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# TIME CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT SITE GALLOWGATE NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

## WATCHING BRIEF

JULY 2006

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Time Central Development,  
Gallowgate  
Newcastle upon Tyne

Archaeological Watching Brief

*Prepared by*

The Archaeological Practice Ltd

July 2006



**Frontispiece:** *Front wall of the cellaring for 30-34 Gallowgate and underlying clay deposits*

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## SUMMARY

*This document reports on an archaeological watching brief conducted to monitor groundworks at a development site encompassing 30-34 Gallowgate and the south part of the car park east of Strawberry Lane, in the centre of Newcastle upon Tyne. The objective of these groundworks was the construction of a seven storey office and retail development with a basement car park for Gallowgate Properties Ltd. The Archaeological Practice Ltd were appointed by the Employer's Agent, Terrace Hill Projects Ltd. A desk based assessment of the site and a building survey of the now demolished building which occupied 30-34 Gallowgate, were previously carried out in 2000 and 2005 respectively, in advance of the works. The assessment showed that the area of Gallowgate and Strawberry Lane lies just outside the medieval town walls, and early mapping indicated that the site had been built upon since the 17th century. In recent years disturbance has occurred through the construction of the Metro system. Archaeological monitoring was recommended as archaeological evidence for medieval activity or post medieval industrial structures may survive in 'pockets' in between areas of disturbance. The monitoring was part of a mitigation exercise to record any features or finds of cultural heritage significance revealed or disturbed during groundworks associated with the construction of the building.*

*The watching brief was accomplished by means of periodic site visits, in liaison with Site Manager from the the main contractor, Tolent, and entailed the observation of surface stripping works carried out by mechanical excavator, recording the construction trenches and monitoring the excavation of the basement car park. Any observed anomalies were checked for significance and a photographic record was made throughout the process.*

*No archaeologically significant observations were made during initial construction of the access ramp for the existing public car park or during the excavation of the basement car park (east and north areas of the site) and the surface stripping in preparation for piling operations in the western part of the site. However brick and concrete structures and one underlying stone wall were recorded along the south and west edges of the development site in narrow trenches associated with piling operations. Brick and concrete construction indicates a relatively recent date of construction for most of the structures identified in these trenches. They are probably represent brick walls and cellar vaults associated with the Corporation Baths and Wash Houses, which are known to have occupied the western half of the Gallowgate frontage of the development site. The wash houses also extended back up the slope alongside Strawberry Lane. The underlying stone wall may be tentatively attributed to an earlier post-medieval building. It is likely that survival was better along the edge of the site because structures were left standing here as they served torevet the substructure of the road carriageways and pavements along Gallowgate and Strawberry Lane.*

*It is concluded that there were no surviving archaeological deposits throughout most of the site. The development site has clearly been subject to substantial topographic modification and disturbance over the recent centuries. In particular, the construction of substantial buildings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (baths & wash houses, warehouses and offices) which were either furnished with deep cellaring or terraced into the sloping site has destroyed most archaeological remains which may once have existed within the development area. As a result that archaeological features were found to survive only in small pockets along the edge of the site and for the most part these did not predate the c. 1900 rebuilding described above.*

## 1. BACKGROUND

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### 1.1 Purpose of the Report

This document, prepared by the Archaeological Practice Ltd. for Terrace Hill Projects Ltd, reports on an archaeological watching brief carried out at 30-34 Gallowgate and Strawberry Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne during work to create an eight storey building. The area of the development lies just outside the medieval town walls, it was farmed until the 14th century and then built upon. Therefore, the watching brief was required to record any evidence of medieval and post-medieval activity or structures that may survive on the site.

### 1.2 Location and Extent of the Development Area

The area of the present watching brief lies on the east side of Gallowgate and the south side of Strawberry Lane. This area was formally occupied by a building situated at 30-34 Gallowgate (see building survey: Archaeological Practice 2005) and is currently partially covered by car parks.

### 1.3 Nature of Proposed Developments

The objective of the groundworks reported here was the construction of an seven storey office and retail development with a basement car park.

### 1.4 Evidence for Remains of Cultural Heritage Significance

A desk-based assessment (LUAU 2000) concluded that the development site was used for farming and cultivation until the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Early mapping (Hutton 1770) shows buildings on the corner of Strawberry Lane and Gallowgate, with private gardens to the rear. No 36 Gallowgate was a Dutch-gabled house of 17<sup>th</sup>- or 18<sup>th</sup>-century date. It was later used as a furniture warehouse by Carver & Co. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century the development site was an industrial area with butchers, slaters, tillers, joiners, carpenters, sawmills, a glueman and tanner and assorted other trades. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the western half of the site (previously occupied by no 36 Gallowgate) was occupied by the Corporation Baths & Wash Houses. Impinging on the northern part of the development site were the warehouses of Currie & Co Furniture Depository.

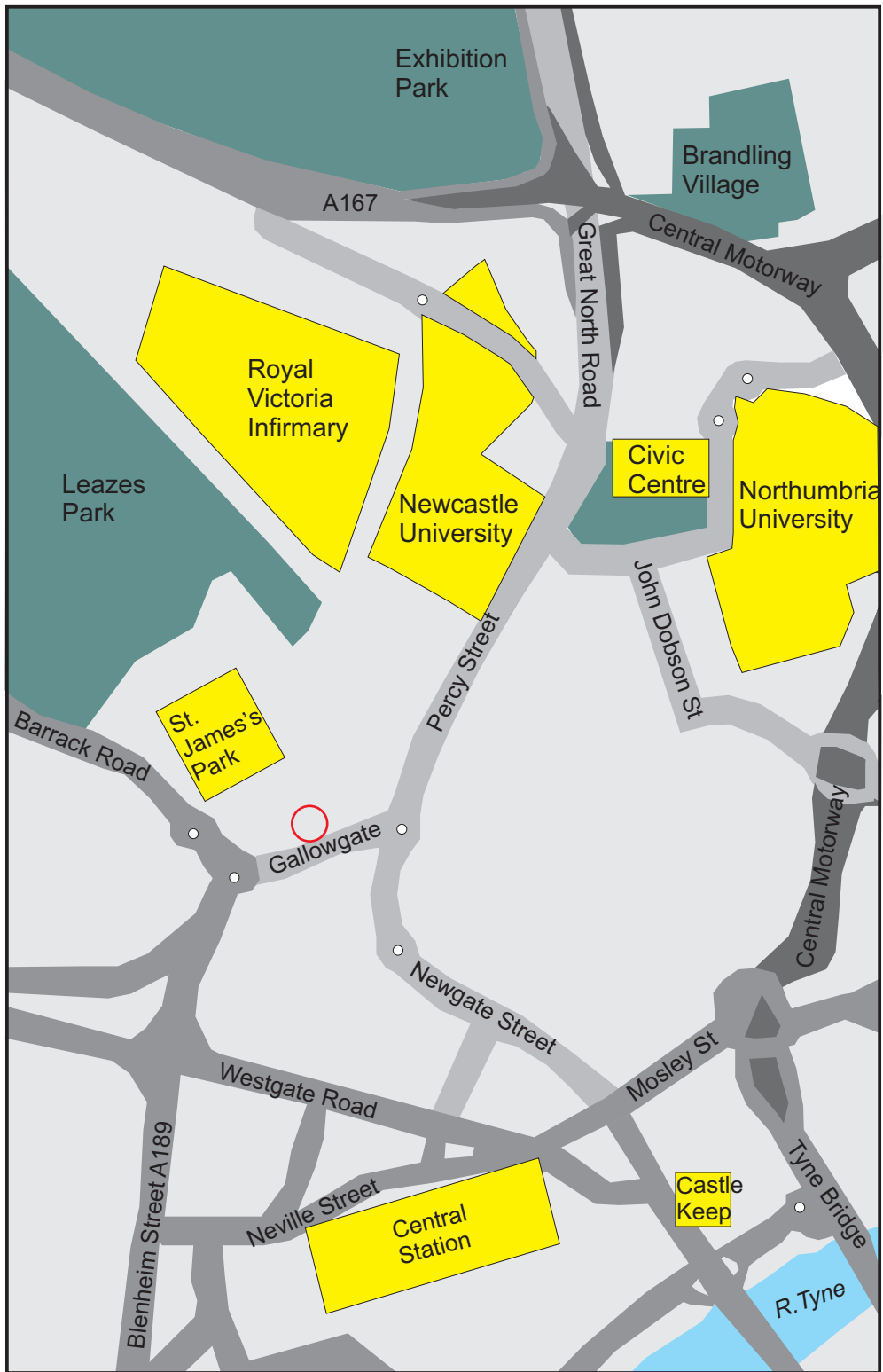
Further research on the eastern half of the development site was undertaken in association with a building survey of 30-34 Gallowgate (Archeological Practice 2005). The first edition Ordnance Survey shows the area in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century prior to construction of the recently demolished building at 30-34 Gallowgate. This part of Gallowgate was occupied by a series of three or four separate but adjoining buildings. Contemporary trade directories give an idea of the trades represented in these buildings. Kelly's Directory for 1886 lists from east to west Thomas Welch, cart owner, at 30 Gallowgate, Joseph Percival, water pipe layer, and Thomas Thompson, boot and shoe manufacturer, at no. 32, and William Hedley, tinsmith at no. 34. The presence of a boot and shoe manufacturer at no. 32 is intriguing, given the history of the building which was to replace these three plots. Ward's Directory of 1885-86 also lists Thomas Welch at no. 39, but makes no mention of nos. 32 and 34.

