
83-89 SHIELDS ROAD
BYKER, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

MARCH 2008



Prepared for: <i>Robertson Construction NEE Ltd</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
--	--

<i>Project code:</i> AP08/04	<i>Stage:</i> Final	<i>Compiled by:</i> RJC	<i>Control:</i> AR	<i>Completion date:</i> 01/05/08
---------------------------------	------------------------	----------------------------	-----------------------	----------------------------------

Office:
Westmorland House, Elswick East Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7LJ
Telephone: 0191 2730777; FAX: 0191 2731777;
E-mail: info@archaeologicalpractice.co.uk r.j.carlton@ncl.ac.uk

Company No: 4549772; VAT Registration No: 848 0163 26.

83-9 SHIELDS ROAD
BYKER
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Prepared by:

The Archaeological Practice Ltd.



Frontispiece:

The site of the watching brief on the north side of Shields Road, Byker.

PROJECT: Archaeological watching brief at Development Site
LOCATION: 183-189 Shields Road, Byker
CLIENT: Robertson Construction NEE Ltd.
SITE GRID REF: NZ 269 649
FIELDWORK: February-March 2008
OASIS REF: thearch2-41837

CONTENTS

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

ILLUSTRATIONS

Cover: View of the watching brief site from west south-west.

Frontispiece: Site of the watching brief on the north side of Shields Road, Byker

Illus. 01: The location of the watching brief site in Byker on the east side of Newcastle upon Tyne.

Illus. 02: The location of the watching brief site (green fill) on Shields Road, Byker.

Illus. 03: Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, c.1855, showing the watching brief site in open countryside.

Illus. 04: Extract from the Third Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, c.1920, showing the watching brief site within the (by now) built-up urban area.

Illus. 05: Extract from the Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, 1941, showing the watching brief site within the (by now) built-up urban area.

Illus. 06: View of the site from the west with Shields Road to right of view.

Illus. 07: View of the site from the south-west.

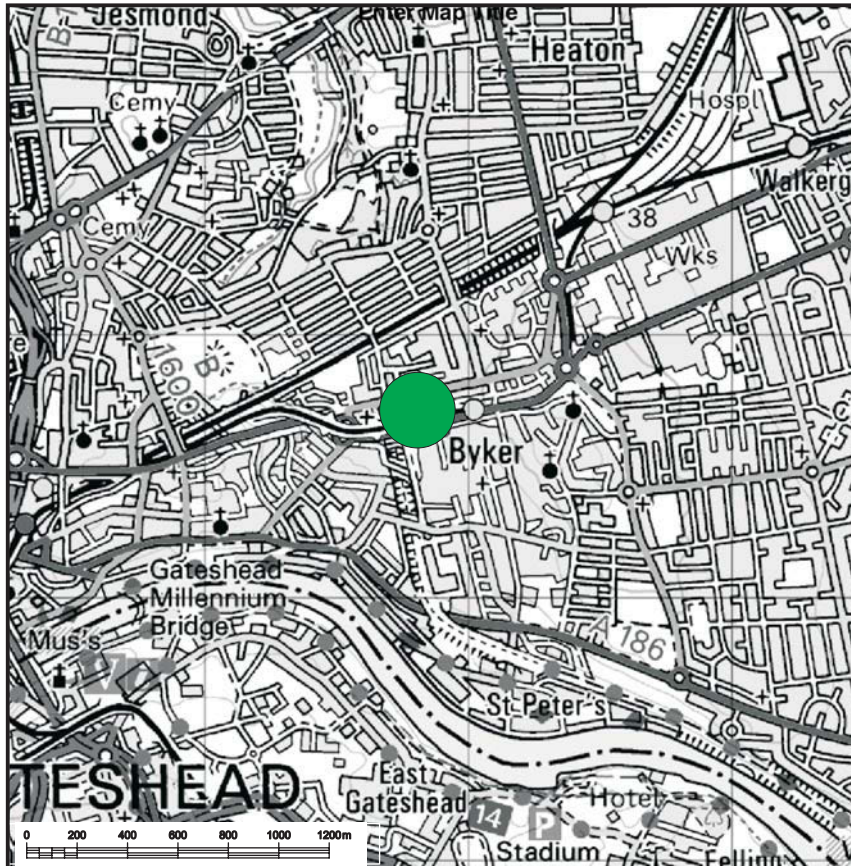
Illus. 08: View of the site from the south.

