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Site & Landscape Survey


Geophysical Survey

**Land Off Grange Road,
Widdrington Station,
Northumberland**

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. 3464

 0131 273 4380

 0131 273 4381

 info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

 www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

The Old Engine House
Eskmills Business Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian
EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131 273 4380
Fax: 0131 273 4381
email: info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Authors	Tomasz Jenorowski MA
Illustrator	Graeme Carruthers MA MCIfA
Editor	Melanie Johnson MA PhD FSA Scot MCIfA
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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) in July 2016 for a proposed residential development at Grange Road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland (NGR: NZ 24100 93900 centred) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by CgMs Consulting.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated July 2016 covering this programme of works was prepared by Richard Conolly of CgMs Consulting for Fairhurst Consulting Ltd Ltd, acting on behalf of Grainger PLC. The WSI was approved by Northumberland Conservation on behalf of the planning authority.

1.2 Background

A planning application (Ref. No. 15/04270/OUT) has been submitted for the erection of approximately 121 dwellings with associated infrastructure and public open space on land off Grange Road, Widdrington Station. A trial trenching evaluation was requested in order to provide information to fully understand the potential impact of the proposed development upon buried archaeology.

The Site has previously been the subject of an archaeological desk- based assessment (Conolly 2016) and a geophysical survey (ASDU 2016).

The desk- based assessment established that there were no previously recorded heritage assets within the Site. A track was depicted crossing the Site on 19th century mapping. This is no longer visible on the ground. Given the known history of the Site and the surrounding area, it was concluded that the Site had some potential to contain previously unrecorded assets, principally relating to pre-Medieval remains and greatest in relation to Roman and earlier settlement and related features.

The geophysical survey did not identify any features of archaeological significance (ASDU 2016). Anomalies relating to near-surface geological variation were identified across much of the survey area, along with the possible site of a lightning discharge, four services, and probable disturbed ground in the south-east corner of the area.

The underlying solid geology of the area comprises Carboniferous mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Pennine Middle Coal Measures, which are overlain by Devensian diamicton till. At the time of the evaluation, the field was under a silage crop.

1.3 Objectives

The aim of the evaluation was to: verify and augment the results of the geophysical survey to aid in the determination of the planning application and the design of an appropriate post-consent mitigation strategy to accompany development works (if required and should the application be granted); likely to be preservation by record, i.e. excavation, analysis and dissemination of results, where preservation in situ is not possible.

2. WORKING METHODS

2.1 General

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

2.2 Evaluation

Twenty four trenches with a total combined area of 1080m² (c.2% of the development area) were required. A 1% contingency was held in reserve in case archaeological features were encountered that could not be fully understood within the limits of the original trenches. Northumberland Conservation requested that each trench be no more than 25m in length, and the trench plan was devised by CgMs accordingly.

Topsoil and subsoil were removed by a 13 ton 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide 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 located using industry standard electronic surveying equipment and all trenches were backfilled on completion of recording.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

Numbers in bold refer to contexts, a full list of which is contained in Appendix 2. A summary of the trenches excavated is contained in Appendix 3. Examples of excavated trenches are shown in Figs. 3-10.

3.2 Trial Trenching

Twenty four trenches (Fig. 1), each measuring 25m by 1.8m, were excavated by machine, to give a total combined area of c.1105m² (c.2% of the development area). Trial trenches were positioned to provide even coverage across the Site with an approximate 10m standoff from an overhead line that crosses the Site and a 4m standoff from geophysical anomalies interpreted as buried services and the mapped line of an abandoned water main. A poorly drained hollow in the north-eastern part of the Site has also been avoided as has an area of disturbance identified in the south-eastern part of the Site by the geophysical survey. None of the trenches needed to be moved from their plotted positions.

A 1% contingency was held in reserve in case archaeological features were encountered that could not be fully understood within the limits of the original trenches. This was not used, with the exception of a small box (5m by 5m) excavated around the natural feature noted in Trench 18, in order to fully expose it and evaluate it.

