
THE PRIORY GATEHOUSE, HEXHAM
~ ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING
CABLE TRENCHING FROM
THE SEAL FIRST SCHOOL TO ST. WILFRID'S GATE ~

JULY-AUGUST 2018



Prepared for: <i>Northern Powergrid</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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THE PRIORY GATEHOUSE, HEXHAM NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING CABLE TRENCHING FROM THE SEAL FIRST SCHOOL TO ST. WILFRID'S GATE

Prepared by:

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Frontispiece: A sandstone rubble surface revealed in segment B2 outside The Seal First School in July 2018.

Grid Reference: NY 93296 64197 (West end), NY 93503 64203 (East end)
Client: Northern Powergrid
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CONTENTS

SUMMARY

1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF
2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND
3. WATCHING BRIEF
4. RESULTS
5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
6. REFERENCES

APPENDIX 1

The Priory Gatehouse, Hexham: Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief during Groundworks on a cable trench within and beyond the extent of the Scheduled Area, by The Archaeological Practice Ltd., April 2017.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Front Cover: *Over-night cable trenching through the Priory Gatehouse along Cowgarth in August 2018. View looking NNE.*

Frontispiece: *A sandstone rubble surface revealed in segment B2 outside the Seal First School in July 2018.*

Location Maps and Plans:

Illus. 01: *Regional view, showing the location of Hexham (circled in red) in the north-east of England.*

Illus. 02: *Town view, showing the location of St. Wilfred's Gateway (circled in red) immediately to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.*

Illus. 03: *Site view, showing the location of archaeological watching brief (highlighted in red) along trenching for a new electricity cable to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.*

Historic Maps & Documents:

Illus. 04: Extract from Wood's Map of Hexham c.1826, showing the Seal area to the west of the Halgut Burn. The approximate area of watching brief trenching is indicated by the red line.

Illus. 05: Extract from C. C. Hodges map of Hexham as it was in c.1860, showing the approximate area of watching brief (red line) and the projected course of the priory precinct wall after crossing the Halgut Burn.

Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1861, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.

Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1896, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.

Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1922, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.

Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1963 Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.

Illus. 10: Postcard of Hexham Abbey from the 1950s, showing the location of the Curate's House, an associated building, and the crenelated boundary wall on the east side of the Cowgarth road - all subsequently demolished.

Illus. 11: Extract of the Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Hexham c.1862, superimposed on the modern Ordnance Survey Map, showing the position of the historic 'Curates House', associated buildings and walls, demolished c.1950s. The watching brief trenching area is shown in red.

Archaeological Plans and Section Drawings:

Illus. 12: Segment B2, NNE facing section of wall feature [07].

Illus. 13: Segment B2, NNE facing section of sandstone rubble feature [08].

Illus. 14: Plan of possible wall core remains [09] in segment B6, Hexham Seal 2018.

Illus. 15: Plan of masonry feature [13] in C2, Hexham Seal 2018.

Photographic Record:

Photo 1. Area A, looking ESE.

Photo 2. Area A, SSW facing section.

Photo 3. Area B0, looking north.

Photo 4. Area B0, WNW facing section.

Photo 5. Area B1, looking WNW.

Photo 6. Area B1, NNE facing section.

Photo 7. Area B2, looking WNW.

Photo 8. Area B2, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [07].

- Photo 9. Area B2, vertical view looking WNW at detail of masonry [07].
- Photo 10. Area B2, oblique view looking WNW at detail of masonry [07].
- Photo 11. Area B2, oblique view looking ESE at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].
- Photo 12. Area B2, vertical view looking SSW at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].
- Photo 13. Area B2, broad view looking ESE at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].
- Photo 14. Area B2, broad view looking WNW at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].
- Photo 15. Area B3, view looking WNW.
- Photo 16. Area B3, SSW facing section.
- Photo 17. Area B4, view looking WNW.
- Photo 18. Area B4, SSW facing section.
- Photo 19. Area B5, view looking WNW.
- Photo 20. Area B5, NNE facing section.
- Photo 21. Area B6, view looking WNW.
- Photo 22. Area B6, NNE facing section.
- Photo 23. Area B6, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [09].
- Photo 24. Area B6, view looking WNW at detail of masonry [09].
- Photo 25. Area B7, view looking WNW.
- Photo 26. Area B7, NNE facing section.
- Photo 27. Area B8, view looking south-east.
- Photo 28. Area B8, SSW facing section.
- Photo 29. Area B9, view looking east.
- Photo 30. Area B9, north-east facing section.
- Photo 31. Area B12, view looking west.
- Photo 32. Area B12, north facing section.
- Photo 33. Area B13, view looking east.
- Photo 34. Area B13, south facing section.
- Photo 35. Area B14, view looking west.
- Photo 36. Area B14, north facing section.
- Photo 37. Area B15, view looking east.
- Photo 38. Area B15, south facing section.
- Photo 39. Area B16, view looking east.
- Photo 40. Area B16, north facing section.
- Photo 41. Area B17, north facing section.
- Photo 42. Area B18, view looking ENE at modern pipe.
- Photo 43. Area B18, view looking WSW.
- Photo 44. Area B18, view looking SSE at modern brickwork.
- Photo 45. Area B18, view looking south.
- Photo 46. Area B18, view looking south-east at modern concrete.
- Photo 47. Area C1, broad view looking NNE.
- Photo 48. Area C1, ESE facing section.
- Photo 49. Area C2, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [13].
- Photo 50. Area C2, view looking SSW at detail of masonry [13].
- Photo 51. Area C2 view looking SSW at detail of timber post and masonry [13].
- Photo 52. Area C2, view looking WNW at detail of masonry [13].
- Photo 53. Area C3, view looking NNE.
- Photo 54. Area C3, ESE facing section.
- Photo 55. Area C4, view looking SSW.
- Photo 56. Area C4, ESE facing section.
- Photo 57. Area D1, view looking NNW.
- Photo 58. Area D1, ENE facing section.
- Photo 59. Area D2, view looking SSW.
- Photo 60. Area D2, detailed view looking SSW.

SUMMARY

This document reports on archaeological monitoring conducted in July and August 2018, to mitigate the potential impact of groundworks carried out by Northern Powergrid along verge, footpath and carriageway from The Seal First School (NGR: NY 93296 64197) to St. Wilfrid's Gate (NY 93503 64203) in the historic town centre of Hexham, Northumberland.

The area around the Priory Gatehouse, at the north-eastern extremity of the site, falls within the scheduled area of the medieval Hexham Abbey. The Grade I listed Priory Gatehouse, a Scheduled Monument also known as Wilfrid's Gateway, is a mediaeval masonry arched gateway originally part of a gatehouse constructed c.1160.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted for the work by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport following the submission and agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring of the works.

The cable trench measured approximately 0.80 m deep x 0.45 m wide x 272 m long in total. Following excavation, a 125 mm diameter plastic duct was installed by hand and the trench was subsequently re-instated to Northern Powergrid and HAUC specification.

It was concluded that no features of archaeological significance were observed or impacted upon by cable trench excavations within the footprint of the Priory Gatehouse and within the Scheduled Area. However, four built features of archaeological significance were observed outside the Scheduled Area, as follows:

A narrow sandstone wall [07] observed in segment B2, was of unknown origin – having no diagnostic material in its composition and not appearing on historic maps of the area. However, a structural association is assumed with a sandstone-rubble surface [08] observed immediately to the east. Given its width and lack of dressed stone, feature [08] has been interpreted as a possible track-base of unknown origin.

Within segment B6, wall-core [09] was discovered fronting a broad ditch [10], observed on a NNE-SSW alignment. Historic maps show no buildings in this area, however, the Hexham Abbey architect and antiquarian C.C. Hodges speculated that the precinct wall of the medieval priory must have extended through this area towards the SSW; the implication being that the cable trenching must bisect its path somewhere to the west of segment B9. Although robbed of its outer skins and with no dateable material associated with it, the wall and ditch [09-10] nevertheless roughly adhere to the correct dimensions, materials, alignment and location – approximately 20 m west of Hodge's projected route - to suggest it may constitute a portion of the western extent of the medieval precinct wall of the priory.

Finally, in Area C2 the truncated remains of a broad sandstone wall [13] was discovered. This was identified as the footings of a crenelated boundary wall formerly located on the east side of, and parallel to, the Cowgarth road extending from the Priory Gatehouse to the former Curate's House. The wall is visible on historic maps and photographs and was demolished in the 1950s.

No further archaeological work is required in association with this scheme, but any future interventions in the vicinity should be considered on their own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention.

1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

1.1 Background

This document reports on a process of archaeological monitoring conducted in July and August 2018, to mitigate the potential impact of groundworks carried out by Northern Powergrid along verge, footpath and carriageway from The Seal First School (NGR: NY 93296 64197) to St. Wilfrid's Gate (NY 93503 64203) in the historic town centre of Hexham, in southern Northumberland (see *Illus. 01-03*).

The area around the Priory Gatehouse, at the north-eastern extremity of the site, falls within the scheduled area of the medieval Hexham Abbey; the route subsequently extends outside the Scheduled Area southwards along the Priory Car Park access road, known as Cowgate, before turning westwards along the north side of the Priory Grounds and The Seal (see *Illus. 03*).

The Grade I listed Priory Gatehouse, a Scheduled Monument also known as Wilfrid's Gateway, is a mediaeval masonry arched gateway originally part of a gatehouse constructed c.1160:

HEXHAM 239066, COWGARTH, THE PRIORY GATEHOUSE; HER No: 8844 NGR: 393498 564194; Listed Grade I.

COWGARTH 1. 5334 The Priory gatehouse (St Wilfrid's Gateway) (Formerly listed under Market Street) NY 9364 1/9 2.10.51. I GV 2. Circa 1160. Former 2 storey ashlar gatehouse now a 3 bay arched gateway. Upper storey and vaults destroyed in early C19 for picturesque effect. Wall ribs and corbels remain. Round arches spanning road, gateway to west. Piers to 1st bay from north. Scheduled as an AM. The Priory Gatehouse together with No 3 Church Row and Nos 2 to 6 (even) Market Street reverse front of Church Row form a group, of which Nos 2 and 8 to 16 (even) Market Street are of local interest.

Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for the work by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport following the submission and agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring of the works:

REMAINS OF MEDIEVAL PRIORY AND ANGLO-SAXON MONASTERY UNDER AND AROUND HEXHAM ABBEY AND ITS PRECINCTS, NORTHUMBERLAND; Scheduled Monument No: SM ND 51, HA 1006593; HE ref: S00157019

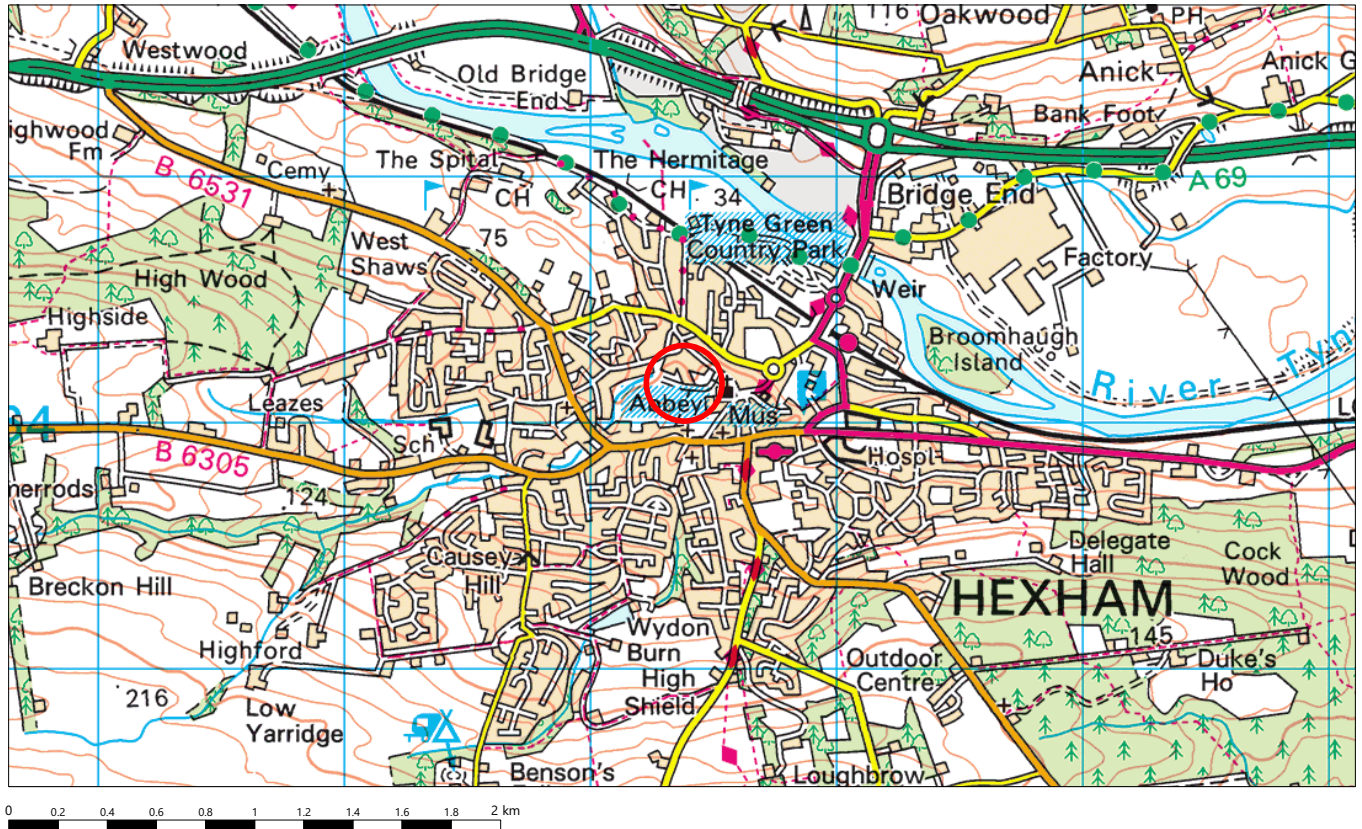
1.2 Nature of Developments

A trench was excavated to install a new electricity cable in a plastic duct in the roadway along the centre of St Wilfred's Gateway near the junction with Market Street to Cowgarth. The excavation was positioned to ensure the maximum distance from any known foundations of the historic gateway. The tarmac wearing course was cut using a road saw, broken with jack hammers and removed using a mini-excavator and hand tools under continuous archaeological supervision.

The cable trench was approximately 0.80 m deep x 0.45 m wide x 272 m long in total; following excavation, a 125 mm diameter plastic duct was installed by hand. The excavation was subsequently re-instated to Northern Powergrid and HAUC specification.



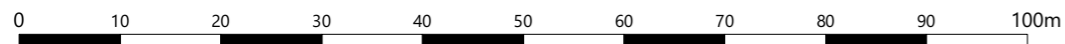
Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Hexham (circled in red) in the north-east of England.



Illus. 02: Town view, showing the location of St. Wilfred's Gateway (circled in red) immediately to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.



Scale 1:750 at A3



Illus. 03: Site view, showing the location of archaeological watching brief (highlighted in red) along trenching for a new electricity cable to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.

1.3 Summary Historic Background (see Section 2, below)

Historic maps of the area (*see Illus. 04-09*) show no additional structures of archaeological interest to the west of the Abbey access road from the south end of Cowgarth to The Seal. However, it has long been speculated that the precinct wall of the medieval priory must have continued from (its known location) where the south end of Tanner's Yard meets the west bank of the Halgut Burn (*see Hodges 1888, and Illus. 05*). It is assumed to have extended thereafter for a distance of at least 200 metres towards the SSW, the implication being that the proposed route of cable trenching must therefore bisect its path.

Buildings and boundary walls associated with the former 'Curate's House', demolished in the 1950s, are visible on historic maps and photographs of the site (*see Illus. 05-11*), located on the east side of the Abbey access road along Cowgarth and could potentially be impacted upon by the proposed service trenching.

1.4 Planning Background

Any archaeological features revealed within the trench were thought likely to be destroyed in order to reach the depth of excavation required for laying the new electricity cable. It was therefore considered appropriate for a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording to be undertaken during the groundworks.

Policy relating to the assessment and mitigation of impacts to the heritage resource within the planning system is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. The Framework identifies that the planning system should perform 'an environmental role', contributing to and protecting the built and historic environment and that the pursuit of 'sustainable development' includes seeking improvements to the built, natural and historic environment. The Framework further clarifies that, in circumstances where heritage assets will be damaged or lost as a result of development, Local Planning Authorities should require developers to record and advance the understanding of the asset to be lost in a manner appropriate to the significance of the asset. The evidence (and any archive) generated as part of the plan making process should be made publically accessible; copies of the evidence generated should be deposited with the relevant Historic Environment Record and archives with the relevant museum.

Having assessed the potential impact of the development on the archaeological resource, Northumberland Conservation advised Northumberland County Council (NCC) Development Management Team that a condition should be attached to the planning permission requiring a programme of archaeological mitigation consistent with the objectives of paragraphs 141; 176; 203-206 of the National Planning Policy Framework.

A written scheme of investigation was prepared for the developer and agreed with the assistant county archaeologist and the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport prior to the groundworks, and this indicates how it was proposed to investigate and record any remains of archaeological significance found to survive within the site.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

The following extracts have been summarised from the Hexham Conservation Area Character Appraisal, 2009, produced by Tynedale Council.

2.1 Anglo-Saxon Origins

The first recorded mention of Hexham is from 674, when the area of Hexhamshire was given to Wilfrid, the Bishop of York. He founded a church and monastery whose crypt, which probably housed a reliquary containing pieces of clothing or material relating to St Andrew, survives below the present buildings. The church, which became the diocesan cathedral, was built on a grand scale with rich carvings. It was claimed to be the finest church north of the Alps. It lost its bishop and cathedral status in the C9th and was plundered during the politically unstable period leading up to the Norman Conquest.

2.2 The Augustinian Priory

The ruined former Cathedral was re-founded in the continental mode by Thomas, the Archbishop of York, as an Augustinian priory in 1113, with the current nave and transepts dating from that period. The C12th priors encircled the priory complex by a substantial wall which was punctured by the main entrance, St Wilfrid's Gate, which dates from 1160. Part of the gateway survives on the south side of Market Street, the roof and upper floors being removed in the C19th in order to relieve the thrust on the ground floor walls and to create a 'Romantic' ruin. Parts of the perimeter wall survive along the western boundary of St Mary's Chare. The Priory became the centre of a large and wealthy farming and landholding enterprise.

Its prosperity and pivotal position in the Tyne valley between two principal routes into and out Scotland made it a convenient place of comfortable refuge for travellers including royal and papal messengers, ambassadors and English and Scottish kings.

2.3 Border Wars and Rebuilding

The church and its ancillary buildings, the present day Abbey, was substantially ruined by the Scots in 1296 when the nave was destroyed. It was substantially rebuilt in the C15th with only the lower south and west walls surviving. Generally, the present day building dates from two periods, c.1180 to 1250 and c.1850 to 1910. The east end facing onto Market Place which was designed by John Dobson and styled on Whitby Abbey dates from 1858 with a later addition made to the nave in 1907/09. The Choir School was added in the late C20th.

2.4 The Seal

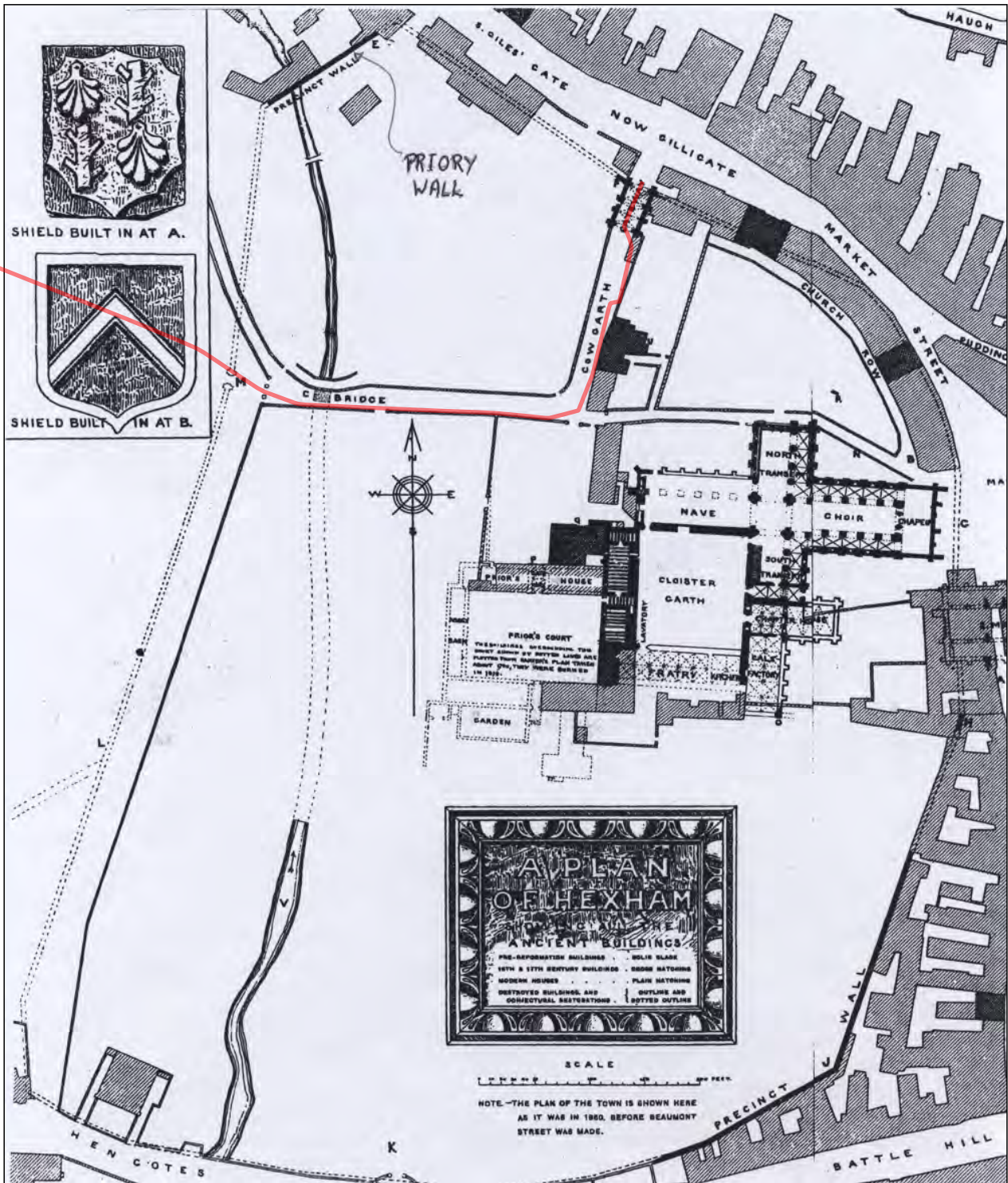
Much of the archaeological watching brief was conducted in an open area of the town centre known as The Seal, which flows over rising glacial moraine to the west of the Abbey. During the C13th the Seal was under cultivation as part of the farmland of the Abbey, although some public access seems to have been allowed. Extending over 1.5 hectares, it has remained open ever since. A medieval bridge still connects the Abbey with The Sele across the Halgut Burn,

and its continued presence as a large publicly accessible open space in the town centre is very important to the character of the conservation area.

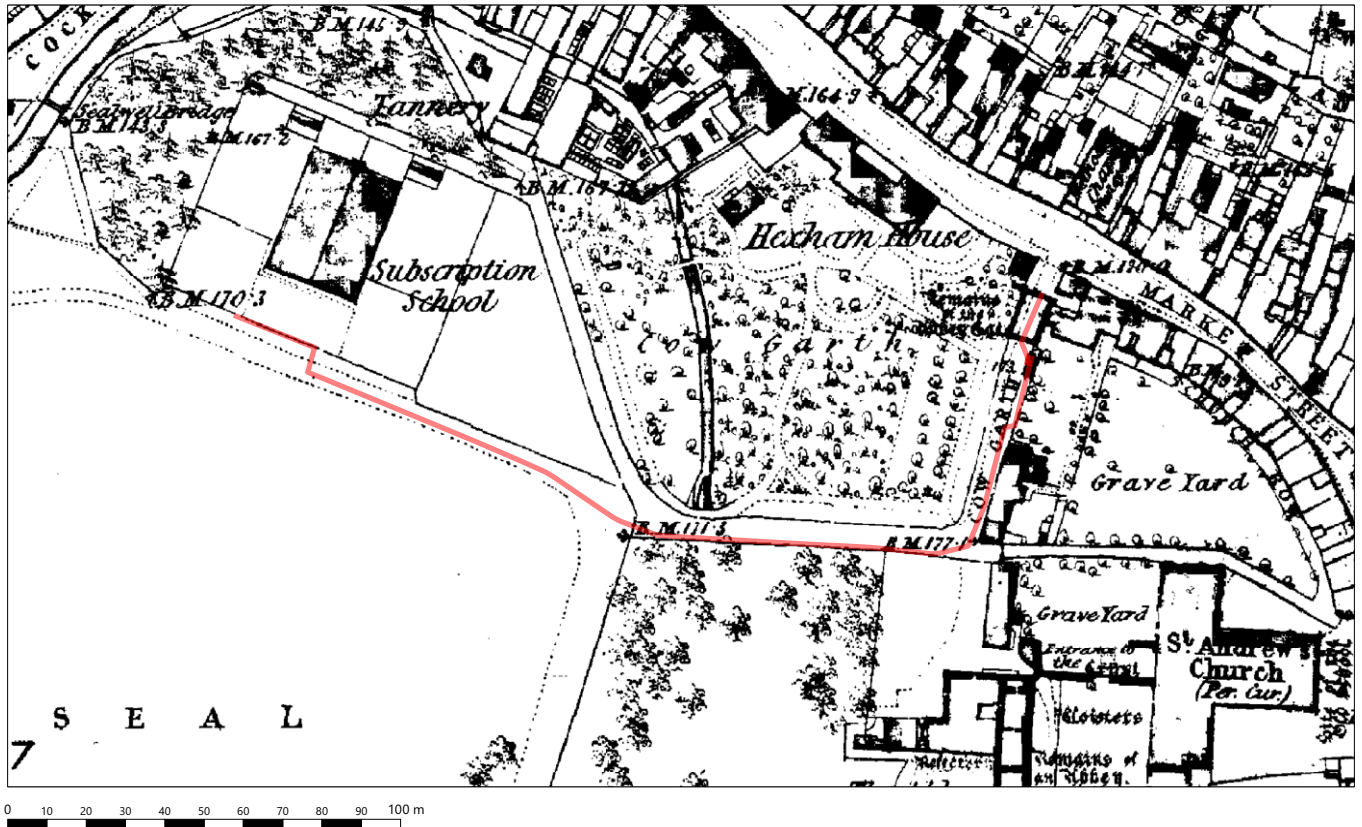
The top of the slope was probably occupied by a hall in Saxon times, Sele or Seal meaning hall in Old English. In the C18th the paths round the perimeter of open area, stated in 1753 to be *'the place of exercise and amusement for all'* were improved, and seats added; in 1856 public access was allowed all year round. In 1908 the land was given to the Council by Lord Allendale.



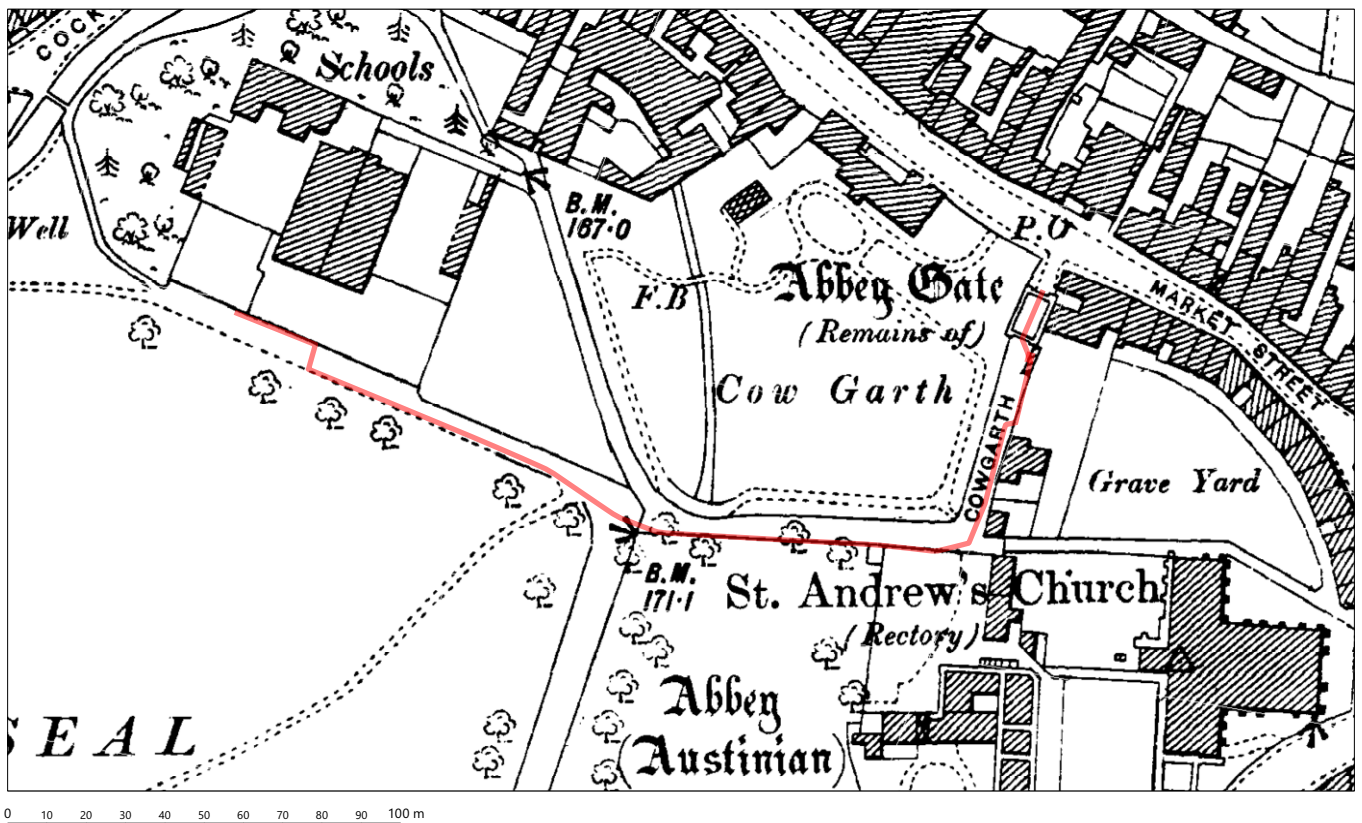
Illus. 04: Extract from Wood's Map of Hexham c.1826, showing the Seal area to the west of the Halgut Burn. The approximate area of watching brief trenching is indicated by the red line.



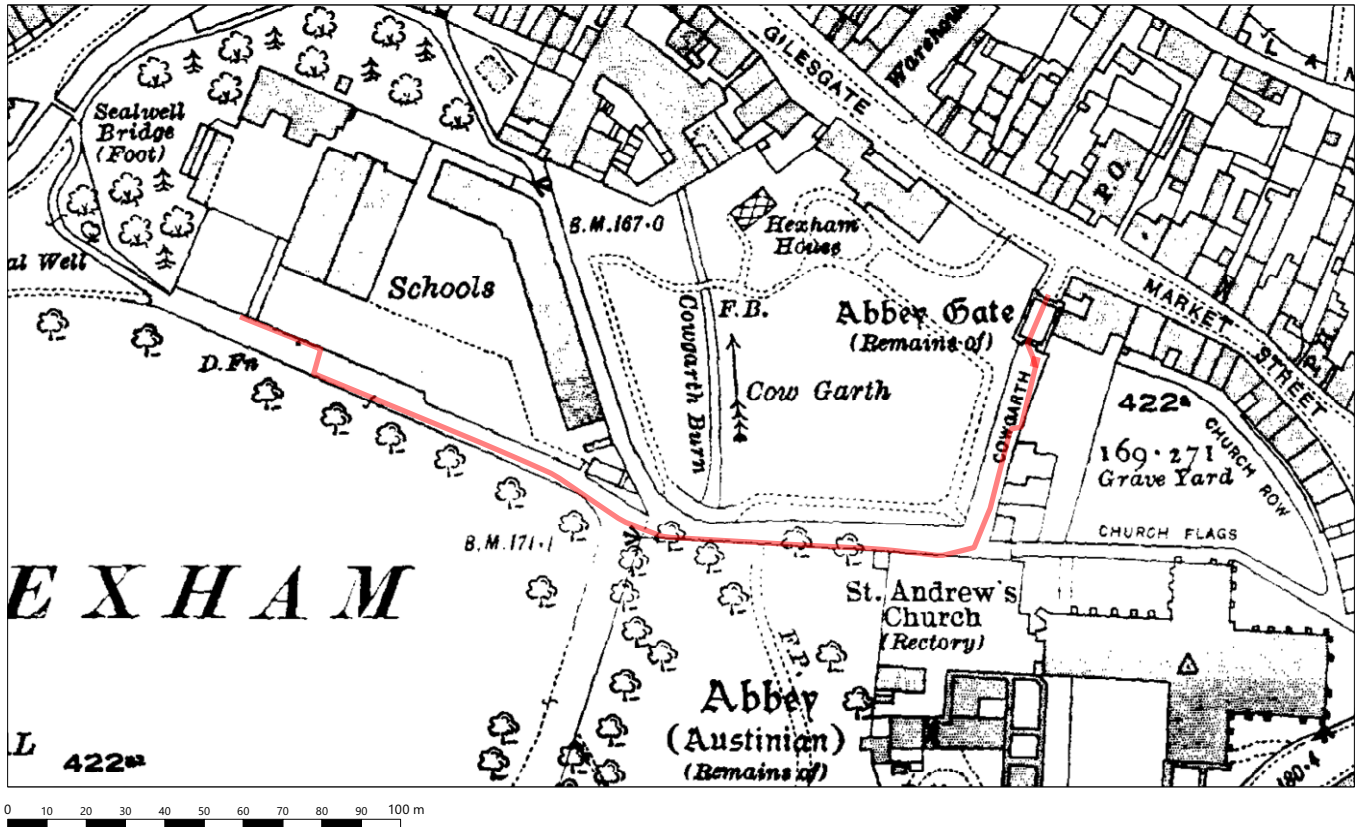
Illus. 05: Extract from C. C. Hodges map of Hexham as it was in c.1860, showing the approximate area of watching brief (red line) and the projected course of the priory precinct wall after crossing the Halgut Burn.



