Archaeological Services
University of Durham

Land at Narrowgate House, Alnwick, Northumberland

archaeological evaluation

on behalf of
Andrew Woodhouse

Report 1984
September 2008

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1. Summary

The project

1.1 This report presents the results of an evaluation and building assessment conducted in advance of a proposed development at Narrowgate House, Alnwick. The works comprised the excavation of six trial trenches and a test pit, recording of a previously excavated structural survey test pit, and photography and assessment of a building and garden wall within the garden of the property.

1.2 The works were commissioned by Andrew Woodhouse, and conducted by Archaeological Services in accordance with a specification provided by Northumberland County Council Conservation Team and a written scheme of investigation provided by Archaeological Services.

Results

1.4 The evaluation identified a number of features of medieval and post-medieval date at the eastern end of the garden, close to Narrowgate House. However, most of these were truncated by a large modern cut that extended at least 0.35m into the natural subsoil.

1.5 Two probably medieval pits were uncovered, together with a gully. Two walls, together with two cobble surfaces, of probable post-medieval date, were uncovered. A small assemblage of medieval and post-medieval pottery was recovered.

1.6 Throughout most of the garden, soil deposits in excess of 1m deep were encountered, and these were not fully excavated. A post-medieval horse burial and remains of a 19th century glasshouse were identified within them. Towards the west, borehole evidence suggests the soil horizons reach a depth of nearly 3m. It has not been established whether significant archaeological remains are preserved beneath these soil deposits or not.

1.7 A stable block and carriage house was examined. It is an integral part of the site, likely to be contemporary with the house, but is in a poor condition, while alterations have destroyed evidence of past use and the sense of its original function. For this reason this building is assessed as being of only local significance. The north wall of the garden appears to have been internally heated for fruit growing. If this proves to be the case, then this would be assessed as being more significant than the coach house, despite its damaged state. This is because of the relative rarity of such finds in urban settings, and the contribution that such a structure makes to the group value of the site.

Recommendations

1.8 It is recommended that where possible, new construction works should be on shallow foundations and preferentially sited towards the rear of the property. Where this does not prove possible, archaeological monitoring should be carried out during the initial stages of construction, to record any archaeological features uncovered by this activity.

1.9 No further archaeological work on the stable / carriage house is recommended. Some remedial work is required as a matter of urgency if the building is not to suffer further decay.

1.10 It is considered essential for the long-term preservation of this building that some new economic use should be found for it. Without this, further decline in its state of repair, and eventual collapse, are inevitable.

1.11 If the building is to be retained, extensive work will be required. Structural engineers who have examined the coach house are of the opinion that the fabric would need to be carefully dismantled and re-built. This should preferably be in a position where it is not at risk from traffic or other factors. Moving the building would help to re-establish the visual connection with Narrowgate House. This has been adversely affected by the construction of tall modern buildings on Pottergate.

1.12 Repair and restoration work on the garden wall will necessary. It is recommended that the wall should be examined carefully when this work is carried out, so that the possibility of active heating can be investigated, and any evidence can be recorded. Such work may provide information that will inform decisions on the re-instatement of the structure.

2. Project background

Location (Figure 1)

2.1 The site is located to the rear of Narrowgate House, 31-33 Narrowgate, Alnwick, Northumberland (NGR: NU 1849 1349). It covers an area of around 850 sq m, bounded by the gardens of properties along Pottergate to the south and west, the gardens of properties further along Narrowgate to the north, and Narrowgate House itself to the east.

Development proposal

2.2 It is proposed to re-develop Narrowgate House as a hotel, with extensions and car parking space in the gardens to the rear. This evaluation has been carried out during the pre-application stage of this proposal.

Objective

2.3 The objective of the evaluation was to assess the nature, extent and potential significance of any surviving archaeological features within the proposed development area, so that an informed decision may be made regarding the nature and scope of any further scheme of archaeological works that may be required in advance of development.

Methods statement

2.4 The works have been undertaken in accordance with specifications provided by Northumberland County Council Conservation Team, reference number A4/12; 8427 (Appendix 3), and a WSI (written scheme of investigation) provided by Archaeological Services and approved by Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (reference number PC 08.206).

Dates

2.5 Fieldwork was undertaken between 30th June and 3rd July 2008. This report was prepared between 4th and 24th July 2008.

Personnel

2.6 Fieldwork was conducted by Andy Platell, Dave Webster and Paul Wilson, and supervised by Andy Platell. The building assessment was conducted by Richard Annis. Soil sample processing was undertaken by Andrea Dixon. This report was prepared by Andy Platell, with contributions from Richard Annis, and illustrations by David Graham. Specialist analysis was conducted by Dr Jennifer Jones (artifacts), Louisa Gidney (animal bone), and Dr Charlotte O'Brien (macrofossil analysis). The Project Manager was Peter Carne.

Archive/OASIS

2.7 The site code is **ANG 08**, for **A**lnwick, **N**arrow**g**ate 20**08**. The archive is currently held by Archaeological Services and will be transferred to the Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle upon Tyne in due course. Archaeological Services is registered with the **O**nline **A**cces**S** to the **I**ndex of archaeological investigation**S** project (OASIS). The OASIS ID number for this project is **archaeol3-45907**.

3. Landuse, topography and geology

3.1 At the time of the evaluation the proposed development area comprised a vacant building and its grounds, both of which were in a poor state of repair.

3.2 The site lies within the historic core of Alnwick (Figure 1) and comprises Narrowgate House, which fronts onto Narrowgate, and a large burgage plot to the rear. This burgage plot is also accessed by a short narrow driveway leading off Pottergate. Within the plot a small stable is present but in a derelict state. The northern and western boundary walls of the site comprise stone and brick. The land rises gently from Narrowgate House to the north-west corner of the plot. The mean elevation of the plot is approximately 54m OD.

3.3 The solid geology of the site comprises Scremerston Coal Group and Carboniferous Limestone Group sediments of Lower Carboniferous Age. These are overlain by boulder clay, which in turn is overlain by glacial sand. Geo-technical boreholes excavated for the neighbouring Pottergate development in 2002 identified depths of between 4.7m and 6.8m of sands, overlying depths of 6.5m to 9.0m of boulder clay (Robinson Environmental 2002). Similar depths of glacial deposits are likely to underlie the current site.

4. Historical and archaeological background

4.1 Davison (1822) and Tate (1866/68) have comprehensively described the development of the town. A modern summary has been provided by Graham (1973). The town was subjected to detailed analysis by Conzen (1969) and has recently been re-examined by the Alnwick Extensive Urban Survey (Heslop n.d.).

The prehistoric and Roman periods

4.2 There are numerous settlement and funerary sites of various prehistoric dates in the Alnwick region. These include isolated finds, such as Bronze Age burials and Neolithic flints, on the outskirts of the town, as well as later prehistoric hillforts at Camp Hill and on Alnwick Moor. A Roman road runs north-south 9km to the west of Alnwick. There are however no prehistoric or Roman sites within the vicinity of the site, and there is no indication that a prehistoric or Roman archaeological resource exists within the proposed development area.

The early medieval period

4.3 Conzen (1969) suggests Alnwick originated as an Anglian *vill* around 600AD, emerging from a settlement based on the crossroads between the settlements of Eglingham, Edlington and Lesbury. It is probable that Lesbury was the principal settlement in the area at this time, as it held ecclesiastic power over Alnwick until the 12th century. The route-ways to these settlements probably followed the course of Narrowgate and Bondgate to the north, and Clayport Street and Market Street to the south. This would locate the centre of the *vill* to around the Market Place and the triangular road junction of Bondgate, Market Street and Fenkle Street.

