



CASTLE WAY, CARLISLE CASTLE, CARLISLE, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

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Balfour Beatty Utilities

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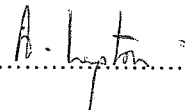
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SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) at Carlisle Castle, Cumbria (NY 395 564), on behalf of Balfour Beatty Utilities during the excavation of location pits preceding the rehabilitation of a water mains. The work was situated on the grassed area adjacent to Castle Way, to the south-east of the Castle entrance, but within the scheduled area of the Castle (SM no. 27657). English Heritage requested a permanent archaeological presence during groundworks under condition 3 (iv) in the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC).

The watching brief was undertaken on 16th and 17th of August 2007, and comprised four small pits (Pits 1-4), of which the largest was 1.3m by 0.9m, and 0.9m deep. None of the pits were excavated beyond the made ground adjacent to Castle Way, and thus no features of archaeological interest were revealed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to extend its thanks to Keith Milligan of Balfour Beatty Utilities for commissioning the project.

The watching brief was carried out by Steve Clarke who also compiled the report. The finds were inspected by Chris Howard-Davis and the CAD drawings produced by Anne Stewardson. Emily Mercer edited the report and managed the project.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Following a proposal by Balfour Beatty Utilities to rehabilitate a cast iron water main within the grounds of the scheduled monument of Carlisle Castle, Carlisle, Cumbria (NGR centred NY 395 564; SM no. 27657), Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned to maintain a permanent presence watching brief during excavation of launch and reception pits. The watching brief was required under condition 3 (iv) in the Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), specified due to the possibility that archaeological remains, in particular occupation debris, may be present within the proposed area works. The work was undertaken on the 16th and 17th of August 2007, following the agreement and approval of English Heritage. Four pits were excavated in total (Pits 1-4), including two location pits, situated in the grounds outside the south wall of the castle. The following report details the results of the archaeological fieldwork.

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 Carlisle is situated towards the northern edge of the Solway Plain, some eight miles upstream from the Solway Firth and about five miles above the tidal limit (Fig 1). The Scottish border, established finally in the thirteenth century, lies nine miles to the north of Carlisle, whilst the Roman frontier, marked by Hadrian's Wall, traverses the village-suburb of Stanwix, which lies on the opposite bank of the Eden immediately north of the city centre. For nearly two millennia, Carlisle has been a military and administrative centre for what is now known as Cumbria (McCarthy 1990, 1). The site is located immediately to the south of the Castle, adjacent to the north side of Castle Way, within the historic core of the city on the south bank of the river Eden, to the south-east of its confluence with the river Caldew. During the medieval period the city centre was clearly defined by the city walls (Fig 1), and there is evidence to suggest that the core of the Roman settlement was situated under the medieval town (*ibid*).

1.2.2 The underlying geology of the area is composed mainly of mudstones and sandstones of Permo-Triassic age. The most important sandstone formation, the St Bees Sandstone, has been much quarried for use as building stone, and has imparted a distinctive character to much of the area's architecture (Countryside Commission 1998, 20). During the last glaciation, thick ice-sheets crossed the area, carrying with them vast quantities of rock debris, which was deposited as boulder clay (*ibid*).

1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 The following historical background presents a basic summary of the known archaeological resource within the vicinity in order to provide a context to the results.

