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# **NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

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**Client Reports No. CP/766/08**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In September 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Sue Barnard, Interpretation Officer, English Heritage to undertake a programme of archaeological works on land beside St. Paul's Monastery, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear (NZ 339 652; SM No.26515). The site is located within an area of high archaeological potential, within the boundary of the designated Scheduled Ancient Monument of St. Paul's Monastery. As a result, all works associated with the insertion of six new interpretation panels in the environs of the monastery required a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken, in the form of a watching brief, undertaken on all groundworks associated with the development.

The works involved the excavation of two circular pits for each interpretation panel, measuring 0.23m in diameter and excavated to an approximate depth of 0.55m, to hold the supports for six Interpretation panels. Modern glass, pottery and ceramic building material were recovered from the foundations of Interpretation Panels 3, 5 and 6. A possible cobbled surface was discovered at the base of the foundations for Interpretation Panel 6.

The archaeological material encountered, which consisted of a possible cobbled surface, was consistent with material that is to be expected in view of the past habitation in the vicinity. The discovery of a possible path or floor surface is unsurprising given the location of the site within the monastery.

As this report comprises the recommendations for archaeological recording of the developments relating to works at St. Paul's Monastery, no further work is necessary. However, due to the continuing high archaeological potential of the area, and the status of the site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, any further development in the area should be subjected to a programme of archaeological investigation.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Sue Barnard, Interpretation Officer, English Heritage for commissioning the project. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to extend their thanks to Lisa Hill, Interpretation Officer, English Heritage, for her assistance on site.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Rachel Horn, who also wrote the report. The drawings were produced by Rachel Horn. The project was managed by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In September 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Sue Barnard, Interpretation Officer, English Heritage, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the installation of six interpretation boards at St. Paul's Monastery, Jarrow, Tyne and Wear (NGR: NZ 339 652; Figure 1). The development site is within the area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument of St. Paul's Monastery. Deposits of archaeological significance may exist in the area of the works associated with the insertion of new interpretation panels. As a result, a condition of the planning permission was that, before the development commences, a programme of archaeological work be undertaken. This is in line with government advice as set out in the DoE Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16). The development works also required Scheduled Monument Consent from the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, and English Heritage advised that such consent was conditional upon the implementation of a programme of archaeological work.
- 1.1.2 The proposed groundworks involved the insertion of six new interpretation panels. The first four were located outside the monastery walls (Interpretation Panel No. 1, No. 2, No. 3 and No. 6). The remaining two were located within the walls of the monastery (Interpretation Panel No. 4 and No. 5). All of these groundworks had to be excavated under full archaeological supervision. The objective of this watching brief was to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds, which were disturbed or exposed by work associated with the development. All stages of the archaeological work were undertaken following approved statutory guidelines (IFA 2002).
- 1.1.3 This report comprises the results of the archaeological work, namely: the archaeological recording of the groundworks associated with the development, and post fieldwork analysis of the archaeological deposits recovered during the groundworks.

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## 2 METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Sue Barnard, Interpretation Officer, English Heritage for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.

### 2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 The watching brief comprised a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during groundworks at the site, followed by the systematic examination and accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and artefacts identified.

2.2.2 The aims and principal methodology of the watching brief can be summarised as follows:

- to determine the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains;
- to produce a photographic record of all contexts using colour digital, 35mm colour slide and monochrome formats as applicable, each photograph including a graduated metric scale;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to sample any environmental deposits encountered according to the NPA standard sampling procedure and in consultation with appropriate specialists;
- to prepare a site archive in accordance with MAP2 (English Heritage, 1991) and MoRPHE standards (English Heritage 2006);
- depending upon the results of the work, to prepare a report for publication.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design, and in accordance with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage guidelines (1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited in The Great North Museum, Newcastle.

2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. Details of the results of this

project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference number is northpen3-48498.



