
*WESTLEA, RIVERSIDE ROAD,
ALNMOUTH,
NORTHUMBERLAND*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



FEBRUARY 2022

*The Archaeological
Practice Ltd.*



WESTLEA, RIVERSIDE ROAD,
ALNMOUTH, NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION



Frontispiece: Shot showing the height difference between the plot of land and the gardens to the east, southeast view.

Grid reference (NGR):	<i>NU 24596 10447</i>
Date of fieldwork:	<i>1st February 2022</i>
NCC Planning Ref:	<i>21/03496/FUL</i>
Client:	<i>Westlea</i>
Project code:	<i>AP 22/02</i>
Stage:	<i>Draft</i>
Compiled by:	<i>Adam Leigh</i>
Control:	<i>Alan Rushworth</i>
OASIS ID:	<i>thearcha2-504637</i>

CONTENTS

SUMMARY

- 1. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION**
- 2. EVALUATION**
- 3. RESULTS**
- 4. DISCUSSION**

APPENDIX 1:

Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation at Westlea, Alnmouth, Northumberland;
Prepared by The Archaeological Practice, Jan 2022

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front Cover: General shot of site looking north-west.

Frontispiece: Shot showing the height difference between the plot of land and the gardens to the east, southeast view.

Location Maps and Plans:

Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), along the Northumberland Coast, near Alnwick.

Illus. 02: District view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), Northumberland.

Illus. 03: Town view, showing the location of the evaluation site (circled in red) in the historic town centre of Alnmouth.

Illus. 04: Street view, showing the location of evaluation (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.

Illus. 05: Site view, showing the site of evaluation and proposed trenching (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.

Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c.1864, 6 inch series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1897, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1923, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1960 Edition Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 10: Trench plan, showing the location of services, the site boundary (highlighted in red) and the proposed footing (highlighted in green).

Photographic Record:

- **Photo 01:** Overview shot of Trench 1, south view.
- **Photo 02:** Sample Section, Trench 1, showing topsoil overlying natural, west view.
- **Photo 03:** Overview shot of Trench 2, west view.
- **Photo 04:** Sample Section, Trench 2, showing topsoil overlying natural, south view.
- **Photo 05:** North view of visible services in Trench 1.
- **Photo 06:** Overview shot, showing Trenches 1 and 2, southwest view.

SUMMARY

This document reports on a process of archaeological evaluation conducted in February 2022, to mitigate the impact of development on land east of Westlea, Alnmouth, Northumberland. The proposed development comprises a new single detached dwelling, with associated service infrastructure, parking facilities and landscaping. The footing measures 9m by 13m and it is positioned on an approximate N-S axis.

The proposed development site had the potential to retain significant unrecorded archaeological remains, with its position in the probable back plots of properties on the medieval high street (the present Northumberland Street). The Assistant County Archaeologist stipulated that a programme of archaeological evaluation be carried out prior to the determination of the planning application. The purpose of this evaluation was to enable the LP to make an informed decision on the application and decide on the scope of an appropriate archaeological mitigation response, if required, consistent with the requirements and objectives or paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF.

It took the form of two trenches, one (Trench 1) aligned along the west footing of the proposed new build, and one (Trench 2) aligned broadly east-west through the middle of the footprint of the proposed new build. The two trenches essentially formed a single L-shaped trench of 20m², with the meeting point of the two legs of the 'L' lying in the centre of the plot of land.

No features or significant finds were identified, and it seems likely that considerable modern terracing or landscaping has occurred on the site. It is concluded that the entire plot of land has been landscaped in the modern period, possibly as part of the demolition of the small structures noted to be extant in 1960 edition OS 1:2500 Series map. Given the historic nature of Alnmouth, and the potential for differing levels of landscaping in different plots of land, future intrusive groundworks in the immediate vicinity should still be understood to have the potential to uncover remains associated with medieval back-plot activity.

1. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

This document reports on a process of archaeological evaluation conducted in February 2022, to mitigate the impact of development on land east of Westlea, Alnmouth, Northumberland (*centred on grid reference NU 24596 10447; Illus. 01-05*).

The site, a small plot of land behind (east of) Westlea Guesthouse on Riverside Road, is located within the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The plot of land largely comprises turf, bounded by fences on the north, east and west and a fence blown down during recent storms to the south. The land lies to the west of the back garden or yard plots of properties on Northumberland Street and to the south of back garden plots of properties on Garden Terrace. On the north edge of the plot is a narrow lane, the course of which runs from Northumberland Street to Riverside Road on a rough east-west alignment. No existing structures are present within the site area, barring a low stone wall marking the edge of the lane. Topographically the site falls from east to west.

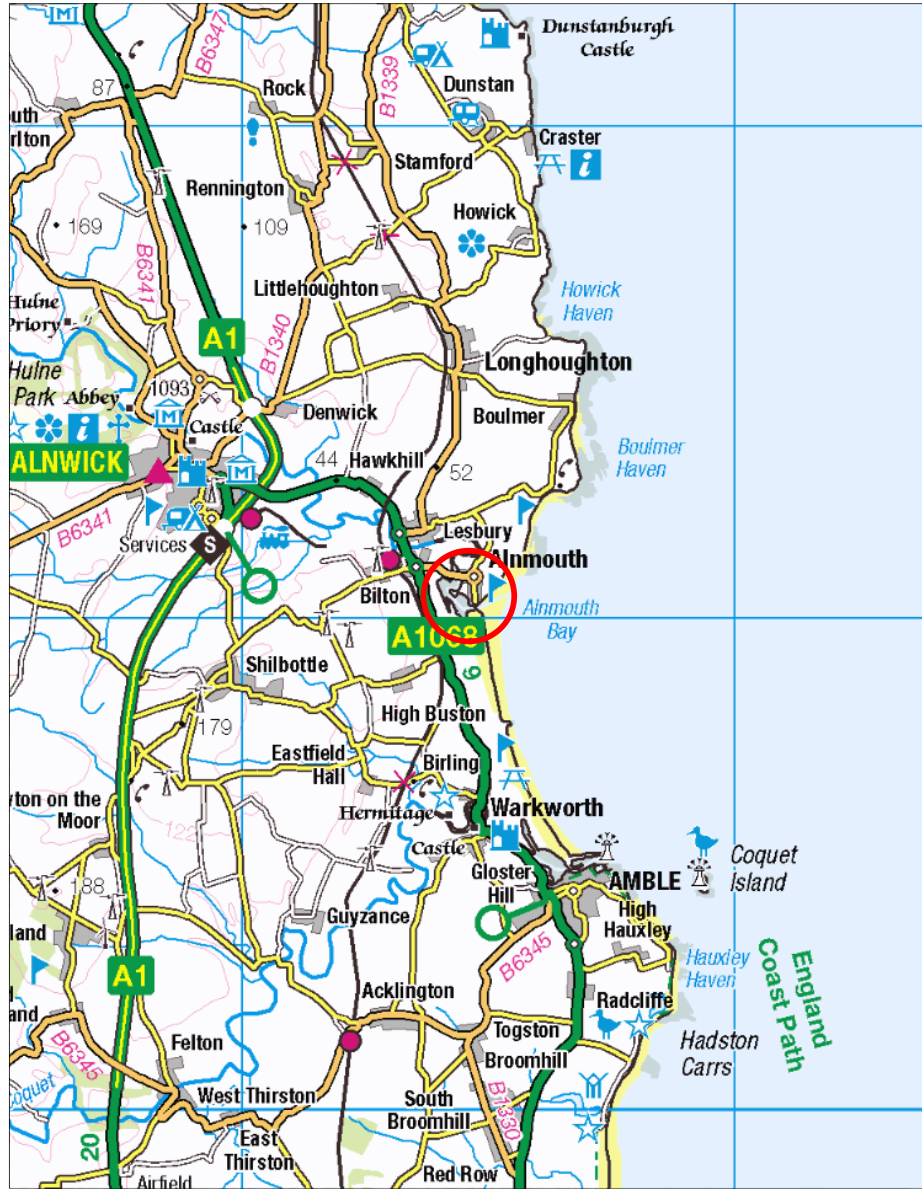
The proposed development comprises a new single detached dwelling, with associated service infrastructure, parking facilities and landscaping. The footing measures 9m by 13m and it is positioned on an approximate N-S axis.

The proposed development site had the potential to retain significant unrecorded archaeological remains, with its presumed position in the back plots of properties on the medieval high street (the present Northumberland Street). Such remains, if present, would be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development. The Assistant County Archaeologist therefore requested that a programme archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) be carried out prior to the determination of the planning application. The purpose of this evaluation was to enable the local planning authority, Northumberland County Council (NCC), to make an informed decision on the application, consistent with the objectives of paragraph 194 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This would also allow NCC to decide on the scope of an appropriate archaeological mitigation response, if required, consistent with the requirements and objectives of paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF.

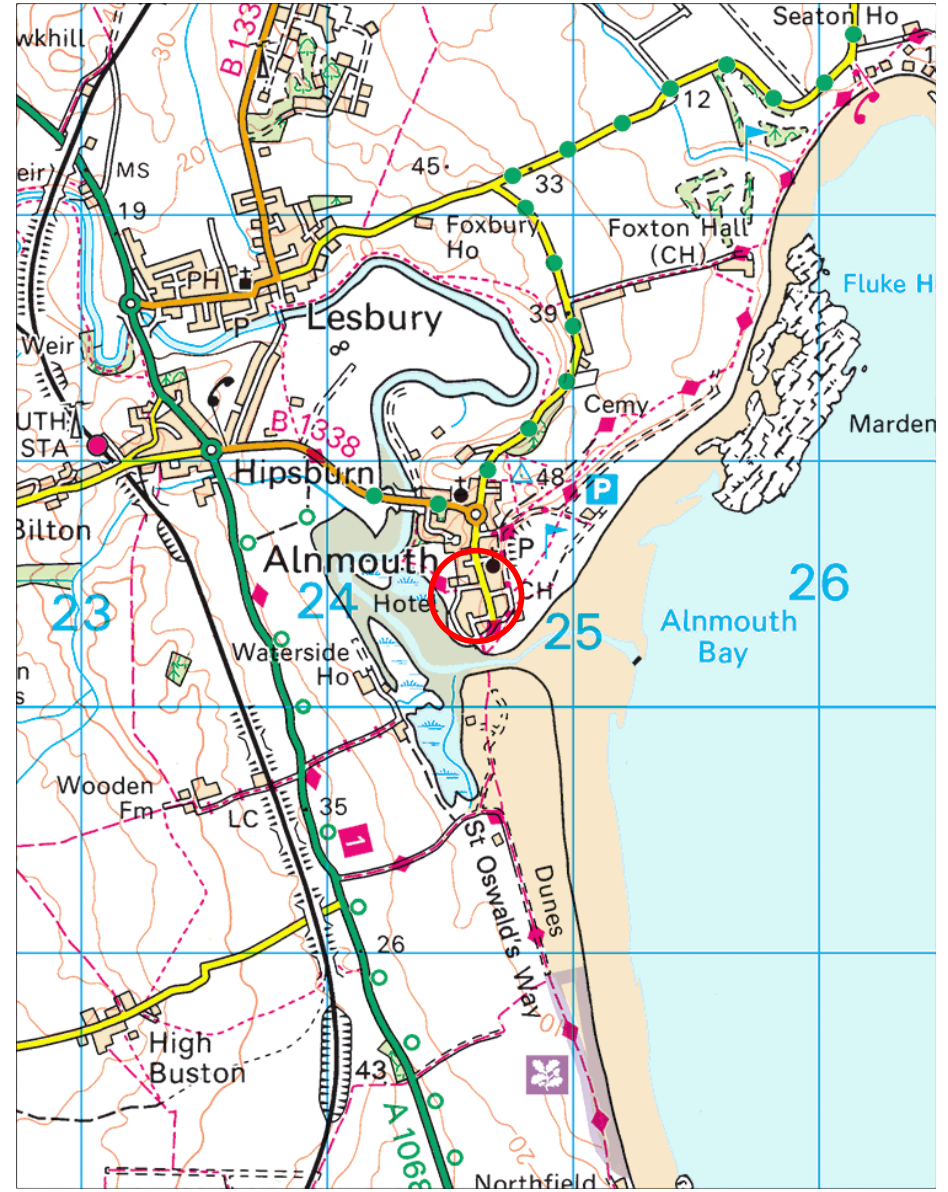
1.2 Cultural Background

Early prehistoric history in Alnmouth itself is restricted to a handful of Mesolithic flint implements found on the raised beach (HER 5712). The estuary would no doubt have provided rich resources for survival in a period defined by hunter-gathering. No Neolithic or Bronze Age remains of any type are recorded within Alnmouth, although it is quite likely that the coastal lowlands remained an attractive area for farming, so Alnmouth and its surrounds were almost certainly frequented or occupied during these periods. Bronze Age burial cists have been found up and down the coast from Alnmouth, at Low Hauxley, Howick, and more locally at High Buston. A copper alloy spearhead was also found in the Aln at Lesbury (HER 5695).

