
**OLD GARAGE SITE
FALSTONE**

(NGR NY 7246 8744)

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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THE OLD GARAGE SITE, FALSTONE, NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MITIGATION BY WATCHING BRIEF

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***Frontispiece:** The Old Garage site, Falstone –
view from the east during machine excavation
of foundation trenches*

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SUMMARY

This report details observations made during an archaeological watching brief carried out on the site of the Old Garage, Falstone, North Northumberland, during the excavation of foundation trenches for a residential development and ancillary drainage works in the vicinity.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds of any significance were encountered during these works. The remains of the garage, including building foundations, floors and a sump or inspection pit, were found to occupy much of the site.

No firm conclusions can be derived from this work with regard to the position and character of the putative medieval and early post-medieval village of Falstone.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Following submission of planning proposals for a residential development on the site of the Old Garage at Falstone, the National Park Archaeologist attached a requirement for a watching brief to be carried out in order to mitigate by record the damage likely to be caused to any sub-surface archaeological remains. Accordingly, a project design was prepared for the client, D & F Symons, and submitted for approval to the Northumberland National Park Authority.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES OF WATCHING BRIEF

In view of the site's location within a medieval village, the known occurrence of medieval remains locally, and the likely depth of the proposed development works, a programme of archaeological work was requested by the Conservation Team Manager of Northumberland County Council (NCC) in order to examine and record the character of any remains discovered during development works.

A written scheme of Archaeological Investigation was compiled by the Archaeological Practice and submitted to NNPA for approval on behalf of the developer. Accordingly, a number of specific objectives for archaeological investigation of the development area were defined within the context of local and regional research priorities. Primary amongst these was the identification of any archaeological remains associated with the medieval and early post-medieval history Falstone.

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

2.1 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Groundworks for foundations and service provisions were based on plans supplied by the developer. The work was carried out in April 2002.

The first phase of the above works, carried out on the Old Garage site, involved the machine excavation of foundation trenches for the planned residential development. This work was observed by the archaeologist appointed to the project. A photographic record was made as the excavations progressed, and features of potential interest were examined more closely.

The subsequent excavation of a service trench southwards from the Old Garage site along a roadway bordering the church grounds was conducted in the same way.

2.2 RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

No features or deposits of archaeological significance emerged during the excavation.

On the Old Garage site the remains of the garage were revealed, including concrete floor surfaces, brick foundations and an inspection pit. The latter was constructed from bricks dateable to the early 1970s and had been infilled with rubble which included test cores taken from the dam of Kielder reservoir, dateable to the early 1980s. Except where they coincided with the line of foundation trenches, the majority of these remains were left in place.

3.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No structures, features or deposits of any archaeological significance were revealed during the excavation of foundation trenches for a residential development and ancillary works at, and adjacent to, the Old Garage site in Falstone.

Various modern structural remains, all associated with a modern garage and largely dateable to the 1970s and 1980s, were partially destroyed by the excavation of foundation trenches.

No recommendations can be made with respect to the present development site, where construction work is to be completed in Autumn 2002, nor can any recommendations be made of a more general nature with respect to the likely occurrence of archaeologically significant deposits in Falstone.

