



Longbyre to Gilsland, Northumberland

Archaeological Evaluation and Watching Brief Report



Oxford Archaeology North

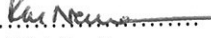
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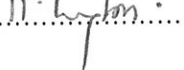
**Hadrian's Wall Heritage
Limited, on behalf of Natural
England**

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SUMMARY

The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, opened in May 2003, and developed by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), aims to help conserve the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, whilst allowing the public to enjoy access to the Wall and its setting. The Path has been designed so that it is not intrusive on the surrounding area, and that the structures installed are in positions that will not adversely affect the Monument.

The part of Hadrian's Wall with which this report is concerned lies between the B6318 at Longbyre (NY 6358 6622) and the centre of Gilsland village (NY 6560 6607), within that part of the Monument designated as SM26071, in west Northumberland. In this area, the National Trail was established on an existing Public Right of Way, on which stiles had been used to cross field boundaries. This path follows the line of the Wall ditch in the east, moving towards the Wall after a few hundred metres, from which point it lies close to the northern side of the Wall into Gilsland village. It is now important to upgrade these structures in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), to make access easier for the less able. As a result, permission was granted to remove the existing stiles and install gates in their stead. The level of ground disturbance necessitated by the replacement of the stiles with gates in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall made it likely that there would be an impact on sensitive archaeological remains and, therefore, it was agreed with English Heritage that the sites of four such structures should be evaluated prior to a decision being made as to the precise type and design of gate. In addition, watching briefs were requested during the excavation of postholes for new gateways at a further six locations.

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has provided advice to Natural England since 1996 on archaeological matters relating to the development and ongoing management of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail. Following the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent in March 2010, OA North undertook the works, which were completed between July and November 2010.

This report presents the results obtained from the evaluations and the archaeological watching briefs. In the majority of the areas examined, particularly the watching briefs, little of archaeological significance was identified, but in two of the evaluation areas, the remains of Hadrian's Wall and the Wall ditch were recorded (Sites 3 and 4), respectively. At Site 3, the northern face of Hadrian's Wall was exposed, demonstrating that the current field boundary follows the southern edge of Hadrian's Wall at this location. Site 4 was situated within the Wall ditch. Although deposits infilling this ditch were excavated, neither the sides nor base were located within the trench.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank David McGlade, the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Officer, for commissioning the work; and Tim Fish and the Northumberland County Council Field Team for their co-operation during the course of the project. OA North would also like to thank Mike Collins, the Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for English Heritage, for his advice and continued support during the works.

The evaluations were directed by Jeremy Bradley and Andy Bates, assisted by Ric Buckle, and the watching briefs were undertaken by Ric Buckle. The report was compiled by Andy Bates, and the illustrations were produced by Mark Tidmarsh. The project was managed by Rachel Newman, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, opened in May 2003, and developed by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), aims to help conserve the Frontiers of the Roman Empire: Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, whilst allowing the public to enjoy access to the Wall and its setting. The Path has been designed so that it is not intrusive on the surrounding area, and that the structures installed are in positions that will not adversely affect the Monument. In the westernmost part of Northumberland, the National Trail was established on an existing Public Right of Way, on which stiles had been used to cross field boundaries. This follows the line of the Wall ditch in the east, moving towards the Wall after a few hundred metres, from which point it lies close to the northern side of the Wall into Gilsland village. It is now important to upgrade these structures in line with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), to make access easier for the less able. As a result, permission was granted to remove the existing stiles and install gates in their stead.
- 1.1.2 The part of Hadrian's Wall with which this report is concerned lies between the B6318 at Longbyre (NY 6358 6622) and the centre of Gilsland village (NY 6560 6607), within that part of the Monument designated as SM26071. The level of ground disturbance necessitated by the replacement of the stiles with gates in the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall made it likely that there would be an impact on sensitive archaeological remains and, therefore, it was agreed with English Heritage that the sites of four such structures should be evaluated prior to a decision being made as to the precise type and design of gate. In addition, watching briefs were requested during the excavation of postholes for new gateways at a further six locations.
- 1.1.3 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has provided advice to the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) since 1996 on archaeological matters relating to the development and ongoing management of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail. A project design for the proposed works was submitted in January 2010 (*Appendix 1*) as part of the application for Scheduled Monument Consent. Following the granting of Scheduled Monument Consent in March 2010, OA North undertook the works, which were completed between July and November 2010.
- 1.1.4 This report presents the results obtained from the evaluations and the archaeological watching brief, together with a brief discussion of the significance of these results.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A Project Design (*Appendix 1*) was compiled by OA North as part of the application for Scheduled Monument Consent. All work was carried out in accordance with this Project Design, the work being consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 EXCAVATIONS

2.2.1 **Evaluations:** in total, four small trenches were excavated, one at each of the particularly sensitive locations where gates were to replace existing stiles (Table 1). Each trench was excavated by hand in a stratigraphical manner, down to the depth of the uppermost archaeological deposits, or the natural geology. Any deposits of antiquity, and thus of archaeological significance, were examined by hand, but excavation was limited to an assessment of the nature, date and survival of the deposits, rather than full excavation. The upper surface of any archaeological layers was identified, cleaned and recorded, both in plan and section. All spoil was scanned for artefacts.

Site no	Grid Reference	Size
1	NY 6492 6608	1.5 x 1m
2	NY 6473 6609	1.5 x 1m
3	NY 6430 6618	2 x 1.44m
4	NY 6544 6606	1.2 x 1m

Table 1: Locations of the evaluation trenches

2.2.2 **Watching Briefs:** archaeological watching briefs were undertaken at six locations (Table 2). These oversaw the excavation of postholes close to, or within, existing wall lines, to allow the insertion of gates to replace stiles. A permanent-presence watching brief was maintained during these works.

Watching Brief References	Grid	Works Observed
NY 6573 6591		Excavation of two postholes
NY 6526 6606		Excavation of six postholes
NY 6464 6612		Excavation of two postholes
NY 6368 6624		Excavation of two postholes
NY 6366 6624		Excavation of two postholes
NY 6357 6624		Excavation of two postholes

Table 2: Locations of the watching briefs

2.2.3 **Recording:** recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of the deposits and materials revealed, on OA North *pro-forma* sheets. The evaluations were located with a differential GPS (accuracy ± 0.01 m). Hand-drawn plans were produced in the field showing the contents

of the trenches or the excavations overseen by the watching briefs, with representative sections being drawn at a scale of 1:10 or 1:20, as appropriate. The field survey data were incorporated with digital map data in a CAD system to create the figures used in this report.

- 2.2.4 A full and detailed photographic record of the trenches was maintained. Photography was undertaken using 35mm cameras on archival black and white film, as well as colour transparency. A 7.1 megapixel digital camera was also used and provided the illustrations for the present report.

2.3 FINDS

- 3.3.1 The recovery of finds and sampling programmes were in accordance with current best practice (eg IfA 1992, and other specialist guidelines) and subject to appropriate in-house expert advice. Handling of finds, their management and storage during and after fieldwork followed professional guidelines (IfA 1992; UKIC 1984).

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 The results of the archaeological evaluations and watching briefs will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (1991; 2006) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (Walker 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IfA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 2.4.2 OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. It is intended that the paper archive should be deposited with the Northumberland County Record Office in Morpeth, and a further copy of the archive can be made available for deposition in the National Archaeological Record. In addition, the Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project *Online Access to the index of Archaeological Investigations* (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project. The only artefacts recovered are of little archaeological significance.
- 2.4.3 The paper archive generated from the evaluation will be transferred in accordance with current guidelines on archive transfer (AAF 2007).

