

Archaeological Desk Based Assessment

Seaton Carew Feasibility Study

Hartlepool



TA09/02

OASIS ID 59910

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May 2009

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1. Summary

This report describes the methodology and results of an archaeological desk based assessment undertaken by Tees Archaeology Research and Fieldwork Section for the Seaton Carew Feasibility Study. This study was commissioned in order to suggest options for the heritage led regeneration of the southern part of the seafront at Seaton Carew. The site is centred on National Grid Reference NZ 5255 2969. The work was undertaken in May 2009, and the commissioning client was Hartlepool Borough Council.

The archaeological desk based assessment has determined that there is evidence for human occupation at Seaton Carew in most of the principal eras from the Mesolithic period (circa 8000-3400 BC) onwards. The medieval origins of the settlement can still be traced within its layout including a square village green. Other interpretable aspects of its heritage include its development as a spa-town in the 18th century, its shipwrecks, and contribution to World War II.

Various options are put forward for the interpretation of the cultural heritage of Seaton Carew. These range from low key trails and panels to more ambitious schemes such as a visitor centre/observatory.

2. Introduction

An archaeological desk based assessment of Seaton Carew (Figure 1) has been undertaken by Tees Archaeology Research and Fieldwork Section between 20th and 27th May 2009 for Hartlepool Borough Council. The research was carried out by Peter Rowe.

The archaeological desk based assessment is required to inform the Seaton Carew Feasibility Study, which will support the physical regeneration of the settlement, and encourage and facilitate investment in key seafront sites with heritage as a principal theme. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the character of the known and potential archaeological resource of the site and a defined area around it (the study area).

Methodology

The desk based assessment will:

- define the principal sources and types of information
- catalogue the elements of the archaeological resource identified by interrogation of these sources
- present a chronological synthesis of the known archaeological resource in the study area
- assess the potential of the archaeological resource of the site for interpretation and delivery of regeneration

Context

Seaton Carew lies on the north east coast, at NZ 525 297 (Figure 1). It comprises a distinct settlement with its main focus being the sea front with housing estates, a caravan park and allotments to the west.

The solid geology of the area is composed of Triassic rocks of the Sherwood Sandstone Formation (Waughman, 1995). These sandstones with mudstone inclusions are separated from the earlier Permian rocks to the north by the West Hartlepool Fault. Buried valleys caused by fluvial erosion during earlier glacial periods are common in the region and they have become filled with Quaternary deposits, mainly tills deposited during the later Devensian glaciation and ice retreat (ibid.).

3. Sources

The desk based assessment reviewed the following sources for information about the area within a 1.5 km radius of the site (the study area; see Figure 1):

- The Historic Environment Record for Teesside (HER)
- The online version of the National Monument Record, Pastscape (NMR)
- Written local histories, historic maps, aerial photographs and other published information held by Tees Archaeology (TA)

These sources were searched for the following types of information:

-
- The Historic Environment Record (HER) is a register of known archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, and isolated artefactual finds, maintained by Tees Archaeology. The Historic Environment Record identifies **thirty-six** sites in the study area (see Figure 1).
 - Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) is a recently completed project mapping out the current land uses of Teesside and discussing how they originated with respect to previous landscape types. This has been particularly useful in describing the suburbanisation of Seaton Carew in the 20th century.
 - Area Designations is a layer of the HER that details heritage designations such as Historic Landscapes and Conservation Areas. There is **one** designated Conservation Area that covers a large proportion of the historic core of the study area (see Figure 1).
 - The National Monument Record is a register of known archaeological sites and monuments, historic buildings, and isolated artefactual finds, maintained by English Heritage. The National Monument Record identifies several sites in the study area, however these mirror those listed in the HER.
 - Protected Wreck sites are identified by English Heritage as being of national importance, and are protected by law from unauthorised disturbance under the Protection of Wrecks Act 1973. There is **one** Protected Wreck site within the study area (see Figure 1).
 - Listed Buildings are buildings identified by English Heritage as being of special architectural or historic interest and placed on a statutory list by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport. There are three grades of listing, I, II* and II. Alterations require listed building consent from the local planning authority. There are **sixteen** listed buildings in the study area (see Figure 1).
 - Secondary documentary sources such as published histories are held by Tees Archaeology. Those consulted in this assessment are listed in section 7.
 - Historic maps such as Ordnance Survey maps are held by Tees Archaeology. The full range of Ordnance Survey maps from the First Edition to the present was consulted at Tees Archaeology, but only the most relevant have been referenced in this report.
 - Aerial photographs taken by the RAF during and after World War II are held by Tees Archaeology.
 - <http://maps.live.com/> was used frequently for its oblique images of the settlement taken from each point of the compass circa 2006/2007.

4. Catalogue

The catalogue lists all the sites of archaeological or historical interest previously identified within the study area, of which there are **thirty-six** in total, plus 18 newly identified sites, shown on Figure 1.

