

CHARLES STREET  
ST PETER'S  
SUNDERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

July 2007

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Prepared for: <i>Turner and Townsend</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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CHARLES STREET  
ST PETER'S  
SUNDERLAND

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

Prepared by:

*The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*



**Frontispiece:** View of the excavation trench, east-facing section following excavation, showing cuts into sub-soil through a dark, silty-loam deposit interpreted as buried top-soil

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## SUMMARY

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*This document reports on archaeological evaluation trenching conducted to inform a proposal for development on the site of a proposed Sixth Form College on the west side of the Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Peter's, on the St Peter's Campus of Sunderland University, Charles Street, Sunderland. Previous archaeological assessment and excavation has provided contextual information regarding the archaeological and historical development of the area, demonstrating the possibility that the area contains the remains of early medieval, later medieval and later industrial remains. The trenching was devised to determine the precise impact of the proposed scheme on the cultural heritage.*

*In requesting archaeological evaluation of the site, the County Archaeologist for Tyne & Wear, and planning archaeologist for Sunderland City Council noted the possibility that structures or features of associated with an early medieval monastery or late remains associated with St Peter's church may have existed upon the site and that their remains may survive below the modern ground surface.*

*The square-shaped trench cut through the tarmac measured 7m x 7m, but its sides were stepped down so that it measured 2m x 2m at the floor, at a depth of 4.5-4.8m. Shoring was then inserted to allow further excavation up to and below 5m below surface level.*

*The excavations revealed the presence of a deep deposit of sand- and gravel-based ballast from 0.3m below the surface tarmac to a depth of 4.5-4.8m. The ballast deposit sat upon a dark, silty deposit, interpreted as probably buried top-soil, within which some items of domestic waste were identified, including shells, an iron rivet and sparse sherds of abraded post-medieval pottery. The silty top-soil deposit, some 0.3m thick, sat upon hard, archaeologically-sterile brown clay which was investigated to a depth of some 5.4m below the surface. No structural remains of any kind were encountered.*

*The findings of the excavation allow at least two main interpretations. First, that ballast was dumped in the 18<sup>th</sup> century upon a modified topsoil. Second, that the underlying clay was the result of major landscaping in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when large quantities of ballast were removed from the area, and that the present ballast overlying the site dates from that period.*

*The nature of remains found upon the site does supports a recommendation for further archaeological evaluation or mitigation by avoidance. However, it should be cautioned that the absence of archaeological remains from this site does not preclude the possibility that they could exist elsewhere in the wider vicinity.*

# 1. INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 Purpose of Evaluation

The following is a report on a programme of archaeological evaluation trenching carried out on the site of a proposed Sixth Form College on the St Peter's campus of Sunderland University at Charles Street, Sunderland. The evaluation strategy was designed to further inform the planning process with regard to the proposed construction of a Sixth Form College as an extension to the university buildings on the site. The trenching was designed to test for the existence and define the nature of any features of archaeological importance under the present ground surface.

An archaeological assessment of the site carried out by Tyne & Wear Museums Service in 2003 (TWMS 2003) concluded that Charles Street was covered by deep deposits of made ground, but that these could be shallower in the eastern part of area covered by the assessment, notably in the vicinity of the current development site. It was recommended, therefore, that archaeological evaluation of the development site was carried out in order to further inform the planning process.

## 1.2 Cultural Heritage Background

The archaeological assessment of the site carried out in 2003 (TWMS 2003) provided a detailed historical summary of the area derived from the archaeological record and from historical sources, including historic maps and published syntheses. This assessment is available for consultation at the County Heritage Environment record (HER) and it is not proposed to repeat its findings here, but a brief summary partly derived from TWMS 2003 will be provided as background to the present work.

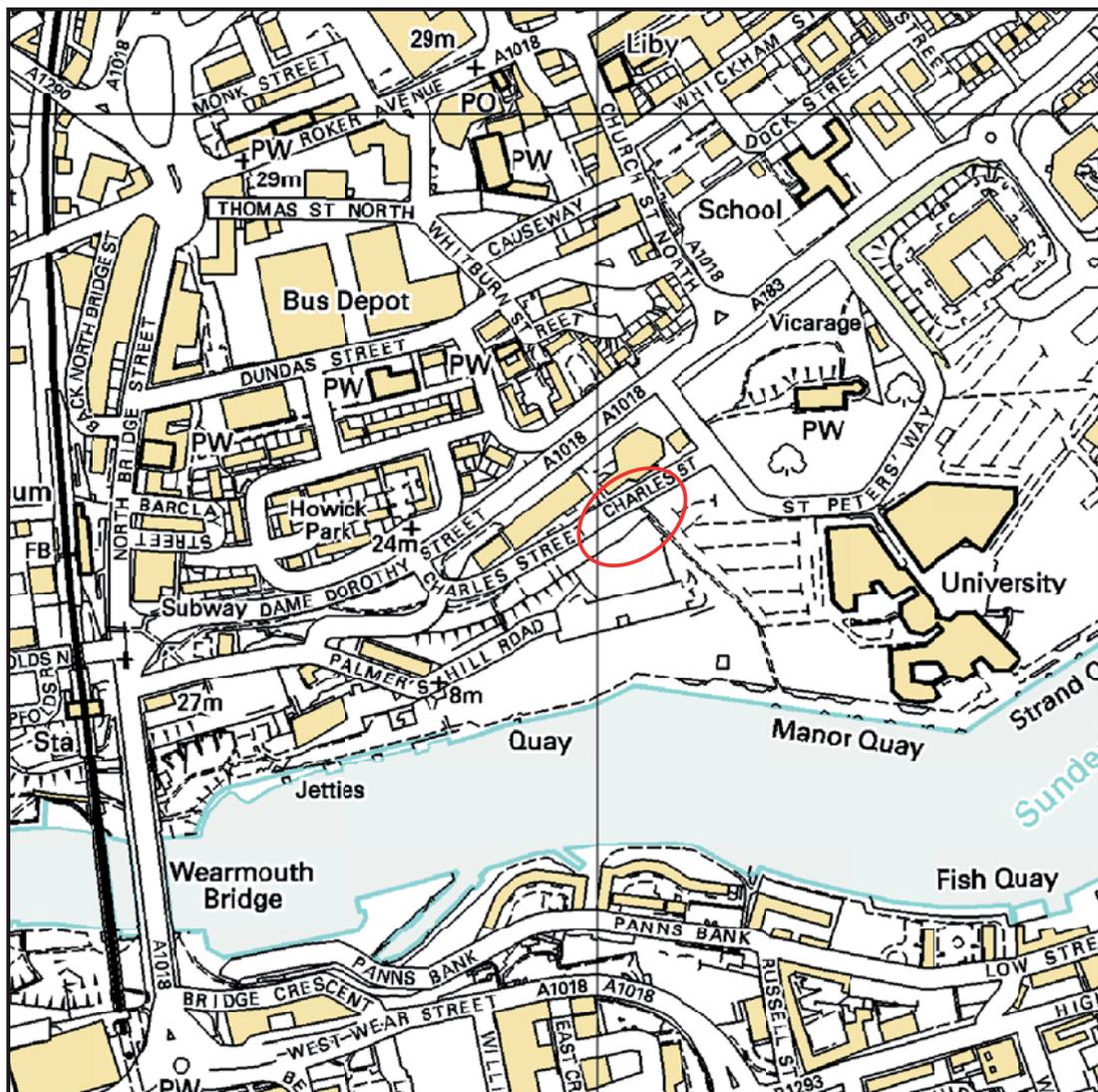
The evaluation site falls in an area that would have been exploited intermittently throughout prehistory and into the Roman period, although secure evidence for the nature of such land-use is lacking. Some flint tools and a Neolithic axe hammer have been found in the vicinity of St Peter's church and in the river nearby, but could have been derived from ballast.

The most significant development in the history of Monkwearmouth and Sunderland was the establishment of St Peter's Monastery on the north bank of the river Wear in c.674 A.D. In 686 A.D. Bede records the site was extended to include 400 acres on the south side of the river, where Sunderland later developed. The site was abandoned following Viking raids in the mid-9<sup>th</sup> century, but rebuilt in 1072 or earlier, subsequently serving as a cell of Durham Cathedral from 1083 until the Reformation. The settlement at Monkwearmouth, initially based on the monastery, is frequently mentioned in medieval documents (TWMS 2003, 8) suggesting a thriving settlement based upon farming, fishing and salt-making.

Following the dissolution of the Monasteries the landholdings of the village were reorganised into the hands of 4 principal farmers, each with tenants. The agricultural character of the area began to change in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with the increased export of coal and development of shipbuilding, both on an industrial scale, aided by the cutting of a new channel in the river Wear and construction of improved harbour facilities. Eighteenth and early nineteenth century maps, notably Lewin's plan of Monkwearmouth of 1714, Burleigh and Thompson's map of 1737 and Garbutt's map of 1817 show the accumulation of the Monkwearmouth ballast hills (HER ref. 5287), specifically in the vicinity of Charles Street. Also striking is the presence from an early period of a straight road (Later, Whitburn Street) from the north, running directly towards the Wear between the present evaluation site and St Peter's church.



*Illus. 01: The location of the evaluation site at Monkwearmouth, Sunderland.*



*Illus. 02: The location of the evaluation site in Charles Street, Monkwearmouth, Sunderland.*

The ballast hills were on land recorded, variously, as Sr William's or Williamson's (ballast) land. The Corder Manuscripts make reference to Meeting Hill "west one of the four ballast hills on Williamson land... estimated by the inhabitants as 1000ft high". There was apparently a Baptist meeting house on the summit of this hill. Meeting Hill was cleared and levelled in 1833 for new streets. Palmer's Hill was an accumulation of ballast on the eastern side of Meeting Hill, on which there was a large square house, lived in by Peter Haswell, a sawyer. The 'fine old house' on the southeast slope of Palmer's Hill belonged to the Freemasons, and later became a school. Corder also mentions that a ship was built on Palmer's Hill in 1840.