Later prehistoric activity is thought to be represented by a scheduled monument (SAM Northumberland 31) known as either Beacon or Watch Hill (HER 5700), although also appearing on the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) as “the Norse Camp”. It is assumed to be a late prehistoric earthwork enclosure by analogy and by the presence of small annular earthworks within the enclosure. Excavation in 1969 produced limited results and no chronological sequence has yet been attained. No archaeological evidence for a Roman



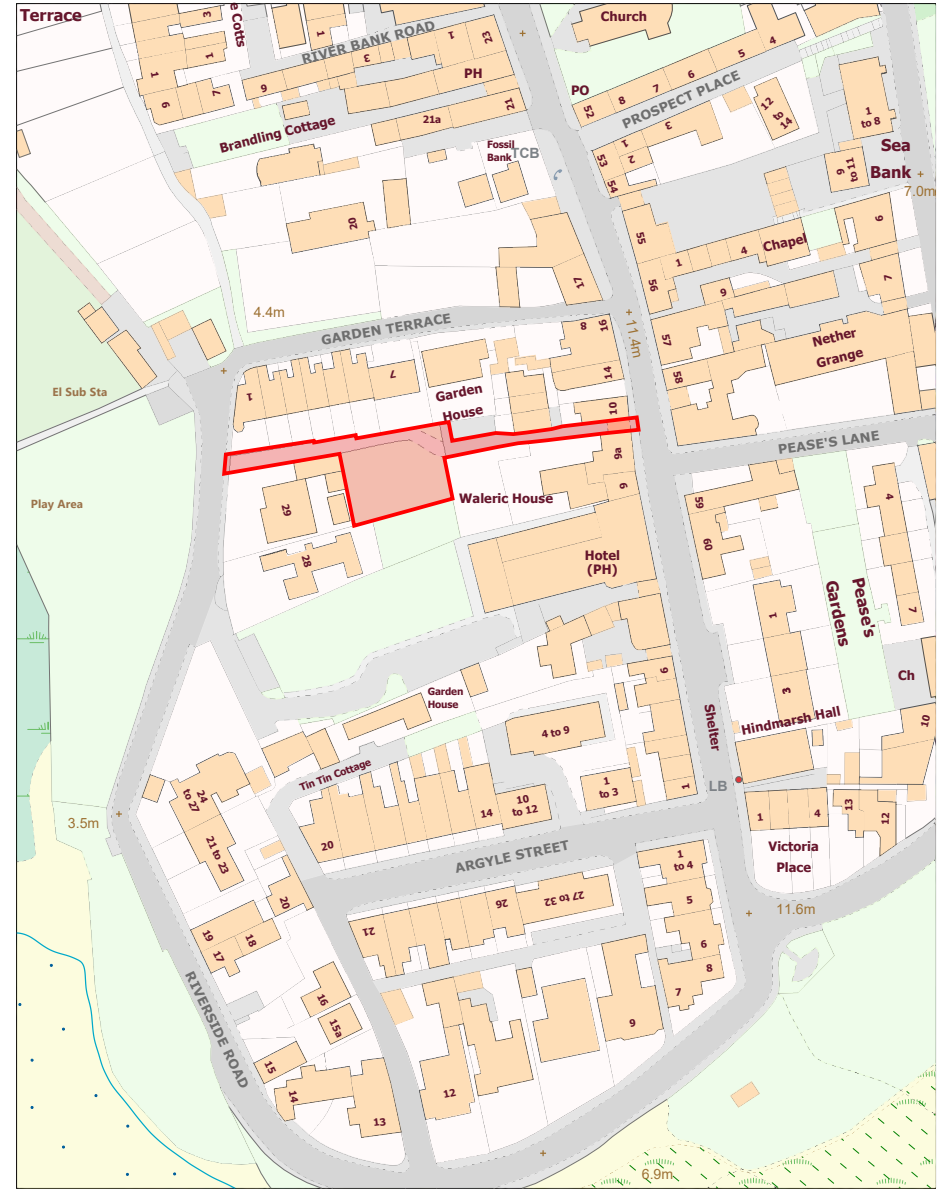
Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), along the Northumberland Coast, near Alnwick.



Illus. 02: District view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), Northumberland.



Illus. 03: Town view, showing the location of the evaluation site (circled in red) in the historic town centre of Alnmouth.



Illus. 04: Street view, showing the location of evaluation (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.

presence in Alnmouth has been established. A presumed prehistoric defended site known locally as 'Alnmouth Castle' lies across the Aln south of Hipsburn (HER 5765).

While Alnmouth is favoured as the location of the 694 AD Synod of Twyford, it is unclear exactly where is represented by Bede's "Adtwifyrði". Contemporary Alnmouth merely fits the bill of the placename by having two fords. No firm evidence of early medieval occupation at Alnmouth has been found. Two pieces of a late 9th or early 10th century decorated stone cross (HER 5705) found in 1789 at Church Hill, once connected with the settlement of Alnmouth, might related to an as yet unlocated pre-conquest church.

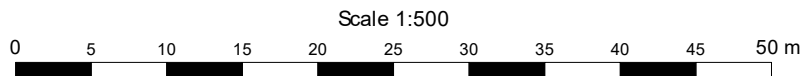
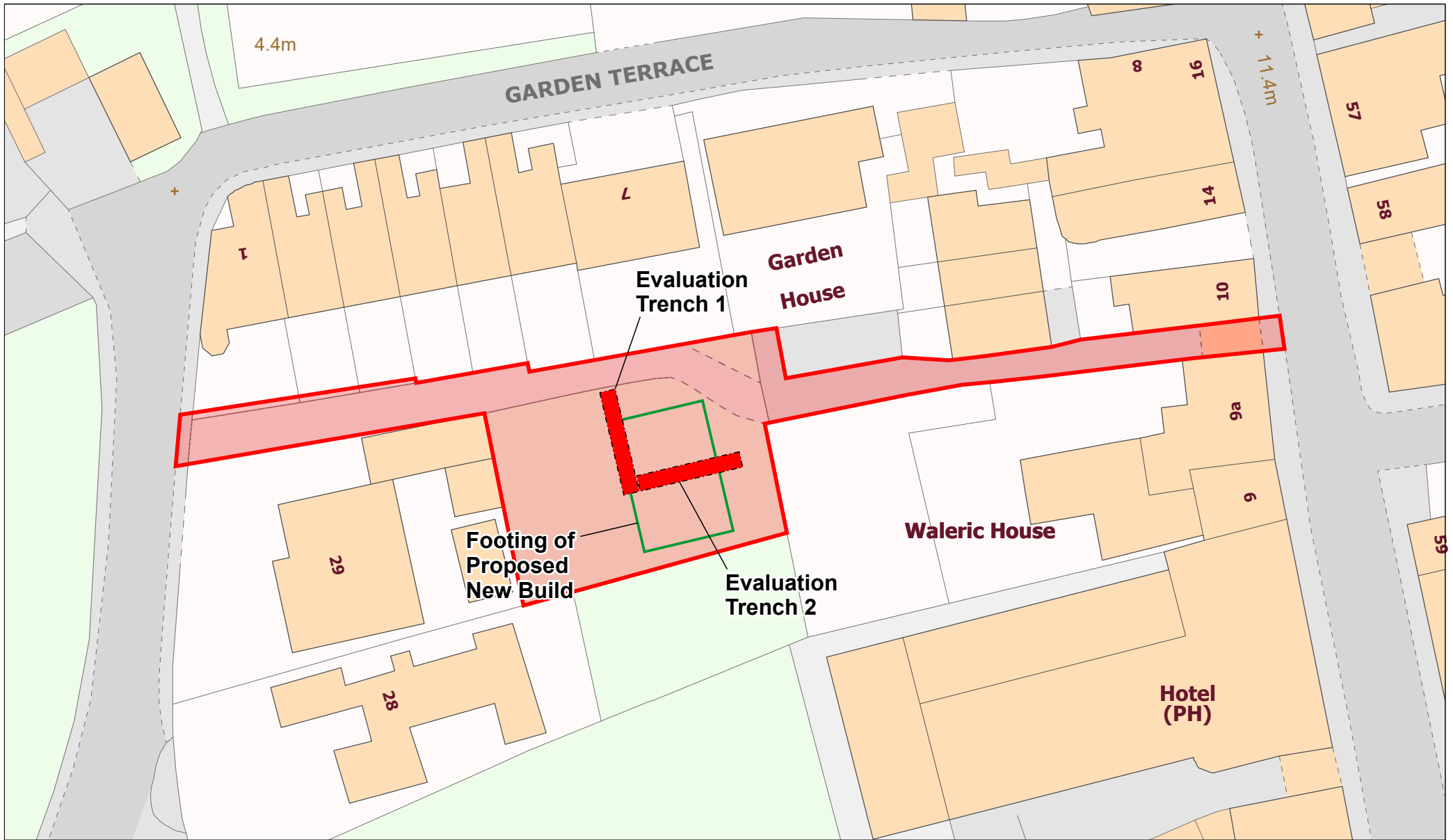
The medieval town was founded after a deed was granted to William de Vesci, giving him the right to hold court and establish a settlement on former common land of the lordship of Lesbury. A church was recorded as existing already within the new town's lands in 1152. A medieval church dedicated to St Waleric existed on Church Hill, falling into disrepair by 1771 and being destroyed by the same 1806 storm that divided Alnmouth from Church Hill. Remnants of a stone wall and rubble possibly associated with St Waleric's Church are still visible on Church Hill.

The new town, furnished with royal charter, became a healthy port, engaged by the 13th century in import and export, and with a market probably near the suspected location of the main harbour on the west side of Church Hill. A raid by the Scots in 1336 seems to have temporarily depressed the economy somewhat, with only one liable taxpayer recorded on the Subsidy Rolls of 1336, down from 28 in 1296. The fundamental pattern of the medieval town has remained largely unchanged to present, with the high street – formerly known as Archibalds Place (*see Illus. 06*) and now known as Northumberland Street – providing the spine of the settlement, with Marine Road and streets parallel and to the west of Northumberland Street constituting the former back lanes. The original boundaries of burgage plots to the east and west of Northumberland Street have likely been preserved to a high degree, with post-medieval maps corresponding well with modern OS surveying (*Alnmouth: Extensive Urban Survey* 2009: 10-11).

