

An Archaeological Evaluation at Denton Burn Petrol Station, Denton Burn, Newcastle



Animal bones uncovered during the course of the evaluation

ARS Ltd Report No. 2013/78
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Executive Summary

In August 2013 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by URS on behalf of BP to undertake an archaeological evaluation at a petrol filling station in Denton Burn, Newcastle. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess damage that may have been caused to any archaeological remains within the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Hadrian's Wall by the drilling of boreholes for monitoring wells. The route of Hadrian's Wall runs directly through the general area of the site from northwest to southeast.

A single trench was opened on the site measuring 1.7m by 3m, which was excavated down through modern ground make-up deposits, which were situated above a buried topsoil and subsoil horizon, the latter of which contained a juvenile cow skeleton, shards of clear glass and early 20th century pottery fragments. Below this subsoil deposit, the natural clay substratum was encountered.

No evidence of in-situ material from Hadrian's Wall was encountered within the trench during the evaluation. Large pieces of dressed stone observed within the trench may date to the Roman period and relate to the wall itself, but these were clearly no longer in-situ, having been deposited as part of the modern ground make-up event to create the surface of the petrol station forecourt. It appears that the wall does not survive at this location.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In August 2013 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by URS on behalf of BP to undertake an archaeological evaluation at a petrol filling station in Denton Burn, Newcastle. The evaluation was required to assess the damage that may have been caused to below-ground archaeology by boreholes for monitoring wells.

1.2 Denton Burn Filling Station is located at the junction of Denton Road and West Road, Newcastle. This area is known to contain the above and below ground remains of Hadrian's Wall which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall)'. The standing remains of Hadrian's Wall and vallum from Denton Road to Denton Dene are a Scheduled Monument (TW 28 15).



Fig. 1 Site location map.

2. LOCATION AND GEOLOGY

2.1 The site is situated in Denton Burn, Newcastle, centred at NZ 20240 65380, less than a mile to the north of the northern bank of the River Tyne. The solid geology of the area is sandstone of the Pennine middle coal measures formation. The overlying superficial deposits are recorded as Diamicton Till.

3. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 It is beyond the remit of this report to give a history of Hadrian's Wall and the Roman presence in the north of England, as there are a number of sources readily available providing detail on this topic, and suggested reading would be Breeze and Dobson's *Hadrian's Wall* (2000). In brief, relating specifically to the site location at Denton Burn, from Benwell Hill towards the west, Hadrian's Wall lies on the south side of the West Road. The curtain wall is visible at Denton Burn where it is attached to Turret 7b and is also visible west of the A1 corridor on the line of the A69. The Wall has been exposed in various places near to the study area between 1953 and 2002. Hadrian's Wall is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

4. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 The archaeological evaluation has been requested as a result of previous borehole drilling works that were conducted within the Scheduled Area of the garage forecourt without Scheduled Monument Consent. The aim of the evaluation is therefore to assess the impact of this previous work on any surviving below ground remains of Hadrian's Wall or other archaeological remains.

4.2 In order to assess this impact a single trench of 1.7m x 3m (reduced from the intended dimensions of 2m x 3m due to underground services) was excavated over borehole MW3 which is located in the closest proximity to the Scheduled Area and the known remains of Hadrian's Wall. This borehole is therefore the most likely to have impacted upon the scheduled remains and can be used to gauge the level of impact of other boreholes in the vicinity. The trench was also located in an area where it would have the least impact on the normal running of the filling station, associated buildings and pre-identified services.

5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 All archaeological fieldwork, recording of archaeological features and deposits and post-excavation analysis were carried out to acceptable standards as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) *Codes of Conduct* (2012) and will follow the IfA's *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation* (2009).

5.2 The evaluation consisted of a single trench covering a total area of 5.2m². This trench measured 1.7m x 3m and was placed in the location illustrated on Figure 2, which was subject to the agreement with Mike Collins, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Hadrian's Wall) in advance of the work.