4.4 Narrowgate was the route to Eglingham. Conzen (1969, 15) notes that it turns sharply to the north, immediately south of the proposed development area, at the junction with Pottergate, and regards this as unlikely to be an original feature. He regards it as probable that the area to the north of the junction was extensively realigned and modified following the construction of the castle and of Hulne Park. Conzen therefore suggests that Narrowgate may have continued on its alignment without turning to the north, heading towards the east end of Ratten Row, in the early medieval period: this would place the early medieval road as crossing through the proposed development area.

The medieval period (5th century AD to AD 1540)

4.5 The Norman Conquest resulted in the restructuring of the region, the border of which was continually contested. The construction of the Great North Road, which took the route of Narrowgate before crossing the Bow Burn and heading north along The Peth, was integral to the future development of Alnwick. Initially the settlement was a logical place for soldiers to rest on route between Newcastle and Berwick. The position was ideal for a military stronghold, and Yvo de Vescy initiated construction of a castle in *c*.1096. By 1138 it was being described as very strongly fortified. It was bought by Henry de Percy in 1309 and extensively rebuilt on the original site. The castle is sited to the north of the Anglian *vill*. To accommodate the staff, not all of whom could fit in the castle itself, tenements were built along a new road, Bailiffgate. This formed an unofficial 'Outer Bailey' to the castle and was administratively separate from the rest of the town until the 19th century.

4.6 Narrowgate may have been realigned at this time, allowing the street to meet Bailiffgate at a right angle. The burgage plots on either side of the street may have been laid out at this time.

4.7 Pottergate originated as a minor trackway leading out to the surrounding fields. It was known as Barresdale Street in 1567 (Tate 1866, 366) and as Pottergate from 1671. Conzen notes differences between the plots in this area and those in the centre, and attributes this to the infill of the area between the town centre and Bailiffgate following the realignment of Narrowgate. Narrowgate has elongated plots compared to the other streets in the area. The three small plots at the eastern end of Pottergate are recorded (in 1567) as being subdivisions of a larger plot with its frontage on Narrowgate, reflecting the importance of this street. It is likely, that as a major road, Narrowgate would have been filled in with plots prior to the Elizabethan period.

4.8 A licence to wall the town was granted in 1433. Construction of the walls took around 50 years to complete due to funding difficulties. According to Tate (1866) there were towers at Bondgate, Clayport, Pottergate and Narrowgate. The first of these survives, while the modern Pottergate is a reconstruction of 1768 on the site of an earlier structure. The first edition Ordnance Survey map shows part of the wall still surviving to the south of Pottergate at that time. This part of the wall was described by Tate as being 20 ½ feet (6.5m) high and 6 feet (2m) thick.

The post-medieval period (1541 AD to 1899 AD)

4.9 There is however some doubt over the date of construction of the northern part to the wall. A map by Mayson in 1622 shows Pottergate Tower (named as such) at the opposite end of the street, actually within Narrowgate. The other Narrowgate Tower, as described by Tate, is not marked on this map. In fact there is no documentary evidence for this tower at all. Conzen (1969, 30) therefore claims that the wall originally ran along the south side of Bow Burn but was later extended towards the north. However, against this it should be pointed out that the tower is recorded in its current position from 1630 (Conzen 1969, 40), just eight years after the map had been produced. If the northern part of the wall had been built between 1622 and 1630, then it would have been constructed to an obsolete design and would have been militarily useless at the time it was being built. This is therefore considered as unlikely.

4.10 The town is shown on Mayson's map of 1622. As noted above, the location of the town walls as depicted on this map suggests that it is not particularly accurate. In addition to the Mayson map, the Alnwick Extensive Urban Survey (2000) lists a map by Norton produced in 1624. It records that this is unreliable when compared to later maps. Norton was Mayson's surveyor (Conzen 1969, 30), and these two maps appear to be copies of each other.

4.11 Alnwick is shown as a detailed inset on Armstrong's 1769 map of Northumberland. This shows buildings along both sides of the Narrowgate frontage, with burgage plots to the rear. A map by Thompson is a slightly modified copy of this map. The map is undated although the paper contains the watermark 'Green 1822'. It appears to be a copy of an earlier map prepared by Tate for his book on Alnwick. Both maps show a tenement boundary heading towards the junction of Narrowgate and Pottergate: this may be in line with the current southern boundary in the north-west part of the site, which may have extended across the proposed development area. However, this may also be a product of poor quality mapping.

4.12 Alnwick is shown on a map prepared by Wilkin in 1774, Fryer in 1820 and Greenwood in 1828, but these are too small a scale to give useful detail for this site. Wood produced a more detailed map of the town in 1827 (Figure 3). The boundaries here reflect the modern boundaries of the site, although there is an additional boundary within the area running parallel with Pottergate separating the southern part of the plot. The buildings along the Narrowgate frontage are shown similar to their present form, and the access from Pottergate is also shown. The plot is shown as being under the ownership of John Lamberts Esq. This is the earliest map to show a building within the plot: this is the stable block that is subject to archaeological recording as part of this scheme of work.

4.13 The first edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 3) shows the same boundaries, with more detail of the stable block and plot. The stable building is shown as three separate buildings, with the outhouses at the eastern end. A series of paths are shown across the plot, and a small building has been constructed against the northern boundary wall: this is likely to have been a garden building such as a glass house, the outline of which is still visible in the

boundary wall. These features are likely to have resulted from the formal laying out of the area as a garden. An additional line parallel with the back of the Narrowgate frontage reflects a retaining wall at the end of the plot.

4.14 The second edition Ordnance Survey map (1897) shows little difference from the first edition (Figure 3), except that the garden paths are not shown. By the time of the third edition (1923), the garden building has been removed, although a very small structure is visible against the northern boundary wall (Figure 3). This structure is not visible on the fourth edition map (1938): the layout from this point until the present has remained the same.

Previous archaeological works

4.15 There have been several archaeological interventions within Alnwick, which have demonstrated the survival of archaeological remains of medieval and post-medieval date within burgage plots and along street frontages. These include excavations conducted adjacent to the site along Pottergate (Archaeological Services 2001; Taylor-Wilson 2001; 2003). These recorded ground-levelling deposits associated with the burgage plots and rubbish pits, both associated with pottery of 12th-13th century date, along with post-medieval structural remains.

5. The evaluation trenches

Introduction

5.1 Six trenches were excavated in the locations shown in Figure 2. Due to access difficulties, all were excavated by a mini-digger fitted with a 1m-wide toothless ditching bucket.

Trench 1 (Figure 4)

5.2 This trench was 5m in length, and located towards the western end of the plot. Dark brown silt loam topsoil [4: 0.6m deep] overlay a deposit of orange-brown silty sand [3; 0.6m deep] and this overlay a slightly darker sandy silt [2; more than 0.6m deep]. A sondage was excavated through this to the full depth of the machine's arm (1.85m), although the base of this layer was not reached. No archaeological features were identified, and no artefacts recovered from this trench. A geo-technical borehole excavated at this end of the Pottergate development in 2002 identified a depth of 2.85m of made ground. It is likely that soil deposits in this trench are of similar depth.

Trench 2 (Figures 2 and 4)

5.3 This trench was 8m in length, and located to the east of Trench 1. Soil deposits [9] greater than 1m in depth were present in this trench and these were not fully excavated. One feature was present at this depth, a large pit [F5; 2.3m wide by 0.4m deep] filled with a deposit of sand containing a large quantity of disarticulated animal bone [6] overlain by a silt [7] and then another silt mixed with stone and machine-manufactured brick of 19th century date [8].

5.4 The trench was excavated up to the northern boundary wall of the property, in order to investigate the foundations for this wall. The current brick wall is built on top of an earlier well-made stone wall whose top lies at a depth of 0.4m below the current ground surface. This earlier wall extends at least as far downwards as 1m below the current ground surface although its exact depth was not established.