One of the most significant events to affect Alnmouth was the storm of 1806, which caused a swell of the river to break through its banks between Church Hill and Alnmouth. The old river channel eventually became blocked, resulting in an estuarine landscape close to that which exists today. Navigation of the river had apparently become a problem well before this point, with injudicious dumping of ballast by ships probably not helping matters. The new river configuration marked the beginning of the end of the import and export of goods to and from mainland Europe, with trade declining over the course of the century. Reflecting the rise of the leisure economy, Victorian Alnmouth became a seaside resort, with infilling of back plots and former trade-related buildings such as granaries turned into dwellings. Many of the buildings on Riverside Road, Garden Terrace and Argyle Street appear on the 1897 2nd Edition OS map, having been absent from the c.1864 1st Edition. A rail link was established with a station at modern-day Hipsburn, originally called Bilton after the nearby hamlet, but changed to Alnmouth in the 19th century.

On the plot of land where the evaluation took place, no buildings are present on historic mapping before the c.1960 Edition OS map. Two very small buildings are shown in the plot, each likely no more than a few metres in length. Given the name of the nearby street, Garden Terrace, and the late introduction of formal roads to the parts of the settlement nearest the Aln, it could be speculated that this land has been cultivated through much of its history. Throughout the span of historic OS Mapping consulted (c.1864-c.1960), boundary divisions, presumably walls, are present in the plot of land. An east-west division running through the

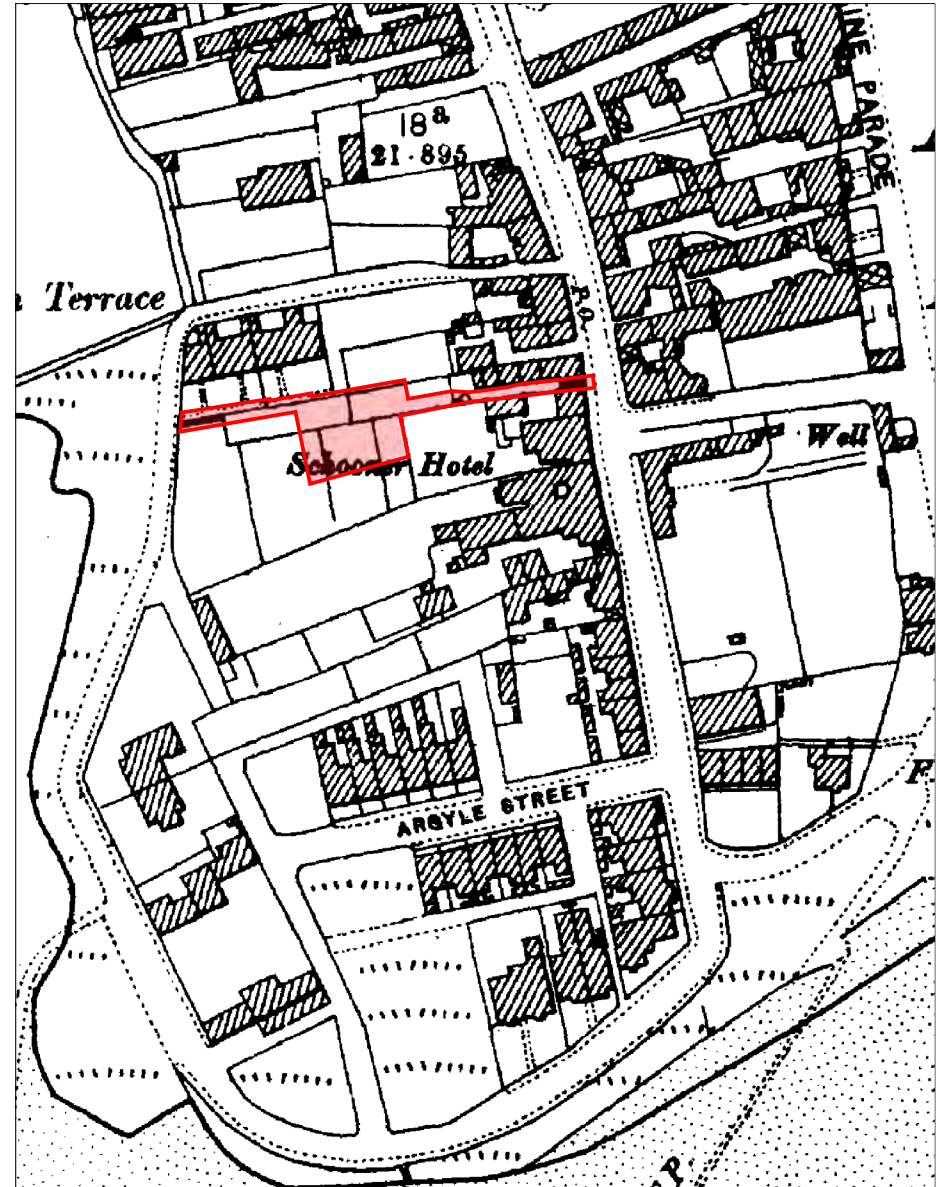
middle of the length of the site and present on all four editions likely represented a division between plots that had survived since medieval times.



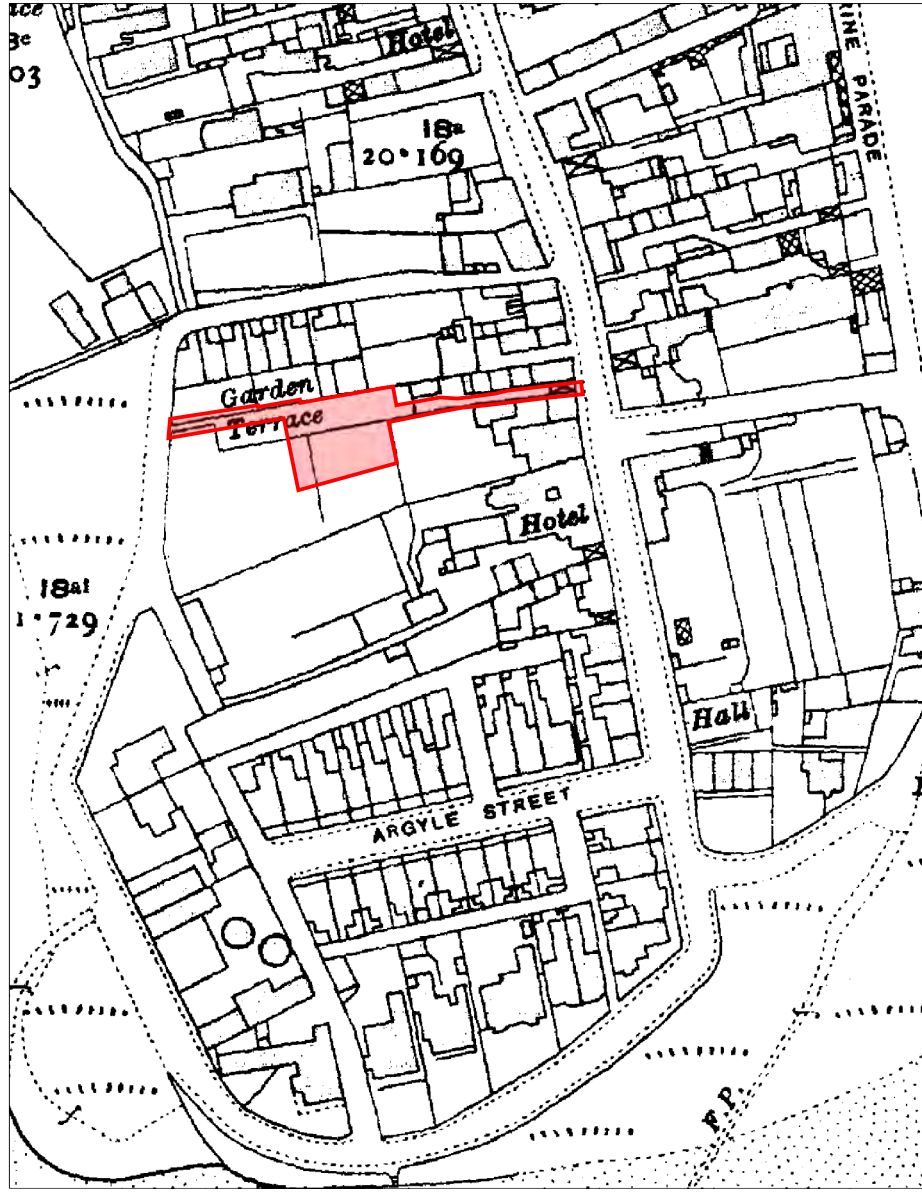
Illus. 05: Site view, showing the site of evaluation and proposed trenching (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.



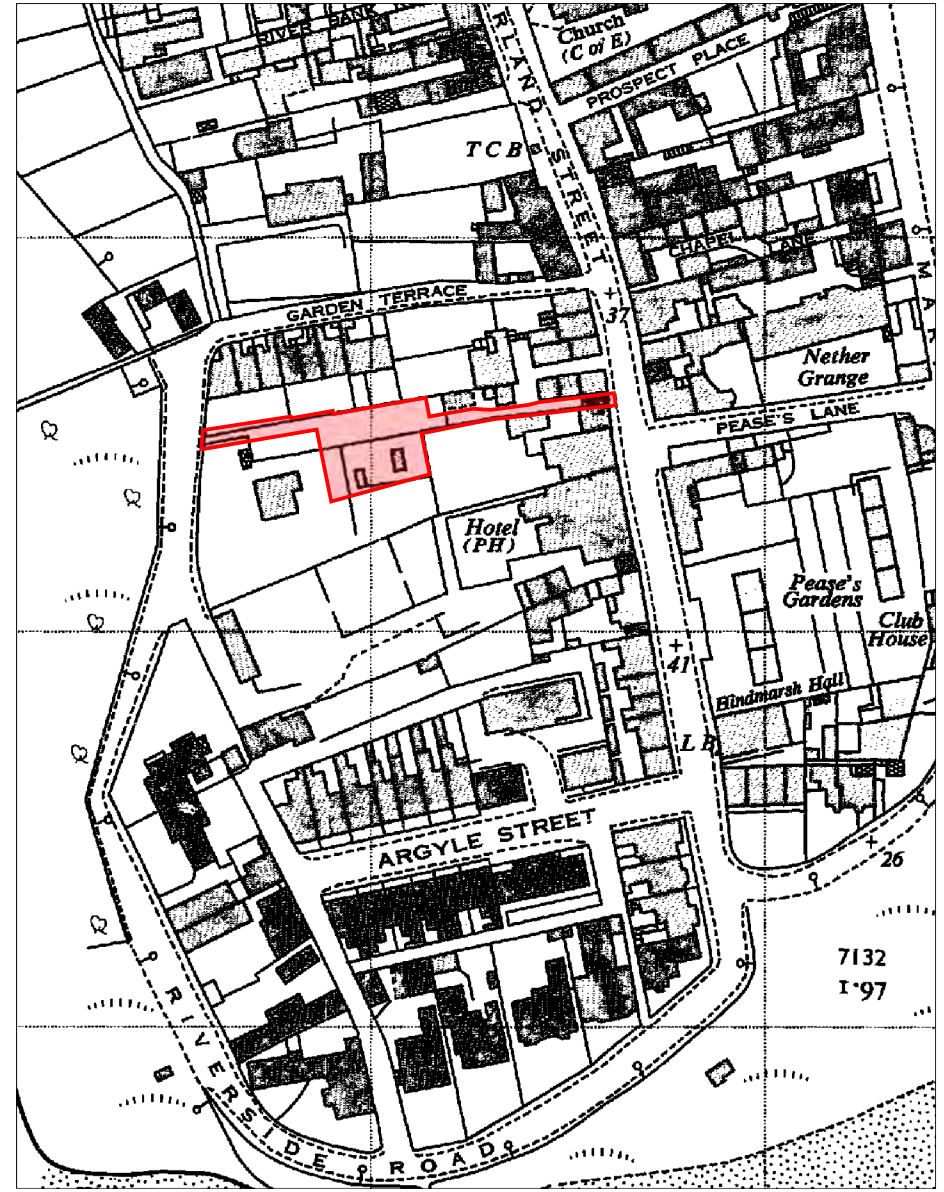
Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c.1864, 6 inch series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1897, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1923, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



