

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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DURHAM UNIVERSITY

on behalf of
The Auckland Project

Kingsway
Bishop Auckland
County Durham

archaeological evaluation

report 6031
October 2023

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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation conducted in advance of the proposed development of a car park and public space at Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, County Durham. The works comprised the excavation of two evaluation trenches.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by The Auckland Project and conducted by Archaeological Services Durham University.

Results

- 1.3 Results from the evaluation trenches indicate that the area has been truncated by modern activity. Modern rubble deposits between 0.74m and 1m deep were recorded in both trenches.
- 1.4 A post-medieval rubbish pit was recorded in Trench 2. This is likely to relate to back plot activity from properties facing onto Newgate Street. The pit was used for the disposal of a small amount of domestic refuse from consumption of sheep meat and fish. The calcined fragments suggest table scraps went onto the fire, with the ashes subsequently dumped in the pit. Fragments of broken pottery, glass, and clay tobacco pipes were also discarded in the pit.
- 1.5 The sample has produced a large volume of coal fuel waste which is consistent with the post-medieval date. Ecofactual evidence is scarce but also consistent with this period.

Recommendations

- 1.6 Due to the depth of modern rubble deposits on the site shallow groundworks associated with the formation of the car park are unlikely to truncate any archaeological deposits. No further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

- 2.1 The site is located at Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, County Durham, (NGR centre: NZ 21109 29797). It covers an area of approximately 0.32 ha. The site is in the centre of Bishop Auckland, surrounded by residential and commercial properties.

Development proposal

- 2.2 A new car park and public square is proposed for the site. The planning application reference number is DM/23/01745/FPA.

Objectives

- 2.3 The main aims of the work are:
- to identify and define the nature of any archaeological deposits on site, and date these where possible
 - to recover a well dated stratigraphic sequence and recover coherent artefactual and ecofactual assemblages
 - to provide a coherent understanding of the archaeological potential of the site
 - to provide information on the potential impact of the development on the archaeological resource, and to enable any mitigation scheme that is necessary to be designed

Research objectives

- 2.4 The works were designed in relation to research priorities set out in the updated North-East Regional Research Framework (NERRF 2.0), specifically:

Roman

R2: What can archaeology tell us about Roman roads and communication routes in NE England?

R9: How can we better understand the landscape and environment of NE England?

Specification

- 2.5 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by Archaeological Services Durham University (reference 23191) and approved by the planning authority. Trench 1 was relocated 2m south to avoid a drain.

Dates

- 2.6 Fieldwork was undertaken w/c 12 September 2023. This report was prepared for October 2023.

Personnel

- 2.7 Fieldwork was conducted by Rachel Wells (supervisor) and Eloise White. This report was prepared by Eloise White, with illustrations by David Graham. Specialist reporting was conducted by Dr Louise Gidney (animal bone) and Jennifer Jones (clay pipe, glass and building materials). Sample processing and specialist reporting by Elena Stefani (paleoenvironmental). The Project Manager was Natalie Swann.

Archive/OASIS

- 2.8 The site code is **KBA23**, for **Kingsway Bishop Auckland 2023**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services Durham University and will be transferred to County

Durham Archaeological Archives within 6 months of it being open. The palaeoenvironmental residue was discarded following examination. The flint and charred plant remains will be retained at Archaeological Services Durham University. Archaeological Services Durham University is registered with the **Online Access** to the Index of archaeological investigationS project (**OASIS**). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-519581**.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

- 3.1 At the time of this evaluation, the proposed development area was an area of waste ground to the west of Newgate Street.
- 3.2 The area was predominantly level with a mean elevation of approximately 97m. The River Gaunless runs around 0.3km to the east of the site and the River Wear runs 0.7km to the north-west.
- 3.3 The underlying bedrock geology of the area comprises Carboniferous strata of the Pennine Middle Coal Measures formation containing mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. These are overlain by Devensian diamiction till. (The British Geological Survey 2023)

4. Historical and archaeological background

Previous archaeological works

- 4.1 A heritage statement has been prepared for the proposed development (Dyer 2023); the relevant results of that statement are summarised here.

