

# Corbridge Market Place (Watling Street) Traffic Improvement Scheme

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING DURING GROUNDWORKS

July 2016



*Prepared for Northumberland County Council Highways  
and Neighbourhood Services Department by:*

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**LOCATION:** Watling Street, Corbridge  
**GRID REFERENCE:** NY 9880 6440  
**OASIS REFERENCE:** alanwill1-259197  
**FIELDWORK DATES:** 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016  
**NCC REF:** T13/24; 23779

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## **SUMMARY**

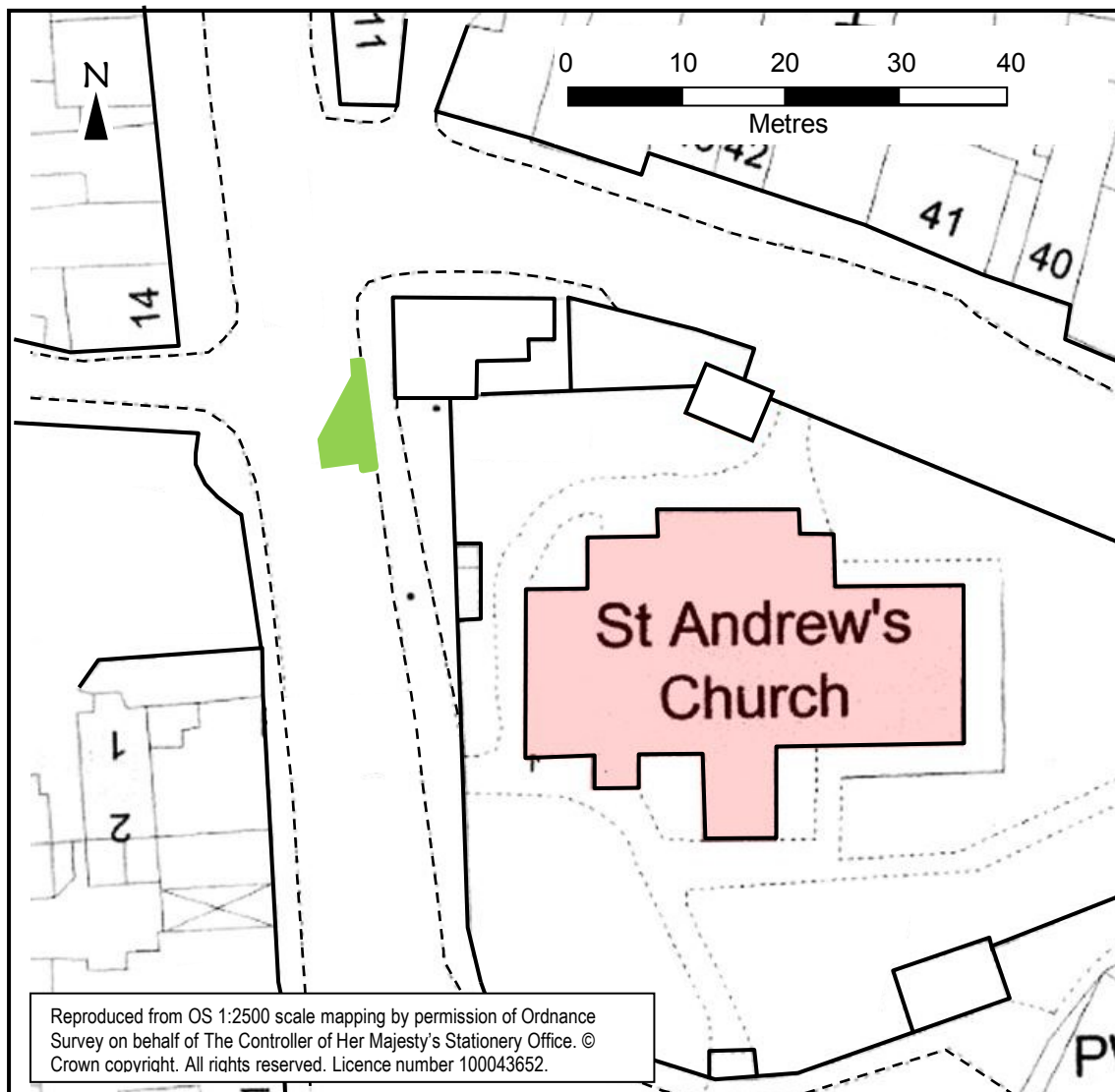
*An archaeological watching brief was carried out during a minor traffic improvement scheme in Corbridge on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of June 2016. The works were along Watling Street, a little way to the north of Market Place, north-west of the Church of St Andrew and west of the listed churchyard wall and St Andrew's Cottage. They involved the formation of a traffic island within the eastern carriageway of Watling Street and the insertion of new drainage gullies and a signpost.*

*Corbridge is an historic settlement with occupation going back to early medieval times following the decay and abandonment of the Roman settlement of Corstopitum to the west. Watling Street formed a part of the later-medieval road layout which grew up around Market Place to the south and St Andrew's Church to the west from the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries, although street lines may have narrowed or widened over time. The early medieval form of the settlement is less well defined, but parts of St Andrew's Church certainly date back to this period. The extent of the early graveyard around the church is not well known, either, and may have extended beyond the present churchyard wall.*

*No structural remains, deposits or artefactual material were disturbed during the roadworks. Stratigraphy exposed was layers relating to highway construction to a depth of 0.35m below current road surface. Groundworks below this depth, to a maximum of 1.1m from the road surface for a new drainage gully and connecting ducts, cut into a loose mid-brown sand [04] with occasional lenses of gravel. The base of the layer was not reached at the final depth of excavation. The context of its formation remains uncertain. The only artefactual material recovered was a rectangular sandstone block. A few fragments of dog's jaw bone were also recovered from the deposit.*



Survey 2009). Watling Street formed a part of the later-medieval road layout which grew up around Market Place to the south and St Andrew's Church and its surrounding churchyard to the east from the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> centuries. Although street lines seem to have been relatively fixed from this time, widths of the thoroughfares may have varied, possibly preserving settlement activity below present roadlines. The early medieval form of the settlement is less well defined, but parts of St Andrew's Church certainly date back to this period. Nor is the extent of the early graveyard around the church securely established. It may once have run beyond the present churchyard wall.



**Figure 2:** Traffic Improvement Scheme in Corbridge. New traffic island (in green) on the east carriageway of Watling Street and north-west of St Andrew's church. See figure 3 for gullies and service trenches in the area.

### **3. TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT WORKS**

Works included:

- Provision of a new kerbside drainage gully set in an excavation 1.2m deep along the east side of Watling Street with linking trench (0.6m deep) for ducts from existing gully which was removed;
- Construction of a new built-out traffic island across the eastern carriageway of Watling Street involving the removal of road formation to a depth of c. 0.3m and the installation of new kerbs;
- Installation of a new 'no entry' signpost within the area of the island with excavation to a depth of 0.6m from former road surface.

### **4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL**

Although there was no indication that the project area would contain any settlement remains from either prehistoric or Roman times, it was possible that Roman burials may have extended towards this area alongside a road leading out from the eastern end of the Roman settlement (HER entries 9006, 9007 and 9130). Roman coins have also been found in St Andrew's churchyard (HER 9023). The early-medieval form of the settlement is poorly understood, and may also have centred on St Andrew's Church. Early-medieval burials, or structures, may well have extended across the area.

In later-medieval times, the general street pattern seen today in the centre of Corbridge was established. However, many of the streets may have been narrower than today. This suggests the possibility that relatively modern layers of road construction may overlie medieval remains which could include the frontages of properties running alongside the street lines or even burials at the former edges of the churchyard.

