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Site & Landscape Survey

Geophysical Survey

**Alexandria Health and Care Centre,
Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria,
West Dunbartonshire
Archaeological Evaluation**

**Data Structure Report
No. 1929**

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standard operating procedures.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report presents the results of an Archaeological Evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) at Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire (NGR: NS 3880 8062; Fig. 1) during July 2011. The work was commissioned by Laing O'Rourke PLC.

The evaluation was required prior to the erection of a new health and care centre with associated access road and parking in Alexandria. A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) based on documents sent to CFA by Laing O'Rourke and subsequent discussion with the West of Scotland Archaeology Service (WoSAS), was approved by WoSAS.

1.2 Background

The work was required as the site lies on a raised terrace of the River Leven within the Vale of Leven. The surrounding area represents the northern tip of low lying ground suitable for farming; the land immediately to the north and west being mountainous. No significant archaeological sites are known from the area and little archaeological work has been done in the past. The evaluation area had never been developed or built on in the past so the potential for archaeological survival seemed high.

1.3 Objectives

The project's aims and objectives were:

- To establish the presence/absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological features or deposits within the proposed development area through trial trenching evaluation
- To establish the vulnerability of any archaeological features to the proposed development
- To propose mitigation measures where appropriate to avoid, reduce or offset any predicted negative impacts on the archaeological resource.

2. METHODS

2.1 General

CFA follows the Institute for Archaeologists' Standards and Guidance and Code of Conduct.

2.2 Trial Trenching

Trial trenches totalling an area of 1813m² were excavated, slightly more than the required 8% of the available site. A narrow corridor across the site was not evaluated due to the presence of a buried electrical cable. The western edge of the site was also avoided due to the presence of a buried telecommunications service. Additionally, the presence of mature trees constrained trench locations.

All ground breaking work was monitored by an archaeologist down to natural subsoil. All excavation was undertaken by a tracked 360° degree mechanical excavator fitted with a smooth bladed ditching bucket. All excavation of archaeological features and deposits was undertaken using hand tools.

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms. The positions of trenches were recorded using Total Station surveying equipment.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

The evaluation area was situated to the south of the current Vale of Leven Hospital on an area of uncultivated ground. The topography of the site was largely flat and devoid of any distinct irregularities. The entire area was covered in self-seeding vegetation and weeds up to 1.5m high and included several large mature trees. The boundaries of the site comprised dense mature tree belts. A small raised area of made ground was present at the SW corner.

Twenty-four trial trenches were excavated totalling an area of 1813m². The edges of the site were avoided due to the presence of live services, as was a corridor across the middle of the site due to the presence of a live electricity service. A wide cordon was also afforded to the large mature trees on the site to avoid damaging the root systems.

Topsoil (**001**) varied from 0.3m to 0.45m deep and comprised rich dark loam beneath the surface vegetation. Subsoil (**002**) comprised dark brown sandy silt which merged with the topsoil and was between 0.1m and 0.5m thick, with the majority of trenches showing c.0.3m of subsoil. Natural (**000**) comprised orange stiff gritty sand with occasional pale grey sandy clay wedges and small sub-rounded stones. Traces of bioturbation were noted in trenches closer to the large trees; otherwise the natural surface appeared undisturbed and had a clear horizon with the overlying subsoil (**002**). Deep deposits of up to 1.5m of made ground comprising rubble, concrete, brick and soil were exposed in Trench 22 which investigated the raised area at the SW corner.

3.2 Trial Trenches

Full descriptions of the trial trenches are contained in Appendix 1. Only those trenches which contained archaeological remains are described in narrative. Context numbers are in bold and parentheses.

Trench 5 (Fig. 2)

Two circular pits were revealed in Trench 5, situated c.1m apart. Both were investigated.

Pit **003** (Fig. 3) measured 0.44m in diameter and 0.3m deep. In profile the cut had steeply sloping to vertical sides with a flattish concave base and a clear horizon and contained two fills. The primary fill (**004**) comprised 0.06m of dark grey silt with occasional small rounded stones. The secondary fill (**005**) comprised dark brown silt with occasional small stones.

Pit **006** (Fig. 4) measured 0.37m in diameter and 0.26m deep. In profile it had steep sides and a flat base. It contained a single fill (**007**) comprising brown silt with occasional small stones and charcoal flecks.