Trench 3 (Figure 4)

5.5 This trench was 15m in length, and located parallel to the northern boundary wall of the property, to the east of Trench 2. Soil deposits more than 1m deep [17/62] were present throughout this trench. Much of the northern baulk of the trench was filled with a floor of unmortared brick [20] overlying a deposit of very fine-grained red sand [19; 0.2m thick]. This floor was only present in a small part of the southern baulk and tapered away westwards indicating that it had been triangular in shape. It is likely to be the floor of the glasshouse that is shown on the 2nd edition Ordnance Survey map of 1897. Towards the east, it was truncated by a cut [F61; 1.7m wide] containing brick and mortar rubble [18]. This is likely to be a demolition deposit for this structure and the rubble overspilled the cut on its western side, to partly overlay the brick floor. A cast-iron pipe 0.25m in diameter crossed the trench directly above this floor and to the east of this a line of large rectangular stones [60] crossed the trench from north to south, just below the ground surface.

Trench 4 (Figure 4)

5.6 This trench was 5m in length, and located to the south of Trench 4. Due to access difficulties, this trench was re-orientated east-west and slightly shortened from the dimensions given in the original specification. Trench 5 was increased in area to compensate for this reduction. A soil deposit [16] more than 1.2m deep was present throughout the trench and no archaeological features were identified.

Trench 5 (Figures 2 and 4)

5.7 This trench was 7m in length, and located to the east of Trench 4. Natural sand was identified at a depth varying from 0.7m at the southern end of the trench to 1.0m at the northern end. Two features were cut into this natural sub-soil. Towards the centre of the trench was a circular pit [F10; 1.1m wide by 0.2m deep] filled with orange-brown silty sandy silt [11]. Several sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from this fill. Further north was an east-west aligned gully [F12; 0.8m wide by 0.15m deep] filled with a darker brown sandy silt [13]. Above both of these was a layer of mid-brown sandy silt [14; 0.4m deep] and then topsoil [15; 0.5m deep].

Trench 6 (Figures 2 and 4)

5.8 This trench was 10m in length, and located at the eastern end of the garden, close to Narrowgate House. The whole of the centre of the trench was filled by a stratigraphically late cut [F39] that truncated all deposits down to a depth below the top of the natural ground surface. Archaeological deposits were identified both to the north and to the south of this cut. Towards the north, natural sand was identified at a depth of 0.9m. A sondage 0.35m deep was

excavated into this sand to establish that it was a natural deposit rather than material redeposited by archaeological activity.

5.9 A pit [F58; 0.6m wide by 0.2m deep] was cut into the natural sand to the north of this sondage. The pit was filled with a mid-brown sandy silt [57] containing occasional small stones and medieval pottery. Above this were two layers of similar sandy silt [56 and 54; both 0.2m deep] that were indistinguishable in the field but were separated from each other by a layer of 0.2m-diameter cobbles [55]. These were only partly exposed in the extreme northern end of the trench but had a clearly defined southern edge. To the south of this edge, the interface between Contexts 54 and 56 could be traced by several sand lenses at the same depth as the cobble surface.

5.10 Towards the south, silt layers 54 and 56 were truncated by a flat-bottomed cut [F53; 1m wide by 0.25m deep] that contained two deposits of similar dark grey-brown silt containing frequent coal fragments and charcoal flecks [52 and 50; both 0.15m deep] separated by a second cobble surface [51]. This cobble surface was very-well constructed, made from rounded cobbles around 0.1m in diameter, and had a clearly defined southern edge formed from larger, more rectangular cobbles, and a northern edge defined by very large stones that formed a raised kerb. Clay pipe stems were recovered from the silt over the cobbles. It is likely that the cobbles themselves are of similar date although this could not be confirmed archaeologically.

5.11 A little way to the north, Context 54 was also truncated by a second cut [F48, more than 0.7m wide by 0.3m deep] that was only partly exposed against the northern baulk of the trench. This was filled with a dark brown silt containing frequent stones and flecks of burnt clay [47; 0.25m deep] capped with a layer of light brown clay [46; 0.05m deep]. A similar band of clay [49] was also present towards the south, overlying silt 50. Between these, and cutting into both of them, was a poorly-made wall of stone and mortar [45]. Mortar from this spread out southwards across the full width of the earlier cobble surface [51]. Above the wall were a mixed deposit of silt, clay, stone and mortar [44; 0.25m deep] and then a thin layer of topsoil [21].

5.12 To the south of stratigraphically late cut F39, the natural sand was not exposed. The earliest deposit identified here was a red sand containing occasional mortar flecks [34; more than 0.15m deep]. This sand was truncated by a shallow but distinct rectangular cut [F36; 0.6m wide by 0.05m deep] containing a dark grey-brown silt containing charcoal flecks [35]. The shallowness but distinctiveness of this feature suggests that this area suffered truncation before the next deposit was laid down. This was a dark brown silt containing frequent mortar flecks [33; 0.15m thick].

5.13 A wall, composed of sandstone blocks and slabs, bonded with clay [38], crossed the trench in an east-west direction over the above deposits. This had a good face towards the south but a poorer one towards the north, possibly indicating that it had been a retaining wall, holding up a bank of material to the north (although since late cut F39 ran along the northern edge of this wall, this poor quality could be due to disturbance from this cut). The wall had a

later capping of mortared stone [37] somewhat similar to Context 45 at the northern end of the trench.

5.14 A deposit of mid-brown silty clay containing frequent stones [32; 0.15m deep] had built up to the south of this wall, and 1m to the south this was truncated by another cut [F31; 0.1m deep]. This was a foundation trench for another east-west aligned, clay-bonded sandstone wall [27; 0.3m high], with dark grey-brown silt [30] filling the remainder of the cut. This wall was capped by a later, well-constructed one made from cemented together sandstone blocks [26], with a flagstone floor [67; 0.4m wide by 0.1m thick] to its south. This latter wall and floor appear to be a return of the modern patio wall that is present slightly to the east of the trench.

5.15 Above silt [30] were a mid-brown silty sand containing occasional stone and mortar fragments [29; 0.2m deep], a dark grey-brown silt [28; 0.15m deep] and then a mixed deposit of silt, stone and mortar [25; 0.4m deep]. This latter deposit was present on both sides of the modern patio wall [26] and may have been a continuation of Context 44 in the northern half of the trench. A cobble surface [24; 1.7m wide by 0.1m thick] was present to the south of, and directly overlying, wall 26, but had been truncated by a shallow cut [F23; 1.5m wide by 0.2m deep] containing a mixed stone, sand and mortar fill [22] to the north. A thin layer of topsoil [21] overlay all these deposits.

5.16 The centre of the trench was filled by a large, vertical-sided cut [F39; 4.8m wide] that post-dated all the neighbouring deposits except for the topsoil. This was more than 1.3m deep and truncated natural deposits by at least 0.35m at its northern end. The sides of the cut were flush with the edges of cobble surface 51 to the north and wall 38 to the south. Since both of these features were buried some distance below the ground surface by the time this cut was made, it is likely that the cut was begun in the centre of the trench and widened outwards until it met the obstacle of these more solid features.

5.17 The cut was filled with a number of deposits; a dark brown stiff clay containing stones [43], overlain by a dark brown silty clay containing 50% stone [42], a mid-brown silty clay containing a similar quantity of stone [41] and a dark brown silt containing mortar flecks and some stone [40]. These were thought to be tipping horizons within a single episode of backfill. Although all these horizons were free from dateable artefacts, their stratigraphic position proves they are of recent date. The machine driver, who lived in the neighbouring street and knew the property well, said he could remember the area outside the house being an open hole, and being backfilled with rubble within his lifetime. The archaeological evidence supports this claim.

Trench 7 - the building survey trench (Figure 4)

5.18 Before the evaluation began, structural engineers had excavated a 1.1m deep trench along the outside face of the western wall of the rear extension to Narrowgate House, in order to investigate possible damp rot. This trench was still open during the evaluation and it was cleaned and the western section recorded. The base of the trench was covered by a dark brown sandy silt [63;

more than 0.1m deep]. This was overlain by a deposit of stone rubble and silt [64; 0.8m deep]. Three large flat stones [65] were regularly-laid on the top of this deposit, towards its southern end. They may have been part of a path or other garden feature and could not be correlated with features in trench 6 to the south. Topsoil [66; 0.2m deep] completed the sequence in this trench.

