

---

76 RAVENSDOWNE  
BERWICK-UPON-TWEED  
NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF  
TREE-BOWL EXCAVATIONS

---

MAY 2018



Prepared for: <i>Maden Eco</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------------------

<i>Project code:</i> AP 18/12	<i>Stage:</i> Final	<i>Compiled by:</i> MJ	<i>Control:</i> RJC	<i>Completion date:</i> 22/05/18
----------------------------------	------------------------	---------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------------

76 RAVENSDOWNE  
BERWICK-UPON-TWEED  
NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF  
TREE-BOWL EXCAVATIONS

Prepared by:

*The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*



**Frontispiece:** View looking north during the excavation of a tree-bowl pit in May 2018.

**Grid Reference:** NU 00149 52971  
**Client:** Maden Eco  
**Date of fieldwork:** May 2018  
**Project Code:** AP 18/12  
**Oasis Number:** thearcha2-318334

## **CONTENTS**

### **SUMMARY**

1. PURPOSE OF THE APPRAISAL
2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND
3. WATCHING BRIEF
4. RESULTS
5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## ILLUSTRATIONS

**Front Cover:** View looking south-east at a removed tree-bowl to the rear of 76 Ravensdowne.

**Frontispiece:** View looking north during the excavation of a tree-bowl pit in May 2018.

### **Location Maps and Plans:**

**Illus. 01:** Town view, showing the Location of Ravensdowne (circled in red) on the east side of Berwick.

**Illus. 02:** Street view, showing the location of the study site to the rear of 76 Ravensdowne.

### **Historic Maps & Documents:**

**Illus. 03:** The tree-bowl watching brief area (highlighted in red) at Ravensdowne, shown on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1890s.

**Illus. 04:** The tree-bowl watching brief area (highlighted in red) at Ravensdowne, shown on the c.1960s Edition Ordnance Survey Plan.

### **Archaeological Plans and Sections:**

**Illus. 05:** Site Plan, showing the location of removed tree-bowls (highlighted in blue) and excavated tree-bowl pit (highlighted in red), 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed.

**Illus. 06:** South-east facing section of tree-bowl pit, 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed.

### **Photographic Record:**

**Photo 1:** View looking north during excavation of tree-bowl pit.

**Photo 2:** View looking east during excavation of tree-bowl pit.

**Photo 3:** South-east facing section of tree-bowl excavation pit.

**Photo 4:** View looking north-east along tree-bowl excavation pit.

**Photo 5:** View looking north-west at removed tree-bowl to the north of the excavation pit.

**Photo 6:** View looking south-east at removed tree-bowl to the north of the excavation pit (background).



## SUMMARY

---

*This document reports on archaeological monitoring conducted in May 2018, to appraise the impact of the removal by excavation of four mature trees from a site to the rear of 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland (centred on grid reference NU 00149 52971).*

*Re-excavation of one of the tree bowls under archaeological supervision, and subsequent cleaning and recording by hand, revealed no significant archaeological remains from one of the 0.60 m deep tree bowls. It was concluded, therefore, that no significant archaeological remains were disturbed during its removal and, further, that the findings from the re-excavated tree bowl site can be extended to the sites of the other three.*

*Thus, it is concluded that it is highly unlikely that any significant archaeological remains were disturbed on the site as a result of the removal of four tree bowls in May 2018. Therefore, re-excavation of the remaining three tree bowl sites is not recommended and no further action needs to take place.*

*However, no further excavations should be carried out upon the site without archaeological monitoring as agreed in the WSI document which stipulates the archaeological mitigation measures agreed in response to perceived development impacts upon the site.*

# 1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

---

## 1. Introduction

**1.1** This document reports on archaeological monitoring conducted in May 2018, to appraise the impact of groundworks associated with the removal by excavation of four mature trees from a site to the rear of 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed, Northumberland (*centred on grid reference NU 00149 52971*), where development work was being monitored under a WSI agreed in December 2016 (*see Illus. 01-02*).

The four tree-bowls were removed by mechanical excavator in the locations marked on the site plan (*see Illus. 05*).