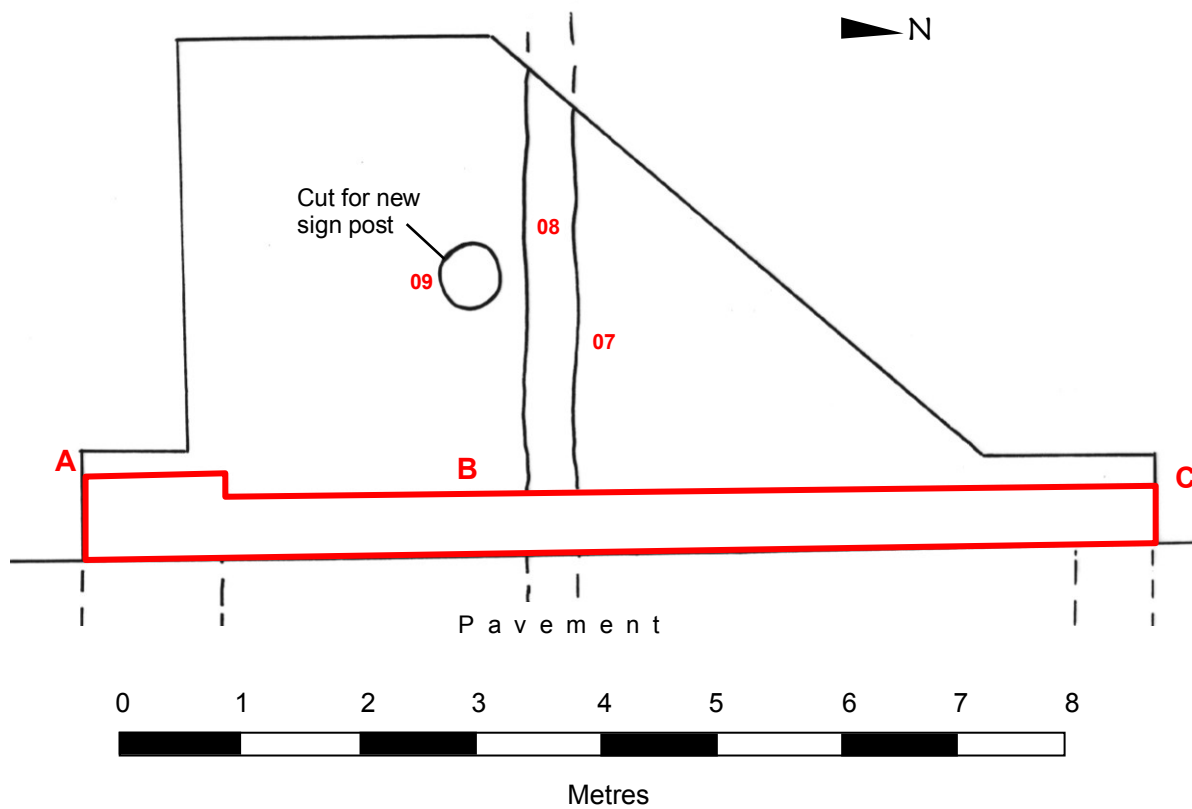
### **5. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

The watching brief was carried out by Alan Williams Archaeology as per requirements set out in the NCC briefing document prepared by Karen Derham (see Appendix 1).