The stable foundation

5.19 A test pit was hand-excavated outside the southwest corner of the stable building, in order to investigate the foundations. These proved to be a single course of masonry below the ground surface, and to end in line with the edge of the stable. There was no indication that the foundations had ever extended under the carriage house.

6. The finds

Pottery assessment

6.1 A small assemblage of 27 medieval and late medieval sherds came from eight stratified contexts at the site, with a further three sherds found unstratified. Most contexts produced no more than three sherds (Table 1). Sandy and gritty buff and buff/orange wares dominate, and 11 sherds have traces of splash or green glazing. Context [11] produced five sherds from the same medieval jug with strap handle and sooted and splash glazed exterior. Context [50] had a single sherd of late or post-medieval ware with traces of white slip decoration below a clear/yellow glaze.

6.2 Further study of this small assemblage by relevant specialists is recommended in the event that further archaeological works are conducted at the site, to refine identifications and provide closer dating evidence for the medieval contexts. The assemblage has the potential to help define the beginnings and extent of medieval occupation at the site.

Animal bone

6.3 A total of 147 fairly well preserved animal bone fragments were recovered by hand from six contexts (Table 2), with the majority coming from context [6], the fill of a post-medieval pit. Most of these appear to derive from the partial recovery of a complete skeleton of an old, but not excessively aged, horse. The same context also produced a partial skeleton of cat, again an adult animal with all permanent teeth present and all epiphysial ends fused. The remaining find from the context was of a cattle maxilla.

6.4 The possible medieval deposit, context [56], produced a fragment of sheep/goat scapula. Four further post-medieval or recent contexts [25, 33, 43 and 50] all produced identifiable sheep/goat bones, with the humerus from context [25] being of the robust, stocky type associated with the late 18th-19th century. Dog gnawing marks were seen on the sheep bones from contexts [25] and [33]. A further horse bone, part of a tibia, was recovered from context [50].

6.5 Further work on these finds is not recommended at present. However, if the rest of the horse skeleton can be lifted during further work at the site, then the specimen could be of great interest for the study of the post-medieval "improvement" of horses in the region.

Clay pipe

6.6 Two pieces of plain pipe stem came from context [50], and a further stem fragment from context [52]. No further work is recommended on these items.

Building materials

6.7 Two pieces of pantile, both with one sanded face, were recovered from context [33], and two different fragments of brick, both of partial thickness, came from context [25]. One of these, though incomplete, is unusually thick at 55mm. This brick may have been made at the end of the 18th century, in response to a tax introduced in 1784 on the number of bricks produced, regardless of size. Until the tax loophole was closed a few years later, this led to brick makers producing a smaller number of larger sized bricks (Morris 2002, 52). A possible partial stone roof tile was found in context [11], and two irregularly shaped pieces of rough wall plaster with grit and charcoal inclusions came from context [52].

6.8 This small assemblage provides examples of most of the range of durable materials used in post-medieval domestic house building. No further work is recommended.

7. The environmental evidence

Methods statement

7.1 Plant macrofossil assessment was carried out on two pit fills (contexts 35 and 57) and a silt under cobbles (context 52). The entire sample of each was manually floated and sieved through a 500μm mesh. The residues were described and scanned using a magnet for ferrous fragments. The flots were dried slowly and examined at × 40 magnification. Identification of the plant macrofossil remains was undertaken by comparison with modern reference material held in the Environmental Laboratory at Archaeological Services Durham University. Plant taxonomic nomenclature follows Stace (1997).

Results

7.2 The residues were dominated by coal and clinker with fragments of bone, pottery, hammerscale and clay pipe also recorded. The flots contained charcoal, clinker and coal, with charred plant macrofossils present in low numbers. A few uncharred seeds occurred in all of the flots, but the non-waterlogged nature of the deposits suggests these are later intrusive material. The results are presented in Table 3.

Discussion

7.3 The few charred plant remains indicate that oats, barley and wheat were used at the site, which were all staple cereal crops of the medieval and post-medieval periods in northern England. The occurrence of charred hazelnut

shell fragments suggest that gathered wild foods also formed a part of the diet. The charred weed seeds indicate that vetch was either introduced to the site as a weed of the cereals, or was growing at the site on areas of waste ground. The sclerotia of *Cenococcum geophilum* may have washed out of nearby woodland soil, as this soil fungus has mutualistic associations with the roots of many species of trees (Hudson 1986).

7.4 The presence of clinker, charcoal, coal, cereal remains, pottery, bone and clay pipe suggest that the fills are dominated with domestic waste, including residues from the hearth. In addition, the occurrence of hammerscale may indicate the inclusion of waste from small-scale metalworking activity.

Recommendations

7.5 No further analysis is recommended for the samples due to the low number of charred plant remains present. Material suitable for radiocarbon dating is present in all of the samples.

8. The garden structures

Historical development

8.1 Map evidence shows that the existing outbuilding was erected in more or less its present form before 1827, when Wood's map of Alnwick was published (Figure 3). This shows an east-west rectangular block with a yard at its east end and a small northern projection at the west. There are few changes in the depiction of the building over time; small sheds appear in the yard in the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map of 1860 (Figure 3). This plan also shows a small lean-to structure against the north wall of the garden, with beds or paths in front of it. This structure had been replaced by a larger glasshouse by the time of the 2nd edition map of 1897 (Figure 3). This is likely to have been a lean-to vinery or soft fruit house. It is not shown on the 3rd edition map of 1923 (Figure 3), but the smaller structure has reappeared, which suggest that it was incorporated into the glasshouse.

8.2 Wood's map also shows a simple pattern of paths and beds in the garden, based around a central path running the whole length of the plot on a north-west - south-east alignment. At the east end of this is a small free-standing structure which no longer exists; it is not shown on the 1897 map. Smaller paths run to the north side of the stable building. A firmer line marks the edge of a drive that connected the Pottergate entrance to the stable block and yard and the back door of the house.

The stable

8.3 In the south part of the garden is a three-bay stable with a carriage house at its west end and a walled yard at its east (Figures 5, 6 and 7). The building is made of dressed sandstone with a projecting eaves course and a stone water table at the east gable. The foundations are shallow and of the same nature as the walls. The south face is the principal elevation; the carriage house has a high door with a basket arch of reeded masonry, and the stable has a central

door with an ogee head, flanked by wide shallow windows (Figure 8). The plank door to the stable is in three parts, which would allow it to be opened inwards without restricting movement of horses to the outer stalls. A first-floor opening over the door provides access to the hay loft.

8.4 Inside, the walls are plastered. Two timber stall partitions survive, together with the floor and the east end of the manger, but most of the woodwork is in very poor condition (Figure 9). The posts at the end of the stalls have quirked angles and there are the remains of a number of hooks and other fittings; there is no sign of the wooden racks for saddles or tack that are often found in stables. The ceiling retains traces of a hatch to the loft at the south-west corner, and chutes for filling the mangers. There are small vents in the north wall at the head of each stall. The floor is stone.

8.5 The light roof structure has open trusses with the principal rafters rising directly from the wall heads, and a light collar nailed to the west face; the trusses have chiselled carpenters' marks. There are two purlins on either side, and a light ridge piece. None of the covering remains, but Welsh slates were found on the floor and around the outside.

The carriage house

8.6 The west end of the building is entirely occupied by a single space, a former carriage house (Figure 10). This has a wide door in the south wall; there are hinge pins in the west jamb. This and the small rebate in the outside of the opening suggest that there was only a light plank door here. The opening is 3.3m (10'10") high and has a wide basket arch to allow access for a tall vehicle and passengers room to enter and leave. The walls are roughly rendered and there was formerly a lath and plaster ceiling; in the east wall is the mark of a later shelf or platform, 2.22m above the floor. The north wall is open, as a large door with a timber lintel has been inserted into the wall. The space above the carriage house was connected to the lower hay loft over the stable.