- 1.3.2 **Prehistoric Period:** a limited amount of evidence for prehistoric activity has been found at a number of sites in the Carlisle area, including Annetwell Street (Caruana forthcoming), Blackfriars Street (McCarthy 1990, 13-4), 46-52 Lowther Street (Flynn 1995), and the Northern Lanes (Zant forthcoming a), but little is known of any prehistoric settlement within the affected area. On the eastern side of the city, prehistoric activities are known from sites at Scotby Road, Botcherby and Garlands Hospital. At Scotby Road, Neolithic and early Bronze Age occupation was followed by two phases of pallisaded enclosure that may be Iron Age in date (McCarthy and Zant 1997a). At Botcherby, a possible roundhouse and other features were associated with Bronze Age pottery (McCarthy and Zant 1997b). At Garlands Hospital, a Bronze Age cremation cemetery was discovered on the hilltop in the nineteenth century, whilst a burnt mound was excavated towards the base of the hill in 1996 (LUAU 1996).
- 1.3.3 **Roman Period:** in AD 72-3 a fort was established by the Romans on a natural promontory, which later became the site of the later medieval castle. By the end of the first century the fort formed part of the Tyne-Solway isthmus frontier known as the Stanegate; indeed, the presence in Carlisle, known as *Luguvalium* in the Roman period, of an official known as the *centurio regionarius* suggests that Carlisle may have been the command centre for this early northern frontier (Shotter 1997, 49). The area continued to be important strategically in the following century, and though the focal point of the emperor Hadrian's new frontier moved to the nearby fort of Stanwix, the recent millennium project excavations (Zant forthcoming b) have shown that the fort at Annetwell Street in Carlisle continued to be occupied into the post-Roman period.
- 1.3.4 A large civilian settlement grew up around the fort at Carlisle and by the early third century the town probably formed the *civitas capital* of the Carvetii, the indigenous tribal unit in the area. The full extent of this extramural settlement is not known but, considered to be large in comparison to other Roman settlements in the North West. It was thought largely to be confined to the approximate area of the later medieval walled city with significant occupation occurring along Botchergate to the south and Rickergate to the north at certain times (McCarthy 1991, 53).
- 1.3.5 **Medieval Period:** the fate of Carlisle at the end of the Roman occupation is less clearly defined, although scattered traces of late fourth and fifth-century occupation have been identified (McCarthy 1990, 4) and archaeological evidence suggests the presence of an important church below the Cathedral in the tenth century (*ibid*). Other churches are also suspected to have existed between the seventh and eleventh century, although the supporting evidence is slight (*ibid*). Indeed, an Anglian monastery is attested to on documentary grounds (Colgrave 1940). The archaeological evidence for this period is largely based on coin-finds, notably a *sceatta*, *stycas*, and pennies of Aethelstan, Edgar, and Aethelred II (*op cit*, 5). Following the arrival of the Normans in 1092, and the construction of the medieval castle and town walls, Carlisle became a major frontier city on the borders of England and Scotland, continuing in this role until the Jacobite rebellion of 1745.

- 1.3.6 **Post-medieval Period:** little work has been carried out on the archaeology of post-medieval Carlisle. Documentary and cartographic sources suggest a recovery of fortunes in the city with a gradual rise in population from the sixteenth century onwards. For most of this period, Carlisle was a small county town whose inhabitants included a significant proportion of merchants, lawyers and gentry. By the end of the eighteenth century the population of the city may have grown to around 4000-5000 (McCarthy 1993, 84).
- 1.3.7 By the middle of the nineteenth century census records indicate the population of the city had increased seven or eightfold in little more than 50 years, and the size of the built-up area increased accordingly. Within the former walled area (most of the city walls, together with the gates, were demolished in the early nineteenth century), land to the rear of the street frontages, much of which had been occupied by gardens or other open spaces for centuries, was infilled with new housing, workshops, and light industrial buildings. This also happened in the suburban tenements and the suburbs themselves were greatly enlarged (OA North 2005).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 A programme of observation was undertaken to record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the excavations in the course of the works. This work comprised the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and those artefacts identified during observation of works undertaken.
- 2.1.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed, on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. A photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was also compiled.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the watching brief has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the County Record Office, with a copy of the report given to the Cumbria Historic Environment Record. Copies of the report will also be deposited with English Heritage.

3. FIELDWORK

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 The watching brief comprised observation of the excavation of four rectangular pits within the grassed area on the south side of the castle, situated to the east of the main entrance drive and north of Castle Way (Fig 2). The largest of these pits measured 1.3m by 1.2m. No archaeological features were revealed during the excavation of the pits, as the maximum depth was limited to within made ground. The details of the contexts are provided in *Appendix 1* and a list of finds discussed below (*Section 3.3*) is provided in *Appendix 2*.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.2.1 **Pit 1:** was situated adjacent to the east edge of the entrance road and 9m north of the pavement on Castle Way. The pit measured 1.3m by 0.9m, and 0.9m deep. Beneath the topsoil, **100**, was a subsoil, **101**, of redeposited compact sandy-clay soil, with 50% inclusions of brick and limestone fragments, and tarmacadam. The cast iron water main was revealed at 0.6m depth.