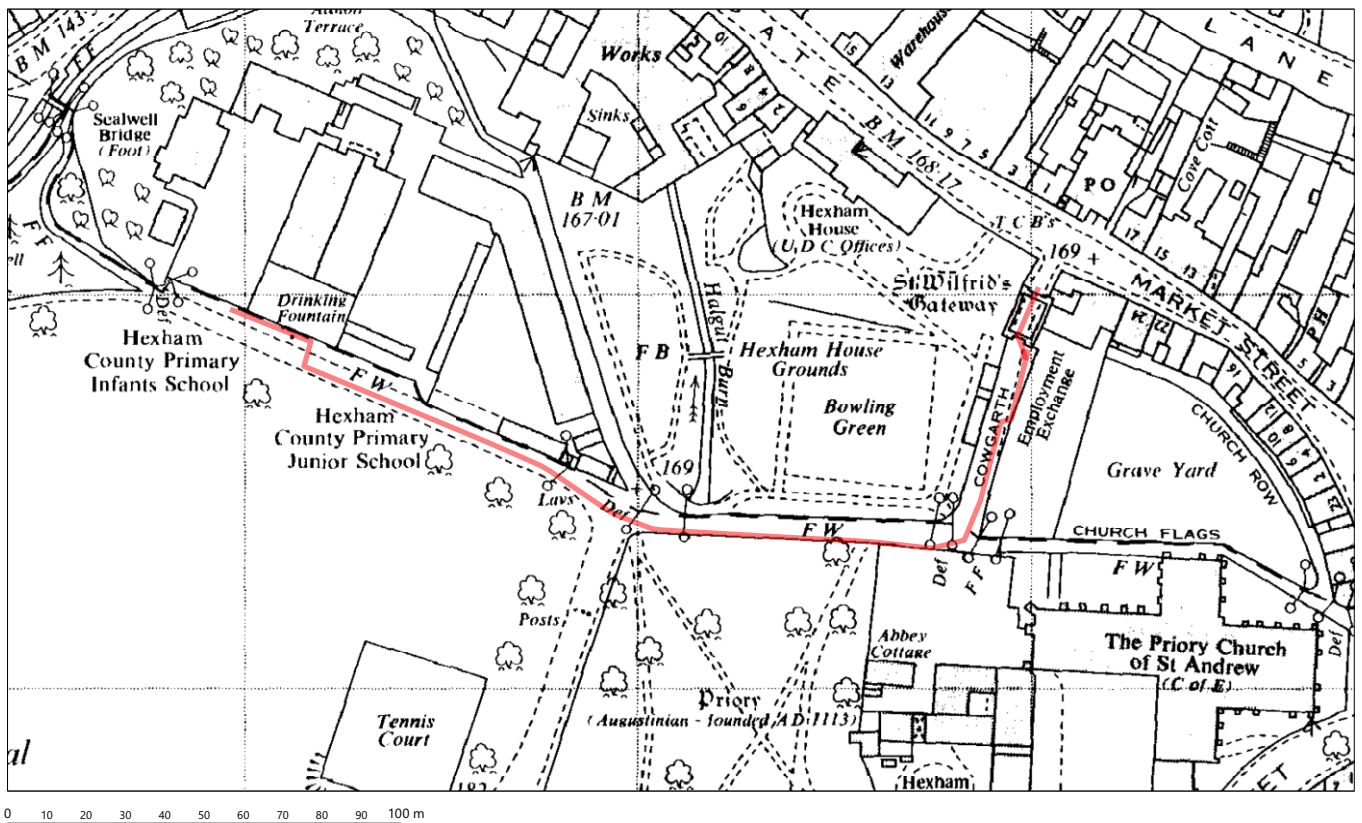
Illus. 06: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1861, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.



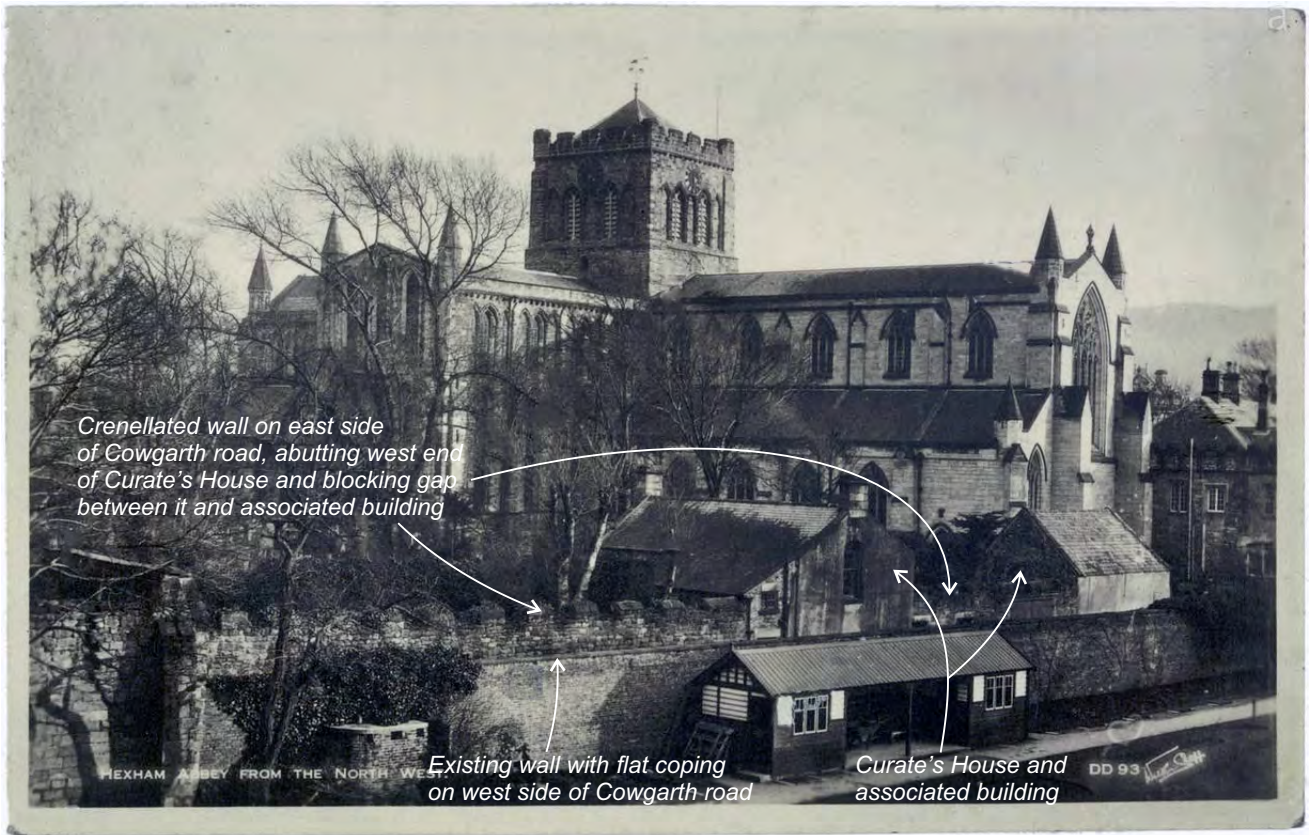
Illus. 07: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1896, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.



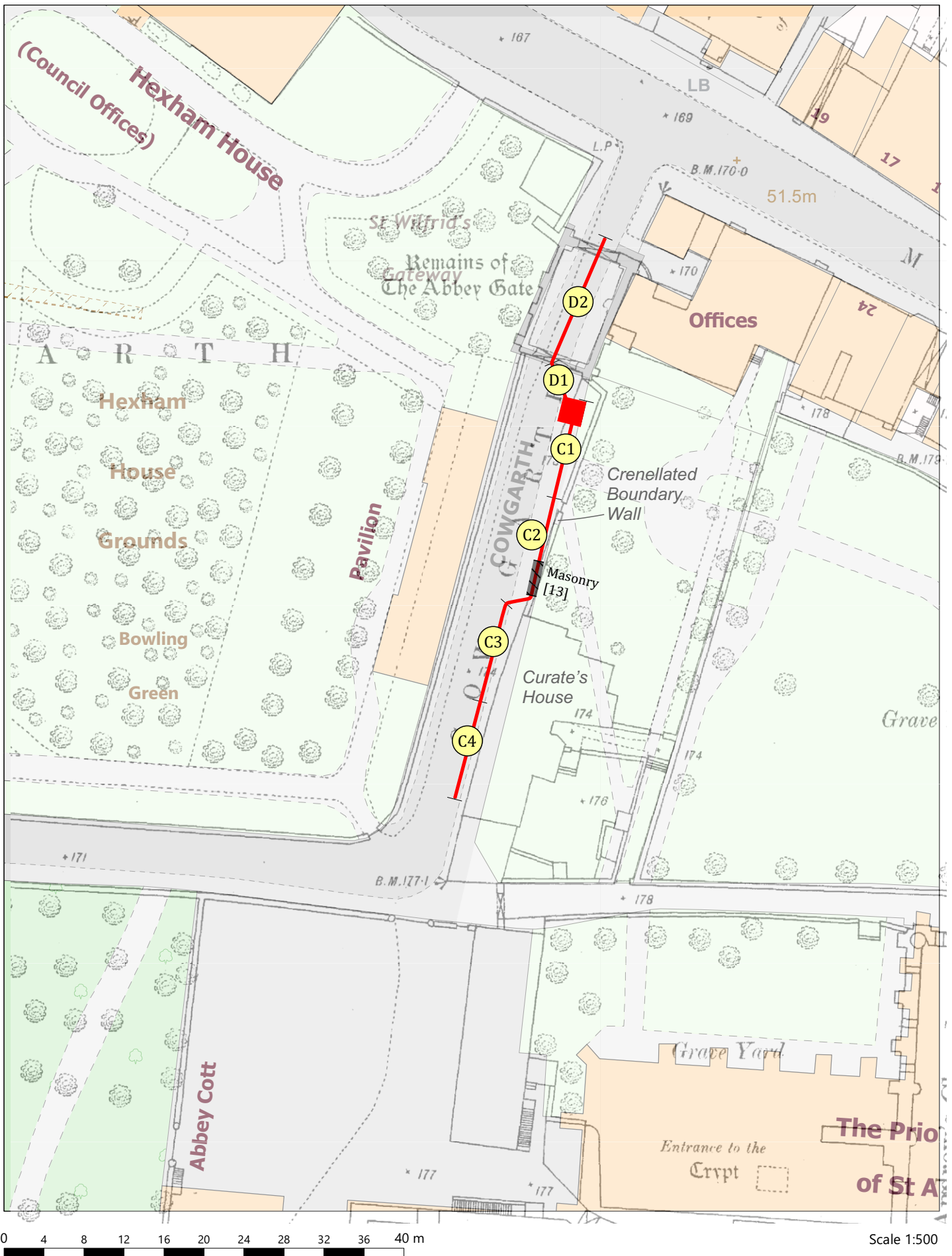
Illus. 08: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan c.1922, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.



Illus. 09: Extract from the c.1963 Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, showing the watching brief area (highlighted in red) located to the north-west of Hexham Abbey.



Illus. 10: Postcard of Hexham Abbey from the 1950s, showing the location of the Curate's House, an associated building, and the crenellated boundary wall on the east side of the Cowgarth road - all subsequently demolished.



Illus. 11: Extract of the Ordnance Survey Town Plan of Hexham c.1862, superimposed on the modern Ordnance Survey Map, showing the position of the historic 'Curates House', associated buildings and walls, demolished c.1950s. The watching brief trenching areas C and D are shown in red.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

The watching brief took place during groundworks comprising the excavation of a long narrow trench for the installation of a new electricity cable in a plastic duct in the roadway along the centre of St Wilfred's Gateway near the junction with Market Street, southwards to Cowgarth and turning westwards towards The Seal First School.

The excavation was positioned to ensure the maximum distance from any known foundations of the historic gateway. The tarmac wearing course was cut using a road saw, broken with jack hammers and removed using a mini-excavator and hand tools under continuous archaeological supervision. Spoil was kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trench at the conclusion of the work by the groundwork contractors.

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundworks on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means.