The building which, until recently, occupied 30-34 swept away these three plots and was designed for T. H. Forsyth, 1891, by the architect E Bowman, apparently to serve as a warehouse. By 1894, however, Kelly's Directory records that Messrs. S. & C.W. Dixon & Co., wholesale boot and shoe manufacturers, were located on this site and by June 1908 the General Electric Co. Ltd was also occupying the premises. The 1924 elevation drawing for the proposed heightening of the building, by the architect H.T. Wright, shows that the General Electric Co. occupied the eastern half of the building and Dixon's Boot Factory (renamed Dixon, Blair & Co. by 1910) the western half.

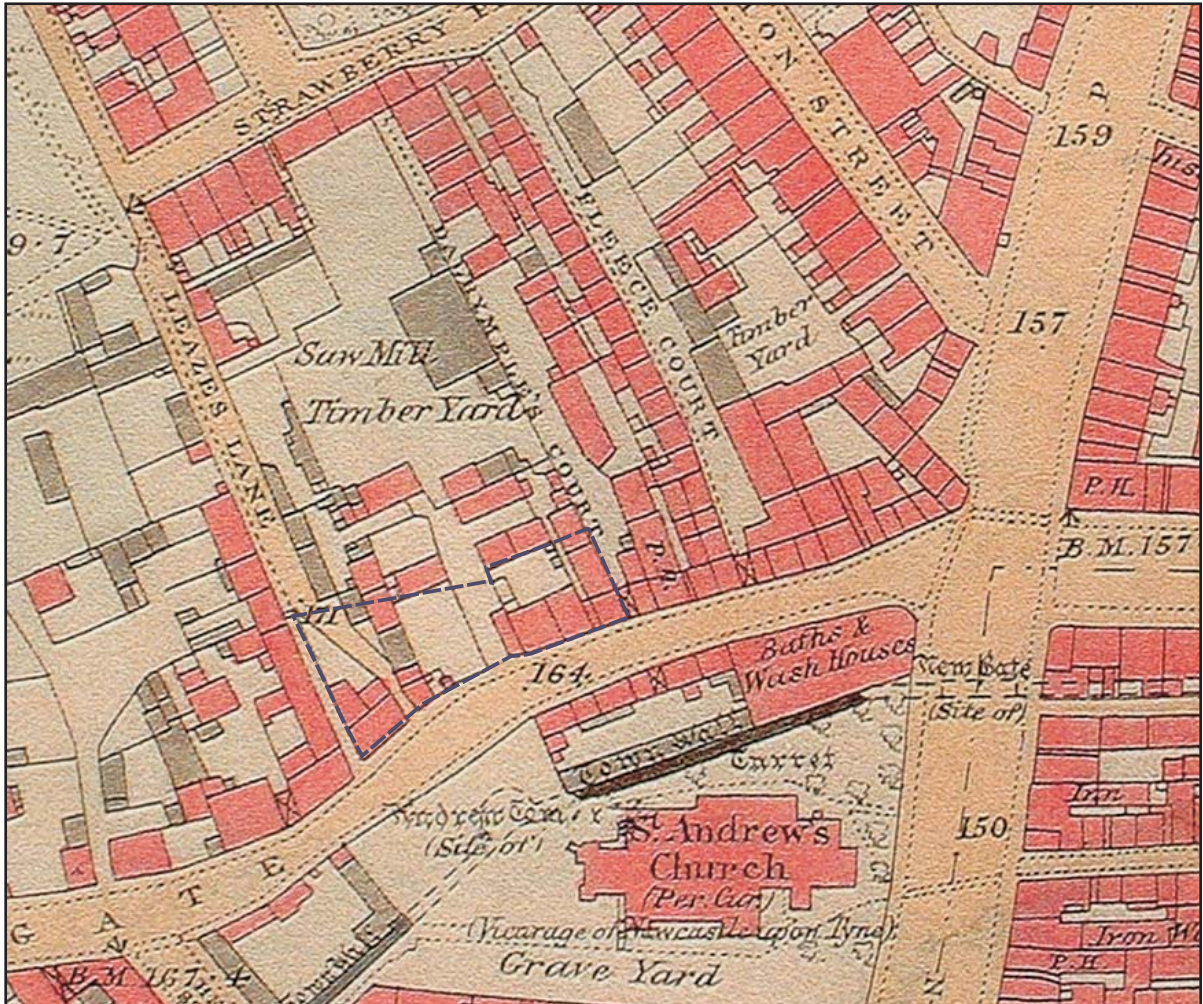
In c. 1930 Magnet House and Andrews House were constructed specifically for the General Electric Co. by the architects Cackett, Burns Dick & Mackellar, on the adjacent site to the east, and by 1936 or 1937 the electricity company had transferred its operations to the new office block. Distinguished by its decorative, carved panels showing stylised electricity workers in heroic poses typical of the era and executed in a bold and simple modern style, the latter is one of the finest of Newcastle's inter-war buildings. In contrast, Messrs. Dixon, Blair & Co., continued to occupy the earlier building throughout the mid-twentieth century, with Kelly's Directories for 1947 and 1968 both listing the boot and shoe manufacturers at 30 Gallowgate. The 1968 directory also lists the Liverpool Victoria Friendly Society at no.32/34.

The most recent tenants of the building include a Japanese restaurant, which occupied the basement of no. 34, and 'Fine Feathers', a retailer of 'quality nearly new designer wear' on the ground floor of no. 32. The building was demolished in 2005 prior to the current construction work commencing. The remainder of the development site, comprising its entire eastern half and the rear of 30-34 Gallowgate, was occupied by public car parks.





*Illus. 1: Location of the site on Gallowgate and Strawberry Lane, (circled in red) within Newcastle upon Tyne*



*Illus. 2: The development area (marked with a dashed line) as shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey plan of 1859 (sheet XCVII.7)*



*Illus. 3: Assessment area (marked in blue) shown on the Goad plan of 1930.*

## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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### 2.1 Timescale

The watching brief on the Gallowgate/Strawberry Lane area commenced on the January 2006 and was completed on May 2006 when all groundworks associated with the scheme were completed.

### 2.2 Nature of works

Initial works involved the construction of an access ramp within the existing car park behind (north of) the development site to maintain public access to that car park. A slit trench was excavated to enable the construction of a retaining wall for the ramp. The main groundworks involved the excavation of deposits into natural subsoil along the rear of the site to enable the construction of a basement car park. The basement car park extended to the south as far as the Gallowgate street frontage of the development site (the site of 30-34 Gallowgate) which was already cellared.

The western edge of the development area (used as a car park prior to commencement of construction works) was not excavated to a substantial depth. Groundworks here involved some stripping of the uppermost overburden to provide a level platforms for piling operations. Where piling was impeded by buried structures, along the west and south limits of the site, deposits were mechanically excavated with archaeological monitoring, to permit piling operations to continue.

### 2.3 Watching brief methodology

The watching brief entailed observation of surface stripping works carried out by mechanical excavator, recording the construction trenches and monitoring the excavation of the basement. Any observed anomalies were checked for significance and a photographic record was made throughout the process. Some cleaning of revealed structures was undertaken where this could be practicably and safely accomplished.

The archaeological work was undertaken by means of periodic site visits in liaison with the main contractor's Site Manager.

Due to the narrowness and depth of the construction trenches excavated it was not possible to record sections through the stratigraphy other than by photography, for reasons of health and safety.

### 2.4 Results of watching brief

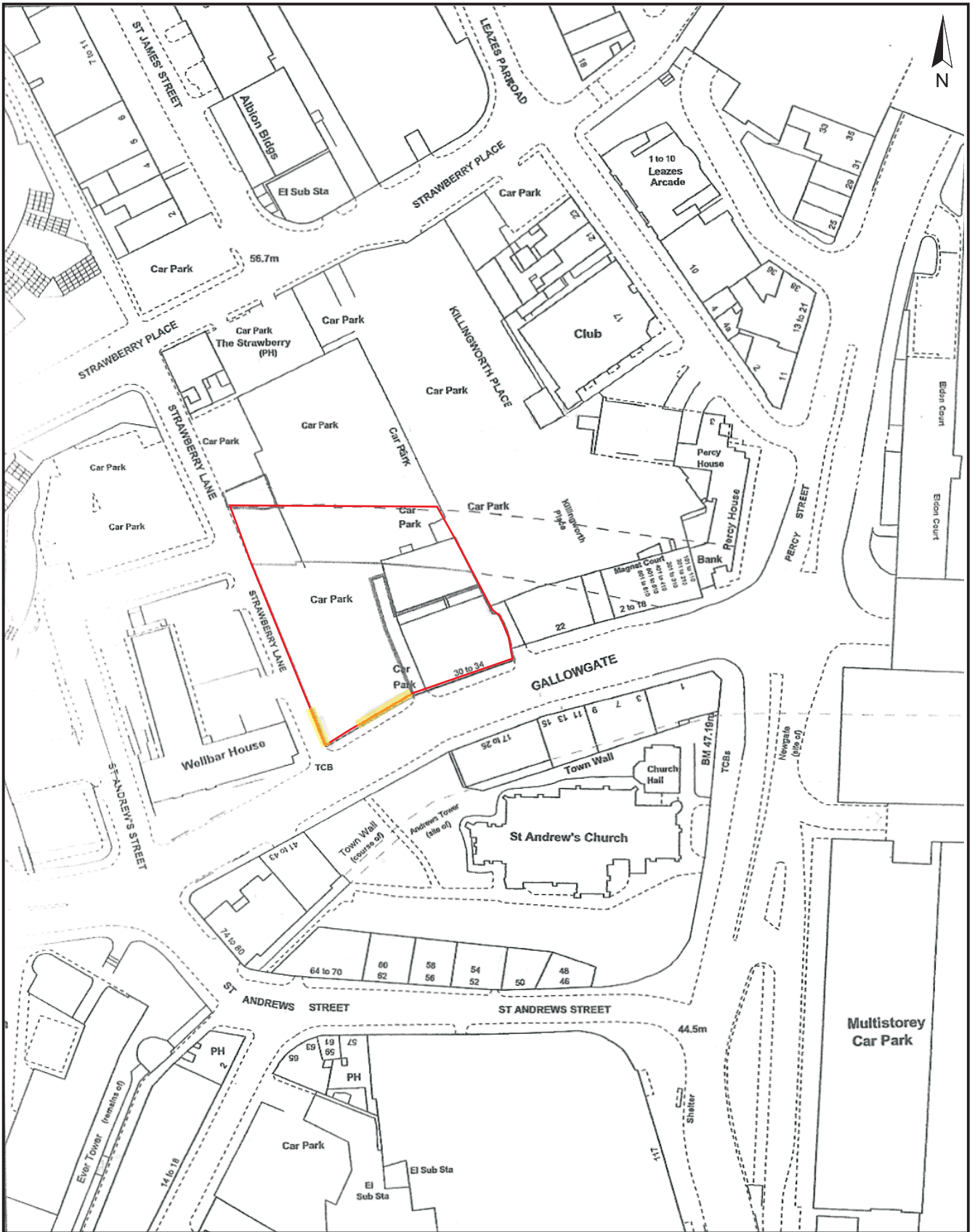
No archaeologically significant observations were made during initial construction of the access ramp for the existing public car park or during the excavation of the basement car park (east and north areas of the site) and the surface stripping in preparation for piling operations in the western part of the site.