Site no.	Other ref.	Description	Type of site	Statutory designations
1	HER 3592	Seaton Battery: 2 x guns installed in 1940.	Demolished structure	None
2	HER 4661	Seaton Low Light: Erected in 1835 and demolished in the early 20 th century.	Demolished building	None
3	HER 6771	1-5 The Cliff: Terrace of six properties built in 1878.	Extant building	None
4	HER 6772	The Staincliffe Hotel: Built in 1869 as a house for Thomas Walker.	Extant building	None
5	HER 6494	K6 Telephone Kiosk, The Green: A traditional booth to a design of 1935.	Extant structure	Listed II
6	HER 6489	7 The Green: An 18 th century terraced house.	Extant building	Listed II
7	HER 6490	8 The Green: An 18 th century terraced house.	Extant building	Listed II
8	HER 6491	9 The Green: An early 19 th century terraced house.	Extant building	Listed II
9	HER 6492	Seaton Hall Hotel: Hotel circa 1803.	Extant building	Listed II
10	HER 6493	11-13 The Green: Terrace of three houses built circa 1800.	Extant building	Listed II
11	HER 6484	2 Green Terrace: House built circa 1800.	Extant building	Listed II
12	HER 6495	18 The Green: Terraced house of the early to mid 19 th century.	Extant building	Listed II
13	HER 6496	19 The Green: Terraced house of the early to mid 19 th century.	Extant building	Listed II
14	HER 0005	Former sea defence wall recorded during installation of pipeline in 1992.	Buried structure	None
15	HER 6488	Marine Hotel: Built 1900.	Extant building	Listed II

Site no.	Other ref.	Description	Type of site	Statutory designations
16	HER 4388	Little Duck: Approximate location of a possible shipwreck locally famous for its reputed hoard of Spanish gold.	Documentary reference	None
17	HER 4590	Former Brewery: Mid-19 th century or earlier in date.	Demolished building	None
18	HER 0952	Seaton Carew Village: Medieval village of at least the 12 th century which developed as a spa resort in the late 18 th century.	Extant settlement	None
19	HER 6482	Church of the Holy Trinity: Built in 1831.	Extant building	Listed II
20	HER 6483	The Seaton Hotel: Built circa 1792.	Extant building	Listed II
21	HER 6134	Seaton Foreshore: Cattle jawbone washed out from submerged peat deposits. Bronze Age or earlier.	Stray find	None
22	HER 4949	Bus Station: Built in 1938 in the Art Deco style with central clock tower.	Extant building	Listed II
23	HER 3836	Seaton Beach: Fragment of human skull washed out from submerged peat deposits in 1998. Bronze Age or earlier.	Stray find	None
24	HER 6154	Seaton Beach: Late 19 th century clay smoking pipe.	Stray find	None
25	HER 3643	Seaton Beach: Demolished World War II Pillbox.	Demolished structure	None
26	HER 3644	Seaton Beach: Demolished World War II Pillbox.	Demolished structure	None
27	HER 2825	Seaton Carew Wreck: The remains of a late 18 th or early 19 th century wooden collier brig.	Extant shipwreck	Protected Wreck
28	HER 5524	Seaton Beach: Late 19 th century clay smoking pipe.	Stray find	None
29	HER 5301	Seaton Beach: Red Deer bone washed out from submerged peat deposits in 2005. Bronze Age or earlier.	Stray find	None
30	HER 3583	Seaton Dunes: circa 1940 observation post.	Demolished structure	None
31	HER 6485	5 & 6 South End: Pair of terraced houses of the early 19 th century.	Extant building	Listed II

Site no.	Other ref.	Description	Type of site	Statutory designations
32	HER 6486	7 South End: early to mid 18 th century cottage.	Extant building	Listed II
33	HER 6487	8 South End: early 19 th century house.	Extant building	Listed II
34	HER 0780	Seaton Dunes: approximate location of former medieval chapel.	Documentary reference	None
35	HER 1461	Bolton Grove allotments: Bronze Age flint arrowhead.	Stray find	None
36	HER 4591	Seaton Carew Railway Station: Railway platform of circa 1839.	Extant structure	None
37	N/A	Former ridge and furrow fields to the west of the Front.	Built over	None
38	N/A	Lifeboat House: built in 1809.	Demolished building	None
39	N/A	Former Quaker Chapel, The Front. Now demolished.	Demolished building	None
40	N/A	Wesleyan Chapel of 1830. Now demolished.	Demolished building	None
41	N/A	The North Shelter: Former shelter of the inter-war period circa 1925-1935.	Partly demolished building	None
42	N/A	Former bandstand, The Front: Early 20 th century.	Demolished building	None
43	N/A	Vesper House, Queen Street: Almshouse of 1923.	Extant building	None
44	N/A	Holy Trinity Primary: School opened in 1925.	Extant building	None
45	N/A	Seaton Carew War Memorial, The Green: Memorial unveiled in 1921.	Extant structure	None
46	N/A	Seaton Carew: Former 1940 pillbox approximate location.	Demolished building	None
47	N/A	Seaton Carew: Former 1940 pillbox approximate location.	Demolished building	None
48	N/A	Seaton Carew: Former 1940 pillbox, approximate location.	Demolished building	None
49	N/A	Seaton Carew Public Park: Public open space formalised in 1970s or 1980s.	Extant park	None

