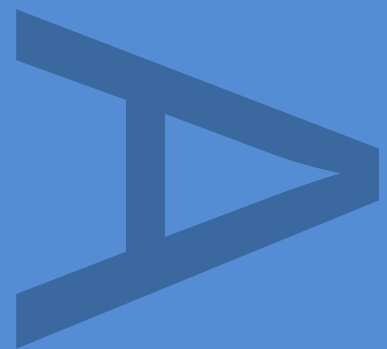


**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT PRESTON EAST FARM, PRESTON LANE,
PRESTON-LE-SKERNE, NEWTON AYCLIFFE,
COUNTY DURHAM**

MARCH 2012



PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Preston East Farm, Preston Lane,
Preston-le-Skerne, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham**

National Grid Reference: NZ 3076 2406

Site Code: PLS 11

Commissioning Client:

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March 2012**

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological monitoring and recording exercise was conducted in association with the improvement of the electricity supply to Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, County Durham. The site, central National Grid Reference NZ 3076 2406, lies adjacent to the site of the medieval village of Preston-le-Skerne, which is a Scheduled Monument.
- 1.2 Groundworks for the improvement of the electricity supply entailed excavation of an open trench across the carriageway of Preston Lane, running into Preston East Farm, in order to allow the installation of new underground cabling as part of a re-development scheme for the farm.
- 1.3 The archaeological investigation was commissioned by Northern Powergrid and was undertaken in November 2011 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited on the recommendation of Durham County Council Archaeology Section due to the archaeological sensitivity of the site. In addition, with the southernmost element of the new supply route lying within the scheduled area, archaeological monitoring was required as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent.
- 1.4 The archaeological work involved monitoring all invasive groundworks for the installation of the new underground electricity supply for Preston East Farm, namely excavation of a narrow open trench to a depth of c. 600mm below existing ground level. The trench extended from an existing electricity source located – within the scheduled area - opposite the property on the south side of Preston Lane, across the road carriageway and into the property; its total length was approximately 14m.
- 1.5 No archaeological remains of note were encountered during the investigation. Natural clay was exposed as the basal deposit along the length of the installation. A boundary wall foundation on the north side of the road carriageway was of likely 19th century origin and all other remains recorded were of modern origin.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

- 2.1.1 This report details the results of an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise, (hereafter 'watching brief'), undertaken in association with the installation of underground cabling for an electricity supply at Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne. The watching brief was commissioned by Northern Powergrid and undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) in November 2011.
- 2.1.2 The site is of archaeological interest because it lies adjacent to the site of the medieval village of Preston-le-Skerne, which is a Scheduled Monument. Although there are a considerable number of deserted or shrunken settlements of the medieval period in County Durham, Preston-le-Skerne is considered to be one of the best examples due to its high level of preservation. The southernmost part of the cable route extended into the scheduled area, therefore part of the watching brief was required as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), on the advice of English Heritage to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). Durham County Council Archaeology Section (DCCAS) required the remainder of the route to be monitored due to the potential for important archaeological remains to be encountered.
- 2.1.3 The archaeological work was carried out according to a Specification¹ prepared by DCCAS and a subsequent Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)² produced by PCA.
- 2.1.4 The main aim of the archaeological work was to identify, investigate and record any archaeological remains of importance revealed during the invasive groundworks. The watching brief was to continue until such time as invasive groundworks were complete or until the site was determined to be archaeologically sterile.
- 2.1.5 The completed Site Archive, comprising written, drawn and photographic records, will be deposited at the Old Fulling Mill Museum of Archaeology, The Banks, Durham DH1 3EB, within six months of the completion of fieldwork at the site, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing with DCCAS. The site code is PLS 11. The Online 'Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations' (OASIS) reference number for the project is: preconst1-121621.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The hamlet of Preston-le-Skerne lies just east of the A1(M), c. 3km to the east of Newton Aycliffe in County Durham (Figure 1). It lies on an unclassified road which continues westwards to cross over the A1(M) north of Junction 59 and then continues roughly westwards to meet the A167 as it skirts Newton Aycliffe.

¹ DCCAS 2011. The Specification is included as Appendix C to this report.

² PCA 2011. The WSI is included as Appendix D to this report.

- 2.2.2 Preston East Farm is located at the eastern end of the hamlet, straddling the through road, Preston Lane, just west of the point at which it curves south and becomes Leehall Lane. The central National Grid Reference for the area of investigation is NZ 3076 2406 (Figure 1) and it comprises the road carriageway and adjacent verges, continuing into the property of Preston East Farm (Figure 2). The main element of the Scheduled Monument occupies a large open field to the south of the road. An additional part of the scheduled area lies on the north side of the road, immediately west of Preston East Farm, again occupying a large open field. Both fields are notable for their earthwork remains.
- 2.2.3 The new underground supply for Preston East Farm was to feed off an over ground main supply located at the field boundary on the south side of the road, opposite Preston East Farm, and within the northern boundary of the southern part of the scheduled area.

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 The hamlet of Preston-le-Skerne lies immediately on the south bank of the old course of the River Skerne, a slow moving tributary of the River Tees which passes through a belt of low-lying flats or 'carrs' where earthy peats are preserved. Preston-le-Skerne is known to be the location of such a lowland carr, along with the nearby settlements of Mordon and Bradbury.³
- 2.3.2 Preston-le-Skerne lies at an elevation of c. 80m OD in an area where the Magnesian Limestone escarpment of East Durham descends into the broad valley of the River Tees.

2.4 Planning Background

- 2.4.1 Planning approval for the conversion of outbuildings into dwellings at Preston East Farm was granted in 2002 (reference 7/2002/0030/DM). A further application in 2011 (reference 7/2011/0061/DM) for alterations to the external elevations of the new buildings was approved in April 2011. The re-development, which lies to the north and west of the core of the farm complex, required an improved electricity supply. An existing overhead supply located opposite the farm, on the south side of Preston Lane, was to be the source of the new supply. The pole carrying the overhead supply lies within the scheduled area of the deserted medieval village although the majority of the new supply route, running north-westwards towards Preston East Farm, does not lie within the scheduled area.
- 2.4.2 Because part of the site has Scheduled Monument status, and thus has statutory protection under *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, any intrusive groundworks for the installation required SMC from DCMS prior to their undertaking. In accordance with the 1979 Act, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport consulted with English Heritage before deciding whether or not to grant SMC after an application for the installation was submitted by CE Electric UK (now part of Northern Powergrid) in October 2011. English Heritage considered the effect of the proposed works upon the monument to be works '*that are due to the need to provide electrical service provision, and which are unavoidable and will not significantly compromise the integrity of the monument, nor prejudice substantially its longer term preservation*'.

³ Hewitt 2011.

- 2.4.3 Accordingly, SMC was granted by the Secretary of State, advised by English Heritage, subject to a series of conditions set out in a letter dated 18 November 2011 to CE Electric UK (now part of Northern Powergrid).⁴ Condition b) of SMC states *'No ground works/building works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work before and/or during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage'*. Condition e) of SMC required a report on the findings of the watching brief to be submitted to DCCAS for inclusion in the County Durham HER and a copy to be sent to English Heritage on completion of the fieldwork.
- 2.4.4 As previously mentioned, DCCAS compiled a Specification for the required archaeological work, namely monitoring and recording along the entire length of the cable installation. Apart from the condition of SMC, the requirement to undertake the archaeological investigation is in line with planning policy at a national level – as described in *Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'* (PPS5)⁵ - and a local level – as described in the archaeological policies of Durham County Council. The DCCAS Specification reiterated the requirement (paragraph 4.14) for a WSI to be submitted by the appointed archaeological contractor for approval by DCCAS prior to work commencing. On appointment, PCA compiled the required WSI and this was subsequently approved (28 November 2011) by DCCAS.

2.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The majority of the information used for the following summary has been taken from 'Keys to the Past', the online County Durham Historic Environment Record (HER) and the DCCAS Specification. The research and writing of those responsible is gratefully acknowledged.

- 2.5.1 It is for the medieval period that the site had particular archaeological potential. In the fields immediately north and south of Preston Lane, the through road of Preston-le-Skerne, are the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Preston-le Skerne (HER 317; National Monument DU 97 'Deserted Village, Preston Lane, Preston-le-Skerne, Aycliffe, County Durham'). As part of a Scheduled Monument, these remains fall within the category of 'designated heritage assets' as defined in PPS5.
- 2.5.2 The village of Preston-le Skerne is first recorded in a documentary source in 1091, as 'Prestetona' in the *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis* and then again as 'Preston super Skiryn' in 1384 in a charter roll held at the British Museum. Although there are a considerable number of deserted or shrunken settlements of the medieval period in County Durham, Preston-le Skerne is considered to be one of the best examples due to its high level of preservation. Other sites of this type in the near vicinity are at Heworth (HER 1484), c. 1.4km to the south-west, at High Grindon (HER 325), c. 1.5km to the east and at Woodham (HER 1497), c. 3km to the north-west.

⁴ The letter is from Rob Young, Historic Environment Archaeology Advisor, English Heritage.

⁵ Department for Communities and Local Government 2010.

