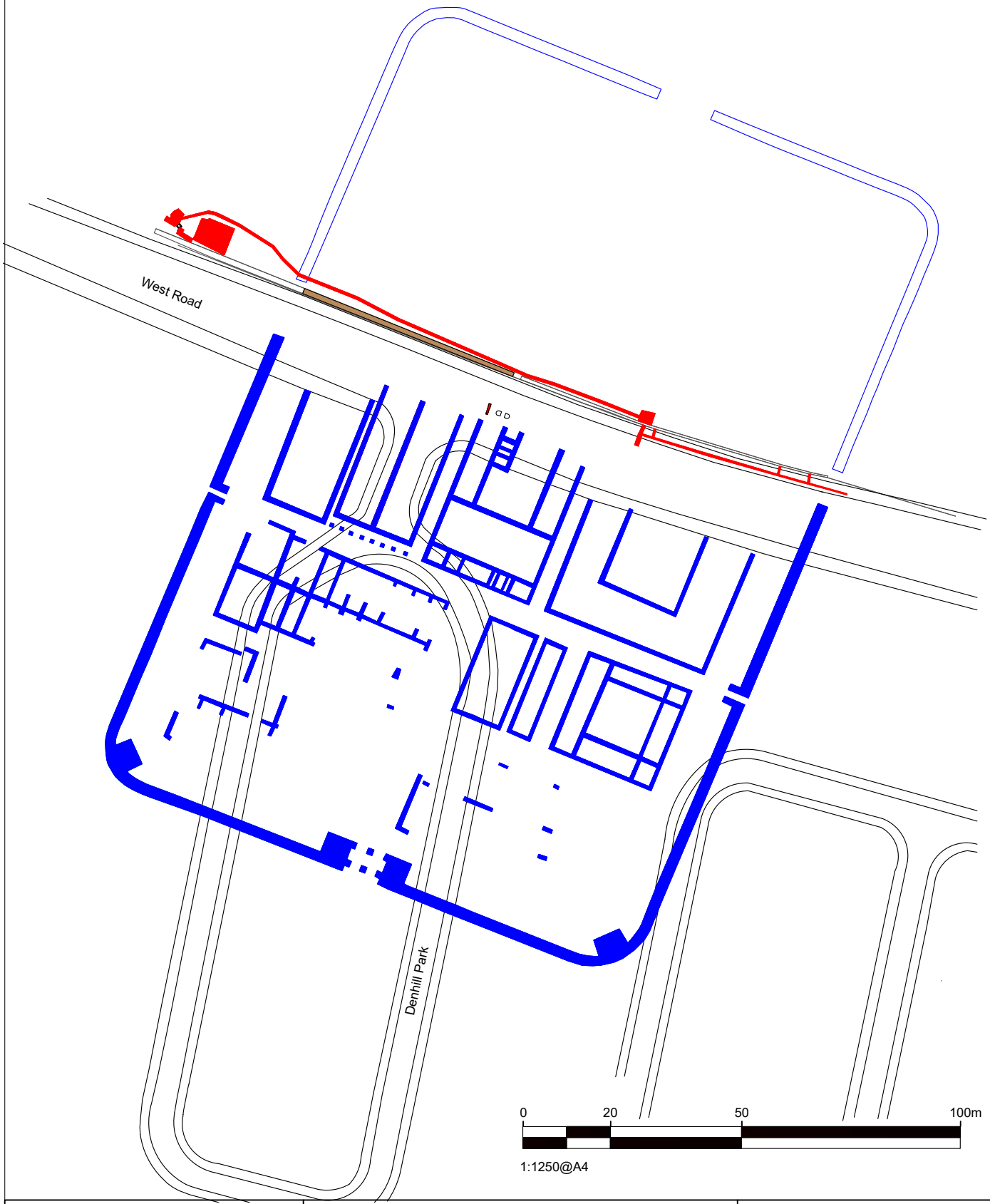

Figure 21. Plan of Codercum Fort overlain by the current road layout, and service trench loctions

Drawn: MN
Scale: 1250@A4

Condercum Roman Fort layout

Excavation area

Reservoir wall

Current road layout

5 The Finds

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The finds assemblage recovered from Fenham Reservoir and West Road comprised nine sherds of Roman pottery, two sherds of post-medieval pottery and one *sestertius* coin of early to mid-2st century date. In total the 11 pottery sherds weighed 230g. A full quantification of the pottery is given in Table 1.