The Roman period (AD 70 to 5th century)

- 4.2 Newgate Street, fronted by the west side of the site, follows the line of a major Roman Road, later known as Dere Street. The road was constructed during the initial conquest of northern England in the AD 70s and was protected by forts at strategic points along its length. Binchester Fort, just north of Bishop Auckland, protected the crossing of the River Wear. A large vicus (civilian settlement) developed outside the fort. There is the potential for roadside settlement dating to this period to survive within the proposed development area (PDA). Evidence for the survival of the Roman Road was recorded approximately 1.6km south of the PDA during a watching brief on Watling Road (Archaeological Services 2015).

The medieval period (5th century to 1540)

- 4.3 The original settlement of Bishop Auckland was likely to have been located around St Andrew's Auckland (South Church). The current church here dates from the 13th century but there is evidence for a church as early as the 7th century. In 1083 a group of canons from Durham set up a collegiate church in the Auckland area. Around a century later Bishop Pudsey established a manor house in the north of the parish, which later developed into Auckland Castle and became the country seat of the Bishops of Durham. The modern town of Bishop Auckland developed to the west of this. The site is located more than 1.4km north-west of St Andrew's Auckland and c.500m south of Bishop Auckland Castle. It is unlikely that these settlements extended as far as the site, and it is probable that the area was used as agricultural land throughout the medieval period.

The post-medieval period (1541 to 1899)

- 4.4 On the 1844 tithe map the site is shown as gardens. By the time of the 1859 Ordnance Survey (OS) map the west part of the site, facing onto Newgate Street, has been developed but gardens are shown to the rear. By 1899 Kingsway to the east is marked on the maps.

The modern period (1900 to present)

- 4.5 By the 1940s most of the area had been built over with the exception of a small area to the north and a larger area to the south. By the 1980s the layout of the area had changed but the areas where the trenches were placed were undeveloped.

5. The evaluation trenches

Introduction

- 5.1 Two evaluation trenches were excavated across the site. Trench 1 was located in the northern end of the site and Trench 2 in the south-eastern end. Trench 1 was moved 2m to the south because of a drain within the original demarcations of the trench. Both trenches were 10m long and were excavated using a machine equipped with a toothless ditching bucket under constant archaeological supervision. Trench plans and sections are shown in Figure 3. Context data is summarised in Table 1.1.
- 5.2 One modern drain was recorded in trench 1 aligned north/south.

Trench 1 (Photo 1)

- 5.3 Trench 1 was aligned east/west in a location with no previously recorded development. Natural subsoil, a reddish-brown sandy clay [4] was identified along the whole of the trench at a depth of 1.3m below the ground surface. Aligned north-south across the centre of the trench was a utility pipe surrounded with concrete [F5]. Overlying the utility and the natural subsoil was a layer of dark black gritty clayey sand [3: 0.75m deep] containing modern bricks, a plastic bag, and pieces of wooden plank. Sealing this was a layer of yellow dolomite [2: 0.2m deep], bedding for a layer of tarmac [1: 0.06m deep].

Trench 2 (Photo 2)

- 5.4 Trench 2 was aligned north-east/south-west and was positioned over an undeveloped area of the site. Natural subsoil, a yellow-brown sandy clay [9] was reached at a depth of 1m. Cutting the natural subsoil at the west end of the trench was a large pit [F11: 1.65m long, over 0.7m wide, 0.55m deep] (Photo 3). The pit was filled by a dark grey silty sand [10] from which animal bone, clay tobacco pipe and medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered. Paleoenvironmental evidence from this feature also suggests a post-medieval date. Due to the depth of the feature below the ground surface the base of the pit was not reached. The pit also extended beyond the edge of the trench; it was not possible to extend the trench due to the presence of utilities.
- 5.5 Sealing the pit was a layer of black-brown sandy clay [8: 0.28m to 0.65m deep] Immediately above this was a modern rubble deposit [7: 0.4-0.54m deep] comprising a mix of brown gritty sand, brick, ash, clay and concrete. Above this across the trench was a mixture of turf and gravel [6: 0.07m deep].