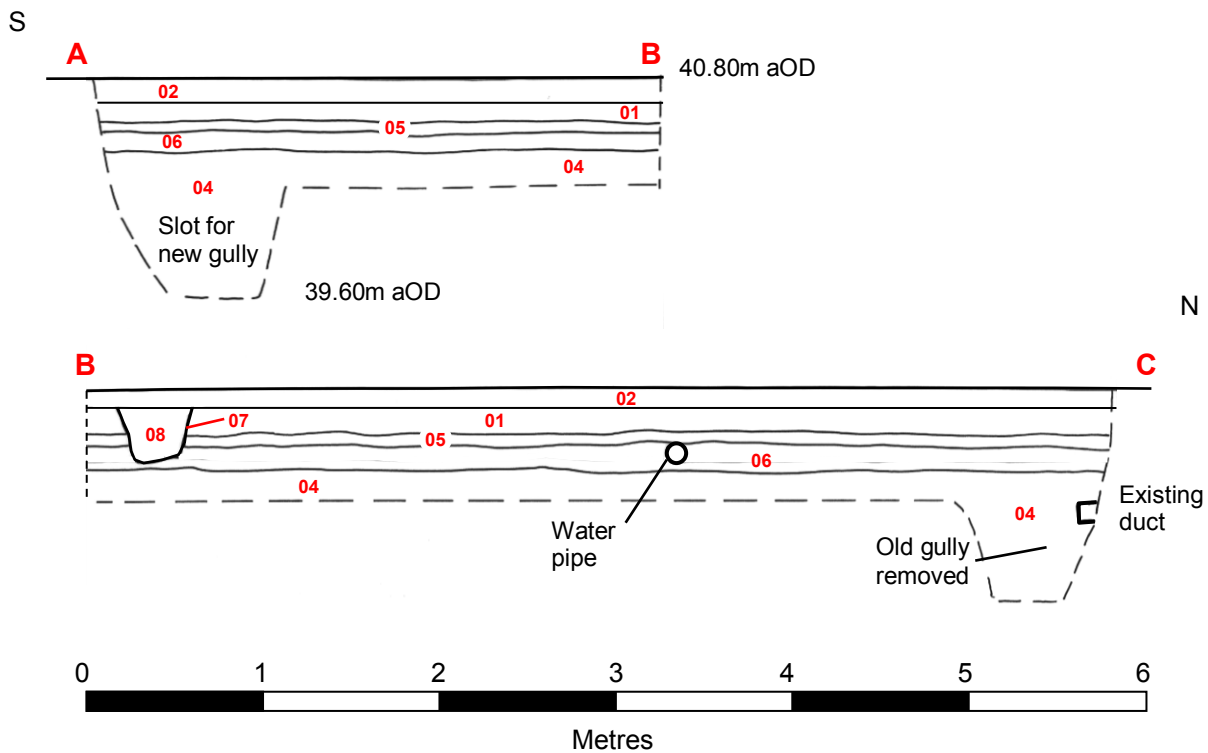
#### **5.1 Results**

Road formation layers (surface level 40.80m aOD), including current tarmac surface [01], earlier tarmac surface [05] and crushed dolomite bedding [06] were removed down to a depth of around 0.2m across the area of the new traffic island along Watling Street (figure 4).





**Figure 3:** Plan of new traffic island along Watling Street. Trench for new drainage System in red. A, B and C locate the section of the trench shown as figure 4.



**Figure 4:** Section of trench (located on figure 3) for new drainage system alongside the traffic island

A new drainage system was installed involving the replacement of the existing roadside gully at the north end of the new island, with a new gully at the south end. A trench, to take connecting ducts, was cut alongside the concrete kerb (projected on to the section drawing in figure 4 as [02]) to a depth of 0.5m from road surface with deeper slots to north and south for the removal of the old, and installation of new gully respectively. These ran to a depth of c. 1.2m from the pavement level (c.39.60m aOD). Cutting of the trench and slots below modern road formation exposed an homogenous, loose mid-brown sand [04] with occasional lenses of gravel which continued below the base of the trench. The only artefactual material recovered from the deposit was a roughly squared sandstone block (0.38m long by 0.26m wide and 0.21m deep). A small quantity of animal bone (fragments of a dog's jaw and skull) was also recovered from the deposit.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

No significant archaeological deposits were seen during the traffic improvement scheme. Layer [04], an homogenous sand, was seen throughout the service trench within the new traffic island. It pre-dated road construction work - but by how much remains uncertain.

## 7. CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Type	Description	Finds
01	Layer	Tarmac road surface	
02	Structure	Concrete kerb blocks	
03	Layer	Bedding for kerb blocks	
04	Layer	Homogenous, mid brown sand with occasional gravel and pebble lenses. At least 1m deep, not bottomed.	Sandstone block Fragments of dog jaw and skull
05	Layer	Old tarmac road surface	
06	Layer	Grey, crushed dolomite road bedding	
07	Cut	Service trench running east-west across traffic island	
08	Fill (of [07])	Concrete	



## 8. PLATES



**Plate 1:** Road surface cut away for the new traffic island.  
Looking north along Watling Street.



**Plate 2:** Excavation for new gully at the south end of the works, to a depth of 1.2m showing road construction and sand [04] below. Looking east. 1m scale.





