# Archaeological Watching Brief at Offerton Grange Farm, Sunderland

Study area showing row of test pits.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*In June 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northern Structures Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Offerton Grange Farm, Sunderland. Fifteen pits were being excavated for the foundations of a barn extension. The excavation of the pits revealed that the natural boulder clay had not been disturbed, other than the presence of modern field drains. Given the relatively shallow depth of the excavation and the undisturbed natural clay, the foundation pits failed to produce any significant archaeological features or artefacts and it is very unlikely that the construction of this barn will disturb any features of archaeological significance.*

 

# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1. In June 2008 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northern Structures Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Offerton Grange Farm, Sunderland (Fig. 1). The work was carried out prior the extension of a barn building on the site and monitored the excavation of 15 foundation pits.

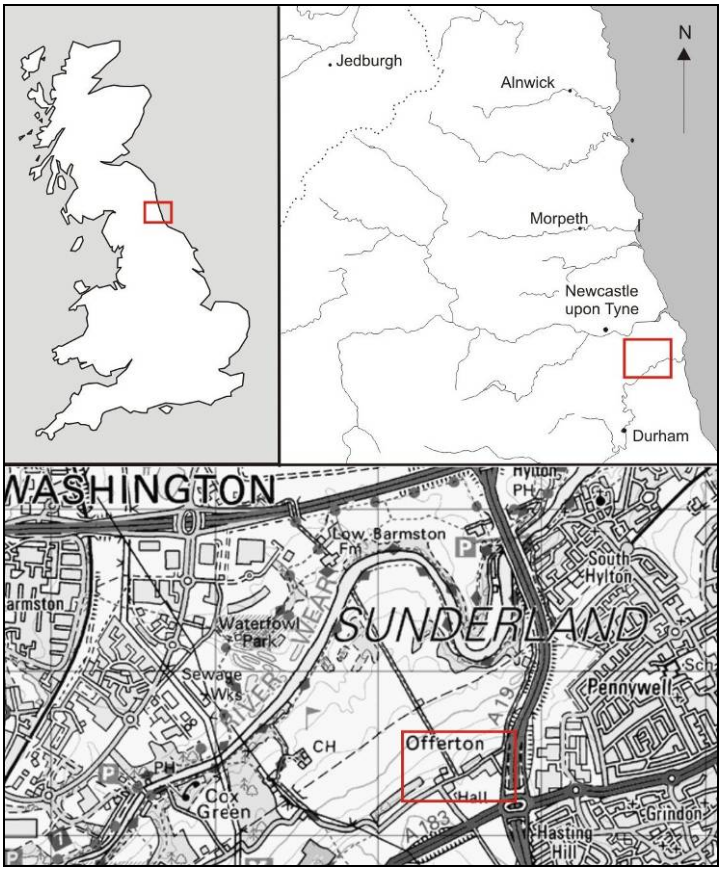


Fig. 1 Location of site.
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1.2.1. The site is centred at NZ 34592 55415 (Fig. 2) in the village of Offerton, just west of the A19, on land at approximately 70m aOD. The village of Offerton is Medieval in origin and is designated as an area of potential archaeological importance in the City of Sunderland's Unitary Development Plan (UDP).

## 1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The solid geology of the site consists of magnesium limestone which is overlain by glacial till and clay with pockets of sand (British Geological Survey 2007).

 

Fig 2

FIG 3

 

## 2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to establish whether any archaeological features were affected by the ground works and to assess the depth and condition of any features present. The ground work involved the excavation of 15 foundation pits (fig. 3)

2.2 The ground works excavated fifteen pits. Twelve of the pits measured 1m x 1m and were 1m in depth. Two pits measures 1m x 0.5m and were 1m in depth. A further pit measured 1m x 2m and 1m deep. The pits were opened by machine using a toothless ditching bucket. All machine excavation was undertaken under close archaeological supervision.

## 3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 3.1. Prehistory

3.1.1. There is no evidence to suggest human activity within the study area during the Prehistoric period but there have been discoveries at nearby Grindon Hill and Hasting Hill. In 1905 a number of Prehistoric artefacts and inhumations were found at Grindon Hill. In addition a number of 'flints and scrapers' (HER 232) were discovered in 1905 by R. Paxton during the quarrying process and, in 1928, a large flake was found on the same site. The number of objects found by Paxton was not recorded but they are thought to date from the Mesolithic period. In 1947 two flint barbed-and-tanged arrowheads which date to the Early Bronze Age (HER 233) were also found in the quarry.

3.1.2. To the south-east of the study area lies Hasting Hill, where two Scheduled Ancient Monuments are located. The first Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 32044) comprises a round barrow (HER 112), 230m west of Hasting Hill farm. It occupies the highest point on the hill at its western end, above a magnesium limestone quarry. The barrow was excavated by Trechmann in 1911 and ten burials (HER 482) were found interred in the barrow, along with pottery of Neolithic and Bronze Age date (HER 483) together bone and flint tools. The skeleton of an infant, aged 18 months at death, was also discovered (HER 481). Behind the head of the infant was a Food Vessel, a flint splinter and an ox tooth. The burial dates from the Bronze Age. An antler pick (HER 325) was also discovered just to the west of the barrow and is thought to be prehistoric. The second Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 32070) includes a cursus (HER 110), a causewayed enclosure (HER 109) and round barrows (HER 111), which have been identified through aerial photography, lying 600m to the south of Hasting Hill farm. No upstanding earthwork remains survive but the evidence of aerial photography, and limited excavations, have confirmed that significant remains survive beneath the present ground surface. The HER records state that a flint scatter (HER 238) was found at the north-east corner of the area covered by the monument. Unfortunately the collection is now lost.

### 3.2. Romano-British

3.2.1. There is no evidence to suggest Romano-British occupation within the study area. Wearside was less Romanised than other parts of Britain, comprising only a

 

militarised zone. The closest town at Corstopitum (Corbridge) was many miles away and the nearest definite known villa was just to the south of present day Durham City (Dodds 1995). At this time Newcastle was only occupied by a station point and bridge (Pons Aelius). In contrast to other towns and villas however, military installations are to be found to immediate north of the study area at Arbeia (South Shields) and Congcangium (Chester-le-Street). A small bronze statue of the smith god Jupiter Dolichenus was discovered in Wearside but nothing has been recovered from the study area.

### 3.3. Early-Medieval

3.3.1. Surtees, writing in 1816, describes Offerton as a small village at the north-east extremity of the Parish of Houghton. The original spelling of the place name was 'Ufferton', which is Saxon in origin and literally means 'Higher Town'. Offerton is situated on a high brow of ground overlooking the River Wear.

3.3.2. The earliest know documentary evidence relating to Offerton appears from around 930 AD when King Athelstan gave 'South Wearmouth' and its appendage, which included 'Ufferton', to the see of Durham (Surtees 1816, 192).

3.3.3. After this date there is little information about the area. Patrick of Ufferton is mentioned in 1172, where he attested a charter from Germanus, Prior of Durham, to the Baron of Hilton and in 1327 John de Denum is noted to have died, seised of the vill which he held from John of Hedham and William de Yeland (*ibid.*). After Denum's death it is thought that it passed through some of the co-heirs of that line into the Strother family (*ibid.*).

3.3.4. By the reign of Henry IV two-thirds of the manor were vested in the Fenwicks and Loreynes. The Loreynes' share eventually passed to the Earl of Durham and the Fenwicks' share, which passed to the Lilburn's, belonged to the Marchioness by the time Fordyce wrote about the area in 1914. A portion belonged to the Middleton family after 1569 and then descended to Richard Wharton Esq., who sold it to Simon Temple Esq. It then passed to the Lambton's and by the time Fordyce was writing in 1914 it belonged to the Earl of Durham.

3.3.5. A chapel dedicated to St. Cuthbert is rumoured to have existed at Offerton but the only evidence for its existence comes from a single reference in an 'ancient deed' in the possession of John Hodgson, and is cited by him in a footnote. There is no trace on the ground for this building and no local tradition survives.

> *"An ancient deed…by which William Basset conveyed to John de Staindrop, called the Coroner, a messuage and lands in Offerton, in the county of Durham, mentions 'the chapel of the blessed Cuthbert in Vfferton', in that village"* (Hodgson 1897).

3.3.3. St. Cuthbert's Well is also rumoured to have existed at St Cuthbert's Chapel. However, the only evidence comes for the same footnote by John Hodgson (1897).