5.2 Methodology

5.2.1 The pottery sherds were carefully cleaned in cold water and left to air dry. Any remaining soil was removed and the sherds laid out according to context, fabric group, and individual vessels. The pottery was examined macroscopically with the aid of a x10 hand lens. No microscopic analysis was undertaken. The coin was lightly cleaned to remove dirt and incrustations while leaving the patina intact.

5.3 Ceramics

Alex Croom

Context Number	Description	Weight (g)
401	Base sherd of a black burnished ware fabric 2 bowl/dish. Late second to late third century	20
601	(i) Rim of Lower Nene Valley ware mortarium. Mid third to fourth century (100g). (ii) Base sherd of a south-east reduced ware cooking pot. Late second to late third century	(i) 100 (ii) 36
601	Two rim sherds post-medieval flowerpots (18g).	18
602	(i) Rounded everted rim from storage jar in sandy grey ware, original surface lost. Most likely late second to late third century (22g). (ii) Body sherd of cooking pot in hard grey ware, possibly Norton. Likely to be third century (7g).	(i) 22 (ii) 7
603	Scrap of Dressel 20 olive-carrying amphora. First to late third century	19
609	Scrap of a flange from a locally produced mortarium in orange fabric with paler surfaces. Second century	13

Table 1. Pottery Quantification

5.4 Metal Finds

Rupert Lotherington

5.4.1 Copper alloy

5.4.1.1 A single Roman coin (8.3g) was recovered from a 19th century landscaping deposit (602) that predated the construction of the reservoir. The coin is a *sestertius* of Hadrian, AD 134 – 138 (RIC II Hadrian 749d). The obverse depicts a bust of Hadrian, laureate, right, with writing '…ANVS' the likely remnants of 'HADRIANVS'. The reverse shows *Felicitas*, draped, standing left and possibly holding *cornucopia* and *caduceus*.