8.7 Outside the recent north door is what remains of the small northern extension shown in the 1860 map (Figure 11). Only the east wall remains. It is clear that this was a later addition to the building, as this is a completely straight joint; this is very clearly demonstrated by the fact that a sycamore has grown in the joint, and is forcing the smaller wall aside. There is a shallow fireplace in this wall, with a brick-lined flue in the west face. Inside, the stub of a brick wall appears to be what remain of a raised hearth; this looks like the fragmentary remains of a small forge.

The yard

8.8 Sandstone walls enclose a narrow yard at the east end of the stable, with doors at either end (Figure 12). There is a small stone shed at the north end and a brick lavatory at the south side; both have recent slate roofs and the stone shed has been cement rendered inside, so there are no clues about its former use. Although it is very small for a harness room, the north shed might have been used for this purpose.

The garden wall

8.9 The north wall of the garden is in two different sections. The west end is a simple brick wall, with mortar traces of a vanished lean-to towards the western end. The east section is higher and noticeably thicker. Near the house, a sizeable section of the brick face has fallen off to reveal a stone core (Figure 13). The brick leaf is tied to this core with projecting groups of three bricks that have been inserted into the stone; these are fairly widely-spaced. There is a gap between the outer leaf and the stone wall, and this gap is backed in places with bricks set on edge. In places there are vertical channels that look like flues (Figure 14). The wall also contains a number of pipes; there are three running through the thickness of the wall a little below the flagged coping and another, of smaller diameter, near the ground. A buried iron pipe was found running towards the wall in trench 3.

8.10 It possible that this wall was deliberately designed to encourage the growth of vines or cordoned fruit trees. Brick walls were preferred, as they have good thermal properties and provide plenty of scope for nailing on supports for wall-trained plants. The space behind the brick leaf might provide passive insulation as an air space, as was recommended by a contributor to the *Mechanic's Magazine* in 1825:

> 'Brick facing to a hard stone wall would certainly prove beneficial; but the bricks … should be separated from the stone … by the best of non-conductors of heat - a *confined air*'

Alternatively, the wall could have been directly heated by flue gases from a stove or furnace. Such a stove could heat a length of wall enough to provide frost protection at critical times of the growing season, even where there was no attached lean-to glasshouse. In the large walled gardens of country houses, where heated walls are generally found (such as Belsay Hall, Northumberland, Croxdale Hall, County Durham, and Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire), heat sources are set against the opposite side of the wall. This would clearly not be practicable here. However, the map evidence shows a small structure against the inside face of the wall before and after the time when the narrow glasshouse was in use; it is possible that this housed a stove. If the wall and glasshouse were heated, the lower iron pipes might represent a later system using hot water. Further investigation of the wall would be required to confirm this hypothesis.

Significance

8.11 The stable block and carriage house is an integral part of the site, and is likely to be contemporary with the house. It is thus an important element of the property. However, the condition of the building is poor and deteriorating, and alterations have destroyed evidence of past use and the sense of its original function. For this reason this building is assessed as being of only local significance. The garden wall, if it proves to be a heated wall for fruit growing, would be assessed as more significant than the coach house, despite its damaged state; this is because of the relative rarity of such finds in urban settings, and the contribution that such a structure makes to the group value of the site.

9. The potential archaeological resource

9.1 The evaluation identified a number of features of medieval and post-medieval date at the eastern end of the garden, close to Narrowgate House. However, in this area there was a large modern cut that extended at least 0.35m into the natural subsoil. This will have severely truncated archaeological features in this area.

9.2 Throughout most of the garden, soil deposits in excess of 1m deep were encountered, and these were not fully excavated. Towards the west, borehole evidence suggests this soil reaches a depth of nearly 3m. It has not been established whether significant archaeological remains are preserved beneath these soil deposits or not.

10. Impact assessment

10.1 The construction of foundations and service trenches for the proposed development has the potential to impact on archaeological remains within the site. The exact nature of this impact will depend on the location and depth of these proposed foundations. In general, the further away from Narrowgate House the construction works are, the deeper they would need to be to have any affect on archaeological remains.

11. Recommendations

11.1 It is recommended that where possible, new construction works should be on shallow foundations and preferentially sited towards the rear of the property. Where this does not prove possible, archaeological monitoring should be carried out during the initial stages of construction, to record any archaeological features uncovered by this activity.

11.2 No further archaeological work on the stable / carriage house is recommended. Some remedial work is required as a matter of urgency if the building is not to suffer further decay.

11.3 It is considered essential for the long-term preservation of this building that some new economic use should be found for it. Without this, further decline in its state of repair, and eventual collapse, are inevitable.

11.4 If the building is to be retained, extensive work will be required. Structural engineers who have examined the coach house are of the opinion that the fabric would need to be carefully dismantled and re-built. This should preferably be in a position where it is not at risk from traffic or other factors. Moving the building would help to re-establish the visual connection with Narrowgate House. This has been adversely affected by the construction of tall modern buildings on Pottergate.

1.12 Repair and restoration work on the garden wall will necessary. It is recommended that the wall should be examined carefully when this work is carried out, so that the possibility of active heating can be investigated, and

any evidence can be recorded. Such work may provide information that will inform decisions on the re-instatement of the structure.

12. References

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Appendix 1: Context data

Summary list of contexts. The • symbols in the columns at the right indicate the presence of finds of the following types: P pottery, B bone, C clay pipe, O other materials.

No	Description	Trench	P	B	C	O
1	Void	-				
2	Lower soil horizon	1				
3	soil horizon above 2	1				
4	Topsoil	1				
F5	Post-med cut containing horse skeleton	2				
6	Horse burial	2		•		
7	Soil over 5	2				
8	Rubble over 7	2				
9	Topsoil	2				
F10	Pit cut	5				
11	Fill of F10	5	•			•
F12	Gully cut	5	•			
13	Fill of F12	5				
14	Soil horizon over 11 and 13	5				
15	Topsoil	5				
16	Topsoil	4				
17	Topsoil	3				
18	Rubble fill of F61	3				
19	Red sand	3				
20	Brick floor	3				
21	Topsoil	6				
22	Sand/mortar fill of F23	6				
F23	Shallow cut truncating 24	6				
24	Cobble surface at S end of trench	6				
25	Rubble deposit under 24 but over 26	6		•		•
26	Rebuild to wall 27	6				
27	Stone wall at S end of trench	6				
28	Silt below 25 but over 29	6				
29	Rubble deposit under 28, over 30	6				
30	Fill of F31	6				
F31	Wall foundation trench?	6				
32	Rubble deposit cut by F31	6				
33	Mixed soil and mortar under 32	6		•		•
34	Red sand	6				
35	Fill of F36	6				
F36	Shallow rectangular cut under 34	6				
37	Mortar cap to wall 38	6				
38	Dry-stone wall	6				
F39	Large rectangular cut in centre of trench	6				
40	Upper fill of F39	6				
41	Fill of F39 below 40	6				
42	Fill of F39 below 41	6				
43	Fill of F39 below 42	6	•	•		
44	Rubble deposit in N of trench (same as 25?)	6				
45	Mortared wall	6				
46	Clay deposit to N of 45	6				
47	Silt fill of F48	6				
F48	Shallow cut at N end of trench	6				
49	Clay deposit to S of 45	6				
50	Silt over cobble surface 51	6	•	•	•	
51	Cobble surface	6				