The topsoil across the Site generally consisted of 0.3m of mid grey -brown sandy silty clay (**001**) overlying orangey-brown sandy-clay and clay natural substrate (**002**).

Modern linear drainage features were identified throughout the area. Cultivation furrows were identified within Trenches 17, 19 and 20 and one irregular linear feature (**003**) was identified within Trench 18.

Feature 003 - Trench 18

Feature **003** was an irregular linear feature measuring 3m south-west to north-east by 0.75m wide and 0.16m deep. The fill (**004**) consisted of a dark-brown clayey-peat. It is thought to represent the remains of a tree which has rotten in situ and has no archaeological significance. A single piece of unworked flint was recovered from the base of this feature.

Cultivation Furrows - Trenches 17, 19 and 20

Cultivation furrows were recorded in Trenches 17, 19 and 20. The furrows all ran in the same direction (NW-SE), and measured between 1.5m to 2.5m wide. The fills consisted of dark grey silty clays.

4. CONCLUSION

An archaeological trial trenching evaluation was carried out in advance of development at land off Grange Road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland.

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded, confirming the results of the geophysical survey. Field drains and cultivation furrows were found, indicating that the area had been utilized for agricultural purposes.

5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Conolly RJ 2016 *Land off Grange road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland: Archaeological Assessment*. Unpublished client report.

Archaeology Services Durham University 2016 *Land off Grange Road, Widdrington Station, Northumberland: Geophysical Survey*.

APPENDIX 1: Photographic Register

Shot No.	Summary description of subject	Taken from
1	Trench no 1 general shot	SE
2	Trench no 2 general shot	N
3	Trench no 3 general shot	W
4	Trench no 4 general shot	N
5	Trench no 5 general shot	N
6	Trench no 6 general shot	W
7	Trench no 7 general shot	W
8	Trench no 8 general shot	S
9	Trench no 9 general shot	S
10	Trench no 10 general shot	W
11	Trench no 11 general shot	W
12	Trench no 12 general shot	S
13	Trench no 13 general shot	E
14	Trench no 14 general shot	S
15	Trench no 15 general shot	W
16	Trench no 16 general shot	S
17	Trench no 17 general shot	E
18	Trench no 18 general shot	S
19	Trench no 17 cultivation furrows	SE
20	Trench no 18, feature [003] fully exposed and bulk sectioned	E
21	Feature [003] E facing section	E
22	Feature [003] E facing section	E
23	Feature [003] fully exposed	W
24	Feature [003] E facing section	E
25	Feature [003] fully exposed	N
26	Feature [003] fully exposed	S
27	Trench no 19, cultivation furrow in foreground	W
28	Trench no 20 general shot	S
29	Trench no 21 general shot	W
30	Trench no 22 general shot	N
31	Trench no 23 general shot	W
32	Trench no 24 general shot	N
33	Trench no 18 extension showing feature [003]	

APPENDIX 2: Context Register

Context no.	Fill of	Description
001		Topsoil
002		Natural
003		Natural hollow in Trench 18, 0.75m across by 0.16m deep
004	003	Peat deposit in Trench 18

