



## **NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**

### **Former Pattern Shop, Sussex Street, Stephenson Quarter Newcastle upon Tyne Tyne and Wear**

**NGR: NZ 24753 63640**

**Contractor:** Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Durham Office)

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**Client:** Spence and Dower LLP, and PfP Igloo

**PCA Site Code:** MPS21

**PCA Report Number:** R14534

**OASIS Number:** preconst1-422866

#### **LOCATION**

**Planning Authority:** Newcastle City Council

**District:** Newcastle City Centre

**County:** Tyne and Wear

**Site address:** Former Pattern Shop, Sussex Street, Stephenson Quarter, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear.

#### **DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:**

An appropriately specified programme of archaeological work was required in association with the excavation of ten geotechnical test pits and five geotechnical percussion drilled window samples surrounding the Former Pattern Shop and Coppersmiths within the Stephenson Quarter, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear (PCA 2021). The site is located to the south of Central Station in Newcastle upon Tyne (Figures 1 and 2). The area is named after the Robert Stephenson & Co Engineering works that previously occupied the site (and the majority of the surrounding area).

The Pattern Shop is located between Sussex Street and South Street and the Coppersmith's Shop is located at the end of these streets. The buildings formed part of the Robert Stephenson & Company Engineering Works which previously occupied this area. The Pattern Shop measures c. 70m NNW-SE, aligned with the streets, by c. 20m wide. At the southern end is a covered walkway forming a through passage from Sussex Street to South Street. A modern extension measuring c. 18m x 20m,

scheduled to be demolished as part of the redevelopment proposal, is located on the southern side of the covered walkway.

The site is located on the sloping valley side on the north side of the River Tyne. Forth Banks, the northwest-southeast road running c. 140m to the south-west of the site, broadly follows the former course of the Skinner Burn, a tributary of the Tyne which has its confluence to the south-west of the site. The stream once divided the counties of Northumberland and Newcastle, as well as Newcastle City with the township of Elswick. The burn was reportedly backfilled with domestic waste culverted sometime in the late 18th century and is noted as the western boundary of the corporation of Newcastle.

Redevelopment proposals include refurbishment of the Grade II Listed Building known as the Pattern Shop and demolition of a modern extension located at the southern extent of the structure. The geotechnical investigations include the excavation of ten foundation inspection trial pits, located to ascertain the depth of the foundation of the Pattern Shop building. An Archaeological Building Recording of the Machine and Pattern Shop has detailed the complex history of structures on this plot of land (Tyne and Wear Museums 2005; HER event 2769). The earliest buildings on the site of the Pattern Shop date from between 1802 and 1827 and the extant structures contain historic elements dating from after 1838 to 1896. The geotechnical pits were sited to expose the foundation of the building that may reveal further information about the phasing and development of the structure.

#### **REASON FOR WATCHING BRIEF:**

The proposed development of Stephenson's Square located c. 30m northwest of the Former Pattern Shop in the area between the Crowne Plaza Hotel and the Stephenson Works Boiler Shop was subject to an open area excavation and three separate evaluation phases of archaeological investigation. These works encountered numerous phases of industrial activity relating to the Robert Stephenson & Company Engineering Works describing a Smith's Workshop with various ancillary buildings, as well as a smithing hearth and forge building (PCA 2018).

Historic mapping evidence shows that the area to the west of the Former Pattern Shop went through various developments of open yards and workshops throughout the 19th century. Two railway lines can be seen on a plan of the manufactory and premises dating to 1846, running along the southern limit of the site, leading from the workshops on the eastern side of South Street across to the workshops on the other side of the Former Pattern Shop potentially through the area now occupied by a covered walkway. Further railway lines can be seen running roughly northwest-southeast from this connected by a turntable. The 1856 Ordnance Survey Map shows the northern part of the site labelled Frame Shop and Tender shop. The southern building is labelled Fitting Shop and a turntable, again potentially beneath the covered walkway, has been built connecting the two railway branches leading into the factory in the east with two more branches leading northwards into the fitting shop. A painter's workshop can also be seen to the immediate west of the Fitting Shop.

Any potential archaeological features present within the area could therefore have been impacted upon during the groundworks. It was the aim of this scheme of work to mitigate potential impacts to the heritage resource.

## **DATES WORK UNDERTAKEN:**

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

- Monday 24/05/2021
- Tuesday 25/05/2021
- Wednesday 26/05/2021
- Thursday 27/05/2021

## **RESULTS:**

*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].*

Test Pits 3-8 were abandoned due to a thick layer of concrete [002] that could not be broken through using the available hand tools. This layer of concrete appeared to surround the Former Pattern Shop and likely served as its internal floor.

