



# 18, The Promenade, Maryport, Cumbria:

## Watching Brief Report



**Oxford Archaeology North**

October 2013

**Mr Stevenson**

Issue No: 2013-14/1454

OA North Job No: L10646

NGR: NY 0372 3715

Planning Application No:  
2/2013/0576

**Document Title:** 18, The Promenade, Maryport, Cumbria

**Document Type:** Watching Brief Report

**Client Name:** Mr Stevenson

**Issue Number:** 2013-14/1454

**OA Job Number:** L10646

**National Grid Reference:** NY 0372 3715

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## 18, THE PROMENADE, MARYPORT, CUMBRIA: ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A planning application (2/2013/0576) was made by Mr Martyn Stevenson for the construction of a new-build front extension attached to 18, The Promenade, Maryport, Cumbria (NGR NY 0372 3715; Fig 1).
- 1.2 As the site lies immediately to the south-west of the Hadrianic Fort (*Appendix I*), it is possible that the property lies within any former parade ground associated with the fort, and that the extramural settlement may also extend into this area. Consequently, Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) attached a condition to the planning application, stipulating that an archaeological watching brief should be maintained during the ground works for the development. These requirements were conveyed to Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) was produced (*Appendix I*). OA North were subsequently commissioned to undertake the watching brief.
- 1.3 The archaeological background to the site and the methodology employed has been summarised within the WSI (*Appendix I*).

### 2 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 The watching brief was undertaken by Jeremy Bradley, in accordance with OA North standards (which in turn meet those of English Heritage and the Institute of Field Archaeologists). The groundworks for the proposed extension comprised the excavation of strip foundations located on the front (west) of the property. The strip foundations measured 0.6m wide by 0.8m deep, and extended some 8m north/south by 5m east/west (Fig 2; Plate 1). All excavation was undertaken by a mini-tracked excavator, using a toothless bucket.

### 3 RESULTS

- 3.1 The strip foundations located on the western side of the property (Figs 2 and 3) contained, at the base, natural geology (reddish-brown silty clay, **01**). Lying above this was an intermittent layer of rounded cobbles (**02**), varying in size between 50 and 70mm. Overlying the cobbles and natural geology was a layer of reddish-brown silty clay (**03**), some 0.2m thick, which was devoid of artefacts. Its similarity to the Roman deposits found both to the front and rear of Number 19, The Promenade (OA North 2013) suggests a Roman date for this deposit. This was, in turn, sealed by a layer of topsoil (**04**), which was capped by rubble and a concrete surface (**05**).

## 4 DISCUSSION

- 1.2.1 The deposits revealed within the strip foundations at Number 18, The Promenade, comprised intermittent cobbling (**02**) and a layer of silty clay (**03**). An isolated patch of cobbling (recorded as deposit 07), similar to **02**, was also identified within the rear (east) strip foundations of a recent extension to Number 19, The Promenade (OA North 2013). Cobbling had previously been reported when the houses were first built in the 1920s (Bailey 1923), and was a typical Roman construction technique.
- 1.2.2 Clay layer (**03**), at Number 18, was a continuation of a layer (deposit 04) identified during the watching brief on Number 19, which contained Samian ware pottery, and sealed a layer of yellow clay. Both layers **03** and 04 and the cobbles (**02** and 07) were probably Roman levelling deposits/surfaces, either associated with the parade ground for the Hadrianic Fort, or, perhaps more contentiously, part of the rampart of the putative Trajanic or late-Flavian fort (Flynn 2006 a and b).

