

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD
MINISTER QUARTER, SUNDERLAND
Negative Watching Brief Report

Site name: Minister Quarter, Sunderland **Grid reference:** NZ 3927 5711

District: Bishopwearmouth **County:** Tyne and Wear

Administrative authority: Tyne and Wear **Development:** Road construction

Client: Sunderland City Council **Contractor:** MGL Demolition

Planning application reference: N/A

Site supervisor: Eddie Dougherty **Project manager:** Matthew Town

Fieldwork Date(s): 15/08/18–24/08/18 **NAA project number:** 1451 **Site code:** MQS18

NAA report number: 18-109 **Report date:** 01 December 2018

Reasons for watching brief

Due to the proximity of known prehistoric, Roman and medieval remains, archaeological monitoring was required during ground disturbance associated with the building of a new road between Eden Street West and St. Mary's Boulevard, Sunderland (Fig. 1) (TWAS 2018). The associated groundworks comprised the demolition of a redundant building and electrical substation, and the rerouting of electricity cables. A pedestrian foot ramp, leading from Garden Place to the carpark at the rear of Gilbridge House Police Station, was also partially removed and a new retaining wall was built within the carpark.

Results

Two trenches were machine-excavated within the investigation area. Only modern features and redeposited material were present, and no significant archaeological features or deposits were discovered.

Trench 1 was located to the south of the investigation area, along the line of the pedestrian walkway (Fig. 2, Plate 1). It measured 19.8m by 4.5m and between 1.5m and 2.9m deep. Natural geology was reached at between 0.7m and 1.5m below present ground levels (bgl). A 0.6m-thick deposit of redeposited mixed dark grey silt and mid-brown clays overlay the natural geology. The construction trench for a wall of the substation was cut into the redeposited material. Two

abutting machine-made brick walls were set in the construction cut upon a solid concrete floor. A sloping tarmacadam surface and its foundation base material sealed the redeposited material and abutting the brick walls.

Trench 2 was excavated through the old police carpark adjacent to the demolished building and electrical substation (Fig. 2, Plate 2). It measured 19.2m by 4.9m and was a maximum of 1.5m deep. Natural geology was present at approximately 0.6m bgl. This was overlain by a mixed layer similar to that recorded in Trench 1. Two service trenches were cut through the mixed layer.

The first service trench ran the length of Trench 2 from north to south. It comprised a deep narrow trench with vertical sides. Three ceramic ducts containing electrical cables were set at the base of the trench, which was backfilled with a mixed deposit. The second service trench ran through the centre of Trench 2 and comprised a vertically cut feature containing a single ceramic pipe set within loose gravel.