Illus. 09: View across the site from the south west

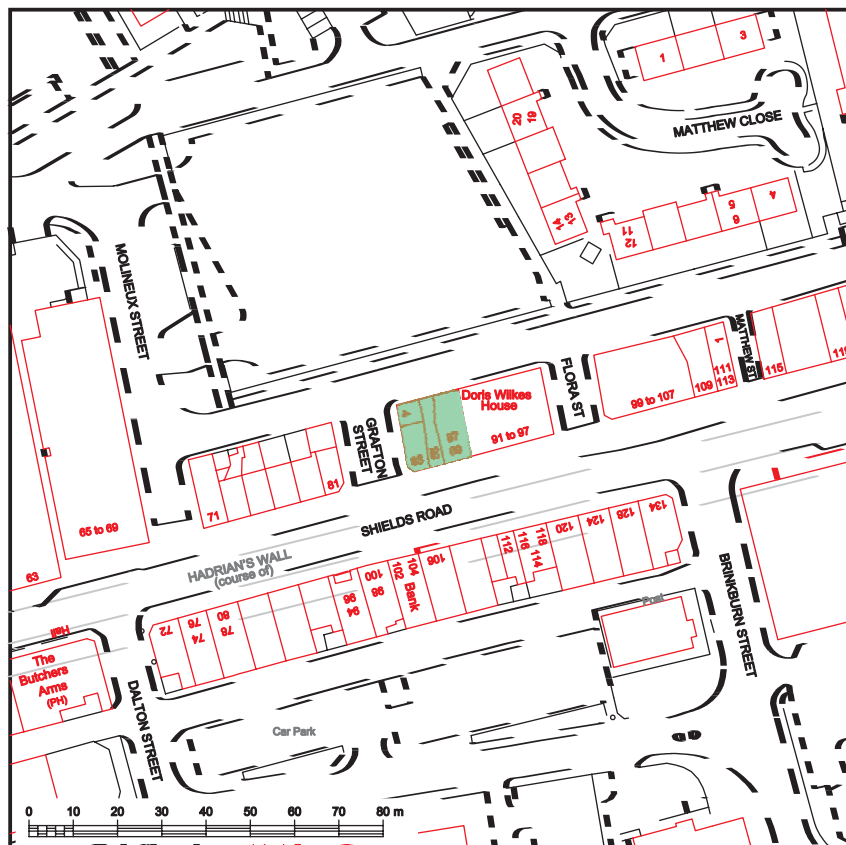
Illus. 10: View across the site towards Shields Road from the north.

Illus. 11: View from the south of cellar wall in west section of the cut made for groundworks.

Illus. 12: View of cellar wall remains from the east side.



Illus. 01: The location of the watching brief site in Byker on the east side of Newcastle upon Tyne.



Illus. 02: The location of the watching brief site (green fill) on Shields Road, Byker.

1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was requested by the Newcastle City Archaeologist during groundworks ahead of the construction of a new Customer Service Centre on the north side of Shields Road.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

Hadrian's Wall (T&W HER ref. 196) lay between Wallsend (Tyne and Wear) on the east, Bowness-on-Solway (Cumbria) on the west, c. 73.5 miles. Its eastern part consisted of a stone wall with ditch on the north side; forts, milecastles and turrets to accommodate the garrison; an earthwork called the Vallum to the south; and a road, the Military Way, south of that again. Building began c. 122-126; the system was abandoned late in the 4th or early in the 5th century. Forts, milecastles and turrets which have been excavated are numbered individually; details of short stretches of the Wall, ditch, Vallum and Military Way are grouped by Roman mile as defined by English Heritage.

