

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT
CESTRIA PRIMARY SCHOOL, CHURCH CHARE,
CHESTER-LE-STREET, COUNTY DURHAM**

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at Cestria Primary School, Church Chare,
Chester-le-Street, County Durham**

Central National Grid Reference: NZ 2762 5121

Site Code: CEP 08

Commissioning Client:
Durham County Council
Property Services
Corporate Services
County Hall
Durham
DH1 5UL

Tel: 0191 388 2483

Contractor:
Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
Northern Office
Unit N19a Tursdale Business Park
Durham
DH6 5PG

Tel: 0191 377 1111

© Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited
April 2009

This report is protected by copyright. The report and the information contained herein are and remain the sole property of Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited and are provided on a single site multi-user basis. If provided in paper form, the report may be utilised by a number of individuals within a location, but copying is prohibited under copyright. If provided in an electronic form, the report may be utilised in a shared server environment, but copying or installation onto more than one computer is prohibited under copyright and printing from electronic form is permitted for own, single location, use only. Multiple printing from electronic form for onward distribution is prohibited under copyright. Further distribution and uses of the report either in its entirety or part thereof in electronic form is prohibited without prior consent from Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited.

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the content of this report. However, Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited cannot accept any liability in respect of, or resulting from, errors, inaccuracies or omissions herein contained.

CONTENTS

	<i>page</i>
1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY	1
2. INTRODUCTION	2
3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY	8
4. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE	10
5. CONCLUSIONS	14
6. REFERENCES	15
7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS	16

Appendices

Appendix A: Roman Pottery Assessment

Appendix B: Specification

List of Figures

Figure 1 Site location	3
Figure 2 Trench location	4
Figure 3 Trench 1, plan and section	12
Figure 4 Trench 2, plan and section	13

1. NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An archaeological monitoring and recording exercise was undertaken during groundworks associated with the installation of a new electricity supply at Cestria Primary School, Chester-le-Street, County Durham. The central National Grid Reference for the site is NZ 2762 5121.
- 1.2 The archaeological investigation was commissioned by Durham County Council and undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited in October 2008.
- 1.3 The investigation involved monitoring excavation of two adjoining trenches to house the new supply cable. The first trench (Trench 1) was sited in the south-eastern corner of the school playground and ended at the boundary wall between the school and the adjoining grounds of Park View Community School. The second (Trench 2) continued, beyond the wall, eastwards on the same line, crossing a small garden to run into an electricity sub-station.
- 1.4 The school site is of archaeological interest as it lies in the area of the Roman fort of *Concangis*, which was founded as a clay and timber fort in the second half of the 2nd century AD. A subsequent stone cavalry fort was founded c. AD 216 and occupation of the fort continued until the late 4th century. The central part of the fort, where the *principia* building would have been located, lies beneath St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church, to the north of Cestria Primary School. The area of investigation lay just beyond the south-eastern corner of the fort, in the area occupied by the fort's extra-mural ditches.
- 1.5 As the cable installation did not follow an existing service run, the work had the potential to disturb important archaeological remains. Accordingly, a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was required in association with all intrusive groundworks. The aim was to examine and record any archaeological remains thus exposed.
- 1.6 Natural boulder clay sub-stratum was encountered across the eastern portion of Trench 1 sloping down from west to east, this reflecting the natural topography of the area. Only a small area of boulder clay survived truncation by modern services in the western portion of Trench 2.
- 1.7 Deposits of archaeological significance were encountered within the eastern portion of Trench 1 where a patch of probable cobbled surface of Roman origin was recorded. This was overlain by an extensive layer, which yielded pottery of 2nd to early 3rd century AD date. All other deposits encountered within Trench 1 were of low archaeological significance. A developed soil of post-medieval or earlier origin overlay the Roman layer and this was truncated by modern services, which were overlain by the existing tarmac playground surface.
- 1.8 No deposits of archaeological significance were encountered within Trench 2. Modern services and dump deposits overlain by garden soil were recorded throughout the trench.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 General Background

- 2.1.1 An archaeological monitoring and recording exercise (hereafter 'watching brief') was carried out at Cestria Primary School, Chester-le-Street, County Durham. The work comprised monitoring excavation of a trench ahead of the installation of a new electricity cable. The groundworks were undertaken in the area occupied by the extra-mural defences surrounding the south-eastern corner of *Concangis* Roman fort.
- 2.1.2 The watching brief was commissioned by Property Services of Durham County Council and the fieldwork was undertaken 18th October 2008 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited (PCA).
- 2.1.3 The Archaeology Section of Durham County Council (DCAS) advised that installation of the new cable had potential to disturb important sub-surface archaeological remains since no existing service run could be utilised. It was therefore recommended that an archaeological watching brief should be undertaken in association with intrusive groundworks. DCAS produced a Specification for the archaeological investigation.¹
- 2.1.4 At the time of writing, the project archive is housed at the Northern Office of PCA, at Unit N19a Turdale Business Park, Durham. The completed project archive, comprising written, drawn, and photographic records will be ultimately deposited at the County Durham Archaeological Archive, Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham, under the site code CEP 08. The Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) reference number is: preconst1-58452.

2.2 Site Location and Description

- 2.2.1 The cable installation straddled the boundary of Cestria Primary School and the adjacent Park View Community School, Chester-le-Street, County Durham (Figure 1). The central National Grid Reference for the area of investigation is NZ 2762 5121.
- 2.2.2 Trench 1 was located on a tarmac playground in the south-easternmost portion of the grounds of Cestria Primary School. It began close to the north-eastern corner of the southernmost school building, initially running roughly northwards before turning to run roughly eastwards up to the boundary wall of the primary school. Trench 2 continued on the same approximate west-east line on the other side of the wall, crossing the garden of the Caretaker's House for Park View Community School and entering an electricity sub-station (Figure 2).

¹DCAS 2008. This is appended to this report (Appendix B).



