

ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
SERVICES  
DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of  
E B & C A Welsh Ltd

Finchale Priory  
Framwellgate Moor  
Durham

archaeological works

report 5272  
February 2020

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## **1. Summary**

### **The project**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological investigation conducted at Finchale Priory in response to previous excavation works for an electric cable trench within a scheduled area to the rear of a Grade II listed barn.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by E B & C A Welsh Ltd and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

### **Results**

- 1.3 No archaeological features or deposits were identified in the excavated trench and no artefacts recovered.

### **Recommendations**

- 1.4 No further scheme of archaeological works are recommended in relation to the project.

## 2. Project background

### Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at Finchale Priory, Framwellgate Moor, Durham (NGR centre: NZ 29544 47091). The trench was located on disused land within the western boundary of the Finchale Priory Scheduled Monument (SM23221). To the immediate north of the trench was a Grade II listed barn, to the east farmyard sheds, to the south the caravan park toilet blocks, and to the west further disused land (Figure 2).

### Objectives

- 2.2 The objective of the scheme of works was to undertake limited investigation and recording in order to inform Historic England of the impact of an excavation for an electricity cable on archaeological deposits. The work was required to assess and record the nature of any archaeological deposits that may have been disturbed.
- 2.3 The regional research framework (Petts & Gerrard 2006) contains an agenda for archaeological research in the region. The scheme of works was designed to address agenda items:

#### Early Medieval

EMii Settlement  
EMvi Christianity

#### Later Medieval

MDi Settlement  
MDv Churches and religion  
MDvii Medieval ceramics and other artefacts

### Specification

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a brief provided by the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments (ref: D00225337), and a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by Archaeological Services Durham University (ref: DS20.25r).

### Dates

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken on the 6th February 2020. This report was prepared for February 2020.

### Personnel

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Daniel Adamson. This report was prepared by Daniel Adamson, with illustrations by David Graham, and editing by Jamie Armstrong. The project was managed by Daniel Still.

### Archive/OASIS

- 2.7 The site code is **DFP20**, for **Durham Finchale Priory 2020**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be deposited in due course in accordance with standard Historic England Archiving policy. 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 **archaeol3-384277**.

### **3. Landuse, topography and geology**

- 3.1 At the time of this investigation, the trench was in a disused area to the rear of a Grade II listed barn (Photo 1).
- 3.2 The area gently sloped upwards from the rear of the barn (c.25m OD) towards a gravel farm track to the south (c.27.2m OD).
- 3.3 The underlying bedrock geology of the area comprises Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation sandstone, overlain by Devensian Diamicton Superficial Deposits (The British Geological Society).

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

- 4.1 Previous recent work at Finchale Priory includes an evaluation conducted further to the south during work to expand the caravan park (Archaeological Services 2002). This comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches. No deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.
- 4.2 The HER records several finds of Mesolithic flints along the banks of the River Wear between Finchale and Durham. These indicate a high level of Mesolithic activity in the area.
- 4.3 In 1110 St Godric, a hermit, settled near Finchale. In 1118 he moved to Finchale itself where he built a chapel to St John. Upon his death in 1170 the chapel was taken over by the Benedictine monks of Durham. In 1196 a permanent Benedictine abbey was set up as a retreat for the monks at Durham. The main buildings of the abbey were built in 1237 and were in use until the abbey was suppressed in 1538. It was also the site of a priory mill. The buildings presently stand in ruins, and are in the guardianship of English Heritage. The site is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM23221; NHLE 1007561).

### **5. Investigation and recording**

#### **Introduction**

- 5.1 The works comprised the cleaning back and recording of a trench which had been excavated for an electric cable. The excavation had been conducted using a machine fitted with a small toothed bucket and without the presence of an archaeologist. The trench plan and sample section are shown in Figure 3. Context data is summarised in Table 1.1.
- 5.2 The trench was 17m long, between 0.4 and 0.6m wide and 0.5-0.6m deep. It was aligned north/south, starting from the south-east corner of the barn and curving uphill to the south-east (photos 1 & 2). Natural subsoil, a yellow-brown sand with stone inclusions [3], was identified at a depth of 0.1m below ground level (24.57m OD) in the central and northern sections of the trench (Photo 3). Some redeposited natural with rubble was present in the centre of the trench beneath the topsoil [2: up to 0.3m deep]. Natural subsoil was not identified at the south end of the trench as a modern cut for a north/south plastic sewer pipe was present to a depth of below 0.6m below ground level (Photo 4). Immediately above this and extending across the whole trench was a dark grey sandy-silt topsoil mixed with rubble and

stone [1: 0.1m to over 0.6m deep]. No archaeological features or deposits were identified in the trench.

## **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 No archaeological features or deposits were identified in the excavated trench.

## **9. Impact assessment**

9.1 The works have not impacted on any archaeological deposits.

## **10. Recommendations**

10.1 No further scheme of archaeological works are recommended in relation to this excavation.

## **11. Sources**

Archaeological Services 2004 *Finchale Abbey Caravan Park, Durham: archaeological evaluation*. Unpublished report **1198**, Archaeological Services Durham University

Petts, D, & Gerrard, C, 2006 *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment*. Durham

### **Websites**

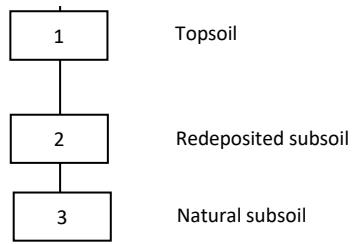
[www.bgs.ac.uk](http://www.bgs.ac.uk)

## Appendix 1: Data table

**Table 1.1: Context data**

No	Description
1	Topsoil
2	Redeposited subsoil
3	Natural subsoil

## Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrix







Photograph 1: Location of trench, looking north



Photograph 2: Trench, looking south-east





Photograph 3: Trench section, centre, looking west

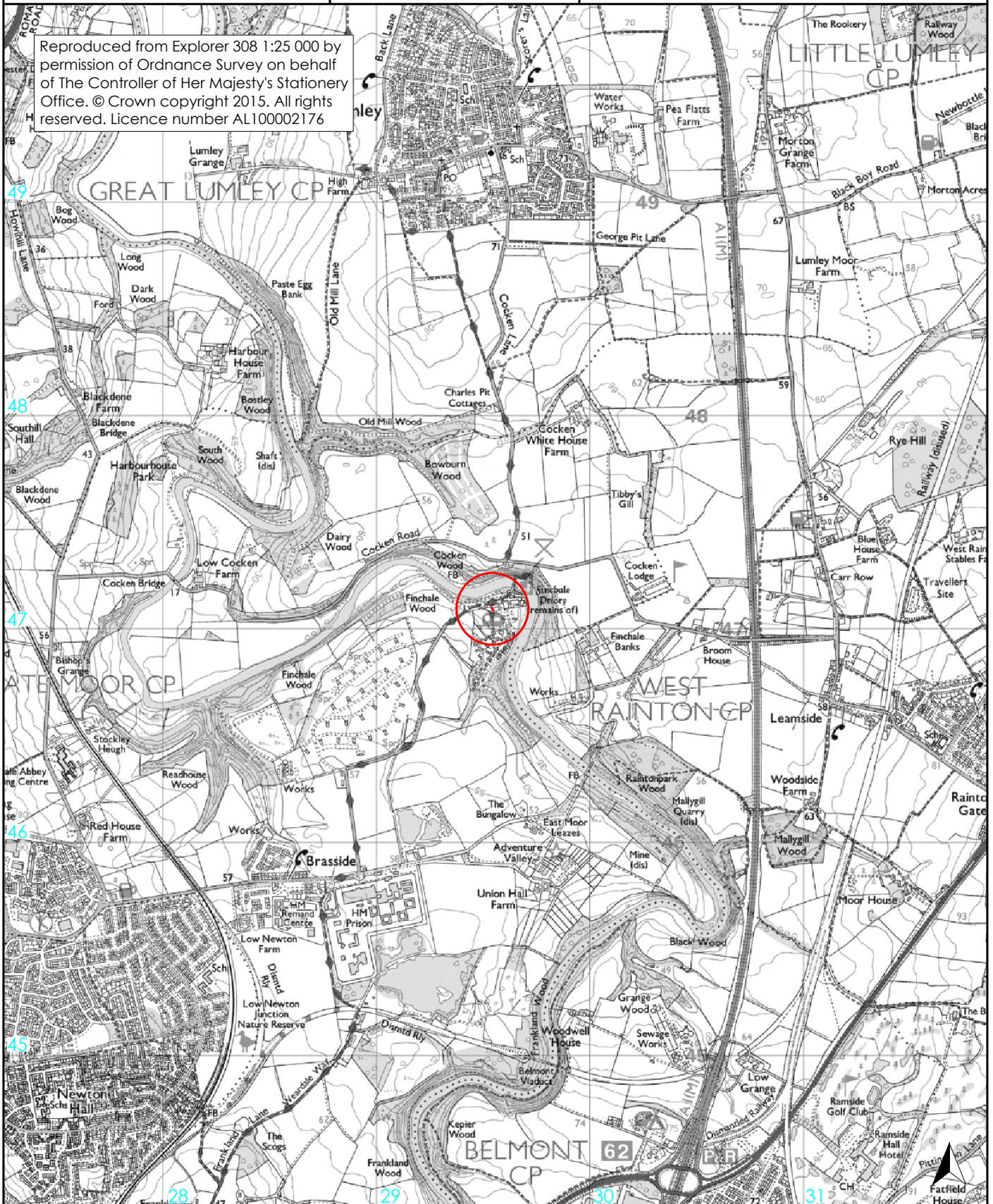


Photograph 4: Trench section, south end, looking west




Figure 1: Site location

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 site location

0  1km  
scale 1:25 000 for A4 plot

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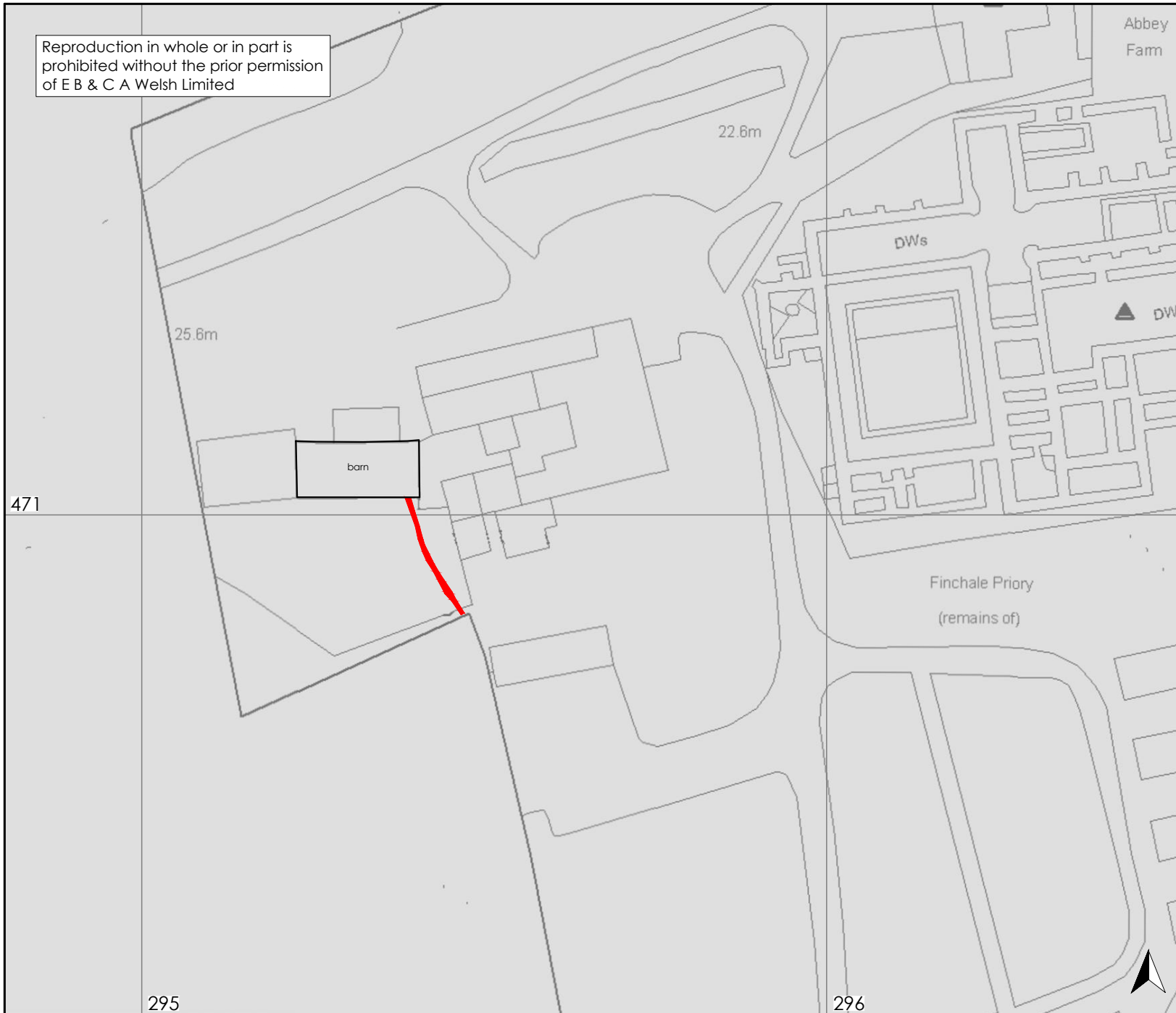
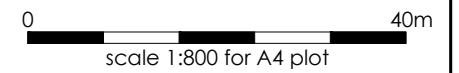
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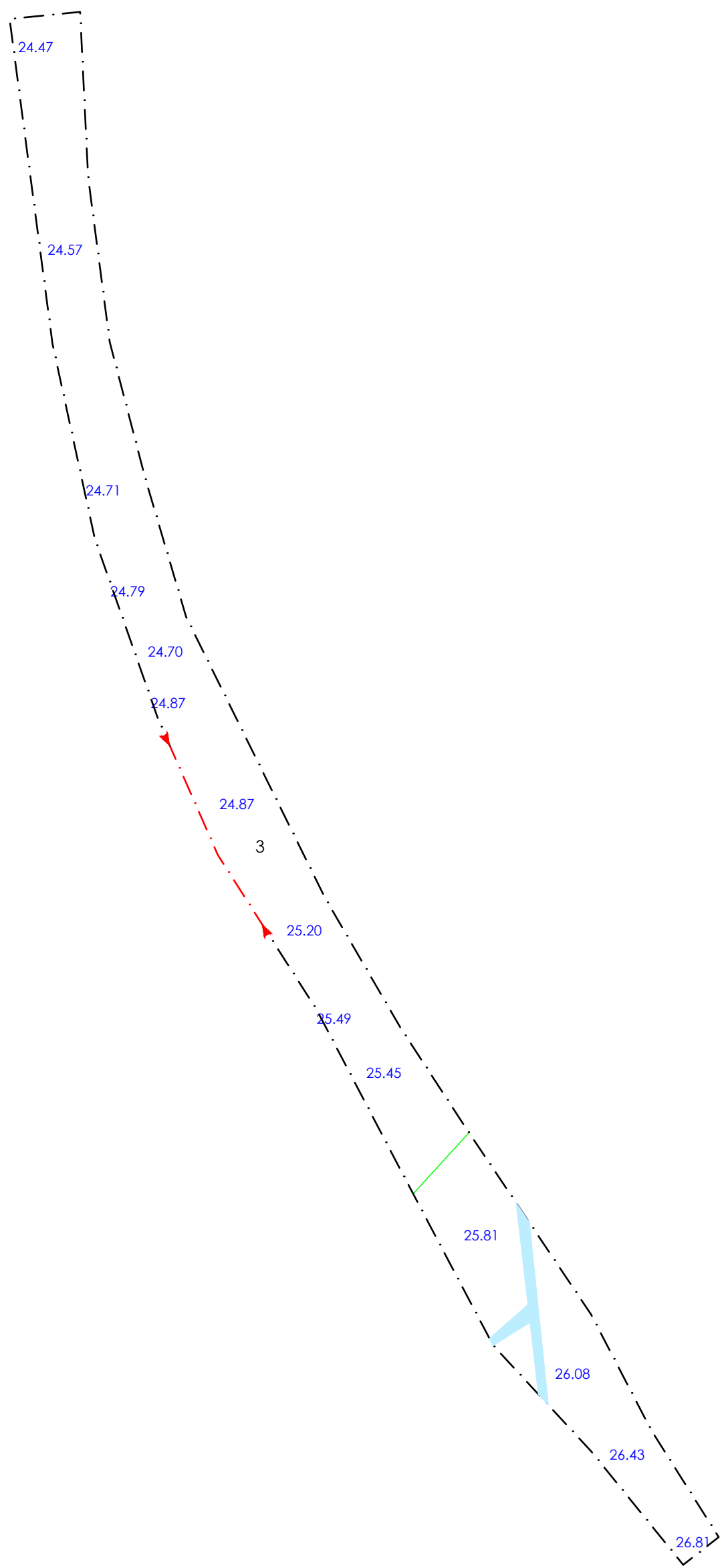
Finchale Priory  
Framwellgate Moor  
County Durham







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Figure 2: Location of works



Plan



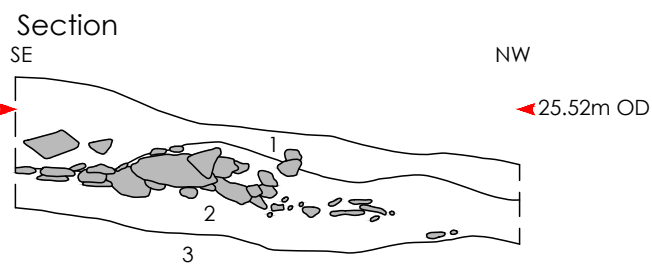
-  edge of excavation
-  section
-  height m OD
-  stone
-  sewage pipe
-  cut for pipe trench

0 2m  
scale for plan 1:50 for A3 plot

0 1.5m  
scale for section 1:30 for A3 plot

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Figure 3: Trench plan and section