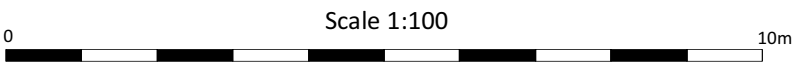
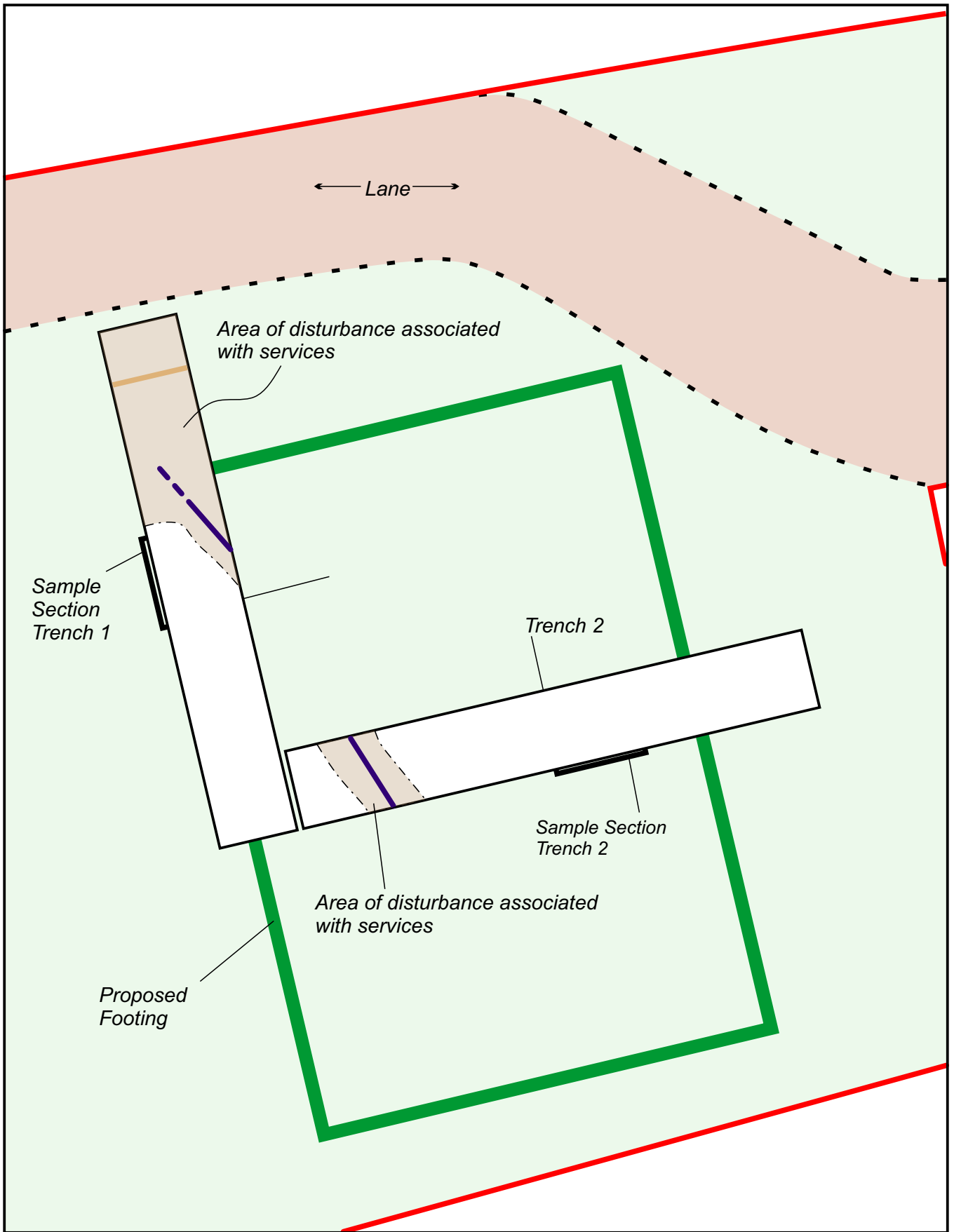
Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1960 Edition Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

The aims of the evaluation were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means.

The evaluation took place on Tuesday 1st February 2022. It took the form of two trenches (*Illus. 05*), one (Trench 1) aligned along the west footing of the proposed new build, and one (Trench 2) aligned broadly east-west through the middle of the footprint of the proposed new build. The two trenches essentially formed a single L-shaped trench of 20m², with the meeting point of the two legs of the 'L' lying in the centre of the plot of land.

The trench was initially excavated by 360° mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket to remove modern layers down to natural horizons, with further recording, investigation and cleaning being carried out by hand. All such excavations were undertaken by suitably trained and experienced archaeologists from The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Illus. 10: Trench plan, showing the location of services, the site boundary (highlighted in red) and the proposed footing (highlighted in green).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Location and Dimensions (*see Illus. 03, 14, Plates 01-06*)

The evaluation took the form of two trenches forming one L-shaped trench. Trench 1 covered the west footing of the proposed development, while Trench 2 (approx. E-W aligned) extended through the centre of the proposed building's footprint (*see Illus. 10*). Natural horizons were encountered directly below topsoil in all areas where service runs were not present.

In two areas, the backfill of service trenches was encountered, relating both to probable historic sewerage associated with the demolished bungalow and to live sewerage and water pipes associated with the guesthouse. The probable historic sewerage pipe, of glazed clay construction, was aligned NE-SW and appeared in both legs of the trench along the same alignment. It was broken near the northern end of Trench 1, presumably during the installation of newer service infrastructure, and was dry inside. A terracotta-coloured plastic pipe, of unknown use and status, although similar to those used as modern groundwater drainage pipes, was discovered running parallel with the narrow lane at the north end of Trench 1. About 3m south of the north end of Trench 1 was the location of known live sewerage and water pipes, running approximately east-west from Northumberland Street down to Westlea. No further excavation was carried out above the location of these services once their backfill had been identified.

3.2 Stratigraphic Report

Turf and topsoil (101) overlay natural horizons or service trench backfill in all areas investigated over the course of the evaluation. The topsoil was largely dark grey-brown loamy soil, with variable amounts of modern debris such as bricks, concrete flags, and plastic, as well as patches of included sand and clay. The fills of the various service trenches have been given the generic code (102) and were generally more clayey and compact in consistency than the topsoil. Much of the fill surrounding the defunct probable sewerage pipe for instance was mid grey-brown sandy clay with occasional medium to large pebble inclusions, with moderately frequent modern debris such as brick and tile. All natural deposits identified in Trenches 1 and 2 (103) consisted of moderately compact mid orange-brown sandy clay with occasional medium to large pebble inclusions.

In the middle of Trench 1, at the northmost point where natural horizons were encountered, 0.67m of topsoil overlay the natural. In the west of Trench 2, 0.46m of topsoil overlay natural horizons, while at the east end of Trench 2, 0.36m of topsoil overlay natural horizons. Topsoil deposits therefore showed a trend towards being thicker towards the western and northern sides of the plot.

Context List

- (101) Turf and Topsoil.
- (102) Backfill of presumed 20th-century service trenches
- (103) Mid orange-brown sandy clay; natural horizon.



Photo 01. Overview shot of Trench 1, south view. Note the plastic pipe in the foreground and the ceramic pipe run in the middle of the trench.



Photo 02. Sample Section, Trench 1, showing topsoil overlying natural, west view.



Photo 03. Overview shot of Trench 2, west view.



Photo 04. Sample Section, Trench 2, showing topsoil overlying natural, south view.



Photo 05. North view of visible services in Trench 1.



Photo 06. Overview shot, showing Trenches 1 and 2, south west view.

4. DISCUSSION

The primary goal of this evaluation was to establish the presence or absence of surviving archaeological remains on the site. No features or significant finds were identified, and it seems likely that considerable modern terracing or landscaping has occurred on the site in addition to truncation by the installation of services.

The findings of the evaluation were that topsoil containing much modern debris directly overlay natural horizons or in some places the backfill of modern service runs. The service runs largely contained sandy clay material not dissimilar in consistency to the natural and were quite possibly backfilled with the material excavated for the laying of pipes. The thickness of topsoil was greater toward the north and west sides of the site area, implying that it has been deposited at some point in the modern period in order to try and somewhat level the natural slope of the land. The topsoil contained debris of clearly 20th- or 21st-century origin, such as plastic packaging. Aside from this evidence of landscaping, the height of the east end of the plot is significantly lower than the height of the land in the yards to the east and the south, while the north of the plot is significantly higher again than the back gardens of properties on Garden Terrace bounding the north of the site area.

It is concluded that the entire plot of land has been landscaped in the modern period, possibly as part of the demolition of the small structures noted to be extant in 1960 edition OS 1:2500 Series map. No trace of these structures or any plot boundary walls were observed. Given the historic nature of Alnmouth, and the potential for differing levels of landscaping in different plots of land, future intrusive groundworks in the immediate vicinity should still be understood to have the potential to uncover remains associated with medieval back-plot activity.

6. REFERENCES

Finlayson, R. & Hardie, C., (rev. Williams A.) (2009) *Alnmouth: Northumberland Extensive Urban Survey*, Northumberland County Council and English Heritage

AP Ltd. (2022) *Proposed New Detached Dwelling Adjacent to Westlea, Riverside Road, Alnmouth, Northumberland 21/03496/FUL: Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation*

APPENDIX 1: Project Design for Archaeological Evaluation at Westlea, Alnmouth, Northumberland; Prepared by The Archaeological Practice, Jan 2022

PROPOSED NEW DETACHED DWELLING
ADJACENT TO WESTLEA, RIVERSIDE ROAD
ALNMOUTH, NORTHUMBERLAND

Written Scheme of Investigation for
Archaeological Evaluation Excavation

Prepared by

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

January 2022

NCC Planning Ref: 21/03496/FUL

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION
3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION
4. PRODUCTION OF FINAL REPORT
5. OASIS
6. TIMETABLE
7. PERSONNEL

ILLUSTRATIONS

Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), along the Northumberland Coast, near Alnwick.

Illus. 02: District view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), Northumberland.

Illus. 03: Town view, showing the location of the evaluation site (circled in red) in the historic town centre of Alnmouth.

Illus. 04: Street view, showing the location of evaluation (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.

Illus. 05: Site view, showing the site of evaluation and proposed trenching (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.

Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c.1864, 6 inch series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1897, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1923, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1960 Edition Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).

