

An Archaeological Watching Brief at Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In January 2013 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Kirkwhelpington in Northumberland. The watching brief involved the monitoring of groundworks associated with the renewal of water main infrastructure around the village.

The service trenches were dug through various layers of road make-up and made ground. Some of the trenches were dug in to the natural, undisturbed clay or bedrock. The Watching Brief did not reveal any archaeological finds or features.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1 In January 2013 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northumbrian Water Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Kirkwhelpington, Northumberland.

1.1.2. The watching brief involved the monitoring of groundworks during the renewal of the water main infrastructure around the village. This consisted of several areas of open-cut excavation (see Figure 2). Areas of pipe-bursting were not subject to archaeological monitoring.

1.2.3 The site is within the Kirkwhelpington Conservation Area (Tynedale Council 2009).



Fig. 1 Location of site.

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1.2. Geology

1.2.1. Kirkwhelpington is centred at NGR NY 99723 84438. The solid geology of the area is Carboniferous Alston Formation consisting of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone. This is overlain by Devensian Diamicton Till (BGS, 2012).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken within the village of Kirkwhelpington during groundworks for the renewal of water mains infrastructure. The watching brief was only required to monitor areas of open cut excavation.

2.2. A series of narrow trenches measuring roughly 1.2m in depth and 0.5m wide were dug along the route of the new water main around the village (Figure 2). The route ran along the main road that leads into the village from the north for a length of approximately 160m (1). Another length was dug from north to south through the centre of the village (2) measuring approximately 100m. A length of discontinuous open cut excavation was carried out from northeast to southwest along the road to the south of St Bartholomew Church (3). A small trench was then dug to the south of the village, to the east of the bridge that crosses the Wansbeck (4). Additional service trenches were dug at right angles to the main trenches in order to provide private properties with the new supply.

Figure 2

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Prehistoric

3.1.1. There is evidence of Neolithic activity in the area surrounding the village of Kirkwhelpington. An unfinished axe head and stone mace was discovered at Kirwhelpinton Grange to the west of the village and a cup-and-ring marked stone has been reused in a Bronze Age cairn located at the Fawns to the northeast of the village (Tynedale Council 2009). The Bronze Age is represented by a series of cairns in the surrounding area, whilst an Iron Age enclosure was discovered through excavations in West Whelpington c.2km west of the village. This site is a Scheduled Monument (ND 312) and provides evidence of multi-period occupation from the Iron Age. There is no recorded evidence of prehistoric activity within Kirkwhelpington village.

3.2. Romano-British

3.2.1. A Romano-British farmstead and associated annexe is located c.1km northwest of Kirkwhelpington village and is a Scheduled Monument (21009). This settlement is visible as earthworks partially disturbed by ploughing. Further Romano-British settlements are known to the north, south and east of the village at Catherside and Kirkharle (Tynedale Council 2009, 8-9), although there is no recorded evidence of Romano-British activity within Kirkwhelpington village.

3.3. Medieval

3.3.1. Kirkwhelpington village is thought have its origins in the early-medieval period and its name translates as 'Hwelps people's settlement' from pre-conquest Old English (Tynedale Council 2009, 9). Further evidence of early medieval occupation comes from a series of five hollow ways that are visible as earthworks located to the north of village and running south towards Kirkwhelpington (Tynedale Council 2009, 9). This is thought to represent a droving route between Scotland and England. The Scheduled Monument at West Whelpington (ND 312) was also occupied at this time, with post holes, a drain and pottery dating to this period being uncovered through excavation of the site.

3.3.2. Not much is known of the early conquest period at Kirkwhelpington, however the settlement was granted along with many lands in Northumberland to the de Umfreville family. By the reign of King John (1199-1216) Kirkwhelpington was an established settlement with its lord Richard de Umfreville who made 'his whole court at Whelpintun (sic) to witness a grant made to the monks at Kelso' (Hodgson 1827). Richard's grandson, Gilbert de Umfreville, also obtained a charter for a fair in the village in August 1267 which was to be held 'at the manor' (www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/places.html).

3.3.3. St Bartholomew's Church would have been the focal point of the medieval village of Kirkwhelpington and it dates back to at least the 12th century, although it was substantially rebuilt in the 13th century (Tynedale Council 2009, 11). It is a Grade II* Listed Building (239617) and is the oldest building in the village, whilst the nearby vicarage, also a Listed Building (239622), fossilises the remains of an earlier, pre 1541, structure in its east wall. In the fields surrounding the village prominent ridge and furrow remains provide evidence of medieval agriculture, whilst to the west of the village two

holy wells and the earthworks of a medieval moated site at Fawns (Scheduled Monument 21001) give the impression that this area was of some importance.

3.4. Post Medieval

3.4.1. Little is known of the village during the 17th – early 19th centuries other than the presence of the mill and farmsteads, however the surrounding geology would lend itself to coal and lead mining (Tynedale Council 2009, 12). A Lead Ore mine is known in Kirkwhelpington and c.20 collieries and pits were located within 8km of the village (<http://www.dmm.org.uk/collnear/k913.htm>). Several buildings dating to the 18th and 19th centuries survive in the village and a number of these are now Grade II Listed Buildings.

4. RESULTS

4.1. The service trenches in Kirkwhelpington were excavated through various layers of road makeup and made ground. The trenches excavated directly through the road surface were dug through a number of layers including the road tarmac, hardcore, sand and made ground and were dug down to the natural yellow/grey clay to a total depth of 1.2m (Figures 3 and 5). The small trench dug towards the south of the village, to the east of the bridge, was dug through various layers of made ground that had been deposited in order to raise up the ground level for the road. These layers included topsoil with turf, a layer of grey chippings and crushed sandstone (Figure 4).

4.2. Two small trenches were dug through the road that leads into the village from the south. It was discovered, however, that the road had been constructed directly on top of the bedrock and therefore archaeological monitoring was deemed unnecessary in this area.



Figure 3: One of the service trenches showing the various layers of road makeup.



Figure 4: The small trench dug to the south of the village showing the various layers of made ground.



Figure 5: The service trench running from north to south through the centre of the village.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the Watching Brief at Kirkwhelpington. The service trenches that were excavated as part of the water mains renewal exercise were all dug through modern road makeup or previously undisturbed natural clay or bedrock.

6. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

6.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

6.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 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.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Stephanie Bryant of Northumbrian Water, James Baxter of Fast Flow and Nick Best and Karen Derham of Northumberland County Council.

9. REFERENCES

Tynedale Council. 2009. *Kirkwhelpington Conservation Area Character Appraisal*. Tynedale

Hodgson, J 1827. *History of Northumberland Part 2 Vol 1*: Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Websites

British Geological Survey	http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm
Durham Mining Museum	http://www.dmm.org.uk/collnear/k913.htm
Institute of Historic Research	www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/places.html
National Heritage List for England	http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/default.aspx
Keys to the Past	http://www.keystothepast.info

Utility ref:
NCT ref: T31/4: 15229

LAND KIRKWHELPINGTON, NORTHUMBERLAND

Brief for an Archaeological Watching Brief

1 Introduction

- 1.1 A new water supply system has been proposed for Kirkwhelpington. The work will comprise mains renewal and will be carried out by the 'pipe-bursting' method. Some open cut excavations will be required approximately every 100m and outside properties. A trench may be required in some locations. This would be approximately 2m wide but may be up to 10m wide in some locations.
- 1.2 The settlement at Kirkwhelpington dates from at least the medieval period. The Church of St. Bartholomew dates from at least the 12th century and may have been constructed on the site of an earlier place of worship. The extent of medieval settlement is not known; medieval remains may occur in the area surrounding the church. Such remains may be impacted by the
- 1.3 Given the archaeological sensitivity of the site, Northumberland Conservation has requested that an archaeological watching brief is carried out during all groundworks in the area indicated on Fig 1.
- 1.4 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. **This brief does not constitute the 'written scheme of investigation' required before work can commence.**
- 1.5 The brief 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 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).
- 1.6 The extent of the watching brief area has been taken from plans supplied by Northumbrian Water (Fig 1). The archaeological consultant or contractor will need to confirm the extent of the development and the nature of the works with Northumbrian Water as part of the specification.

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.
 - 2.1.1 The proposed development has the potential to disturb important archaeological remains associated with medieval occupation of Kirkwhelpington. It is considered that in this case a watching brief is the appropriate archaeological response.

2.1.2 The new water supply will be laid along the line of the existing supply.

2.2 Scope of monitoring

2.3 Sections of the route upgraded via 'pipe-bursting' will not require archaeological monitoring. The watching brief will be required only on those sections of the route where open cut excavations are required. Certain sections of the route outwith the historic core of Kirkwhelpington may also be excluded from the scope of the watching brief.

2.4 The appointed archaeological contractor should liaise with NWL before work commences to identify locations where open cut excavation will be required. These locations should be identified as part of the required Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI). The WSI should also identify those areas of the route to be excluded from the monitoring programme.

2.5 General Standards

- i) All work should be carried out in compliance with codes of conduct of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) ¹ and should follow the IFA Standards for Watching Briefs. ² All work should also be carried out in compliance with the Regional Statement of Good Practice. ³
- ii) All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles.
- iii) 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.
- 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).**
- v) This observation shall involve the systematic examination and accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and artefacts identified.
- vi) **If archaeological remains are uncovered, the archaeologist should be given the opportunity of excavating and recording the remains before they are destroyed.**
- vii) 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.

¹ Institute for Archaeologists, 2008, *By-Laws: Code of Conduct* (23 October 2008):

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

² 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>

³ Yorkshire, The Humber and the North-East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process (25 November 2009)

- Where skeletons are encountered, they should be recorded by photography and the use of pro forma skeleton recording sheets.
- vii) 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 groundworks must be recorded with an **above ordnance datum (aOD)** level.
 - viii) 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.
 - ix) 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.
 - x) **Where any part of a human burial is disturbed, the whole burial must be archaeologically excavated.**
 - 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) 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 the Assistant County Archaeologist 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 30 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.

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 Work⁴ and those set by UKIC.

⁴ Institute for Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials* (28 October 2008):

- 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 Archiving⁵.
- 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 County Council 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 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 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 as a minimum the following:
- i) [utility] reference number, Northumberland Conservation reference, OASIS reference number and an 8 figure grid reference
 - ii) A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of at least 1:10 000
 - iii) 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
 - iv) Plans and sections of archaeology located at a recognisable planning scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100, as appropriate)
 - v) A summary statement of the results
 - vi) A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds

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

⁵ 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>

- vii) **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://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 Historic Records 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 watching brief **in advance** of work commencing.
- 5.2 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.
- 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/Nick Best
Assistant County Archaeologist
Northumberland Conservation
Northumberland County Council
County Hall
Morpeth
Northumberland

NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 622657

Fax: 01670 533409

e-mail: karen.derham@northumberland.gov.uk / nick.best@northumberland.gov.uk

[date]

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		
Utility ref.		
Northumberland Conservation ref.		
OASIS ref.		
Confirmation that all OASIS sections completed incl. submission of grey literature		
8 figure grid reference		
Results		
Summary statement of the results		
Table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds		
Plans and sections		
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: