

**Tow Law Auction Mart,  
Tow Law, County Durham**

**archaeological recording, July 2005**

*on behalf of*  
**Alexander Developments (NE) Limited**

**Report 1326**  
August 2005

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*Alexander House, Butterwick Road, Fishburn, Stockton-on-Tees, TS21 4AR*

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## **1. Summary**

### ***The project***

- 1.1 This report presents the results of recording work conducted in advance of a proposed redevelopment of the site of the Auction Mart at Tow Law, County Durham. The work comprised a photographic survey and a field visit.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by Alexander Developments (NE) Ltd, and conducted by Archaeological Services in accordance with a specification provided by the County Archaeologist's office.

### ***Results***

- 1.3 The buildings of the Auction Mart are typical examples of their type and provide a complete picture of the background to livestock sales in this area. The group presents no significant chronological depth, and none of the buildings is particularly remarkable or significant in its own right; the most important element, the sale ring, is to be retained. There is no likelihood that future work here will affect any hitherto unexposed archaeological resources. No further work is recommended in connection with the development proposal for the site.

## **2. Project background**

### ***Location (Figure 1)***

- 2.1 The site is located at the junction of Castle Bank and Church Lane, at the centre of the town of Tow Law, County Durham. The grid reference of the site is NZ1205 3905.

### ***Development proposal***

- 2.2 The work was carried out in response to a proposal for redevelopment of the Cattle Mart site for new housing.

### ***Objective and scope***

- 2.3 The objective of the scheme of works was to provide a permanent record of the buildings and the site in their present condition and setting, and to summarise what is known of their development. The auction ring and its associated sheds were examined, together with the adjoining public house and two neighbouring buildings at the north end of the site.

### ***Methods statement***

- 2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by Archaeological Services, and approved by the County Archaeologist's office.

### ***Dates***

- 2.5 Recording work took place on 26th and 27th July 2005.

### ***Personnel***

- 2.6 Recording was conducted by Richard Annis and Jason Mole. This report was prepared by Richard Annis, with illustrations by Martin Railton and Janine Fisher. The Project Manager was Richard Annis.

### ***Archive/OASIS***

- 2.7 The site code is **TLM05**, for **Tow Law Mart 2005**. The photographic archive has been transferred to Bowes Museum. Archaeological Services is registered with the **Online AccesS** to the **Index** of archaeological investigationS project (OASIS). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-10179**.

### ***Acknowledgements***

- 2.8 Archaeological Services is grateful for the assistance of Mr Harry Vickers, of Hexham & Northern with TH Vickers, Tow Law, for his assistance with this work.

## **3. The site**

- 3.1 The Tow Law mart was founded in 1882 by Joseph Vickers of Elm Park Hall. The Cattle Mart Hotel was built at about the same time, and railway sidings were adapted to allow animals to be carried to and from the sales. The site was used for a variety of other activities as well; N Grant, in his *Memoirs of*

*Tow Law* says that a large market was held by the Auction Mart Hotel, and that the town's annual flower show used to be held 'on the auction mart field'.

- 3.2 The site lies in a shallow depression, at the head of the valley of the river Deerness (Figure 4). This runs eastwards away from the town; to the south is Church Lane, which lies alongside the line of the railway that once served the ironworks and the coke ovens. At the time of the survey, the mart was still in use for the sale of livestock; the public house and the other buildings were empty and disused. A little under half of the site is open ground used for parking; this lies at the east and south. The buildings are at the west end of the site, on the High Street. The central part of the site is surfaced with concrete, and covered with steel pens for cattle and sheep, a system of raceways and gates, and a cattle crush. At the north-east corner of the site is a small area of rough pasture.
- 3.3 At the northern end of the site is a large open-fronted shed formerly used as a coal depot (Figure 7). It is built of concrete blocks and has a steep-pitched roof of corrugated asbestos cement sheets. The Cattle Mart pub lies at a lower level immediately south of this, and behind it is a stone storage building (Figures 8, 9 & 10). It was formerly attached to a longer building on its east face, now reduced to a low cement-rendered shed that has been used for storage and for public lavatories (Figure 10). The old building was inaccessible, so its interior has only been inspected from outside. The retaining wall between the pub and the old coal depot is all that remains of a long structure first shown on the second edition Ordnance Survey map. This is assumed to have been a storage or service building. The auction ring lies south-east of the pub (Figures 18 & 19); it is flanked on the west and south by recently-erected portal-frame sheds filled with steel cattle pens. In the north-west corner of the western shed is a small corrugated iron pay office (Figure 27).
- 3.4 When the site was examined, the ring and its pens were still in use; all of the other buildings were empty and disused. The pub had been examined by surveyors, and so sample areas of floor and wall coverings had been lifted or stripped.

### ***Maps***

- 3.5 The mart is shown on the second, third and fourth editions of the 25-inch Ordnance Survey maps of Tow Law. These indicate that there has been relatively little change in the pattern of the buildings on the site. The mart, the hotel and its associated buildings, including the long structure to the north of the pub, all appear for the first time on the 1897 second edition; prior to this, the area had been an open field. In 1897 there were open pens on the west and south sides of the ring, and as far north as the boundary of the development site. More pens appear in the third and fourth editions; these plans are incorrect in showing the ring as octagonal, rather than as a twelve-sided building. In all of these maps, there are rail lines and goods depots close to the pens and the sale ring; the lines and sidings ran across High Street / Castle Bank along the line of Church Lane.

***Listing***

- 3.6 The ring is a Grade II listed building, Co. Durham number 23/309. The listing description reads as follows.

NZ13NW 23/309	TOW LAW	A68 (East side) Cattle Market auction building II
Cattle market auction building. Wood with Welsh slate roof with glazed roof lights. 12-sided plan. Sides of battened boards; doors of similar construction, in the north-west side to admit animals; office door and 2 sashes with glazing bars in west side; small board-shuttered opening in south-west. Conical roof of 12 sides with row of large square lights, most with glazing bars, near centre. Interior: 3 tiers of wood benches behind high wood fence; auctioneer's desk on west with zinc screen in front.		

- 3.7 This account is incorrect in its orientation of the building; the entrance for animals is in the west wall, and the door to the office is in the east side. Some of the details of the glazing have changed since the description was written.

**4. The Cattle Mart**

- 4.1 The Cattle Mart, formerly known as the Cattle Mart Hotel, is a large building of two storeys, typical both of its period and location (Figures 9-11). It is built of coursed sandstone with projecting quoins; the north and east walls are rendered, and the roof is slated. Some external additions can be seen at the rear. The building has been altered internally in recent years but the old plan can be detected from surviving sections of internal walls. A sketch plan and section of the building is shown in Figure 2. Originally the building had a flat façade of three bays; the door was placed off-centre, and had a broad chamfered opening which is now hidden by a later porch (Figure 12). The windows have slightly-projecting quoins and lintels, which are painted white. The ground-floor windows have been widened, and the masonry between them shows the effect of this change.
- 4.2 On the ground floor the front rooms have been joined to form a single large bar (Figure 13); this was formerly three separate rooms and a passage (Figure 14) running through to the staircase and the rear of the building. There are two large parlour dining or bar rooms at the rear, and the kitchen (Figure 15) stands at the middle of the north end. These rooms are served by chimney stacks in the gable walls and near the middle of the central bay. A scullery and a projecting porch lie at the north-east corner; the main passage also extends into a rear porch. Relatively recent additions on either side of the passage and porch house the lavatories (Figure 11).
- 4.3 The staircase stands on the north side of the passage the back of the bar. Stone steps lead down to the cellar, which underlies the middle and eastern bays at

the front of the building, and has a hatch at the front. Above, the stairs rise to a half-landing that serves a mezzanine-level lavatory above the back porch. On the first floor there were formerly three bedrooms at the front and three at the rear; these have been subdivided to provide a larger bathroom at the north end of the central corridor, and a box-room in the middle front room. All of the bedrooms are large; the biggest, at the south-west corner, was most recently the sitting room of the manager's flat (Figure 16).

- 4.4 The attic contained two small bedrooms lit by skylights, with two cupboards at the south-east side. An opening in the north wall of the largest room allowed a view of the roof truss, which is shown in Figure 17. It has a pair of queen posts supporting a collar and truncated principal rafters that carry two purlins; a third is notched into the top of the queen-posts, and the lighter ridge-piece is carried on a slender post rising from the collar. The trusses are softwood, and the individual timbers are connected with iron bolts and straps; the roof is boarded and covered with slate.
- 4.5 The building retains little more than the shape of its former arrangement. The original iron grates remain in three of the upstairs rooms. There are no other features of any significance, and nothing remains that would indicate any particular function or importance for any part of the building.
- 4.6 The smaller building at the rear is built of sandstone rubble, with dressed stone in the quoins, sills and lintels (Figure 8). The low-pitched roof is slated and there is a tall brick chimney in the south gable. There are no openings in the north, east and south walls; however, as the majority of the east wall is covered by a later concrete shed, some features may be hidden from view. The building has four bays. At the north there is a three-bay room on the ground floor that may have been used as a stable; it has a central door and two windows. The room above this has a single central window. The fourth bay, at the south end of the building, has a large vehicle door with a softwood lintel; there is a central window above.

