



Archaeological Services
University of Durham

Land east of Church Cottage Lesbury, Northumberland

archaeological watching brief

on behalf of

Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall Ltd

ASUD Report 1167

November 2004

Archaeological Services

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Millmont, Ponteland Road, Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 3AL

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1. Summary

The project

- 1.1 This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological work carried out in advance of a proposed development of House at Site East of Church Cottage, Lesbury, Northumberland. The watching brief was aimed at recording any significant archaeological deposits that may have survived.
- 1.2 The works were commissioned by Jane Darbyshire and David Kendall Ltd, and conducted by Archaeological Services University of Durham in accordance with a project design provided by Archaeological Services.

Results

- 1.3 Geotechnical test pitting in seven locations around the site, and extensive stripping of the topsoil, revealed no archaeological features.
- 1.4 No further investigation of the site is recommended.

2. Project background

Location

- 2.1 The site is located on land east of Church Cottage Lesbury, Northumberland. NGR NU 2375 1167.

Development proposal

- 2.2 The proposal is to construct a single dwelling and garage.

Objective

- 2.3 The objective of the scheme of works is to record the nature, extent and potential significance of any surviving archaeological features within the proposed development area.

Specification

- 2.4 The work was carried out in accordance with a project design provided by Archaeological Services.

Dates

- 2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken on 7th July 2004.

Personnel

- 2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Andy Willis. This report was written by Andy Willis, the illustrations were prepared by Linda Bosveld. Project Manager Richard Annis.

Archive

- 2.7 The site code is LCC04 Lesbury Church Cottage.

3. Landuse and historical background

- 3.1 Documentary sources indicate that there has been a settlement at Lesbury since medieval times. Although the layout of the original village is not entirely clear, the early map evidence indicates that the current layout of the village strongly reflects that of the early settlement. The site lies directly across the main street from the church and is therefore located in the core of the early settlement.

- 3.2 Some of the medieval structures in Lesbury still survive today along with a number of 18th and 19th century buildings. St Mary's church is located on the opposite side of the road and dates to the 12th century. Lesbury bridge is a grade 1 listed structure and a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 24599) the western end of the village. The monument includes the above and below ground remains of Lesury Bridge, a multi span bridge of 15th or 16th century date, spanning the river Aln. Lesbury Bridge is considered one of the oldest medieval bridges still standing in Northumberland, its importance enhanced by the adjacent medieval mill.

4. The watching brief

- 4.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during all elements of ground disturbance on the site. A mechanical excavator was used for the excavation of seven test pits (Figure 2) and the stripping of an area to the south of the existing house and along the south-western boundary of the site.

Test pits

- 4.2 In all but one of the test pits, the topsoil that was exposed was a fine dark grey sandy silt containing small stones and some coal fragments. This deposit was between 0.2 and 0.75m deep; details of the pits are given in the table below. The topsoil was underlain by a fine sandy glacial clay that contained some gravel. A small amount of 19th- and 20th-century pottery and fragments of animal bone were found in test pits (TP) 3 and 6. TP2, which was to have been excavated near the north wall in the east side of the house was relocated to a site near the eastern boundary, because of the presence of a large spoil heap. At that point, the topsoil was underlain by a light brown sandy silt over the subsoil. No finds or indication of human activity were recorded here.

	<i>Topsoil</i>	<i>Max depth</i>	<i>Area</i>	<i>Finds</i>
TP1	0.50m	0.70m	2.7 x 1.5m	-
TP2	0.47m	0.67m	2.5 x 1.5m	-
TP3	0.75m	0.90m	2.2 x 1.5m	Pot, bone
TP4	0.70m	0.90m	2.5 x 1.5m	-
TP5	0.50m	0.80m	2.5 x 1.5m	-
TP6	0.90m	1.10m	2.2 x 1.5m	Pot, bone
TP7	0.65m	0.8m	3.3 x 1.5m	-

Table 1: test pit details

Boreholes

- 4.3 Five window sample (WS) boreholes were cut in the course of the geotechnical survey. The logs of these were examined, in each case the topsoil is recorded as being 0.5m deep, with no made ground or other anthropogenic material. Each found stiff boulder clay at depths between 0.5 and 1.5m below existing ground level, and this material was present in every case to 3m, the maximum depth of investigation.

Area stripping

- 4.4 Two areas to the south of the house were stripped of topsoil. No features were seen in the subsoil that was exposed, and nothing was seen in the spoil.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 No evidence has been found for past activity at this site. Additional archaeological work would in all probability be fruitless, and no further investigation is recommended.

6. References

DOE (HRR) District of Alnwick: Lesbury 01/9/1988

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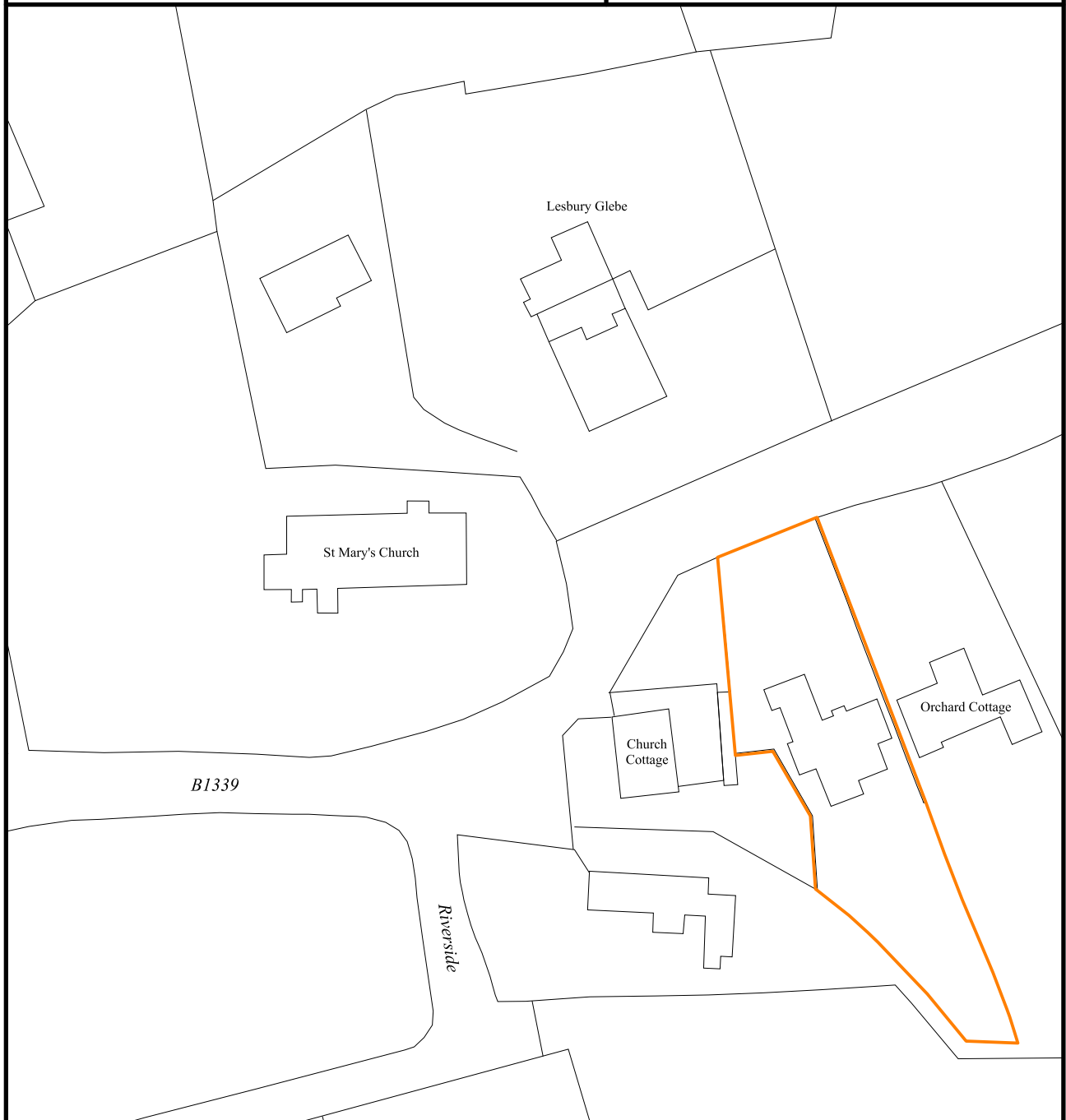
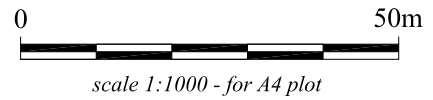
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Figure 1

