



NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

**Westgate Road,
Newcastle upon Tyne
Tyne and Wear**

NGR: NZ 22551 64527 – NZ 23113 64401

Contractor: Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Durham Office)

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Client: IQA (Elecnor Group)

PCA Report Number: 14503

PCA Site Code: WWR21

Oasis ID: preconst1-421969

LOCATION

Planning Authority: Newcastle City Council

District: Newcastle upon Tyne District

County: Tyne and Wear

Site address: Westgate Road

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

An appropriately specified programme of archaeological work was requested by the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Service in association with telecommunication upgrading works along Westgate Road, Wingrove Road and Chelsea Grove, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear (Figure 1). Pre-Construct Archaeology were commissioned by IQA to undertake an archaeological watching brief at five locations where the excavation of trenches was to be undertaken to enable the installation of plastic ducts for telecommunication cables (Figure 1).

The areas monitored include three locations at Westgate Road (central NGR NZ 22562 64525, NZ 22649 64504 & NZ 22813 64460), one location at Wingrove Road (central NGR NZ 22620 64525) and one location at Chelsea Grove (central NGR NZ 23113 64403) (Figure 2).

The groundworks associated with the telecommunications upgrade involved the excavation of five trenches (Trenches 1-5). Machine excavation was undertaken by IQA utilising a 1.5-tonne tracked

machine fitted with a breaker. Subsequent hand excavation was undertaken by IQA's groundworks team.

REASON FOR WATCHING BRIEF:

The five locations that were archaeologically monitored are of archaeological importance as they lie either within, or in close proximity to the Frontier of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall) World Heritage Site (List Entry Number 1000098) (Figure 2). The archaeological work was undertaken on the advice of the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Service as the five locations under investigation lie within an area of high archaeological sensitivity.

Archaeological work provides potential opportunities to address key research objectives as set out in shared Visions: The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (NERRF) (Petts & Gerrard 2006). The NERRF highlights the importance of research as a vital element of development-led archaeological work. It sets out key research priorities for all periods of the past 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.

The archaeological work was considered to have good potential to make a significant contribution to existing archaeological knowledge of central Newcastle in general and of the Roman frontier in the city. Specific research objectives to be addressed by the project were formulated with reference to two existing archaeological research frameworks. The first is *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment* (NERRF) (Petts and Gerrard 2006), which highlights the importance of research as a vital element of development-led archaeological work. The second is the two-volume *Frontiers of Knowledge. A Research Framework for Hadrian's Wall* (Symonds and Mason (eds) 2009).

The NERRF identifies the key priority within the research agenda for the Roman period which is of direct relevance to the project:

- **Riii** – The Roman military presence

The Research Strategy of *Frontiers of Knowledge* was compiled to respond to gaps in knowledge pertaining to the archaeology of the Wall as highlighted in the Research Agenda (both in Volume I of the document). A prioritised set of objectives was devised within eight main themes, one of which 'S.4 The Wall', contains the objective of 'Understanding the Wall' which underlines the necessity of '*Establishing the course and survival of the Wall and its installations on Tyneside and the West*'.

This document highlights specific queries in relation to the monument. These include:

The Wall:

- **3.1 – Locating the Resource;** the precise course and distribution of the frontier installations and infrastructure remain uncertain.
- **3.2 – Existing Data;** the challenges that arise with utilising existing data.
- **3.3 – Chronology;** establishing the chronological relationship between the key Wall elements.
- **3.4 – Materials;** the precise source of the structural material.

- **3.5 – Structures (Function, Curtain, Ditch, Obstacles, Milecastles, Turrets, Vallum);** the precise manner in which the Wall structures interact and the resulting frontier system.

The specific research objective to be addressed by the project, given its location within the Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian’s Wall Empire (Hadrian’s Wall) ‘buffer zone’ was:

- Do any sub-surface archaeological remains in the areas of investigation provide evidence of Hadrian’s Wall itself or any other element of the frontier.

DATES WORK UNDERTAKEN:

Archaeological work was undertaken at the site on the following dates:

- Sunday 21/02/2021
- Friday 28/02/2021
- Monday 01/03/2021
- Sunday 07/03/2021
- Saturday 20/03/2021
- Sunday 21/03/2021
- Friday 07/04/2021

RESULTS:

During the archaeological investigation, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual context numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example [123]. The archaeological sequence is described by placing stratigraphic sequences within broad phases, assigned on a site-wide basis in this case. An attempt has been made to add interpretation to the data and correlate these phases with recognised historical and geological periods.