No 76 is the northernmost property on the east side of Ravensdowne, a road in Berwick which runs within and parallel to the eastern side of the Elizabethan town walls, before the dogleg bend at the north end of the road which takes it around the 18th century Barracks. The site is shown on early maps with the main building standing as part of a terrace on the street frontage, open to the rear, but later maps show the recently-demolished modern extension to the rear (*see Illus. 03-04*).

In May 2018 several trees were removed from the central part of the rear plot, inside the Scheduled Area. The removal of the trees was carried out by excavation of the tree bowls and subsequent cutting of the attached root systems.

The removal of the trees was reported by a witness to Historic England which, through the agency of the Inspector for North-East England, visited the site and, in view of the location of the trees within the Scheduled Area and non-compliance with the agreed WSI (which embraces areas both within and without the Scheduled Area), instructed the developer to carry out sample re-excavation under archaeological supervision of one of the tree-bowls in order to inform on the level of disturbance, if any, caused to significant archaeological remains on the site.

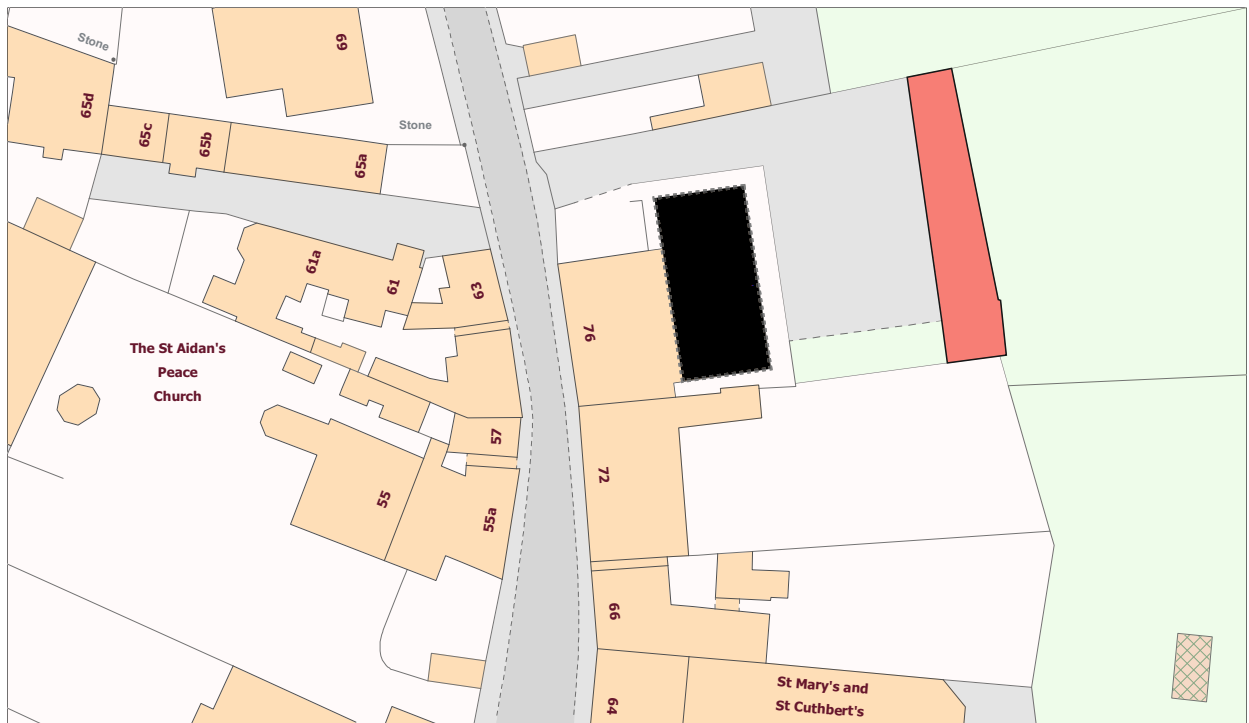
## 2. Planning Background

The development work being carried out at 76 Ravensdowne includes the refurbishment of the street-front building, demolition of a modern rear extension, construction of an additional building to the rear and related service and landscaping works. In addition, a new build is being placed largely on the site of a former rear extension to the historic property facing onto Ravensdowne, and a retaining wall built on 1.2 m wide strip foundations on its east side. Associated, resurfacing and shallow drainage works are required throughout much of the west part of the site, with limited, deeper drain excavations required in the west part of the north side of the site, where an evaluation in December 2016 revealed no archaeological remains of significance.

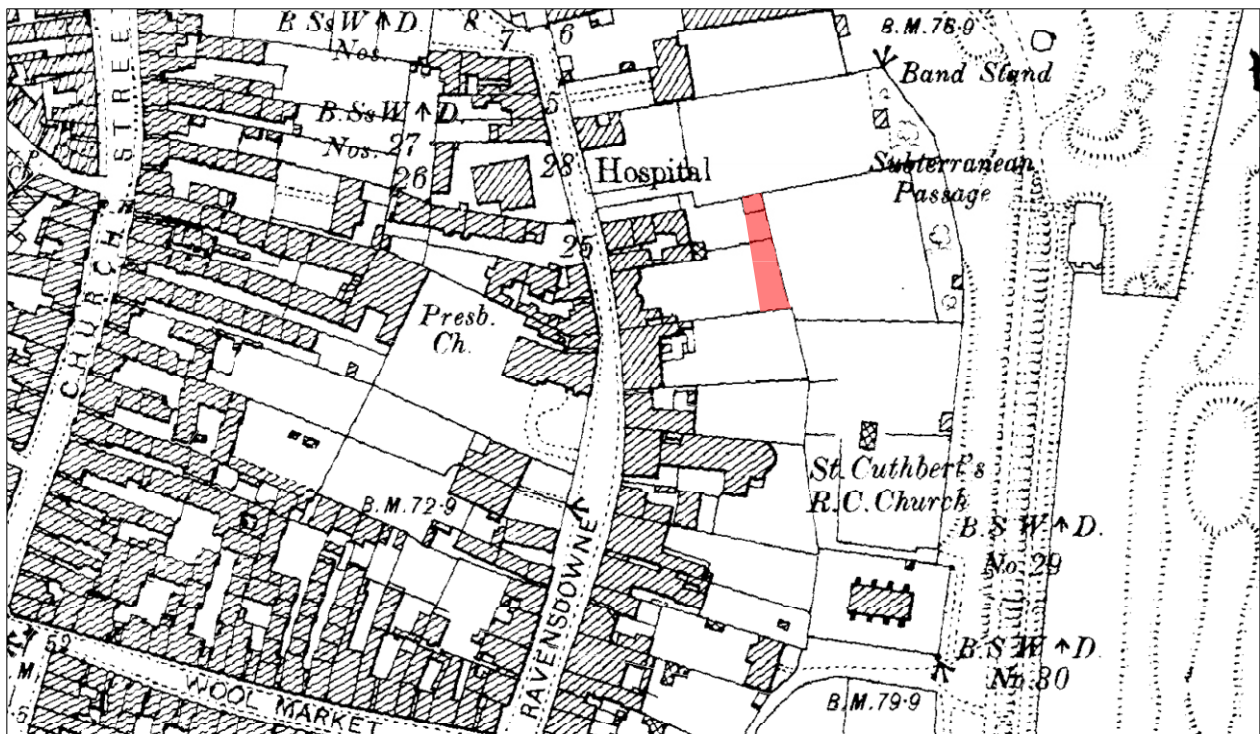
The developments for which a mitigation response was agreed by means of a WSI also proposed to take site burden from ground reduction in unspecified parts of the site in order to level the uneven ground on the site of proposed communal gardens within the Scheduled Area at the rear of the site, by spreading 200-300 mm of overburden over the existing ground surface to level up the ground prior to landscaping. It was further proposed to resurface and



