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Geophysical Survey

Borders Railway Project A7 Falahill Improvements

Archaeological Works

Report No. 3148

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Commissioned by	BAM Nuttall Ltd
Date issued	February 2015
Version	1
OASIS Reference	cfaarcha1-176818
Planning Application No.	10/01544/FUL
Grid Ref	NT 39669 55820

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

Borders Railway Project A7 Falahill Improvements

Archaeological Works

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This report has been prepared by CFA Archaeology Ltd for archaeological works on the diversion of the A7 that was required to accommodate the reinstatement of the Borders Railway (Fig. 1). The diversion of the A7 was covered by a separate planning application to the Bill that was passed allowing the construction of the Borders Railway. This application was subject to a requirement for archaeological works by Scottish Borders Council (SBC).

The works that were required were solely associated with the section of the new road development as the reinstatement of the rail line in this section followed the old Waverly Line route and no features of interest associated with this were present at this location.

1.2 Background

A watching brief methodology was approved and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for this was accepted by SBC (dated 25 April 2013). An area of the site set up works was monitored under watching brief but, due to a number of constraints including overhead lines, the contractor needed to use bulldozers to strip the new road line. It was, therefore, agreed with the Scottish Borders Council Archaeology Officer that a trial trenching evaluation could be undertaken and that, if following the evaluation, a negative result was achieved then the remaining topsoiling could be undertaken by bulldozer without archaeological monitoring. A WSI covering this change in methodology was accepted by SBC (dated 21 March 2014).

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 a watching brief and trial trenching evaluation;
- To establish the vulnerability of any archaeological features to the proposed development;
- To propose mitigation measures.
- To prepare a report to describe the results.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance.

2.2 Watching Brief

The watching brief monitored the excavation of the works compound (Figs. 1 & 2). All excavation was carried out using a smooth-bladed ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision.

2.3. Trial Trenching

The initial area of the proposed evaluation was based on the contractors estimates c.10,000m² for the off-line area that stretched north to south along the western edge of the A7 at Falahill (Fig. 1). Trial trenching was to cover 1000m² or 10% of that area. However the northernmost part of the evaluation area was marshy with deep pools of standing water and the southernmost part of the evaluation area was composed of modern made ground that the proposed works were not going to penetrate. It was agreed with SBC that no trial trenches needed to be excavated within these parts. Further constraints were present within the remaining area that was trenched, which included buried and overhead services and parts of a haul road that had been constructed by laying stone over a geotextile base. A reduced total area of 485m² was, therefore excavated which amounted c.10% of the available area.

Overburden was removed by a tracked 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.5m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision to the first archaeological horizon or to the top of the underlying geology. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the brief were carried out by hand.

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.

Trench positions were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

Individual trench descriptions are provided in Appendix 1. In the text below, archaeological context numbers are given in bold and in parenthesis.

3.2 Watching Brief

A single linear ditch (**003**) orientated N-S was revealed (Figs 3 & 4). Its southern terminus lay within the stripped area but it continued beyond the watching brief area to the north. It was c.30m long (as exposed) by 0.60m wide and 0.30m deep. Its profile was U-shaped and it contained a single fill of brownish grey sandy silt (**004**). No artefacts were recovered. No field boundaries are recorded at this location on Ordnance Survey coverage of the area, and it must be suspected that this feature relates to a field boundary of medieval or post-medieval date that had become defunct by the time that the Ordnance Survey first edition map was surveyed in the mid-19th century.

3.3 Evaluation

Fourteen evaluation trenches were excavated (Figs 1, 5, 6 & 7). Topsoil (**001**) was between 0.3m and 0.6m deep and directly overlay natural (**002**) which consisted of banded light greyish brown and orange- brown silty sand with gravel patches in some trenches.

No archaeological features or deposits were found in any of the trenches and no artefacts were recovered.

