



**Archaeological
Research
Services Ltd**

Archaeological Evaluation at Cornhill-on-Tweed



View of site looking south-west

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Phillip Allenson to carry out an archaeological investigation on a derelict garden plot in Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland, prior to a proposed development of a residential building.

Two trenches were excavated within the proposed development area, the first measuring 10m by 2m, and the second measuring 5m by 2m. Medieval buildings had previously been discovered approximately 200m to the south-west of the site, and so there was potential to recover medieval archaeology on the site. No finds or features were evident however, apart from two modern drainage trenches, one being present in each trench.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and Scope of Work

Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) was commissioned by Phillip Allenson to carry out an archaeological investigation at Cornhill-on-Tweed in June 2006. The site is a derelict garden plot centred at NT860392 (Fig. 1) and the proposed development involves the construction of a residential building and garage. The site contains a small disused building (Fig. 2).

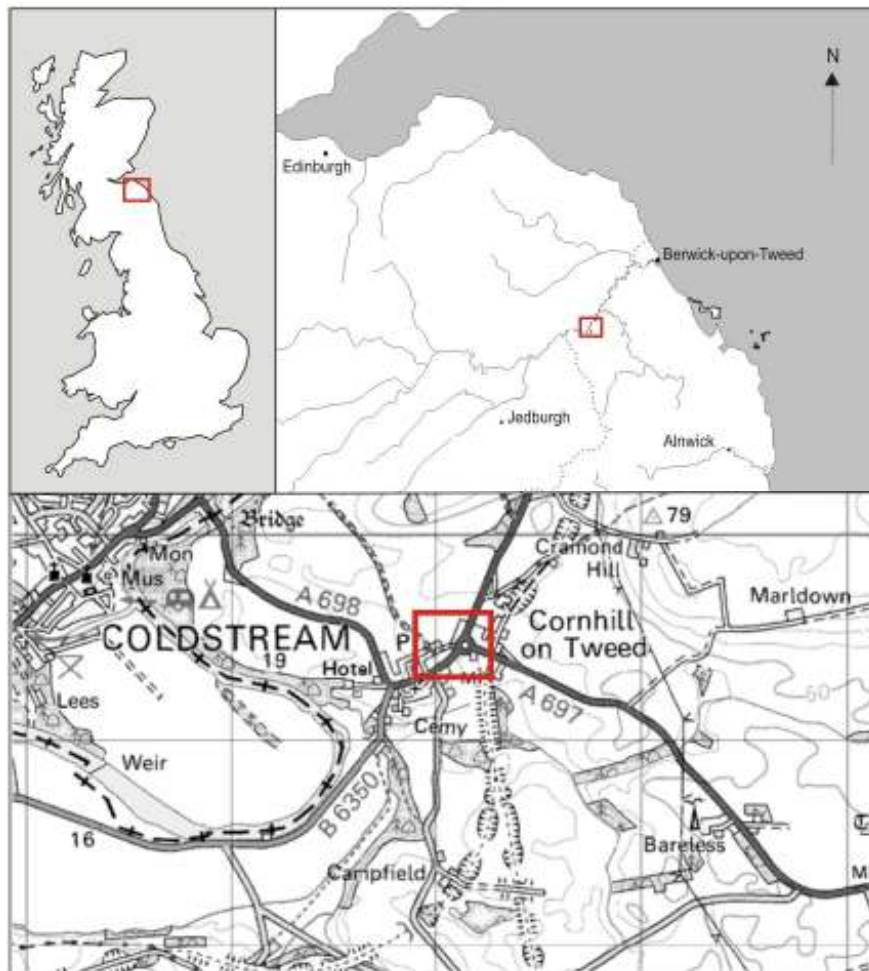


Fig. 1 Location of site (Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence no. 100045420)



Fig. 2 Small disused building within the proposed development area

1.2. Geology and Soils

- 1.2.1 The solid geology of the area consists mainly of limestone and coal measures and the overlying drift geology consists of boulder clay (Scrutton 1995). The site is a derelict garden plot which consists of made ground.

Fig 3

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. An archaeological investigation was carried out, which involved two trenches being placed within the proposed development area (Fig. 3). Trench one measured 10m by 2m, and trench two measured 5m by 2m. The trenches were opened using a back-acting mechanical excavator and the earth was removed in spits until the natural level was exposed. This was monitored by a trained archaeologist in order to assess whether any significant archaeological features were exposed during the process. Each separate layer and feature encountered was given a unique context number (a Harris matrix can be found in Appendix II and a full context register can be found in Appendix III).
- 2.2. The trenches were cleaned using hand tools in order to identify any potential archaeological features. They were then planned and a section was drawn at a scale of 1:50. The two drainage trenches that were present (007 and 010) were photographed using colour slide and black and white print.

3. RESULTS

3.1.1 *Topsoil*

The topsoil (001) measured between 0.30m and 0.50m thick throughout the site, and was a fine to medium, dark brown silty-sand with modern brick, glass, ceramic and metal inclusions. It is possible that the topsoil (001) was brought to the site in order to make the site suitable for use as a garden.

3.1.2 *Redeposited Subsoil*

The redeposited subsoil (002) measured between 0.20m and 0.30m throughout the site and consisted of a fine to medium, dark to medium brown, silty-sand, with gravel and cobble inclusions.

3.1.3 *Building Rubble*

There were two layers of building rubble in each trench (004, 005, 006 and 009). Both layers consisted of a silty-sand with the upper layers (004 and 006) showing 80% rubble inclusion, and the lower layers (005 and 009) showing 10% rubble inclusion.

3.1.4 *Natural Till*

Natural Till (003) covers the site and lies beneath the building rubble (004, 005, 006 and 009). Its depth is unknown, as it carries on beyond the depth of excavation

3.2. Trench One

Trench one measured 10m by 2m and was oriented north-south (Fig. 4). The topsoil (001) measured between 0.30m and 0.50m in depth and directly overlay the redeposited subsoil (002) which measured between 0.20m and 0.30m in depth. The

redeposited subsoil (002) overlay a rubble layer (006) which measured between 0.30m and 0.40m in depth and consisted of a silty-sand with 80% rubble inclusion. This overlay another rubble layer (009) also consisting of a silty-sand but with only 10% rubble inclusion and measuring 0.45m in depth. Cut into this layer (009) was a drainage trench (010) oriented west-east which continued beyond the edges of the trench. This was excavated by hand and measured 0.60m in width and 0.50m in depth. It consisted of a fine dark grey-brown, silty-sand with cobble and gravel inclusions. There were also a number of modern finds, such as pottery sherds, animal bone and the lid of an oil drum. The break of slope at the top and bottom was very sharp and the sides fairly steep. The base formed a fairly flat U-shape. The depth of the drainage trench (010) was cut beyond the depth of the rubble layer (009) and continued into the natural till (003) below. Associated with this context was a spread of clay (012 and 014) which can be seen in Fig. 5. It lay to the north and south edges of the drainage trench and consisted of a fine red-grey material. To the north (012) it measured 0.40m by 0.30m by 0.15m in depth. To the south (014) it measured 0.37m by 0.31m by 0.16m in depth. There was no clear cut and is therefore more likely an interface of 010 rather than a separate feature. The depth of the natural is unknown as it carried on beyond the depth of excavation.



Fig. 4 Trench one facing north. Drainage trench visible at the north end

Fig. 5

3.3. Trench Two

Trench two measured 5m by 2m and was oriented west-east (Fig. 6). The topsoil (001) measured between 0.30m and 0.50m in depth and directly overlay the redeposited subsoil (002) which measured between 0.20m and 0.30m in depth. The redeposited subsoil (002) overlay a rubble layer (004) identical to the layer in trench one (006) and measured 0.40m in depth. This overlay another layer of rubble (005) which was identical to the lower rubble layer in trench one (009) and measured a depth of 0.45m. This lay directly over the natural layer (003), which carried on beyond the depth of excavation. Another drainage trench (007) surrounding a modern ceramic drain was cut into the natural (003). This was oriented northwest-southeast and was excavated by hand (Fig. 7). It measured 0.40m wide by 0.30m in depth and continued beyond the edges of the trench. The fill consisted of coarse, dark brown-red sand and the break of slope at the top and bottom of the cut was very sharp. The based formed a regular U-shape and no finds came from within the fill (Fig. 8).



Fig. 6 Trench two facing east



Fig. 7 Feature 007 in trench two

4. DISCUSSION

- 4.1. Excavations approximately 200m to the south-west of the site have previously shown the potential for medieval remains to be present at the proposed development area. However, the two evaluation trenches excavated uncovered no significant archaeological features or small finds that could be ascribed to the medieval period. The drainage features that were uncovered are undoubtedly of modern origin due to the presence of modern material and a ceramic drain within their fills.

5. REFERENCES

Scrutton, C. 1995. *Northumbrian Rocks and Landscape*. Cumbria: Ellenbank Press.

Fig 8

APPENDIX I: SPECIFICATION

Archaeological Specification for Land at Main Street, Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland

For: Mr. Philip Allenson
By: Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Planning Reference: 06/B/0294
NCCCT Ref: 5837/B13/01

23th May 2006

1. Introduction

1.1 This written scheme of investigation has been prepared by Archaeological Research Services Ltd for Mr. P. Alanson in accordance with a brief supplied by Northumberland County Council. It consists of a project design for an evaluation of the area to be affected by the development at the land on the north side of Main Street in Cornhill-on-Tweed, Northumberland.

2. Background

2.1 The Main Street development area lies within area that is rich in archaeological remains, with material known in the immediate vicinity dating from the Mesolithic onwards to medieval times. The site lies on flat land adjacent to a roundabout on the principal artery road into Cornhill-on-Tweed. Being situated above the flood plain and along the course of a road that is presumed to have followed a similar course in the medieval period, the site is regarded as being in an archaeologically sensitive location. Recent excavations by Headland Archaeology Ltd. on the opposite side of the road have resulted in the discovery of a medieval building. Other medieval structures have been exposed in the village in recent excavations.

2.2 The form of the medieval village is currently known only in the broadest outlines and requires further investigation. It is assumed that the early settlement would have consisted of a series of narrow properties fronting onto Main Street, probably with strips of land to the rear, known as burgage plots, which were used for a variety of craft, industrial and rubbish disposal activities. Structures with a specialized industrial function might also have been arrayed along the road, such as blacksmith shops, joiners, and so on. The recent excavations in Cornhill-on-Tweed suggests that the present development lies along a main road and possibly within the core of the medieval village. It therefore has the potential to disturb important archaeological remains associated with the medieval and later settlement.

3. Aims

3.1 This project aims to accord with national and regional research agendas. Currently very little is known about Cornhill-on-Tweed in the medieval period, and so any archaeological findings will contribute to enhancing understanding of this historic village.

3.2 The project aims can be summarised as follows:

- Establish the presence/absence of surviving archaeological remains, their quality, depth and degree of preservation
- Identify and record all archaeological deposits within the evaluation area.
- Establish the likely chronological range of any remains.
- Characterise the nature and form of the deposits/structural remains.

4. Strategy

4.1 The site comprises a building plot on ground currently forming a plot of land with a derelict building (refer to map in the outline provided by the Northumberland County Council). The evaluation will comprise two trenches measuring 10m by 2m, and one measuring 5m X 2m across the site situated for maximum representativeness. Should changes to the trench dimensions be necessary, they will be discussed with the Assistant County Archaeologist and approved prior to work commencing on site. The topsoil will be removed by machine under continuous archaeological supervision and the exposed archaeological horizon cleaned back by hand. All features will be recorded and then fully excavated by hand.

5. Project Management and Standards

5.1 The project will be carried out in compliance with the codes of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) (2000) and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Excavations (1995).

5.2 All staff employed on the project will be suitably qualified and experienced for their respective project roles and have practical experience of archaeological excavation and recording. All staff will be made aware of the medieval origins of Wooler and the location and direction of known burgage plots and will be fully briefed of the work required by this specification. Each member of staff will be fully conversant with the aims and methodologies and will be given a copy of this written scheme of investigations to read. The evaluation team will be led by Clive Waddington who is an expert on the archaeology and geomorphology of the area. This will ensure that appropriate decisions regarding environmental and dating sampling will be able to be made in the field.

5.3 Deposits that have the potential for providing environmental or dating evidence will be assessed while work is in progress.

6. Methods

6.1 Topsoil and unstratified modern material will be removed by a machine with a backactor using a wide toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision.

6.2 The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits.

6.3 No machinery will track over areas that have previously been stripped.

6.4 The whole area will be cleaned using appropriate hand tools in order to expose any surviving archaeological features and deposits.

6.5 All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded on a pre-excavation plan before excavation, sampling and recording.

6.6 All features exposed will be excavated by hand. Typically this will comprise 50% sampling of every discrete feature; 25% sample of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill and 10% sample of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill.

6.7 The sampling strategy comprises putting all feature fills through a 10mm mesh to maximise finds recovery. If the fill is thought to have potential for environmental sampling a minimum of 30 litres (3 buckets), or if less 100% of the deposit, will be floated on site and passed through graduated sieves with the smallest being 500 μ (0.5mm). All discrete features will be assessed for their potential for providing environmental or dating evidence. This will include features such as pits, hearths, ovens, occupation surfaces, primary ditch silts, placed deposits and burials, and some structural features such as post holes, stake holes and construction slots and eaves drips.

6.8 In the event of human burials being discovered, they will be left *in situ*, covered and protected and the coroners' office informed. If removal is essential, work will comply with relevant Home Office regulations.

6.9 Appropriate procedures under the relevant legislation will be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasure Act 1996.

6.10 During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts and environmental samples will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this will include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material).

7. Recording

7.1 The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.

7.2 A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate

7.3 All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.

7.4 A photographic record of all contexts will be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept.

7.5 Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

8. Finds Processing and Storage

8.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in compliance with the IFA guidelines for Finds Work (2001) and those set out by UKIC (1990).

8.2 Artefact collection and discard policies will be appropriate for the defined purpose.

8.3 Finds will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage and to establish the potential for further information for all categories of finds.

8.4 Bulk finds which are not discarded will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labeling will be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded. This process will be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.

8.5 All small finds will be recorded as individual items and appropriately packaged (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated. Prehistoric pottery will not be cleaned or be subject to any abrasion or loss of adhering residues.

8.6 During and after the excavation all objects will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (inc. controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will have appropriate security provision.

8.7 Assessment and analysis of artefacts and environmental samples will be carried out by an approved named specialist. Lithics and pottery will be looked at by Clive Waddington while environmental assessment will be undertaken by Jacqui Cotton or Jenny Moore (after consultation with Jacqui Huntley).

8.8 The deposition and disposal of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner (Mr. P. Allenson) and Museum of Antiquities prior to the work taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner (Mr.P. Allenson).

8.9 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

9. Site archive

9.1 The archive will be compiled in an orderly fashion to the standards and format set out in Management of Archaeological Projects (HBMC 1991) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). This includes the indexing, ordering, quantification and checking for consistency of all original context records, object records, bulk find records, sample records, skeleton records (if recovered), photographic records, drawing records, photographs, drawings, level books, site note books, spot dating records and conservation records. A stratigraphy report and site matrix will accompany the primary record together with copies of all specialist reports, summary documents and photographic archive.

9.2 The archive will be deposited with the Museum of Antiquities of Newcastle upon Tyne within 6 months of the fieldwork once all post-excavation work is completed and the final report produced.

10. Report

10.1 A report will be produced within 15 working days of the completion of archaeological fieldwork. Two copies of the report (one bound, one unbound) will be submitted to the NCC Conservation Team and one to the client. Each report will be bound with each page and paragraph numbered and will include as a minimum the following:

- Planning application number, NCC Conservation Team Reference, OASIS reference, and an 8 figure grid reference
- A location plan of the site
- A location plan of the excavation showing the distribution of archaeological remains across the site. This will be at a suitable scale, and located with reference to the national grid, to allow the results to be accurately plotted on the Sites and Monuments Record.
- Detailed plans and sections of all archaeology located.
- A summary statement and discussion of the results.
- A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.

11. OASIS

11.1 ARS Ltd will complete an on-line OASIS form for this evaluation. ARS Ltd is a registered contractor on the OASIS system and has uploaded archaeological reports before.

12. Dissemination/Publication

12.1 A copy of the report will be submitted by the archaeologist to the developer and the County within 10 working days of the completion of the work.

12.2 A summary will be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' if appropriate.

12.3 A short article will be prepared for a local journal if appropriate.

13. Monitoring

13.1 The NCC Conservation Team will be informed of the start date and timetable for the evaluation in advance of work commencing. Reasonable access to the site will be allowed to the County Archaeologist or their nominee for the purpose of monitoring the archaeological scheme at all times.

14. References

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1995. *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation*.

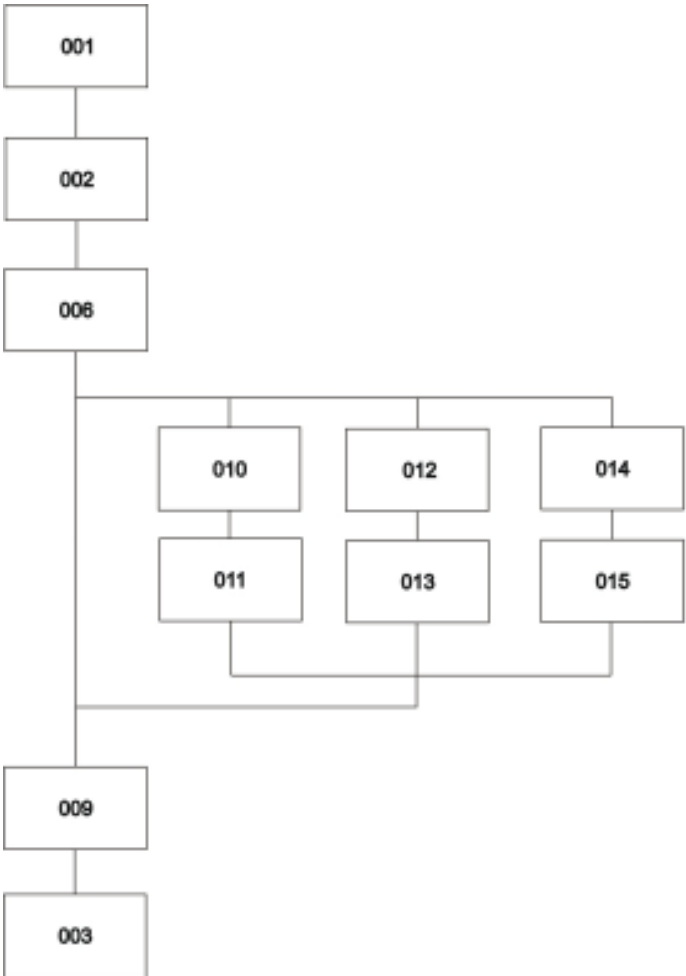
Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2000. *Code of Conduct*.

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2001. *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*.

UKIC (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation). 1990. *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage*.

APPENDIX II: HARRIS MATRIX

Trench One



Trench Two



APPENDIX III: CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Associated Contexts	Trench	Description
001	-	1 and 2	Redeposited topsoil
002	-	1 and 2	Redeposited subsoil
003	-	1 and 2	Natural till
004	-	2	Modern building rubble
005	-	2	Modern building rubble
006	-	1	Modern building rubble
007	008	2	Fill of modern drainage trench
008	007	2	Cut of modern drainage trench
009		1	Modern building rubble
010	011	1	Fill of modern drainage trench
011	010	1	Cut of modern drainage trench
012	013	1	Fill relating to drainage trench
013	012	1	Cut of above
014	015	1	Fill relating to modern drainage trench
015	014	1	Cut of above

APPENDIX IV: PHOTOGRAPHIC REGISTER

Film 1: Black and white print

Film Number	Photograph content
1	Trench one facing north
2	Trench one facing north
3	Trench one facing north
4	Trench one facing north
5	South facing section of trench two
6	South facing section of trench two
7	South facing section of trench two
8	Feature 007 in trench two
9	Feature 007 in trench two
10	Feature 007 in trench two
11	Feature 007 in trench two
12	Trench two facing west
13	Trench two facing west
14	Trench two facing west
15	Trench two facing west
16	South-west corner of site

Film 2: Colour slide

Slide Number	Photograph content
1	Trench one facing north
2	Trench one facing north
3	Trench one facing north
4	Trench one facing north
5	South facing section of trench two
6	South facing section of trench two
7	South facing section of trench two
8	Feature 007 in trench two
9	Feature 007 in trench two
10	Feature 007 in trench two
11	Trench two facing west
12	Trench two facing west
13	Trench two facing west
14	Trench two facing west
15	Derelict building on site
16	South-west corner of site