However brick and concrete vaults were observed and photographically recorded in a narrow piling trench, 10m in length and 0.5m wide, running parallel to Strawberry Lane at the SW corner of the development site. Three further brick and concrete walls were observed in another trench which was dug to facilitate piling operations along the southern edge of the site, parallel with the street line of Gallowgate (see Illus. 5). These brick walls ran NNW-SSE, perpendicular to the alignment of Gallowgate, and were 0.75m wide. At the bottom of this trench, at a depth of 1.75m, a short section of stone walling was recorded between two of the brick walls. Two courses of the stone wall were preserved, running parallel with Gallowgate for a length of 1.50m, between two of the brick walls. To the west the stone wall appeared to turn southward beneath the westerly of the brick walls. The stone wall was overlain by a layer of rubble and a series of makeup/demolition deposits. It was not observed elsewhere in this trench. The wall may have continued further eastwards, but the trench was not sufficiently deep there to disturb it.

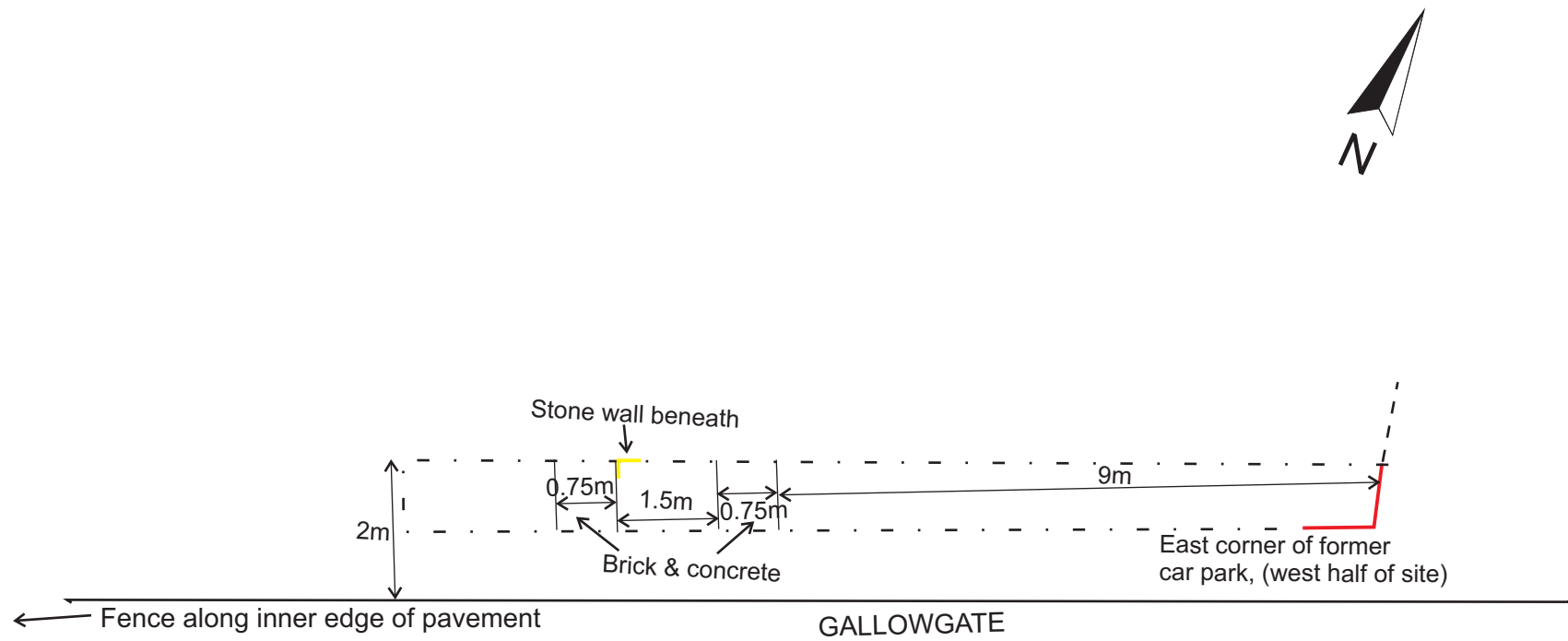
## **2.5 Interpretation of the results**

The brick and concrete construction of the majority of the structures recorded in the SE part of the site demonstrates they are of no great antiquity. They are probably to be associated with the public baths and wash houses known to have existed in this part of the site at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (see Illus. 3: Goad plan of 1930).

