

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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**Land off Netherhall Road  
Maryport  
Cumbria**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 1843**

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## **CONTENTS**

|    |                        |   |
|----|------------------------|---|
| 1. | Introduction           | 3 |
| 2. | Working Methods        | 4 |
| 3. | Archaeological Results | 4 |
| 4. | Summary and Conclusion | 5 |
| 5. | References             | 6 |

## **Appendices**

|    |                               |   |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. | Digital Photographic Register | 7 |
| 2. | Summary of Excavation Results | 8 |

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) in November 2010 at Land off Netherhall Road, Maryport, Cumbria (NGR: NY 0406 3692) (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by Story Homes Ltd.

A Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) dated 22 October 2010 for the project was produced by CFA. The WSI was designed to meet the requirements of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES).

### **1.2 Background**

Story Homes Ltd is proposing to construct a residential development within an area of pastureland on the north-eastern outskirts of Maryport. The proposed development area is situated off the A596, immediately to the north and west of Netherhall School and is currently utilised for the grazing of sheep. The proposed development area is roughly rectangular orientated north-east to south-west, and is broadly split in two by a pronounced crest running north-east to south-west at which point the field slopes steeply to the A596. The field is bordered by the A596 to the south-east, an area of allotments gardens to the south-west, an area of woodland to the north and an area of farmland to the north-east.

The proposed development lies c. 250m to the south of the Roman fort of ‘Alavna’ and a possible Roman road leading to the fort passes through the proposed development area. Consequently, the area was considered to be of high archaeological potential for features dating to the Roman period.

A geophysical survey of the proposed development area was conducted as part of a large scale survey of Roman Maryport, which was carried out between 2000 and 2004 (Biggins & Taylor 2004). The published results of that survey were re-evaluated in a desk-based assessment carried out by CFA in 2009 (Glendinning & Neighbour 2009). CFA conducted an archaeological trial trenching evaluation in 2010. The evaluation uncovered a number of features which are reported in Kirby 2010. The trial trench locations are depicted on Fig. 1. The findings of the desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation are not repeated in this document and this report should be read with reference to those documents.

### **1.3 Objectives**

The aims of the watching brief were:

- to determine the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains liable to be threatened by the proposed development in the trial pit locations;
- to assess the need for any further work if required.

## **2. WORKING METHODS**

### **2.1 General**

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

### **2.2 Excavation Strategy**

As part of a geo-technical investigation a series of trial pits and boreholes were monitored through an archaeological watching brief. There were twenty-two borehole locations and twenty-one trial pit locations (Fig. 1). The trial pit and borehole locations were positioned to minimise the effect on any known buried archaeological remains located within the development area, based on the previous archaeological work conducted there. The trial pit and borehole locations were agreed in advance by CCCHES, although site conditions, such as steep gradients, required that some locations be moved from their original position.

Topsoil and modern overburden was removed by a mechanical excavator equipped with a 0.4m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. All further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the WSI was carried out by hand.

Test pit and borehole locations were surveyed using industry standard electronic surveying equipment. All trenches were backfilled on completion.

### **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

A summary of the excavated trial pit and borehole locations is contained in Appendix 2. Trial pits are abbreviated to TP and boreholes are abbreviated to BH. The suffix corresponds to the trial pit or borehole number, the locations of which are indicated on Fig. 1

Borehole and trial pit locations were excavated by removing overlying deposits until the natural substrate was reached; at which depth geo-technical investigations commenced without further archaeological monitoring once the monitoring archaeologist had cleaned and recorded the trench.

The excavated topsoil was generally soft clayey-silt, mid to dark grey in colour. The depth of topsoil varied, but was on average 0.4m in depth. Soft orangey-brown, sandy-clay subsoil had accumulated in some locations and this was particularly noticeable when excavating trenches at lower datum. The natural substrate had subtle variations in character but typically comprised sandy gravel and/or sandy clay, reddish to orangey-brown in colour. Occasionally, and at higher datum, firmer laminations of pinkish-red clay were noted. Below the natural substrate surface, loose deposits of sandy-gravel with river cobbles and sandstone fragments were noted. Trial pitting removed deposits to a maximum depth of c. 3m.

An anthropogenic feature of unknown provenance was uncovered at a depth of 0.45m below ground level in Trial Pit 15b (Fig. 3). The remains were characterised by large to medium sub-angular to sub-rounded sandstone boulders. Between the spaces of the boulders were smaller cobbles with pea gravel infilling the remaining gaps. The remains were exposed within a trench that was c. 2m north-east to south-west and 0.4m in width. The remains, which were not removed, appeared to continue beyond the limit of excavation in all directions and have been tentatively interpreted as a stone surface. Further geo-technical investigation in TP15b was aborted and the location of the trial pit was moved (see TP15a). No finds or artefactual evidence were recovered from within TP15b.

### **4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The archaeological watching brief conducted during geo-technical investigations at Netherhall Road uncovered one archaeological feature of unknown function, date and provenance within TP15b.

No other features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded during the watching brief.

The project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, maps and reports, will be deposited with Tullie House, Cumbria. Copies of reports will be lodged with Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record. The project will also be reported on through the online *OASIS* protocol.

## 5. REFERENCES

- Biggins, J.A & Taylor, D.J.A. 2004 'The Roman fort and vicus at Maryport: geophysical survey, 2000-2004', in Wilson & Caruana, *Romans on the Solway: Essays in honour of Richard Bellhouse*.
- Glendinning, B. & Neighbour, T. 2009 *Netherhall Road, Maryport, Cumbria: Desk-based Assessment*. Unpublished CFA Report No. 1701.
- Kirby, M. 2010 *Land of Netherhall Road, Maryport, Cumbria: Archaeological Evaluation*. Unpublished CFA Report No. 1772.

## APPENDIX 1: Digital Photographic Register

| Digi No | Contexts/description   | Conditions         |
|---------|--|--------------------|
| 1       | Post-excavation shot of TP1                                  | Bright             |
| 2       | Shot of terraced area for drilling rig at BH6                | Bright             |
| 3       | Photo of BH5 location  | Bright             |
| 4       | Post-excavation shot of BH18                                 | Bright             |
| 5       | Shot of section of trench for BH18                           | Bright             |
| 6       | Post-excavation shot of BH16 location                        | Bright             |
| 7       | Post-excavation shot of BH4                                  | Overcast           |
| 8       | Post-excavation shot of BH4                                  | Overcast           |
| 9       | Post-excavation shot of BH17                                 | Overcast           |
| 10      | Post-excavation shot of BH10                                 | Overcast           |
| 11      | Post-excavation shot of BH11                                 | Overcast           |
| 12      | Post-excavation shot of TP22                                 | Overcast           |
| 13      | Post-excavation shot of TP21                                 | Overcast           |
| 14      | Post-excavation shot of TP14                                 | Overcast           |
| 15      | Post-excavation shot of TP9                                  | Overcast           |
| 16      | Post-excavation shot of BH2                                  | Overcast           |
| 17      | Post-excavation shot of BH17                                 | Overcast           |
| 18      | Post-excavation shot of BH3                                  | Overcast           |
| 19      | Post-excavation shot of BH15                                 | Overcast           |
| 20      | Post-excavation shot of BH22                                 | Overcast           |
| 21      | Post-excavation shot of BH19                                 | Overcast           |
| 22      | Post-excavation shot of BH12                                 | Low Light          |
| 23      | Post-excavation shot of BH20                                 | Overcast/Low Light |
| 24      | Post-excavation shot of BH21                                 | Overcast           |
| 25      | Post-excavation shot of TP4                                  | Overcast           |
| 26      | Post-excavation shot of TP18                                 | Overcast           |
| 27      | Post-excavation shot of TP23                                 | Overcast           |
| 28      | Post-excavation shot of BH8                                  | Overcast           |
| 29      | Post-excavation shot of TP16                                 | Overcast           |
| 30      | Post-excavation shot of TP17                                 | Overcast           |
| 31      | Post-excavation shot of BH13                                 | Overcast           |
| 32      | Post-excavation shot of TP5                                  | Overcast           |
| 33      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 34      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 35      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 36      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 37      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 38      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 39      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 40      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 41      | Post-excavation shot of TP15b showing archaeological remains | Overcast/Rain      |
| 42      | Post-excavation shot of BH14                                 | Overcast/Rain      |
| 43      | Post-excavation shot of BH9                                  | Overcast/Rain      |
| 44      | Post-excavation shot of TP10                                 | Overcast/Rain      |
| 45      | Post-excavation shot of TP13                                 | Overcast/Rain      |
| 46      | Post-excavation shot of TP6                                  | Overcast/Rain      |



## APPENDIX 2: Summary of Excavation Results

### *Borehole Locations*

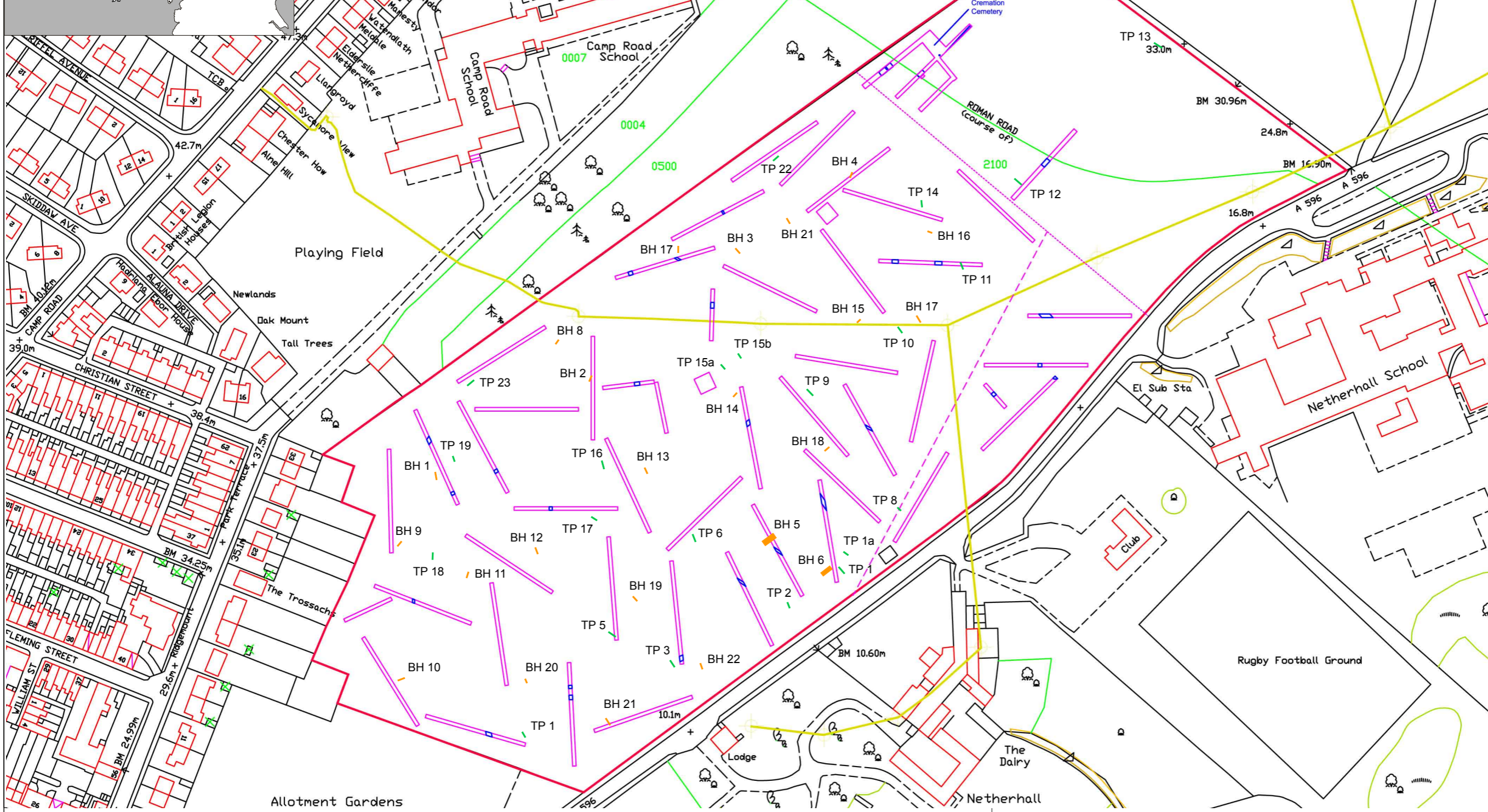
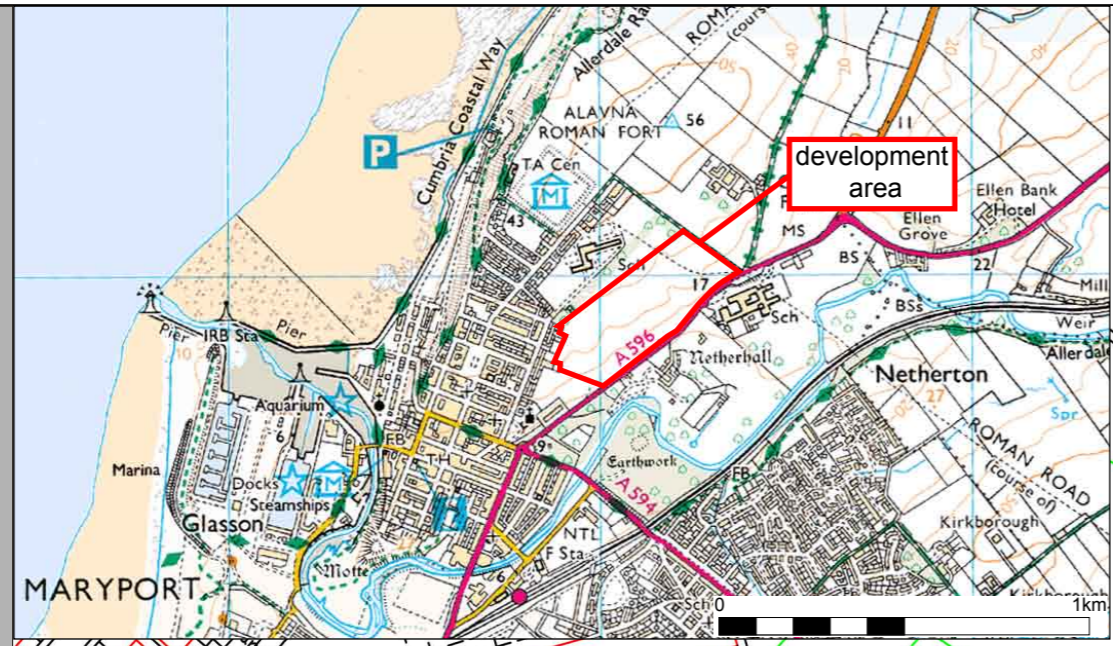
| <b>Borehole No.</b> | <b>Topsoil Depth (m)</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|--|
| BH1                 | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| BH2                 | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| BH3                 | 0.3                      | 0.3m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH4                 | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| BH5                 | 0.4                      | Location within previous evaluation trench: No archaeology                 |
| BH6                 | 0.4                      | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH7                 | 0.35                     | No archaeology   |
| BH8                 | 0.3                      | 0.3m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH9                 | 0.3                      | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH10                | 0.5                      | No archaeology   |
| BH11                | 0.4                      | 0.1m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH12                | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| BH13                | 0.3                      | No archaeology   |
| BH14                | 0.3                      | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH15                | 0.3                      | No archaeology   |
| BH16                | 0.3                      | No archaeology   |
| BH17                | 0.3                      | No archaeology   |
| BH18                | 0.25                     | No archaeology   |
| BH19                | 0.3                      | 0.6m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH20                | 0.3                      | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH21                | 0.3                      | 0.4m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| BH22                | 0.35                     | 0.35m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology |

### *Trial Pit Locations*

| <b>Trial Pit No.</b> | <b>Topsoil Depth (m)</b> | <b>Description</b>   |
|----------------------|--------------------------|--|
| TP1                  | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| TP2                  | 0.5                      | No archaeology   |
| TP3                  | 0.3                      | 0.3m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP4                  | 0.35                     | No archaeology   |
| TP5                  | 0.35                     | 0.35m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology |
| TP6                  | 0.4                      | No archaeology   |
| TP7                  | Void                     | Not excavated  |
| TP8                  | 0.35                     | No archaeology   |
| TP9                  | 0.3                      | 0.1m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP10                 | 0.35                     | No archaeology   |

|       |      |  |
|-------|------|--|
| TP11  | 0.35 | 0.15m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology |
| TP12  | 0.35 | No archaeology   |
| TP13  | 0.3  | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP14  | 0.4  | No archaeology   |
| TP15a | 0.5  | No archaeology   |
| TP15b | 0.45 | Remains of possible stone surface  |
| TP16  | 0.35 | 0.8m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP17  | 0.3  | 0.3m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP18  | 0.4  | No archaeology   |
| TP19  | 0.3  | 0.2m of subsoil recorded before natural substrate reached: No archaeology  |
| TP20  | Void | Not excavated  |
| TP21  | 0.6  | No archaeology   |
| TP22  | 0.3  | No archaeology   |
| TP23  | 0.35 | No archaeology   |





- Key:
- Borehole
  - Test Pit
  - Evaluation Trench 2009
  - Overhead Electric Cable
  - Archaeological features recorded during 2009 evaluation

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|          |   |           |   |
|----------|---|-----------|---|
| Fig. No: | 1 | Revision: | A |
|----------|---|-----------|---|

Title:  
**Site Location and Trench Plan**

Project:  
**Land off Netherhall Road,  
 Maryport, Cumbria:  
 Archaeological Watching Brief**

Scale:  
**1:2000 @ A3**

Client:  
**Story Homes Ltd**

|           |    |            |      |
|-----------|----|------------|------|
| Drawn by: | SW | Report No: | 1843 |
|-----------|----|------------|------|

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Fig 2. Post-excavation shot of TP5



Fig 3. Shot of possible surface in TP15b

Key:

Scale:

|          |   |           |   |         |                 |
|----------|---|-----------|---|---------|-----------------|
| Fig. No: | 2-3   | Revision: | A | Client: | Story Homes Ltd |
| Title:   |   |           |   |         |                 |
| Project: | Land off Netherhall Road, Maryport, Cumbria:<br>Archaeological Watching Brief |           |   |         |                 |



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| SW        |          | 1843       |