Community Archaeology North CIC (CANCIC): Test Pit CHAP25 TP11

Location of Test Pit: 30 Hallstile Bank, Hexham
Owner:
Date of Excavation: 13-14 September 2025
Area of Excavation: 1m^2
Weather conditions: sunny with showers
Excavators: Keith Cooper, Paul Edwin, Steph Alder, Lesley Eagan, Liam Downey; Neil Irving, Jean Blakelock and Mark Benjamin on finds
Report: JH and the team
GPS location and height above sea-level, mOD: 393747, 564170; 37.5mOD

Introduction
Two test pits (TPs 10 and 11) were excavated in the rear garden of 30 Hallstile Bank (fig. 1). On the 1826 map Hall Stile is shown with several buildings including what appears to be no. 30, with extensive nurseries in place to the east, and fields to the north and north-west. The buildings on the bank are well-located to take goods out across the bridge to the north. The house is present on the 1860s OS map (fig. 2), with the large Hall Orchard to the east on the ground now covered by the Wentworth car park.

The test pits were located in the slightly raised rear lawn area of the property. TP11 was closer to the rear of the house to the NE and TP10 some 5metres to the SW, closer to the end of the garden.

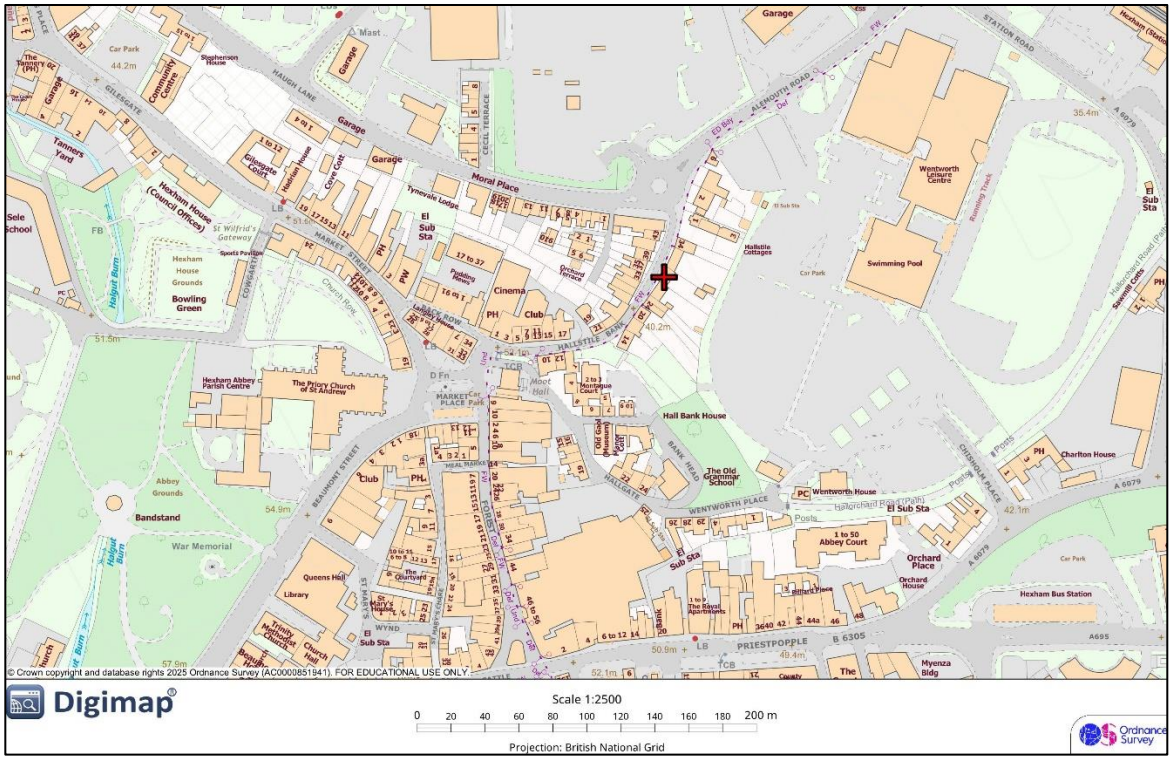


Fig. 1: location of TPS 10 and 11

Excavation Summary
TP11 was dug to a depth of 700mm, at which depth the diminution in finds numbers and the clay content suggested natural sub-soil was close. This test pit was closer to the house. The upper three spits were cut by small ground clearance pits filled with building demolition/alteration debris, including brick, worked stone and stone roof tiles. The more recent and smaller pit included electrical fittings. The later pit may document

the change in use of the building from primarily industrial/agricultural to domestic. The soil from 300mm down was still very humic but did not contain the building debris, rather household rubbish, such as buttons, animal bone and teeth, and some 17C pottery. This suggests a building was on the site before the current one, although as already mentioned the much-altered structure may have subsumed older elements.

