

# The Gates, Unit 33

*Durham, County Durham*

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Monitoring and Building Recording : July 2015

*for*

*Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners on behalf of Milburngate Durham Ltd*

July 2015



*Unit 33 - No.5 Framwellgate broidre (formerly 129 Milburngate), looking NE*



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### *Monitoring and Building Recording : July 2015*

*Job number 2125.00*

*July 2015*

by Kenneth Macfadyen and Tom Addyman

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# Unit 33, The Gates, *Durham, County Durham*

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## **1. Introduction**

This report provides a record of archaeological and historic structural features revealed during opening-up and investigatory works in July 2015 at Unit 33 of The Gates Shopping Centre in Durham. Unit 33 largely comprises the remains of a late medieval / early post-medieval timber-framed building that had formerly fronted on to the historic thoroughfare of Milburngate. Truncated and extensively restored in c.1975, this building is the subject of evolving proposals for its refurbishment as part of a wider redevelopment of The Gates centre by Milburngate Durham Ltd. Addyman Archaeology's principal contact for the project has been through Nathaniel Litchfield & Partners (contact, James Taylor, Associate Director).

Addyman Archaeology had previously carried out an assessment of the historic buildings that lie within the project boundary, specifically those structures clustered at the southern extent of the site at the western end of Framwellgate Bridge<sup>1</sup>. Though lying upon the historic Milburngate that formerly branched northwards off the bridge head, Unit 33 is presently addressed 'No.5 Framwellgate Bridge'. In spite of its heavily altered condition Unit 33 was identified as the most significant surviving structure within the site (other than the Grade 1 listed Framwellgate Bridge itself).

The current investigations, carried out by SCE Technical Services of Durham (contact, Steve Cook), were monitored on 9 and 10 July by Tom Addyman, and on 17 July by Kenneth Macfadyen. The various investigations were to examine aspects the building's fabric and structure. The work involved the opening up of floor areas at first floor level, the coring through parts of the side-walls on the north side of the structure at ground floor level, and two sub-floor exploratory investigations in to underlying deposits, also at ground floor level. The opportunity of the site visits was also taken to enhance the archaeological record of the building more generally.

## **2. Monitoring works**

### *i. Ground floor - wall investigation*

Two localised coring exercises were carried out on the north side of the building at ground floor level, see *figure 1*. These consisted of small holes being broken through interior linings and then coring through the walling behind, through to the exterior. The exercise was intended to confirm that these wall sections – the side (north) wall of the rear range, and the short east-facing return section of the frontage range – to be of modern fabric (of the 1970s works) and non-historic.

For both investigations it was revealed that the inner walling was of cement-bedded concrete block construction, to which an external skin of sandstone rubble had been applied, again cement-bedded. No historically significant fabric was encountered.

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<sup>1</sup> Addyman Archaeology (April 2015), *The Gates, Durham, County Durham : Historic Building Assessment*



Figure 1 Ground floor plan showing location of investigations

ii. Ground floor – sub-floor investigation

a. General

At ground floor level two investigations were made through the existing floor surface into the underlying deposits. The first was located at the south-east interior corner of the frontage range, and the second at the south-east interior corner of the rear range – figure 1.

b. Trench 1 (figure 2; plates 1 and 2)

Concrete flooring of 0.18m in depth was cut through by means of multiple cores (101). This overlay a 0.12m – 0.15m thick mixed deposit of dark soils containing some rubble, lime mortar lumps, etc. – apparently make-up and levelling material from the 1970s works, (102). In the south half of the trench (102) directly overlay the well preserved remains of a sandstone flag floor, the flags neatly squared and close-jointed, lying at 0.25m below surface (104). The flags in turn overlay a lens/narrow bed of cinders, (103), apparently an intended preparation. The cinders deposit in turn overlay a 0.15m – 0.20m thick lower deposit of a pale grey-green silty soil that contained many lumps of white lime mortar, (105). (105) overlay a level of well-laid cobbles, (106), these revealed in the north half of the sondage at a depth of 0.45m below surface.