APPENDIX 3: Trench Summary

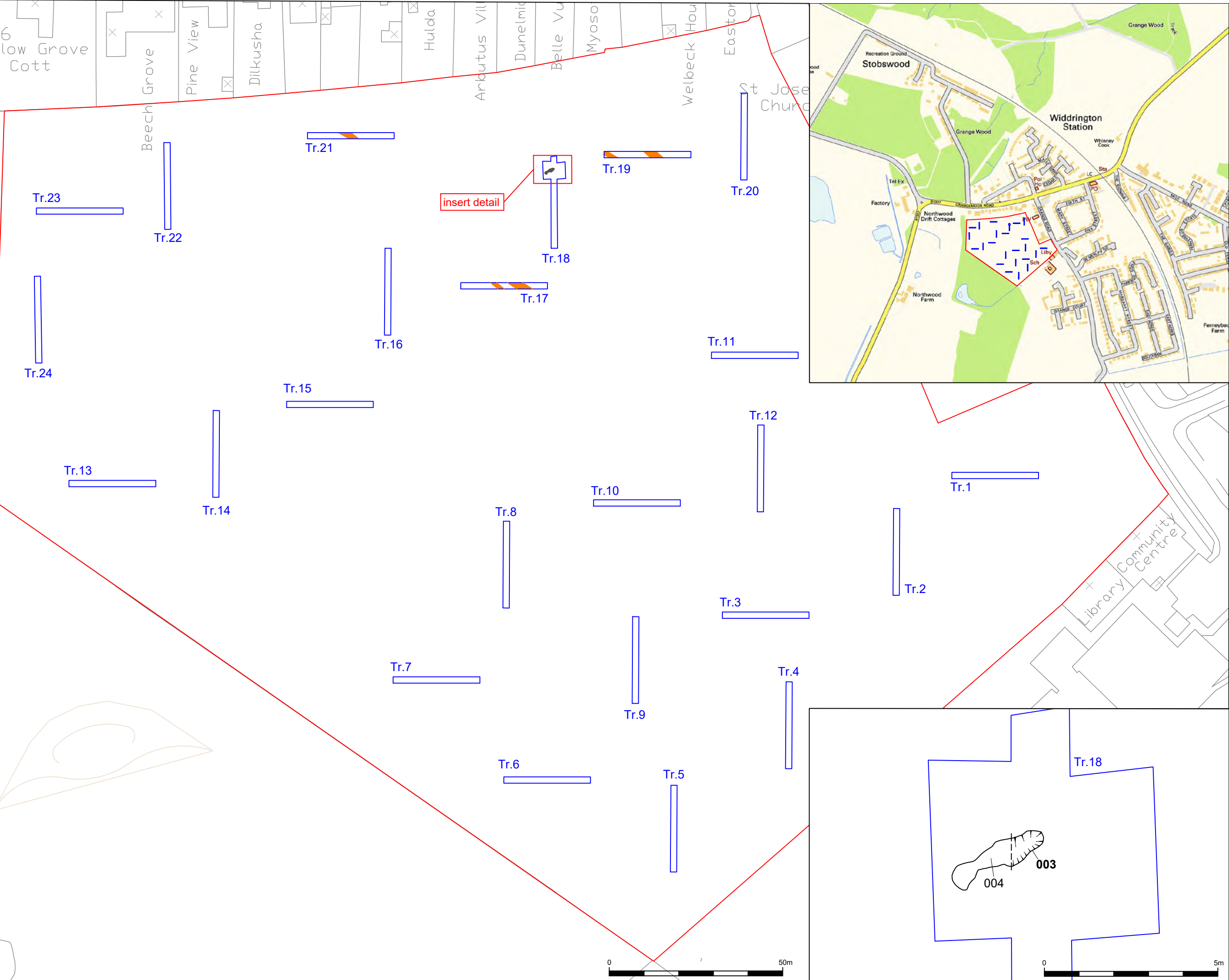
Trench no.	Size	Depth of topsoil	Description
1	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology
2	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology, 1 modern field drain
3	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
4	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology
5	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
6	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
7	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
8	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
9	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology
10	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
11	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology. Plough scars
12	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
13	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology
14	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology. 4 modern drainage features
15	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology. 3x modern linear drainage features
16	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology. 2x modern linear drainage features
17	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology. 2x modern linear drainage features. 2x cultivation furrows
18	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology. One natural feature containing unworked flint (003)
19	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	2x cultivation furrows
20	25 x 1.8m	0.25m	No archaeology
21	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	One possible cultivation furrow
22	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology. 2 modern drainage features
23	25 x 1.8m	0.3m	No archaeology
24	25 x 1.8m	0.35m	No archaeology. One modern linear drainage feature

APPENDIX 4: Sample Register

Sample no.	Context	Description	Size
001	004	Peaty fill of [003]	40 litres

APPENDIX 5: Drawing Register

Dwg No.	Sheet No.	Scale	Plan / Section	Description/contexts
1	1	1/10	Section	East facing section of trench 18 with peat deposit (004)