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### **FIGURES**

Figure 1: Site Location

Figure 2: Plan of groundworks showing foundations

Figure 3: Sections

### **PLATES**

Plate 1: deposits within the new foundations

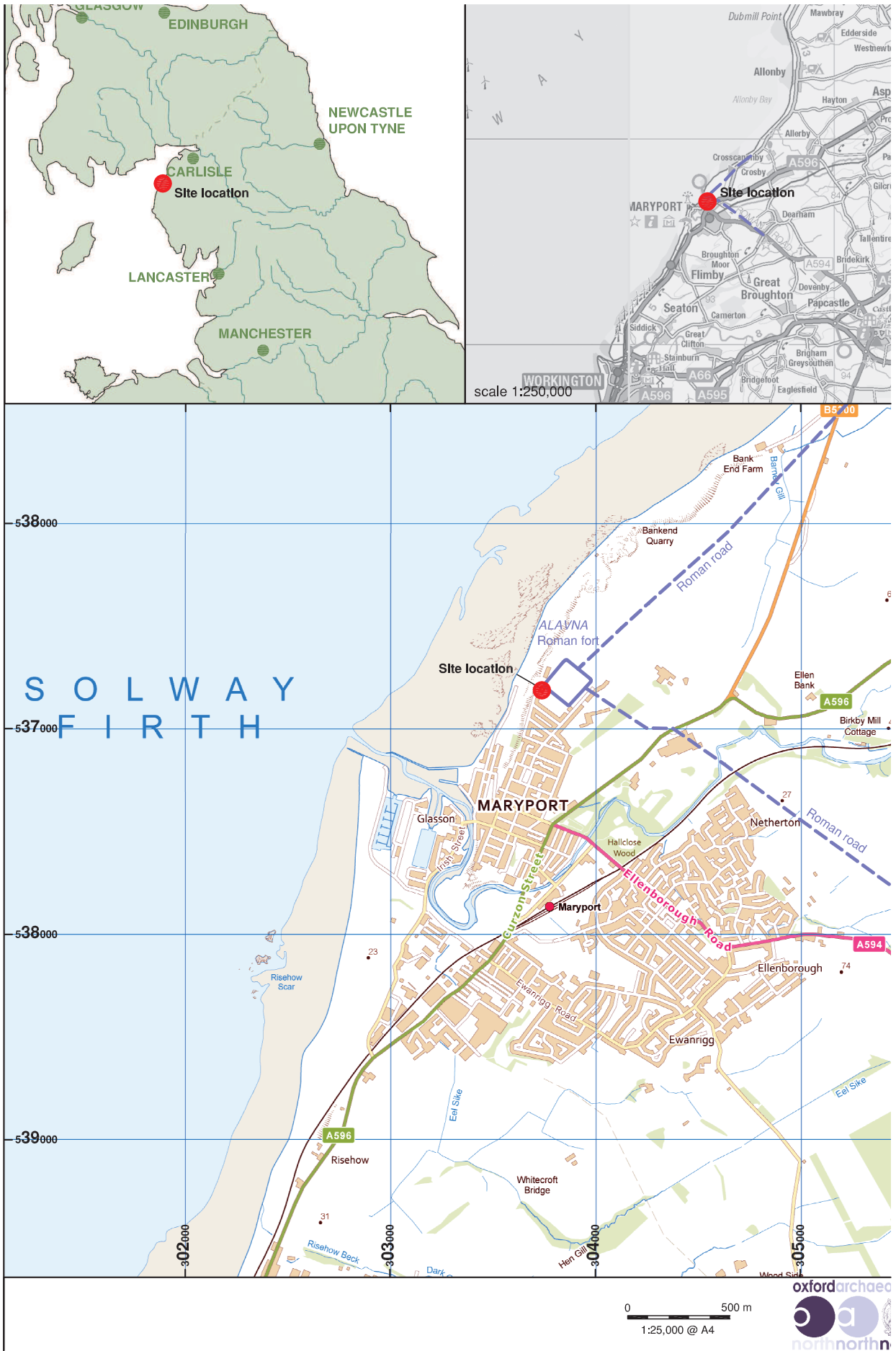


Figure 1: Site location



The Promenade

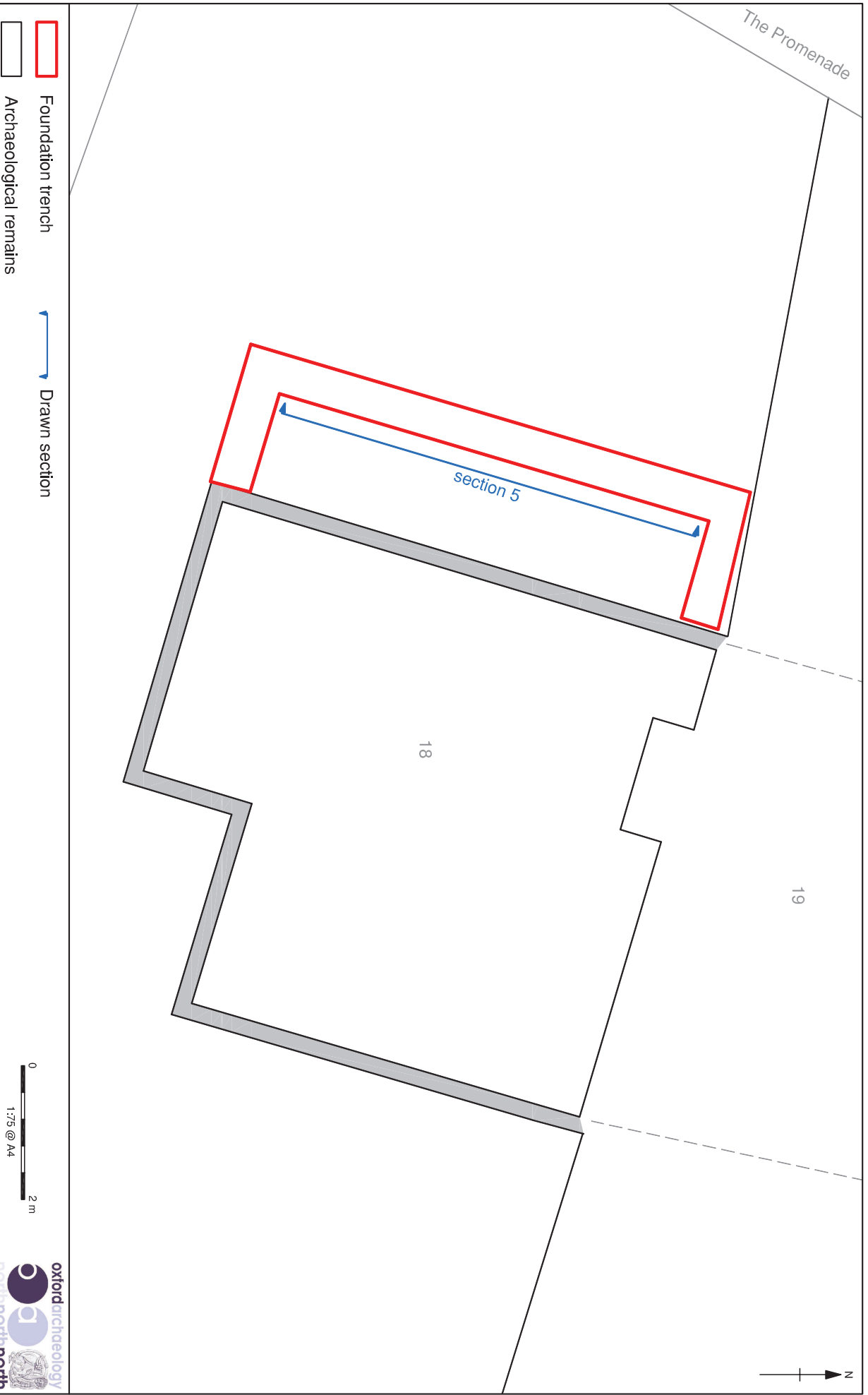
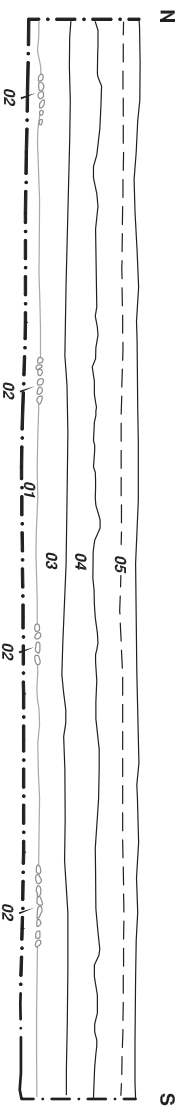