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 **Location:** the element of Hadrian's Wall with which these works are concerned lies between the B6318 at Longbyre and the centre of Gilsland village, between NY 6358 6622 and NY 6560 6607. All the works lay within the Scheduled Monument of *Hadrian's Wall, Vallum, section of Stanegate Roman road and a Roman temporary camp between the B6318 road and Poltross Burn, in Wall Miles 46 and 47*, designated SM26071. The landscape is predominantly open, exposed, lowland pasture enclosed by drystone walls and hedgerows, with blocks of woodland (Countryside Commission 1998, 51-2).
- 3.1.2 **Geology:** the underlying solid geology of the area comprised Carboniferous (350 to 299 million years ago) sedimentary rocks, a repetitive succession of limestone, sandstone and shales. Most of these rocks are of the Middle or Upper Limestone Groups, with several small areas of coal measures along the line of the Stublick Fault System (*ibid*). Boulder clay, sands and gravels of the last, Devensian (110,000 to 10,000 years ago), glaciation cover the solid geology (*ibid*).

3.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 At the time of the Roman invasion of southern Britain in AD 43, what is now northern England probably lay within the tribal territory of the Brigantes. The Brigantian queen, Cartimandua, seems to have entered into a treaty with Rome (Hanson and Campbell 1986, 73), which would probably have kept the region free from military occupation. However, this arrangement was shattered in or about AD 69, when the Roman world was plunged into civil war following the death of the emperor Nero (Webster 1970, 196). The army in Britain seems to have been taken by surprise when Cartimandua was ousted by her former consort Venutius, who was by this time actively hostile towards Rome. In the war which followed, Venutius was eventually defeated and the whole region was occupied (Braund 1984; Hanson and Campbell 1986), the newly conquered territory being held down by means of an extensive network of forts and roads.
- 3.2.2 During the late AD 70s and early AD 80s, Roman military strategy in Britain seems to have envisaged conquest of the whole island (Shotter 2000, 39), and to this end the army had penetrated as far as what is now north-east Scotland by *c* AD 83 (Shotter 2004, 37-9). However, by the early second century, a complete withdrawal south to the Tyne-Solway line had taken place (Daniels 1989, 34). The principal reason for this is likely to have been the inability of the army to hold Scotland in the face of extensive troop withdrawals for service on the Rhine and Danube (Breeze 2006, 26).
- 3.2.3 It is generally acknowledged that, following this withdrawal, the Tyne-Solway corridor was held by a slightly greater concentration of military units than elsewhere in the North (Jones 1991), stationed in a series of large forts placed at reasonably regular intervals and connected by an east-west road. Until

recently, this disposition was seen by most scholars as marking the establishment of a frontier system (the so-called Stanegate frontier) extending from Corbridge in the east to Carlisle in the west. In some quarters, the concept of this frontier has been challenged (Dobson 1986; Bidwell 1999), though the most recent review of the evidence (Hodgson 2000) concluded that the Stanegate 'system' could have performed a frontier control function.

- 3.2.4 Whatever the precise situation, the emperor Hadrian ordered the construction of an elaborate frontier system on the Tyne-Solway line following his visit to Britain in AD 122. Work probably commenced on Hadrian's Wall in AD 122-3 (Breeze and Dobson 2000, 66), and was largely complete by *c* AD 128, though work continued to the end of Hadrian's reign in AD 138 (Breeze 2006, 28). As originally planned, the system comprised a curtain wall, approximately ten Roman feet (*c* 3m) wide, with small fortlets (milecastles) at intervals of one Roman mile, and turrets every one-third of a mile (two between each pair of milecastles). The milecastles and turrets were originally intended to be garrisoned from the 'Stanegate' forts, a short distance to the rear (Breeze and Dobson 2000, 39-40), but at an early stage in construction, a decision was made to place full-sized forts on the line of the Wall itself (*op cit*, 74). It was from these that the garrisons of the smaller installations would have been drawn. During the course of the construction programme, the width of the stone wall was also reduced to around eight Roman feet (*c* 2.4m) or narrower (Breeze 2006, 51, 54).
- 3.2.5 The Wall was fronted, for most of its length, by a V-shaped ditch, whilst to the south was the Vallum, an enigmatic earthwork comprising a large, flat-bottomed ditch, flanked to north and south by mounds. The purpose of this is unclear, but it may have marked the boundary of a 'militarised zone', from which unauthorised persons were excluded (Breeze 2006, 86).
- 3.2.6 For most of its length, the Wall was built of stone, but west of the River Irthing it was initially constructed of turf and timber, for reasons that remain obscure (Breeze 2006, 59), and this was *c* 6m wide at the base. The original milecastles in this sector were also of turf and timber, but the turrets were stone-built from the outset. Eventually, the Turf Wall and its milecastles were rebuilt in stone, but in some places this does not seem to have occurred until the late AD 150s, or even later (*op cit*, 60).
- 3.2.7 Hadrian's Wall was abandoned in the early AD 140s, following the Roman reoccupation of southern Scotland under the emperor Antoninus Pius and the establishment of a new frontier, marked by the Antonine Wall, on the Forth-Clyde isthmus. However, Pius' conquests had been abandoned by *c* AD 160, and Hadrian's Wall was recommissioned (*op cit*, 28-9). Thereafter, it continued to mark the northern frontier of Roman Britain to the end of Roman administration in the fifth century AD. As such, it underwent periodic refurbishment during the third and fourth centuries, most notably in the late second/early third centuries and a century or so later (*op cit*, 32-3).
- 3.2.8 There is increasing evidence that some elements of the Wall, particularly some forts, remained occupied beyond the formal end of Roman administration in the early fifth century (Wilmott 1997), though details remain unclear. Little is

known of the history of the Wall through the early medieval period. However, from early post-Roman times to the nineteenth century, the monument provided an ideal source of building materials and was extensively robbed of its stone, particularly in the densely populated eastern sector, within what is now urban Tyneside, and in the west, on the Cumberland Plain.

3.3 CONDITION OF THE MONUMENT

- 3.3.1 The archaeological works between Longbyre and Gilsland took place between Milecastle 46 (Carvoran), on the east, and Milecastle 48 (Poltross Burn), to the west, within Wall Miles 46 and 47. The Wall ditch and Vallum are strikingly well preserved as they descend the slope westwards to the River Tipalt (Breeze 2006, 283), immediately to the east of the area of the work. Further west, the ditch is indistinct, but immediately west of the B6318 a short stretch of the Broad Wall is preserved, three courses in height (*ibid*), within the cutting for the modern road. Westwards from there, the line of the ditch is clear up to the site of Turret 46b, which lies entirely beneath Wallend Farm (*ibid*). The line of the Vallum is also clear in this area, running across the Haltwhistle Golf Course. When the Wall was given up following the Roman reoccupation of southern Scotland in the early AD 140s, gaps were dug in the Vallum mounds at this point. However, the spoil was merely dumped nearby in heaps, rather than being used to create causeways across the Vallum ditch (*ibid*).
- 3.3.2 Milecastle 47 (Chapel House) was investigated in 1935, and was found to be unusually large for a Stone Wall milecastle (*ibid*). Though badly robbed, by means of explosives, in the nineteenth century (Hodgson 2009, 127), evidence was found for two buildings on either side of the central road, and an oven in the north-west corner (Breeze 2006, 283). Turrets 47a and 47b were located in 1912 (*op cit*, 284), though neither is visible today. The Wall ditch in this area is unusually large, up to 15.2m wide, and the glacis is also prominent; excavation in 1971 found it to be 1.22m high and at least 9m wide (*ibid*). It would seem that, at least for part of this section, the glacis in effect created the ditch, by enhancing the natural fall of the land.

4. RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 Four evaluation trenches were excavated (Fig 1), measuring between 1.2m and 2m in length, and 1m to 1.44m wide. In addition, archaeological watching briefs were undertaken at six locations (Fig 1). Mike Collins, the English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, was consulted where appropriate at each stage of the works.
- 4.1.2 An overview of the results is presented below., A more detailed description of each deposit and archaeological feature within the evaluations is provided in *Appendix 2*.

4.2 SITE 1

- 4.2.1 The trench at Site 1 was excavated at NY 6492 6608 (Fig 1) on a north/south alignment, and measuring 1.5m by 1m (Fig 2; Plate 1), immediately to the north of Milecastle 47. Prior to the excavation, a section of the drystone boundary wall extending northwards from the boundary apparently on the line of Hadrian's Wall was dismantled to accommodate the proposed new gate, its foundation being recorded as structure **102**. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.74m (Fig 2; Plate 2), through topsoil **101** and subsoil **103**. A sondage was excavated into deposit **103** at the northern end of the trench, but this did not locate the natural geology. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered within the trench, which confirms that the line of Hadrian's Wall lies to the south, presumably under the modern field wall. Given that the ground drops away steeply to the north, it can be concluded that the site is on the berm to the north of the Wall, which here has not been obviously modified.

4.3 SITE 2

- 4.3.1 The trench at Site 2 was excavated at NY 6473 6609 (Fig 1) on a north/south alignment, measuring 1.5m by 1m in size (Fig 3; Plate 3), and adjacent to Hadrian's Wall. Prior to the excavation, a section of the boundary fence extending northwards from the boundary apparently on the line of Hadrian's Wall was dismantled to accommodate the proposed new gate. The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.6m, within a sondage at the northern end of the trench (Fig 3; Plate 4). Topsoil **201** was removed, following which the excavation examined three layers of fluvial deposits, **202**, **203**, and **204**. The natural glacial geology was not located in the trench. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered, which confirms that the line of Hadrian's Wall lies to the south, presumably under the modern field wall. Again, there was no evidence of modification to the berm.

4.4 SITE 3

- 4.4.1 The trench at Site 3 was excavated at NY 6430 6618 (Fig 1) on an east/west alignment, and measured 2.0m in length, a maximum of 0.44m wide and a

maximum of 0.54m deep (Fig 4; Plate 5). The trench was placed across an area of demolished north/south-aligned drystone boundary wall, **302**, extending northwards from the boundary on the apparent line of Hadrian's Wall, and this had to be partially cleared prior to the excavation of the trench.

- 4.4.2 The trench was excavated through topsoil **301** and subsoil **305**, to a depth of 0.38m, whereupon the northern face of Hadrian's Wall (**303**) was encountered. Two courses of the Wall were visible. An upper course comprised random rubble, forming a rough northern side, which tapered inwards, the stones measuring a maximum of 0.35m by 0.38m by 0.19m in size. The underlying course, of which only the upper side was partially visible, appeared to comprise roughly rectangular blocks of stone, producing an even northern edge. This course projected *c* 0.20m to the north of the overlying course, the stone within it measuring up to 0.50m in length. It seemed that the stones were bonded with a soft mortar.
- 4.4.3 Layer **304**, seemingly glacial till, was encountered at a depth of 0.32m below the ground surface, to the north of Wall **303**. Some slight evidence for a construction cut (**307**) through layer **304** was identified (Fig 4; Plate 6), although it was difficult to establish with certainty in the very limited area of excavation. The backfill between the putative cut and the masonry, deposit **306**, was almost identical to deposit **304**.
- 4.4.4 The overlying drystone boundary wall, **302**, had evidently been constructed directly onto the remains of Hadrian's Wall (Fig 4; Plate 7), as had the east/west-aligned boundary wall, still standing in a good state of repair. This seems to have been constructed over the southern side of Hadrian's Wall.
- 4.4.5 No further excavation was undertaken. The remains of Hadrian's Wall were covered by a permeable membrane, with the post for the new gate being placed immediately to the north of the Wall (Plate 8). The trench was then backfilled, with packing stones placed around the new post to hold it steady, as agreed at a site meeting with English Heritage.
- 4.4.6 In addition, a posthole for a second post was excavated to the north of the evaluation trench for the opposing gatepost. This measured 0.44m by 0.33m in size, and was excavated 1.07m to the north of the evaluation trench, to a maximum depth of 0.73m (Plate 9). This posthole was excavated through 0.40m of topsoil **301**, and 0.33m of sediment identical to **304**. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered in this, apparently confirming that the berm in this area was unmodified.

4.5 SITE 4

- 4.5.1 The trench at Site 4 was excavated at NY 6544 6606 (Fig 1), on a north/south alignment in the vicinity of the Wall ditch, and measured 1.2m long and 1m wide (Fig 5; Plate 10). Prior to the work, part of the existing drystone boundary wall was dismantled to accommodate the proposed new gate.
- 4.5.2 Topsoil **400** was removed, following which the excavation examined a series of four deposits (Fig 5; Plate 11). These sediments, comprising largely sandy silts, clearly formed the upper fills of the Wall ditch, and predominantly

derived from surrounding eroding soils and horizons, although deposit **402** appeared to contain large quantities of small stones, presumably derived from the glacial till. There was some indication that at least some of the material was deposited from the north (Fig 5). No finds were recovered from these ditch fills, and the limited size of the excavations prevents any further interpretation.

4.6 WATCHING BRIEF 1

- 4.6.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two postholes, 1.2m apart, for a new gate at NY 6573 6591 (Fig 1; Plate 12). This structure was in the vicinity of the Vallum, although on the roadside verge. The excavations measured 0.35m square, and reached a maximum depth of 0.9m.
- 4.6.2 The excavations removed 0.2m of mid-grey brown sandy silt topsoil, and 0.5m of dark brown clayey silt subsoil, containing occasional small- to medium-sized sub-rounded stone inclusions. Below the subsoil, a pale grey silt was encountered, but this soon became highly waterlogged. No archaeologically significant deposits were identified by the watching brief.

4.7 WATCHING BRIEF 2

- 4.7.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of six postholes for a new kissing gate at NY 6528 6606 (Fig 1), within the infilled Wall ditch. Each posthole measured 0.35m square and reached a maximum depth of 0.9m (Plate 13). Part of a drystone boundary wall was removed to accommodate the new gate. Each posthole was excavated through the same deposits.
- 4.7.2 Topsoil comprised mid-grey brown sandy silt, with a moderate quantity of small- to medium-sized angular stone inclusions, measuring 0.20m thick. Below this was 0.35m of subsoil, a mid-brown sandy silt with a moderate quantity of small angular stone inclusions. The basal deposit, below 0.55m in depth, was a mid-yellowish brown sandy silt which contained abundant quantities of sandstone rubble. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

4.8 WATCHING BRIEF 3

- 4.8.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two postholes, 1.4m apart, for a new gate at NY 6464 6612 (Fig 1), within the area of the counterscarp mound, although no remains of this were visible at this point. The excavated holes measured 0.2m square and 1m deep (Plate 14). Their excavation removed 0.2m of a dark brownish-grey sandy silt topsoil. Below the topsoil, a mid-brownish orange silty coarse fluvial sand was excavated. Twelve sherds of nineteenth-century white earthenware and red glazed earthenware were recovered from the excavations, but were not retained as they were clearly of no archaeological significance, presumably originating from the nearby Chapel House or Green Croft. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

4.9 WATCHING BRIEF 4

4.9.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two postholes, each measuring 0.30m square and 0.80m deep, for a new gate at NY 6368 6624 (Fig 1; Plate 15), in the vicinity of the Wall ditch. The excavations removed a mid-brown sandy silt with occasional small rounded stone inclusions, heavily disturbed by rooting activity. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

4.10 WATCHING BRIEF 5

4.10.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two postholes, measuring 0.3m square and 0.80m deep, for a new gate at NY 6366 6624 (Fig 1; Plate 16), again in the vicinity of the Wall ditch. The excavations proceeded through a mid-brown sandy silt topsoil, with occasional small- to medium-sized rounded stone inclusions. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

4.11 WATCHING BRIEF 6

4.11.1 A watching brief was maintained on the excavation of two postholes, each measuring 0.30m square and 0.80m deep, for a new gate at NY 6357 6624 (Fig 1; Plate 17), also in the vicinity of the Wall ditch. The excavations removed a mid-brown sandy silt topsoil, with occasional small rounded stone inclusions. No archaeologically significant deposits were encountered.