In 1860 Corder reported the removal of 6000 cartloads of ballast prior to the building of John Dickinson's engineworks on Palmer's Hill - but substantial accumulations remained, particularly on the south side of Charles Street close to its junction with Whitburn Street. By Garbutt's map of 1817, several buildings have been built amongst the ballast hills. Wood's plan of 1826 and Cook's plan of 1848 show the development of housing on the west side of Whitburn Street, and by the 1<sup>st</sup> edition Ordnance Survey (surveyed c.1855-60) it had also developed along the south side of Charles Street, with the terraced housing set in front of (i.e. north of) small yards or gardens. Immediately south of the development site the Palmer's Hill Engine Works (HER ref. 5286) developed in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. By this time much of the ballast deposits had been levelled, but the second and later editions of the Ordnance Survey map series suggest underlying ballast deposits through the use of hachures.

The terrace on the south side of Charles Street had been cleared by the 1967 edition of the Ordnance Survey plan, although a single property remained on or close to the evaluation site. This had also been removed by 1975, by which time building had begun on the University site and the Palmer's Engineering Works had closed. It is unclear whether the car park bordering the south side of the evaluation site was created by adding or removing material from the site, and whether this process had a direct impact upon the evaluation site.

## 2. EVALUATION PROGRAMME

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### 2.1 Aims

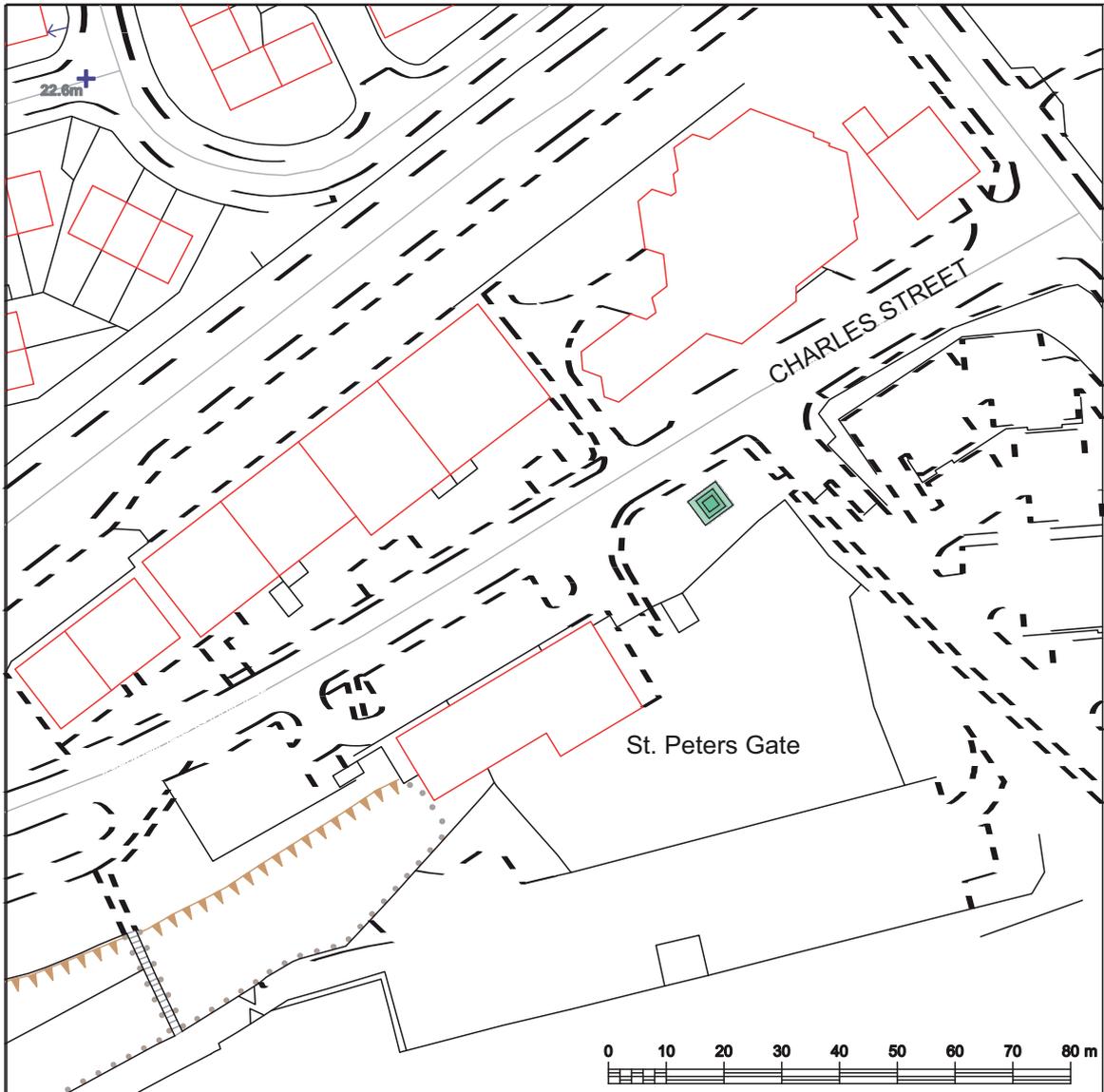
The aims of the programme of evaluation trenching were to investigate the possibility that significant archaeological remains were present on the site, to determine the character of any such remains and determine, as far as possible, their function and state of preservation.

### 2.2 Methods

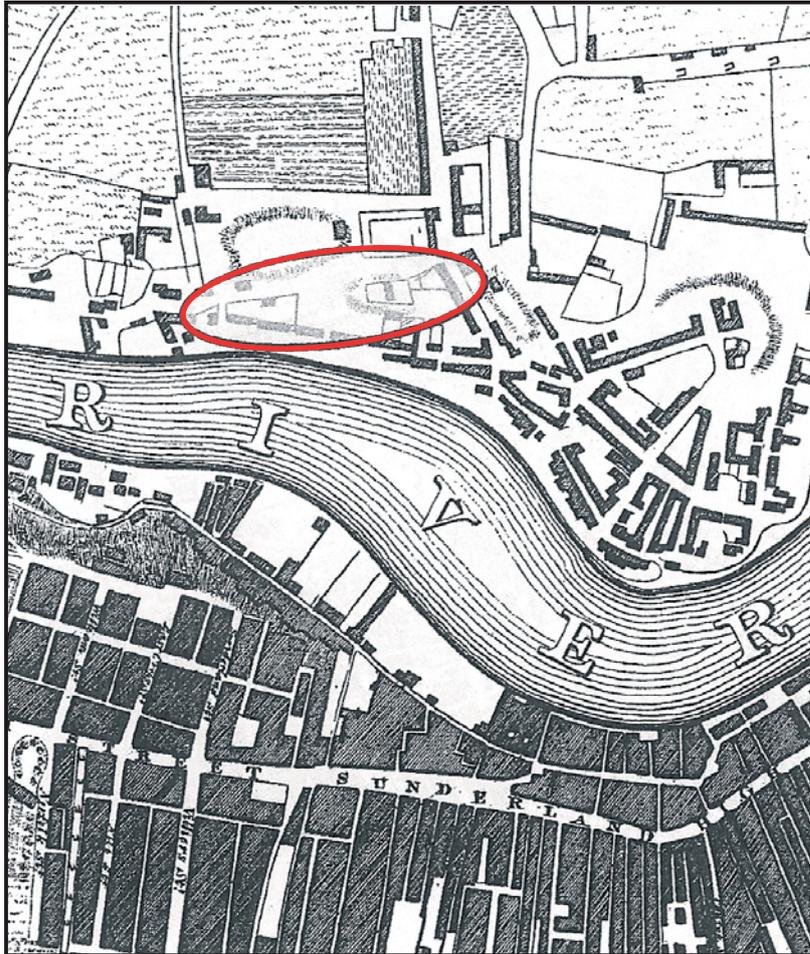
A single trench was placed in the centre of the available area,+ taking due care to avoid undermining or otherwise disturbing the foundations or above ground structure of a modern car park wall (which also acts as a revetment for the raised car park surface beyond. A mechanical excavator, closely supervised by an archaeologist, was used to remove the surface tarmac and excavate the underlying ballast. The trench was excavated following a stepped pattern in order to achieve the maximum depth by the safest possible means. However, the depth of the ballast was found to be so great that the inner trench, measuring 2m x 2m, had to be excavated some 3m below the final step. At this point, some 4.7m below the current ground surface, the ballast gave way to a dark, silty deposit which it was considered merited further examination. For that purpose a system of boxed shoring was implemented, using a 2m x 2m inner box and wider outer box which sat at a higher level upon one of the terrace platforms excavated previously. Following the establishment of the shoring system, the floor of the trench was cleared by hand below the level of the shoring. All anomalies or features of potential interest were examined closely by hand to appraise their importance and for recording purposes. A cut was also made into the sub-soil exposed to check its authenticity. Trench sections exposed by lowering the trench floor by hand were also hand-cleaned for recording purposes.

### 2.3 Trench Location and Extent

The locations and extent of the evaluation trench is shown on *Illustration 03*.



