

**An Archaeological Evaluation on
Land to the North of Lower Dundas
Street, Sunderland.**



Trench looking west

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Contents

	List of Illustrations.....	
	Executive Summary.....	2
1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Location and Geology.....	3
3.	Background.....	4
4.	Aims and Objectives.....	4
5.	Methodology.....	4
6.	Evaluation Results.....	5
7.	Discussion.....	5
8.	Conclusions.....	5
9.	Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright.....	5
10.	Statement of Indemnity.....	5
11.	Acknowledgments.....	6
12.	References.....	6

Appendix I: Figures
Appendix II: Context Register
Appendix III: Harris Matrix
Appendix IV: Specification

List of Illustrations

Fig No.	Detail	Page
1.	Location map	3
2.	Map of the site showing the locations of the trenches.....	7
3.	Trench plan.....	8
4.	Trench Section.....	9
5.	Trench looking west.....	10
6.	Trench looking west, from middle.....	10
7.	North facing section.....	11

Executive Summary

In February 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Brent McCafferty, of Leah properties Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of Lower Dundas Street, Sunderland. The purpose of the evaluation was to inform on the presence or absence of archaeological remains prior to the development of the site. The site falls within the proposed area of the Monkwearmouth World Heritage Site.

An archaeological desk based assessment has been produced (Stobbs 2011) which indicated that the proposed development site offered a high potential for research related to the North East Regional Research Framework (NERRF), in particular the early Medieval and Medieval periods.

During the evaluation no archaeological evidence was found of a Medieval settlement or Monastic activity. Given the depths and consistency of the made ground present across the site, it is probable that previous groundworks and site use may have destroyed any potential archaeological remains in the area.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In February 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Brent McCafferty of Leah Properties Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land to the north of Lower Dundas Street, Sunderland (Fig. 1). The purpose of the evaluation was to inform on the presence or absence of archaeological remains prior to the development of the site. The site falls within the proposed area of the Monkwearmouth World Heritage Site.