4.12 THE FINDS

4.12.1 Two fragments of artefacts were recovered, both from deposit **103** at Site 1. One (OR 1001) appears to be a small fragment of fired daub, having a very open and irregular texture. The other (OR 1000) is an unusual handle in a sandy cream fabric, with iron-rich inclusions, and a markedly grey core. On a visual inspection of the fabric, it might be possible to suggest that it is an example of Corbridge white ware, current in the second century AD (Tyers 1999, 118-19), but the vessel is clearly not a mortarium, the principal vessel-type produced in this fabric. Indeed, the tightly-looped form of the handle is not particularly characteristic of a Romano-British vessel, although it could perhaps be paralleled amongst 'honey pots' made in 'Verulamium Region' white ware (Tomber and Dore 1998; Tyers 1999, fig 255), which is known to have been reaching Carlisle in the late first and early second centuries, up to the end of the Hadrianic period (Swan *et al* 2009, 603).

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 DISCUSSION

- 6.1.1 In total, four evaluation trenches were excavated and six archaeological watching briefs were maintained in association with works for the upgrading of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, between Longbyre and Gilsland. Of these investigations, only two (Sites 3 and 4) yielded evidence of archaeological significance, though a single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from Site 1.
- 6.1.2 At Site 3, the north face of the Stone Wall was located at a depth of 0.38m below the present ground surface. The foundations of the existing post-medieval boundary walls were found to have been built directly on top of the surviving Roman stonework. It is likely that the existing east to west boundary wall follows the line of the Wall, and was constructed directly upon the denuded remains of its south face.
- 6.1.3 Two courses of masonry were observed, the north face of the uppermost seemingly being offset to the south by 0.2m. The larger dressed stones in the lower course appear to have formed part of the Wall foundation, and may have been set in a shallow construction trench, rather than being laid directly on the ground, though this was not entirely certain. Both forms of construction have been attested by excavation at other sites (Breeze 2006, 53). Too little was seen for the remains to be characterised in more detail, but the Broad Wall foundation has been noted at several places in the sector between the River North Tyne and the River Irthing (*op cit*, 56-7), and a fragment of Broad Wall three courses high survives immediately west of the B6318 (*op cit*, 283), a little over 1km east of Site 3. The Broad Wall foundation was usually about 3.2m wide, though variations between 2.97m and 3.5m have been recorded (*op cit*, 53). The fragment recorded at Site 3 was up to 0.75m wide, meaning that probably some 2.22m of the foundation's full width lay beyond the investigated area, if it was indeed part of the Broad Wall foundation.
- 6.1.4 Site 4, located just over 1km east of Site 3, was situated entirely within the Wall ditch, with neither the ditch edges nor the base being encountered. On average, the Wall ditch was *c* 8.23-8.53m wide and 2.74m deep, with a V-shaped profile (Breeze 2006, 62), but in places within Wall Miles 46 and 47, including just to the west, it was unusually large, at up to 15.2m wide (*op cit*, 284). At Site 4, only a fragment of the feature, 1.2m wide and up to 1m deep (including 0.3m of modern topsoil), was investigated. Beneath the topsoil, a sequence of four fills was recorded which, in view of their position in the top of the ditch, were probably of comparatively recent (post-Roman) date, though none yielded any dating evidence. They appear to represent gradual infilling of the upper part of the ditch, perhaps over a prolonged period.

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APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

January 2010

**Oxford
Archaeology
North**

LONGBYRE TO GILSLAND

NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Proposals

The following project design is offered as part of an application for Scheduled Monument consent (SM26071) for the installation of two structures between the B6318 at Longbyre, and the centre of Gilsland, in western Northumberland. This will necessitate an archaeological evaluation of the proposed positions of the structures, to inform their design so that the monument is not adversely affected by their construction.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, opened in May 2003, and developed by the Countryside Agency (now Natural England), aims to help conserve the monument whilst allowing the public to enjoy the great drama and beauty of the Wall and its surroundings. In the western central sector of the route, through west Northumberland, much of the development work related to upgrading an existing footpath, ensuring that the structures were designed in a sympathetic manner and installed in positions that would not adversely affect the monument. It is now important to upgrade structures to bring them in line with the Disabilities Discrimination Act (1995), and where feasible, there is a proposal that all stiles should be converted to gates.
- 1.2 The Path crosses the line of Hadrian's Wall at the eastern end of the section at Longbyre, whilst following the B6318. It then turns westwards, and the alignment is immediately to the north of the Wall, in the vicinity of the largely infilled ditch. To the west of Wall End Farm, the ditch survives in a much better state, and there it is proposed that a permissive path within it should be confirmed, leading walkers up onto the berm to the south by means of an existing causeway. The Path then continues along the berm, with only a brief diversion at Chapel House Farm, all the way to the Gap. At this point, the Path moves slightly to the north, and it is proposed to manage the walked route up the ditch, rather than the formal route on the narrow counterscarp mound. The route continues in the largely infilled ditch through the former auction mart at Gilsland, before diverting to the north, towards the access to the Guardianship site at Milecastle 48. Given the relatively gentle walking conditions in this section of the Path, the potential exists to improve access for the less able, and it is therefore considered appropriate to install kissing gates at most crossings. The level of ground disturbance necessitated by such structures may have an impact of sensitive archaeology, however, and therefore English Heritage has asked that the sites of two structures should be evaluated prior to a decision being made as to the precise type and design.
- 1.3 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has provided advice to the Countryside Agency (now Natural England) since 1996 on archaeological matters relating to the development and implementation of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail and through this has developed a detailed knowledge of the archaeology of Hadrian's Wall and its associated features. OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. The organisation operates subject to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and is a Registered Archaeological Organisation, number 17.

1.4 SITE LOCATION

- 1.4.1 The element of the monument with which this project design is concerned lies between the B6318 at Longbyre and the centre of Gilsland village, between NY 6358 6622 and NY 6560 6607. All the proposed works lie within the Scheduled Monument of *Hadrian's Wall, Vallum, section of Stanegate Roman*

road and a Roman temporary camp between the B6318 road and Poltross Burn, in Wall Miles 46 and 47, designated SM26071.

- 1.4.2 Given that both of the structures proposed for evaluation are close to the line of Hadrian's Wall (Fig 1), one in the vicinity of Milecastle 47, and a further structure has some engineering issues that may need refinement on site, it is proposed that a single trench be excavated within the footprint of two of the existing boundaries (NY 6492 6608 and NY 6430 6618), and a further trench be excavated adjacent to a boundary to assess precisely how the new structure can be installed (at NY 6464 6612). These will evaluate the presence or absence of significant archaeology. If significant archaeological remains are present, the condition and depth will be assessed, in order to inform the type of structure that can be inserted at these locations and, if necessary, to develop a mitigation strategy to prevent any direct adverse impact on the World Heritage Site. Such a mitigation strategy will be agreed on site with the Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, on behalf of the Secretary of State, before each trench is closed.

2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The purpose of the evaluation will be to establish the presence or absence of significant archaeological stratigraphy at the proposed locations of the structures, and, if present, to validate the purpose, and to establish the condition and extent, character and integrity of the archaeological remains. The objective will be to quantify and qualify the archaeological potential of these limited areas, with a view to informing the type of structure that can be installed without adversely impacting on the archaeology of the monument, and, if necessary, to develop a strategy for the preservation and management of the archaeological remains, so that the proposed structures will not compromise significant deposits, nor the integrity of the monument. The results will be placed in the public domain in a manner appropriate to their significance.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Evaluation Trench

- 3.1.1 A single trench will be excavated in the position of each of the proposed structures (Plate 1; Figs 2 and 3). These will be excavated following the removal of the present structures and the limited demolition of the boundary walls/fences. Each trench will measure 2m square, and will not exceed 1.2m in depth. The work undertaken will be carried out in compliance with the Code of Practice and the Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations of the IFA.
- 3.1.2 All excavation will be exclusively manual and will proceed in a stratigraphical manner. Excavation will be restricted to the topsoil and any build-up of soil below this, as the aim of the work is to clarify the structure of the monument, which will not be disturbed. The upper surface of any archaeological layers will be identified, cleaned and recorded, both in plan and, if feasible, in section. Any deposits of antiquity, and thus of archaeological significance, will

be examined by hand, but excavation will be limited to an assessment of the nature, date and survival of the deposits, rather than full excavation (the main exception to this will be where the upper archaeological horizon is considered to be of post-Roman date, and where, after discussion with English Heritage, it is deemed necessary to excavate into this material to provide information about the survival and importance of any underlying archaeology). Any finds recovered will be retained for assessment and spot dating.

