

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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*Field Evaluation & Excavation*


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## **The Old Garage, Bowness on Solway, Cumbria Archaeological Evaluation**

**Data Structure Report  
No. 1969**

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Fig. 5 NE-facing section of NW-end of trench

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment and evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in October 2011 at The Old Garage, Bowness on Solway, Cumbria (NGR: NY 22400 62735) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Mr Peter Anderson.

A Written Scheme of Investigations was produced by CFA on behalf of Mr Anderson. The WSI designed to meet the requirements of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES).

### **1.2 Background**

Bowness on Solway lies at the western end of Hadrian's Wall and was built on the site of the Roman fort of Maia. An associated civilian settlement (*Vicus*) was discovered outside the southern gate of this fort. The village itself appears to have had medieval origins with the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Michael's Church overlying what may have been the granary for the Roman fort. In common with other structures within the village, the church contains reused stone from the Roman period structures. During the late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the village was directly linked to Annan in Scotland by a steel railway viaduct which ran across the Solway Firth (Solway Junction Railway). This railway, which opened in 1869 and closed in 1921, was primarily for the shipment of iron ore, but also carried passengers up until 1914. It was demolished in 1935.

The development site is located immediately to the east of the Roman fort of Maia on the site of a former bus garage. A previous archaeological investigation undertaken at the nearby Bowness House Farm uncovered well-preserved Roman remains. These remains are thought to relate either to the civilian settlement associated with the fort or with Roman military activity outwith the main fort site. Consequently, this site was considered to be of high potential in relation to archaeological remains dating to the Roman period.

The development area consisted of an upstanding 20<sup>th</sup> century steel garage measuring c.16m by 8m. Proposals for extending the development area into the adjoining field were shelved and consequently trial trenching was limited to the garage site itself.

A walkover survey of the site undertaken immediately prior to the evaluation did not identify any surface features of potential archaeological interest.

No invasive archaeological fieldwork is known to have taken place within the proposed development area prior to this evaluation.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the evaluation were to determine the presence or absence, location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development.

## **2. METHODS STATEMENT**

### **2.1 General**

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

#### **2.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

The Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record was consulted to obtain information relating to the development area. This included consulting primary and secondary maps and documents relating to the site to set the evaluation results in their geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context.

Historic map coverage for the area was examined together with any other readily available cartographic information on pre-recent land use in the development area.

#### **2.2 Evaluation**

The terms of the brief required the excavation of two trenches totalling 15<sup>2</sup>m. However, plans to extend the development into the adjoining field had to be shelved and consequently the investigation was limited to the garage site itself. As a result, a single trench measuring 9m by 1.3m (11.7m<sup>2</sup>) was excavated within the interior of the garage (Fig. 2).

The outline of the trench was cut into the concrete floor of the garage using a petrol cut-off saw (Stihl saw). Topsoil and modern overburden was then removed by a 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was 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.

The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

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

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

#### **3.1 Desk-Based Assessment**

The CCCHES HER indicates that there are no cultural heritage sites within the proposed development area.

A number of sites were identified within a 0.5km radius of the proposed development site. A significant number of these are Roman in date and include Hadrian's Wall and vallum (HER No.5782), Maia Roman fort (HER No.166), Maia Roman fort vicus and bathhouse (HER No.167), and the site of a Roman frontier defence at Bowness Vicarage (HER No.13653). Roman period finds include an inscribed stone and coin hoard (HER No.178), a Roman alter stone (HER No.183), an architectural feature (HER No.181), and an architectural fragment set within the wall of St Michael's Church (HER No.4854).

The medieval origins of the village are reflected in the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Michael's Church (HER No.4854) and a Peel Tower recorded in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (HER No.163). There is also evidence of medieval ridge-and-furrow cultivation (HER No.41454) within the area. The remaining features are post-medieval in date and largely consist of existing buildings within the village.

The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (1868) and all subsequent editions consulted depict the proposed development area lying within undeveloped farmland on the edge of the village. On the Second Edition map (1901) it is depicted lying within a small enclosure, but on the First Edition and on the subsequent editions of 1926 and 1951, it is simply shown as being part of a much larger field. Editions from 1926 and 1951 depict a Roman altar within close proximity to the proposed development area.

#### **3.2 Archaeological potential**

The close proximity of Hadrian's Wall and the site of the Roman fort of Maia and its civilian settlement suggested that there was a high potential for encountering artefacts or features of Roman date.