Site no.	Other ref.	Description	Type of site	Statutory designations
50	N/A	Beacon at The Cliff: erected 1988 to mark 400 th anniversary of defeat of the Spanish Armada.	Extant structure	None
51	N/A	Searchlight Battery: circa 1940, established by a small pond opposite Glentower Road	Demolished structure	None
52	N/A	Searchlight Battery: circa 1940, in Stokesley Road area.	Demolished structure	None
53	N/A	The Station Hotel, Station Lane: Public House of 1872.	Extant building	None
54	N/A	7-9 Green Terrace: Former agricultural building of the 18 th century or earlier.	Extant building	None

5. Synthesis

Prehistoric

A number of prehistoric stray finds (Sites 21, 23, 29 & 35) are recorded within the study area. The majority (Sites 21, 23 & 29) are beach finds of human or animal remains that have eroded from intertidal or submerged deposits. To the immediate north of the study area lies an extensive outcrop of peat beds and other wetland deposits known as the Submerged Forest. As well as being an excellent medium for the preservation of organic archaeological material these deposits encode information on sea level change, past environments and climate. The importance of the deposits is recognised with almost 20 hectares designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest since 1988.

Archaeological interest in the 'Submerged Forest' at Seaton Carew began in the early 19th century and there is now a substantial body of evidence consisting of plant, animal and artefactual remains. Finds of particular significance include a substantially complete human burial recovered in 1972. This was radio-carbon dated to 3600-3342 BC (Waughman 2005, 19).

A recent monograph (Waughman, 2005) brings together this information along with reports on archaeological work in advance of the construction of sea defences in 1990, 1995 and 2002.

Further inland there is a record of the find of a barbed and tanged flint arrowhead of Bronze Age date (Site 35) found whilst working an allotment.

Roman

There is no evidence for Roman settlement within the study area itself. However finds of the Roman period have been noted from the foreshore in the vicinity of the Submerged Forest. These include a midden (HER 0784) found in 1881 including Samian pottery and

a bronze brooch (Swain, 1986). Further brooches and coins have been reported by metal detectorists sweeping the foreshore in more recent years. The evidence points to a small trading or supply base.

Early Medieval

There is no evidence for Anglo-Saxon or early medieval activity within the study area or its environs. The site would have been visible from the monastery established on the Headland in circa 640 AD. The place-name 'Seaton' originates from Old English with the 'ton' element usually taken to indicate an Anglo-Saxon origin.

Medieval to 17th century

The earliest documentary information relating to Seaton Carew (Site 18) in the Medieval period is 1146 and 1151 when Robert de Brus held 230 acres of demense there (Page 1928, 367-368). The place name Seaton simply means 'settlement by the sea', whilst Carew is a personal name of the principal family who held land here (Watts 2002, 109). The documentary history for the settlement is well researched for the entire medieval period (Page 1928, 367-370). It details various events such as a fine given to John de Carew in 1342 for butchering a whale at Seaton Carew which was determined to be a royal fish and hence the rightful property of the Bishop of Durham.

Unfortunately there are no contemporary plans to indicate the layout and extent of the medieval settlement. It would seem probable that Seaton Carew would have been re-ordered following the Norman Conquest of 1066 and the subsequent quenching of open rebellion in this part of the country in the bloody 'Harrying of the North'. The Normans were keen to permanently stamp their footprint on the country with nucleated settlements replacing less formal dispersed settlement. Norman villages were structured with regular plans including elements such as one or more rows of properties with a continuous frontage and regular greens.

It is possible that medieval Seaton Carew took the form of a single row village developed along the sea front with open fields to the west. This is an unusual form but is echoed locally at Redcar. A second possibility is that there was a second row on the east side of The Front, but that this has been lost through the process of coastal erosion. A record of 1767 states that at '*Seaton several houses were washed down*' following a two day storm event (Anderson 2004, 77). The current late 18th-19th century properties at 70-79 on the east side of The Front may be the vestigial remains of a second row of vanished properties.

It is likely that the existing square green (see Plate 3) was established in the medieval period. If this was the case then the pattern of the medieval settlement is largely fossilised along The Front today. The one row structure, possible vestigial second row and green are shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1857 (Figure 2).

A chapel (Site 34) is mentioned at Seaton in 1200 AD when a chantry was granted to Walter de Carew. The chapel was dedicated to St. Thomas of Canterbury. The chapel was still in existence between 1577-88 but was in ruins by 1622, although still recognised as a chapel in 1646 (Page 1923, 376).

There is no firm evidence of the location of the chapel. Church sites are often reused; however the current church at Seaton Carew (Site 19) was erected on a virgin site in

1831, over 200 years following the abandonment of the medieval chapel.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a site to the south of the village might be likely. In 1953 Mr. Dearlove, the green keeper at Seaton Golf Club, gave testimony that *'the previous green keeper, now dead, said that the old chapel stood in the hollow behind the 4th green. He made no mention of any remains having been found there, and I have made no discoveries in the area'* (Tees Archaeology HER 0780). This local knowledge was echoed by Canon Booth, the vicar in 1953, *'It is said that the chapel of Seaton stood on that part of the sand dunes now occupied by the golf course, but I cannot give definite sources of information'* (ibid.). Both of these accounts concord with a legend on the 1857 Ordnance Survey edition map on Seaton Dunes which reads *'Chapel Open'* adjacent to a small break in the dune system (see Figure 2; bottom right of figure).

A similar situation is noted at West Coatham (HER 4668) to the south of the Tees where the Church of St. Sepulchre (HER 0350) lay on the dunes approximately 1.5km away from the main focus of settlement.