52	Silt under cobble surface 51	6	•		•	•
F53	Cut for F52	6				
54	Silt horizon above 55	6	•			
55	Cobble surface at N end of trench	6				
56	Silt horizon under 55	6	•	•		
57	Fill of F58	6	•			
F58	Pit cut	6				
59	Organic horizon to S of F61	3				
60	Stone path in topsoil	3				
F61	Cut for demolition of glasshouse	3				
62	Soil horizon under 19/59	3				
63	Soil horizon under 64	7				
64	Rubble deposit	7				
65	Stone floor in S end of trench	7				
66	Topsoil	7				
67	Flagstone floor	6				

Appendix 2: Data tables

Table 2.1: *Pot fragments by number and context*

Context	Medieval	Late med or post-medieval
u/s	3	
11	5	
12	3	
43	1	
50		1
52	2	1
54	1	1
56	2	
57	7	
Total	**24**	**3**

Table 2.2: *Animal bone species and numbers by context*

Context	Horse	Cat	Cattle	Sheep/goat
6	87	47	1	
25				1
33				1
43				1
50	1			7
56				1
Total	**88**	**47**	**1**	**11**

Table 2.3: *Macrofossil results*

Context		**35**	**52**	**57**
Sample		**1**	**2**	**3**
Fill		**Pit**	**Silt**	**Pit**
Full analysis recommended		x	x	x
Material available for radiocarbon dating		✓	✓	✓
Volume processed (l)		10.5	7	9
Material remaining		x	x	x
Volume of flot (ml)		80	100	30
Volume of flot assessed (ml)		80	100	30
Residue (relative abundance)				
Bone (burnt)		1	-	-
Bone (unburnt)		-	1	-
Clay pipe		-	1	-
Clinker		3	2	-
Coal		3	2	-
Coal shale		-	2	-
Metal dust / hammerscale		3	2	2
Pot (number of fragments)		5	18	-
Flot matrix (relative abundance)				
Charcoal		4	4	3
Clinker		4	4	-
Coal		-	3	-
Culm node (charred)		1	-	-
Uncharred seeds		1	1	1
Charred remains (total counts)				
(c) *Avena* spp (oat species)	grain	3	-	-
(c) *Hordeum* spp (barley species)	grain	1	-	1
(c) *Triticum* spp (Wheat species)	grain	-	1	3
(r) *Vicia* spp (Vetch species)	seed	-	1	-
(t) *Cenococcum geophilum* (Soil fungus)	sclerotium	2	-	-
(t) *Corylus avellana* (Hazel)	nutshell frag.	-	-	4

[c-cultivated plant; r-ruderal; t-trees/woodland].
Relative abundance is based on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest).

Appendix 3: Project specifications

NCCCT ref: A4/12; 8427 Grid ref: NU 1849 1349

LAND AT NARROWGATE HOUSE, 31-33 NARROWGATE, ALNWICK, NORTHUMBERLAND
Brief for an Archaeological Evaluation

1. Introduction

1.1 Northumberland County Council (NCC) Conservation Team has been approached at pre-application stage to discuss the potential archaeological implications of a proposed development comprising the renovation and conversion of Narrowgate House, 31-33 Narrowgate, Alnwick and the redevelopment of the land to the rear (Fig 1). Narrowgate House is a Grade II* listed building located within the medieval settlement of Alnwick. Narrowgate is known to have been a thoroughfare since at least the medieval period, with a strong potential that it may date back to the early medieval period. The existing site layout reflects its medieval, if not early medieval origins with buildings along the Narrowgate street frontage and narrow burgage plots to the rear. Archaeological investigations within Alnwick and across the county has shown that medieval structural remains can survive later development along the street frontage as up until the 20th century, buildings frequently appear to have been constructed with minimal foundations, thus preserving earlier remains in situ.

1.2 Burgage plots have been shown to be a very rich resource indicating a range of land use ranging from domestic refuse disposal, industrial activity and cultivation. These remains provide a valuable insight into not only the land use within that specific burgage plots but also into the life and diet of the people living in the medieval and later settlements. Investigations have also shown that land-use can vary on a plot by plot basis.

1.3 The range of surviving archaeological remains in burgage plots and along the street frontage has been shown by the archaeological evaluation and subsequent excavation along Pottergate, to the immediate south and south-west of Narrowgate House. The archaeological investigations on that site revealed both medieval and post-medieval structural remains, refuse pits and probable medieval wells.

1.4 The land to the rear of Narrowgate House currently comprises an open area with a single standing building, bounded to the north and west by stone boundary walls, several faced with brick. While the standing remains will be subject to a separate historic building assessment, the archaeological potential of this area is such that NCC Conservation Team have advised that a programme of archaeological evaluation is undertaken at the earliest opportunity in order to establish the nature, extent, location and significance of archaeological remains on this site.

1.5 Alnwick has previously been the subject of a number of desk-based assessments and an extensive urban study in recent years which have built up a good understanding of the available information on the town's development, including the area of the proposed development. For this reason, Northumberland County Council (NCC) Conservation Team has advised the developer that the programme of trial trenching will need to be preceded by a detailed project design rather than a full desk-based assessment. **In lieu of a desk-based assessment, the project design will need to include an archaeological background placing the site in its archaeological and historic context and comprehensive historic map regression focussing on both archaeological potential and more recent areas of potential disturbance. In this way we will be provided with the essential information required by the desk-based assessment combined with a proposed trench location plan based on that information**.

1.6 This brief constitutes NCC Conservation Team's justification for the investigation, its objectives and the strategy and procedures to apply to the archaeological evaluation. The results of this work will be used to inform the planning decision.

1.7 **This brief does not constitute the 'written scheme of investigation'**. It is intended to establish the project parameters to enable an archaeological consultant or contractor to tender for the work and once commissioned to prepare and submit an appropriate Method Statement, Project Design or Specification to the Conservation Team for approval prior to work commencing. The project design/specification should be based on a thorough study of:

- Historic maps held at the Northumberland Record Office and Alnwick Castle Archives
- 19th, 20th and 21st century maps showing subsequent buildings and disturbance

- All relevant background information and archaeological reports, particularly those associated with the adjacent archaeological investigations on Pottergate
- Data held or referenced in Northumberland Historic Environment Record Office (HER).

1.8 The extent of the development (Fig 1) has been taken from plans attached to the planning application. The archaeological consultant or contractor will need to confirm the extent of the development and the nature of the works with the developer as part of the specification.

2. Site Specific Requirements

2.1 The evaluation work proposed here is designed to ascertain whether there are any archaeological constraints that may affect the planned development. The purpose of trial excavation is to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains, their quality, depth and preservation.

2.2 The evaluation should comprise 8% of the proposed development area and should take the form of a series of trenches measuring a total of at least 50m by 1.5m. Should changes to the trench dimensions be necessary these should be discussed with the Assistant County Archaeologist and approved prior to work commencing on site. The trenches should be located:

- to provide effective evaluation of the whole development area
- several trenches will need to be located perpendicular to the line of the presumed burgage plot boundaries to establish if medieval and later boundaries are located on the site
- to investigate any features of potential interest identified by historic map regression
- to archaeologically record and expand, where necessary, the open trench adjacent to the northern boundary wall and Narrowgate House (medieval pottery was retrieved from the lower deposits in this trench during a site visit by Karen Derham, the Assistant County Archaeologist, the pottery is retained in the Conservation Team Office and will need to be passed over to the commissioned archaeologist to be included in the pottery assessment and archive)
- limited test pitting adjacent to the standing building and boundary walls to establish nature and date

2.3 Access arrangements, especially for mechanical excavation equipment, should be confirmed with the person or body commissioning the work, and where appropriate also with the land owner. Utility information should be requested prior to work commencing on site, so that the utilities can be avoided.

3. General Standards

3.1 All work should be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) 1 and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation.2 Archaeological contractors must be able to prove that they have appropriate excavation experience and current insurance to undertake excavations.

3.2 The contractor should provide an indication of the resources they are proposing to use on the site, expressed where appropriate as a number of person days for each grade.