6. The artefacts

Pottery assessment

Results

- 6.1 Pit fill context [10] produced a small assemblage of 10 sherds (40g weight), hand-recovered and from the sample, which dated from the medieval period through to the 18th/19th century.
- 6.2 The earliest were 5 unglazed medieval body sherds, three very poorly preserved and abraded, along with one small everted rim sherd and one fresher body sherd with traces of red slip. 12th-early 14th century.
- 6.3 A body sherd of tin-glazed earthenware of 17th/18th century date was found, plus two small slipware body sherds of 18th/19th century date, from different vessels. A very small body sherd of glazed whiteware of later 18th/19th century date came from the sample residue.

Discussion

- 6.4 This small collection provides further evidence for medieval and continuing occupation in the town.

Recommendation

- 6.5 No further work is recommended.

Animal bone assessment

Results

- 6.6 Pit fill context [10] produced the only animal bones.

Hand-recovered:

Sheep size long bone shaft fragment, probably from a femur.

Sample residue:

Sheep/goat metacarpal, distal fused, very abraded.

Small mammal acetabulum.

Fish sp. vertebra, very small.

Indeterminate fragments, some calcined

Discussion

- 6.7 Context [10] provides evidence for the disposal of a small amount of domestic refuse from consumption of sheep meat and fish. The calcined fragments suggest table scraps went onto the fire, with the ashes subsequently dumped in the pit. The small mammal bone indicates the presence of commensal species on site.

Recommendation

- 6.8 No further work is recommended on the faunal remains.

Clay pipe assessment

Results

- 6.9 The sample residue from context [10] had a length of burnt clay pipe stem along with three small fragments from different pipe bowls. Post-medieval.

Recommendation

- 6.10 No further work is recommended.

Glass assessment

Results

- 6.11 Context [10] sample residue produced three very small, slightly weathered glass fragments, one a thin (2mm) flat, greenish piece of window glass along with two flakes of green (probable) bottle glass.

Recommendation

- 6.12 No further work is recommended.

Building materials assessment

Results

- 6.13 Context [10] had two small fragments of pantile, each with one sanded face, one surviving to its full thickness of 13mm. 17th century or later. The sample residue contained flakes and small pieces (18g weight) of brick or tile. Post-medieval.
- 6.14 The sample residue also had some small, abraded fragments (11g weight) of grey-cream, unpainted wallplaster with fine grit and coal/charcoal chip inclusions, probably post-medieval in date, along with a small flake of grey roofing slate, probably 19th/20th century.

Recommendation

- 6.15 No further work is recommended.

Fuel waste assessment

Results

- 6.16 A small nodule of fuel waste/cinder came from the context [10] sample residue. Probably domestic in origin.

Recommendation

- 6.17 No further work is recommended.

7. The palaeoenvironmental evidence

Methods

- 7.1 Palaeoenvironmental assessment was undertaken on one bulk sample taken from a pit [F11], provisionally dated to the post-medieval period. The sample was manually floated and sieved through a 500 μ m mesh. The flot was examined for waterlogged and charred botanical remains, using a Leica MZ7.5 stereomicroscope at up to x60 magnification. Identifications were aided by comparison with modern reference material held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University, and by reference to relevant literature (Cappers *et al.* 2006). Plant nomenclature follows Stace (2010). The residue was fully scanned for additional charred plant material, industrial residues, and finds such as small bones (animal, fish and bird), marine shell and snails. This included microscopic examination of the fine fraction.
- 7.2 Selected charcoal fragments were identified to provide material suitable for radiocarbon dating and to determine the nature and condition of the assemblage.

The transverse, radial and tangential sections were examined at up to x500 magnification using a Nikon Eclipse microscope. Identifications were assisted by the descriptions of Schweingruber (1990), Gale & Cutler (2000) and Hather (2000), and modern reference material held in the Palaeoenvironmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University.

- 7.3 The works were undertaken in accordance with the palaeoenvironmental research aims and objectives outlined in the regional archaeological research framework and resource agendas (Petts & Gerrard 2006; Hall & Huntley 2007; Huntley 2010), including the updated version: *North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF 2.0) (<https://researchframeworks.org/nerf/> accessed 28/09/2023).