Figure 1. Site location
Scale 1:20,000

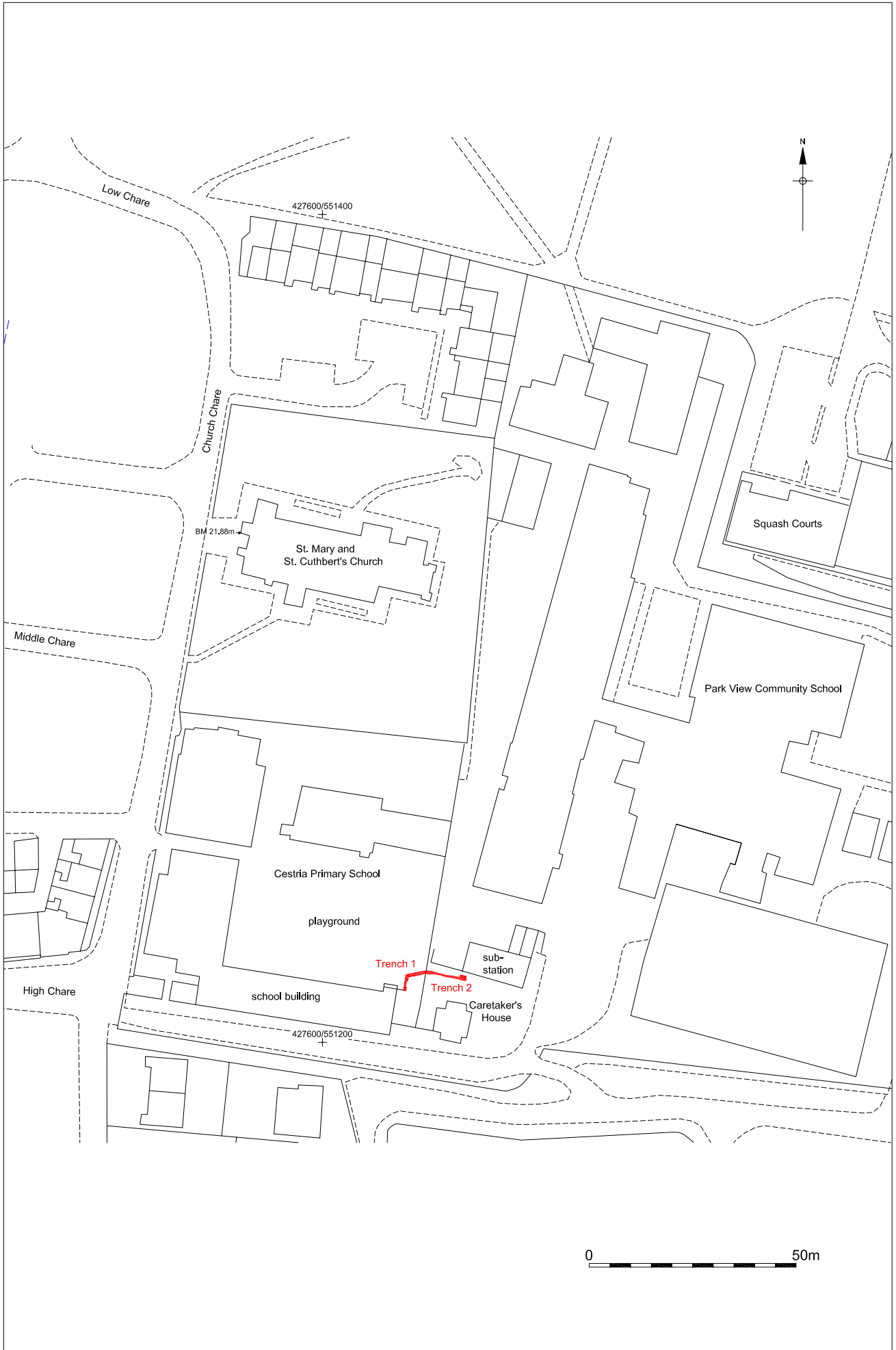


Figure 2. Trench location
Scale 1:1250

2.3 Geology and Topography

- 2.3.1 The solid geology of the Chester-le-Street area comprises Westphalian Coal Measures. These rocks consist essentially of a succession of shales and sandstones with numerous coal seams. The overlying glacial drift material in the area varies from clean sand to firm boulder clay.
- 2.3.2 The River Wear lies c. 300m to the east of the site and the Cong Burn flows a similar distance to the north, meeting the Wear c. 400m to the north-east of the site. *Concangis* Roman fort was founded on a relatively elevated (c. 20m OD) plateau, overlooking the two river valleys. The central part of the fort area lies below the grounds of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert's Church, immediately to the north of Cestria Primary School.

2.4 Planning Background

- 2.4.1 DCAS has responsibility for archaeological development control throughout County Durham, including the district of Chester-le-Street. The archaeological work at Cestria Primary School was undertaken on the recommendation of DCAS as the area of the cable installation has high archaeological potential since it lies in close proximity to site of the Roman fort of *Concangis*. The installation was however not within the area of the fort to the north of Cestria Primary School that has statutory protection as a Scheduled Monument.
- 2.4.2 DCAS determined that a watching brief was the most appropriate archaeological mitigation strategy in order to record any archaeological features or deposits uncovered during the groundworks for the cable installation.

2.5 Archaeological and Historical Background

- 2.5.1 Until relatively recently, very little was known of Chester-le-Street during any of the various prehistoric eras. A few stray artefact finds of prehistoric origin are recorded in the town on the County Durham Historic Environment Record and evidence of ploughing has been recorded at Middle Chare below the earliest phase of the Roman fort, although this could represent early Romano-British activity rather than pre-Roman agriculture.
- 2.5.2 The Roman fort of *Concangis* has long been believed a cavalry fort founded c. AD 216. However, excavations on Church Chare and in the grounds of Park View Community School have recorded evidence for an earlier clay and timber fort belonging to the second half of the 2nd century AD.² Samian pottery indicates that the foundation of the fort actually dates from c. AD 175 and it is possible that a civil Roman settlement existed in the area prior to this. Occupation of the fort continued until the late 4th century.
- 2.5.3 The site of *Concangis* fort is a Scheduled Monument (Monument Number 105). Numerous archaeological interventions have been undertaken on the site of the fort and its environs, many of which have contributed important information to overall knowledge of the military complex, as well as its associated civilian settlement or *vicus*, and the position of the main elements of the fort are reasonably well established. The central part of the fort where the *principia* would have stood is located in the area now occupied by the parish church.

²Evans *et al.* 1991, 15.