The presence of the 12<sup>th</sup> century St Michael's Church and the site of a medieval Peel Tower also suggested that there was potential for uncovering medieval remains.

Historic map investigation did not indicate any pre-recent development prior to the construction of the bus garage in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

#### **3.3 Evaluation**

##### *General*

A single trench measuring 9m by 1.3m was excavated through the floor of the garage. A lack of space within the garage prevented excavation of the entire trench in a single excavation so approximately two-thirds of the trench, beginning at the SE end, was excavated (Fig. 3) then backfilled, following which approximately two-thirds starting

at the NW end was excavated (Fig. 4) then backfilled, ensuring a significant overlap to give an uninterrupted view of trench.

The SE end of the trench contained what was assumed to be a live waste water pipe at a depth of 0.7m, which prevented full excavation of the trench. Archaeological deposits were encountered at the NW end of the trench; however, their depth and the unstable nature of the trench sides prevented access for manual excavation. The deposits were carefully reduced down to natural using the machine. Due to space within the garage and the presence of the concrete floor it was not possible to extend the trench to pursue the deposits and realise their full extents.

### *Trial Trenching*

The upper deposits (Fig. 5) within the trench were modern in nature and consisted of the concrete floor of the garage (**001**), which measured c.0.07m thick and overlay 0.05-0.1m of rubble hardcore (**002**). A bedding layer of red sand and crushed sandstone (**003**) underlay the hardcore (**002**) to a thickness of 0.2m at the NW end, and fading out to the SE end. A 0.7m thick layer of made ground (**004**) underlay the hardcore and red sand. It comprised loose soil and rubble and contained several modern artefacts including discarded vehicle parts.

The made ground deposit (**004**) lay directly on the surface of a pale grey silty deposit (**005**) (Fig. 5) which was up to 0.35m thick. The deposit comprised wet, fibrous silt which is interpreted as the remains of an old ground surface prior to the construction of the garage. This deposit overlay a dark grey to black layer of rich humic soil (**006**) (Fig. 5). The deposit (**006**) was soft, moist and composed mainly of organic matter and smelled of peat. It was up to 0.4m thick and overlay the natural substrate (**000**) which was reddish sandy clay (Fig. 5). While the surface of the substrate appeared to be undisturbed, it was not possible to be certain about this within the constraint of the trial trench.

A number of Roman period and post-medieval finds were recovered from deposits **005** and **006**. Details of these finds are contained within the following section.

### **3.4 The Finds (Sue Anderson)**

Twelve sherds of pottery (421g) were recovered. Two fragments from **005** were rimsherds of samian vessels, and ten fragments from **005/006** were pieces of a black burnished ware jar with a flaring rim and obtuse lattice decoration (3rd-4th c.).

Three fragments (759g) of ceramic building material were found in **005**. These comprised two pieces of ?drain tiles (or possibly ridge tiles) in a fine dense fabric with occasional coarse inclusions, and a fragment of red brick in a coarse sandy fabric with large pebble inclusions. All fragments are of post-medieval date.

A fragment of fired clay (160g) in a fine oxidised fabric was collected from layer **006**. This has straw impressions on the underside and a roughly smoothed upper surface. It is likely to be a fragment of oven dome but is intrinsically undatable.

Eleven fragments of animal bone were recovered from layer **006**. These included two pieces of a juvenile sheep skull, a ?sheep rib, an abraded and gnawed cattle metapodial, a cattle mandible and three loose incisors, a cattle humerus fragment and two large mammal ribs.

Deposit **006** also contained leather remains which appear on preliminary investigation to be a near-complete Roman sandal cut from a single piece of leather with an openwork upper.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

A desk-based assessment and an archaeological evaluation were carried out in advance of the development of The Old Garage, Bowness on Solway. Although there were no known sites within the proposed development area, the desk-based assessment indicated that it lay within close proximity to Hadrian's Wall and the Roman fort of Maia. The village of Bowness contains a 12<sup>th</sup> century medieval church and the site of a medieval Peel Tower, but the majority of the sites identified by the DBA within close proximity to the development area relate to post-medieval development.

The excavation of the evaluation trench led to the identification of Roman period soil deposits. A number of sherds of Roman pottery including samian ware and black burnished ware were recovered from these deposits along with animal bones, fired clay and a possible Roman sandal.

Following completion of all relevant analyses, the project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1991), and arrangements made for its deposition with an appropriate repository. A copy will also be offered to the National Monuments Record.

The Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service will be notified of the arrangements made for the deposition of the archive.

A summary statement of the results of this archaeological work will be submitted for inclusion on the OASIS website.

Based on the results of the evaluation no further work is recommended, however it is understood that final the decision regarding any further mitigation measures lies with CCCHES.



## **5. REFERENCES**

### **Cartographic**

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1868, *Cumberland XIV* 6”to 1mile

Ordnance Survey 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition 1901, *Cumberland XIV.NE* 6”to 1mile

Ordnance Survey 1926, *Cumberland XIV.NE* 6”to 1mile

Ordnance Survey 1951, *Cumberland XIV.NE* 6”to 1mile

## APPENDIX 1: Trial Trench Register

Trench No.	Dimensions (m)	Depth to natural (m)	Description	Archaeological Remains
1	9 x 1.3	1.9	0.07m of concrete surface (001). 0.05m – 0.1m of hardcore (002). 0.2m of red sand (003). 0.7m of made ground (004).	0.35m of pale grey degraded turf (005), probable old ground surface. 0.4m dark humic/peaty deposit (006) overlying natural subsoil (000).

## APPENDIX 2: Context Register

No.	Trench No.	Description
000	1	Geological subsoil
001	1	Topsoil
002	1	Subsoil
003	1	Cut of linear ditch
004	1	Fill of 003
005	1	Subsoil
006	1	Subsoil
007	1	Subsoil

## APPENDIX 3: Digital Photographic Register

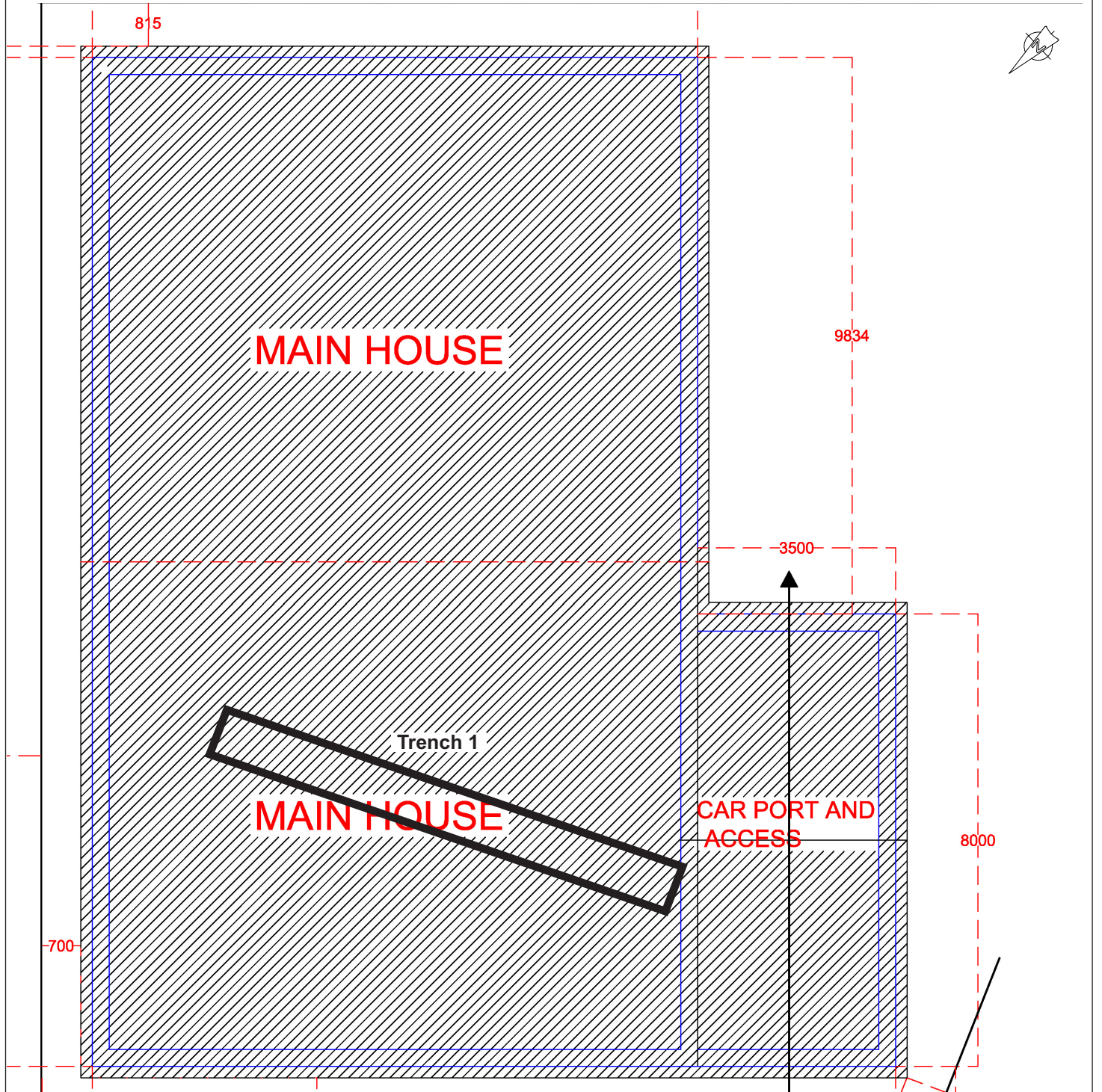
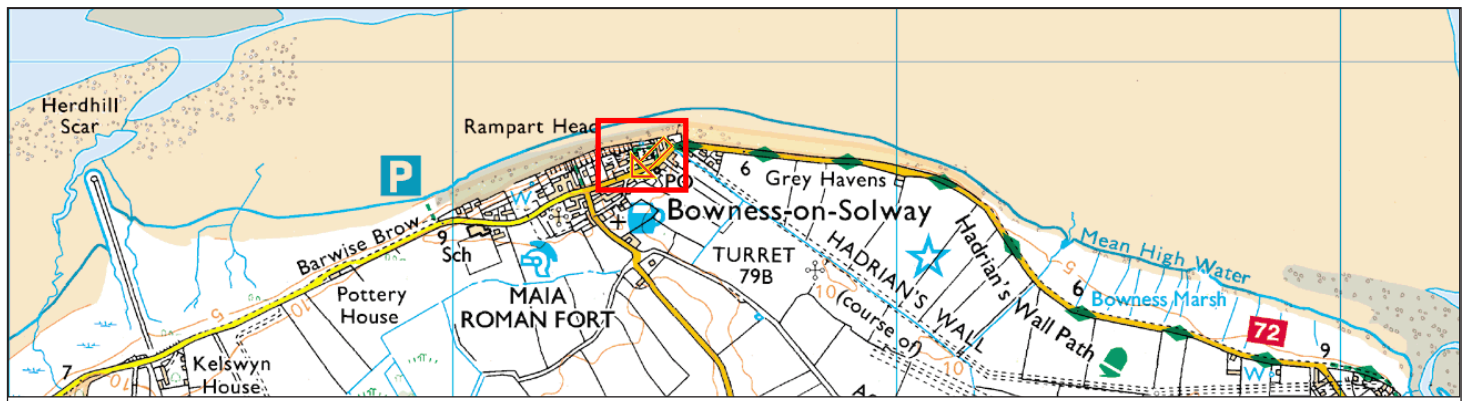
Photo No.	Description	From
1	General view of garage interior prior to excavation	W
2-4	Working shots, SE end of trench	Various
5-6	SE end of trench excavated to fullest extent showing extant drainpipe.	E
7-9	Working shots of NW end of trench.	W
10-13	Section of NW end of trench, not fully excavated, taken in case of collapse	NE
14-16	Working shots of excavating through humic/peaty layer 006	NW
17-19	Section of NW end of trench, fully excavated showing natural subsoil surface (000)	NE
20	Working shot excavating back towards SE end of trench	NW
21-22	Detail of burst field drain and water ingress	NE

## APPENDIX 4: Field Drawings Register

Drawing No.	Sheet No.	Content	Description	Scale
1	1	Trench 1	Plan	1:50
2	1	Trench 1	Section	1:20

## APPENDIX 5: Finds

Context	Find type	No.	Wt (g)	Notes	Spotdate
005	pot	2	36	samian, rims from two bowls	Rom
005	CBM	2	630	?drain tiles, fine dense fabric, occ coarse inclusions	pmed
005	CBM	1	129	late brick, coarse sandy with pebbles	pmed
005/006	pot	10	385	black burnished ware jar with broad lattice	3rd-4th c.
006	fired clay	1	160	straw impressions on underside, roughly smoothed on top	Rom
006	bone	11	789	sheep frontal & rib, cattle metapodial, hum and mandible + 3 loose incisors, 2 large mammal ribs	
006	leather	1	-	one-piece shoe/sandal with openwork upper	Rom



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Title:  
 Location Map and Trench Location