- 3.1.3 All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white prints and colour transparency and digital photographs) to identify and illustrate individual elements of the monument. Each trench will be located with respect to surrounding landscape features and the National Grid, by electronic means, and all deposits, including the basal deposits in the trench, will be three-dimensionally recorded.
- 3.1.4 Results of all field investigations will be recorded using a system, adapted from that used by the former Centre for Archaeology of English Heritage, based on *pro forma* contexts, object records (for both individual finds and bulk groups from individual contexts as appropriate), and survey sheets and, if stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled for each trench. The archive will include both a photographic record, with a clearly visible, graduated metric scale, and accurate large-scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20, and 1:10). Indices of both photographs, by type, and plans and sections, will be compiled. All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines), and to an appropriate timetable, to minimise deterioration. All finds where appropriate will be washed and marked with indelible ink, and then appropriately bagged and boxed, with box lists compiled. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.
- 3.1.5 If necessary, access to conservation and specialist advice on finds and facilities can be made available immediately. OA North maintains close relationships with staff at the University of Durham and also employs artefact and palaeoecology specialists with considerable expertise in the investigation, excavation and finds management of sites of all periods and types, who are readily available for consultation. All appropriate legislation, such as the 1996 Treasure Act and the 1857 Burial Act, will be adhered to in full.
- 3.1.6 The deposition of finds will be agreed with the legal owners and with the appropriate museum (the Great North Museum) prior to the work taking place. The legal owners (through Northumberland County Council) will be encouraged to deposit such finds. Any discard policy will be agreed with the recipient museum during the course of the work.
- 3.1.7 Samples where appropriate will be collected for technological, pedological, palaeoenvironmental and chronological analysis. If feasible, samples for deposit characterisation, potential radiocarbon dating, and macrofossil analysis will be 30 litres in volume, whilst samples to assess the potential for buried soils will be collected as monoliths, where appropriate, using plastic drainpipe,

as recommended by OA North's in-house paleoenvironmentalist, following discussion with Jacqui Huntley, English Heritage's Scientific Advisor for the North East. These will be packaged appropriately and stored for possible future analysis.

- 3.1.8 Complete backfilling is not likely to be required, as, following agreement between Northumberland County Council and English Heritage as to the type of structure appropriate to each position, and any mitigation measures, such as design modification, that prove necessary, the structures will be inserted into each excavated trench immediately following the archaeological work, although it is likely that some limited backfilling may be required as part of the mitigation measures. If, however, it becomes apparent that a significant amount of time will elapse between the evaluation and the structure being installed on the site with the agreement of English Heritage, then the base of the trench will be covered with a membrane and earth backfilled on to this, to seal the deposits whilst discussions are ongoing.

4. HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 OA North considers health and safety to be of paramount importance on all its projects. OA North has considerable experience in applying modern health and safety practices in large and small-scale archaeological projects.
- 4.2 OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit 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 (1997 rev). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.
- 4.3 If necessary, each trench will be fenced temporarily to prevent access, in a manner that will not adversely affect the monument.
- 4.4 OA North will undertake a Cat scan as a matter of course in advance of the commencement of excavation.

5. ATTENDANCES

- 5.1 Northumberland County Council is requested to arrange all access and any provisions for the removal of the existing structures, as well as those elements of the existing boundaries that need to be demolished to allow larger structures to be installed, requirements for temporary fencing, and any limited backfilling, under archaeological supervision, as well as provision of welfare facilities (presumably at Rudchester Farm).

6. ARCHIVE

- 6.1 The results of the evaluation will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). The project

archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of any features and finds recovered during fieldwork, in accordance with UKIC guidelines. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA.

- 6.2 The paper archive will be deposited with the Northumberland Record Office in Morpeth and any material archive with the Great North Museum, Newcastle, with the land owners' permission, unless English Heritage deems otherwise.
- 6.3 All finds will be treated in accordance with OA North's standard practice which follows current IFA guidelines.

7. REPORT

- 7.1 A report of the findings will be compiled following completion of the fieldwork. This report will examine and describe the archaeology and, if appropriate, the palaeoenvironment of the site. The report will also seek to establish the significance of the results.
- 7.2 The report will consist of a typescript, containing a non-technical summary, an account of the circumstances of the project, methods used, a description of the results, and an interpretation of these, together with a statement as to their significance, as well as a bibliography and a copy of this project design. This report will be illustrated with line drawings, including finds if necessary, and, if suitable, photographs.
- 7.3 Two copies of this report will be submitted to English Heritage, to inform the decision-making process as to the type of structure appropriate to this location. A copy of the report will be deposited for inclusion in the Northumberland Historic Environment Record, and a further copy will be deposited with the RCHM(E) database for Hadrian's Wall.

7.4 CONFIDENTIALITY

- 7.4.1 The report is designed as a document for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in this project design, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication, save as a note, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

7.5 PUBLICATION

- 7.5.1 If the results of the evaluation justify such a course of action, the work should be published as a short article, submitted to *Archaeologia Aeliana*.

8 PROJECT MONITORING

- 8.1 Any proposed variations to the project design will be agreed with English Heritage. OA North will arrange a preliminary meeting, if required, and English Heritage and Northumberland County Council's Archaeology Service will be informed of the commencement of the project in writing.

9 OTHER ISSUES

- 9.1 Insurance in respect of claims for personal injury to or the death of any person under a contract of service with OA North and arising out of an in the course of such person's employment shall comply with the employers' liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and any statutory orders made thereunder. For all other claims to cover the liability of OA North in respect of personal injury or damage to property by negligence of OA North or any of its employees, there applies insurance cover of £5m for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event.
- 9.2 Excavation will be undertaken on the basis of a five day week, within daylight hours only.

10 WORK TIMETABLE

- 10.1 OA North could commence the evaluation within two weeks of notification. It is estimated that the evaluation will take one day to complete on site, if both trenches are excavated at the same time. OA North would be able to submit the report on the evaluation to English Heritage within two months of the completion of the fieldwork.

11. PROJECT TEAM

- 11.1 If both trenches are excavated together, a team of four on site (two for each trench) would be required. All staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for this type of project. The work will be directed on site by a Project Supervisor who has previously undertaken evaluatory work on Hadrian's Wall. In addition, three Project Assistants would work on site.
- 11.2 The project will be managed by **Rachel Newman BA FSA** (Senior Executive Officer: OA North) who has acted since 1996 as the archaeological consultant to the Countryside Agency in the development of the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail.