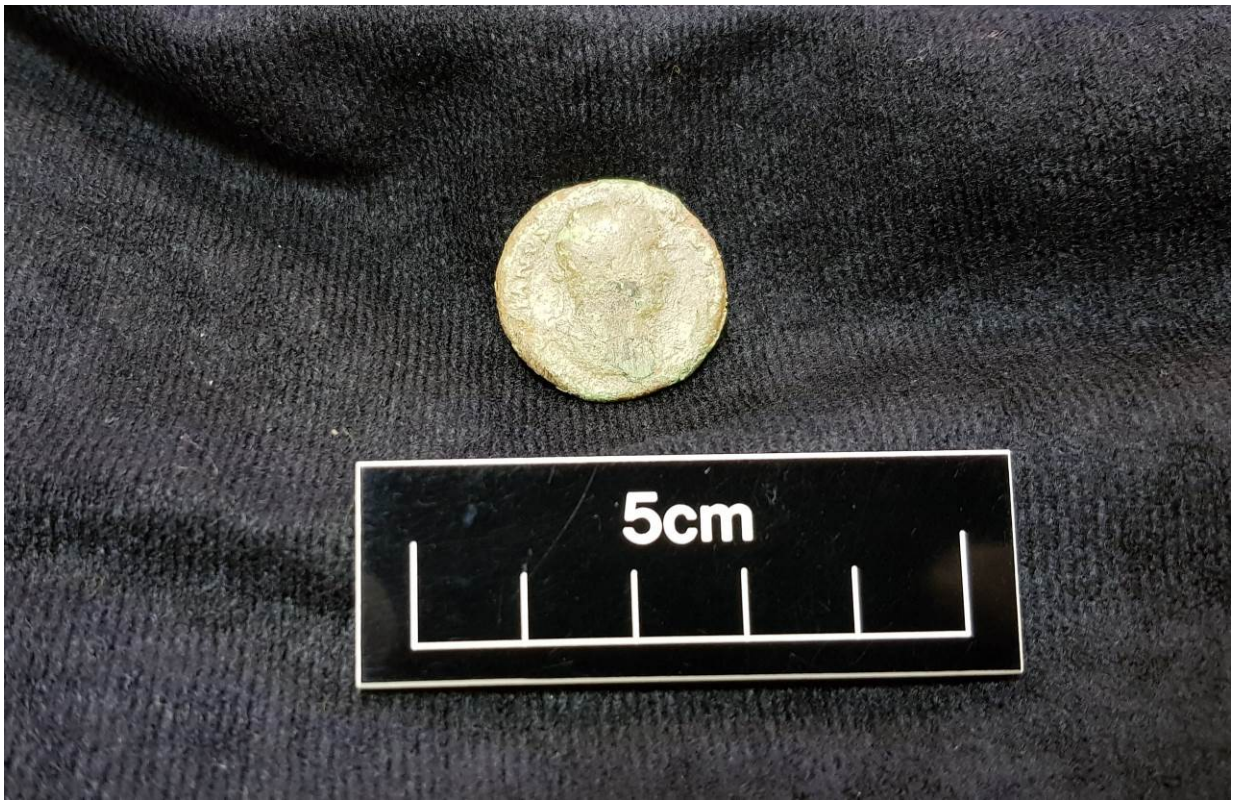

Figure 22. *Sestertius* of Hadrian AD 134 – 138 (Roman Coin)

6 Conclusion

6.1 The monitored works lie within the presumed northern extent of *Condercum* Fort and identified the remnants of possible Roman walls, road surfaces and associated levelling deposits. These were truncated by the construction and reconstruction of Fenham Reservoir as well as associated and separate modern utilities on a broad parallel alignment to West Road.

6.2 An archaeological excavation undertaken in 2017 immediately north-east of Fenham Reservoir revealed evidence of Roman activity, specifically a north-east/south-west aligned Roman road thought to service the northern gate of *Condercum* Fort (Cooper, 2018). In addition, *c.*100m to the north of the present scheme of works, a 2018 excavation identified a multi-period site that included ring gullies, pits and roundhouses related to indigenous Iron Age settlement later integrated within the fort as the local population was Romanised (Town, M. 2019). These earlier schemes of archaeological works suggest that the area to the north of *Condercum* Fort was unusually active. This might relate to the

importance of the area prior to the Roman influx and the construction of *Condercum* Fort which may explain its deliberate insertion into the existing local economy and wider landscape.

6.3 The present phase of works revealed the truncated remnants of a probable Roman road (603/704), which was observed within the vicnity of the later reservoir wall, and identifed in association with a single fragment of Dressel 20 olive-carting amphora which was recovered from its surface. An early to mid-2nd century *sestertius* and other residual pottery fragments recovered elsewhere from the site, which were similarly dated from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD, may potentially assist in the dating of the road surface. The composition of the road surface identified during this monitoring scheme also broadly matches the description of the composition, construction and depositional sequence observed during the archaeological investigations undertaken during 2017, "the road was built up…of irregular fragments of laminar yellow sandstone… and a second layer of sandstone fragments… the upper surface of the road contained occasional pockets of silt from which three sherds of Roman pottery and a fragment of roof tile were recovered" (Cooper, 2018. 8). In addition, the probable road surfaces (603/704), revealed in Test Pits 6 and 7 also correspond with the projected route of the *via principalis* which bisects the northern central portion of the fort and would have extended east-west to the north of the forts administrative buildings and the commandmants house. The watching brief also revealed the heavily truncated relict remnants of a sandstone wall directly north of the presumed location of the eastern gate and the *via principalis*, close to the projected location of the outer walls of *Condercum* fort and may represent the extant remains of the gate tower, however this interpretation remains tentative due to the truncated nature of the archaeological evidence allowing for limited interpretation.

6.4 Previous works undertaken on Hadrian's Wall have shown the construction of the wall comprises large footings, measuring approximitely 3-3.5m with an internal core of angulare sandstone rubble in a matrix of yellow brown mottled clay, faced with grey sandstone blocks (Wilmott, 2000). Sandstone rubble deposit (813) broadly mirrors the composition of the wall as described, however, Test Pit 8, was located within the centre of West Road, *within* the postulated location of *Condercum* Roman Fort. The Simpson and Richmond map produced in 1941, collated the archaeological evidence and investigation relating to Hadrian's Wall and the associated forts carried out from the 19th century onwards and displays the line of the Wall as following the northern boundary of the fort, which is located the northern extent of the reservoir. Consequently, the rubble core (813) identified in Test Pit 8 may reasonably be considered to be located within the north-west corner of the presumed central headquaters building (Simpson, 1941), and may represent the truncated relict remnants of an outer wall of the structure. Accordingly, although the size and depth of the excavated test pit were relatively limited the robust form of the rubble core could also indicate that further archaeological evidence associated with the

forts administrative centre survives at shallow depths beneath the route of the modern tarmac construction layers comprising the West Road.

6.5 In conclusion, this watching brief identified evidence associated with the Roman Fort of *Condercum* substantially truncated by 19th and 20th century suburban development of Benwell particularly during the construction of Fenham Reservoir and its associated utilities. Fenham Reservoir was believed to have significantly impacted on earlier *in-situ* archaeological remains though the observed remains of a probable Roman road and possible gate tower within during the present phase of works indicates that potentially isolated elements of *Condercum* Fort have survived in the immediate vicinity. The positive results from this watching brief reflect the high archaeological potential of works undertaken within the presumed location of *Condercum* Fort and further reinforces the need for archaeological mitigation during future developments in the area.

7 Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

7.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

7.2 ARS Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

8 Statement of Indemnity

8.1 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 authors 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.

9 Archive

9.1 A digital and paper archive will be prepared by ARS Ltd, consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data, and will be deposited with the Great North Museum in accordance with the specification compiled by Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at Newcastle City Council and in line with relevant CIfA guidance: *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (CIfA 2014d) and *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (CIfA 2014c). An OASIS record has also been completed for this work, including a digital version of this report, the reference for which is archaeol5-383135.

10 Acknowledgements

10.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Ben Ralston for commissioning the work on behalf of Northumbrian Water Ltd and Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeological Officer for their advice and guidance.

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Appendix I: Context Summary Table