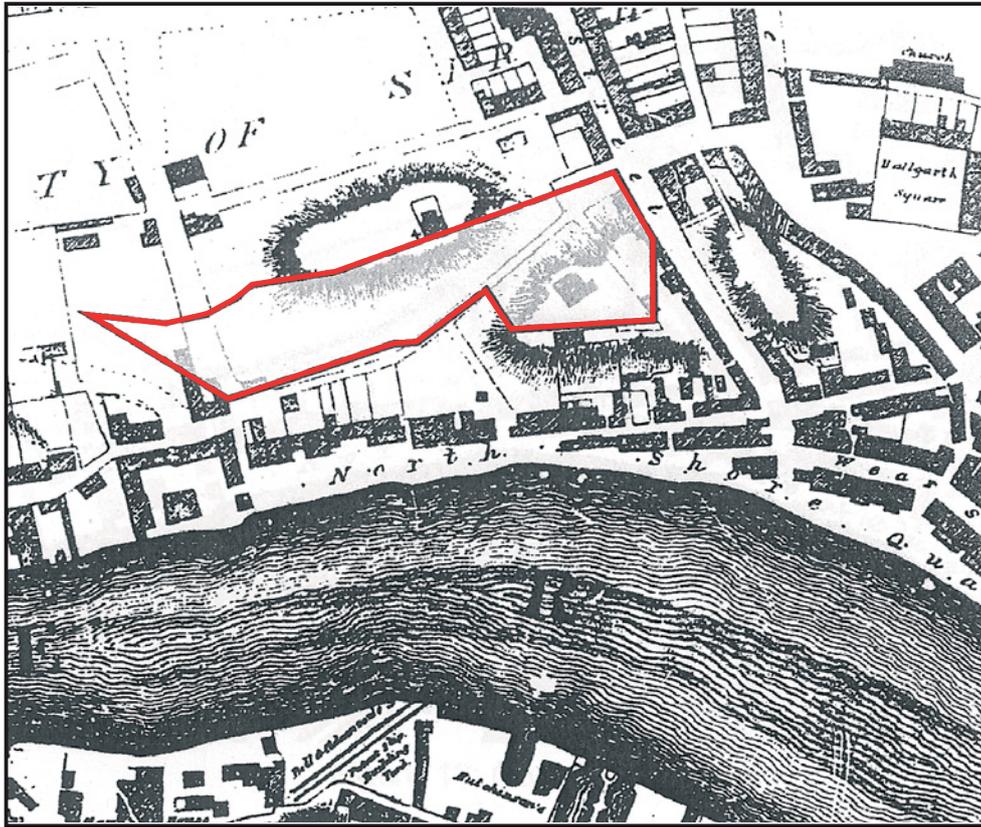
**Illus. 03:** The position of the evaluation trench  on the south side of Charles Street.



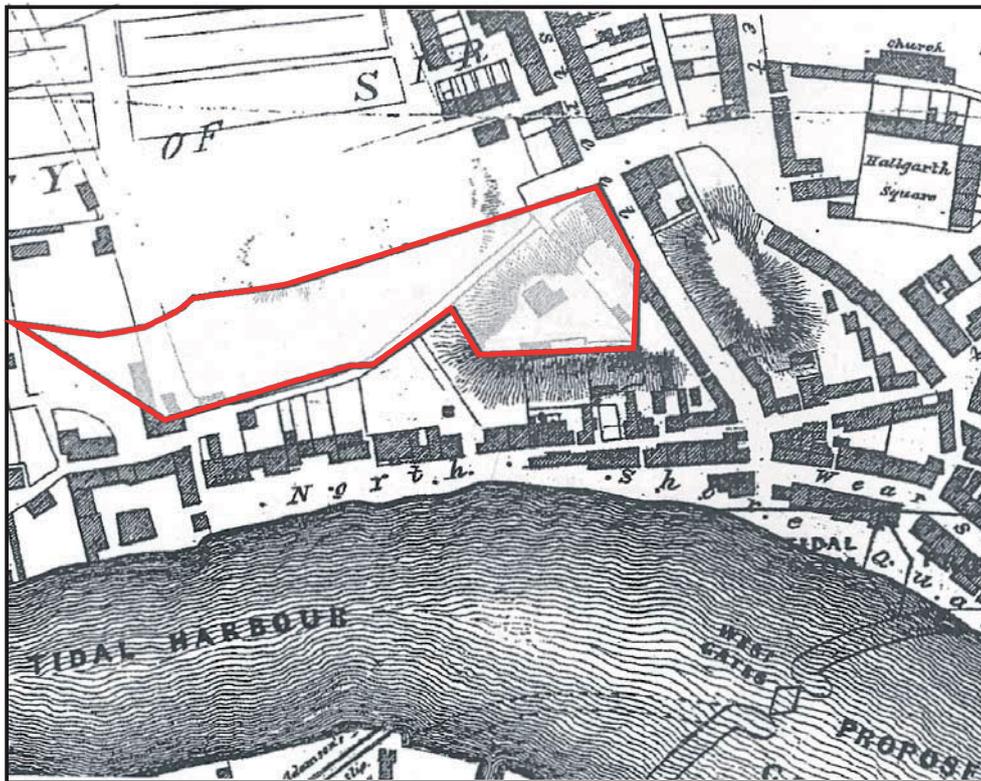
*Illus. 04: Extract from Garbutt's map of 1817*



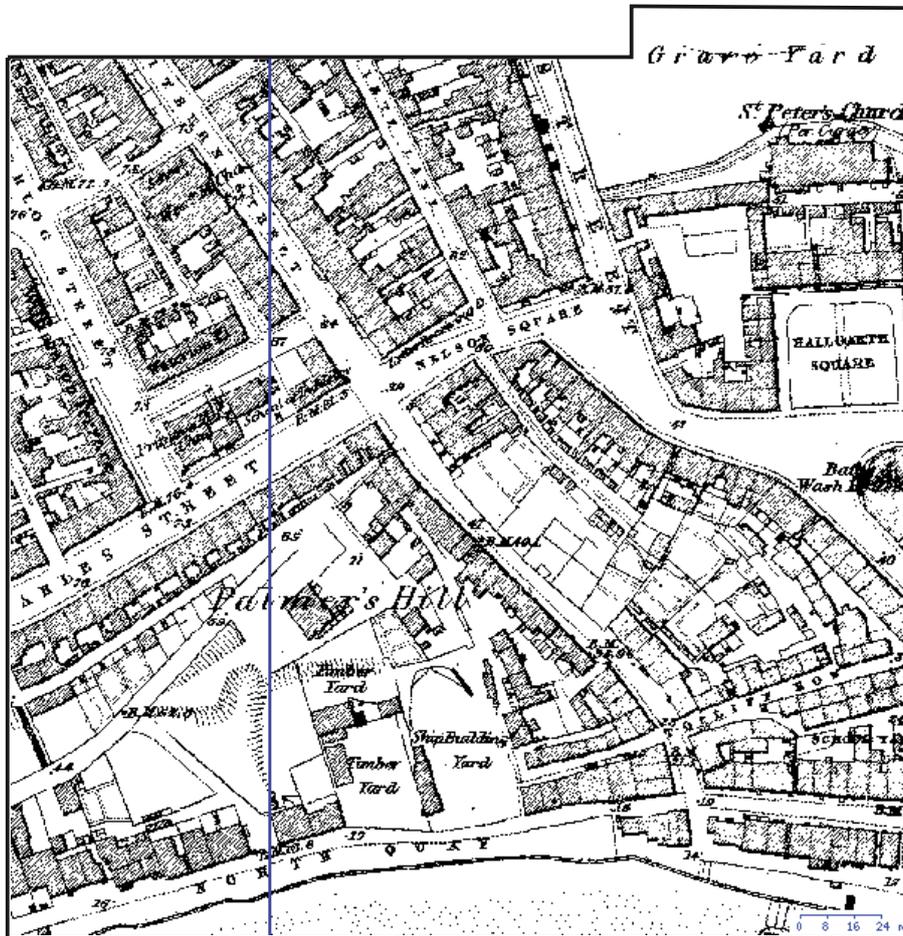
*Illus. 05: Extract from Wood's map of 1826*



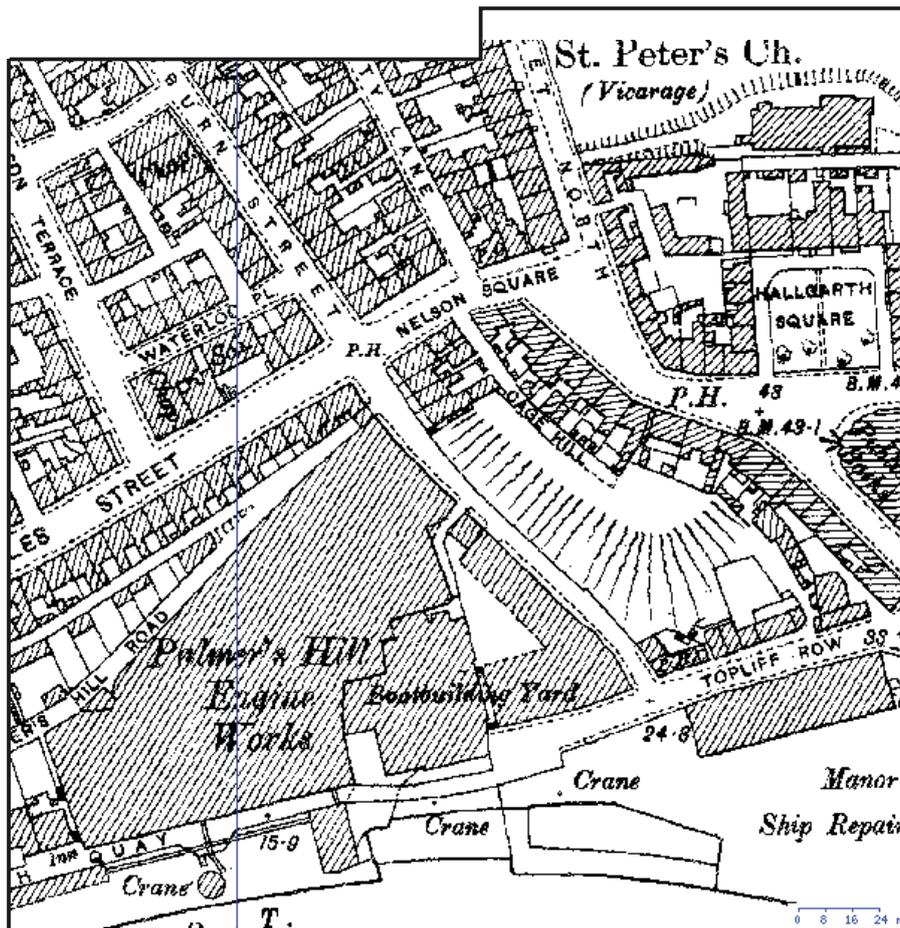
*Illus. 06: Extract from Robson's map of 1831*



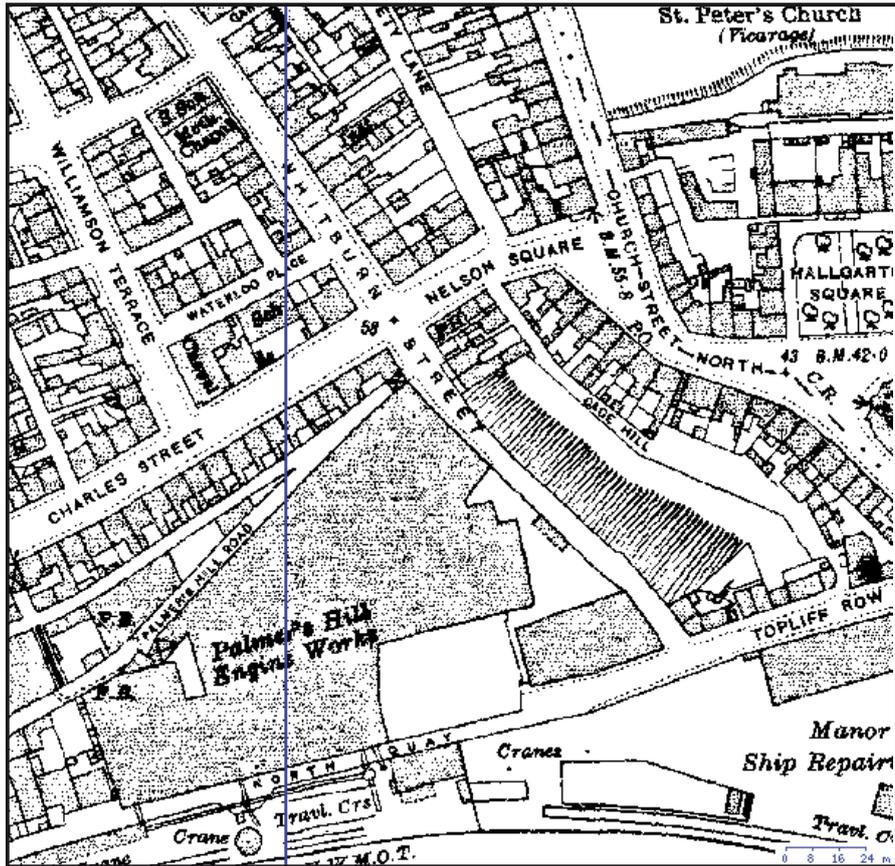
*Illus. 07: Extract from Cook's map of 1848*



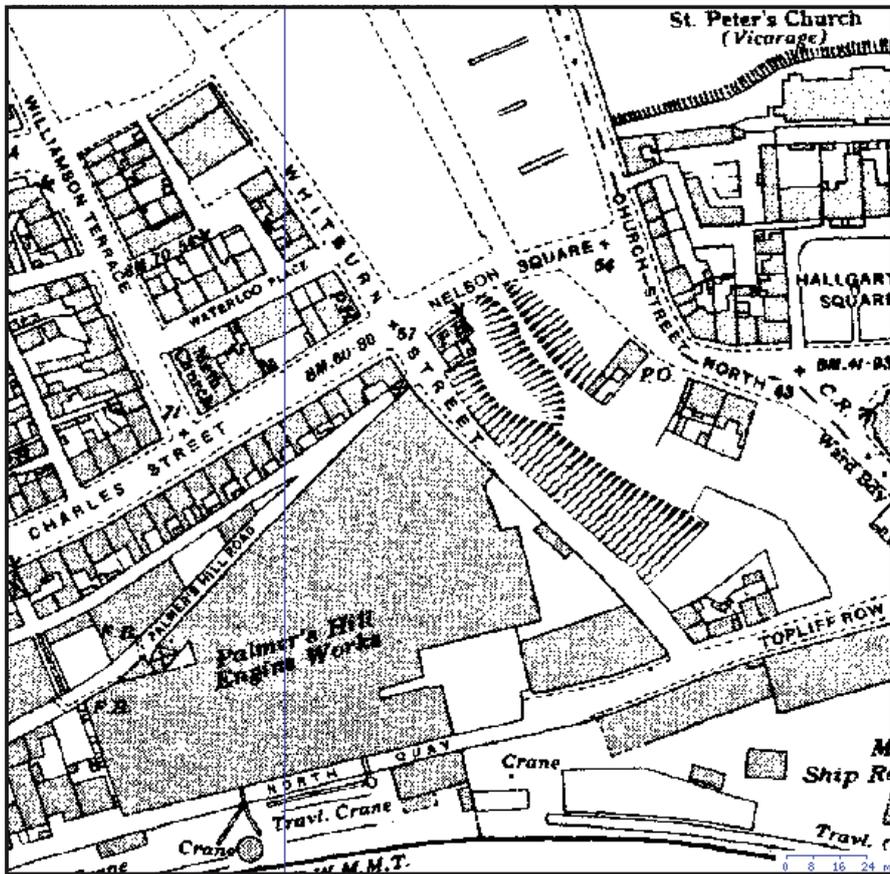
*Illus. 08: Extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey Plan (surveyed c.1855-60).*



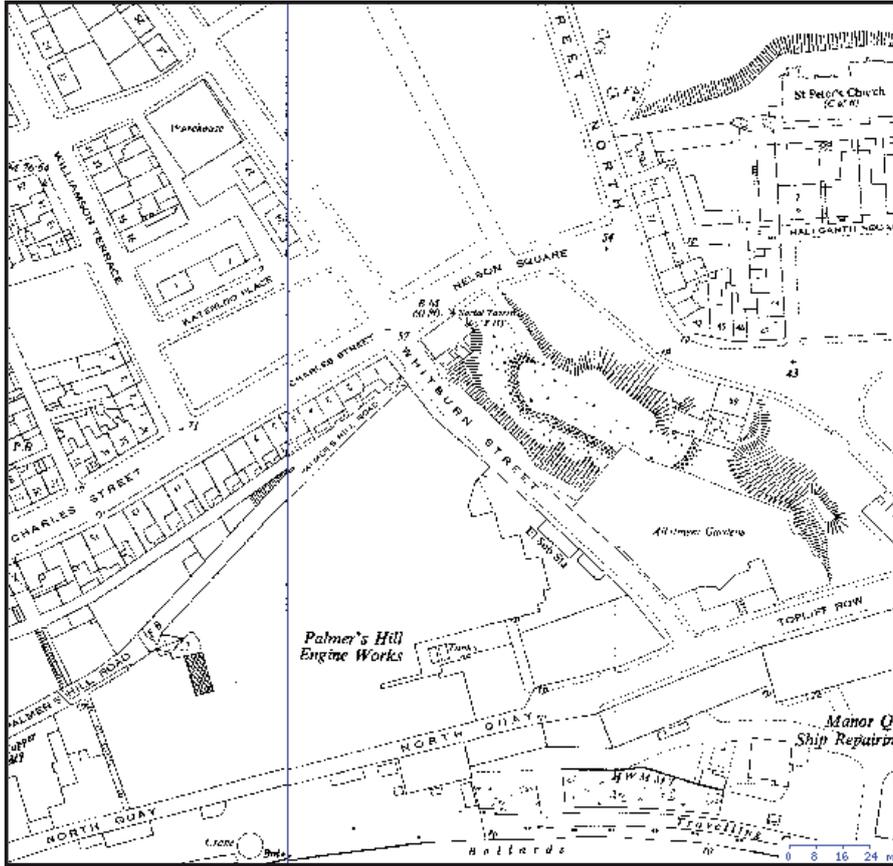
*Illus. 09: Extract from the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1898).*



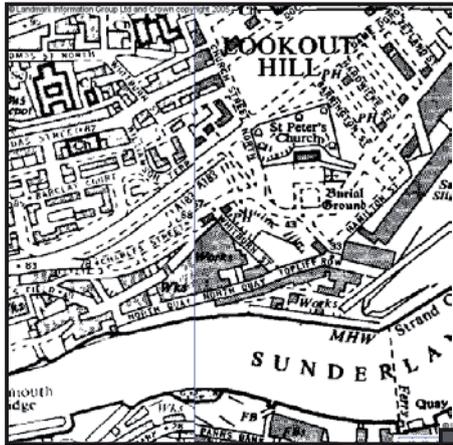
*Illus. 10: Extract from the 3rd edition Ordnance Survey Plan (1920).*



*Illus. 11: Extract from the 4th edition Ordnance Survey Plan (c. 1940).*



*Illus. 12: Extract from the 1955 edition Ordnance Survey Plan.*



*Illus. 13: Extract from the 1967 edition Ordnance Survey Plan.*



*Illus. 14: Extract from the 1975 edition Ordnance Survey Plan.*

## 3. RESULTS

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### 3.1 Description

Below the tarmac surface of the car park [101] and its sandy rubble base [102] was a deep deposit of ballast [103] - sands and gravels imported by coal-exporting ships on their return to the river, and dumped on and above the shoreline as waste. The upper part of this deposit [103i] was darker and more mixed than the lower, deeper part which comprised light coloured sand [103ii]. The ballast extended from 0.3m below the surface tarmac to a depth of 4.5-4.8m. Due to the constraints of the site and requirement for shoring, which obscured the trench sides, it was not possible to view the full stratigraphy of the ballast deposits, but it clearly comprised a mixture of fine sands, coarse sands and gravel, some apparently mixed, some dumped in discrete layers. The lower reaches of the deposit were examined more closely, being visible through the structure of the shoring, and below it. Here it was banded in different grades (from fine sand to gravely coarse sand), the boundaries of some of which were clearly discrete, others more blurred, but for recording purposes it was not felt practical, necessary or meaningful to assign each band a discrete context number. Parts of the ballast contained abraded tile of likely modern origin as well as some modern pottery. A decorated clay pipe stem of likely 18<sup>th</sup> century date was also recovered at a depth of some 0.3m from the foot of the ballast deposit. Some apparent post-holes cut into the ballast close to its very stark junction with the underlying black silty-loam deposit [104] appeared, upon excavation, to be animal burrows. The black silty-loam deposit was explored in the western half of the trench, where the cut of an apparent, shallow pit [105] was revealed at the southern end. This was filled with coarse gravel [106] and contained some sherds of glazed pottery, certainly post-medieval and probably no earlier than mid-18<sup>th</sup> century in origin. Within the silty-loam deposit were some items of domestic waste, including oyster and cockle shells, a large, iron rivet and a few sherds of abraded post-medieval/early modern pottery. The silty top-soil deposit, some 0.3m thick, sat upon hard, archaeologically-sterile brown clay [107] which was investigated to a depth of some 5.4m below the surface by means of a second, narrow cut along the west section of the trench. The boundary between [104] and [107] was extremely clear, with no intermixing of deposits.