APPENDIX 2: TRENCH DESCRIPTIONS

Site 1 Dimensions: 1.5m by 1.0m Orientation: North/South

Context	Category	Description	Depth
101	Layer	Topsoil. Comprised mid-greyish brown sandy silt.	0.28m
102	Structure	Foundation of drystone boundary wall. Comprised sub-angular stone, a maximum of 1.2m by 1.2m in size. The foundation measured 0.46m wide.	-
103	Layer	Subsoil. Comprised mid-browish orange sandy silt with frequent small sub-rounded stone inclusions.	1.36+m

Site 2 Dimensions: 1.5m by 1.0m Orientation: North/South

Context	Category	Description	Depth
201	Layer	Topsoil. A dark greyish brown sandy silt, with occasional small sub-rounded stone inclusions.	0.17m
202	Layer	Fluvial deposit. Comprised mid-orangy brown silt with frequent sub-rounded stone, a maximum of 200mm by 150mm by 120mm in size.	0.25m
203	Layer	Fluvial deposit. Comprised mid-brownish orange silty sand with frequent rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 20mm by 100mm by 100mm in size.	0.36m
204	Layer	Fluvial deposit. Comprised light greyish white, loose, silty sand.	0.17+m

Site 3 Dimensions: 2.0m by 1.44m Orientation: East/West

Context	Category	Description	Depth
301	Layer	Topsoil. A mid-greyish brown sandy silt.	0.25m
302	Structure	Drystone wall. Comprised roughly hewn stone, a maximum of 0.40m by 0.30m by 0.25m in size. The wall measured a maximum of 0.90m wide.	-
303	Structure	Northern face of Hadrian's Wall. Comprised sandstone, a maximum of 0.35m by 0.38m by 0.19m in size. The uppermost course had lost most of its northern face. This course was laid upon an underlying course, projecting c 0.20m to the north of the upper course, comprising stone measuring a maximum of 0.50m in length. A mid-orange medium sandy mortar bonded the masonry together. This structure was left <i>in-situ</i> , with no further excavation.	0.41+m
304	Layer	Possibly glacial till. Comprised a mid-orange silty fine sand, with rare sub-rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 80mm by 70mm by 50mm in size.	0.22+m
305	Layer	Subsoil. A dark orangy grey silty fine sand.	0.18m

306	Deposit	Fill of 307 . A mid-greyish orange silty fine sand, with rare sub-rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 80mm by 70mm by 30mm in size.	0.18m
307	Cut	?Construction cut for 306 . Only the southern, straight and near vertical, edge of the cut was visible.	0.18+m

Trench 4 Dimensions: 1.2m by 1.0m**Orientation: North /South**

Context	Category	Description	Depth
400	Layer	Topsoil. A dark brown sandy silt, with occasional sub-rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 80mm in diameter.	0.29m
401	Layer	A mid-grey brown sandy silt, with abundant rounded and sub-rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 80mm in diameter.	0.29m
402	Layer	A mid-brownish yellow sandy silty clay, with a moderate quantity of rounded and sub-rounded stone inclusions, 20mm to 50mm in diameter.	0.30m
403	Layer	A mid-grey brown fine sandy silt, with abundant sub-rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 20mm to 70mm in diameter.	0.26+m
404	Layer	A mid-brownish yellow sandy silt, with a moderate quantity of rounded stone inclusions, a maximum of 30mm to 60mm in diameter.	0.06+m

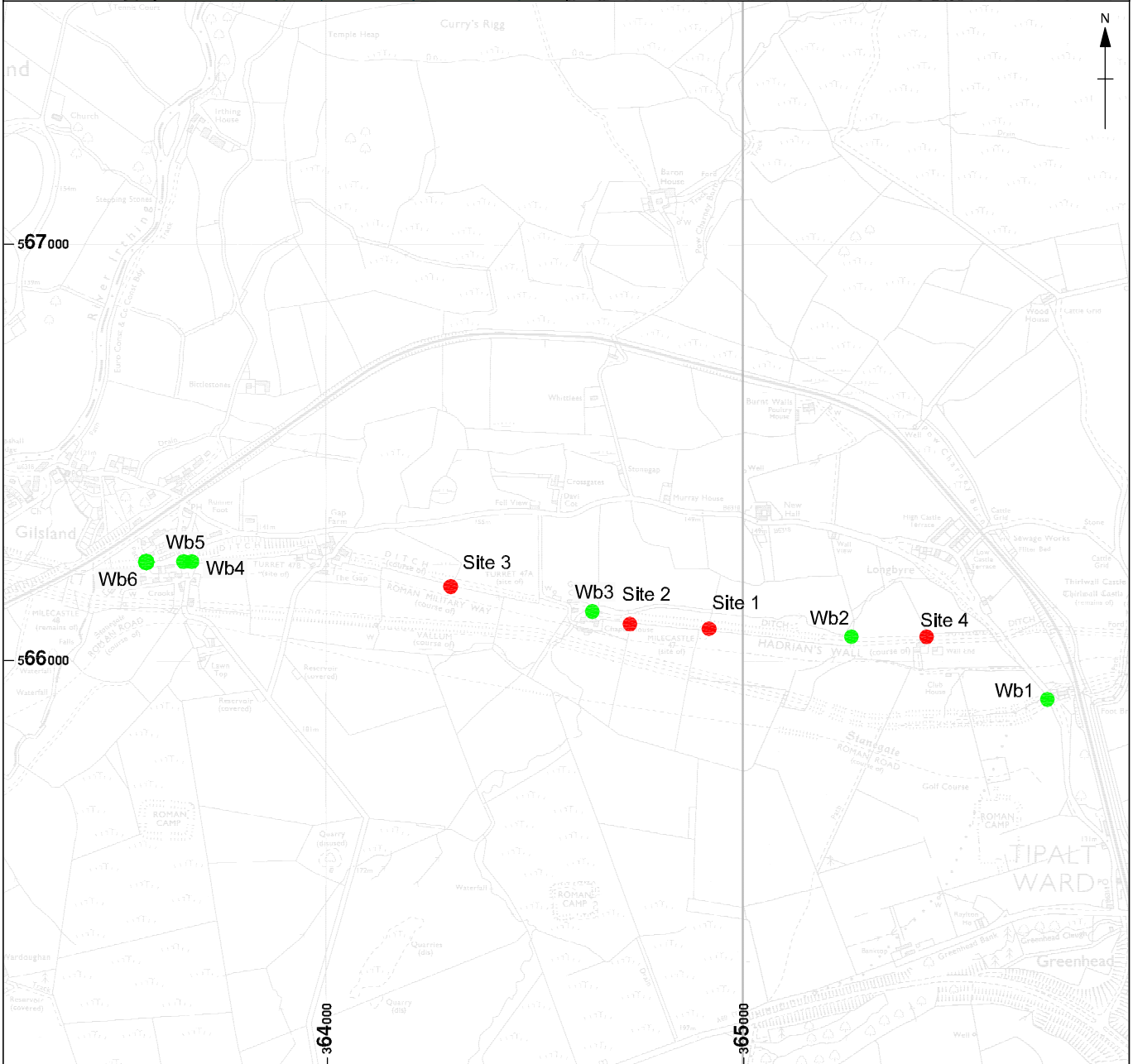
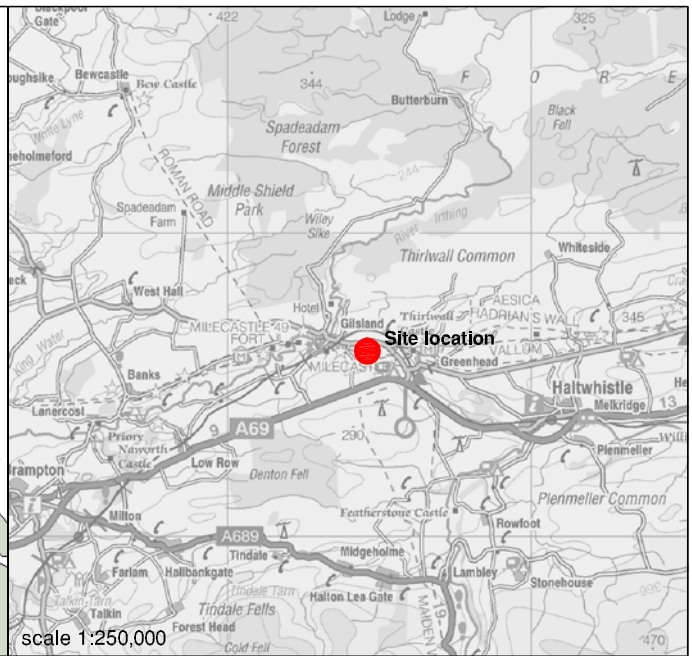
ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES

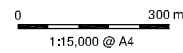
- Figure 1: Site location
- Figure 2: Plan and west-facing section of Site 1
- Figure 3: Plan and west-facing section of Site 2
- Figure 4: Plan and east-facing section of Site 3
- Figure 5: Plan and south-facing and east-facing sections of Site 4

