

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES  
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of  
Miller Homes

Land at Green Rigg  
Medburn  
Northumberland

archaeological evaluation

report 4123  
March 2016

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## **1. Summary**

### **The project**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation conducted in advance of a proposed development at Green Rigg, Medburn, Northumberland. The works comprised the excavation of 18 trenches.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by Miller Homes and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

### **Results**

- 1.3 Plough furrows were identified across both fields during the excavations, indicating agricultural exploitation of the land during the medieval or post-medieval period in this area. No other significant archaeological deposits were identified.

### **Recommendation**

- 1.4 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 Green Rigg, Medburn, Northumberland (NZ 13044 70624). It covers an area of approximately 4.2 ha. The area to the west and south is residential housing, whilst the area to the north and east is open farmland.

### Development proposal

- 2.2 The proposal is for residential housing (Planning reference 15/00557/OUT).

### Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the scheme of works was to assess the nature, extent and potential significance of any archaeological resource within the proposed development area, so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in relation to the development.

### Specification

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by Archaeological Services Durham University (reference PC16.8r) and approved by the planning authority.

### Dates

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken between 29th February and 9th March 2016. This report was prepared for March 2016.

### Personnel

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Jenny Richards, Tudor Skinner and Benjamin Westwood (supervisor). This report was prepared by Benjamin Westwood, with illustrations by David Graham. The Project Manager was Daniel Still.

### Archive/OASIS

- 2.7 The site code is **MGR16**, for **Medburn Green Rigg 2016**. 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 **archaeol3-245940**.

## 3. Landuse, topography and geology

- 3.1 At the time of this assessment, the proposed development area comprised 2 fields under pasture.
- 3.2 The survey area was predominantly level with a mean elevation of approximately 96m OD.
- 3.3 The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous strata of the Stainmore Formation (mudstone, sandstone and limestone) which are overlain by Devensian glaciofluvial deposits (sands and gravel) to the north, and Devensian diamicton till the south.

## **4. Historical and archaeological background**

### **Previous archaeological works**

- 4.1 No known archaeological works have been undertaken within the proposed development area. In the vicinity of the site the only archaeological work undertaken comprise four desk-based assessments including schemes for both overhead lines and a trunk main. A little further afield and some 1.3km to the south-east of the proposed development area, recent archaeological works in 2014 identified Neolithic remains including rock art, extensive later prehistoric occupation and land use and a site from which Roman, Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval artefacts were recovered.

### **The prehistoric period and Roman period (up to 5th century AD)**

- 4.2 There is no evidence of prehistoric or Roman activity within the proposed development area. The site is located within a wider landscape in which there are archaeological sites from the prehistoric period onwards. Aerial photographs looked at by the English Heritage funded National Mapping Project for Hadrian's Wall identified both a number of later prehistoric/Romano-British enclosures and ditches indicating occupation and utilisation of the area during these periods. In addition the extent of occupation and land use at this time in south-east Northumberland is being increasingly identified through archaeological investigations.

### **The medieval period (5th century to 1540)**

- 4.3 Nearly 1km to the south-west of the proposed development area is the site of the deserted medieval village of South Dissington (HER10978). Originally a member of Seaton Delaval lordship, South Dissington was granted to Tynemouth Priory in around 1085. By the 18th century only the hall stood on the village site. Earthworks including the remnants of tofts and croft boundaries are present.

- 4.4 There is no evidence for any medieval occupation within the proposed development area.

### **The post-medieval period and modern period (1541 to present)**

- 4.5 Approximately 200m to the south-west of the proposed development area at Dissington Old Hall is a 17th-century walled garden, with the remnants of a house built into the north-east corner. To the north of the garden are the mid-19th century Old Dissington Farmhouse and outbuildings.

## **5. The evaluation trenches**

### **Introduction**

- 5.1 A total of 18 trenches were excavated across the development area, located to target anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. A further trench, located across the remains of a modern building in the south-east corner of the development site, was not excavated following discussion with the Assistant County Archaeological Officer for Northumberland. The trenches were excavated by a machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket and were sealed by a deposit of grey-brown clayey-silt topsoil [1: up to 0.4m thick].

**Trench 1 (Figures 3, 4)**

- 5.2 Trench 1 was 50m long and excavated on a north-west/south-east alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- brown clay and gravel [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.1m thick]. Toward the western end of the trench, a deposit of dark grey-brown clay-silt [7: 15m+ long, 0.5m+ thick] containing frequent rubble and modern glass fragments was identified, together with the remains of a concrete post [4: 2m long, 0.3m wide] (Figure 4).

**Trench 2**

- 5.3 Trench 2 was 50m long and excavated on a north/south alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- brown clay and gravel [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by four plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 6m apart, were up to 2m wide and 0.1m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. The furrows were overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

**Trench 3**

- 5.4 Trench 3 was 50m long and excavated on an east/west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- brown clay and gravel [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

**Trench 4**

- 5.5 Trench 4 was 50m long and excavated on a north-east/south-west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- brown clay and gravel [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, cut by a single plough furrow aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrow [F5] extended the length of the trench, was up to 0.1m deep and filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. It was overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

**Trench 5**

- 5.6 Trench 5 was 50m long and excavated on a north/south alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- brown clay and gravel [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.35m, and was cut by five plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 6m apart, were up to 2m wide and 0.1m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. The furrows were overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.1m thick]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

**Trench 6**

- 5.7 Trench 6 was 50m long and excavated on an east/west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 7**

- 5.8 Trench 7 was 50m long and excavated on a north-west/south-east alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 8 (Figures 3, 5)**

- 5.9 Trench 8 was 50m long and excavated on an east/west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m. A steep sided gully with a pronounced 'V' shaped profile indicative of a land drain cut the natural [F8: 0.6m wide, 0.35m deep]. This was filled by a grey clay-silt [9] (Figure 5). No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 9**

- 5.10 Trench 9 was 25m long and excavated on a north-east/south-west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, overlain by a deposit of brown clay-silt subsoil [3: 0.2m thick]. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 10**

- 5.11 Trench 10 was 50m long and excavated on a north/south alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by five plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 5m apart, were up to 5m wide and 0.2m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 11**

- 5.12 Trench 11 was 50m long and excavated on an east/west alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by three plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 12m apart, were up to 12m wide and 0.2m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 12 (Figures 3, 6)**

- 5.13 Trench 12 was 50m long and excavated on a north/south alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by six plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 7m apart, were up to 5m wide and 0.2m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]; the varying surviving width of the furrows is indicative of their truncation. A shallow truncated furrow [F10: 0.6m wide, 0.1m deep] was excavated, filled by a deposit of brown-grey clay-silt [11] (Figure 6). No artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 13**

- 5.14 Trench 13 was 50m long and excavated on a north/south alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by five plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 8m apart, were up to 5m wide and 0.2m deep, and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 14**

- 5.15 Trench 14 was 25m long and excavated on a north-east/south-west alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.5m. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 15**

- 5.16 Trench 15 was 50m long and excavated on an east/west alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, brown silty-clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.5m. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 16**

- 5.17 Trench 16 was 50m long and excavated on a north-east/south-west alignment in the western-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, brown silty-clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.45m. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 17**

- 5.18 Trench 17 was 50m long and excavated on a north-west/south-east alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, brown silty-clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.5m. No archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

### **Trench 18**

- 5.19 Following discussion and the agreement of the Assistant County Archaeology Officer, Trench 18 was not excavated due to extensive rubble and concrete in the vicinity of the trench.

### **Trench 19**

- 5.20 Trench 19 was 25m long and excavated on a north-west/south-east alignment in the eastern-most field in the development area. Natural subsoil, orange- yellow clay [2], was identified at a depth of up to 0.4m, and was cut by three plough furrows aligned approximately north-east/south-west. The furrows [F5] were spaced approximately 3m apart, were up to 3m wide and 0.2m deep and were filled by a deposit of brown clayey-silt [6]. No further archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were recovered.

## **6. The artefacts**

- 6.1 No artefacts were recovered.



## **7. The palaeoenvironmental evidence**

7.1 No material suitable for palaeoenvironmental assessment was identified.

## **8. The archaeological resource**

8.1 Plough furrows were identified across both fields during the excavations, indicating agricultural exploitation of the land during the medieval or post-medieval period in this area. No other significant archaeological resource was identified.

## **9. Impact assessment**

9.1 Development of the site is unlikely to impact on any significant archaeological deposits.

## **10. Recommendation**

10.1 No further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

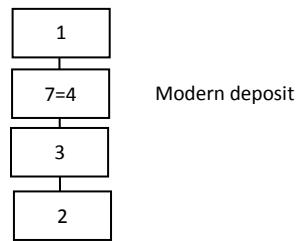
## Appendix 1: Data table

**Table 1.1: Context data**

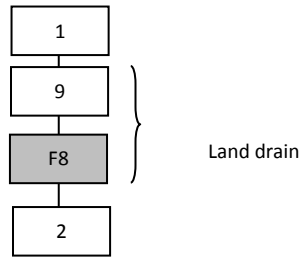
No	Area	Description
1	all	Topsoil
2	all	Natural subsoil
3	all	Subsoil
4	T1	Concrete post
F5	all	Cut of Furrows
6	all	Fill of furrows F5
7	T1	Modern deposit
F8	T8	Land drain
9	T8	Fill of F8
F10	T12	Truncated furrow
11	T12	Fill of truncated furrow F10

## Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrices

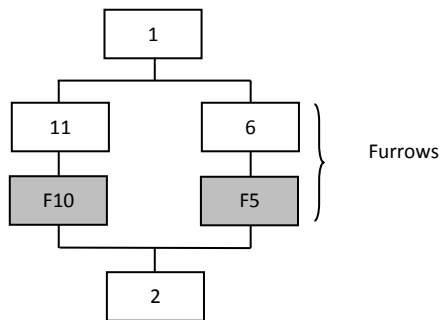
### Trench 1



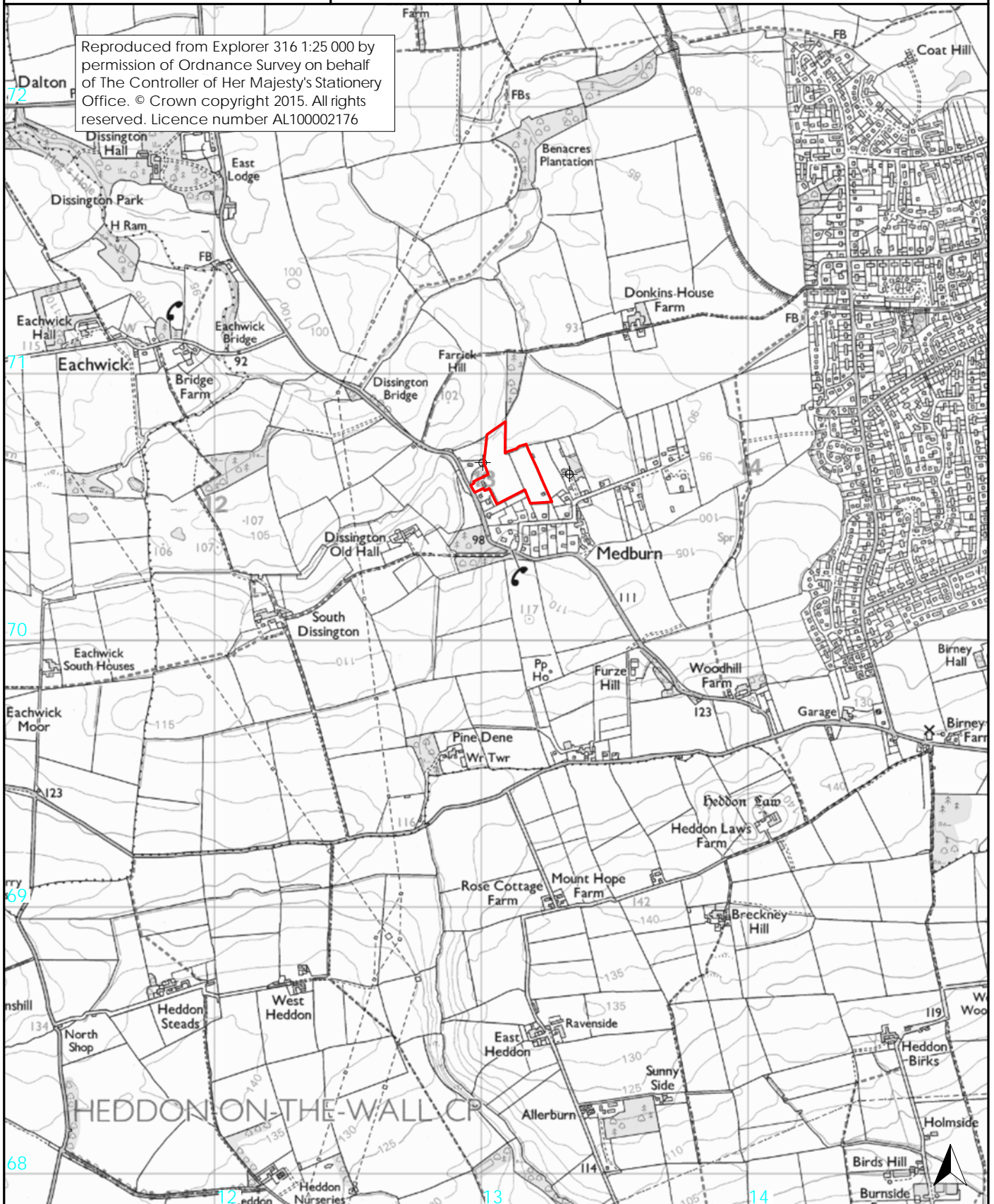
### Trench 8




### Trench 12



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 site location

0  1km  
scale 1:20 000 for A4 plot

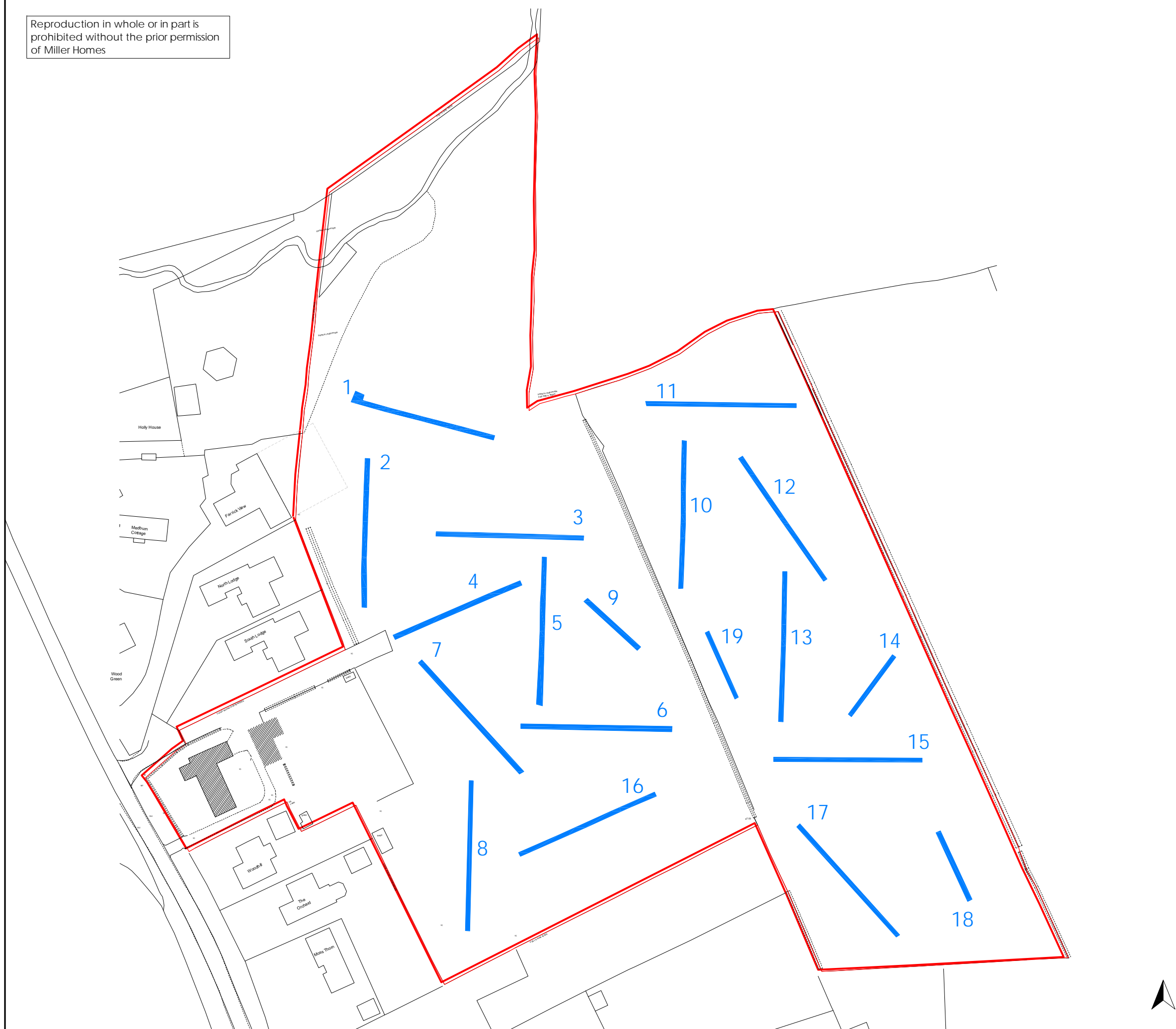
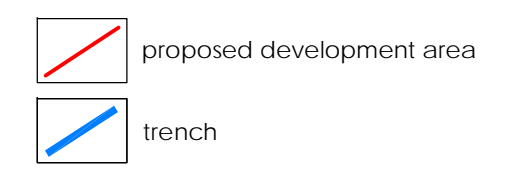
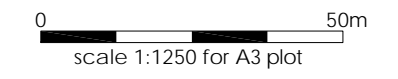
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Figure 2: Trench locations



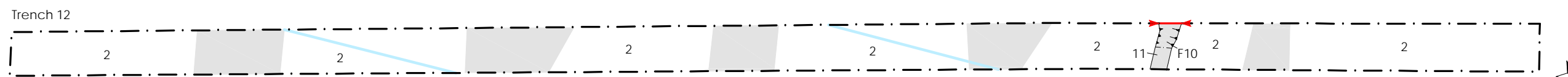
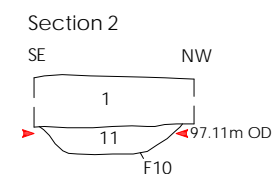
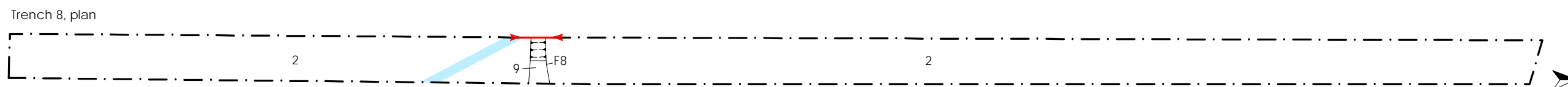
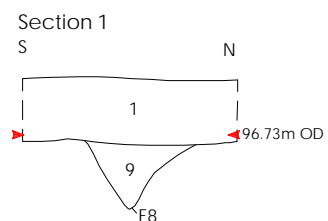
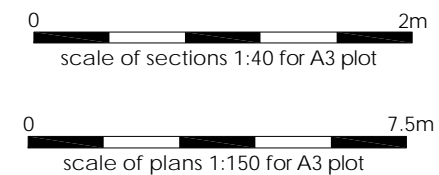
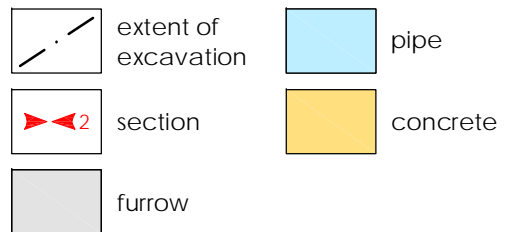




Figure 4: Trench 1, modern deposit [7] and concrete post [4], looking north



Figure 5: Trench 8, land drain [F8] , looking west



Figure 6: Trench 12, truncated furrow [F10], looking west