During the medieval period Seaton Carew hosted a major salt industry, documented from the 1380s onwards (Page 1923, p. 368). The remains of this industry now litter Seaton Common, to the south of the study area, in the form of over fifteen low mounds. These mounds are the ash and silt piles left as a result of boiling reinforced brine in shallow pans to produce salt crystals. The landscape at Seaton Common also includes early land reclamation, drainage channels and field systems. It has been designated as a Historic Landscape in the adopted Hartlepool Local Plan. Aside from salt making it would appear that the principal labour of a resident of medieval Seaton would be agriculture, fishing and possibly seal hunting in this period.

Wholesale change was imposed on the landscape of Seaton Carew in the later 17th century with the enclosure of common fields which would have lain to the west of the settlement. The date of the enclosure award for Seaton Carew was 1689 with 1691 being the date of confirmation (Page 1907, 259).

Aerial photographs of Seaton Carew taken by the RAF in 1946 (Plate 1) give a good indication of this enclosure landscape before it was succeeded by suburbanisation. The field boundary pattern shown in 1946 is very similar to that shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of 1857 (Figure 2). It shows a pattern of enclosed fields of various sizes. All boundaries appear to be hedgerows. Approximately half way between the railway line and The Front the photographs show a very regular north-south aligned boundary. Other than this the pattern of the fields is irregular, with various differing shapes and sizes. A number of the fields demonstrate earthwork remains of ridge and furrow ploughing. This is particularly apparent in the field to the immediate north of Holy Trinity Church (approximate centre of Plate 1; Site 37). Here the ridges appear to be broad and with a slight s-curve, typical of medieval ploughing using animal traction. It is possible to see this plough curve fossilised in many of the east-west aligned field boundaries which undoubtedly followed earlier ridges.



Plate 1: Extract from aerial photograph of 1946 (RAF CPE/UK 1835; Frame 3004)

Pre-industrial expansion and development as a Spa Town (circa 1760-1830)

Seaton Carew became a popular spa-town in the later 18th century. It was described in 1812 by William Tate as '*a watering place of high estimation*' (Tate 1812, 34). Amongst the principal surviving buildings of this era is the Seaton Hotel on The Front (Site 20; Listed II; Plate 2), built circa 1792 by George Pearson of Durham. The Seaton Hall Hotel (Site 9; Listed II) was added on the west side of the green circa 1803.



Plate 2: The Seaton Hotel

Tate's account describes some of the hotel facilities in great detail but also mentions that the village contained '*between fifty and sixty inhabited houses*' (ibid, 37). It is likely that the majority of the residents were at least seasonally employed in service industries associated with the new role of the village.

Other employments not previously mentioned were the collection of 'sea-coal' from the beaches. There is some debate as to the origin of the coal which takes the form of fine particles. It may be waste from mines to the north which has been dumped at sea, cargoes from wrecked colliers or erosion from off-shore seams. Sea coal is still collected on a small scale today.

Domestic properties of this period are also present within the village and consist of terraced houses around The Green at no's 7 (Site 6), 8 (Site 7), 9 (Site 8), 11-13 (Site 10), 18 (Site 12) and 19 (Site 13). Further terraces of similar date are to be found at no's

5-8 South End (Sites 31-33) along with a house at 2 Green Terrace (Site 11). All of these buildings are Listed Grade II.

An unlisted former agricultural building survives at 7-9 Green Terrace (Site 54). This is stone built with a pantile roof. Although much altered it dates from at least the 18th century and could conceivably be much earlier.

The layout of the settlement is shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 2) with properties set out along three sides of The Green (Plate 3) with a single row running south along the seafront.



Plate 3 - The Green looking south

New public buildings of the period included a lifeboat house built in 1809 (Site 38; Anderson 2004, 79) at the south end of the village (now demolished).

A brewery is shown at Seaton (Site 17) on Ordnance Survey maps of 1857 (Figure 2). This probably dates from at least the earlier 19th century. It would have been a local industry serving the needs of the population at a time when water supplies were not always potable and beer provided a sterile and nutritious alternative (Rowe 2000, 35).

Maritime finds and shipwrecks (circa 1750-1900)

The broad beaches at Seaton Carew appear to have proved attractive to sea-farers from at least the Roman period onwards. However it was not until the end of the 18th century, with the Industrial Revolution that a new era of shipping took place. There was a dramatic increase in the demand for coal from the major coal fields of Northern England to markets in London and the continent beyond. Meeting this demand were large numbers of 'colliers', many of which foundered or were wrecked *en route*, particularly when running for the shelter of Tees Bay during ferocious winter storms. Over 50 vessels are known to have been lost at or near to Seaton Carew (Tees Archaeology HER). Twenty-nine of these were stranded on the same day, 11th October 1824, following a particularly violent storm (Green & Pritchard, 1999).



Plate 4: Site 27, remains of a collier brig, a Protected Wreck site

The remains of one of these vessels (Site 27; Plate 4) was discovered in 1996 following unusually low sands. This was a wooden, medium sized, coastal trading vessel (measuring 25.1m in length and 7.07m in breadth) of the late 18th or 19th century. The vessel had been salvaged after its loss with the majority of the upper timbers removed. Despite this the wreck is substantially intact and its importance was marked by its

designation as Protected Wreck Site in August 1996 by the Secretary of State. It is the only wreck with such status between The Wash and the Orkneys.