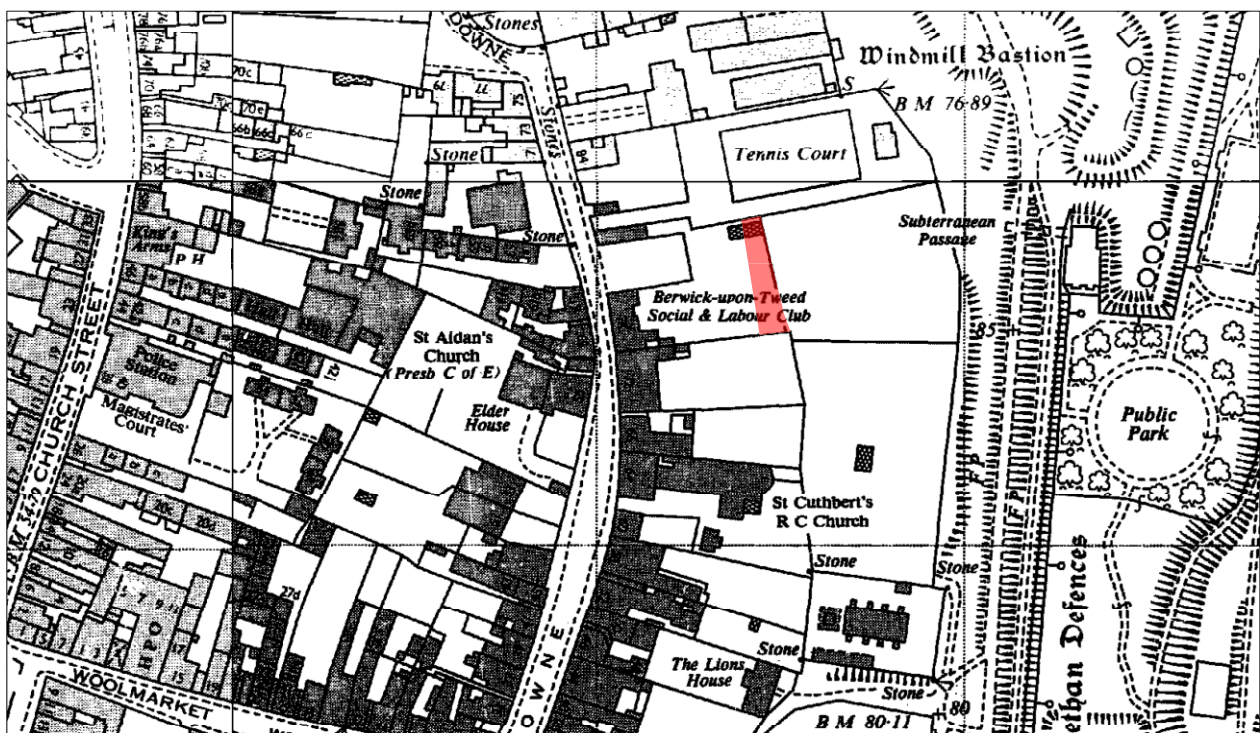
*Illus. 01: Town view, showing the Location of Ravensdowne (circled in red) on the east side of Berwick.*



*Illus. 02: Street view, showing the location of the study site to the rear of 76 Ravensdowne.  
NB1. The crosshatched building (centre of map) has been recently demolished.  
NB2. The area highlighted in red is where trees were removed under watching brief condition.*



Illus. 03: The tree-bowl watching brief area (highlighted in red) at Ravensdown, shown on the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1890s.



Illus. 04: The tree-bowl watching brief area (highlighted in red) at Ravensdown, shown on the c.1960s Edition Ordnance Survey Plan.



reduce the level of modern fill material on the existing car park area, and, as set out in previous SAM consent *Scheduled Monument No SM 28532, HA 1015968 Case S00142820*, it was also proposed to temporarily remove top soil to a depth of up to 200 mm on the 'Allotment Gardens' within the Scheduled, rear part of at 76 Ravensdowne. Allowing the overburden as previously described in the SAM application will be laid into the site and the top soil returned over it.

