

The Manor House, Nesham Place
Houghton-le-Spring

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief
Planning Ref. 15/01737/FUL



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Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief Planning Ref. 15/O1737/FUL

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Assumptions and Limitations

Data and information obtained and consulted in the compilation of this report has been derived from a number of secondary sources. Where it has not been practicable to verify the accuracy of secondary information, its accuracy has been assumed in good faith. The information accessed from the relevant HER and national lists of designated heritage assets represents a record of known assets and their discovery and further investigation. Such information is not complete and does not preclude the subsequent discovery of additional assets and the amendment of information about known assets which may affect their significance and/or sensitivity to development effects. All statements and opinions arising from the works undertaken are provided in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by Solstice Heritage LLP on behalf of Colinas Estates Ltd. documenting the findings of a programme of archaeological monitoring. The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the 9th December 2019, to inspect groundworks for the erection of a building situated to the rear of The Manor House. Following on from this, further monitoring of two trenches for drainage was undertaken on the 8th January 2020.

The excavations at the development site to the rear of The Manor House have exposed made ground that was different in character across the site. The ground make-up layers variously comprised deposits of gravel which corresponded with material laid during the construction of the driveway; areas of small- to medium-sized rubble, mortar, and stones, and a deposit of coal debris, each of which appear to have been used to create a level surface for the garden to the rear of the house.

The foundation course of a sandstone wall with lime mortar bond was observed in Trench 2. The wall was orientated along a northwest to southeast direction and may have related to a drive that once passed by the Manor House. The wall appears to correspond with a boundary—shown on the Plan of the Township of Houghton le Spring 1838 and the earliest Ordnance Survey map of 1862—which was part of an access route that led past The Manor House to the ‘Wardens House’ to the north of Quality Hill. The Ordnance Survey map of 1896 appears to suggest that the house had been demolished by that time, but the section of wall observed during this excavation may have remained extant until the 1970s.

It is considered that the results of the current monitoring work have proven sufficient to characterise the archaeological deposits and potential within the proposed development site, and therefore it is suggested that no further archaeological work is required.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT OUTLINE

This report has been prepared by Solstice Heritage LLP on behalf of Colinas Estates Ltd. to document the findings of the archaeological monitoring which was undertaken during December 2019 and January 2020. The watching brief was requested by Sunderland County Council to fulfil condition 9 of planning permission reference 15/O1737/FUL for the erection of a building at the rear of the Manor House, Houghton-le-Spring. The archaeological monitoring of groundworks was undertaken during December 2019 and January 2020. It was not possible to monitor the open area excavated during December 2019, as much of the groundworks had taken place prior to archaeological oversight.

1.2 SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Manor House sits on the northern side of Nesham Place, immediately to the east of the A690 in Houghton-le-Spring (NGR NZ 3447 4987). The building is within the Nesham Place Conservation Area (Sunderland City Council 2007) and is a Grade II listed building (NHLE 1025415).

The building's listing description is reproduced below:

NZ34NW HOUGHTON-LE-SPRING NESHAM PLACE (north side) 7/49 Houghton-le-Spring. 26.4.50 No. 10 (Manor House) (formerly listed as Manor House) and area railings and dwarf wall.

G.V. II House. Late C18. Rendered; cumbrian slate roof. L-shaped plan. 3 storeys, 3 windows and 2 storeys, 2 windows. 3-storey part has central 4-panelled door under oblong fanlight in deep panelled reveal and Tuscan doorcase with canopy on wide brackets; round-headed window over door; all windows sashes with flat heads and projecting cills except second floor first and third which are horizontal sliding sashes. 2 dentilled end brick chimneys. 2-storey part has central door, similar to the other, flanked by sashes; roof has flat stone gable coping and one end, one rear brick chimneys. Alternately spearheaded railings on dwarf wall. Listing NGR: NZ3447749882

The archaeological works undertaken comprised the excavation of an open area and two service trenches within the proposed development area (Figure 2).

2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 PREVIOUS WORK

A Heritage Impact Assessment, including an Historic Building Recording, was carried out by Solstice Heritage LLP in 2015 (Scott and Brightman 2015). This characterised the historic use and dating of the Manor House and its surrounding outbuildings. Additionally, a watching brief was carried out, also by Solstice Heritage (Scott, 2018), which included the recording of unmonitored work exposing archaeological material.

2.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

2.2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief is defined as:

“a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, intertidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive” (ClfA 2014b, 2).

Given the nature of the fieldwork, the overarching aim of this work was:

- To archaeologically inspect and record unmonitored groundworks.

The objectives were:

- To record, excavate and environmentally sample any archaeological deposits of significance observed
- To establish the date, character and significance of any archaeological and palaeoenvironmental deposits, including in relation to other similar features within the area
- To ensure there was a permanent record of the work undertaken deposited with the local Historic Environment Record (HER) and made available online
- To ensure all work was undertaken in compliance with the *Code of Conduct* of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (ClfA) (2014a), the *ClfA Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs* (2014b), and the *Regional Statement of Good Practice*.

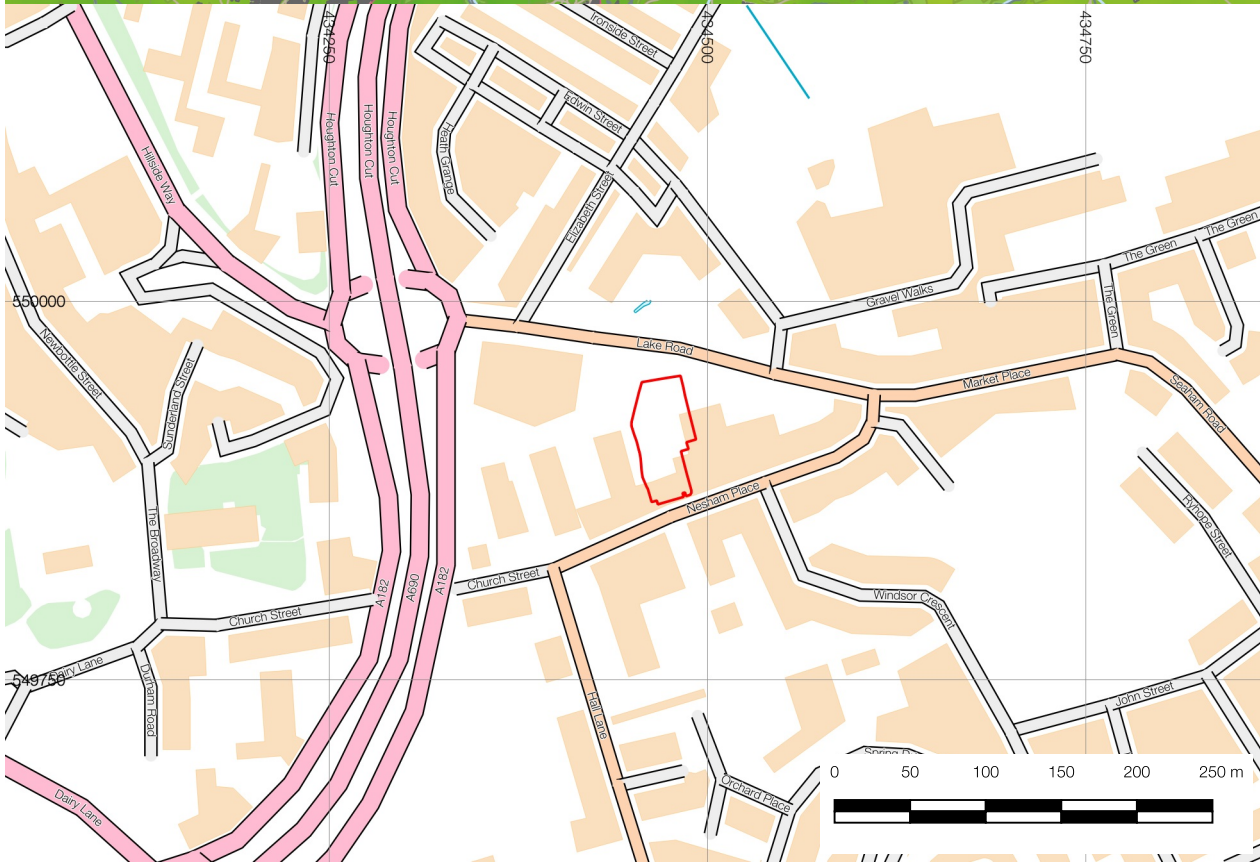
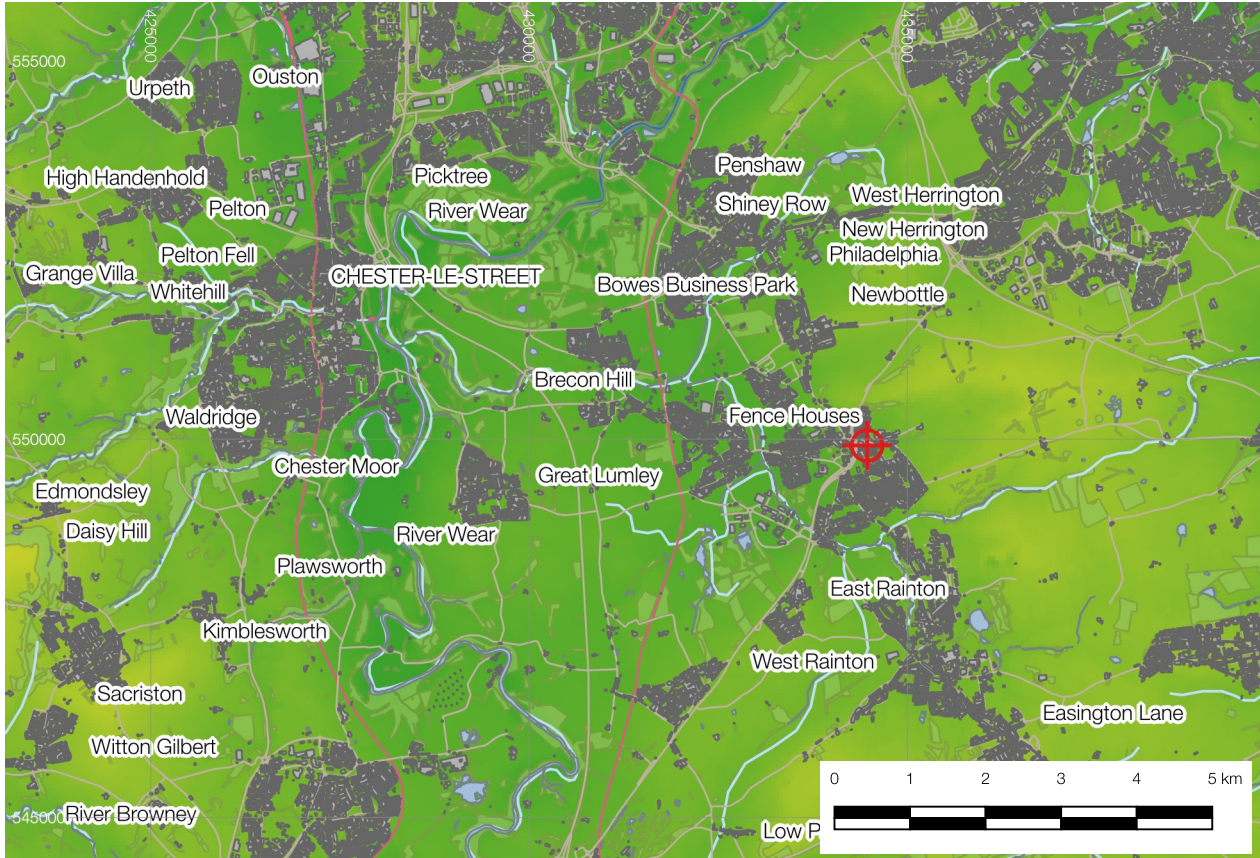
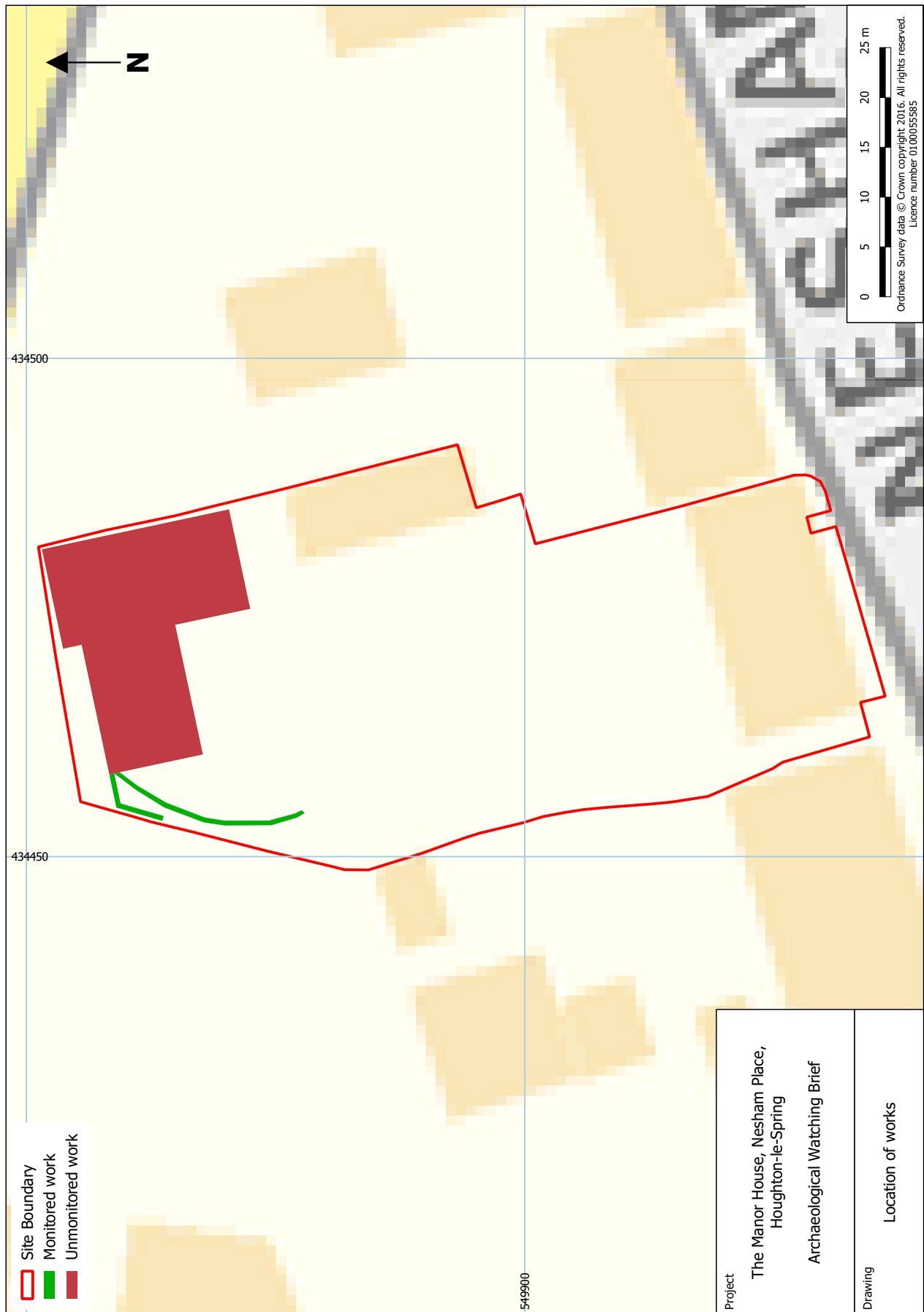


