



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING REPORT

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**FEETHAMS RIVERSIDE
DARLINGTON
COUNTY DURHAM**

prepared for

Darlington Borough Council

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Client Darlington
Location Feethams Riverside, Darlington

Grid Ref NZ 29130 14321
HER no. 1519; 1520 (Medieval Bishop's Palace)
OASIS Ref northern1-310038
Dates of Fieldwork March-May 2017

**FEETHAMS RIVERSIDE, DARLINGTON, COUNTY DURHAM
ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT**

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FEETHAMS RIVERSIDE, DARLINGTON, COUNTY DURHAM

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING REPORT

Summary

This document presents the results of archaeological monitoring during landscaping works at Feethams Riverside, Darlington, County Durham (NZ 29130 14321). The development comprised approximately 4,100m² of public park area, extending between the Town Hall complex and the west bank of the River Skerne.

The development encompassed the site of the medieval Bishop's Palace, between the east end of the new office block and the River Skerne. Ancillary buildings associated with the running of the Bishop's estate may also have been located within the area of the riverside development. The site was later adapted as a Quaker workhouse, and then converted to housing in the late 19th century, when it was known as Luck's Terrace and Luck's Square. The housing was demolished in the 1960s.

Prior to monitoring commencing, the site was cleared of the tarmac and sub-base of the car park. The ground level was then brought back up to the required height using imported hardcore and soil. The monitored work consisted of the excavation of one flower bed, 16 tree pits (three of which were excavated twice), trenches for the foundations of two viewing platforms, and three drainage and water pipe trenches. Each tree pit was approximately 1m square and 1m deep. The flower beds were shallower, at no more than 0.6m below modern ground level, and the ancillary works varied in depth, but were generally less than 1m deep.

The monitored excavations did not identify any in-situ deposits or features relating to the Bishop's Palace, although there were a few fragments of masonry that were potentially of medieval date. Much of the site demonstrated the degree of previous disturbance, both from the demolition of the 19th-century Luck's Terrace / Luck's Square housing and the later use of the site as a car park. A thin concrete surface seen in Tree Pit 19 may have been the floor of a house (the 1956 OS map shows this to be number 4 Luck's Square). The surface was likely to be of 20th-century date. Brick rubble in the northern corner of Tree Pit 4, and generally elsewhere within the made ground, was probably derived from the demolition of the square in the 1960s. There were no pre-modern finds, other than the fragments of masonry, which were retained by the developer to incorporate into the street furniture.

The site record will be archived internally at NAA.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document presents the results of archaeological monitoring during landscaping works at Feethams Riverside, Darlington (NZ 29130 14321; Figure 1), between March–May 2017. The development comprised approximately 4,100m² of public park area, extending between the Town Hall complex and the west bank of the River Skerne in Darlington, County Durham (Figure 2). The site lay immediately outside the south-east corner of the Darlington Town Centre Conservation Area, and to the south of the Grade I listed Church of St Cuthbert.
- 1.2 This report was prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd (NAA) on behalf of Darlington Borough Council (DBC).

2.0 SUMMARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A desk-based assessment of the development proposals (NAA 2016a) identified that the site was the former location of a medieval palace belonging to the Bishop of Durham, and subsequently a workhouse.

Bishop of Durham's Manor House and Hallgarth

- 2.2 The site of the Bishop's Manor or Bishop's Palace (HER 1519; 1520), lay approximately 80m to the south of St Cuthbert's Church and the complex would have once extended throughout the area now occupied by the Town Hall, the new office block and the car park. Together with St Cuthbert's Church, associated Deanery and Grammar School, the Manor formed part of a group of important ecclesiastical buildings located to the east of the Market Place, indicative of the administrative and ecclesiastical importance of Darlington within the Bishopric of Durham.
- 2.3 The Manor House is said to have been built by Bishop le Puiset in c.1164 (Clack and Pearson 1978, 8). The building stood in surrounding parkland, which was reputedly enclosed under Bishop Bek (1287-1311). The parkland enclosed both sides of the River Skerne; the area on the western bank became known as the Hallgarth, while that on the east continued to be referred to as High and Low Parks into the 19th century, a factor reflected in the modern street name 'Parkgate'. Attached to the Manor was also the Chantry Chapel of St James, this was valued at 60 shillings per annum in the *Valor Ecclesiasticus* of 1535 (Clack and Pearson 1978, 8).

- 2.4 Little is known about its construction or its early history. The earliest illustrations of the Manor date from the 18th century and these show that the main Manor building was a Romanesque-style hall with round-arched windows, quite different in architectural style to the Transitional and Early English styles of St Cuthbert's Church, which was also founded by Bishop le Puiset a few years later in around 1180/1190.
- 2.5 The east elevation of the building is shown in a series of images dating from the mid-18th century (Archaeo-Environment 2013, 21-23). A Thomas Bewick wood cut published in Longstaffe's History of Darlington (1854) and a water colour by Norman Cross dated 1764, provide the most architectural detail. A sketch dated 1813 and titled 'Old Bishop's Palace' shows the west-facing elevation of the building. There is also a prospect of Darlington dated 1760 by Samuel Wilkinson that looks west from the high ground now occupied by Bank Top Station, showing the Manor House in relation to its parkland, St Cuthbert's Church and the river. The latter images show that, prior to its canalisation in the 19th century, the Skerne was a meandering river, which occupied a wide flood plain with gently sloping terraces.
- 2.6 The illustrations of the Manor House reveal a substantial building with a main north-to-south range and an adjoining north wing, which projected east towards the River Skerne and west towards Feethams Lane. It was built of coursed stone and by the 18th century had a pantile roof. The main range was of two storeys with an attic and had large stepped buttresses on both the east and west elevations. The north wing was also of two-storeys, with gabled east and west elevations and is said to have contained the Chapel of St James. This wing survived into the 19th century and is recorded on the 1856 First Edition OS map as the Old Hall. Adjoining the south gable of the main north-to-south range was a lower two storey extension, which appears to have been later. There are five chimney stacks shown on the main range of the north wing, with a sixth shown on the lower, southern extension.
- 2.7 The Manor complex would have probably been the focus for all the other buildings necessary for the Bishop to collect tithes and administer his estates, Manor and staff (Archaeo-Environment 2013, 25). Although no details of these buildings have been identified, they probably included a gatehouse onto Feethams Lane, stables, a brewhouse and a tithe barn. A tithe barn is mentioned in the 15th century as having 'once stood in Feetham's Field' (HER 1515).

- 2.8 The Bishop of Durham owned several manor houses or palaces around his estates, in addition to principal residences at Durham and Auckland Castles. It is likely that the Manor House at Darlington was occupied only occasionally by the bishop, and more regularly used by his officials. The Manor also provided facilities to accommodate visitors to the town, including Margaret Tudor (daughter of Henry VII), who spent a night at the Bishop's Manor in Darlington in 1503 (Longstaffe 1854, 198-199; 1868).
- 2.9 While the Manor and church were unaffected by a fire in 1575, which devastated much of Darlington, the Manor was partly destroyed during the Civil War (1642-51). It was repaired, following the Restoration in 1660, by Bishop Cosin. Records from 1668 indicate the purchase of slates, stones, timber and brick for the Manor House and toll booth (Longstaffe 1854, 143-5). Following this, the building was used only rarely as a residency for the Bishop, and was eventually leased from the Bishop for use as a Quaker's Workhouse in 1703 (*ibid.*).
- 2.10 The site of the main Manor building lay entirely within the new development site, between the east end of the new office block and the River Skerne. As referred to above, it is likely that there would have been a number of ancillary buildings associated with the running of the Bishop's estate, and some of these may also have been located within the area of the riverside development site.