Project:  
 The Old Garage, Bowness on Solway,  
 Cumbria. Archaeological Evaluation

Fig. 1 Report: 1969 Drawn: LW CKD: LW Date: 09/09/14

Client:  
 Mr Peter Anderson

Scale:  
 1:100







Fig. 2 - Interior of garage pre-excitation



Fig. 3 - SE end of trench excavated to fullest extent



Fig. 4 - NW end of trench excavated to fullest extent



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Title: <b>Site Photographs</b>	Fig. <b>2 - 4</b>	Report: <b>1969</b>	Drawn: <b>LW</b>	CKD: <b>LW</b>	Date: <b>09/09/14</b>
	Client: <b>Mr Peter Anderson</b>				
Project: <b>The Old Garage, Bonness on Solway, Cumbria Archaeological Evaluation</b>					





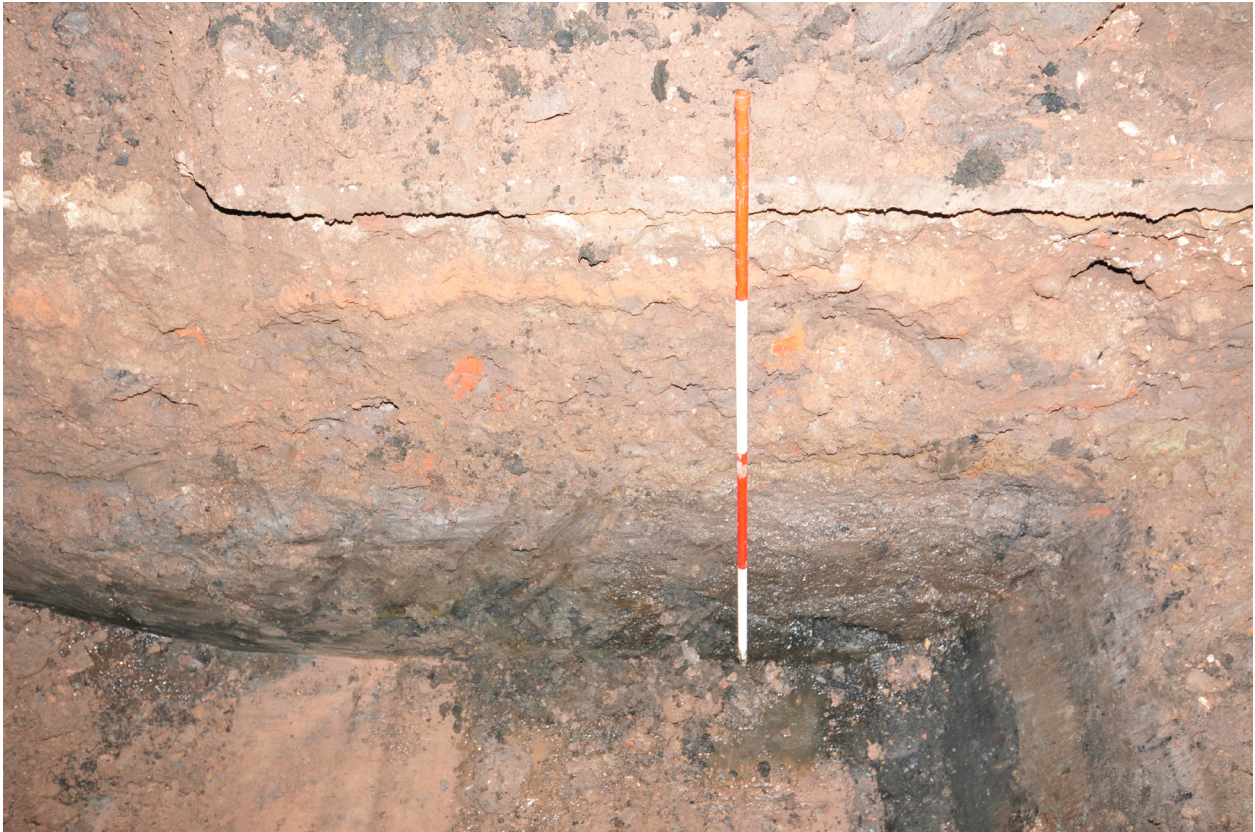


Fig. 5 - NE-facing section of NW end of trench



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Title: <b>Site Photographs</b>	Fig. <b>5</b>	Report: <b>1969</b>	Drawn: <b>LW</b>	CKD: <b>LW</b>	Date: <b>09/09/14</b>
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