Stray finds of the period include two complete clay smoking pipes (Sites 24 & 28) of the 19th century found on the beach. These fragile items could not survive any length of time in the sea and it is possible that they were discovered shortly after eroding out from shipwrecks or from the dunes.

In March 1867 several gold and silver coins were recovered from Seaton beach by labourers on their way to work (Anderson 2004, 108). This led to a short-lived 'gold-rush'. Local legend recounts an earlier wreck (Site 16) of a Spanish Galleon, sunk in Seaton Bay, on 4th June 1669. The vessel was said to be carrying a large amount of gold and silver coinage (ibid.). An alternative story suggests that a former slaver was wrecked in 1829 (ibid.). The coins may have been hidden within the ship's timbers and overlooked by the new owners and subsequent salvagers. In either event there is no firm evidence to back up the story and none of the coinage has survived to make its way to the local museum.

Post-industrial expansion (circa 1830-1914)

In 1832 the Hartlepool Dock and Harbour Company were given Royal Assent to enable improvements to their dock facilities at Hartlepool with a new rail link from the north (Rowe 2000, 4).

These improvements at Hartlepool led to the Tees Navigation Company taking steps to attract more shipping to the Tees in direct rivalry. They set out two new lighthouses for this purpose. The Seaton Low Light (Site 2) was erected in 1835 along with its sister the Seaton High Light (which lay 1.5 km to the north of the study area; HER 1061). The Low Light was demolished in the early 20th century whilst the remains of the High Light were moved to Jackson's Landing in 1997 as a centrepiece for the new marina development.

The railway from Stockton arrived at Seaton Carew in 1839 and continued to the newly conceived West Hartlepool Docks to the north. The Station (Site 36; see also Figures 2-6) is still in use but lacks original features other than the station platforms. The adjacent Station Hotel was built in 1872 (Site 53; Anderson 2004, 69).

Despite the arrival of the railway Seaton Carew village avoided any large scale industrialisation within its core. Its residents undoubtedly found employment at the various docks and steelworks that developed in the neighbourhood. The closest industry was the extensive timber yards and railway sidings which developed to the immediate north (see Figure 4). These were victim of a ferocious fire which started on the 27th April 1949 (Ward 1999, 53) and raged for three days.

The development of the West Hartlepool Docks led to further prosperity for the area. Principal buildings of the period are the Staincliffe Hotel (Site 4) built as a house in 1869 for Thomas Walker, a prominent local industrialist. Walker added the adjacent terrace at no's 1-5 The Cliff in 1878 (Mennear 1985, 119; Site 3; Plate 5) for members of his family. These developments extended the settlement to the north of the green with other elegant terraces built to the south of the Staincliffe (see Figure 3).

Further gentrification took place along Station Lane (see Figure 3) with several large, later Victorian villas established at no's 34-52 (evens). These were all high status houses with large well stocked gardens.

Smaller terraces were also added to the settlement in the early 20th century with the grid of streets at Carlisle Street, Berwick Street and Allendale Street (see Figure 4). Different finishes to the buildings suggest that the first phase of plain fronted and bay windowed terraces were begun prior to World War I with an ensuing hiatus prior to the completion of the housing in the inter-war period with bow windowed properties.



Plate 5: 1-5 The Cliff built in 1878

Public buildings of this era include Holy Trinity Church (Site 19; Listed II) built in 1831 in the 13th century style. A Vicarage of 1837 previously stood alongside but this was demolished in the 1970s (Anderson 2004, 53-54).

Vanished churches of other denominations include a Quaker Chapel (Site 39) built in 1841 to the north of South Terrace and demolished in the 1960s (Anderson 2004, 54) and a Wesleyan Chapel (Site 40) of 1830, erected on The Front and now replaced by an amusement arcade (ibid, 55).

Commercial properties of the period include The Marine Hotel (Site 15; Listed II) built in 1900. Another building of note which lay just to the north of the study area were the Art Deco style saltwater swimming baths which opened in 1914. These were demolished in 1978 (Anderson 2004, 83).

In 1874 the Durham and Yorkshire Golf Club founded a 14 hole course (HER 5508) on the eastern parts of Seaton Common to the south of the study area. The course was later expanded to 18 holes and the club renamed Seaton Carew Golf Club in 1887.

Improvements were made to the infrastructure of the village in 1882 when a road was built linking Seaton Carew to West Hartlepool. Previously access to the north was via track (Anderson 2004, 27). The narrowness of this track can be appreciated on the first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1857 (Figure 2).

The road to the south of the green was widened in 1876 (see Figure 3) and a new sea wall erected (Anderson 2004, 135). Inspection of the first edition map of 1857 (see Figure 2) shows the 'pinch-point' to the south of The Green that must have been extremely precarious. The remains of the 1876 sea wall (Site 14) were noted in 1992 during pipe trenching. The construction was of large irregular blocks bedded in lime mortar with a later concrete coping and would have stood at least 3.5m high.