## **5. The sale ring**

- 5.1 The sale ring, which is the central feature of the mart, is a 12-sided wooden building with a conical slate roof (Figures 18 & 19). It is lit by a ring of large skylights; a number of small windows in the walls having all been closed up (Figure 20). The west side of the building is now overlapped by the westernmost portal-frame shed, to provide sheltered access to the sale ring from the covered yards to the west and south (Figure 21). This side houses the steel weighbridge (Figure 22) with internal and external doors, secured by a steel sliding door in the shed. The inner door gives access to the concrete-floored ring, which is surrounded by twelve trimmed roundwood posts that support the roof (Figure 23). Outside these there are three tiers of green-painted wooden benches, separated from the ring by a wood and steel fence (Figures 24 & 26). A fourth row of benches is fixed to the inside of the fence on the north and south sides of the ring.

- 5.2 At the opposite side of the ring from the weighbridge is the auctioneer's box (Figure 23). This has a raised floor and a wooden counter, with a sliding door to an entrance passage on the north side (Figure 25). Three metal screens on the floor in front of the box provide refuges for the auctioneer's assistants; inside the box are connections and controls for lights and the public address system. The marks of the auctioneer's hammer are clearly visible on the counter at the north-west corner.
- 5.3 Immediately south of the box is the exit door, which runs vertically in a steel frame (Figure 26). This has slits to allow the operator to see the animals in the ring before opening the shutter. At the back, wooden doors allow access to the outdoor pens and the crush, east of the ring.
- 5.4 The last component of the group is the pay office, housed in a small black-painted corrugated iron shed at the north-west corner of the pens on the west of the ring. This is windowless, and was inaccessible when the site was surveyed.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The buildings of the auction mart are typical examples of their type and provide a complete picture of the background to livestock sales in this area. The group presents no significant chronological depth, and none of the buildings is particularly remarkable or significant in its own right; the most important element, the sale ring, is to be retained. There is little likelihood that future work here will affect any hitherto unexposed archaeological resources. No further work is recommended in connection with the development proposal for this site.





Archaeological Services  
University of Durham

**Tow Law Auction Mart  
archaeological recording**

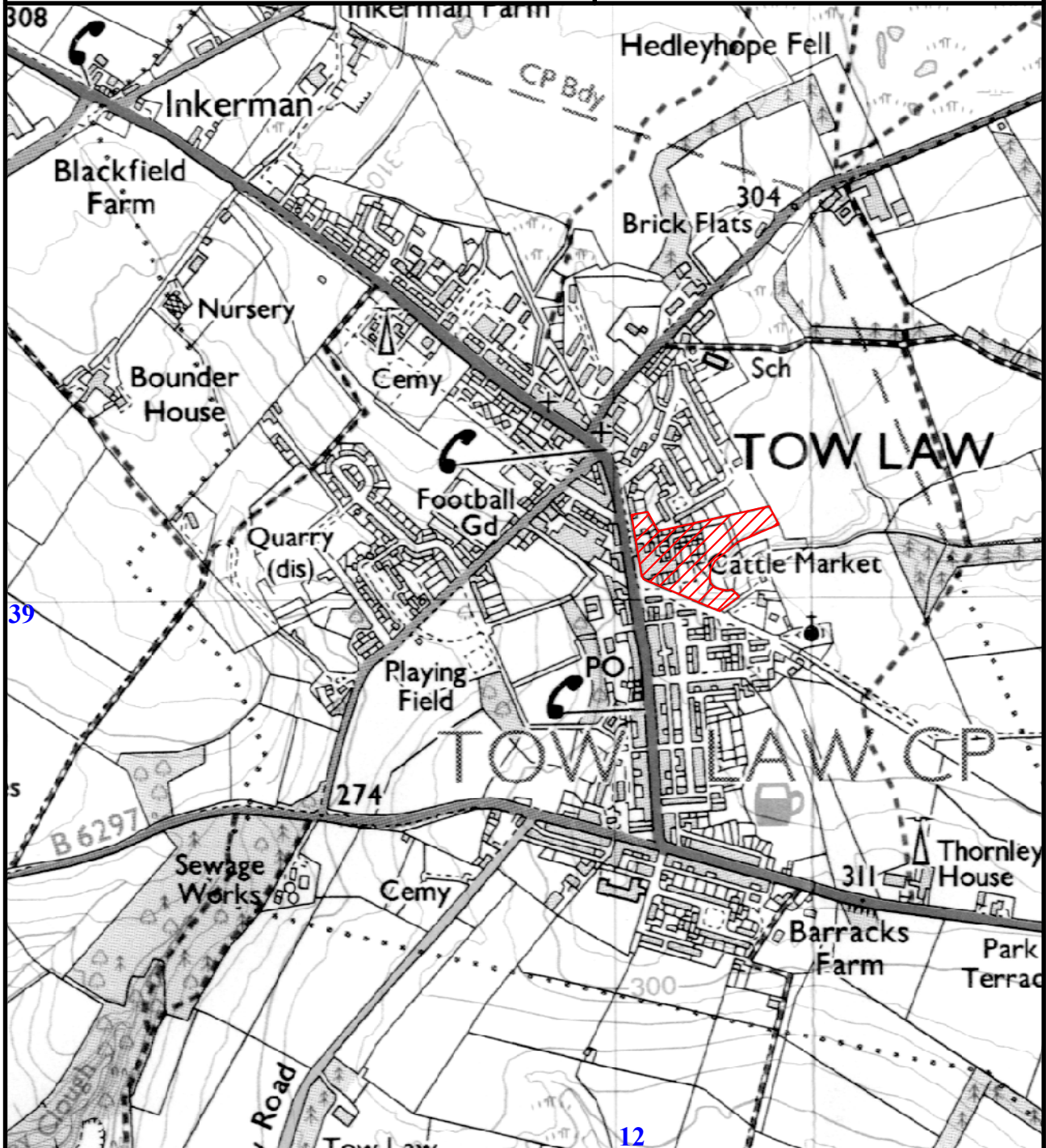
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Figure 1

*Location map showing the proposed  
development area in red*

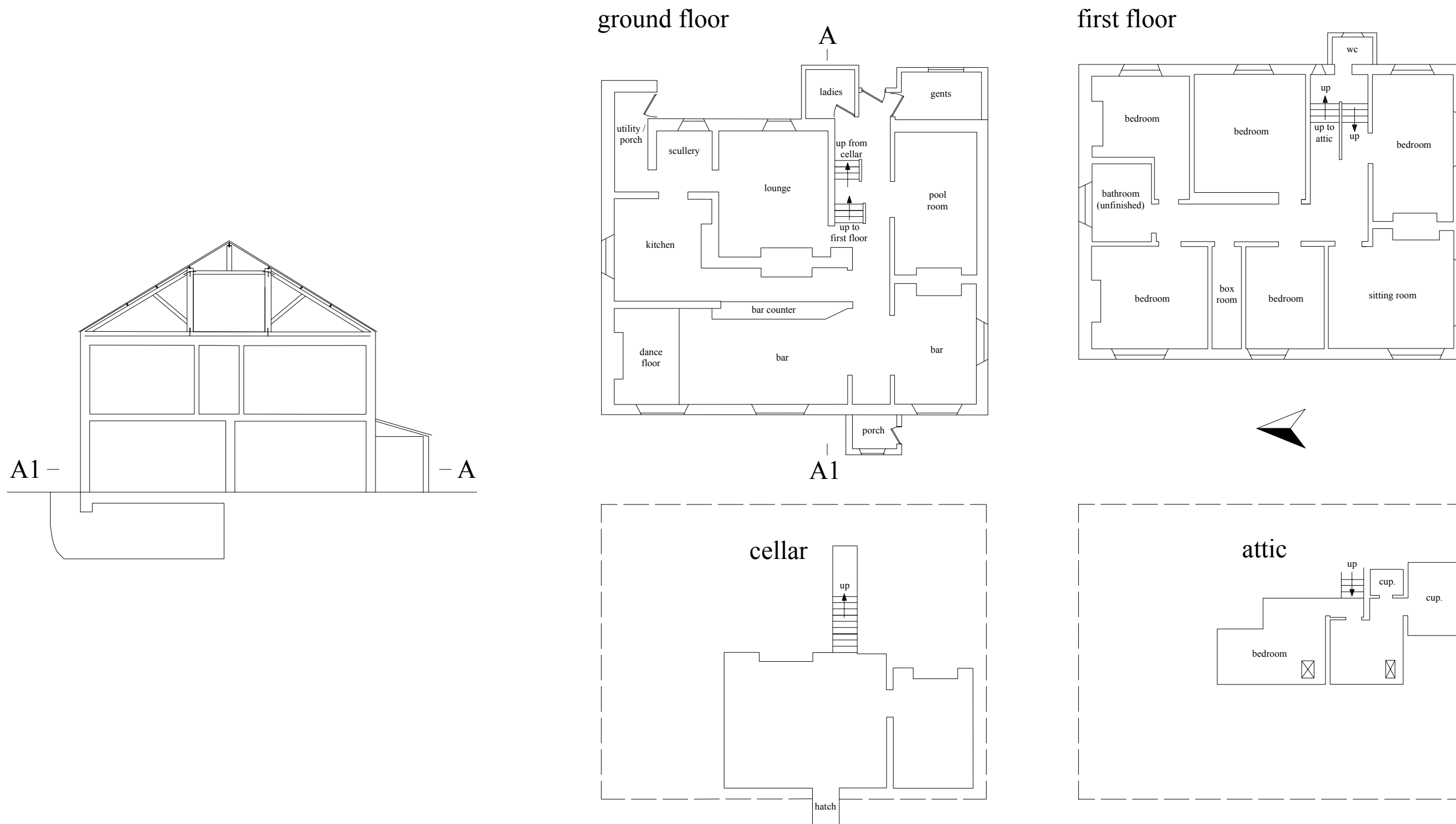
on behalf of  
**Alexander Developments (NE) Ltd**