Figure 2: Plan of groundworks showing foundations



Section 5 - west-facing





-  Limit of excavation
-  Archaeological remains



Figure 3: Sections



*Plate 4: deposits within the new foundations*

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## APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

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July 2013

Oxford  
Archaeology  
North

**18, THE PROMENADE  
MARYPORT,,  
CUMBRIA  
CA15 6**

**Written Scheme of Investigation for:  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

### ***Proposals***

*The following project design is offered in response to a request for a proposed archaeological watching brief at 18, The Promenade, Maryport issued by Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service.*

## BACKGROUND

### CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) have produced the following Written Scheme of Investigations for an archaeological Watching Brief on construction work for a new-build extension to be attached to a property: 18, The Promenade, Maryport, CA15 6, Planning Reference 2/2013/0576 (Fig 1). Specifically, it proposes monitoring all activities, which will result in a below-ground-level impact, where there is significant potential for disturbing any archaeological deposits that may be present. This document has been produced at the request of Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) and is in accordance with the advice CCCHES have given to Allerdale Borough Council, which states:

An archaeological watching brief shall be undertaken by a qualified archaeologist during the course of the ground works of the permitted development. The archaeological watching brief shall be in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority in advance of the permitted development. Within two months of the completion of the permitted development, 3 copies of the report shall be furnished to the Local Planning Authority.

The purposes of the watching brief have been specified as being in order to "...afford a reasonable opportunity for an examination to be made to determine the existence of any remains of archaeological interest within the site and for the investigation and recording of such remains".

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The Roman site at Maryport occupies a prominent position overlooking the Solway Firth, to the north of the modern town. It comprises the earthwork remains of an auxiliary fort and an extensive extramural (civil) settlement, the main focus for which appears to have been to the north and north-east of the fort. Much of the site is a Scheduled Monument (SM 27746), and, as part of the Cumbrian coastal defences, the fort formed an integral part of the Hadrianic frontier system in northern England (Breeze 2006, 373-5), the best-known element of which is Hadrian's Wall itself.

Antiquarian interest in Roman Maryport dates back to the sixteenth century, but very little modern excavation has been undertaken. However, highly-significant discoveries were made in the extramural settlement during the late-nineteenth century (Fig 2). Unquestionably the most important of these occurred in April 1870, when a 'cache' of 17 second-century altars was found (Bruce 1874, 178; 1875) at a location *c* 300m north-east of the fort. Today, the altars form the core focus of the Netherhall Collection at the Senhouse Museum. They are of international significance, and make Maryport unique in Roman Britain (Wilson 1997a, 32). Re-investigation of this site in 2011-12 by Newcastle University (Newcastle University 2012) revealed that the 'pits' found in 1870 were in fact substantial post-pits, the remains of a large, late Roman (or possibly immediately post-Roman) timber building, or a series of buildings on the same site, in which the altars had been reused as post-packing or post-pads (*ibid*; Haynes and Wilmott 2012). The building/buildings may have been associated with a small number of inhumation burials.

Research on the site of Roman Maryport continued through the twentieth century, although with only limited excavation (Jarrett 1976; Flynn 2006a; 2006b). Of key significance was the production of two volumes of essays: *Roman Maryport and its setting: Essays in memory of Michael G Jarrett* (Wilson 1997b) and *Romans on the Solway: Essays in honour of Richard Bellhouse* (Wilson and Caruana 2004). The latter volume included an account of a programme of extensive geophysical survey undertaken across much of the site between 2000 and 2004 (Biggins and Taylor 2004 (Fig 2)). This survey resulted in the production of an exceptionally detailed plan of much of the settlement (*op cit* 114, fig 5.9), and revealed a great variety of features associated with both the fort and the extramural settlement, including a large number of discrete 'properties' or 'building plots', extending for several hundred metres on both sides of the road leading north-east from the fort's east gate (*ibid*). A second, more intensive, programme of geophysical survey has recently been undertaken (Biggins and Taylor 2010), but this was restricted largely to the area of Robinson's 'temples' and the find spot of the altars.