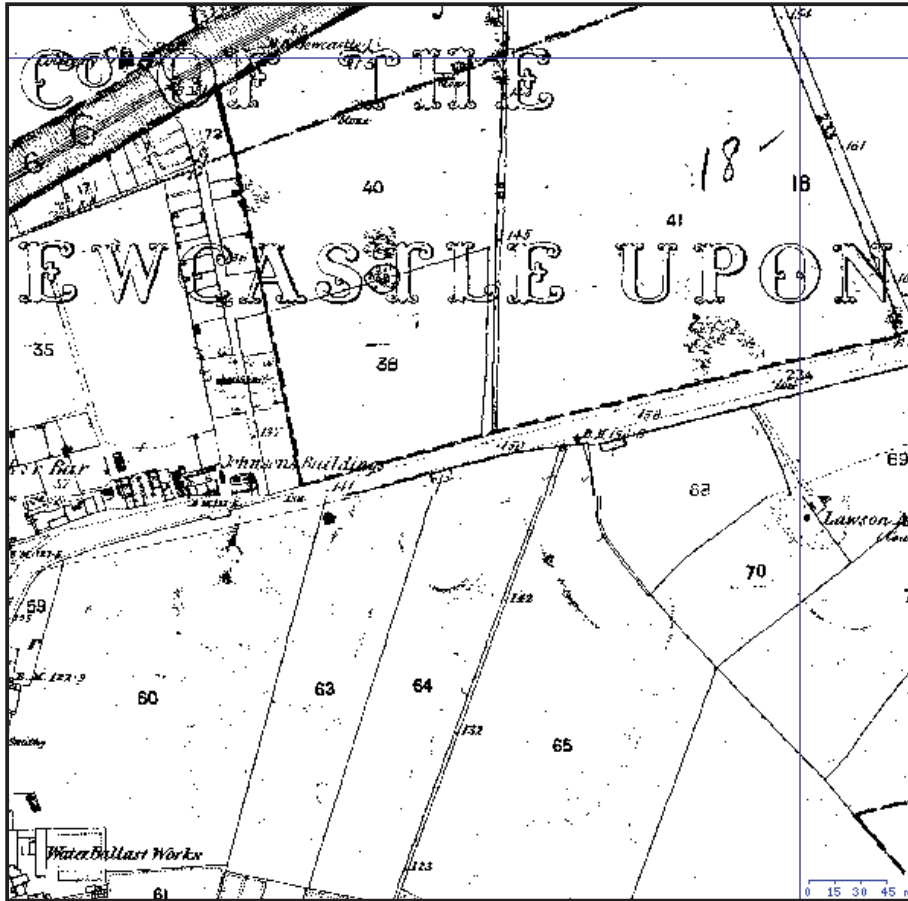
It is generally accepted that the Wall ran along the south side of the Fosseway and Shields Road (Wall mile 2; T&W HER ref. 20; SAM 28(5)), with ditch and berm under the roads. Secure evidence of the Wall was finally located in February 2001 by Tyne and Wear Museums, on the site of a new public square outside the swimming baths on the south side of Shields Road. A 29m stretch of Wall foundations were revealed, 2.5m wide constructed of a rubble core between large edging blocks. It had been built on the site of a native settlement, evidenced by a series of drainage ditches and stakeholes. Three rows of defensive pits (cippi) were revealed between the Wall and the ditch. 49 pits were traced over a distance of 32m, each around 79cm x 40cm and 46cm deep. These pits would have originally held entanglements of sharpened branches which would have served the same purpose as barbed wire. Up until this discovery these pits had only been found along stretches of Wall associated with a fort, such as at Buddle Street at Wallsend. A layer of roughly squared sandstone blocks bonded with yellow-brown clay, taken to be the foundation course of Hadrian's Wall was found in a small trial pit excavated inside Nos. 40-42 Shields Road in December 2002. The remains were better preserved and more deeply buried than those found at the public square the previous year. In 1906 a 7ft wide wall was reported on the north side of Shields Road "in the yard of 105 Shields Road, at a depth of about 9 feet..." – it was once thought that these remains could indicate that the wall ran on the north side of the road, but this theory has been discredited by recent discoveries.