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scale 1:10 000 - for A4 plot





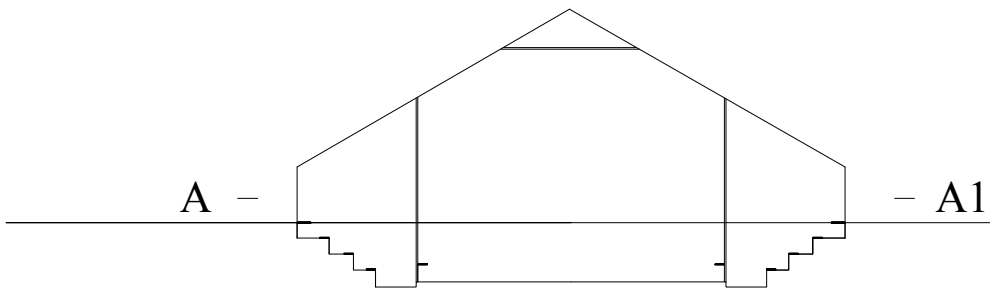
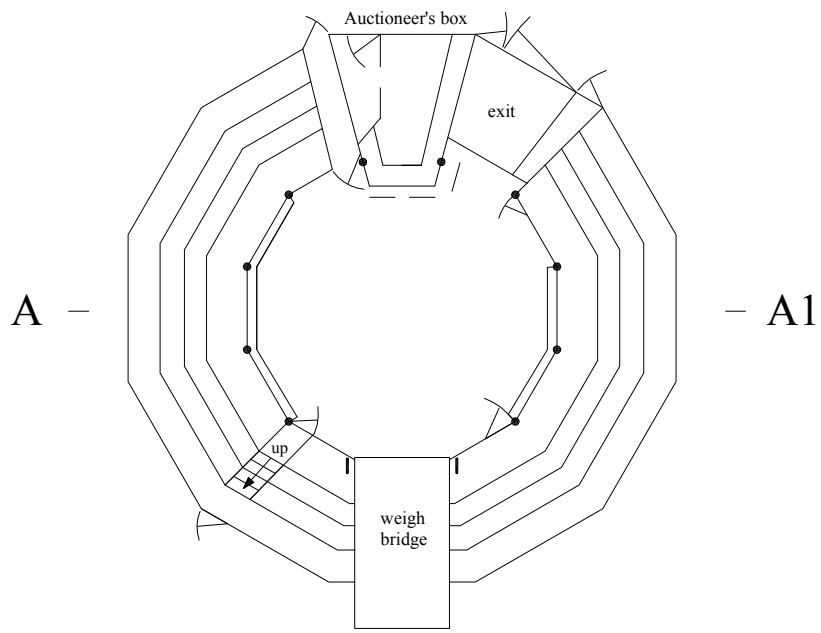
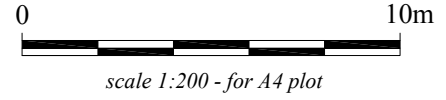