Trench 8 (Fig. 5)

Five pits were revealed in Trench 8, of which two were investigated. One pit [008] appeared isolated; the other four pits [010, 014, 016, 018] formed two pairs situated c.3m apart. All had clear horizons.

Pit 008 (Fig. 6) was sub-oval in plan and measured 1.05m by 0.66m. In profile it was 0.42m deep and had steep to vertical sides with a narrow concave base. It had a single fill (009) comprising brown silt with occasional small stones and charcoal flecks. Two sherds of pottery were recovered from near the base of the fill and are described below in the finds report.

Pit 010 (Fig. 7) was sub-oval and measured 0.9m by 0.72m. In profile it was 0.22m deep and had steep, even sides and a flattish concave base. It had three fills. The primary fill (011) was dark brown silt with occasional small stones and was up to 0.05m thick. The secondary fill (012) was up to 0.12m deep and comprised pale brown sandy silt. The uppermost fill (013) was 0.1m thick and comprised fine mid-brown silt.

Pit 014 was circular and measured 0.5m in diameter. A single fill (015) was visible, comprising orange-brown sandy silt.

Pit 016 was oval and extended from the trench section. It measured 0.5m wide and >0.56m long. A single fill (017) of dark grey-brown silt was visible.

Pit 018 was sub-square and measured 0.7m by 0.7m. A single fill (019) comprising mid-brown silt with occasional stones was visible.

3.3 The Finds, by Melanie Johnson

Two sherds of prehistoric pottery were recovered from pit 008. The sherds join together. They are undecorated and in a hard, mica-rich fabric. It is considered more likely that the sherds are early prehistoric in date rather than late.

4. CONCLUSION

A programme of trial trenching was carried out on ground to the south of the Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria, West Dunbartonshire in advance of development. Seven pits were discovered in two trenches, roughly in the centre of the site. Two sherds of early prehistoric pottery were recovered from one of the pit fills (009).

Any decision on further mitigation work rests with WoSAS.

A summary statement of the results of the watching brief, will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland 2011* (Appendix 3) and OASIS.

In line with the Written Scheme of Investigation, copies of the report will be lodged with WoSAS Sites and Monuments Record and the National Monuments Record of Scotland.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Trench Register

Trench No.	Dimensions (m)	Depth to Natural Subsoil (m)	Archaeological Contexts
1	40 x 2	0.45	N/A
2	40 x 2	0.45	N/A
3	40 x 2	0.55	N/A
4	30 x 2	0.55-0.65	N/A
5	40 x 2 + 5 x 5 box	0.55-0.65	003-007
6	25 x 2	0.55-0.65	N/A
7	35 x 2	0.5	N/A
8	40 x 2 + 6 x 6 box	0.55	008-019
9	40 x 2	0.4	N/A
10	35 x 2	0.4	N/A
11	40 x 2	0.3-0.4	N/A
12	40 x 2	0.3-0.4	N/A
13	35 x 2	0.4	N/A
14	40 x 2	0.45	N/A
15	40 x 2	0.5	N/A
16	40 x 2	0.5	N/A
17	40 x 2	0.5	N/A
18	35 x 2	0.5-0.6	N/A
19	35 x 2	0.5-0.6	N/A
20	40 x 2	0.55	N/A
21	30 x 2	0.5	N/A
22	3 x 2	c. 1.2	Made ground deposits
23	40 x 2	0.6	N/A
24	30 x 2	0.55	N/A

Appendix 2: Context Register

Context No.	Trench No.	Description
000	All	Natural: sandy clay and gravel
001	All	Surface topsoil
002	All	Subsoil: sandy silt
003	5	Cut of pit or possible post-hole
004	5	Primary fill of 003: dark grey silt, occasional small stones
005	5	Secondary fill of 003: dark brown silt, occasional small stones
006	5	Cut of pit
007	5	Fill of 006: Brown silt, occasional small stones and charcoal flecks
008	8	Cut of pit
009	8	Fill of 008: Brown silt, occasional small stones and charcoal flecks
010	8	Cut of pit
011	8	Primary fill of 010: Dark brown silt, occasional small stones
012	8	Secondary fill of 010: Pale brown sandy silt
013	8	Upper fill of 010: Mid-brown silt
014	8	Cut of pit
015	8	Fill of 014: Orange-brown sandy silt
016	8	Cut of pit
017	8	Fill of 016: dark grey-brown silt
018	8	Cut of pit
019	8	Fill of 018: Mid brown silt, occasional stones