Figure 1 Site location



3. RESULTS

3.1 UNMONITORED WORKS DECEMBER 2019

3.1.1 AREA 1

The area excavated on the 9th December 2019 measured 349.9 m² and was mostly unmonitored due to excavation having taken place prior to archaeological oversight. Upon arrival, the natural substrate, comprising of a firm, mid grey-brown clay (502), had been exposed (Figures 3 and 4). Within the northern section of the open area—closest to the driveway—ground make-up/levelling deposits which corresponded with the make-up/levelling deposits that were observed during the previous watching brief (Scott 2018).

The topsoil consisted of a soft, dark brown, silty clay (500), that contained small- to medium-sized pieces of rubble and stone that averaged a thickness of between 0.30–0.58 m. The ground make-up/levelling deposits immediately beneath the topsoil comprised a friable, mid red gravel (503) (Figure 5), that measured 0.10 m thick. Beneath deposit (503), another layer of made ground was observed, which consisted of soft, mid orange-red sandy silt (501) that contained fragments of rubble, mortar, and stones, and measured between 0.22 m and 0.73 m in thickness. The made ground deposits were consistent with the levelling of the garden to the rear of the house and the construction of the driveway.

Monitoring of the most westerly area of the excavation was undertaken, where a deposit of made ground which consisted of soft, mid orange-red sandy silt (501) and measured 0.20 m in thickness was observed to lie immediately beneath the topsoil (500) (Figure 6).



Figure 3 Eastern boundary wall, facing east. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 4 East facing section. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 5 Upper northern facing section. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 6 Lower northern facing section. Scale 1 x 1 m.

3.2 MONITORED WORKS JANUARY 2020

3.2.1 TRENCH 1

The L-shaped service trench, which measured 8.20 m in length by 0.40 m wide, was excavated from an existing manhole, that was located on the western border of the development site, to the outer northwest corner of the building. From the manhole the trench was excavated in a northeast to southwest direction and measured 4.80 m long by 0.40 m wide and 1.20 m deep (Figure 7). It then turned along a west to east orientation, where it measured 3.40 m in length by 0.40 m wide, with a depth of 0.70 m (Figure 8). The topsoil, which measured 0.46 m in thickness, was a soft, dark brown, silty clay (600) that was heavily rooted and contained modern intrusions, such as pottery and animal bone. A deposit of coal debris (601), which measured 0.15 m thick, was observed immediately beneath the topsoil. The natural substrate (602), which was a firm, mid grey-brown clay, was encountered beneath deposit (601). No archaeological features were observed.

3.2.2 TRENCH 2

The service trench was excavated from the existing driveway and arched along the western extent of the development area, curving to the northwest corner of the building foundation. The trench measured 17.50 m in length by 0.40 m wide and was excavated to a depth of 0.70 m. A soft, dark brown, silty clay (600) topsoil, which measured 0.46 m thick, overlay the foundations of a sandstone wall (604). The remains of the wall was observed at 2.90 m from the southern end of the trench. The stone wall, which appeared to be bonded with lime mortar, measured 3.90 m in length by 0.20 m wide as observed. The natural substrate, which was a firm, mid grey-brown clay (602) in this location, was observed beneath the wall. No foundation cut for the wall was observed.



Figure 7 Trench 1, facing south west. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 8 Trench 1, facing west. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 9 Sandstone wall (604) (dashed line), facing north. Scale 1 x 1 m.



Figure 10 Sandstone wall (604) (dashed line), facing south. Scale 1 x 1 m.

4. DISCUSSION

4.1 EARLIER OCCUPATION

No archaeological evidence of occupation prior to the post-medieval period was observed during the course of the works.

4.2 POST-MEDIEVAL

The excavations at the development site to the rear of The Manor House have exposed made ground that was different in character across the site. The ground make-up layers variously comprised deposits of gravel which corresponded with material laid during the construction of the driveway; areas of small- to medium-sized rubble, mortar, and stones, and a deposit of coal debris, each of which appear to have been used to create a level surface for the garden to the rear of the house.

The foundation course of a sandstone wall with lime mortar bond was observed in Trench 2. The wall was orientated along a northwest to southeast direction and may have related to a drive that once passed by the Manor House. The wall appears to correspond with a boundary—shown on the Plan of the Township of Houghton le Spring 1838 (Figure 11) and the earliest Ordnance Survey map of 1862—which was part of an access route that led past The Manor House to the ‘Wardens House’ to the north of Quality Hill. The Ordnance Survey map of 1896 appears to suggest that the house had been demolished by that time, but the section of wall observed during this excavation may have remained extant until the 1970s.

It is considered that the results of the current monitoring work have proven sufficient to characterise the archaeological deposits and potential within the proposed development site, and therefore it is suggested that no further archaeological work is required.

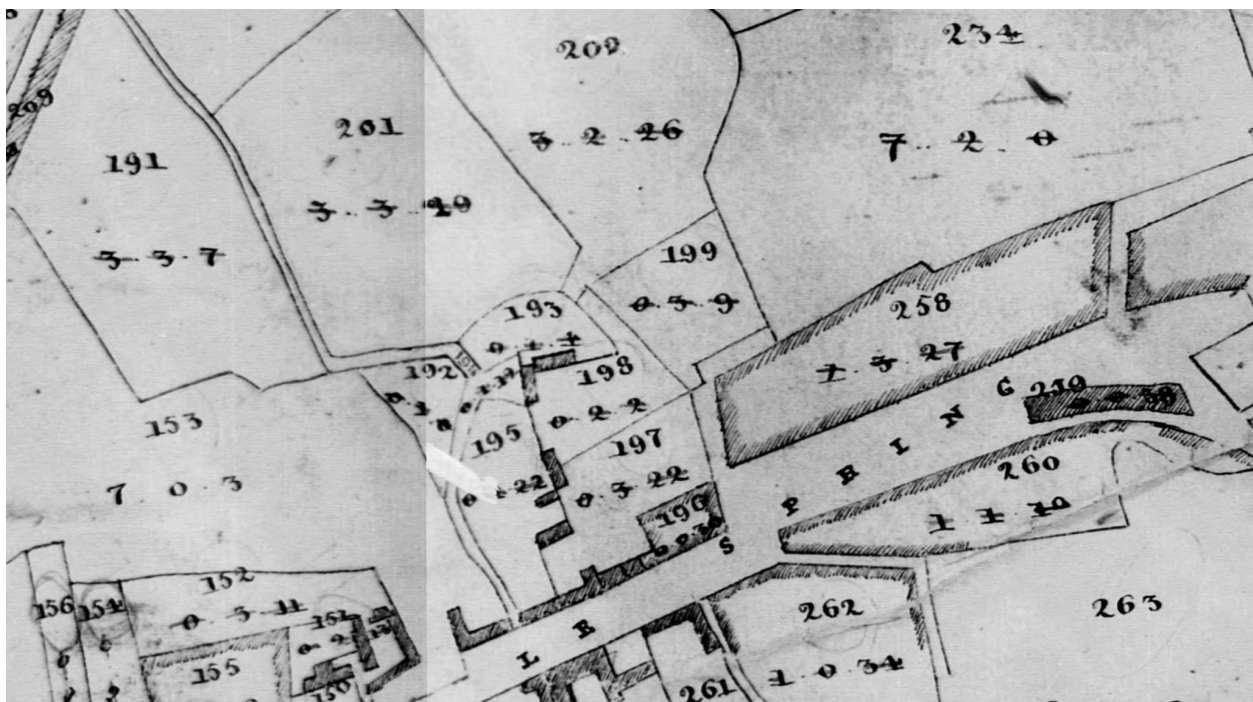


Figure 11 Plan of the Township of Houghton le Spring 1838, showing the drive leading to the ‘Wardens House’ (The Genealogist 2020).

5. SOURCES

5.1 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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5.2 WEB SOURCES

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APPENDIX 1 – POLICY AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

LEGISLATION

National legislation which applies to the consideration of cultural heritage within the development and the wider planning process is set out in Table 1 below.

Title	Key Points
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002)	Scheduled Monuments, as defined under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), are sites which have been selected by a set of non-statutory criteria to be of national significance. Where scheduled sites are affected by development proposals there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Any works, other than activities receiving class consent under The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1981, as amended by The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1984, which would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or covering-up a Scheduled Monument require consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Buildings of national, regional or local historical and architectural importance are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Buildings designated as 'Listed' are afforded protection from physical alteration or effects on their historical setting.

