



Lochinvar Flood Alleviation Scheme, Longtown, Cumbria

Archaeological Watching Brief



Oxford Archaeology North

March 2008

**Jacobs UK, on behalf of the
Environment Agency**

Issue No: 2007-08/789

OA North Job No: L9979

NGR: NY 38912 68774

Document Title: LOCHINVAR FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME, LONGTOWN,
CUMBRIA

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: Jacobs UK, on behalf of the Environment Agency

Issue Number: 2007-08/789
OA Job Number: L9979

National Grid Reference: NY 38912 68774

Prepared by: Chris Healey
Position: Project Officer
Date: March 2008

Checked by: Emily Mercer
Position: Project Manager
Date: March 2008
Signed.....

Approved by: Emily Mercer
Position: Project Manager
Date: March 2008
Signed.....

Oxford Archaeology North

Mill 3
Moor Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1GF
t: (0044) 01524 848666
f: (0044) 01524 848606

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd (2008)

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0EA
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	4
1. INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Circumstances of Project.....	5
1.2 Location, Topography and Geology.....	5
1.3 Historical and Archaeological Background	5
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 Watching Brief	7
2.2 Archive	7
3. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS	8
3.1 Introduction	8
3.2 Results	8
3.3 Finds	8
3.4 Conclusions	9
BIBLIOGRAPHY	10
ILLUSTRATIONS	11
List of Figures	11

SUMMARY

The Environment Agency has proposed the construction of a new embankment and lagoon as part of flood alleviation works to the east of Longtown, Cumbria (NY 38912 68774). The scheme was considered to lie within an area of archaeological potential. Consequently, Jacobs UK commissioned an archaeological watching brief on behalf of their client, the Environment Agency, to be undertaken during the preliminary phase of geotechnical groundworks.

The watching brief was undertaken by Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) in January 2008. In total, eight geotechnical trial pits were excavated, comprising four investigation pits for the boreholes and four hand-excavated trial holes. The pits and holes were each excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m below the existing ground surface.

While no features, structures or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during these works, a small assemblage of artefacts were recovered from the topsoil disturbed during hand-digging activity. These comprised a small group of potsherds and a single prehistoric flint flake. The artefacts were unstratified and contributed little significance to the understanding of the site. No further archaeological work is recommended.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Warren Boal of Jacobs UK for commissioning the project on behalf of Hugh Johnston of the Environment Agency. Thanks are also due to the staff of Ian Farmer Associates, who undertook the site work on behalf of the Environment Agency.

The watching brief was undertaken by Chris Healey, who also wrote this report. The finds were examined by Annie Hamilton-Gibney and Rebekkah Pressler and the project was managed by Emily Mercer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

1.1.1 The Environment Agency has proposed the construction of a new flood alleviation scheme to the east of Longtown, Cumbria (NY 38912 68774; Fig 1). The scheme may potentially impact upon any surviving archaeological remains. Consequently, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were commissioned by Jacobs UK, on behalf of the Environment Agency, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during preliminary geotechnical site investigation works. The work was undertaken on 29th January 2008.

1.2 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

1.2.1 Longtown lies in the Esk Valley, 13km north of Carlisle and 4km south of the Scottish border. The underlying geology of the coastal area around Longtown is made up of Triassic red and grey sandstones with partings of grey mudstone (Institute of Geological Sciences 1976). Longtown lies within the Solway Basin area, an area of relatively flat lowland bounded by the Cumbria High Fells to the south and by the hills of the Scottish borders to the north (Countryside Commission 1998).

1.3 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.3.1 **Prehistoric Period:** there is no evidence for Mesolithic activity around the Longtown area, but contemporary material in Cumbria comes from the Eden Valley, Shap area and the Cumbrian west coast (Cherry and Cherry 2002). Evidence for later prehistoric activity is more common in the region, although settlement sites that can be identified with any certainty are rare (Hodgkinson *et al* 2000, 111). A complex of cropmarks shown on an aerial photograph to the north of Longtown may represent prehistoric settlement remains. Field boundaries or an enclosure, a small sub-oval feature or enclosure and a possible trackway have been identified (CCC 2002). In addition, a Late Bronze Age socketed spearhead was found in 1950 in gravel quarries near Longtown (Hogg 1953, 205).