- 2.5.4 Archaeological investigations on Middle Chare, on the western side of the fort, have indicated that the earliest fort at Chester-le-Street was of clay and timber construction and was surrounded by four V-shaped ditches.³ These were evidently replaced in the late 3rd or early 4th century by three broad ditches thought to be contemporary with the installation of a stone wall to replace the earlier rampart. Building extensions to Chester-le-Street Grammar School, which later became Park View Community School, undertaken in the 1960s revealed substantial archaeological remains including sections of the fort's defences.⁴ A section across the foundations of the south wall of the fort were exposed a short distance to the east of the electricity sub-station within the area of the current investigation.
- 2.5.5 A section across the eastern fort wall was also exposed in the near vicinity to the current site along with evidence for three external ditches interpreted as three extra-mural ditches,⁵ which, in similar fashion to the activity to the west, have been assumed to be replacements of an earlier ditch system.⁶ At no point during this work was the full width of either the inner or central ditches exposed, although both were apparently at least 7m wide. The outer ditch was of much smaller proportions, only c. 4.0m wide, and appeared to diverge away from the other ditches to the north-east, perhaps suggesting that it was not in fact contemporary with the ditches to the west.
- 2.5.6 A recent excavation undertaken by PCA ahead of the construction of an extension to the Drama Suite at Park View School, c. 50m north-east of the current site, revealed significant archaeological remains.⁷ The earliest features recorded included part of a large sub-rectangular pit, located in the north-eastern part of the site, which yielded Roman pottery from the second half of the 2nd century AD. The presence of a clay-lining suggested that the feature was designed to hold water. It produced well-preserved organic material, related either to its original use or to the disposal of refuse following disuse. Another feature, also possibly a pit, was partially exposed in the south-eastern corner of the excavation area. This yielded pottery from the late 2nd or early 3rd century, suggesting that it could be contemporary with the larger feature to the north. A metalled surface overlay the smaller of the two pits and continued beyond the limit of excavation to the south and east. This was presumably an area of hardstanding; areas of cobbled surface encountered during previous investigations in the immediate vicinity have been interpreted as a parade ground associated with the Roman fort. In this instance, the surface had silted over with material that produced Roman pottery of 3rd century date.
- 2.5.7 A substantial north-south aligned ditch was recorded within the western half of the excavation area for the Drama Suite at Park View School. On the basis of previous work in the vicinity, this was interpreted as being one of three extra-mural defensive ditches associated with the Roman fort. In this instance, the ditch was more than 1.20m deep with a flat, wide base. Within the limits of excavation, with only its eastern side revealed, the ditch was c. 3.75m wide, although previous investigations have recorded a width of c. 7m. Probable upcast material was recorded to the east of the ditch and this produced pottery of the late 2nd-early 3rd century.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Gillam and Tait 1968.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Evans *et al.* 1991, 15-16.

⁷ PCA 2006.

- 2.5.8 Pottery from the basal fills of the ditch indicates that silting-up began in the 2nd-3rd centuries and large quantities of well-preserved organic material were recovered from these waterlogged deposits. Natural silting of the feature probably continued into the 4th century and the upper portion of the ditch was then infilled with stone rubble. This material could be demolition debris from the Roman fort and, if so, dates from some time after the abandonment of the fort in the late 4th century.
- 2.5.9 Fragments of a building interpreted as the fort bath-house were recorded in 1856, c. 30m south of the current site. There is growing evidence for the existence of an extensive *vicus* to the east of the fort, where the easternmost elements of Park View School, including the sports fields, are located. The *vicus* also probably extends to the south and west of the fort and a cemetery has been located to the south.
- 2.5.10 When St Cuthbert's body was brought to Chester-le-Street by the monks of Lindisfarne in the late 9th century, settlement in the town is believed to have been concentrated on the site of the present parish church of St. Mary and St. Cuthbert, which lies immediately to the north of Cestria Primary School. The church was established in the centre of the Roman fort, on the site of the *principia*, and remained in use after AD 995 when St. Cuthbert's remains were moved to Durham. The original church may have been constructed in wood, but it was certainly re-built in stone in the mid 11th century and it has been much altered since, including another rebuild in stone in 1267; substantial parts of the existing fabric are of medieval date.
- 2.5.11 A tithe map of 1847 shows a deanery on the site of Park View School. This structure remained *in situ* until at least the time of the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1896. Although both this and the 1st edition (1857) show increasing development in the centre of the town, the area that is now developed as Cestria Primary School and Park View School remained largely undeveloped at that time.

2.6 Aims and Objectives

- 2.6.1 The broad aim of the watching brief was to allow the preservation by record of any archaeological remains exposed as a result of groundworks associated with the laying of the new electricity cable. Such remains could encompass buried structures, deposits and features and any associated artefactual and ecofactual evidence.
- 2.6.2 Recording of archaeological remains of the Roman period formed the site-specific project objective, given the setting within the fort. The project had the potential to make a significant contribution to archaeological knowledge of the area.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL METHODOLOGY

3.1 Fieldwork

- 3.1.1 The archaeological investigation conducted in association with the laying of the new electricity cable at Cestria Primary School was undertaken on the recommendation of DCAS. The fieldwork was undertaken in accordance with the aforementioned Specification and the relevant standard and guidance document of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA).⁸ PCA is an IfA-Registered Organisation (RAO 23).
- 3.1.2 The groundworks comprised the excavation of two adjoining trenches to house the electricity cable. Trench 1 was sited on a tarmac playground in the south-eastern corner of the primary school. It ran SSE-NNE for a distance of c. 3.70m then turned to run WSW-ENE for a distance of c. 4.70m up to the brick boundary wall between the primary school and the adjoining Park View Community School (Figure 2). The trench was up to 0.70m wide and was on average c. 0.80m deep, although where it was excavated below the foundation of the brick boundary wall its maximum depth was 1.70m. On the eastern side of the boundary wall, Trench 2 ran WNW-ESE across the garden of the Caretaker's House for Park View School to the south-western corner of an electricity sub-station. This trench was 9.70m in length and was on average c. 0.40m wide, widening to c. 0.70m at the western end adjacent to the dividing wall and 1.10m at the eastern end adjacent to the electricity sub-station. Trench 2 was on average 0.60m deep, increasing to 1.10m at its western extent adjacent to the boundary wall.
- 3.1.3 The tarmac surface of Trench 1 was cut with a circular saw and the trench was excavated by a tracked 360° 'mini-digger' (of c. 5-tonnes size) utilising a toothless ditching bucket. Trench 2 was excavated by hand. All work was carried out under archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.4 All deposits were recorded on *pro forma* recording sheets. The trenches were planned to scale and located relative to existing structures and relevant sections of the exposures were drawn to scale. A photographic record of the work was compiled.

3.2 Post-excavation

- 3.2.1 The stratigraphic data for the project is represented by the written and drawn record. A total of 21 contexts were defined during the investigation. A written summary of the archaeological sequence was compiled, as described below.
- 3.2.2 A small assemblage of Roman pottery was recovered. This material was cleaned, marked, conserved, bagged, packaged, boxed and stored, as appropriate and in accordance with recognised guidelines.⁹ Assessment of the ceramic material has been undertaken by suitably qualified personnel and assessment has been undertaken, including a basic quantification of the material and a statement of its potential for further analysis and recommendations for such work. No other inorganic artefactual material was recovered and no material was recovered that required specialist stabilisation or an assessment of potential for conservation research.

⁸ IfA 2001.

⁹ UKIC 1983; Watkinson and Neal 2001.

- 3.2.3 The palaeoenvironmental sampling strategy for the project was to recover bulk samples where appropriate, from well-dated (where possible), stratified deposits covering the main periods or phases of occupation and the range of feature types represented. To this end, no features of significance were encountered to warrant the recovery of bulk samples.
- 3.2.4 Survival of all materials from archaeological fieldwork depends upon suitable storage. The complete Site Archive, in this case comprising artefactual, written and drawn records (including all material generated electronically during post-excavation), will be packaged for long term curation.
- 3.2.5 In preparing the Site Archive for ultimate deposition, all relevant standards and guidelines documents referenced in the Archaeological Archives Forum guidelines document *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation transfer and curation*¹⁰ will be adhered to, in particular *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*¹¹ and *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*.¹² The depositional requirements of the receiving body, in this case the County Durham Archaeological Archive at Bowes Museum, will be met in full.

¹⁰ Brown 2007.

¹¹ IfA forthcoming.

¹² Walker 1990.

4. THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEQUENCE

4.1 Trench 1

- 4.1.1 Natural sub-stratum, [9], comprising soft light yellowish brown clayey sand with patches of sand and containing occasional fine and medium sub-rounded pebbles, was exposed at the eastern end of Trench 1 for a distance of c. 1.60m. The maximum recorded thickness of this deposit was 0.30m and the level at which it was encountered sloped down from a level of 1.10m below present ground level in the west to 1.40m below present ground level in the east. This reflects the natural topography of the area, with the ground falling away towards the floodplain of the River Wear in the east.
- 4.1.2 Towards the eastern end of the trench, the natural sub-stratum was overlain by a deposit of loosely compacted medium to large sub-rounded cobbles, [8], which survived for a distance of c. 1.80m east-west. This was encountered at a depth of c. 0.90m below present ground surface and had a maximum thickness of 0.20m. It is possible, although not certain given the limited degree to which it was exposed, that this material represents an area of disturbed cobbled surface; such surfaces have been encountered in several areas during archaeological investigations undertaken to the south and east of the Roman fort.
- 4.1.3 The cobbles were overlain by a deposit, [7], comprising soft, mid to dark greyish brown clayey silt with moderate inclusions of flecks and fragments of charcoal, fine and medium sub-angular and sub-rounded pebbles, occasional flecks of chalk, small fragments of degraded sandstone and very small fragments of animal bone (not retained). This was recorded in section along the full length of the roughly west-east portion of Trench 1, continuing along the roughly north-south portion for distance of c. 1.30m. The maximum thickness of this deposit was 0.32m and it was encountered at a depth of 0.60m below present ground level, sloping down to 1.10m at the eastern end of the trench, again reflecting the natural slope of the underlying sub-stratum. A small quantity of Roman pottery was recovered from layer [7] and this dates to the late 2nd or early 3rd century AD (Appendix A). The deposit is broadly interpreted as an occupation layer; whether it relates in any way to the extra-mural fort ditches, for example upcast from the excavation of the those features, cannot be certain due to the limitations of the investigation.
- 4.1.4 Layer [7] was overlain by a layer, [6], comprising soft dark grey clayey silt with occasional inclusions of fine and medium sub-rounded pebbles and flecks of charcoal. This deposit was exposed in section along both portions of Trench 1, at a depth of 0.30m below present ground level. It was generally c. 0.30m thick, increasing to 0.73m at the eastern end of the trench. It is interpreted as a developed soil of likely post-medieval date, although it is possible that it could be of earlier origin; no dating evidence was recovered to be able to confirm its period of origin.
- 4.1.5 Towards the southern end of Trench 1, developed soil [6] was cut through by a 0.60m wide linear service trench, [11]. The backfill, [10], which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.25m, comprised loosely compacted mid yellow sand. To the north, developed soil [6] was cut through by another linear service trench, [5], 0.58m wide and excavated for a maximum depth of 0.52m. The backfill of this trench, [4], comprised firm mid yellowish brown sandy clay, presumably representing redeposited natural sub-stratum.

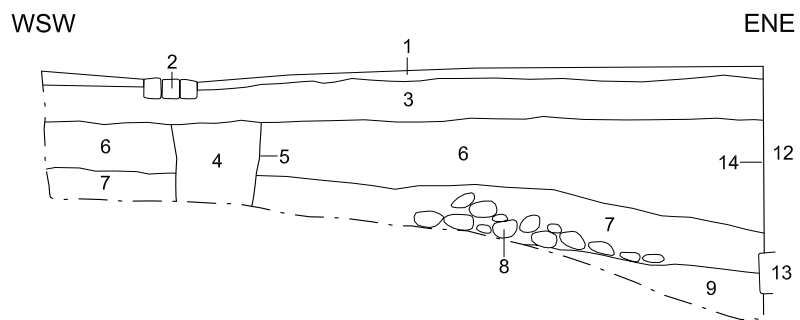
- 4.1.6 At the eastern end of Trench 1, developed soil [6] was truncated by a linear vertically-sided cut, [14], which measured at least 1.10m deep. This was the construction cut for the north-south aligned school boundary wall, which was built on a 0.26m thick concrete footing, [13], for the brickwork, [12], which extended c. 1.20m below present ground level.
- 4.1.7 The two aforementioned service trenches were overlain by a 0.33m thick layer, [3], comprising aggregate, large stones and brick fragments, which abutted brick wall [12]. This material was recorded in section throughout the trench and was the make-up for the existing tarmac surface of the playground. Gravel setts, [2], in the roughly west-east portion of Trench 1 represent a surface drainage gully within the tarmac surface, [1], which was 60mm thick.

4.2 Trench 2

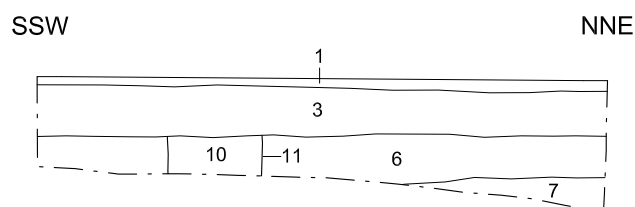
- 4.2.1 Natural sub-stratum, [9], was exposed for a length of only c. 0.50m at the western end of Trench 2, close to the eastern side of brick wall [12], at a depth of c. 0.65m below the existing ground level.
- 4.2.2 Natural sub-stratum was overlain by a 0.38m thick mixed deposit, [20], comprising greyish brown clayey silt with frequent patches of yellowish brown clayey sand, representing redeposited natural. Although no dating evidence was recovered, this material is likely to be of modern origin, presumably deposited during recent ground disturbance, evidence for which was encountered throughout Trench 2. This material was encountered at a depth of c. 0.20m below present ground level.
- 4.2.3 The basal deposit, [21], encountered at the eastern end of Trench 2 comprised very loosely compacted dark grey clayey silt, forming 60% of the deposit, with large cobbles, fragments of brick and tile and medium to large stones forming the remainder. Fragments of plastic were also noted within this deposit, which was encountered across the length of the trench for a distance of c. 6.50m; at the eastern end of the trench it contained several live electricity cables leading to the adjacent sub-station. The maximum excavated thickness of this modern dump deposit was 0.30m.
- 4.2.4 Deposits [20] and [21] were truncated by a 1.80m wide cut, [19], aligned north-south and excavated for a maximum depth of 0.40m. This modern service trench housed an iron pipe of 160mm diameter within the upper part of its backfill, [18], and another iron pipe, this of only 60mm diameter, at the base of the trench.
- 4.2.5 Deposit [20] was truncated to the west by a 1.0m wide service trench, [17], which contained an iron pipe of 170mm diameter within its backfill, [16]. The western side of this service trench, which was excavated for a maximum depth of 0.50m, was defined by the brick boundary wall.
- 4.2.6 The uppermost deposit recorded in Trench 2 was a 0.20m thick layer, [15], comprising friable dark grey garden soil, this encountered throughout the trench.



Trench 1. Plan.



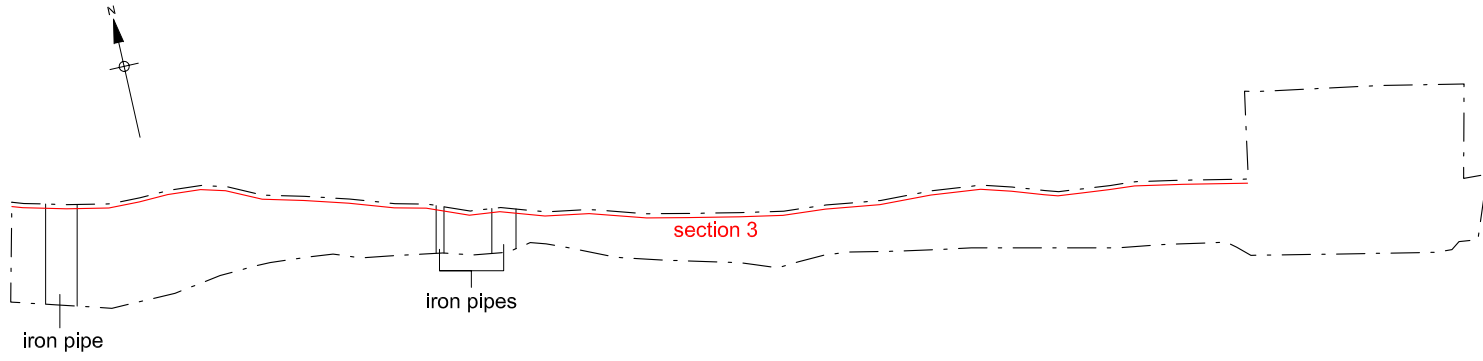
Section 1. SSE facing section, Trench 1.



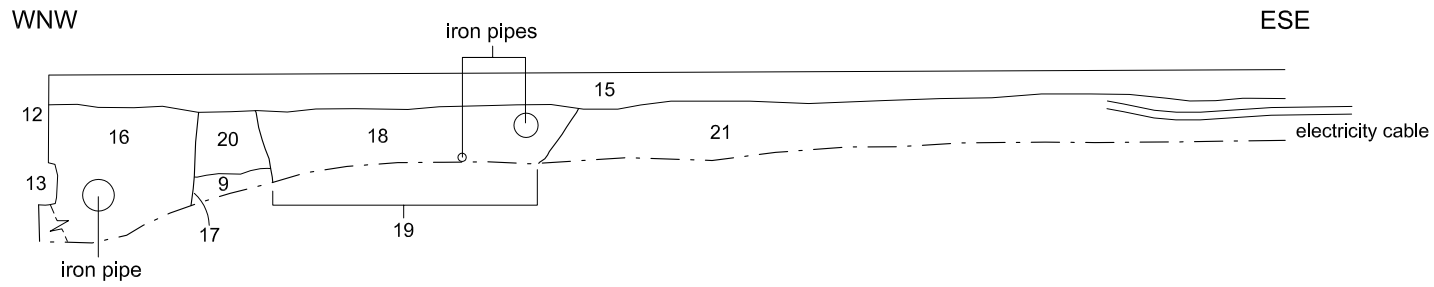
Section 2. ESE facing section, Trench 1.



Figure 3. Trench 1, plan and section
Scale 1:50



Trench 2. Plan.



Section 3. SSW facing section, Trench 2.



Figure 4. Trench 2, plan and section
Scale 1:50

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Deposits of archaeological significance were recorded within the easternmost section of Trench 1. A spread of cobbles exposed overlying the natural sub-stratum could represent a disturbed cobble surface of Roman date, although this interpretation is not certain. Evidence for such features has been identified during several previous archaeological investigations in the vicinity. For example, building work at Park View School in the 1960s included a large number of machine-excavated foundation trenches close to the south-eastern corner of the fort and across the area of its extra-mural defences. Associated archaeological observations identified cobbled surfaces at several locations in the extra-mural area, these being interpreted as parts of an extensive late 2nd century parade ground.¹³ Rescue excavations at Park View School in 1979 revealed a similar surface, again dated to the 2nd century, with the total area occupied by the putative parade ground being at least c. 54m east-west x 23m north-south.¹⁴ The surface was described as an area of fine cobbling laid on various levelling deposits due to the undulating nature of the ground.¹⁵ Part of a metallised surface was also exposed during more recent excavations undertaken by PCA c. 50m north-east of the current site, this work ahead of the Drama Suite of Park View School.¹⁶
- 5.2 The putative cobble surface was overlain by an extensive layer from which an assemblage of Roman pottery dating from the 2nd to early 3rd century AD was recovered. Although interpretation of this deposit cannot be definite due to the limited nature of the investigation, the material is almost certainly of Roman origin and is broadly interpreted as an occupation layer; its location suggests that it may relate to the excavation of the fort ditches, possibly incorporating ditch upcast. The cable trench was certainly located within the area occupied by the extra-mural ditches surrounding the Roman fort and a similar deposit was encountered during the archaeological excavation ahead of the construction of the Drama Suite at Park View School.
- 5.3 All other deposits and features exposed within the investigations are considered to be of negligible archaeological significance. Natural sub-stratum was exposed at the eastern end of Trench 1 and towards the western end of Trench 2. The level at which this was encountered fell away to the east, reflecting the natural topography of the area, with the ground sloping away towards the River Wear. The Roman layer in Trench 1 was overlain by a developed soil of possible post-medieval date, although this may have been of earlier origin.
- 5.4 Modern services were recorded in Trench 1 along with a make-up deposit for the tarmac playground surface.
- 5.5 The majority of Trench 2 had been severely disturbed by modern services and only a very small area of natural sub-stratum survived. The remainder of the trench was occupied by modern dump deposits and service trenches, overlain by existing garden soil.
- 5.6 It is recommended that no further work be undertaken on the information recovered from the investigations associated with installation the electricity cable at Cestria Primary School, Chester-le-Street, County Durham.

¹³ Gillam and Tait 1968, 82.

¹⁴ Evans *et al.* 1991.

6. REFERENCES

- Brown, D. H., 2007. *Archaeological Archives. A guide to best practice in creation, compilation transfer and curation*, Archaeological Archives Forum.
- DCAS, 2008. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Cestria Primary School, Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham*, DCAS unpublished.
- Department of the Environment, 1990. *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: 'Archaeology and Planning'*, HMSO.
- Evans, J., Jones, R. F. J., and Turnbull, P., 1991. 'Excavations at Chester-le-Street, County Durham, 1978-1979', *Durham Archaeological Journal*, 7, 5-48.
- Gillam, J. P. and Tait, J., 1968. 'The Roman at Chester-le-Street', *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Fourth Series, XLVI, 75-96.
- Institute of Field Archaeologists (now Institute for Archaeologists), 2001. *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching brief*, IFA (now IfA) unpublished.
- Institute for Archaeologists, forthcoming. *Standard and guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives*, IfA.
- Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 1999. *Field Recording Manual*, PCA unpublished.
- Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 2006. *An Archaeological Excavation at Park View Community School, Chester-le-Street, County Durham, Post-Excavation Assessment Report*, PCA unpublished.
- United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1983. *Guidelines No. 2: Packaging and storage of freshly excavated artefacts from archaeological sites*, Archaeology Section of the UKIC.
- Walker, K., 1990. *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*, Archaeology Section of the UKIC.
- Watkinson, D. and Neal, V., 2001. *First Aid for Finds, 3rd edition revised*, Rescue and Archaeology Section of the UKIC.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, microfiche, 3.

¹⁶ PCA 2006.

7. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS**

Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited would like to thank Property Services of Durham County Council for commissioning the project herein described. The liaison role of John Berry is acknowledged.

The curatorial roles of Lee White and Deborah Anderson, of the Archaeological Section of Durham County Council, is acknowledged.

PCA Credits

Fieldwork: Robin Taylor-Wilson

Report: Jenny Proctor and Robin Taylor-Wilson

Project Management: Robin Taylor-Wilson

Illustrations: Adrian Bailey

Roman Pottery: Alex Croom, Tyne and Wear Museums

APPENDIX A
ROMAN POTTERY ASSESSMENT

ROMAN POTTERY ASSESSMENT

By: A. T. Croom (Tyne and Wear Museums)

Introduction

Context [7] produced seven sherds of Roman pottery, weighing 0.256kg, from seven different vessels.

Amphora

There was a single body sherd of Dressel 20 amphora used for transporting olive oil. This is the most common form of amphora found on Roman sites, and was in use throughout most of the Roman period.

Coarse wares

There were two rounded-rimmed bowls or dishes in BB2, both apparently without decoration, a body sherd of a cooking-pot with close-set lattice in the same fabric, and a body sherd from a South Essex/North Kent cooking-pot. The remaining two body sherds come from locally produced grey wares; one from near the base of a storage jar and the other from a cooking-pot with wide-spaced lattice. This cooking-pot is in a distinctive fabric with ferrous inclusions, identified as Grey Ware 6 in the Hadrian's Wall Ceramic Database, which probably equates with Fabric R-J previously noted at Chester-le-Street (Evans 1991, MF table 1). It has been noted at Wallsend and South Shields Forts and in turrets on Hadrian's Wall, and is Hadrianic-Antonine in date.

Date

The BB2 and SENK sherds give a *terminus post quem* of the late second or early third century, but the limitations of such a small assemblage mean it could easily be later in date.

Further work

This is a small group, a typical assemblage of a fort on the northern frontier during the late second or third century and contains nothing unusual. No further work is required on it.

Bibliography

Evans, J. 1991. 'The coarse pottery', in Evans, J., Jones, R. F. J. and Turnbull, P., 'Excavations at Chester-le-Street, Co. Durham, 1978-1979', *Durham Archaeological Journal* 7, MF 83-130.

Catalogue

type	fabric	vessel	decoration	sherd	weight (g)	EVE (%)
amphora	dr 20	amphora	-	body	140	
coarse ware	BB2	bowl/dish	none surviving	rim	22	14
coarse ware	BB2	bowl/dish	none	rim	18	10
coarse ware	BB2	cooking-pot	close-set lattice	bsh	11	
coarse ware	SENK	cooking-pot	none	bsh	6	
coarse ware	GW6	cooking-pot	lattice	bsh	20	
coarse ware	local GW	jar	lattice or vertical line	bsh	39	

Abbreviations

BB2	black burnished ware fabric 2
EVE	estimated vessel equivalent
GW	grey ware
GW6	grey ware 6 (see www.twmuseums.org.uk/archaeology/ceramic%20database/pottery%20fabrics.html)
SENK	South Essex/North Kent ware, a BB2-allied fabric.

APPENDIX B
SPECIFICATION

**SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF:
At Cestria Primary School,
Chester-le-Street
Co. Durham**

1.0 Site Location

- 1.1 This specification is for a watching brief/archaeological recording of excavation works associated with laying a new service cable for Cestria Primary School which lies within the boundary of Chester-le-Street Roman fort and adjacent to the Scheduled Monument area (2135). The site is centred on NGR 427618551221.
- 1.2 The workings are located south of the scheduled monument of Chester-le-Street Roman Fort. The site is within the school playground within an unscheduled area of the fort, but in an area of high archaeological potential.
- 1.3 The workings do not follow any existing cable trench.

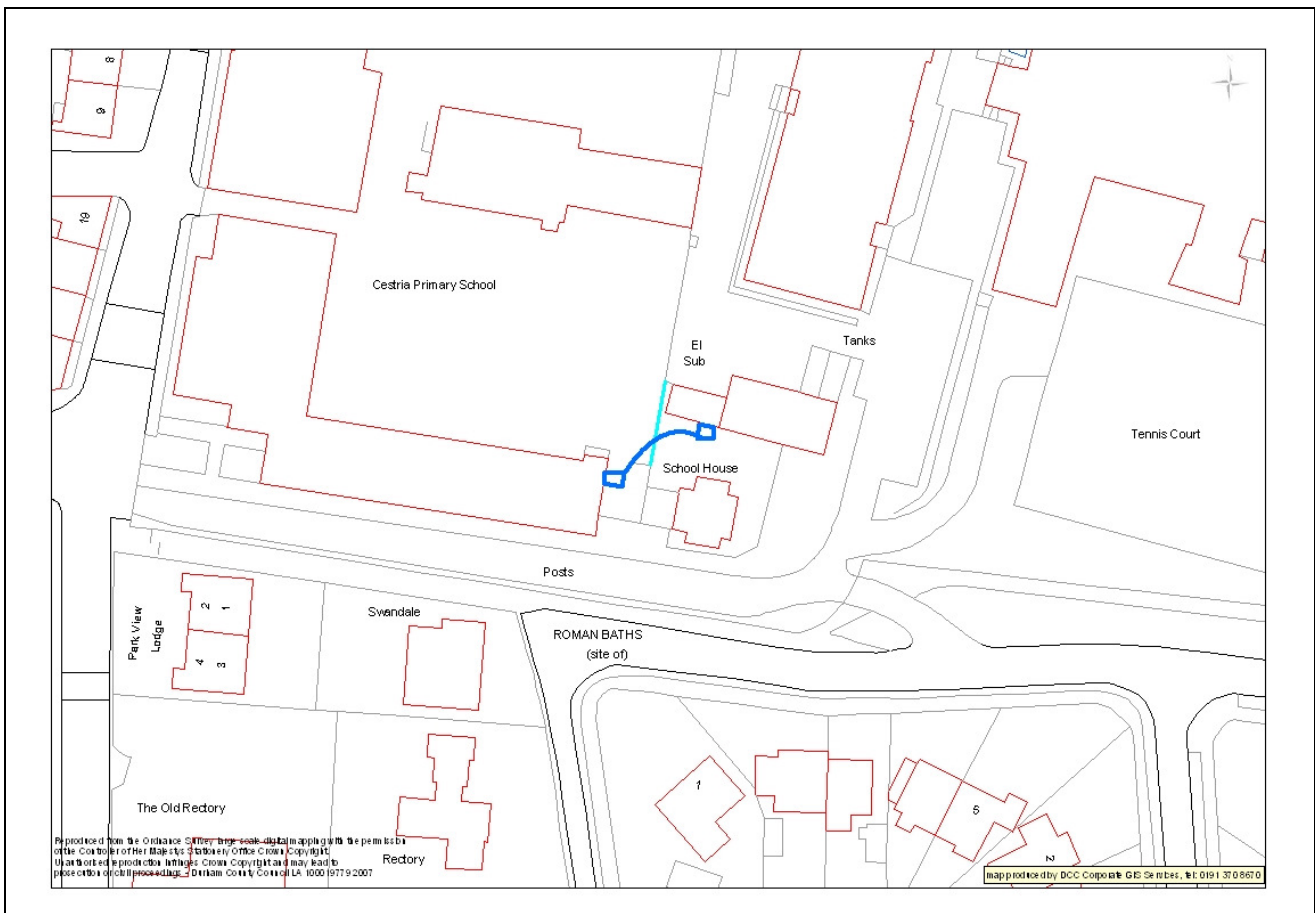


Figure 1: Showing approximate location of development site in blue (© Durham County Council)

2.0 The Development

- 2.1 The client for the work is Durham County Council. The client wishes to carry out the works beginning Saturday the 18th October. The works are to provide an increase in electrical supply capacity for Cestria Primary School.
- 2.2 The cable will be installed underground from a position directly up to and adjacent to the electrical sub-station, the sub-station is located in the garden of the Caretakers house for Parkview Church Chare Comprehensive School. A cable trench will run under a dividing wall between the Primary School and the Caretakers garden to the proposed service kiosk
- 2.3 Freedom Electrical will excavate the trench under archaeological supervision until archaeological deposits are encountered whereby the archaeologists on site will excavate to a depth of 600mm.
- 2.4 The County Council will supply fencing around the trench.
- 2.5 If the archaeological works continue into the school week 20/24 October all contractors must be aware that the school will be in use, therefore traffic across the playground will be strictly controlled.
- 2.6 Further detail of access across the playground and surrounding area will be provided.
- 2.7 The stretch of trench for the new cables will be 20m long, 600mm deep and 600mm wide.