3.3 All staff must be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Short CVs/relevant career histories should be provided in the specification for all site staff of supervisor or higher grade as well as any specialists involved in the project either in the field or during the post excavation phase.

3.4 Pre-site work preparation

1. A specification in line with this brief must be submitted and approved by NCC Conservation Team prior to work commencing.
2. An appropriate environmental sampling strategy is a mandatory part of this project. Advice on such a strategy must be obtained from the English Heritage Scientific Advisor for North-East England, Dr Jacqui Huntley, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, Science Laboratories, South Road, Durham. The sampling strategy should be included in the specification and submitted to the County Archaeologist for approval.
3. The relevant museum should be contacted to discuss archiving, prior to work commencing.

[1] Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2000, Code of Conduct

[2] Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2001, Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation

4. All staff must familiarise themselves with the archaeological background of the site, and the results of any previous work in the area, prior to the start of work on site. All staff must be aware of the work required under the specification, and must understand the projects aims and methodologies.

3.5 Fieldwork

1. Topsoil and unstratified modern material may be removed mechanically by a machine using a wide toothless ditching blade. This must be carried out under continuous archaeological supervision
2. The topsoil or recent overburden should be removed in successive level spits down to the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural subsoil, whichever is encountered first.
3. All faces of the trench that require examination or recording must be cleaned sufficiently to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains
4. The top of the first significant archaeological horizon or the natural subsoil must be cleaned sufficiently to allow for its inspection for features.
5. All subsequent deposits must be excavated by hand
6. The archaeology must be investigated sufficiently to establish its nature, extent and date, unless it is deemed of sufficient importance to require total preservation in situ. All features exposed should be sample excavated. This would 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
7. Within the constraints of the site, the excavations should be maintained in a manner that allows quick and easy inspection without any requirement for additional cleaning.
8. Deposits should be assessed for their potential for providing environmental or dating evidence. Sampling should be in line with the strategy agreed with Jacqui Huntley and the Conservation Team
9. In the event of human burials being discovered, they should be left in situ, covered and protected and the coroners' office should be informed. If removal is essential, work must comply with relevant Home Office regulations.
10. Appropriate procedures under the relevant legislation must be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasure Act 1996.
11. The drawn record from the site must 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. If there is any uncertainty, advice should be sought from the Assistant County Archaeologist as to which sections may be appropriate for inclusion within the site record.
12. During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts 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).

3.6 Contingency

3.6.1 In some circumstances a programme of evaluation may, in answering the questions posed, also raise others of an unexpected nature. Every attempt should be made to deal with the problem by agreed modification of the specification while fieldwork is in progress.

3.6.2 A contingency sum should be allowed for the excavation of an additional 20m of trench to answer particular issues that may arise during fieldwork. **Failure to make this allowance, where appropriate, may necessitate further evaluation work being recommended to the local authority and a delay in the decision making process for a future planning application on this site.**

3.6.3 The activation of the contingency must only be undertaken after discussion with, and with the agreement of the County Archaeological Officer. A representative of the developer/owner etc should be present at such discussions.

3.7 Recording

1. The evaluation trenches should be accurately related to the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.

2. A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) should be made for all work, using pro forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings should be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate
3. The stratigraphy of all trenches should be recorded even where no archaeological deposit have been identified
4. All archaeological deposits and features, the current ground level and base of each trench must be recorded with an above ordnance datum (aOD) level.
5. A photographic record of all contexts should be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and should include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs should be kept
6. Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix should be compiled

4. Post excavation work, archive, and report preparation

4.1 Finds

4.1.1 All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds must be carried out in compliance with the IFA Guidelines for Finds Work and those set by UKIC.

4.1.2 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. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer.

4.1.3 All retained artefacts must be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

4.2 Site Archive

4.2.1 The archive and the finds must be deposited in the appropriate local museum, within 6 months of completion of the post-excavation work and report.

4.2.2 Before the commencement of fieldwork, contact should be made with the landowners and with the appropriate local museum to make the relevant arrangements. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer. Details of the appropriate museum can be provided by the Assistant County Archaeologist.

4.2.3 **Northumberland County Council will require confirmation that the archive had been submitted in a satisfactory form to the relevant museum.**

4.3 Report

4.3.1 The evaluation part of the initial stage in a potential multi-staged programme of archaeological work and has been requested following direct consultation between the developer and NCC Conservation Team

4.3.2 The Conservation Team require two copies of the report (one bound and one unbound)

4.3.3 Each page and paragraph should be numbered within the report and illustrations cross-referenced within the text.

4.3.4 The report should include the following as a minimum:

1. NCC Conservation Team reference, OASIS reference number and an 8 figure grid reference
2. A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of at least 1:10 000
3. A location plan showing trench locations within the site. This must be at a recognisable planning scale, and located with reference to the national grid, to allow the results to be accurately plotted on the Sites and Monuments Record
4. Plans and sections of archaeology located at a recognisable planning scale (1:10, 1:20, 1:50 or 1:100, as appropriate)
5. A summary statement of the results
6. A table summarising the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds
7. Any variation to the above requirements should be approved by the planning authority prior to work being submitted

4.4 OASIS

4.4.1 NCC Conservation Team and HER support the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) Project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large scale developer funded fieldwork.

4.4.2 The archaeological consultant or contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/. If the contractors are unfamiliar with OASIS, they are advised to contact Northumberland HER prior to completing the form. Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the HER, Northumberland HER will validate the OASIS form thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website. The archaeological consultant or contractor must indicate that they agree to this procedure within the specification/project design/written scheme of investigation submitted to NCC Conservation Team for approval

4.5 Publication

4.5.1 A summary should be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' and submitted to Liz Williams, Northumberland HER Officer, by December of the year in which the work is completed.

4.5.2 A short report of the work should also be submitted to a local journal if appropriate.

5. Monitoring

5.1 The County Archaeologist must be informed on the start date and timetable for the evaluation in advance of work commencing.

5.2 Reasonable access to the site will be afforded to the County Archaeologist or his/her nominee at all times, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological evaluation

5.3 Regular communication between the archaeological contractor, the County Archaeologist and other interested parties must be maintained to ensure the project aims and objectives are achieved.

6. Further Guidance

6.1 Any further guidance or queries regarding the provision of a specification should be directed to:
Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
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16/5/08

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NCCCT ref: A4/12; 8427 Grid ref: NU 1849 1349
LAND AT NARROWGATE HOUSE, 31-33 NARROWGATE, ALNWICK, NORTHUMBERLAND
Brief for a Standing Building Assessment

1. Introduction

1.1 Northumberland County Council (NCC) Conservation Team and the Alnwick Conservation Officer have been approached at pre-application stage to discuss the potential archaeological and conservation implications of a proposed development comprising the renovation and conversion of Narrowgate House, 31-33 Narrowgate, Alnwick and the redevelopment of the land to the rear (Fig 1). Narrowgate House is a Grade II* listed building located within the medieval settlement of Alnwick. Narrowgate is known to have been a thoroughfare since at least the medieval period, with a strong potential that it may date back to the early medieval period. The existing site layout reflects its medieval, if not early medieval origins with buildings along the Narrowgate street frontage and narrow burgage plots to the rear. Archaeological investigations within Alnwick and across the county has shown that medieval structural remains can survive later development along the street frontage as up until the 20th century, buildings frequently appear to have been constructed with minimal foundations, thus preserving earlier remains in situ.

1.2 The land to the rear of Narrowgate House currently comprises an open area with a single standing building, bounded to the north and west by stone boundary walls, several faced with brick. The development proposals are in the initial stages for this site but the developer has expressed an interest in either demolishing or moving this building within the site, consolidation and potential openings or alterations to the boundary walls and a new build element across much of the open area.

1.3 NCC Conservation Team and the Alnwick Conservation Officer have expressed a preference for the retention, restoration and reuse of the existing historic structures. They have also advised that the value of the existing historic structures within their context requires further more detailed assessment before plans for their removal or alteration are progressed. NCC Conservation Team has also advised that the impact of any new-build element on archaeological remains should be investigated by a programme of trial trenching.

