

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Kenton School, Drayton Road,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear**

Central National Grid Reference: NZ 219516763

Site Code: KSN 07

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1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological monitoring and recording exercise was undertaken intermittently between February and June 2007 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited at Kenton School, Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The work was undertaken ahead of re-development of the school, part of the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme in Newcastle. The work was commissioned by Sir Robert McAlpine and was undertaken as a planning condition, on the advice of the Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team at Newcastle County Council.
- 1.2 Overall, the existing campus of Kenton School covers an area of c. 8 hectares, and is bounded by Kenton Lane to the south, by Drayton Road and Balmain Road to the east and by residential streets off Hazeldene Avenue to the north and west. Its central National Grid Reference is NZ 219 678. The area of archaeological interest was the southernmost portion of the proposed development area in the campus, specifically a 70m wide corridor skirting Kenton Lane.
- 1.3 The watching brief was preceded by an archaeological desk-based assessment in 2004, which concluded that the site lay close to the core of the medieval village of Kenton, first referred to in documentary evidence in the 12th century. Map regression showed that a manor house of at least post-medieval, possibly earlier, origin was formerly located on Kenton Lane within the southern part of the site. However, the assessment also concluded that the school site had been subject to considerable modern development, including landscaping, which would effect the potential survival of any archaeological remains.
- 1.4 The archaeological work was undertaken according to a Specification compiled by the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer. The broad aim was to ensure that any archaeological remains disturbed during groundworks within corridor of interest were adequately recorded. The majority of the monitored groundworks involved bulk excavation to reduce ground level.
- 1.5 Natural bedrock and boulder clay were the earliest deposits to be encountered during the work. A crude sandstone surface, possibly related to the Manor House complex, and a brick-lined pump shaft for Kenton Colliery were the only two features of archaeological interest to be encountered. Evidence of extensive former landscaping in this part of the school site was recorded, this probably dating from the time of the construction of Kenton School.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This report details the results of an archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (hereafter 'watching brief') undertaken intermittently between February and June 2007 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA) at Kenton School, Drayton Road, Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The work was undertaken ahead of the overall re-development of the school, within the southernmost portion of the school campus.
- 2.2 Kenton is situated c. 4.5km north of the centre of Newcastle, to the north of Kenton Lane, the A191. The watching brief was undertaken in association with development groundworks conducted within a 70m wide corridor adjacent to Kenton Lane, which forms the southern boundary of the site. This corridor of archaeological interest contained existing school buildings, as well as hardstanding for car parking and grassed areas. The central National Grid Reference for the watching brief area is NZ 2195 6763 (Figure 1).

- 2.3 The archaeological work was commissioned by Sir Robert McAlpine and undertaken as a planning condition on the advice of the Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team at Newcastle County Council (NCC). The site was considered to be of archaeological interest mainly due to its proximity to core of the medieval village of Kenton and the potential presence of structural remains of a former manor house, which survived on Kenton Lane until the mid 20th century. The archaeological potential of the site was first highlighted by a desk-based archaeological assessment, undertaken in 2004.¹
- 2.4 The work was undertaken according to a Specification prepared by the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer.² The broad aim of the work was to record archaeological remains encountered during development groundworks, which principally involved reduction of the existing ground level within two distinct parts of the 70m wide corridor of interest. These were an 'upper' area skirting the Kenton Lane frontage, where ground reduction was c. 1.5m, to create access and areas for car parking and site offices during the development, and a smaller, 'lower' area to the north, where ground reduction was c. 7m, this the site of a new school hall.
- 2.5 The completed project archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records, will be deposited at The Museum of Antiquities, Department of Archaeology, Newcastle University, under the site code KSN 07. The **Online Access** to the **Index of Archaeological Investigations** (OASIS) reference number for the project is: preconst1-35125.

3. PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

3.1 Planning Background

- 3.1.1 Kenton School is being re-developed as part of Newcastle's 'Building Schools for the Future' (BSF) programme, a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) being delivered for Newcastle City Council by Aura Learning Communities Limited, a consortium which includes Sir Robert McAlpine Limited.
- 3.1.2 A planning application (reference 2006/1584/01/DET) for re-development of Kenton School was submitted in July 2006 by Aura. A condition of planning permission, granted in October 2006, was that, because the site lies in an area of potential archaeological importance, as identified within the aforementioned archaeological desk-based assessment, no works should commence on the site until details of a programmed series of archaeological observations had been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. Such observations were to be undertaken in accordance with a Specification prepared by the Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team and their purpose was to record any items of archaeological interest and finds.

¹ Archaeological Services, University of Durham 2004.

² Tyne and Wear Specialist Conservation Team 2007.

- 3.1.3 Government guidelines on archaeology are set out in the document '*Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: 'Archaeology and Planning'*' (PPG 16).³ At a local level, guidance relating to archaeological sites is set out in the '*Newcastle City Unitary Development Plan*' (UDP), adopted in 1998.⁴ The UDP contains the following relevant policies:

POLICY C04

DEVELOPMENT WHICH WOULD HARM SITES OR AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST AND THEIR SETTINGS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED.

POLICY C04.1

THE FOLLOWING SITES AND AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST ARE IDENTIFIED FOR THE PURPOSES OF POLICY C04:

Other sites and areas of archaeological interest as defined on the Proposals Map.

Medieval village cores of:

67. Kenton

POLICY C04.2

WHERE A PROPOSAL MAY AFFECT A SITE OR AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST, THE DEVELOPER WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS AND WHERE NECESSARY UNDERTAKE AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION.

POLICY C04.3

WHERE ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WILL ADVERSELY AFFECT A SITE OR AREA OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST, DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO PRESERVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN SITU UNLESS THIS IS CLEARLY INAPPROPRIATE OR THE DESTRUCTION OF THE REMAINS IS DEMONSTRABLY UNAVOIDABLE, IN WHICH CASE A PROGRAMME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORKS SHALL BE SUBMITTED TO AND AGREED WITH THE COUNCIL BEFORE THE START OF DEVELOPMENT.

POLICY C04.4

WHERE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT WOULD INVOLVE LARGE SCALE GROUND DISTURBANCE IN CURRENTLY UNDEVELOPED AREAS DEVELOPERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO SUBMIT A PRELIMINARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT TO IDENTIFY ANY SITES OR POTENTIAL AREAS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST.

3.2 Research Objectives

- 3.2.1 In broad terms, the watching brief aimed to record the date, nature, extent and significance of any archaeological remains encountered at the site as evidenced by any buried deposits, structures and features and any artefactual and ecofactual evidence that they may contain.

- 3.2.2 Additional aims and objectives of the project were:

- to compile a site archive consisting of all site and project documentary and photographic records, as well as artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material recovered;
- to compile a report that contains details of the findings and, where appropriate, set out an assessment of the nature and significance of all stratigraphic, artefactual, and archaeological data recovered during the course of the work.

³ Department of the Environment 1990.

⁴ Available online at www.theplanningportal.gov.uk.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Information contained within the aforementioned desk-based assessment of the archaeological potential of Kenton School has been used as the basis for this section of the report. The research and writing of those responsible is fully acknowledged.
- 4.2 Whilst there is no direct prehistoric evidence within the school site, fifty Neolithic flints were found at Kenton in 1978 (HER 4609) and this represents the earliest evidence of human activity in the vicinity
- 4.3 Kenton lies to the north of Hadrian's Wall, although no sites of Roman date are recorded within the immediate area.
- 4.4 Whilst the village of Kenton originated in the Anglo-Saxon period, the first documented evidence comes from the 12th century. After the Norman Conquest, the manor of 'Kynton' was made part of the barony of Whalton. The tenure of the manor passed to the family of Newham and sometime in the 1160s, when Kenton was passed to Iseult, daughter of William of Newham, she took Kenton as the family name. The ownership of Kenton can be traced through the Kenton family to Sir John of Kenton, the Sheriff of Northumberland in 1313 at the Battle of Bannockburn. It passed through marriage to the Bennet family around 1415, and later to the Fenwick family, in the 1550s.
- 4.5 Having been owed by the Blakett family since c. 1743, Kenton was sold to the Montague family in 1781 and they retained ownership until the 1930s when the land was sold off for development. Kenton was the largest township in Gosforth, covering 1436 acres and with a population of 1204 people in 1821. This was largely due to Kenton Colliery, the closure of which marked a steady population decline to 549 in 1851.
- 4.6 In 1796 it is recorded that Christopher Bedlington opened a three-mile long railway tunnel named 'Kitty's Drift' connecting East Kenton and Scotswood. The tunnel was designed to drain the mines and transport coal to the Tyne. The north-eastern end of the tunnel is recorded as being in the vicinity of Kenton School. The tunnel is shown on a map dating to 1812.
- 4.7 The 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860 details buildings within the south-western quadrant of the development area at Kenton School. In the extreme south-western corner is cluster of buildings including a Methodist Chapel, Smithy and short rows of houses some with rear gardens. To the east are ranges of buildings in courtyard plan, the Manor House (although it is not annotated as such on this map), with various gardens and a pond immediately to the north. The likely period of origin of the Manor House is the 17th century. In the 1930s the building was described as 'modern in appearance but with relics of antiquity'. Architectural features included triangular spandrel stones used to finish the main gables and an elaborate oriel window in the west gable, above which was a three-stepped tympanum (decorative arch) bearing the date 1616.

- 4.8 The 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897 shows several changes within the development area at the school site, including demolition of most of the buildings immediately to the west of the Manor House, necessitating re-location of the aforementioned Methodist Chapel. Furthermore, the Manor House complex had acquired additional buildings, and two 'pumps' are now shown immediately to its north. Further outbuildings were added to the Manor House complex up to the mid 20th century.
- 4.9 From the early 1900s to 1945, various re-developments were proposed for the Kenton estate, most of which included the demolition of the Manor House. In 1957 a plan was devised to build separate girls and boys schools on the site of the Manor house, although by 1960 the intention was simply for one comprehensive school, the plan that was eventually realised. From 1960 onwards, the area around the school site underwent extensive redevelopment.
- 4.10 No previous archaeological investigation has been undertaken on or near the development site.

5. GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

5.1 Geology

- 5.1.1 The underlying solid geology of the Kenton area comprises mudstones, shales and limestones with coal seams. These are overlain by the 'drift' geology, which is characterised in this area by Glacial Till, with other glacial, and fluviogalcial deposits intermittently present.

5.2 Topography

- 5.2.1 The site lies on relatively level ground north of the A191, Kenton Lane, and has a mean elevation of 110m OD. In places there has been significant terracing of the ground occupied by the school, particularly to the north where sports pitches have been created.

6. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

6.1 Fieldwork

- 6.1.1 The archaeological fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.⁵ PCA is an 'IFA-Registered Archaeological Organisation'.
- 6.1.2 The Specification for the archaeological fieldwork described how monitoring and recording must be carried out during intrusive groundworks within a 70m wide corridor adjacent to the southern boundary of the site. Two distinct areas were monitored: a larger 'upper' area skirting the southern site boundary, where creation of a site compound and access route required overall ground reduction by up to c. 1.5m; a smaller 'lower' area to the north, where formation level for a new school hall required far more extensive ground reduction, up to c. 7m (see Figure 2). Additional recording was undertaken when a brick-lined shaft was encountered between the aforementioned two areas.

⁵ IFA 2001.

- 6.1.3 Ground reduction was undertaken using tracked 360° excavators of various sizes, up to 70-tonnes, with buckets up to 2m wide. Such work was monitored by the attendant archaeologist.
- 6.1.4 Archaeological deposits were recorded using a 'single context recording' system. Features and deposits were recorded on *pro forma* context record sheets. A 'Harris Matrix' stratification diagram was compiled to record stratigraphic relationships. A photographic record of the investigations was compiled using SLR cameras. This comprised black and white prints and colour transparencies (on 35mm film). All photographs included a graduated metric scale.