1.3.2 **Roman Period:** Longtown is situated approximately 10km north of Hadrian's Wall, and the route of a north/south Roman road probably ran through the nearby area, which would have connected Carlisle with the Roman outpost fort of *Castra Exploratum* (Camp of the Scouts) at Netherby, 3km to the north. However, no physical trace of this road has ever been recorded, (Margary 1973, 456). A fourth century AD Roman coin was found in Longtown in 1983, although its exact findspot location is unknown (CCC 2002), and there is little other evidence of Roman activity in the close vicinity of Longtown.

1.3.3 **Medieval Period:** there is circumstantial evidence that the Battle of Arthuret, took place about 0.75km south of Longtown in *c* AD 573 (Miller 1975). The identification of the site as that of Arthuret was first proposed by Skene, supported by the possible derivation of the name of nearby Carwinley from

Car Gwenddoleu, the defeated pagan protagonist (CCC 2002, 4). The name Longtown first appears in 1267, as *Longeton*, in the Calendar of Charter Rolls (Armstrong *et al* 1971). This was a reference to the death of the last of the de Stutevilles, Johanna, Lady of the Manor of Arthuret (Routledge 2000, 3). It is thought that this early settlement was focused on St Michael's Church in the parish of Arthuret, 1km south of Longtown (*ibid*). At that time, Arthuret had no capital messuages or properties, but it did have a mill, a brewery and several freehold tenancies (*ibid*).

- 1.3.4 It is thought that the main focus of medieval settlement shifted north towards the present day town after 1306, when a granting of a weekly market and a yearly fair on the feast of St Giles took place. This market and fair was held on the banks of the Esk, and was chosen to take advantage of a river crossing along the ancient route from Carlisle to Edinburgh (*ibid*).
- 1.3.5 Longtown's position within the 'debatable lands' contested by England and Scotland meant that settlements in the area were frequently raided in the later medieval period. In 1528, many houses and barns in the vicinity of Longtown were destroyed, including at Netherby, Howend, Arthuret, Skarbanke and Stubble (*ibid*).
- 1.3.6 **Post-medieval Period:** although there were only a dozen houses in Longtown in 1688, built of clay and thatch (Routledge 2000, 3), the village cattle market was of considerable note, however, and rivalled that of Carlisle (Bulman and Frith 1959). A bridge over the River Esk was built in 1756, superseding the ford situated at the bottom of Esk Street (CCC 2002, 5).
- 1.3.7 In 1757, Longtown was the beneficiary of Reverend Robert Graham, who inherited the nearby Netherby Estates through the will of Lady Widdrington in 1757 (Routledge 2000, 4). The Reverend Graham set about comprehensive improvements of the Netherby Estates and drained a thousand acres of land (*ibid*). Under Graham's direction, Longtown was entirely rebuilt and laid out in a formal grid pattern with four principal streets running east/west off the main arterial spine. The buildings were set in wide streets in formal terraces of two-storied, three-bay, cobble- and rubble-constructed, lime-rendered houses, with regular opening patterns of sash windows and central-panelled doors, all under common slate roofs (CCC 2002, 5). This gave Longtown a strong architectural unity that still characterises the town to the present day. In 1861 the railway came to Longtown, with the opening of the Waverley line. The railway line that formed part of the network connecting Carlisle, Edinburgh and Berwick, closed in 1970 (Routledge 2000).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 A programme of field observation recorded accurately the location, extent and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits exposed during the course of the excavation. The work comprised the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.
- 2.1.2 All groundworks on the site were conducted under constant archaeological supervision and comprised the hand-excavation of topsoil and natural geology to a maximum depth of 1.2m. All exposed soil horizons were examined and described, and spoilheaps were carefully checked for any unstratified finds.
- 2.1.3 A daily record of the nature, extent and depths of groundworks was maintained throughout the duration of the project. All archaeological contexts were recorded on OA North's *pro-forma* sheets, using a system based on that of the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology. A monochrome and colour slide photographic record was maintained throughout and, where appropriate, scaled profiles were produced of archaeological features at a scale of 1:20.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and will be submitted to the Carlisle Record Office on completion of the project. Copies of the report will also be submitted to the Historic Environment Record. The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database *Online Access index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.

3. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

3.1.1 Hand-excavation of the trial pits for the hand auger holes and boreholes proceeded to a maximum depth of 1.2m, and deposits of topsoil were encountered immediately above natural geology. The topsoil varied in thickness between each excavated pit, and the natural geology was markedly different on the northern and southern sides of Longtown Brook (Fig 2). The eight trial pits were organised in two groups; the trial pits dug for boreholes (BH101-104) and those excavated as purely hand-dug interventions (HA101-104).

3.2 RESULTS

3.2.1 The table below shows the differing thickness of topsoil encountered during the trial pit excavation. The table also includes details of the character of the natural geology.

Trial Hole	Topsoil thickness	Natural Geology
HA101	0.40m	Weathered orangey-red sandstone
HA102	0.50m	Reddish-brown boulder clay
HA103	0.50m	Weathered orangey-red sandstone
HA104	0.45m	Weathered orangey-red sandstone
BH101	0.35m	Reddish-brown boulder clay
BH102	0.50m	Reddish-brown boulder clay
BH103	0.35m	Weathered orangey-red sandstone
BH104	0.35m	Weathered orangey-red sandstone

Table 1: Summary of results

3.3 FINDS

3.3.1 In all, four fragments of artefacts were recovered during the investigation. They were recovered from the topsoil deposits in HA102, HA104, and BH103, and all were unstratified. Three of the fragments recovered were pottery, whilst the fourth comprised a single piece of flint.

3.3.2 All of the ceramic material recovered was nineteenth century in date. The sherds represent pearlware (2) and a glazed earthenware (1), and none of the

vessels represented can be dated with precision. These finds are of little significance to an understanding of the site.

- 3.3.3 The flint artefact comprised a primary debitage flake with a beach pebble cortex on the dorsal face. Pronounced concoidal fractures were evident on the ventral face, radiating from the striking platform at the proximal end, and a hinge fracture was present at the distal end of the ventral face. The artefact appeared to be unprepared and there was no evidence of retouch, although it was damaged along the majority of its edges. This artefact may conceivably have been washed downstream to this location, and is undateable.

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

- 3.4.1 The watching brief recorded no archaeological features, structures or deposits during the course of monitoring the site investigation works. The artefacts recovered were of limited significance, and add little to the interpretation of the site and of the Longtown area.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Armstrong, AM, Mawer, A, Sventon, FM, Dickins, B, 1971 *The Placenames of Cumberland*, The English Place-name Society, **21**

Bulman, CG, and Frith, RE, undated, *Arthuret Church and Parish*, Kendal

Cherry, PJ, and Cherry, J, 2002 Coastline and Upland in Cumbrian Prehistory - A Retrospective, *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Arch Soc*, 3rd ser, **2**, 1-20

Countryside Commission, 1998 *Countryside Character Volume 2: North West*, Cheltenham

Cumbria County Council (CCC), 2002 *Extensive Urban Survey for Cumbria*, CCC and English Heritage

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, London

Hodgkinson, D, Huckerby, E, Middleton, R and Wells, C, 2000 *The Lowland Wetlands of Cumbria*, **8**, Lancaster

Hogg, R, 1953 Further accessions to the Carlisle Museum, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Society*, 2nd ser, **53**, 202-208

Institute of Geographical Sciences (IGS), 1976 *Lake District Sheet 54H 04W*, Solid Edition

Margary, ID, 1973, *Roman Roads in Britain*, third edition, London

Miller, M, 1975 The commanders of Arthuret, *Trans Cumberland Westmorland Antiq Arch Soc*, **75**, 96-118