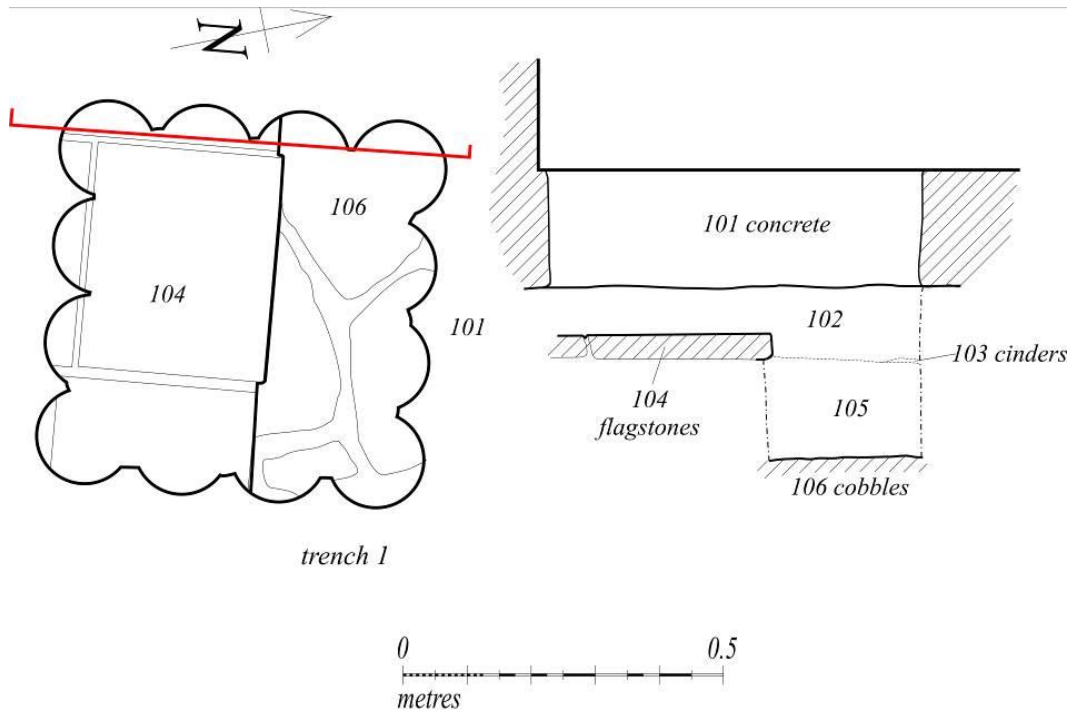


Figure 2 Trench 1 – plan at LOE and west section



Plate 1 Trench 1 at limit of excavation, vertical view



Plate 2 Trench 1 at limit of excavation, east section

c. Trench 2 (figure 3; plate 3)

Trench 2 was located at the south-east corner of the small room within the south-east part of the rear range, a former kitchen. Coreing broke through a 0.20m thick concrete flooring (201) to reveal a 0.15m thick rubbly bottoming deposit of brick and sandstone fragments, (202). On the east side of the trench the base of this deposit lay at a similar level to a brick footing, (104) – 0.35m below surface (bricks of pale fire-clay). Elsewhere existed a thick deposit of loose mixed cindery soil fill, apparently further levelling material. This in turn overlay a level of packed sandstone rubble, (205), encountered between 0.50m and 0.58m below surface.

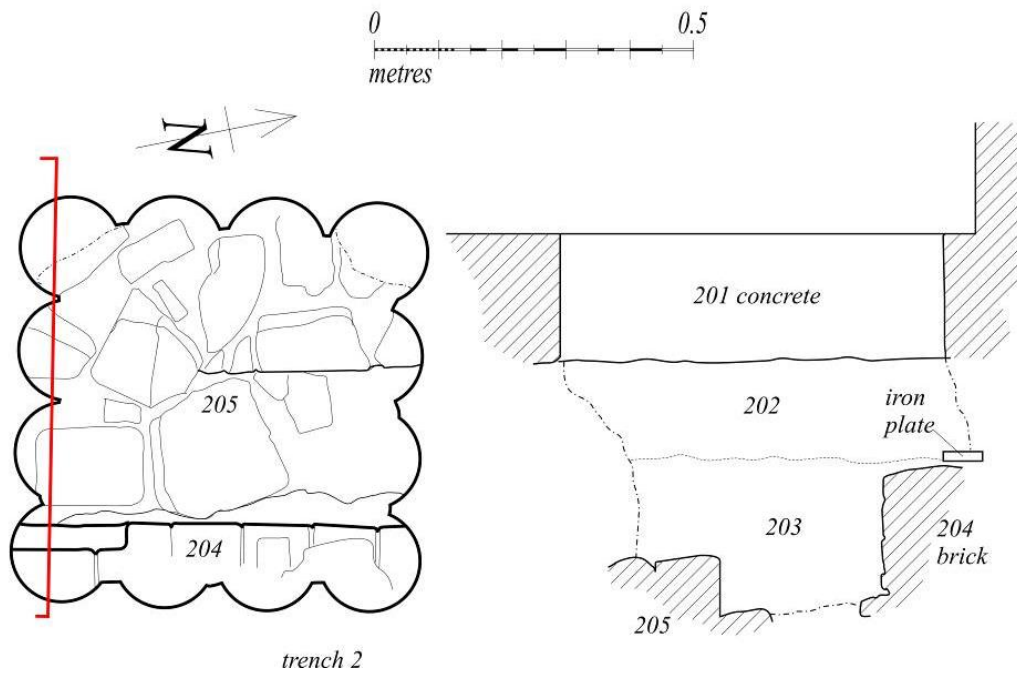


Figure 3 Trench 2 – plan at LOE and south section



Plate 3 Trench 2 at limit of excavation, vertical

*iii. First floor – lifting of floor boards*

Existing floor boards were lifted in two localised areas within the frontage range, these on either side of the fire stack that sub-divides the space, *figure 4*. Floor boards were aligned north-south in both areas; these were lifted to reveal the underlying joisting structure. In both areas oak joists of substantial section were revealed. On the south side of the stack these corresponded to the noses of jetty beams visible to the exterior (west frontage – see cover) – two early joists were revealed, *plates 4* and *5*. On the north side of the stack two further early joists were revealed and, to their north side, a further modern sawn pine joist, evidently part of the 1970s works, *plate 6*. The survival of parts of the early first floor floor structure on the north side of the stack had not been previously confirmed.