3. WATCHING BRIEF

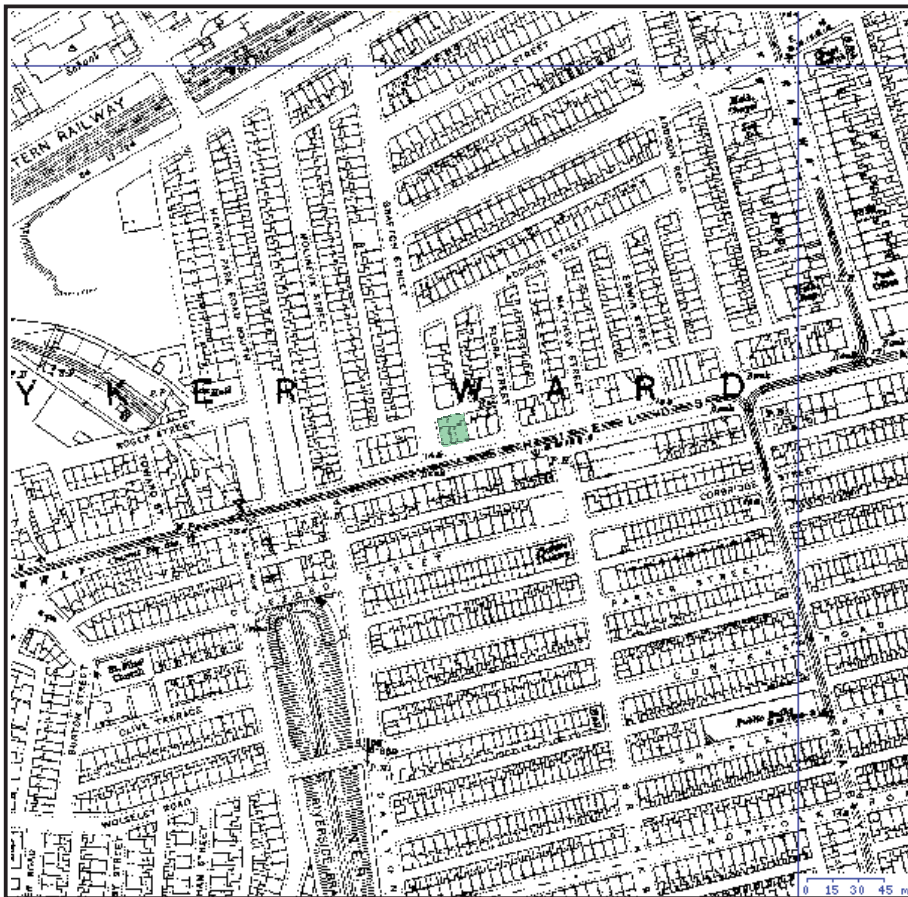
The aims of the watching brief were to determine whether archaeological features or deposits were present during the groundworks, and to make an appropriate record of any such finds by photographic and other means. Attendance by an archaeologist was requested by the Newcastle City Archaeologist.

The groundworks involved drilling and piling holes up to 0.30 metres diameter using heavy plant.

The work was carried out in late February and early March 2008, with visits made by an archaeologist for the purpose of carrying out a watching brief on February 26th & 29th and March 4th.



Illus. 03: Extract from the First Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, c.1855, showing the watching brief site in open countryside.



Illus. 04: Extract from the Third Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, c.1920, showing the watching brief site within the (by now) built-up urban area.



Illus. 05: Extract from the Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, 1941, showing the watching brief site within the (by now) built-up urban area.

4. RESULTS

The drilling and piling operations cast up modern ground surface material, underlying mixed topsoil and sub-soil, none of which was observed to contain any material of archaeological interest. However, in the south-west corner of the site a sandstone wall was exposed. The wall appeared to form the west side of cellar belonging to a building known to have been a former public house. The wall ran in an east-west direction and was made up of irregular shaped sandstone blocks, three courses of which were exposed but could not be measured as the wall ran under the edge of excavation.

No archaeological remains were discovered during the bulk of the groundworks.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No features, deposits or finds of archaeological importance were observed in any of the holes drilled and piled as part of the development works carried out at 83-89 Shields Road, Byker in February and March 2008. However, it is unlikely that the upcast from the drilled and piled holes could have provided diagnostic indicators of features lying to the north of Hadrian's Wall outer ditch. The only feature revealed during the development scheme was a stone-built cellar wall of relatively modern origin.

It is considered unlikely that any archaeological remains of significance were damaged during the groundworks carried out on the site.



Illus. 06: View of the site from the west with Shields Road to right of view.



Illus. 07: View of the site from the south-west.



Illus. 08: View of the site from the south.



