

NAU Archaeology

Report No.1104

**An Archaeological Watching Brief at St George's Bridge, St
George's Street, Norwich**

245 N

B. Hobbs, March 2006

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BAU 1149

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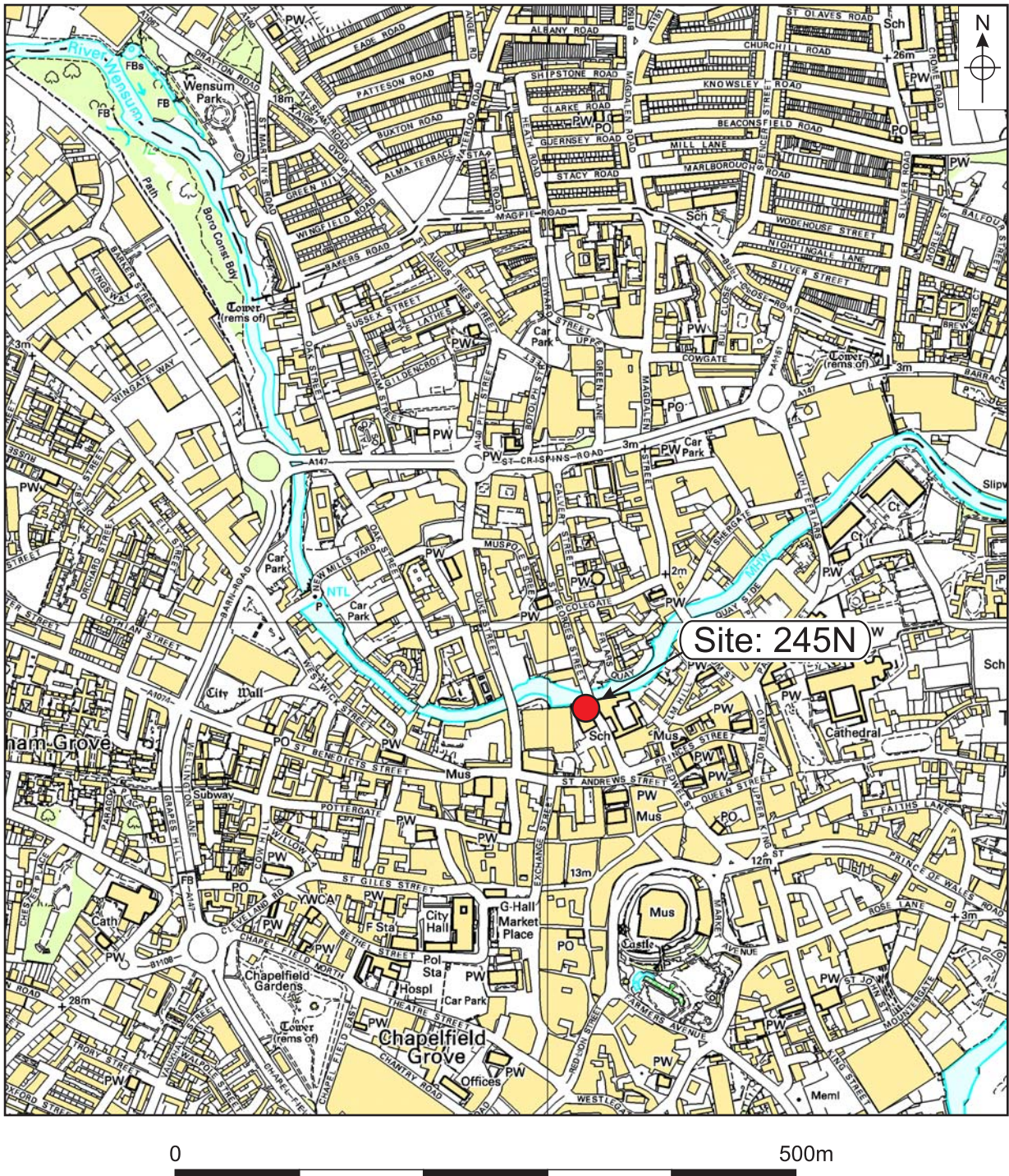


Figure 1. Site location. Scale 1:5000

Local Authority No.100019340

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Location: St George's Bridge, St George's Street, Norwich
District: Norwich
Grid Ref: TG 2306 0886
HER No.: 245N
Date of fieldwork: 19th, 20th and 23rd September 2005

Summary

An archaeological watching brief at St George's Bridge, St George's Street, Norwich was undertaken to observe groundwork during renovation of the south bank.

No features or finds of archaeological interest were observed during the work.

1.0 Introduction

(Fig. 1; Plate 1)

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the south-west river embankment at St George's Bridge, St George's Street, Norwich. An area of embankment 3m by 2m (6 sq. m) was renovated and strengthened.

A river crossing is postulated to have existed in this spot since the late 11th century (Ayers 2003, 83). The current St George's Bridge (originally Blackfriar's Bridge) was however, built in 1783-4 with a single rusticated Portland stone arch and cast-iron railings (Pevsner and Wilson 2002). The bridge has been widened since, probably in the early-to-mid 19th century to accommodate the increase in city traffic.

No archaeological work has previously been carried out on the areas adjacent to the bridge. Although recent archaeological research on an area close by to the south (Percival 2005; Forthcoming) has resulted in the exploration of the historic background of the area.

The watching brief was commissioned by Norwich City Council, City Hall, Norwich.

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a Brief issued by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology (NLA Ref: AJH 09/02/05).

The objective of this watching brief was to record any archaeological evidence revealed during the stripping of vegetation from the south bank of the river, a fairly restricted area measuring c. 3m between the south-west end of the bridge and the east wall of the Norwich School of Art gallery annexe and c. 2m between the embankment and the river (Plate. 1).



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Plate 1. Clearing work in progress, looking north-west

Colour and monochrome photographs were taken of the clearing phase of the work showing the embankment prior to being backfilled with material to consolidate the bank.

Site conditions were good with dry and bright weather. Access to the area of the embankment being cleared was restricted and somewhat hazardous. Consequently all observations of the site were made from the side of the bridge.

The Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service currently hold the site archive, in accordance with the relevant policy on archiving standards.

2.0 Observations

(Plate 2)

The soil of the embankment was loose silt and gravel, c. 3m in depth and appeared to be fairly recent made ground containing concrete and fragments of brickwork for consolidation. The concrete embankment beneath the level of the pavement to the south was substantial with several iron tie rods protruding from it.



Plate 2. Cleared bank showing *in situ* wooden revetment, looking south-west

At the base of the embankment slope a length of wood was observed running along the bank from the foot of the bridge to the base of the gallery annexe building for the purpose of retaining the earth bank. This appeared to be constructed of relatively modern planks and may date from the time the bridge was widened, or from when the commercial premises, now the gallery annexe, was built. This planking, although somewhat warped by the steel shuttering, was retained in place.

No other features or finds of archaeological interest were observed.

3.0 Conclusions

The clearing of the vegetation from the south-west embankment did not reveal any structural aspects of the bridge or any evidence of earlier structures. The riverbank appears to be modern in composition and has been formed during the continuous practice of consolidation.

Bibliography

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Acknowledgements

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