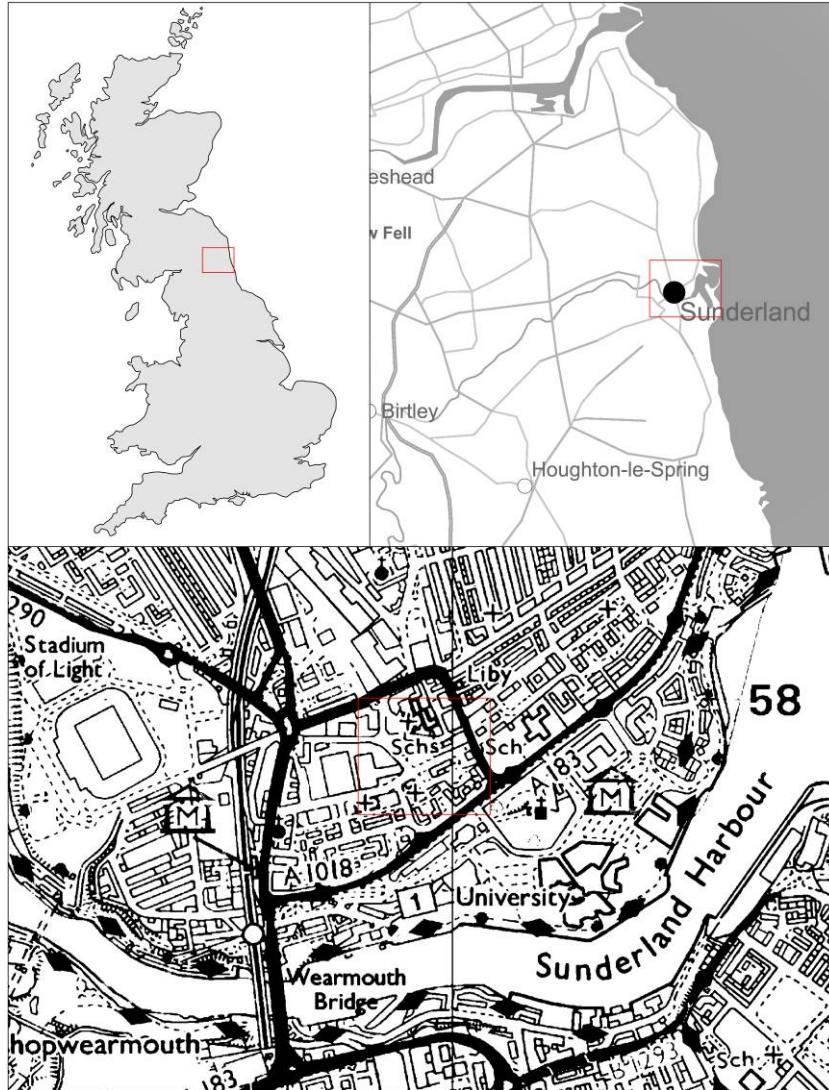


Fig. 1 General location map of the development site.

2. Location and Geology

- 2.1. The development site comprises a piece of waste ground, formerly occupied by terraced housing, to the north of Lower Dundas Street (NZ 39939 57887). The site is situated less than 300m north of the River Wear and approximately 800m north of the city centre.
- 2.2. The solid geology of the site comprises Hartlepool and Roker Dolomite Magnesium Limestone which is overlain by laminated boulder clay and glacial sands and gravels (B.G.S. 1978). Extensive ballast dumping has also occurred across much of the surrounding areas.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1. An archaeological desk based assessment has been produced (Stobbs 2011) which outlines the historic background of the site. The assessment concluded that until the early 19th century the site of the proposed development had been undeveloped and possibly used as agricultural land. However, because of evidence of Prehistoric and Roman activity within the wider vicinity, there was a possibility that remains of this period may survive. The close proximity of the study site to the former Anglo-Saxon monastery of Wearmouth suggests that there is a possibility that the proposed development site may have originally lain within the monastic precinct.
- 3.2. It was also possible that the site may have lain along the southern extent of Monkwearmouth Medieval village and there was a possibility of features associated with this period being present. The proposed development site was considered to offer a high potential for research related to the North East Regional Research Framework (NERRF), in particular the early Medieval and Medieval periods.

4. Aims and Objectives

- 4.1 The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to gather sufficient information to establish the extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological features and deposits within the area of proposed development, and to record any features or deposits at an appropriate level.

5. Methodology

- 5.1 The archaeological evaluation comprised of one trench (Fig. 2). The trench location was determined based upon the results found in the desk-based assessment (Stobbs 2011) and the locations of known services and restraints on the site. The trench measured 40m in length by 2m in width.
- 5.2 The trench was opened by machine using a toothless ditching bucket in level spits until the natural level was reached, at which point the trenches were examined and cleaned by hand. All machine excavation was carried out under careful archaeological supervision.
- 5.5 The deposits were recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Each context was recorded on pro-forma records which included the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.
- 5.6 The trench was planned at 1:50. Trench sides were also drawn in section at a scale of 1:20. All deposits and the base of each trench were levelled and heights are expressed in metres above Ordnance Datum.
- 5.7 A photographic record was maintained including photographs of each trench. All images were taken in digital format, and contain a graduated photographic scale.

6. Evaluation Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 3 - 7)

Trench 1 measured 40m x 2m at its base. The trench was located to the north of the study area and was orientated east-west. A layer of dark brown/ black (10yr 2/1) topsoil (001) was first removed, which existed to a depth of 0.20m in the eastern end of the trench and 0.25m in the western end. Directly underlying the topsoil layer (001) was a layer of modern backfill, which included brick, stone, rubble, sand, and refuse. The backfill layer existed to depths of 0.70m. A large yellow sand layer (004) was present within the backfill layer (002) at the eastern end of the trench. The sand was 10m in length and existed to depths of 0.60m, the layer itself having a general depth of 0.30m. Directly underlying the made ground (002) was a layer of natural light grey/yellow (10yr 4/1), silty boulder clay, with depths beyond excavation. 9.8m from the western edge of the trench there was a modern brick manhole (003). Throughout the length of the trench there were also many drainage pipes present, associated with the previous terraced housing.

7. Discussion

7.1 There were no archaeological features, deposits, buried land surfaces or small finds located within the trench. The lack of archaeology is likely due to the former land use of the site. The area had been previously occupied by terraced housing and the land levelled prior to construction. It was evident from the trenches that the level of demolition penetrated the natural clay level and any archaeology which may have existed here will have been damaged or destroyed.

8. Conclusions

8.1. During the evaluation no archaeological evidence was found of a Medieval settlement or monastic activity. It is probable that previous groundworks and site use may have destroyed any potential archaeological remains evidence in the area.

9. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

9.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

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

10. Statement of Indemnity

10.1 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.

11. Acknowledgements

- 11.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Brent McCafferty of Leah Properties Ltd, Mario Minchella of Mario Minchella Architects and Jennifer Morrison, Tyne and Wear Archaeological Officer.

12. References

Stobbs, G. 2011. *Lower Dundas Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment* Tyne & Wear Museums Archaeology.

British Geological Survey, 2008, *Sunderland – Solid and Drift Edition*, 1:50 000 Series, Sheet 21

Tyne and Wear Sitelines HER <http://www.twsitelines.info/>

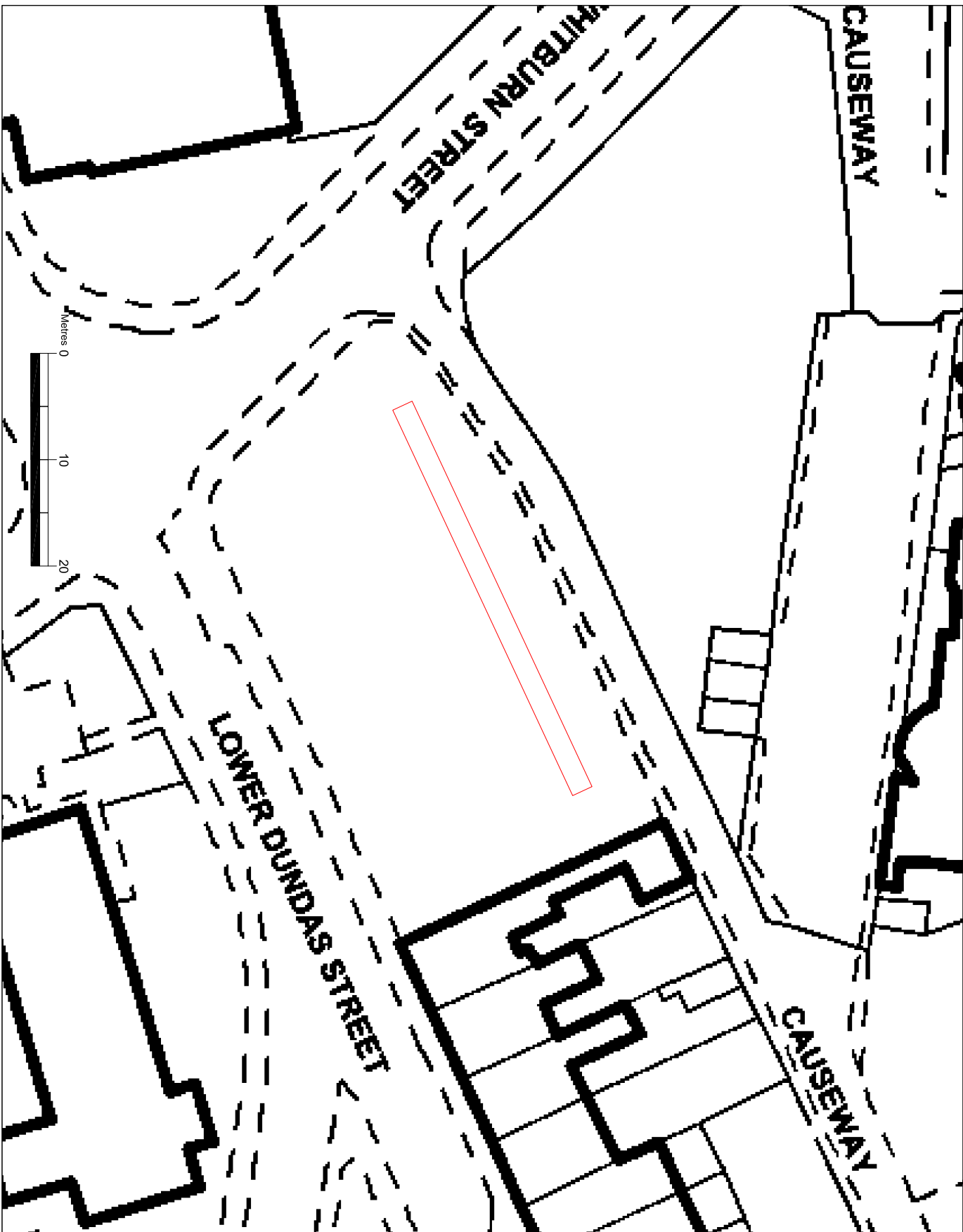


Figure 2

Trench location

Scale = 1:500 @ A4

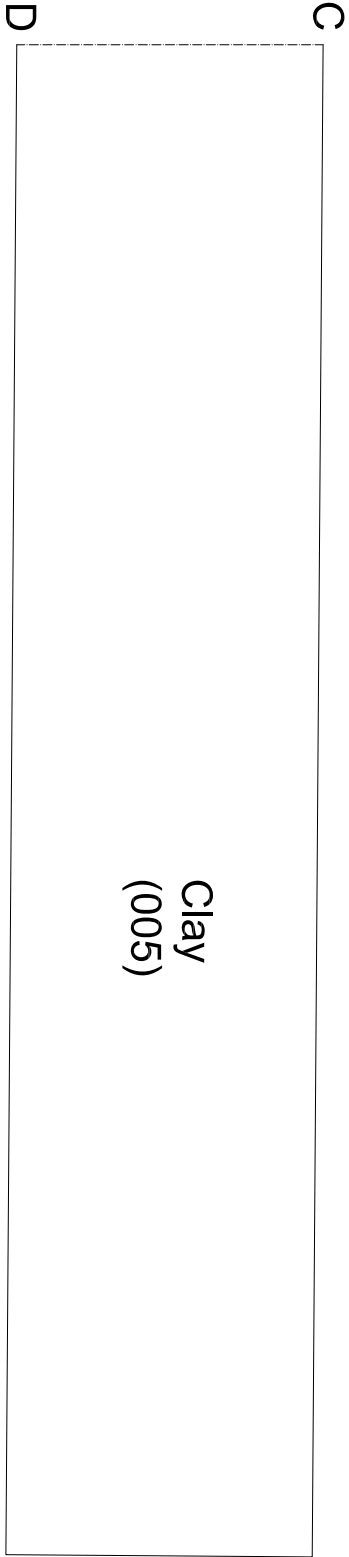
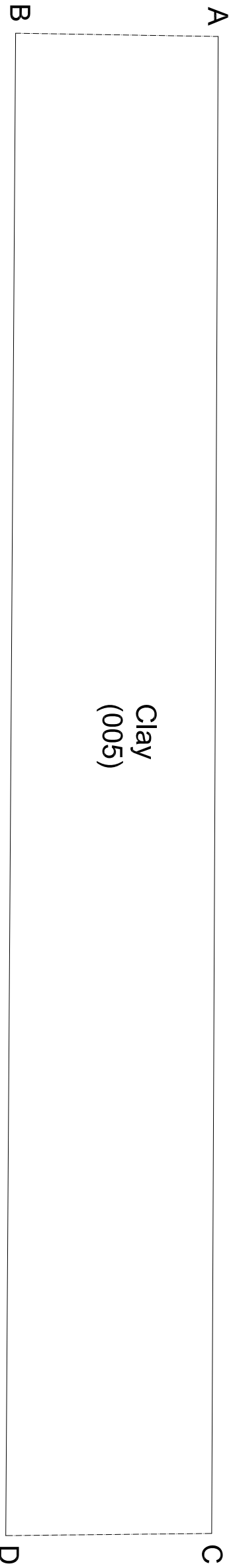
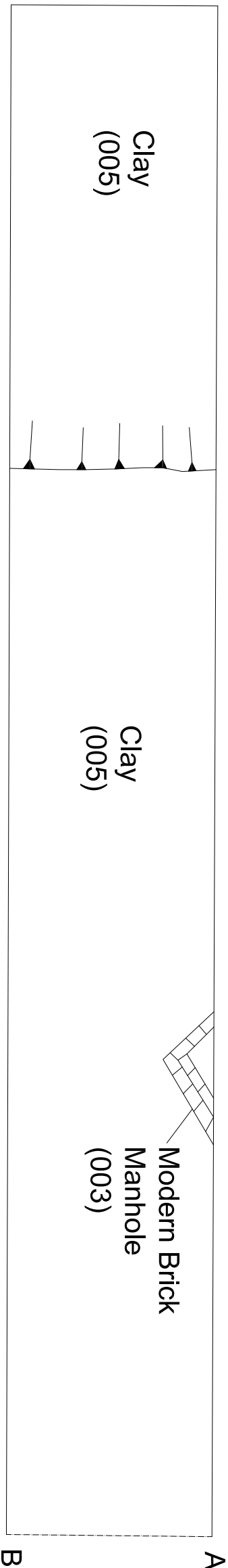
Key:



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Trench plan

Figure 3
Trench plan
Scale = 1:50 @ A3

Key:

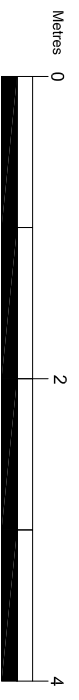


Figure 4
Trench Section
Scale = 1:50 @ A3

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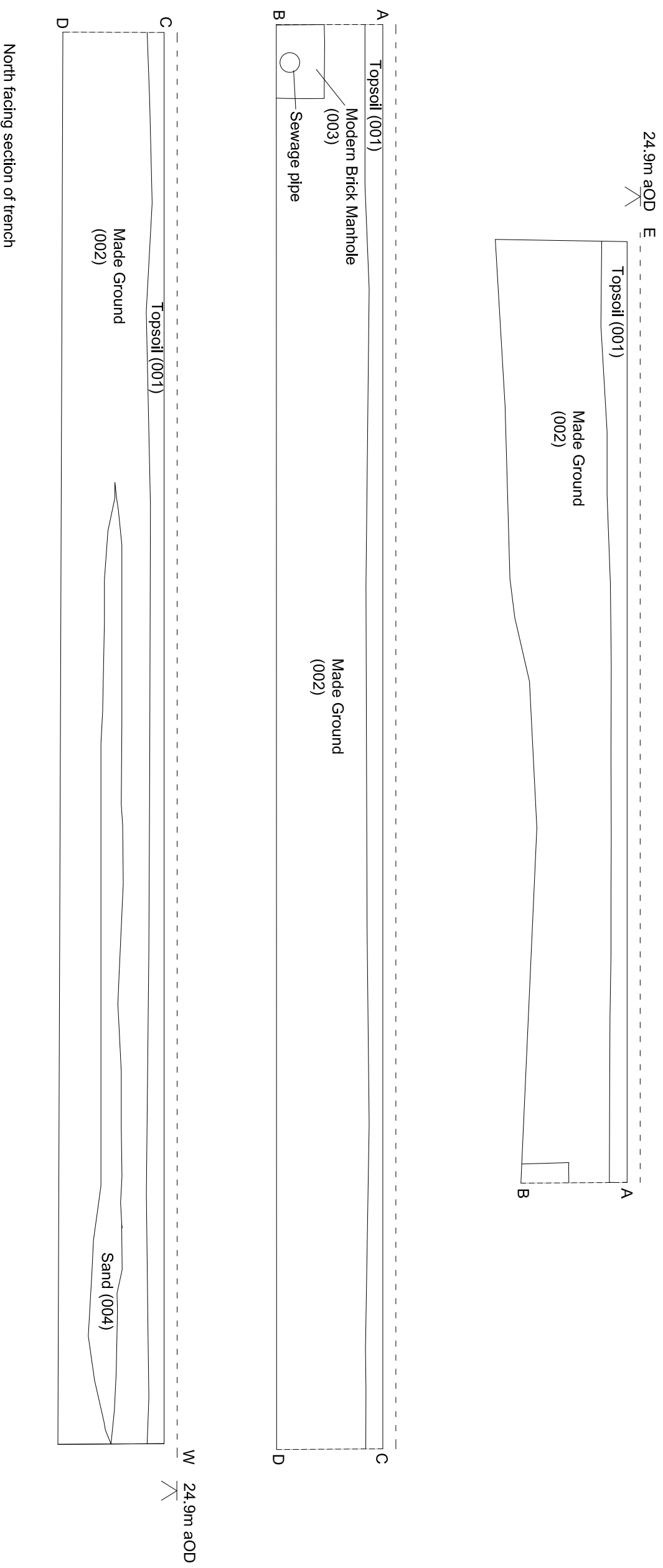