Key:

- Site boundary
- Evaluation trench
- Cultivation furrow
- Feature

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
Eskmills Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Title:
Location map and trench plan

Project:
**Widdrington Station,
Northumberland**

Client:
CgMs

Scale at A3:
1:1000 and insert @ 1:100

Drawn by: GC	Checked: SW	Date: 26/07/2016
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Fig. 2 Trench 17 showing cultivation furrows, from E



Fig. 3 Trench 19 showing cultivation furrows, from W

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
Eskmills Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
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Fig. 4 Trench 20 showing cultivation furrows, from S

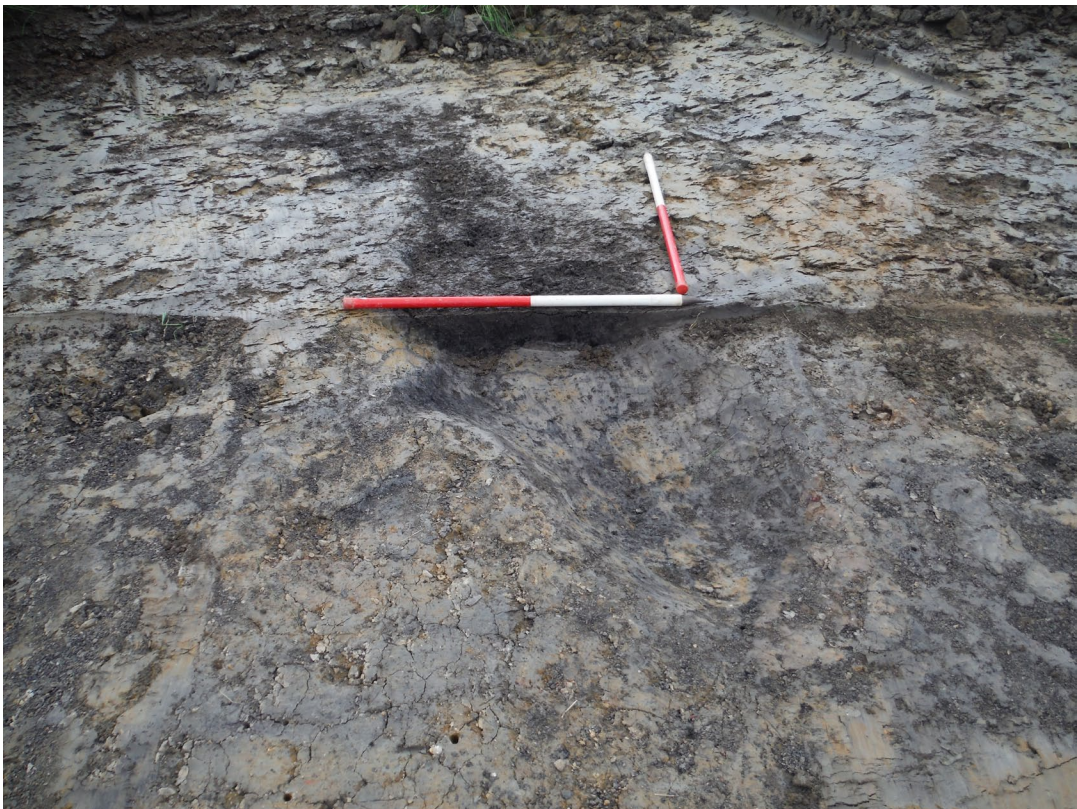


Fig. 5 Trench 18, feature [003] section, from E

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
Eskmills Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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Fig. 6 Feature [003] fully exposed, from S



Fig. 7 Trench 5, from N

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
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Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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Fig. 8 Trench 6, from W



Fig. 9 Trench 7, from W

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
Eskmills Park
Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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Fig. 10 Trench 8, from S

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CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
The Old Engine House
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Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ
T: 0131 273 4380
F: 0131 273 4381
info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

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