Illus. 10: Architects plans showing the existing and proposed site, with proposed location of evaluation trenches highlighted in solid red.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

A plot of land located to the east of Westlea Bed & Breakfast in the historic coastal town of Alnmouth, is proposed as the site of a new single detached dwelling (NGR: NU 24599 10449), inclusive of associated service infrastructure, driveways/parking areas and landscaping (see *Illus 01-04*).

The total area comprising the site, including driveway, is 825 square metres, with the house footing measuring approximately 9 x 13 m and positioned upon a NNW-SSE axis. The site is bound to the north by hedges defining the back garden plots of properties along Garden Terrace; to the west by the boundary of the Westlea B&B complex; to the south with boundaries associated with No. 28 Riverside Road; and to the east with the site boundary of Waleric House – again comprising of hedges. An existing driveway extends from the north-west corner of the site to the WSW, passing the Westlea B&B and intersecting with Riverside Road. An additional driveway extends from the east side of the site, running ENE and passing between the properties of No. 9a and 10 Northumberland Street before reaching the road itself (see *Illus 04-05*). The main plot of land comprises of a small field, devoid of any structures, and used for pasture.

This document, prepared by the Archaeological Practice Ltd., has been commissioned by Michael Rathbone Architectural & Surveying, to satisfy a requirement for an archaeological evaluation to inform the planning process regarding the likely or potential impact of the proposed works upon the cultural heritage of the site.

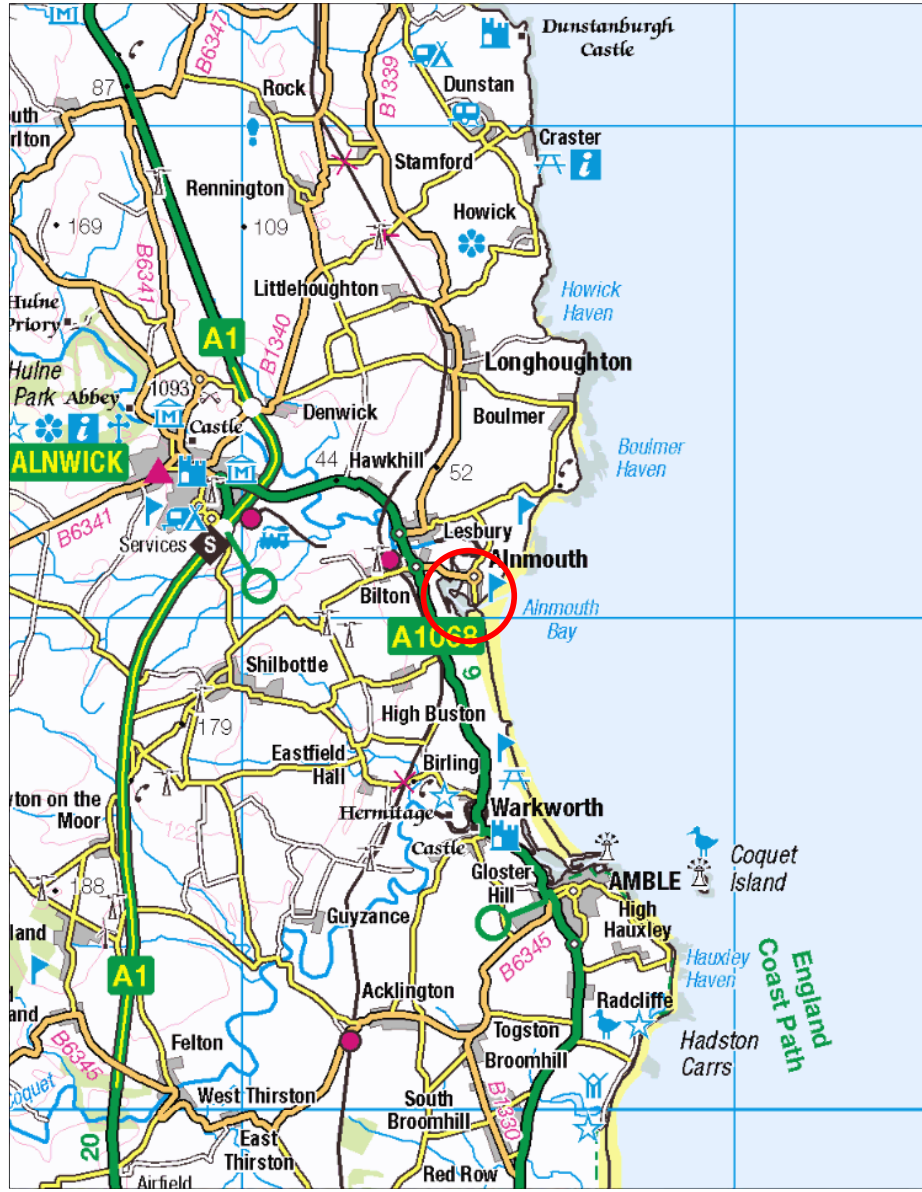
The proposed development site has potential to retain significant unrecorded archaeological remains. Such remains, if present, would be damaged or destroyed by the proposed development. The Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland has therefore requested that a programme of archaeological evaluation (trial trenching) be carried out prior to the determination of the planning application.

The results of this exercise will enable the LP to make an informed decision on the application, consistent with the objectives of paragraph 194 of the NPPF and the scope of an appropriate archaeological mitigation response, if required, consistent with the requirements and objectives of paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF.

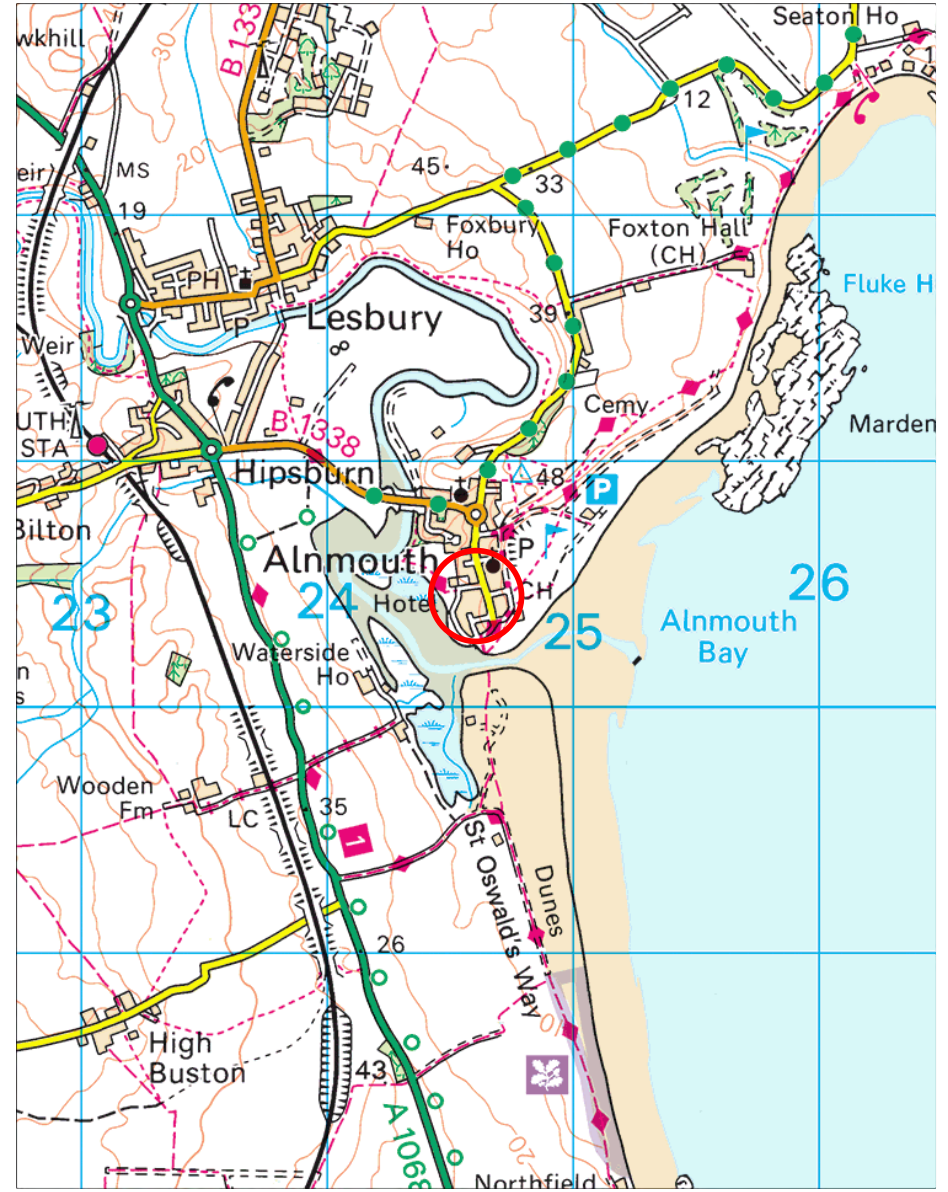
1.2 Cultural Heritage Background

The application is not currently supported by an archaeological assessment. However, the site falls within the study area of the Alnmouth Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) (see: <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/NorthumberlandCountyCouncil/media/Planningand-Building/Conservation/Archaeology/Alnmouth.pdf>) and was included within the study area of an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken of a nearby site in 2017 (ASDU 2017). The EUS was most recently updated in 2010, but both assessments remain broadly pertinent to the present application site.

1.3 Archaeological Potential



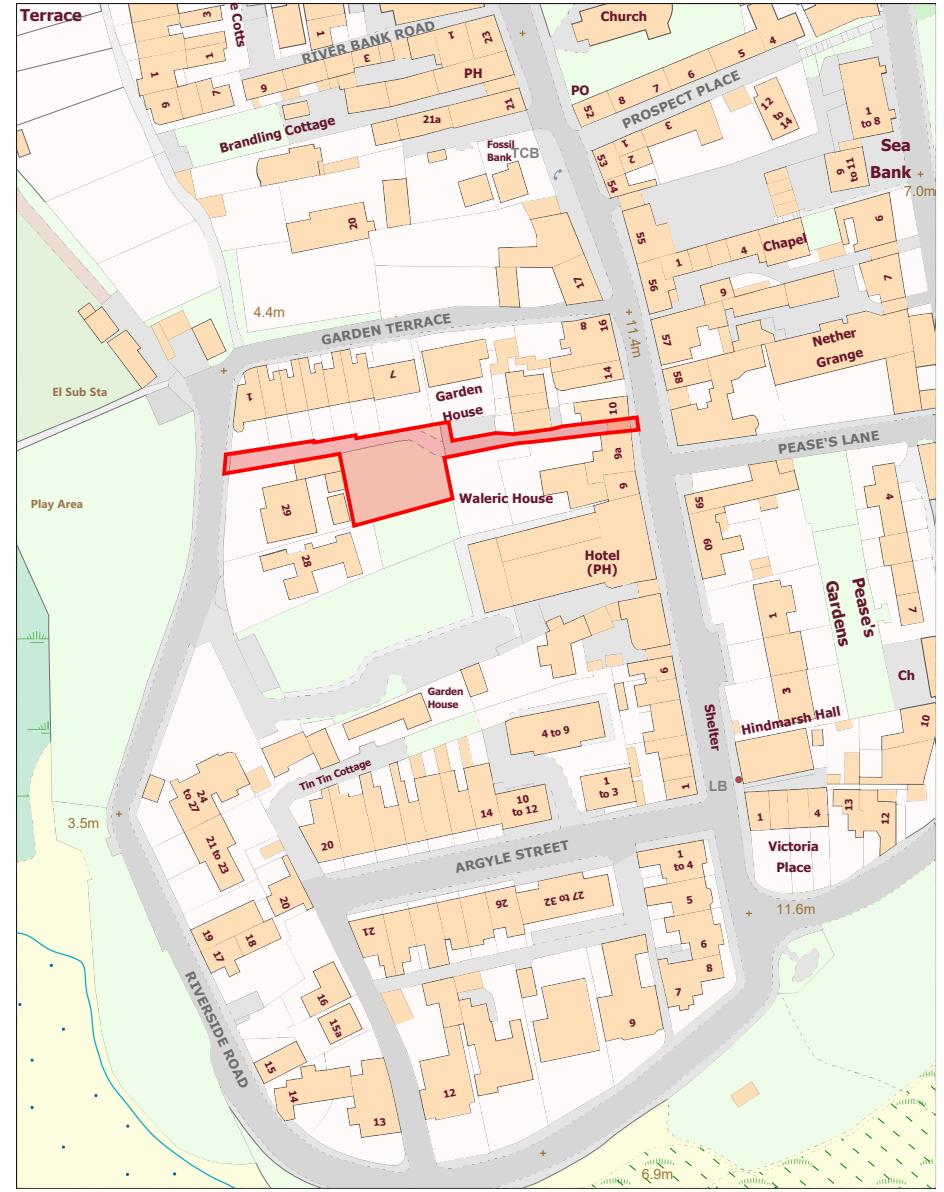
Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), along the Northumberland Coast, near Alnwick.