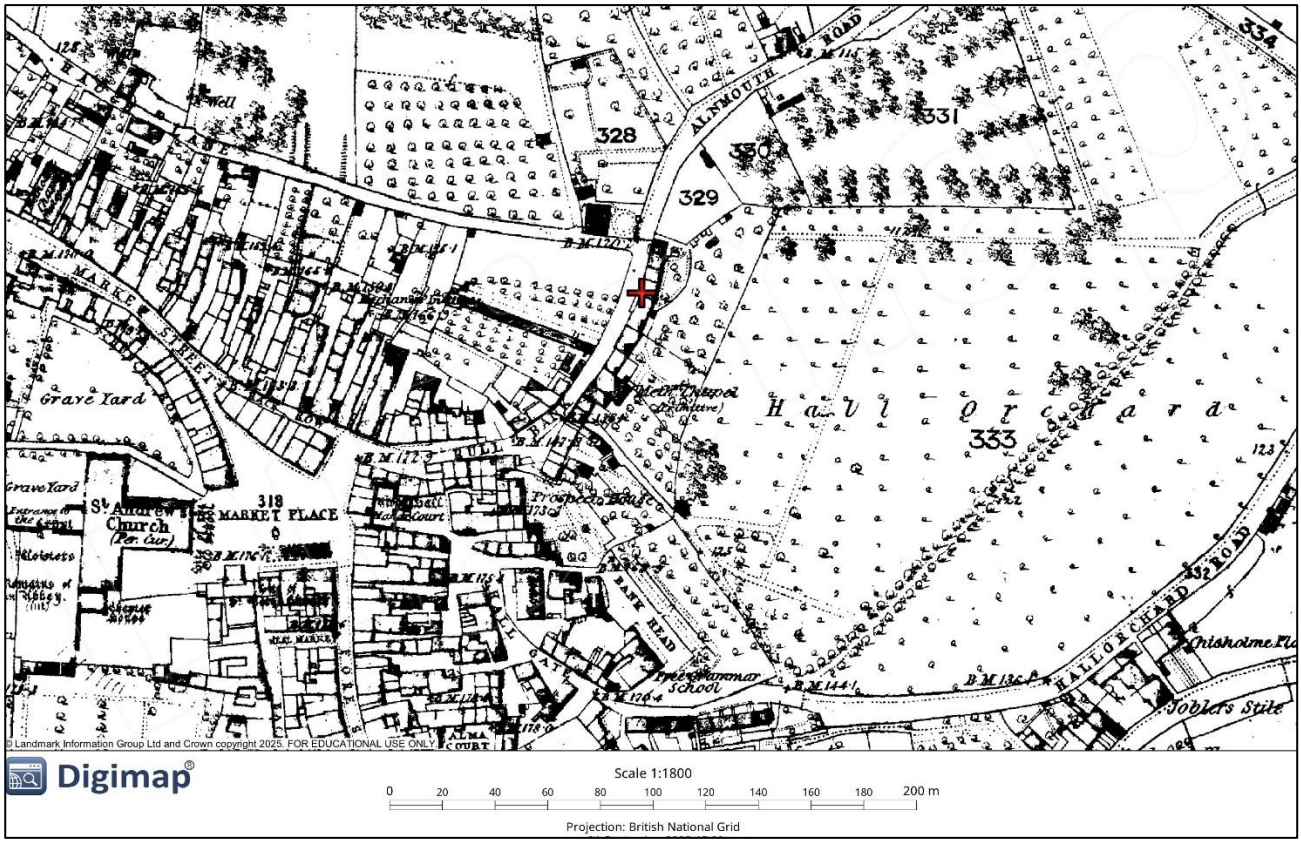


Fig. 2: Hall Stile Bank in 1860

Conclusion

The TP uncovered at least two pits with demolition and house clearance detritus in upper spits; the layers below held household midden material, possibly of 17-18C date.

Results

Spit	Type of deposit	Description	Comments and photo
(100)	spit	**Soil:** damp, friable; humic dark greyish black; slightly sandy silt (10:90); fine sand **Inclusions:** small pebbles, gravel and grit: 5-10%; very occasional charcoal **Contamination:** roots **Finds:** mortar, CBM incl. brick: 15%; (brick: narrow without a frog was discarded, along with pieces of electrical fittings); window and vessel glass fragments; clay pipe: stem and bowl; pottery; animal tooth and bone; flint; Monopoly house; Fe artefacts incl. nails **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 0-100mm **How excavated:** trowel	 **Bottom (100)** Garden topsoil with demolition and house clearance detritus. Brick and other finds concentrated in south and west. Possible pits?

(101)	spit	**Soil:** damp, friable; humic dark greyish black; slightly sandy silt (10:90); fine sand **Inclusions:** small pebbles, gravel and grit: 5%; occasional charcoal **Contamination:** roots **Finds:** mortar, CBM incl. worked stone, brick: 10%; window and vessel glass fragments; pottery; animal bone; Fe and steel artefacts incl. nails. Some burnt. Worked stone pieces: 27 x 65 x 50mm; 30 x 70 x 60mm **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 100-200mm **How excavated:** trowel	 **Bottom (101)** Dump of building material in truncated pit in west corner of TP; remains of bonfire within very organic soil.
(102)	spit	**Soil:** damp, friable-compact; humic mid greyish black; gritty slightly sandy silt (10:90); fine sand **Inclusions:** small sub-rounded and sub-angular well-sorted pebbles, gravel and grit: c 2%; occasional charcoal **Contamination:** roots **Finds:** pottery; coin; CBM; older and modern window and vessel glass; Pb artefact; slate pencil; Fe hooks and nails; clay pipe; slate; clay ball; glass bead. Some burnt **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 200-300mm **How excavated:** trowel and mattock	 **Bottom (102)** Bottom of larger rubble-filled pit in west reached; likely smaller pit also in east corner – seemed to be more recent.
(103)	spit	**Soil:** damp, friable; humic dark greyish black; gritty slightly sandy silt (10:90); fine sand **Inclusions:** small sub-rounded and sub-angular well-sorted pebbles, gravel and grit: c 2-3%; occasional charcoal **Contamination:** roots and worms **Finds:** pottery; CBM; window and vessel glass; Fe artefacts; bullet (0.5" 853 Enfield rifle); animal bone **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 300-400mm **How excavated:** trowel and mattock	 **Bottom (103)**
(104)	spit	**Soil:** dry friable; humic mid brownish black; gritty sandy silt (20:80); fine sand **Inclusions:** small sub-rounded, well-sorted gravel and grit: c 2-3%; occasional charcoal **Contamination:** fine roots **Finds:** coal; pottery, incl. 17C sherds; a little CBM; window and vessel glass; Fe artefacts; 2 buttons; animal bone **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 400-500mm **How excavated:** trowel and mattock	 **Excavating TP11** Household debris with relatively little building material; different layers to pit disturbed layers above
(105)	spit	**Soil:** dry compact; mid greyish black; gritty sandy silt (10:90); fine sand **Inclusions:** small sub-rounded, well-sorted pebbles, and occasional small cobbles; gravel and grit: c 2-%5; occasional charcoal	Continuation of silty soil with rubbish related to use of 17C property. TP half-sectioned at bottom (105) SW-NE with west half excavated.

		Contamination: worms and roots **Finds:** fragments of stone roof tiles; pottery incl. Tudor Green; glass fragments; brass button; animal bone and teeth **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 500-600mm **How excavated:** trowel and mattock	
(106)	spit	**Soil:** dry compact; mid greyish brown; slightly clay gritty sandy silt (20:80); fine sand **Inclusions:** small sub-rounded, pebbles, and occasional small cobbles; gravel grit: c 2-%5; occasional charcoal **Contamination:** worms and roots **Finds:** older vessel glass; animal bone; pottery; clay pipe stem and bowl fragments **Special finds:** none **Distance from top of context**: 600-700mm **How excavated:** trowel and mattock More yard deposits with household rubbish, but fewer finds and increasingly clay in proximity to natural.	 **Excavation complete**



Fig. 3: TP11 finds from (102)



Fig. 4: excavating TP11



TPs 10 and 11: the finds team