

NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/714/08



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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
List of Illustrations	iv
Executive Summary	v
Acknowledgements	vi
1. INTRODUCTION	6
1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT	6
2. METHODOLOGY	7
2.1 PROJECT DESIGN.....	7
2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION.....	7
2.3 SITE SPECIFIC AIMS.....	7
2.4 ARCHIVE.....	8
3. BACKGROUND	9
3.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY	9
3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	9
4 EVALUATION RESULTS	11
4.1 INTRODUCTION	11
4.2 TRENCH 1	11
5 FINDS	13
5.1 INTRODUCTION.....	13
6 CONCLUSIONS.....	14
6.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL.....	14
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	15
7.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY	15
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST	16
APPENDIX 2: FIGURES	17

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

FRONTISPIECE: TRENCH 2 SHOWING CLAY SERVICE PIPE FRONT COVER

FIGURES

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION..... APPENDIX 2

FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATION APPENDIX 2

PLATES

PLATE 1: TRENCH 1, POST CLEAN-UP, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST..... PAGE 11

PLATE 2: TRENCH 2, POST CLEAN-UP, LOOKING NORTH-WEST PAGE 12

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land to the south of 3-25 Thackeray Road, Hartlepool (NGR NZ 4885 3116.) The work was commissioned by Dunelm Property Services Ltd, in order to fulfil an archaeological evaluation brief issued by Tees Archaeology. This followed a planning application to Hartlepool Borough Council for demolition of existing dwellings and construction of new residential houses in an area that included a greenfield site. This area is located 3.5km southwest of Hartlepool town centre and is to the south of Catcote, an extensive Romano-British settlement. As a result, Hartlepool Borough Council recommended an archaeological evaluation be undertaken, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to, and approved by, Hartlepool Borough Council and Tees Archaeology. The focus of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of archaeology, and advise on the impact that any redevelopment on the site would have upon these remains.

The area around the land at Thackeray Road has a diverse archaeological history. Ongoing excavations by Tees Archaeology and Durham University at Catcote started in 1998 and have continued through to the most recent 2008 season. Prior to this, there had also been sporadic excavation near to or at the site, in 1963, 1964 and 1987. During these excavations, Bronze Age and Romano-British remains have been identified, including substantial enclosures, elaborate burial rituals and evidence of buildings. Given the proximity to the Catcote site, any remains at Thackeray Road would have had the potential to help with predictive models for surviving archaeological remains within this small area.

Two evaluation trenches, measuring 2m in width by 10m in length, were excavated (Trench 1 and 2). The results of the evaluation failed to locate any archaeological remains within the evaluation trenches. However, the evaluation did reveal evidence for post-medieval activity in the form of a ceramic land drain, **(100)** which was aligned E-W within Trench 2.

Within both Trench 1 and 2, evidence of the construction of the residential buildings to the NE of the site, which occurred during the 1970's, consisted of brick debris within the upper soil horizon, as well as 20th century pottery and glass which was located within the topsoil and serves to highlight the grounds function as a communal area within this estate.

The evaluation failed to locate any significant archaeological evidence, and no further works should be required on the present site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Richard Williamson of Dunelm Property Services Ltd for commissioning the project, and for all his assistance throughout the fieldwork.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to Peter Rowe, Sites and Monuments Officer at Tees Archaeology, and to Robin Daniels, Archaeological Officer at Tees Archaeology, for their help during this project and for allowing us the chance to visit the excavations at Catcote.

Rachel Horn undertook the evaluation under the supervision of Helen Noakes. The report was written by Helen Noakes. The project was managed by Matt Town, Project Manager, who also produced the drawings and edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In July 2008 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land to the south of 3-25 Thackeray Road, Hartlepool. The area lies on the western fringes of the city and comprises previously undeveloped land within a residential estate (NGR NZ 4885 3116; see Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The work was commissioned by Dunelm Property Services Ltd in order to fulfil an Archaeological Evaluation Brief issued by Tees Archaeology. This followed a planning application to Hartlepool Borough Council for demolition of, and extension to, a residential development at the site. The land lies in an archaeologically sensitive area and is located near to, and immediately south of, the Romano-British settlement at Catcote. As a result, Hartlepool Borough Council recommended an archaeological evaluation be undertaken, in accordance with the brief, and a Written Scheme of Investigation submitted to, and approved by, Tees Archaeology. The focus of the evaluation was to determine the presence or absence of archaeological remains within the proposed development area and to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains.
- 1.1.3 The field evaluation comprised the excavation of two linear trial trenches in order to provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals (See Figure 2). The principal objective of this evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed.
- 1.1.4 This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document outlining the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area, an assessment of the impact of the proposed development, and recommendations for further work.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Dunelm Property Services Ltd (Town 2008). This design was prepared in accordance with a brief prepared by Tees Archaeology (Rowe 2008).
- 2.1.2 Following acceptance of the project design, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