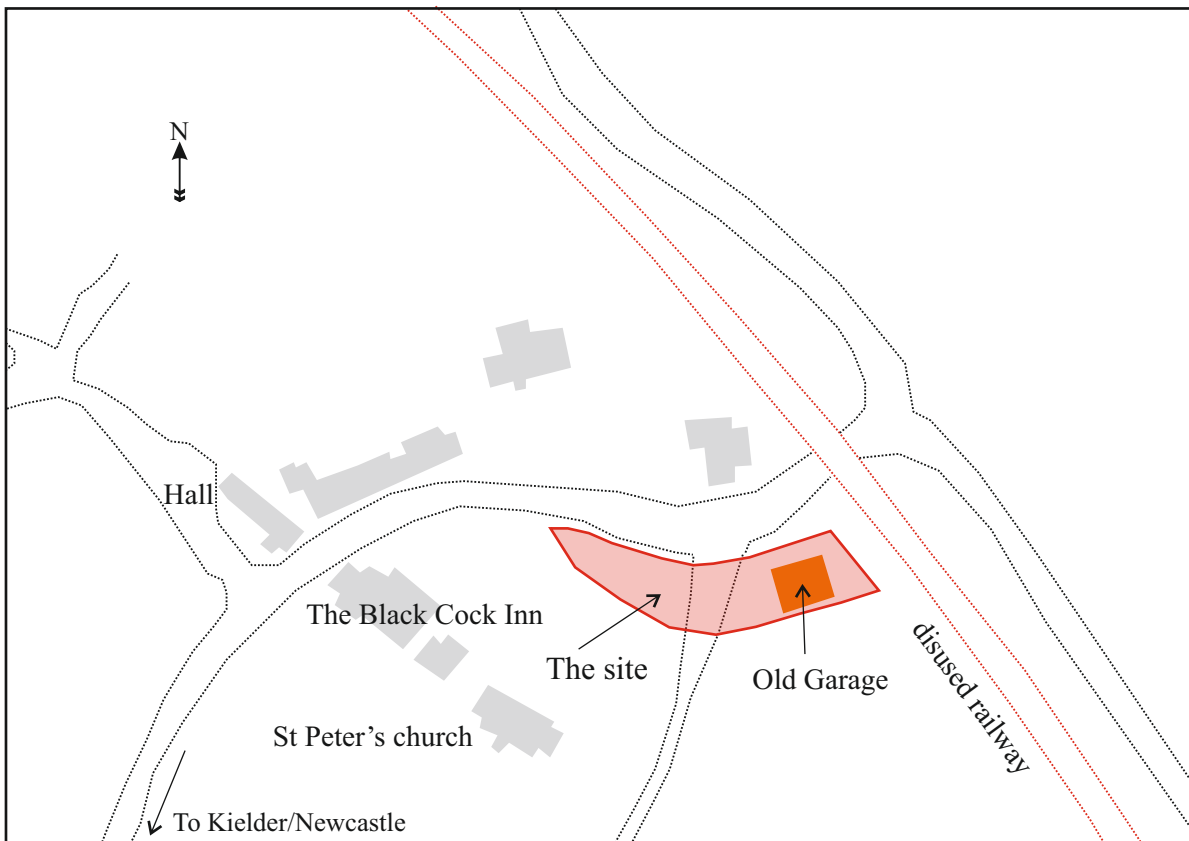
4.0 REFERENCES

NNPA, 2002, *Old Garage Site, Falstone: Specification for archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished document.

AP, 2002, *Old Garage Site, Falstone: Project design for archaeological watching brief*. Unpublished document prepared for the NNPA.



Figure 1: Location of the site in Falstone, County of Northumberland





*Plate 1: Remains of the old garage,
Falstone*



*Plate 2: Excavating foundation trench
along north wall of the Old Garage site*



Plate 3: Excavating an ancillary service trench through the southern boundary of the site



Plate 4: Excavation of ancillary service trench south of the construction site

5.0 OLD GARAGE SITE, FALSTONE: PROJECT DESIGN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The Archaeological Practice has been instructed to carry out an archaeological watching brief at the Old Garage Site in Falstone, Northumberland (NGR NY 7246 8744), based on a Brief prepared by the Northumberland National Park Authority (NNPA) Archaeologist.

The aim of the watching brief is to record any significant archaeological remains before their removal or destruction during the course of development works.

Falstone probably has pre-conquest origins, but nothing is known about the precise nature or location of this putative early settlement (fragments of a ninth century cross found in the churchyard may derive from an early church there, but could have been imported). Similarly, no evidence for prehistoric or Roman occupation has been recorded, although the context of the village and finds in the wider vicinity indicate a high potential for remains of human activity from these periods on the site.

5.2 EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME

5.2.1. The Developer will appoint a professionally competent Archaeological Contractor, on terms to be agreed between the Developer and the Archaeological Contractor, to execute the scheme of archaeological work as set out in this document.

5.2.2. All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and should follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations, Excavations or Watching Briefs as appropriate.

5.2.3. All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles and will familiarise themselves with the results of any previous assessment of the site prior to the start of work on site. All staff must be aware of the work required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project

5.2.4. The Developer will allow all the appointed Archaeological Contractors full access to the site in order to fulfil their commissions, subject only to safety requirements.

5.2.5. The Developer will allow the National Park Archaeologist all reasonable access to the site for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological scheme, subject only to safety requirements.

5.2.6. The archaeological consultant appointed to manage the execution of the scheme shall ensure that:

- i.* the appropriate parties are informed of the objectives, timetable and progress of the archaeological work
- ii.* the progress of the work is adequately and effectively monitored and the results of this are communicated to the appropriate parties.

iii. 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.

5.2.7. The archaeological consultant appointed to manage the execution of the scheme 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.

5.2.8. The archaeological consultant appointed to manage the execution of the scheme will liaise with the appointed CDM Planning Supervisor and prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Safety Plan for the archaeological work.

5.2.9. The archaeological consultant appointed to manage the execution of the scheme will prepare an estimate of the cost of executing the scheme in consultation with the Developer and appropriate specialist advisors. Maximum contingency sums will be identified for certain parts of the post-excavation work. These estimates will be used as a baseline from which to assess the tenders received to execute the scheme.

5.3 FIELDWORK METHODOLOGY

5.3.1 Watching Brief

All sections and deposits exposed during trenching will be systematically examined to locate, excavate, sample and record previously unidentified archaeological features which may survive within the site and are at threat from development works.

Should any archaeological features be identified, sufficient time will be allowed to sample, fully excavate or record these features within practicable operational parameters.

Should additional staff members be deemed necessary by the archaeological contractor to excavate and record revealed archaeological features, this would be in agreement with the developer and the planning authority.

Drawings, photography and written records of discrete features, where deemed necessary, will be sufficient to allow interpretation of the material and the preparation of a report on the site. The location of all photographs must appear on a plan base.

5.3.2 Recording

A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic, as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Written descriptions should comprise both factual data and interpretative elements. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate. Sections should normally be accurately related to Ordnance Datum.

The stratigraphy of trenches will be recorded even when no archaeological deposits have been identified.

Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

The site grid will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:1250 or 1:500 map of the area.

A photographic record of all contexts will be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept.

5.3.3 Finds Processing

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

Artefact collection and discard policies must be fit for the defined purpose.

Finds will be scanned to assess the date range of the assemblage with particular reference to pottery. Artefacts will be used to establish the potential for all categories of finds, should further archaeological work be necessary.

All bulk finds which are not discarded must be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labelling must be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds must be appropriately bagged and boxed and recorded. This process must be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.

All small finds must be recorded as individual items. All small finds must be appropriately packaged. Vulnerable objects must be specially packaged, and textiles, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process must be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated.

Assessment and analysis of artefacts and environmental samples must be carried out by an approved, named specialist.

The deposition and disposal of artefacts must be agreed with the legal owner and recipient museum prior to the work taking place. Where the landowner decides to retain artefacts, adequate provision must be made for recording them.

During and after the excavation and watching brief, all objects must be stored in the appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this should include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage must have appropriate security provision.

5.3.4 Production of Site Archive

The site archive will be prepared to the standard specified in MAP 2 and in accordance with the UKIC guidelines. This should include the indexing, ordering, quantification and checking for consistency of all original context records, object records, bulk finds records, sample records, skeleton records (if recovered), photographic records, drawing records, photographs, drawings, level books, site note-books, spot dating records, and conservation records. Ensuring that all artefacts and ecofacts recovered and retained from the site are packed and stored in the appropriate materials and conditions and that all their associated records are complete. This will be completed by the end of the field work. A summary account of the context record will be included and written by the supervising archaeologist.

The archive will be submitted to the County SMR within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. The location of artefacts must be stated in the archive.

5.3.5 Production of Final Report

The report will be bound, with each page and paragraph numbered. It should include as a minimum the following:

A summary statement of methodologies used.

A location plan of the site. A general location plan of all trenches, fieldwalking grids etc.

Plans and sections of all features excavated.

A summary statement of results.

A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.

Conclusions

Recommendations

Copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork to the developer, the NNPA archaeologist, the SMR officer at Northumberland County Council (Conservation Team). An additional report will be lodged with Morpeth Library.

5.3.6 Publication of Results of Archaeological Works

The contractor will, at the request of the NNPA archaeologist, prepare a summary of the results of the investigation for publication in an agreed journal.

5.4 REFERENCES

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