Table 1 Legislation relating to relevant cultural heritage in planning

POLICY

NATIONAL

The principal instrument of national planning policy within England is the *National Planning Policy Framework* (NPPF) (MHCLG 2019) which outlines the following in relation to cultural heritage within planning and development:

Paragraph	Key Points
8	Contributing to protecting and enhancing the historic environment is specifically noted as being a part of one of the key objectives contributing to sustainable development.
189	During the determination of applications "local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". This information should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and only enough to "understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".
190	Paragraph 190 identifies that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.
193	'Great weight' should be given the conservation of a designated heritage asset irrespective of the level of 'harm' of a proposed development. However, the more important the asset, the greater the weight given.
194	'Harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage assets...should require clear and convincing justification'. In terms of the levels of designated heritage assets, substantial harm to Grade II listed buildings and parks and gardens should be exceptional, and to all other (the highest significance of) designated assets wholly exceptional.
195	Substantial harm to a designated heritage asset will be refused unless it is outweighed by substantial public benefits.
196	Where there is 'less than substantial harm' to a designated heritage asset, the decision will weigh this harm against the public benefit of the proposal 'including, where appropriate, securing its optimum viable use'.

Paragraph	Key Points
197	For decisions affecting non-designated heritage assets ‘a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset’.

Table 2 Key passages of NPPF in reference to cultural heritage

LOCAL

Under planning law, the determination of an application must be made, in the first instance, with reference to the policies of the local development plan. For the proposed development, and until the agreement of the new *Core Strategy and Development Plan 2015-2033* (Sunderland City Council 2018) (currently awaiting final examination) local heritage policy comprises saved policies from Sunderland City Council’s *Unitary Development Plan* (UDP) that was adopted in 1998. The following policies are relevant to cultural heritage and the nature of the proposed development:

Policy	Key Text
B4	‘All development within and adjacent to conservation areas will be required to preserve or enhance their character or appearance. To this end the council will issue planning/design guidance for the various areas from time to time.’
B6	‘The council will preserve and enhance the character or appearance of conservation areas; measures will include: (i) encouraging the retention of existing buildings and the improvement of features, open spaces, historic street patterns and plot boundaries; (ii) encouraging the retention of existing mature trees; (iii) introducing controls over the display of advertisements; (iv) seeking, where appropriate, to control development by the use of article 4 directions; (v) giving special attention to the preservation of important views into and out of the area; (vi) restoring highways and verges by use of appropriate materials and planting, encouraging utility companies to respect such works; (vii) reducing the impact of traffic where possible by diversion and traffic calming measures; and (viii) promoting environmental improvement and enhancement programmes.’
B8	‘There will be a presumption in favour of retaining listed buildings. Demolition in whole or substantive part will only be given consent when all other avenues for retention (including preservation in charitable or community ownership) have been explored and found not to be feasible or it is considered that redevelopment would produce substantial benefits for the community which would decisively outweigh the loss resulting from demolition. Consent will only then be given when planning permission for an acceptable replacement development has been granted, which will also be subject to conditions requiring the letting of a contract prior to demolition.’
B9	‘The city council will seek to preserve and enhance the character and qualities of those buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest by: (i) refusing permission for extensions or alterations which would adversely affect their architectural or historic character; (ii) giving financial assistance (where available) for appropriate works of restoration or repair in accordance with city policies; (iii) giving favourable consideration to a wider range of uses than might normally be appropriate to help bring otherwise vacant buildings back into beneficial use, providing these do not adversely affect the architectural character or setting of the building or amenity of nearby residents; (iv) the acquisition and restoration of important buildings, particularly in conservation areas, if this is the only way to secure their preservation.’

Policy	Key Text
B10	'The city council will seek to ensure that development proposals in the vicinity of listed buildings do not adversely affect their character or setting.'
B11	'The city council will promote measures to protect the archaeological heritage of Sunderland and ensure that any remains discovered will be either physically preserved or recorded.'
B13	'The city council will seek to safeguard sites of local archaeological significance. When development affecting such is acceptable in principle, the council will seek to ensure mitigation of damage through preservation of the remains in situ as a preferred solution. Where the physical preservation of remains in the original situation is not feasible, excavation for the purpose of recording will be required.'
B14	'Where development proposals affect sites of known or potential archaeological importance, the city council will require an archaeological assessment/evaluation to be submitted as part of the planning application. Planning permission will not be granted without adequate assessment of the nature, extent and significance of the remains present and the degree to which the proposed development is likely to affect them.'
B16	'Where any historic sites and monuments are discovered provision will be made for an appropriate level of assessment, recording and preservation (in advance of or if necessary during construction) commensurate with the importance of the find.'

