

**An Archaeological Evaluation on land
adjacent to The Blackbird Inn in
Ponteland, Northumberland**



Recording Test Pit 2 towards the front of the Blackbird Inn

ARS Ltd Report No. 2011/125

December 2011

OASIS No.: archaeol5-116178

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Executive Summary

In December 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. were commissioned by Walsingham Planning to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to The Blackbird Inn pub in Ponteland, Northumberland, prior to development. The proposed development involves alterations and extensions to the west elevation of the property which is a Grade II listed building with 13th or 14th century origins. Due to the archaeologically sensitive nature of the building it was advised that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation be carried out.*

Two evaluation trenches and two test pits were dug to the west of the site with a further test pit being dug to the east at the front of the property. None of the trenches or test pits revealed any archaeological finds, features or buried land surfaces.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. In December 2011 Archaeological Research Services Ltd. were commissioned by Walsingham Planning to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land adjacent to The Blackbird Inn pub in Ponteland, Northumberland. The client consulted the Northumberland Conservation team at a pre-application stage with regards to archaeological issues that were involved with a future application for the proposed development. It was therefore advised that a pre-determination archaeological evaluation be carried out.
- 1.2. The proposed development involves alterations and extensions to the west elevation of the property which is a Grade II* listed building with 13th or 14th century origins. Part of an original manorial site also survives. In order for the extension to be built, a smaller 20th century extension must first be demolished.

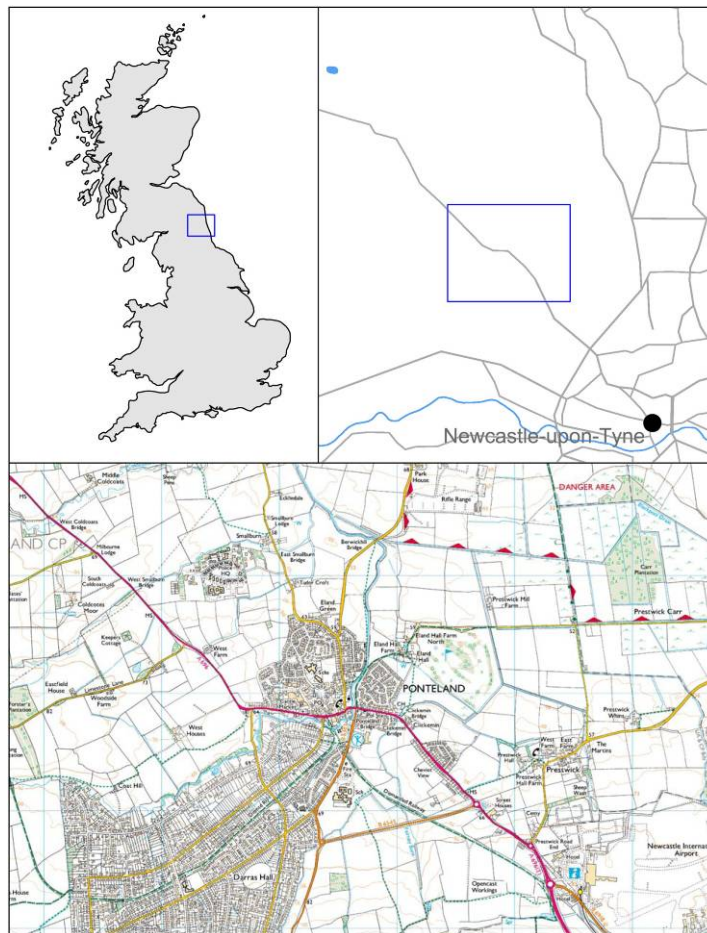


Fig. 1 Location map of the development site.

2. Location and Geology

- 2.1 The site is situated in Ponteland and is centred at NZ 16536 72998. It sits approximately 150 metres to the north of Main Street, which runs from east to west through the centre of Ponteland, and approximately 8.5km to the north west of the centre of Newcastle. The bedrock geology of the area comprises Yoredale Group limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone with overlying superficial deposits of clay, silt and sand.

3. Background

- 3.1. The Blackbird Inn in Ponteland was originally built as a manor house and may have been destroyed as early as 1388 by the Scottish Army. Today, the earliest surviving part of the Blackbird Inn is the medieval tower to the south of the complex. Around 1600, Mark Errington altered the tower and reduced it to its present height. He also added a stack on to the east wall to heat the ground and first floor chambers and inserted mullion windows. It is thought that the tower would have formed the parlour wing to a hall range at this time. During the 17th century, a two storeyed domestic range was built on the north side of the original tower, and doorways were constructed at ground and first floor levels. By around 1900 the northern range had been converted into use as an inn however by 1920 the tower was a ruin and was without a roof. It remained in this state until 1935 when it was restored and became part of the inn.
- 3.2. In addition to the inn itself, Ponteland contains a number of designated sites. Fifteen of these sites lie within a 500m radius of the Blackbird Inn. These include listed buildings such as St. Mary's Parish Church and The Seven Stars Public House. One Scheduled Ancient Monument, Vicars Peel also lies in very close proximity to the development site.
- 3.3. A recent Heritage Statement (Mora-Ottomano 2011) discusses the background to the site in greater detail.

4. Aims and Objectives

- 4.1. The aim of the archaeological evaluation was to gather sufficient information to establish the extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological features and deposits within the area of proposed development, and to record any features or deposits at an appropriate level. Prior to the evaluation there was no information available that provided details on the nature of buried archaeological deposits in the immediate area surrounding the Blackbird Inn.

5. Methodology

- 5.1. The archaeological evaluation took the form of two evaluation trenches and three test pits. The positioning of the trenches was decided upon in order to target the area of the proposed extension. However, prior to the commencement of the evaluation a CAT scan survey revealed the presence of services which meant that two of the 1m x 1m test pits at the rear of the building were combined to form a 2m x 1m test pit (Test Pit 1). All work was undertaken in accordance with the Specification for Archaeological Evaluation, approved by Northumberland CC (SW 2009) and a Written Scheme of Investigation (see Appendices).
- 5.2. The trenches were opened by machine using a toothless ditching bucket in level spits to a maximum depth of 1.2m, at which point the trenches were examined and cleaned by hand. All machine excavation was carried out under careful archaeological supervision.
- 5.3. The deposits were recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation. Each context was recorded on pro-forma records which included the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour,

texture and consistency); interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers.

- 5.4. Each trench was planned at 1:50. Trench sides were also drawn in section at a scale of 1:20. All deposits and the base of each trench were levelled and heights are expressed in metres above Ordnance Datum.
- 5.5. A photographic record was maintained including photographs of each trench. All images were taken in black and white print, colour print and digital format, and contain a graduated photographic scale.

6. Evaluation Results

6.1 Trench One

- 6.1.1 Trench 1, measuring 5m x 1m, was located to the west of the existing building and was orientated from north to south. Dark grey topsoil with turf (001) covered the trench to a maximum depth of 0.3m and overlay a layer of made ground (002) which consisted of orange/grey coarse textured silty clay with modern brick, stone and modern waste inclusions with a depth of 0.42m. Within this layer of made ground was a lead water pipe running diagonally across the trench measuring approximately 0.04m in diameter. Natural orange/grey fine textured sand (006) covered the base of the trench and continued beyond the limit of the excavation.

6.2 Trench Two

- 6.2.1 Trench 2, measuring 5m x 1m, was located to the north of Trench 1 and ran from east to west. Dark grey topsoil with turf (001) covered the trench to a depth of 0.3m and overlay a layer of made ground (002) which consisted of orange/grey coarse textured silty clay with modern brick, stone and modern waste inclusions and a maximum depth of 0.74m. A layer of dark orange coarse textured sand (012) with large pebble inclusions lay across the base of Trench 2 at the eastern end and continued beyond the limit of excavation. Natural orange/grey fine textured sand (006) covered the base of the trench and continued beyond the limit of the excavation. Towards the western end of the trench an electric cable was encountered during excavation. Therefore, for health and safety reasons, the length of the trench was shortened slightly to ensure that the cable was not fully exposed.

6.3 Test Pit 1

- 6.3.1. Test Pit 1 was located at the west of the existing building to the south of both Trench 1 and Trench 2. There were originally supposed to be two 1m x 1m test pits at the west of the building but due to the presence of services they were combined to create a 2m x 1m test pit (Test Pit 1). Dark grey topsoil with turf (001) covered the trench with a maximum depth of 0.3m and overlay a layer of made ground (002) which consisted of orange/grey coarse textured silty clay with modern brick, stone and modern waste inclusions with a depth of 0.3m. Below this was a thin layer of black, medium textured silty clay (003) with a maximum depth of 0.14m. Within Test Pit 1 a 0.1m wide clay pipe (004) believed to be a field drain was encountered running from the east facing section of the test pit into the west facing section. Natural orange/grey fine textured sand (006) covered the base of the test pit and continued beyond the limit of the excavation.

6.4 Test Pit 2

- 6.4.1. Test Pit 2 was located at the east of the existing building and was positioned between two bollards in between the pub car park tarmac and paved area. The test pit measured 1m x 1m. Black tarmac (007) with a depth of 0.03m covered a thin layer of hardcore (008) that had a depth of 0.05m. Below this was another hardcore layer consisting of crushed red stone (009) with a depth of 0.06m. This context overlay a 0.25m deep layer of grey/brown coarse texture clayey sand with large stone inclusions (010). Natural orange/grey fine textured sand (006) covered the base of the test pit and continued beyond the limit of the excavation.