- 2.5.3 The buildings that comprise Preston East Farm, along with two other farms in the vicinity, Preston West Farm and Manor Farm, represent the only continuation of settlement in the former village. It is likely that Preston-le-Skerne was visited by two periods of desertion or shrinkage. Firstly, in the mid to late 14th century, when climatic conditions were very poor, there were several years of failed crops followed by famine and plague. Many villages were simply abandoned at this time with less land being kept under cultivation to supply a smaller population. Secondly, in the later post-medieval period, improvements in agricultural practice inevitably lead to rural depopulation as fewer people were need to undertake the same amount of labour. It is likely that Preston-le-Skerne finally shrank to the three established farms at around this time.
- 2.5.4 The settlement is shown at Preston-le-Skerne on historic mapping going back as far as the 16th century, for example Saxton's map of 1576, with detail of the actual layout of buildings appearing from the mid 19th century, such as the Ordnance Survey 1st edition of c. 1860. The overall township had a population of 119 in 1801 and reached a 19th century maximum of 176 in 1831.
- 2.5.5 The earthworks representing the medieval village lie on the south bank of the old course of the River Skerne and cover an area of c. 400m east-west by c. 160m north-south. The earthworks consist of banks and ditches dividing the area into small crofts, with buildings represented by smaller enclosures and house platforms. There are some large undressed stones in the banks, but no other structural traces. The wide ditch which forms part of the south boundary is probably an old trackway. The scheduled area takes in parcels of land either side of Preston Lane but the road itself is not included.
- 2.5.6 For all other archaeological eras the site had much lower potential. The discovery of prehistoric flints (HER 1490) in 1908 at Heworth House, c. 2km to the south-west, broadly indicated that evidence of prehistoric activity was possible, as well as a probable Early Bronze Age ring ditch indicated by a cropmark on the Magnesian Limestone in the vicinity of Preston-le-Skerne.⁶ For Roman period remains there was considered to be low potential. The line of Cade's Road lies c. 2.6km to the east, with major roadside settlement known near Sedgefield, c. 5.5km to the north-east, and the major Roman period site at Faverdale East lying c. 11km to the south.
- 2.5.7 Monitoring of a water main extension along Preston Lane earlier in 2011 did not identify any archaeological remains of note.

⁶ Hewitt 2011.

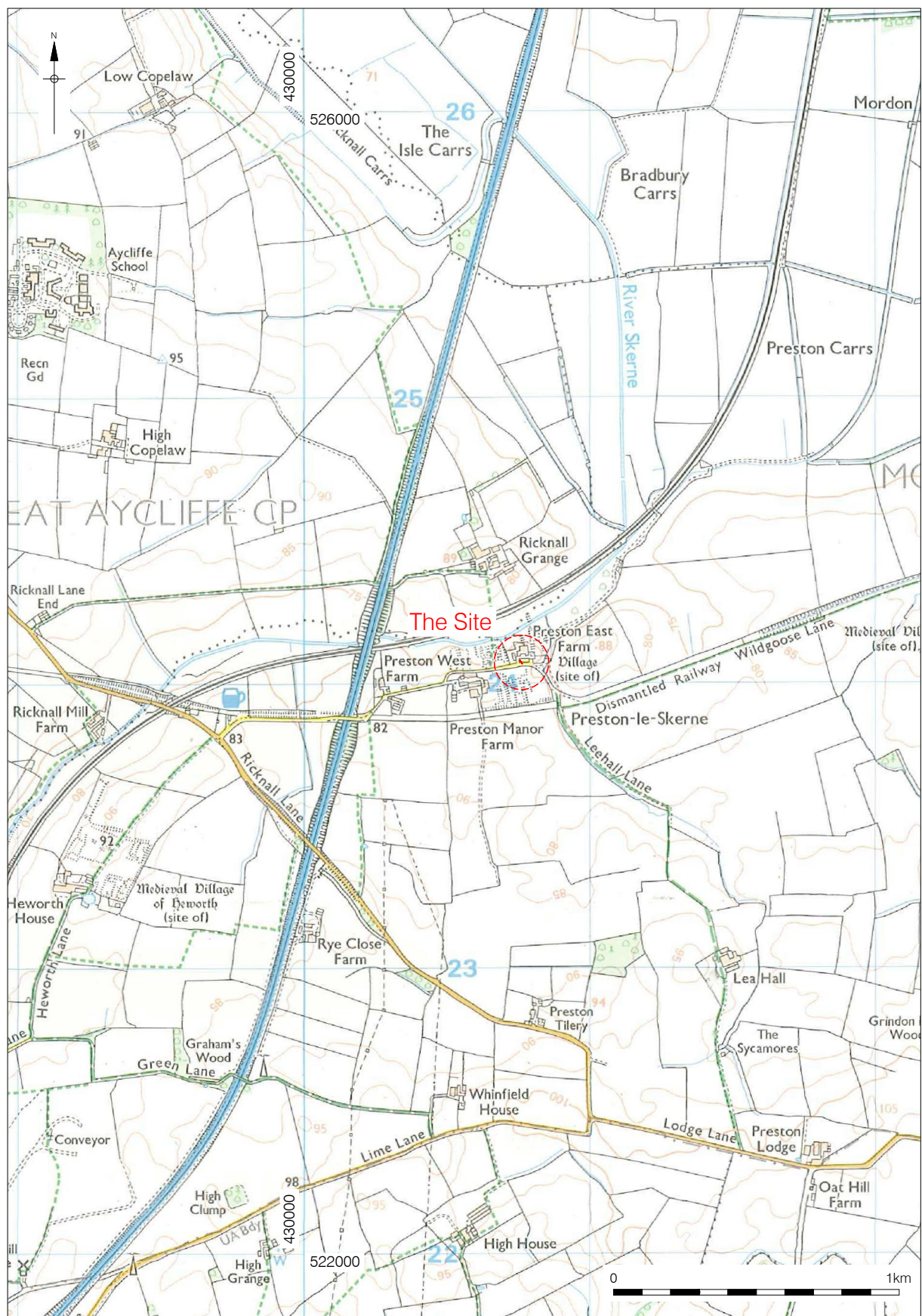
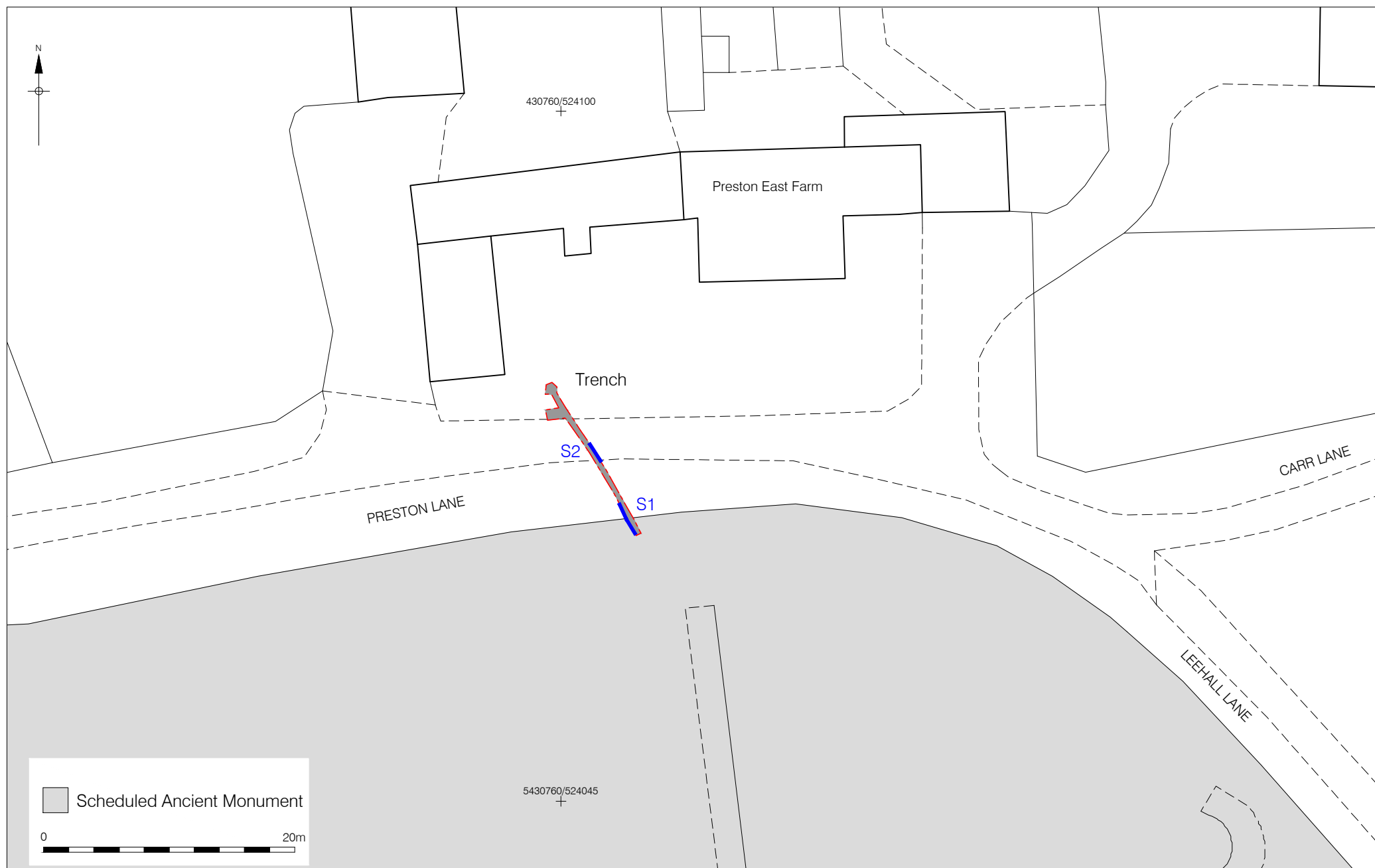


Figure 1
Site Location
1:20,000 at A4



3. PROJECT AIMS AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 Project Aims

3.1.1 The overarching aim of the archaeological project was to mitigate the impact of groundworks on archaeological remains through a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording, to fulfil the condition of SMC and to comply with the requirements of Durham County Council.

3.1.2 The DCCAS Specification details the purposes of the project as being to record:

- as yet unknown archaeological features and deposits which may be uncovered in the course of groundworks;
- features associated with scheduled deserted medieval settlement which lies to the north and south of Preston Lane.

3.2 Research Objectives

3.2.1 In terms of project specific research objectives, the work had the potential to make a significant contribution to archaeological knowledge of the area. *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF)⁷ highlights the importance of research as a vital element of development-led archaeological work and sets out key research priorities for all periods of the past so that all elements of commercial archaeological work can be related to wider regional and national priorities for the study of archaeology and the historic environment.

3.2.2 In view of the known medieval origin for the hamlet of Preston-le-Skerne, the investigation was carried out with reference to the following research priorities, as set out in the NERRF Research Agenda for the 'Later Medieval' (MD):

- MDi. Settlement;
- MDii. Landscape;
- MDvii. Medieval Ceramics and Other Artefacts;
- MDviii. Other Medieval Industries.

⁷ Petts and Gerrard 2006.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

4.1 Fieldwork

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 28 November 2011. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).⁸ PCA is an IfA-Registered Organisation. The DCCAS Specification (see Appendix C) and PCA WSI (see Appendix D) should be consulted for full details of proposed methodologies to be employed regarding archaeological recording, sampling, *etc.*
- 4.1.2 Groundworks involved machine excavation of an open trench from an existing overhead electricity supply adjacent to the field boundary on the south side of Preston Lane, across the verge and carriageway of Preston Lane, and into Preston East Farm, in order to allow the installation of underground cabling for the new electricity supply. While only the southernmost part – a length of c. 1.80m - of the cable route lay within the scheduled area, the DCCAS Specification required that all invasive groundworks along the cable route were to be monitored until their completion or until such time as the site was determined to be archaeologically sterile, to be decided in consultation with DCCAS.
- 4.1.3 The cable trench was excavated to a depth of c. 0.60m, width of c. 0.40m and an overall length of c. 14.0m (Figure 2). Excavation was subject to continuous archaeological monitoring. The majority of the trench excavation was undertaken mechanically, using a tracked 'mini digger'. The majority of the portion of the route within the scheduled monument was hand excavated, to a depth of c. 0.40m, due to restricted access caused by the presence of a hedged field boundary.
- 4.1.4 Deposits were recorded on *pro forma* 'Context Recording Sheets'. A basic photographic record of the work was compiled. The open trench was located using a Leica VIVA GNSS Smart Rover, which gives corrected Ordnance Survey co-ordinates to an accuracy of 1 cm.

4.2 Post-excavation

- 4.2.1 The stratigraphic data for the project comprises written, drawn and photographic records. A total of fifteen archaeological contexts were defined during the watching brief (Appendix B). Post-excavation work involved checking and collating site records, grouping contexts and phasing the stratigraphic data (Appendix A). A written summary of the archaeological sequence was then compiled, as described below in Section 5.
- 4.2.2 No artefactual or organic material was recovered during the fieldwork and no suitable archaeological deposits were encountered to warrant the recovery of bulk samples for palaeoenvironmental material.

⁸ IfA 2008a.

4.2.3 The complete Site Archive will be packaged for long-term curation. In preparing the Site Archive for deposition, all relevant standards and guidelines documents referenced in the Archaeological Archives Forum guidelines document⁹ will be adhered to, in particular a well-established United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) document¹⁰ and a more recent IfA publication.¹¹ The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the Old Fulling Mill Museum of Archaeology, The Banks, Durham DH1 3EB, will be met in full.

⁹ Brown 2007.

¹⁰ Walker, UKIC 1990.

¹¹ IfA 2008b.

5. RESULTS: THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

During the watching brief, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example [123]. The archaeological sequence has been assigned to broad phases on a site-wide basis.

5.1 Phase 1: Natural Sub-stratum

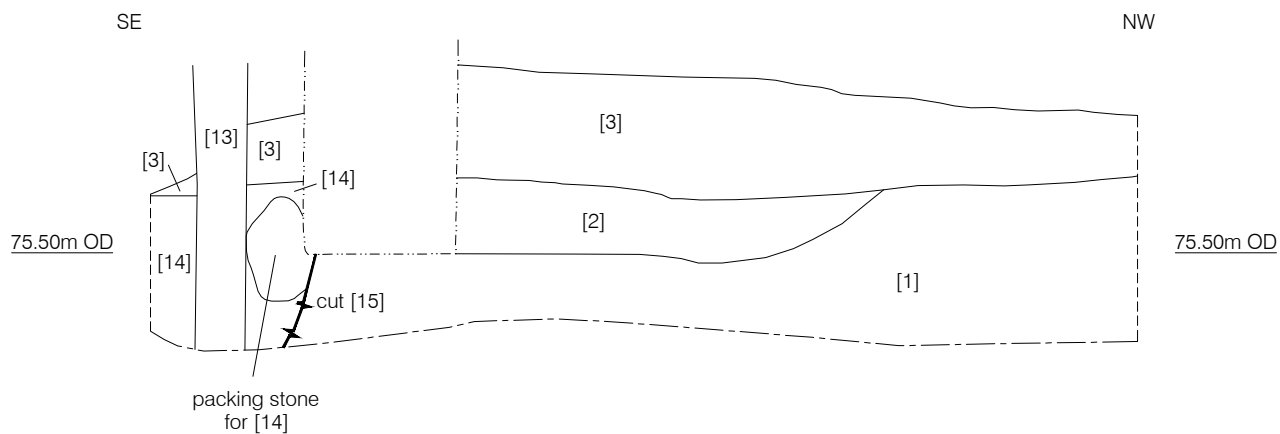
- 5.1.1 A layer, [1], comprising firm, dark purplish brown clay was exposed as the basal deposit along the length of the cable trench (Figure 3). This deposit occurred at a variable depth, c. 0.20 – 0.50m, below existing ground level was recorded at a maximum height of 75.70m OD, this towards the southern end of the trench. The deposit is of glacial origin, representing the drift geology of the area.

5.2 Phase 2: Undated

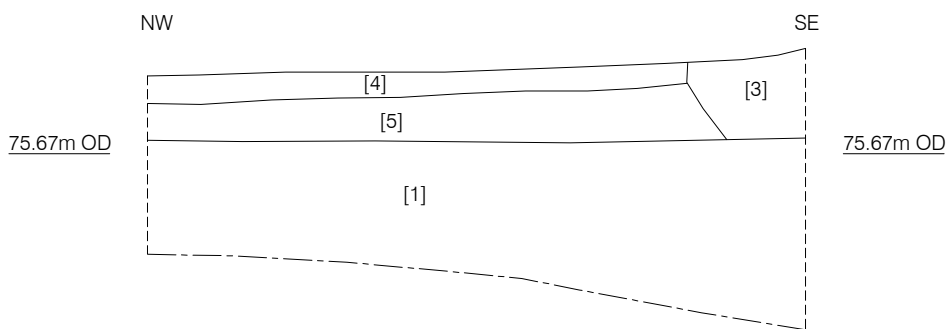
- 5.2.1 Overlying natural clay in the southernmost portion of the cable trench was a sub-soil layer, [2]. It comprised firm mid yellowish brown silty clay and was up to 0.20m thick (Figure 3). Further north, below the carriageway of Preston Lane, the natural ground level had been reduced to allow the construction of the road and in this area the sub-soil did not survive.
- 5.2.2 At the northern extent of the cable trench, the foundation of a mortared sandstone wall, [11], were exposed to a depth of c. 0.30m in a construction cut, [10], backfilled with compact dark brown silty clay, [12]. The wall had been recently demolished as part of the re-development scheme, although sections of the same boundary structure survived above ground, further east along the north side of Preston Lane. The foundation was overlain by 'topsoil', although this was likely the result of established topsoil being redistributed following demolition of the structure; the wall and its foundation are likely to be of 19th century date.

5.3 Phase 3: Modern

- 5.3.1 All other remains recorded within the cable trench were of modern origin. At the extreme southernmost end of the cable trench, lying within the scheduled area, was a timber pole, [13], this carrying the existing overhead electricity supply. The pole occupied a post-pit, [15], of which only part of the northern edge was observed (Figure 3). The post-pit had been back filled with mid reddish brown clayey silt, [14] and a large packing stone measuring c. 180mm x 270mm had been added to the backfill, to support the pole on its north side.
- 5.3.2 A U-shaped linear service trench, [6], was recorded running on an east-west alignment along the south side of Preston Lane. This contained a pipe, [8], with two backfills, [7] and [9], recorded, the upper fill, [9], comprised dark grey silty gravel. The existing road of Preston Lane comprised a c. 0.15m thick make-up layer, [5], of mid yellowish brown dolomite hardcore, overlain by a 70mm thick tarmac surface treatment, [4] (Figure 3). The dolomite hardcore had been laid down directly upon truncated natural clay.
- 5.3.3 The uppermost deposit recorded during the work was a topsoil layer, [3], up to c. 0.30m thick, which formed the existing ground surface either side of the road and sealed the modern era features described above. The topsoil abutted the deposits forming the road surface, likely having been redeposited after construction.