Figure 5 Trench looking west



Figure 6 Trench looking west, from middle



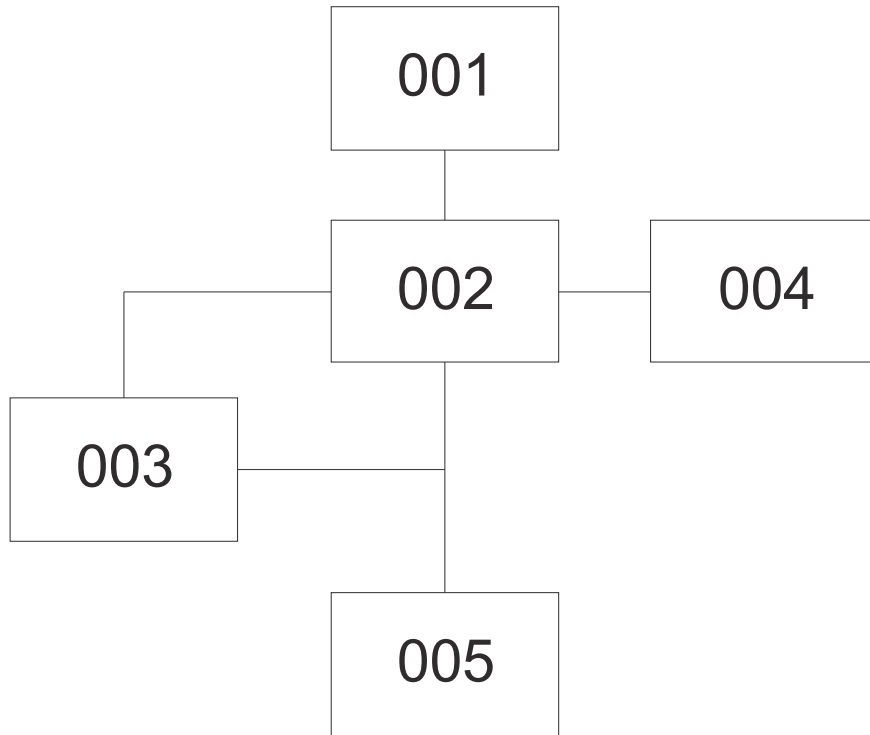
Figure 7 North facing trench section

APPENDIX II: REGISTER

Context Register

Context No.	Description
001	Topsoil
002	Made ground
003	Modern Manhole
004	Sand
005	Natural Clay

APPENDIX III: HARRIS MATRIX



Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team

Specification for Preliminary Archaeological Evaluation at Dundas Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland

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The Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team is the curatorial service for archaeology, industrial archaeology and historic buildings throughout the Tyne and Wear districts. It helps and advises Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland Councils to carry out their statutory duties to care for the precious historic environment of Tyneside and Wearside. The Team can be found at the Strategic Housing, Planning and Transportation Division of the Environment & Regeneration Directorate of