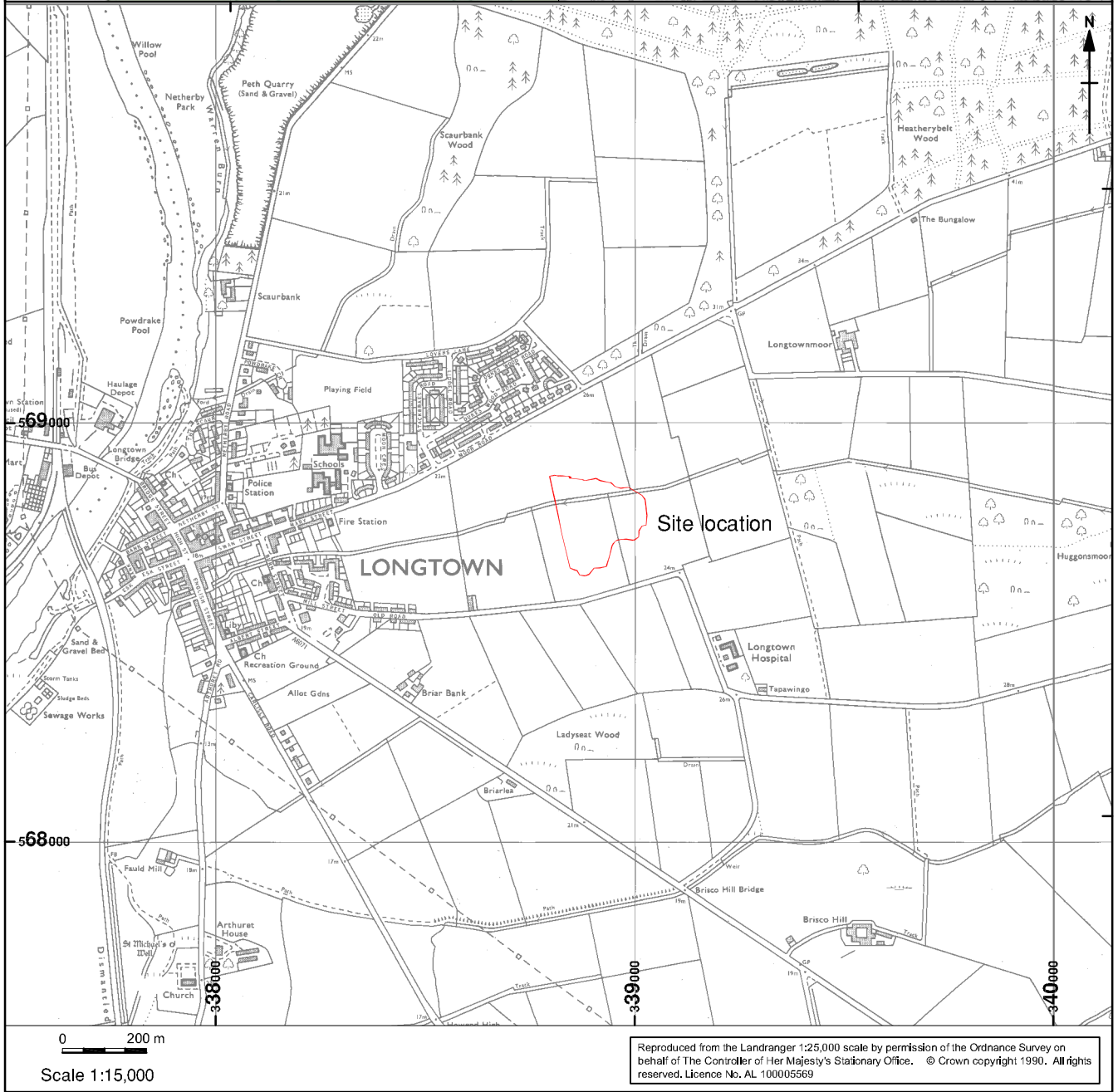
Routledge, GL, 2000 *Longtown*, Carlisle

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Plan showing the location of the geotechnical site investigation works