The earliest deposits encountered across the site represent the formation of the Robert Stephenson & Company Engineering Works. Such deposits were encountered in Test Pits 9 & 10 and comprised mid brown grey stiff sandy clay [005] up to 0.57m thick, encountered 0.30m and 0.16m below the present ground level. In both test pits this deposit contained fragments of ceramic building material and was visible to the maximum depth of both test pits.

The present surfaces at the locations of Test Pits 1, 2, 9 & 10 comprised asphalt [001] between 0.12m and 0.16m thick and its associated sub-base of dolomite crushed rock [003] up to 0.15m thick. Test Pits 9 & 10 encountered a modern service trench at least 0.60m deep that was backfilled with dolomite crushed rock [004] and contained a gas utility pipeline. No further excavation was undertaken in Test Pits 9 & 10 beyond the pipeline.

Test Pits 1 and 2 each encountered two skins of modern brick [006] that was exposed to a maximum depth of 0.45m, abutting the outer face of the Pattern Shop wall. The brick structure [006] represents the lower courses of a modern brick facade that would have extended across the whole of the Pattern Shop external wall. In Test Pit 2 the modern brick façade wall [006] had been built directly onto concrete pad [002]. The modern asphalt surface [001] and associated sub-base dolomite crushed rock [003] in test Pit 2 directly overlay compact light brown grey stony sand [007] up to 0.15m thick that contained CBM fragments throughout. This deposit represents a modern made ground deposit that directly overlay concrete pad [002].

In Test Pit 1 the modern brick façade wall [006] had been built onto c. 0.15m compact brick and stone rubble levelling and consolidation deposit [008]. Deposit [008] in turn overlay c. 0.10m thick concrete pad [002]. The concrete pad [002] directly overlay friable dark brown grey sandy clay [009] and gravel [011] at least 0.10m thick that probably represents modern or early 20th century levelling deposits. Located within the south-west corner of Test Pit 1 a short length of an ENE-WSW aligned brick wall [010] was exposed for a maximum distance 0.40m (Plate 1). The wall itself was exposed to a height of at least 0.60m and was built using red brick bonded by light yellowish brown cement mortar. Based on the cement composition of the walls mortar it is likely to be of 20th century construction rather than forming part of the former workshops of the Robert Stephenson & Company Engineering Works.

Context numbers were not assigned to the deposits encountered within the window samples.

The present modern surfaces at the location of Window Samples 1 and 2 comprised asphalt and concrete up to 0.20m thick. Window Sample 1 encountered a mixed stony clay with frequent CBM fragments up to a depth of 0.45m before refusing. In Window Sample 2 the modern road surface directly overlay a rubble sub-base up to 0.20m thick that in turn overlay mixed stone and clay up to 0.80m. The superficial geological material was encountered c. 1.20m below the current ground level and comprised stiff mid yellowish brown and grey sandy clay that.

The current ground surface at the location of Window Sample 3 comprised c. 0.2m this asphalt and associated sub-base comprising c. 0.2m thick dolomite crushed rock. This in turn overlay a mixed rubble and clay made ground deposit up to 1.8m thick. The superficial geological material was encountered c. 2.20m below the current ground level and comprised mid brownish grey firm sandy clay.

The current ground surface at the location of Window Sample 4 comprised dolomite crushed rock up to 1.40m thick. This dolomite directly overlay the superficial geological material that comprised stiff mid greyish yellow sandy clay that was encountered at 1.40m below current ground level.

The current ground surface at the location of Window Sample 5 comprised 0.20m thick concrete that in turn overlay mixed rubble and clay made ground up to 2.50m thick. The superficial geological material was encountered c. 2.70m below the current ground level and comprised mid brownish grey firm sandy clay.

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

#### **ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION:**

Figure 1- Site Location

Figure 2- Detailed Site Location

#### **REFERENCES:**

PCA, 2018. *Walkway Excavations at Stephenson Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear Post Excavation Assessment Report*, PCA RN 11106.

PCA, 2021. *Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief in Association with Site Investigations at the Former Pattern Shop, Stephenson Quarter, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear*, unpublished.

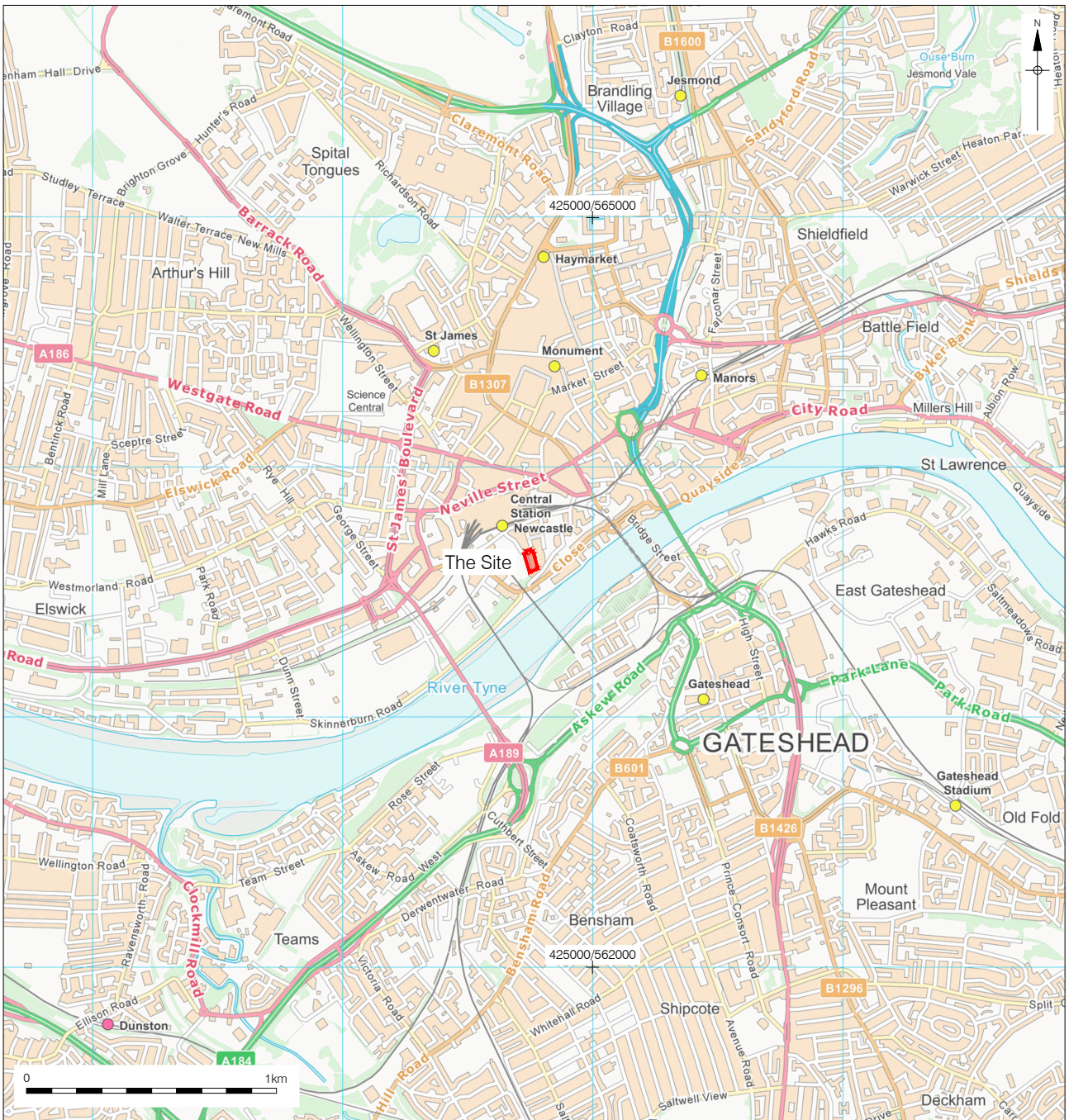
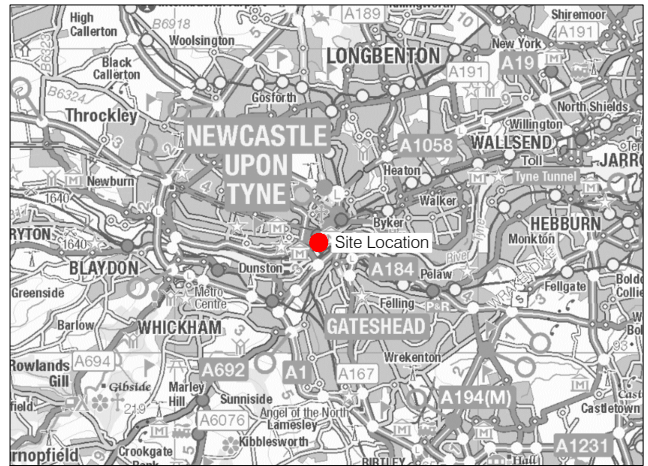
Tyne and Wear Museums, 2005. *Former Machine and Pattern Shop, Stephenson Quarter, Newcastle Upon Tyne, Archaeological Building Recording*, unpublished.