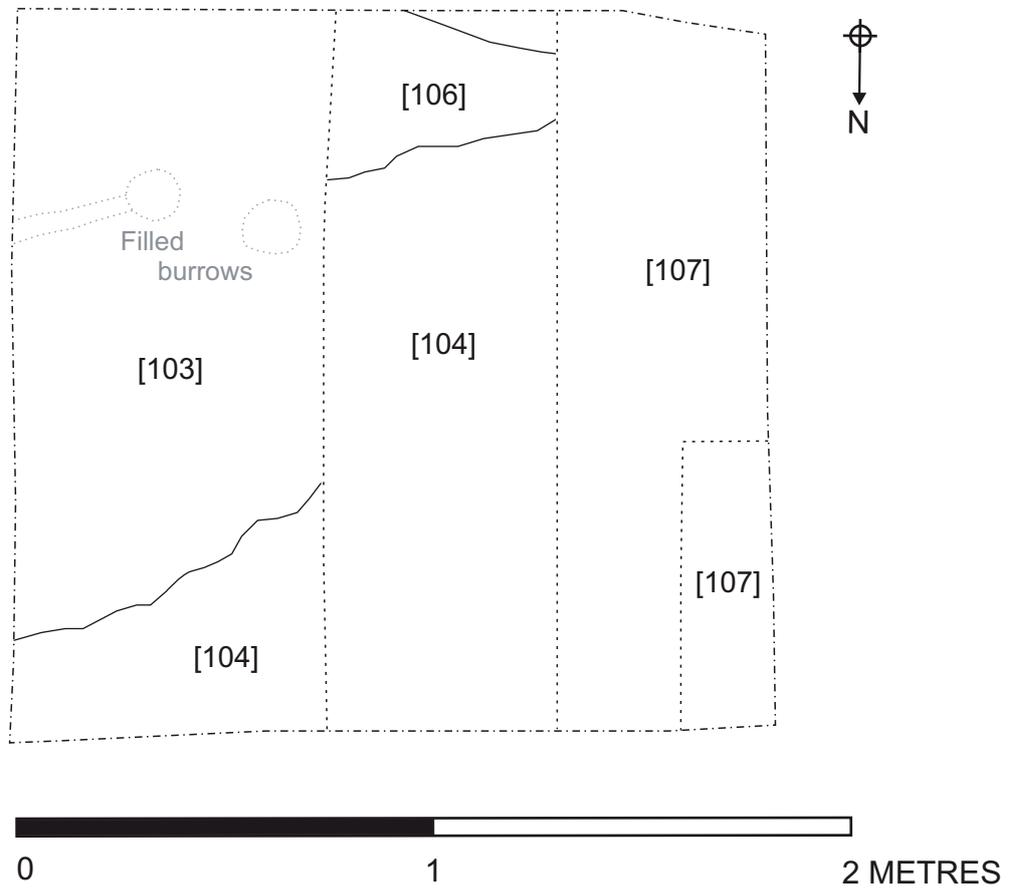
Samples of the black top-soil deposit [104], a silty buried 'top-soil' deposit of unknown date encountered at 4.5-4.8 metres below the modern ground surface, were screened for artifactual inclusions and a single bulk sediment sample submitted for an evaluation of its bio-archaeological potential. Small quantities of charred and waterlogged biological remains were recovered from the deposit, together with larger amounts of cinder, coal and ?slag. It was concluded that the remains were consistent with waste from a domestic hearth (or similar) discarded onto a former land surface but too few to provide any strong supporting (or contrary) evidence. No further study of the biological remains from this deposit is considered warranted.

#### *Summary*

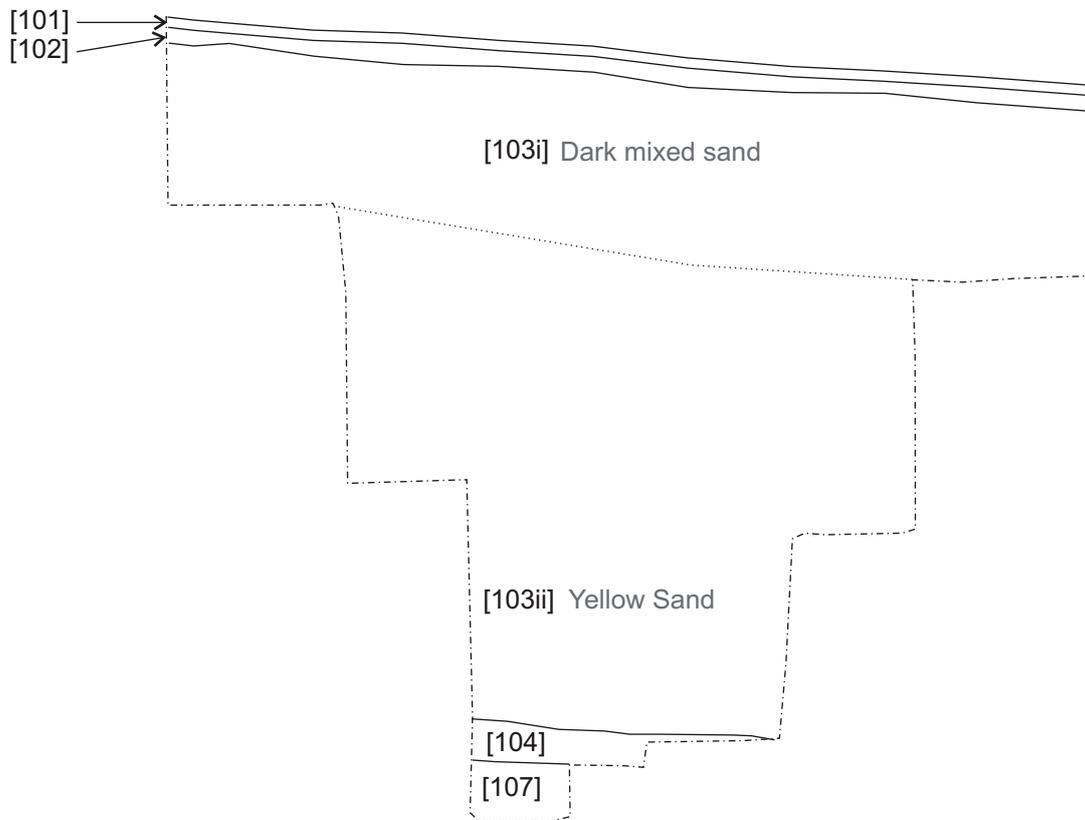
The excavations revealed the presence of a deep deposit of sand-based ballast from 0.3m below the surface tarmac to a depth of 4.5-4.8m.

The ballast deposit sat upon a dark, silty deposit, interpreted as probably buried top-soil, within which some items of domestic waste were identified, including shells, post-medieval pottery and an iron rivet and burnt domestic waste.

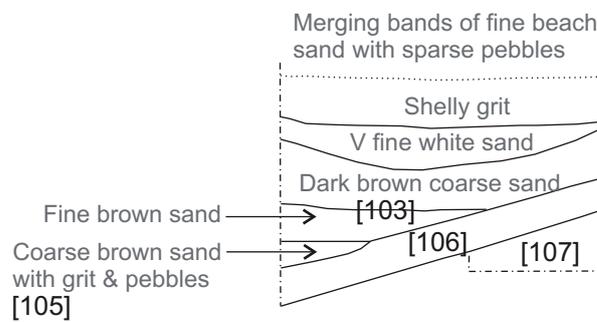
Below the silty top-soil was the natural sub-soil, an archaeologically-sterile deposit of brown clay which was investigated to a depth of some 5.2m below the surface.



**Illus. 15:** Plan of the evaluation trench



**Illus. 16:** South-facing section of evaluation trench.



**Illus. 17:** Lower east-facing section of evaluation trench.

### 3.2 Interpretation

The excavation clearly encountered ballast, the product of waste deposition from otherwise unladen ships entering the river between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The ballast had been deposited upon a land surface of black, silty loam which gave the appearance of a domestic, back-plot deposit, its siltiness probably the result of night-soiling. The sparse sherds of pottery found within this deposit appear to be no earlier than 18<sup>th</sup> century in origin and may even be later (*pers. com.* Jenny Vaughan, NCAS). This suggests that the ballast was deposited on the site at a relatively late date. The stark nature of the junction between [103] and [104] also suggests the possibility that [104] may have been truncated prior to the deposition of [103]. The junction between the silty-loam and underlying brown clay was also stark, suggesting the possibility that the latter was also truncated prior to deposition of [104].

The nature of the deposits recorded in the evaluation trench allow at least two main interpretations. First, that [104] is an ancient topsoil modified by intensive cultivation and domestic dumping in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, upon which ballast was deposited by the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Alternatively it might be suggested that the nature of the interface between [104] and [107] implies that [107] is either truncated or is itself a made deposit, perhaps the result of major landscaping in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when large quantities of ballast were removed from the area. The latter option would date the silty-loam topsoil [104] to the early or middle part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, following which it was covered by a new infusion of (perhaps redeposited) ballast.



