



REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT WEST ROAD AND GRETN ROAD, DENTON BURN, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, TYNE AND WEAR

**FOR
OPENREACH**

Grid Ref: NZ 420 565 and 420 564

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CONTENTS

	Page
List of Illustrations	iii
Executive Summary	viii
Acknowledgements.....	ix
1. INTRODUCTION	7
1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT	7
1.2 SITE LOCATION	7
2. METHODOLOGY	8
2.1 THE WATCHING BRIEF	8
2.2 THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD	8
2.3 PROJECT ARCHIVE	8
3. RESULTS	9
4. CONCLUSION	12
5. BIBLIOGRAPHY	13
APPENDIX: FIGURES.....	14

FIGURE 1	SITE LOCATION.....	APPENDIX
FIGURE 2	LOCATION OF INSPECTION TRENCH ON WEST ROAD	APPENDIX
FIGURE 3	LOCATION OF INSPECTION TRENCH ON GRETN A ROAD	APPENDIX

PLATES

PLATE 1	LOCATION OF EXCAVATED TRENCH ON WEST ROAD.....	9
PLATE 2	DETAIL OF EXCAVATED TRENCH ON WEST ROAD	9
PLATE 3	LOCATION OF EXCAVATED TRENCH ON GRETN A ROAD.....	10
PLATE 4	DETAIL OF EXCAVATED TRENCH ON GRETN A ROAD	10



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KNOWLEDGEMENTS

es Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Openreach to
ing brief on West Road and Gretna Road, Newcastle upon
Tyne during the clearance of blockages along the line of existing duct tracks, to allow for the
installation of an optical fibre cable (NZ 420 565 and 420 564). Some of the blockages were in
the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall (West Road) and the Vallum (Gretna Road); consequently an
archaeological watching brief was required during any groundworks in order that any
archaeology revealed relating to Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site could be recorded.

The groundworks associated with the clearance of blockages along sections of existing ducting
revealed no archaeological evidence or artefacts. The existing ducting was located at a depth of
c.0.50 metres below the present level of the pavement, consequently only evidence was observed
of the existing ceramic pipe and gravel backfill.



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KNOWLEDGEMENTS

would like to thank Gary Hedworth of Openreach for staff of Enterprise and Openreach for their assistance during the fieldwork.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to David Heslop, Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Fiona Wooler. The report was written by Fiona Wooler and edited by Matt Town. The project was managed by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In November 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Limited were commissioned by Openreach to undertake an archaeological watching brief at West Road and Gretna Rod, Denton Burn, Newcastle upon Tyne (NZ 420 565 and 420 564) during the clearance of blockages along existing ducts to allow for the installation of an optical fibre cable. Six of the blockages are located within the vicinity of Hadrian's Wall (West Road) and the Vallum (Gretna Road), consequently a watching brief was required during ground works in order that any archaeological relating to Hadrian's Wall or the Vallum could be recorded.
- 1.1.2 The Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist produced a specification for the archaeological watching brief which set out the tasks to be undertaken by the archaeological contractor during and following the groundworks (Heslop 2008). These tasks were adhered to and all work was in line with accepted best practice and IfA guidelines (1994).
- 1.1.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Fiona Wooler on 19th November 2008.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The present works were undertaken along West Road and Gretna Road, both located to the west of Newcastle City Centre, in an area between Benwell and Denton Burn (Figure 1). West Road is the main road into Newcastle City Centre from the west (A186) which rises from the junction of the A1 and A69 to the west to a height of c.96m just to the east of the Crematorium. Gretna Road is a residential street, and the location of St Cuthbert's School, which runs from the southern side of West Road and is aligned north-south (Figure 2).
- 1.2.2 The existing ducting and associated boxes are located beneath the pavement on the north side of West Road and beneath the pavement on the west side of Gretna Road.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 THE WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during all groundworks associated with the clearance of blockages along the route of existing ducting on West Road, between the Denton Hotel and the Crematorium, and Gretna Road.
- 2.1.2 When the contractors needed to clear blockages by excavating to locate the existing ducting, an archaeologist observed all groundworks in order that any archaeology relating to Hadrian's Wall or the Vallum could be noted.

2.2 THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

- 2.2.1 The photographic archive consists of the following:
- a series of 35mm black and white prints showing the location of the groundworks and the excavated areas;
 - a series of digital views showing the general location of the groundworks and detail of the excavated areas included within this report for illustrative purposes.

2.3 PROJECT ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 The full archive of the archaeological watching brief has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the *Management of Archaeological Projects* (MAP 2nd Edition 1991) and recommendations in *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Brown 2007). The archive will be deposited within the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Service.
- 2.3.2 The Tyne and West County Archaeologist and North Pennines Archaeology Ltd support 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. Details of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd as a part of this national project under the unique identifier **northpen3-51728**.

3. RESULTS

- 3.1 The contractors commenced their operations at the west end of the route beside the Denton Hotel, and worked eastwards towards the Crematorium and then southwards along Gretna Road. Only two blockages needed to be cleared, out of a possible six.
- 3.2 The first blockage was located just to the east of the entrance to the Crematorium (Stop 3) (Plate 1). A small trench was excavated by hand beneath the pavement to a depth of *c.*0.50m deep, and measured *c.*0.50m square (Plate 2). The excavated material consisted of grey gravel which was presumably the backfill for the trench following the insertion of the existing ducting pipes. The top of the existing ceramic pipe which houses the ducting was located and the blockage cleared. The hole was then backfilled and paving stones reinstated.
- 3.3 The second blockage was located beneath the pavement on the west side of Gretna Road, opposite the playing fields of St Cuthbert's School (Plate 3). A trench measuring *c.*0.40m square and 0.40m deep was excavated to locate the existing ceramic pipe which contains the ducting. As with the trench on West Road, the excavated material consisted a grey gravel which was presumably the backfill for the trench when the pipes were laid. The only other material observed was broken pieces of ceramic pipe which had been removed to allow for clearance of the blockage (Plate 4).



Plate 1 – Location of excavated trench on West Road, to east side of Crematorium entrance



Plate 2 – Excavated trench on West Road showing gravel and pieces of broken ceramic pipe which houses the ducting (Scale = 1m)



Plate 3 – View looking north showing the excavated trench outside No.26 Gretna Road



Plate 4 – Detail of excavated trench on Gretna Road

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The groundworks associated with the clearance of blockages along sections of existing ducting on West Road and Gretna Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, revealed no archaeological features or artefacts. The existing ducting was located at a depth of c.0.50m below the present level of the pavement. Consequently, only evidence was observed of the existing ceramic pipes and gravel backfill.



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APPENDIX: FIGURES