All excavations were closely monitored by a suitably trained and experienced archaeologist from The Archaeological Practice Ltd. with fieldwork and reporting conforming to a Written Scheme of Investigation document agreed in advance of works in line with NCC Specifications.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Location and Dimensions

The groundworks comprised the excavation of a long narrow trench for the installation of a new electricity cable in a plastic duct from The Seal First School (*NGR: NY 93296 64197*) to St. Wilfrid's Gate (*NGR: NY 93503 64203*) in the historic town centre of Hexham.

Due to the extensive area of watching brief, it was necessary to facilitate consistent recording techniques by dividing the trench into four sections, labelled A-D (see below), which corresponded to distinct geographical areas and keyed to Illus. 03. Additionally, each area was subdivided into approximately 10 metre long segments or whatever length was deemed suitable for incorporating the entirety of revealed features.

The trench was excavated broadly from west to east, with each section located as follows:

- A – The Seal verge. Excavated along the verge on the north side of the road outside The Seal First School (*NGR: NY 93296 64197*) for a distance of approximately 22 m upon a WNW-ESE alignment.
- B – The Seal roadway to Cowgarth. Excavated initially from the verge at the east end of Area A, bisecting the road for a distance of approximately 6.50 m upon a NNE-SSW alignment, turning in an ESE direction following the southern edge of the road for 100 m before turning eastwards at the Halgut Burn, again following the southern edge of the road for a distance of approximately 67 m then turning ENE and finally NNE for a distance of approximately 20 m.
- C – The Cowgarth road to the Priory Gatehouse. Excavated upon a SSW-NNE alignment, initially along the eastern side of the Cowgarth road (C4-C3) for a distance of approximately 20 m, before turning ENE for 2.50 m and subsequently turning NNE along the pavement for a distance of approximately 18 m. A pit measuring 2.50 m x 2.50 m was excavated at the north end of this area.
- D – The Priory Gatehouse. Excavated initially from the NW corner of the pit at the north end of Area C, for a distance of approximately 3 m in a NW direction before turning to the NNE and running along the centre of the road under the Priory Gatehouse for a distance of approximately 13 m and terminating at its north end (*NGR: NY 93503 64203*).

Overall, the dimensions of the cable trench were as follows: 0.80 m deep x 0.45 m wide x 272 m long; following excavation, a 125 mm diameter plastic duct was installed by hand.

4.2 Stratigraphy and Interpretation

4.2.1 Area A

No archaeological remains were observed within Area A. Below the topsoil was a dark loamy-silt [04] sitting upon subsoil of mid orange-brown rich loamy-silt [05], before reaching natural sandy gravel alluvium [06], observed at a depth of 0.53 m below ground level. See Photos 1-2 for details.

4.2.2 Area B

In general, the stratigraphy of Area B reflected that of Area A, but with the addition of road surface material [01-03] constituting the upper horizons. Three features of archaeological significance were observed within Area B, all cutting into the natural gravel [06].

First, in segment B2, a narrow sandstone wall was observed [07], comprising a single skin and single course of three fairly rough but symmetrical dressed blocks without bond, observed to bisect the trench on a NNE-SSW alignment (*see Illus. 12, Photos 8-10*). This wall is of unknown origin, but may be associated with a sandstone rubble surface [08] observed 0.90 m to the east and measuring 1.60 m across (*see Illus. 13, Photos 11-14*). Although there was no obvious bonding material present, the rubble surface was very compact and homogenous. Given its extensive width and lack of dressed stone, the feature is unlikely to be a wall foundation and has been interpreted as a possible track-base of unknown origin. The third feature of archaeological significance was observed within segment B6 and comprised of wall-core material [09] measuring 0.88 m in width and fronting a ditch [10] which measured over 2 m in width, observed on a NNE-SSW alignment (*see Illus. 14, Photos 23-24*). Assuming the dressed frontage of the wall has been robbed-out, its overall width would have measured well over a metre.

Historic maps of the area (*see Illus. 04-09*) show no buildings of archaeological interest to the west of the Abbey access road from the south end of Cowgarth to The Seal. However, it has long been speculated that the precinct wall of the medieval priory must have continued from (its known location) where the south end of Tanner's Yard meets the west bank of the Halgut Burn (*see Hodges 1888, and Illus. 05 for projected line*). It is assumed to have extended thereafter for a distance of at least 200 metres towards the SSW, the implication being that the proposed route of cable trenching must therefore bisect its path somewhere to the west of segment B9. Although robbed of its outer skins and with no dateable material associated with wall and ditch [09-10], nevertheless its dimensions, materials, alignment and location – approximately 20 m west of Hodge's projected (theoretical) route, indicate the possibility that it constitutes a portion of the western extent of the medieval precinct wall of the priory.

4.2.3 Area C

This area, located along the eastern edge of the Cowgarth road, contained large deposits of concrete and made ground of demolition material and mixed backfill from a C20th service pipe trench [11-12]. One feature of archaeological significance was discovered within Area C. Truncated remains of a sandstone wall [13] was observed for a distance of 3.60 m within segment C2 (*see Illus. 15, Photos 49-52*). Although truncated by modern services and overlain by modern concrete at its central-north end, this wall has been identified as the probable footing of the crenelated boundary wall formerly located on the east side of and parallel to the Cowgarth road extending from the south-east corner of the Priory Gatehouse to the north-west corner of the former Curate's House. The wall was aligned NNE-SSW and is visible on historic maps (*see Illus. 5-8, 11*) and photographs (*see Illus. 10*) in this exact location. The wall was positioned on a slightly more north-easterly alignment than the current cable trench, which explains its disappearance after 3.60 m northwards. In the 1950s, the crenelated boundary wall – along with the Curate's House and associated building was demolished.

4.2.4 Area D

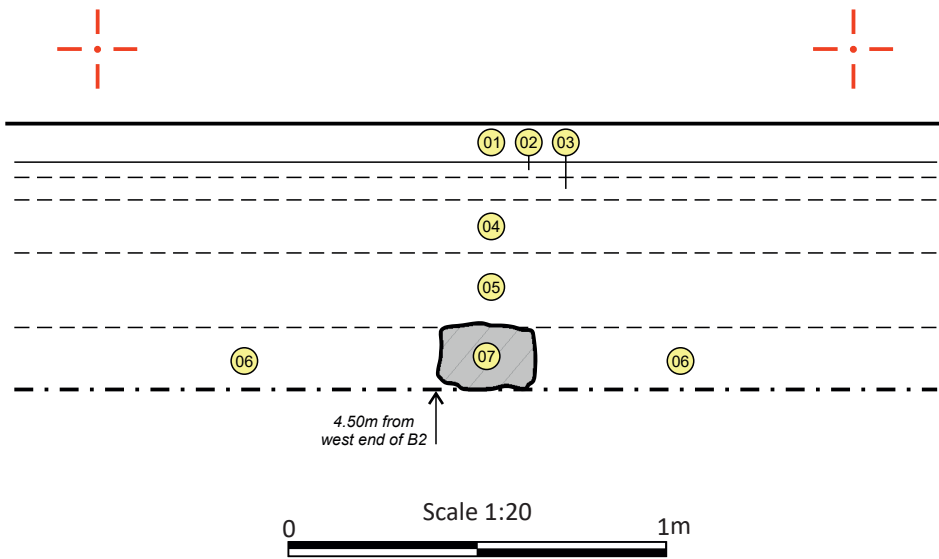
No archaeological remains were observed within Area D. The area ran through the centre of the road under the Priory Gatehouse and was organised as an overnight excavation necessitating road closures (*see Photos 57-60*). The stratigraphy was composed entirely of road

surface material and modern make-up, with apparent modern voids below the road surface apparently caused by settling of deposits infilling previous service works. Safety concerns raised upon encountering these previously-unknown deposits caused abandonment of further groundworks operations.

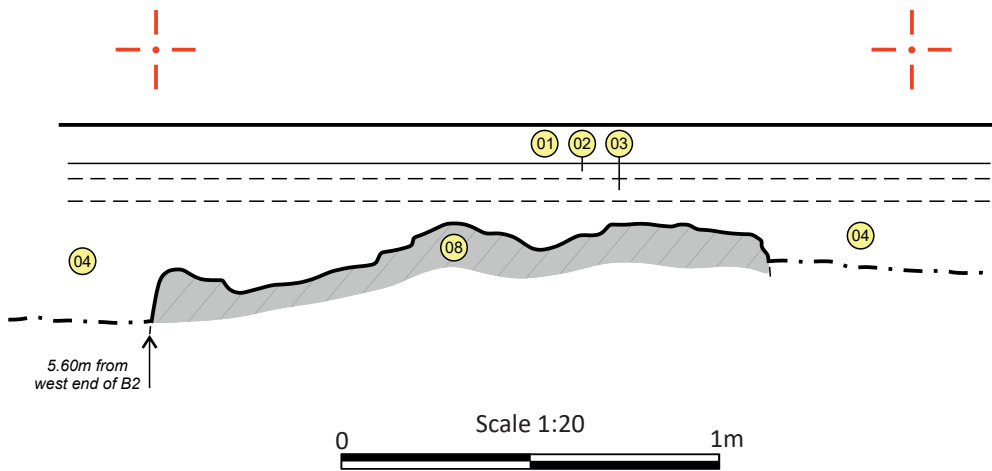
4.3 Context List

- [01] Tarmac surface of modern road, running from The Seal First School, past Cowgarth and terminating at Market Street. Observed to a depth of 0.10 m below ground level.
- [02] Dolomite sub-base associated with tarmac road surface [01]. Observed to a depth of 0.10 m – 0.19 m below ground level.
- [03] Firm mid-orange clay and gravels. Observed to a depth of 0.14 m – 0.19 m below ground level.
- [04] Mid-dark fairly firm loamy-silt. Observed to a depth of 0.19 m – 0.34 m below ground level.
- [05] Subsoil, comprising firm mid orange-brown, rich loamy-silt, fine with very rare pebble inclusions. Observed to a depth of 0.34 m – 0.53 m below ground level.
- [06] Natural sandy gravel alluvium. Observed at depths from 0.53 m onwards below the ground level.
- [07] Narrow sandstone wall observed in segment B2. Comprises a single skin and single course sandstone wall of three roughly hewn but symmetrical dressed blocks without bond, observed to bisect the trench on a NNE-SSW alignment. Cuts into natural [06]. Dimensions: 0.23 m (width) x 0.50 m (length = max width of trench) x 0.18 m (depth). Observed at a depth of 0.53 m below ground level and located 4.50 m from the west end of segment B2. Central block measured 0.30 m in length.
- [08] Sandstone rubble surface or wall-core material observed at the east end of segment B2, approximately 0.90 m east from narrow sandstone wall [07]. Not particularly level due to possible robbing. Comprises of sandstone rubble with some quarried or split irregular sandstone pieces at its south end. No obvious bonding material present but very compact and homogenous. No obvious edge or construction cut present. Given its extensive width and lack of dressed stone, the feature is unlikely to be a wall foundation and has been interpreted as a possible track-base of unknown origin or indeed alignment.
Dimensions: 1.60 m (width) x 0.50 m (length = max width of trench). Observed at a depth of 0.25 m – 0.44 m below ground level and located a distance of 5.60 m from the west end of segment B2.
- [09] Small amount of masonry rubble observed within segment B6, over the western edge of a NNE-SSW aligned linear feature [10] interpreted as a possible ditch. Could this be remains of a wall once fronting the ditch? Located 6.50 m from the west edge of segment B6.
Dimensions: 0.88 m (width) x 0.45 m (length = max width of trench).
- [10] Possible ditch or similar linear feature associated with masonry [09] observed within segment B6. Aligned NNE-SSW. Interpreted as a possible ditch with wall fronting on western edge. Dimensions: 2.12 m (width) x 0.45 m (length = max width of trench).
- [11] Mixed backfill from existing service pipe trench and demolition material, observed throughout segments C1-C2.
- [12] Large deposits of concrete and made ground, observed throughout C3-C4.
- [13] Truncated remains of sandstone wall, comprising core material and ashlar face at north end. Observed for a distance of 3.60 m within segment C2 (see Illus. 03 for location). Truncated by modern services and overlain by modern concrete at central-north end. Timber post visible abutting north face. Interpreted as the probable footing of a crenelated boundary wall formerly located on the east side of and parallel to the

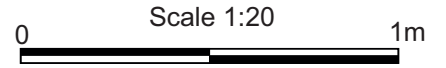
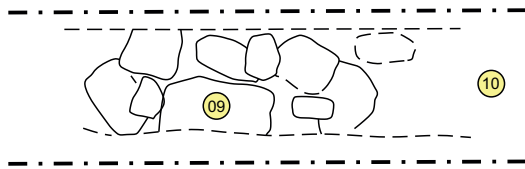
Cowgarth road extending to the north-west corner of the former Curate's House. The wall was aligned NNE-SSW and is visible on historic maps (see Illus. 5-8, 11) and photographs (see Illus. 10) in this exact location, aligned slightly more to the north-east than the current cable trench. The ashlar face revealed on the north side of the feature, cannot be explained through historic map or photographic evidence. Additionally, the wall suffers from severe truncation by modern services at its north end, making the feature incoherent and impossible to interpret with confidence.