Section 1
Northeast Facing



Section 2
Southwest Facing



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Figure 3
Sections 1 & 2
1:20 at A4

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Conclusion

- 6.1.1 No archaeological remains of significance were recorded by the work. Natural clay was recorded along the cable trench at a minimum depth of c. 0.20m below ground level. A sub-soil survived towards the southern end of the cable trench, but had been truncated by construction of the road further north. A boundary wall foundation was of likely 19th century origin. All other remains to be recorded were of modern origin.

6.2 Recommendation

- 6.2.1 No further work is required on the information recovered during the watching brief, with the Site Archive, including this report, forming the permanent record of the strata encountered.

7. REFERENCES

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Online Sources

British Geological Survey website www.bgs.ac.uk for geological information.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

Acknowledgements

PCA would like to thank Northern Powergrid for commissioning the project herein described.

The liaison role of Caroline Gray is acknowledged.

The curatorial role of Clare Henderson, Assistant Archaeological Officer, DCCAS, is acknowledged.

PCA Credits

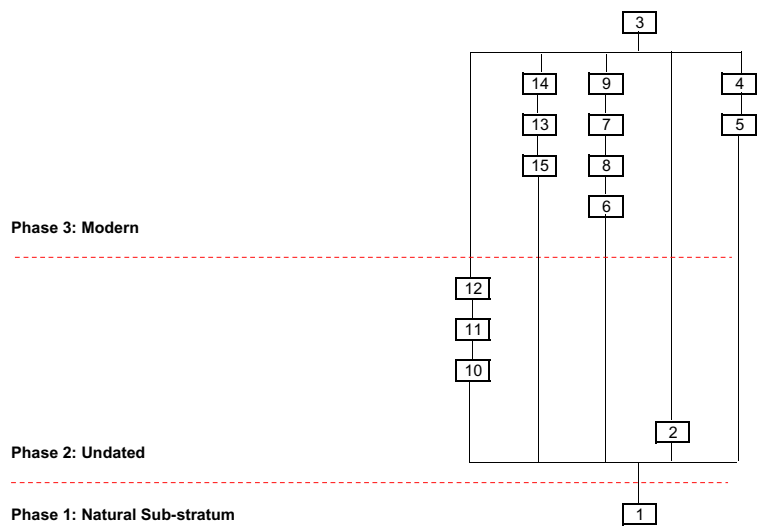
Fieldwork: Sophie Laidler and Aaron Goode (survey)

Report: Sophie Laidler

Project Manager: Robin Taylor-Wilson

CAD: Jennifer Simonson

APPENDIX A
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRIX



APPENDIX B

CONTEXT INDEX

PLS 11: CONTEXT INDEX

Context	Phase	Type 1	Type 2	Interpretation
1	1	Deposit	Layer	Natural boulder clay sub-stratum
2	2	Deposit	Layer	Silty clay sub-soil
3	3	Deposit	Layer	Topsoil
4	3	Deposit	Layer	Tarmac road surface
5	3	Deposit	Layer	Hardcore levelling deposit for tarmac surface [5]
6	3	Cut	Linear	Service trench
7	3	Deposit	Fill	Primary backfill of service trench [6]
8	3	Deposit	Fill	Pipe in service trench [6]
9	3	Deposit	Fill	Secondary backfill of service trench [6]
10	2	Cut	Linear	Construction cut for wall foundation [11]
11	2	Masonry	Structure	Stone wall foundation
12	2	Deposit	Fill	Backfill of construction cut [10]
13	3	Timber	Post	Timber pole for overhead electricity supply
14	3	Deposit	Fill	Backfill of post-pit[15]
15	3	Cut	Discrete	Post-pit housing pole [13]

APPENDIX C SPECIFICATION

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF: Electricity connection at Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, Durham

1 Site Location

- 1.1 This specification is for a watching brief near Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, Newton Aycliffe. The work is centred on OS grid reference NZ30745 24072.
- 1.2 The work to be monitored is for a new electricity connection that will cross Preston Lane, the unclassified road which passes through the village of Preston-le-Skerne, north-south before entering the grounds of Preston East Farm. The connection is required as part of the re-development of Preston East Farm.

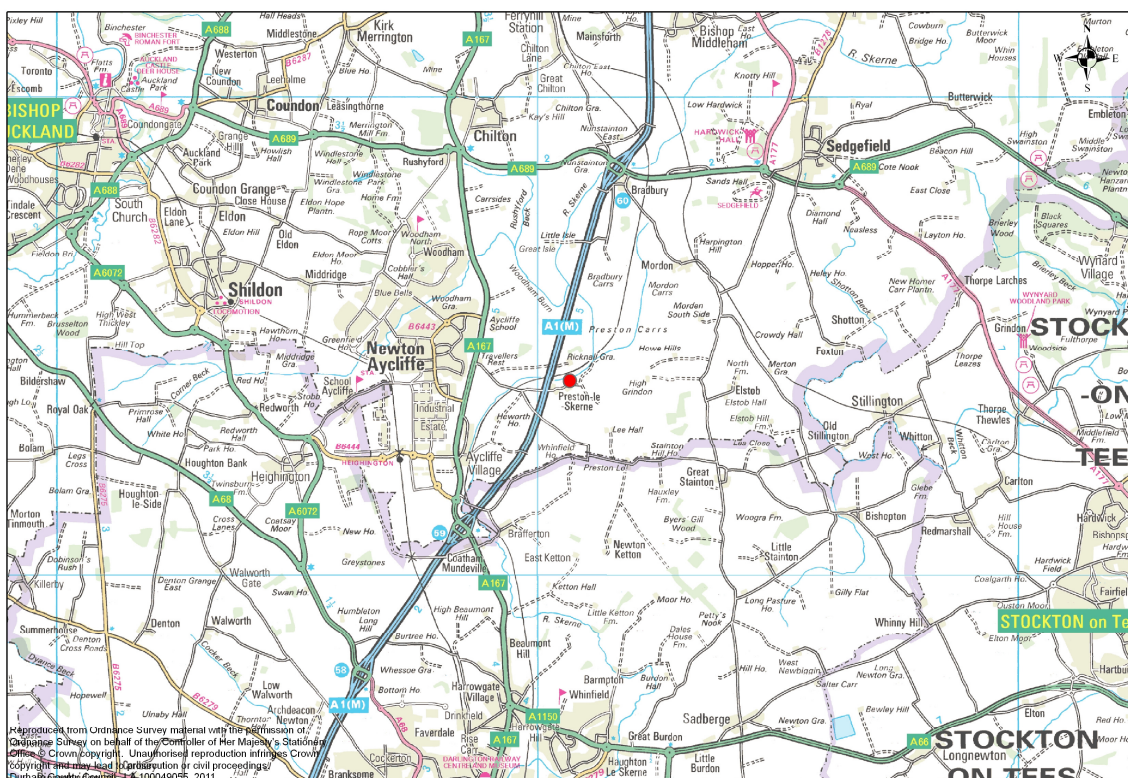


Figure 1: location of site shown in red. (© DCC)

2 The Development

- 2.1 The client for this work is CE Electric (NEDL). The client wishes to carry out the works in the immediate future.
- 2.2 The purpose of the work is to provide an improved electricity supply to the farm complex. It will entail the excavation of a trench for new cables.

- 2.3 A small portion of the work is within the scheduled area of Preston le Skerne deserted Medieval village. Scheduled Monument Consent for the work has been granted by English Heritage (ref. S00023883)
- 2.4 The appointed contractor will need to liaise with the client regarding plans showing the precise route of the proposed works.

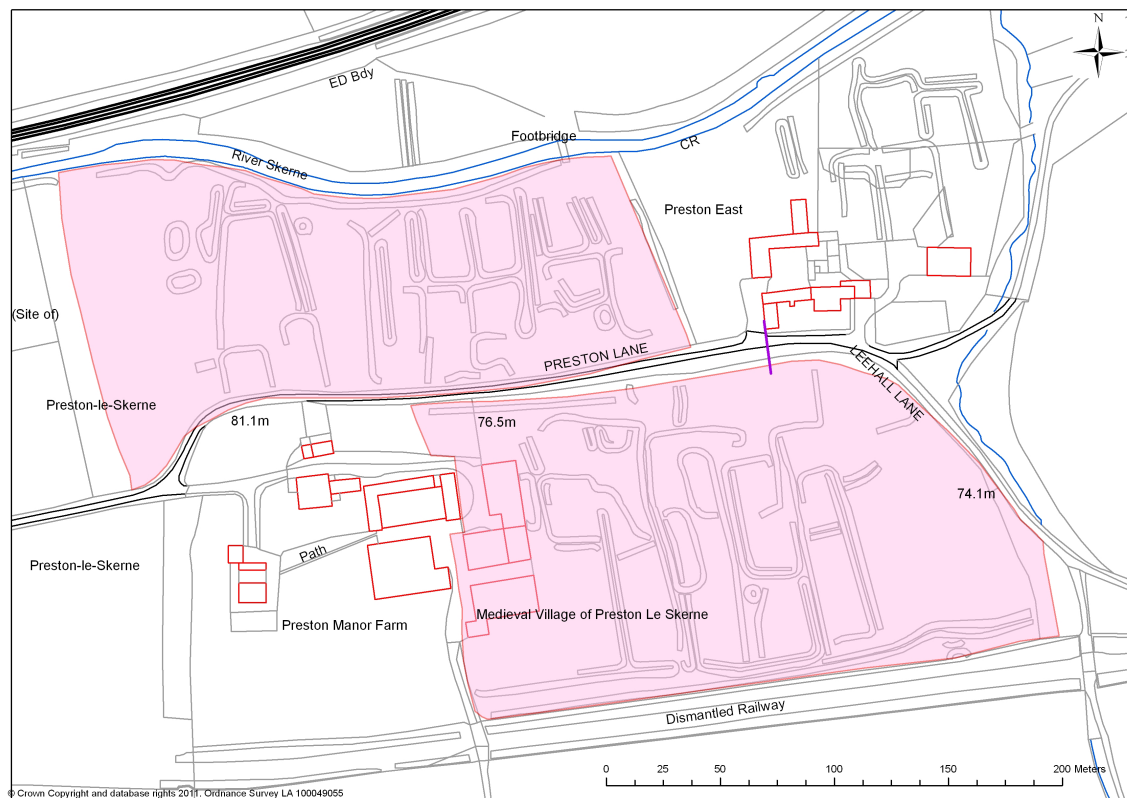


Figure 2: Preston East farm (top left) with the scheduled area of Preston-le-Skerne deserted Medieval village in pink and the approximate route of the proposed mains extension in purple (© DCC)

3 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The following brief summary is taken from the County Durham HER. A rapid assessment has indicated that the proposed excavations may impact upon archaeological resources, most likely dating to the Medieval period.
- 3.2 In the fields immediately north and south of Preston Lane are the designated earthwork remains of the Medieval village of Preston-le-Skerne (HER 317, Monument number DU 97, HA 1002335). The village is first recorded in 1091, and although there are a considerable number of deserted or shrunken settlements of this period in Durham, Preston-le-Skerne is considered to be one of the best examples due to the high level of preservation.

- 3.3 The buildings that comprise Preston East Farm, along with two other farms in the vicinity, Preston West and Manor Farm, represent the only continuation of settlement in the former village. Changes in agricultural practices in the 18th and 19th Centuries resulted in rural depopulation. Buildings are shown at Preston East Farm from the 1st Edition OS map (c.1860) onwards.
- 3.4 Monitoring of water mains extension work along Preston lane was carried out in 2011. No archaeological deposits were identified.
- 3.5 There is some potential that archaeological remains relating to the Medieval period may be disturbed by the excavation of the trench for the cable.

4 Archaeological brief

- 4.1 It is expected that the archaeological works will be carried out according to archaeological best practice as set out in the following publications: Yorkshire, the Humber and the North-East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process (SYAS 2011) and Standard and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 2008).
- 4.2 Archaeological works involving a watching brief are required on this development during all ground disturbance associated with the provision of a new electricity supply.
- 4.3 The fact that a watching brief has been identified as the appropriate archaeological response indicates that although the area has some archaeological potential, the impact of the groundworks can be mitigated by the monitoring of the site and the recording of any archaeological deposits. If archaeological remains are found, the archaeologist must be given the opportunity of excavating and recording the remains before they are destroyed. Depending on the significance of these features, further mitigation in terms of preservation in situ or preservation by record may be required. This would be dealt with by a separate brief if required.
- 4.4 The purpose of the watching brief is to record:
- as yet unknown archaeological features and deposits which may be uncovered in the course of the electricity connection works.
- 4.5 It must be noted that recording work, when required, must be to the same standard as for any larger evaluation or excavation. The watching brief must set out to identify and record any previously unknown archaeological deposits disturbed during the process of the work.
- 4.6 A continuous presence watching brief must be maintained during all excavation works carried out on the site until such time as they are completed or the area of the works is determined to be archaeologically sterile (in consultation with DCC Archaeology Officer).
- 4.7 Due to the nature of a watching brief, the archaeological working practice must be accommodated within the development timetable of the client's scheme. A clear working practice must be agreed in advance and cover the following points:

- 4.8 The archaeological contractor must be made aware in advance of scheme timetables and when their presence will be required on site. Adequate notice must be given to the archaeological contractor by the client. The anticipated extent of the work must be confirmed with the client in advance of tendering.
- 4.9 The line of communication on-site between the client and/or his representative and the archaeological contractor must be clearly stated in advance. This is especially important with regards to who must be advised of any necessary stoppage time required.
- 4.10 It must be clearly agreed before the site works begin that the archaeological contractor has access to all appropriate areas on site and can ask for stoppage time to allow for adequate archaeological recording to take place.
- 4.11 The on-site contractor's method statement, including Health and Safety requirements, must be circulated in advance to the archaeological contractor. This is to ensure archaeological best practice.
- 4.12 The machine used by the on-site contractor must be equipped with a toothless ditching bucket. This is to minimise the impact on potential archaeological deposits. If ground conditions dictate otherwise, this must be agreed with the DCC Archaeology Section.
- 4.13 It must be noted that archaeological finds remain the property of the landowner. They must not be removed from site unless previously arranged by agreement with the landowner. It is the client's responsibility to ensure that such an agreement is sought in advance of work commencing on site if the client is not the landowner.
- 4.14 This brief does not constitute the "written scheme of investigation" which must be submitted by the appointed contractor for approval by Durham County Council Archaeology Section prior to work commencing.

5 Recording

- 5.1 A sufficient sample of exposed archaeological features and deposits will be excavated in an archaeologically controlled and stratigraphic manner to fulfil the purpose of the project. The complete excavation of all features is not a necessity, especially where these continue into sections or below the maximum depth of excavation.
- 5.2 Any human remains encountered must be accurately recorded, including in-situ examination by a palaeo-pathologist, but not removed from site until a Section 25 licence has been obtained from the Ministry of Justice. Both the client and the DCC Assistant Archaeology Officer must be informed if human remains are found so that an agreement can be reached on the best possible way forward.
- 5.3 Horizontal survey control of the site must be by means of a coordinate grid, using metric measurements. The location of the grid must be established, where possible, relative to the National Grid. Vertical survey control must be tied to the Ordnance Survey datum. Details of the method employed must be recorded, including the height of the reference point.

- 5.4 Sections must be recorded by means of a measured drawing at an appropriate scale. The height of a datum on the drawing must be calculated and recorded. The locations of sections must be recorded on the site plans, relative to the site grid. Cut features must be recorded in profile, planned at an appropriate scale and their location accurately identified on the appropriate trench plan.
- 5.5 All drawn records must be clearly marked with a unique site number, and must be individually identified. The scale and orientation of the plan must be recorded. All drawings must be drawn on dimensionally stable media. All plans must be drawn relative to the site grid and at least two grid references marked on each plan.
- 5.6 Each archaeological context must be recorded separately by means of a written description. The stratigraphic relationships of each context must be recorded. Pro-forma record sheets must be used throughout. An index must be kept of all record types.
- 5.7 A full record of excavated features must be made using a single context planning system. All archaeological features will be photographed and recorded at an appropriate scale. Sections must be drawn at 1:10, and plans at 1:20. All levels will be tied into Ordnance Datum and the trenches accurately located with the National Grid. Photographic records must use black and white prints and bracketed 35mm colour slide and prints. Suitable digital images for inclusion on the Keys to the Past website must be included with the report (these may be general site images or images of specific features or finds).
- 5.8 Pottery and animal bone must be collected as bulk samples by context. Significant small finds must be three dimensionally located prior to collection. All finds must be processed to MAP2 standards and subject to specialist assessment. Palaeo-environmental samples must also be taken where appropriate. If necessary conservation of finds must be appraised to allow for specialist study (see section 6.0 Specialist Services below).
- 5.9 Scientific dating techniques such as archaeo-magnetism and radio-carbon (C^{14}) must be applied where appropriate. X-ray photography of metal objects must be used where appropriate.
- 5.10 All relevant procedures relating to artefacts which fall under the Treasure Act (1996) must be adhered to should any such finds be discovered in the course of the watching brief.
- 5.11 Following the completion of recording the site must be left in a condition to be agreed with the client.

6 Specialist Services and Reports

- 6.1 The vast majority of sites where excavation takes place will require the input of archaeological specialists for dating, artefact analysis, palaeo-environmental sampling and conservation. Contingency sums must be set aside for all of these areas and clearly indicated in any tender documents. In the instance of palaeo-environmental remains and conservation, policies as follows must be adopted. In each case the specialist involved must be kept informed of the start date and progress of sites so that sampling and necessary on site conservation needs can be timetabled.

- 6.2 Specialist advice regarding the need for palaeo-environmental sampling, appropriate sampling techniques and research questions for specific sites must be identified in advance. The successful contractor must make contact with, and ensure that any proposed sampling strategy includes the input of Jacqueline Huntley, The English Heritage Science Advisor for the NE, based at the English Heritage NE offices in Newcastle. The contractor's environmental specialist must be named in the project design/WSI.
- 6.3 Specialist conservation advice and services must be budgeted for in all tenders along with other specialist services. A contingency amount must be identified for the appraisal of the conservation needs of artefactual material excavated on site and for the initial stabilisation of such finds where needed so that they may be studied as part of the post-excavation for the project. All specialists must be named in advance.

7 OASIS

- 7.1 The Durham County Council Archaeology Section supports the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) Project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large scale developer funded fieldwork.
- 7.2 The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> within 3 months of completion of the work. Contractors are advised to ensure that adequate time and costings are built into their tenders to allow the forms to be filled in.
- 7.3 Technical advice must be sought in the first instance from OASIS (oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk) and not from Durham County Council Archaeology Section.
- 7.4 Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the SMR, Durham County Council Archaeology Section will validate the OASIS form thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website.
- 7.5 The archaeological consultant or contractor must indicate that they agree to this procedure within the specification/project design/written scheme of investigation submitted to Durham County Council Archaeology Section for approval

8 Health and Safety Policy

- 8.1 Contractors are expected to abide by the 1974 Health and Safety Act and any subsequent amendments. They are also expected to ensure that all projects which fall under the Construction and Design Management Regulations 2007 follow all necessary requirements of said regulations. Appropriate provision of first aid, telephone and safety clothing as described in the SCAUM manual on archaeological health and safety must be followed. Each site must have a nominated safety officer.



- 8.2 The undertaking of a risk assessment prior to the commencement of works is required. A copy of the risk assessment must be circulated to the client and any other sub-contractors working on the site at the same time. Contractors must ensure that all staff working on the site are fully briefed on all health and safety issues relating to the site prior to working there.
- 8.3 Extra care and attention must be taken in areas where excavation goes below 1.20m. It may be that shoring or stepping of the trench may be required in such an instance, or where ground conditions dictate. The risk assessment must identify if this is likely to be an issue on this site.

9 Publication

- 9.1 All assessments, evaluations and watching briefs which do not progress to further excavation and research (with the relevant post-excavation and publication scheme and costs), must have a time and budget allocation identified for publication. This must be to a minimum standard to include a summary of the work, findings, dates, illustrations and photographs and references to where the archive is lodged.
- 9.2 Editors of regional journals, either the Durham Archaeological Journal or Archaeologia Aeliana must be contacted for information on outline publication costs, fuller figures may be worked out on completion of the watching brief. As the final note is largely unpredictable in advance a contingency sum must be set aside at the outset of work in the tender.
- 9.3 County Durham Archaeology Section will be producing an annual publication every March which will highlight the archaeological work conducted in the county over the previous 12 months. To this end, it is now a requirement of every specification that a précis of archaeological works conducted in the county as a result of PPG16 must be submitted to the DCC Archaeology Section.
- 9.4 The précis must be no more than 500 words in length and it would be appreciated if TIFF images of 300dpi are also included. The summary must be sent to the County Archaeologist by the beginning of December of the same year in which the work was conducted.
- 9.5 Where publication is required, conditions will not be discharged until County Durham Archaeology Section have received written agreement from the contractor that publication will be funded by the client.

10 The Report

10.1 The watching brief report must follow the standards and layout as set out in MAP2 (phase 4 and appendix 4):

- executive summary
- a site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with at least an 8 figure central grid reference
- OASIS reference number; unique site code
- contractor's details including date work carried out
- nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details
- description of the site location and geology
- a site plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
- discussion of the results of field work
- context & feature descriptions
- features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating & scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format
- plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale
- initial assessment reports by specialists to MAP2 standards
- recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work
- bibliography

10.2 A report synthesising the results of the watching brief must be produced for the client. This must include a site location plan with NGR references, and also be accompanied by additional plans/map extracts to display noted and recorded archaeological features as appropriate. At least 2 copies must be prepared for the client and a further one including a digital PDF copy sent to the HER at County Hall, so that the condition can be discharged.

10.3 The report must be presented in an ordered state and contained within a protective cover/sleeve or bound in some fashion (loose-leaf presentation is unacceptable). The report must contain a title page listing site/development name, district and County together with a general NGR, the name of the archaeological contractor and the developer or commissioning agent. The report must be page numbered and supplemented with sections and paragraph numbering for ease of reference.

10.4 The report must seek to identify any deposits remaining on or associated with the site that will remain following the completion of the watching brief.

11 The Tender

11.1 Tenders for the work must include a method statement, day rates and the following:

11.2 Brief details of the organisation and the number of staff who are proposing to carry out the work including any relevant specialism or experience. The earliest date at which the work can be commenced and the amount of notice required to initiate the survey.



- 11.3 Details concerning proposed methods of recording and source material.
- 11.4 Statement agreeing to complete the OASIS forms on completion of the watching brief.
- 11.5 An estimate of how long the work will take broken down by time and cost in terms of data collection and report production (the anticipated extent of the work must be confirmed with the client in advance). The tender must include a breakdown of costs attributable to:
- travelling and subsistence
 - fieldwork
 - monitoring visit (x1)
 - finds analysis
 - report production
 - administration
 - other

Contingency sums must be clearly allocated for the following:

- conservation of finds
- environmental sampling
- archiving and publication
- post-ex assessment
- other

12 Submission of Report

This watching brief must be considered as a project in its own right and not necessarily the first stage of any further work. At least two copies of the report must be sent to the client. A third paper copy of the report and a PDF on CD-ROM with digital images (JPEG's) of the site for the Keys To The Past website must be sent to the Archaeology Section, Durham County Council for inclusion into the County Durham Historic Environment Record (HER) at:

Archaeology Section
Design & Historic Environment Team
Regeneration & Economic Development
The Rivergreen Centre
Aykley Heads
Durham
DH1 5TS

13 The Archive and Submission to a Museum

- 13.1 The site archive comprising the original paper records and plans, photographs, negatives, and finds etc, must be deposited in the appropriate museum (the Bowes Museum, Durham) at the completion of post-excavation. In the rare event that the landowner should wish to retain the finds, then a full measured, written and graphic record of the assemblage must be made.



- 13.2 Deposition must be in accordance with the County Durham Archaeological Archive policy, a guidance note on which can be obtained from the County Archaeology Service. Failure to adhere to the guidance note can mean refusal of the archive by the intended museum.
- 13.3 Contractors must ensure that suitable costs to cover archiving requirements are included in the original tender document.

14 Notice

The County Archaeologist must be given two weeks (or in exceptional circumstances a minimum of 48 hours) notice in writing of the commencement of groundworks. During such works the County Archaeologist or his nominated representative must be allowed access to the site and excavations at all reasonable times.

15 References

Archaeological Archives Forum	2007	Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.
English Heritage	1991	Management of Archaeological Projects 2
	2002	Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recording to post-excavation
Institute for Archaeologists (IFA)	2008	Standard and Guidance: for an archaeological watching brief.
United Kingdom	1990	Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for long-term storage
Institute of Conservation		
South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS)	2011	Yorkshire, The Humber & The North-East: A regional statement of good practice for Archaeology in the development process

22nd November 2011
 Clare Henderson
 Assistant Archaeology Officer
 Durham County Council

**YORKSHIRE, THE HUMBER & THE NORTH EAST: A REGIONAL STATEMENT
OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

This document contains general principles on Archaeology in the development process and has been endorsed by the organisations listed below:

The intention is to help improve standards of archaeological work in the Yorkshire & the Humber and the North East Regions and to help establish a consistent approach for the benefit of archaeological contractors, consultants, curators and developers who are funding the work, as well as to the historic environment. The historic environment is an encompassing term that includes “all aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible or buried, and deliberately planted or managed flora” (English Heritage 2008, Conservation Principles p. 71). It should be noted that there is a presumption within the Region that archaeological interest may apply not only to below ground archaeological remains, but also may apply to upstanding structures / buildings (both listed and unlisted), marine and maritime assets as well as paleoenvironmental deposits.

This document should be read in conjunction with the issued specification/WSI/brief/project design.

The following general principles are expected to pertain to archaeological work carried out as part of the development process in these Regions in accordance with Central Government Guidance and Regional and Local Development Plans and policies:

- Pre-application discussion on the potential archaeological impact of a development is encouraged as is pre-determination evaluation where it is necessary to help define the character, extent and significance of the archaeological remains that may exist in the area of a proposed development prior to a planning decision.
- Archaeological work in the development process should be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or archaeologist (PPS5 HE12.3; PPS 5 HE PPG Para 130.1) and the archaeologists undertaking the work should have “the requisite qualifications, expertise and experience” (IFA Code of Approved Practice).
- In accordance with long-standing professional practice (see footnote below) it is expected that all archaeological specifications/WSIs/ briefs/project designs will have been agreed in advance with the relevant archaeological curator before archaeological work commences. Any variations to the previously established programme of work must be agreed in writing by the archaeological curator acting on behalf of the local planning authority.
- As part of the implementation of the Planning Consent process archaeological work will be monitored on behalf of the LPA by its archaeological curator (who may seek advice where appropriate from the EH Science Advisor). There may be exceptions, but consultants and contractors should expect monitoring to be the norm unless informed otherwise. To allow monitoring to occur, the relevant curatorial archaeologist should be given reasonable notice of intention to commence any fieldwork undertaken as part of the development process and confirmation of the actual start date.
- Archaeological work carried out within the development process is expected to accord with best practice as published in English Heritage guidelines and the IFA’s standards and guidance.

YORKSHIRE, THE HUMBER & THE NORTH EAST: A REGIONAL STATEMENT OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- Historic Environment Records (also known as Sites and Monuments Records) are key to understanding and managing the historic environment. Archaeological contractors and consultants should consult the relevant HER / SMR in person prior to producing desk-based assessments or commencing fieldwork (unless otherwise agreed with the relevant curator).
- Archaeological fieldwork carried out as part of the development process should have regard to both national and local published research agenda, and should have an intention of furthering these agenda.
- Archaeological contractors and consultants are expected to discuss any recommendations they make in archaeological reports submitted as part of the development process with the relevant curatorial archaeologist prior to formal submission. If this has not been done, the absence of discussion / agreement should be formally stated in the submitted document. It should be noted that the final decision on the need for and scope of any further works lies with the Archaeological curator acting on behalf of the Local Authority
- All reports and required data produced following archaeological work as part of the development process should be supplied by the archaeological contractor / consultant directly to the relevant HER / SMR within a reasonable timescale following completion of the fieldwork, in the format agreed with the curatorial body, and in accordance with any issued or agreed specification or project design.
- The curatorial archaeologist will make any comments they wish to make on the report within a reasonable timescale of receipt.
- Where considered appropriate by the archaeological curator, and particularly where supported by the relevant research agenda, it is expected that significant archaeological results will be submitted for publication in a suitable journal or journals.
- The archive produced as a result of archaeological fieldwork is expected to be deposited in an ordered and acceptable fashion with an appropriate public repository within a reasonable timescale following completion of the project. Details of the location of the (intended) repository should be included in the archaeological fieldwork report.

The historic environment is a shared resource. During the course of archaeological work on site, it is normally expected that arrangements will be made for dissemination of information to the general public, providing intellectual access where physical access is not possible or appropriate.

Organisations that have accepted and agreed these Principles within Yorkshire & the Humber & the North East are listed below:

Archaeology Section, Design & Historic Environment Team, Durham County Council
City of York Design, Conservation & Sustainable Development Team
Humber Archaeology Partnership
North East Lincolnshire Archaeology Service
North Lincolnshire Council Historic Environment Record
North York Moors National Park Authority Historic Environment Service

**YORKSHIRE, THE HUMBER & THE NORTH EAST: A REGIONAL STATEMENT
OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

North Yorkshire County Council Historic Environment Team
Northumberland Conservation, Northumberland County Council
South Yorkshire Archaeology Service
Tees Archaeology
Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team
West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service
Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Historic Environment Service

*Footnote: the IFA's Standards and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation para. 3.3.1;
the IFA's Standard and Guidance for archaeological desk-based assessment para. 3.2.5;
the IFA's Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief para. 3.2.5; ACO
Model Briefs and Specifications for Archaeological Assessments and Field Evaluations,
Appendix D iv (b))*

Revision 1: March 2011 to reflect the replacement of PPGs 15 & 16 with PPS 5

APPENDIX D
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, Newton Aycliffe, County Durham

***Prepared on behalf of Northern Powergrid by
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited***

24 November 2011

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 An appropriately specified programme of archaeological work is required in association with the improvement of the electricity supply to Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, County Durham. The work – to be undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) - will involve: archaeological observation and recording – a ‘watching brief’ – during all invasive groundworks; excavation and recording of any archaeological remains of interest exposed; reporting on the work, including, as appropriate, publication of any significant findings. The work has been commissioned by Northern Powergrid.
- 1.1.2 The site is of archaeological interest because it lies within the area that was occupied by the medieval village of Preston-le-Skerne, much of which is a Scheduled Monument. An open trench is to be excavated across the carriageway of Preston Lane and into Preston East Farm in order to allow the installation of cabling to improve the electricity supply as part of a re-development scheme. Only the southernmost portion of these groundworks lie within the scheduled area but the entire installation is to be archaeologically monitored.
- 1.1.3 The undertaking of the archaeological work herein described has been recommended by the Durham County Council Archaeology Section (DCCAS) because of the archaeological sensitivity of the site. In addition, the part of the work to be undertaken within the scheduled area is required as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC), on the advice of English Heritage to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS). A Specification for the work has been prepared by the Assistant Archaeology Officer at DCCAS.¹

1.2 Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1 The hamlet of Preston-le-Skerne lies just east of the A1(M), c. 3km to the east of Newton Aycliffe in County Durham. It lies on an unclassified road which continues westwards to cross over the A1(M) north of Junction 59 and then continues roughly westwards to meet the A167 as it skirts Newton Aycliffe.

¹ DCCAS 2011. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief: Electricity Connection at Preston East Farm, Preston-le-Skerne, Durham*, dated 22 November 2011.

- 1.2.2 Preston East Farm is located at the eastern end of the hamlet, straddling the through road, Preston Lane, just west of the point at which it curves south and becomes Leehall Lane. The central National Grid Reference for the area of investigation is NZ 3076 2406 and it comprises the road carriageway and adjacent verges, continuing into the property of Preston East Farm. The source of the improved electricity supply for the property lies to the south of the road, just within the scheduled area, which takes in a large open field within the curve of the road. An additional part of the scheduled area lies on the north side of the road, immediately to the west of Preston East Farm, again taking in a large open field. Both fields are notable for their earthwork remains.
- 1.2.3 Preston-le-Skerne lies at an elevation of c. 80m OD in an area where the Magnesian Limestone escarpment of East Durham descends into the broad valley of the River Tees. The hamlet lies immediately on the south bank of the old course of the River Skerne, a slow moving tributary of the River Tees which passes through a belt of low-lying flats or 'carrs' where earthy peats are preserved; Preston-le-Skerne is known to be the location of such a lowland carr, along with the nearby settlements of Mordon and Bradbury.²

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

Much of the information used for the following summary has been taken from 'Keys to the Past, the online County Durham Historic Environment Record (HER) and the DCCAS Specification, with other sources used as appropriate. The research and writing of those responsible is gratefully acknowledged.

- 1.3.1 It is for the medieval period that the site has particular archaeological potential. In the fields immediately north and south of Preston Lane, the through road of Preston-le-Skerne, are the earthwork remains of the medieval village of Preston-le Skerne (Durham County HER 317, National Monument DU 97 'Deserted Village, Preston Lane, Preston-le-Skerne, Aycliffe, County Durham', HA 1002335). As part of a Scheduled Monument, these remains fall within the category of 'designated heritage assets' as defined by *Planning Policy Statement 5 'Planning for the Historic Environment'* (PPS5).
- 1.3.2 The village of Preston-le Skerne is first recorded in a documentary source in 1091, as 'Prestetona' in the *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis* and then again as 'Preston super Skiryn' in 1384 in a charter roll held at the British Museum. Although there are a considerable number of deserted or shrunken settlements of the medieval period in County Durham, Preston-le Skerne is considered to be one of the best examples due to its high level of preservation. Other sites of this type in the near vicinity are at Heworth (HER 1484), c. 1.4km to the south-west, at High Grindon (HER 325), c. 1.5km to the east and at Woodham (HER 1497), c. 3km to the north-west.

² R. Hewitt 2011. *An Archaeological Assessment of County Durham. The Aggregate-Producing Areas.*

- 1.3.3 The buildings that comprise Preston East Farm, along with two other farms in the vicinity, Preston West Farm and Manor Farm, represent the only continuation of settlement in the former village. It is likely that Preston-le-Skerne was visited by two periods of desertion or shrinkage. Firstly, in the mid to late 14th century, when climatic conditions were very poor, there were several years of failed crops followed by famine and plague. Many villages were simply abandoned at this time with less land being kept under cultivation to supply a smaller population. Secondly, in the later post-medieval period, improvements in agricultural practice inevitably lead to rural depopulation as fewer people were need to undertake the same amount of labour. It is likely that Preston-le-Skerne finally shrank to the three established farms at around this time.
- 1.3.4 The settlement is shown at Preston-le-Skerne on historic mapping going back as far as the 16th century, for example Saxton's map of 1576, with detail of the actual layout of buildings appearing from the mid 19th century, such as the Ordnance Survey 1st edition of c. 1860. The overall township had a population of 119 in 1801 and reached a 19th century maximum of 176 in 1831.
- 1.3.5 The earthworks representing the medieval village lie on the south bank of the old course of the River Skerne, and cover an area of c. 400m east-west by c. 160m north-south. The earthworks consist of banks and ditches dividing the area into small crofts, with buildings represented by smaller enclosures and house platforms. There are some large undressed stones in the banks, but no other structural traces. The wide ditch which forms part of the south boundary is probably an old trackway. The scheduled area takes in parcels of land either side of Preston Lane but the road itself is not included.
- 1.3.6 It is therefore considered probable that the site contains evidence of medieval period activity.
- 1.3.7 For all other archaeological eras the site has much lower potential. The discovery of prehistoric flints (HER 1490) in 1908 at Heworth House, c. 2km to the south-west, broadly indicates that evidence of prehistoric activity is possible, as well as a probable Early Bronze Age ring ditch indicated by a cropmark on the Magnesian Limestone in the vicinity of Preston-le-Skerne.³ For Roman period remains there is probably low potential. The line of Cade's Road lies c. 2.6km to the east, with major roadside settlement known near Sedgfield, c. 5.5km to the north-east, and the major Roman period site at Faverdale East lying c. 11km to the south.
- 1.3.8 Monitoring of a water main extension along Preston Lane earlier in 2011 did not identify any archaeological remains of note.