1.4 The programme of trial trenching is the subject of a separate brief. This brief constitutes Northumberland County Council Conservation Team's justification for the investigation, its objectives and the strategy and procedures to apply to the desk-based and standing building assessments. **This brief does not constitute the 'written scheme of investigation'**.

1.5 The assessment is designed to establish:

Standing building in the curtilage of Narrowgate House

i) the date, phasing and development of the building and its different components (Close consultation with the archaeological contractor undertaking test pitting adjacent to the building may help to establish this)

ii) the historical and architectural significance of the standing building on a local, regional and national level

iii) the significance of each phase and the individual and group value of the building within the curtilage of Narrowgate House, the wider landscape and Conservation Area

iv) the high, medium or low significance of surviving features, fixtures and fittings surviving within the building

v) combine the results of the assessment with the results of the structural survey of the building to identify potential requirements and mitigation strategies

Boundary walls

i) the date of the stone boundary walls and whether the brick facing is contemporary or subsequently added. (Close consultation with the archaeological contractor undertaking test pitting adjacent to the wall may help to establish this)

ii) the historical and architectural significance of the boundary walls and brick facing on a local, regional and national level

iii) the significance of each phase and the individual and group value of the wall within the curtilage of Narrowgate House, the wider landscape and Conservation Area

iv) combine the results of the assessment with the results of the structural survey of the walls to identify potential requirements and appropriate mitigation strategies

1.6 It is intended to establish the project parameters to enable a historic buildings specialist or suitably experienced archaeological contractor to tender for the work. **Curriculum vitaes and examples of comparable assessment work must be provided to NCC Conservation Team and the Alnwick Conservation Officer for approval prior to work commencing**

1.7 **The appointed historic buildings specialist or suitably experienced archaeological contractor must confirm in writing to the Assistant County Archaeologist and the Alnwick Conservation Officer that they accept all the requirements of the brief and confirm the extent of the development and the nature of the works following discussions with the developer. Any variations must be discussed with the Assistant County Archaeologist and the Alnwick Conservation Officer before the commencement of work. No work should commence prior to the receipt of that letter**.

2. General Standards

2.1 A standing buildings assessment should be carried out to English Heritage standards, following the guidelines issued by that body in 2006, in order to establish the local, regional and national value of the building and boundary walls both individually and as a group of buildings within the setting of Narrowgate House, the wider landscape of the town and its conservation area. A copy of those guidelines is available to purchase from English Heritage publications department and is also available online.3 This assessment should broadly adhere to Level 3 of the guidelines in order to provide an **analytical assessment** with some additional items will be required from other levels of the guidelines:

i) Written Account

This section should include:

[3] English Heritage, 2006, Understanding Historic Buildings. A guide to good recording practice (EH product code 51125).
http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/upload/pdf/Understanding_Historic_Buildings_1.pdf

- Precise details of the location of the building, by name or street number, civil parish or town.
- The National Grid reference of the building and details of listing or scheduling
- The date when the record was made and the name of the recorder
- A discussion of primary (documents and historic maps) and published sources relating to the building and its setting (The archives at Woodhorn and Alnwick Castle should be visited as a minimum)
- A summary of the building's form, function, date and sequence of development and purpose, materials used in construction and evidence supporting this analysis
- Any evidence for the former existence of demolished structures
- A discussion of the architectural or historical context or significance of the building, locally, regionally or nationally in terms of its origin, purpose, form, construction, design, materials, status or historical associations
- Copies of historic maps, drawings, views, photographs or other records illustrating the development of the building or its site

ii) Drawn Record

This section should include:

- A scale plan and elevations (where appropriate) of all floors as existing, showing the form and location of any structural features of historic significance (including blocked windows and doors, former fireplace openings, masonry joints, changes in internal levels)

iii) Photography

This section should include:

- General views of the interior and exterior of the building, from all angles
- The overall appearance of the principal rooms and circulation areas
- A photographic record of any architectural features, features, fixtures and fittings unique to the building

2.2 NB The contractor should bear in mind this is a process of building assessment to establish the history, nature and importance (or otherwise) of the structures on the site. The aim of this exercise is **NOT** to prepare a complete record of the building.

3. Report

3.1 The building assessment has been requested prior to the determination of planning permission in order to assess the appropriateness of the application. It will also establish whether a more detailed programme of building recording is required as a condition of planning permission.

3.2 **The Conservation Team requires two copies of the report (one bound and one unbound). Another bound copy must be sent to Frances Fewster, the Alnwick Conservation Officer.** Each page and paragraph should be numbered within the report and illustrations cross-referenced within the text.

3.3 Text

3.3.1 The text should include:

1. NCC Conservation Team reference, OASIS reference number and an 8 figure grid reference
2. The nature and extent of the proposed development and client information
3. Description of the results of the Standing Building Assessment
4. An assessment of the local, regional and national importance of the standing building and boundary walls individually and as a group of buildings within the curtilage of Narrowgate House and Alnwick Conservation Area
5. An assessment and justification of the high, medium or low significance of surviving features, fixtures and fittings associated with the buildings in tabular form
6. Discussion of the physical impact of the proposed development on the standing structures, surviving features, fixtures and fittings and the boundary walls in their current state

3.4 Illustrations

1. A location plan of the site at an appropriate scale of at least 1:10 000
2. A location plan of the extent of the proposed development area. This must be at a recognisable planning scale, and located with reference to the national grid, to allow the results to be accurately plotted on the Historic Environment Record
3. Plans, drawings and photographs appropriate to the building assessment required including historic maps and photographs where appropriate (See section 4)
4. **Any variation to the above requirements should be approved by the planning authority prior to work being submitted**

4. Site Archive

4.1 A limited archive will need to be deposited in the appropriate local museum, once the report is produced. This should comprise:

1. A copy of the report
2. Original illustrations and photographs that are not included in the report
3. A digital copy of the report and illustrations, where appropriate

4.2 The archive and the finds must be deposited in the appropriate local museum, within **6 months** of completion of the post-excavation work and report.

4.3 Before the commencement of fieldwork, contact should be made with the landowners and with the appropriate local museum to make the relevant arrangements. Details of land ownership should be provided by the developer. Details of the appropriate museum can be provided by the Assistant County Archaeologist.

4.4 **Northumberland County Council will require confirmation that the archive had been submitted in a satisfactory form to the relevant museum**.

5. OASIS

5.1 Northumberland County Council Conservation Team and HER support the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) Project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large scale developer funded fieldwork.

5.2 The archaeological consultant or contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/. If the contractors are unfamiliar with OASIS, they are advised to contact Northumberland HER prior to completing the form. Once a report has become a public document by submission to or incorporation into the HER, Northumberland HER will validate the OASIS form thus placing the information into the public domain on the OASIS website. **The historic buildings specialist or suitably experienced archaeological contractor must indicate that they agree to this procedure within the specification/project design/written scheme of investigation submitted to NCC Conservation Team for approval**

6. Publication

6.1 A summary should be prepared for 'Archaeology in Northumberland' and submitted to Liz Williams, Northumberland HER Officer, by December of the year in which the work is completed.

6.2 A short report of the work should also be submitted to a local journal if appropriate.

7 Further Guidance

6.3 Any further guidance or queries regarding the provision of a specification should be directed to:

Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist, Northumberland County Council, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland, NE61 2EF
Tel: 01670 534057, Fax:01670 533409e-mail: kderham@northumberland.gov.uk
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Figure 7
The stable from the house roof

Figure 8
The stable, south face

Figure 9
The stable, internal view

Figure 10
The carriage house, looking south-east at inside wall

Figure 11
The carriage house, view of north wall

Figure 12
The yard, view looking northwest

Figure 13
The garden wall

Figure 14
The garden wall, looking up at possible flues