

**An Archaeological Watching Brief on land
adjacent to Villa Lane in Longframlington,
Northumberland**



ARS Ltd Report No. 2014/141

OASIS no. archaeol5-196826

Compiled By:

Philippa Cockburn
Archaeological Research Services Ltd
The Eco Centre
Windmill Way
Hebburn
Tyne and Wear
NE31 1SR

Checked By:

Chris Scott MifA
Tel: 0191 477 511
Fax: 0191 477 7687
admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com



An Archaeological watching brief on land adjacent to Villa Lane in Longframlington, Northumberland

ARS Ltd Report 2014/141

November 2014

Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Contents

	List of Figures	
	Executive Summary.....	2
1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Location and Geology.....	3
3.	Background.....	4
4.	Methodology.....	5
5.	Evaluation Results.....	5
6.	Discussion.....	9
7.	Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright.....	9
8.	Statement of Indemnity.....	9
9.	Acknowledgments.....	9
10.	References.....	9

Appendix I: Specification

List of Figures

1	Site location.....	3
2	A plan of the site showing the line of the scheme.....	5
3	Topsoil strip, looking west.....	7
4	The trench section showing the subsoil overlying orange/grey natural clay...	7
5	Trench deposits at the western end of the pipe trench showing redeposited yellow clay with dark deposit beneath.....	8
6	The pipe trench across the road showing tarmac, bedding and natural clay....	8

Executive Summary

In November 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd was commissioned by Northumbrian Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief on Villa Lane in Longframlington, Northumberland. The work involved monitoring the excavation of sewage trenches that were being dug as part of a flood alleviation program. The excavations took place partly in a field to the east of Villa Lane and partly across the road of Villa Lane itself.

Longframlington is a small village in Northumberland on the A697 road near the Cheviot hills. The site has the potential to contain significant archaeological remains, particularly of Roman date. Part of the sewage scheme trench ran across the projected line of the Devil's Causeway Roman road which is thought to sit beneath the road of Villa Lane. Previous excavations at Bradford Edgehouse in c.1938 uncovered sandstone blocks with kerbs and evidence of an upper surface made from sandstone chips. Further investigations in the area have also uncovered evidence of the road although a watching brief that was carried out in 2001 to the north of the current scheme did not reveal any remains.

The watching brief did not reveal any archaeological finds, features or buried land surfaces.

1. Introduction

1.1 In February 2014 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd.) was commissioned by Northumbrian Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief in Longframlington, Northumberland, during sewage works related to a flood alleviation scheme. The works took place partly in a field to the east of Villa Lane and partly across the road of Villa Lane itself.

1.2 The site has the potential to contain important archaeological remains, particularly of Roman date. The route of the Devil's Causeway Roman road runs through the western side of Longframlington, on the same line as Villa Lane. Various excavations in and around Northumberland have uncovered remains relating to the road, although a watching brief in 2001 just to the north of Villa Lane found no evidence of it.



Figure 1: Site Location. (Ordnance Survey data Copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence No. 100045420).

2. Location and Geology

2.1 The development site is located on Villa Lane which is situated towards the western edge of Longframlington, Northumberland. The site is centred at NU 12604 00645 (Figure 1). The solid geology of the area consists of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone of the Stainmore Formation, overlain by superficial deposits of diamicton till (BGS 2014).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 Evidence for prehistoric activity in the vicinity of Longframlington exists in the form of a Neolithic stone axe made from dolerite (6763). This was found in a ploughed field to the east of Longframlington. Part of a ditch and post found during an excavation at Hall Hill Farm could possibly date from the Neolithic period. Some Bronze Age cists have been found in Longframlington at Snook Bank and on the Longframlington/Cartington parish boundary.

3.2 The remains of a possible Iron Age or Roman settlement is reported to exist within the parish and an earthwork of an enclosure that has been found at Swarland Burn could also date to the Iron Age.

3.3 The line of the Devil's Causeway Roman road is thought to pass from north to south through the western side of Longframlington. The projected line of this Roman road is thought to run directly across the line of the present sewage renewal scheme on Villa Lane. A number of previous excavations have been carried out on the line of the road, including at Bradford Edgehouse in 1938 when some sandstone blocks with kerbs and evidence of an upper surface were found. Excavations near Netherwitton in 2001 found a central spine of worked blocks with cobbles to either side, although the upper surface did not survive. Further investigations at Wooperton Quarry in 1997 did not encounter the surface of the road but did find the two parallel ditches that would have bounded it, along with a number of quarry pits used in its construction. An archaeological watching brief just to the north of the current scheme did not find any evidence of the road, indicating that it has most probably been previously destroyed in this area.

3.4 A Roman-period enclosure has been found nearby which may have been intended for animals.

3.5 After 1066 Longframlington gradually grew in size while other villages around it shrunk and then, in many cases, disappeared altogether. For example the parish of Longframlington contains the deserted medieval villages of Low or Nether Framlington and Newmoor Hall.

3.6 The 17th to 19th centuries saw quarries and lime kilns appearing, and the remains of a lime kiln can still be seen today at Longframlington quarry.

4. Methodology

4.1 The archaeological watching brief involved the monitoring of all groundworks associated with the installation of a new sewage system.

4.2 The work comprised monitoring the removal of topsoil in a strip measuring 4m wide from east to west and the excavation of a 0.5m wide trench, also from east to west, as well as the excavation of large pits for manholes (Figure 2).

4.3 All relevant groundworks were undertaken with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket and where necessary, hand dug by the onsite contractors. All digging was carried out under archaeological supervision.

4.4 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.

4.5 All necessary plans were recorded at a scale of 1:20 and all sections were recorded at 1:10. All deposits were leveled and all heights expressed in metres above Ordnance Datum.

4.6 A photographic record of all identified archaeological features was maintained during the course of works and all images were taken in digital and monochrome format with a graduated scale.



Figure 2: A plan of the site showing the line of the scheme.

5. Results

5.1 The topsoil (001) across the site consisted of dark brown medium textured silty clay with inclusions of coal, charcoal and stones. This had an average depth of 0.3m. Directly beneath the topsoil, with a depth of between 0.3-0.6m was a subsoil (002) consisting of yellow/brown loamy clay containing a large number of stones. The subsoil varied in depth

along the line of the scheme but was generally quite shallow. Beneath the subsoil was the natural yellow/grey mottled boulder clay (005) which became darker in colour the deeper it went and which contained a large number of stones. This natural deposit continued beyond the limits of the excavation. The deepest that the trench was dug was 1.7m, although it became much shallower towards the west.

5.2 Towards the western end of the sewage pipe trench a layer of re-deposited yellow/grey natural clay (006) with a depth of 0.5m was seen beneath the subsoil (002). A layer of very dark grey loamy clay (007) with a depth of 0.35m sat beneath the subsoil and contained a large number of partial bricks, some plastic sheeting and a glass bottle. A number of field drains and a water pipe ran through this deposit. The natural yellow/grey mottled clay natural was seen beneath deposit (007) and continued beyond the limits of the excavation.

5.3 Lastly, the trench was dug through the modern road surface and across to the other side to meet an existing manhole.

5.4 No archaeological finds or features were encountered during the watching brief.



Figure 3: Topsoil strip, looking west. Scale = 1m.



Figure 4: The trench section showing the subsoil overlying orange/grey natural clay.



Figure 5: Trench deposits at the western end of the pipe trench showing redeposited yellow clay with dark deposit beneath. Scale = 1.5m.



Figure 6. The pipe trench across the road showing tarmac, bedding and natural clay.

6. Discussion

6.1 The lack of archaeological finds and features on the site at Longframlington can probably be attributed to the large amount of redevelopment that has taken place in recent years. Particularly towards the west, which is where the Devil's Causeway would have been found had it survived.

7. Publicity, Confidentiality and Copyright

7.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

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

8. Statement of Indemnity

8.1 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.

9. Acknowledgements

9.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved with this work, in particular Ben Ralston of Northumbrian Water Ltd., Paul Powers of Owen Pugh and Nick Best, Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland.

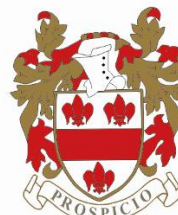
10. References

Keys to the Past *<http://www.keystothepast>*

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

Villa Lane, Longframlington, Northumberland.

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief



**Archaeological Research
Services Ltd**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A new combined sewer is proposed at Villa Lane, Longframlington, Northumberland, as part of proposed flood alleviation works by Northumbrian Water. Part of the scheme crosses the line of the Devil's Causeway Roman road. The site is centred on NU 12604 00645.
- 1.2 Lonframlington is a small village in Northumberland that lies on the A697 near the Cheviot Hills.
- 1.3 There is the potential for significant archaeological remains to exist in and around the village of Longframlington, particularly of Roman date. Part of the scheme crosses the line of the Devil's Causeway Roman road. A number of excavations have been carried out along the length of the Devil's Causeway. Excavations at Bradford Edgehouse in c.1938 revealed sandstone blocks laid on the clay subsoil, with kerbs on both sides and some evidence of an upper surface of sandstone chips. Excavations near Netherwitton in 2001 revealed a central spine of worked blocks with water worn cobbles on either side, forming the base of the road, although the upper surface of the road did not survive. Excavations at Wooperton Quarry in 1997 did not reveal the metalled road surface, but did record two parallel ditches which would have flanked the road, and a number of quarry pits used in its construction. In 2001, an archaeological watching brief during mains laying to the north of the new combined sewer did not identify any remains that could be have formed part of the Roman road or associated features.
- 1.2 The absence of remains to the north may indicate that Roman road surfaces had been removed or the line of the Roman road varies to the line marked on the map. Nevertheless, there remains the potential for the new combined sewer to affect Roman road deposits, associated roadside ditches and possibly even quarry features associated with its construction.
- 1.3 There exist the evidence of prehistoric activity within the area in the form of a Neolithic polished stone axe of dolerite (Monument number: 6763), found in a ploughed field (north of the junction of the Wooler-Morpeth and Long Framlington-Felton roads).
- 1.4 Scheduled monument is located in the area. A group of cup and ring carved rocks (Mo. N:6653) as well as an extensive cairnfield (Mo.N:6676) of Bronze Age date are situated on a fell sandstone ridge on the south slope of Glantlees Hill.



Figure 1: Site location plan.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. The objective of the watching brief is to ensure that any archaeological features encountered during the course of the groundworks are recorded and interpreted.
- 2.2. The proposed development has the potential to disturb important archaeological remains associated with the Devil's Causeway Roman road. Having considered the nature, extent and location of the proposed groundwork and the location of potential archaeological remains, it is considered that in this case a watching brief is the appropriate archaeological response. The

watching brief should cover the area highlighted in red on figure 1.

- 2.3 Should the groundworks not exceed modern disturbance or equally should they exceed the depth at which archaeological remains are present, Northumberland Conservation should be contacted in order to establish whether the watching brief need continue in these specific areas.

3. Fieldwork Methodology

- 3.1. All relevant groundworks will be undertaken by a suitable mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket. Archaeological monitoring will not entail excavation beyond the total areas exposed by the development works. If significant archaeological features are identified, Nick Best Assistant County Archaeologist with the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team, will be notified and a decision taken as to the best method of proceeding, in consultation with Northumbrian Water Ltd.
- 3.2. Excavation will be carried out in spits where possible. This will provide the maximum visibility of cut features such as postholes and pits and will allow for minimum disturbance of buried masonry structures. The attending archaeologist will supervise mechanical excavation to ensure maximum archaeological visibility. At the request of Nick Best, Northumberland County Council Conservation Team, if stone-built structural deposits are encountered and it is possible to manoeuvre trench excavations around them (thus preserving features in situ) then this will be done.
- 3.3. ARS Ltd will provide a suitably qualified archaeologist at all times during any ground works on the site to undertake a watching brief. The on-site archaeologist will be given the opportunity to stop site work in order to investigate potential archaeological features and adequate time will be allowed for recording any such features.
- 3.4. A written, drawn and photographic record will be maintained during the watching brief plus all significant archaeological remains will be recorded and/or retrieved. All excavations will be recorded in accordance with normal principles of archaeological evaluation upon pro forma context sheets (this will include at a minimum trench record sheets, an accurate site plan and record photography where no archaeological features are present).
- 3.5. Where archaeological features and/or deposits are identified during the watching brief, then a sufficient quantity of the said features will be investigated by hand to allow their date, nature and degree of survival to be ascribed. All features thus investigated will be recorded in plan and section and significant archaeological finds recovered will be retained for analysis. Any archaeological features identified will be photographed and drawn in plan at a scale of 1:20 and in section at a scale of 1:10. The stratigraphy, where relevant and apparent, will be recorded. All significant archaeological features will be photographed (with scale) *in situ* and their location recorded on a plan of the site.
- 3.6. 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). Brick samples will be taken for structures likely to pre-date the mid 19th century.
- 3.7. Site photography will be in digital format. Photography will include general site shots, shots of each excavation area, and shots of individual features and groups of features. All photographs

will include a suitable photographic scale and will be recorded on a photographic register with the subject and direction of each shot.

- 3.8. A plan of the excavated areas will be maintained, features noted and section lines recorded. All drawings will be carried out at an appropriate scale and all contexts will be recorded using a single context recording system. The site archive will include plans and sections at an appropriate scale, a scale photographic record, and full stratigraphic records on recording forms/context sheets or their electronic equivalent. Should archaeological features be present then the locations and height AOD of the features will be accurately fixed, surveying in either the planning baselines or the features themselves.
- 3.9. The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standards and Guidelines for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).
- 3.10. Any human remains discovered will initially be left *in-situ* and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations.
- 3.11. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will ensure that heavy plant or machinery will not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded. Contractors and plant operators will be notified that any observations of archaeological remains must be reported immediately to the archaeologist on site.
- 3.12. A risk assessment will be undertaken before commencement of the work and health and safety regulations will be adhered to at all times.
- 3.13. All archaeological fieldwork, recording of archaeological features and deposits and post-excavation analysis should be carried out to acceptable archaeological standards. The contractor will be expected to abide by the Code of Practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

5 Artefact and Ecofact collection and Recording

- 5.1 Artefact collection policy will be concerned with the provision of adequate samples for meeting the objectives of the work. All finds of 18th century and earlier date will be collected as a matter of course. All retained finds and palaeo-environmental samples will be treated in accordance with the EH guidance document *A strategy for the care and investigation of finds (1995)* Discarded artefactual materials will be described and quantified through assignment to broad categories in the field. Analysis of finds will be undertaken, as necessary, by suitably qualified specialists. Retained finds will be cleaned, marked, catalogued and packed in materials, as appropriate, for long term storage (see 8 Archive Deposition below).
- 5.2 Unstratified finds will only be collected where they contribute significantly to the project objectives or are of particular intrinsic interest. Finds of 'treasure' will be reported to the Coroner in accordance with the Treasure Act (1996).
- 5.3 Collection and policies for structural remains and industrial residues have been set out by the Society of Museum Archaeologists (SMA, 1993). The presence of such materials within a context will be recorded even where comprehensive retention is not considered appropriate.
- 5.4 The representative from Archaeological Research Services Ltd will inspect and monitor the upcast spoil from the site investigations, and unstratified pottery will be retained only if it is of

18th century date, or earlier.

- 5.5 If significant waterlogged deposits are found, which are judged to be of palaeoenvironmental significance in relation to archaeological deposits, then contingency will be set aside to allow for retrieval and assessment of such samples. ARS Ltd will liaise with Dr Jacqui Huntley of English Heritage in this event.

6. Monitoring Arrangements

6.1.1 The watching brief will be undertaken during the excavation by NWL's chosen subcontractor. 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.

6.1.2 ARS Ltd will liaise with Nick Best of the Northumberland County Council Conservation Team at regular intervals throughout the course of the work:

Nick Best
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 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.