Illus. 09: View across the site from the south west



Illus. 10: View across the site towards Shields Road from the north.



Illus. 11: View from the south of cellar wall in west section of the cut made for groundworks.



Illus. 12: View of cellar wall remains from the east side.

APPENDIX 1. SPECIFICATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT 83-9 SHIELDS ROAD, BYKER, NEWCASTLE

Introduction

The construction of a new Customer Service Centre on the north side of Shields Road needs to be monitored by an archaeologist as a Watching Brief, in order that any archaeology relating to the World Heritage Site of Hadrian's Wall can be recorded, and will take no more than one day one site.

The watching brief must be carried out by a suitably qualified and experienced archaeological organisation. The work will record and environmentally sample (if necessary) any archaeological deposits of importance found on the plot. The purpose of this brief is to obtain tenders for this work. The report must be the definitive record for deposition in the Tyne and Wear HER.

The commissioning client will provide plans indicating the location of the proposed work.

The tasks

1 A timetable has yet to be agreed, but the work will take place as soon as possible. Tenders for the Watching Brief should therefore be a cost per day including overheads such as travel costs and equipment. Any variation on the agreed timetable will be notified by the client, who will give a minimum of 48 hours notice of a change on the days of site attendance. Close liaison between the parties involved will be needed to co-ordinate this element of the work.

2 The work involves undertaking a structured watching brief to observe and record any archaeological deposits and finds from this locality. The absence of deposits and finds must be recorded as negative evidence. The Watching Brief will not hinder the construction programme. Within the course of the Watching Brief, it may be possible to record sections through the stratigraphy exposed during the construction work. The recording will be undertaken during intervals within the construction work, at the convenience of the Client's Site Manager.

General Conditions

3 All staff employed by the Archaeological Contractor shall be professional field archaeologists with appropriate skills and experience to undertake work to the highest professional standards.

4 The Archaeological Contractor must maintain a Site Diary for the benefit of the Client, with full details of Site Staff present, duration of time on site, etc. and contact with third parties.

5 The Archaeological Contractor must be able to provide written proof that the necessary levels of Insurance Cover are in place.

The report

6 The archaeological contractor will provide a brief report of archaeological operations, including a site location plan, brief description of recording procedures, sections of stratigraphy recorded (if practical), locations of finds collected (if any), photographs of any significant archaeological features and a summary of the results of the work. The report will form an addition to the *Short Reports* files in the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record.

7 Two bound and collated paper copies of the report need to be submitted, one for the commissioning Client, and one for deposition in the County HER at the address below. A digital copy of the report on CD is required by the HER for archive purposes.

Monitoring

8 The Archaeological Contractor will inform the County Archaeologist of the start and end dates of the Watching Brief to enable the County Archaeologist to monitor the work in progress. The Client will give the County Archaeologist reasonable access to the development to undertake monitoring.

OASIS

The Tyne and Wear County Archaeologist supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index/access to the large and growing body of archaeological grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded fieldwork.

The archaeological contractor is therefore required to register with OASIS and to complete the online OASIS form for their watching brief at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. Please ensure that tenders for this work takes into account the time needed to complete the form.

Once the OASIS record has been completed and signed off by the HER and NMR the information will be incorporated into the English Heritage Excavation Index, hosted online by the Archaeology Data Service.

The ultimate aim of OASIS is for an online virtual library of grey literature to be built up, linked to the index. The unit therefore has the option of uploading their grey literature report as part of their OASIS record, as a Microsoft Word document, rich text format, pdf or html format. The grey literature report will only be mounted by the ADS if both the unit and the HER give their agreement. The grey literature report will be made available through a library catalogue facility.

Please ensure that you and your client understand this procedure. If you choose to upload your grey literature report please ensure that your client agrees to this in writing to the HER at the address below.

For general enquiries about the OASIS project aims and the use of the form please contact: Mark Barratt at the National Monuments Record (tel. 01793 414600 or oasis@english-heritage.org.uk). For enquiries of a technical nature please contact: Catherine Hardman at the Archaeology Data Service (tel. 01904 433954 or oasis@ads.ahds.ac.uk). Or contact the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at the address below.

David Heslop
Tyne & Wear County Archaeologist