

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
Environment Agency

Corbridge Bridge
Corbridge
Northumberland

archaeological monitoring

report 3536
September 2014

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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief conducted during groundworks at Corbridge Bridge. The works comprised the monitoring of a topsoil strip and ground reduction prior to the construction of new flood defences.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by the Environment Agency and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Results

- 1.3 No archaeological features were uncovered and no artefacts recovered during the course of the works.

Recommendation

- 1.4 As no significant archaeological resource was identified, no further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at Corbridge Bridge, Corbridge, Tynedale, Northumberland (NGR centre: NY 98921 64106). It covers an area of approximately 800m². Residential properties lie to the south, with the structure of Corbridge Bridge to the immediate west. The wooded bank of the River Tyne extends to the east, with the river itself to the north.

Development

- 2.2 The flood defences on the south bank of the River Tyne at Corbridge are to be refurbished. Part of this work lies next to the east of the south end of Corbridge Bridge

Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the monitoring programme was to identify and record any archaeological features or artefacts uncovered during groundworks.

Methods statement

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by Archaeological Services Durham University (reference PC14.292) and approved by English Heritage. Corbridge Bridge is a Scheduled Monument (number SM ND 123, HA 1006574). Monument Consent was granted for the groundworks to take place (reference S00089168).

Dates

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken between the 3rd and the 4th of September 2014. This report was prepared for September 2014.

Personnel

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Mark Randerson. This report was prepared by Mark Randerson, and edited by Peter Carne with graphics by David Graham. The Project Manager was Daniel Still.

Archive/OASIS

- 2.7 The site code is **CFD14**, for **Corbridge Flood Defences 2014**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be transferred to the Great North Museum in due course. Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the **Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations project (OASIS)**. The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-189878**.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

- 3.1 At the time of the monitoring, the study area comprised a small area of open rough grassland on the south bank of the River Tyne.
- 3.2 The study area is mostly level, with a mean elevation of 27.5 OD. The ground rises slightly to the west, toward the south end of the bridge, and falls away sharply to the river to the north. To the south, the course of Station Road is slightly sunk, with the study site accessed by a flight of stone steps.

- 3.3 The underlying solid geology of the area of the study site comprises Carboniferous sandstone of the Stainmore Formation. This is overlain by Quaternary alluvium of clay, silt, sand, and gravel.

4. Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 Corbridge Bridge is the oldest bridge on the River Tyne. Although there was a Roman bridge at Corbridge, this lay to west of the study site. The forerunner of the present bridge was constructed in the early 13th century, and small parts of this medieval bridge survive on the north bank of the Tyne. The current seven-arched structure was built in 1674, and was the only bridge to survive the great floods of 1771. The span has been altered and enlarged in 1780, 1880, 1950, and 1973/4, with the southern arch completely rebuilt in 1831. The bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument, and also a Grade I Listed Building.

5. The archaeological monitoring (Figure 2)

- 5.1 The planned flood defences in the area of the bridge involve the construction of an earth bund, roughly following the course of the river. This bund was to hold a core of compacted clay, contained in a buried trench. In the study area, the route of this bund followed a sinuous line extending east-west from the southern end of the bridge structure to the existing flood wall on the north side of Station Road.
- 5.2 The ground was reduced along the course of a six-metre wide corridor following the footprint of the bund. In the centre of this area, a 1.2m-wide trench was excavated, extending to a maximum depth of 1m (Figure 3). This central trench ended approximately three metres to the east of the end of the bridge, but otherwise crossed the whole of the study area. A moderately compact deposit of mid greyish-brown sandy silt [2] was exposed at the base of the reduced area and in the trench: the base of the deposit was not revealed. Inclusions of large sub-angular stone blocks, fragments of concrete and tarmac, and lenses of sand and gravel were observed throughout the whole of the deposit, suggesting that it represented a thick layer of modern 'made ground', possibly deposited in order to build up the river bank in this area. This was sealed by a layer of dark grey-brown loose sandy silt topsoil [1]. No other features were exposed.

6. The archaeological resource

- 6.1 No archaeological features were uncovered and no artefacts recovered during the course of the works. The deposits encountered were clearly of very modern origin, and were presumably laid down during past works on the flood defences.

7. Recommendations

- 7.1 As no significant archaeological resource was identified, no further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

8. Sources

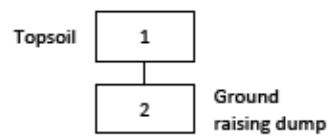
<http://www.keystothepast>

Appendix 1: Data table

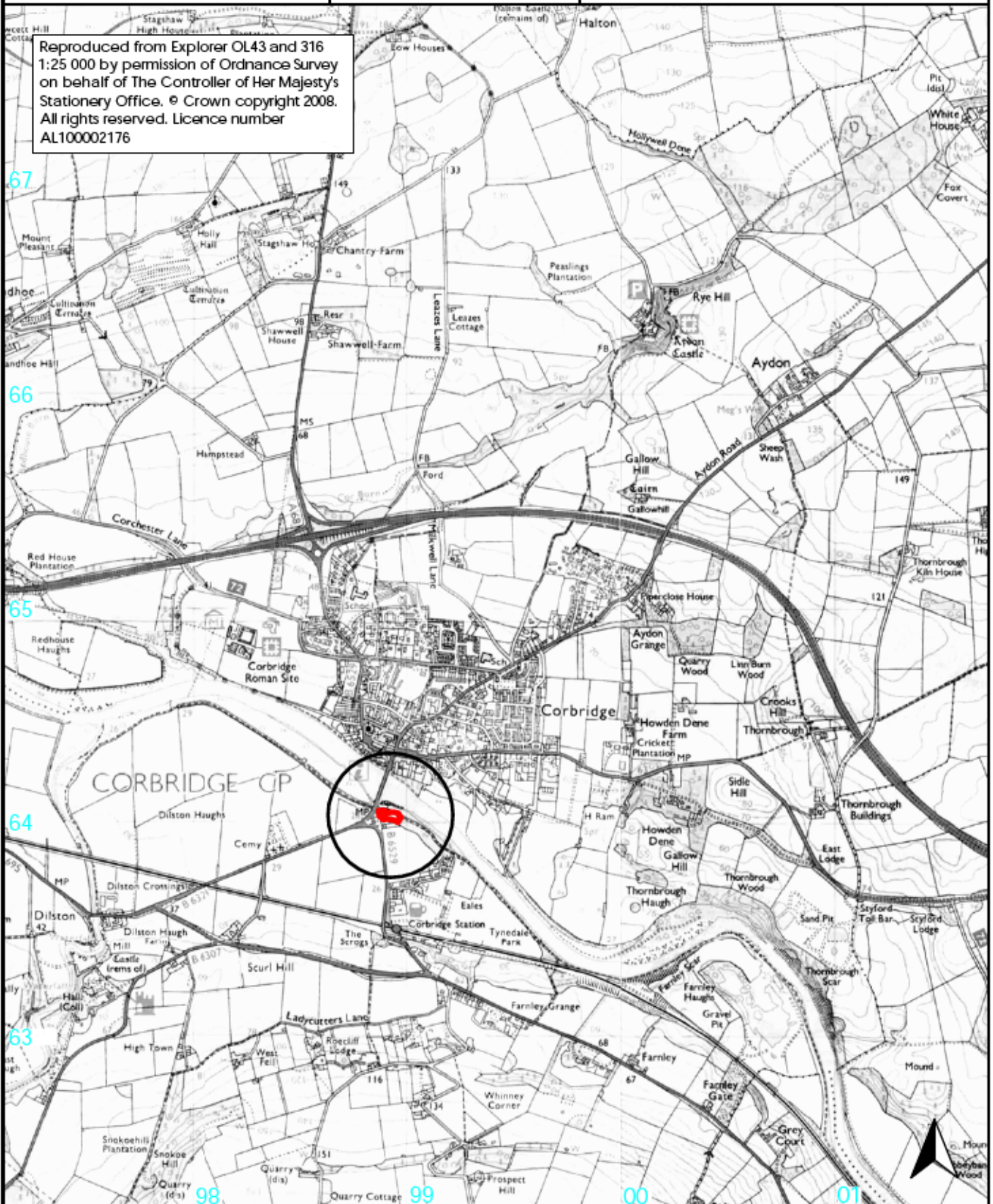
Table 1.1: Context data

No	Description
1	Topsoil
2	Ground-raising dumps

Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrix

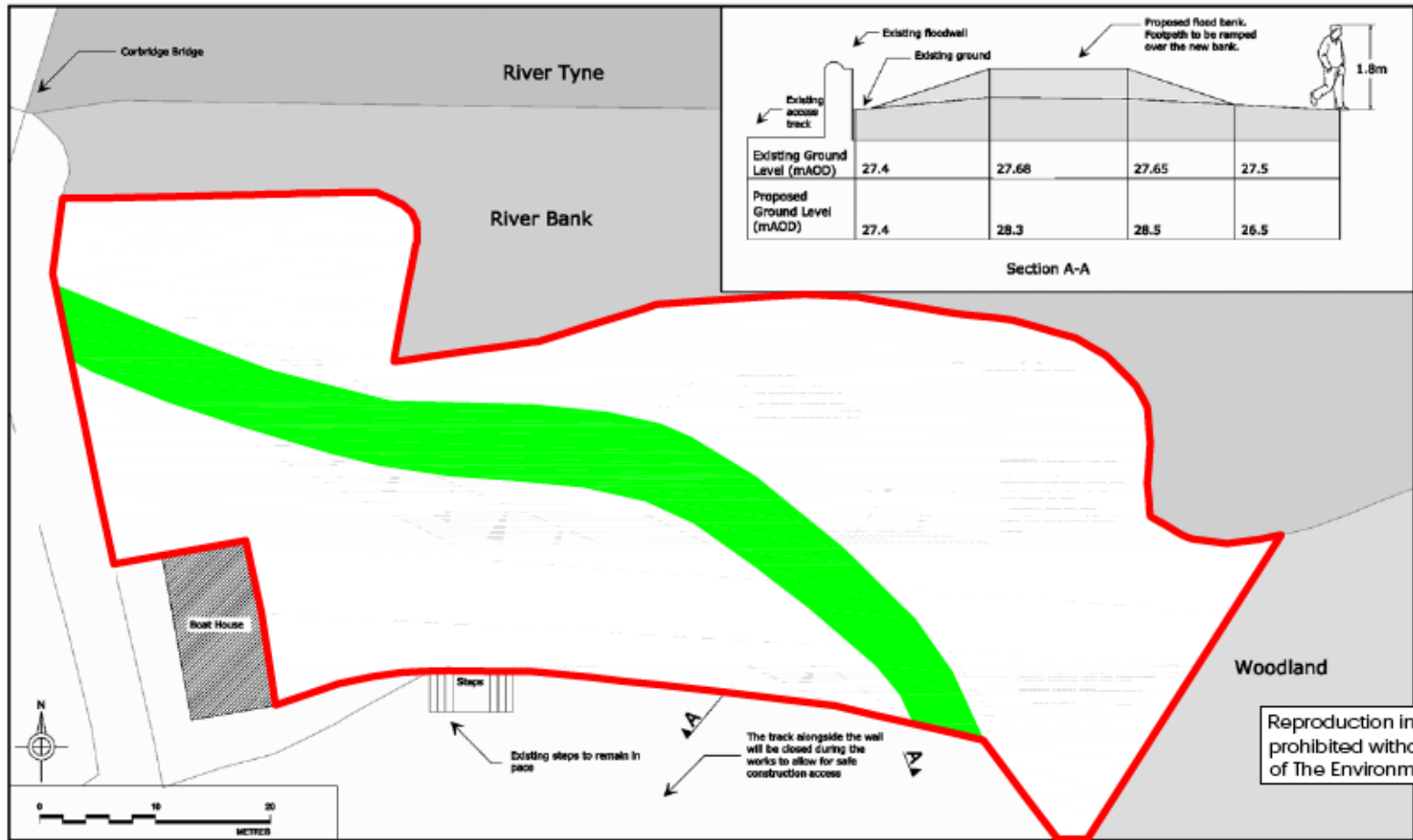


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 site location

0 1km
scale 1:25 000 for A4 plot



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**CORBRIDGE-WALL-REPLACEMENT
DEFENCE_IMPROVEMENTS**
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Rev	Amendments	Date	By	Scale
				SEE_SCALE_BAR
				Original Size
				Drawing No.
				CONSULTATIONPLAN1

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Figure 2: Monitored area

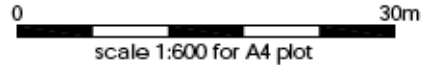




Figure 3: The monitored area during groundworks, looking south-east