**Illus. 18:** View of the excavation at an early stage, showing the tarmac surface upon a sandy rubble base, with mixed brown sand below



**Illus. 19:** View of the partially excavated evaluation trench sandy ballast over mixed (?redeposited) darker sandy deposits immediately below the tarmac surface.



**Illus. 20:** View of the evaluation trench prior to shoring, showing dark deposit appearing below the sandy ballast deposit.



**Illus. 21:** View of the excavation at an early stage, showing the tarmac surface upon a sandy rubble base, with mixed brown sand below



**Illus. 22:** View of the partially excavated evaluation trench showing sandy ballast over mixed (?redeposited) darker sandy deposits immediately below the tarmac surface.



**Illus. 23:** View of the evaluation trench following completion of excavation, showing slot into natural clay to left of view (A) with deeper slot (B) at top left.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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The following conclusions may be drawn from the results of the evaluation excavations:

No significant structural remains were discovered during the excavation and no artifacts pre-dating the 18<sup>th</sup> century were recovered from archaeologically-secure contexts.

No indication was found of medieval settlement or land-use.

The findings of the excavation allow at least two main interpretations. First, that ballast was dumped in the 18<sup>th</sup> century upon a modified topsoil. Second, that the underlying clay was the result of major landscaping in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when large quantities of ballast were removed from the area, and that the present ballast overlying the site dates from that period.

Whether the absence of significant archaeological remains from the site is no intensive activity took place there prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or because they have subsequently been removed, perhaps by terracing, remains, in the absence of additional information from the vicinity, the subject of speculation.

The absence of archaeologically-significant remains in this area does not, of course, preclude the possibility that they survive elsewhere in the vicinity.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

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The nature of remains found upon the site does not support a recommendation for further archaeological evaluation or mitigation by avoidance.

Any further development likely to impact upon the levels below the ballast in the St Peter's area should be subject to further archaeological investigation.

## 6. REFERENCES

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Sunderland MBC Conservation Team, City of Newcastle Planning and Transportation Dept. Northumberland County Council Archaeology and Conservation (unpublished). *Northumberland and Tyne and Wear Historic Towns Survey-Sunderland: An Archaeological Assessment*

## 7. APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

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- [101] Tarmac car park surface
- [102] Rubble base to the tarmac surface.
- [103] Ballast deposits comprising sands and gravels, including fine sands, coarse sands and gravel, some apparently mixed.
- [104] Black silty-loam containing some pottery sherds, sea shell and a metal bolt or rivet.
- [105] The cut for a shallow pit in the surface of [104]
- [106] The gravely fill of shallow pit [105]
- [107] Stiff brown clay interpreted as the upper part of the natural deposits.

## 8. APPENDIX 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF DEPOSIT [104]

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**Palaeoecology Research Services**

**PRS 2007/44**

*Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at St Peter's Sixth Form College, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear (site code: AP2007SCS)*

by

John Carrott, Alexandra Schmidl and Alex Beacock

### Summary

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*A single bulk sediment sample, recovered from deposits revealed during excavations at St Peter's Sixth Form College, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, was submitted for an evaluation of its bio-archaeological potential. The sample was taken from a silty buried 'top-soil' deposit of unknown date encountered at 4.5-4.8 metres below the modern ground surface.*

*Small quantities of charred and waterlogged biological remains were recovered from the deposit, together with larger amounts of cinder, coal and ?slag. Overall, the remains were consistent with waste from a domestic hearth (or similar) discarded onto a former land surface (as conjectured by the excavator) but too few to provide any strong supporting (or contrary) evidence.*

*A recovered charred cereal grain could provide sufficient suitable material for radiocarbon dating, if required (and provided its presence within this deposit is archaeologically secure – i.e. it has not been reworked or relocated by human or other activity).*

*No further study of the biological remains from this deposit is warranted.*

**KEYWORDS:** ST PETER'S SIXTH FORM COLLEGE; SUNDERLAND; TYNE AND WEAR; UNDATED; PLANT REMAINS; CHARRED PLANT REMAINS; CHARRED CEREAL GRAIN; INVERTEBRATE REMAINS; SNAILS; VERTEBRATE REMAINS

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23 July 2007

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## Evaluation of biological remains from excavations at St Peter's Sixth Form College, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear (site code: AP2007SCS)

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### Introduction

An archaeological evaluation excavation was undertaken by The Archaeological Practice Ltd at St Peter's Sixth Form College, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear, during the first half of 2007. The works were undertaken on the west side of the Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Peter's, the site of the proposed Sixth Form College.

The excavations revealed the presence of a deep deposit of sand-based ballast from 0.3 m below the surface tarmac to a depth of 4.5 m. The ballast deposit sat upon a dark, silty deposit, interpreted as a probable buried top-soil, within which some items of domestic waste were identified, including shells and an iron rivet. The silty 'top-soil' deposit was some 0.3 m thick and overlay an archaeologically-sterile brown clay which was investigated to a depth of some 5.4 m below the modern ground surface.

A single bulk sediment sample ('GBA'/'BS' *sensu* Dobney *et al.* 1992) from the probable buried top-soil was submitted to Palaeoecology Research Services Limited (PRS), County Durham, for an evaluation of its bio-archaeological potential.

### Methods

The sediment sample was inspected in the laboratory and its lithology was recorded using a standard *pro forma*. A sub-sample was taken and processed, broadly following the techniques of Kenward *et al.* (1980), for the recovery of plant and invertebrate macrofossils. Prior to processing the sub-sample was disaggregated in water and its volume recorded in a waterlogged state.

The washover and residue were mostly mineral in nature, or largely composed of charred remains, and were dried and weighed before being recorded. Plant and invertebrate remains were recorded briefly by 'scanning' using a low-power microscope, identifiable taxa and other biological and artefactual components being listed on paper.

Nomenclature for plant species follows Stace (1997), snails follow Kerney (1999) and charcoal identifications follow Schoch *et al.* (2004).

### Results

Archaeological information, provided by the excavator, is given in square brackets after the context number (this was assigned by PRS for internal record keeping purposes). A brief summary of the processing method and an estimate of the remaining volume of unprocessed sediment follows (in round brackets) after the sample numbers.

**Context PRS1000** [probable buried top-soil deposit at 4.5-4.8 metres below the modern ground surface; undated]

Sample 3/T (3 kg/3 litres sieved to 300 microns with washover; approximately 6 litres of unprocessed sediment remain but additional material was retained by the excavator)

Moist, mid grey to dark grey (with some small yellow-brown patches), unconsolidated to crumbly (working soft in places), very slightly sandy slightly clay silt, with stones (6 to over 60 mm) present.

The medium-sized washover (66 g, dried) was mostly of coal (to 15 mm) and cinder (to 10 mm), with a little ?slag (to 10 mm), fine unidentifiable charcoal (to 5 mm) and a small number of snail shells. In addition, there was one unidentifiable charred cereal grain present and a few waterlogged fruits and seeds from wild taxa of waste ground – cabbage/mustard (*Brassica/Sinapis*), meadow/creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus acris* L./*R. repens* L.), orache/goosefoot (*Atriplex/Chenopodium*) and sedge (*Carex*), for example. The snails comprised remains of twelve individuals, nine of which were represented by unidentified apex fragments (one of which appeared burnt, or perhaps stained, black). The other three shells were of *Vallonia ?excentrica* Sterki.

There was a small residue (dry weight 0.36 kg) of sand, stones (to 32 mm), ?slag (to 40 mm; 44 g) and cinder (to 25 mm; 22 g), with some coal (to 19 mm; 4 g of larger pieces sorted from residue) and charcoal (to 14 mm; 1 g). There were also traces of unidentified marine shell (to 10 mm; <1 g) and two unidentified burnt bone fragments (to 9 mm; <1 g). Some of the larger charcoal twig fragment could be partially identified as alder/birch/hazel (*Alnus/Betula/Corylus*).

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## **Discussion and statement of potential**

Biological remains recovered from the processed sub-sample were restricted to small quantities of unidentified charcoal, a single charred cereal grain, a few waterlogged seeds and fruits of plants of waste ground, a small number of land snails and traces of marine shell and burnt bone. The charred remains were almost certainly contemporary with the formation of the deposit – given the range of other remains from burning – but were largely unidentified and of no real interpretative value. The waterlogged plant and unburnt snail remains *may* also be ancient but could be modern contaminants of the opened section – in either case they were, again, too few to be of any value for detailed ecological interpretation.

Overall, the remains were certainly consistent with waste from a domestic hearth (or similar) discarded onto a former land surface (as conjectured by the excavator) but too few to provide any strong supporting (or contrary) evidence.

The charred cereal grain could provide sufficient suitable material for radiocarbon dating (via AMS), if required (and provided its presence within this deposit is archaeologically secure – i.e. it has not been reworked or relocated by human or other activity).

## **Recommendations**

No further study of the biological remains from this deposit is warranted.

## **Retention and disposal**

Unless required for purposes other than the study of the biological remains, or the recovery of additional material for submission for radiocarbon dating (bearing in mind the caveat expressed above), any remaining sediment from this deposit may be discarded.

The small quantities of biological remains recovered from the evaluation subsample should be retained for the present.

### **Archive**

All material is currently stored by Palaeoecology Research Services (Unit 8, Dabble Duck Industrial Estate, Shildon, County Durham), along with paper and electronic records pertaining to the work described here.

### **Acknowledgements**

The authors are grateful to Richard Carlton, of The Archaeological Practice Ltd, for providing the material and the archaeological information.