The wall was made redundant with new sea defences and the taking in of land on the seaward side of the settlement (see Figure 4) in the early 20th century. This led to the establishment of the first section of promenade between Station Lane and Church Street by 1905 (Ward 1999, 36).

World War I (1914-1919)

An aerodrome was established to the south of Seaton Carew in 1915 (Ward 1999, 39) on a site of approximately 72 acres which now lies beneath the Tofts Farm Industrial Estate. The aerodrome consisted of an aeroplane shed, two hangars, bomb stores and various ancillary buildings (Anderson 2004, 139).

On the 27th November 1916 Lieutenant Pyatt of No. 36 Squadron based at Seaton Carew aerodrome attacked a German zeppelin that had carried out a fatal bombing raid in West Hartlepool. The zeppelin came down in the sea off Hartlepool (Ward 1999, 39-40). The zeppelin pilots were buried in a corner of Holy Trinity churchyard before being exhumed and transferred to Cannock Chase war cemetery in 1962 (Anderson 2004, 53).

Seaton Carew aerodrome was used for pleasure flights in the early 1920s using converted military aircraft (Ward 1999, 41). It is presumed to have closed shortly after.

A seaplane slipway of the period survives to the east of Seaton Snook Wharf (HER 0392; NGR 5329 2672). This was a part of the Seaplane Station, covering approximately 7 acres with a seaplane shed and two hangars which were demolished shortly after the war (Anderson 2004, 139).

The road leading south from Seaton Carew was constructed in this period (compare Figures 3 & 4) using Prisoners of War for labour (Anderson 2004, 27). This replaced a cart track that diverged across the dunes.

The Inter-War Period (1920-1938)

This period see the extension of sea defences and the taking in of further land on the seaward side of the settlement (see Figure 5). This includes the lawns and promenade which extend from the north at a point roughly east of the Staincliffe Hotel and run southwards to Station Lane. Land to the south of Church Street, now occupied by the Bus Station (Site 22), was also reclaimed. These extensions were formally opened by Princess Mary in 1926 (Ward 1999, 42). The northern area originally accommodated the former North Shelter (Site 41), built to help create employment in the 1930s (Mennear 1985, 139), along with a bandstand (Site 42).

A key development of the period is the addition of the Bus Station (Site 22; Listed II) at the south end of the sea-front in 1938. This served the large volumes of visitors to Seaton Carew. It is built in Art Deco style and consists of a central clock tower with flanking arched shelters to either side. To the front of the station lies a lawned area with some geometric flower beds.

The beginnings of suburbanisation appear in this period. Inter-war developments include Glentower Grove and Stanmore Grove, to the west of the main settlement beside the train station (see Figure 5). These developments led to the first cul-de-sacs at Seaton Carew lined with bow windowed, semi-detached houses with hipped tiled roofs and well proportioned gardens to front and rear. There is also some infill of high status domestic properties between The Green and the Staincliffe Hotel (see Plate 6) and the addition of Bolton Grove to the west of The Green.

An interesting run of buildings was added along the north side of Queen Street circa 1923-1935. These are three similar blocks of terraces with forward facing gables above first floor windows. The row is interrupted by Vesper House (Site 43), built in 1923 by Lt. Col. William Thomlinson as an almshouse. This is a handsome single storey red brick building with commemorative shield above its principal entrance.

A school (Site 44) was added to the settlement in 1925 (Anderson 2004, 81) to meet the needs of its growing population. Holy Trinity Primary (formerly Seaton Carew Church of England School) lies to the west of the church of the same name (see Figure 5). The building's façade has a regular symmetry defined by various forward facing gables of differing sizes. The playing field of the school is bound by mature hedge lines which correspond to earlier agricultural boundaries, probably of the enclosure period (circa 1689).

The development of allotments was also a key feature of this period. The majority are now built over with later 20th century developments. A plot of pre-World War II allotments survive in use to the south of Elm Tree Caravan Park.

A war memorial (Site 45; Plate 7) was unveiled on The Green on the 12th February 1921 (www.ukniwm.org.uk; accessed 26/05/2009). This takes the form of a tapering shaft with cross head. It was added to following World War II.

The final noteworthy item of the period is a traditional K6 Telephone Kiosk (Site 5) which also stands on The Green (see Plate 8). The kiosk is a design of 1935 and painted in the typical pillar-box red. The kiosk is Listed grade II for its group value with other buildings around The Green.



Plate 6: 7-8 The Cliff – High status semi-detached housing of the 1920s with sea views



(left) Plate 7: Seaton Carew War Memorial



(right) Plate 8: K6 Telephone Kiosk

World War II (1939-1945)

Seaton Carew was heavily defended during World War II, particularly from the threat of an amphibious assault across the broad beach with easy access to the road network beyond. The area between Hartlepool Port and the North Gare was defined as the Left Zone in the 59 Division Left Sub-Sector Defence Plan (Wilkie 2006, 30).

The first defences of this zone were begun on 9th June 1940 with the first pillbox completed on the 22nd June (ibid, 39). There were twenty-nine documented pillboxes within this left zone that were completed by the end of July 1940. Five of these pillboxes fall within the study zone, their positions estimated from Cassini references from documentary sources (ibid, p. 40). One of these was disguised as fairground roundabout (Anderson 2004, 140).

Two of the pillboxes are listed on the HER (Sites 25 & 26). The pillboxes appear to have been cleared shortly after the end of hostilities, or even during, and it is difficult to distinguish them on the available aerial photographs of 1946 and 1948. An aerial photograph of 1946 (RAF CPE/UK 1835; Frame 3004; see Plate 1) indicates a small hexagonal structure to the north of the slipway on the north side of the Bus Station (Site 25). This had been removed by 1948 (RAF 541/23; Frame 3009). There is also a rectangular feature (Site 26) at the base of the slipway that lines up with Seaton Lane. It is presumed that this is a pillbox protecting an access point to the beach. There is no accurate location information for the remaining three pillboxes (Sites 46-48) within the study area.

The pillboxes would have been backed up by further beach defences in the form of obstacles including minefields, barbed wire, trenches and anti-tank obstacles in the form of regular lines of concrete cubes. A double row of anti-tank cubes (HER 1011) is still visible in part in the dunes between Seaton Carew and the North Gare. These are intermittently visible depending on dune movements. A coherent group (HER 1091) is consistently visible to the immediate north of the North Gare breakwater.

A military building (Site 30) is visible on the dunes to the south of Seaton Carew on aerial photographs of 1946. This is likely to be the Seaton Carew Royal Observer Corp post. This was partly subterranean and was manned by 10 men. It closed in 1968 (Anderson 2004, 141).

An emergency battery (Site 1) was constructed to the north of Seaton Carew between 6th April and 27th July 1940. The battery contained two 6-inch Mk VII guns on Mk III naval central pivot mounts. It remained in service until the 11th July 1944 and was cleared shortly afterwards (Foster 2004, 154-155). There is no trace of the battery on the ground today.

Searchlight batteries were constructed to the west of the settlement. One of these (Site 51) was located by a pond in a field opposite Glentower Grove (see Figure 5) and is now built over by Bransdale Grove (Anderson 2004, 141). A second searchlight battery (Site 52) was sited in the area of Swainby Road/Stokesley Road. This might equate with a small mound shown on the 1938-40 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 5) but absent from the earlier 1923 edition (Figure 4).

Later 20th century to present (1946-present)

A major regeneration of Seaton Carew was planned in 1948 by the Max Lock Group. This envisioned the '*complete reconstruction of the front from the Green to South End. Provision of adequate shops, places of amusement and the reconstruction of the two hotels (the Marine and the Seaton)*' (Max Lock Group 1948, 190). This grand scheme envisioned the demolition of 124 of the town's 553 dwellings recorded at that time (ibid. 81). The planned demolitions included a large proportion of the current Conservation Area and three buildings which are now Grade II Listed. An intended plan for new seafront facilities and 724 new houses was also put forward (see Figure 7).

The Max Lock Group plan was not carried out with the settlement retaining its rural feel until the large scale suburbanisation beginning in the 1960s. This era sees the replacement of the former enclosure field system with housing estates between The Front to the east and railway line to the west (see Figure 6). Between circa 1965 and 1980 a large private estate (approximately 34 hectares) was developed off Elizabeth Way. The estate has its own facilities in the form of a shopping parade, nursery and community centre. The estate was extended in the 1980s/early 1990s with the addition of the Wicketts/The Links to its south and Deacon Gardens to the north-east.

Municipal housing of the early part of this period (circa 1960-1980) can be found at Danby Grove and Farndale Road. The housing types include terraces, bungalows and two small apartment blocks.

Elm Tree Caravan Park was also opened in the 1960s. This is a static caravan park laid out around a loop with a central facilities block.

In the later part of this period (begun 1991; Ward 1999; 80) a large estate of 35 hectares was laid out at Warrior Park. The street pattern is of branching cul-de-sacs leading from a central spine road. The estate is characterised by plain detached houses with open plan front gardens.

As well as the larger planned estates there are also more piecemeal infill developments of this period (see Plate 9), particularly in its later half. A classic example is the development of a number of self build bungalows in the walled garden to the rear of the Staincliffe Hotel.

A park (Site 49) was added to Seaton Carew circa 1970-1980. This lies to the south of Station Lane and occupies an irregularly shaped piece of land to the rear of the seafront. It includes a bowling green, tennis courts and playing fields. Further sports facilities were opened to the south of Elizabeth Way at about the same time in the form of a cricket ground and rugby pitches.

The southern end of the seafront was heavily commercialised during the period with the opening of amusement arcades and other seaside attractions (see Plate 10). These include the Longscar Centre of 1967 (Anderson 2004, 85) on the east side of The Front which was extended and re-clad in the 1980s. This is an uninspiring red-brick building which detracts from the general historic character of the area.

A basket beacon (Site 50) was erected on the promenade, due east of No. 12 The Cliff in 1988 to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the defeat of the Spanish Armada (Ward 1999, 79). A sister beacon was erected on the Town Moor at Hartlepool.



Plate 9: A classic infill development of the later 20th century which fragments the character of the area



Plate 10: Later 20th century commercialisation along The Front

6. Conclusions

Historical Development

There is good evidence for human activity in and around Seaton Carew for most of the major eras from the Mesolithic onwards. The settlement itself retains much of its medieval layout despite being remodelled as a spa town in the later 18th century, industrialisation in the 19th century and suburbanisation in the 20th century. There is a high potential for the interpretation and enhancement of the historic character of the settlement.