Plate 1: North-facing section of Pit 1

3.2.2 **Pit 2:** was situated 36.8m east of the entrance road and 11.6m north of the pavement on Castle Way. The pit measured 0.65m by 0.55m, and 0.5m deep. Beneath the topsoil, **200**, was a subsoil, **201**, of redeposited firm sandy-clay, which was very stony with inclusions of chippings and pea-grit.

3.2.3 **Pit 3:** was situated adjacent to the pavement on Castle Way, and 35.3m east of the entrance road. The pit measured 1.5m by 0.5m, and 0.85m deep. Beneath the topsoil, **300**, was a subsoil, **301**, similar to that in Pit 2. The north-facing section revealed the make-up layers of the adjacent pavement.

3.2.4 **Pit 4:** was situated 15.4m east of the entrance road and 10.6m north of the pavement, and measured 1m by 0.8m, and 0.9m deep. Beneath the topsoil, **400**, there was a 0.15m deep lens, **401**, of sandstone fragments, mortar and stones. The subsoil, **402**, was a very stony reddish-brown sandy-clay.

3.3 FINDS

3.3.1 In all, 31 fragments were recovered during the investigation. All are of small to medium size, but not abraded. Their distribution is shown below in Table 1.

3.3.2 Two joining fragments from the make-up layer in Pit 3, **301**, can be identified as amphora, probably of second to third century date. Its presence is not unexpected, albeit redeposited, as the castle stands upon the same site as its Roman forebear.

3.3.3 The remainder of the pottery can be dated to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and is of a domestic nature, with white salt-glazed stoneware dishes and plates, Creamware and pearlware plate fragments, and a fine-walled stoneware tankard amongst the group. There are, in addition, several fragments of brown-glazed slip-decorated redwares. Part of the base of a small porcelain figure was recovered from the make-up layer in Pit 2, **201**.

3.3.4 A small assemblage of animal bone was also recovered from **301**. It has clearly been butchered, and includes a pig jaw with very worn teeth.

Context	Post-medieval pottery	Romano-British pottery	Animal bone	Totals
101	5	0	0	5
201	6	0	0	6
301	0	2	0	2
301	0	0	12	12
401	6	0	0	6
Totals	17	2	12	31

Table 1: Distribution of finds

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 DISCUSSION

- 4.1.1 The excavation of the pits for the purposes of upgrading of the water mains was limited to within the depth of the made ground adjacent to Castle Way, and within the area previously disturbed by the insertion of the former mains pipe. Therefore, the paucity of archaeological features is not surprising. The finds were mainly industrial or modern in date, reflecting the nature of the disturbance in the area. However, there were two sherds of adjoining Roman amphora fragment within the made ground, which had been imported from elsewhere.

4.2 IMPACT

- 4.2.1 Due to the upgrading works being limited to the made ground, there will be no impact on any archaeological remains.

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6. ILLUSTRATIONS

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Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Location of pits