PLATES

- Plate 1: Site 1, looking south
- Plate 2: West-facing section, looking east
- Plate 3: Site 2, looking south
- Plate 4: West-facing section, looking east
- Plate 5: Site 3, looking west, showing the north face of Hadrian's Wall
- Plate 6: East-facing section, looking west
- Plate 7: Boundary wall **302**, directly upon Hadrian's Wall (**303**), looking south-west
- Plate 8: Post of new gateway set adjacent to Hadrian's Wall (**303**), looking west
- Plate 9: New posthole excavated to the north of Site 3, looking south
- Plate 10: Site 4, looking west
- Plate 11: South-facing section, looking north
- Plate 12: North-westernmost posthole of Watching Brief 1, looking east
- Plate 13: South-easternmost posthole of Watching Brief 2, looking south-west
- Plate 14: Southernmost posthole of Watching Brief 3, looking west
- Plate 15: Southernmost posthole of Watching Brief 4, looking west
- Plate 16: Easternmost posthole of Watching Brief 5, looking north-east
- Plate 17: Excavating postholes during Watching Brief 6, looking south

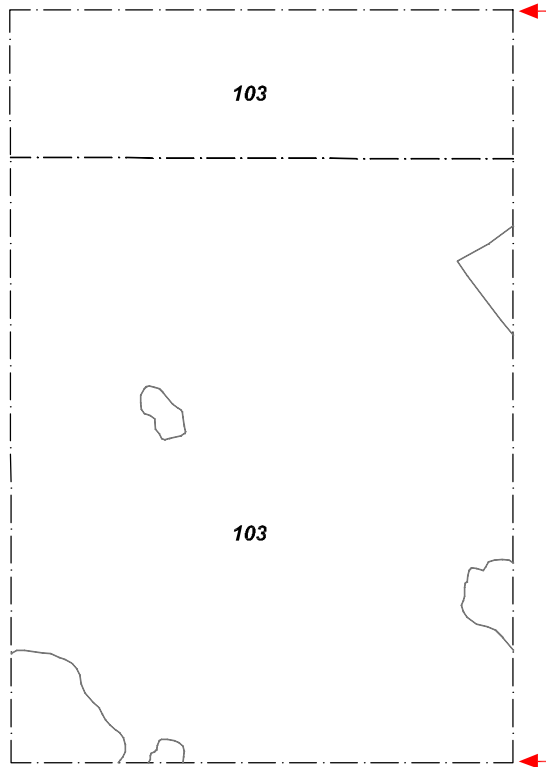
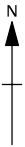


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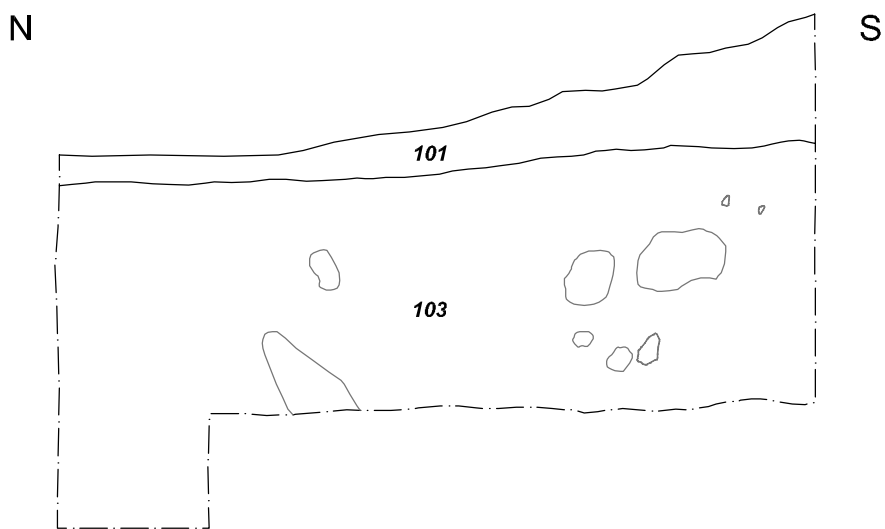


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Figure 1: Site location



Plan



West-facing section

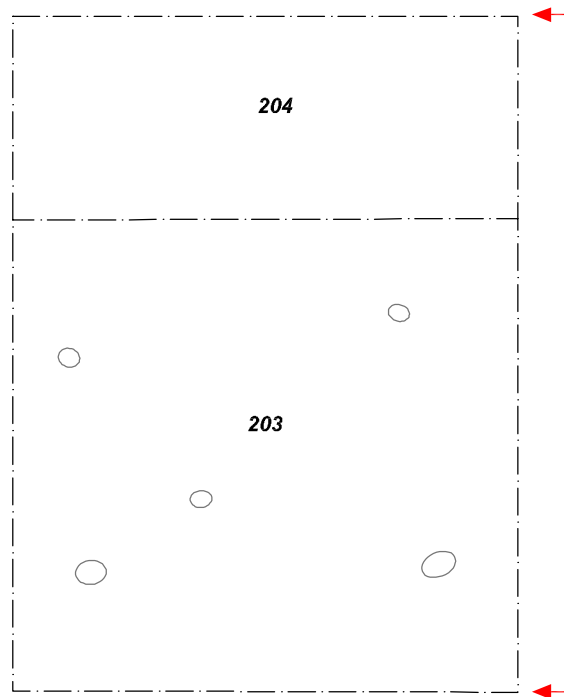
--- limit of excavation
--> location of section

103 context
○ ○ ○ stone

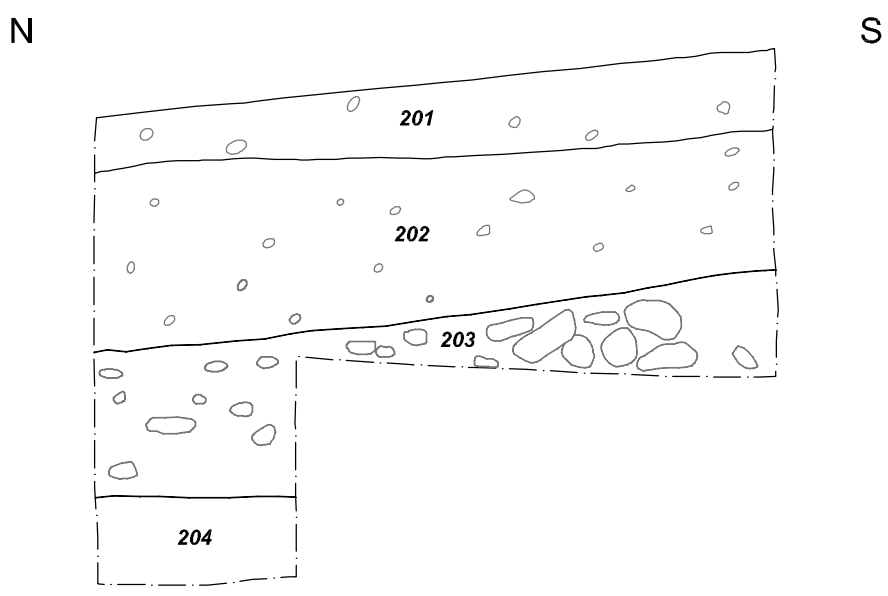
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Figure 2: Plan and west-facing section of Site 1





