

An Archaeological Investigation at Clayport Street, Alnwick



Medieval stone lined pit under excavation

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2007 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Gentoo Ventures to undertake an archaeological investigation at Clayport Street, Alnwick. The work was carried out prior to a mixed-use development comprising a ground floor retail unit with 51 residential units above and 51 car parking spaces, on land to the north of Clayport Street.

Significant medieval archaeological deposits were revealed during the excavations at Clayport Street, although the artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from them appear to be from site abandonment and or re-use, rather than primary depositions, with features that were not obviously intended initially for rubbish deposition being used for such practices. The presence of postholes and stone-lined features suggests fairly substantial medieval structures present on-site and pottery from the 12th and 13th centuries suggest that these structures are from early in the development of the town of Alnwick most likely associated with both industrial and domestic processes. No in-situ evidence of the former town wall of Alnwick was found, although substantial sandstone blocks found in backfill deposits within the vicinity of its projected course may well represent the only surviving fragments of the wall. Use of the site from the 13th century onwards is absent and it is only in the 19th century that definite evidence of further activity is present, evidenced by the stone-lined well and the sandstone wall and gully. The later use of the site by the Bird and Bush public house and the extensive service trenches located across the site have destroyed any earlier archaeology.

All archaeological features on-site were excavated in accordance with the brief supplied by the County Archaeologist and post-excavation analysis was undertaken on the artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from the site.

1. Introduction

1.1. Location and scope of work

- 1.1.1. In November 2007 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Gentoo Ventures to undertake a three-stage archaeological investigation at Clayport Street, Alnwick (Figs. 1 and 2). The work was carried out prior to and during groundwork's for a mixed-use development comprising a ground floor retail unit with 51 residential units above and 51 car parking spaces.

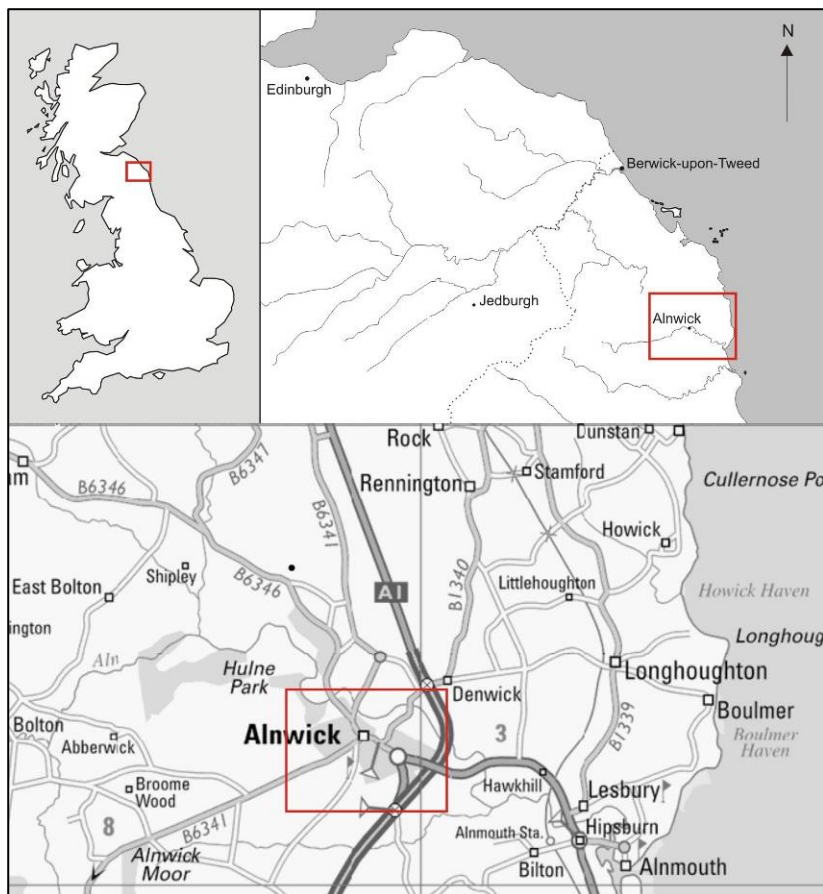


Fig. 1 Site location Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence no. 100045420

- 1.1.2. The site comprises a sub-rectangular block of land which covers approximately 0.35 hectares. The site is centred at NU18451323 and is bordered by Lagny Street to the east, Dispensary Street to the west and Clayport Street, one of the oldest roads in Alnwick, to the south. The site is on land which slopes gently downwards from west to east and is at approximately 66.40m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.1.3. Previous archaeological work carried out on the site in 2006 (Pre-Construct 2007) revealed a number of archaeological remains. Evidence of Medieval and Post-Medieval material culture was found to exist across the southern part of the site. The Medieval remains were interpreted as predominantly rubbish pits and were

associated with at least one possible post-built structure. A locally important substantial stone structure of nineteenth century date was also discovered in the north-east area of the site (Area 2, Fig. 2). There was also thought to be potential for archaeological remains of Post-Medieval date and earlier to exist across the northern part of the site despite subsequent development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

1.2. Geology and preservation

- 1.2.1. The solid geology of the area consists of Tournaisian and Visean carboniferous Limestone from the Palaeozoic period with an Igneous intrusion of Basalt dolerite, camptonite and other allied types. The drift geology consists of glacial sands and gravels interspersed with till (British Geological Survey 2007). The study area revealed deposits of fluvio-glacial sediments.

2. Methodology

- 2.1. The aim of this investigation was to record any archaeological features which may have been impacted upon as a result of the proposed development. A mixed mitigation approach was undertaken in order to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their quality, depth and preservation as well as ensuring full recording as necessary. Three methods were used depending on the area of the site under investigation and comprised a watching brief, a strip and record exercise and open-area excavation (Fig. 2).

2.2. Continuous watching brief

- 2.2.1. In Area 1 (Fig. 2) an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during all groundwork's for the development. Although the northern area of the site (Area 1) has been heavily developed from at least the nineteenth century onwards, investigations by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Pre-Construct 2007) suggested that the natural deposits appeared to have been left relatively undisturbed by later activity. The proposed lack of truncation across the site showed potential for the survival of Medieval and Post-Medieval archaeology within Area 1. Additionally the Medieval town wall is thought to be located very close to the vicinity of the western limit of the site and could have been present within the development area.
- 2.2.2. All ground works were carried out by a 360 degree tracked excavator utilising a toothless ditching bucket and an archaeologist was present on site during all groundworks with the topsoil and overburden being removed down to any significant horizon in successive level spits.
- 2.2.3. The area watched has been accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:1250 map of the area (Fig. 2). A digital photographic record of the groundworks was made.