4. CONCLUSION

The watching brief revealed a single, undated ditch. No field boundaries are recorded at this location on Ordnance Survey coverage of the area, and it must be suspected that this feature relates to a field boundary of medieval or post-medieval date that had become defunct by the time that the Ordnance Survey first edition map was surveyed in the mid-19th century.

Fourteen trenches covering 485m² were excavated. No archaeological deposits or features were found and no further excavation work was required.

No further work is recommended in post-excavation. However, the final decision lies with Scottish Borders Council.

A summary statement of the results of this evaluation will be submitted for publication in *Discovery and Excavation in Scotland*.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Scotland (RCAHMS) and copies of reports will be lodged with the Scottish Borders Council Sites and Monuments Record.

APPENDIX 1: Summary of Evaluation Trenches

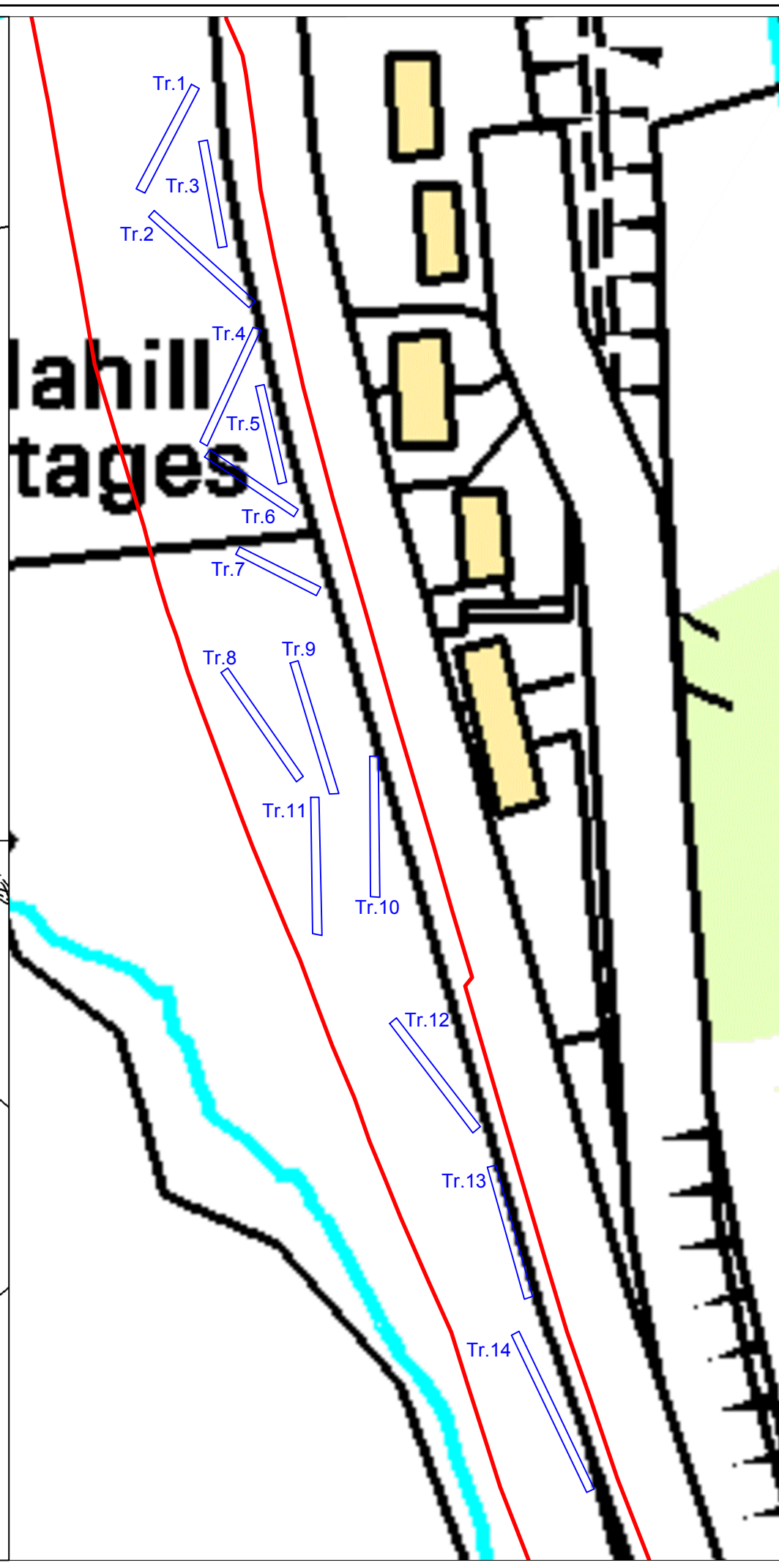
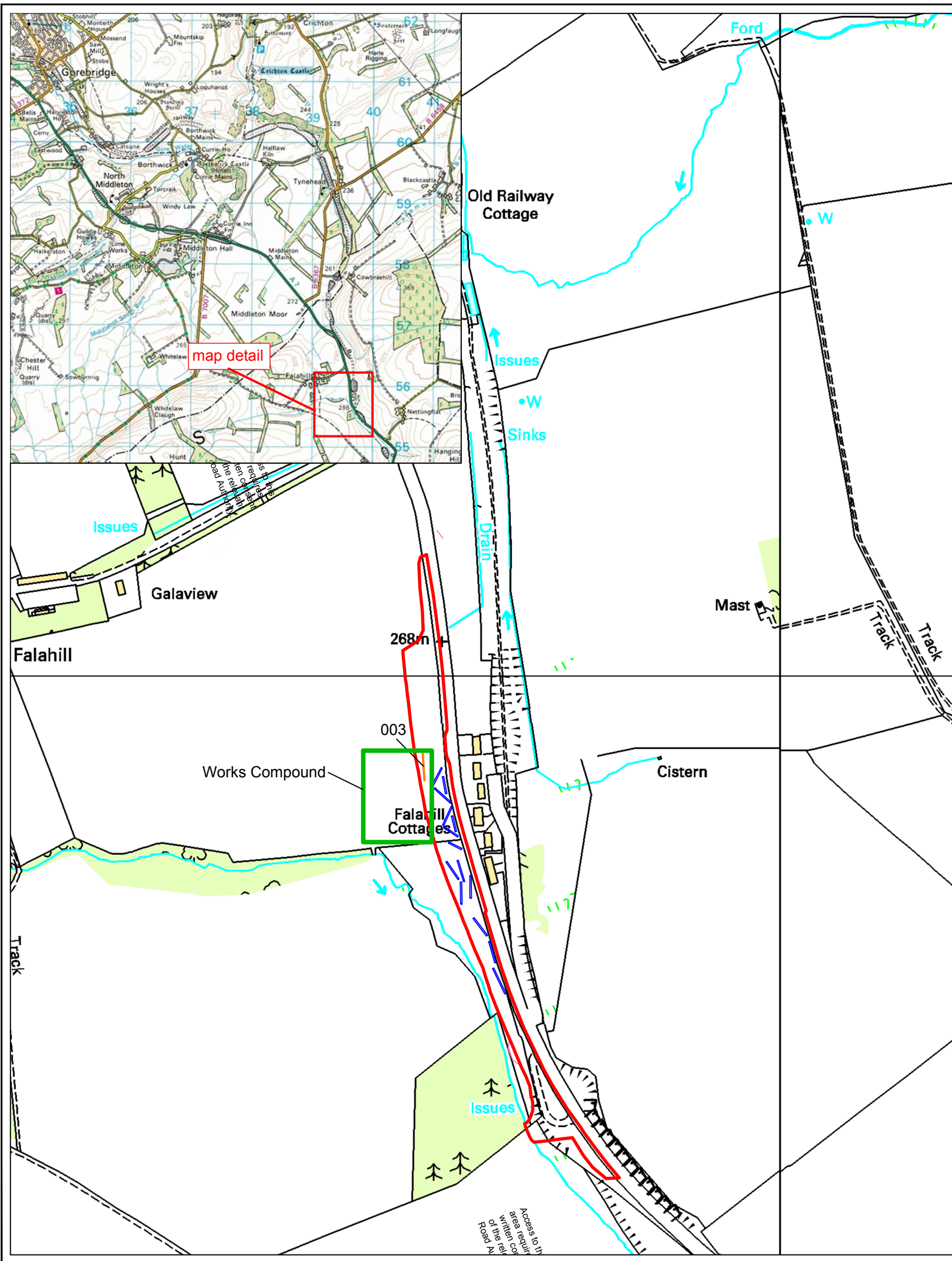
Trench No.	Size (m)	Topsoil Depth (m)	Description
1	23x 1.5	0.30-0.40	Stone field drain
2	25x 1.5	0.20	Stone field drain
3	16x 1.5	0.20-0.35	No Archaeological features found
4	25x 1.5	0.30	No Archaeological features found
5	16x 1.5	0.40	No Archaeological features found
6	20x 1.5	0.45	Stone field drain
7	18x 1.5	0.30-0.60	No Archaeological features found
8	25x 1.5	0.45	No Archaeological features found
9	25x 1.5	0.35-0.45	No Archaeological features found
10	25x 1.5	0.40	No Archaeological features found
11	25x 1.5	0.20-0.40	No Archaeological features found
12	25x 1.5	0.30	No Archaeological features found
13	25x 1.5	0.20-0.30	No Archaeological features found
14	30x 1.5	0.35	No Archaeological features found