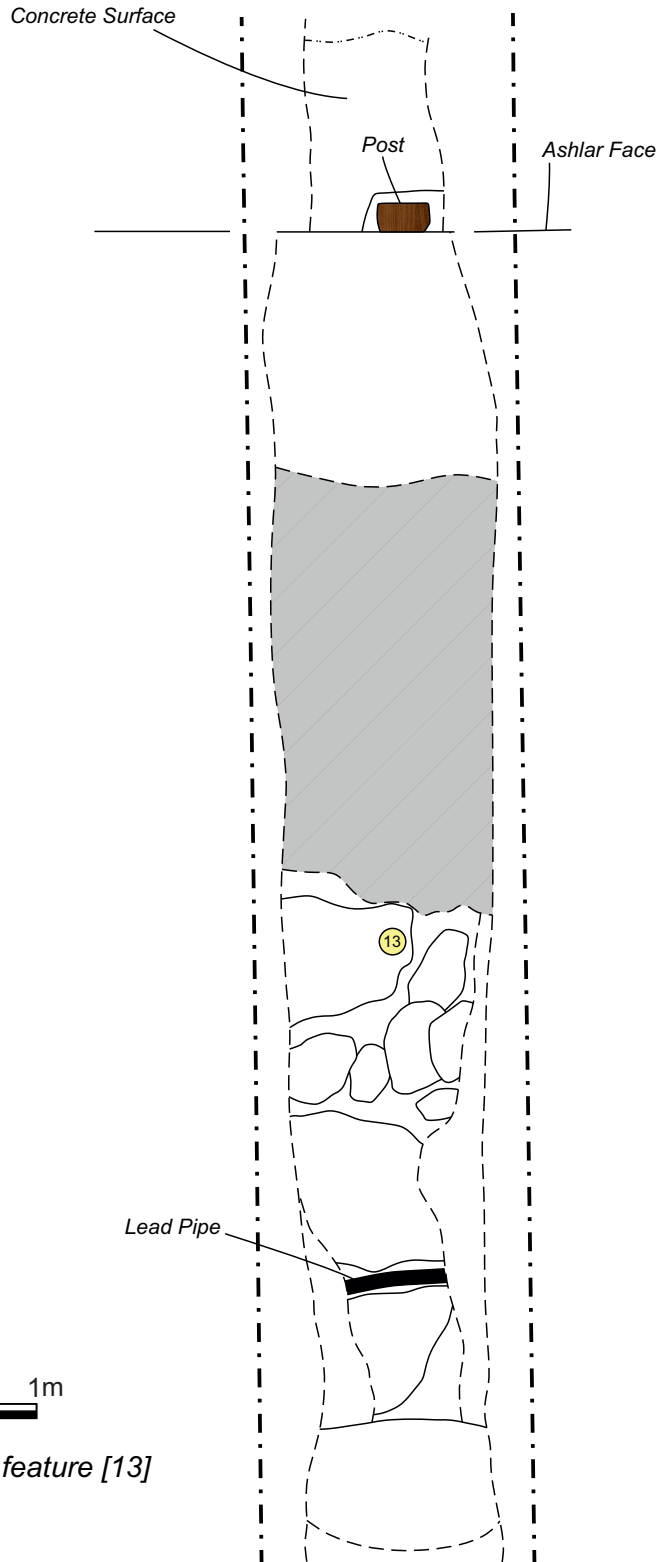
Illus. 12: Segment B2, NNE facing section of wall feature [07].



Illus. 13: Segment B2, NNE facing section of sandstone rubble feature [08].



Illus. 14: Plan of possible wall core remains [09] in segment B6, Hexham Seal 2018.



Illus. 15: Plan of masonry feature [13] in C2, Hexham Seal 2018.

5. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

No features of archaeological significance were observed or impacted upon by cable trench excavations running through the road within the footprint of the Priory Gatehouse and within the Scheduled Area. However, four features of archaeological significance were observed outside the Scheduled Area within the cable trench and recorded during archaeological monitoring.

A narrow sandstone wall [07] observed in segment B2, is of unknown origin – having no diagnostic material in its composition or by association and not appearing on any historic maps of the area. By virtue of its proximity to a sandstone-rubble surface [08] observed 0.90 m to the east, however, a structural association between them is considered likely. Given its extensive width and lack of dressed stone, feature [08] is unlikely to be a wall foundation and has been interpreted as a possible track-base.

Within segment B6 an area of wall-core [09] was discovered fronting a broad ditch [10], observed on a NNE-SSW alignment. Assuming the dressed frontage of the wall had been robbed-out, its overall width would have measured well over a metre. It is suggested that, although robbed of its outer skins and with no dateable material associated with it, the wall and ditch [09-10] may constitute a portion of the western extent of the medieval precinct wall of the priory.

The final feature of archaeological significance was discovered within Area C2, comprising the truncated remains of a broad sandstone wall [13]. This has been identified as the probable footing of the crenelated boundary wall formerly located on the east side of and parallel to the Cowgarth road extending from the south-east corner of the Priory Gatehouse to the north-west corner of the former Curate's House.

No further archaeological work is required during groundworks associated with electrical cable trenching at the Priory Gatehouse site. However, given the high potential for significant archaeological deposits to exist in the wider area, especially relating to Hexham Abbey and its precinct walls, it is recommended that any future interventions in the vicinity should be considered on their own merits with respect to the need for archaeological intervention.

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Photo 1. Area A, looking ESE.

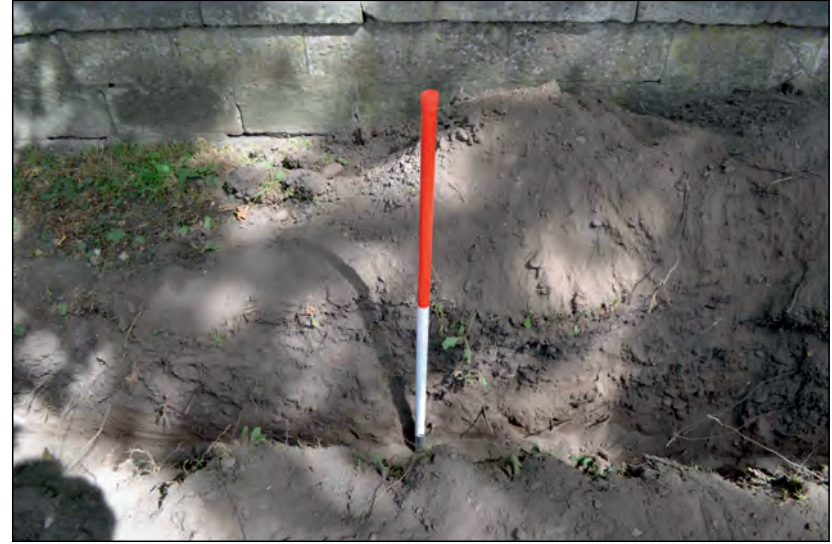


Photo 2. Area A, SSW facing section.



Photo 3. Area B0, looking north.



Photo 4. Area B0, WNW facing section.



Photo 5. Area B1, looking WNW.



Photo 6. Area B1, NNE facing section.



Photo 7. Area B2, looking WNW.



Photo 8. Area B2, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [07].



Photo 9. Area B2, vertical view looking WNW at detail of masonry [07].



Photo 10. Area B2, oblique view looking WNW at detail of masonry [07].



Photo 11. Area B2, oblique view looking ESE at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].



Photo 12. Area B2, vertical view looking SSW at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].

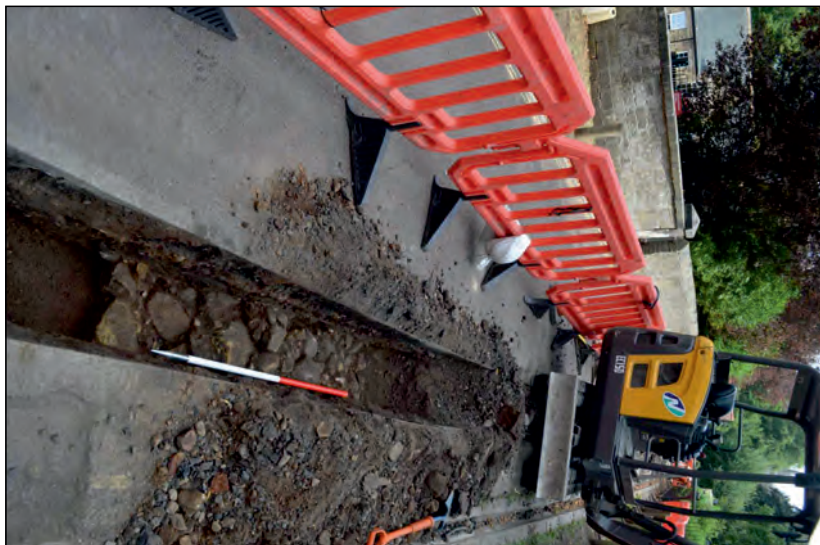


Photo 13. Area B2, broad view looking ESE at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].



Photo 14. Area B2, broad view looking WNW at detail of sandstone rubble surface [08].



Photo 15. Area B3, view looking WNW.



Photo 16. Area B3, SSW facing section.



Photo 17. Area B4, view looking WNW.



Photo 18. Area B4, SSW facing section.



Photo 19. Area B5, view looking WNW.



Photo 20. Area B5, NNE facing section.



Photo 21. Area B6, view looking WNW.



Photo 22. Area B6, NNE facing section.



Photo 23. Area B6, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [09].



Photo 24. Area B6, view looking WNW at detail of masonry [09].



Photo 25. Area B7, view looking WNW.

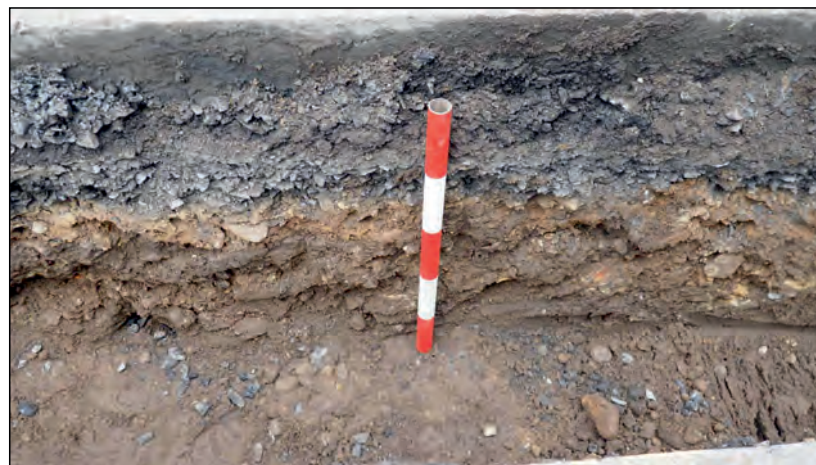


Photo 26. Area B7, NNE facing section.



Photo 27. Area B8, view looking south-east.



Photo 28. Area B8, SSW facing section.



Photo 29. Area B9, view looking east.



Photo 30. Area B9, north-east facing section.



Photo 31. Area B12, view looking west.



Photo 32. Area B12, north facing section.



Photo 33. Area B13, view looking east.



Photo 34. Area B13, south facing section.



Photo 35. Area B14, view looking west.



Photo 36. Area B14, north facing section.



Photo 37. Area B15, view looking east.



Photo 38. Area B15, south facing section.



Photo 39. Area B16, view looking east.



Photo 40. Area B16, north facing section.



Photo 41. Area B17, north facing section.



Photo 42. Area B18, view looking ENE at modern pipe.



Photo 43. Area B18, view looking WSW.



Photo 44. Area B18, view looking SSE at modern brickwork.



Photo 45. Area B18, view looking south.

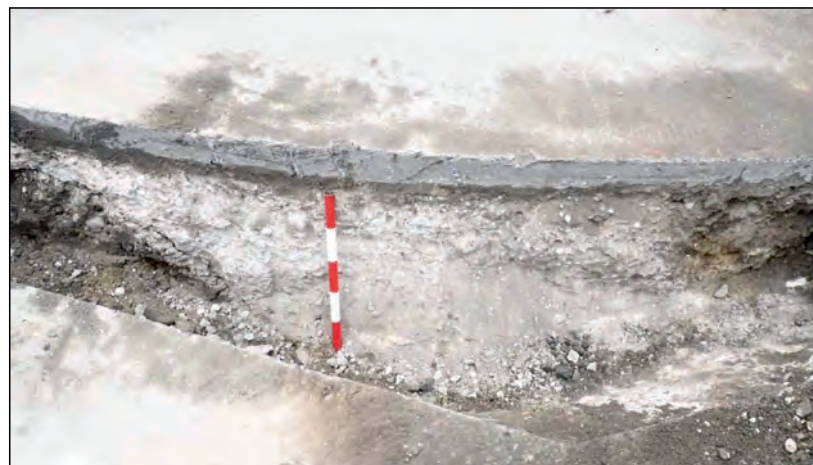


Photo 46. Area B18, view looking south-east at modern concrete.



Photo 47. Area C1, broad view looking NNE.



Photo 48. Area C1, ESE facing section.



Photo 49. Area C2, view looking NNE at detail of masonry [13].



Photo 50. Area C2, view looking SSW at detail of masonry [13].



Photo 51. Area C2 view looking SSW at detail of timber post and masonry [13].



Photo 52. Area C2, view looking WNW at detail of masonry [13].



Photo 53. Area C3, view looking NNE.



Photo 54. Area C3, ESE facing section.



Photo 55. Area C4, view looking SSW.



Photo 56. Area C4, ESE facing section.



Photo 57. Area D1, view looking NNW.



Photo 58. Area D1, ENE facing section.



Photo 59. Area D2, view looking SSW.



Photo 60. Area D2, detailed view looking SSW.

APPENDIX 1

The Priory Gatehouse, Hexham. Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief during Groundworks on a cable trench within and beyond the extent of the Scheduled Area.

By The Archaeological Practice Ltd. April 2017.

THE PRIORY GATEHOUSE HEXHAM

Written Scheme of Investigation for an Archaeological Watching Brief during
Groundworks on a cable trench within and beyond the extent of the
Scheduled Area

Prepared by

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.

April 2017

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION
2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY
3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION
4. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

Illus. 01: Position of the proposed works.

Illus. 02: View of the site showing position of the proposed works.

*Illus. 03: Plan showing the complete length of proposed cable route *green line) including its extent beyond the Scheduled Area of the gateway shown in Illus. 01.*

.1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The following represents a project design for an archaeological watching brief to mitigate the impact of groundworks by Northern Powergrid on the footpath at St Wilfrid's Gateway, Hexham (see *Illus 01 & 02*, below), which falls within the scheduled area of the medieval Hexham Abbey, and extending outside the Scheduled Area east along the south side of Market Street, southwards along the Priory Car Park access road and west along the north side of Priory Grounds and The Seal (see *Illus 03*, below).

The Grade I listed Priory Gatehouse, a Scheduled Monument also known as Wilfrid's Gateway, is a mediaeval masonry arched gateway originally part of a gatehouse constructed c1160:

**HEXHAM 239066, COWGARTH, THE PRIORY GATEHOUSE; HER No: 8844
NGR: 393498 564194; Listed Grade I.**

COWGARTH 1. 5334 The Priory gatehouse (St Wilfrid's Gateway) (Formerly listed under Market Street) NY 9364 1/9 2.10.51. I GV 2. Circa 1160. Former 2 storey ashlar gatehouse now a 3 bay arched gateway. Upper storey and vaults destroyed in early C19 for picturesque effect. Wall ribs and corbels remain. Round arches spanning road, gateway to west. Piers to 1st bay from north. Scheduled as an AM. The Priory Gatehouse together with No 3 Church Row and Nos 2 to 6 (even) Market Street reverse front of Church Row form a group, of which Nos 2 and 8 to 16 (even) Market Street are of local interest.

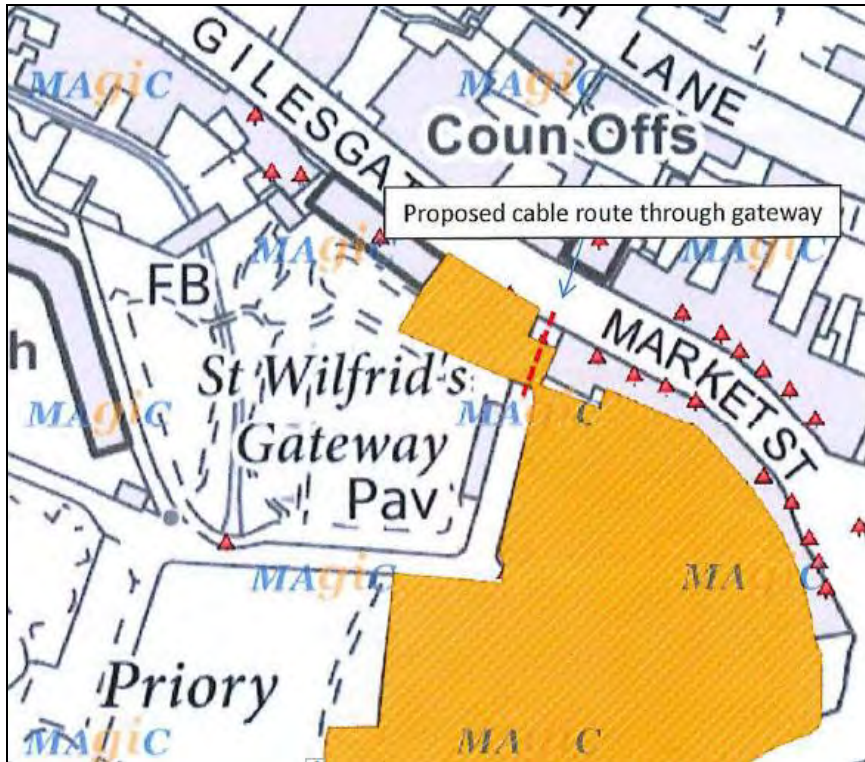
Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for the work has been granted by Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport subject to submission and agreement of a Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological monitoring of the works:

**REMAINS OF MEDIEVAL PRIORY AND ANGLO-SAXON MONASTERY
UNDER AND AROUND HEXHAM ABBEY AND ITS PRECINCTS,
NORTHUMBERLAND; Scheduled Monument No: SM ND 51, HA 1006593;
HE ref: S00157019**

1.2 Nature of Proposed Developments

It is proposed to excavate and install the new cable in a plastic duct in the roadway in the centre of St Wilfred's Gateway from Market Street to Cowgarth (see *Illus. 01*). The excavation will be positioned to ensure the maximum distance from any known foundations of the gateway. The tarmac wearing course will be cut using a road saw, broken with jack hammers and removed using a mini-excavator and hand tools under continuous archaeological supervision. Any stone flags and cobble sets located at both ends of the gateway will be removed using hand tools.

The proposed trench is to be 800 mm deep and 300 mm wide; following excavation, a 125 mm diameter plastic duct will be installed by hand. The excavation will then be re-instated to Northern Powergrid and HAUC specification.



Illus. 01: Position of the proposed works.

1.3 Monitoring Scheme

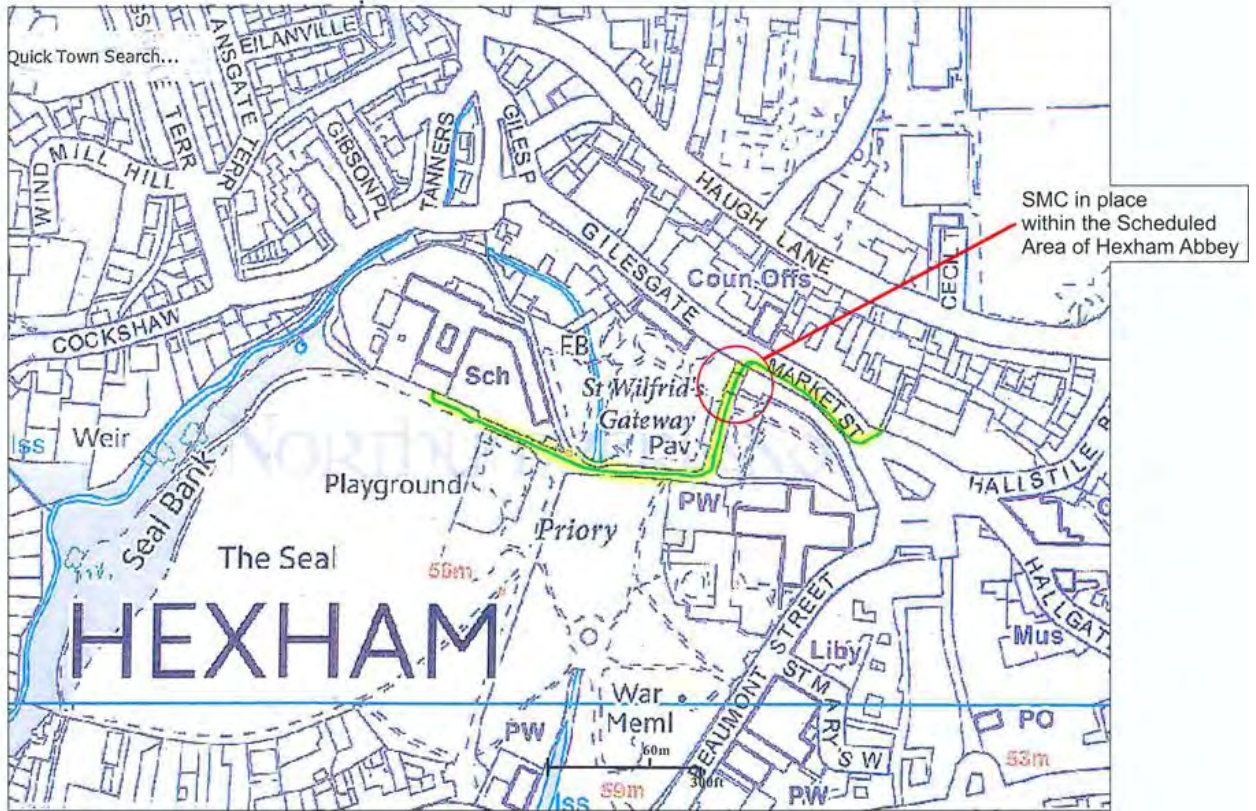
1.3.1 Aims and objectives

The monitoring work will be related to the research aims of the NERRF, which aims to place developer-led archaeological fieldwork in a context of academic understanding of the history and archaeology of the region (Petts and Gerrard 2006).¹ The remains considered most likely to be encountered during the excavations are of medieval, post-medieval (see Petts and Gerrard 2006, Chapter 17 & 18, 165-188) and modern origin.