Location of the proposed development area

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 proposed development area



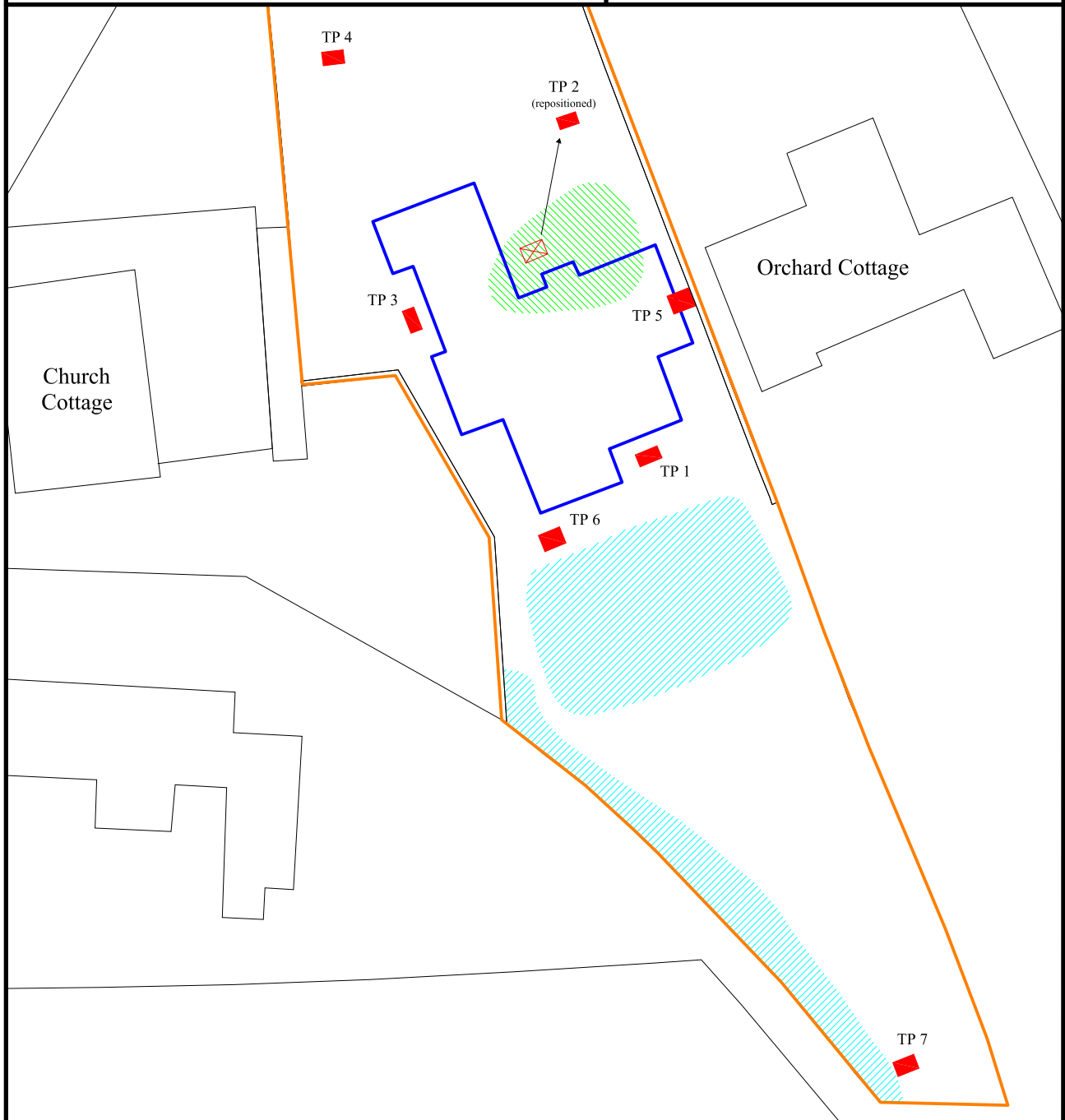
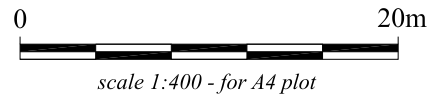


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Figure 2
Plan showing location of areas monitored

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- proposed development area
- test pits
- stripped areas
- spoil heap