6.2 Post-Excavation

- 6.2.1 The stratigraphic data generated by the project is represented by the written, drawn and photographic records. A total of 15 archaeological contexts were defined during the work (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 7.
- 6.2.2 No artefactual or biological material was recovered from the site.
- 6.2.3 The complete project archive, comprising written, drawn and photographic records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation) will be packaged for long term curation according to relevant guidelines.⁶ The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the Museum of Antiquities, Department of Archaeology, Newcastle University, will be met in full.

7. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

7.1 Phase 1: Natural Sub-stratum

- 7.1.1 In the 'upper' monitored area, where ground reduction was in the region of 1.5m, the lowest exposed deposits, seen in section at the western edn of the area, were fractured sandstone bedrock, [6], overlain by glacial clay, [5]. The height of these natural geological deposits at this location suggests that natural ground level, prior to post-1960s landscaping, rose fairly steeply towards Kenton Lane.
- 7.1.2 Further north, in the 'lower' monitored area, where far more substantial ground reduction took place, a clayey sand deposit, [12], again probably of glacial origin, was the lowest exposed material, at a depth of c. 7m below the ground surface, this across much of the monitored area. Another glacial boulder clay, [13], was recorded in section at the eastern limit of the 'lower' area, overlying layer [12]. In the south-western corner of this area, deposits [12] and [13] were overlain by deposit [9], also interpreted as natural boulder clay, at least 2m thick.
- 7.1.3 Deposits [13], [9] and [5] can be reasonably equated in broad terms, representing undisturbed natural boulder clay, rising towards the southern (highest) part of the site.

⁶ UKIC 1990.

7.2 Phase 2: Late Post-medieval and Undated

- 7.2.1 Between the upper and lower areas, where no overall ground reduction was undertaken, a circular brick-lined shaft, [8], was encountered during demolition and removal of modern buildings and associated surfaces (in this area concrete overlying hardcore). Recording was undertaken remotely due to Health and Safety restrictions, but the structure was c. 2.0m in diameter and was formed from bricks measuring 220mm x 100mm x 80mm. Its domed brick roof was damaged by the groundworks (Plate 1), revealing standing water inside the structure at a depth of c. 1.50m and a corroded iron pipe attached to its internal wall (Plate 2). The structure has been interpreted as a pump shaft associated with Kenton Colliery; it is believed to be one of two pump shafts shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897.
- 7.2.2 In the 'upper' monitored area, a compact dump of mixed demolition rubble, [7], mostly sandstone blocks and fragmented brick, was recorded in section overlying natural clay, [5]. Several *in-situ* drains were observed within this dump, which was up to 0.50m thick, these appearing to have been laid contemporaneously with deposition of the rubble. Layer [7] was overlain by the remains of a crude surface, comprising a make-up/bedding layer, [4], comprising fire debris and sand, overlain by a compact layer of roughly hewn sandstone blocks, [3], up to 0.20m thick. It is assumed that this feature represents the remains of road or yard surface, potentially associated with the complex of the former Manor House.

7.3 Phase 3: Modern

- 7.3.1 Overlying surface [3]/[4] in the 'upper' monitored area was a deposit, [2], interpreted as 'made ground', within which were a large number of squared sandstone blocks, some with tool marks, potentially demolition material from the former Manor House. This deposit was up to c. 1m thick and was overlain by a thin topsoil with turf, [1], up to 0.15m thick.
- 7.3.2 In the southern central part of the 'lower' monitored area, where the southern extent of the footprint for the new hall building was reached, two distinct deposits were exposed in section, overlying natural clay [13]. These were dump layers, [15] and [14], comprising sandstone rubble and ashy coal waste, respectively. Up to c. 1.0 m thick in total, these deposits are interpreted as ground-levelling dumps laid down immediately prior to the building of Kenton School.
- 7.3.3 An extensive and substantial 'made-ground' deposit, [10], was encountered throughout the 'lower' monitored area. Varying in thickness, up to a maximum of c. 4.0m in the north, it thinned significantly to the south as the underlying natural clay sloped upwards. Comprising mixed building rubble in a silty matrix, this dump layer is believed to derive from 1960s landscaping.
- 7.3.4 Towards the south-eastern corner of the 'lower' monitored area, 'made ground' [10] was overlain by a distinctive dump of brick rubble, [11], which formed the hardcore make-up for an existing car park. Up to c. 0.50 thick, this material may represent debris from an earlier building on the site, and is assumed to have been deposited during 1960s landscaping.

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 The earliest deposits recorded in both monitored areas during the watching brief comprised natural material, either boulder clay or fractured sandstone bedrock.
- 8.2 In the 'upper' monitored area, skirting Kenton Lane, the remains of a stone surface, possibly associated with outbuildings to the former Manor House, were recorded overlying natural geological material. A brick-lined pump shaft probably associated with Kenton Colliery, and known to have been in operation in the late 19th century, was encountered during the removal of modern surfaces material between the two monitored areas.
- 8.3 In the 'lower' monitored area, where ground reduction was far more substantial, up to c. 7.0m from existing ground level, extensive 'made ground' material derived from landscaping at the time of the construction of the school in the 1960s was encountered.
- 8.4 Turf/topsoil and modern surfaces were the highest recorded deposits in both areas.

9. REFERENCES

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10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

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The curatorial role of Jennifer Morrison, the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer, is also acknowledged.

PCA Credits

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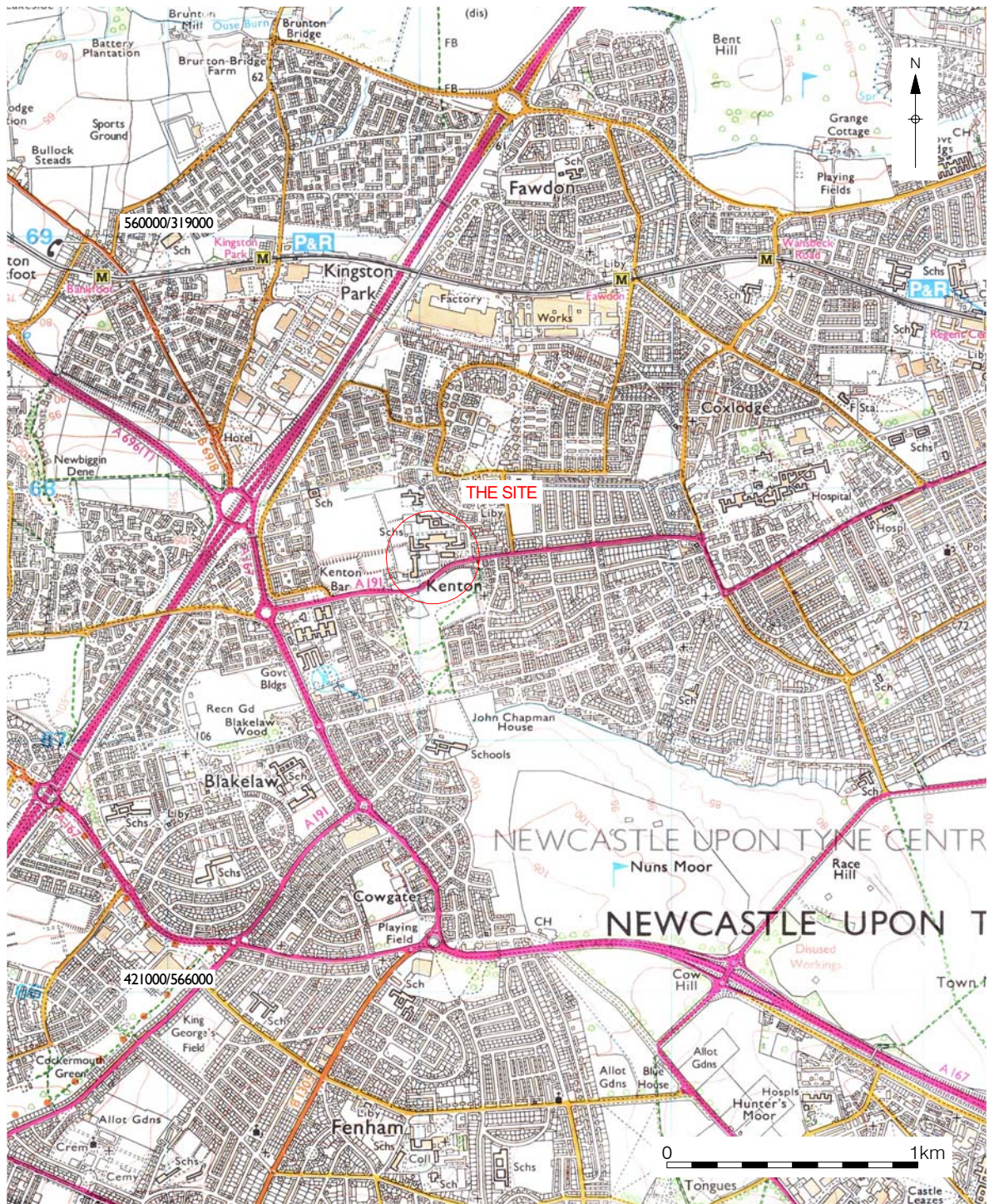


Figure 1. Site location
Scale 1:25,000

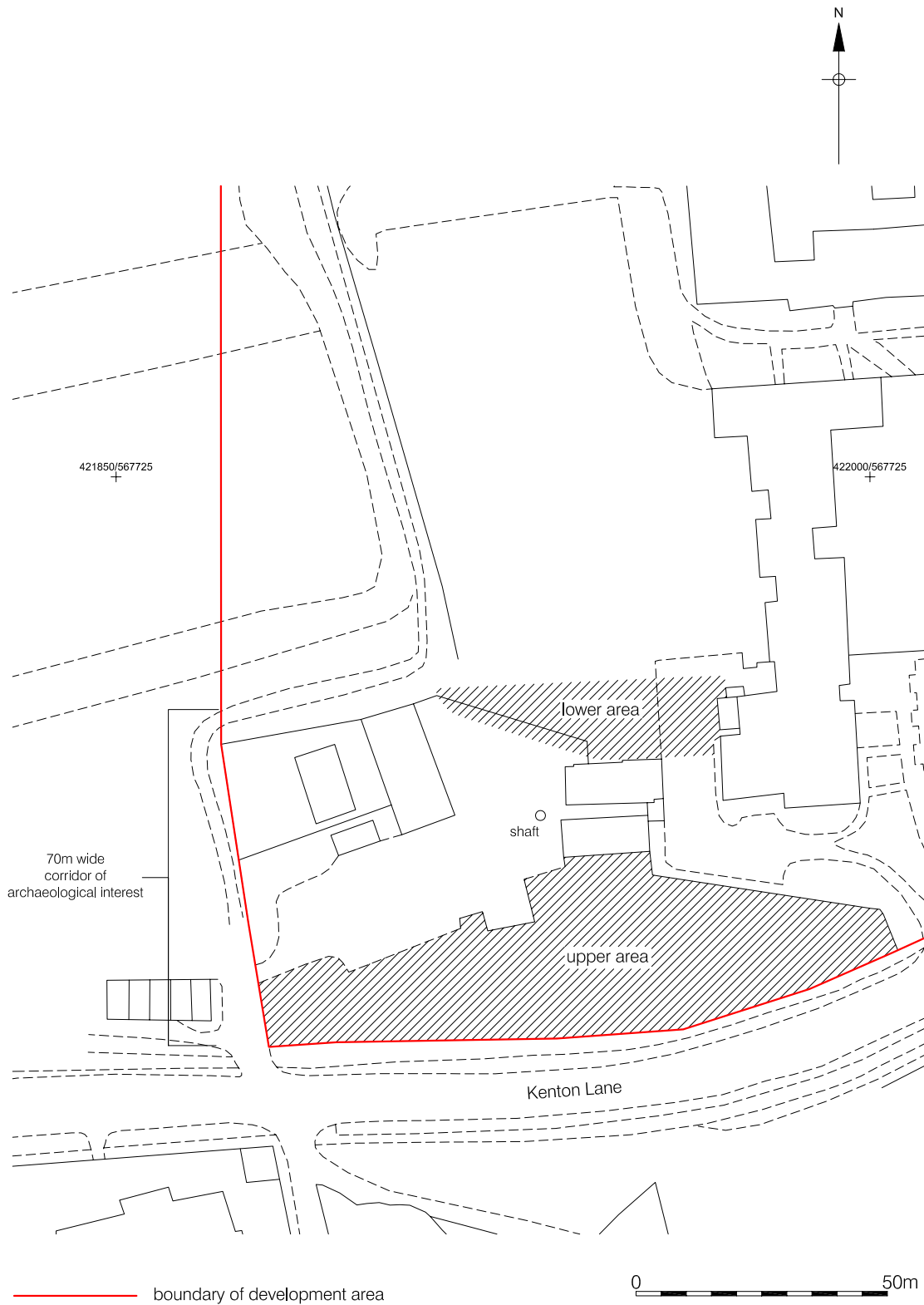


Figure 2. Monitored areas
Scale 1:1250



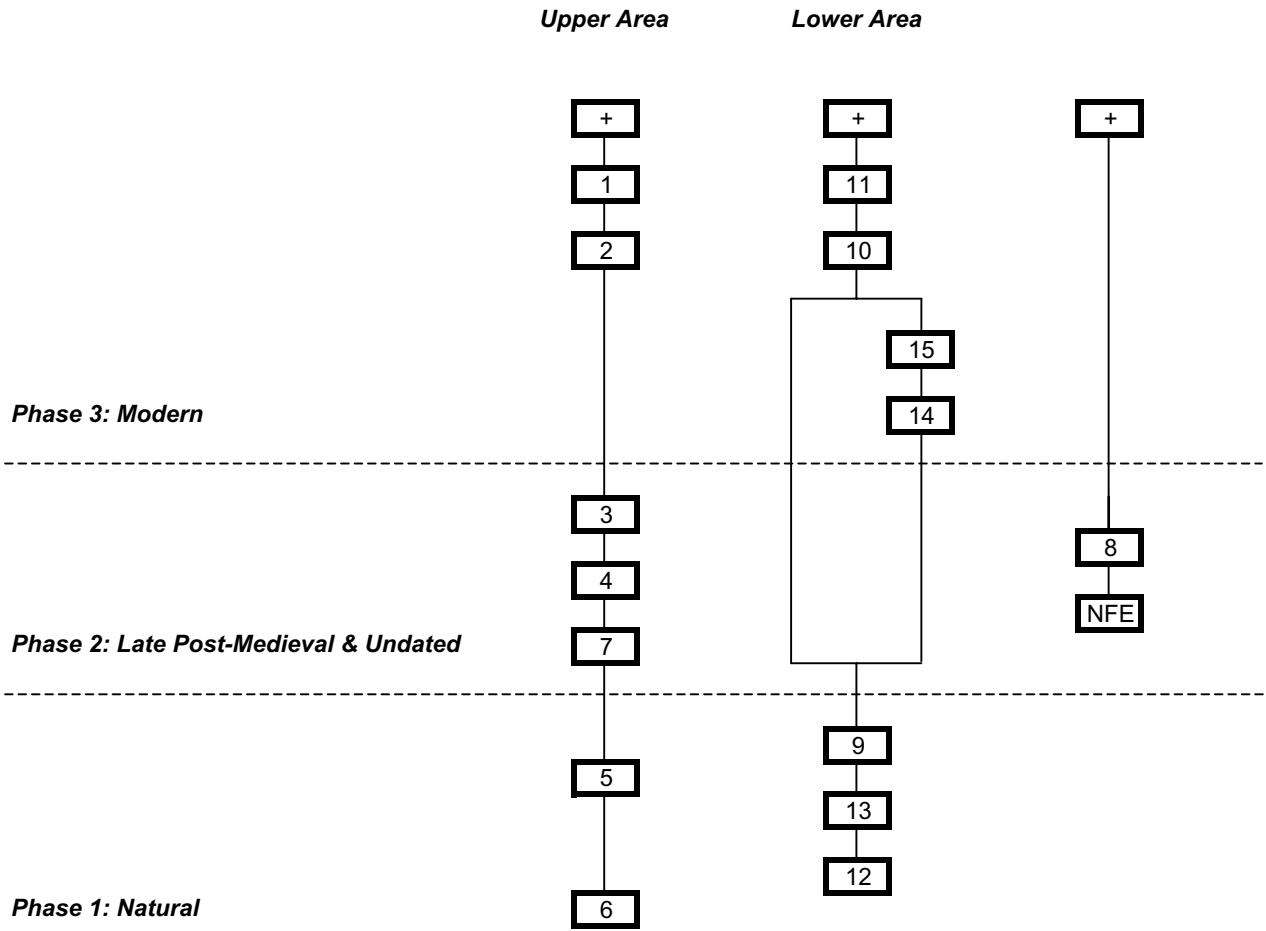
Plate 1. Structure [8] (0.5m scale).



Plate 2. Structure [8]. Detail showing iron pipe, brick lining and dome.

APPENDIX A
STRATIGRAPHIC MATRICES

KSN 07: Stratigraphic Matrices



**APPENDIX B
CONTEXT INDEX**

KSN 07: Context Index

Context	Area	Phase	Type 1	Type 2	Description	Interpretation
1	1	3	Deposit	Layer	Soft-friable, mid greyish brown, clayey sandy silt, up to 0.15m thick	Turf/topsoil
2	1	3	Deposit	Layer	Soft-friable, mid greyish brown, clayey silt with lumps of yellowish brown clay, freq worked sandstone blocks, occ fine and medium angular and rounded stones, occ glass shards, pottery sherds and CBM frags, up to 1m thick	Made-ground
3	1	2	Deposit	Surface	Roughly hewn sandstone blocks, no bonding, up to 0.20m thick	Crude surface
4	1	2	Deposit	Layer	Friable, dark greyish brown to black, ashy sand, 75% burnt material including charcoal, coal and cinders, occ fine sub-angular stones, occ glass shards, pottery sherds and CBM frags, 0.15-0.50m thick	Levelling for surface [3]
5	1	1	Deposit	Layer	Stiff, mid yellow or pinkish brown, clay, very occ fine and medium sub-rounded stones, thickness not established	Natural boulder clay
6	1	1	Deposit	Layer	Mid brownish greyish yellow, fractured angular sandstone bedrock, thickness not established	Natural bedrock
7	1	2	Deposit	Layer	Compact, 60% sandstone and 10% brick rubble, in matrix of friable dark greyish brown ashy sand and burnt material, up to 0.50m thick	Ground raising/levelling dump
8	1	2	Structure	Shaft	Brick-lined and domed, circular, mid grey mortar on dome, c.2m diameter, bricks 220mm x 100mm x 80mm, iron pipe on internal wall	Pump shaft
9	2	1	Deposit	Layer	Firm, mid reddish brown or mid yellow, clay, at least 2m thick	Natural boulder clay
10	2	3	Deposit	Layer	Firm, mid greyish brown, sandy clayey silt, occ fine and medium stones, up to 4m thick	Made-ground
11	2	3	Deposit	Layer	Compact, crushed and fragmented bricks, some almost complete, 220mm x 100mm x 80mm, up to 0.50m thick	Rubble dump, make-up for car park
12	2	1	Deposit	Layer	Compact, mid brownish orange, clayey sand, thickness not established	Natural sand
13	2	1	Deposit	Layer	Stiff, mid yellow, clay, thickness not established	Natural boulder clay
14	2	3	Deposit	Layer	Loose, 80% burnt material including cinders, charcoal, coal, occ brick and shale frags, thickness varies, up to 0.70m	Ground raising/levelling dump
15	2	3	Deposit	Layer	Loose, sandstone rubble (75%), in matrix of mid yellow sand, thickness varies, up to 0.70m	Ground raising/levelling dump