Plate 4 First floor - joisting revealed to south of stack

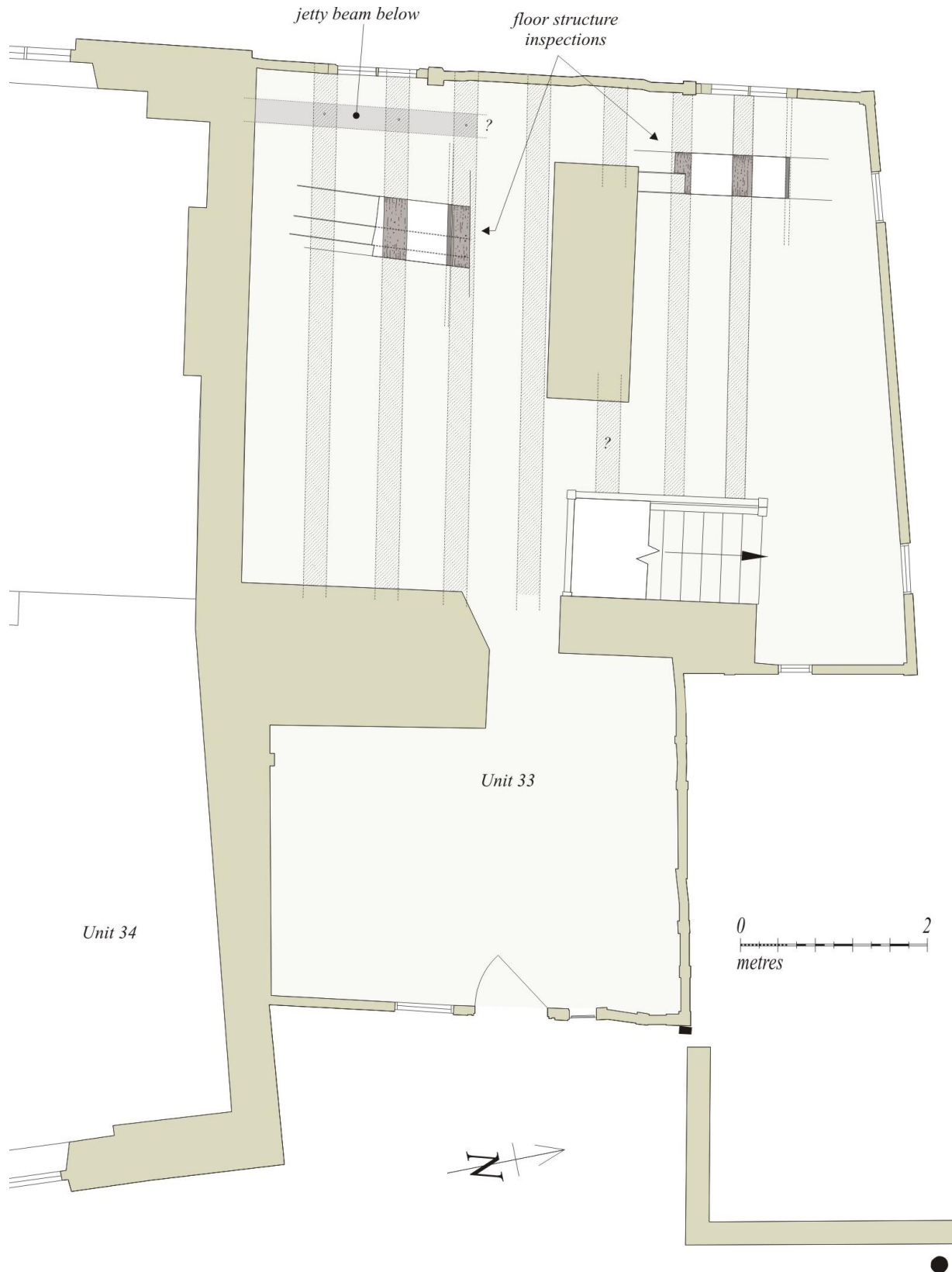


Figure 4 First floor plan showing location of investigations





Plate 5 First floor - joisting revealed to south of stack – detail



Plate 6 First floor - joisting revealed to north of stack

#### *iv. Building record*

Details of the survey record of the roof trusses made in April 2015 were checked and some additions made, and the record enhanced in general. The early timber framing of the interior side of the west (frontage) wall of the principal range was recorded in detail. This included the evidence for an early, possibly original window; this feature was subsequently blocked, perhaps at the time of the insertion of the existing stack. Corresponding to the position existed a series of augered / drilled holes and other sockets (above) and evidence of fixings that didn't relate to the construction of the framing. However it remained unclear to what these features related.



Figure 5 First floor – record of the interior of the west wall