Number 18, The Promenade, is sited immediately to the south-west of the Hadrianic Fort. It is probable that the property lies within any parade ground associated with the fort, however, the extramural

settlement may also extend on this side of the fort as well as to the north east of it. Indeed, the 2004 geophysical survey depicts archaeological features, including probable structural remains, continuing into an area to the south-west of the fort and to the east of the property. Excavations, undertaken for a playground there, in 2005 (Flynn 2006 a and b), found evidence suggesting that a larger earthwork fort, dating either to the Trajanic or late-Flavian periods extended into this area.

## **OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH (OA NORTH)**

OA North has considerable experience of the evaluation and excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England, including Cumbria, during the past 35 years. OA North is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct. A rigorous approach is taken towards health and safety and our staff are CSCS accredited. OA North are insured for third party liability and carry Public, Employers and Professional indemnity.

## **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **PROJECT AIMS**

The watching brief will monitor all construction works that will result in a below-ground-level impact and where there is significant potential for disturbing any archaeological remains that may be present. For example all excavations for foundations, services, areas for stockpiling or hard-standing. This will be with the intention of identifying and appropriately characterising and recording any archaeological features or deposits present within the impacted zone. This information will be used to inform a decision regarding whether such archaeological remains can be preserved *in situ* or whether there is a requirement to excavate them and preserve them by record. In the event of the latter, archaeological work will be undertaken so as to ensure that an accurate record of the archaeological remains is made and that, as far as is possible, they are understood.

### **REPORT AND ARCHIVE PRODUCTION**

If the results of the watching brief are negative, a very brief report to this effect can be produced for the client and supplied to CCCHES, upon their request. If any significant archaeology is identified a suitable level of analysis/reporting will be agreed with the client and CCCHES. Such a report will as a minimum include:

- A site location plan, related to the national grid;
- A front cover/frontispiece which includes the planning application number and the national grid reference of the site;
- The dates on which the fieldwork was undertaken;
- A concise, non-technical summary of the results;
- An explanation of any agreed variations to the brief, including justification for any analyses not undertaken;
- A description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and the results obtained;
- Plans and sections at an appropriate scale, showing the location and position of deposits and finds located, and absolute heights above Ordnance Datum;
- A list of, and dates for, any finds recovered and a description and interpretation of the deposits identified;

- A description of any environmental or other specialist work undertaken and the results obtained.

Three copies of the report will be deposited with the County Historic Environment Record (CHER) within a reasonable period following the completion of fieldwork. This will be on the understanding that the report will be made available as a public document through the CHER.

The results of the watching brief will be made available for inclusion in a summary report to a suitable regional or national archaeological publication if further archaeological fieldwork is expected.

An archive will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations in Brown (2007). Arrangements will be made for its long term storage and deposition with an appropriate repository. A copy shall also be offered to the National Monuments Record.

In the event that any finds are recovered, the transfer of the ownership of finds will be made to a local or relevant specialist museum, assuming the landowner gives their approval. The County Historic Environment Service will be notified of the arrangements made.

Cumbria HER is taking part in the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. The online OASIS form at <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/> will, therefore, also be completed as part of the project. This will be on the understanding that information on projects undertaken in Cumbria will be made available through the above website, unless otherwise agreed.

## **METHOD STATEMENT**

### **FIELDWORK**

All aspects of the evaluation shall be conducted in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Conduct* (2009).

The archaeological techniques will be selected to cause the minimum amount of destruction. Work will proceed in such a manner as to avoid any unnecessary delays to construction and will comply with all relevant health and safety regulations. All of those working on site will be made aware of the significance and history of the site.

An archaeologist will attend the site, on the request of the client or their representative, to monitor any below-ground works which will have a significant potential of disturbing any archaeological remains that might be present. It is anticipated that this will include all hand-dug or mechanical stripping of topsoil *etc* and/or deeper excavation, for example, site clearance, foundations, drains or service trenches or areas for storage or hardstanding.