³ *ibid.*

2. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Planning approval for the conversion of outbuildings into dwellings at Preston East Farm was granted in 2002 (reference 7/2002/0030/DM). A further application in 2011 (reference 7/2011/0061/DM) for alterations to the external elevations of the new buildings was approved in April 2011. The re-development, which lies to the north and west of the core of the farm complex, now requires an improved electricity supply. The new supply is to be brought in by underground cabling from an existing supply location opposite the farm, on the south side of Preston Lane. This location lies within the scheduled area of the deserted medieval village and the site hereafter referred to comprises the route of the underground cable supply. The installation will take the form of a narrow open trench dug to depth of c. 600mm.
- 2.2 Because part of the site has Scheduled Monument status, and thus has statutory protection under *The Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979*, any intrusive groundworks for the installation require SMC from DCMS prior to their undertaking. In accordance with the 1979 Act, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport consulted with English Heritage before deciding whether or not to grant SMC after an application for the installation was submitted by CE Electric UK (now part of Northern Powergrid) in October 2011. English Heritage considered the effect of the proposed works upon the monument to be works *'that are due to the need to provide electrical service provision, and which are unavoidable and will not significantly compromise the integrity of the monument, nor prejudice substantially its longer term preservation'*.
- 2.3 Accordingly, SMC was granted by the Secretary of State, advised by English Heritage, subject to a series of conditions set out in a letter dated 18 November 2011 to CE Electric UK. Condition b) of SMC states *'No ground works/building works shall take place until the applicant has confirmed in writing the commissioning of a programme of archaeological work before and/or during the development in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the Secretary of State advised by English Heritage'*. This document details the required scheme of investigation. Condition e) of SMC requires a report on the findings of the watching brief to be submitted to DCCAS for inclusion in the County Durham HER and a copy to be sent to English Heritage on completion of the fieldwork.
- 2.4 As previously mentioned, the Assistant Archaeology Officer at DCCAS compiled a Specification for the required archaeological work, which comprises archaeological monitoring and recording along the entire length of the cable installation. Apart from the condition of SMC, the requirement to undertake the archaeological investigation is in line with planning policy at a national level – as described in PPS5 - and a local level – as described in the archaeological policies of Durham County Council. The DCCAS Specification reiterated the requirement (paragraph 4.14) for a written scheme of investigation to be submitted by the appointed archaeological contractor for approval by DCCAS prior to work commencing.

3. PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The project aims to fulfil the requirements of SMC and the DCCAS Specification by undertaking an appropriately specified scheme of archaeological fieldwork in association with invasive groundworks, with subsequent reporting on the findings, as described in this document.
- 3.2 The archaeological work will aim to identify, investigate and record any archaeological remains through a programme of observation and recording - watching brief - conducted in association with invasive groundworks.
- 3.3 In view of the known medieval origin for the hamlet, the investigation will be carried out with reference to *Shared Visions: the North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF)⁴, specifically the following research priorities, as set out in the NERRF Research Agenda:
- Later Medieval: MDi. Settlement; MDii. Landscape; MDvii. Medieval Ceramics and Other Artefacts; MDviii. Other Medieval Industries.
- 3.4 An appropriate level of reporting on the work is required, including, if necessary, full analysis and publication of any notable archaeological findings upon completion of the project. Thus the results of the work will constitute the preservation by record of any archaeological remains thus encountered and subsequently removed during the course of works. The full scheme of archaeological work required is described in the following section.

4. METHOD STATEMENT

4.1 General Standards

- 4.1.1 All archaeological work will be carried out in compliance with the codes and practice of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) and will follow the relevant IfA standard and guidance documents. PCA is an IfA 'Registered Organisation'.
- 4.1.2 All archaeological staff involved in the project will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. The project will be overseen for PCA by a Member (at MIfA level) of the IfA
- 4.1.3 All archaeological staff involved in the project will be aware of the work required, as detailed in this document, and will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.
- 4.1.4 All relevant Health and Safety legislation, regulations and codes of practice will be respected. For Health and Safety purposes, PCA is a sub-contractor and will have no responsibilities as a Principal/Main Contractor. Site welfare will be provided for PCA personnel. All PCA personnel will attend site inductions as required. All archaeological personnel will use PPE.

⁴ Petts and Gerrard 2006.

4.2 Archaeological Methodology - Fieldwork

- 4.2.1 Continuous archaeological monitoring and observation will be carried out during invasive groundworks for the cable installation. All monitoring and observation will be carried out by one (or more if required) suitably experienced professional archaeologist(s). The watching brief will continue until such time as invasive groundworks are completed or until such time as the site is determined to be archaeologically sterile, which is to be decided only in consultation with DCCAS.
- 4.2.2 Any archaeological remains of possible significance that are exposed during groundworks are to be immediately examined, hand cleaned, excavated and recorded, to an appropriate level and using the established principles of stratigraphic excavation. Within the scope of the watching brief, adequate time is to be afforded for such work to take place to the satisfaction of the attendant archaeologist(s). Depending upon the significance of any archaeological remains preservation *in situ* may be required, although it is envisaged that for most remains preservation by record will be suitable mitigation.
- 4.2.3 All archaeological remains - structures, features and deposits - encountered at the site will be excavated and recorded to the necessary extent to achieve as full an understanding as possible of the past activity that those remains represent. All archaeological features (layers, cuts, fills, structures) that do not merit preservation *in situ* will be excavated by hand tools and recorded in plan and/or section. Work in plan will use the standard 'single context planning' system. Archaeological recording will be carried out by means of unique numeric based context records and will be written, drawn and photographic (and any other appropriate means). All archaeological exposures (layers, cuts, fills, structures) will be recorded using *pro forma* recording sheets. Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.
- 4.2.4 The area of investigation will be located by appropriate means to ensure its accurate location relative to the Ordnance Survey National Grid. Drawn records of archaeological features and deposits will normally be at a scale of 1:10 (sections) or 1:20 (plans) and will be prepared in a suitable form of digitisation. Where possible, archaeological features and deposits will be logged relative to Ordnance Datum.
- 4.2.5 Archaeological excavation may require work by pick/mattock and shovel. Such techniques will be used only for the removal of homogeneous and 'low grade' layers, where it can be reasonably argued, firstly, that more detailed attention would not produce information of value and, secondly, that their removal provides a window onto the underlying archaeological levels. Such tools will not be employed on complex stratigraphy, and where deposits are removed in this manner they will have been properly recorded first.
- 4.2.6 Photography will be undertaken in 35mm film and digital format. Graduated metric scales will appear in all photographic frames and, in addition, general 'working shots' will be taken to show the overall scale of the archaeological operation mounted. A register of all photographs will be kept.

- 4.2.7 During the archaeological work, a high priority will be given to dating any archaeological remains. Therefore, all relevant artefacts and finds would be retained. Consideration would also be given to the recovery of specialist samples for scientific analysis, particularly samples of structural materials, samples for absolute dating and bulk or column samples of deposits for palaeoenvironmental evidence. Different sampling strategies may be employed according to established research targets and the perceived importance of the strata under investigation.
- 4.2.8 The overall aim of the fieldwork with respect to archaeological science is to determine the types of material preserved and in what quantity and condition, thus enabling the aims and objectives of the project as a whole to be addressed. The advice of English Heritage's Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science (RAAS) will be sought, as appropriate.
- 4.2.9 Deposits would be assessed for their potential for absolute dating by radiocarbon, archaeomagnetism or by any other means and, if appropriate, samples would be recovered for these purposes. Specialist analysis of the recovered material would be a requirement.
- 4.2.10 Appropriate procedures involving human remains and discoveries classed as 'treasure' under *The Treasure Act 1996* will be followed, as appropriate. In the event of human burials being discovered, PCA will procure and comply with all statutory consents and licences. If human burials are encountered, they would be recorded by photography and the use of *pro forma* recording sheets. Where any part of a human burial is disturbed, the whole burial should be archaeologically excavated as far as possible, but always with Health and Safety considerations in mind.
- 4.2.11 Waterlogged organic materials are unlikely at the site but in the event that they are encountered they would be dealt with following recognised guidelines.
- 4.2.12 All processing of artefacts and ecofacts would be undertaken away from the site. All finds would be treated in a proper manner and would be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with recognised guidelines.

4.3 Archaeological Methodology – Post-Excavation

- 4.3.1 Irrespective of whether or not any archaeological remains of note are encountered during the fieldwork, the archaeological investigation will be summarised in a report. The report will include the following information specific to the work:
- a summary statement of the results of the investigations;
 - the aims and methods adopted in the course of the work;
 - illustrative material (cross-referenced within the text), including an overall site location plan and a plan showing the location all areas of investigation, both tied into the Ordnance Survey grid and at recognisable scales, plans and sections of archaeological deposits at recognisable scales, and photographs, as appropriate;
 - text detailing the nature, extent, date, condition and significance of any archaeological remains.
- 4.3.2 The report will detail the dates when the fieldwork was undertaken.

- 4.3.3 All recovered artefacts (e.g. ceramic, metallic) and samples (e.g. bulk soil samples for biological remains) would be examined off-site by appropriate specialists. For each category of artefact and ecofact, an assessment report would be produced, that would include a basic quantification of the material, a statement of its potential for further analysis and recommendations for such work. The results of all specialist assessment reports would be incorporated into the overall report on the watching brief.
- 4.3.4 Where one or more elements of the recovered data-set from the watching brief is identified as having potential for further analysis (irrespective of whether or not extensive, significant and/or unexpectedly complex archaeological remains are discovered), an 'Updated Project Design' would be produced to accompany the report on the watching brief and this would detail any requirements for further analysis of material, the results of which would likely require reporting on in a subsequent published paper or report. Costs for any such further analysis and publication can only be established after an initial assessment of the material. The scope of any such further analysis and publication would be agreed with the commissioning client before being undertaken. The 'Updated Project Design' would detail the post-excavation methodologies to be employed, as well as outlining the likely form of a publication paper.
- 4.3.5 Copies of all reports will be sent to all appropriate organisations in hardcopy and electronic format, as required. The requirements of DCCAS with regard to report format and quantities of copies are set out in paragraph 10.2 and Section 12 of the Specification.
- 4.3.6 PCA will complete an Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) form for the project.

4.4 Site Archive

- 4.4.1 The data collected during the programme of archaeological work, including all paper and photographic records, as well as all artefacts and ecofacts recovered, will comprise the Site Archive. The Site Archive will be prepared to recognised standards.
- 4.4.2 The Site Archive will be deposited at the County Durham Archaeological Archive, Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, within six months of the completion of fieldwork at the site, unless alternative arrangements have been agreed in writing with DCCAS.

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