### **References**

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## 9. APPENDIX 3: BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

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### **SPECIFICATION FOR EVALUATION WORK TO RECORD SUSPECTED ARCHAEOLOGICAL DEPOSITS AT CHARLES STREET, ST PETER'S, SUNDERLAND**

#### **Introduction**

In accordance with PPG16 and Sunderland City UDP Policies, an archaeological evaluation trench is required to test the possibility that archaeological remains survive on the site of a proposed Sixth Form College building. The site lies within a close distance of the Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Peters, a prospective World Heritage Site. The importance of potential archaeological remains cannot be overstated – the monastic cemetery may extend into the development area, or buildings from the outer precinct or associated secular settlement could be encountered. Any deposits containing surviving palaeo-environmental evidence are of equal importance. Mediaeval occupation may survive, shedding light on the later history of the site.

The appointed archaeologist must familiarise themselves with the results of previous archaeological work on the site before starting work, particularly the Desk Top Assessment (HER 33712) and the 2003 evaluation on the adjacent site (HER Report file 2003/51), the latter confirming the suspected presence of ballast deposits on the site. Geotechnical work for the St Peters Gate building recorded ballast up to 6.5 m deep, from locations within the car-park retaining wall, ie approximately 1.5 m higher than the level of the present ground surface of the evaluation trench. Shoring and a degree of trench widening in the upper section of the trench may well be required to enable the evaluation to reach horizons sealed and preserved by the 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century ballast dumping. Excavation must progress until natural deposits are encountered.

All staff on site must understand the project aims and methodologies.

All work must be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and must follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, Excavation or Watching Briefs as appropriate.

The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (2006) notes the importance of research as a vital element of development-led archaeological work. It sets out key research priorities for all periods of the past allowing commercial contractors to demonstrate how their fieldwork relates to wider regional and national priorities for the study of archaeology and the historic environment. The aim of NERRF is to ensure that all fieldwork is carried out in a secure research context and that commercial contractors ensure that their investigations ask the right questions. The relevant key research theme for this evaluation is *EM (vi): Christianity*, but other sections of this period may also prove relevant.

The principal purpose of the evaluation trench is to inform the Planning Authority of the character, nature, date, depth, degree of survival of archaeological deposits on this site. The excavation must be carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological organisation. The work will record and environmentally sample any archaeological deposits of importance found on the plot. The purpose of this brief is to obtain tenders for this work. The report must be the definitive record for deposition in the Tyne and Wear HER, and it must contain recommendations for any further work needed on this site before development destroys any archaeological remains.

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL BRIEF**

The work can be split into two sections;

- 1) evaluation of archaeologically sensitive deposits
- 2) post-evaluation analysis and report production including recommendations for further work on the site, if appropriate

### **1) Archaeological evaluation**

The location of the trench is shown on the accompanying plan. The dimensions are 2 m x 2m in plan **at base**. The upper section of the evaluation trench can be widened in order to step the sides of the trench. Trench positions should be accurately surveyed prior to excavation and tied in to the national grid.

#### **Tasks**

Hand excavation, recording and environmental sampling (as stipulated below) of deposits down to the depth specified above.

Any modern overburden or levelling material can be machined-off using a wide toothless ditching bucket under strict archaeological supervision and the remaining deposits are to be excavated by hand.

Excavation is to be carried out with a view to avoid damage to any archaeological features which appear to worthy of preservation in-situ. Should substantial stone structures be revealed, the County Archaeologist must be informed immediately, and the structural remains left *in situ*.

Excavation is to be carried out by single context planning and recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. Features over 0.5 m in diameter can be half sectioned.

The spoil can be kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trenches at the conclusion of this work.

#### **Fieldwork - General Conditions**

The Archaeological Contractor will provide an outline methodology of excavation and provide details of recording procedures employed.

The Archaeological Contractor must detail measures taken to ensure the safe conduct of excavations, and must consult with the client's structural engineers concerning working in close proximity to the foundations of the surrounding buildings. The Client may wish to see copies of the Archaeological Contractor's Health and Safety Policies.

The Archaeological Contractor must be able to provide written proof that the necessary levels of Insurance Cover are in place.

The Archaeological Contractor must maintain a Site Diary for the benefit of the Client, detailing the nature of work undertaken on a day by day basis, with full details of Site Staff present, duration of time on site, etc. and contact with third parties.

All staff employed by the Archaeological Contractor shall be professional field archaeologists with appropriate skills and experience to undertake work to the highest professional standards.

#### **Recording**

A full written, drawn (accurate scale plans, elevations and section drawings) and photographic record (of all contexts in black and white print and colour transparency with clearly visible graduated metric scale) will be made.

Pro-forma context sheets will be used.

All deposits and the base of the trench will be levelled. Levels will be expressed as metres above Ordnance Datum.

Stratigraphy shall be recorded even when no archaeological features have been recognised.

A 'Harris' matrix will be compiled where stratified deposits are recorded.

### ***Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating***

**This is a compulsory part of the evaluation exercise.**

Scientific investigations should be undertaken in a manner consistent with "The Management of Archaeological Projects", English Heritage 1991 and with "Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists", English Heritage, 2003.

Aims of environmental sampling – to determine the abundance/concentration of the material within the features and how well the material is preserved, to characterise the resource (the site) and each phase, to determine the significance of the material and its group value, what crop processing activities took place on the site? What does this tell us about the nature of the site? Is there any evidence for changes in the farming practice through time? How did people use this landscape? Can we place certain activities at certain locations within the site? Function and date of individual features such as pits, hearths etc. Are the charred assemblages the result of ritual deposition or rubbish? Is the charcoal the result of domestic or industrial fuel?

Advice on the sampling strategy for environmental samples and samples for scientific dating etc. must be sought from Jacqui Huntley, English Heritage Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science (0191 3341137 or 07713 400387) **before** the evaluation begins. The sampling strategy should include a reasoned justification for selection of deposits for sampling.

Deposits should be sampled for retrieval and assessment of the preservation conditions and potential for analysis of biological remains (English Heritage 2002). Flotation samples and samples taken for coarse-mesh sieving from dry deposits should be processed at the time of fieldwork wherever possible. Sieving recovers fish, amphibian, small bird and mammal bone, small parts of adult mammals and young infused bones which may be under-represented otherwise. However it is noted that clay soils in this region make sieving difficult. Discuss the potential for sieving with Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science.

Environmental samples (bulk soil samples of 30 litres volume, to be sub-sampled at a later stage) will be collected by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. It is suggested that a large number of samples be collected during evaluation from which a selection of the most suitable (uncontaminated) can be processed. All tenders will give a price for the full analysis, report production and publication per sample.

Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. Timbers will be assessed for their potential for dendrochronology dating. Sampling should follow procedures in "Dendrochronology: guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates", Hillam, 1998. All tenders will quote the price of these techniques per sample.

The following information should be provided with the environmental samples to be processed – brief account of nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods, sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination etc.

Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

A range of features, and all phases of activity, need to be sampled for charred plant remains and charcoal. Aceramic features should not be avoided as the plant remains from these features may help to date them. Deep features should be sampled in spits to pick up changes over time. Part, or all of each of the contexts should be processed. In general samples should be processed in their entirety. All flots should be scanned, and some of the residues.

Pollen samples can be taken from features such as lakes, ponds, palaeochannels, estuaries, saltmarshes, mires, alluvium and colluvium, and from waterlogged layers in wells, ditches and latrines etc. Substances such as honey, beer or food residues can be detected in vessels. Activities such as threshing, crop processing and the retting of flax can be identified. When taken on site, pollen samples should overlap. Your regional science advisor can advise on the type of corer or auger which would be most appropriate for your site. Samples need to be wrapped in clingfilm and kept dark and cool. Make a description of the sediments in which the pollen was found, and send this with the sample to be assessed.

Coastal or estuary sites (even those which are now well drained) are suitable for sampling for foraminifera. Diatoms can also be found on marine sites, but also in urban settings (sewers, wells, drains, ditches etc). They only survive in waterlogged conditions. These aquatic microfossils are used as proxy indicators of the former aquatic ecological conditions on site, changes in sea levels and temperature, salinity, PH and pollution. Forams are taken from cores, monolith tins or bulk samples. Diatoms are cut from monolith tins or cores or taken as spot samples.

Insects, which are useful as palaeoenvironmental indicators, survive best in waterlogged deposits such as palaeochannels and wells. They can provide information on climate change and landscape reconstruction as some species are adapted to particular temperatures, habitats or even particular trees. Certain insects can indicate the function of a feature or building (eg. Weevils, which were introduced by the Romans, often indicate granary sites, parasites will indicate the presence of particular animals such as sheep or horse, latrine flies survive in the mineral deposits in latrines, or in the daub of medieval buildings etc). Samples need to be sealed (eg. in a plastic box).

Where there is evidence for industrial activity, macroscopic technological residues should be collected by hand. Separate samples should be collected for micro-slags (hammer-scale and spherical droplets). Guidance is available in the English Heritage "Archaeometallurgy" guidelines, 2001.

Buried soils and sediment sequences should be inspected and recorded on site by a recognised geoarchaeologist. Procedures and techniques in the English Heritage document "Environmental Archaeology", 2002 and "Geoarchaeology", 2004 should be followed.

Sampling strategies for wooden structures should follow the methodologies presented in "Waterlogged wood. Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood" R. Brunning, 1996. If timbers are likely to be present on your site, contact a wood specialist beforehand. Pre-excavation planning – determine questions to ask, agree on a sampling strategy, allocate reasonable time and budget. Soil samples should be taken of the sediments surrounding the timber. Keep the timbers wet! Record them asap on-site – plan, photograph, record the size and orientation of the wood (radial, tangential, transverse), any toolmarks, joints, presence of bark, insect damage, recent breaks, and if another piece of wood was on top of or below the piece sampled. Both vertical and horizontal positioning of wattling must be recorded. Wood samples can provide information on woodland management such as medieval

coppicing, type of taxa (native or foreign), conversion technology (how the wood was turned into planks), building techniques and type of tools used.

Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in "Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather", English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995.

### **Animal Bone**

Animal bone can explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment.

Animal bone assemblages should be assessed by a recognised specialist.