7. Discussion

- 7.1. The Blackbird Inn in Ponteland is of regional-national significance and has been designated a Grade II* Listed Building. The setting in which it is located also bears architectural and historic significance as it is within a Conservation Area including further listed buildings as well as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Vicar's Pele tower. The archaeological evaluation was primarily intended to assess whether or not the proposed development will impact upon any surviving significant archaeological remains. The impact of the 20th century extension has not been established but, in addition, the original hall range is thought to run under the southern end of the proposed extension.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1. There were no archaeological finds, features or buried land surfaces encountered during the watching brief.

9. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

- 9.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.
- 9.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

10. Statement of Indemnity

- 10.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

11. Acknowledgements

- 11.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Karen Derham, Northumberland Assistant County Archaeologist and Roberta Cameron of Walsingham planning.

12. References

Websites:

British Geological Survey: <http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

Mora-Ottomano, A. *The Blackbird Inn, Ponteland. Heritage Statement*. Archaeological Research Services Report 2011/118.

APPENDIX I – CONTEXT REGISTER

Context No.	Within	Description
001	Trench 1, Trench 2, Test Pit 1	Topsoil with turf
002	Trench 1, Trench 2, Test Pit 1	Made ground containing brick, stone and waste
003	Test Pit 1	Thin layer of black deposit
004	Test Pit 1	Clay field drain
005	Test Pit 1	Layer of stone
006	Across whole site	Natural sand
007	Test Pit 2	Car park tarmac surface
008	Test Pit 2	Black hardcore
009	Test Pit 2	Red hardcore
010	Test Pit 2	Clayey sand with large stone inclusions
011	Trench 1	Lead water pipe
012	Trench 2	Sandy/pebbly deposit

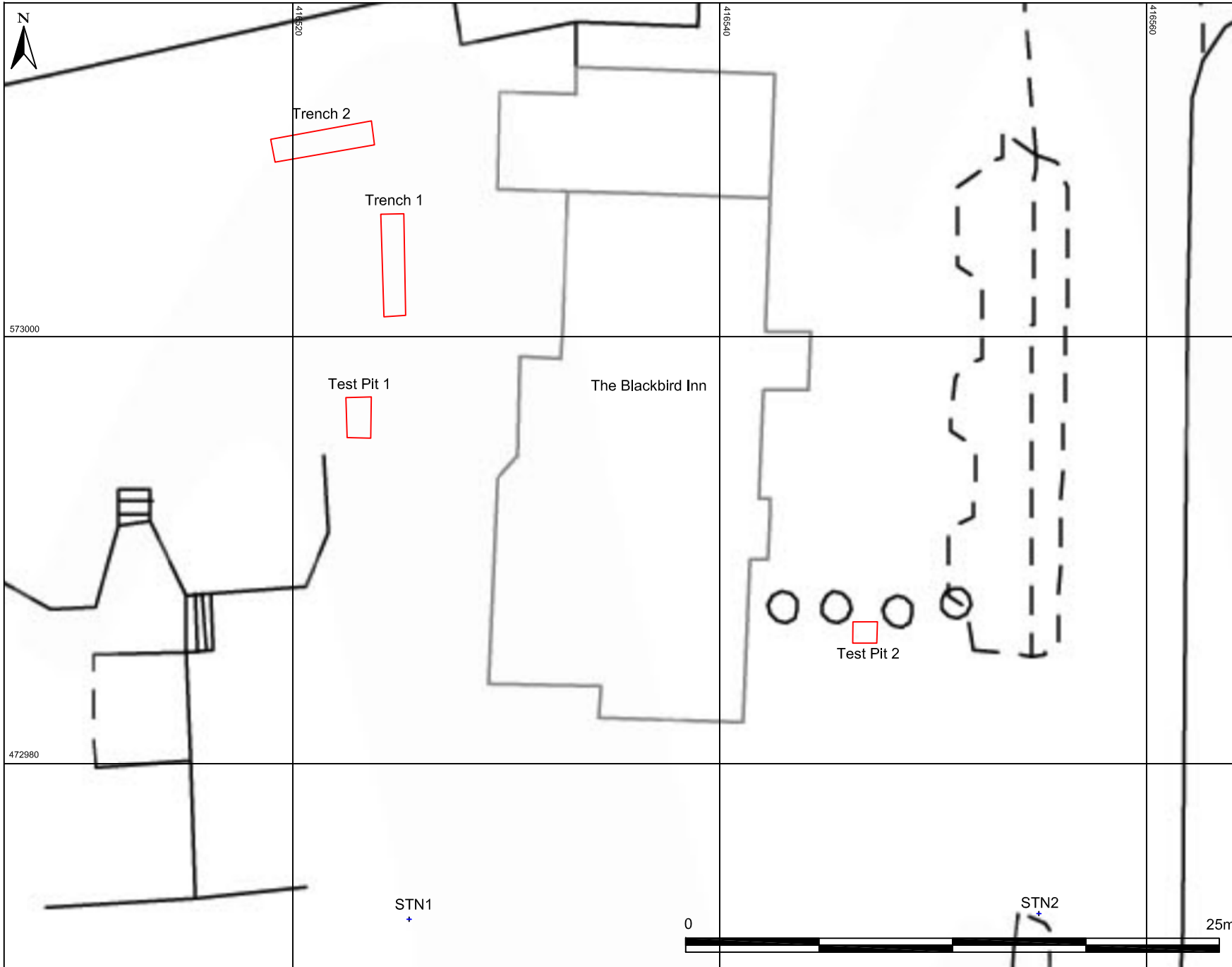


Figure 2: Site plan showing trench and test pit locations

Scale = 1:250 at A4

Key:

- Trench/Test Pit
- + Station Point

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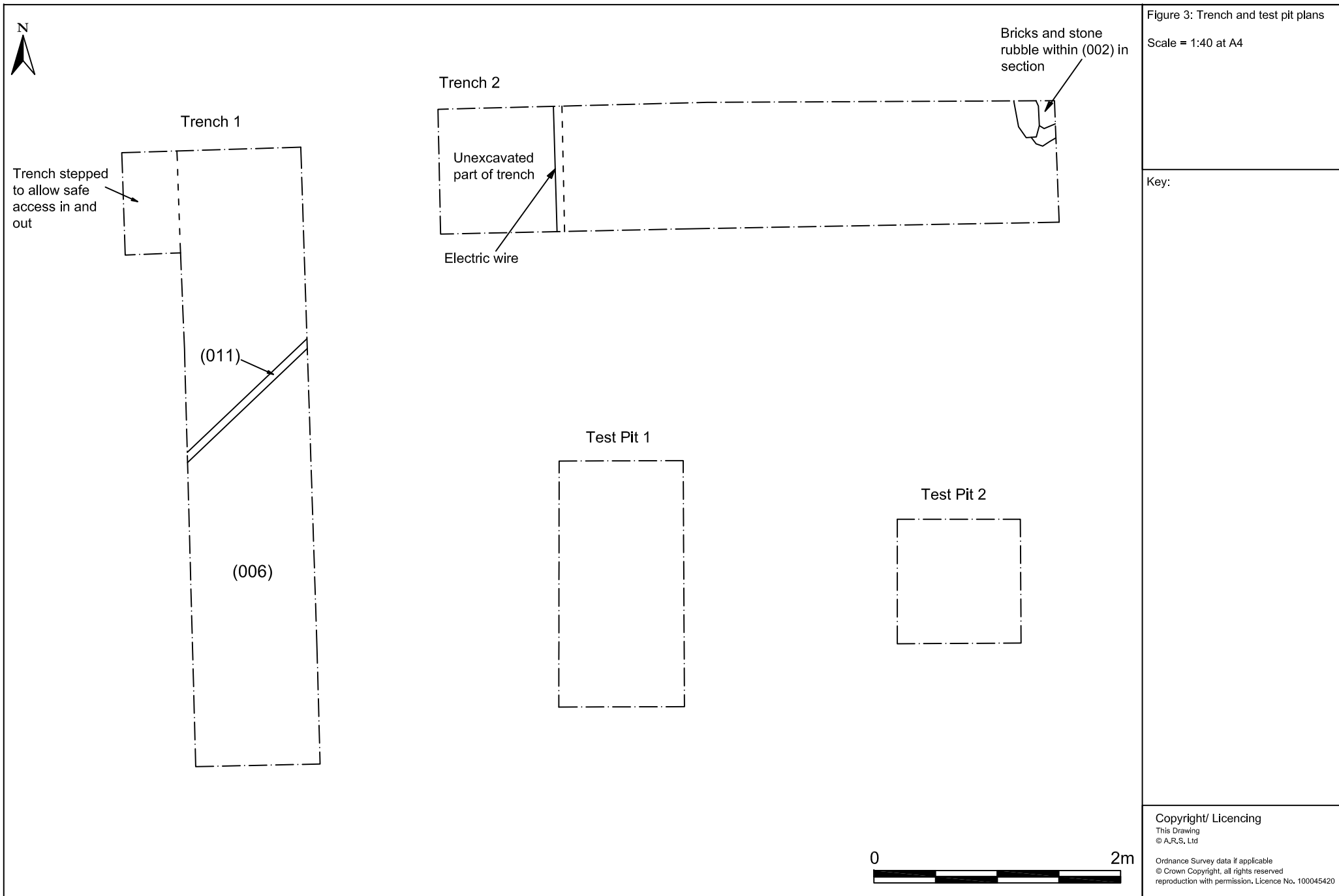


Figure 3: Trench and test pit plans

Scale = 1:40 at A4

Key:

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Figure 4: Trench and test pit sections

Scale = 1:20 at A3

Key:

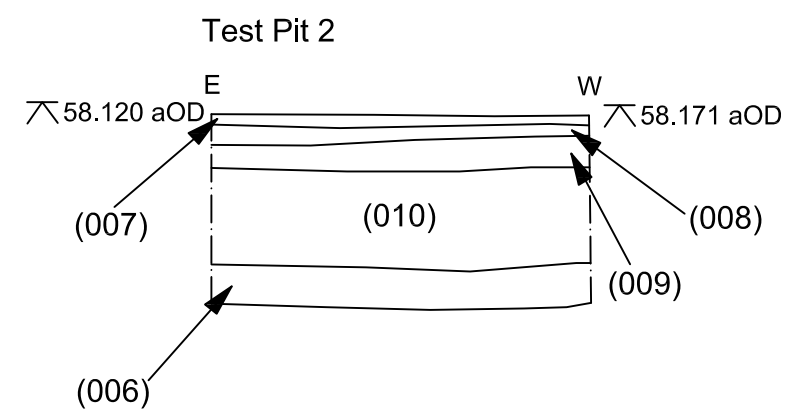
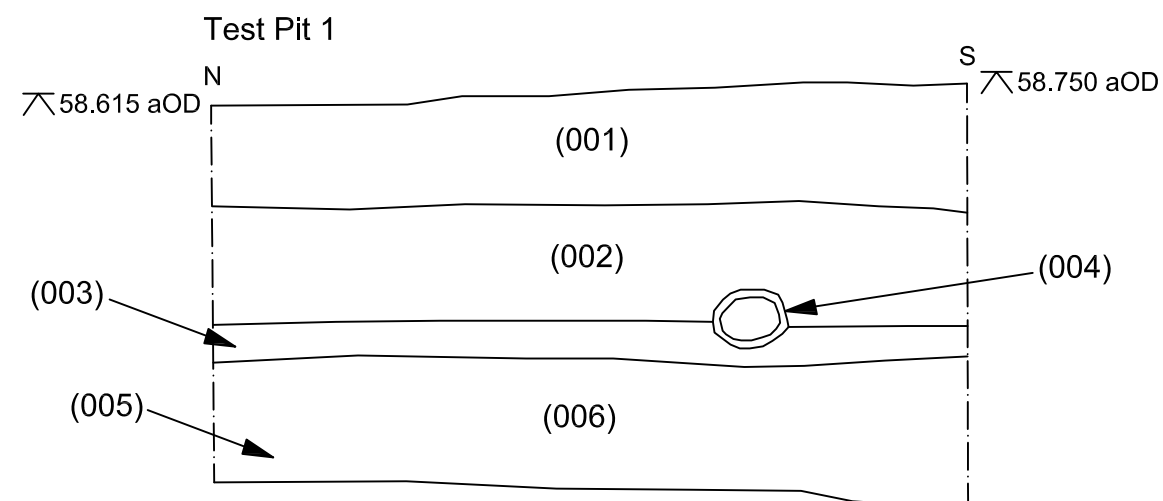
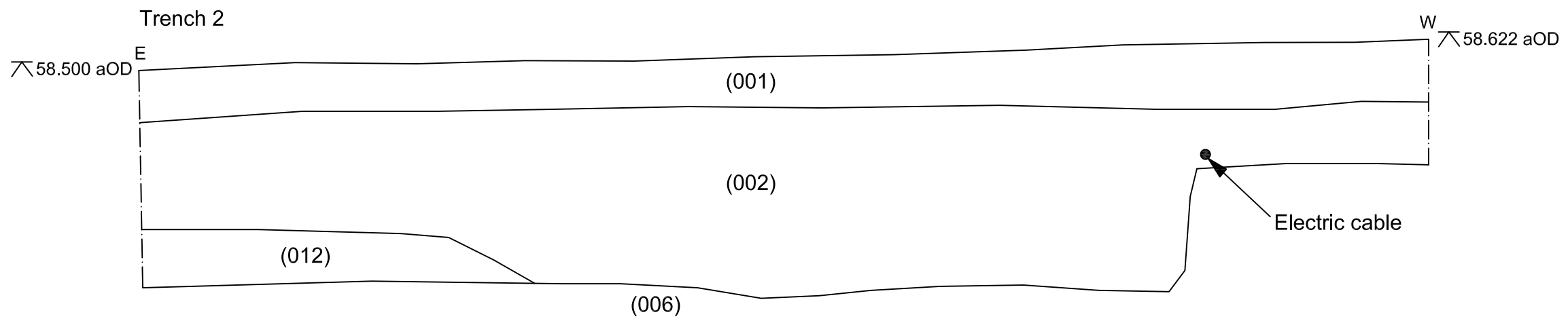
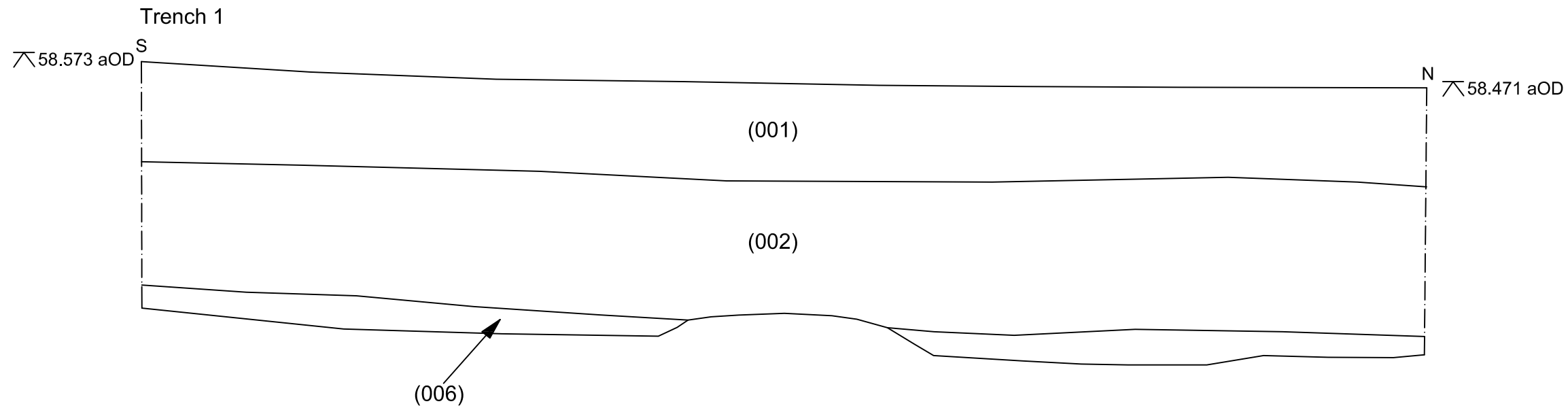




Figure 5. Trench 1, looking north. Scale = 2m.



Figure 6. Trench 2, looking east. Scale = 2m.



Figure 7. Test Pit 1, looking north. Scale = 2m.



Figure 8. Test Pit 2, looking south. Scale = 1m.

APPENDIX III - PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Shot No.	Direction	Scale	Description	Taken By
1	N	2m	Test Pit 1, general shot	PC
2	E	2m	Test Pit 1 W facing section	PC
3	N	2m	Trench 1, general shot	CS
4	E	2m	Trench 1 W facing section	CS
5	S	1m	Test Pit 2, general shot	CS
6	E	2m	Trench 2, general shot	CS
7	N	2m + 1m	Trench 2, S facing section	CS

The Blackbird Inn, Ponteland, Northumberland.