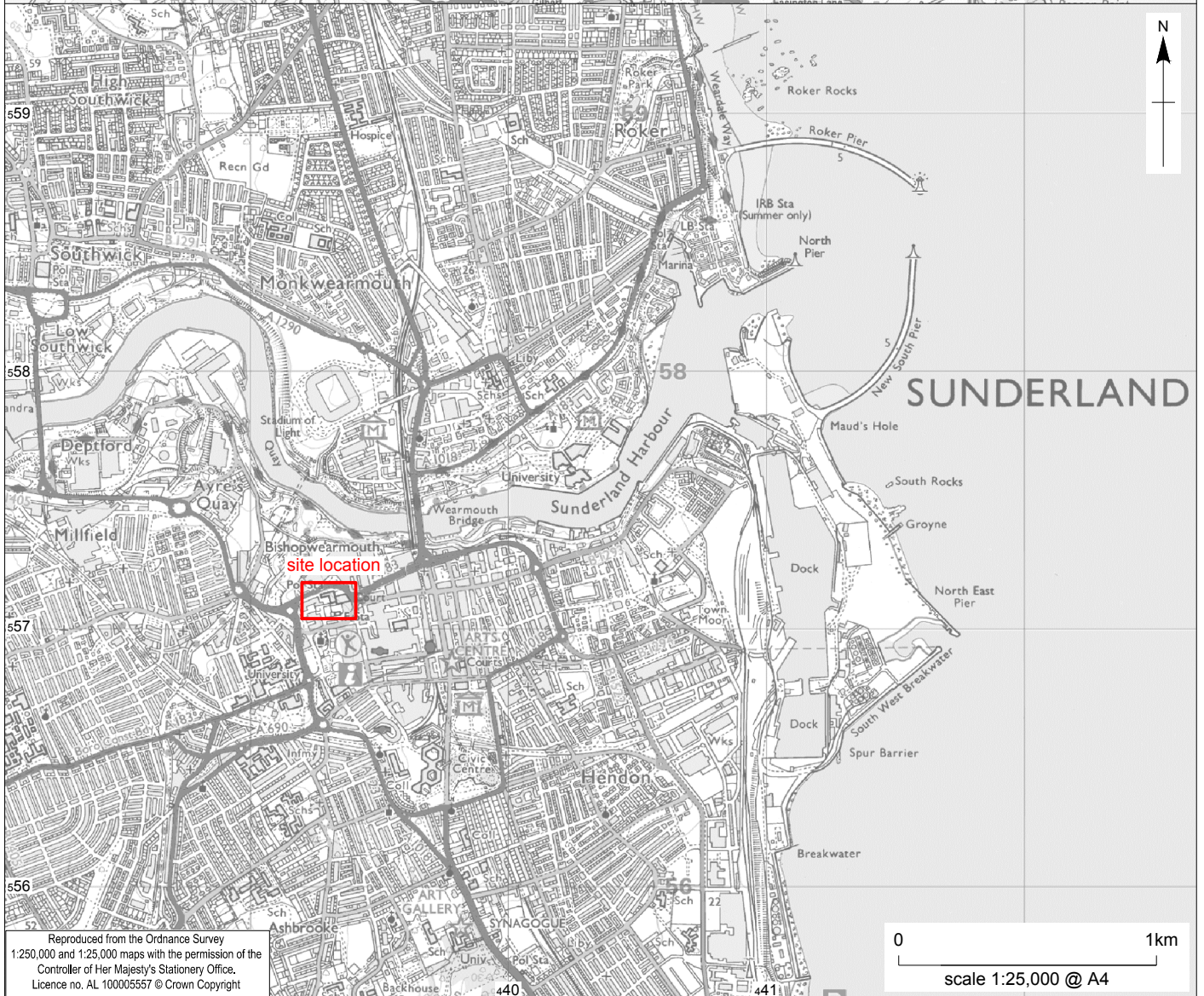
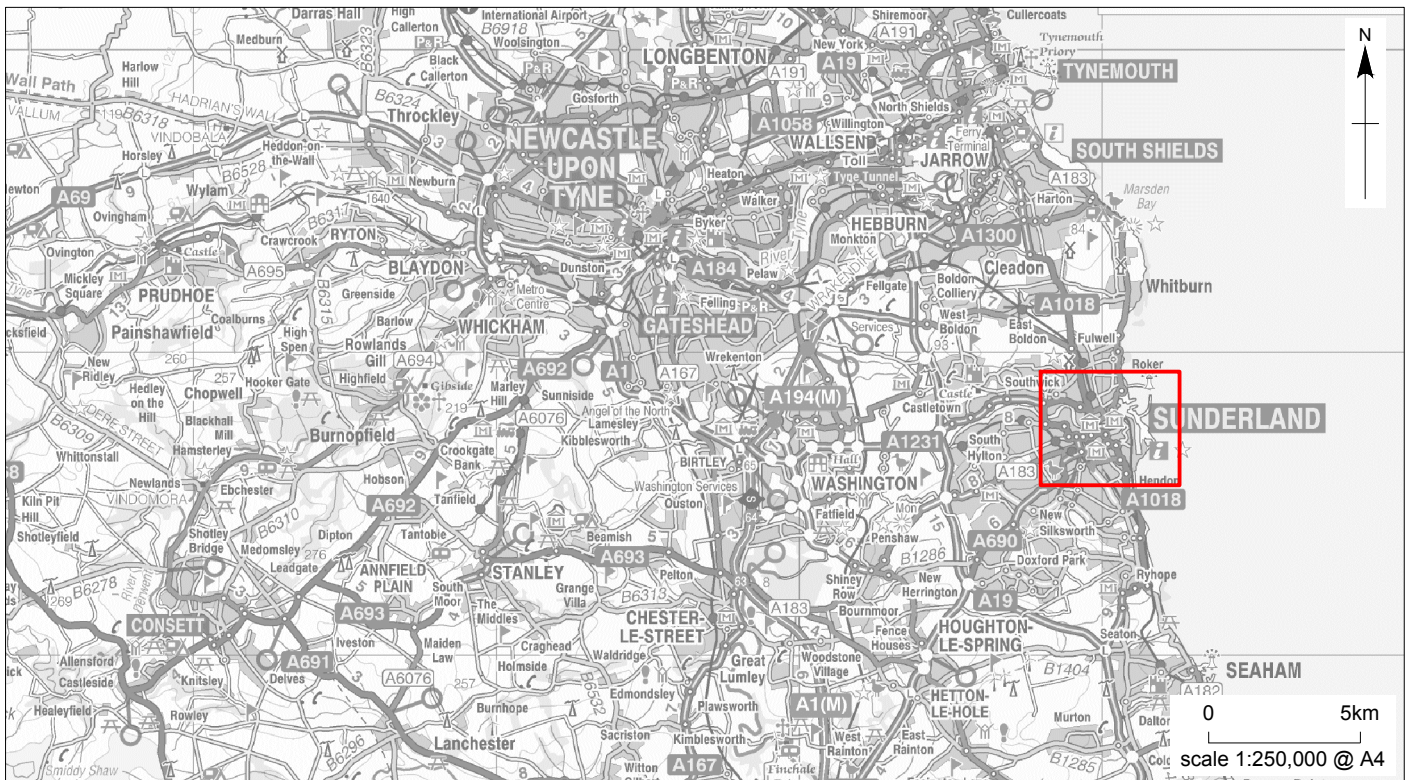
Both service trenches were sealed by a layer of crushed dolomite, which was overlain by a black tarmacadam surface.