¹ Petts, D and Gerrard, C., 2006, 'Shared Visions: The North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment'.

Illus. 02: View of the site showing position of the proposed works.



Illus. 03: Plan showing the complete length of proposed cable route *green line) including its extent beyond the Schedules Area of the gateway shown in Illus. 01.

2. FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

2.1 General

2.1.1 The Field Investigation will be carried out by means of Archaeological watching brief.

2.1.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and will follow the CIFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.

2.1.3 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

2.2 Excavation

2.2.1 The 300 mm wide service trench will be excavated to a maximum depth of 800 mm in the position indicated in *Illus. 01 & 02*. Excavation, recording and sampling procedures will be undertaken using the strategies indicated below.

2.2.2 The setting out of the trench will be undertaken by the main works contractor.

2.2.3 The excavation will be carried out mechanically, with surfaces and unstratified modern material removed mechanically by a machine, under continuous archaeological supervision.

2.2.4 The recent overburden will be removed in successive level spits down to the first significant archaeological horizon.

2.2.5 Spoil will be kept close-by and rapidly backfilled into the trenches at the conclusion of this work.

2.2.6 All faces of the trench that require examination or recording, and the top of the first significant archaeological horizon, will be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains

2.2.7 Sufficient of the archaeological features and deposits identified will be cleaned and recorded by hand through a sampling procedure to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described. Pits and postholes will normally be sampled by half-sectioning although some features may require complete excavation. Linear features will be sectioned as appropriate. All [feature intersections will also be investigated](#).

The sampling procedure will typically comprise:

- 50% of every discrete feature
- 25% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a non-uniform fill
- 10% of the area of linear/curvilinear features with a uniform fill

2.3 Archaeological Recording

2.3.1 Archaeological stratigraphy revealed by excavation will be recorded by the following means:

2.3.2 **Written descriptions.** Each archaeological context will be recorded on a pro-forma sheet. Minimum recorded details will consist of the following: a unique identifier; an objective description which includes measurements of extent and details of colour and composition; an interpretative estimate of function, clearly identified as such; the identifiers of related contexts and a description of the relationship with such contexts (for preference, executed as a mini Harris matrix); references to other recording media in which representations of the context are held (plans, sections, photographs).

2.3.3 **Measured illustrations.** The drawn record from the site will include a representative selection of long sections from the excavations that clearly allow the nature and depth and any significant changes in the deposits recorded to be demonstrated. Detail plans and sectional profiles of archaeological features will be at appropriate scales (1:20 or 1:10). Archaeological contexts will be referenced by

their unique identifiers. All illustrations will be properly identified, scaled and referenced to the site survey control.

2.3.4 Photographs. Digital photographs will be taken for purposes of record. A system will be used for identifying the archaeological features photographed.

2.3.5 All processing, storage and conservation of finds will be carried out in compliance with the relevant CIFA and UKIC (United Kingdom Institute of Conservation) guidelines.

2.3.6 Portable remains will be removed by hand; all artifacts encountered will be recovered.

2.3.7 The potential requirement for specialist analyses (see below) is an unavoidable risk in all such excavations. The scientific investigation of any features/deposits which are considered significant will be undertaken as a non-negotiable part of this programme. Any such analyses would be carried out by specialists and priced to the client on a costs only basis (see Contingencies in the Project Costing).

2.4 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data

2.4.1 Following the completion of the Field Investigation and before any of the post-excavation work is commenced, an archive (the Site Archive) containing all the data gathered during fieldwork will be prepared.

2.4.2 Following completion of the Field Investigation, a full report will be prepared collating and synthesizing the structural, artefactual and environmental data relating to each agreed constituent part of the works.

2.5 Environmental Sampling and Scientific Dating

2.5.1 The investigations will be undertaken in agreement with the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Historic England North East Science Advisor in a manner consistent with *MoRPHE EH 2006 and PPN 3* and with "Archaeological Science at PPG16 Interventions: Best Practice for Curators and Commissioning Archaeologists", English Heritage, 2003.

2.5.2 The following strategy for environmental sampling will be confirmed with *Don O'Meara, Historic England North-East Science Advisor (tel. 0191 269 1250)* before the excavation begins.

2.5.3 Deposits/fills with potential for environmental evidence will be assessed by taking up to two bulk samples of 30 litres from any context selected for analysis by the excavator from suitable (i.e. uncontaminated) deposits. Deposits/fills totalling less than 30 litres in volume will be sampled in their entirety. Six of the collected samples which are judged to be most suitable on grounds of being derived from uncontaminated and reasonably well-dated deposits and/or recognisable features will be selected for full analysis, reporting and publication.

2.5.4 Any significant animal bone assemblages, which can be used to explore themes such as hunting and fowling, fishing, plant use and trade, seasonality, diet, age structures, farrowing areas, species ratios, local environment will be assessed by a recognised specialist.

2.5.5 Waterlogged organic materials should be dealt with following recommendations in *Guidelines for the care of waterlogged archaeological leather* (English Heritage and Archaeological Leather Group 1995).

2.5.6 Deposits will be assessed for their potential for radiocarbon, archaeomagnetic (guidance is available in the Centre for Archaeology Guideline on Archaeometallurgy 2001) and Optically Stimulated Luminescence dating. As well as providing information on construction techniques, timbers will be assessed for their potential for dendrochronology dating, in which case sampling will follow procedures in *Dendrochronology: guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates* (Hillam 1998) and *Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood* (R. Brunning 1996). A maximum of 5 samples of material suitable for dating by scientific means (eg: Radiocarbon, Luminescence, Remnant Magnetism, etc.) will be collected.

2.5.7 Information on the nature and history of the site, aims and objectives of the project, summary of archaeological results, context types and stratigraphic relationships, phase and dating information, sampling and processing methods, sample locations, preservation conditions, residuality/contamination, etc. will be provided with each sample submitted for analysis.

2.5.8 Laboratory processing of samples shall only be undertaken if deposits are found to be reasonably well dated, or linked to recognisable features and from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence.

2.5.9 Human remains will be treated with care, dignity and respect, in full compliance with the relevant legislation (essentially the Burial Act 1857) and local environmental health concerns. If found, human remains will be left in-situ, covered and protected, and the church authorities and County Archaeologist informed. If it is agreed that removal of the remains is essential, 2.5.9 – If it is essential that the human remains are removed, a Ministry of Justice Licence will be acquired beforehand and the remains will be removed and stored with appropriate care and reburied in a location to be determined with the church authorities. Any analysis of the osteological material will take place according to published guidelines, *Human Remains from Archaeological Sites, Guidelines for producing assessment documents and analytical reports* (English Heritage 2002).

2.5.10 If anything is found which could be Treasure, under the Treasure Act 1996, it is a legal requirement to report it to the local coroner within 14 days of discovery. The Archaeological Practice Ltd. will comply with the procedures set out in The Treasure Act 1996. Any treasure will be reported to the coroner and to The Portable Antiquities Scheme Finds Liaison Officers, Benjamin Westwood (Tel. 03000 267 011) for guidance on the Treasure Act procedures. Treasure is defined as the following:

- Any metallic object, other than a coin, provided that at least 10% by weight of metal is precious metal and that is at least 300 years old when found
- Any group of two or more metallic objects of any composition of prehistoric date that come from the same find
- All coins from the same find provided that they are at least 300 years old when found, but if the coins contain less than 10% gold or silver there must be at least ten
- Any object, whatever it is made of, that is found in the same place as, or had previously been together with, another object that is Treasure
- Any object that would previously have been treasure trove, but does not fall within the specific categories given above. Only objects that are less than 300 years old, that are made substantially of gold or silver, that have been

deliberately hidden with the intention of recovery and whose owners or heirs are unknown will come into this category

2.5 Production of Final Report

2.6.1 Copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork to the Client, and the [NCC Archaeology Section](#). An additional digital copy of the report will be lodged with the Northumberland County HER.

2.6.2 Two bound and collated copies of the report will be provided. Each will be bound, with each page and heading numbered. Any further copies required will be produced electronically. The report will include as a minimum the following:

A summary statement of methodologies used.

A location plan of the site and any significant discoveries made.

Plans and sections of any archaeological discoveries of note.

A summary statement of results.

Conclusions

2.6.3 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines.

2.6.4 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated repository, The Great North Museum, within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Digital data, in particular a selection of important site photographs will be archived with ADS at the University of York.

2.6.5 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in the appropriate Notices, Annual Reviews, Reports, etc.

2.6.6 OASIS

The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS). The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to, or incorporation of, the final report into the Northumberland County HER.

2.6.7 A copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS within one week of final submission of the completed report to the NCC Archaeology Section.

3. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

3.1 The Developer has appointed The Archaeological Practice Ltd. as a professionally competent Archaeological Contractor, on agreed terms, to execute the scheme as set out in the brief supplied by the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments.

3.2 The present project design must be submitted for approval and, if necessary, modification by the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments before work on-site can proceed.

3.3 The Developer will allow the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments and the appointed contractor all reasonable access to the site for the purposes of the archaeological investigation, subject only to safety requirements.

3.4 The archaeological contractor appointed to manage the execution of the scheme shall ensure that:

3.4.1 the appropriate parties are informed of the objectives, timetable and progress of the archaeological work

3.4.2 the progress of the work is adequately and effectively monitored and the results of this are communicated to the appropriate parties.

3.4.3 significant problems in the execution of the scheme are communicated at the earliest opportunity to the appropriate parties in order to effect a resolution of the problems.

3.5 The archaeological contractor will carry, and will ensure that other archaeological contractors involved in the scheme carry appropriate levels of insurance cover in respect of Employers Liability, Public and Third Party Liability & Professional Indemnity.

3.6 The archaeological contractor will liaise with the appointed CDM Planning Supervisor and prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Safety Plan for the archaeological work.

3.7 At or before the commencement of the scheme the Developer, the appointed Archaeological Contractors, the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments and other appropriate parties will agree arbitration procedures to be followed in the event of any unresolvable difficulties or disputes arising from the scheme

3.8 Careful assessment has led to the definition of a number of research objectives which identify with a high degree of likelihood the kind of archaeological deposits which the investigation will encounter. Nevertheless, it is possible that discoveries will be made which could not reasonably have been foreseen on the basis of all the information currently available. Any difficulties arising from unforeseen discoveries will be resolved by discussion between all the parties involved. There will be a presumption, the investigation having been carried out in accordance with the schedule set out in this document, and to the satisfaction of the Historic England Inspector of Ancient Monuments, and all other considerations being equal, that no executive or financial obligation shall attach to any particular party in the event of unforeseen discoveries being made, and that the executive and financial responsibility for dealing with such unforeseen discoveries shall rest outside the currently agreed scheme of investigation.

3.9 The Archaeological Contractor(s) appointed to execute the scheme will procure and comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981 regarding the exhumation and interment of

any human remains discovered within the site, and will comply with all reasonable requirements of any church or other religious body or civil body regarding the manner and method of removal, re-interment or cremation of the human remains, and the removal and disposal of any tombstones or other memorials discovered within the site. The Developer will incur all costs resulting from such compliance.

4. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

It is envisaged that the groundworks will take place in early Spring 2017.

4.1 Personnel:

Archaeological Practice

Project Manager: Richard Carlton

Project Archaeologists:

Marc Johnstone, Michael Coates,

Michael Parsons

Sub-Contractors

Archaeological Services University of Durham

(Environmental remains)

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



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