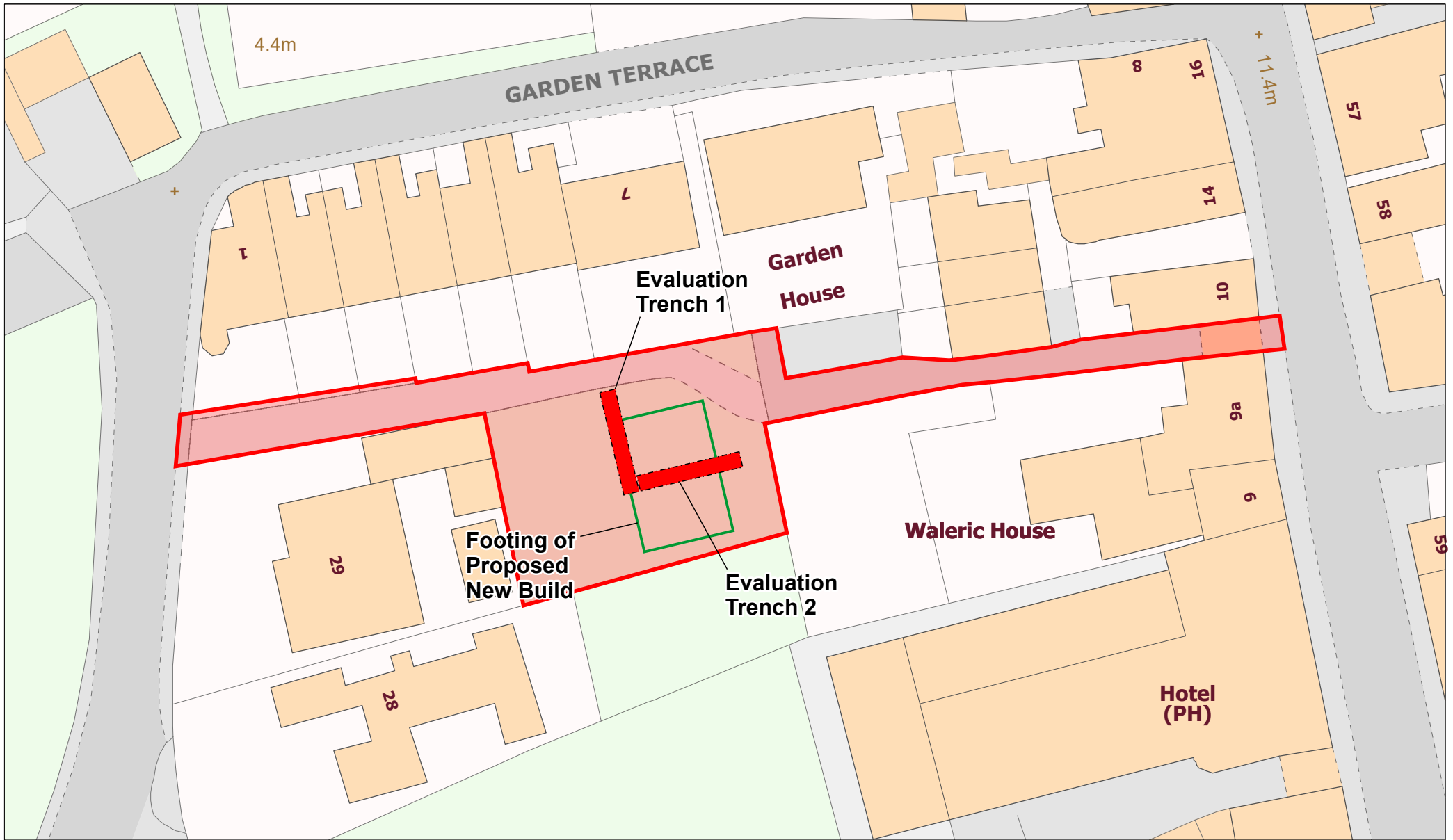
Illus. 02: District view, showing the location of Alnmouth (circled in red), Northumberland.



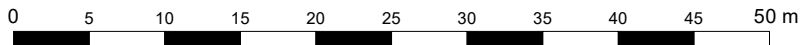
Illus. 03: Town view, showing the location of the evaluation site (circled in red) in the historic town centre of Alnmouth.



Illus. 04: Street view, showing the location of evaluation (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.



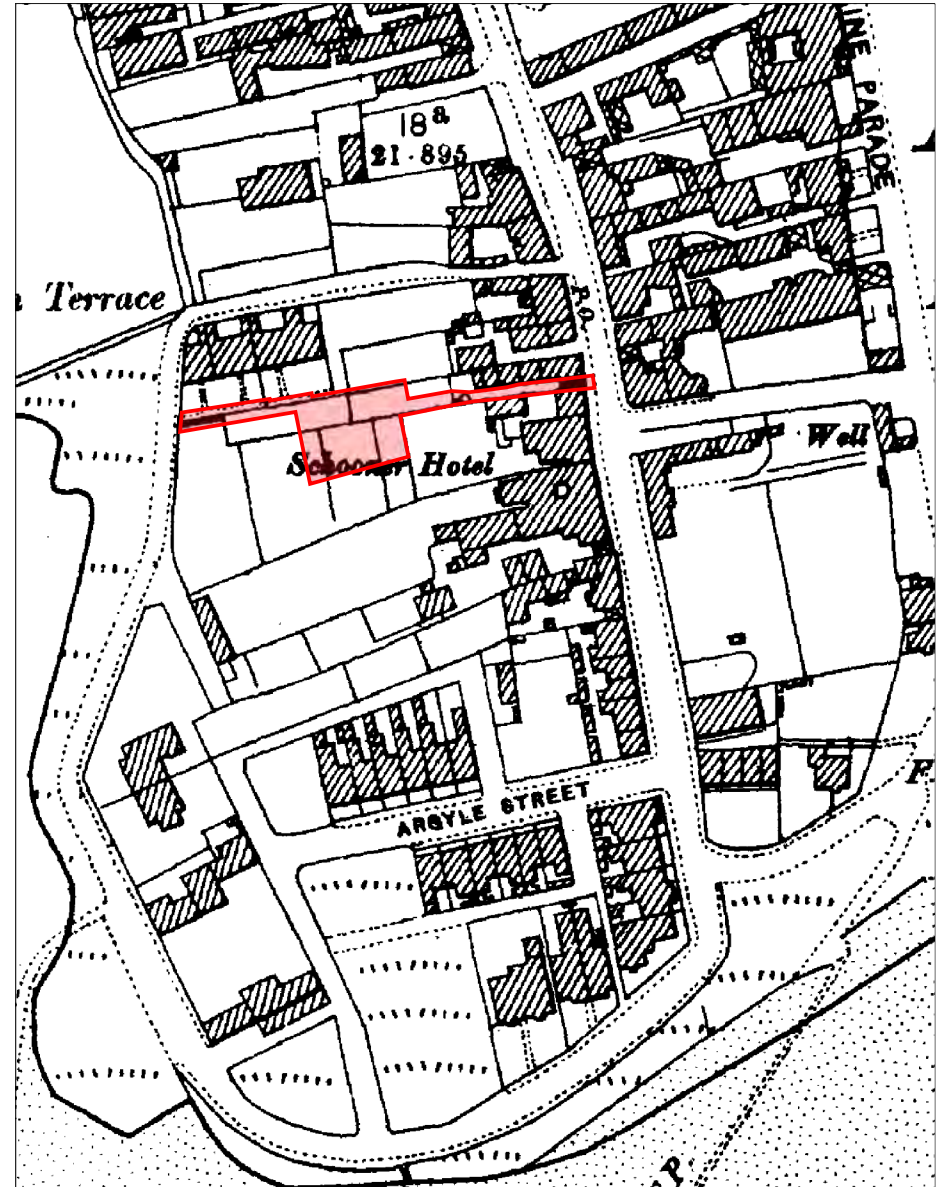
Scale 1:500



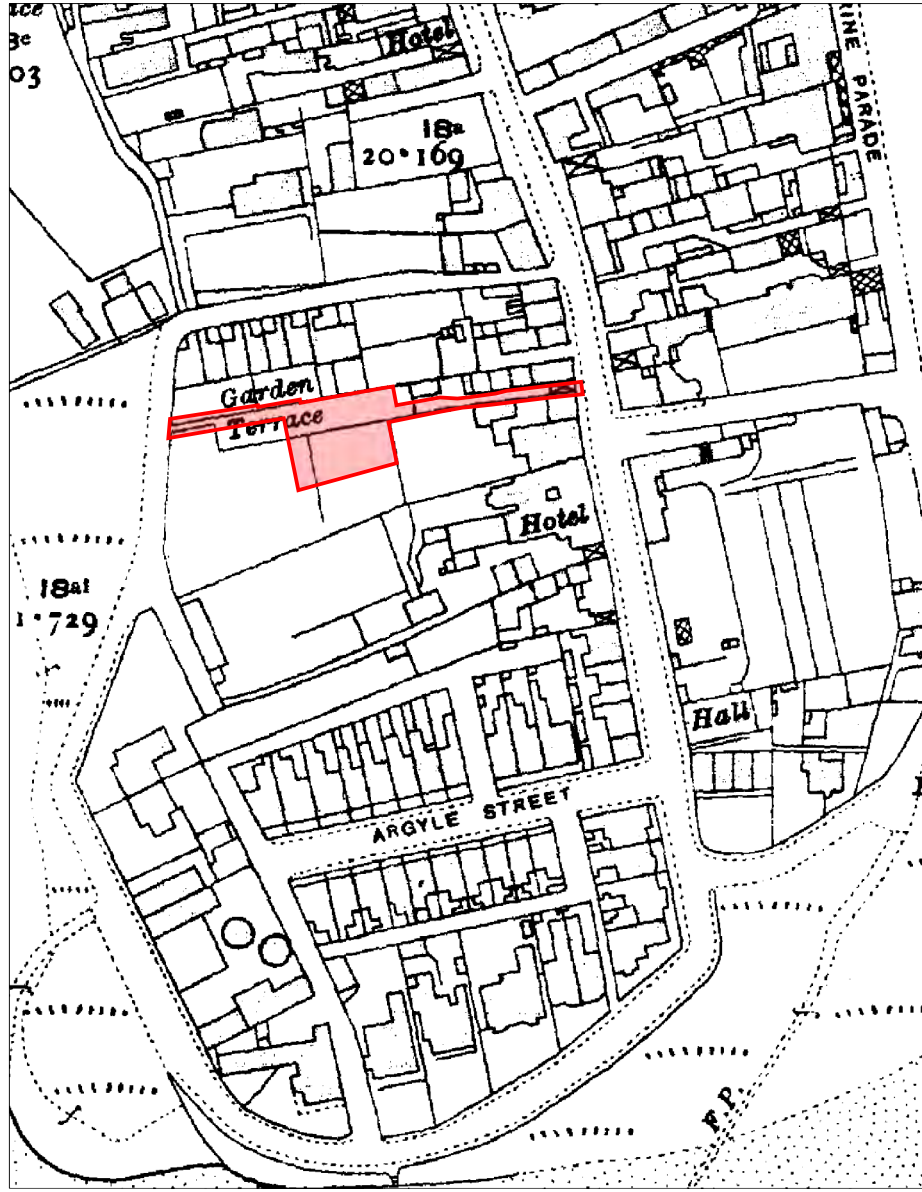
Illus. 05: Site view, showing the site of evaluation and proposed trenching (highlighted in red) adjacent to Westlea, Alnmouth.



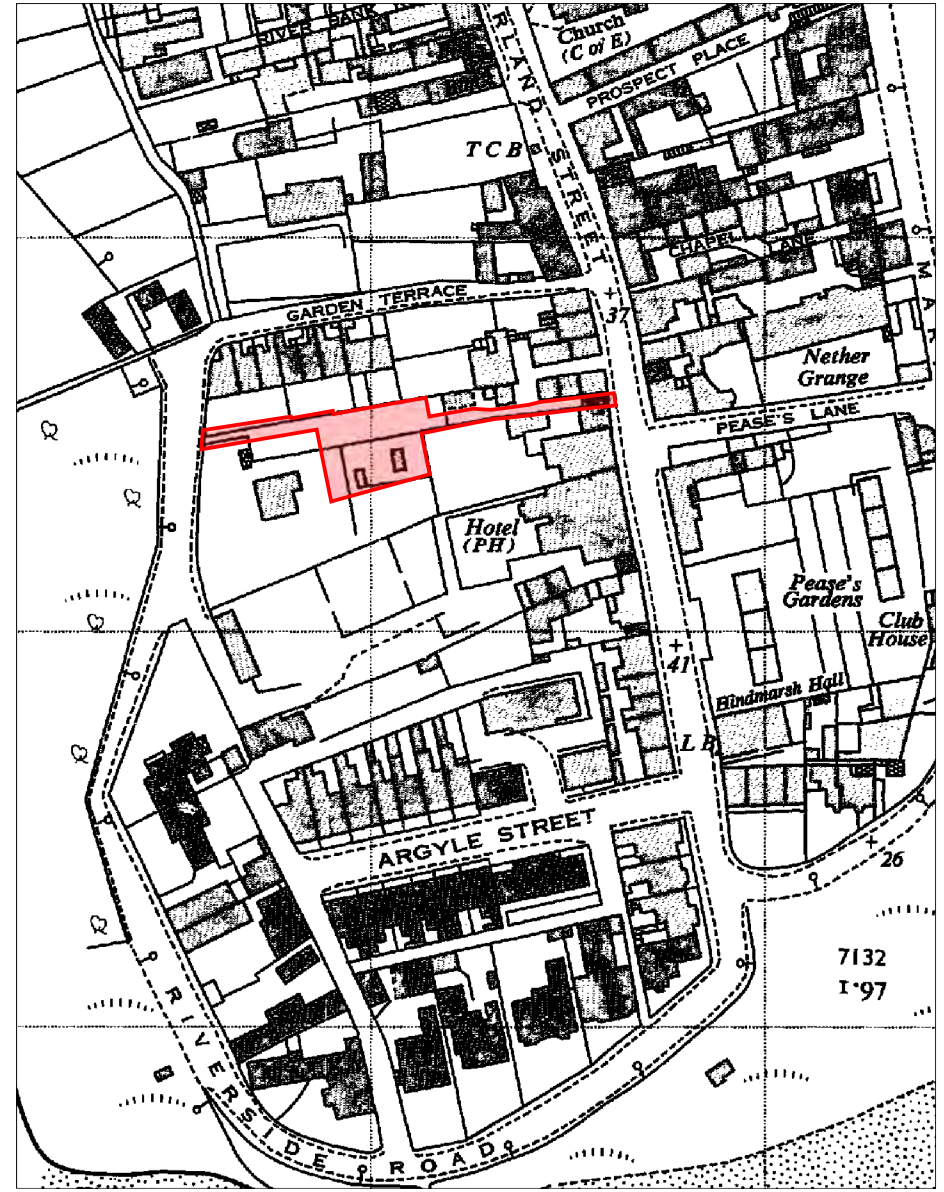
Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey c.1864, 6 inch series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



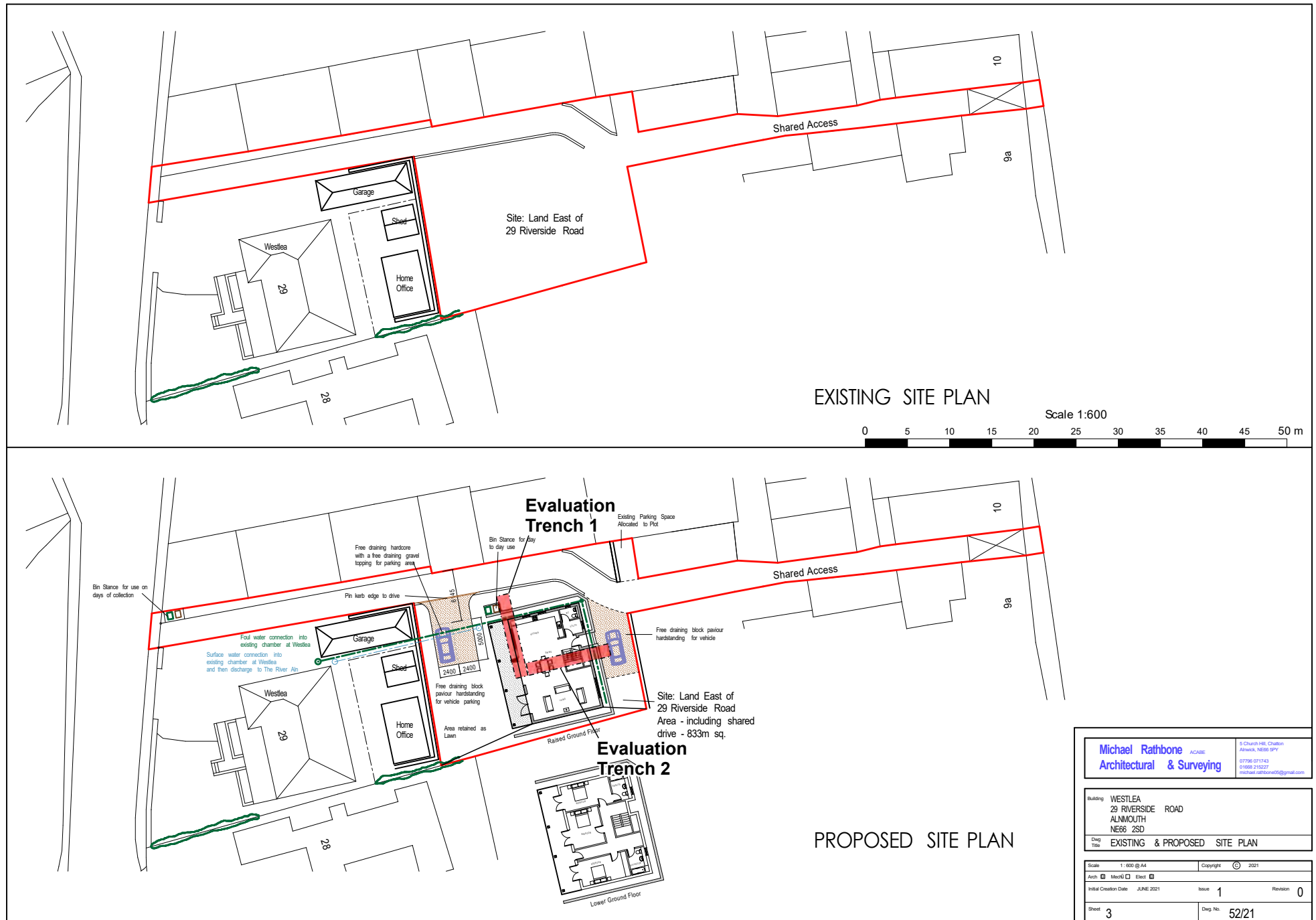
Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1897, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey c.1923, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1960 Edition Ordnance Survey, 1:2500 series, showing the site of evaluation (highlighted in red).



Michael Rathbone ACABE Architectural & Surveying		<small>© Church Hill, Chesham Alnwick, NE66 5PY 01793 071743 01603 215227 michael.rathbone05@gmail.com</small>	
Building WESTLEA 29 RIVERSIDE ROAD ALNMOUTH NE66 2SD			
Dwg Title EXISTING & PROPOSED SITE PLAN			
Scale 1: 600 @ A4		Copyright © 2021	
Arch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MeasR <input type="checkbox"/> Elect <input type="checkbox"/>			
Initial Creation Date JUNE 2021		Issue 1 Revision 0	
Sheet 3		Dwg. No. 52/21	

Illus. 10: Architects plans showing the existing and proposed site, with proposed location of evaluation trenches highlighted in solid red.

The area of the North Northumberland coast is known to have been occupied and exploited by human populations since at least the Mesolithic (middle stone age) period. Bronze Age burials, cairns or cists are recorded nearby at Low Hauxley, High Buston, Howick and Beadnell, for example.

The origins of the early medieval settlement at Alnmouth are uncertain. Alnmouth is conjectured as one possible location for the Synod of Twyford recorded by Bede as taking place in 684. A deed records the founding of the town in 1152. The former church on Castle Hill is recorded in 1305. Property boundaries within Alnmouth are typically well established and many are likely to preserve or at least reference medieval burgage plots laid out from the 12th century and set back from Northumberland Street. In many instances the long linear burgages have been subdivided or had later property boundaries partially imposed upon them, but the overall pattern of the medieval town may still be discerned. Burgages in Alnmouth are not regularly spaced which may suggest a gradual rather than singular establishment of property boundaries. The EUS places the site within an area of high potential for medieval and post-medieval remains.

Subject to the extent of later medieval and post-medieval land use, burgage plots have potential to retain significant archaeological remains which can inform an understanding of the development of the settlement at Alnmouth. They can retain, for example, evidence of waste or maddening, kitchen gardening, fish processing, butchery, or animal husbandry or small-scale industrial activity.

1.4 Previous Archaeological Work

No invasive archaeological work has taken place on the site. However, the site falls within the study area of the Alnmouth Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) (see above) and was included within the study area of an archaeological desk-based assessment undertaken of a nearby site (ASDU 2017).