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## 3 BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 The Anglo-Saxon monastery of St Paul's, Jarrow, was founded in 681/2 AD and St Paul's Church dedicated in 685 AD. The monastery was founded by a Northumbrian nobleman, Benedict Biscop, on a large land grant from King Ecgfrith of Northumbria. The Venerable Bede entered St Peter's in 680 AD as a seven-year old and remained in the monastery until his death in 735 AD. At this time the Anglo-Saxon building tradition was to build in timber; the monasteries of St Peter's and St Paul's were amongst the first stone buildings in Northumbria since the days of the Roman empire. Excavations at the site was undertaken in the 1960s and 70s under the direction of Professor Rosemary Cramp of Durham University. The excavations revealed the central buildings, and amongst the finds were finely carved stone and large quantities of coloured window glass. The survivals testify to the richness of the art and architecture employed by Benedict Biscop to glorify God, and represent a fraction of what could have been seen at the monastery in the early 8<sup>th</sup> century.
- 3.1.2 There are no detailed accounts of Jarrow after the early 8<sup>th</sup> century. A few letters, and an account of Bede's death written by his pupil Cuthbert, show that life carried on through the 8<sup>th</sup> century. Archaeological evidence suggests that in the later 9<sup>th</sup> century, organised monastic life was disrupted or discontinued and at some time between the later 9<sup>th</sup> and the later 11<sup>th</sup> centuries the buildings were badly burnt, perhaps as a result of Viking threat, or Scottish raids. Eventually pagan Scandinavian settlers in Northumbria accepted Christianity, allowing the Community of St Cuthbert to establish a monastery at Chester-le-Street in 883 and giving them substantial lands between the rivers Tyne and Wear - this presumably included the estate of St Paul's, Jarrow. In 995 the Community moved to Durham. According to the chronicler Symeon of Durham, a member of the Durham community, Alfred Westou, was in the habit of visiting Jarrow in the 1020s on the anniversary of Bede's death and on one of these occasions removed Bede's bones from Jarrow to put in St Cuthbert's coffin at Durham.
- 3.1.3 In the 1070s, Aldwin, prior of Winchcombe, travelled north with two monks from Evesham to visit the sites of the Northumbrian saints described by Bede. Walcher, Bishop of Durham, gave them the site of St Paul's monastery, "the unroofed walls of which were alone standing, and they exhibited scarce any vestige of their ancient dignity" (Symeon of Durham, History of the Church of Durham). They set about rebuilding the monastery to a Benedictine layout. The monastery continued to function as a small cell dependant on Durham Cathedral, until it was dissolved by Henry VIII. The monastic estates were then sold, although St Paul's Church continued in use as the parish church of Jarrow. Although significant architecturally as one of the first Anglo-Norman monasteries in Northumbria, the medieval monastery of St Paul's never achieved the European-wide significance of the Anglo-Saxon monastery evident from the works of Bede.
- 3.1.4 (shortened history drawn from: <http://www.bedesworld.co.uk/bedesworld-monastic.php>).

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## 4 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Summary results of the watching brief are presented below, and are illustrated in Figure 1 and 2 (Appendix 1) and Plates 1 to 17. The watching brief took place on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and consisted of the excavation of foundations for six interpretation panels to be placed in the area of St. Paul's Monastery. A possible archaeological feature was observed within the foundations for Interpretation Panel No. 6. This consisted of a cobbled surface, possibly a path or floor surface. No other archaeological features were observed and therefore no environmental samples were taken. However, finds were recovered from the foundations of Interpretation Panel No 3, No. 5 and No. 6.

### 4.2 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 1



*Plate 1: Interpretation Panel No. 1 under excavation, facing south east.*

4.2.1 The groundworks commenced at the area to the west of the church. Two round foundation cuts were excavated, into which the posts of the interpretation panel were to be placed. These were 0.23m in diameter and were dug to a depth of 0.52m. The stratigraphy in this area consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay that had a depth of 0.09m. This overlay a dark brown silty clay which was intermixed with a mid orange clay (**101**) which contained a large amount of modern rubble and rubbish. This was interpreted as a modern backfill layer here as a result on modern building/landscaping in the area around the modern church. This had a depth of 0.36m

and lay on top of a light orange clay (102), which was excavated to a depth of 0.07m. No finds were recovered from any of these contexts.



*Plate 2: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 1, facing south east.*



*Plate 3: Interpretation Panel No. 1 in situ, facing south east.*

### 4.3 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 2

- 4.3.1 The second interpretation panel was located to the south of the monastery ruins. A further two 0.23m diameter holes were excavated, to a depth of 0.54m. The stratigraphy was slightly different in this area and consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.18m. This overlay the intermixed layer (**101**), a dark brown silty clay and mid orange clay, which had a depth of 0.22m. Below this lay another deposit (**103**), a dark brown silty clay containing yellow sandstone, slate and limestone inclusions as well as modern sweet/cigarette wrappers. This deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.14m, and no finds were recovered from this context.