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Figure 3  
*Sketch plans and cross-section through  
the sale ring*

on behalf of  
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**Figure 4**  
General view of the mart, showing open parking areas, pens and sheds. The pub is visible above the recent portal-frame sheds: looking NW



**Figure 5**  
View of the buildings from the east end of the sheep pens: W



**Figure 6**  
Plaque on the north wall of the large southern shed, beside the ring: S





**Figure 7**  
Former coal depot  
building at the north end  
of the site: S



**Figure 8**  
Store and stable / garage  
building at the rear of  
the pub: SE



**Figure 9**  
Pub, sheds and the roof  
of the auction ring, seen  
from the opposite side  
of the High Street: NE



**Figure 10**  
Pub, store building and  
sheds seen from the  
northern pens: SW



**Figure 11**  
The Cattle Mart pub:  
SE



**Figure 12**  
The front of the pub.  
Alterations to the  
ground floor windows  
are apparent left of the  
later porch: E



**Figure 13**  
View along the bar.  
Former wall lines are  
visible as boxed-in  
joists on the ceiling:  
N



**Figure 14**  
The passage, looking  
towards the staircase  
and the lavatories: E



**Figure 15**  
The kitchen, showing  
the large fireplace in  
the S wall: SW





**Figure 16**  
First-floor sitting room at the south-west corner of the building: SE



**Figure 17**  
The roof truss near the north end of the building. The truncated principal rafters, queen posts and collar beam are connected by iron straps: N



**Figure 18**  
The auction ring, with the pub and other buildings behind: W





**Figure 19**  
The auction ring,  
showing the doors  
for buyers (right)  
and auctioneers: W



**Figure 20**  
View of the roof of  
the ring



**Figure 21**  
The west side of the  
ring, inside a recent  
shed. The steel door  
covers the end of the  
weighbridge: E



**Figure 22**  
Interior of the weighbridge, seen from the pens: W



**Figure 23**  
The auction ring, showing the auctioneer's box and the exit gate: SE



**Figure 24**  
Seating on the north side of the ring: NW





**Figure 25**  
View of the ring from  
the back of the  
auctioneer's box: W



**Figure 26**  
The exit from the  
ring to the raceways.  
The sliding door with  
the viewing slits  
slides vertically in  
the black frame: N



**Figure 27**  
The pay office at the  
north-west corner of  
the pens west of the  
ring: W

## Appendix 1: Project brief

### BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL BUILDING RECORDING:

#### At Auction Mart, Tow Law, Co. Durham

#### 1.0 Site Location

- 1.1 This brief is for archaeological building recording works at the Tow Law Auction Mart.
- 1.2 The site is centred at NZ12163907 on the east side of Tow Law, Wear Valley, Co. Durham.
- 1.3 Contractors are recommended to contact the client for detailed site plans prior to tendering.

#### 2.0 The Development

- 2.1 The client for this work is Alexander Developments. Planning permission with an archaeological condition for building recording has been granted by Wear Valley District Council (3/05/069).
- 2.2 The developer has permission to demolish the buildings associated with the Gr. 11 listed Auction Mart and construct a mixture of 67 detached, linked and semi-detached dwellings with associated access. The Gr. II structure will be retained in a reduced setting.

#### 3.0 Historical and Planning Background

- 3.1 The Sites and Monuments Record has no information on the Auction Mart complex, bar the listing data in the greenbacks.
- 3.2 PPG16 and PPG15, advocate that where archaeological remains or the structures of historic buildings will be damaged, altered or destroyed by development, that an adequate record should be made. (PPG15 section 3.23 and PPG16 para's 8 & 13).
- 3.3 The need for recording in this instance has been identified by Durham County Council Archaeology Section who act as archaeological advisors to Wear Valley District Council planning authority. The approved planning permission has been granted subject to an archaeological building condition.
- 3.4 The final report on the recording works is intended to provide the developer, the County Archaeology Section and members of the public with a clear statement on the buildings' history, structure, setting and form.

#### 4.0 The Archaeological Brief

- 4.1 A RCHME level 3 building recording is required for this site. The recording should be conducted to IFA standards as set out in *Standards and Guidance For The Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2001) and should follow the recording protocol as set out in the *RCHME Recording Historic Buildings: A Descriptive Specification (:1d edition)*. Both of these are available for consultation in the SMR.
- 4.2 Contractors are strongly advised to conduct a site visit prior to tendering.
- 4.3 The brief has been developed by the Assistant Archaeology Officer, Durham County Council. **This brief does not constitute the Written Scheme of Investigation** which must be supplied by the successful contractor to the planning authority for approval prior to any works commencing.
- 4.4 The fact that a building recording condition has been identified as the appropriate archaeological response indicates that although the area has some archaeological potential, the impact of the demolition and rebuilding can be mitigated by the recording of architectural features/structures prior to the conversion process.
- 4.5 The general aims of the building recording should be to ensure that a comprehensive record of the buildings as they stand in 2005 is carried out **prior** to any substantial changes and/or demolitions conducted as part of development.
- 4.6 The specific aims of the building recording are to:
  - produce from the available archive and the current application drawings, an accurate set of floor plans, elevations and sections as a base for subsequent recording, showing constructional changes and phases already established;
  - produce a full photographic record of the buildings, internal and external (including fixtures and fittings), prior to any building work commencing. This should be clearly tied into plans showing locations and/or directions of photos;
  - monitor the building work on a regular basis during the contract to record revealed fabric, fabric more easily accessed during the works and any fabric to be re-concealed on completion of the works;

- produce a report on the building complex, summarising any recording work already undertaken as well as documentary sources (to give context to the recording work) so that a lasting record of the building complex will be retained.

## **5.0 Recording**

- 5.1 All staff, including sub-contractors, must be suitably qualified and experienced in their project role. They must also be fully briefed and understand the nature of the work required of them under this specification.
- 5.2 All archaeological/architectural record drawings should be prepared to a suitable scale using techniques appropriate to the site and to the aims of the project. Recording should include detailed drawings, dimensional sketches, analytical and interpretive drawings and rectified photography - the archaeological contractor can use their judgment on site as to which method is best suited, at all times ensuring that "reasonableness" in terms of scale and value for money is applied.
- 5.3 Where the same building form is repeated across site with no significant change in layout/internal fixtures and fittings, then a representative sample may be recorded in detail. This should be clearly indicated in the report and on site plans.
- 5.4 Records should be made using suitable pro-formas as applicable. This should be detailed in the WSI.
- 5.5 All levels will be tied into Ordnance Datum and the complex accurately located within the O.S. National Grid.
- 5.6 Photographic records should use black and white prints and colour slide and include a suitable graduated scale. Annotated plans showing location and direction of photographs should be included in the report.
- 5.7 Digital photography can be used to produce photos for inclusion in the report, the annual archaeology summary publication, and to enhance the *Keys To The Past* website.**

## **6.0 Specialist Services and Reports**

- 6.1 It is not envisaged that any specialist services or reports would be required during the recording works. Should the contractor feel that such services may be required these must be clearly set out in the WSI and tender documents.

## **7.0 OASIS**

- 7.1 The Durham County Council Archaeology Section supports the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) Project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large scale developer funded fieldwork.
- 7.2 The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> within 3 months of completion of the work. Contractors are advised to ensure that adequate time and costings are built into their tenders to allow the forms to be filled in.
- 7.3 Technical advice should be sought in the first instance from OASIS ([oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk](mailto:oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk)) and not from Durham County Council Archaeology Section.
- 7.4 Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the SMR, Durham County Council Archaeology Section will validate the OASIS form thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website.
- 7.5 The archaeological consultant or contractor must indicate that they agree to this procedure within the specification/project design/written scheme of investigation submitted to Durham County Council Archaeology Section for approval on behalf of the planning authority.

## **8.0 Health and Safety Policy**

- 8.1 Contractors are expected to abide by the 1974 *Health and Safety Act* and its subsequent amendments. Appropriate provision of first aid, telephone and safety clothing as described in the *SCAUM* manual on archaeological health and safety should be followed. Each site should have a nominated safety officer.
- 8.2 The undertaking of a risk assessment prior to the commencement of works is strongly recommended. Extra care and attention should be taken in areas where buildings may be unstable.

