

# **BAMBURGH RESEARCH PROJECT**



## **NORTH BEACH, LOW HAUXLEY, NORTHUMBERLAND:**

### **REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING**

Compiled for Dickman Limited by The Bamburgh Research Project: Commercial Projects  
Section

BRP 10/06b

May 2011

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*Figure 1 Site location*

*Figure 2 Plan of the New Build*

*Plate 1: Development area stripped, facing south east*

*Plate 2: One of the midden layers, 2005, facing east*

**SUMMARY**

*This report presents the results of the archaeological monitoring programme undertaken by the Bamburgh Research Project on behalf of Mr Andrew Dickman of Dickman Limited between December 2010 and January 2011 at North Beach, Low Hauxley, Northumberland. Monitoring of the groundworks associated with the erection of a new dwelling revealed dune build-up and some late post-medieval midden material but failed to reveal any remains of any antiquity.*

**NORTH BEACH, LOW HAUXLEY,  
NORTHUMBERLAND:**

**REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
MONITORING**

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

1.0.1 This report has been compiled by The Bamburgh Research Project for Mr Andrew Dickman of Dickman Limited and sets out the results of the archaeological monitoring undertaken between December 2010 and January 2011, during the groundworks associated with the construction of a new dwelling at North Beach, Low Hauxley, Northumberland. The work was undertaken in line with a Written Schedule of Investigation compiled by the Bamburgh Research Project in October 2010 in response to a brief issued by the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team. Planning reference number is: A/2008/0541 and the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team number is: A20/1; 8991. The OASIS number is bamburgh1-101948.

**2.0 THE SITE**

**2.1 Location**

2.1.1 North Beach lies in the north east corner of the small settlement of Low Hauxley, Northumberland, some 2km south east of Amble. The site lies on the east side of the lane between the lane and the beach (NGR NU 2860 0285) (Figures 1 and 2).

**2.2 Archaeological background to the site**

2.2.1 The present site lies immediately to the west of the coastal strip in an area that has produced considerable evidence of prehistoric activity. Such material includes Mesolithic midden deposits as well as peat deposits found to overly Bronze Age burials to the east of the Low Hauxley nature reserve, some 700m to the south of the present site. In addition a Bronze Age rapier and flints have been recovered from the town of Amble to the north of the site and a series of undated burials have been recorded at 5 Hauxley Links. The presence of peat deposits including a preserved tree stump in the coastal strip also indicates considerable potential for palaeoenvironmental material to be recovered from the site.

2.2.2 Link House and a lifeboat station are present to the immediate south of the present site on the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition of the Ordnance Survey, but there is no indication of any buildings on the site itself. A concrete pillbox is present to the north of the site indicating some potential for identifying material associated with the 20<sup>th</sup> century defence of the Northumberland Coast.

### 3.0 METHODS

#### 3.1 Monitoring during excavation

3.1.1 A suitably experienced archaeologist, familiar with the archaeological background to the site, was present to record any items of interest that were revealed. All work was carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IfA 2010) and followed the IfA Standards for Watching Briefs (IfA 2008). The work undertaken conformed to the methodology listed below.

#### 3.2 General standards

3.2.1 All archaeological features identified during the monitoring, would be sample excavated according to their type and form:

50% of all discrete features.

50% of waterlogged deposits.

25% of stratified deposits.

25% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill

10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill

3.2.2 A 40 litre bulk palaeoenvironmental sample would be taken from all features recognised as suitable for the preservation of palaeoenvironmental remains.

3.2.3 Secure contexts would be sampled for dating where appropriate, whether on site or as sub samples of bulk samples.

3.2.4 Pottery and Animal Bone would be collected as bulk samples whilst significant artefacts would be three-dimensionally recorded prior to processing. All finds would be recorded and processed according to the BRP system and submitted for post-excavation assessment. Finds recovery and storage strategies were in accordance with published guidelines (English Heritage 1995 and IfA Guidelines for Finds Work). Had artefacts of gold or silver been recovered they would be treated in accordance with the 1996 Treasure Act and appropriate procedures would be followed.

3.2.5 In the event of Human burials being revealed they would be left *in situ* and treated in an appropriate manner. Consultation with the County Archaeological Officer would be sought to determine further action.

3.2.6 Any archaeological features encountered would be hand-cleaned, excavated and recorded:

1. A photographic record of the site was taken using black and white print, colour slide film at 35mm format. In addition a digital photographic record was compiled.
2. A written description of features was compiled using the BRP *pro forma* context recording system.

- 3.2.8 Arrangements will be made with the appropriate museum for the deposition of the site archive within 6 month of the completion of the post-excavation report.

## **4.0 RESULTS**

### **4.1 Monitoring during excavation**

- 4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken intermittently between Monday 11<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> January 2010. Depth of excavation varied between 1m, to the base of the foundations, at the north side of the excavation to 1.5m at the south side, where embanked soil was stripped to level the ground prior to the foundations being excavated.
- 4.1.2 The subsoil comprised a light yellowish-brown sand deposit (1004). Cut into this layer at the north end of the site a curving ditch feature (1008) was identified extending across the site on a north to south alignment for 1.2m and 8m east to west. The feature was concave in profile and was 0.35m deep. It contained a single fill (1006), a dark grey sand that contained porcelain pot sherds and which seemed to be rich in coal dust. The feature was overlain by a mid brownish-grey silty clay (1003) that contained moderate clinker slag, coal, glass and fragments of brick and tile and one corroded iron bolt. An aeolian sand layer (1002) separated this midden layer from a further midden deposit (1001), that comprising a dark greyish-brown and black silty sand which contained frequent sea shells, limpets and mussels and late post-medieval pot sherds. The sand layer may represent either a hiatus in deposition or perhaps even a storm event. This depositional sequence, which was up to 0.8m thick, was overlain by the topsoil (1000) a light greyish-brown silty sand up to 0.3m thick.
- 4.1.3 An area in the north west, separate to the house foundation, was excavated to provide services to the development. A series of deposits were revealed that resembled those in the main construction area. The sand dune was exposed, as context (2007) essentially the same as layer (1004), a light yellowish-brown natural sand deposit. This was overlain by (2006) a mid-greyish brown sand that was in turn overlain by a layer of fire waste, (2005), that comprised a mid orangey-brown burnt clay with a substantial content of ash, coal and clinker. A further layer of aeolian sand (2004) separated this layer from a further deposit of black sand and cinder, context (2003), which contained glass, coal and white porcelain pot sherds, which was sealed by the topsoil (2000).

