

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT:
LAND AT 5 EARDULPH AVENUE, CHESTER-LE-STREET, COUNTY DURHAM

Planning Reference: DM/21/02641/FPA
NGR: NZ 2778 5117
AAL Site Code: CHEA22
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1-513598



Report prepared for DJK Architect Limited

By

Allen Archaeology Limited

Report Number AAL 2023021

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Cover image: General shot of site, looking west

Executive Summary

- DJK Architect Limited commissioned Allen Archaeology Limited to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks as a condition of planning consent for the demolition of an existing conservatory and erection of a two-storey rear extension and a replacement single storey garage, on land at 5 Eardulph Avenue, Chester-le-Street, County Durham.
- The development area lies close to recorded sites of archaeological sensitivity associated with the Roman fort of *Concangis* and its surrounding *vicus*. Numerous phases of archaeological investigation have uncovered features and deposits of Roman date in the immediate vicinity. In the wider area, prehistoric settlement evidence has been recorded c.1km to the north.
- The watching brief recorded the concrete foundation of the existing conservatory extension and associated deposits. None of the deposits recorded were thought to pre-date the 20th century. No archaeologically significant deposits or features were recorded during the monitoring.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 DJK Architect Ltd commissioned Allen Archaeology Limited to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording as a condition of planning consent for the demolition of an existing conservatory and erection of a new extension and garage on land at 5 Eardulph Avenue, Chester-le-Street, County Durham.
- 1.2 The fieldwork, recording and reporting conformed to current national guidelines as set out in *Standard and guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (CIfA 2020) and *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment* (Historic England 2015 and a specification for the site prepared by this company (AAL 2022).
- 1.3 All documentation and records generated during the project will be converted into an appropriate format in accordance with guidelines set out in *Standards for all Archaeological Work in County Durham and Darlington* (DCC 2019).
- 1.4 The archive will be deposited with the museum at Sevenhills, Greenhills Business Park, Enterprise Way; Spennymoor, DL16 6JB, within 6 months of completion of the reporting.

2.0 Site Location and Description

- 2.1 Chester-le-Street is located in the administrative district of Durham County Council, approximately 11km south of Newcastle upon Tyne and 13km west of Sunderland. The site is close to the historic core of the settlement and occupies a roughly triangular shaped plot of land at the northern end of Eardulph Avenue, centred on NGR NZ 2778 5117.
- 2.2 The bedrock geology of the area comprises Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation, overlain by superficial river terrace deposits. (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>).

3.0 Planning Background

- 3.1 Planning permission has been granted by Durham County Council for '*Demolition of existing conservatory, erection of two storey rear extension and a replacement single storey garage*' (Planning Application Number DM/21/02641/FPA). The permission was granted subject to conditions, including the undertaking of a scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording during all associated groundworks for the scheme.
- 3.2 The approach adopted is consistent with the recommendations of the National Planning Policy Framework, with the particular chapter of relevance being '*Section 16. Conserving and enhancing the historic environment*' (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021).

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 4.1 There is limited evidence for prehistoric activity within Chester-le-Street, however an evaluation at the former Highfield Hospital, just over 1km to the north of the site, revealed the presence of a prehistoric settlement there (Archaeological Services Durham University 2004).
- 4.2 The Roman fort of *Concangis* lies approximately 200m to the northwest of the site. An archaeological desk-based assessment, with specific regard to the Roman fort of *Concangis* has been undertaken (Archaeological Services Durham University 2005).
- 4.3 The central defensive ditch of the fort was revealed within excavations at Park View School in 2005, immediately north of the site (Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited 2006). Monitoring of geotechnical pits also at Park View School revealed Roman deposits and finds (Harrison and White 2004).
- 4.4 Approximately 50m to the east of the site groundworks for a domestic service trench revealed the irregular metalling and kerbstones of a Roman road (Britannia 2000).
- 4.5 A watching brief undertaken between 2012 and 2015 during a sewer renewal scheme in the centre of Chester-le-Street, including works on the edge of the playing fields to the east of Park View School, identified made ground to a depth of 1.3m at the western end and 3.4m at the eastern end of the field. Roman remains have been discovered along Roman Avenue, 80m to the north of the site, including a possible bath house on the corner of Lindisfarne Avenue, c.180m to the northwest of the site.
- 4.6 Unstratified Roman artefacts were recovered during a watching brief at No. 11 Eardulph Avenue, c.20m to the south of the site, in 2021, comprising three sherds of Samian ware (Archaeological Services Durham University 2021).
- 4.7 The Church of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert (Reference number D35154) was built on the site of the Roman fort, with the earliest mention of it dating to AD883. The current church was built in 1262 with a spire added c.1400.
- 4.8 Cartographic evidence suggests that the site comprised agricultural land until the interbellum period, with the houses on Eardulph Avenue first depicted on the 1938 revision of the 25" OS mapping, having been absent on the 1915 revision.