Results

- 7.4 The sample produced a large flot (650 ml) comprising mostly of coal fuel waste (cinder) and coal, with some well-preserved charcoal fragments which include oak and Maloideae (hawthorn, apple, whitebeams) branchwood. Charred plant macrofossils are sparse, consisting of a few barley and oat grains, a single hazel nutshell fragment and few wild species (goosefoots and cleavers).
- 7.5 Artefactual evidence comprised pot, clay pipes, bone, CBM, mortar and traces of green glass.
- 7.6 Detailed palaeoenvironmental results and a provisional date for context [10] are presented in Table 1.2

Discussion

- 7.7 The large volume of coal fuel waste is consistent with the provisional post-medieval date, as are the few charred palaeoenvironmental remains.

Recommendations

- 7.8 No further work is recommended.

8. The archaeological resource

- 8.1 Results from the evaluation trenches indicate that the area has been truncated by modern activity. Modern rubble deposits between 0.74m and 1m deep were recorded in both trenches.
- 8.2 A post-medieval rubbish pit was recorded in Trench 2. This is probably related to back plot activity from properties facing onto Newgate Street.
- 8.3 The palaeoenvironmental sample produced a large volume of coal fuel waste which is consistent with the provisional post-medieval date. Ecofactual evidence is scarce but also consistent with this period.
- 8.4 The updated regional research framework *North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF 2.0) (<https://researchframeworks.org/nerf/> accessed 25-09-2023) contains an agenda for archaeological research in the region, which is incorporated into regional planning policy implementation with respect to archaeology. In this instance, the potential archaeological resource could address

specifically agenda item Pmed1: How can we better understand patterns of consumption in the post-medieval period?

9. Impact assessment

- 9.1 Due to the depth of modern rubble deposits on the site shallow groundworks associated with the formation of the car park are unlikely to truncate any archaeological deposits.

10. Recommendations

- 10.1 No further scheme of archaeological works is recommended in relation to this development.

11. Sources

- Archaeological Services 2015 *Watling Road, Bishop Auckland, County Durham. Archaeological Monitoring*. Archaeological Services Durham University, report 3733
- Cappers, R T J, Bekker, R M, & Jans, J E A, 2006 *Digital Seed Atlas of the Netherlands*. Groningen
- Dyer, S 2023 *Heritage Statement for Proposed Development on Land at Kingsway, Bishop Auckland, County Durham*. Sarah Dyer Heritage Consultant
- Gale, R, & Cutler, D, 2000 *Plants in archaeology; identification manual of vegetative plant materials used in Europe and the southern Mediterranean to c.1500*. Otley
- Hall, A R, & Huntley, J P, 2007 *A review of the evidence for macrofossil plant remains from archaeological deposits in northern England*. Research Department Report Series no. **87**. London
- Hather, J G, 2000 *The identification of the Northern European Woods: a guide for archaeologists and conservators*. London
- Huntley, J P, 2010 *A review of wood and charcoal recovered from archaeological excavations in Northern England*. Research Department Report Series no. **68**. London
- Petts, D, & Gerrard, C, 2006 *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic environment*. Durham
- Schweingruber, F H, 1990 *Microscopic wood anatomy*. Birmensdorf
- Stace, C, 2010 *New Flora of the British Isles*. Cambridge

Websites:

<https://researchframeworks.org/nerf/>

Appendix 1: Data tables

Table 1.1: Context data

The * symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of artefacts of the following types: P pottery, B bone

No	Area	Description	P	B	G	C	O
1	T1	Tarmac					
2	T1	Dolomite					
3	T1	Rubble deposit					
4	T1	Natural subsoil					
F5	T1	Modern drain					
6	T2	Turf and gravel					
7	T2	Mixed rubble reposit					
8	T2	Dark grey deposit					
9	T2	Natural					
10	T2	Fill of F11	•	•	•	•	•
11	T2	Cut of large pit					

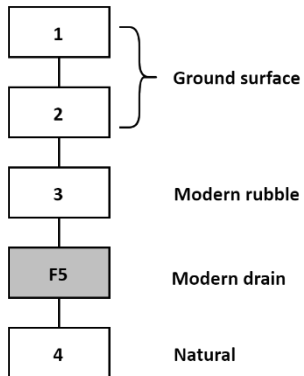
Table 1.2: Data from palaeoenvironmental assessment

Sample	Context	Feature	Trench	Volume processed (l)	Flot volume (ml)	C14 available	Rank	Notes
1	10	F11	2	12	650	Y	*	Large flot dominated by cinder and coal with some charcoal (oak and Maloideae branchwood), and some uncharred vegetative material. The few charred plant remains include barley and oat grains, a hazel nutshell fragment, and seeds of goosefoots and cleavers. (Finds: pot, clay pipe, bone CBM, mortar, small glass fragments). Post-medieval

[Rank: *: low; **: medium; ***: high; ****: very high potential to provide further palaeoenvironmental information]

Appendix 2: Stratigraphic matrices

Trench 1



Trench 2

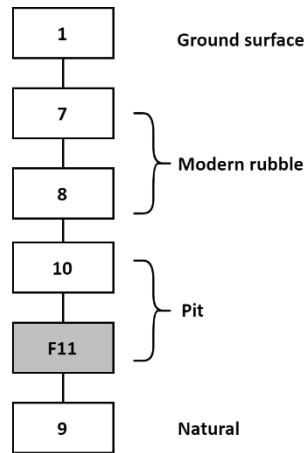




Photo 1: Trench 1, looking east



Photo 2: Trench 2, looking west



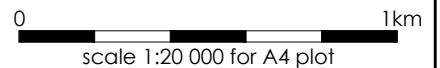
Photo 3: Trench 2, pit [F11], looking east

Figure 1: Site location

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site location



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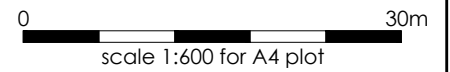
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



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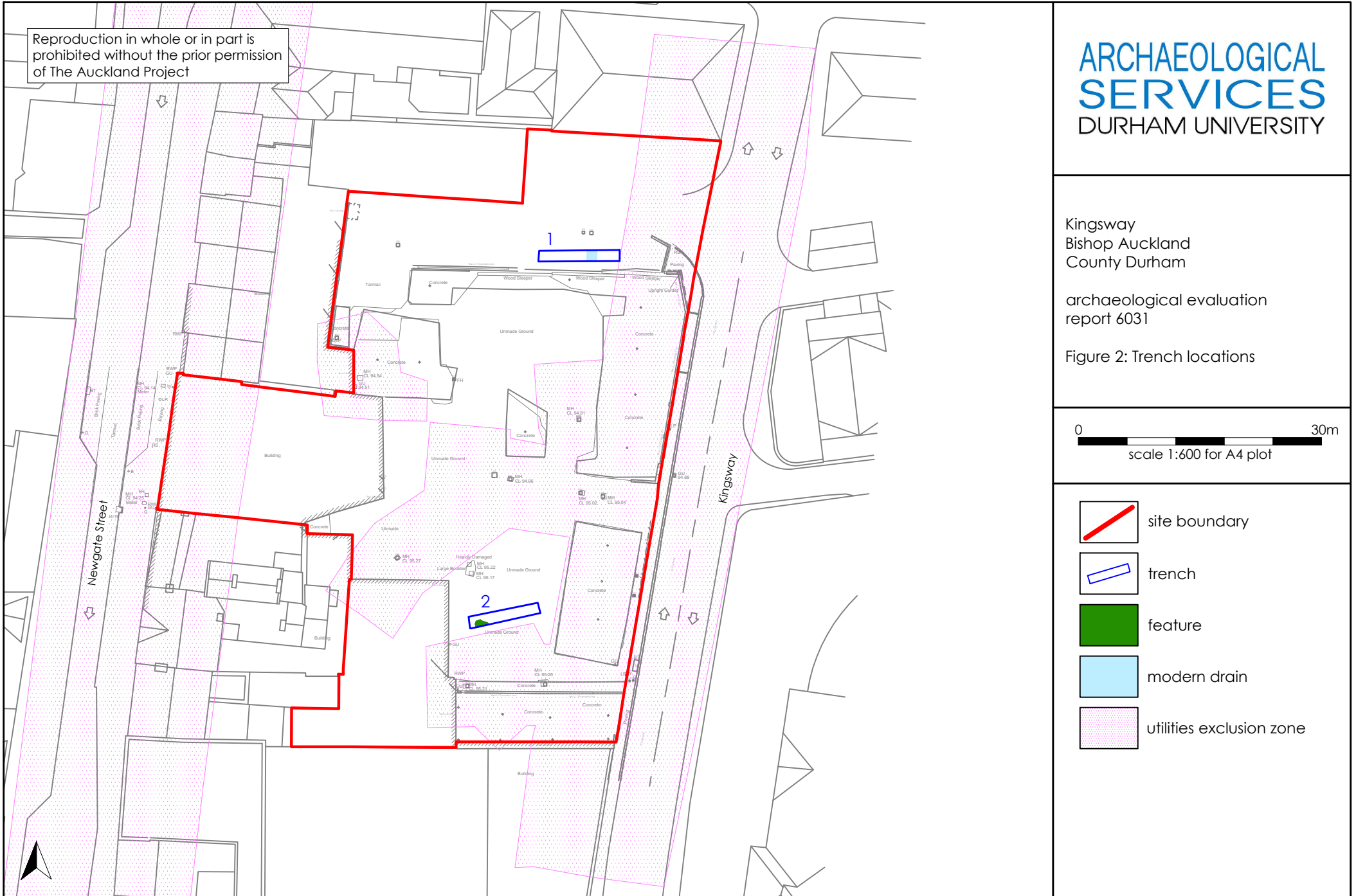
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Figure 2: Trench locations