Quaker Workhouse (subsequently Darlington Poor House)

- 2.11 The Quaker Workhouse was bought by the town in 1808. The main north-south range of the Manor seems to have been demolished at this time and replaced by purpose-built workhouse buildings, partly financed by a bequest of £100 from a Quaker, Gideon Gravett Phillips (Archaeo-Environment 2013).
- 2.12 This institution was called the Union Workhouse on the 1856 Ordnance Survey. It had a quadrangular layout with ranges of buildings or rooms set around the west, south and east sides of a central courtyard area with an enclosed area of garden to the west. Entrance into the complex was from Lead Yard to the north. Two entrances were shown in the northern perimeter; the western one appears to be the main entrance leading via two gatehouses into a controlled space but there was also an ancillary eastern entrance into the Men's Yard. The courtyard contained the surviving remains of the north wing of the Manor, which was labelled as Old Hall. To the north of this building was the Men's Yard, and to the south were three separately divided areas recorded as Boys' Playground, Girls' Playground and Women's Yard.

- 2.13 Although part of the western range, together with the enclosed gardens, lay within the footprint of the new office block and Town Hall, the majority of the Union Workhouse complex was located on the site of the new riverside development.
- 2.14 In 1870, the Darlington workhouse was relocated from the Bishop's Palace site to Yarm Road, and the buildings on the Feethams site were sold to Alderman Richard Luck.

Luck's Terrace and Luck's Square

- 2.15 Luck incorporated the workhouse buildings into a quadrangular block of terraced housing, which was renamed Luck's Terrace and Luck's Square. The layout of this new residential area was recorded on the 1898 Second Edition OS map. Although the Old Hall was demolished as part of this redevelopment, historic mapping indicates that the terraced square occupied the same footprint as the Workhouse and suggests that Luck's development utilised the eastern, southern and western building ranges.
- 2.16 It is recorded that some architectural features from the Old Hall of the Bishop's Manor were salvaged from the demolition in 1870. At least four medieval arches were saved, two of which were taken to Alderman Luck's house in Middleton One Row and are now protected as a Grade II listed structure. Two other arches, thought to have been from the Chapel of St James, were reportedly installed in the garden between Luck's Terrace and Feethams House. One has been relocated to the town's South Park, while the other seemingly remained in the garden until the 1960s (Archaeo-Environment 2013, 25).
- 2.17 Luck's Terrace and Luck's Square were eventually demolished in the 1960s prior to the construction of the Town Hall. Again, with the exception of the western half of Luck's Terrace, the majority of this residential close occupied the site of the new riverside development.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The main aims of the watching brief were (NAA 2016a):
- to provide a detailed record of any archaeological remains in advance of their loss as a result of the groundwork; and
 - to produce a report on the results.

3.2 The specific objectives were:

- to identify the presence of any structural remains relating to the medieval Bishop's Palace and, if present, seek a construction methodology that would allow the remains to be preserved in situ;
- to identify and record any other archaeological remains that did not necessitate preservation in situ;
- to recover any pre-modern artefacts;
- to undertake a programme of investigation that meets with national and regional standards (Historic England 2015; ClfA 2014a; 2014b; 2014c; Petts and Gerrard 2006; SYAS 2011);
- to prepare an illustrated report on the results of the archaeological investigations to be deposited with the County Durham Historic Environment Record and the Historic England Archive; and
- to prepare an OASIS record.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Three elements to the riverside development were scheduled to be subject to archaeological monitoring: the planting of a number of semi-mature trees; the creation of sections of flower bed and viewing platforms; and ancillary work to install lighting columns and drainage. Of these, the pits for planting trees were deemed to be the most likely works to have an impact on archaeological remains and, following initial consultation, these were repositioned away from the footprint of the Bishop's Palace. Each tree pit was approximately 1m square and 1m deep. The flower beds were shallower, at no more than 0.4m below modern ground level, and the ancillary works varied in depth, but were generally less than 1m deep.

