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Northern Archaeological Associates

**A66 IMPROVEMENTS
ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING
GRETA BRIDGE TO STEPHEN BANK
COUNTY DURHAM AND NORTH YORKSHIRE**

INTERIM REPORT

prepared for

BHWP ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND DESIGN

on behalf of

**MOUCHEL NORTH YORKSHIRE
AND
THE HIGHWAYS AGENCY**

NAA 99/87

November 1999

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**A66 IMPROVEMENTS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING
GRETA BRIDGE TO STEPHEN BANK, COUNTY DURHAM
INTERIM REPORT**

<i>Summary</i>	2
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Background	2
3.0 Methodology	3
4.0 Results of Excavation	3
5.0 Discussion	4
6.0 References	5
Appendix A: List of Contexts	6
Appendix B: List of Photographs	7

**A66 IMPROVEMENTS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING
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INTERIM REPORT**

Summary

Excavation of a series of evaluation trenches along the proposed line for the upgrading of the A66 between Stephen Bank and Greta Bridge revealed only a number of archaeological remains, none of which lay within County Durham.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 A series of evaluation trenches were excavated by Northern Archaeological Associates for BHWB Environmental Design and Planning on behalf of Mouchel North Yorkshire and the Highways Agency and project managed by Ed Dennison Archaeological Services (EDAS). This work was undertaken, after preparation of a desk-based assessment (NAA 1997), and subsequent reports (BHWB 1998a; 1998b) in advance of the proposed dualling of the A66 trunk road between Carkin Moor and Scotch Corner, and Greta Bridge and Stephen Bank. Trench locations were predetermined by EDAS, based mainly upon the results of geophysical surveys undertaken by Geoquest Associates (1999a; 1999b) and the Department of Archaeology at the University of Durham (Casey *et al* 1995).
- 1.2 This interim report has been prepared in accordance with the specification for the trial trenching (EDAS 1999, paragraph 3.9.1). Matrices and measured plans have only been produced for those trenches containing archaeological features, although the context, photographic, and drawing lists are complete.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The A66 for the most part follows the course of a Roman road linking the eastern and western sides of the Pennines via the Stainmore Pass, a route in use at least as early as the 1st century AD, and probably much earlier. For the most part, the modern route lies above the Roman road, although there are a few deviations in the line of the modern road from its Roman counterpart, most notably at the Scotch Corner end, where the Roman road joins the Dere Street some distance to the north of the junction of the A66 and the A1.
- 2.2 A series of 41 evaluation trenches were proposed (later modified to 42, with some additions and some areas not excavated) in order to examine any archaeological deposits that might be present within the proposed road improvement corridor. Three of the trenches (G1-3) lay within County Durham.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 All trenches were excavated in spits by machine under constant archaeological supervision until natural deposits were reached. In many cases, an additional delve into the natural was undertaken to confirm that this was indeed so. All trenches were recorded by photography and, where features occurred, by planning. Archaeological (as opposed to modern) features which were sampled by excavation were also drawn in section at a scale of 1:10. The trial trenching along all relevant sections of the A66 was given the site code ASS 99.

4.0 RESULTS OF EXCAVATION

4.1.0 Area G1

Trench G1/1

- 4.1.1 This trench (contexts 100-1), which measured 20 by 2m and was oriented east to west, produced no archaeology.

Trench G1/2

- 4.1.2 This trench (contexts 200-1), which also measured 20 by 2m and was oriented east to west, produced no archaeology.

Trench G1/3

- 4.1.3 This trench (contexts 300-1) was 8 by 3m (oriented north to south) and cut through the surface of the old A66 road (next to the present course) – and on one possible anticipated course for the Roman road – but it failed to produce any evidence of archaeological activity.

4.2.0 Area G7

Trench G7/2

- 4.2.1 Measuring 30m by 2m, this trench (contexts 7200-1) was aligned east to west and contained no archaeological features.

Trench G7/3

- 4.2.2 This trench (contexts 7300-1), measuring 20m by 2m and oriented north-west to south-east, similarly contained no archaeological features.

Trench G7/4

- 4.2.3 This trench (contexts 7400-1) measured 30m by 2m, was oriented east to west, and contained no archaeological features.