The specialist will need to know a brief account of the nature and history of the site, an account of the purpose, methods (details of sampling) for recovery of animal bones, and the main aims and results of the excavation, details of any specific questions that the excavator wants the animal bone specialist to consider, information about other relevant finds from the excavation (e.g. bone tools, fishing equipment, weaving equipment), specific information about each context that has produced significant quantities of animal bone (recovery method, phase, context type, position in relation to major structures, contamination by more recent material, some indication of the amount of bone (by weight or by container size). See "Ancient Monuments Laboratory Advisory Note, "Assessment of animal bone collections from excavations", Sebastian Payne, 1991 and "The Assessment of a collection of animal bones", S. Davis, n.d., Ancient Monuments Laboratory.

### **Human Remains**

Human remains must be treated with care, dignity and respect.

Excavators must comply with the relevant legislation (essentially the Burial Act 1857) and local environmental health concerns. If found, human remains must be left *in-situ*, covered and protected. The archaeological contractor will be responsible for informing the police, coroner and County Archaeologist. If it is agreed that removal of the remains is essential, the archaeological contractor will apply for a licence from the Home Office and their regulations must be complied with. Human remains will only be lifted if the aims of the evaluation cannot be achieved without so doing. In most cases it should be possible to leave the remains *in situ*, the evaluation having demonstrated their presence, but should complex intercutting of burials be found, it may be necessary to remove later inhumations to enable densities and depths to be established.

Site inspection by a recognised osteologist is desirable for isolated burials and essential for cemeteries. The remains will be recorded *in-situ* and, if subsequently lifted, washed in water (without additives). They will be marked and packed to standards compatible with "Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains", McKinley and Roberts, 1993. After excavation, the remains will be subject to specialist assessment.

Analysis of the osteological material should take place according to published guidelines "Human Remains from Archaeological Sites, Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports, English Heritage, 2002.

Some of the potential benefits from the study of human skeletons – demography, growth profiles, patterns of disease, genetic relationships, activity patterns, diet, burial practices, human evolution. New scientific techniques available include DNA and stable isotope analyses.

The final placing of the remains after scientific study and analysis will be agreed beforehand.

Further guidance is available in:

“Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England”, The Church of England and English Heritage, 2005 ([www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/16602\\_HumanRemains1.pdf](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/16602_HumanRemains1.pdf))  
“Church Archaeology: its care and management”, Council for the Care of Churches, 1999

The Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Christian burials in England can provide free well-informed advice with consideration of relevant religious, ethical, legal, archaeological and scientific issues. Panel’s website:

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/churches/humanremains/index.html>

or email the secretary [simon.mays@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:simon.mays@english-heritage.org.uk)

### **Treasure**

Defined as:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Contractor must comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure must be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer, Rob Collins (0191 2225076 or [Robert.Collins@newcastle.ac.uk](mailto:Robert.Collins@newcastle.ac.uk)) who can provide guidance on the Treasure Act procedures.

## **2) Post-excavation and report production**

### **Finds Processing and Storage**

Finds shall be recorded and processed in accordance with the IFA Guidelines for Finds Work

Finds will be assessed by an experienced finds specialist.

The Archaeological Contractor will process and catalogue the finds in accordance with Museum and Galleries Commissions Guidelines (1992) and the UKIC Conservation Guidelines, and arrange for the long term disposal of the objects on behalf of the Client. A catalogue of finds and a record of discard policies, will be lodged with the finds for ease of curation.

Assessment should include x-radiography of all iron objects (after initial screening to exclude recent debris) and a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including all coins). Refer to “Guidelines on the x-radiography of archaeological metalwork, English Heritage, 2006.

If necessary, pottery sherds and bricks should be recommended for Thermo-luminescence dating.

Finds processing, storage and conservation methods must be broadly in line with current practice, as exemplified by the IFA "Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials", 2001. Finds should be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication "First Aid for Finds" (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Proposals for ultimate storage of finds should follow the UKIC publication "Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage" (Walker 1990). Details of methodologies may be requested from the Archaeological Contractor.

Other useful guidance – "A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds", English Heritage, 2003, "Finds and Conservation Training Package", English Heritage, 2003.

All objects must be stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure minimal deterioration. Advice can be sought from Jacqui Huntley of English Heritage (0191 3341137 or 07713 400387) where necessary.

### **The report**

1. The Archaeological Contractor must produce an interim report of 200 words minimum, two weeks after the completion of the field-work, for the Client and the Planning Authority, with a copy for information to the County Archaeologist. This will contain the recommendations for any further work needed on site.

2. The production of Site Archives and Finds Analysis will be undertaken according to English Heritage Guidelines (Managing Archaeological Projects 2nd Edition).

3. A full report with the following features should be produced within six months of the completion of the field-work. All drawn work should be to publication standard. The report must include:

- \* Location plans of trenches and grid reference of site
  - \* Site narrative – interpretative, structural and stratigraphic history of the site
  - \* Plans showing major features and deposit spreads, by phase, and section locations
  - \* Sections of the two main trench axes and through excavated features with levels
  - \* Elevation drawings of any walls etc. revealed during the excavation
  - \* Artefact reports – full text, descriptions and illustrations of finds
  - \* Tables and matrices summarising feature and artefact sequences.
  - \* Archive descriptions of contexts, grouped by phase (not for publication)
  - \* Deposit sequence summary (for publication/deposition)
  - \* Colour photographs of trenches and of archaeological features and finds
  - \* Laboratory reports and summaries of dating and environmental data, with collection methodology.
  - \* A consideration of the results of the field-work within the wider research context (ref. NERRF).
  - \* Recommendations for further work on site, or further analysis of finds or environmental samples
  - \* Copy of this specification
4. Three bound and collated copies of the report need to be submitted:
- one for the commissioning client
  - one for the planning authority, to be sent to Anthony Jukes, Senior Planner, Development & Regeneration Services, PO Box 102, Civic Centre, Sunderland SR2 7DN.
  - one for deposition in the County HER at the address below. A digital copy of the report on CD is also required by the HER in a plastic case. Please do not attach this to the report.

**The report and CD for the HER must be sent by the archaeological consultant or their client directly to the address below. If the report is sent via the planning department, every page of the report will be stamped with the planning application number which ruins the illustrations. The HER is also often sent a photocopy instead of a bound colour original which is unacceptable.**

5. If significant archaeological features are found during the evaluation, the results may also warrant publication in a suitable archaeological journal. The tender should therefore include an estimated figure for the production of a short report of, for example 20 pages, in a journal such as *Archaeologia Aeliana* or *Durham Archaeological Journal*. This is merely to give the commissioning client an indication of potential costs.

### **Site Archive**

The site archive (records and materials recovered) should be prepared in accordance with *Managing Archaeological Projects*, Second Edition, 5.4 and appendix 3 (HBM 1991), "Archaeological documentary archives" IFA Paper No. 1, "Archaeological Archives – creation, preparation, transfer and curation" Archaeological Archives Forum etc. and Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990).

This should include indexing, ordering, quantification and checking for consistency of all original context sheets, object records, bulk find records, sample records, skeleton records, photographic records, drawing records, photographs, drawings, level books, site note-books, spot-dating records and conservation records etc. All artefacts and ecofacts retained from the site must be packed in appropriate materials. A summary account of the context record, prepared by the supervising archaeologist, should be included.

The archive will be placed in a suitable form in the appropriate museum (typically Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle for sites north of the Tyne and Tyne and Wear Museums for sites south of the Tyne, but there are different rules for Roman sites etc. check with these institutions) with the landowner's permission.

A letter will be sent to the County Archaeology Officer within six months of the report having been submitted, confirming where the archive has been deposited.

### **OASIS**

The Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index/access to the large and growing body of archaeological grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded fieldwork.

The archaeological contractor is therefore required to register with OASIS and to complete the online OASIS form for their evaluation at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. Please ensure that tenders for this work takes into account the time needed to complete the form.

Once the OASIS record has been completed and signed off by the HER and NMR the information will be incorporated into the English Heritage Excavation Index, hosted online by the Archaeology Data Service.

The ultimate aim of OASIS is for an online virtual library of grey literature to be built up, linked to the index. The unit therefore has the option of uploading their grey literature report as part of their OASIS record, as a Microsoft Word document, rich text format, pdf or html format. The grey literature report will only be mounted by the

ADS if both the unit and the HER give their agreement. The grey literature report will be made available through a library catalogue facility.

Please ensure that you and your client understand this procedure. If you choose to upload your grey literature report please ensure that your client agrees to this in writing to the HER at the address below.

For general enquiries about the OASIS project aims and the use of the form please contact: Mark Barratt at the National Monuments Record (tel. 01793 414600 or [oasis@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto: oasis@english-heritage.org.uk)). For enquiries of a technical nature please contact: Catherine Hardman at the Archaeology Data Service (tel. 01904 433954 or [oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto: oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk)). Or contact the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at the address below.

### **The tender**

Tenders for the work should contain the following:-

1. Brief details of the staff employed and their relevant experience
2. Details of any sub-contractors employed
3. A quotation of cost, broken down into the following categories:-
  - \* Costs for the excavation, incl. sub-headings of staff costs on a person-day basis, transport, materials, and plant etc.
  - \* Post-excavation costs, incl. storage materials
  - \* Cost of Environmental analysis and scientific dating per sample
  - \* Estimated cost for full publication of results in an archaeological journal
  - \* Overheads
4. An indication of the required notification period (from agreement to start date) for the field-work; the duration of fieldwork and the expected date for completion of the post-excavation work (a maximum of 6 months after completion of the fieldwork)

### **Monitoring**

*The Archaeological Contractor will inform the County Archaeologist of the start and end dates of the excavation to enable the CA to monitor the work in progress.*

*Should important archaeological deposits be encountered, the County Archaeologist must be informed. If further archaeological evaluation is required on this site, then the archaeological contractor must submit a written scheme of investigation for approval by the CA before extending the size of the trenches.*

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