 

### 3.4. Medieval

3.4.1. Salt was important in Medieval times and was being produced at Sunderland from at least 1511. In 1589 a mine was opened at Offerton in order to supply coal for heating brine. There is very little evidence to describe events in the village during this period**.**

### 3.5. Post-Medieval

3.5.1. The district-parish of Penshaw was formed by an Order of Council, dated May 1838, and consisted of the townships Offerton and Penshaw, which formerly constituted a chapelry in the parish of Houghton-le-Spring (Whellan 1894).

3.5.2. In 1840, shortly after the death of the Earl of Durham, a committee was established to build a monument in his memory. Penshaw Hill was selected for the site of the monument, and the design of a Grecian temple, by John and Benjamin Green of Newcastle, was adopted. The foundation stone for the monument was laid in 1844, watched by over 10,000 spectators. Original plans were to roof over the pediment and to adorn the monument with an equestrian statue, but this never occurred. There are a number of earthworks around Penshaw Hill. It has been suggested that they are evidence of a possible Iron Age hillfort, but there is no documentary, cartographic or archaeological evidence to support this. Alternatively, quarrying on the hill in the nineteenth century may have caused the features. Local tradition suggests that the 'rings' were formed by the legendary Lambton Worm which coiled around the hill. The land in which the monument is situated is now the property of the National Trust.

3.5.3. It was not until 1967 that Offerton was added to the County Borough of Sunderland. Sunderland saw huge industrial growth, with the mining of coal and the glassworks among other industries, but when many of the coal pits were closed the area went into decline. Henry Thompson, who wrote about the area, including Offerton in 1976, describes how the villages of Durham were "in defense against the encroachments of the town of Sunderland, the more so since so many of the collieries have been closed down, tight corporate communities have been dissolving, and village life, as the miners and their families understood it, has been difficult, if not impossible to maintain" (Thompson 1976).

## 4. RESULTS

4.1. The testpits were excavated (figures 4, 5, 6, 7) to a depth of 1m. The majority of the trenches were dug through what appeared to be undisturbed natural orange/ brown boulder clay, but three (pits 2, 4, 6) contained modern field drains (fig. 5 & 6). These drains had been dug into the natural clay but left no mark or staining on the surface. There was no change in stratigraphy between the pits (all being natural clay) but as the surface of the study area was covered with patches of hardcore this was not immediately obvious before excavation.

 


Fig. 4 Pit 1 looking north

Fig. 5 Pit containing one of the modern field drains which cross the site.

Fig. 6 Excavation of a pit

Fig. 7 Row of 1m x 1m foundation pits.


Fig. 8 Study area showing residual hardcore.

## 4. DISCUSSION

5.1. The study area has been disturbed in the past presumably while preparing the ground for the original barn structures. The natural clay has then been covered with a hardcover for farm vehicles to track over. Given the close proximity to areas of known archaeological importance, the archaeological potential for the study area was high. However the pits monitored during the watching brief failed to produce any significant archaeological features or artefacts. The only disturbance of the natural clay evident on the site was modern field drains.

5.2. Given the above, it is very unlikely that the construction of this barn will disturb any features of archaeological significance.

## 6. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

6.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

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

## 7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

 

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Mark Sinclair of Northern Structures Ltd.

## 9. REFERENCES

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Petts, D. and Gerrard, C. 2006. *Shared Visions: The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment.*

Hewitt, R. and Carey, C. 2007. *An Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment and Building recording at Offerton Grange Farm, Sunderland*

### Websites

| | |
|---|---|
| British Geological Survey | http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm |
| Northumberland Communities | http://communities.northumberland.gov.uk |
| Keys to the Past | http://www.keystothepast.info/ |
| Roman Britain | http://www.roman-britain.org/ |
| Heddon website | http://www.heddon.co.uk/ |

 

## Appendix I: Specification

TYNE AND WEAR SPECIALIST CONSERVATION TEAM

Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Offerton Grange Farm, Offerton, Sunderland

*Introduction*

Planning permission has been granted for a single storey steel framed building to the north west elevation of an existing barn.

Offerton is in origin a medieval village, which is designated as a site of potential archaeological importance in the UDP (policy B14). There is a possibility that the construction of the steel framed building could disturb medieval archaeological remains.