Documentation: Digital photographs

Archive deposition: NAA internal archive only

References

Tyne and Wear Archaeology Service (TWAS) (2018) *Specification for Archaeological Watching Brief at Garden Place and St. Mary's Boulevard, Bishopwearmouth, Sunderland*. Unpublished TWAS report.

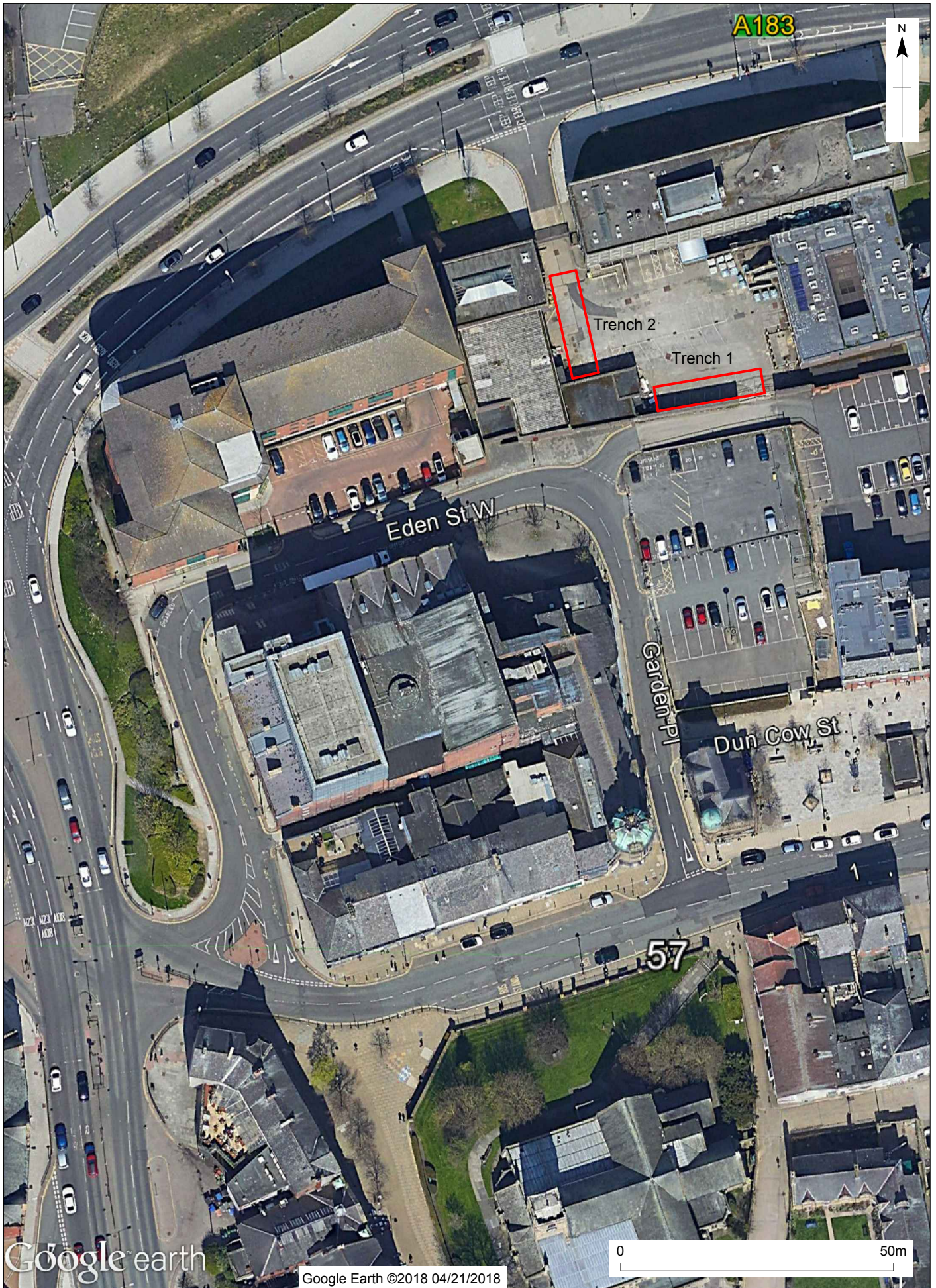


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Minster Quarter, Sunderland: site location

Figure 1



Minster Quarter, Sunderland: trench locations

Figure 2



Plate 1: Trench 1, looking south-west towards the rear of the Sunderland Empire Theatre.



Plate 2: Trench 2, looking north-east towards the rear of Gilbridge House Police Station.