If archaeological features or deposits are encountered during excavation, measures will be taken to safeguard them, and the client and CCCHES will be informed, as soon as is practicable. If the archaeological remains are of limited significance and/or extent, it may be possible to mitigate them during the course of the watching brief. In the event of more significant remains being discovered, a decision will be reached, through discussion with the client and CCCHES, as to whether the archaeology can be preserved *in situ* or whether it should be excavated and preserved by record. In the case of *in situ* preservation, an explicit methodology will need to be determined to ensure that the archaeological remains are not compromised. If excavation is preferred, a methodology for this will be agreed with the contractor that allows sufficient time for the archaeology to be excavated and recorded, and which causes the minimal amount of disruption to the construction works.

Any human remains found will be left *in situ*, covered and protected. No further investigation will normally proceed beyond that necessary to establish the date and character of the burial, and the CCCHES and the local Coroner will be informed immediately if a burial is discovered. If removal is essential, the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Ministry of Justice licence, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. The removal of human remains will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations.

All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, using a system, adapted from that used by the Centre for Archaeology Service of English Heritage. Results of all field investigations will be recorded on OA North's *pro forma* context sheets. All features and deposits will be planned at an appropriate scale and representative trench sections will be drawn. Digital photographs will record the trenches and illustrate individual features. The elevation of the underlying natural deposits will be recorded as will the elevation of any archaeological horizons. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.

Finds recovery and sampling programmes will be in accordance with current best practice (following IfA and other specialist guidelines). All artefacts and ecofacts will be treated in accordance with OA North standard practice, which is cognisant of IfA and UKIC Guidelines. In general, this will mean that (where appropriate and safe to do so) finds are washed, dried, marked, bagged and packed in stable conditions; no attempt at conservation will be made unless special circumstances require prompt action. In such a case guidance and/or expertise will be sought from a suitably qualified conservator. OA North will assess the finds for conservation after fieldwork has been completed, but the cost of conservation must be born by the client.

Samples will be collected for artefact retrieval should this prove necessary, for example, in the case of deposits associated with metalworking being identified.

Any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996/7.

The field team will be advised and supported by Oxford Archaeology's in-house environmental specialists. An agreed sampling strategy will be defined through discussions with CCCHEs, if archaeologically sensitive features or deposits are encountered during the watching brief.

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

OA North recognises its responsibilities with regard to health and safety, and will establish safe working practices in accordance with current legislation. OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Health and Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1991) and OA North's own health and safety guidance documentation. OA North's site staff are CSCS accredited and senior staff are qualified First Aiders. All staff are issued with Personal Protective Equipment and each team with a telephone and a first aid kit. OA North will liaise with all parties to ensure all site specific health and safety regulations are met. A risk assessment will be completed in advance of any on-site works, which will be made available with our method statement.

OA North staff will work under the supervision of the principle contractor, with regards to site health and safety procedures and legislation. Site access will be well regulated and notification of hazards such as services and contaminated ground will be obtained from the principle contractor. It will be the principal contractor's responsibility to alert OA North of any such.

## **RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING**

### **STAFF AND TIMETABLE PROPOSALS**

The overall management of the project will be undertaken by **Fraser Brown** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

The watching brief will be undertaken by a competent archaeologist. The duration of the work will be dependent on the principle contractor's programme.

If finds or deposits are encountered that require specialist input, OA North will use Oxford Archaeology's in-house specialists out of preference, but external specialists may also be commissioned, subject to the agreement of the CCCHEs, should no in house expertise be available.



Normally OA North staff work a 7.5 hour day, Monday to Friday, though adjustments to hours may be made to maximise daylight working time in winter and to meet travel requirements

## PROJECT MONITORING

### PROCEDURE

Fieldwork will be monitored by the Historic Environment Officer on behalf of the local planning authority. CCCHEs will be given prior notification, detailing when the watching brief is going to take place, and will be afforded access to the site at reasonable notice.

The involvement of CCCHEs will be acknowledged in any report or publication generated by this project.