**9.0 Publication**

- 9.1 All archaeological works which do not progress to further excavation and research (with the relevant post-excavation and publication scheme and costs), should have a time and budget allocation identified for publication. This should be to a minimum standard to include a summary of the work, findings, dates, illustrations and photographs and references to where the archive is lodged.
- 9.2 Editors of regional journals, either the *Durham Archaeological Journal*, *Archaeologia Aeliana* or other suitable journals should be contacted for information on outline publication costs, fuller figures may be worked out on completion of the watching brief. **As the final note is largely unpredictable in advance a contingency sum should be set aside at the outset of work in the tender.**
- 9.3 **County Durham Archaeology Section will be producing an annual publication every March which will highlight the archaeological work conducted in the county over the previous 12 months. To this end, it is now a requirement of every specification that a precis of archaeological works conducted in the county as a result of PPG16 must be submitted to the DCC Archaeology Section.**
- 9.4 **The precis should be no more than 500 words in length and it would be appreciated if JPEG or TIFF images of 300dpi are also included. The summary must be sent to the County Archaeologist by the beginning of December of the same year in which the work was conducted.**

**10.0 The Report**

- 10.1 The report should include the following:
- planning application number
  - executive summary
  - a site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with at least a 8 figure central grid reference
  - **OASIS reference number**
  - contractor's details including date work carried out
  - nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/ client details
  - description of the site location and geology
  - a plan to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
  - plan showing the location of photographic survey
  - architectural plans and detailed drawings/photos including elevations etc
  - discussion of the historical context, significance of the buildings locally, regionally and nationally
  - discussion of the results of recording work, including details of phasing etc.
  - context & feature descriptions
  - list of features, photos and drawings presented in tabular format
  - plans, section drawings and photos of the features produced at a suitable scale
  - recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work
  - bibliography
- 10.2 A report of the results of the building recording should be produced for the client and the local planning authority. This should include a site location plan with NGR references, and also be accompanied by additional plans/map extracts to display noted and recorded archaeological features as appropriate.
- 10.3 The report should be presented in an ordered state and contained within a protective cover/sleeve or bound in some fashion (loose-leaf presentation is unacceptable). The report should contain a title page listing site/development name, district and County together with a general NGR, the name of the archaeological contractor and the developer or commissioning agent. The report should be page numbered and supplemented with sections and paragraph numbering for ease of reference.
- 10.4 At least three copies of the report should be produce. One copy of the report should be sent to the SMR, along with a rich-text or PDF format digital copy. A copy should also be sent to the planning authority for their files, and one retained by the client.

**11.0 The Tender**

- 11.1 Tenders for the work must include a method statement, day rates if applicable, and the following:
- 11.2 Brief details of the organisation and the number of staff who are proposing to carry out the work Including any relevant specialisms or experience.
- 11.3 The earliest date at which the work can be commenced and the amount of notice required to initiate the survey.
- 11.4 Details concerning proposed methods of recording and source material.
- 11.5 Statement agreeing to complete the OASIS forms on completion of the watching brief.
- 11.6 An estimate of how long the work will take broken down by time and cost in terms of data collection and report production (the anticipated extent of the work should be confirmed with the client in advance). The tender should include a breakdown of costs attributable to:
- travelling and subsistence
  - fieldwork
  - any finds analysis
  - report production
  - administration
  - other
- 11.7 Contingency sums must be clearly allocated for the following:
- additional recording which may be required which is not covered by this brief (to be used only after discussion with client and County Archaeology Section)
  - archiving and publication
  - post-ex assessment
  - other

**12.0 Submission of Report**

- 12.1 This report should be considered as a project in its own right and not necessarily the first stage of any further work. A final copy of the report should be sent to the Archaeology Section, Durham County Council for inclusion into the County Durham Archaeological Archive (SMR) at:  
Archaeology Section, Culture & Leisure, County Hall, Durham, DH1 5TY.

**13.0 The Archive**

- 13.1 The site archive comprising the original paper records and plans, photographs, negatives etc, should be deposited in the appropriate museum at the completion of post-excavation. This should be in accordance with County Archaeological Archive policy, a guidance note on which can be obtained from the County Archaeology Service.

**14.0 Notice**

- 14.1 The County Archaeologist should be given two weeks notice in writing of the commencement of evaluation works. During such works the County Archaeologist or his nominated representative should be allowed access to the site and excavations at all reasonable times.

*June 2005*