Reproduced from the Landranger 1:25,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown copyright 1990. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site location

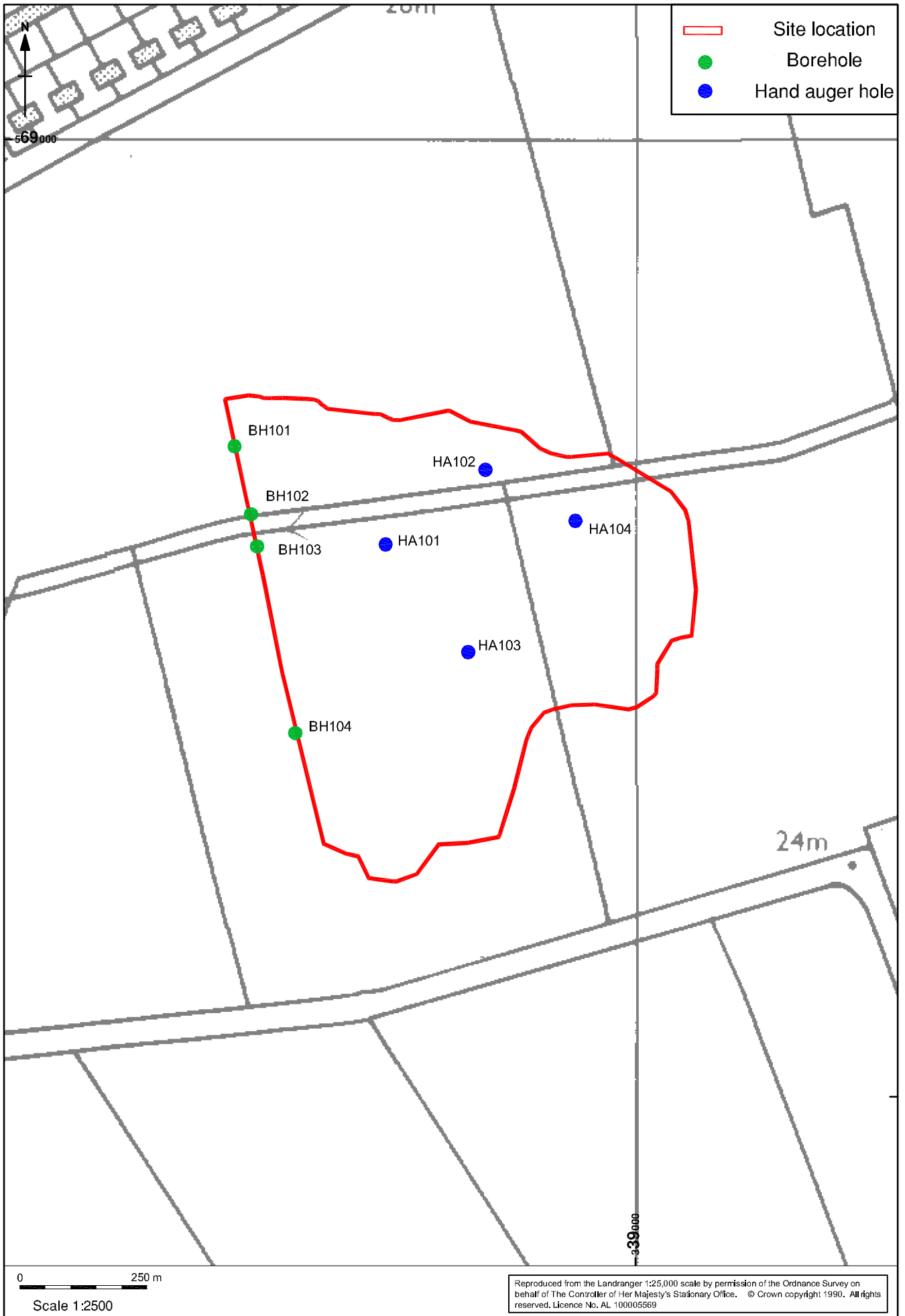


Figure 2: Plan showing the location of the geotechnical site investigation works