**Plate 3:** Service trench excavated along the kerbline, gully excavations to either end. Looking north.



**Plate 4:** Excavation for new sign post within the area of the traffic island. 1m scale.



**Plate 5:** Removing the existing gully at the north end of the works. 1m scale.



## APPENDIX 1: MONITORING BRIEF

NCC ref: HE141313  
Our ref: T13/24; 23779

### MINOR TRAFFIC IMPROVEMENT SCHEME, CORBRIDGE MARKET PLACE, NORTHUMBERLAND

#### Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief

#### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Northumberland Conservation has been directly consulted by Northumberland county Council Highways & Neighbourhood Services concerning a minor traffic improvement scheme around Corbridge Market Place (Fig. 1). The works are focussed in Watling Street, to the north-west of St Andrew's church, west of the grade II listed churchyard wall and the grade II listed St Andrew's Cottage
- 1.2 Watling Street forms part of the medieval street pattern for the historic settlement which was focussed on the church of St Andrew and the market place to the south. There was a weekly market at Corbridge from the beginning of the 13<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that the medieval market place was larger than the current one extending to the north and south of Middle Street and potentially around the church. The medieval settlement comprised buildings along the street frontage with narrow burgage plots to the rear and the layout has not changed significantly since that period.
- 1.3 While the structure of the town became fixed either in the late 10<sup>th</sup> or early 11<sup>th</sup> century or after becoming a burgh by at least 1154, the nature and extent of the early medieval settlement in this area is not known and may not conform to the current road pattern. In addition, there is documentary evidence of plots being rebuilt and left open a number of times in the medieval period. Human remains have also been found between Hill Street and St Helen Street and near 41 Hill Street which may indicate that earlier burials extended over a greater area than the current churchyard walls.
- 1.4 Archaeological investigations in other historic settlements in Northumberland have revealed that the wider streets on the historic street pattern can, on occasion, be located on the line of earlier, narrower roads with historic settlement activity present under the modern roads. In addition to potential medieval settlement and road remains, this scheme has the potential to impact on early medieval settlement remains and potential burials associated with the early church. There is also increasing evidence of Roman remains associated with the fort to the west extending into this part of Corbridge.
- 1.5 An Extensive Urban Survey has been produced for Corbridge<sup>1</sup> which provides a detailed summary of the development of the settlement from the prehistoric period onwards.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Default.aspx?page=614>

- 1.6 The proposed works involve:
- The provision of a new gully to a depth of 1.5m below the carriageway with trenches excavated to lay ducts into the existing highway drainage
  - New kerbs for the proposed build out with groundworks to a depth of 300mm
  - New signposts requiring foundations to a depth of 500mm
- 1.7 The groundworks therefore have the potential to impact on archaeological remains associated with historic settlement remains from the early medieval period onwards with the possibility for early medieval or medieval burials and Roman remains. Having taken into consideration the likely extent of groundworks required and the probable presence of existing utilities in this area, Northumberland Conservation has requested that a continuous archaeological watching brief is carried out during the groundworks required for the works (shown in blue on Fig 1).

## 1.8 Purpose of the Brief

- 1.8.1 This brief constitutes Northumberland Conservation's justification for the investigation, its objectives and the strategy and procedures to apply to the programme of archaeological recording.
- 1.8.2 The brief is intended to establish the project parameters to enable an archaeological consultant or contractor to tender for the work. **Once commissioned to undertake the work the archaeological contractor must provide written confirmation that they will comply with the requirements of this brief prior to work commencing.**
- 1.8.3 The archaeological contractor will need to confirm if they intend to use digital or slide and print photography. Contact should be made with the relevant Archives (see sections 3.4 and 4.1) to discuss their requirements **prior to work commencing on site. Details of these requirements should be provided for approval.** *Contractors should therefore ensure that they have made provision for any associated fees as part of any required tender submissions or project costings.*

## 2 Method of work

- 2.1 The purpose of this work is to ensure that important archaeological remains are not destroyed without first being adequately recorded.
- 2.2 The proposed development has the potential to impact on archaeological remains associated with historic settlement remains from the early medieval period onwards with the possibility for early medieval or medieval burials and Roman remains. Having considered the nature, extent and location of the proposed groundwork and the location of potential archaeological remains, it is considered that in this case a watching brief is the appropriate archaeological response. The watching brief should cover the area highlighted in purple on figure 1. **Sufficient time must be provided for the archaeological contractor to excavate and record any archaeological remains that are revealed.**
- 2.3 Should the groundworks not exceed modern disturbance or equally should they exceed the depth at which archaeological remains are present, Northumberland Conservation should be contacted in order to establish whether the watching brief

need continue in these specific areas.

## 2.4 General Standards

2.4.1 All work should be carried out in compliance with the Regional Statement of Good Practice<sup>2</sup> and the codes of conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA)<sup>3</sup> and should follow the IfA Standards for Watching Briefs<sup>4</sup>.

2.4.2 All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles.

2.4.3 All staff must familiarise themselves with the archaeological background of the site, and the results of any previous work in the area, prior to the start of work on site. All staff must be aware of the work required under the specification, and must understand the projects aims and methodologies.