- 2.2.1 The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of two 10m by 2m trial trenches, in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals. The location and size of the trial trenches were agreed with Peter Rowe, Sites and Monuments Officer, Tees Archaeology (Figure 2). In summary, the main objectives of the evaluation were:
- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they are observed;
 - to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
 - to recover artefactual material, especially where useful for dating purposes;
 - to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes;
 - to assess how the presence/absence, of archaeological remains will impact on the proposed development works.

2.3 SITE SPECIFIC AIMS

- 2.3.1 The main site-specific aim of the evaluation was defined as follows:
- to find evidence for the extent and date of prehistoric and Romano-British activity as evidenced by buildings, boundaries, burials, pits, ditches, artefacts and any environmental information they may contain.' (Rowe 2008)
- 2.3.2 A total of two trenches were excavated to record the presence or absence of archaeological feature and characterise the nature and significance of any recorded features. The trenches were mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the natural substrate or the top of archaeological deposits, whichever was encountered first. Each trench was then manually cleaned and any putative archaeological features investigated and

recorded according to the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd standard procedure as set out in the NPAL Excavation Manual (Giecco 2005).

- 2.3.3 Photography was undertaken using Canon EOS 500V Single Lens Reflex (SLR) cameras. A photographic record was made using digital photography, 400 ISO Black and White Print and 200 ISO Colour Slide film.
- 2.3.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (IFA 1994).

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design, and in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (2nd Edition, 1991) and the *'Archaeological Archives-A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation'* (Brown 2007) The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository, and a copy of the report given to the National Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 08 THK-A.
- 2.4.2 North Pennines Archaeology supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this evaluation will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project. The site has been given the unique identification number, northpen3-45143 as part of the Oasis Project.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 3.1.1 Thackeray Road is located 3.5km southwest of Hartlepool town centre and is to the south of Catcote, an extensive Romano-British settlement (see Figure 1). Both these sites occupy views on the slopes of a low hill (Summerhill woodland) commanding panoramic views of the Tees Estuary and Hartlepool Bay (Tees Archaeology 2003). The area of development exists within the junction of Thackeray Road and Masefield Road, on a current open greenland area used for recreational purposes.
- 3.1.2 The Teesside Lowland region is largely underlain by red mudstones and sandstones of Permo-Triassic age. Jurassic sandstones and shales outcrop on the coast, forming the edge of the Eston and Upleatham Hills near Guisborough. Thick deposits of glacial drift, bolder clay, sand and gravel, tinged red by their rock debris content, mask almost the whole of the Teesside area.
- 3.1.3 Much of the area is low lying, at roughly 30m OD, with extensive areas of coastal plain, marshland and mudflats (Countryside Commission 1998).

3.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 Thackeray Road is made up of residential properties, which were constructed between the 1950's and the 1970's. Thackeray Road itself overlooks the site of Summerhill and the Catcote excavation area to the north, and backs on to an area of small, maintained parklands to the northwest. The current properties located on the land of the proposed development area are backed by terraced gardens which have truncated the side of the hill leading up to the site of the Catcote excavations.
- 3.2.2 The site at Catcote was initially discovered in 1963 during rescue archaeology which came about from the levelling of playing fields attached to The English Martyrs School. Little is known from these excavations as they were mostly the result of amateur conservation but the following year, an excavation by the University of Durham uncovered a human burial and evidence for Iron Age roundhouses (Tees Archaeology 2003).
- 3.2.3 Between 1998 and 2008, Tees Archaeology established a training programme with The University of Durham which entailed a four week programme of excavation during the summer months. Over these 10 years, a clearer picture of the nature of the occupation at Catcote has emerged.
- 3.2.4 A Bronze Age settlement, which reached its height at around 800BC, was located in the slope of the valley, on well- drained soils. Evidence for enclosures and roundhouses were uncovered, on the area now occupied by the visitors centre for Summerhill.
- 3.2.5 Further up the slope from the visitors centre, to the south, evidence for the Iron Age and Romano-British settlement dating to between 200BC-400AD, exists on the upper

crest of the hill, and on the east-facing slopes of this hill in particular. In the Iron Age, the settlement seems to have comprised routeways, ditched enclosures and roundhouses. It is believed that some of the enclosures could have housed farmsteads, one of which in particular was used over an extensive period of time (*ibid*).