4.3.0 Area G8

Trench G8/5

- 4.3.1 This trench (originally measuring 15m by 4m and oriented north-east to south-west) was placed over the anticipated route of the Roman road where it was known to deviate from the course of the A66, yet despite the length being extended from 15m to 30m, failed to find any trace of the Roman road (or, indeed, any other archaeological remains). The absence of any sign of flanking ditches makes it unlikely that the road could have been completely removed by ploughing. Contexts 500-1.

5.0 DISCUSSION

- 5.1 The series of three trenches within County Durham failed to produce any evidence of archaeological activity, in contrast to that within North Yorkshire. One trench (G1/3) was placed across the possible course of the Roman road, where it deviates from the present course on the A66. In both instances, no trace of the road was found.
- 5.2 The absence of any archaeological remains within the evaluation trenches described above does not mean that there will not be any such remains along the line of the proposed road improvements, as only a small sample has been examined.

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6.0 REFERENCES

BHWB 1998a: *A66 Greta Bridge to Dyson Lane Improvements: Archaeological Condition Survey*

BHWB 1998b: *A66 Melsonby Crossroads to Scotch Corner Improvements: Archaeological Condition Survey*

Casey, P.J., Howard, P., and Wright, J. 1995: *The Scotch Corner (Violet Grange Farm) Geophysical Research Project: Report*, unpublished ms

EDAS 1999: *A66 Greta Bridge to Stephen Bank Improvements, County Durham and North Yorkshire - Contract and Specification for Trial Excavations*

Geoquest Associates 1999a: *Geophysical Surveys for the A66 Greta Bridge to Dyson Lane Road Improvements, County Durham and North Yorkshire*

Geoquest Associates 1999b: *Geophysical Surveys for the A66 Scotch Corner to Melsonby Crossroads Road Improvements, North Yorkshire*

NAA 1997: *A66 Upgrading to Dual Carriageway: Area A – Scotch Corner to Greta Bridge*, NAA report 97/16

APPENDIX A: LIST OF CONTEXTS

Context	Trench	Description
100	G1/1	topsoil
101	G1/1	natural
200	G1/2	topsoil
201	G1/2	natural
300	G1/3	topsoil
500	G8/5	topsoil
501	G8/5	natural
7200	G7/2	topsoil
7201	G7/2	natural
7300	G7/3	topsoil
7301	G7/3	natural
7400	G7/4	topsoil
7401	G7/4	natural

APPENDIX B: LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Film	Frame	Type	Trench	Context	Facing	Description
20	27	slide	G7/3	-	N	general view after cleaning
20	28	slide	G7/3	-	N	general view after cleaning
20	29	slide	G7/3	-	S	general view after cleaning
20	30	slide	G7/3	-	S	general view after cleaning
20	31	slide	G7/2	-	W	general view after cleaning
20	32	slide	G7/2	-	W	general view after cleaning
20	33	slide	G7/2	-	E	general view after cleaning
20	34	slide	G7/2	-	E	general view after cleaning
20	35	slide	G7/4	-	E	general view after cleaning
20	36	slide	G7/4	-	E	general view after cleaning
20	37	slide	G7/4	-	W	general view after cleaning
21	7	print	G7/3	-	N	general view after cleaning
21	8	print	G7/3	-	N	general view after cleaning
21	9	print	G7/3	-	S	general view after cleaning
21	10	print	G7/3	-	S	general view after cleaning
21	11	print	G7/2	-	W	general view after cleaning
21	12	print	G7/2	-	W	general view after cleaning
21	13	print	G7/2	-	E	general view after cleaning
21	14	print	G7/2	-	E	general view after cleaning
21	15	print	G7/4	-	E	general view after cleaning
21	16	print	G7/4	-	E	general view after cleaning
21	17	print	G7/4	-	W	general view after cleaning
21	18	print	G7/4	-	W	general view after cleaning
21	19	print	G8/5	-	S	general view after cleaning
21	20	print	G8/5	-	S	general view after cleaning
21	21	print	G8/5	-	N	general view after cleaning
21	22	print	G8/5	-	N	general view after cleaning
21	23	print	G8/5	-	E	section
22	1	slide	-	-	-	film ID shot
22	2	slide	G8/5	-	S	general view after cleaning
22	3	slide	G8/5	-	S	general view after cleaning
22	4	slide	G8/5	-	N	general view after cleaning
22	5	slide	G8/5	-	N	general view after cleaning
22	6	slide	G8/5	-	E	section
22	7	slide	G8/5	-	E	section