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 Chester-le-street roman fort was established in the later 2nd century AD as a timber and earthwork fort. It was probably expanded in the mid to late 3rd century and then rebuilt as a stone structure in the later 3rd century covering an area of 2.52ha. The fort was further modified during the remainder of the third and fourth centuries.
- 3.2 Over the last 150 years research and excavations have been carried out in different portions of the fort showing that any proposed development, through the construction of foundations and associated services has the potential to impact upon the archaeological resource.
- 3.3 An archaeological assessment of Chester-le-Street roman fort has been conducted by Archaeological Services, Durham University. This work was carried out in May 2005. This report must be referred to and is available for consultation in the SMR.

4.0 Archaeological brief

- 4.1 Archaeological works involving a watching brief are required on this development.
- 4.2 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 during the cable trenching process. **Should archaeological remains be 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.**



- 4.3 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 groundworks phase of the scheme.
 - remains associated with the known roman settlement, which may enhance our current knowledge.
- 4.4 It must be noted that recording work, when required, must be to the same standard as for any larger evaluation or excavation. The watching briefs must set out to identify and record any previously unknown archaeological deposits disturbed during the process of the development scheme.
- 4.5 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 site is determined to be archaeologically sterile (in consultation with DCC Archaeology Officer).
- 4.6 A **toothless ditching bucket on a back-acting machine must be used on site** during the groundworks phase if a machine is suitable for this space. In any area where evidence is observed which indicates the presence of archaeological remains, and it is considered that the normal method of stripping and excavation would be inappropriate, the technique and type of machine being employed may be varied so as to ensure that an adequate record is made of the archaeological remains. Final on-site methodology must be confirmed with the DCC Archaeology Section prior to work commencing.
- 4.7 Due to the nature of watching briefs, 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.
- 4.7.1 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.
- 4.7.2 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.
- 4.7.3 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.
- 4.7.4 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.
- 4.7.5 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. Should ground conditions dictate otherwise, this must be agreed with the DCC Archaeology Section.
- 4.7.6 The on-site machine operator must have a valid ticket which is available for inspection by the archaeological contractor when on site. This is to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements.
- 4.8 **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.

5.0 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.
- 5.3 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 colour slide. **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).**
- 5.4 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).
- 5.5 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.
- 5.6 All relevant procedures relating to artefacts which fall under the Treasure Act (1996) must be adhered to must any such finds be discovered in the course of the watching brief.
- 5.7 Following the completion of recording the site must be left in a condition to be agreed with the client.

6.0 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, University of Durham, Archaeology Department, Biological Sciences Laboratory, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE. 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 artifactual 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. In the first instance for sites within County Durham advice must be obtained from Jennifer Jones, Conservation Laboratory, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE. If contractors intend to use a different source of advice then the specialist must be named in advance.

7.0 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

8.0 Health and Safety Policy

8.1 Contractors are expected to abide by the *1974 Health and Safety Act* and its subsequent amendments as stated in the *Construction and Design Management Regulations 1994*. 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 strongly recommended. Extra care and attention must be taken in areas where foundation excavation goes below 1.20m.

9.0 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 JPEG or 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.

10.0 The Report

- 10.1 The watching brief report must include the following:
- 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
 - 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
 - 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 SMR at County Hall.
- 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.



10.5 The text shall be readable and take into account that the document will be read by non-archaeologists, i.e. the Client and members of the public. Technical terms shall only be used where necessary and 'jargon' will be avoided

11.0 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 specialisms or experience.

11.3 The earliest date at which the work can be commenced and the amount of notice required to initiate the survey.

11.4 Details concerning proposed methods of recording and source material.

11.5 Statement agreeing to complete the OASIS forms on completion of the watching brief.

11.6 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 at a daily rate
- finds analysis
- report production
- administration
- 1 x site monitoring visit from DCC archaeologist
- other

11.7 Contingency sums must be clearly allocated for the following:

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

12.0 Submission of Report

12.1 This watching brief must be considered as a project in its own right and not necessarily the first stage of any further work. A final paper copy and PDF on CD-Rom of the report, the précis and digital images 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 Archaeological Archive (SMR) at:

Archaeology Team, Adult & Community Services, Culture & Leisure, Durham County Council, The Rivergreen Centre, Aykley Heads, Durham, DH1 5TS

13.0 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 at the completion of post-excavation. In the rare



event that the landowner should wish to retain the finds, then a full measure, 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.

14.0 Notice

- 14.1 The County Archaeologist must be given two weeks notice in writing of the commencement of evaluation works. During such works the County Archaeologist or her nominated representative must be allowed access to the site and excavations at all reasonable times.

15.0 References

Archaeological Archives Forum	2007	<i>Archaeological Archives: A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation.</i>
English Heritage	1991	<i>Management of Archaeological Projects 2</i>
	2002	<i>Guidelines for Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods from sampling and recording to post-excavation</i>
	2006	<i>Understanding Historic Buildings: A Guide to Good Recording Practice</i>
	2008	<i>Geophysical Surveys in Field Evaluation</i>
Institute of Field Archaeologists	1999	<i>Standard and Guidance: Archaeological Excavation</i>
	2001	<i>Standards and Guidance For The Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures</i>
United Kingdom Institute of Conservation	1990	<i>Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation</i>

26 September 2008
Deborah Anderson
Archaeology Section, Durham County Council