All five trenches (Trenches 1-5) were excavated using a tracked 360° 4-tonne mechanical excavator utilising a toothless ditching bucket (Plate 1). Trenches 1 and 4 extended across Westgate Road, Trench 3 was located within the northern carriageway of Westgate Road and extended into the footpath, Trench 2 extended across Wingrove Avenue and Trench 5 extended across a pedestrianised section of Chelsea Grove (Figure 2). The dimensions of each trench are summarised in the table below.

Trench No.	Dimensions
1	13.10m N-S x 0.60m wide x 0.75m deep
2	10.70m E-W x 0.60m wide x 0.90m deep
3	23.65m E-W x 0.60m wide 0.88m deep
4	13.10m N-S x 0.60m wide x 0.70m deep
5	13.34m N-S x 0.60m wide x 0.32m deep

Trench Dimensions

Three phases of activity were encountered: Phase 1: Superficial Geology, Phase 2: undated and post-medieval levelling and consolidation activity and Phase 3: Modern.

The earliest deposits encountered across the site represents superficial geological deposits (Phase 1) that were only observed within Trench 4. The geological material comprised firm mid pinkish brown

clay (402) that was encountered c. 0.60m below the present ground level, encountered at a maximum height of 109.42m AOD.

Phase 2 represents undated but probably post-medieval levelling and consolidation activity. Compact sandstone rubble material (504) recoded across the base of Trench 5 probably represents material derived from the demolition of 19th century buildings that were located within the near vicinity. The table below summarises all Phase 2 deposits:

Context	Description	Thickness
Trench 1		
(101)	Firm mid brownish grey silty clay	0.20m
Trench 2		
(202)	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay	>0.20m
Trench 3		
(301)	Firm dark greyish brown silty clay	>0.30m
Trench 4		
(401)	Firm mid brownish grey and pinkish brown clayey sand and clay	0.35m
Trench 5		
(503)	Indurated black silty sand	0.10m
(504)	Compact sub-angular and sub-round sandstone fragments	N/A

Summary of Phase 2 deposits

Phase 3 represents modern made ground deposits and surfaces. The current road surfaces of Westgate Road and Wingrove Avenue recorded in Trenches 1-4 comprised a concrete sub-base that in turn was directly overlain by asphalt (Trench 1 (100); Trench 2 (200); Trench 3 (300); Trench 4 (400)) (Plates 2, 3 & 4). In Trench 2 compact light yellow stone (dolomite) (201) up to 0.30m thick represents modern levelling and consolidation activity prior to the construction of the current road surface.

Trench 3 extended into the footpath at its eastern and western extent. The footpath surface (300) at this location comprised c. 80mm thick asphalt and c. 0.30m thick compact yellow stone (dolomite) sub-base (Plate 3).

Trench 5 was located within a pedestrianised area of Chelsea Grove (Plate 4). The current surface at this location comprised c. 60mm thick concrete paving slabs (500) that overlay c. 0.11m thick concrete sub-base that in turn overlay c. 0.10m thick compact yellow stone (dolomite) (502).

The table below summarises all Phase 3 modern deposits and surfaces:

Context	Description	Thickness	Height (m AOD)	
			max	min
Trench 1				
(100)	Asphalt and concrete (road surface)	0.55m	112.34	112.19
Trench 2				

(200)	Asphalt and concrete (road surface)	0.40m	112.45	112.38
(201)	Compact yellow stone (dolomite)	0.30m		
Trench 3				
(300)	Asphalt and concrete (road surface)	0.47m	112.97	112.85
(303)	Asphalt (footpath surface)	>0.36m	113.01	112.96
Trench 4				
(400)	Asphalt and concrete (road surface)	0.35m	110.07	109.98
Trench 5				
(500)	Concrete pavers (footpath surface)	60mm	107.58	107.49
(501)	Concrete	0.11m		
(502)	Compact yellow stone (dolomite)	0.10m		

Summary of Phase 3 deposits and surfaces

No features or deposits of archaeological significance were observed during the investigation.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION:

Figure 1- Site Location

Figure 2- Detailed Site location

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:

All documentation resulting from this project will be archived internally by PCA.