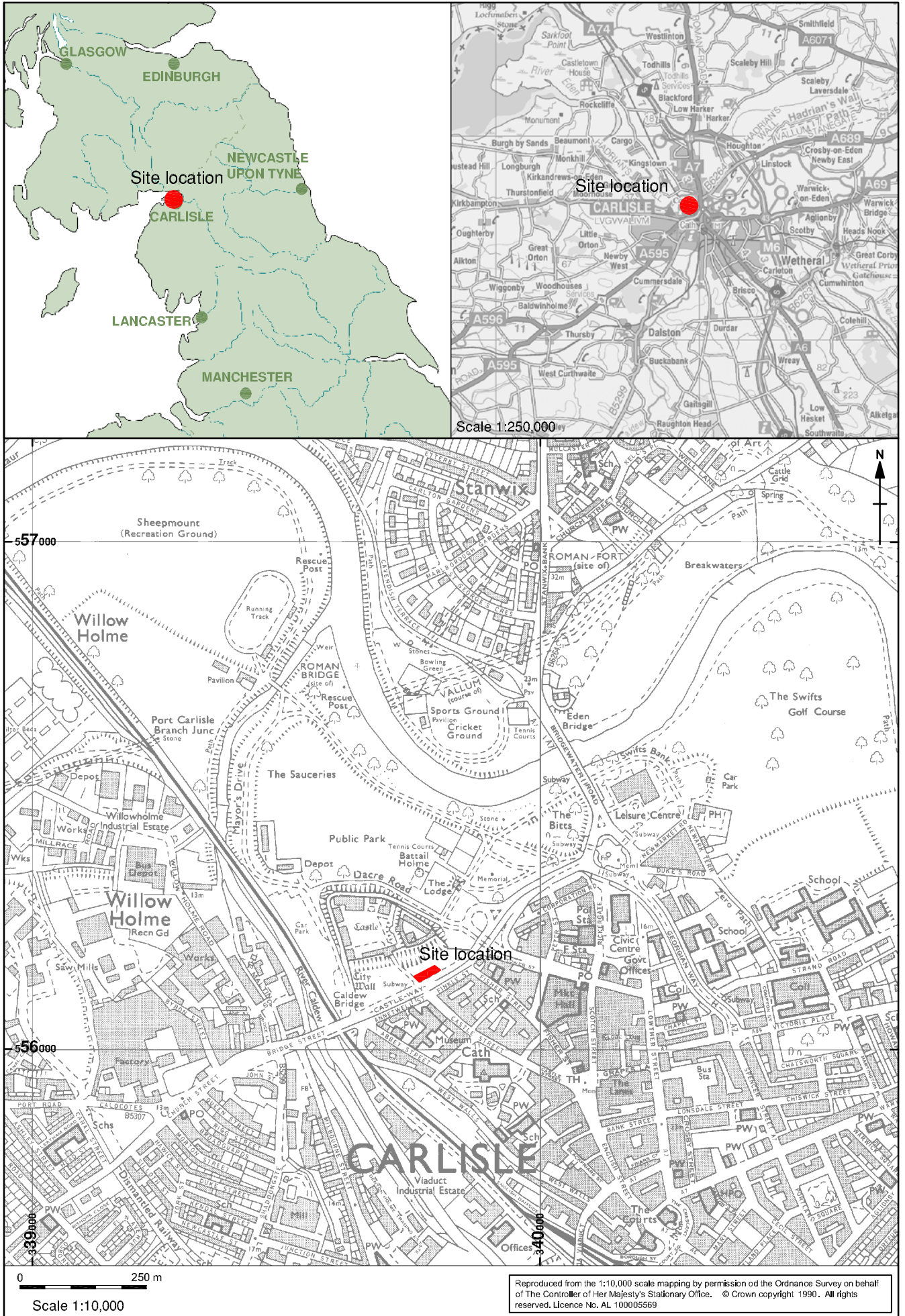


Figure 1: Site location

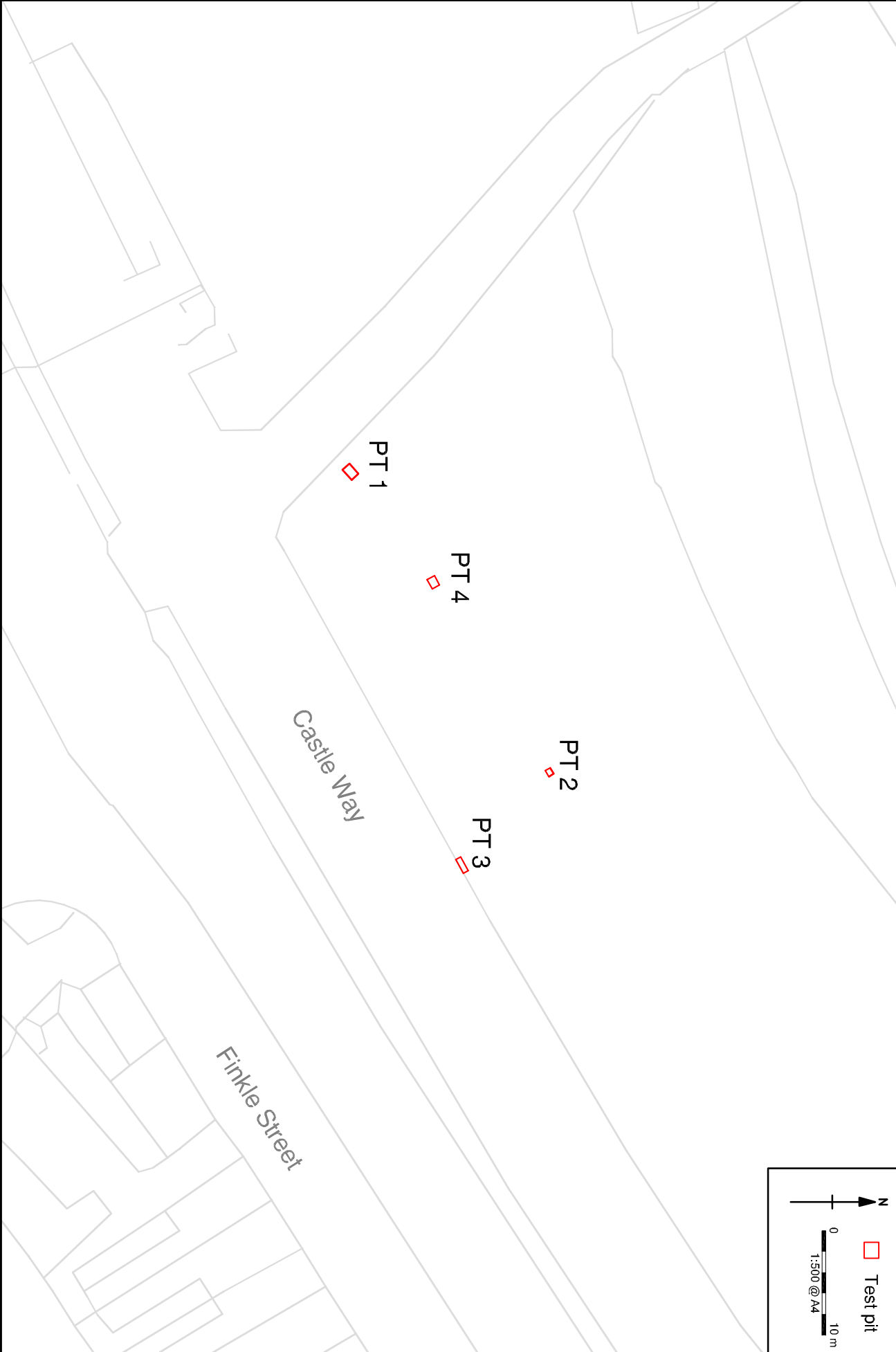


Figure 2: Location of pits

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Context	Trench	Type	Depth	Description
100	1	Topsoil	0.2m	Greyish-brown friable sandy-clay, occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular stone.
101	1	Backfill	0.75m	Compact greyish-black soil, 50% inclusions of limestone chippings, small to medium sub-rounded stones and red brick fragments.
200	2	Topsoil	0.2m	Greyish-brown friable sandy-clay, occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular stone.
201	2	Make-up layer	0.3m	Firm blackish-grey sandy-clay, 30% inclusions of chippings and pea-grit.
300	3	Topsoil	0.15m	Blackish-brown friable sandy-silty-clay, 10% inclusions of small sub-rounded stones.
301	3	Make-up layer	0.7m	Firm blackish-grey sandy-clay, 30% inclusions of small sub-rounded stones, occasional brick and sandstone fragments.
400	4	Topsoil	0.35m	Greyish-brown friable sandy-clay, occasional small sub-rounded and sub-angular stone.
401	4	Make up layer	0.15m	Medium sandstone fragments, mortar, and small to medium sub-rounded stones.
402	4	Make up layer	0.55m	Reddish-brown firm sandy-clay, 20% inclusions of small to medium sub-rounded stones.

APPENDIX 2: FINDS LIST

Context	Material	Category	No	Description	Date
101	Ceramic	Vessel	5	One fragment white salt-glazed stoneware dish; two fragments brown-glazed redware; two fragments slip-decorated ware.	Late eighteenth century?
201	Ceramic	Vessel	6	Two fragments white salt-glazed stoneware; one fragment black-glazed redware; one fragment white-glazed earthenware with painted decoration, one fragment white porcelain figurine base.	Late eighteenth-nineteenth century
301	Ceramic	Vessel	2	Two joining fragments amphora body.	Second to third century AD
301	Bone	Animal	12	Fragments butchered animal bone, including pig.	Undatable
401	Ceramic	Vessel	6	One large fragment stoneware tankard; one fragment brown-glazed redware with simple slip-decoration; two fragments pearlware, one base, one plate rim; one fragment Creamware base; one fragment small grey stoneware bottle.	Late eighteenth to early nineteenth century