4.2 For those areas where archaeological monitoring was undertaken, the methodology was as follows.

- Excavation was undertaken by 360° excavator, under archaeological supervision;
- Excavations were photographed and a record made of the deposits exposed; and

- Worked masonry from disturbed deposits was recovered for possible reuse within the development.

4.3 No stratified artefacts or deposits warranting environmental samples were encountered.

5.0 RESULTS

5.1 Prior to monitoring commencing, the site was cleared of the tarmac and sub-base of the car park. The ground level was then brought back up to the required height using imported hardcore and soil (Plate 1). This meant that the flower beds were mostly within newly imported soils and the cable trenches for the street lighting were within the hardcore deposit. Therefore, the monitored work consisted of the excavation of a sample of flower bed, sixteen tree pits (three of which were excavated twice), trenches for the foundations of two viewing platforms, and three drainage and water pipe trenches. The locations of the monitored work are illustrated on Figure 2.

5.2 The flower bed measured up to 7m by 4m and was excavated to a depth of 0.6m, passing entirely through topsoil (Plate 2). Only modern finds were identified.

5.3 The tree pits in the centre of the site were aligned approximately north-east to south-west, while others were east to west. None of the pits revealed in-situ archaeological remains, with the possible exception of Tree Pit 19, which had a 50mm thick concrete surface immediately below the imported fill. This was identified only in the side of the pit (Plate 3), incorporated brick rubble, and was apparently relatively modern.

5.4 The majority of the pits revealed a dark, 'brown earth' buried topsoil at a depth of between 0.6m and 0.9m. There were occasional sherds of 19th-century or later pottery and glass, which were not retained. The buried soil was generally overlain by up to 0.3m of 'made ground', comprising mixed clay and soil with frequent inclusions of concrete and brick rubble, and up to 0.3m of hardcore, occasionally with remnants of the granular sub-base for the earlier car park. Within the northern side of Tree Pit 4, the made ground was almost entirely composed of brick rubble (Plate 4), probably arising from the demolition of the Victorian workhouse.

5.5 Tree Pit 5, immediately to the south, produced three blocks of dressed masonry, possibly derived from the Bishop's Palace. Two of these were fragments of plinths or corbels with differing angles of slope; one measured 0.28m long, 0.18m high and

0.34–0.4m deep, with an angle of c.72° (Plate 5), while the other measured 0.5m long, 0.19m high and 0.2–0.3m deep, with an angle of c.62°. The third block of masonry was approximately cuboidal, measuring 0.48m by 0.26m by 0.19m. A few other pits had occasional masonry fragments within the made ground. The larger blocks of masonry were retained by the contractor for reuse in the street furniture.

5.6 The trenches for the foundations of the viewing platforms were c.0.5m deep at the river edge, where they were cut through the deep topsoil of the river bank. The western (upslope) ends of the trenches were 0.8m deep (Plate 6), with up to 0.5m of made ground and 0.3m of topsoil recorded.

5.7 The drainage trenches extended for a total distance of 45m, were c.0.5m wide and up to 0.4m deep, and excavated entirely through the modern hardcore. Although somewhat deeper at 0.8m, the 6m section of water pipe trench encountered only hardcore and made ground deposits (Plate 7).

6.0 DISCUSSION

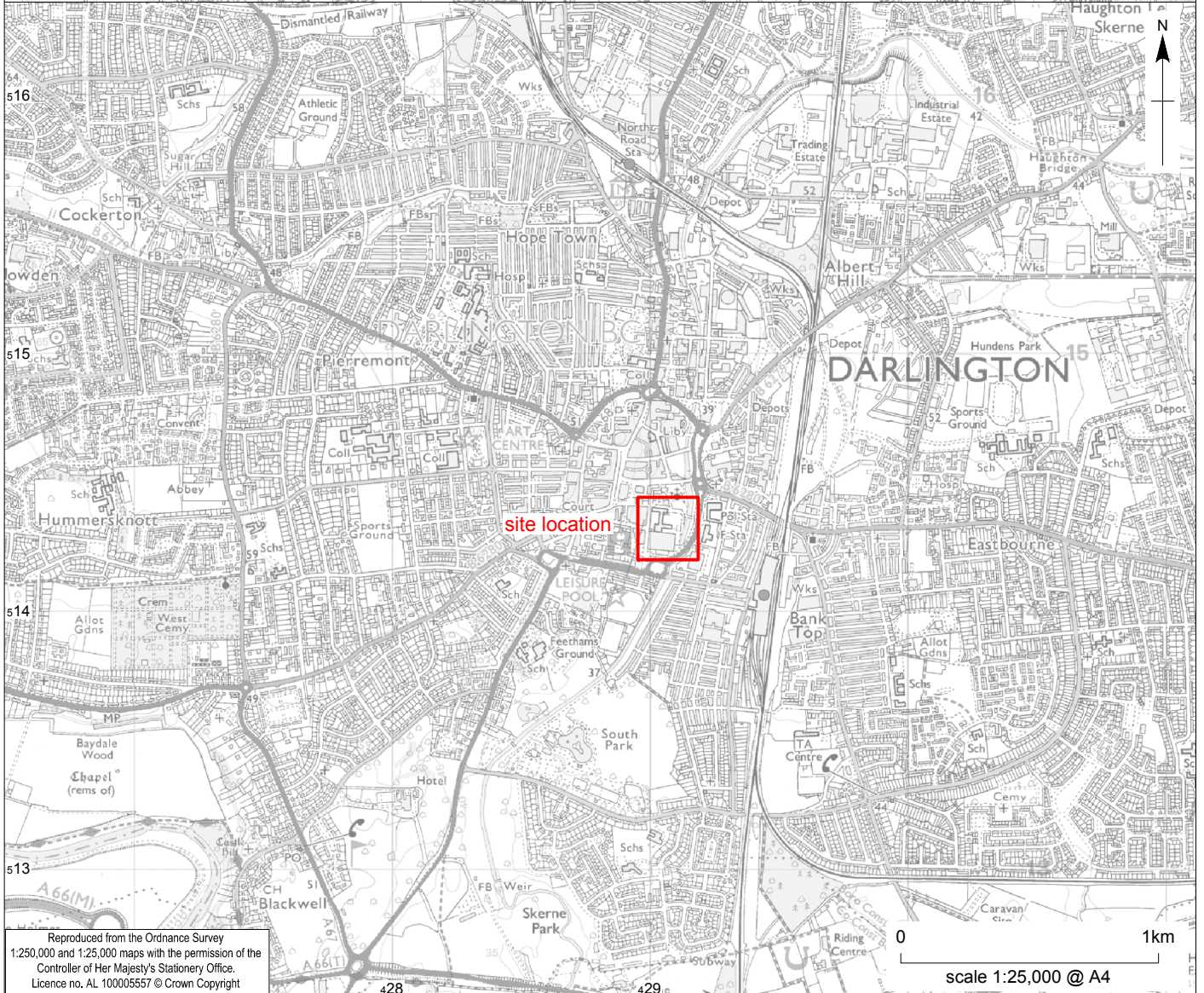
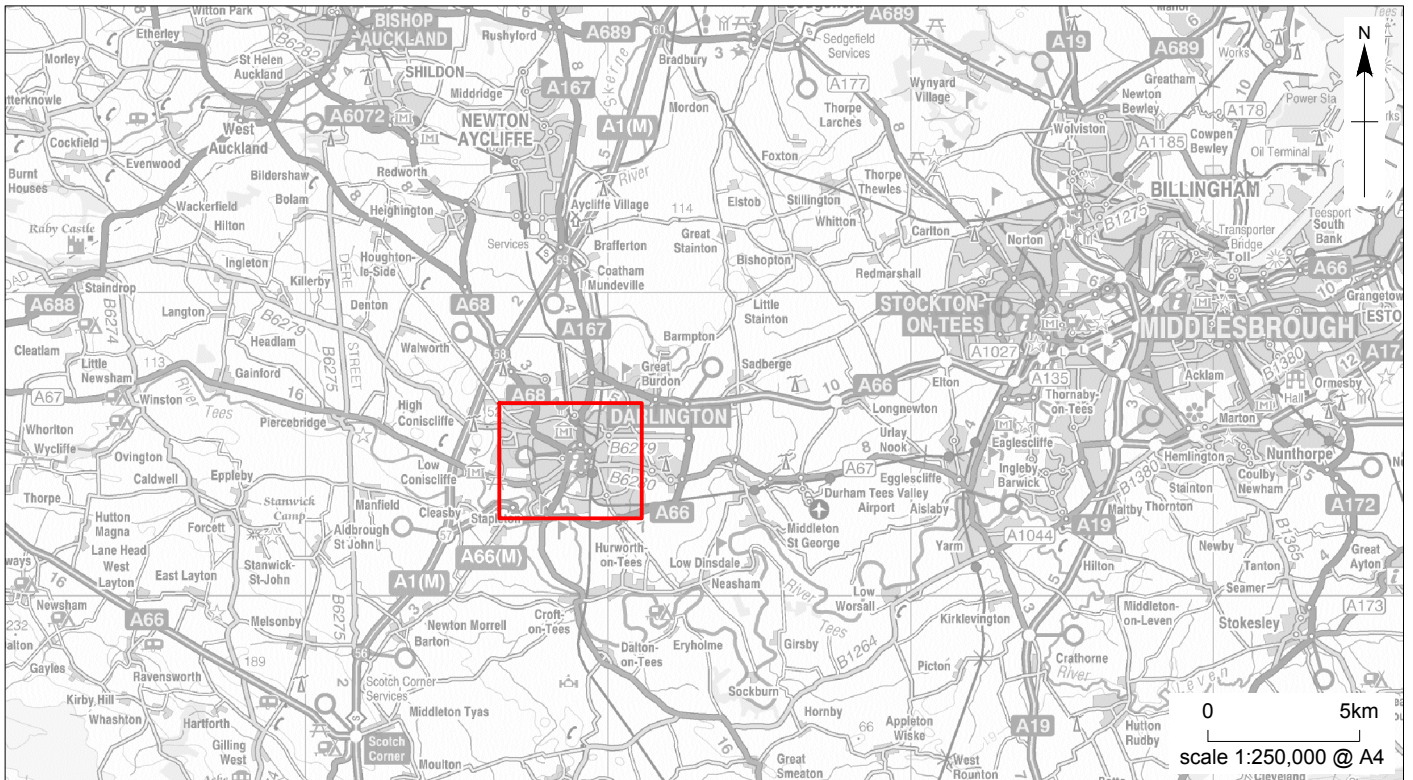
6.1 The monitored excavations within the Feethams Riverside development did not identify any in-situ deposits or features relating to the Bishop's Palace, although there were a few fragments of masonry that were potentially of medieval date. Much of the site demonstrated the degree of previous disturbance, both from the demolition of the 19th-century Luck's Terrace / Luck's Square housing and the later use of the site as a car park. A thin concrete surface seen in Tree Pit 19 may have been the floor of a house (the 1956 OS map shows this to be number 4 Luck's Square), which was initially part of the Victorian Quaker workhouse (see Figure 2). The surface was likely to be of 20th-century date. Brick rubble in the northern corner of Tree Pit 4, and generally elsewhere within the made ground, was probably derived from the demolition of the square in the 1960s.