APPENDIX 2: Context Registers

Context	Trench	Description
001	All	Topsoil - Light Brown Sandy Clay
002	All	Natural - Light Orange Brown Sandy Clay with occasional gravel patches
003	WB	N-S Linear Cut
004	WB	Light Brownish Grey Sandy Silt fill of 003

APPENDIX 3: Photographic Register

Photo No.	Description	Taken From
001	Topsoil stripping compound area	S
002	Topsoil stripping compound area showing linear feature 003	SE
003	S Facing section of linear feature 003	S
004	S Facing section of linear feature 003	S
005	S Facing section of linear feature 003	S
006	Stripped area showing drain	S
007	Topsoil stripping compound area	S
008	TR. 01 (Gen View)	S
009	TR. 02 (Gen View)	W
010	TR. 03 (Gen View)	SE
011	TR. 04 (Gen View)	S
012	TR. 05 (Gen View)	NW
013	TR. 06 (Gen View)	NW
014	TR. 07 (Gen View)	SW
015	TR. 08 (Gen View)	NNW
016	TR. 09 (Gen View)	N
017	TR. 10 (Gen View)	NNE
018	TR. 11 (Gen View)	N
019	TR. 12 (Gen View)	NNW
020	TR. 13 (Gen View)	N
021	TR. 14 (Gen View)	N



Key:

- OFF Line Section of Road Upgrade
- Works Compound & Watching Brief Area
- Evaluation Trenches
- Linear feature 003



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Fig. No: 1 Report No: 3148

Title:
 Site location, location of
 Watching Brief Area and
 Evaluation Trenches

Project:
 Borders Railway Project, A7
 Falahill Improvements

Client:
 BAM Nuttall

Scale at A3:
 1:5000
 1:1000

Drawn by: GC Checked: LW Date: 27/02/2015

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Fig. 2 Watching Brief during compound construction



Fig. 3 Linear feature 003



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Fig. 4 South-facing section through linear feature **003**



Fig. 5 Post-excitation shot of Trench 2



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Fig. 6 Post-excavation shot of Trench 7



Fig. 7 Post-excavation shot of Trench 14



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