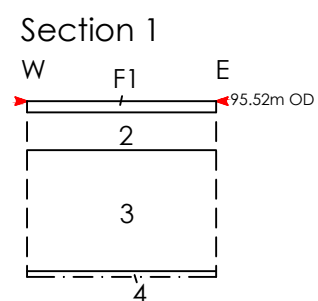
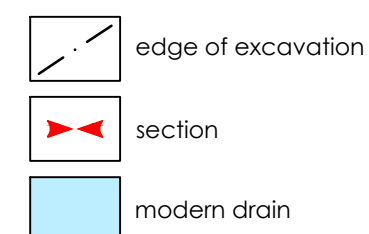
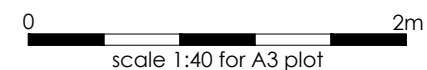
-  site boundary
-  trench
-  feature
-  modern drain
-  utilities exclusion zone



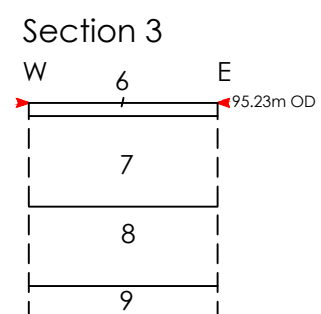
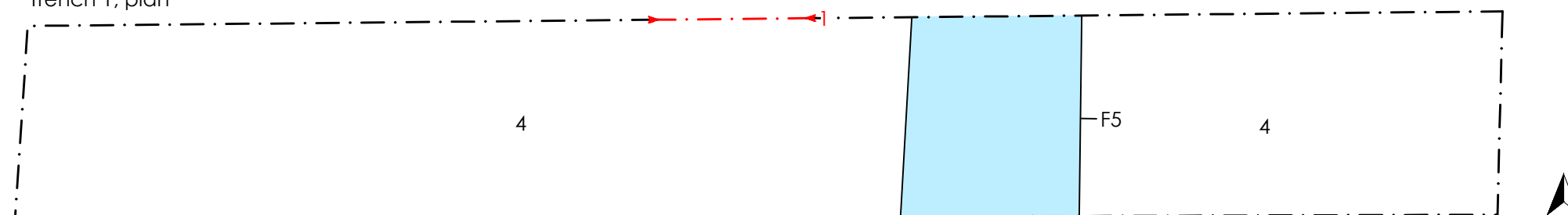
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Figure 3: Trenches 1 and 2, plans and sections



Trench 1, plan



Trench 2, plan