Plan



West-facing section

 limit of excavation
 location of section

204 context
 stone

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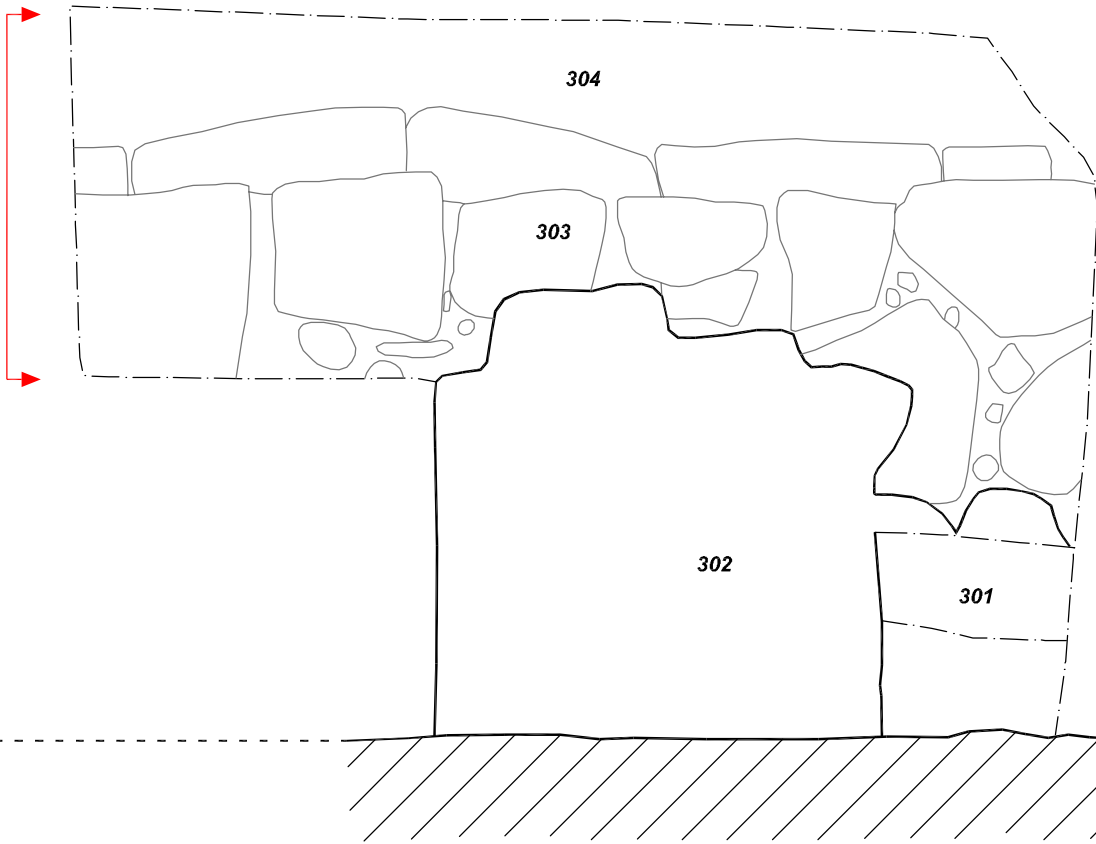


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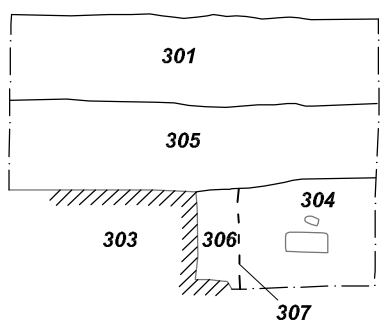
Figure 3: Plan and west-facing section of Site 2



Plan



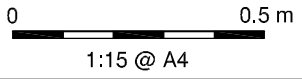
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East-facing section

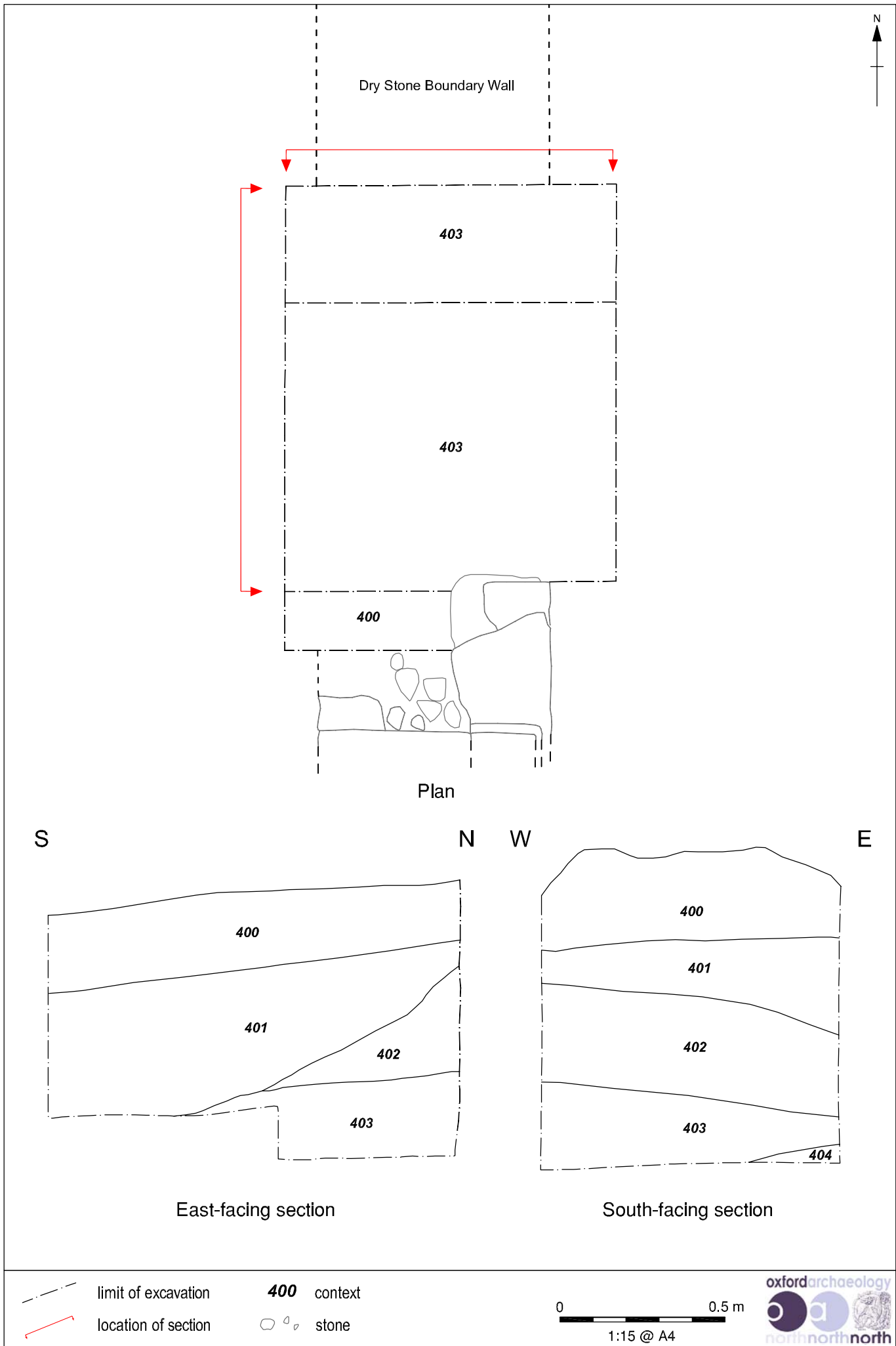
- limit of excavation
- location of section

- 302** context
- stone



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Figure 4: Plan and east-facing section of Site 3



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Figure 5: Plan and south-facing and east-facing sections of Site 4



Plate 1: Site 1, looking south



Plate 2: West-facing section, looking east



Plate 3: Site 2, looking south



Plate 4: West-facing section, looking east



Plate 5: Site 3, looking west, showing the north face of Hadrian's Wall



Plate 6: East-facing section, looking west



Plate 7: Boundary wall 302, sitting directly upon Hadrian's Wall (303), looking south-west



Plate 8: Post of new gateway set adjacent to Hadrian's Wall (303), looking west



Plate 9: New posthole excavated to the north of Site 3, looking south



Plate 10: Site 4, looking west



Plate 11: South-facing section, looking north



Plate 12: North-westernmost posthole of Watching Brief 1, looking east



Plate 13: South-easternmost posthole of Watching Brief 2, looking south-west



Plate 14: Southernmost posthole of Watching Brief 3, looking west



Plate 15: Southernmost posthole of Watching Brief 4, looking west



Plate 16: Easternmost posthole of Watching Brief 5, looking north-east



Plate 17: Excavating postholes during Watching Brief 6, looking south