### 2.4.4 Pre-site work preparation

- i) The archaeological contractor must provide written confirmation that they will comply with the requirements of this brief **prior** to work commencing.
- ii) **The archaeological contractor should note that the formulation of an appropriate environmental sampling strategy is a mandatory part of this project. Advice on such a strategy must be obtained from the English Heritage Scientific Advisor for North East England, Dr Jacqui Huntley, English Heritage Offices, Bessie Surtees' House, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 3JF(Tel. 0191 269 1250 or Mobile (preferred contact): 077134 00387).**
- v) **The Great North Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne and ADS (if digital photography is being used) should be contacted to discuss archiving prior to work commencing.**

### 2.4.5 Fieldwork

- i) This observation shall involve the systematic examination and accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and artefacts identified.
- ii) **If archaeological remains are uncovered, the archaeologist should be given the opportunity of excavating and recording the remains before they are destroyed.**
- iii) A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) should be made for all work, using pro forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings should be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate. Where skeletons are encountered, they should be recorded by photography and the use of pro forma skeleton recording sheets.
- iv) The area watched by the archaeologist should be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area. All archaeological deposits and features and at the top and base of all

<sup>2</sup> Yorkshire, The Humber and the North-East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process (25 November 2009)

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *By-Laws: Code of Conduct* (23 October 2008): [http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/iContent/inPages/docs/codes/code\\_conduct.pdf](http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/iContent/inPages/docs/codes/code_conduct.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief* (28 October 2008): <http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/iContent/inPages/docs/codes/watch2.pdf>

- groundworks must be recorded with an **above Ordnance Datum (aOD)** level.
- v) A photographic record of all contexts should be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and should include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs should be kept. **If the archaeological contractor would prefer to use digital photography as standard, the digital photographs will need to be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) for long-term archive storage. ADS will need to be approached prior to the production of the Written Scheme of Investigation (see section 1.5.4) and the digital archiving details included in that document. Contact details can be provided by Northumberland Conservation on request.**
  - vi) In the event of human burials being discovered, the archaeologist will procure and comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Burial Act 1857.
  - vii) **Where any part of a human burial is disturbed, the whole burial must be archaeologically excavated, even if this involves expansion of the trench.**
  - viii) Appropriate procedures under the relevant legislation must be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasure Act 1996.
  - ix) During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts must be stored in the appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this should include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material).

### **3 Contingency arrangements**

- 3.1 In the event of the discovery of archaeological remains which are of a greater number or extent than anticipated, work will cease and Northumberland Conservation and a representative of the developer will be notified. An assessment will be made of the importance of the remains and any provision for their recording or preservation in situ as appropriate.
- 3.2 The contingency for this project has been set at up to 25 person-days.
- 3.3 In the event that hearths, kilns or ovens (of whatever period, date or function) are identified during the watching brief, provision should be made to collect at least one archaeo-magnetic date to be calculated from each individual hearth surface (or in the case of domestic dwellings sites a minimum of one per building identified). Where applicable, samples to be collected from the site and processed by a suitably trained specialist for dating purposes. In the event that such deposits or structures are identified, the Conservation Team should be contacted to discuss the appropriate response. This specific aspect of the sampling strategy should also be discussed in advance with English Heritage as per 'General Standards' above.

### **3.4 Site monitoring and visits**

- 3.4.1 The Assistant County Archaeologist dealing with this application must be informed on the start date and timetable for the watching brief in advance of work commencing.



- 3.4.2 Reasonable access to the site for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological scheme will be afforded to the Assistant County Archaeologist or his/her nominee at all times.
- 3.4.3 Regular communication between the archaeological contractor, the Assistant County Archaeologist and other interested parties must be maintained to ensure the project aims and objectives are achieved.
- 3.4.4 Northumberland Conservation has identified that 2 site visits may be required for the mitigation programme.

#### **4 Post-excavation work and reporting**

##### **4.1 Finds**

- 4.1.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds must be carried out in compliance with the IfA Guidelines for Finds Work<sup>5</sup> and those set by UKIC.
- 4.1.2 The deposition and disposal of artefacts must be agreed with the legal owner and recipient museum **prior** to the work taking place. Where the landowner decides to retain artefacts adequate provision must be made for recording them. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer.
- 4.1.3 All retained artefacts must be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