HER 348 Offerton village
The earliest reference seems to be c. 930, when King Athelstan gave "South Wearmouth" and its appendages, which included "Ufferton", to the see of Durham. Thereafter there is remarkably little information. Patrick of Ufferton is mentioned in 1172; in 1327 John de Denum died seised of the vill which he held from John of Hadham and William de Yeland; and it subsequently passed to the Strothers. In 18th century "the mansion house", presumably Offerton Hall, at the west end of the village, was the seat of Francis Middleton. Roberts and Austin type 6, i.e. "irregular two-row plan, without a green", which has shrunk. O.S. suggest there is evidence for depopulation on RAF APs. Today there are remains of 18th century-19 farms, though horribly adapted to new uses, plus a lot of modern infilling.

HER 349 Chapel of St Cuthbert, Offerton and HER 350 St Cuthbert's Well
The inclusion of this chapel, and the well (350), on the SMR depends solely on a single reference in an "antient deed" in the possession of John Hodgson, and cited by him in a footnote. "An antient deed...by which William Basset conveyed to John de Staindrop, called the Coroner, a messuage and lands in Offerton, in the county of Durham, mentions 'the chapel of the blessed Cuthbert in Vfferton', and 'the well of St.Cuthbert' in that village". As the O.S. point out, there is no trace on the ground and no local tradition.

HER 25 Site of Civil War skirmish, Offerton
Early in March 1644, probably 6-8, there occurred the first of two inconclusive skirmishes between the Scots army, encamped at Sunderland, and the Royalist forces. Though the various secondary accounts do not altogether agree it seems likely that this action took place on the south side of the Wear some 2.5 miles W of Sunderland. The Royalists are said to have shown themselves on top of a hill 3 miles from Sunderland, one source adding - improbably - Worm Hill. Mitchell locates the event in a large field W of Hylton

 

Road, - "the field is still known as the 'battlefield', and the remains of the trenches on the high ground at the south are locally known as the rifle pits". The O.S. declared this to be the field known as Penny Well, now built over. Meikle and Newman (2007) concluded that the skirmish actually took place on 7th and 8th March 1644 on rough ground south of Offerton in March 1644, the Royalist army having marched from Penshaw Hill (HER 10881) and the Scottish troops from Humbledon Hill (HER 10882). The landscape was described as 'fields of furze and whin bushes… three thick hedges with banks' two of which the Scots had lined with musketeers. The Scots had another 200 musketeers and a small cannon (drake) lining the hedges a a stream. The Royalists retreated to Penshaw Hill. The armies faced each other again the next day but after heavy snow fall, the Royalists again retreated. As they retreated their troops were attacked by 200 Scottish musketeers and dragoons. 40 Royalists were said to have been killed. The Royalists admitted to one death. 100 were taken prisoner. 600 Scots then attacked the Royalist baggage train which led to another musketeer and cavalry fight. The Scots claimed that 800 Royalist horses died, and some did die of exposure in the snow, but there is no evidence to confirm this number of deaths. The true number of casualties, men and horses, is not known. The skirmish is recorded in Robert Douglas' diary.

The work must therefore be monitored by an archaeologist as a Watching Brief, in order that any archaeological remains can be recorded.

The watching brief must be carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological organisation.

All work must be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and must follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Watching Briefs (revised 2001).

The work will record, excavate and environmentally sample (if necessary) any archaeological deposits of importance found on the plot. The purpose of this brief is to obtain tenders for this work. The report must be the definitive record for deposition in the Tyne and Wear HER.

A toothless bucket will be used on the plant employed on site where feasible to reduce damage to archaeological remains.

The North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (2006) notes the importance of research as a vital element of development-led archaeological work. It sets out key research priorities for all periods of the past allowing commercial contractors to demonstrate how their fieldwork relates to wider regional and national priorities for the study of archaeology and the historic environment. The aim of NERRF is to ensure that all fieldwork is carried out in a secure research context and that commercial contractors ensure that their investigations ask the right questions.

 

The commissioning client will provide plans indicating the location of the proposed work.

*Notification*

The County Archaeologist needs to know when archaeological fieldwork is taking place in Tyne and Wear so that he can inform the local planning authority and can visit the site to monitor the work in progress. The Archaeological Contractor must therefore inform the County Archaeologist of the start and end dates of the Watching Brief. He must also keep the County Archaeologist informed as to progress on the site. The CA must be informed of the degree of archaeological survival. The Client will give the County Archaeologist reasonable access to the development to undertake monitoring.

*The tasks*

1 A construction timetable has yet to be agreed. Tenders for the Watching Brief should therefore be a cost per day including overheads such as travel costs and equipment. Contingency costs will be provided for environmental sampling and scientific dating per sample and for finds analysis. Any variation on the agreed timetable will be notified by the client, who will give a minimum of 48 hours notice of a change on the days of site attendance. Close liaison between the parties involved will be needed to co-ordinate this element of the work.

2 The work involves undertaking a structured watching brief to observe and record any archaeological deposits and finds from this locality. The absence of deposits and finds must be recorded as negative evidence. The Watching Brief will not aim to hinder the construction programme, however should archaeological remains be found, the appointed archaeologist must be allowed sufficient time to fully record (by photograph and scale plan and section), excavate and environmentally sample (if necessary) the archaeological deposits. Within the course of the Watching Brief, it may be possible to record sections through the stratigraphy exposed during the construction work.

*General Conditions*

All staff employed by the Archaeological Contractor shall be professional field archaeologists with appropriate skills and experience to undertake work to the highest professional standards.

The Archaeological Contractor must maintain a Site Diary for the benefit of the Client, with full details of Site Staff present, duration of time on site, etc. and contact with third parties.

The Archaeological Contractor must be able to provide written proof that the necessary levels of Insurance Cover are in place.

*Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating*

Scientific investigations should be undertaken in a manner consistent with "The Management of Archaeological Projects", English Heritage 1991 and with "Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists", English Heritage, 2003.

 

Aims of environmental sampling – to determine the abundance/concentration of the material within the features and how well the material is preserved, to characterise the resource (the site) and each phase, to determine the significance of the material and its group value, what crop processing activities took place on the site? What does this tell us about the nature of the site? Is there any evidence for changes in the farming practice through time? How did people use this landscape? Can we place certain activites at certain locations within the site? Function and date of individual features such as pits, hearths etc. Are the charred assemblages the result of ritual deposition or rubbish? Is the charcoal the result of domestic or industrial fuel?

Advice on the sampling strategy for environmental samples and samples for scientific dating etc. must be sought from Jacqui Huntley, English Heritage Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science (0191 3341137 or 07713 400387). The sampling strategy should include a reasoned justification for selection of deposits for sampling.

Deposits should be sampled for retrieval and assessment of the preservation conditions and potential for analysis of biological remains (English Heritage 2002). Flotation samples and samples taken for coarse-mesh sieving from dry deposits should be processed at the time of fieldwork wherever possible. Sieving recovers fish, amphibian, small bird and mammal bone, small parts of adult mammals and young infused bones which may be under-represented otherwise. However it is noted that clay soils in this region make sieving difficult. Discuss the potential for sieving with Regional Advisor for Archaeological Science.

Environmental samples (bulk soil samples of 30 litres volume, to be sub-sampled at a later stage) will be collected by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. It is suggested that a large number of samples be collected during evaluation from which a selection of the most suitable (uncontaminated) can be processed. All tenders will give a price for the full analysis, report production and publication per sample.

Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. Timbers will be assessed for their potential for dendrochronology dating. Sampling should follow procedures in “Dendrochronology: guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates”, Hillam, 1998. All tenders will quote the price of these techniques per sample.

The following information should be provided with the environmental samples to be processed – brief account of nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods, sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination etc.

Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

A range of features, and all phases of activity, need to be sampled for charred plant remains and charcoal. Aceramic features should not be avoided as the plant remains from these features may help to date them. Deep features should be sampled in spits to pick up changes over time. Part, or all of each of the contexts should be processed. In general samples should be processed in their entirety. All flots should be scanned, and some of the residues.

Pollen samples can be taken from features such as lakes, ponds, palaeochannels, estuaries, saltmarshes, mires, alluvium and colluvium, and

 

from waterlogged layers in wells, ditches and latrines etc. Substances such as honey, beer or food residues can be detected in vessels. Activities such as threshing, crop processing and the retting of flax can be identified. When taken on site, pollen samples should overlap. Your regional science advisor can advise on the type of corer or auger which would be most appropriate for your site. Samples need to be wrapped in clingfilm and kept dark and cool. Make a description of the sediments in which the pollen was found, and send this with the sample to be assessed.

Coastal or estuary sites (even those which are now well drained) are suitable for sampling for foraminifera. Diatoms can also be found on marine sites, but also in urban settings (sewers, wells, drains, ditches etc). They only survive in waterlogged conditions. These aquatic microfossils are used as proxy indicators of the former aquatic ecological conditions on site, changes in sea levels and temperature, salinity, PH and pollution. Forams are taken from cores, monolith tins or bulk samples. Diatoms are cut from monolith tins or cores or taken as spot samples.

Insects, which are useful as palaeoenvironmental indicators, survive best in waterlogged deposits such as palaeochannels and wells. They can provide information on climate change and landscape reconstruction as some species are adapted to particular temperatures, habitats or even particular trees. Certain insects can indicate the function of a feature or building (eg. Weevils, which were introduced by the Romans, often indicate granary sites, parasites will indicate the presence of particular animals such as sheep or horse, latrine flies survive in the mineral deposits in latrines, or in the daub of medieval buildings etc). Samples need to be sealed (eg. in a plastic box).

Where there is evidence for industrial activity, macroscopic technological residues should be collected by hand. Separate samples should be collected for micro-slags (hammer-scale and spherical droplets). Guidance is available in the English Heritage “Archaeometallurgy” guidelines, 2001.

Buried soils and sediment sequences should be inspected and recorded on site by a recognised geoarchaeologist. Procedures and techniques in the English Heritage document “Environmental Archaeology”, 2002 and “Geoarchaeology”, 2004 should be followed.

Sampling strategies for wooden structures should follow the methodologies presented in “Waterlogged wood. Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood” R. Brunning, 1996. If timbers are likely to be present on your site, contact a wood specialist beforehand. Pre-excavation planning – determine questions to ask, agree on a sampling strategy, allocate reasonable time and budget. Soil samples should be taken of the sediments surrounding the timber. Keep the timbers wet! Record them asap on-site – plan, photograph, record the size and orientation of the wood (radial, tangential,transverse), any toolmarks, joints, presence of bark, insect damage, recent breaks, and if another piece of wood was on top of or below the piece sampled. Both vertical and horizontal positioning of wattling must be recorded. Wood samples can provide information on woodland management such as medieval coppicing, type of taxa (native or foreign), conversion technology (how the wood was turned into planks), building techniques and type of tools used.

Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in “Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather”, English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995.

*Animal Bone*

Animal bone can explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment.

 

Animal bone assemblages should be assessed by a recognised specialist.

The specialist will need to know a brief account of the nature and history of the site, an account of the purpose, methods (details of sampling) for recovery of animal bones, and the main aims and results of the excavation, details of any specific questions that the excavator wants the animal bone specialist to consider, information about other relevant finds from the excavation (e.g. bone tools, fishing equipment, weaving equipment), specific information about each context that has produced significant quantities of animal bone (recovery method, phase, context type, position in relation to major structures, contamination by more recent material, some indication of the amount of bone (by weight or by container size). See "Ancient Monuments Laboratory Advisory Note, "Assessment of animal bone collections from excavations", Sebastian Payne, 1991and "The Assessment of a collection of animal bones", S. Davis, n.d., Ancient Monuments Laboratory.

*Human Remains*

Human remains must be treated with care, dignity and respect.

Excavators must comply with the relevant legislation (essentially the Burial Act 1857) and local environmental health concerns. If found, human remains must be left in-situ, covered and protected. The archaeological contractor will be responsible for informing the police, coroner and County Archaeologist. If it is agreed that removal of the remains is essential, the archaeological contractor will apply for a licence from the Home Office and their regulations must be complied with.

Site inspection by a recognised osteologist is desirable for isolated burials and essential for cemeteries. The remains will be recorded in-situ and subsequently lifted, washed in water (without additives). They will be marked and packed to standards compatible with "Excavation and post-excavation treatment of cremated and inhumed human remains", McKinley and Roberts, 1993. After excavation, the remains will be subject to specialist assessment.

Analysis of the osteological material should take place according to published guidelines "Human Remains from Archaeological Sites, Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports, English Heritage, 2002.

Some of the potential benefits from the study of human skeletons – demography, growth profiles, patterns of disease, genetic relationships, activity patterns, diet, burial practices, human evolution. New scientific techniques available include DNA and stable isotope analyses.

The final placing of the remains after scientific study and analysis will be agreed beforehand.

Further guidance is available in:

"Guidance for best practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England", The Church of England and English Heritage, 2005 (www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/16602_HumanRemains1.pdf)
"Church Archaeology: its care and management", Council for the Care of Churches, 1999

The Advisory Panel on the Archaeology of Christian burials in England can provide free well-informed advice with consideration of relevant religious, ethical, legal, archaeological and scientific issues. Panel's website: http://www.britarch.ac.uk/churches/humanremains/index.html
or email the secretary simon.mays@english-heritage.org.uk

 

*Treasure*

Defined as:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Contractor must comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure must be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officer, Rob Collins (0191 2225076 or Robert.Collins@newcastle.ac.uk) who can provide guidance on the Treasure Act procedures.

*Finds Processing and Storage*

Finds shall be recorded and processed in accordance with the IFA Guidelines for Finds Work

Finds will be assessed by an experienced finds specialist.

The Archaeological Contractor will process and catalogue the finds in accordance with Museum and Galleries Commissions Guidelines (1992) and the UKIC Conservation Guidelines, and arrange for the long term disposal of the objects on behalf of the Client. A catalogue of finds and a record of discard policies, will be lodged with the finds for ease of curation.

Assessment should include x-radiography of all iron objects (after initial screening to excluse recent debris) and a selection of non-ferrous artefacts (including all coins). Refer to “Guidelines on the x-radiography of archaeological metalwork, English Heritage, 2006.

If necessary, pottery sherds and bricks should be recommended for Thermo-luminescence dating.

Finds processing, storage and conservation methods must be broadly in line with current practice, as exemplified by the IFA “Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials”, 2001. Finds should be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication “First Aid for Finds” (Watkinson and Neal 1998). Proposals for ultimate storage of finds should follow the UKIC publication “Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage” (Walker 1990). Details of methodologies may be requested from the Archaeological Contractor.

Other useful guidance – “A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds”, English Heritage, 2003, “Finds and Conservation Training Package”, English Heritage, 2003.

All objects must be stored in appropriate materials and conditions to ensure minimal deterioration. Advice can be sought from Jacqui Huntley of English Heritage (0191 3341137 or 07713 400387) where necessary.

The report

The production of Site Archives and Finds Analysis will be undertaken according to English Heritage Guidelines (Managing Archaeological Projects 2nd Edition).

*The report*

6 The archaeological contractor will provide a report of archaeological operations, including:

- a site location plan and grid reference
- brief description of recording procedures
- plans and sections of stratigraphy recorded (if practical)
- report on the finds (if any)
- environmental report (if relevant)
- colour photographs of the site and any significant archaeological features/finds
- a summary of the results of the work
- copy of this specification

The report will form an addition to the *Short Reports* files in the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record.

7 Three bound and collated paper copies of the report need to be submitted:

- one for the commissioning client
- one for the planning authority (City of Sunderland)
- and one for deposition in the County HER at the address below. A digital copy of the report on CD is also required by the HER, in a plastic case and not attached to the report.

*The report and CD for the HER must be sent by the archaeological consultant or their client directly to the address below. If the report is sent via the planning department, every page of the report will be stamped with the planning application number which ruins the illustrations. The HER is also often sent a photocopy instead of a bound colour original which is unacceptable.*

*Site Archive*

The archive should be a record of every aspect of an archaeological project – the aims and methods, information and objects collected, results of analysis, research, interpretation and publication. It must be as complete as possible, including all relevant documents, records, data and objects {Brown, 2007, 1}.

The site archive (records and materials recovered) should be prepared in accordance with Managing Archaeological Projects, Second Edition, 5.4 and appendix 3 (HBMC 1991), "Archaeological documentary archives" IFA Paper No. 1, "Archaeological Archives – creation, preparation, transfer and curation" Archaeological Archives Forum etc., Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990) and "Archaeological

 

Archives – A guide to best practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation" by Duncan H. Brown, Archaeological Archives Forum, July 2007.

*Documentary Archive*

The documentary archive comprises all records made during the archaeological project, including those in hard copy and digital form.

This should include written records, indexing, ordering, quantification and checking for consistency of all original context sheets, object records, bulk find records, sample records, skeleton records, photographic records (including negatives, prints, transparencies and x-radiographs), drawing records, drawings, level books, site note-books, spot-dating records and conservation records, publication drafts, published work, publication drawings and photographs etc.

A summary account of the context record, prepared by the supervising archaeologist, should be included.

All paper-based material must at all times be stored in conditions that minimise the risk of damage, deterioration, loss or theft.

Do not fold documents

Do not use self-adhesive labels or adhesive or tape of any kind

High quality paper (low-acid) and permanent writing materials must be used.

Original drawings on film must be made with a hard pencil, at least 4H.

Do not ink over original pencil drawings.

Use polyester based film for drawings (lasts longer than plastic).

Store documents in acid-free, dust-proof cardboard boxes

Store documents flat

All documents must be marked with the project identifier (e.g. site code) and/or the museum accession number.

All types of record must use a consistent terminology and format.

Use non-metal fastenings, and packaging and binding materials that ensure the longevity of documents.

Copies of reports and appropriate drafts, with associated illustrative material, must be submitted for inclusion with the archive.

*Material Archive*

The material archive comprises all objects (artefacts, building materials or environmental remains) and associated samples of contextual materials or objects.

All artefacts and ecofacts retained from the site must be packed in appropriate materials.

All finds must be cleaned as appropriate to ensure their long-term survival

All metal objects retained with the archive must be recorded by x-radiograph (except gold or lead alloys or lead alloys with a high lead content and objects too thick to be x-rayed effectively e.t.c. )

 

All finds must be marked or labelled with the project and context identifiers and where relevant the small-finds number

Use tie-on rot-proof labels where necessary

Bulk finds of the same material type, from the same context, may be packed together in stable paper or polythene bags

Mark all bags on the outside with site and context identifiers and the material type and include a polyethylene label marked with the same information

Use permanent ink on bags and labels

Sensitive finds must be supported, where appropriate, on inert plastic foam or acid-free tissue paper. It is not advisable to wrap objects in tissue as the unwrapping could cause damage.

The archive will be placed in a suitable form in the appropriate museum (typically Museum of Antiquities for Newcastle and Tyne and Wear Museums for the rest of Tyne and Wear (check with these institutions) with the landowner's permission.

A letter will be sent to the County Archaeology Officer within six months of the report having been submitted, confirming where the archive has been deposited.

*Monitoring*

8 The Archaeological Contractor will inform the County Archaeologist of the start and end dates of the Watching Brief to enable the County Archaeologist to monitor the work in progress. The Client will give the County Archaeologist reasonable access to the development to undertake monitoring.

*OASIS*

The Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index/access to the large and growing body of archaeological grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded fieldwork.

The archaeological contractor is therefore required to register with OASIS and to complete the online OASIS form for their watching brief at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/. Please ensure that tenders for this work takes into account the time needed to complete the form.

Once the OASIS record has been completed and signed off by the HER and NMR the information will be incorporated into the English Heritage Excavation Index, hosted online by the Archaeology Data Service.

The ultimate aim of OASIS is for an online virtual library of grey literature to be built up, linked to the index. The unit therefore has the option of uploading their grey literature report as part of their OASIS record, as a Microsoft Word document, rich text format, pdf or html format. The grey literature report will only be mounted by the ADS if both the unit and the HER give their agreement. The grey literature report will be made available through a library catalogue facility.

 

Please ensure that you and your client understand this procedure. If you choose to upload your grey literature report please ensure that your client agrees to this in writing to the HER at the address below.

For general enquiries about the OASIS project aims and the use of the form please contact: Mark Barratt at the National Monuments Record (tel. 01793 414600 or oasis@english-heritage.org.uk). For enquiries of a technical nature please contact: Catherine Hardman at the Archaeology Data Service (tel. 01904 433954 or oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk). Or contact the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at the address below.

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