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.0.1 The monitoring exposed a series of late post-medieval middens interleaved within the formation of the upper part of the dune system. No archaeological features nor cultural remains of significant antiquity were encountered during the course of this monitoring programme. Although archaeological features and remains of importance have been encountered elsewhere within the coastal zone in this part of Northumberland, the absence of any significant archaeological remains in this case is likely to be due to the the limited area of excavation.

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## **7.0 REFERENCES**

### **Published and unpublished sources**

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English Heritage *Management of Archaeological Projects 2*, 1991.  
English Heritage *A strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds*. Ancient  
Monuments Laboratory, 1995.  
IFA 2000 Code of Conduct  
IFA 2001 Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.





Figure 1 Site Location

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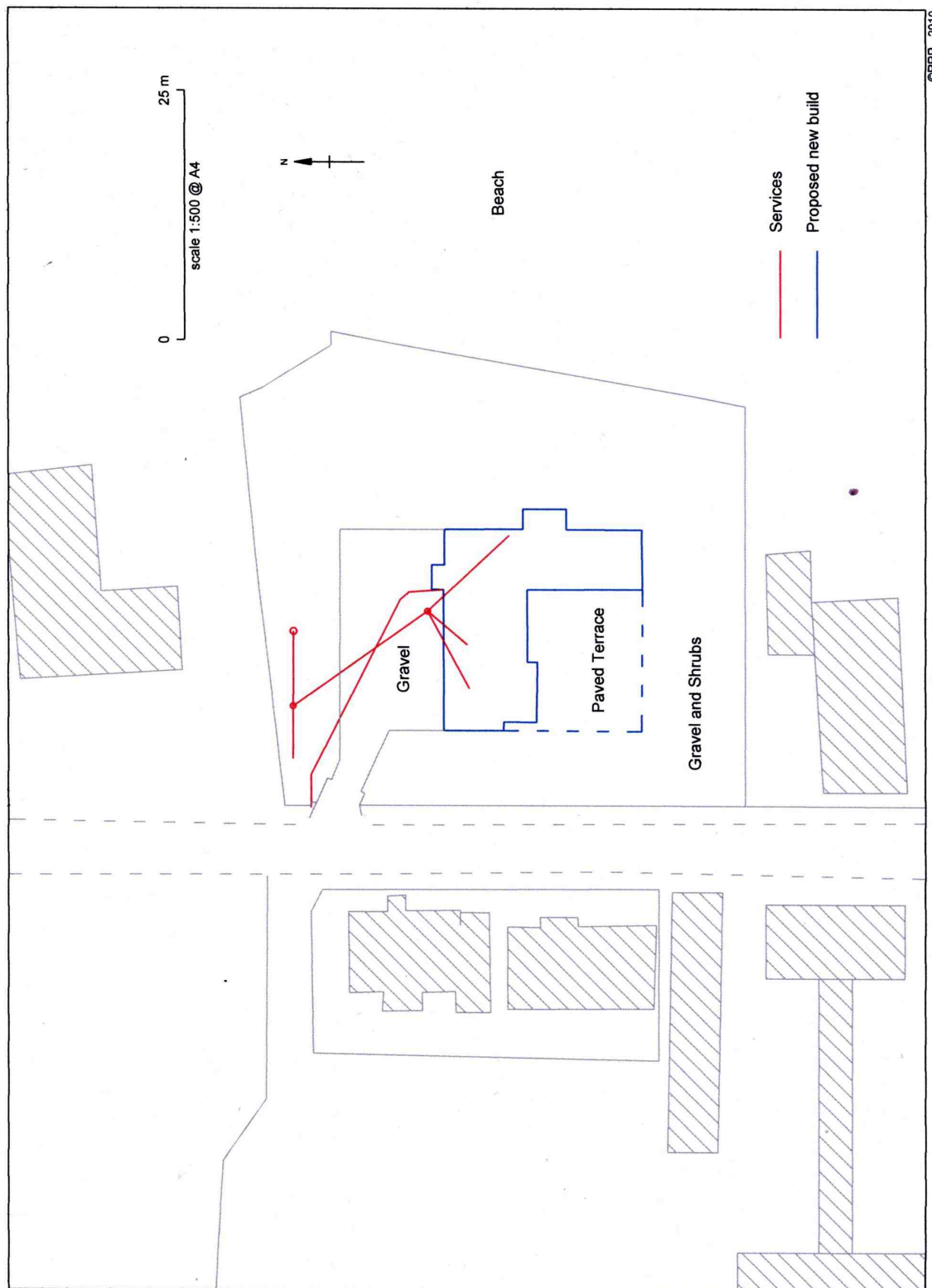


Figure 2 Plan of new build



*Plate 1: Development area stripped, facing south east*



*Plate 2: One of the midden layers, 2005, facing east*