2.3 Strip and record

- 2.2.4. In Area 2 (Fig. 2) the remains of a locally important, substantial building, thought to date from the nineteenth century were discovered during previous

archaeological investigations (Pre-Construct 2007). Only one wall was revealed during previous work and therefore a strip-and-record exercise was undertaken in order to establish the extent of the building, and to try to provide a secure date, establish its form and function and identify any associated remains or material culture. The total area stripped during this investigation measured 10m by 18m and exposed the whole building footprint. The work was carried out following the demolition of the existing buildings to ground level and prior to any groundwork's for the development.

- 2.2.5. The topsoil and unstratified modern material was removed down to the uppermost surviving courses of stonework of the structure in successive level spits, by a back acting machine utilising a wide, toothless ditching bucket. The whole process was supervised by an archaeologist. The area stripped measured 10m by 18m and exposed the whole building footprint
- 2.2.6. The area was cleaned using hand tools in order to expose the full nature and extent of the buildings foundations. The building was recorded using proforma sheets, planned and a photographic record in colour transparency and black and white print was made.
- 2.2.7. The area watched has been accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:1250 map of the area (Fig. 2).

2.3. Open area excavation

- 2.3.1. In Area 3 (Fig. 2) evidence for Medieval and Post-Medieval occupation was discovered during previous archaeological evaluation trenching (Pre-Construct 2007). An open area excavation was carried out in order to recover and record all archaeological remains within the area. Archaeology which had been sampled by the previous work was fully excavated. The work was carried out following the demolition of the existing buildings to ground level and prior to any groundwork's for the development.
- 2.4.2. All groundwork's were carried out by a back acting machine using a toothless ditching bucket. The areas were opened up under constant archaeological supervision and the overburden and modern material was removed in level spits down to the first archaeological horizon. All areas were cleaned using hand tools in order to expose surviving archaeological features and deposits.
- 2.4.3. All features exposed were excavated by hand and fully excavated. The archaeology discovered by previous investigations (Pre-Construct) was excavated in full in order to maximise finds recovery.
- 2.4.4. All deposits and features were given a unique context number (Harris Matrices can be found in Appendix I and a context register in Appendix II) and recorded using pro-forma record sheets. Accurate plans and sections were drawn at scales of 1:10 and 1:20 and all archaeological deposits and features were recorded with an above Ordnance Datum (aOD) level. All contexts were photographed in colour transparency and black-and-white print and included a clearly visible, graduated metric scale.

- Deposits that had the potential for providing environmental or dating evidence had samples taken and were assessed by Archaeological Services, University of Durham (Appendix III). Bulk samples of 40 litres were taken from 2 large feature features.

2.4.5 During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts and environmental samples were stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information.

Figure 2

3. Historical Background

3.1. Prehistory

- 3.1. The earliest evidence for human activity in Alnwick was found in 1939 and is a Neolithic, leaf-shaped arrow head (Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle 1942, 97). A number of Bronze Age finds are known from the area, including stone lined graves, and fragments of a rare Bronze Age ring were found in 1850 near to the railway station to the south of the town (SMR 4502). Although there have been several burials uncovered from this period no trace of a settlement has been found in the area. Several Iron Age homesteads were found in Alnwick including the prominent stone ramparts and evidence of structures at Alnwick Moor Camp (SMR 4494).

3.2. Roman

- 3.2.1. There is very little evidence for Roman occupation within the area although a Roman coin (SMR 12189) was found close to the river Aln near the Lion Bridge which is north of Alnwick.

3.3. Early Medieval

- 3.3.1. The place name Alnwick means the ‘settlement by the Aln’ and indicates that the town of Alnwick probably originated in the Early-Medieval period, though it is not recorded in the literary sources until around 1160 (SMR 12982). It has been suggested that Alnwick has its origins as an Anglian *vill*, founded in the early seventh century and that an Early-Medieval settlement may have developed around the triangle formed by Bondgate, Market Street and Fenkle Street, representing an early ‘green village’ which continued in use as the Medieval and later market place (Pre-Construct 2006).

3.4. Medieval

- 3.4.1. After the Norman Conquest Gilbert de Tesson, a Norman Lord, inherited Alnwick. When he joined a rebellion against William Rufus, the English King, he was forced to give up his lands to Yvo de Vescy, the first Norman Baron of Alnwick, who began building Alnwick Castle in 1096 (Pevsner *et. al.* 2002).
- 3.4.2. In 1172 and 1174 the King of Scotland, William the Lion besieged the castle. During the second siege the English ambushed William’s forces and the king was captured. The castle continued to be the focus of warfare and conflict in the region and in 1297 it fought off an attack from William ‘Braveheart’ Wallace. The following year the last surviving member of the De Vescy family died, and the castle was put in the care of the Bishop of Durham who sold it to Henry de Percy in 1309. The Percy family has held the titles of Earls and Dukes of Northumberland until the present day.
- 3.4.3. In 1434, the Earl of Northumberland was given permission by Henry V to build walls around the town. Construction stretched over 50 years and the walls were over 6m high and 2m thick. One gateway, the Clay Port, formed the western entrance to the town and can be seen on Armstrong’s map of Alnwick dated to

1769 (Fig. 3). The map suggests that Clayport Gate lay immediately to the south-west of the development site. It has also been suggested that several modern roads around the site, including Dispensary Street to the west and Tower Lane to the south-west, probably represent the line of the town wall (Pre-Construct 2006). The town increasingly developed under the Percy's who built substantial walls around the town. The town walls acted as a further defence against raiding from Scotland. Little survives of the original fortifications apart from the town gates. Bondgate Tower (SMR 4830) was the principal gate into the town, which was heavily rebuilt in the 18th century. The circuit of the town wall dating from this period is yet to be found but literary sources state it was 20ft high and six feet wide in places.

- 3.4.4. As well as high status buildings such as the Church of St Michael (SMR 4517) and the Medieval chantry, the Medieval town contained many domestic shops and houses around the Market and the surrounding streets with narrow plots of land called burgage plots. These burgage plots often continued in use well after the Medieval period and Armstrong's 1769 Map of Northumberland, Alnwick Plan shows many boundaries still in use (Fig. 3). There was good potential for the remains of Medieval and Post-Medieval frontage dwellings to survive in the southern area of the site. To the north, there was potential to find features typically associated with the backlots of burgage plots, including middens, boundary ditches and outbuildings.



Fig. 3 Armstrong's 1769 Map of Northumberland, Alnwick Plan
(Northumberland Communities)

3.5. Post-Medieval

- 3.5.1. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Earls of Northumberland ceased to live in Alnwick Castle and it fell into disrepair. In the eighteenth century however, Algernon, the seventh Duke of Somerset and a descendant of the Earls

of Northumberland, whose line died out in 1670, returned to the castle. He was the first family member to live there in over a century and his son carried out major restoration work in the mid-eighteenth century. The parks and gardens surrounding the castle were developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

- 3.5.2. The town also saw development during this period. The spaces between Medieval developments were filled with later buildings and the location of Alnwick proved a good staging point on the Great North Road. Industry began to flourish and until the 1770's there were several mills along the River Aln. The land around the river was also used by the tanners to bleach hides. In the nineteenth century there was much development of the Green Batt area and many shops along the Market Place were altered with new frontages. Armstrong's map of 1769 shows the frontage of Clayport Street to have been developed by this date, with the remainder of the site occupied by burgage plots running east-west from 'Finkle' Street. Lagney Street has not been developed by this date and does not appear on mapping until 1970 (Pre-Construct 2006). By the time of Wood's map of Alnwick, dated 1827, the frontages along Clayport Street and Dispensary Street are fully developed.
- 3.5.3. The first edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1860 shows that the majority of the site has been developed although many burgage plot boundaries are still in place and they are still shown on the third edition of 1920.
- 3.5.4. There are a number of documentary records of extensive clearance of 'slum' dwellings along Clayport Street in the first half of the twentieth century. The Bird and Bush public house was built in the 1930's, to replace an earlier inn of the same name (Pre-Construct 2006). A Bird and Bush inn is first recorded in 1855 (Whellan's Directory) and is listed on Dispensary Street where it was run by a George Rogerson (Pre-Construct 2006).
- 3.5.5. The 1950's edition Ordnance Survey Map shows that by this date, only the frontage of Clayport Street is developed. The northern area of the site has been largely cleared of buildings with the exception of a narrow structure fronting onto an area that will later become Lagney Street.
- 3.5.6. The 1970's edition Ordnance Survey Map shows the site as it existed prior to the demolition of buildings at the time of this investigation. The former AMC Ford garage must therefore date from the 1950's or later.

4. Results

4.1. Area 1 continuous watching brief

4.1.1 18th and 19th February 2009.

This first phase of work (Fig. 4) was initiated in order to trace the location of two fuel tanks from the garage which occupied the site prior to demolition. The earth was removed to 0.3m below the natural level. During this period no

archaeological remains were uncovered. The work ended on the second day when the two fuel tanks were located near the main road in the phase 1 area.

4.1.2 *24th March to 4th April 2009.*

Phase two of the watching brief took place between the 24th March 2009 and the 4th April 2009. The earth was removed by machine in the south-west side of the study area, starting at the east side, to 1 meter below the natural level. This was done in order to level the site for the development. The excavation took place intermittently over 10 days, in this time the ground was levelled and no features of archaeological significance or buried land surfaces were revealed (Figs, 6, 7 and 8).

- 4.1.3 While the site levelling was taking place it was decided to put in an experimental trench at the top of the site in-order to trace a known gas pipe. This trench extended over an area 43 meters long and 0.6m wide and was excavated to a depth of 1m. The spoil removed from the trench consisted of rubble and backfill, indicating that the ground level had been raised possibly in advance of the construction of the neighbouring houses and for the construction of the road. During the excavation a number of large sandstone blocks were discovered. Although these blocks were part of a large backfill deposit and not *in-situ*, judging from their size and general shape, and also their close proximity to known archaeological features, they are likely to have been robbed or disturbed from a medieval context (figs g, h, I). These could possibly have come from the town wall.

4.1.4 *April 16th – 18th 2009.*

The third phase of the watching brief took place after piling had been carried out on site. Steel retaining support had been sunk into the ground as well as piling in order to make a retaining wall for Dispensary Street (Fig. 12). The excavation began at the south section (Fig. 4), where the topsoil and backfill layers were removed to below the natural clay level, in-order to level the site. The ground was made up of modern rubble and debris until reaching the natural layer. The excavation continued from south to north. No finds of archaeological significance were found.

4.2. **Area 2 Strip and record of nineteenth century building F04**

- 4.2.1. Following the demolition of existing buildings within the development site, the overburden and made-ground was removed with a toothless ditching bucket in order to expose the earlier building footprint (Fig. 13). The remains existed approximately 0.3 m below the existing ground level, after demolition. The building measured 9.6m long by 5.4m wide with two internal partitions and one doorway, situated in the north-west wall. The walls (052) measured 0.65m thick and were constructed using large ashlar sandstone blocks bound in a greyish brown mortar. The degraded quality of the blocks made it difficult to measure their exact size but were approximately 0.3m in length and width. Remnants of a flagged floor (054) built with irregular sandstone paving slabs averaging 0.25m in length and width, were evident in the corners of the building. A relatively modern concrete floor surface (058) had replaced most of these flags however and the

laying of this floor had caused extensive damage to the rest of the structure. The other deposits located within the building (056) and immediately adjacent (as described by Pre-Construct Archaeology 2006) contained 20th century material and represent relatively recent backfilling and levelling deposits, presumably finished off by the capping of the building using concrete prior to the erection of the former AMC Ford garage. No artefacts or ecofacts were recovered from the structure to explain its 19th century function or significance.

4.3. Area 3 open area excavation

- 4.3.1. Archaeology was previously found in Area 3 (Pre-Construct 2006) which was opened up in full during this investigation (Fig. 14). In addition to the archaeology previously found, archaeology was also found to exist to the north, west and south of the former building footprint of the Bird and Bush. Archaeology was also discovered in a pocket of ground between the internal foundations of the former Bird and Bush public house. The area to the east of the Bird and Bush had been heavily disturbed by previous development on the site. A deposit of made-ground (001) existed across the site and measured a depth of approximately 0.30m. Natural clay (002) lay directly below the made-ground (001) and the archaeology was cut into this deposit (002).
- 4.3.2. In the area to the west of the previous Bird and Bush public house a large, shallow pit (005), a smaller pit (007) and a rectilinear feature (009). The area to the north of the Bird and Bush had previously been investigated by trial trenching (Pre-Construct 2006). The trench had picked up most of the archaeology surviving in this area, however, further investigation revealed that a number of features were more larger and more complex than previously established in the evaluation trenching exercise. All previous features have been given new context numbers in line with this investigation. The area to the south of the pub had also been previously investigated by trial trenching (*ibid.*). The surviving archaeology in this area was very truncated and little further information could be gained in relation to these features. One additional feature, outside the location of the previous trenching was a early 20th century well (017). All previous features have been given new context numbers in line with this investigation.
- 4.3.3. In the pockets of ground between the internal foundations in the north-west corner of the Bird and Bush public house, a stone flagged floor was discovered (F01), which had been covered by a midden deposit.
- 4.3.4. **Medieval remains**

Stone flagged floor F01 and associated deposit

A flagged stone floor (Figs. 16, 17 and 18) existed within the north-west corner of the previous Bird and Bush public house within. A large area of deposited material (012) covered the flagged surface (016), measuring 3m by 2.60m by 0.12m deep, although it had been heavily truncated by previous development on the site. The deposit consisted of dark-grey (10YR 3/1), organic-rich, sandy-clay mottled with clay throughout. The sandstone flags existed below the fill (012), covering the same area and the flags themselves measured a maximum of 0.85m by 0.65m by 0.35m deep (Fig. 17). The cut (013) was well defined and the break

of slope at the top and bottom was sharp. The base was irregular and undulating where the flagstones were set. Deposit (012) contained clinker and metal dust, charred cereal remains and hazelnut fragments and fish and mammal bone, all indicative of an occupation site. The charred food plant remains from this context are limited, but indicate that barley, wheat, oats and hazelnuts were being used on the site. The wheat grains had the morphological characteristics of bread wheat, but in the absence of any diagnostic chaff the presence of this type cannot be confirmed. The mammal bones present were a cattle scapula which showed chop marks and had been chewed by a dog; a sheep/goat astragalus, which showed acid-etching on the surface, indicating that it had passed through a canine gut in the faeces; and a rib fragment that could not be further identified. The species represented are cattle and sheep, with dog also indicated by the gnawing marks and the acid-etching. A total of 80 identifiable diagnostic fish bones were recorded, with the majority of identified specimens from whiting, with a few haddock and one plaice; these included two articulated haddock caudal vertebrae and six articulated whiting caudal vertebrae. From the elements present there is no clear indication of any fish processing having taken place either on- or off-site but the remains indicate the use of sea fish at an inland location, indicating either a market, or deliveries of fish, into Alnwick in the 12th and 13th centuries. The deposit is thought to represent a domestic midden deposit, although the deposition context does not appear to be a rubbish pit, and it is possible that this represents a site abandonment, or change in use, and the deposit is used to infill features that were no longer in use.

Pit 005 (Figs. 17 and 19)

A large, shallow pit (005) existed in the north-west corner of Area 3. It measured 1.13m by 0.50m by 0.14m deep. The fill (005) comprised brown (7.5 YR 4/2), sandy-clay with a small amount of sub-angular stone and charcoal inclusions. There were no finds within the fill. The cut (006) of the pit was very shallow and is likely to have been truncated by previous development on the site. The break of slope at the top and bottom was very shallow and the sides sloped very gradually although the pit was deeper to the east by approximately 0.04m. The base formed a regular 'U'-shape. No dateable evidence was recovered from within the pit (005) but its close proximity to other features thought to be of Medieval date would suggest that this pit (005) is associated with that period.

Pit 007 (Figs. 17 and 20)

A small pit or possible posthole (007) existed in the north-west corner of Area 3. It measured 0.60m by 0.55m by 0.12m deep. The fill consisted of dark-grey (7.5YR 4/1) sandy-clay with a small amount of charcoal inclusions. A large quantity of medium (10-25cm), angular stone inclusions existed near the base of the fill. The cut (008) showed the break of slope at the top to be fairly sharp to the west but very soft to the east. The sides were very shallow and the break of slope at the bottom was soft. The base formed a 'U'-shape. No datable evidence was recovered from within the fill but its close proximity to other features thought to be of Medieval date would suggest that this pit (007) is associated with that period.

Rectilinear stone lined feature 009 (Figs. 17 and 21)

A rectilinear feature (009) existed in the north-west corner of Area 3 and was oriented east-west (Fig. x). The feature was lined with sandstone blocks (010) on

the outer edges. The stones lining the north edge were between 0.10m and 0.25m long and appeared to have been dressed in a crude manner. The stones along the east and west edges were slightly larger, between 0.20m and 0.25m long, and were more angular due to being more neatly dressed. There were no stones along the southern edge. The existence of a modern pipe in that area suggests that the stones were removed during the installation of the pipe. The cut in which the stones were placed was a well defined rectilinear with a sharp break of slope at top and bottom. The sides were vertical and the base formed a flat, regular 'U'. The area between the stones measured 0.90m by 0.51m by 0.12m deep and was filled with a dark-grey (7.5YR 4/1) sandy deposit (009). There was a large amount of un-burnt coal within the fill (009), measuring between 0.05m and 0.15m as well as angular sandstone inclusions, measuring between 0.05m and 0.17m. A large amount of Medieval pottery was recovered from the centre of the feature near the base. It is likely that the sherds belonged to the same vessel as they were concentrated in one area. A small amount of very badly preserved bone was discovered within the fill along with a fragment of corroded iron.

Large pit 036 (Pre-Construct ref: 089) **Figs. 17 and 22**

A large pit (036) was located in the northern part of Area 3. Almost completely excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology the feature measure 1.70m wide by 1.68m long with a depth of 0.48m. Only the primary silty-clay fill identified by Pre-Construct Archaeology was visible in the surviving section of the feature, although an area of very loose coarse sandstone in a dark-grey (7.5YR 4/1) silt matrix, measuring 0.5m across and 0.3m in depth was revealed in the western portion of the feature. No further dating material was recovered from the complete excavation of the feature and no further post holes or other structural features were revealed. It is thought that this represents a medieval structural feature of some kind (of pre-14th century date from the pottery sherd recovered by Pre-Construct Archaeology), probably associated with the use of the site as a burgrave plot, which has then been subsequently infilled and levelled prior to later phases of activity on the site.

Pit 039 (Pre-Construct ref: 081) **Figs. 17 and 23**

A pit measuring 0.56m by 1.03m by 0.16m deep, previously partially excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology, was fully excavated in the northern part of Area 3. The fill comprised a medium, brown (7.5 YR 4/2) clay matrix and the feature was almost vertical-sided and flat-based with very sharp breaks in slope at the top and bottom of the feature. No further finds were recovered from the feature, which probably represents a medieval rubbish pit, although the lack of finds or organic remains leaves this interpretation open to challenge.

Large pit F03 (Pre-Construct ref: 075) **Figs. 17 and 24**

A pit was discovered during previous archaeological investigations (Pre-Construct 2007) but this investigation revealed that the pit was much deeper than previously thought. The fill (041), partially excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology consisted of a medium, brown (7.5 YR 4/2) mottled clay, however there were extensive irregular patches of much more silty material throughout the fill, that had a high organic content and contained significant volumes of medieval pottery. The feature measured 1.08m by 2.45m by 1.56m deep and was roughly rectangular in plan, although it had been truncated along its eastern edge by a modern drainage channel. Very steep to vertical sides broke sharply to a flat

base. The remnants of a stone-built lining to the pit survived on the western side of the feature and enough stonework was present in the southern and eastern sides to suggest that these three faces to the pit had been stone lined. No evidence of a stone-lining survived on the northern face. The stonework was roughly faced rectangular sandstone with a clay matrix, identical in composition to the natural clay. No evidence of mortar was found and it appears that the stonework was bound in the clay matrix, although this may have been naturally washed into the joints between the stonework, rather than been deliberately placed. Analysis of the bulk samples taken from (041) show semi-vitrified fuel waste and a level of metal dust commonly associated with deposits from occupation sites. Additionally fish bones were present, although nothing diagnostic was recovered from this deposit. The charred remains of indeterminate roots/rhizomes and heather stems were present and the charred food plant remains consisted of barley, wheat and oat grains and hazel nutshell fragments. A few charred weed seeds were recorded from wide niche taxa were present with pod remains from the arable weed wild radish. The deposit is domestic in nature and the few charred weed seeds from wide niche and wetland taxa suggest open and disturbed ground, typical of an occupation site. Hazel nuts may have been gathered from local woodland or from opportunist bushes growing in waste ground at the site. The arable weed remains are most likely to be contaminants of the cereal harvest, and therefore are more indicative of the environment of the agricultural location of origin. The charred remains of heather stems and flowers, and indeterminate roots/rhizomes may suggest the use of peat or turves, for fuel or in construction, or the purging of heather used for bedding or thatching. The low numbers of uncharred seeds do not indicate former waterlogged conditions, and are likely, therefore, to be modern intrusive material. The pottery fragments recovered, from at least 15 vessels, suggest a mid to late 13th century date for its deposition. However, our knowledge of the pottery in use in Northumberland in the medieval period is incomplete and patchy. The original use of the feature is unclear, and it would be curious to apply even a rough-cut stone lining to a rubbish pit, however the lack of any primary contextual artefacts makes interpretation difficult. It would appear that its use as a dump for midden material was not its primary function however.

Posthole 023 (Pre-Construct ref: 013) **Figs. 17 and 26**

The posthole was excavated in full during this investigation and measured 0.66m by 0.62m by 0.51m deep. The fill (023) comprised a with a small amount of charcoal fragments near the surface. Bone and Medieval pottery were found by Pre-Construct Archaeology within the fill (023) and an angular stone measuring 0.15m in diameter was found at the base. The cut (024) revealed a sharp break of slope at the top and bottom. The south and south-east sides formed a gradual slope and the remaining sides were vertical with a slight undercut on the north side. The base formed a regular 'V' shape.

Double posthole 025 (Pre-Construct ref: 022) **Figs. 17 and 27**

The posthole was excavated in full during this investigation and appeared to be a double posthole. It measured in total 0.72m by 0.52m by 0.44m in the deepest area. The west posthole measured 0.42m by 0.27m by 0.44m deep and the east posthole measured 0.51m by 0.38m by 0.39m deep. The fill (025) comprised a matrix with a small amount of charcoal fragments near the surface with an increasing amount nearer the base. A small amount of small, angular stones also

existed near the base. The cut (026) was well-defined and the break of slope at the top and bottom was sharp and the sides were vertical. The base of each posthole formed a regular 'U' shape. The west side of the feature was slightly truncated by a later stone drain. No finds were recovered from the feature but the close proximity to other features producing Medieval finds suggests that the double posthole (025) was associated with that period.

Posthole 027 (Pre-Construct ref: 035) Figs. 17 and 28

The posthole was excavated in full during this investigation and measured 0.57m by 0.34m by 0.40m deep. The fill (027) comprised a medium, brown (7.5 YR 4/2) clay matrix with a small amount of charcoal near the surface. There were a few small stone inclusions throughout the fill and bone fragments were discovered by Pre-Construct Archaeology near the base. The cut (028) revealed a sharp break of slope at the top and bottom and the sides were vertical with a slightly more gradual slope to the south. The base formed a regular 'V' shape. No finds were recovered from the feature but the close proximity to other features producing Medieval finds suggests that the posthole (027) was associated with that period.

Pit 029 (Pre-Construct ref: 039) Figs. 17 and 29

The pit was excavated in full during this investigation and measured 0.95m by 0.60m by 0.38m deep. The fill (029) comprised a medium, brown (7.5YR 4/2) clay matrix with a few small stone inclusions and charcoal flecking throughout. Fragments of bone, iron and Medieval pottery were found by Pre-construct Archaeology within the fill. The cut (030) revealed a sharp break of slope at the top and bottom and the sides were vertical. The base rose in the centre forming a 'W' shape. The north end was shallower with a steep step down to the south end.

Further remains, fully excavated as part of this process, in the vicinity of Pre-Construct Archaeology's Trench 2, and interpreted by them as being of medieval date, were shown to be modern in origin and associated with the construction of the Bird and Bush public house.

4.3.5. Post-Medieval remains

Stone wall (031) Fig. 30

A substantial stone wall existed in the south end of Area 3, part of which had been recorded by previous archaeological investigation (Pre-Construct). The wall and associated stone-lined gully were fully excavated. The wall measured 5.5m by 0.62m by 0.3m high and was constructed of randomly coursed sandstone blocks surviving one course high. The stone lined gully had been fully excavated by Pre-Construct Archaeology. The wall and gully had been truncated by later service pipes and no indication of its function could be discerned.

Nineteenth century well F02 Fig. 31

The nineteenth century well (F02) comprised a stone-lined (018) circular shaft. The stones used were dressed sandstone blocks measuring between 0.05m by 0.15m and 0.20m by 0.35m. The depth of the stones was approximately 0.30m. The stones were set into a clay matrix (019) which measured between 0.15m and 0.20m in thickness from the cut (020) of the well. The depth of the matrix continued beyond the depth of excavation which was 1.20m. A small fragment of Medieval pottery was discovered near the surface but further excavation revealed

modern material, including ceramic, brick and glass, to exist within the matrix at lower levels. The well shaft was filled with a number of deposits (017, 021 and 022). The primary fill (017) consisted of medium textured, black (7.5YR 2.5/1) sandy-clay. It measured 0.70m across and between 0.07m and 0.22m deep. Inclusions comprised modern pottery, glass and plastic. A deliberately placed stone constructed cap (021) existed below the primary fill (017). The stones were placed vertically and measured approximately 0.10m by 0.07m by 0.17m deep. Below the cap was a secondary deposit (022) of dark-brown sandy-clay. This deposit continued beyond the depth of excavation but contained modern inclusions of pottery, brick, glass and plastic at 1.20m below the present ground surface. The cut for the well (020) was a defined circular shape and the break of slope at the top was very sharp. It is almost certain however, that the well had been truncated during previous development on the site. The sides of the cut (020) were vertical but the base was not reached as it existed below the depth of excavation. A narrow chambered augur was used to obtain a sample of the well deposits and ascertain whether any early organic rich deposits existed at the base of the well. Deposit (022) continued for a further 2.87m below the limits of excavation and a wooden board, 0.04m thick lined the base of the well. This had been laid on the natural clay. No waterlogged deposits were encountered and the well dates from the mid-19th century at the earliest. It was probably infilled at the time of construction of the Bird and Bush public house.

5. Discussion

- 5.1 Significant medieval archaeological deposits were revealed during the excavations at Clayport Street, although the artefactual and ecofactual material recovered from them appear to be from site abandonment and or re-use, rather than primary depositions, with features that were not obviously intended initially for rubbish deposition being used for such practices. The presence of postholes and stone-lined features suggests fairly substantial medieval structures present on-site and pottery from the 12th and 13th centuries suggest that these structures are from early in the development of the town of Alnwick. All the features are heavily truncated however and are difficult to form into a recognisable building footprint or other structure that may have been involved in industrial processes or other activities. The postholes (023-029) from closer to the Clayport Street frontage on the south of the site presumably represent the footings for a timber framed building facing onto the street and the traffic passing through the nearby gate however the apparent removal by later development of most of these postholes and any associated features makes any further interpretation impossible.
- 5.2 Further from the street frontage the stone lined pits were most likely associated with both industrial and domestic processes. Again the heavily truncated nature of the features makes interpretation almost impossible and it is thought by the excavator that the deposits within the stone lined features do not represent material associated with the primary use of these features. Given the fact that there is later pottery material within the assemblages, coupled with the uncharred intrusive seeds, the truncation to the east side of the very large pit and the patchy nature of the organic rich deposits within it, it is thought that the deposits used to infill these features represent a change in use of the site and an infilling and levelling of previous features prior to this change of use. However there is no further evidence of this change in use, other than pits containing material that

may be later than 14th century in date. It is thought most likely that the stone-lined features are of 13th century or earlier date and have been infilled, probably all at the same time, using material that has built up on the site during the 13th century. The presence of domestic and industrial material within these deposits indicates that the site had been used for metal working as well as more general domestic tasks such as eating and drinking.

- 5.3 No *in-situ* evidence of the former town wall of Alnwick was found, although substantial sandstone blocks found in backfill deposits within the vicinity of its projected course may well represent the only surviving fragments of the wall.
- 5.4 Use of the site from the 13th century onwards is absent and it is only in the 19th century that definite evidence of further activity is present, evidenced by the stone-lined well and the sandstone wall and gully. The later use of the site by the Bird and Bush public house and the extensive service trenches located across the site have destroyed any earlier archaeology other than that surviving in a few pockets and discussed here. The 19th century building located in the northern part of the site and examined as a strip-and-record exercise, is the best surviving archaeological feature although again the original use of the building is unclear as it has been infilled with modern material during a later site levelling procedure, probably prior to the building of the former AMC Ford garage on the site.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The program of archaeological fieldwork at Clayport Street Alnwick has been completed in accordance with the brief supplied by the County Archaeologist. Significant medieval deposits were revealed and fully excavated with a post-excavation analysis indicating the use of the site in the 12th and/or 13th centuries for industrial and domestic practices. This phase was then infilled and further use of the site is unknown until the 19th century when the ephemeral remains of structures and the well on the Clayport Street frontage and the more substantial building situated on Lagny Street were created.
- 6.2 All archaeological features on-site were fully excavated as part of this program, other than the remains of the 19th century building on Lagny Street and the full depth of the 19th century well on Clayport Street. No further work is necessary on the material recovered from site.
- 6.3 The planning condition associated with the archaeological investigation of the site of the Bird and Bush public house and the AMC Ford garage has been completed.

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Appendix I: Figures

Fig 4



Fig. 5 Phase one of the watching brief, tracing the fuel tanks.



Fig. 6 South west corner during demolition prior to excavation



Fig. 7 Machine removing topsoil down to the natural level



Fig. 8 South west excavation down to natural



Fig. 9 Large sandstone step found in area of gas pipe



Fig. 10 Large sandstone blocks found in area of gas pipe



Fig. 11 Large faced sandstone block found in area of gas pipe



Fig. 12 Phase three of the watching brief revealing the newly driven piles and retaining wall

Fig. 13



Fig. 14 Photograph of 19th century building looking south



Fig. 14 Photograph of 19th century building looking north

Fig. 16 Plan of Area 3

Fig 17 plans and sections of medieval features



Fig. 18 F01: deposit (012) over flagged stone floor, scale 2m



Fig. 19 South facing section of Pit 005, scale 0.25m



Fig. 20 Pit 007, scale 0.25m



Fig. 21 Feature 009, scale 1m



Fig. 22 Pit 036, scale 0.25m



Fig. 23 Pit 039, scale 0.25m



Fig. 24 Feature 03, west facing section, scale 2m



Fig. 25 Feature 03, south facing section, scale 2m



Fig. 26 Posthole 023, scale 0.25m



Fig. 27 Posthole 025, scale 1m



Fig. 28 Posthole 027, scale 0.25m



Fig. 29 Pit 029, scale 1m



Fig. 30 Stone wall (031) and stone gully (034) looking east, scale 2 x 2m
Posthole 023 is located in the bottom right of the picture



Fig. 31 19th century well, Feature 02, scale 1m

Appendix II: Harris Matrices

Appendix III: Plant macrofossil and faunal analysis



Clayport Street, Alnwick, Northumberland
plant macrofossil and faunal analysis

on behalf of
Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Report 2018

September 2008

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Suite 7 Angel House, Portland Square, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1HB

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2. Project background	2
3. Plant macrofossil analysis	2
4. Faunal remains analysis (mammal bone)	5
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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 Medieval features were excavated at Clayport Street, Alnwick, by Archaeological Research Services Ltd. This report presents the results of plant macrofossil and faunal analysis of two bulk samples taken at the site.

Results

Plant macrofossil analysis

- 1.2 The charred food plant remains, although relatively low in numbers, indicate that barley, wheat, oats and hazelnuts were being used; an assemblage typical of medieval, urban deposits in northern England.

Faunal remains analysis (mammal bone)

- 1.3 The species represented are cattle and sheep, with dog also indicated by the gnawing marks and the acid-etching. All three fragments are suggestive of the deposition of domestic refuse.

Faunal remains analysis (fish bone)

- 1.4 The two bulk samples have produced a small and exclusively marine fish bone assemblage of primarily whiting, with some haddock and plaice. Given the element distribution and size of fish, it is likely that these bones were from whole fish, rather than from fish processed off-site. The location of Alnwick on the North Sea coast means all of the species present could have been caught locally.

2. Project background

Location and background

- 2.1 An excavation was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd at Clayport Street, Alnwick, Northumberland. This report presents the results of plant macrofossil and faunal analyses of two bulk samples taken at the site: a layer of material overlying a flagged floor, context (12); and the primary fill of a stone-lined rubbish pit, context (41). Pottery from the 12th and 13th Centuries was present in both samples.

Objective

- 2.2 The objective was to analyse the bulk samples to provide information about the diet, economy and fishing/farming practices of the medieval inhabitants of Alnwick, and the former natural environment at the site.

Dates

- 2.3 Samples were received by Archaeological Services Durham University on the 3rd July 2008. Analysis and report preparation were conducted between 14th August and 2nd September 2008.

Personnel

- 2.4 Plant macrofossil analysis and report preparation were by Dr Helen Ranner. The animal bone was analysed by Ms Louisa Gidney and the fish bone by Dr Rachel Parks. Sample processing was undertaken by Ms Andrea Dixon and Mr Alan Rae.

Archive

- 2.5 The site code is CPS07. The flots and fish bone are retained in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University, for collection. The pottery and mammal bone have been returned with this report.

3. Plant macrofossil analysis

Method

- 3.1 The whole of each bulk sample was manually floated and sieved through a 500 μ m mesh. The residues were described and scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were dried slowly and examined at $\times 40$ magnification for waterlogged and charred botanical remains. Identification of these was undertaken by comparison with modern reference material held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Plant taxonomic nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

Results

- 3.2 The bulk samples contained small quantities of fire-waste, principally charcoal, with traces of coal; clinker was present in context (12) and semi-vitrified fuel waste in context (41). Both samples contained a background level of metal dust commonly associated with deposits from occupation sites. Mammal bone and fish bone were present in both contexts, and are discussed in sections 4 and 5. A number of pottery sherds were recovered from context

(41). The charred remains of indeterminate roots/rhizomes and heather stems were present in both contexts, and in addition charred heather flowers were recorded in context (12). A few uncharred seeds were present in both contexts and traces of modern roots were recorded in context (41).

- 3.3 Charred food plant remains consisted of cereal grains and hazel nutshell fragments. Barley and wheat were recorded in both contexts with most of the wheat grains in context (12) showing the morphological characteristics associated with bread wheat. Oats were present in context (41).
- 3.4 A few charred weed seeds were recorded. Seeds derived from wide niche taxa were present in both contexts with pod remains from the arable weed wild radish in context (41), and nutlets from wetland sedge taxa in context (12). The results are presented in Table 3.1.

Discussion

- 3.5 The charred food plant remains are limited, but indicate that barley, wheat, oats and hazelnuts were being used. The wheat grains in context (12) had the morphological characteristics of bread wheat, but in the absence of any diagnostic chaff the presence of this type cannot be confirmed. This assemblage of food plant remains, although limited, is typical of medieval deposits in northern England (Huntley & Stallibrass 1995), and has previously been recorded in medieval deposits at Pottergate, Alnwick (Archaeological Services 2002). The additional presence of mammal bone, fish bone and pot sherds supports the domestic nature of these deposits.
- 3.6 The few charred weed seeds from wide niche and wetland taxa suggest open and disturbed ground, typical of an occupation site. Hazel nuts may have been gathered from local woodland or from opportunist bushes growing in waste ground at the site. The arable weed remains in context (41) are most likely to be contaminants of the cereal harvest, and therefore are more indicative of the environment of the agricultural location of origin. The charred remains of heather stems and flowers, and indeterminate roots/rhizomes may suggest the use of peat or turves, for fuel or in construction, or the purging of heather used for bedding or thatching. The low numbers of uncharred seeds do not indicate former waterlogged conditions, and are likely, therefore, to be modern intrusive material.

Table 3.1: Data from plant macrofossil analysis

Context	12	41
<i>Volume processed (l)</i>	25	45
<i>Volume of flot (ml)</i>	200	150
<i>Volume of flot analysed (ml)</i>	200	150
<i>Residue contents (relative abundance)</i>		
Bone (fish burnt)	1	-
Bone (fish unburnt)	3	-
Bone (mammal burnt) indet. frag.	2	-
Bone (mammal unburnt) see faunal remains analysis (4.1)	2	-
Bone (mammal unburnt) indet. frag.	1	1
Bone (mammal calcined) indet. frag.	-	1
Clinker	2	-
Coal	2	-
Metal dust	2	1
Pottery sherds (total number)	-	13
<i>Flot matrix (relative abundance)</i>		
Bone (fish unburnt)	3	-
Bone (fish calcined)	-	1
Bone (mammal unburnt) indet. frag.	-	1
Bone (mammal calcined) indet. frag.	-	1
Charcoal	3	2
Clinker	1	-
Coal	1	1
Heather flowers (charred)	1	-
Heather twigs (charred)	3	1
Roots (modern)	-	1
Roots/rhizomes (charred)	1	1
Semi-vitrified fuel waste	-	1
Uncharred seeds	1	1
<i>Charred remains (total counts)</i>		
(a) <i>Raphanus raphanistrum</i> (Wild Radish) pod frag.	-	1
(c) <i>Avena</i> spp (oat species) grain	-	3
(c) <i>Cerealia</i> indeterminate grain	1	1
(c) <i>Hordeum</i> spp (Barley species) grain	1	3
(c) <i>Triticum</i> cf. <i>aestivum</i> (cf. Bread Wheat) grain	3	-
(c) <i>Triticum</i> spp (Wheat species) grain	1	2
(r) <i>Galium aparine</i> (Cleavers) seed	-	2
(t) <i>Corylus avellana</i> (Hazel) nutshell frag.	1	10
(w) <i>Carex</i> spp (Sedges) trigonous nutlet	2	-
(x) <i>Chenopodium</i> spp (Goosefoot) seed	1	-
(x) Poaceae undifferentiated (Grass family) caryopsis	1	-
(x) <i>Rumex</i> spp (Dock) nutlet	-	1
Seed indeterminate	2	-

[a-arable; c-cultivated plant; r-ruderal; t-tree; w-wetland; x-wide niche]

Relative abundance is based on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

4. Faunal remains analysis (mammal bone)

- 4.1 Three pieces of mammal bone from context (12) were analysed; preservation was fair. The bones present are: a cattle scapula which showed chop marks and had been chewed by a dog; a sheep/goat astragalus, which showed acid-etching on the surface, indicating that it had passed through a canine gut in the faeces; and a rib fragment that could not be further identified. The species represented are cattle and sheep, with dog also indicated by the gnawing marks and the acid-etching. All three fragments are suggestive of the deposition of domestic refuse.

5. Faunal remains analysis (fish bone)

Methods

- 5.1 Analysis was conducted at the fishlab, Centre for Human Palaeoecology, University of York. Following the York system recording protocol (Harland *et al* 2003) all specimens were counted and classified as either 'diagnostic' or 'non-diagnostic' elements. A suite of 18 to 22 diagnostic elements (QC1 elements) were identified and fully recorded. This included characteristics such as bone surface texture, element completeness, bone modification and estimated fish size. Vertebrae (QC2 elements) are identified to family or species level where possible. All other elements were recorded as QC0, this includes both non-diagnostic and truly unidentifiable bones.

Results and discussion

Recovery and preservation

- 5.2 The fish bone came from the >4mm and 2-4mm fractions of the bulk samples. For diagnostic elements two indicators of preservation were recorded; surface texture and element percentage completeness of diagnostic. Element completeness was variable and the surface texture of the bone was typically fair, but with some flaking (Table 5.2). No diagnostic QC1 elements were sufficiently intact to take measurements. Out of the 227 specimens, 13 showed signs of burning and were either charred or calcined. One fish bone (unidentified) from context (12) had been crushed. Such crushing is most likely to have been caused by trampling or mastication (Wheeler and Jones 1989).

Species, element representation and fish size

- 5.3 A total of 227 bones were examined, 80 identifiable diagnostic bones were recorded, all of which came from context (12). The species and elements present are presented in Table 5.3. The majority of identified specimens were from whiting (62), with haddock (4) and plaice (1); these included two articulated haddock caudal vertebrae and 6 articulated whiting caudal vertebrae. In addition, some specimens were only identifiable to family level: cod family (18); and plaice family (1). From the elements present there is no clear indication of any fish processing having taken place either on- or off-site.

Table 5.2: Preservation and modifications (number of specimens)

Context	12	41
<i>Crushed</i>	1	-
<i>Burning</i>		
calcined	3	2
charred	8	-
<i>Texture(QC1 elements)*</i>		
good	3	-
fair	12	-
poor	3	-
<i>Element completeness (QC1 elements)</i>		
0-20%	2	-
21-40%	3	-
41-60%	5	-
61-80%	8	-

*Assessment of surface texture based on the following criteria (Harland *et al.* 2003): good - lacks fresh appearance but solid; very localized flaky or powdery patches; fair - surface solid in places, but flaky or powdery on up to 49% of specimen.; poor - flaky or powdery on over 50% of specimen.

Table 5.3: Number of identified specimens (NISP) and element representation

Taxa		Element	Context		Total
			12	41	
Haddock	<i>Melanogrammus aeglefinus</i>	caudal vertebra 2	4	-	4
Whiting	<i>Merlangius merlangus</i>	articular	1	-	1
		basioccipital	1	-	1
		ceratohyal	1	-	1
		dentary	4	-	4
		infrapharyngeal	1	-	1
		posttemporal	2	-	2
		supracleithrum	2	-	2
		vomer	2	-	2
		abdominal vertebra 1	1	-	1
		abdominal vertebra 2	3	-	3
		abdominal vertebra 3	11	-	11
		caudal vertebra 1	26	-	26
		caudal vertebra 2	7	-	7
Cod family	Gadidae	ceratohyal	1	-	1
		infrapharyngeal	1	-	1
		quadrate	1	-	1
		abdominal vertebra 1	3	-	3
		caudal vertebra	6	-	6
Plaice	<i>Pleuronectes platessa</i>	quadrate	1	-	1
Plaice family	Pleuronectidae	first vertebra	1	-	1
Unidentified fish			145	2	147
Total			225	2	227

- 5.4 The QC1 elements were compared with reference specimens of fish of known total length. On this basis the fish present were small, i.e., over 15cm and below 30cm total length (Table 5.4). All of the taxa recorded are marine and their small size is indicative of having been fished from local North Sea coastal waters. Young whiting and haddock are typically found close to the shore. Plaice are found on the sea bottom, at a depth of water that varies with their age; younger (therefore, smaller) fish can be found in water a few metres deep, while older specimens can be found at depths up to 100m (Hureau 1996).

Table 5.4: Fish size based on comparison with reference specimens of known total length (number of specimens)

Fish size (mm)	Taxa	Context 12
151-300	Whiting	14
	Cod family	2
	Plaice	1

Summary

- 5.5 The two bulk samples have produced a small and exclusively marine fish bone assemblage of primarily whiting, with some haddock and plaice. Given the element distribution and size of fish, it is likely that these bones were from whole fish, rather than from fish processed off-site. The location of Alnwick on the North Sea coast means all of the species present could have been caught locally.

6. Sources

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Appendix III: Analysis of the pottery sherds

Jenny Vaughan, Northern Counties Archaeological Service

Quantity, dating

An assemblage of 120 sherds of pottery weighing 2863 grms was recovered from a single context (41). There were an estimated fifteen vessels, although five did not have any form sherds (i.e. rim, base etc.), and four miscellaneous sherds. At least one of the vessels was of 12th century type but the rest were broadly 13th century.

Range and Variety

The vessels present are listed in the catalogue, see below.

Pot no	fabric	No.	weight	form sh	comments
1	buff	26	870	prof	Jug with lid seated rim and ridged rod handle, green glaze with some copper on upper part of body. Rather squat form. Moderately gritted buff fabric with slightly pinker surfaces which are slightly eroded/roughened. Brown deposit/concretion inside and out.
2	gritty ware	20	326	b	Grey fabric with oxidised exterior margin and buff internal surface. Sooted. Glazed over inside of base and a small patch higher up on the outside.
3	gritty ware	9	189	b	Similar fabric to #2 though exterior margin is light brown rather than red brown.
4	sandy ware	23	825	prof	Jug with everted clubbed rim, strap handle and thumbled base. A taller vessel than #1. Grey fabric with oxidised external margin/surface. Interior is pale pinkish brown getting redder towards the top. Brownish glaze with applied scales on upper part of body which is somewhat distorted.
5	oxidised gritty	6	57		Oxidised fabric with blackened outside and buff interior.
6	coarse white gritty	2	61	r b	Everted jar rim. A coarse gritted fabric similar to 12th century Dog Bank type.
7	coarse white gritty	1	34	b	Also possibly an early gritty ware.
8	oxidised gritty	6	139	r	Rectangular jar rim with groove around outer face. Grey core with light orange brown surfaces. Inclusions ill sorted

Pot no	fabric	No.	weight	form sh	comments
					medium to large.
9	oxidised gritty	1	30	r	Upright expanded rim with groove along top. Occasional very large quartz inclusion. Possibly another early vessel.
10	white ware	3	56	r	Clubbed jar rim. ? all same ves. One is flat fragment from base with green glaze. Part of the east coast tradition.
11	reduced greenware	1	20	r	Upright jug rim with two cordons below. Hard mid grey fabric with zone of green glaze, surfaces otherwise oxidised.
12	oxidised iron rich	6	52		? from same vessel. Grey fabric with bright red brown oxidised surfaces.
13	early green glazed	6	86		Most sherds appear to be the same vessel. Dark grey sandy micaceous fabric.
14	iron rich	1	55		Fairly coarse grey fabric with oxidised light brown exterior.
15	Grey green glazed	5	36		Pale grey fabric with moderate medium quartz. Pale pinkish brown int surface.
16	medieval	4	27		Miscellaneous sherds

Pot numbers 2 to 5 can probably be regarded as the same type, the jug being simply finer than the other vessels.

Discussion

The general characteristics of most of the pottery suggest a mid to late 13th century date for its deposition. However, our knowledge of the pottery in use in Northumberland in the medieval period is incomplete and patchy, and when few close parallels can be made with other material dating remains uncertain. The current writer has seen only one relatively large assemblage of pottery from Alnwick - that from Pottergate (2002 Assessment Report for PCA). Although no direct 'in the hand' comparison has been made the two assemblages appear to have little in common. This may be because there is in fact no chronological overlap, or because the Clayport Street group contains relatively few vessels from a single deposit. It cannot therefore be taken as representative of the whole range of ceramics in use at the time, even by a single household.

However, the fresh condition of most of this group, and the large vessel families present are of great interest as they indicate a primary and contemporary deposit, (with the exception of the coarse whiteware sherds, and possibly one other, which may be residual material). Further work elsewhere may in future allow a closer dating, and a better understanding of where the pottery was produced. A programme of scientific analysis is being planned as part of the county wide review of medieval pottery currently being

undertaken. The possibility of including material from Clayport Street in this should be explored.