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
101	Deposit	Modern concrete pavement. Same as (201) and (301). *20th Century.*
102	Deposit	Modern sand and gravel deposit. Base layer for concrete pavement (101). Same as (202) and (302). *20th Century.*
103	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (106) and services (109). *20th Century*
104	Deposit	Dark grey concrete and gravel. Backfill within utilities trench [115]. *20th Century*
105	Deposit	Concrete and gravel. Base layer for concrete curbs. *20th Century*
106	Deposit	Dark brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [103]. *20th Century*
107	Deposit	Modern service pipe. *20th Century*
108	Deposit	Dark brown concrete and clay mix. Backfill within utilities trench [114]. *20th Century*
109	Deposit	Modern service pipe within trench [103]. *20th Century*
110	Structure	North West to South East aligned sandstone wall. *Romano-British*
111	Deposit	Dark brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [116]. *20th Century*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
112	Structure	Brick built Fenham Reservoir boundary wall. *20th Century*
113	Deposit	Yellow-Brown clay silt deposit below wall [112]. *Roman-British? 20th Century?*
114	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (108). *20th Century*
115	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (104). *20th Century*
116	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (111). *20th Century*
201	Deposit	Modern concrete pavement. Same as (201) and (301). *20th Century.*
202	Deposit	Modern sand and gravel deposit. Base layer for concrete pavement (101). Same as (202) and (302). *20th Century.*
203	Deposit	Dark brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [205]. *20th Century*
204		Void
205	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (203) *20th Century*
206	Deposit	Modern service pipe within trench [215]. *20th Century*
207	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (212) *20th Century*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
208	Deposit	Yellow brown gravel. Levelling deposit for concrete curbs. *20th Century*
209	Deposit	Concrete and gravel. Base layer for concrete curbs. *20th Century*
210	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (211) *20th Century*
211	Deposit	Dark brown concrete and clay mix. Backfill within utilities trench [210]. *20th Century*
212	Deposit	Dark brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [210]. *20th Century*
213	Deposit	Mid brown clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [214]. *20th Century*
214	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (213) *20th Century*
215	Deposit	Mid brown-yellow clay. *Natural Substrate.*
216	Deposit	Mid brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [217]. *20th Century*
217	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (216) *20th Century*
301	Deposit	Modern concrete pavement. Same as (101) and (101). *20th Century.*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
302	Deposit	Modern sand and gravel deposit. Base layer for concrete pavement (301). Same as (102) and (202). *20th Century.*
303	Deposit	Dark brown concrete and clay mix. Backfill within utilities trench [304]. *20th Century*
304	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (303) *20th Century*
305	Deposit	Dark grey concrete and gravel. Backfill within utilities trench [306]. *20th Century*
306	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (305) *20th Century*
307	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (308) *20th Century*
308	Deposit	Dark brown-black clay silt. Backfill within utilities trench [307]. *20th Century*
401	Deposit	Topsoil and turf. *20th Century*
402	Deposit	Mid brown-grey silty loam. Backfill within utilities trench [403]. *20th Century*
403	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (402) *20th Century*
501	Deposit	Yellow grey clay. Redeposited natural. *20th Century*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
502	Deposit	Topsoil and turf. Below (501) *20th Century*
503		Void
504	Structure	Brick built inspection pit. *20th Century*
505	Structure	Concrete shaped structure associated within (504). *20th Century*
600	Deposit	Dark greyish clay. Made ground. *20th Century*
601	Deposit	Topsoil and turf below made ground (600) *20th Century*
602	Deposit	Grey-black clay and clinker deposit of made ground. *19th/20th Century*
603	Structure	Sandstone floor surface. *Romano-British*
604	Structure	Sandstone floor surface below (603). *Romano-British*
605		void
606	Cut	Cut for reservoir tank. Filled by deposit (607) *19th Century*
607	Deposit	Dark grey clay. Modern backfill within cut [606] *19th Century*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
608	Structure	Brick built wall. Fenham reservoir boundary wall *19th Century*
609	Deposit	Dark grey brown clay. Modern backfill within cut [606] *19th Century*
610	Deposit	Mid grey clay. Modern backfill within cut [606] *19th Century*
701	Deposit	Modern concrete pavement. Same as (201) and (301). *20th Century.*
702	Deposit	Modern sand and gravel deposit. Base layer for concrete pavement (101). Same as (202) and (302). *20th Century.*
703	Cut	Cut for modern utilities. Filled by deposit (106) and services (109). *20th Century*
704	Deposit	Sandstone and clay deposit. Base deposit for (703). *Romano-British*
705	Deposit	Mid brown clay *Natural substrate*
801	Deposit	Tarmac Road surface *20th Century.*
802	Deposit	Concrete. Base layer for tarmac road surface (801)
803	Deposit	Dark brown-black silty load. Backfill within utilities trench [017]. *20th Century.*

Context	Type	Description: *Processual Interpretation*
804	Deposit	Bitumen backfill within utilities trench [817]. *20th Century.*
805	Deposit	Tarmac road surface. Replacement surface within location of utilities service [807] *20th Century.*
806	Deposit	Compacted foam concrete. Backfill within utilities trench [807]. *20th Century.*
807	Cut	Cut for Modern utilities trench. Backfilled with (811), (806) and (805). *20th Century.*
808	Deposit	Yellow brown clay. Backfill within utilities trench [809]. *20th Century.*
809	Cut	Cut for Modern utilities trench. Backfilled with (808). *20th Century.*
810	Deposit	Yellow brown clay. *Natural substrate.*
811	Deposit	Light brown sand and gravel. Backfill within Utilities trench [807]. *20th Century.*
812		Void
813	Deposit	Mid brown silty clay with frequent sandstone fragments. *Romano-British*
814	Deposit	Dark brown silty loam. Found below (813) *Romano-British*
815	Deposit	Mid yellow orange clay. Bedding deposit. *Romano-British*

Context	Type	Description: ***Processual Interpretation***
816	Deposit	Mid grey silty clay. Bedding deposit. *Romano-British*
817	Cut	Cut for Modern utilities trench. Backfilled with (803) and (804). *20th Century.*

Appendix II: OASIS Form

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

Printable version

OASIS ID: archaeol5-383135

Project details

Project name	Archaeological Watching Brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne
Short description of the project	In June 2019 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. was commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd. to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne. The watching brief monitored groundworks associated with the installation of a new connection onto the mains within West Road prior to development at the Fenham Reservoir site.The monitored works identified evidence associated with the Roman Fort of Condercum substantially truncated by 19th and 20th century suburban development of Benwell particularly the construction of Fenham Reservoir and its associated utilities. Fenham Reservoir was believed to have significantly impacted on earlier in-situ archaeological remains though the observed remains of a probable Roman road within its bounds indicates that elements of Condercum Fort have survived in the immediate vicinity.
Project dates	Start: 26-06-2019 End: 06-08-2019
Previous/future work	Yes / Yes
Any associated project reference codes	WRDP19 - Sitecode
Any associated project reference codes	100098 - Related HER No.
Any associated project reference codes	1003499 - Related HER No.
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	World Heritage Site
Site status	Local Authority Designated Archaeological Area
Current Land use	Transport and Utilities 3 - Utilities
Monument type	FORTIFICATION Roman
Monument type	ROAD Roman
Significant Finds	POTTERY Roman
Investigation type	"Watching Brief"
Prompt	National Planning Policy Framework - NPPF

Project location

Country	England
Site location	TYNE AND WEAR NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne

Postcode	NE4 9LA
Study area	184.45 Square metres
Site coordinates	NZ 21576 64819 54.977436736888 -1.662865036668 54 58 38 N 001 39 46 W Point
Height OD / Depth	Min: 124.42m Max: 125.03m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project brief originator	Tyne and Wear County Council
Project design originator	Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Project director/manager	Rupert Lotherington
Project supervisor	Ana Rodrigues
Type of sponsor/funding body	Northumbrian Water

Project archives

Physical Archive recipient	Great North Museum
Physical Contents	"Animal Bones","Ceramics","Metal"
Digital Archive recipient	Tyne and Wear HER
Digital Contents	"none"
Digital Media available	"Images raster / digital photography","Survey","Text"
Paper Archive recipient	Great North Museum
Paper Contents	"none"
Paper Media available	"Context sheet","Drawing","Map","Plan","Report","Section","Survey "

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
Title	Archaeological Watching Brief at Fenham Reservoir, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne
Author(s)/Editor(s)	Cockcroft, D., Nicholson, M., and Rodrigues, A.
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Please e-mail Historic England for OASIS help and advice

Cite only: http://www.oasis.ac.uk/form/print.cfm for this page