##### **4.2 Site Archive**

- 4.2.1 Paragraph 141 of the *National Planning Policy Framework* clarifies that Local Planning Authorities should make evidence gathered as part of archaeological mitigation exercises, including any archive, publically accessible. Copies of the primary report should be deposited with the Historic Environment Record and the archive deposited with an agreed local museum.
  - 4.2.2 Archiving work must be carried out in compliance with the IfA Guidelines for Archiving<sup>6</sup>.
  - 4.2.3 The archive and the finds must be deposited in the Great North Museum, within **6 months** of completion of the post-excavation work and report.
  - 4.2.4 Before the commencement of fieldwork, contact should be made with the landowners and with the Great North Museum to make the relevant arrangements. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer.
- 4.2.5 If the archaeological contractor would prefer to use digital photography as standard, the digital photographs will need to be submitted to the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) for long-term archive storage within 6**

<sup>5</sup> Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (28 October 2008):

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/codes/Finds2008.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for the creation, compilation, transfer and deposition of archaeological archives* (October 2008):

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/codes/Archives2009.pdf>

***months of completion of the post-excavation work is and the report.***

- 4.2.6 **Northumberland Conservation will require confirmation that the archive had been submitted in a satisfactory form to the relevant depository.**

#### **4.3 Report**

- 4.3.1 The archaeological consultant or contractor must submit a copy of the report to their client and Northumberland Conservation within 2 months of completion of the work.

- 4.3.2 Northumberland Conservation requires one bound paper copy and one digital copy (in Word or PDF format) of the report.

- 4.3.3 Each page and paragraph should be numbered within the report and illustrations cross-referenced within the text.

- 4.3.4 The report should include as a minimum the following:

- i) Northumberland Conservation reference, OASIS reference number, Archive reference and an 8 figure grid reference
- ii) A summary statement of the results
- iii) A copy of this brief
- iv) A copy of the 'check-list' appended to this brief
- v) A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds
- vi) Above Ordnance Datum levels and levels below current ground level in the text
- vii) A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of at least 1:10 000
- viii) A location plan of the extent of the watching brief within the site. This must be at a recognisable planning scale, and located with reference to the national grid, to allow the results to be accurately plotted on the Historic Environment Record
- ix) Plans and sections of archaeology located at a recognisable planning scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100, as appropriate)
- x) Above Ordnance Datum (aOD) levels included on plans and sections
- xi) Both aOD levels and depth below current ground level to be included within the text
- xii) **Any variation to the above requirements should be approved by Northumberland Conservation prior to work being submitted**

#### **4.4 OASIS**

- 4.4.1 Northumberland Conservation and HER support 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.

- 4.4.2 The archaeological consultant or contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://oasis.ac.uk/>. If the contractors are unfamiliar with OASIS, they are advised to contact Northumberland HER prior to completing the form. Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the HER, Northumberland HER will validate the OASIS form thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website. **The archaeological consultant or contractor must indicate that they agree to this procedure within the**

**specification/project design/written scheme of investigation submitted to Northumberland Conservation for approval**

**4.5 Publication**

4.5.1 A summary should be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' and submitted to Liz Williams, Northumberland HER Officer, by December of the year in which the work is completed.

4.5.2 A short report of the work should also be submitted to a local journal if appropriate and agreed with Northumberland Conservation. If publication is a requirement, the publication report will need to be approved by Northumberland Conservation.

**5 Further Guidance**

5.1 Any further guidance or queries regarding the provision of a specification should be directed to:

Karen Derham  
Assistant County Archaeologist  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall  
Morpeth  
Northumberland  
NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 622655  
Fax: 01670 533409  
e-mail: [karen.derham@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:karen.derham@northumberland.gov.uk)

17/9/15

**FOR COPYRIGHT REASONS, ALL MAPS SUPPLIED BY NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL MUST BE RETURNED TO THEM ON COMPLETION OF THE PROJECT**

### Archaeological Watching Brief Report Check List

Site name:

Archaeological Contractor:

Check List	Contractor	Northumberland Conservation (NC)
Copy of report checklist		
Northumberland Conservation ref.		
OASIS ref.		
Confirmation that all OASIS sections completed incl. submission of grey literature		
Archive reference		
8 figure grid reference		
<b>Results</b>		
Summary statement of the results		
Table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds		
<b>Plans and sections</b>		
Location plan at scale of at least 1:10000		
Plans showing location of archaeological work at recognisable planning scale		
Plans showing location of archaeological work with reference to national grid		
Detailed plans and sections at recognisable planning scale		
Above Ordnance Datum levels and levels below current ground level in the text		
Above Ordnance Datum levels included on plans and sections		
Any variation approved by NC prior to work commencing		

Contractor checked:

NC Officer checked:

Date:

Date: