

Archaeological Watching Brief at Westgate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne



Westgate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne

ARS Ltd Report 2009/55
August 2009

OASIS ref: archaeol5-63980

Compiled By:

Daniel Amat
Archaeological Research Services Ltd
Baltic Business Centre
Saltmeadows Road
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE8 3DA

Checked By:

Jim Brightman
Tel: 01629 814540
Fax: 01629 814657
admin@archaeologicalresearchservices.com
www.archaeologicalresearchservices.com

Archaeological Watching Brief at Westgate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne

ARS Ltd Report 2009/55

August 2009

Archaeological Research Services Ltd

Contents

Executive summary.....	4
1. Introduction.....	5
1.1. Location and scope of work.....	5
1.2. Geology and soils.....	5
2. Methodology.....	6
3. Historical background.....	6
4. Results.....	6
5. Conclusion.....	7
6. Publicity, confidentiality and copyright.....	7
7. Statement of indemnity.....	7
8. Acknowledgements.....	7
9. References.....	7

Appendix I: Figures

© ARS Ltd 2009

List of Figures

1.	Location of site.....	5
2.	Trench location.....	8
3.	Open trench showing tarmac, concrete and made ground.....	9
4.	Gas pipe sitting on made ground.....	9

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In August 2009 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Enterprise Plc to undertake an archaeological watching brief during excavations to determine the presence of gas services on Westgate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne.

A single trench measuring 2m in length by 1m in width was excavated. The excavation did not locate or penetrate any natural strata and terminated when the gas pipe was found. The pipe itself sat within a layer of made ground.

There were no surviving in-situ archaeological remains in the area of the watching brief. The lack of archaeological remains in an otherwise archaeologically rich area can probably be attributed to the disturbance caused by the construction of the modern roads and the laying of previous services.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1 In August 2009 Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) were commissioned by Enterprise Plc to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation to determine the presence of gas services on Westgate Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne (Fig. 1). The area is situated in Benwell, Newcastle Upon Tyne, centred at NZ 219 646, one mile to the north of the of the River Tyne.

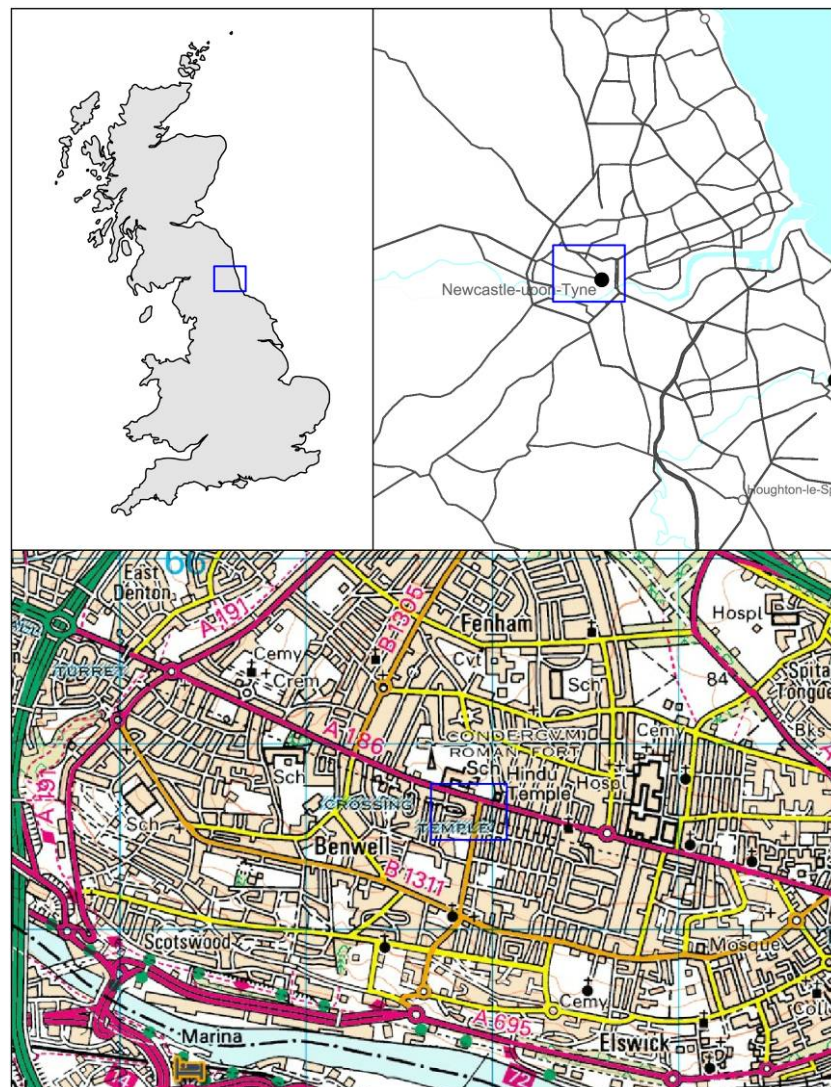


Fig. 1 Location of site.

Ordnance Survey data copyright OS, reproduced by permission, Licence no. 100045420

1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The solid geology of the area is Westphalian Coal Measures and sandstone bedrock. The overlying drift geology comprises glacial till and alluvial clay, silt and sand (British Geological Survey 2008).

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 groundwork involved the lifting of the current road surface and excavation down to the level at which the gas pipe was believed to be.
- 2.2. The trench measured 2m x 1m and was excavated using mechanical hand tools including a pneumatic drill, circular saw, spades and picks.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1. There have been many finds of archaeological interest from the Benwell area dating from Prehistoric to the Post-Medieval. The largest amount of historic activity in the area surrounding the excavation dates to the Roman period.
- 3.2.2. The study area is situated on what is believed to be the course of the Vallum, the principal ditch on the north side of Hadrian's Wall. The Roman fort of *Condercum* is known to have existed approximately 0.5 km to the west of the excavations. In connection with the fort are the remains of a bath house and a temple to the local deity *Antenociticus* along with associated burials (Bidwell & Halbbrook 1989). There is also evidence for a large Roman civilian settlement or *vicus* that lay to the south of the fort (Keys To The Past 2009).

4. RESULTS

- 4.1. The trench was opened to approximately 2m in length by 1m in width. The tarmac layer was broken up and then removed to a depth of 0.12m to reveal a layer of concrete (Fig. 3). The concrete was then removed from the south east corner, which had a depth of 0.14m, revealing the gas pipe sitting within made ground (which consisted of gravel and hardcore).
- 4.2. The excavation was terminated when the gas pipe was located (Fig. 4). As a result the work did not penetrate any undisturbed layers beneath the tarmac and concrete of Westgate Road.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1. There were no surviving *in-situ* archaeological remains in the area of the watching brief. The lack of archaeological remains in an otherwise archaeologically rich area can be attributed to the disturbance caused by the construction of the modern roads and the laying of previous services.

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 Michael Smith of Enterprise Plc and Tyne and Wear archaeological officer Jennifer Morrison.

9. REFERENCES

Bidwell, P. T. and Holbrook, N. 1989. *Hadrian's Wall Bridges*. English Heritage Archaeological Reports 9. London: English Heritage.

Websites

British Geological Survey
Keys to the Past

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>
<http://www.keystothepast.info/>

Fig 2



Fig. 3 Open trench showing tarmac, concrete and made ground.



Fig. 4 Gas pipe sitting on made ground.