Current heritage facilities

The following bullet points summarise the most readily accessible interpretation and facilities regarding the heritage of Seaton Carew: -

- Prehistoric and Roman finds from Seaton Carew are currently on display in the Museum of Hartlepool. These finds include the Neolithic human skeleton exposed following storms in 1972 and finds from the Roman midden at Carr House discovered in the 19th century.
- The Protected Wreck Site designated in 1996 has an interpretation panel sited at the sea wall at the car park at the southern end of the settlement. This was renewed in 2006 with assistance from English Heritage and explains the history and value of the wreck site. A bronze artwork has recently been designed based on the wreckage which will be erected at the new restaurant facilities at Seaton Reach to the immediate north east of the study area.
- Various interpretation panels line the promenade covering diverse topics including the history of the village and the history of the Seaton lifeboats.
- Interpretation has been carried out on a less formal basis in the form of guided walks led by members of Tees Archaeology. These generally take the form of a trail from the submerged forest to the north of the settlement to the North Gare breakwater to the south.
- The cultural heritage of the area is well documented. The prehistoric and Roman material was published as a monograph by Tees Archaeology in 2002 (Vaughan 2002). In 2004 a comprehensive history of the settlement was published by Wharnccliffe books in their popular 'Bygone' series (Anderson 2004).
- Holy Trinity Church is indicated by a 'brown' heritage road sign from The Front.
- A gateway feature has been erected at the south end of the settlement in the form of two pillars bearing the name of the settlement. The oval section pillars pay homage to the Art Deco style bus station.

Opportunities for development of heritage themes

As previously discussed Seaton Carew has a wealth of cultural assets that can be interpreted to various degrees. It has good access for the visitor and movement within the study area is fluid with a well developed promenade providing access for cyclists and walkers.

Opportunities for future enhancement of heritage resources fall into two categories; low key interpretation such as information panels, heritage trails etc and more ambitious schemes perhaps to reconstruct vanished buildings such as the former bandstand or to provide visitor facilities.

Low key interpretation might include: -

- **Themed trails.** These might explore subjects such as the historic buildings of Seaton Carew. This would improve awareness of features that lie away from the principal thoroughfares such as Holy Trinity Church (Site 19) and Vesper House (Site 43).
- **Web facilities.** An internet gateway might be developed for Seaton Carew with information on historic features with downloads such as trail leaflets and/or podcasts. Interactive facilities might be provided in the form of live web-cams.
- **Interpretation panels.** A review is needed of the existing provision of interpretation panels (see Plate 11) which are currently in a range of styles and conditions.
- **Links with other local heritage features.** Seaton can be used as a base to explore features to the south such as the medieval salt working complex at Seaton Common or the fragmentary World War II remains between Seaton and the North Gare. It also has strong links to the north including the Submerged Forest and Hartlepool itself. There are opportunities to create themed trails around these features. Such trails might take in other items of interest within the wider Tees Estuary such as the extensive World War II remains around Greatham Creek.



Plate 11: Interpretative panels of varying designs

More ambitious projects might involve: -

- **Provision of visitor facilities.** One of the weaknesses of Seaton Carew is that it does not have any facilities such as a visitor centre. Such a feature would assist in the interpretation of the cultural heritage of the settlement.
- **Provision of shelters along the promenade.** There are also few opportunities for shelter along the promenade in the case of inclement weather. Archive images of early 20th century shelters at Seaton Carew are available (see Mennear 1985, 131).
- **Provision of an observatory.** One of the key features of Seaton Carew is its location on the coast. It has excellent views to Hartlepool, the River Tees, Middlesbrough and East Cleveland. Currently there is no interpretation of these views. This could be achieved by construction of an observatory with visitor information. Such an observatory might be constructed with a heritage theme in mind such as lighthouse tower, Art Deco style or military building.
- **Provision of an events space.** Seaton Carew lacks any formal events space despite the broad greens running beside the promenade. A heritage themed event space might seek to reinstate the former bandstand (Site 42). There are numerous archival images of the bandstand (see for example Mennear 1985, 131 & 133)
- **Development of a Community Archaeology project.** A project of this sort would attempt to engage the local community in recording their heritage. This would be achieved by field survey and rapid building recording in the first instance to identify the key resources. This might be followed by more intensive projects looking at individual features in more detail such as recording the grave memorials at Holy Trinity and publishing the results on the internet as a family history resource. More intensive archaeological work might involve attempting to locate the vanished medieval chapel (Site 34), excavating the World War II gun battery (Site 1) or carrying out offshore archaeology using local diving groups.
- **Greater pedestrianisation along The Front.** Seaton Carew is a busy settlement particular in the summer season. The Front is usually lined with vehicles which detract from the frontages and clutter the street scene. Consideration might be given to promoting car parking facilities elsewhere and providing broader pavements, particularly along the southern part of The Front.
- **Interpretation through art.** As previously mentioned a shipwreck inspired bronze work has been designed for the Seaton Reach restaurant complex. A similar sculptural artwork has recently been installed at the sea front at Redcar to celebrate its military heritage and use as a film set in the 2007 movie 'Atonement'. These sorts of permanent or temporary art features might be a means of representing some of the less tangible heritage themes where little survives on the ground.

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