5.0 Aims and Objectives

- 5.1 The purpose of this scheme of works was to allow the preservation by record of the archaeological resource within the proposed development area, where exposed by the groundworks.

6.0 Methodology

- 6.1 The fieldwork was undertaken by the author on 24th January 2023 in accordance with the contents of this document and national and local guidelines regarding agreed best practice for archaeological monitoring and recording projects.
- 6.2 All groundworks were carried out by hand excavation and monitored by the supervising archaeologist.

- 6.3 A full written record of the archaeological deposits was made on standard Allen Archaeology Limited context recording sheets. Excavated sections were drawn at an appropriate scale (1:10, 1:20 or 1:50), with Ordnance Datum heights being displayed on each drawing.
- 6.4 All archaeological deposits and features were recorded by full colour photography, with an identification number board, appropriate metric scales and a north arrow. General site shots were also taken to show the location of the groundworks.

7.0 Results

- 7.1 The monitored area comprised a roughly triangular trench measuring c.1.30m on the diagonal side and 1.18m on the other two. It was excavated by hand in order to reveal the existing foundation of the conservatory wall where an alteration in the alignment of the wall for the proposed new extension was to be made.
- 7.2 The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.65m. The earliest deposit 005 comprised firm dark grey clayey silt with occasional inclusions of small angular brick and coal fragments, which was over 0.28m thick. Overlying this deposit was the concrete foundation 004 of the existing conservatory wall, which extended c.0.46m beyond the face of the wall (Plate 1). The foundation was overlain by a 0.18m thick deposit 003 of dark grey silt very similar to 005 below the foundation, so that no construction cut for the concrete foundation was discernible. Above this deposit a 0.14m thick deposit 002 of sand and gravel served as a bedding layer for the cast stone paving slabs 001 of the existing patio.



Plate 1: Hand excavated trench showing concrete wall foundation 004, looking west, scale 1m

- 7.3 When the trench had been hand excavated to this depth it was decided that an engineering solution re-using the existing foundation for the altered line of the wall was feasible, and thus no further excavation was carried out.

8.0 Discussion and Conclusions

- 8.1 Although the site lies within an archaeologically sensitive area close to the Roman fort and associated *vicus* the limited scope of the intervention meant that no archaeologically significant deposits or features were recorded. The earliest deposit recorded is likely to represent garden soil associated with the 20th century house prior to the construction of the existing conservatory. All deposits above this were associated with the construction of the conservatory and patio in the late 20th century.
- 8.2 Previous archaeological interventions in the area of the site have demonstrated that there is generally at least 0.77m of made ground above Roman archaeological horizons. The potential remains for the preservation of Roman deposits and features on the site, but the nature of the intervention meant that no archaeologically significant levels were encountered.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

- 9.1 The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the nature and scale of this scheme in determining the nature and extent of the archaeology present and has made a permanent record of the remains impacted by the development.

10.0 Acknowledgements

- 10.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank DJK Architect Ltd for the commission, and the groundworkers for their cooperation during the site works.