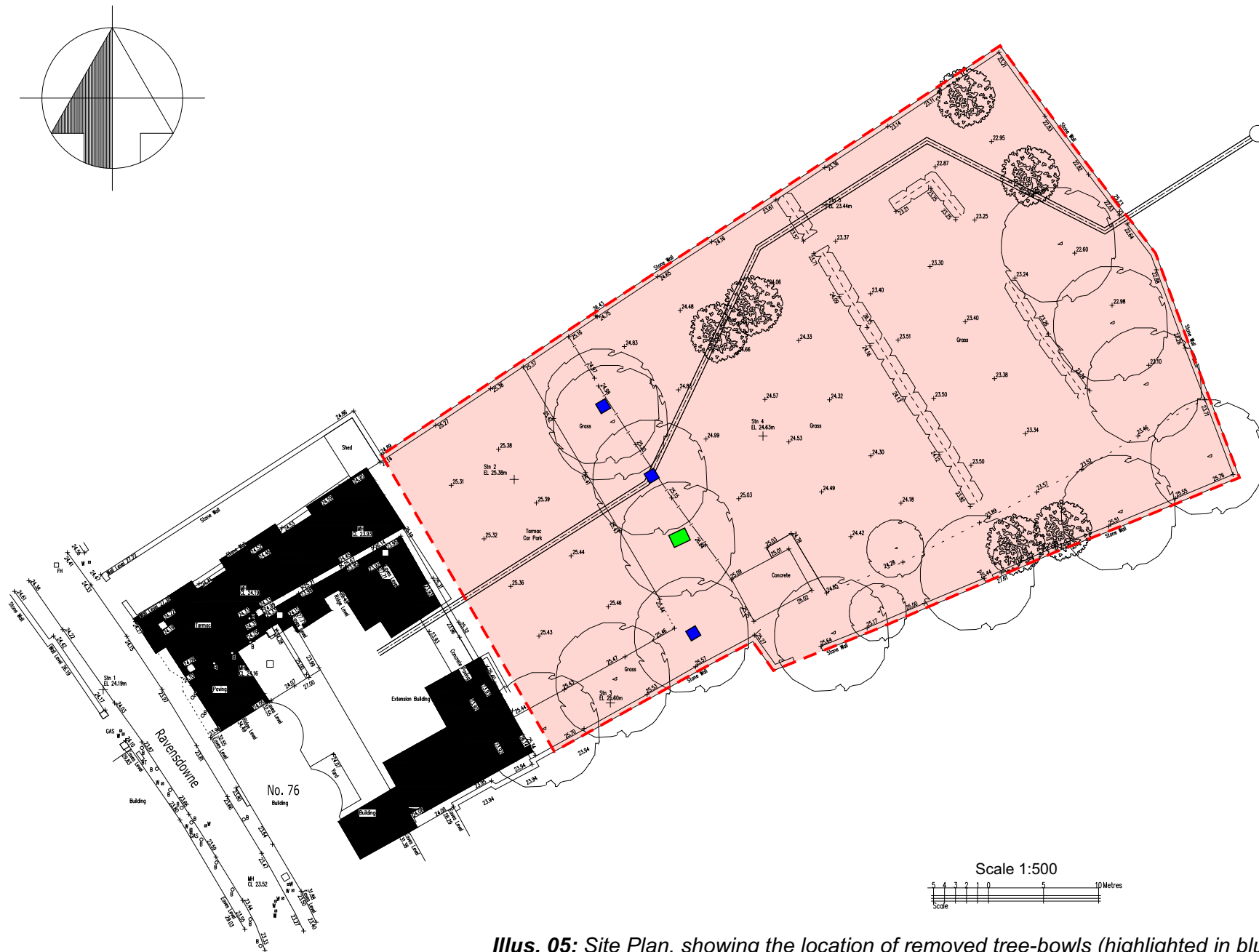
Within these proposals, addressed by the agreed WSI for mitigation, there was no specific mention of tree removal by excavation, but any such permitted work should have been accompanied by archaeological monitoring.

### 3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

---

The appraisal took place on May 18th 2018 by means of monitoring by Marc Johnstone of The Archaeological Practice Ltd. while the infilled tree-bowl was re-excavated by mini-digger.

The aims of the process were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered within the tree bowl, to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means and to assess their significance and likely extent with regard to the overall level of damage caused to surviving archaeological remains by the tree removal work.



**Illus. 05:** Site Plan, showing the location of removed tree-bowls (highlighted in blue) and excavated tree-bowl pit (highlighted in green) within the Scheduled Area (broken red line and pink transparency), 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed.

## 4. RESULTS

---

### 4.1 Location and Dimensions

One of the tree-bowls was selected for sample excavation under archaeological supervision in order to inform on the survival or otherwise of archaeological remains in that location and to assess the level of damage, if any, caused by the removal of this and three other adjacent tree bowls, to the buried cultural heritage of the site. The excavation tree bowl was located approximately 20 m to the north-east of the southern building marked on the site plan and 10 m to the north-west of the southern stone boundary wall. The line of tree-bowls lay inside the area designated as Scheduled Ancient Monument (*see Illus. 05*).

The tree-bowl excavation pit had the following dimensions: 1.60 m (length) x 1.20 m (width) x 0.60 m (depth).

### 4.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

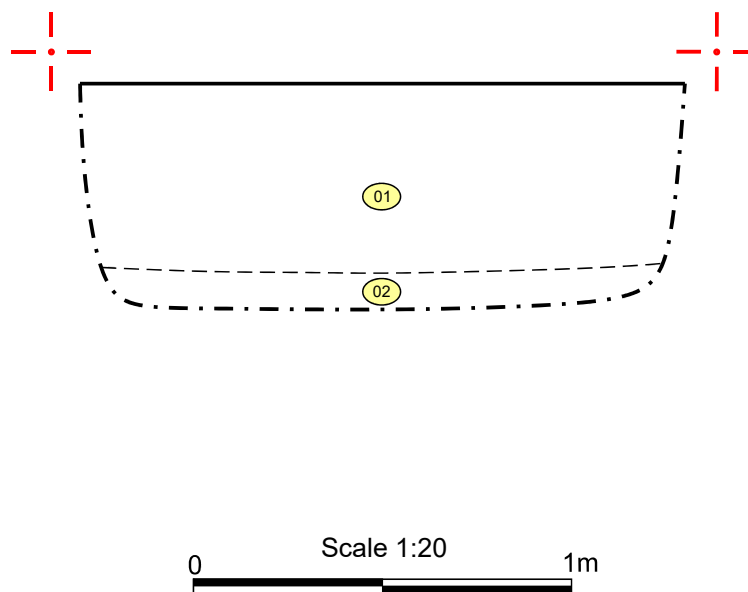
Below the typical silty topsoil [01], a firm plastic sandy-clay with gravel inclusions [02] was observed from depths of 0.50 m below ground level and extending to beyond the limits of excavation. Upon first glance this material would be considered as a natural deposit, but given its relatively shallow depth within the city of Berwick upon Tweed – an area widely known to have medieval accumulative deposits of considerable depth, it has been interpreted as a redeposited natural related to previous landscaping make-up on the site.

No archaeological remains were observed in any of the tree-bowl locations at the depth specified.

### 4.3 Context List

- [01] Topsoil, comprising a mid grey-brown silty loam with common inclusions of 20<sup>th</sup> century rubbish including waste plastic, glass, tin cans etc.). The topsoil was observed to a depth of 0.50 m below ground level.
- [02] Redeposited natural material, comprising firm, plastic orange sandy-clay with common pea-gravel alluvium. Observed from depths of 0.50 m below ground level and extending to beyond the limits of excavation.





***Illus. 06:*** South-east facing section of tree-bowl pit, 76 Ravensdowne, Berwick upon Tweed.



*Photo 1. View looking north during excavation of tree-bowl pit.*



*Photo 2. View looking east during excavation of tree-bowl pit.*





*Photo 3. South-east facing section of tree-bowl excavation pit.*



*Photo 4. View looking north-east along tree-bowl excavation pit.*





*Photo 5. View looking north-west at removed tree-bowl to the north of the excavation pit.*



*Photo 6. View looking south-east at removed tree-bowl to the north of the excavation pit (background).*



## 5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

---

**5.1** It is concluded that no significant archaeological remains were disturbed during the removal by excavation of a tree bowl from the site in May 2018. Further, given the results of an earlier, evaluation exercise in an adjacent position to the north, as well as appraisal of other, desk-based information pertaining to the site, it is concluded that the findings from the re-excavated tree bowl site can be extended to the sites of the other three trees.

Thus, it is concluded that it is highly unlikely that any significant archaeological remains were disturbed on the site as a result of the removal of four tree bowls in May 2018. Therefore, re-excavation of the remaining three tree bowl sites is not recommended and no further action needs to take place.

No further excavations should be carried out upon the site without archaeological monitoring as agreed in the WSI document which stipulates the archaeological mitigation measures agreed in response to perceived development impacts upon the site.