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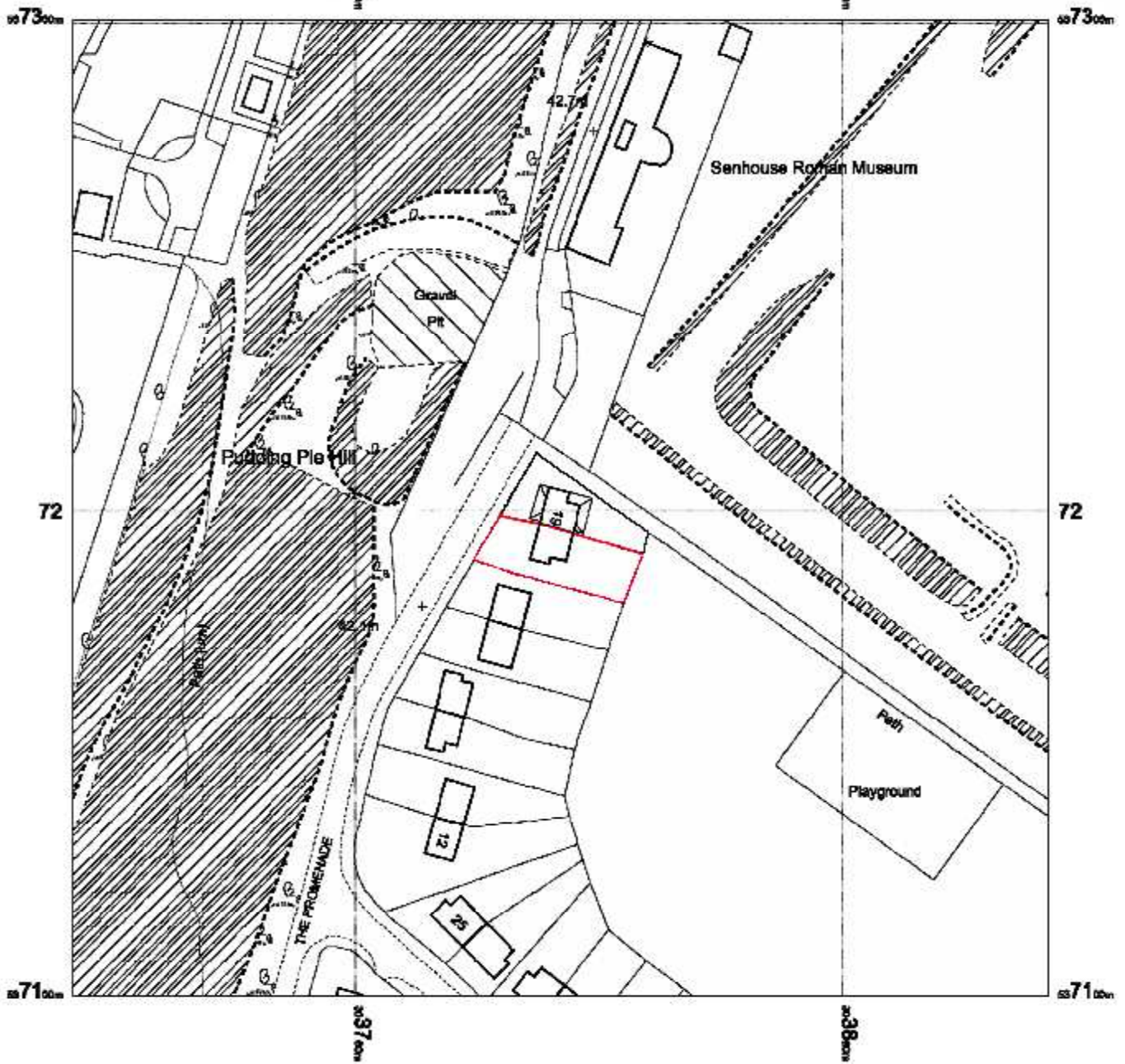


Figure 1: Location of the watching brief (application area within red box)  
 the watching brief (application area within red box)