6.2 There were no pre-modern finds, other than the fragments of masonry, which were retained by the developer to incorporate into the street furniture (Plate 8).

6.3 The site record will be archived internally at NAA.

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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: site location

Figure 1



Based on survey data supplied by:
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ref: RF13-136L02 survey date: 11/09/15
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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: monitoring locations overlaid on 1856 Ordnance Survey map and the outline of the extent of Bishop Pudsey's 1164 Manor House

Figure 2



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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: general view prior to main excavations

Plate 1



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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: excavated flower bed

Plate 2



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*Feethams Riverside, Darlington: Tree Pit 19 showing
concrete layer*

Plate 3



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*Feethams Riverside, Darlington: brick rubble on north side
of Tree Pit 4*

Plate 4



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*Feethams Riverside, Darlington: fragment of plinth or corbel,
possibly from Bishop's Palace*

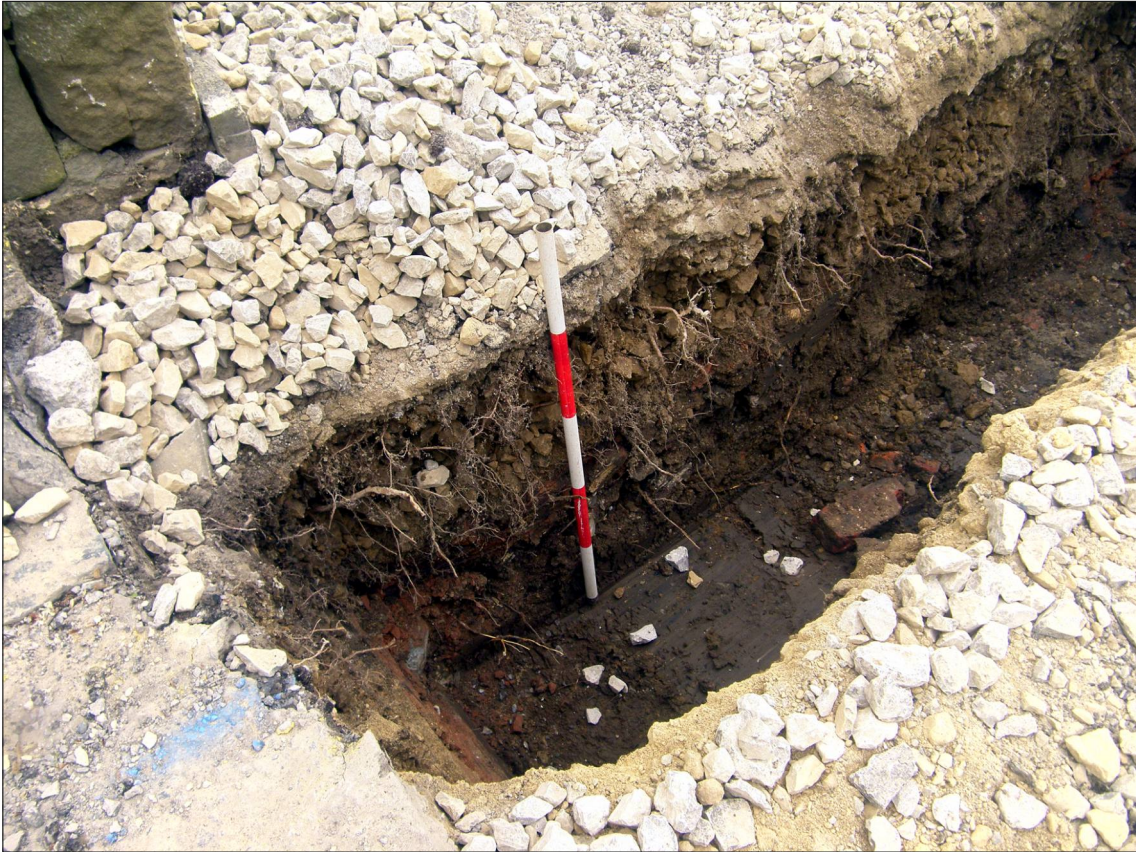
Plate 5



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*Feethams Riverside, Darlington: upslope end of foundation
trench for viewing platform*

Plate 6



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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: pipe trench

Plate 7



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Feethams Riverside, Darlington: feature seating in completed development showing reused medieval masonry

Plate 8