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Checked: Aaron Goode

Authorised: Aaron Goode

Date: 12/05/2021



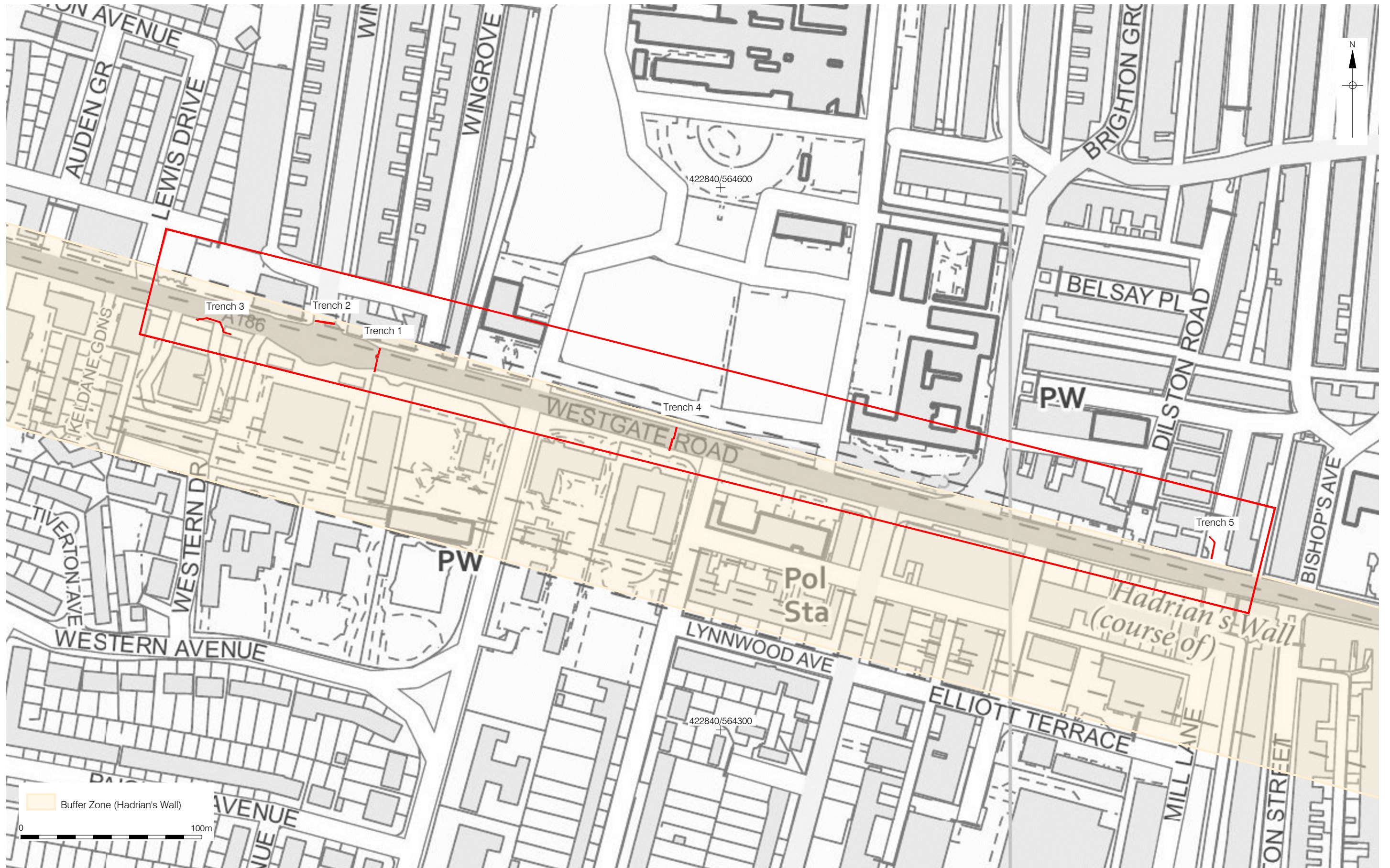


Figure 2
 Trench Location
 1:2,000 at A3

PLATES:



Plate 1: General view of Trench 4 location, direction of view South.



Plate 2: Trench 2, direction of view East, scale: 1m.



Plate 3: Trench 3, direction of view NW.



Plate 4: Trench 5 showing sandstone rubble deposit (504), direction of view South, scale: 1m.

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