Table 3 Key passages of Sunderland City Council's *Unitary Development Plan (UDP)* in reference to cultural heritage relevant to the proposed development

GUIDANCE

NATIONAL

During the assessment and preparation of this document, the following guidance documents have been referred to, where relevant:

Document	Key Points
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (Historic England 2008)	This document sets out the guiding principles of conservation as seen by English Heritage and also provides a terminology for assessment of significance upon which much that has followed is based.
Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (CIfA revised 2014b)	This document represents non-statutory industry best practice as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. This work has been undertaken to these standards, as subscribed to by Solstice Heritage LLP.

Table 4 National guidance documentation consulted

REGIONAL

Archaeological work in Sunderland is often required to comply with *Yorkshire, The Humber and The North East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process* (SYAS 2011). The key principles in relation to the monitoring work undertaken are summarised in the table below:

Principle	Key Points
2	Archaeological work should be undertaken by professionally qualified and appropriately experienced archaeologists and organisations.
3	All archaeological work will have a scope agreed in advance with the archaeological curator (this document), and any changes to the scope or methodology will be agreed in writing with the archaeological curator.
4	Monitoring of archaeological work by the local archaeological curator will be the norm, and reasonable notice of commencement of fieldwork will be given.

Principle	Key Points
5	Archaeological work will be undertaken in accordance with the best practice guidance of English Heritage and the IfA.
6	The local Historic Environment Record should be consulted prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
7	Archaeological work in the planning process should have regard to national and local published research agenda (see section 4.2 below)
9	Reports and required data will be submitted to the archaeological curator and local HER in a timely fashion and in accordance with the agreed WSI.
10	Any comments made by the archaeological curator on reports and outputs will be made within a reasonable timetable of receipt.
11	Where appropriate significant archaeological findings will be submitted for publication in a suitable journal or journals.
12	Any archive produced will be deposited in an ordered and acceptable fashion within a reasonable timetable, the details of which will be given in the report.
13	During the course of archaeological work arrangements will be made, where possible, for disseminating information about the site to the general public.

Table 5 Key principles of the Regional Statement of Good Practice

APPENDIX 2 - METHODOLOGY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

Archaeological inspection and recording of the unmonitored groundworks was carried out on the 9th December 2019 by Frankie Wildmun PCIfA of Solstice Heritage LLP. Archaeological monitoring of the groundworks carried out on the 8th January 2020 was undertaken by Frankie Wildmun PCIfA of Solstice Heritage LLP

Where archaeological features and deposits were encountered, these were recorded to the standards outlined in the relevant CfA *Standard and Guidance* (2014b). All features and deposits were recorded on *pro forma* record sheets, drawn in plan and section at a suitable scale and photographed, subject to the access constraints of the site. No deposits with palaeoenvironmental potential were noted. In addition to any specific features or deposits, a general record of the trench stratigraphy was made on a *pro forma* record sheet.

POST-FIELDWORK

The primary site archive was compiled, comprising site records and digital photography. This has been used to compile this report, which will be deposited with the local HER as the principal record of the monitoring work undertaken. If considered to be of sufficient significance following discussion with the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer, the documentary archive will be deposited with a suitable local collections museum within six months of the submission of this report. A suitable OASIS record will be completed for this work, including a digital version of the report uploaded, within the same timescale.

CHRONOLOGY

Where chronological and archaeological periods are referred to in the text, the relevant date ranges are broadly defined as follows:

- Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age): 1 million – 12,000 BP (Before present)
- Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age): 10000 – 4000 BC
- Neolithic (New Stone Age): 4000 – 2400 BC
- Chalcolithic/Beaker Period: 2400 – 2000 BC
- Bronze Age: 2000 – 700 BC
- Iron Age: 700 BC – AD 70
- Roman/Romano-British: AD 70 – 410
- Early medieval/Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian: AD 410 – 1066
- Medieval: AD 1066 – 1540
- Post-medieval: AD 1540 – 1900
 - » Tudor: AD 1485 – 1603
 - » Stuart: AD 1603 – 1714
 - » Georgian: AD 1714 – 1837
- Industrial: 1750 – 1900
 - » Victorian: AD 1837 – 1901
- Modern: AD 1900 – Present

ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

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