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation Trenching



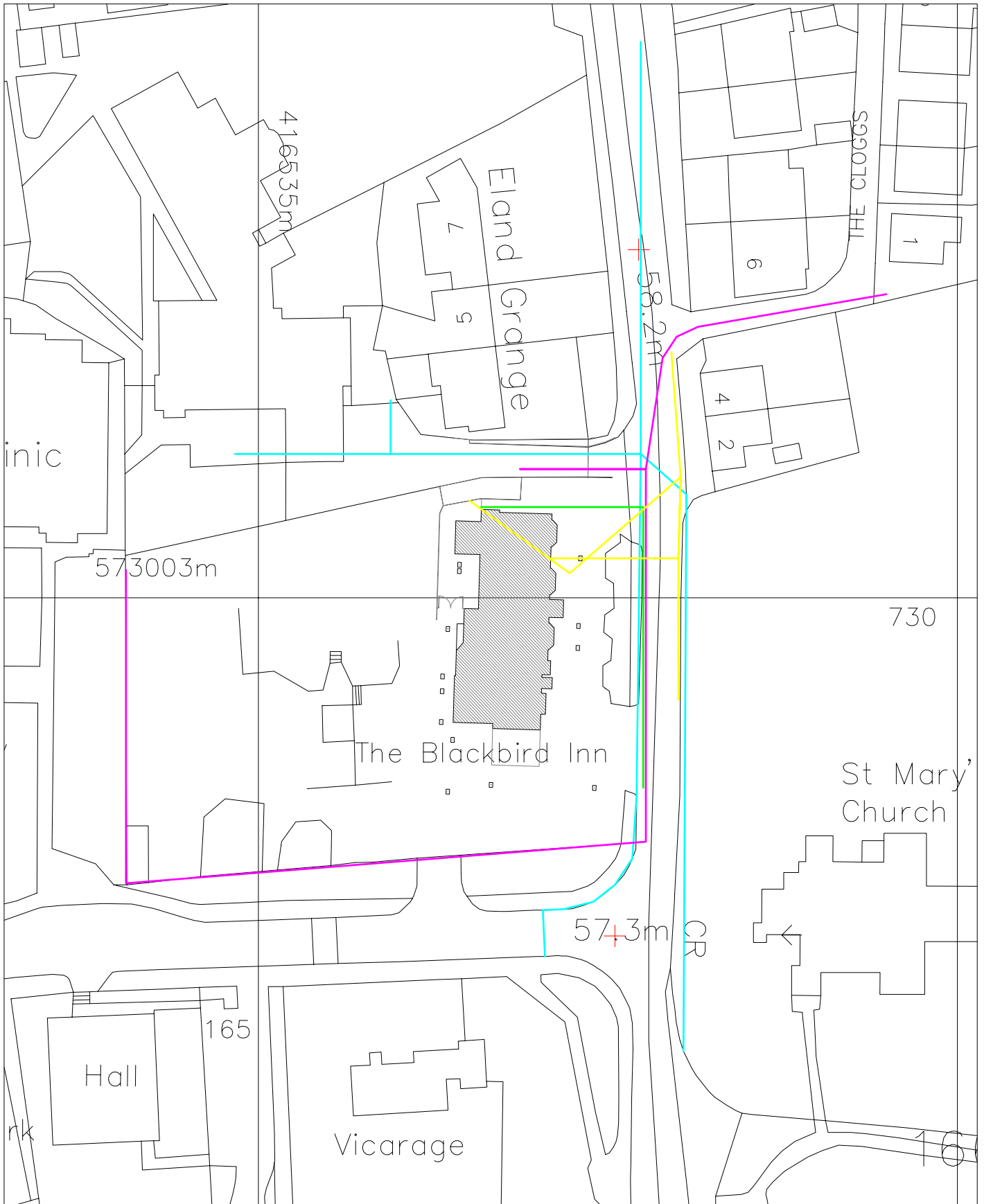
Archaeological Research
Services Ltd

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This scheme of works relates to proposed alterations and extensions to the west elevation of the Blackbird Inn, Ponteland, a Grade II* listed building with 13th or 14th century origins and all that survives of an original manorial site (Fig.1). The proposals involve the construction of a series of extensions to the west of the existing building following the demolition of a smaller 20th century extension. The impact of the existing 20th century extension on archaeological remains has not been established and the survival of remains under those extensions cannot be fully discounted. In addition, while the original hall range is thought to run under the southern end of the proposed extension, associated remains could be located across a much wider area. The proposed development therefore has the potential to impact on significant remains associated with the original manorial site.
- 1.2. The Northumberland Conservation team has been consulted by the client at a pre-application stage concerning the archaeological issues involved with a future application for the proposed alterations and extensions. Northumberland have advised that pre-determination archaeological evaluation informed by a Heritage Statement for the building and an appraisal of relevant Historic Environment Record information is required. Subsequently, ARS Ltd have been approached by Walsingham Planning to undertake the evaluation and also carry out an associated Heritage Statement (Appendix 1). The heritage statement, plus a consideration of the relevant HER information (Appendix 1 and Section 2 below) has been used to inform this document, will inform the subsequent evaluation work and support the subsequent planning application.
- 1.3. This document is a written scheme of investigation (WSI) confirming the nature of the archaeological trenching to be undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) at the Blackbird Inn for approval by Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist with the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team.

2. Archaeological Background: The Blackbird Inn

- 2.1 The Blackbird Inn is a Grade II* Listed Building (LBS Number: 238837) and is also located within the conservation Area of Ponteland. The Listed Building entry reads as follows:
- 2.2 ‘The Blackbird Inn 27.8.52 GV II* Formerly a manor house, now an inn. Medieval tower, altered and house added mid C17 for Mark Errington. Restored early C20. Tower large random rubble with stone slate roof. Attached house roughly-dressed stone and Welsh slate roof. Old brick chimneys. Tower, on left, has large projecting chimney to left with stone base rising to 2 tall brick shafts. To right a projecting 3-storey gabled frontispiece, blank on ground floor and oversailing above on 2 large rounded corbels Two 2-light double-chamfered mullioned windows above, with strings rising to form hoodmoulds Gabled roof with kneelers. Between these projections a C20 door and, on 1st floor a 2-light



Archaeological Research Services Ltd
 Angel House
 Portland Square
 Bakewell
 Derbyshire
 DE45 1HB

Figure 1
 Location

Key:

- BT Openreach
- Gas line
- Water line
- Electricity cable

Site Code: Blackbird
 Date: 08/12/2011

Notes:

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window with hoodmould and panel above inscribed M:E: for Mark Errington. 3-bay attached house to right has central gabled porch with round-headed door in architrave. Stone slate roof. M.E. inscribed on lintel of original Tudor- arched doorway within. Flanking canted bay windows and 2-light windows above have double-chamfered surrounds. This detail is now all C19. On left return 4-light mullioned windows with hoodmoulds on ground and first floors. 2-light window above. Interior of tower has tunnel-vaulted ground floor and a large C17 fireplace; the lintel carved with crenellations.'

- 2.3 The earliest part of the Blackbird Inn dates to the late 13th or early 14th century - the two and a half storeyed tower of coursed sandstone forming the southern end range of the present complex. The tower is all that survives of the original manorial site. It is likely there was an adjoining building to the west - possibly the hall range. The tower was remodelled and reduced to its present height in c.1600. This building work is attributed to Mark Errington whose inscribed initials appear on the building.
- 2.4 A stack was built on to the east wall heating the ground and first floor chambers and the present mullion windows were inserted. A two storeyed gabled bay was built over a closet at first and attic floor level. It is probable that the tower formed the parlour wing to a hall range at this time. In the 17th century a two storeyed domestic range was built on the north side of the original tower and doorways inserted at ground and first floor levels. By c. 1900 the northern range had been converted into use as an inn. The tower was ruinous by 1920 and lay as a roofless ruin until c. 1935 when it was restored and incorporated into the inn (RCHME 1991, Ryder 1995).
- 2.5 The heritage asset as a whole may be judged as being of national significance, due to the Grade II* listing. However, the southern range containing the remnants of the medieval tower represent the main significance, whereas the 17th century northern range and later extensions bear lesser historic and architectural importance.
- 2.6 As part of the present application a Heritage Statement for the Blackbird Inn (Moro-Ottomano, 2011) has been compiled. This document, included as Appendix 1 to this WSI , discusses the Blackbird Inn and appraises its significance. Surrounding heritage assets listed on the Historic Environment record and previous archaeological events are also considered (see also section 3 below). The Heritage Statement's findings can now be summarised.
- 2.7 The Blackbird Inn incorporates a substantial amount of medieval masonry possibly related to a former tower of a larger complex, such as a manor, rather than deriving merely from a pele or bastle tower. The remains correspond to the present southern range which despite later alterations is in good state of preservation. It is possible that the original medieval manor was largely destroyed by the Scottish army in 1388. Subsequently, the tower was remodelled and reduced to its present height in c. 1600 and a chimney stack added to it to heat the chambers at ground and first floor levels with elegant fire places. This building work is attributed to Mark Errington whose inscribed initials appear on the building.
- 2.8 The site is of regional-national significance as it has been designated Grade II* Listed Building; and the setting in which it is located also bears architectural and historic significance as it is within a Conservation Area including further listed buildings as well as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, the Vicar's Pele tower.
- 2.9 The majority of the proposed alterations will be to the rear of the brick-built extension which may be regarded as minor in the context of the overall development. It is intended to retain the existing medieval and post-medieval fabrics. Sympathetic alterations will have

little impact on the significance of the heritage asset and the conversion of the building will enhance the Listed Building and its setting, by preventing the site falling into disuse. However, a doorway is intended to be inserted between the northern range and the 19th century brick-built rear abutment. This will have an impact on the 16th century fabric although of no severe degree.

- 2.10 Although previous surveys suggest that the former manorial structure might have extended to the west of the southern range or tower; this statement reviewed the evidence and proposes instead that the northern range might have been erected within the site of the remainder manor; and probably reused existing masonry including part of its former foundation. This is based on a series of evidence discussed in the building analysis, of which the most supportive evidence might be the fact that the north wall of the southern range or tower is much thinner than its counterparts, resembling a partition wall rather than an exterior wall. Furthermore, the plan itself is somewhat trapezoidal with the south wall being the shortest and the only containing externally reinforced quoins. Thus the south wall might have been the end of the tower which might have incorporated a northern range, where the present structure lays. Thus any ground-works proposed within the northern range should be regarded as sensitive areas and therefore should be archaeologically monitored and appropriately dealt with.
- 2.11 At present there is no information that provides details on the nature of sub-surface deposits in the immediate environs of The Blackbird Inn. Due to Medieval and later building and subsequent truncation because of the public house car-park it might be expected that any preserved deposits are now shallowly buried/truncated, however this is presently a conjectural notion. Despite this possibility, excavations in other parts have recovered medieval features (see section 3 below).

3. Archaeological Background: Wider Historic Environment Data

- 3.1 Within 500m of the proposed development there are fifteen designated sites (listed buildings and 1 scheduled monument) and fourteen archaeological interventions (including desk-based assessments) recorded by the Northumberland Historic Environment Records. A summary of them is provided below. Full details and locations are Listed in Appendix I (Appendix II).

Sites:

- *SAM 31728* Vicars Peel: Vicarage Tower, Grade II. Tower house. Said to be 14th century, but existing remains appear early 17th century. In the 19th century the tower was part of a larger house the former Vicarage. This was demolished around the turn of the 20th century but the tower was left standing. Interpretation of the tower suggests a medieval house with a ground floor hall, an undefended building possibly dating from the 1280s.
- HER 10992. NGR: NZ 16587295 St Mary's Church Parish church. 12th-15th century.
- HER 11004 NGR: NZ1654272907 The Old Rectory The Old Rectory, Grade II*. Early 18th century,
- HER 11010 NGR: NZ16677289 Nos 3 and 5 Bell Villas Bell Villas, in total a group of nine houses, were built in 1826.
- HER 11012 NGR: NZ16557291 Gatepiers and garden wall to east of The Old Rectory early 18th century.
- HER 11013 NGR: NZ16447282 Nos 12 and 14 Main Street (north side) Grade II listed

- buildings. Late 18th to early 19th century farmhouse and hind's cottage.
- HER 11014 NGR: NZ16527281 The Seven Stars Public House, Main Street (south side) Grade II listed building. Early 19th century.
 - HER 11015 NGR: NZ1650172802 Nos 21 to 25 (odd) Main Street (south side) Grade II listed buildings. Early 19th century houses.
 - HER 11016 NGR: NZ1657672996 Tomb of Sir Charles Ogle 1858.
 - HER 11017 NGR: NZ1656372971 Grace headstone approx 15 yards North-west of Church of St. Mary. Grade II listed headstone. 1788 to Nathaniel Grace.

 - HER 11018 NGR: NZ1656172960 Warwick gravestone approx 10 yards West of Church of St. Mary Grade II listed table tomb. 1778.
 - HER 11019 NGR: NZ1656472954 Pearson and Potts headstones approx 5 yards West of Church of St. Mary Three grade II listed headstones. 1) John Pearson and wife Isabell and children, various dates from 1736; 2) John Potts, 1796; 3) John Potts 1765.
 - HER 11020 NGR: NZ1657172940 Tones and Shireton headstones approx 10 yards South west of Church of St. Mary Grade II listed headstones. 1) Sarah Tones, 1794; 2) Elizabeth Shireton, 1788.
 - HER11021 NGR: NZ1656472944 Bell headstone approx 10 yards South west of Church of St. Mary Grade II listed headstone. 1764 to William Bell.
 - HER 11022 NGR: NZ1658772936 Forster and Turnbull headstones approx 10 yards South of Church of St. Mary Grade II listed headstones. 1) Matthew Forster, 1758; 2) William Turnbull, 1788.
 - HER 11023 NGR: NZ1659272941 Charlton headstone approx 3 yards South of Church of St. Mary Grade II listed headstone. 1795 to James Charlton.
 - HER19475 NGR: NZ1654673324 Site of Castle Ward Union Workhouse Workhouse buildings and enclosures shown in early mapping of the area north of Ponteland; none of the buildings are identified specifically.

Events:

- HER 14036 NGR: NZ1647872898 Medieval ditches, Peel House An evaluation trench (2003) and a watching brief (2008), revealed two intercutting gullies from which medieval pottery was recovered. The gullies probably represent medieval agricultural features related to drainage or successive field boundaries. They were sealed by two ploughsoils, the earlier of which may be associated with the gullies. The gullies were orientated east-west. And a maximum of 0.64m deep. The absence of further archaeological remains in this area reiterated the previous conclusion that these features represented agricultural boundaries.

- HER250 The Vicar's Pele, Ponteland. Two evaluation trenches were excavated: one inside the south-west corner of the pele tower and the other outside the north-west corner. The internal trench uncovered stone flagging apparently overlying a modern concrete surface in part of the floor space. Possible traces of an older flagged floor were also seen. The external trench also uncovered a modern concrete floor at a depth of 0.35m, probably part of a dwelling present on the site until about 1950. The Archaeological Practice, 2001.

- HER408 Peel House, Ponteland. Two evaluation trenches were excavated. Trench 1

- produced features and deposits of archaeological interest, including two gullies from which medieval pottery was recovered. They probably represent medieval agricultural features relating to drainage or successive field boundaries and were sealed by two ploughsoils. Natural subsoil was recorded at a depth of 59.7m above OD, 0.8m below ground level.
- HER 13010/13011 A new approach to church archaeology, II: Dowsing and excavations at Ponteland and St. Oswald's Durham. Excavation carried out in the angle of the northern transept and chancel walls, with a trench about 3.5 by 3.5 to a maximum depth of 1.4m, revealing the foundation and lower courses. A sequence is proposed with the Medieval inhumation graves and breaks in foundation courses. Structural evidence was not evident from the surface prior to the excavation or to the previous dowsing survey (EPRN 13010).
 - HER 13466 Ponteland Flood Defences: an archaeological assessment Desk based assessment of the area either side of the River Pont in advance of flood defence work. Various dated sites in the immediate area are noted; crossings of the river are thought likely from the Roman period, with the village of some importance developing in the Medieval period. (The evidence for the bridge pile remains to be Roman is unclear)
 - HER 13650 Vicar's Pele Ponteland Desk-based assessment. The Archaeological Practice, 1998 (see SAM 31728 above).
 - HER 13804 An Archaeological Watching Brief at Ponteland Watching brief undertaken at three areas along the lengths of Main Street and Thornhill Roads within Ponteland. The watching brief was carried out in the refurbishment of a mains water supply, along areas thought to be areas of early village settlement in Ponteland. No structures or deposits were noted in Areas B and C. In Area A by the bridge across the Pont a wall was observed beneath Modern ground makeup, though this is undated itself.
 - HER13997 River Pont Flood Defence Bank, Ponteland, Northumberland Watching brief on invasive investigations into the make up of an existing modern flood defence prevention bank. Work was carried out on two sites north of the Diamond Inn, on the east bank of the River Pont. Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 1.7m and trench 2 to a depth of 2.15m. No features, deposits or finds of archaeological significance were observed in either trench, both of which were cut on the line of an existing modern flood prevention bank. The Archaeological Practice Ltd, 2008.
 - HER14194 A new approach to church archaeology, II: dowsing and excavations at Ponteland and St. Oswald's, Durham Earth resistance survey, following previous dowsing survey within and around the Church of St. Mary, Ponteland (EPRN 13010), in the angle between the north transept and chancel. Survey preceded excavation (EPRN 13011), though, unlike the dowsing, failed to identify the proposed apse projecting through the area. Department of Geophysics, University of Newcastle, 1983.
 - HER 14276 Watching brief at Peel House, Ponteland An archaeological watching brief during the groundwork required for a proposed housing development identified the fragmentary remains of east-west orientated intercutting gullies thought to be medieval in date. The absence of further archaeological remains in this area led to the conclusion that these features represented broadly contemporary agricultural boundaries.

- HER 14359 Increasing the Operating Voltage of the Blyth to Heddon Tee (YG). Desk-based assessment.
- HER14446 The Old Rectory, North Road, Ponteland. Watching brief and limited excavation on works for a conservatory extension, revealed archaeological features comprising linear gullies, a ditch, medieval pottery and burnt material.
- Marginally outside the study area of 500m buffer, a comprehensive desk-based assessment was undertaken by CgMs. The assessment established that during the early medieval period the Auction Mart site probably comprised pasture or farmland on the banks of the River Pont.

Discussion:

The propensity of designated heritage assets (Listed Buildings and the Scheduled Monument) within 500m of the Blackbird Inn demonstrates that this site was within the Medieval and Post Medieval historic core of Ponteland. Indeed, Medieval structures such as the Vicars Peel tower (*SAM 31728*), St. Mary's Church (HER 10992) and the Blackbird Inn itself demonstrate that at times during the Medieval period there were individuals with substantial wealth to invest into the building of impressive stone structures in the immediate vicinity. We might expect to see this evident status reflected within preserved archaeological deposits around the Blackbird Inn by, for example, finds of high status portable material culture.

Yet, although there are clearly medieval sites of some importance within the 'historic core' of Ponteland, a number of previous excavations in the area, summarised above, have demonstrated that certain areas may not have been so intensively built upon by medieval elite residences, instead being reserved for less intensive 'agricultural' activity. For example, at Peel House (HER 14036/HER14276) and the Old Rectory (HER14446), around 100m south of the Blackbird, gullies probably indicative of medieval agricultural features relating to drainage or successive field boundaries have been excavated. The gullies found at Peel House were sealed beneath topsoil and two subsoils and were a maximum of 0.64m deep. Such features in Ponteland have produced finds of medieval pottery but no high status accoutrements. A desk-based assessment for the Auction Mart site west of the Blackbird also suggested that the site comprised of pasture or farmland on the banks of the River Pont during the medieval and post-medieval periods.

As also noted in section 2.11 above at present there is no information that provides detailed information on the nature of sub-surface deposits in the immediate environs of The Blackbird Inn. The nearest intervention is a small trench which found foundations and medieval burial at a depth of 1.4m within the Churchyard of St Marys (HER13011), however, the preservation and depositional history of the churchyard is evidently very different to the Blackbird site opposite. Due to Medieval and later building and subsequent truncation because of the public house car-park it might be expected that any preserved deposits are now shallowly buried and subject to localised truncation. By way of parallel, evaluation in and around the Vicar's Pele (HER250) to the south of the Blackbird uncovered traces of an older flagged floor and a modern external concrete floor at a depth of only 0.35m below ground level. However, any deposit model comparison between this site and The Blackbird is at presently conjectural.

4. Objectives

- 4.1. The objective of the evaluation trenching is to provide sufficient information for informed decisions to be made regarding:
 - i) the presence or absence of archaeological features their quality, depth and preservation. As mentioned in 2.9 above at present there is no information that provides details on the nature of sub-surface deposits in the immediate environs of The Blackbird Inn.
 - ii) an assessment of their significance and importance in line with PPS5 (Planning for the Historical Environment) (CLG 2010)
 - iii) the likely impact of the development upon any such features
 - iv) the appropriate mitigation of the development's impact upon those remains
- 4.2. The research aims for any further work required following the evaluation will be developed in an additional WSI.
- 4.3. If significant archaeological remains are identified during the evaluation that require further examination, a site meeting will be arranged with the client, ARS Ltd and Karen Derham of Northumberland County Council in order to agree the requirement and timetable for further evaluation work. This is in accordance with Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) (CLG 2010).
- 4.4. Any changes to the agreed WSI will be discussed with, and agreed with Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist with the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Team before implementation.