*Plate 4: Interpretation Panel No. 2 under excavation, facing north east*



*Plate 5: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 2, facing north east.*



*Plate 6: Interpretation Panel No. 2 in situ, facing north east.*

#### 4.4 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 3

- 4.4.1 The third interpretation panel was also located to the south of the monastery ruins. A further two 0.23m diameter holes were excavated, to a depth of 0.46m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.10m. Finds were recovered from this context which included modern pottery and glass. This overlay (**103**), a dark brown silty clay containing yellow sandstone, slate and limestone inclusions as well as modern sweet/cigarette wrappers. This deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.36m.



*Plate 7: Interpretation Panel No. 3 under excavation, facing south east.*



*Plate 8: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 3, facing south east.*



*Plate 9: Interpretation Panel No. 3 in situ, facing south east.*

## 4.5 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 4

- 4.5.1 The fourth interpretation panel was located within the courtyard of the monastery ruins. A further two 0.23m diameter holes were excavated, to a depth of 0.54m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.15m. This overlay (**102**), a light orange clay containing yellow sandstone inclusions. This deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.40m.



*Plate 10: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 4, facing south.*





*Plate 11: Interpretation Panel No. 4 in situ, facing south.*

## **4.6 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 5**

- 4.6.1 The fifth interpretation panel was also located within the courtyard of the monastery ruins. A further two 0.23m diameter holes were excavated, to a depth of 0.52m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil **(100)**, a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.15m. Finds were recovered from this context which included modern pottery and glass. This overlay **(103)**, a dark brown silty clay containing yellow sandstone, slate and limestone inclusions as well as modern sweet/cigarette wrappers. This deposit had a depth of 0.12m and overlay **(102)**, a light orange clay containing yellow sandstone inclusions. This deposit had a depth of 0.14m and overlay the intermixed layer **(101)**, a dark brown silty clay and mid orange clay, which was excavated to a depth of 0.11m.



*Plate 12: Interpretation Panel No. 5 under excavation, facing north.*



*Plate 13: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 5, facing north.*



*Plate 14: Interpretation Panel No. 5 in situ, facing north.*

#### **4.7 INTERPRETATION PANEL NO. 6**

- 4.7.1 The sixth interpretation panel was also located to the east of the monastery ruins. A further two 0.23m diameter holes were excavated, to a depth of 0.46m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.15m. Finds were recovered from this context which included modern pottery and glass. This overlay (**103**), a dark brown silty clay containing yellow sandstone, slate and limestone inclusions as well as modern sweet/cigarette wrappers. This deposit had a depth of 0.31m and overlay (**104**), a blue/grey stone layer. This was interpreted as a possible cobbled surface which may have been used as a path or floor surface.



*Plate 15: Interpretation Panel No. 6 under excavation, facing west.*



*Plate 16: foundation cuts for Interpretation Panel No. 6, facing west.*



*Plate 17: Interpretation Panel No. 6 in situ, facing west.*

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## 5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief recorded all works associated with the insertion of six new interpretation panels at St. Paul's Monastery, undertaken on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008. Archaeological finds were recovered from the foundations of Interpretation Panel No. 3, No. 5 and No. 6, and will be deposited within The Great North Museum, Newcastle.
- 5.1.2 The archaeological material, which consisted of post-medieval pottery and glass is consistent with material that is to be expected in view of the past habitation in the vicinity.

### 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 As this report comprises the recommendations for archaeological recording of the developments relating to the insertion of the new interpretation panels, no further work is necessary. However, due to the continuing high archaeological potential of the area, and the status of the site as a Scheduled Ancient Monument, any further development in the area should be subjected to a programme of archaeological investigation.

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## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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### 6.1 SECONDARY SOURCES

English Heritage 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2)*. London: English Heritage.

English Heritage 2006 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*. London: English Heritage.

IFA 2002, *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

UKIC 1990, *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage*

<http://www.bedesworld.co.uk/bedesworld-monastic.php>

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## **APPENDIX 1: FIGURES**

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