11.0 References

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Appendix 1: Context Summary List

Context	Type	Description	Length (m)	Width (m)	Thickness/depth (m)	Interpretation
001	Layer	Cast stone paving slabs measuring e.g. 580mm x 450mm x 30mm	-	-	0.03	Paving of existing patio
002	Layer	Loose light reddish grey sand and gravel	-	-	0.14	Make up layer for 001
003	Layer	Firm dark grey clayey silt with moderately frequent small sub-rounded gravel, occasional small angular coal and very occasional small angular brick fragments	-	-	0.18	Garden soil
004	Fill	Hard light yellowish grey concrete	-	-	0.18	Poured concrete foundation for existing conservatory wall
005	Layer	Firm dark grey clayey silt with moderately frequent small sub-rounded gravel, occasional small angular coal and very occasional small angular brick fragments	-	-	>0.28	Garden soil

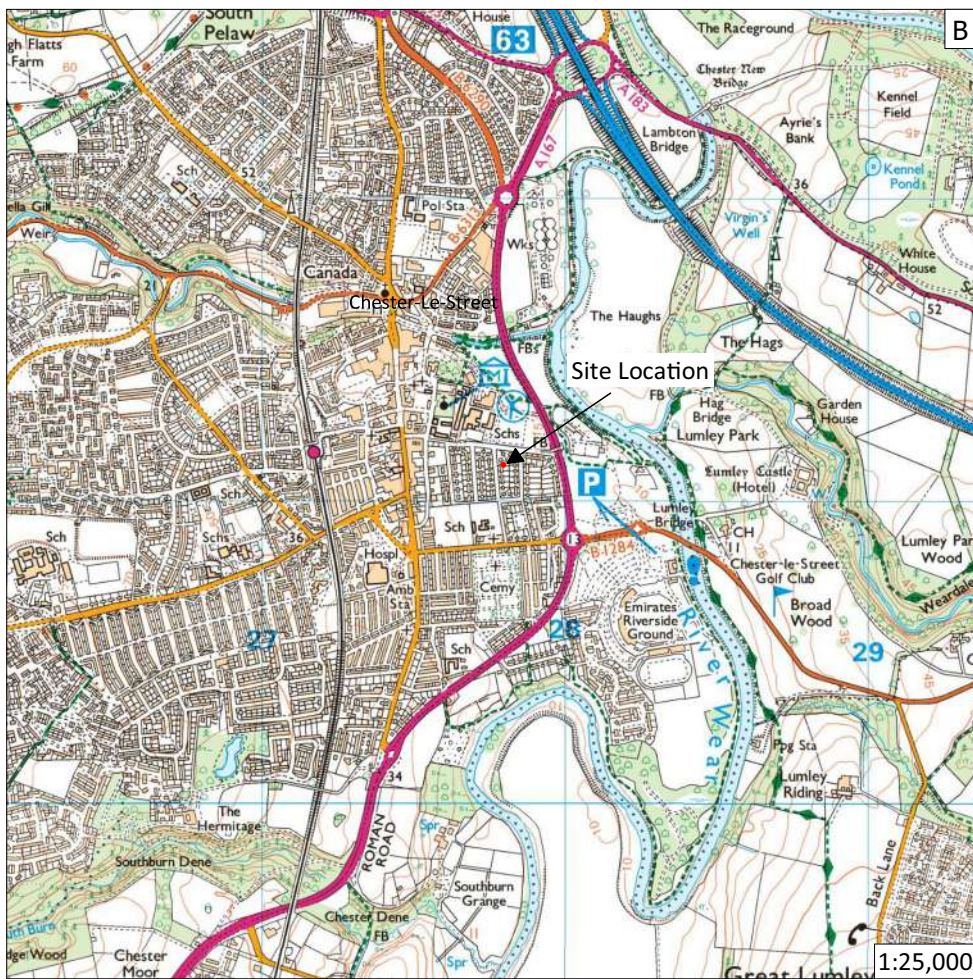
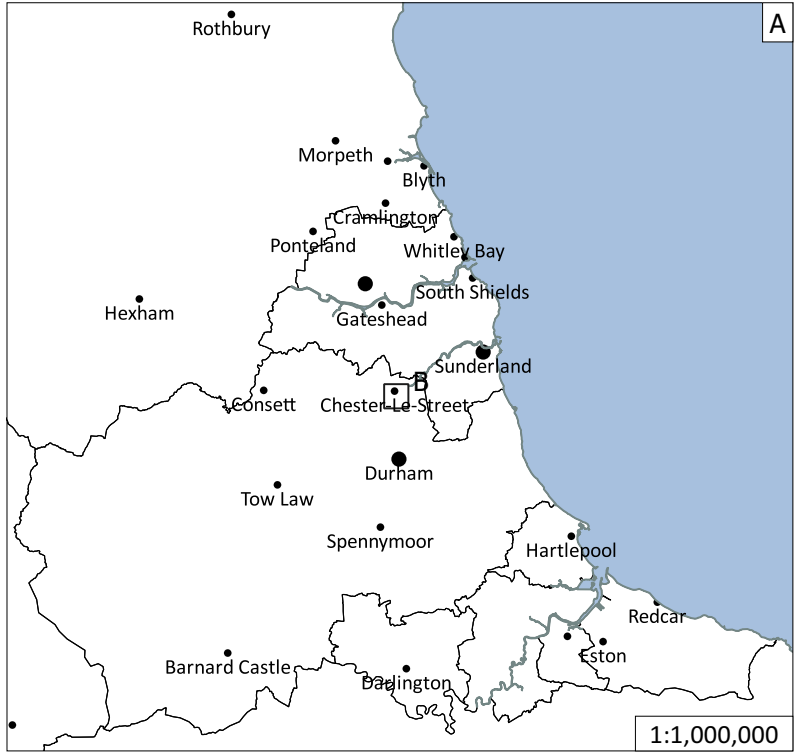
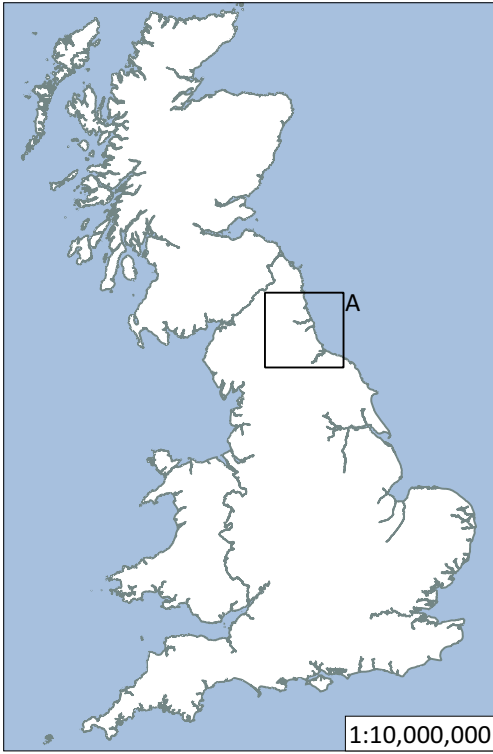


Figure 1: Site location outlined in red

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Site Code	CHEA 22
Scale	1:10,000,000 1:1,000,000 1:25,000 @ A4
Drawn by	A Telford
Date	02/03/2023

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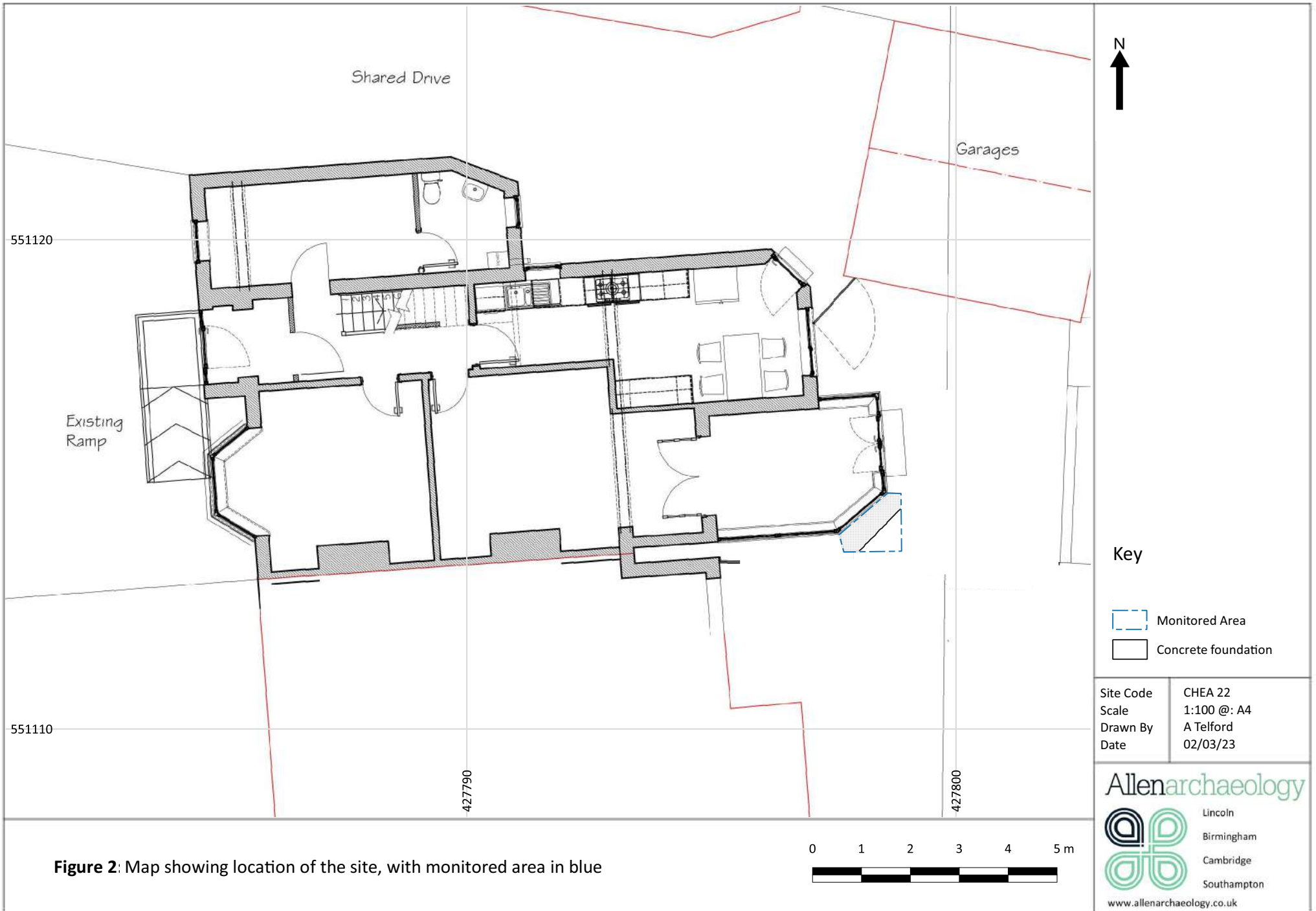
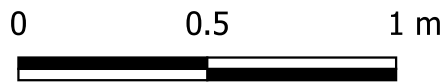
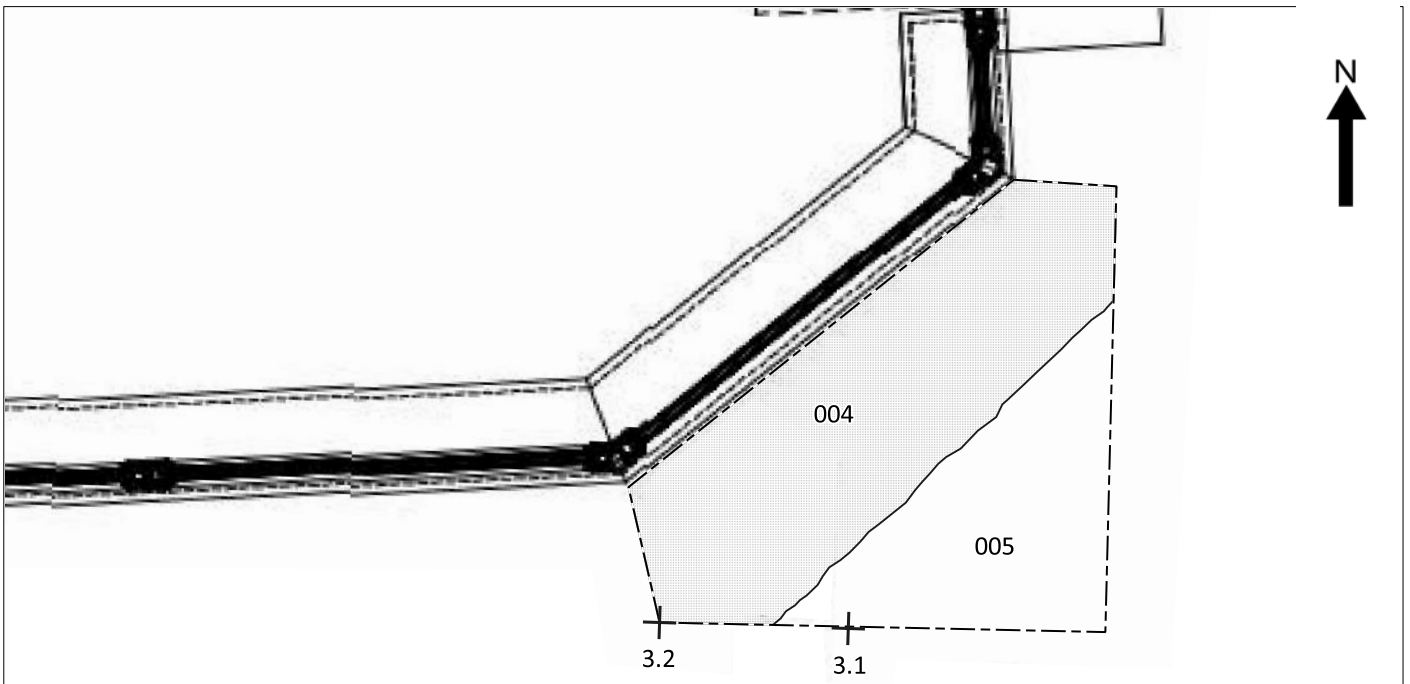
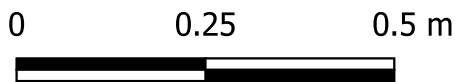