5. Fieldwork Methodology

- 5.1. The proposed extension covers an area which has been subject to varying levels of 20th century construction (Fig 2). There is no known evidence of later extensions in the northern part of the extension which will be the proposed kitchen and cold storage area. In comparison, the proposed dining area is largely on the same footprint as an existing extension but is also located on the likely site of the 13th-14th century hall range. It is unclear to what extent the existing extension in this area will have disturbed archaeological remains.
- 5.2. Given the above, the evaluation requirement therefore reflects the archaeological potential of the site and the extent of previous and proposed groundworks. Karen Derham of Northumberland County Council has stated that the evaluation should comprise:
 - Two 5m long trenches at the northern end of the proposed extension (proposed kitchen and cold storage area). One trench orientated east-west, the other north-south.
 - Two test pits at the southern end of the proposed extension (proposed dining area) One test pit to the immediate south of the southern elevation of the existing extension and the other to the south-west of the western elevation of the same extension
 - A 1m x 1m test pit at the east front of the building (at the join of the tarmac and brick/paving slabs). This will hopefully give a better indication of the depth of modern surfacing and whether the proposed work can be limited to the depth of modern disturbance/build-up. If groundworks are required to a greater depth, more extensive evaluation will be required. See Figure 1, existing, for trench locations.






Any alterations to trench size or location due to the presence of services will be confirmed with

Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Angel House
Portland Square
Bakewell
Derbyshire
DE45 1HB

Site Code: Blackbird
Date: 08/12/2011
Drawn: KM
Scale: 1:125 at A3

Figure 2:
Site plan

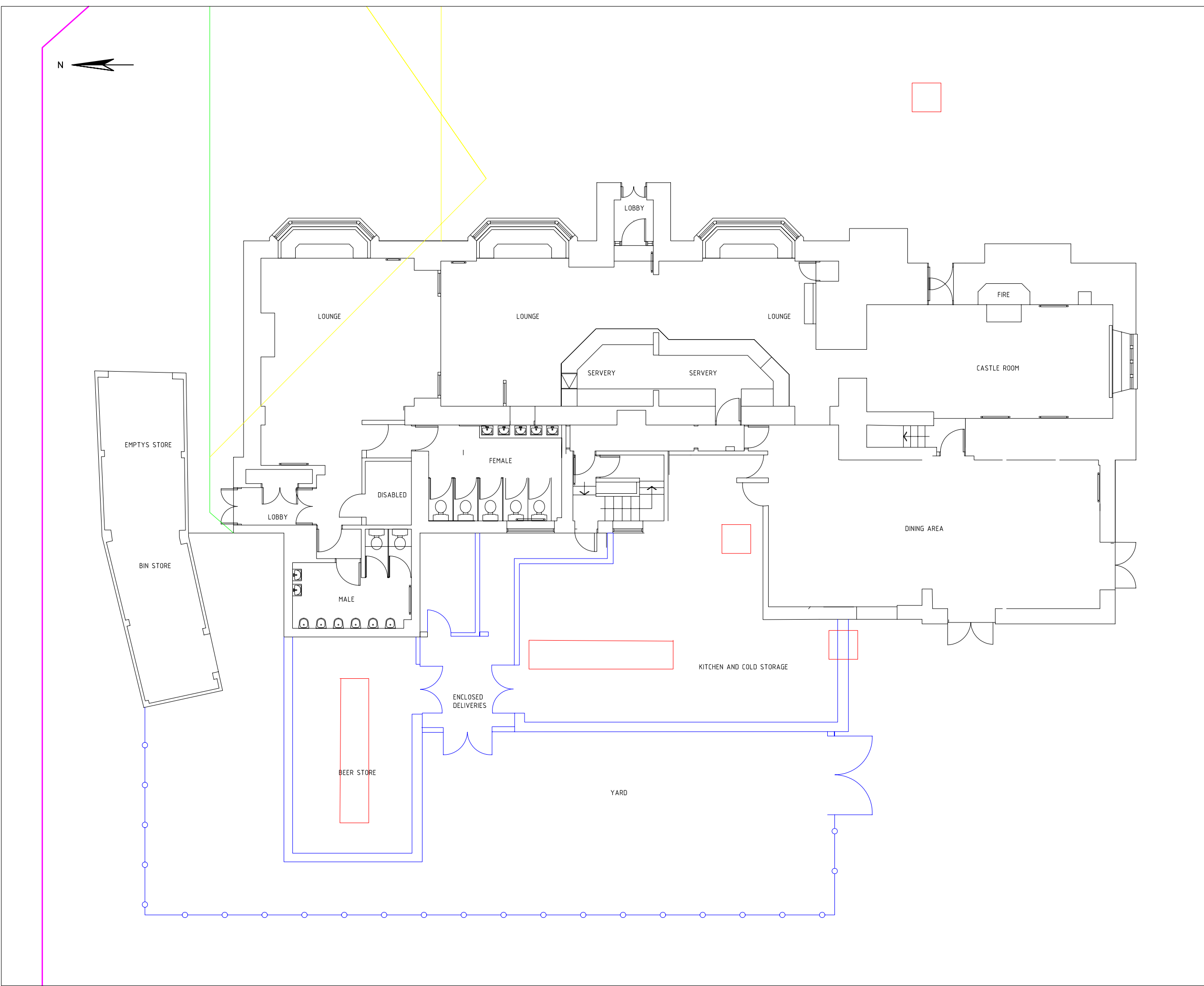
Key:

-  Trench/test pit locations
-  Proposed building location
-  BT Openreach
-  Gas line
-  Electricity cable

Notes:

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Ordnance Survey data if applicable
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the Assistant County Archaeologist. A CATscan will be used to determine the presence of services on site.

- 5.3. All archaeological fieldwork, recording of archaeological features and deposits and post-excavation analysis will be carried out to acceptable standards as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists' *Code of Practice* (2000) and *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2008).
- 5.4. Trenches will be machine stripped under continuous archaeological supervision to the first archaeological horizon in successive level spits or to a level where it is possible to assess the presence or absence of archaeological features. A toothless bucket will be used wherever possible although a drill and toothed bucket may be required to remove concrete/tarmac in the first instance.
- 5.5. Following the excavation, recording and monitoring of each trench they will be backfilled using excavated material.
- 5.6. Each trench will be cleaned by hand sufficiently to allow the identification and planning of archaeological features. Where archaeological features appear to be absent, sufficient work will be done to demonstrate this. Each trench will be planned at an appropriate scale; 1:20 where complex deposits are present or 1:50 in areas of lesser complexity (to be omitted if the trench is completely blank). One representative long section of each trench will be produced, at an appropriate scale, if necessary. Sections and profiles of each feature sampled will be drawn at 1:10 or 1:20, depending on the size of the feature. Spot levels relative to ordnance datum in metres will be taken as appropriate.
- 5.7. Identified archaeological features will be sufficiently sampled by manual excavation to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascertained. All features thus investigated will be recorded in plan and section and all finds recovered retained for analysis.
- 5.8. For brick structures, the record should include details of brick dimensions and type (handmade/machine-made, plain/frogged), mortar (colour, composition, hardness) and the extent of structures (number of courses, thickness in skins).
- 5.9. All identified archaeological features will be accurately fixed using an EDM/Total Station, surveying in either the planning baselines or the features themselves.
- 5.10. The site archive will include plans and sections at an appropriate scale, a photographic record, and full stratigraphic records on recording forms/context sheets. Each context will be recorded on pro-forma records which will include the following: character and contextual relationships; detailed description (dimensions and shape; soil components, colour, texture and consistency); associated finds; interpretation and phasing as well as cross-references to the drawn, photographic and finds registers. Each context will be recorded on an individual record.
- 5.11. A photographic record will be maintained including photographs of all significant features and overall photographs of each area or trench. All images will be taken in black and white print, and digital format, and will contain a graduated photographic scale. The main photographic archive will comprise 35mm b/w SLR print film, supplemented by digital SLR (minimum 12 megapixels).
- 5.12. All stratified finds will be collected by context or, where appropriate, individually recorded in 3 dimensions. Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the

project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. All pottery of Nineteenth century or earlier will be retained, whether stratified or un-stratified. Deposits that have the potential for providing environmental or dating evidence will be assessed while the work is in progress. Every archaeological context with potential for organic remains will be sampled. A bulk sample of at least 40 litres will be taken from each feature unless the context contains less than this. Initially only 10 litres from each context will be assessed so that those deposits that are worth further analysis can be identified and those that are not discarded. Pit features will be initially sampled and floated through graduated sieves. If the context has the potential to contain organic residues then further sampling will take place as appropriate. So, for example, a Medieval pit with evidence for cereal production will be 100% sampled, given the rarity of such features. The sampling of contexts such as linear ditch fills will target the primary ditch silts as these have the potential to inform on the contemporary farming landscape at the time the ditch was initially cut and in use, but given the taphonomic problems associated with secondary ditch fills and their potential for intrusive and residual material, these will not be assessed in the same level of detail. However, samples will be taken where, for example, they may inform about the re-use or change in use of a feature.

- 5.13. The field method will include putting 100% of all samples through a 10mm mesh and then collecting the residue (this will remove the larger pebbles in the gravel as well as maximise finds recovery of lithics and pottery). However, where there is a possibility of human or animal remains being present, including cremated human remains, the whole sample will be floated. Of the remaining material 10 litres (or all of the material if it is less) will then be floated and the flots and residues collected. These will be collected in graduated brass sieves with the smallest having a minimum mesh size of 300 microns.
- 5.14. Once the deposits have been assessed those that show good potential for further results will be floated in full. This strategy will ensure that all deposits with potential for containing palaeoenvironmental residues (such as botanical macrofossils, animal bone and invertebrates) are assessed while at the same time ensuring that excessive time is not wasted on sterile deposits that will add nothing to furthering understanding. Furthermore, it will mean that any further work can be targeted specifically to those deposits that have demonstrable potential.
- 5.15. Samples for Pollen Analysis will be taken from any archaeological contexts that are suitable for providing an accurate indication of past environmental conditions and/or land use in the vicinity of the site. However, due to the taphonomic issues surrounding pollen samples a decision on whether to take samples will be taken on a feature by feature basis. For example, primary ditch silts, buried land surfaces and intact floor surface deposits would be considered suitable contexts to sample whilst secondary ditch deposits affected by cryoturbation or root action that will have mixed pollen from different horizons would not. Secondary ditch fills will be sampled where there is the chance that they could inform about the re-use or change in use of a feature. If waterlogged deposits are identified, for example in deep cut features, separate samples for analysis will be taken for invertebrates, vegetative plant remains *etc.*
- 5.16. Samples will be assessed by a suitable specialist with provision for further analysis as required. Specialist advice on the collection of industrial residues will be sought and their strategies implemented. The advice of the English Heritage Scientific Adviser will be followed in relation to the collection of palaeoenvironmental evidence.
- 5.17. All retained finds and palaeoenvironmental samples will be treated in accordance with the English Heritage guidance document *A Strategy for care and investigation of find (1995)* and the UKIC's document *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long term storage.*

- 5.18. Provision will be made for additional specialist advice, e.g. for finds analysis and conservation.
- 5.19. Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.
- 5.20. If grave cuts are discovered on site, then they will be sampled through hand excavation to determine the presence/absence, depth and preservation of the uppermost burials, before being initially left in situ. Where excavation of human remains is necessary, a license will be obtained from the Ministry of Justice and work will be carried out under appropriate environmental health regulations and, if appropriate, in compliance with the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendments) Act 1981.
- 5.21. Disarticulated human bone will be quantified and characterised prior to reinterment on site.
- 5.22. The record of the extent and vulnerability of features will be sufficiently detailed to facilitate discussions regarding the need for preservation beneath any future potential development, or any other mitigation measures including further excavation or recording.
- 5.23. A risk assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the work and health and safety regulations will be adhered to at all times.

6. Monitoring Arrangements

- 6.1. The trenching is programmed to last for around two working days but will be ultimately dictated by the nature of the below ground archaeology.. Should complex archaeological features be discovered, requiring detailed recording, a contingency will be required. The allocation of this contingency will be agreed with the client and the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team. Consultation between the client, ARS Ltd and the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team will be required at the end of the archaeological trenching to ensure that all the below ground archaeology has been adequately recorded.
- 6.2. ARS Ltd will liaise with Karen Derham of the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team at regular intervals throughout the course of the work:

Karen Derham
Assistant County Archaeologist
Northumberland County Council Conservation Development and Regulatory Services
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland
NE61 2EF
Direct Dial: 01670 534095

7. Report

- 7.1 Following completion of the evaluation ARS Ltd will produce a report which will include:

- Non-technical summary
 - Introductory statement
 - Aims and purpose of the project
 - Methodology
 - A location plan showing all excavated areas and any archaeological features with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads
 - Illustrations of all archaeological features with appropriately scaled hachured plans and sections.
 - An objective summary statement of results
 - Conclusions
 - Supporting data – tabulated or in appendices
 - Index to archive and details of archive location
 - References
 - Statement of intent regarding publication
 - Confirmation of archive transfer arrangements
 - A copy of the approved WSI
 - A copy of the OASIS form
- 7.2 Within the report:
- All plans will be clearly related to the national grid.
 - All levels will be quoted relative to ordnance datum.
- 7.3 If significant archaeological remains are identified the report will include
- Detailed description and plans (at 1:50 scale) of any areas which provided significant archaeological information, all feature plans and sections (at 1:10 or 1:20 scale), select artefact illustrations, photographs and an overall site plan showing all recorded archaeological features.
 - Finds quantification and assessment.
 - Assessment of any palaeo-environmental samples taken.
 - A summary of the extent, depth and state of preservation of archaeological deposits across the site.
- 7.4 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the the Northumberland County Council Historic Environment Record, and will be submitted to the Assistant County Archaeologist within six weeks of the completion of fieldwork.

8 Archive Deposition

- 8.1 A digital, paper and artefactual archive, which will consist of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data will be submitted to the a suitable repository museum, in a format agreed in discussion with the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team.
- 8.2 All artefacts and associated material will be cleaned, recorded, properly stored and deposited in the archive (see above).

- 8.3 If they are forthcoming as a result of the work, a full set of annotated, illustrative pictures of the site, excavation, features, layers and selected artefacts will be supplied to the HER and deposited with the archive as digital images on a CD ROM.
- 8.4 The Northumberland County Council Conservation Team will be notified on completion of fieldwork, with a timetable for reporting and archive deposition.
- 8.5 Written confirmation of the archive transfer arrangements, including a date (confirmed or projected) for the transfer, will be included as part of the final report.
- 8.6 An OASIS online record <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> has been initiated and the watching brief data will be added to this record. Key fields will be completed on Details, Location and Creators forms. All parts of the OASIS online form will be completed for submission to the HER. This will include an uploaded .pdf version of the entire report (a paper copy will also be included within the archive).
- 8.7 The Northumberland County Council Conservation Team will be notified of the final deposition of the archive.

9 Changes to Methodology or Work Programme

- 9.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with the prior written approval of the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team.

10 Publication

- 10.1 In the event of significant remains being encountered and excavated, there will be the need for a more formal publication than in the summary form. In this instance a suitable programme and timetable for publication and dissemination will be discussed and agreed upon by all stakeholders.

11 References

Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). 2010. *Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment*. London, The Stationery Office.

English Heritage, 1995. *A strategy for the care and investigation of finds*, English Heritage.

Institute for Archaeologists. revised 2010a. *Code of Conduct*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA). 2008. *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Briefs*. Reading, Institute for Archaeologists.

Museum of London Archaeological Services (MoLAS). 2002. *Site Manual*. London, Museum of London.

LAND AT THE BLACKBIRD INN, PONTELAND, NORTHUMBERLAND

Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Northumberland Conservation has been consulted at a pre-application stage concerning the archaeological issues involved with a future application for proposed alterations and extensions to the west elevation of the Blackbird Inn, Ponteland (Fig 1).
- 1.2 The site of the Blackbird Inn probably formed the residence owned by the Earls of Athol in 1309 and may have been the castle burnt by Earl Douglas in 1388. The tower that makes up the southern end of the Grade II* listed building is all that survives of the original manorial site. The ground floor and parts of the first floor of the tower date to the late 13th or early 14th century building and are likely to have originally been part of a two storey building possibly with a wall-walk above. The ground floor of this early building is barrel vaulted and has an entrance in the west wall protected by a draw-bar and murder hole. While the full extent of the original manorial complex is not known, it is likely there was an adjoining building to the west of the tower which was possibly the hall range of the complex with the tower representing the parlour wing to its east.
- 1.3 The tower was remodelled and reduced to its present height in c.1600 by Mark Errington. A stack was built on the east wall to heat the ground and first floor rooms. Mullion windows were inserted, a domestic range was built on the north side of the tower and doorways were broken through at ground and first floor level. By c.1900 the domestic range had been converted into an inn. By 1920 the tower was in ruins but in c.1935 it was restored and incorporated into the inn.
- 1.4 The proposals involve the construction of a series of extensions to the west of the existing building following the demolition of a smaller 20th century extension. The impact of the existing 20th century extension on archaeological remains has not been established and the survival of remains under those extensions cannot be fully discounted. In addition, while the original hall range is thought to run under the southern end of the proposed extension, associated remains could be located across a much wider area. The proposed development therefore has the potential to impact on significant remains associated with the original manorial site.

1.5 Policy Background

- 1.5.1 Policy relating to the assessment and mitigation of impacts to the cultural heritage resource within the planning system is set out in Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment, published on 23rd March 2010.¹
- 1.5.2 Policy HE6 of PPS5 states that:
 - i) Local Planning Authorities should require applicants to provide a description of the significance of heritage assets affected by a development proposal and the contribution their setting makes to that significance (HE6.1).
 - ii) As a minimum, the relevant historic environment record should be consulted and the heritage assets themselves should have been assessed using

¹ PPS5: *Planning for the Historic Environment* and the associated *Practice Guide* can be viewed on the Communities and Local Government website at:
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>

- appropriate expertise (HE6.1)
- iii) Where an application includes, or is considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets with archaeological interest, local planning authorities should require developers to submit an appropriate desk-based assessment (HE6.1)
 - iv) Where desk-based research is insufficient to properly assess the interest, a field evaluation may be required (HE6.1).
 - v) The results of all stages of assessment (including, where required, geophysical survey and intrusive evaluation trenching) should be set out in the application (within the Design and Access Statement, or if applicable, an Environmental Statement) as part of the explanation of design concept (HE6.2)
 - vi) Local planning authorities should not validate applications where the extent of the impact of the proposal on the significance of heritage assets affected cannot be adequately understood from the application and supporting documents (HE6.3)
- 1.6 Northumberland Conservation considers that the application site has the potential to include heritage assets of archaeological significance. In accordance with Policy HE6 of PPS5: Planning for the Historic Environment. 2 Northumberland Conservation would advise Northumberland County Council (NCC) Development Management Team (West Area), that the planning application should provide sufficient information to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance of potential heritage assets. Northumberland Conservation considers that a field evaluation is necessary to provide sufficient information to properly assess the archaeological impact of the future application in line with policy HE6 of PPS5.
- 1.7 This brief constitutes Northumberland Conservation's justification for the investigation, its objectives and the strategy and procedures to apply to the archaeological evaluation. The results of this work will be used to inform the planning decision.
- 1.8 **This brief does not constitute the 'written scheme of investigation'**. It is intended to establish the project parameters to enable an archaeological consultant or contractor to tender for the work and once commissioned to prepare and submit an appropriate Method Statement, Project Design or Specification to Northumberland Conservation for approval prior to work commencing. The project design/specification should be based on a thorough study of all relevant background information, in particular any assessment or evaluation reports or, in their absence, data held or referenced in Northumberland Historic Environment Record Office (HER).
- 1.9 The extent of the development (Fig 1) has been taken from plans provided by the agent. All drawings have been provided to Northumberland Conservation by email. It is therefore vital that, as part of the specification, the archaeological consultant or contractor confirms with the developer the extent of the development and the nature of the works including direct comparison with drawings of the existing extensions.

² Planning Policy Statement 5: *Planning for the Historic Environment*, available to view or download via the Department of Communities and Local Government website at: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/pps5>

2 Site Specific Requirements

- 2.1 The evaluation work proposed here is designed to ascertain whether there are any archaeological constraints that may affect the planned development. The purpose of trial excavation is to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their quality, depth and preservation.
- 2.2 The proposed extension covers an area which has been subject to varying levels of 20th century construction. There is no known evidence of later extensions in the northern part of the extension which will be the proposed kitchen and cold storage area. In comparison the proposed dining area is largely on the same footprint as an existing extension but is also located on the likely site of the 13th-14th century hall range. It is unclear to what extent the existing extension in this area will have disturbed archaeological remains.
- 2.3 The evaluation requirement therefore reflects the archaeological potential of the site and the extent of previous and proposed groundworks. The evaluation should comprise:
- Two 5m long trenches at the northern end of the proposed extension (proposed kitchen and cold storage area). One trench orientated east-west, the other north-south.
 - Two test pits at the southern end of the proposed extension (proposed dining area) One test pit to the immediate south of the southern elevation of the existing extension and the other to the south-west of the western elevation of the same extension
- 2.4 **Utility information should be requested prior to the production of the written scheme of investigation as this may influence trench location. Any alterations to trench size or location will need to be confirmed with the Assistant County Archaeologist.**
- 2.5 Access arrangements, especially for mechanical excavation equipment, should be confirmed with the person or body commissioning the work, and where appropriate also with the land owner.

3 General Standards

- 3.1 All work should be carried out in compliance with the codes of conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA)³ and will follow the IfA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.⁴
- 3.2 All work should be carried out in compliance with the Regional Statement of Good Practice.⁵
- 3.3 Archaeological contractors must be able to prove that they have appropriate excavation experience and current insurance to undertake excavations.
- 3.4 The contractor should provide an indication of the resources they are proposing to use on the site, expressed where appropriate as a number of person days for each grade.
- 3.5 All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Short

³ Institute for Archaeologists, 2009. *By-Laws: Code of Conduct* (23 October 2009):

http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/codes/code_conduct.pdf

⁴ Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (28 October 2008):

<http://www.archaeologists.net/modules/icontent/inPages/docs/codes/fldeval2.pdf>

⁵ Yorkshire, The Humber and the North-East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process (25 November 2009)

CVs/relevant career histories should be provided in the specification for all site staff of supervisor or higher grade as well as any specialists involved in the project either in the field or during the post excavation phase. Details must also be supplied for office based staff involved in the management and direction of the project.

3.6 Pre-site work preparation

- i) A specification in line with this brief must be submitted and approved by Northumberland Conservation prior to work commencing.
- ii) 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.
- iii) As required by Policy HE6.1 of PPS5, the appointed contractor must consult the Historic Environment Record as part of the site assessment process. Contractors should therefore ensure that they have made provision for to consult the HER as part of any required tender submissions or project costings. The results should be included in the written scheme of investigation.
- iv) 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).The sampling strategy should be included in the specification and submitted to the Assistant County Archaeologist for approval.
- v) The relevant museum should be contacted to discuss archiving, prior to work commencing.

3.7 Fieldwork

- i) Topsoil and unstratified modern material may be removed by hand or mechanically by a machine using a **wide toothless ditching blade**. This must be carried out under continuous archaeological supervision
- ii) The topsoil or recent overburden should be removed in successive level spits down to the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural subsoil, whichever is encountered first.
- iii) All faces of the trench that require examination or recording must be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains
- iv) The top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural subsoil must be cleaned sufficiently to allow for its inspection for features.
- v) **In the event that small discrete archaeological features are revealed, including but not limited to postholes and pits, during machining or subsequent cleaning of the trench, the trench will need to be expanded either side of the feature by a machine bucket width as *standard*. If further additional trench expansion is required, this should be carried out following discussions with the Assistant County Archaeologist and at that stage the contingency allowance can be used.**
- vi) All subsequent deposits must be excavated by hand
- vii) The archaeology must be investigated sufficiently to establish its nature, extent and date, unless it is deemed of sufficient importance to require total preservation *in situ*. All features exposed should be sample excavated. This would typically comprise:
 - i) 50% of every discrete feature

- ii) 25% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill
- iii) 10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill
- viii) Within the constraints of the site, the excavations should be maintained in a manner that allows quick and easy inspection without any requirement for additional cleaning.
- ix) Deposits should be assessed for their potential for providing environmental or dating evidence. Sampling should be in line with the strategy agreed with Jacqui Huntley and Northumberland Conservation
- x) In the event of human burials being discovered, they should be left *in situ*, covered and protected and the coroners' office should be informed. If removal is essential, work must comply with relevant Home Office regulations.
- xi) 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.
- xii) The drawn record from the site must include a representative selection of long sections from the excavations that clearly allow the nature and depth and any significant changes in the deposits recorded to be demonstrated. If there is any uncertainty, advice should be sought from the Assistant County Archaeologist as to which sections may be appropriate for inclusion within the site record.
- xiii) 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).

3.8 Contingency

- 3.8.1 In some circumstances a programme of evaluation may, in answering the questions posed, also raise others of an unexpected nature. Every attempt should be made to deal with the problem by agreed modification of the specification while fieldwork is in progress.
- 3.8.2 A contingency sum should be allowed for the excavation of an additional 2m of trench to answer particular issues that may arise during fieldwork. **Failure to make this allowance, where appropriate, may necessitate further evaluation work being recommended to the local authority and a delay in the decision making process.**
- 3.8.3 The activation of the contingency must only be undertaken after discussion with, and with the agreement of the Assistant County Archaeologist. A representative of the developer/owner etc should be present at such discussions.
- 3.8.4 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, Northumberland Conservation 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.

3.9 Recording

- i) The evaluation trenches and test pits should be accurately related to the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
- ii) 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
- iii) The stratigraphy of all trenches should be recorded even where no archaeological deposit have been identified
- iv) All archaeological deposits and features, the current ground level and base of each trench or test pit 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
- vi) Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix should be compiled

4 Post excavation work, archive, and report preparation

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 ⁶ 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 Archiving work must be carried out in compliance with the IfA Guidelines for Archiving ⁷.
- 4.2.2 The archive and the finds must be deposited in the appropriate local museum, within **6 months** of completion of the post-excavation work and report.
- 4.2.3 Before the commencement of fieldwork, contact should be made with the landowners and with the appropriate local museum to make the relevant arrangements. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer. Details of the appropriate museum can be provided by the Assistant County Archaeologist.
- 4.2.4 **Northumberland Conservation will require confirmation that the archive had been submitted in a satisfactory form to the relevant museum.**

4.3 Report

- 4.3.1 The archaeological evaluation is the first stage in a potentially multi-staged

⁶ 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>

⁷ 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>

programme of archaeological assessment which has been requested to inform a future planning application. Further stages of assessment may be required. **As required by PPS5 (Policy HE6), all stages of assessment should be undertaken prior to the submission of an application and the results used to inform the explanation of design concept and consideration of the impact of development on the significance of the heritage resource.**

4.3.2 Northumberland Conservation require 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 the following as a minimum:

- i) Planning application number, Northumberland Conservation reference, OASIS reference number and an 8 figure grid reference
- ii) The nature and extent of the proposed development and client information
- iii) A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of at least 1:10 000
- iv) A location plan showing trench locations 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
- v) Plans and sections of archaeology located at a recognisable planning scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100, as appropriate)
- vi) Period based discussion of the known and potential archaeological sites within the proposed development area
- vii) A summary statement of the results
- viii) A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds
- ix) A description of the geology on the site
- x) Discussion of the physical impact of the proposed development on known and potential archaeological sites
- xi) A copy of this brief
- xii) A copy of the 'check-list' appended to this brief
- xiii) Any variation to the above requirements should be approved by the planning authority 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://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. 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.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 The Assistant County Archaeologist must be informed on the start date and timetable for the evaluation **in advance** of work commencing.
- 5.2 Reasonable access to the site will be afforded to the Assistant County Archaeologist or his/her nominee at all times, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological evaluation
- 5.3 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.

6 Further Guidance

- 6.1 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 534057
Fax: 01670 533409
e-mail: Karen.derham@northumberland.gov.uk

18/11/11

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