APPENDIX 3: Photograph Register

Photo No.	Description	From
1-5	General views of site	Various
6	Trench 1 sondage, working shot	N
7	Trench 1 sondage, section	W
8	Trench 5, (003) section	E
9	Trench 7, gas pipe trench	E
10	Trench 2	E
11	Trench 4	S
12	Trench 3	NW
13-14	Trench 5 box section working shot	E
15	Trench 6	E
16	Trench 5 (006) section	S
17	Trench 5 (003) and (006) general	S
18	Trench 5 003 fully excavated	S
19	Trench 8 (008) section	E
20	Trench 8 box working shot	S
21	Trench 8 (010) section	W
22	Trench 9	S
23	Trench 11	N
24	Trench 13	SE
25	Trench 15	NW
26	Trench 8 (018) & (016)	SW
27	Trench 8 (014)	SW
28	Trench 24	SW
29	Trench 23	W
30	Trench 16	SE
31	Trench 18	N
32	Trench 19	N
33	Trench 20	NW
34	Trench 21	E
35	Trench 22 test pit showing made ground deposits	SW

Appendix 4: Drawings Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Description	Context Numbers
1	1	1:10	Section	003, 004, 005,
2	1	1:10	Section	006, 007
3	1	1:50	Plan	Trench 5, 003, 006
4	2	1:10	Section	008, 009
5	2	1:10	Section	010, 011, 012, 013
6	2	1:50	Plan	Trench 8, 008, 010, 0114, 016, 018

APPENDIX 5: Discovery and Excavation in Scotland Entry

LOCAL AUTHORITY:	West Dunbartonshire
PROJECT TITLE/SITE NAME:	Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria
PROJECT CODE:	ALEX
PARISH:	Bonhill
NAME OF CONTRIBUTOR:	S Mitchell
NAME OF ORGANISATION:	CFA Archaeology Ltd
TYPE(S) OF PROJECT:	Evaluation
NMRS NO(S):	N/A
SITE/MONUMENT TYPE(S):	Pits
SIGNIFICANT FINDS:	Early prehistoric pottery
NGR (2 letters, 6 figures)	NS 3880 8062
START DATE (this season)	July 2011
END DATE (this season)	July 2011
PREVIOUS WORK (incl. DES ref.)	None
MAIN (NARRATIVE) DESCRIPTION: (May include information from other fields)	A trial trenching evaluation was carried out on land to the south of Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria. Twenty-four trenches totalling 1813m ² were excavated, comprising slightly over 8% of the evaluation area. Seven pits were discovered in two trenches. Two sherds of probably early prehistoric pottery were recovered from one of the pit fills.
PROPOSED FUTURE WORK:	
CAPTION(S) FOR ILLUSTRS:	None
SPONSOR OR FUNDING BODY:	Laing O'Rourke PLC
ADDRESS OF MAIN CONTRIBUTOR:	CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh, EH21 7PQ.
EMAIL ADDRESS:	smitchell@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
ARCHIVE LOCATION (intended/deposited)	Archive to be deposited in NMRS, Reports lodged with SMR and NMRS.



- Site Location

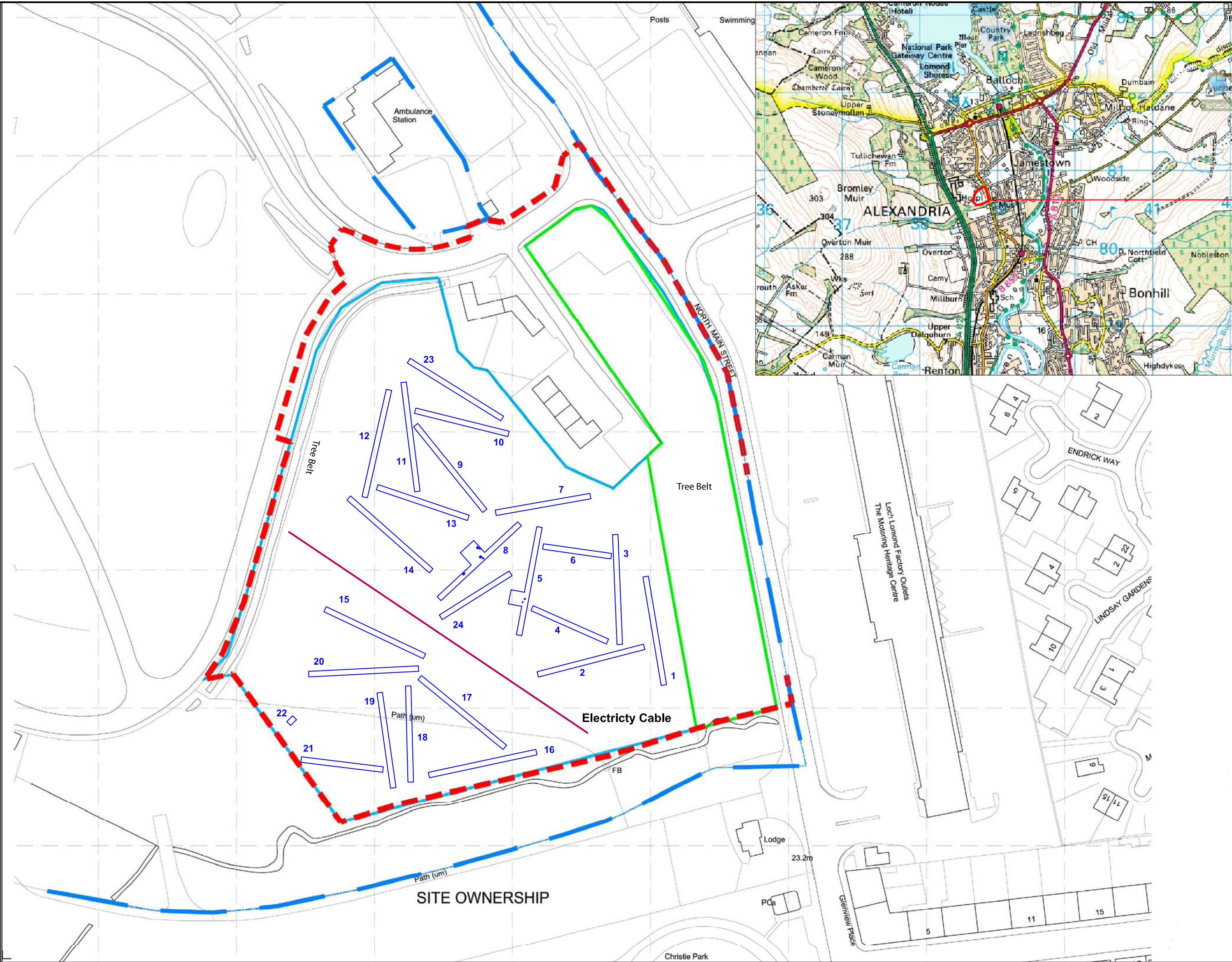
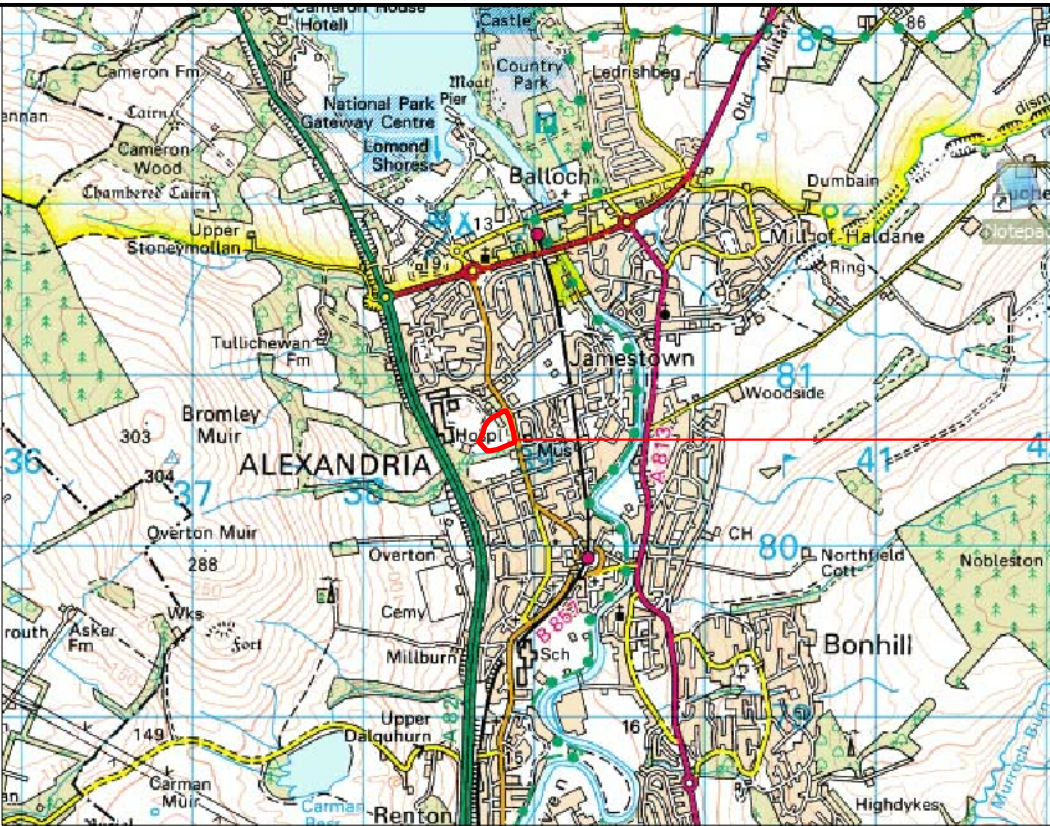


Fig. No: 1	Revision: A
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Title: Location map and plan of site showing trial trench locations

Project:
Vale of Leven Hospital
Alexandria

Client: **Laing O'Rourke PLC**

Scale at A3:
1:1250



Drawn by: LW	Checked: LW	Report No: 1929
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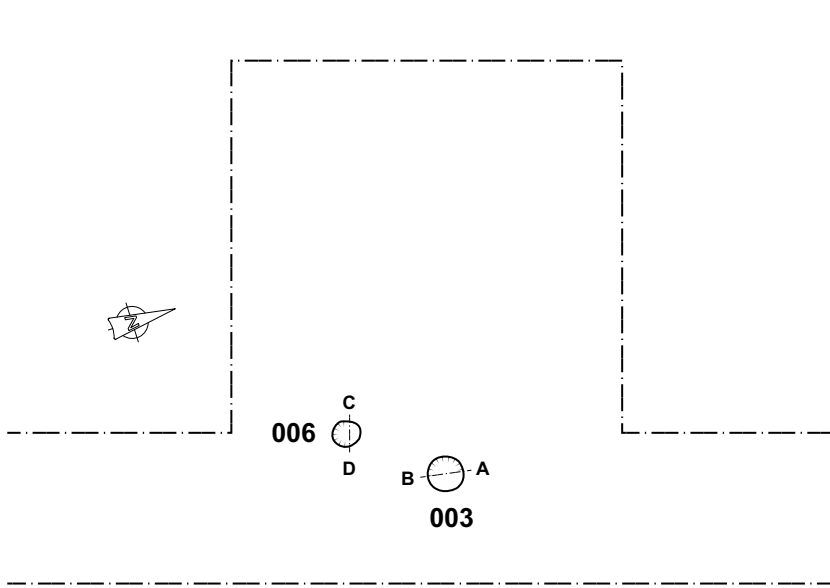


Fig. 2 - Plan of Trench 5

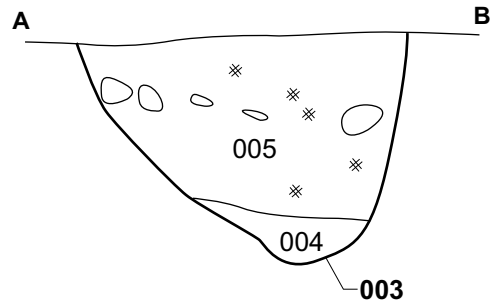


Fig. 3 - Section of 003

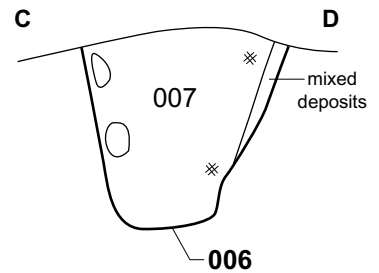


Fig. 4 - Section of 006

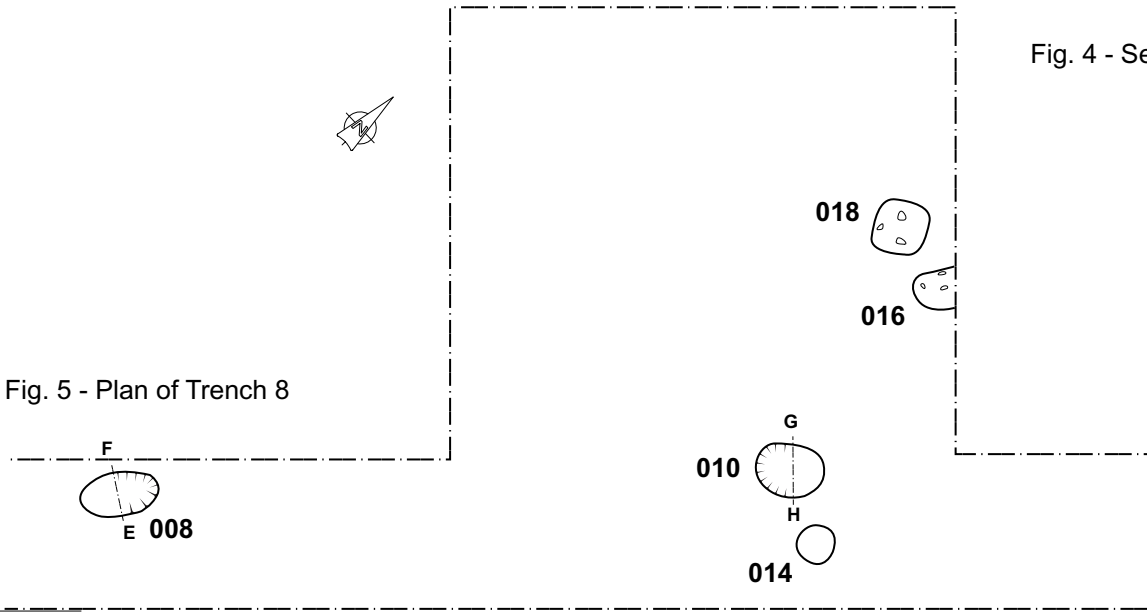


Fig. 5 - Plan of Trench 8

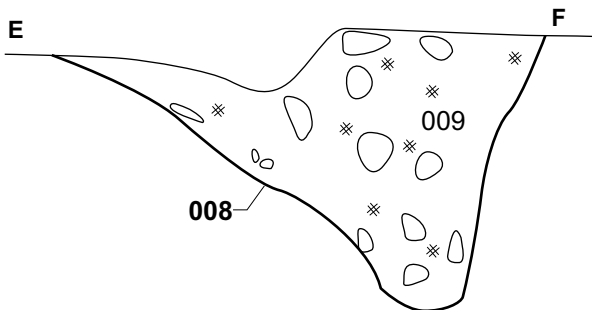


Fig. 6 - Section of 008

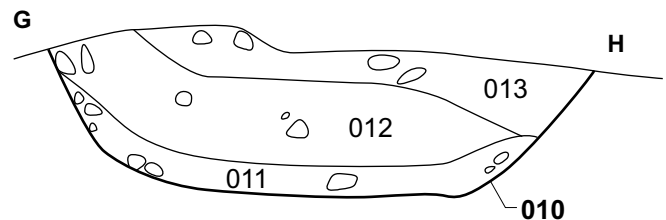


Fig. 7 - Section of 010

Key:

Fig. No: 2-7 Revision: A Client: Laing O'Rourke PLC

Title: Plans and sections

Project: Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria

Scale at A4: Plans 1:100 Sections 1:10



Fig. 8 - Trench 13



Fig. 9 - Working shot: boxing out Trench 5



Fig. 10 - Pits 003 and 006



Fig. 11 - Pits 101 and 014

Key:

Fig. No:

8-11

Revision:

A

Client:

Laing O'Rourke PLC

Title:

Project:

Vale of Leven Hospital, Alexandria

Scale at A4:

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