- 3.2.6 In 1999 and 2001, geophysical surveys were carried out by both GeoQuest Associates and Archaeological Services University of Durham, which showed anomalies relating to substantial ditches thought to be defining the southern part of the hilltop. Also identified within this survey was a funnel shaped anomaly which has been interpreted as a possible driveway. Domestic refuse from specific features within the excavations, such as roundhouses and boundary ditches suggest that of a high status settlement (Waughman 2001).
- 3.2.7 The more detailed history of the excavations at Catcote is available from Tees Archaeology and within The Durham Archaeological Journals series.

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The machine stripping of the trenches, which were subsequently excavated by hand down to the natural subsoil, permitted an examination of the archaeological remains within the site. All trench locations are depicted in Figure 2.

4.2 TRENCH 1

4.2.1 Trench 1 was aligned NW-SE and measured 10m in length by 2m in width (See Figure 2; Plate 1)

4.2.2 The natural substrate **(102)** was encountered at 19.84m OD. It consisted of compacted mid-brown, silty clay with some inclusions of small sub-angular pebbles.

4.2.3 Above this, and overlying the natural, was the topsoil, **(101)** which was 0.28m in depth and consisted of loosely compacted, dark greyish-brown, silty clay with frequent inclusions of construction debris, such as red brick and glass, as well as 20th century domestic pottery. This was encountered from 20.28m OD.

4.2.4 No archaeological or modern features of interest were excavated or recorded.



PLATE 1: TRENCH 1, LOOKING SOUTH-EAST

4.3 TRENCH 2

- 4.3.1 Trench 2 was aligned NW-SE and was 10m in length by 2m in width (Figure 2, Plate 2)
- 4.3.2 The natural geology (**102**) was encountered at 20.02m OD. It consisted of compacted mid-brown, silty clay, with some inclusions of small, sub-angular pebbles. Within Trench 2 a slot was excavated to ascertain whether or not the natural substrate had been observed, measuring 1.5m wide by 0.70m deep at the NW end of the trench. The slot showed no variation from the natural substrate encountered.
- 4.3.3 Cutting into the natural (**100**), was a ceramic land drain, which was orientated E-W and had an extent of 3.94m. The pipe itself was 0.08m wide and was at 20.04m OD within the trench. The land drain was presumably installed to add drainage to the site.
- 4.3.4 Above this, and overlying the natural was the topsoil (**101**), which was 0.28m in depth and consisted of loosely compacted, dark greyish-brown, silty clay which had frequent inclusions of construction debris, such as red brick and glass, as well as 20th century domestic pottery. This was encountered from 20.54m OD.



PLATE 2: TRENCH 2, LOOKING NORTH-WEST

5 FINDS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 Finds were observed within the topsoil of both trenches that were consistent with the construction date of the buildings during the late 20th century. Modern glass, ceramics and metalwork all attributed to the communal nature of the land within an estate were observed but not retained as little could be gained from the examination of this material. A generic date of the 20th-21st century is given for the finds encountered.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 6.1.1 The project has provided an opportunity to study an area close to Catcote, a known archaeological settlement, ranging from the Bronze Age through to the Romano-British period within Hartlepool. Excavations undertaken by Tees Archaeology in conjunction with Durham University show that substantial Bronze Age and Romano-British archaeological remains exist within the area to the north of the proposed development site at Thackeray Road.
- 6.1.2 The results of the evaluation failed to locate any archaeological remains which could be associated with Romano-British or earlier settlement in Hartlepool or with the Catcote settlement.
- 6.1.3 The post-medieval period was largely characterised by the occurrence of the ceramic land drain within Trench 2, as well as modern debris which is associated with both the building works carried out in the 1970's and the current communal green land-use of the area off Thackeray Road.
- 6.1.4 The existence of redbrick debris within the upper layers of the area suggests that any archaeological remains which may have existed prior to the construction of the residences at Thackeray Road has been severely truncated, if not removed entirely. Therefore, the proposed development is likely to have a limited impact on any surviving archaeological remains. Nevertheless, the surrounding area remains of archaeological importance and any future development should consider that there remains a strong likelihood of archaeological remains being present in the vicinity.

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7.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Trench	Category	Interpretation
100	2	Deposit	Ceramic water pipe, modern.
101	1 & 2	Deposit	Topsoil
102	1&2	Deposit	Natural

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES