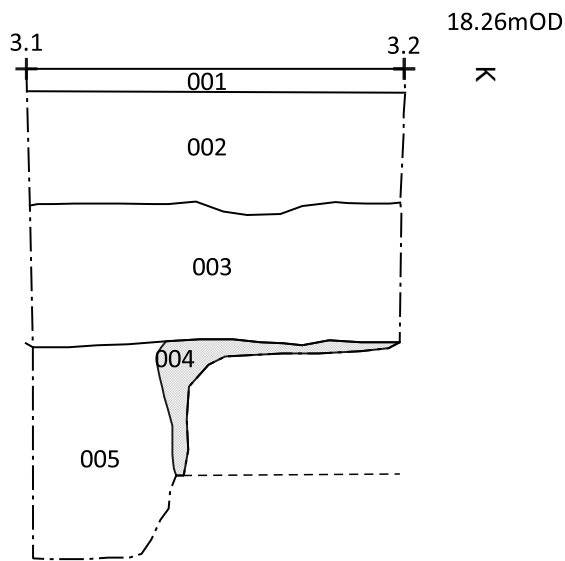


Figure 2: Map showing location of the site, with monitored area in blue



North facing section



Site Code	CHEA 22
Scale	1:20 and 1:10 @ A4
Drawn By	A Telford
Date	02/03/2023

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Figure 3: Plan of monitored area and representative section



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