1.5 Requirements for evaluation

This excavation has the main purpose of establishing the presence and character of any archaeological remains surviving on the site.

As noted above, the existing Alnmouth Extensive Urban Survey and a recent archaeological desk-based assessment relating to an adjacent site are in the public domain and their conclusions are pertinent to the present site. It is considered that a programme of intrusive archaeological field evaluation (based on the excavation of linear trial trenches and / or test pits) is an appropriate assessment method. The purpose of this exercise would be to establish the presence / absence, significance and extent of the archaeological resource within the site, if present. The exercise will also establish the extent to which medieval or later archaeological horizons have been buried and sealed below later deposits and the extent of any modern truncation or terracing, if applicable.

The results of this exercise would inform the LPAs assessment of the application, having regard to paragraphs 194, 195 and 203 of the NPPF, and the detail of an appropriate archaeological mitigation response, if required, in line with paragraphs 56 and 205 of the NPPF.

Thus, **two trenches** are proposed across the area of the new build, each measuring **10 x 1.5 m** (see *Illus. 05, 10*), to be distributed evenly within the area proposed for groundworks, taking into account the variable archaeological potential of the site. The position of the trenches has been partially informed by historic mapping (see *Illus. 06-09*) and attempts to avoid/limit contact with potential remains from modern sheds/outbuildings visible in the southern portion of the field on the 1960 OS map, and modern field boundaries visible on the 1897 OS map.

2. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

2.1.1 The Field Investigation will be carried out by means of Archaeological Evaluation.

2.1.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CIfA) and will follow the CIfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.

2.1.3 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

2.1.4 Each context identified as important will be considered for recording by drawing and/or photography.

2.1.5 An appropriate control network for the survey of any archaeological remains revealed will be established.

2.1.6 The survey control network will be related to the OS grid.

2.1.7 The survey control network and the position of recorded structures, features and finds will be located on a map of an appropriate scale (1:2500 or 1:500)

2.1.8 At least one absolute height value related to OD will be recorded for each archaeological context.

2.1.9 All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant CIfA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

2.1.10 Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artefacts encountered will be recovered.

2.1.12 All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for recording historic buildings and a curriculum vitae will be supplied if requested to the Northumberland Planning Archaeologist for approval prior to work commencing. Furthermore, all staff will familiarise themselves with the archaeological background of the site and with the work required, and must understand the projects aims and methodologies.

3 EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

3.2.1 The excavation and monitoring will be carried out in the positions indicated on *Illus. 05 and 10*). Excavation, recording and sampling procedures will be undertaken using the strategies indicated below.

3.2.2 The setting out of the trenches will be undertaken by the archaeological contractor.

3.2.3 Unstratified modern overburden will be removed by hand. All manual excavation will be carried out by trained, archaeologically competent staff.

3.2.4 Spoil will be kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trenches at the conclusion of this work. Although the site is private property without public access, signs will be displayed to warn of deep excavations on the site.

3.2.5 All excavation of archaeological horizons and trench faces will be carried out by hand and every effort will be made to leave all potentially nationally important remains *in situ*.

3.2.6 All excavation of archaeological horizons will be carried out by hand and every effort will be made to leave all nationally important remains *in situ*.

3.2.7 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits identified will be excavated by hand through a sampling procedure to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described. Pits and postholes will normally be sampled by half-sectioning although some features may require complete excavation. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. No archaeological deposits will be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable.

3.2.8 Archaeological stratigraphy revealed by excavation will be recorded by the following means:

3.2.9.1 **Written descriptions.** Each archaeological context will be recorded on a pro-forma sheet. Minimum recorded details will consist of the following: a unique identifier; an objective description which includes measurements of extent and details of colour and composition; an interpretative estimate of function, clearly identified as such; at least one absolute height value; the identifiers of related contexts and a description of the relationship with such contexts (for preference, executed as a mini Harris matrix); references to other recording media in which representations of the context are held (plans, sections, photographs).

3.2.9.2 **Measured illustrations.** Detailed plans and sectional profiles of archaeological features will be at appropriate scales (1:50, 1:20 or 1:10). Archaeological contexts will be referenced by their unique identifiers. All illustrations will be properly identified, scaled and referenced to the site survey control and, in turn, accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area

3.2.9.3 **Photographs.** Any features of archaeological note will be recorded on b&w and colour film stock. A system will be used for identifying the archaeological features photographed. The record will include, in addition to detailed views of specific features, the context of the feature and the relationship of the feature and its context to the wider setting and, where appropriate, to other sites or viewpoints.

Specifically, a digital photographic record of all contexts will be taken and each photograph will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept and the location of all photographs will be recorded on a plan base. A full archive of photographs will be maintained on the APLtd hard drive and provided to the County Archives and ASD, York.

All photographs will be in sharp focus, well lit and will include a clearly visible 1 m or 2 m scale.

3.2.10 An appropriate control network for the survey of any archaeological remains revealed in excavation will be established.

3.2.11 The survey control network will be related to the OS grid.

3.2.12 The survey control network and the position of recorded structures, features and finds will be located on a map of an appropriate scale (1:2500 or 1:500)

3.2.13 At least one absolute height value related to OD will be recorded for each archaeological context.

3.2.14 All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant ClfA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

3.2.15 Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artifacts encountered will be recovered.

3.2.16 The potential requirement for specialist analyses (see below) is an unavoidable risk in all such excavations. The scientific investigation of any features/deposits which are considered significant will be undertaken as a non-negotiable part of this programme. Any such analyses would be carried out by specialists and priced to the client on a costs only basis within the ceiling of costs established by the project brief.

3.2.17 A **contingency** of up to 10 person days will be allowed in the event that remains of greater than anticipated complexity are revealed which require additional time for appropriate evaluation.

3.3 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data

3.3.1 Following the completion of the Field Investigation and before any of the post-excavation work is commenced, an archive (the Site Archive) containing all the data gathered during fieldwork will be prepared. This material will be quantified, ordered, indexed and rendered internally consistent. It will be prepared according to the guidelines given in English Heritage's MAP 2 document, Appendix 3 (English Heritage 1991).

3.3.2 An interim report of no less than 200 words, containing preliminary recommendations for any further work required, will be produced within two weeks of completion of the field investigation for the commissioning client.

3.3.3 Following completion of the Field Investigation, an interim report will be produced within 25 days and a full report will be prepared within 2 months of the completion of fieldwork, collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the evaluation works. Obviously the final report may take longer to produce if specialist analysis is required.

3.4 Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating

3.4.1 The investigations will be undertaken in a manner consistent with “The Management of Archaeological Projects”, English Heritage 1991 and with “Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists”, English Heritage, 2003.

3.4.2 Don O’Meara, the English Heritage Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science (0191 3341137 or 07713 400387) will be contacted before the excavation begins.

3.4.3 Deposits/fills with potential for environmental evidence will be assessed by taking up to two bulk samples of 30 litres from any context selected for analysis by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. Deposits/fills totalling less than 30 litres in volume will be sampled in their entirety. Six of the collected samples which are judged to be most suitable on grounds of being derived from uncontaminated and reasonably well-dated deposits and/or recognisable features will be selected for full analysis, reporting and publication.

3.4.4 Deposits will be sampled for remains of pollen, food residues, microfossils, small boned ecofacts (e.g. fish & insects/micro-fauna), industrial residues (e.g. micro-slugs - hammer-scale and spherical droplets), cloth and timber. Flotation samples and samples taken for coarse-mesh sieving from dry deposits will be processed at the time of fieldwork wherever possible.

3.4.5 Any significant animal bone assemblages, which can be used to explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment will be assessed by a recognised specialist.

3.4.6 Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in *Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather* (English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995).

3.4.7 Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. As well as providing information on construction techniques, timbers will be assessed for their potential for dendrochronology dating, in which case sampling will follow procedures in *Dendrochronology: guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates* (Hillam 1998) and *Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood* (R. Brunning 1996). A maximum of 5 samples of material suitable for dating by scientific means (eg: Radiocarbon, Luminescence, Remnant Magnetism, etc.) will be collected.

3.4.8 Information on the nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods, sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination, etc. will be provided with each sample submitted for analysis.

3.4.9 Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

3.4.10 Human remains will be treated with care, dignity and respect, in full compliance with the relevant legislation (essentially the Burial Act 1857) and local environmental health concerns. If found, human remains will be left in-situ, covered and protected, and the police, coroner and County Archaeologist informed. If it is agreed that removal of the remains is essential, the Archaeological Practice Ltd, will apply for a licence from the Home Office. Analysis of the osteological material will take place according to published guidelines, *Human Remains from Archaeological Sites, Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports* (English Heritage 2002).

3.4.11 If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Practice Ltd. will comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure will be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer, (0191 2225076) for guidance on the Treasure Act procedures. Treasure is defined as the following:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

4 PRODUCTION OF FINAL REPORT

4.1 Copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork to the Client and Northumberland County HER. Obviously the final report may take longer to produce if specialist analysis is required.

4.2 Digital copies of the report will be provided, with each page and heading numbered. Paper copies required will be produced upon request. The report will include as a minimum the following:

- A summary statement of methodologies used.
- A location plan of the site and any significant discoveries made.
- Plans and sections of any archaeological discoveries of note.
- A summary statement of results.
- Conclusions
- Recommendations
- A table summarizing the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.

4.3 The report will finish with a section detailing recommendations for further archaeological work needed to mitigate the effects of the development upon any significant deposits revealed during the evaluation or if necessary, for further evaluation.

4.4 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines.

4.5 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated repository within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Additionally, a copy shall be offered to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

4.6 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in the appropriate Notices, Annual Reviews, Reports, etc.

4.7 An entry for inclusion in the Northumberland County Heritage Environment Record will be prepared and submitted.

5 OASIS

5.1 The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS), following consultation with the relevant planning authority. The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to or incorporation of the final report (see 3.4) into the HER.

6. TIMESCALE

Following the agreement of the current WSI document with the planning archaeologist, it is proposed to carry out the above tasks according to the developer's schedule in late January, 2022.

Environmental samples, ecofacts and artefacts will be submitted for analysis immediately following the fieldwork period and a reporting period of 2 months requested.

Structural reports on the trenches will be completed to allow submission of an interim report within 25 days of completion of the fieldwork.

A full report will be prepared within 2 months of the completion of fieldwork, collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the evaluation works. Obviously the final report may take longer to produce if specialist analysis is required.

The full archive report will be produced using the structural report and any commissioned specialist reports within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork.

7. PERSONNEL

The Archaeological Practice Ltd. has been operating in its present form since 2002, previous to which it was a part of the former Department of Archaeology at the university of Newcastle. During this time it has considerable experience and expertise in producing reports based on a combination of fieldwork and documentary analysis.

The Archaeological Practice Ltd comprises **Richard Carlton** and **Dr Alan Rushworth**, both of whom are highly experienced in carrying out fieldwork and documentary studies leading to the production of detailed, analytical reports, along with Marc Johnstone and Adam Leigh, who are experienced fieldworkers and now principally engaged in documentary research and illustration.

The fieldwork will be carried out by **Marc Johnstone** and **Adam Leigh**, all highly experienced fieldworkers, with the additional assistance of Richard Carlton if required.

Further details of The Archaeological Practice and its staff can be found on its web-site at: <http://www.archaeologicalpractice.co.uk>

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Westmorland House, Elswick East Terrace,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7LJ
Tel: 0191 273 0777; Fax: 0191 273 1777
Email: info@archaeologicalpractice.co.uk
Web: www.archaeologicalpractice.co.uk