The stone wall was roughly coursed, its characteristics suggesting it may have formed part of foundation walling. No material was recovered which could assist in the dating of this structure. However some elements provide relative dating. Its longest recorded face lay parallel to the line of Gallowgate implying it was constructed after that street had been laid out. Although it turned and ran under the line of one of the brick walls apparently on the same alignment as that structure the stone wall was not necessarily associated with the brick one. None of the other brick walls were observed to be associated with stone foundations in this way. An early modern date (17<sup>th</sup>-early 19<sup>th</sup>-century) is most plausible.



*Illus. 4: Location plan showing the development area in red with the position of archaeological features highlighted in yellow.*



Illus. 5: Plan showing the position of the structures identified during the watching brief

### 3. CONCLUSIONS

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It is evident that there were no surviving archaeological deposits throughout much of the site. The cellaring of 30-34 Gallowgate and the terracing of the ground to the rear to allow the construction of early 20<sup>th</sup> century furniture warehouses had already removed any deposits throughout the eastern part of the development site.

In the western part of the site, earlier structures were only revealed in small pockets along the southern and western limits of the site where trenches associated with were excavated. Surface stripping was carried out to a shallow depth not exceeding that of the disturbed top-soil which contained bricks and other debris associated with modern tipping. No archaeological features were identified where the deep excavation for the car park extended into this part of the site, only layers of demolition rubble and makeup deposits.

Most of the structures identified in the works trenches along the south and west edges of the site were of brick and concrete indicating a relatively recent date of construction. They are probably to be associated with the Corporation Baths and Wash Houses which are known to have occupied the western half of the Gallowgate frontage of the development site. The wash houses also extended back up the slope alongside Strawberry Lane (see Illus. 3). The underlying stone wall may be tentatively attributed to an earlier post-medieval building. It is likely that survival was better along the edge of the site because structures were left standing here as they served to revet the substructure of the road carriageways and pavements along Gallowgate and Strawberry Lane.

In sum the development site has been subject to substantial topographic modification and disturbance over the recent centuries. In particular, the construction of substantial buildings in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century (baths & wash houses, warehouses and offices) which were either furnished with deep cellaring or terraced into the sloping site has destroyed most archaeological remains which may once have existed within the development area. As a result that archaeological features were found to survive only in small pockets along the edge of the site and for the most part these did not predate the c. 1900 rebuilding described above.

No further archaeological work is required with respect to this scheme.



#### 4. REFERENCES

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LUAU 2000 Assessment Report: The south part of the car park east of Strawberry Lane and 30-34 Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Archaeological Practice 2005 *30-34 Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne: Building Survey*. Unpublished report prepared by the Archaeological Practice Ltd for Terrace Hill Projects Ltd.



1. The trench for the revetment wall of the access ramp viewed from the west. The section shows layers of demolition rubble and redeposited material



2. Section at the front of the western part of the site (the wall is the front wall of the cellaring for 30-34 Gallowgate)



3. Deep section on the N edge of the development site showing the deep cut into natural subsoil and the thick overlying layer of redeposited clay



4. Construction trench beside Strawberry Lane looking S towards Gallowgate



5. Brick vault associated with Corporation Baths in the S end of the Strawberry Lane construction trench



6. A basement vault of the Corporation Baths next to Strawberry Lane



7. Piling trench along the S edge of the development site showing brick walls probably associated with Corporation Baths (looking W)



8. Slot between the two brick walls in the piling trench showing the courses of stone walling at the bottom (looking N)



9. The stone wall at the bottom of the same section viewed in Pl. 8 with the W brick wall removed