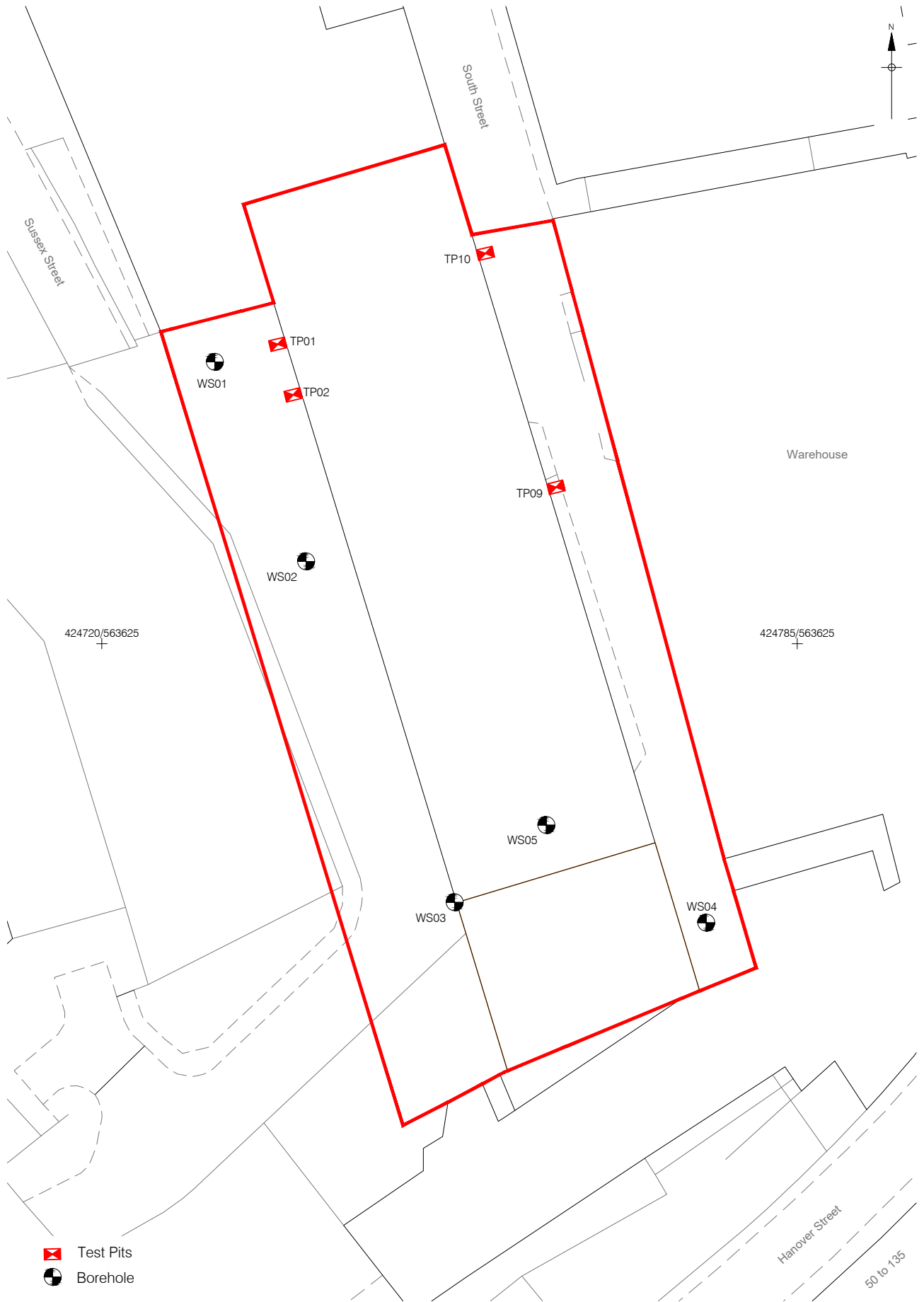
#### **ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:**

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

Author: Aidan Pratt

Checked: Aaron Goode  
Authorised: Aaron Goode  
Date: 04/06/2021





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Figure 2  
Detailed Site Plan  
1:500 at A4

**PLATES:**



*Plate 1- Test Pit 01 showing walls [006] and [010]. Facing southwest, 1m scale.*



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