5.3. Following mechanical cutting and removal of the current forecourt surface the trench was machine-excavated under constant archaeological supervision, in level spits until the natural level was reached, at which point the trenches were examined and cleaned by hand.

5.4. 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. Each context was recorded on an individual record. A photographic record was maintained including photographs of the trench. All images were taken in digital format, and contain a graduated photographic scale.

5.5. The trench was planned at a scale of 1:20. One representative long section was produced, also at a scale of 1:20. Spot levels relative to ordnance datum in metres were taken as appropriate.

5.6. Identified archaeological features were sufficiently sampled by manual excavation to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascertained. All features thus investigated were recorded in plan and section and all finds recovered retained for analysis.

5.7. All identified archaeological features were accurately fixed using an EDM/Total Station.

5.8. Following excavation and recording, the trench was backfilled using non-contaminated imported material, and the forecourt surface and drain were re-instated as existing.

6. EVALUATION RESULTS

6.1 After the cutting and removal of the forecourt concrete (101), the trench was excavated down through a polythene ground sheet (102), which was laid directly underneath the concrete, and a depth of up to 0.28m of beige-yellow hardcore stone(103 and 108). A deposit of hardcore and sandy silt (117), not greater in depth than 0.06m, was observed towards the northern extent of the trench, above deposit (108).

6.2 Bisecting the hardcore diagonally across the trench was a silty sandy deposit (110), which was interpreted as a soft bedding foundation for the forecourt drain (111) and its concrete support (112) which was located along this orientation and removed during the opening of the trench. Beneath this was a roughly laid, but level setting of concrete (107), which provided a stable base for the aforementioned drain (Figure 3).

6.3 The hardcore differed in character to the north (108) and the south (103) of the concrete drain foundation. To the south the hardcore comprised sand and large pieces of gravel not greater than 0.15m, whereas the deposit to the north of the concrete drain foundation comprised the same sand and gravel, but also contained inclusions of large pieces of dressed stone. The character of these two deposits changed beneath the concrete foundation (107), but as this foundation was not removed and the deposits were modern in origin, their relationship was not investigated further. Also observed to the northern extent

of the trench was an extremely compacted deposit of very dark stone (109), which was limited to the extents of the concrete foundation (107).

6.4. A very dark and slightly clayey soil (104) was observed (Figure 8), which spanned the dimensions of the trench, and was situated beneath both hardcore deposits (103) and (108). This possible buried topsoil horizon was not greater in depth than 0.15m and did not produce any finds, apart from the partial canine radius. Beneath this deposit, a dark green-grey-brown clayey silt (105) was encountered, which contained a probable juvenile cow skeleton (Figure 9), and shards of modern glass. This probable buried sub-soil/rubbish deposit overlaid the natural substratum (106), which was a fine textured, light green-beige clay.

6.5. Borehole MW3 (comprising contexts (113), [114], (115), and (116)) was cut through the modern deposits and the buried topsoil and subsoil horizons into the natural substratum (Figure 10).

7. FAUNAL REMAINS ASSESSMENT

By Kate Mapplethorpe (ARS Ltd)

Introduction

7.1 The animal bone assemblage from Denton Burn Filling Station consisted of a total of two bags of remains from contexts (104) and (105). The bone is all in good condition, with the bone from (105) being slightly better preserved.

Description

7.2 The remains from context (104) consisted of a single partial radius from a canine individual measuring 14.1cm in length and weighing 25.2g. The bone featured only the proximal end and a portion of the shaft so identification to a specific canine breed was not possible. The bone was off-white in colour indicating a period of weathering prior to burial, and the bone surface has flaked in places supporting this. Root etching is present across the bone surface (Figure 11).

7.3 The remains from context (105) consisted of a bag weighing 968.8g which contained the hind legs, pelvis, partial ribcage and spine of a juvenile cow. The bones were very well preserved and the remains were articulated when excavated. None of the epiphyses of the bones were fused indicating a very young, possibly foetal age. No evidence of trauma or butchery was present (Figure 12).

Assessment

7.4 The canine radius from context (104) appears to have been the result of secondary deposition. (104) was interpreted as a buried topsoil horizon, and this would concur with the assessment that the bone was part of a disturbed deposit.

7.5 (105) was situated beneath (104) and was interpreted as buried subsoil overlying the natural substrate. The cattle remains are most likely to have been a primary burial, with the modern glass found within the deposit dating it to the modern period. The use of the

adjacent building as a farmhouse from at least the 1790's suggests that the remains are most likely agricultural, and the age of the individual with the absence of any butchery or trauma may indicate a stillbirth.

Further Work

7.6 No further analysis is recommended for the recovered bones. If additional work is undertaken at the site the results of this assessment should be added to any further relevant assessment produced.

7.7 It is not recommended that the remains should be retained for deposition within a museum due to the fact that they are not archaeologically significant. However, they could be retained as part of a teaching or reference collection.

8. DISCUSSION

8.1 The upper deposits encountered, comprising contexts (101), (102), (103), (108) and (117), were the result of modern ground make-up, levelling, and the construction of the petrol station forecourt. A spillage drain, oriented south-west to north-east, was encountered at the location of the trench, which accounted for contexts (111), (112), (110), (107), and possibly (109), which appeared to represent an area of hard-standing which was concreted over with the drain foundation (107).

8.2 The possible topsoil horizon (104) may have been the ground surface level when the area of land was associated with the farm house dated to the 1790's, which is situated adjacent to the petrol station, and is currently in use as an Indian restaurant. A possible subsoil or rubbish deposit, composed of clayey silt, was encountered beneath this deposit. This subsoil appeared to support the interpretation that deposit (104) was indeed a topsoil layer. Within the subsoil, a cow skeleton, which was situated close to the interface with the natural substratum, was observed and recorded, along with some small shards of clear glass, which were interpreted as being modern in origin. Additionally some small fragments of clearly early 20th century pottery were discovered, but not retained.

9. CONCLUSION

9.1 No evidence of *in-situ* wall material from Hadrian's Wall was encountered within the trench during the evaluation. The larger pieces of dressed stone observed within deposit (108) may date to the Roman period and relate to the wall itself, but these were clearly no longer *in-situ*, having been deposited as part of the modern ground make-up event to create the surface of the petrol station forecourt. It appears that the wall either does not survive at this location, or that this location is not directly over the course of the wall.

9.2 The evaluation provided no evidence to suggest that boreholes undertaken at the site had caused any damage to the Scheduled Ancient Monument.

10. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

10.1 Any publicity will be handled by the client.

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

11. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

11.1 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.

12. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

12.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Jeremy Head, Annie Calder, and Sam Barton of URS, Mike Simpson of BP and Mike Collins of English Heritage.

13. REFERENCES

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Tyne and Wear Sitelines HER <http://www.twsitelines.info/>

APPENDIX I – FIGURES

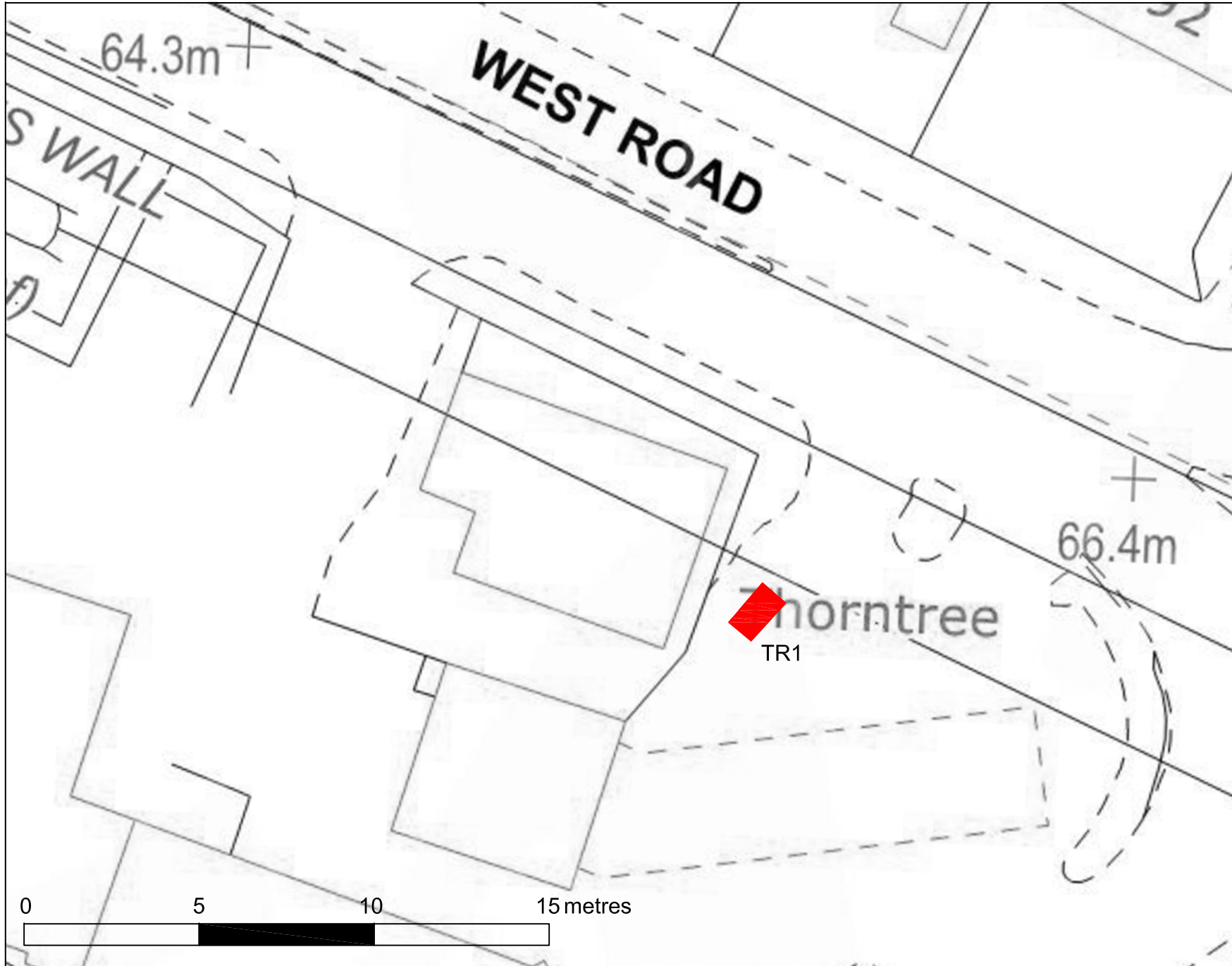


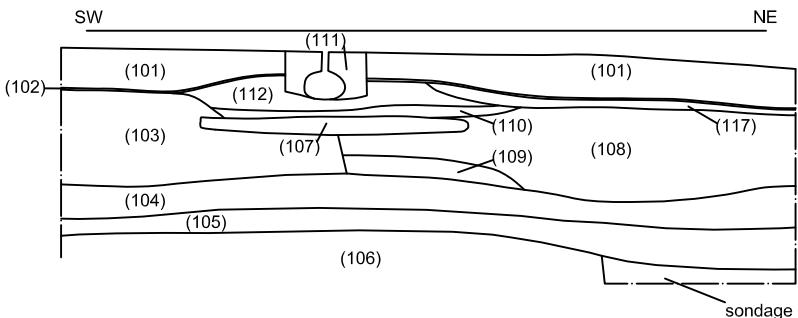
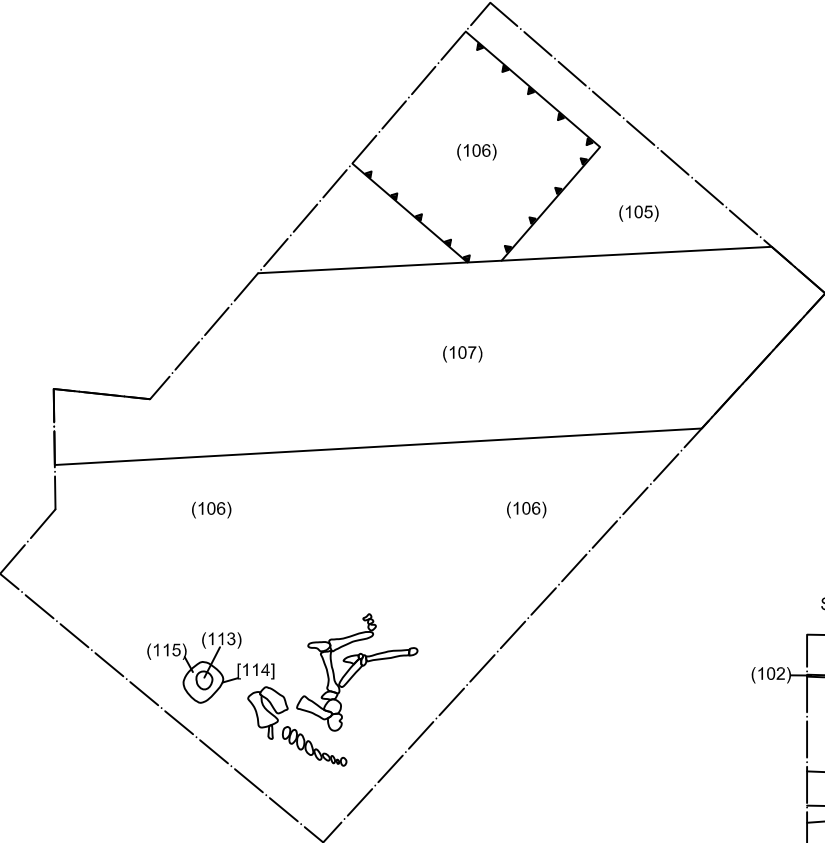
Figure 2. Trench location plan

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Figure 3. Trench 1, drawn plan and SE facing section



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Figure 4: Trench 1, facing south. Scale = 2m and 1m.



Figure 5: Trench 1, facing north. Scale = 1m and 2m.



Figure 6: Trench 1, south-east facing section. Scale = 1m and 2m.



Figure 7: Trench 1, north-east facing section. Scale = 1m.



Figure 8: Trench 1, north-west facing section. Scale = 1m.



Figure 9: Animal bones, detail. Scale = 0.25m.



Figure 10: Trench 1, detail of the southern extent. Scale = 1m and 2m.

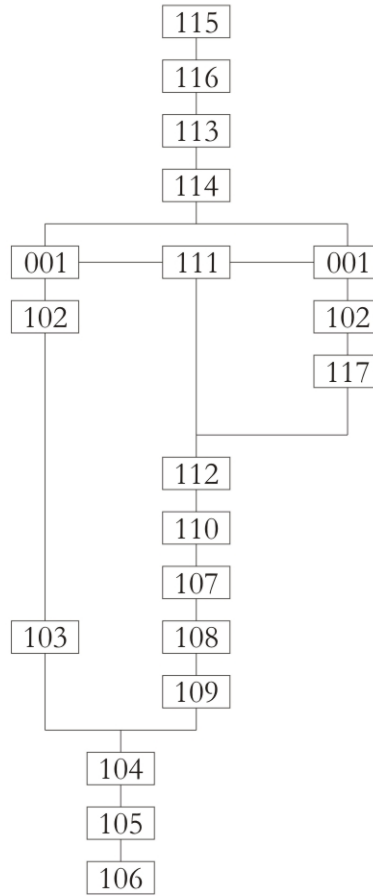


Figure 11 -: The canine radius from (104). Scale = 10cm.



Figure 12 -: The cattle bone assemblage from (105). Scale = 20cm.

APPENDIX II – HARRIS MATRIX



APPENDIX III – SPECIFICATION

Denton Burn Filling Station, Denton Burn, Newcastle

**Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological
Evaluation Trenching**



**Archaeological Research
Services Ltd**

Produced by: Gillian Eadie, 03/05/13

Approved by: Chris Scott, 17/05/13

Revisions:

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This scheme of works relates to archaeological evaluation trenching in the forecourt of Denton Burn Filling Station, Denton Burn, Newcastle (Grid Reference NZ 20236 65379).
- 1.2. Denton Burn Filling Station is located at the junction of Denton Road and West Road, Newcastle (Figure 1). This area is known to contain the above and below ground remains of Hadrian's Wall which is part of the UNESCO World Heritage Site, 'Frontiers of the Roman Empire (Hadrian's Wall)'. The standing remains of Hadrian's Wall and vallum from Denton Road to Denton Dene are a Scheduled Monument (TW 28 15). This Scheduled Area extends into the garage forecourt and the evaluation work will therefore require Scheduled Monument Consent.

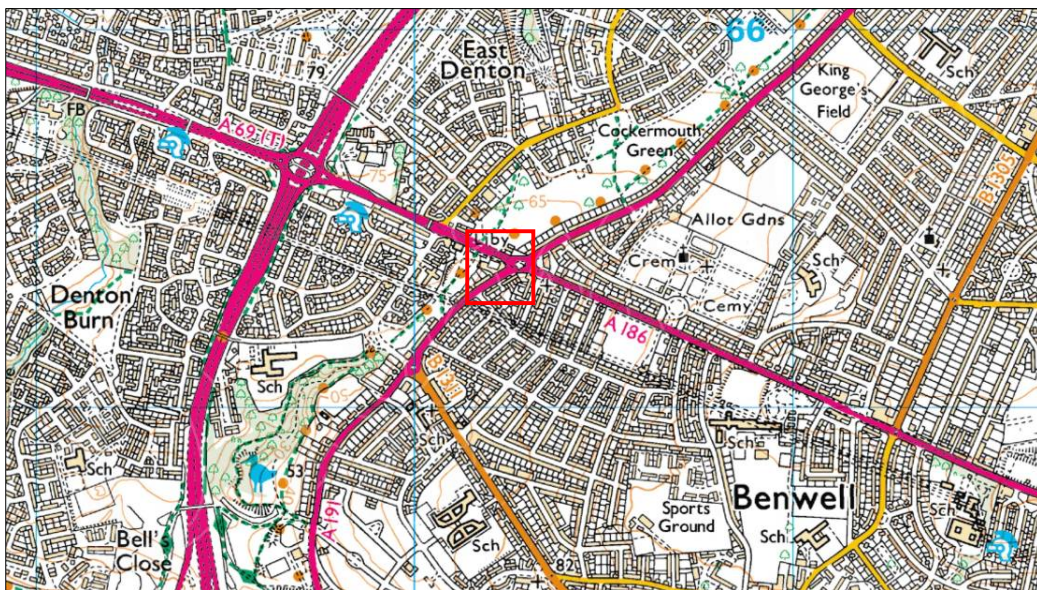


Figure 1: Site location plan.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1. The archaeological evaluation has been requested as a result of previous borehole drilling works that were conducted within the Scheduled Area of the garage forecourt without Scheduled Monument Consent. The aim of the evaluation is therefore to assess the impact of this previous work on any surviving below ground remains of Hadrian's Wall or other archaeological remains.
- 2.2. In order to assess this impact a single trench of 3m x 2m will be excavated over borehole MW3 which has been drilled in/in the closest proximity to the Scheduled Area and the known remains of Hadrian's Wall. This borehole is therefore the most likely to have impacted upon the scheduled remains and can be used to gauge the level of impact of other boreholes in the vicinity. The trench is also located in an area where it will have the least impact on the normal running of the filling station, associated building and identified services. Maintaining an operating filling station was agreed as a requirement during the on-site meeting in November 2012.

3. Evaluation and Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1. 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).
- 3.2. The trenching will consist of one trench covering a total area of 6m². This trench will measure 3m x 2m and will be placed in the location illustrated on Figure 2 subject to agreement with Mike Collins, English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments (Hadrian's Wall) in advance of the work.
- 3.3. Following cutting out and mechanical breaking of the current forecourt surface the trench will be excavated by machine in successive level spits to a level where it is possible to assess the presence or absence of archaeological features, to a maximum permitted depth of 1.2m. The trench will then be cleaned and recorded in line with standard archaeological techniques. Suitable hand tools will be used.
- 3.4. Following excavation and recording of the trench it will be backfilled using non-contaminated, imported, material. Should remains of the wall or associated features be found these would be suitably protected in advance of re-instatement. A specification for protection will be agreed by all parties, but would consist as a minimum of geotextile covering, and careful re-burial, with compaction taking place no closer to any remains than c. 150mm.
- 3.5. The 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. The 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 the 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.
- 3.6. 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.
- 3.7. For brick structures, the record will 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).
- 3.8. All identified archaeological features will be accurately fixed using an EDM/Total Station, surveying in either the planning baselines or the features themselves.
- 3.9. 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.

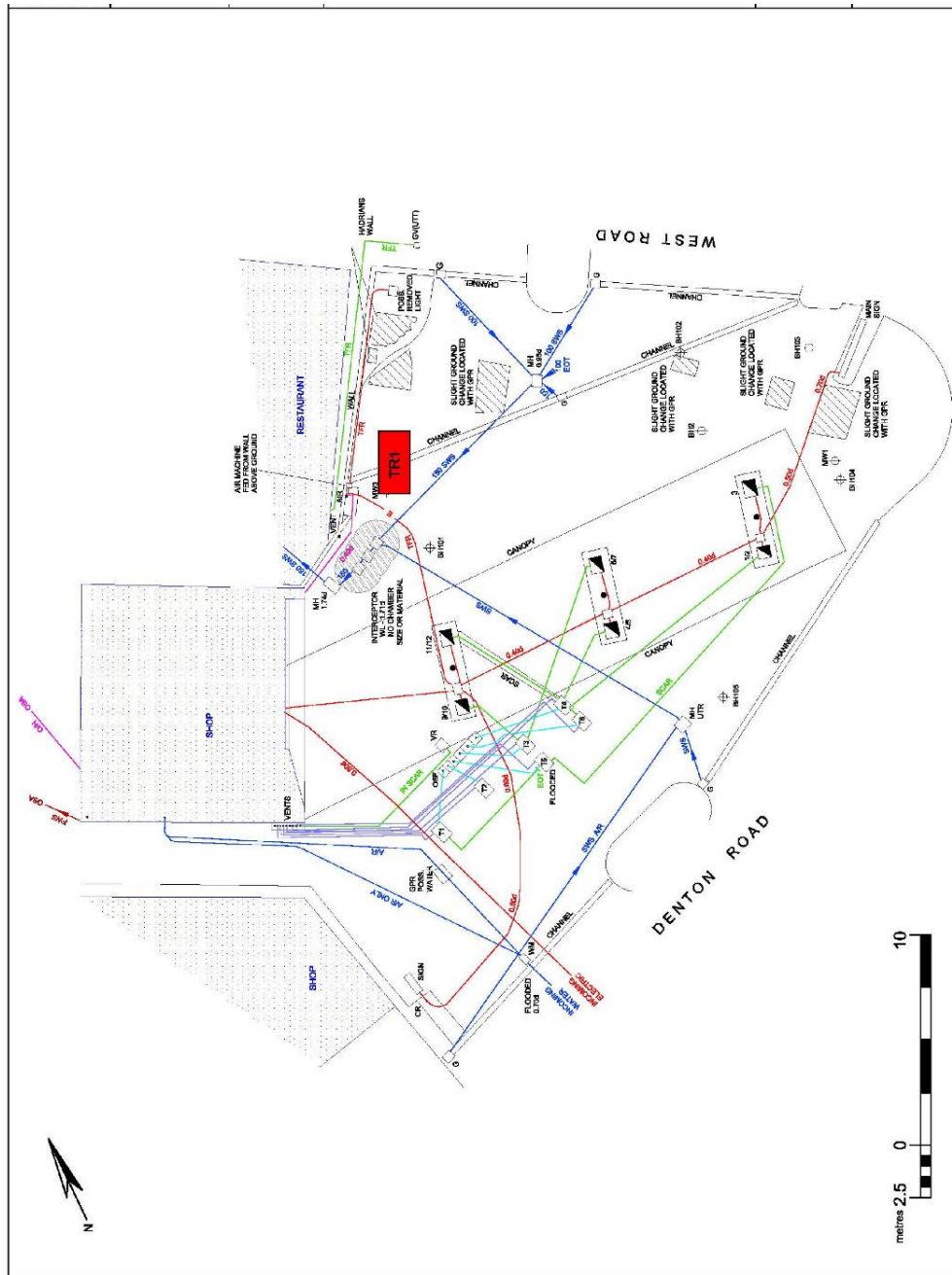


Figure 2: Proposed trench location plan.

3.10. 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 digital format, and will contain a graduated photographic scale. The main photographic archive will comprise digital SLR (minimum 12 megapixels).

4. Artefact and Ecofact Collection and Recording

- 4.1 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 post-medieval date or earlier will be retained, whether stratified or un-stratified.
- 4.2 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 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.
- 4.3 Once collected samples 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 palaeo-environmental remains (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. Further work can then be targeted specifically to those deposits that have demonstrable potential.
- 4.4 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 bioturbation 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.*
- 4.5 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 palaeo-environmental evidence.
- 4.6 All retained finds and palaeo-environmental 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*.
- 4.7 Provision will be made for additional specialist advice, e.g. for finds analysis and conservation.
- 4.8 Finds of "treasure" will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act procedures.
- 4.9 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. In the unlikely event that 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.

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 A detailed risk assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the work and health and safety regulations will be adhered to at all times. A separate method statement for the works, and risk assessment has been produced as an addendum to this document, due to the specific nature of the clients requirements and the specific and significant risks attendant with works on this site.

5. Monitoring Arrangements

- 5.1 Consultation between the client, URS Scott Wilson, ARS Ltd and English Heritage will be maintained throughout the project and will be required at the end of the evaluation to ensure that all the below ground archaeology has been adequately recorded.
- 5.2 ARS Ltd will liaise with Mike Collins of English Heritage and Jennifer Morrison, the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at regular intervals throughout the course of the work:

6. Report

- 6.1 Following completion of the evaluation ARS Ltd will produce a report which will include:
- The site reference number, OASIS reference number and an 8 figure grid reference
 - A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of least 1:10000
 - A location plan of the extent of the showing the excavated trench within the site. This will be at a recognisable planning scale, and located with reference to the national grid.
 - Non-technical summary
 - Introductory statement
 - Aims and purpose of the project
 - Methodology
 - An objective summary statement of results and table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.
 - An assessment of the likely damage to historic fabric or remains caused by previous unlicensed works.
 - 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
- 6.2 Within the report:
- All plans will be clearly related to the national grid.
 - All levels will be quoted relative to ordnance datum.
- 6.3 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.

6.4 Copies of the final report will be deposited with English Heritage and the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record, and will be submitted to Mike Collins and Jennifer Morrison within six weeks of the completion of fieldwork.

7. Archive Deposition

7.1 All archiving work will be carried in compliance with the IfA guidelines for Archiving.

7.2 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 Tyne and Wear Archaeology Team.

7.3 All artefacts and associated material will be cleaned, recorded, properly stored and deposited in the archive (see above).

7.4 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.

7.5 Mike Collins will be notified on completion of fieldwork, with a timetable for reporting and archive deposition. The archive will be deposited within 6 months of the completion of fieldwork.

7.6 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.

7.7 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).

7.8 English Heritage and the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer will be notified of the final deposition of the archive.

8. Changes to Methodology or Work Programme

8.1 Changes to the approved methodology or programme of works will only be made with the prior written approval of Mike Collins of English Heritage.

9. Publication

- 9.1 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.