

# Bedlington

## Northumberland Extensive Urban Survey



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Figure 1: Location

## PART ONE: THE STORY OF BEDLINGTON

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project Background

Towns and villages have been the focus of settlement in this country for many hundreds of years. Beneath our places of work, beneath our houses, gardens, streets and shops-beneath our feet, there lie archaeological remains which can tell us how these settlements were once arranged and how people went about their lives. Awareness and appreciation of this resource can enhance our sense of place and identity and help us understand how the past has directly shaped our present and how we may use it to shape our future. To ensure that evidence for our urban past is not needlessly lost during development local and national government have put in place a range of statutory designations and policies to make sure that valuable remains are protected, preserved and understood.

In 1992, English Heritage published a national policy to help planners and developers deal with urban archaeology and any issues that might arise during the planning process (Managing the Urban Archaeological Resource). This led to the Extensive Urban Survey programme, where funds were made available to individual planning authorities to prepare material to explain how archaeology fits into the planning process and how issues raised can be best resolved. Bedlington is one of 20 towns in Northumberland to have been reviewed within this programme. The report is divided into three parts:

**Part 1** summarises the development of Bedlington using documentary, cartographic and archaeological sources, and examines the evidence for the survival of archaeological remains in the town.

**Part 2** assesses the archaeological potential of the town of Bedlington and how development could impact on significant archaeological resources which are of both national and local significance.

**Part 3** looks at the national and local planning process with regard to archaeology and is designed to give the developer, planner, and general public, the framework within which development in an historic town will normally proceed.

Material within this report includes information available on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER) at the time this report was updated. Information on the HER is constantly being updated and should be used as the primary source for historical and archaeological information.



## 1.2 Location, Geology and Topography

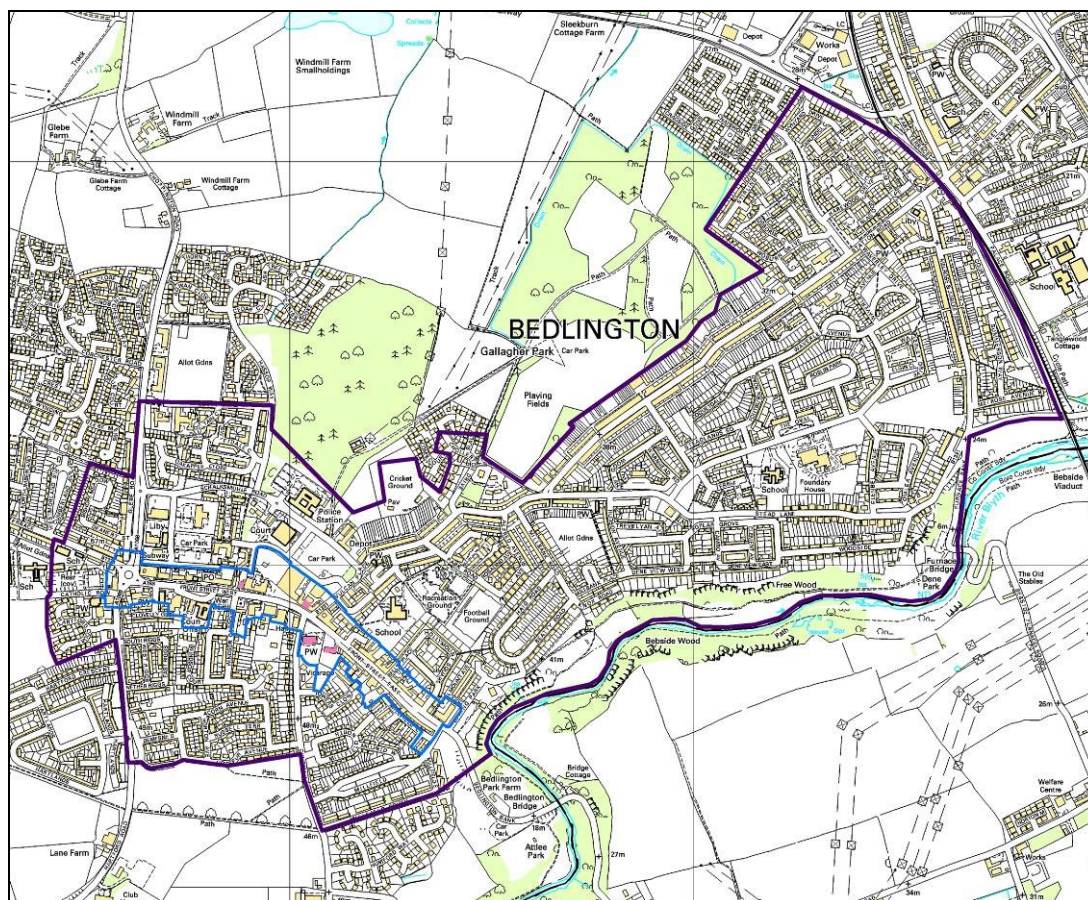


Figure 2: Study Area (purple), conservation area (blue), listed buildings (pink).

The town of Bedlington in south-east Northumberland, once the head of a detached part of the Palatinate of Durham, more recently a very significant coal-mining settlement, and today a largely dormitory town with a population of about 15,000 people, lies above the deeply incised northern bank of the River Blyth at the point where the valley begins to widen out into broad estuarine mudflats. The North Sea lies nearly three miles to the east at Blyth. Morpeth, the county town, lies five miles to the north-west and Ashington two miles to the north.

Historically, settlement at Bedlington has developed to either side of Front Street, a wide thoroughfare nearly a mile long which runs along a low north-west - south-east trending ridge.

The countryside around the town beyond the valley of the Blyth is typical of the commonly flat, occasionally undulating landscape of the south-east coastal plain of Northumberland. It is a countryside divided into large fields, usually in arable but some under pasture, with dispersed farms, thin hedges and only relatively little tree cover, much of this windswept; it is a landscape influenced by the North Sea. Parts of the area are also marked by development on the urban fringe and associated dissection by infrastructure.

The geology underneath Bedlington, indeed of the whole sweep of the south Northumberland coastal plain, has been of great significance in the historic development of the area. It is the

geology of the Northumberland Coalfield, formed in the Upper Carboniferous Age and consisting of successive horizontally laid bands of mudstone and sandstone, interleaved with seams of coal, each of these seams with its own name, and each of these names redolent of the massive coal industry which developed in the area over the 19<sup>th</sup> century. At the height of this industry, in the 1900s, over 25,000 people lived and worked in Bedlington. As well as coal, bands and nodules of ironstone have also formed within the Carboniferous succession. Significantly for the early industrial history of Bedlington, the deeply incised River Blyth has cut through and exposed layers of both ironstone and coal. The solid geology of the coastal plain is overlaid with frequently thick bands of Boulder Clay spread by advancing glaciers, and by other detritus from the end of the last Ice Age, laid down by the retreating ice and escaping meltwaters. This superficial geology has also been exploited for the massive production of bricks to construct houses for the population serving the coalmines and other industries

### 1.3 Documentary and Secondary Sources

The settlement of Bedlington is included within *Boldon Book*, a customal or catalogue prepared in 1183, listing the services and monetary dues owed settlement by settlement throughout the Palatinate to Bishop Hugh du Puiset. The early history of the town is covered by Craster in volume IX of *A History of Northumberland* (1909) and in more detail by Hodgson in volume II part II of the *History of Northumberland* (1832). Wallace includes a section on Bedlington at the end of his *History of Blyth* (1862). There has been fairly limited modern research into the town of Bedlington, although industrial development of the area has been extensively, but certainly not exhaustively covered. There are good primary sources relating to the coal and iron industries in Northumberland Record Office (NRO). Information contained in this report is derived mainly from secondary sources and maps. Archives available in the NRO and DRO for Bedlington have been catalogued in Appendix 1. Further research of primary sources would allow a greater understanding of the development of the town.

### 1.4 Cartographic Sources

Cartographic evidence includes maps of the Hirst Head Estate prepared between 1800 and 1837 as well as the more general *Map of the Northern Coalfield* by Gibson in 1787 and Bell's *Map of the Northern Coalfield* made in 1847. County maps include Speed's of 1610, Armstrong's of 1769, Fryer's of 1820 and Greenwood's of 1828. The First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1860 and succeeding Second and Third Editions, both six inches and twenty-five inches to the mile are vital sources for the expansion of the town and the changing locations of mining and other industrial centres over the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An undated manuscript (NRO 1755/10) which includes architectural drawings, photographs and notes on St Cuthbert's Church provides a useful source for the study of the historic building.

### 1.5 Archaeological Sources

There have been a number of archaeological interventions within Bedlington. The first was in



the 1930s when construction work at Mill Field disturbed a Bronze-Age burial ground. More recent interventions includes work along Front Street and to the north-east of Front Street at Spring Park. Summaries of all interventions appear in Appendix 3. An archaeological assessment of Dene Park, the former site of Bedlington ironworks, was carried out as part of a Single Regeneration Fund project in 1998.

## **1.6 Protected Sites**

There are no scheduled monuments within the town of Bedlington or its vicinity. There is currently one Grade II\* listed building, this is the Parish Church of St Cuthbert, and 20 Grade II listed buildings. The historic core of Bedlington along Front Street is a Conservation Area.

## **1.7 Summary History**

Although there will have been at least transient human activity on the coastal plain around Bedlington since the end of the last glaciation, around 10,000 years ago, the first substantial archaeological evidence from the vicinity of Bedlington is of Bronze-Age date and from Mill Field, a site now incorporated in the south part of the town and overlooking the valley of the River Blyth, where a cluster of cist burials was found during development of a council estate in 1934-5. This burial ground consisted of four inhumations and one cremation. There is little physical evidence for later prehistoric activity around Bedlington, although it is known from adjacent areas that the coastal strip was densely occupied in the later Iron-Age and Romano-British times as is suggested by cropmark enclosures seen at Sleekburn and Nedderton and with excavated sites at Pegswood to the north-west where a series of Iron Age enclosures has recently been exposed.

There was clearly early-Medieval occupation at Bedlington but pinpointing just what this consisted of remains obscure. Antiquarians have, in the past, suggested that the church of St Cuthbert had an Anglo-Saxon predecessor, and although a carved stone slab of 10<sup>th</sup> century date has been found built into one of the later walls of the church, little substantial evidence for this earlier church has as yet been found.

Simeon of Durham, an historian of the church writing in the early 12<sup>th</sup> century, noted that in 1069 the body of St Cuthbert was laid at Bedlington for one night during the flight of the Monks of Durham to Lindisfarne away from a punitive advance by the new Norman authority following rebellion in the North. This would have been an understandable stop as Bedlington was the head or *caput* of Bedlingtonshire, a detached part of the Palatinate of Durham, bought by one of the early Bishops of Durham in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. From at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century, there was a substantial hall at Bedlington for the Bishop and his retinue. There was also a court building as assizes were held in the town. The settlement developed around the predecessor of Front Street with the church and Bishop's hall adjacent and long, narrow properties running back at right angles from the street line. There will also have been a market place in the medieval

settlement, probably extending north and west from the church along Front Street. The River Blyth provided power for a corn mill; it was expected that all tenants would have their wheat milled at this Bishop's mill for which a charge would have been levied.

Early post-medieval Bedlington remained small and probably very similar in form to the medieval settlement, with a rental for the town for 1631 listing only 13 tenants. There is also an entry in the same rental for a Bedlington Colliery, a reminder that by this time, the first waggonways to transport coal in the North East of England constructed by Huntingdon Beaumont of Nottingham had already been constructed at Bedlington and fallen out of use. Both coal mine and waggonways presaged bigger things as the town was starting to systematically exploit its mineral resources.

Bedlington Ironworks developed over the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and was of considerable significance for its development of malleable iron rail which unlike cast iron rail, did not snap or crack. It was used on the Stockton and Darlington and Liverpool and Manchester lines. But the simple exploitation of coal for markets elsewhere outstripped everything; the ironworks closed down in the 1860s when the population of the town was about 8,500. By the first decade of the twentieth century, the population was nearly 25,000, a great percentage of it working in collieries around the town. Bedlington is no longer a coalmining town although much of its built fabric and its extent; vastly increased from one thoroughfare and now including satellite settlements of Bedlington Station and Bedlington Colliery, harks back to that time with only fragments of an earlier history remaining.

## **2 PREHISTORIC AND ROMAN**

### **2.1 Mesolithic and Neolithic**

The landscape around Bedlington will undoubtedly have been exploited by man subsequent to the end of the last Ice Age around 10,000 years ago. In late Palaeolithic and early Mesolithic times, the coastline will have been considerably further to the east, but the rise in sea level as the ice melted has moved it constantly westwards to its present position. The Blyth river valley will have been of especial significance for people in the area, offering a wide range of resources from the river, the estuary and the coastal margins. Other than the occasional Mesolithic and Neolithic flint tool found over the area, though, evidence of early prehistoric activity is restricted to the Bronze Age (c.2000-800BC).

### **2.2 Bronze Age Cists at Mill Field (HER 11747)**

In 1934, Bedlington Urban District Council began to lay out an estate of houses on the Mill Field, an area of land just to the south of the town and on the edge of the valley of the River Blyth. During works prior to construction, the levelling of a ridge revealed five sunken cist

burials in one part of the site (Purvis 1947, 322-4). All were constructed with sandstone side slabs and cover stones. One contained a female burial with an 'earthenware pot'; one a burial with a 'beaker'; another cist, described by Purvis as a 'large chamber' with what appeared to be a side opening contained only a few bone fragments and a flint knife. A small crudely built cist next to this large chamber contained the remains of a cremation and an earthenware pot (since identified as a Bipartite vase). The final cist contained a burial but no grave goods. They are all readily identifiable as burials of the Bronze Age. No controlled excavation was undertaken at the time and cists and contents were apparently damaged by onlookers. A photograph in the Newcastle City Library Local Studies Collection (NCLLSC) shows one of the burials *in situ*. Another more intriguing photograph from the collection shows an enclosure and a round barrow in Bedlington. It may show the Mill Field site prior to the development or may represent an unknown site in the vicinity (both photographs are catalogued within NCLLSC VF 10641). If the site were Mill Field, alternative locations for the features may be suggested based on whether the road shown is Church Lane (NZ 2608 8136) or Bedlington Bank (NZ 2641 8146). The first location is now covered by houses, the second still free of development.

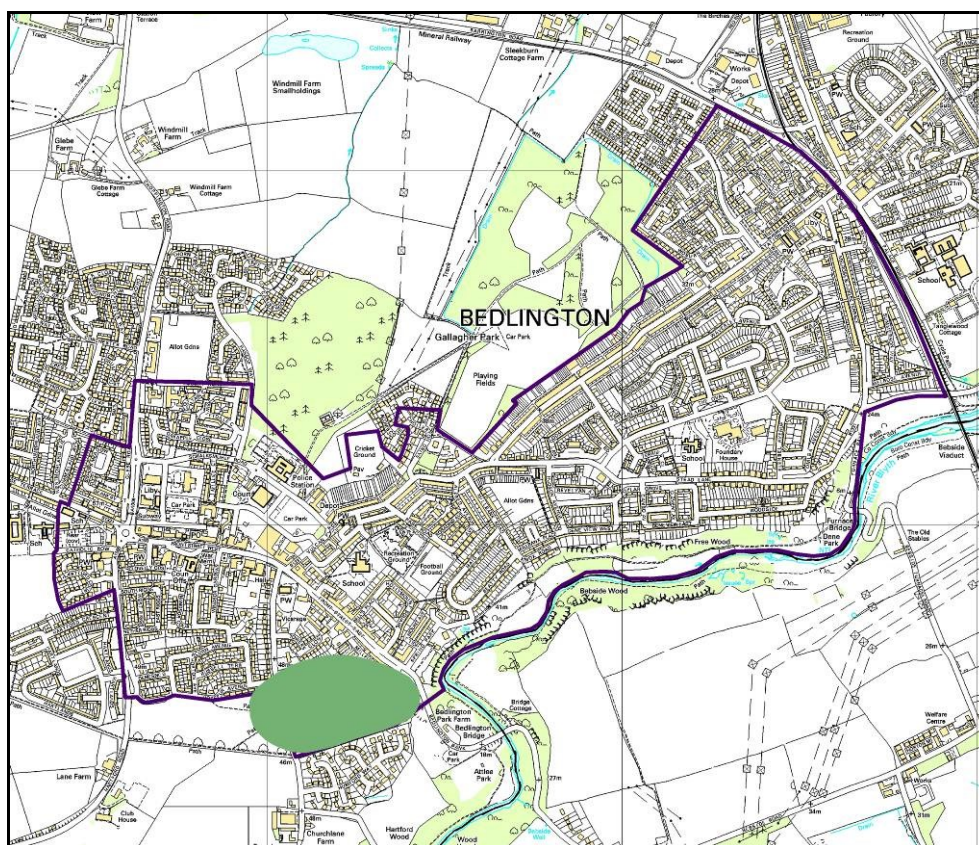


Figure 3: Prehistoric potential of Bedlington. Purple line is survey area.

Dark green block is area of Mill Field where Bronze Age burials were found in the 1930s

## **2.3 Later Prehistoric**

Although there is no evidence for Iron Age or Romano British occupation in the immediate vicinity of Bedlington, aerial photographs of cropmarks show what are probably two rectilinear enclosures at the northernmost bend of the Sleek Burn at Bomarsund (HER 11671) a little to the north-east of Bedlington, and of a circular enclosure to the north of Netherton Moor Farm (HER 11706) just to the south-west of Bedlington. The coastal plain was probably quite densely populated and well-cultivated over Iron Age times. Extensive settlements of this date have recently been excavated at Pegswood to the west of Morpeth (Event no. 13249).

## **2.4 Roman**

There are no known remains of Romans date within Bedlington or in the immediately surrounding area.

# **3 EARLY MEDIEVAL**

## **3.1 Settlement**

Simeon of Durham, a church historian of the late 11<sup>th</sup> and the early 12<sup>th</sup> century wrote that Cutheard, the last Bishop of Lindisfarne and the first of Chester-le-Street ( 900-915) purchased with the patrimony of St Cuthbert the 'ville' of Bedlington with its appendences; Nedderton, Grubbo, Twizle, Cubbington, Slikeburn and Camboise (Hodgson 1832, 349). Bedlington thus became a detached part of the episcopate and successively of the Palatinate and County Durham.

Probably a little later than this purchase, an earth barrow kerbed with stones was constructed overlooking the coast within one of the 'appendences' of Bedlington at Cambois (HER 12074).

The barrow was opened in 1859 and found to contain the skeletons of a middle-aged man and woman and of a man in his 20s. An enamelled bronze brooch and a bone comb, both of distinctively Scandinavian type, were found within the graves. They are clearly pagan burials, and contrast with the only other evidence for Scandinavian influence in the area which is a sculptured slab which was set ex-situ into the external east face of the nave of the Parish Church of St Cuthbert at Bedlington (HER 11764). This abraded stone, first noted in 1921-2, shows two haloed figures-one holding a staff and a book, the other a rod. It is unlike other sculpture from Northumberland and has been compared to Anglo-Scandinavian work from the Tees Valley which would suggest that it was made in the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The barrow and the slab both speak eloquently of the fluidity of belief and of settlement in the area.

The form of the Early-Medieval settlement at Bedlington is unknown. The name is of little help in establishing this, but it would certainly seem to be of Anglo-Saxon derivation, probably meaning the farmstead of Bedel or Betla (Mawer 1920, 15; Watson 1970, 160).

## 4 MEDIEVAL

### 4.1 Settlement

Following the Norman invasion of 1066, continued unrest in the North followed by outright rebellion in 1068 led to punitive campaigns by King William. Fearing for the safety of the body of St Cuthbert which lay in the church at Durham, the monks of Durham carried it to Lindisfarne and perceived safety in 1069. The body of the saint was laid within Bedlington for one night en-route (Wallace 1862, 127) which shows that some form of settlement existed here at this time. It is not until the 12<sup>th</sup> century, though, that we begin to get an idea of the form of this settlement. *Boldon Book*, a customal or catalogue of the properties owned by the Bishop of Durham prepared in 1183 provides much evidence:

In Bedlington there are 80 bovates and each is of 16 acres and yields 4 shillings of rent and one cart-load of wood, and they mow the whole meadow and lift and cart the hay and make ricks. And with the help of the other townships of Bedlingtonshire, they cart timber and mill-stones, and they similarly make the mill-pond, and they similarly enclose the court, and they similarly cover the hall, and they similarly prepare the fishery, and they similarly carry loads as far as Newcastle and as far as Fenwick and no further. Robert Hugat holds in the same township 21 acres which were taken from the waste and pays 40 pennies, and in another part, six acres and from that he pays 44 pennies. Guy holds one toft and one croft and pays 12 pennies. Seven cottagers pay 8 shillings. Peter of East Sleekburn holds there six acres (Austin 1982, 29).

The entry specifically mentions the Bishop's hall and court, a mill and fishery as well as naming a number of tenants including eight cottagers and the number of bovates within the township. Although the church in Bedlington is not mentioned in the entry, it was certainly there by the 1180s as fabric within the structure survives from this time. There was almost certainly a church at Bedlington by the 10<sup>th</sup> century, but there is no *in-situ* physical evidence for this.

### 4.2 Bishop's Hall and Courts (HER 11849)

*Boldon Book* confirms the presence of a hall (*aulam*) for the bishop and of courts in Bedlington in the late 12<sup>th</sup> century. The location of the hall and the courts is uncertain although the site formerly known as Demesne Field to the west of St Cuthbert's church would seem a likely candidate. An article in the *Morpeth Herald* for April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1954 mentions a local tradition of remains in this area, including 'fine arches and human bones' on land where the infant school formerly stood. The veracity of the stories, of course, is open to question, but they are of



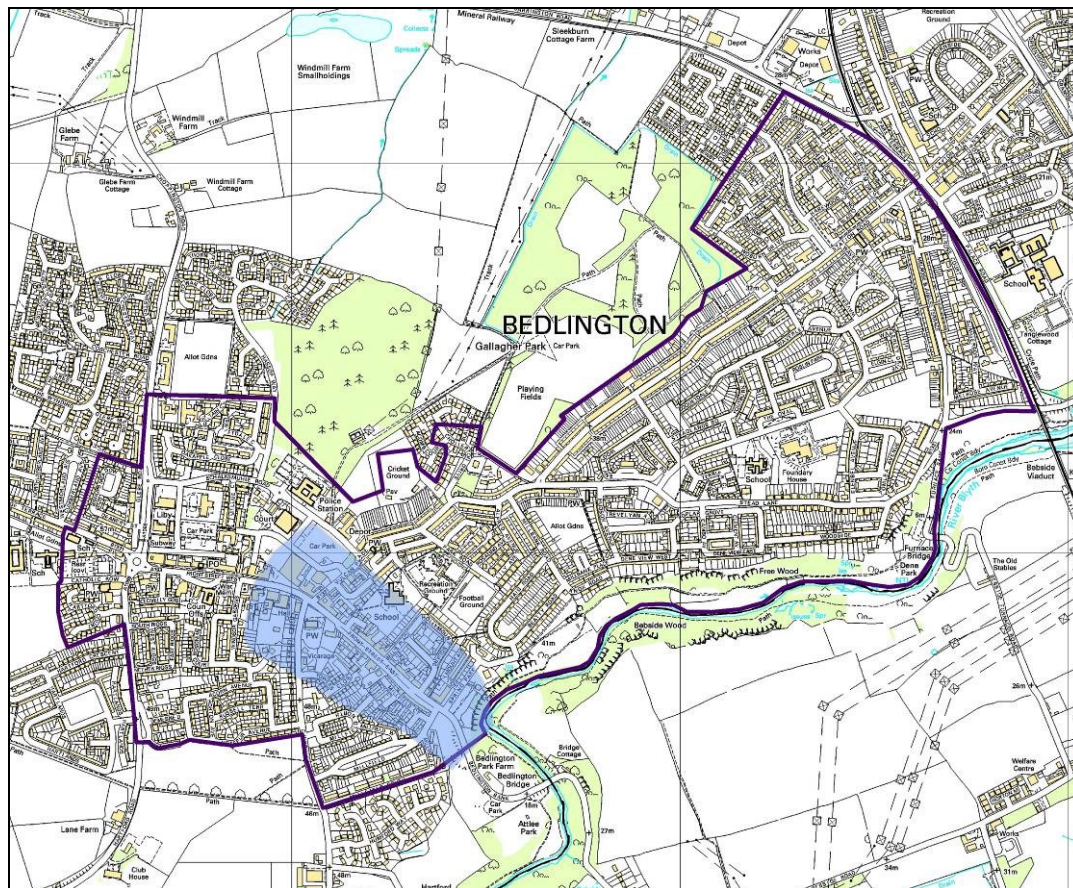


Figure 4: Medieval potential of Bedlington.

considerable interest. The presence of human bones might imply that the churchyard of St Cuthbert's once extended further to the west, or the existence of another ecclesiastical site. No location for a medieval leper hospital, known to have existed in Bedlington (see below), has been established, but its central location within Bedlington in Demesne Field, suggested within the newspaper article, would seem unlikely.

Between 1209 and 1216, King John visited Bedlington on four occasions: He held discussions there with King William of Scotland in 1209 before they proceeded to Norham for further negotiations; John returned to Bedlington on his way south from Norham and he again visited in 1213. In 1216 he stayed for two days at Bedlington during the war against the Northern Barons who burnt Morpeth, Mitford, Alnwick and Wark to impede his campaign against them (Wallace 1862, 134). The frequent visits show that there was suitable accommodation for king and retinue (Wallace 1862, 131), quite probably the bishops' residence.

#### 4.3 Church of St Cuthbert (HER 11764)

There was probably a church at Bedlington long before the Norman Conquest. Reginald of Durham, writing in the later 12<sup>th</sup> century noted that before 1080 the church there had been held by a secular canon as his prebend or allowance. There is no standing fabric at St Cuthbert's which can be used to prove that this was the site of any early-medieval foundation



although an *ex-situ* pre-Conquest slab built into the north wall of the nave is noted above. A dowsing survey at St Cuthbert's, one of a number of such studies carried out on churches in the North-East (Bailey et al 1984, 119, 130), suggested the presence of an earlier structure on the same alignment as the standing church with flanking portici, a western tower and an apsidal-ended chancel. Limited excavation just to the east of the present tower in 2001 in advance of a development, failed to locate any evidence for an earlier tower but works did not extend to subsoil (Event No. 216). In 1120, the church was given to the monks of Durham, and by 1247 Bishop Farnham had appropriated the church and its revenues to the office of sacrist in the convent of Durham (Wallace 1862, 142-4).

The south wall of the nave of St Cuthbert's is of 12<sup>th</sup> century date, but blocked round-arched windows in the wall, sometimes considered early, are more likely to have been put in during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The original west tower, also of 12<sup>th</sup> century date, was demolished in 1867 and replaced with a new version. The north wall of the nave (it is not certain if there was an east-west north aisle at any time before the 19<sup>th</sup> century) was removed for a very substantial semi-circular north aisle constructed in 1818 (see below). The chancel arch was probably set up around 1200 (it is now four-centred, suggesting that it was reset in the 15<sup>th</sup> century). It sits on semicircular responds and carved imposts with bold Norman mouldings around the voussoirs including zigzags. A small south chapel/chamber was probably constructed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, although it is entered through a reused outer doorway dating to around 1400. The chancel was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (and demolished and rebuilt again in the 19<sup>th</sup> century). Further substantial demolition and rebuilding took place on the church between 1818 and 1819 when the north wall of the nave was removed and a large semi-circular aisle added. During the demolitions of 1818, three grave covers carved with crosses and swords were recovered, as well as a 'portion of the shaft of a 'Saxon cross', which was ornamented with knot work and the words *Crux [or Lux] udiq fulget amata* (Tomlinson 1888, 69). In fact, all of these stones are of post-Conquest date (Cramp 1984, 163-4, 250).

#### **4.4 Leper/Lesser Hospital (HER 11750)**

There are several sources relating to a medieval hospital at Bedlington. Little is known about its history, location, nature or extent. Knowles and Hancock (1953, 253) refer to a leper hospital founded in Bedlington some time before 1203, while other sources refer to a lesser hospital (Net income under £50) which was dissolved or moved elsewhere before AD 1500 (List of Monastic Establishments in Northumberland, see bibliography).

In his historical and traditional sketch of Bedlington, Johnson Morpeth states that a monastery stood in the Demesne field where the infant school now stands and local sources from the 1950s refer to fine ruined arches and human bones recovered from this area, presumably in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Morpeth Herald 1954, 5).

A leper hospital is unlikely to be located in the centre of the settlement while there is a possibility that a lesser hospital could be located on this site, in close proximity to the medieval church. Evidence remains inconclusive and not substantiated by archaeological investigations to date.

#### **4.5 Corn Mills (HER 11753 and 11690)**

*Boldon Book* mentions a mill with a mill dam and pond at Bedlington. At a later date there were two mills; Bedlington Mill (HER 11753), the mill later utilised by the ironworks, and Sheepwash or Cleaswell Mill (HER 11690, Wallace 1862, 132). This latter mill may have only been constructed during post-medieval times. The site of Bedlington Mill, the exact location is uncertain today; it is described by Hodgson as where the steep, rocky and wooded banks of Blyth Dene began to open and slope gently into the estuary (Hodgson 1832, 359) almost certainly in the area of Dene Park.

#### **4.6 Evidence for Properties**

The settlement at Bedlington had seen such little change up to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century that the Tithe Map of 1843 can be used as evidence for the form of the later medieval town. The map shows long narrow properties running at right angles from Front Street in four fairly discrete blocks. Whether all four blocks were laid out at one time is uncertain. These are typical of croft or tenement plots, which would have been held by tenants of the bishop. Each would have had domestic and ancillary ranges towards the street with an open property running to the rear, utilised as areas to hold stock, for horticulture and for crafts and industries. The properties would have been demarcated by walls at an early date. A number of archaeological excavations carried out in Bedlington have thrown some light on medieval properties. Evaluation excavations in a brownfield open area to the north of the putative medieval market place in advance of developments were carried out by Archaeological Services of the University of Durham in 2006 (Event No 13707). Although considerable remains of relatively recently demolished buildings (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century) were seen in all six of the trenches there was no evidence for medieval structures or occupation, which may have been removed by later construction and terracing.

To the east, an evaluation by Tyne and Wear Museums Service in the area of Spring Park (Event No 13533) carried out in 2004 and again on the northern side of Front Street, involved the excavation of five trenches. This failed to find any evidence for medieval occupation alongside Front Street where deposits had been cut down to subsoil by relatively recent terracing. Towards the north of the site, however, a deposit of sandstone chippings, possibly a floor or wall core, lay below a developed soil which contained medieval pottery. Above this soil horizon were the remnants of a substantial sandstone wall c. 0.7m in width with one surviving course of facing stones. This wall ran south-east – north-west but was truncated at both extremities and no return walls or indication that it necessarily functioned as the wall of a

building was found. The demolished wall was overlain by a soil which contained pottery as early as 17<sup>th</sup> century in date suggesting that the wall may have been a medieval construction. 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century structures lay above. A series of possibly medieval features was also seen in a trench towards the middle of the evaluated area. This included a 'u' profiled gully, about 0.4m deep, which ran south before veering to the south-west. It had been recut on at least one occasion. Although no dating evidence was recovered from the gully, a horizon of soil which lay immediately above contained a single sherd of medieval pottery. Plough marks were seen in this horizon and in its equivalent in a trench further to the east. The gully was tentatively identified by the excavators as the boundary of a medieval tenement plot running from Front Street to the south, although as noted, the only other medieval remains seen were further to the north.

Between the two extensive evaluations noted above, further evidence for medieval occupation along Front Street has been recovered during a watching brief at No 34-38 (Event No 13289) and an evaluation excavation at Nos 72 and 84 (Event No 359) both in 2003. At No 34-38, features of probable medieval date included what was interpreted as a dry-stone wall lying between parallel ditches running on the same alignment as Front Street. The southernmost of the two ditches turned to the north within the development area and contained two sherds of later medieval pottery within its fill. The evaluation at No 72-84 revealed evidence for two slight gullies within one of the three excavated trenches. One of the gullies contained one sherd of medieval pottery.

#### **4.7 Market Place**

Although there is no extant charter for a medieval market at Bedlington, a market almost certainly existed in the settlement as it did in later times. There is still a market cross (actually in the form of an obelisk) although this is probably only of 18<sup>th</sup> century date. It lies along Front Street but has been repositioned. In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the market lay to the west of the church; the width of the western stretch of Front Street would have easily allowed it to function as a market. Equally, an area of properties to the north of the church, which may be later than the four blocks of tenement properties, may have once formed a more extensive open area suitable for a market.

## **5 POST-MEDIEVAL**

### **5.1 The Form of the Settlement (HER 11850)**

The extent of early post-medieval Bedlington can be estimated from surviving rental returns for the town paid to the Bishop of Durham in the 1630s. These name leaseholders as Henry Milburne for the demesne house and garth, John Errington for two farms and the wife of William Milburn for three and a half farms. There were also 13 tenants of cottages and garths

and two freeholders. Bedlington water mill and Bedlington Colliery are recorded as paying £4 and £2 rent per annum respectively (Wallace 1862, 141). It was not an extensive settlement.

No plans survive which show the town in any detail before 1800. As mentioned above, though, the form of the settlement probably changed little before the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest available plan for part of Bedlington is dated 1800 and maps the holdings of a Mr John Ainsty (NRO ZGI/III/2). This marks two properties on the north side of Front Street and plots to their rear, but does not give any indication of the overall character of the town. William Arison's 1816 plan of the Hirst Head Estate (NRO ZG/III/6) shows three properties at Church Row and twelve properties on the north side of Front Street running from opposite the church to beyond the market cross. The Tithe Map of 1843 shows the whole settlement which continued to focus along Front Street with walled properties running back at right angles from the road line. The remnants of stone boundary walls, most heavily patched with later masonry and bricks, are the remains of the boundaries of these properties. The age of the walls is unclear.

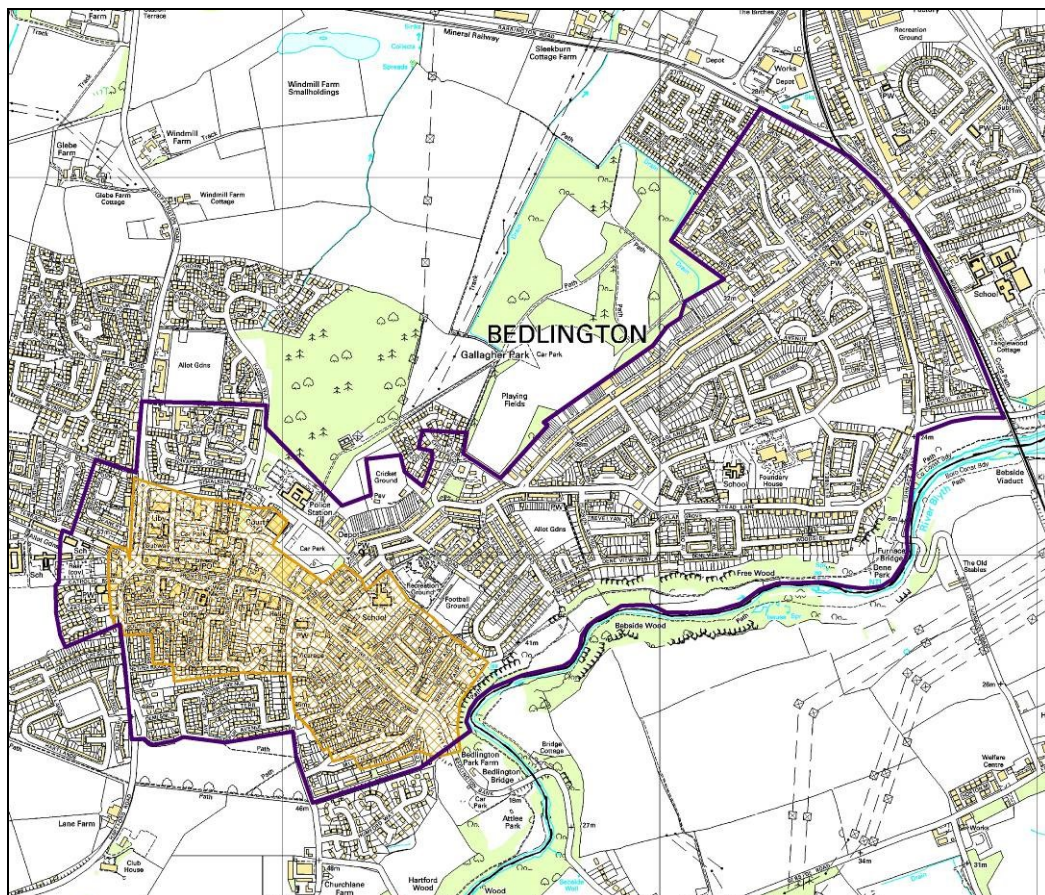


Figure 5: Post-medieval potential of Bedlington. Purple line is survey area.

The orange cross-hatched area represents the extent of the town up to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century

## **5.2 Market Place**

On the Tithe map, the main street widens at the western end to form a market place. On the Ainsty plan of 1800, a square likely to represent the market cross (as already mentioned, in fact an obelisk) lies in the street immediately to the west of the church, to the east of its present position which is certainly not its original location. Little is known of the history of the Market Cross (HER 11751) although it probably dates to the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Pevsner 1992, 162).

## **5.3 Buildings in the Town**

A number of 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings (a few with possibly earlier fabric) remain in Bedlington, although many early structures were removed during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. For instance, a tower house, of 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century date and known as Bedlington Old Hall (HER 11755) was demolished in 1959 to make way for new Council Offices. Some time in the 18<sup>th</sup> century the building had been converted to a range of tenements in which use it continued (Rawlinson 1849, 35) until demolition.

Eighteenth century buildings in Bedlington gather around Front Street and the Market Place area in particular. The former King's Arms, now The Grapes (HER 11757), on the north side of Front Street West is listed grade II and incorporates fabric possibly earlier than the 18<sup>th</sup> century, although the majority of the building is of that date. The Old Vicarage (HER 11823) on the south side of Front Street East is a three bay villa listed grade II and now a private house. Although much of it dates to 1835, the service wing and the garden wall of its 18<sup>th</sup> century predecessor survive. Barclays Bank on the north side of the Market Place (HER 11758), is a grade II listed house of the late 18<sup>th</sup> century as is The Tower and The Beeches (HER 11821), south of the Market Place in Church Lane. Formerly one large house, it is now divided into two dwellings. It was reputedly built as an astronomical observatory by an 18<sup>th</sup> century curate of Bedlington and was extended and altered in 1910. The White House (HER 11857), on Front Street West, was originally the site of a brewery which lay to the rear of the house and was demolished over 30 years ago (Martin 1997). The former house is now occupied by the Northern Rock Building Society. The Top Club (HER 11858), also on Front Street West, has a date stone of 1777 above the front door. The attached service buildings, a kitchen and stable block, are now occupied by Lloyds Bank and the Post Office, and the coachmen's cottages of a similar date are occupied by 'Inview' and Wright's Bakery (CHECK CURRENT NAMES) (Martin 1997).

## **5.4 Church of St Cuthbert (HER 11764)**

The present church has its origins in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, although much has been rebuilt. The chancel was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century (and rebuilt in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century). There is a sketch of the church in 1770 made by Ralph Bielby in Northumberland Record office (NRO ZGI III/2).

## 5.5 Corn Mills

Bedlington Corn Mill (HER 11753) is mentioned in Isabel Ogle's will of 1602, and again in a will of 1715 when it was left, along with two farms, by a William Curry. By post-medieval times, there were certainly two corn mills at Bedlington: A decree by the Durham Court of Chancery in 1637 required Robert Delaval, the lessee of Sheepwash Mill, to seek the permission of the tenant of Bedlington Mill, a little higher up the Blyth and on the opposite bank, to place the end of his new mill dam on the north bank, which the lessee of Bedlington mill agreed to, only after stipulating that he should be allowed to destroy the dam if he were inconvenienced by it. Unsurprisingly, the miller claimed that the new dam did interfere with the operation of his mill and the dam was demolished (Craster 1909, 331-2).

Bedlington Mill was leased by the Maling family of Sunderland from 1759. They set up an ironworks on adjacent land and the mill was used to provide motive power for bellows to blow blast furnaces (see below).

## 5.6 Economy

The medieval economy of Bedlington must have been solidly agricultural, but by the post-medieval period other industries had started to develop in the settlement. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century these industries must have begun to impact on the nature of the settlement.

## 5.7 Weaving

The first record of weavers in Bedlington dates from 1590 and the industry carried on until the early 19<sup>th</sup> century when there were about a dozen weaving establishments in the town (Martin 1986, 13).

## 5.8 Coal Mines and Waggonways

The first waggonways in the North East, probably two lines, ran down to the River Blyth at Bedlington. They dated to the first decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and were constructed by Huntingdon Beaumont, an entrepreneur from Nottingham. The exact location of the waggonways and the mines they were serving is uncertain but were probably a little way to the east of the town. They failed to make a profit for Beaumont and were soon closed.

The earliest specific reference to a coal pit at Bedlington is within a rental from the 1630s which notes that the Bishop of Durham received £2 a year rent for a colliery (Wallace 1862, 141). In 1635 a jury in Bedlington, in a case regarding the Bishop's rights in Bedlingtonshire, mention one working coal pit (probably the same one mentioned above) and two other pits in the process of being sunk. Rent received from the working colliery was £2 a year. In 1693 a lease for the coal mines of the area along with way leaves for transporting the coal was granted to an Edward Arden (Wallace 1862, 150). The location of the colliery workings is not certain, but possibly lay somewhere around the area of the pit marked 'Bedlington' (HER



11830) on Gibson's 1787 Map of the Northern Coalfield. Gibson's map also shows a wagon way (HER 11848) one and three quarter miles long running from the pit to a staith on the River Blyth. The route of this 18<sup>th</sup> century waggonway cannot be accurately located today; and it had gone by the time the First Edition Ordnance Survey was prepared, although the point at which it reached the river Blyth is marked on the Hirst Head Estate Plan of 1837 as 'old waggonway'.

## **5.9 Iron Working**

The development of iron working at Bedlington and Bebside is a long and complex story, beginning in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century in Bebside and ending in 1867 with the final closure of an amalgamated Bedlington ironworks which lay on both sides of the river Blyth and encompassed much of what is today Dene Park, a wooded and landscaped area to the south-east of the town, an area which belies the fact that it was once the centre of major industry; the only obvious above-ground features of this period being the frontage walls of a lime/calcing kiln, substantial river and terracing walls, the mouths of two culverts, one almost completely buried in the riverbank and Furnace Bridge.

## **5.10 Nail-Making Factory at Bebside**

In 1736 a Newcastle-based merchant, William Thomlinson, whose family was already involved in iron and steel production at a number of sites in the North East (Evans 1992, 182) including the Teams Valley (Gateshead), Derwentcote (Durham) and Skinnerburn (City of Newcastle), took up a lease for a series of closes and a stretch of the steeply sloping south bank of the River Blyth at Bebside, just to the south-east of Bedlington (NRO ZMD 66/32a). Given his previous interests, it is a reasonable assumption that Thomlinson was aiming to set up an ironworks of some description on the site but died only one year later in 1737. His premises at Bebside, and a warehouse in London, were sold off in 1739 to unknown parties, and were sold again in 1750 to a Thomas Simpson, a Newcastle businessman. The advert for the sale of the Bebside works listed 'a Slitting Mill and Nailors Shops, with several Houses, Warehouses and Other Buildings'. An adjacent wharf, Watson's Quay, was also put up for sale (*Newcastle Courant*, 10<sup>th</sup> March 1750).

The works which Simpson bought, and which Thomlinson must have set up prior to his premature death, was a nail production plant with, at its heart, a water-powered slitting mill. The nails produced would have been taken along the river by keel from Watson's Quay and transhipped at the port of Blyth into sea-going vessels bound for London. Once there, the nails would have been stored in Thomlinson's warehouse for distribution to shipbuilders along the Thames, who used nails by the ton in the burgeoning industry. In setting up this works Thomlinson had introduced to Bebside - and to Northumberland - the factory system, a miniature version of the works developed by Crowley at Swalwell and Winlaton Mill. In most other areas of the country - notably Shropshire, south Yorkshire and north Derbyshire, nail making was still a semi-domestic craft business.

Simpson tried to diversify the business; he planned to set up a forge to refine malleable bar iron with coal, not charcoal – an innovative technique in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century. He never managed to do this, and he advertised the works for sale in 1757. It included a:

*...Slitting Mill and Warehouses...with workshops for about 40 Nailors now employed in an established trade with all manner of tools suitable, also dwelling houses for the workmen, together with a large and commodious dwelling house...together with about thirty acres of land, well fenced and much improved.*

With:

*...a convenience of erecting a forge or other ironworks on the premises.*

In addition:

*...a place called Watson's Quay, near the said works, with a dwelling house, stable, and a warehouse for the landing and shipping of goods*  
(Newcastle Courant, 29<sup>th</sup> January to 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1757)

### **5.11 Ironworking on the Bedlington Bank of the Blyth**

In 1759, land adjacent to Bedlington Corn Mill was taken up as freehold by the Maling family of Sunderland, and the mill, its leet and stream were also leased. Two blast furnaces were erected next to the mill with bellows to blow the furnaces powered by a wheel on the leet. At least some local iron ore from the valley sides was used: Wallis wrote in 1767 that "the ore is digged out of the hanging banks by the river, with great labour and pains" (Martin 1974, 6)

The works was advertised for sale in 1778 when it consisted of:

*A Furnace Stack, a double Air Furnace Stack, a large Casting House, Warehouses, Smith and Joiners Shops, several Dwelling Houses, a Boring Mill and all other necessary Edifices, Buildings and Conveniences proper for the Business of Smelting Iron Ore, and manufacturing the same...*

(Newcastle Chronicle, 11<sup>th</sup> April 1778)

The works described was entirely devoted to the production of iron castings. The market would no doubt have been the coal industry which had a constant need for items such as wheels for chaldron wagons and machine parts for pumping engines. Despite what must have been a captive market, the blast furnace at Bedlington fell out of use some time between 1778 and 1788 when the works was bought by Hawks, Longridge and Co. of Gateshead who had purchased the Bebside slitting mill six years before, which was still in production. The works at Bebside and Bedlington were now under one owner.

### 5.12 The Amalgamated Works

Hawks and Longridge closed the blast furnace at Bedlington. This was probably at least partly due to the availability of plentiful supplies of shipped scrap in the north east which meant there was little demand for local smelting of iron (Evans 1992, 192). It was replaced with a rolling mill (Evans 1992, 191) and the works became largely concerned with the handling of semi-processed iron and techniques which would lead to the development of malleable iron rail in the next century.

## 6 NINETEENTH-CENTURY

### 6.1 Urban Form

The form of Bedlington before the coal industry began to radically alter it can be best seen on the Tithe Map of 1843. The town consisted of the east-west running Front Street with a crossroads to the west and a staggered cross-road to the centre near to the church. There was still no bridge over the River Blyth to the east. Four discrete blocks of properties are shown lying north and south of Front Street, each property with its own plot to the rear. Other than the infilling of what may have been a more extensive market area with properties, and the alteration of housing stock over time, the town had probably not altered greatly from the medieval period. Hodgson described the village in 1832 as one long and broad street running from the north bank of the Blyth to the road leading to Newcastle by Shipwash bridge and Stakeford to Newbiggin (Hodgson 1832, 357).

Other buildings included:

*...along the banks of the Blyth, an especially handsome stone house by Mr. Cotes which commands views of the banks. Two Methodist meeting houses have been lately built near it. At the south-west corner of the church yard there is a good parish school house, besides several private schools and a Presbyterian meeting house, eight or more inns or ale houses and shops of various descriptions.*

(Hodgson 1832, 358).

Rawlinson, reporting to the Board of Health in 1849, described the overall aspect of the village in a similar vein:

*...the site of the village is on some of the highest land in the parish, and it consists of one wide street, mostly irregularly built, with the church and the burial ground near the centre. The street or village is about 1 mile in length and lies south-east and west (1849, 29).*



## **6.2 Places of Worship**

There are documentary references to several non-conformist meeting houses (HER 11853, 11854 and 11855). Further research would be required to locate these more accurately. A Baptist Chapel (HER 11844) is marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1865.

## **6.3 St Cuthbert's Church**

The increase in the population of Bedlington from the early 19<sup>th</sup> century meant that St Cuthbert's was too small for the congregation. In 1818, the north wall of the nave was demolished and an extensive, protruding semi-circular north aisle was erected. Pews within the new space faced the south wall of the nave and a three-decker pulpit. The south porch became a vestry. In 1847 the 18<sup>th</sup> century chancel was enlarged and given a new east window. Twenty years later, the Norman tower was pulled down and the present one erected.

In 1912 the semi-circular aisle was removed and a new aisle, the Burdon aisle, with a memorial window and new font, pulpit, vestry and two large windows in the south wall of the nave were added and the old ones were blocked (NRO 1755/10). Rawlinson noted that "there is only one burial ground – the church yard, which is overcrowded, but an enlargement took place last year. There are no internments allowed within the walls of the church" (Rawlinson 1849, 38). Due to the overcrowding in the cemetery the bishop of Durham gave a new piece of land by the side of the road leading to Netherton in 1856 (Wallace 1862, 142).

## **6.4 Wells**

By 1849 there was still no piped supply of water in Bedlington. Rawlinson reported that water was obtained from three public pumps and local wells (1849, 38). These sources can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey. The Trotter Memorial drinking fountain (HER 11825) is later, dating to 1899, and is located on Front Street West. It was built as a memorial to Dr James Trotter and moved from the top of the town to this spot in 1971 following road improvements.

## **6.5 Blacksmiths**

Within Bedlington there were at least two smithies (HER 11792 and HER 11845) these are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1865. One building still stands in Vulcan Place (HER 11792) and has been recently re-roofed with pantiles.

## **6.6 Bedlington Iron and Engine Works (HER 11769)**

In 1809 Gordon and Biddulph, a London based company bought Bedlington Ironworks from Hawks and Longridge and ran them for 50 years (Wallace 1862, 117). This period covers, perhaps, the most notable phase in the history of the Bedlington Iron and Engine Works which contributed to the success of early railways through the development of malleable rail,

patented in 1820 by John Birkinshaw (Hodgson 1832, 359). Previous technical advances in rolling iron at the works allowed the rails to be given a wedge-shaped cross-section which presented the broadest possible face to the flanged wagon and locomotive wheels. The developing technology also meant that rails could be longer – up to 18 feet. They were first used on the Bedlington Waggonway, opened in 1819. George Stephenson, a close friend of Michael Longridge, the site manager from 1819, advised the adoption of these rails by the Stockton and Darlington Railway, opened in 1825, and by the Liverpool and Manchester Railway, opened in 1830.

A locomotive plant was opened in 1836 at Bebside. The first locomotive produced was the *Michael Longridge* for the Stanhope and Tyne Railway. In total, about 155 – 160 locomotives were manufactured at the plant, including the first to be used in Holland and Italy (the *De Arend* and the *Snelheid* were the Dutch engines, *Bayard* the Italian). The plant closed in 1855, a victim of competition from other better placed works.

In 1820, Michael Longridge acquired the rights to an ironstone mine at Netherton and constructed two blast furnaces on the north bank of the Blyth (Martin 1974, 33). They soon fell into disuse. In 1839, a list made by the land agent for the Bishop of Durham showed that the ironworks comprised a steam-engine manufactory, iron and brass foundries, copper and smiths shops, warehouse, gasworks, wharves, houses, stables, granary, stone dams and weir across the river and a bridge. Also a forge worked by water wheel and steam engine, rolling mills, anchor shops, testing machines, quay, crane and railway (ibid). The works were at their peak at the start of the 1850s, producing rails and forgings for the Crimean War effort. Finished products were sent down river in keels and shipped at Blyth. Competition in the locomotive trade and the cost of transporting locomotives and other goods caused the works to fail in 1853 (Craster 1909, 301) and the works were finally abandoned in 1867.

Plans exist of the Hirst Head Estate along the north bank of the river Blyth which date from 1816 and 1837. A comparison of these two plans demonstrates the development of the works over this period. On the plan dated 1816 a bridge over the river is marked, with a quay close by. One large building complex and two lime kilns are depicted. On the plan dated 1837 the site also included a factory complex and other associated buildings, one specifically labelled an office. On this plan a waggonway runs along the river side. The South View of the Works drawn by W B Thompson in 1827 is reproduced in Martin (1974, 24-5).

Few of the structures associated with the Iron Works now survive above ground. The weir was washed away in 1886 and the last chimney of the engine works felled in 1906. The works' clock tower was removed in 1915 and the old iron works cottages near Bank Top demolished in 1936. The remaining works were cleared and the area landscaped in 1959. (Martin 1974, 44). An archaeological assessment of the site, now Dene Park, was carried out in 1998 by



The Archaeological Practice. This identified the survival of a number of structures not previously recognised. Features so far identified on the site include the extensive riverside quay walls, Furnace Bridge, the thick walls of the blowing engine house, a two arched lime kiln, a number of arched conduits running into the river (including the watermill tail-race) and undergrowth covered retaining walls adjacent to the north flank of the tarmaced path running through the park. At a number of points in the park, walls or foundations appear through grass. An L-shaped stable block on the south side of the river was possibly associated with Bedlington Ironworks, and may have served as a nailers shop.

### **6.7 Chain and Mail Manufacturers and Ironmongers**

There is an account book for Gibson Bros. of Bedlington chain and mail manufacturers and ironmongers dated 1853-1923. This account book lists orders from customers but does not establish the location of the works, which may have been within the Bedlington Iron Works.

### **6.8 Coal Mines**

As noted above, the population of Bedlington increased rapidly over the 19<sup>th</sup> century, drawn in by the expansion of the coal industry in the area. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was one small colliery at Bedlington, the coal from which was sent to a staith below the iron works and there put into keels and sent down the river to Blyth where they were shipped off the ferry boat landing (Wallace 1862, 150). During the period 1836-60 further large pits were sunk including Bedlington Colliery (HER 11830) the Doctor Pit (HER 11797) sunk in 1854, Bedlington Colliery shaft (HER 11799) and a drift mine. All of these can be seen on the First Edition Ordnance Survey of 1865. Bedlington Colliery, for instance, (HER 11830) included 'A' Pit, a school and three terraces of colliery houses. Rawlinson noted that in 1849 cottages were being built for 300 colliers and their families (1849, 29), almost certainly those built of brick at Bedlington Colliery:

*...each with a small garden behind... living rooms of about 14 feet square with a pantry behind, the floor is flagged and generally has a bed in it. There is a chamber above –reached by a step ladder. The room is open to the slates. A detached stone or brick oven in front, serves for baking bread for the inhabitants of a row of some 20-30 cottages. Pigsties were generally a distance from the house at the bottom of the garden (Rawlinson 1849, 36).*

### **6.9 Waggonways**

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was further development of the network of waggonways which linked the industrial complexes to the river and thence to the sea forming a supply and distribution network. The chronology of many waggonways is not clear and further research is required to unravel the story. The routes of most are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey.

### **6.10 Railways**

In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century an extensive railway network developed around Bedlington, initially to facilitate movement of coal and goods but latterly including passenger lines. Further research, with a wider focus than the present study area, would be necessary to establish a picture of developments in the region. Within the Bedlington area, a number of railway features should be noted. The Bedlington Coal Co. saw the value of the railway line from Blyth to Percy Main Colliery and the potential of access to it. A link from Bedlington Colliery to Newsham, sometimes called the Davidson line, was opened in 1850. It involved crossing the River Blyth by means of a spectacular wooden viaduct 80 feet high and 770 feet long designed by Robert Nicholson (Wells 1989, 30). Substantial sandstone abutments of this timber viaduct lie to the west of its steel replacement (The Archaeological Practice 1998, 19). Bebside Viaduct, known as the Black Bridge (HER 11767) has steel girders with lattice parapet carried on nine openwork piers with cross bracing. Bedlington Station (HER 11807) on the Blyth and Tyne Railway is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey.

## **PART TWO: ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL OF BEDLINGTON**

### **7 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK**

This section deals with the possibility of discovering archaeological remains within Bedlington in the course of development and to what extent discovered remains might contribute to understanding the past of the town and of the region. To be meaningful, any archaeological input in Bedlington should be weighed against the value of likely returns. The most useful way of assessing this value is for it to be set against local and nationally agreed research agendas which will allow the relevant work to be planned and delivered to best value. Developer funded work in Northumberland will always refer to these national and local research frameworks.

Historic towns provide one of the most complex and important forms of archaeological evidence, some having been occupied over two millennia (English Heritage 1992, 13). As well as information about the overall development of urban settlement and its planning, towns can also provide information on defence, ecclesiastical organisation, crafts, commerce, industry and the environment as well as about the individual occupants of a town and how they lived and died. As more work is carried out in our urban centres because of archaeological intervention in the planning process, more information is being accumulated. It is important that this information is synthesized and made accessible publicly, enabling archaeologists and other researchers to analyse this material to create a national picture of urban settlement change. Bedlington, with its medieval origins, industrial development in the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, during which time the ironworks led the way in the production of steel rail line, and with massive development of coal mining over the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, will have an important role to play in this research.

This assessment indicates that the most likely areas to discover archaeological remains will be around the 'demesne' to the west of St Cuthbert's church and the church itself, the plots around the Market Place and Front Street and the site of the Ironworks along the River Blyth. Unfortunately, with the exception of the church, all medieval buildings within Bedlington appear to have been lost and there is little if any opportunity to carry out above ground recording of early structures. The earliest domestic buildings in Bedlington date to the 18th century. Therefore any evidence which will throw light on life in the medieval period or earlier will be derived from buried deposits under present day buildings and open spaces.

## 7.1 Prehistoric Potential

The area around Bedlington has a number of prehistoric sites but none are known from within the historic core of the town. The closest remains were a Bronze-Age burial ground at Mill Field, just to the south of Bedlington. These remains were disturbed during housing developments in the area in the 1930s and the exact location of the graves remains uncertain, an issue made problematic by the possible development of areas to the south of the Mill Field (District Policy H20). It would seem unlikely that any evidence for the revealed cist graves now survives, but other unlocated burials may lie in the vicinity beyond existing development.

The presence of the cluster of Bronze-Age cist burials would suggest the presence of an associated settlement in the fairly near vicinity.

### 7.1.1 *Research Agenda: Bronze-Age Burials*

- What was the exact location of the Bronze Age cist burials seen at Mill Field in the 1930s? Can photographs taken of the area in the 1920s and 1930s and held at the NRO help establish this location?
- Do other cist burials survive in the same general area overlooking the River Blyth?

### 7.1.2 *Research Agenda: Prehistoric Settlement*

- What is the likely location of any settlement associated with the cist burials?

### 7.1.3 *Archaeological Priorities*

In order to explore these areas of potential, the County Archaeologist will consider the area around Mill Field to be a priority area and specifications for archaeological work in this area will need to address the issue of further burial remains. More generally, archaeological contractors will need to be aware of the potential for prehistoric settlement associated with the burials either adjacent to those already discovered or possibly along the ridge now taken up by Front Street.

## 7.2 Early Medieval Potential

Although there was certainly occupation at Bedlington in the pre-Conquest period, there is very little evidence for its nature or extent. For instance, it is uncertain whether any settlement ran along the east-west ridge now occupied by Front Street as in the later medieval period or took a different configuration entirely. A tenth century sculpture built into the nave wall of St Cuthbert's hints at an establishment there earlier than the present church, but its nature awaits further discoveries.

### 7.2.1 *Research Agenda: The Early Medieval Settlement*

- What was the extent and character of the Early Medieval settlement?
- What evidence is there for a pre-Conquest church?

### 7.3 Later Medieval Potential

There is little structural evidence for later medieval Bedlington, the only building of this date being parts of the Parish Church of St Cuthbert. A medieval residence for the Bishop of Durham and a monastic leper hospital will also have provided foci within the settlement but the location of these establishments remains uncertain. The general delineation of the historic core of Bedlington, however, is directly related to the medieval settlement. It would seem very likely that from an early date the settlement bounded a thoroughfare running along the east-west ridge now overlaid by Front Street, with properties running back from this street and with a market area somewhere along it, possibly in a similar location to the modern market place where the street broadens. It is also very likely that a number of modern properties take up the same footprint as their medieval predecessors. Areas flanking Front Street which have not been fully developed may still contain considerable evidence of medieval activities including industries, waste disposal and if areas towards the front of the plots survive, domestic occupation. As mentioned, there is no evidence for medieval structures in the town other than the parish church and so all of this evidence will be from below present ground level. Comparison of the periods of development and abandonment of areas of medieval properties will also reflect and help explain the fortunes of the town. Some archaeological excavation has already shown that medieval deposits do survive within properties along Front Street and as seen in evaluation at Spring Park, some way to the north, although no extensive work has as yet been carried out to fully exploit this potential.

#### 7.3.1 *Research Agenda: The Parish Church of St Cuthbert*

- What is the earliest in-situ fabric in the church?
- Can the form and extent of the church when first constructed be established?

#### 7.3.2 *Research Agenda: The Bishop's Hall*

- Where was the Bishop's Hall located in Bedlington?

#### 7.3.3 *Research Agenda: The Leper Hospital*

- Where was the Leper Hospital located in Bedlington?

#### 7.3.4 *Research Agenda: The Growth of the Medieval Town*

- What was the form of the early post-Conquest settlement?
- What does the presence of a substantial wall of probable medieval date seen during archaeological evaluation to the north of Front Street at Spring Bank signify?
- What evidence is there for the location and extent of the medieval market place?
- Is there any likely medieval fabric surviving in property boundaries running back from Front Street?

### 7.3.5 *Archaeological Priorities*

In order to explore these areas of potential, the County Archaeologist will consider the historic core of Bedlington as a whole to be a high archaeological priority and specifications for work will:

- seek to explore the evolution of the town from the early medieval period
- use, wherever possible, building recording as a means for identifying earlier buildings, so that the evolution of these buildings can be examined
- archaeological recording during works to the church and the churchyard for ecclesiastical faculties

## 7.4 **Post-Medieval and Eighteenth Century Potential**

The settlement at Bedlington does not appear to have changed dramatically from the medieval period through to the first half of the 19th century. It is over this period that there are the first references to industries such as weaving in the 16th century, coal mining in the 17th century and iron working in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century at Bebside. Especially in the latter two cases, Bedlington grew to be of considerable importance, and understanding the development of these industries and recording surviving remains is of national significance.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a massive increase in the numbers and diversity of the housing stock within Bedlington and associated settlements because of the development of adjacent coal mines, with the construction of workers terraces and other more substantial houses for a new middle class. Can this increasing diversity be traced back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century? Some 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings survive and are often listed as being of architectural or historic interest. In many cases the upstanding fabric will contain information about their historic use, their status and their construction and will be subject, whenever necessary, to archaeological recording through the implementation of the relevant guidance in PPG15.

### 7.4.1 *Research Agenda: Development of a Weaving Industry*

- What evidence is there for the development of a weaving industry in Bedlington?
- What were the reasons for its development?

### 7.4.2 *Research Agenda: The Development of Iron Working*

- What evidence is there for 18<sup>th</sup> century iron working on the north and south banks of the river Blyth?
- Does any evidence for blast furnaces remain and can the location of these structures be established from map evidence if not physically?
- Is there any evidence for the extraction of iron ore along the banks of the river?
- What date are the river walls in the area of Dene Park?



#### 7.4.3 *Research Agenda: Coal Mining and Waggonways*

- Is there any evidence remaining for early coal mining around Bedlington?
- Can a secure sequence of development for the waggonways around Bedlington be established?
- Can the route of the early Huntingdon-Beaumont waggonways be established?

#### 7.4.4 *Research Agenda: The Development of the Town*

- What was the character of buildings along Front Street over the post-medieval period?

#### 7.4.5 *Research Agenda: The Growth of Nonconformism*

- How early is the first Nonconformist meeting house in the town?
- Was the introduction of Nonconformism to Bedlington a product of industrial development?

#### 7.4.6 *Archaeological Priorities*

In order to explore these areas of potential, the County Archaeologist will consider the historic core of Bedlington as a whole to be a high archaeological priority and specifications for work will:

- seek to explore the evolution of the town over this period
- use, wherever possible, building recording as a means of identifying earlier buildings and parts of buildings, so that the evolution of these buildings can be examined
- see the potential for excavation within the historic core for evidence of small scale industrial complexes, the commercial and residential nature of the pre-industrial town
- the usefulness of building recording in assessing the development of houses and the changing use of space within them

### 7.5 **Nineteenth-Century Potential**

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a period of remarkable change for Bedlington. It witnessed the massive expansion of the coal industry and the growth of suburbs and purpose built terrace housing which provided accommodation for much of the new work force.

This period also saw the introduction of commercial and public railways into the area, which influenced the coal industry in many ways and was a prime facilitator of this expansion, allowing coal to move freely and speedily to ports for export. The area may still contain important evidence of early coal mining techniques and how the introduction of the railways influenced them.

With the growth of industries came nonconformism and the construction of several new chapels and meetings houses. To date, no research has been conducted understand the

whereabouts of these former places of worship and their development.

Much of the iron works site is now located beneath Dene Park. Many structures were only finally bulldozed in the 1950s and evidence for parts of the works will survive below ground. Some structural remains can still be seen. Bedlington Ironworks played a significant part in the Industrial Revolution in the North East. It produced boiler plates, axles and wheels for Stephenson's first locomotive, and then went on to produce 150 locomotives for both national lines and for export to Europe. The success for which Bedlington achieved most fame, was the production of cheap malleable iron rail which allowed the pioneering long distance rail lines such as the Stockton and Darlington Railway which opened in 1825.

#### *7.5.1 Research Agenda: Development of the Town*

- How did the development of major industries alter the historic core of the town?
- How did the growth of industries affect the agriculture of the area?
- Can we define the locations and extent of smaller industries within the town?

#### *7.5.2 The Growth of Non-conformism*

- Can the number and nature of Nonconformist chapels in Bedlington and area over the 19<sup>th</sup> century be established through documentary research?

#### *7.5.3 Archaeological Priorities*

In order to explore these areas of potential, the County Archaeologist will consider the historic core of Bedlington and much of Dene Park to be a high archaeological priority and specifications for work will:

- pursue research to form a more complete picture of the development of the town and related industrial activity
- enhance the understanding of the surviving of the built heritage through recording
- identify the location and development of non-conformism in the town

## PART THREE: ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE PLANNING PROCESS.

### 8 THE EXISTING FRAMEWORK

The protection and management of archaeological remains in England is achieved through a combination of statutory and policy based measures. For what are considered to be the most important sites, those of national or international significance, statutory protections are conferred. For many other sites, those which are considered to be of regional or local significance, protection is provided through planning legislation and policy guidance. An indication of best practice for the protection and management of all archaeological sites is provided by Planning Policy Statement 5 issued by the Government.

**8.1 Planning Policy Statement 5: Planning for the Historic Environment (PPS5)** was published in 2010 and replaces Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning (PPG16) and Planning Policy Guidance Note 15: Planning and the Historic Environment (PPG15). PPS5 is supported by a companion *Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide* endorsed by Communities and Local Government, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and English Heritage. The practice guide contains general and specific advice on the application of the PPS.

PPS5 recognises a heritage asset as a building, monument, site, place, area or landscape positively identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions. It recognises that heritage assets are a non-renewable resource which should be conserved and enjoyed for the quality of life they bring to this and future generations. It indicates that planning decisions should be made based on the nature, extent and level of significance investigated to a degree proportionate to the importance of the heritage asset (para 7). It establishes the principle that nationally important heritage assets and their settings, whether scheduled or not, should be preserved except in exceptional circumstances (HE9 and 10).

Policies HE6 and 8 require that local planning authorities should ensure that sufficient information on the significance of any heritage assets accompanies all applications with assessment being carried out by appropriate experts. In the case of archaeological assets, this may require desk-based assessment and where an assessment is insufficient to properly assess the situation, field evaluation may be required. Assessment and evaluation should be proportionate to the importance of the known or potential asset and no more than is required to understand the impact of the proposal on the significance of the asset. *Where assessment and evaluation is required this needs to be undertaken prior to the submission of an application and included within the required Design and Access Statement (HE6 and 8).* Pre-application discussion with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) is recommended (HE8), in

particular Northumberland Conservation, who provide planning advice to the local authority on heritage issues.

Where the loss of part or all of the asset is *justified*, LPAs should require the developer to record and advance an understanding of the heritage asset before it is lost. Such actions can be secured by condition. The extent of mitigation requirements should be proportionate to the significance of the asset (HE12). These procedures are examined in more detail in section 8.7 and 8.8 below.

## **8.2 Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

The most important sites in the country are protected under the terms of section 1 of the *Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979)*. For any works carried out on or in the vicinity of these sites consent must be granted by the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), who take advice on these matters from English Heritage (EH). Scheduling is in many ways unsuited to widespread application in urban areas. It is not designed to protect extensive areas, but rather protects well-defined and easily identifiable monuments. Nor does it adapt well to protecting archaeological remains where the precise nature of the deposits is not known. It is therefore necessary to protect many urban archaeological remains through the planning process and if necessary by controlling or reducing sub-surface interference through an Article 4 direction under the *Town and Country Planning General Development Order 1988*.

## **8.3 Listed Buildings**

This is a statutory designation, the equivalent of scheduling for a building. Listed buildings can be altered, but only after due consideration to the nature of the building and its historic context. There is currently a range of listing grades: grades I and II\* are protected directly by English Heritage, grade II by local authorities.

## **8.4 Conservation Areas**

Conservation Areas are designated by the local planning authority under the terms of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Archaeological Areas) Act 1990. Conservation Areas are put in place in parts of towns which are considered to be of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. There are more than 50 Conservation Areas in Northumberland of which Bedlington is one.

## **8.5 Archaeological Sites without Statutory Designation**

The protection and management of the majority of archaeological sites in England, *ie* those which are not protected by statutory means, is carried out by local authorities. Measures for the protection of both known and unknown archaeological sites are set out within the statutory development plan and include specific requirements as well as reference to nationally agreed planning policy guidelines and statutory obligations.

## 8.6 Development Plan Policies

Responsibility for the protection and management of archaeological sites and the historic environment falls upon the Local Planning Authority (LPA). To assist the LPA in preserving the built and natural environment, the statutory development plan contains a comprehensive set of planning policies. For Bedlington, the statutory development plan comprises the *Wansbeck District Local Plan*. The Regional Spatial Strategy was revoked in July 2010.

The relevant policies within the Wansbeck District Local Plan are:

### **Policy GP 20 – Archaeology**

*Development which would adversely affect a scheduled or other nationally important archaeological site, and/or its setting, will only be permitted where:*

*a) there is no alternative solution; and b) the development is in the national interest.*

*Development which would affect other sites of archaeological significance will only be permitted if:*

*a) the archaeological remains would be preserved in situ as part of the proposals; or  
b) the significance of the remains is outweighed by the need for and benefits of the development.*

*Where development affecting archaeological remains is permitted, the developer will be required to make proper provision for the excavation and recording of the site and its remains before and during development and also for post-excavation analysis and publication of findings.*

### **Policy GP21 – Archaeology**

*Where evidence suggests that a proposed development could disturb archaeological remains, the developers will be required, before their planning application is determined, to provide information on the character and extent of the remains and any measures they propose to mitigate the impact of development. A field evaluation will be required if judged necessary.*

These objectives are implemented through the planning system and through protective legislation.

## 8.7 Pre-Application Discussion

Early consultation with Northumberland Conservation on planning proposals is of enormous importance and is highlighted in PPS5. Where assessment and evaluation are required, this needs to be undertaken prior to the submission of an application and included within the required Design and Access Statement in line with PPS5 policies HE6 and 8.

Northumberland Conservation can provide an initial appraisal of whether known or potential heritage assets of significance are likely to be affected by a proposed development and can give advice on the steps that may need to be taken at each stage of the process.

### 8.7.1 Desk-Based Assessment

Information on the likely impact a proposed development will have on the remains can be estimated from existing records (including this report), historical accounts and reports of archaeological work in the vicinity, in conjunction with a number of sources which suggest the nature of deposits on the site, such as bore-hole logs and cellar surveys. This is presented in a standard format, known as a Desk-Based Assessment, prepared by an archaeological consultant on behalf of the applicant, to a specification drawn up by, or in agreement with, Northumberland Conservation, which can assist by providing a list of organisations which do work of this sort (see Policies GP20 and GP21, above).

Pre-application consultation with Northumberland Conservation is vital as desk-based assessment may not be necessary in many instances but where required, it will need to be submitted with the planning application.

### 8.7.2 Field Evaluation

Where an assessment is insufficient to properly assess the impact of a proposed development on known or potential heritage assets, field evaluation may be required. The requirements of this stage will also be determined by Northumberland Conservation. It may require a range of survey and analytical techniques including limited excavation. An evaluation is designed to provide sufficient information about the extent, character and preservation of archaeological remains to judge what planning decision would be appropriate and, if necessary, what mitigation measures should be adopted (see Policies GP20 and GP21, above).

Pre-application consultation with Northumberland Conservation is vital as evaluation may not be necessary in some instances but where required, it will need to be submitted with the planning application.

## 8.8 Archaeological Planning Conditions

The Planning Authority can make the appropriate decision (in the context of the Policies set out in the statutory development plan) on whether or not to give consent to the scheme, based the information provided by the Historic Environment Record and assessment and evaluation reports, where necessary. If it is considered that an application can be consented, steps may be required to mitigate its impact on the archaeological remains. This can sometimes be achieved by simply designing the scheme to avoid disturbance, for example by the use of building techniques that ensure minimal ground disturbance. If planning permission is given and archaeological remains will be unavoidably destroyed, the developer may be required to ensure that these remains are archaeologically investigated, analysed and published. In this situation, the requirements for further work will normally be attached to the Planning Consent as conditions, such as the standard Northumberland Conservation condition detailed below:

*A programme of archaeological work is required in accordance with the brief provided by Northumberland Conservation (NC ref X dated X). The archaeological scheme shall*



*comprise three stages of work. Each stage shall be completed and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before it can be discharged:*

*a) No development or archaeological mitigation shall commence on site until a written scheme of investigation based on the brief has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.*

*b) The archaeological recording scheme required by the brief must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.*

*c) The programme of analysis, reporting, publication and archiving if required by the brief must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.*

#### **8.8.1 Written Scheme of Investigation**

This is a detailed document which sets out the extent and the nature of archaeological work required, including any necessary analyses and research, finds collection, conservation and deposition policies as well as likely publication requirements. This document is usually prepared by the contracting archaeologist, who will undertake the work, to a brief prepared by Northumberland Conservation.

#### **8.8.2 The Range of Archaeological Fieldwork**

The range of archaeological requirements set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation will vary. Many sites in historic urban areas will require full excavation. Frequently, though, the small-scale of disturbance associated with a development, or the low probability that archaeological remains will have once existed or survived on the site, will mean that a less intensive level of observation and recording is required. This may take the form of a Watching Brief; this is the timetabled presence of a suitably qualified archaeologist at the point when ground work on a site is underway. Any archaeological deposits encountered will be quickly recorded and any finds collected, without undue disruption to the construction work. Again, Northumberland Conservation will provide the brief for the Watching Brief and the contracting archaeologist will provide a detailed Written Scheme of Investigation which complies with the brief.

#### **8.8.3 Building Recording**

Where historic standing buildings form a component of the archaeological resource affected by development, there may be a need to undertake building recording in advance of demolition or renovation. This requirement may apply to listed and unlisted buildings and will be dependent on the historical interest of the building; outwardly unprepossessing structures may contain important information about past communities and industries and will merit recording by qualified archaeologists or building historians to an agreed specification.

### **8.9 Unexpected Discoveries**

Developers may wish to incorporate the potential for unexpected discoveries into their risk-management strategies. The PPS5 Practice Guide (paragraph 141) provides advice on the

rare instances where, as a result of implementing a consent, a new asset is discovered or the significance of an existing asset is increased in a way that could not reasonably have been foreseen at the time of the application. It advises the local planning authority to work with the developer to seek a solution that protects the significance of the new discovery, so far as is practical, within the existing scheme. The extent of modifications will be dependant on the importance of the discovery and new evidence may require a local planning authority to consider reviewing its decision. Discoveries of treasure or human remains will need to be reported in accordance with the relevant legislation. English Heritage wishes to be informed if the discoveries are likely to merit designation.

The National Heritage Protection Commissions Programme Guidance on PPS5 Assistance Cases released in July 2010 indicates that English Heritage recognises that the best-planned and informed schemes can occasionally result in entirely unexpected discoveries of national significance, and therefore it may be possible to apply for funding as a last resort to ensure that a suitable record is made prior to destruction or loss of significance. English Heritage will only consider financial assistance towards the investigation, analysis or dissemination of such nationally significant discoveries if:

- The discovery is genuinely unexpected and could not have been predicted
- The asset discovered is of national significance
- The planning process set out in PPS5 has been followed
- Every effort can be demonstrated to have been made to accommodate unexpected discoveries within the available resources by prioritising the most important elements of the asset(s) being investigated

The request for funding must come from the appropriate local government heritage officer with responsibility for the case and not directly from the contractors or consultants conducting the investigation. Funding will be provided via the National Heritage Protection Commissions Programme (replacing the Historic Environment Enabling Programme in April 2011). English Heritage must be consulted at the earliest possible juncture so that they have an opportunity to shape the response to the unexpected discoveries. English Heritage will not consider retrospective applications to cover costs already incurred when they have not been consulted on or agreed to the response and its cost implications. The first point of contact should be the North-East English Heritage offices at Bessie Surtees House, 41-44 Sandhill, Newcastle upon Tyne (0191 269 1200).

#### *8.9.1 How is National Archaeological Importance Defined?*

A number of assumptions will be made when determining whether archaeological remains are nationally important or not. These have been set out by English Heritage (1992, 47):

- i) the further back in time the origins of the form the greater the interest to archaeology; the fewer the number of examples believed to exist the greater the interest that attaches to those places as representatives of their form;
- ii) the greater the variation that can be perceived within any defined form the higher the archaeological interest in terms of opportunities to explore spatial and temporal variation

in respect of social, economic, political, religious, and symbolic matters; and  
iii) the more representative of the life and times of the periods during which defined forms were current the greater the archaeological interest in terms of providing insights into past lifestyles.

These assumptions are not intended to apply to all of the town at all times. Nor will all of these assumptions be appropriate to all nationally important archaeological sites within the urban area. Instead they are used to help create a value judgement on particular archaeological remains and whether they may be nationally important or not. A number of discrimination criteria will also be applied to archaeological remains discovered during the course of development. These will relate more specifically to the remains uncovered and will include their state of survival, their potential to provide archaeological evidence, previous archaeological or historical documentation on site, their group value, diversity, and amenity value. These criteria have been developed by the Secretary of State to determine whether archaeological remains are nationally important or not.

In Bedlington, the majority of sites considered to be of archaeological interest are industrial in nature. At the time of writing this document (1999) industrial sites had not yet been fully assessed as part of the national programme to identify nationally important sites, known as the Monuments Protection Programme. As a result, there are currently no archaeological sites which have been identified as nationally important and given statutory protection. There are no listed buildings which have been given Grade I status which means that they are of exceptional interest (less than 5% of buildings listed). Only the Church of St Cuthbert has Grade II\* status which gives it a particularly important status within the category of Grade II.

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Including

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Morpeth Herald, April 2nd 1954

## APPENDIX 1: LISTED BUILDINGS

### Grade II\*

Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11764)

### Grade II

The Cross (HER 11751)

The King's Arms Public House, Front Street West (north side) (HER 11757)

Barclays Bank, Market Place (north side) (HER 11758)

Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11764)

Gate piers and adjacent walls with railings to Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11812)

Pair of headstones 1m east of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11813)

Potts and Wilson tombs 4m south of chancel of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11814)

Willson headstone 2m south of chancel of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11815)

Hedley headstone 14m south of chancel of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11816)

Nicholson headstone 17m south of chancel of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11817)

Spearman headstone 5m south of tower of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11818)

Collingwood and Scott headstones 15m south west of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11819)

Southern headstone 13m north of vestry door of Church of St. Cuthbert (HER 11820)

The Tower and The Beeches (HER 11821)

Spring View (HER 11822)

The Old Vicarage, Front Street East (south side) (HER 11823)

Wall, gateway and gates to north of Old Vicarage, with attached gateway and gate to church, Front Street West (north side) (HER 11824)

Trotter Memorial drinking fountain, Front Street West (south side) (HER 11825)

Bedlington War Memorial (HER 11851)



## APPENDIX 2: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVENTS

Material within this report includes information available on the Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER) at the time this report was updated. Information on the HER is constantly being updated and should be used as the primary source for archaeological investigations in this area

### Event No: 94

The Archaeological Practice, 1999, *Bedlington Iron and Engine Works*

Three trenches were excavated and showed that considerable remains of the largely demolished ironworks survived beneath deposits laid down either during limited domestic occupation after the works closed in the 1860s, or during levelling in the 1960s. Trenches were dug to depths of 0.95m, 1.3m and 1.5m. All contained evidence of structural remains from the ironworks. Trench 2 contained a wall standing to a height of at least 1.3m which seems to represent a major revetment wall, with ground stepping south towards the river. Floor levels survived in Trench 3, including a substantial brick floor. A brick-lined conduit or flue, which extended towards the river, was also revealed in Trench 3. The depth of overburden varies across the site, with deposits occurring directly beneath topsoil in Trenches 1 and 3, but not reached at a depth of 1.3m in Trench 2. No early or pre-19<sup>th</sup> century deposits were noted, although these will clearly survive beneath the later deposits.

### Event No: 216

The Archaeological Practice, 2001, *St. Cuthbert's Church, Bedlington*

Two trenches (2.4m by 1.9m by 0.6m deep and 2.5m by 1.9m by 0.9m deep) excavated ahead of the construction of a gallery at the western end of the church located evidence for components of an earlier gallery which had occupied the same position over much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Beneath these structural remains were found human burials, including a multiple grave. No evidence was located for the west wall of a postulated tower or porch, previously identified in a dowsing survey.

### Event No: 359

Headland Archaeology, 2003, *72-84 Front Street East, Bedlington*

Evaluation on land to the rear of 72-84 Front Street East, an area of waste ground. Three evaluation trenches were excavated, each 12.5m long. The only features encountered that were of archaeological significance were two slight ditches or gullies at the west end of Trench 1; a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered. Two larger ditches seem to be of post-medieval date. Trench 3 showed this part of the site had been heavily truncated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The features from trench 1 may be medieval drainage ditches and/or croft boundaries.

### Event No: 13289

Alan Williams Archaeology, 2003, *34-38 Front Street East, Bedlington*

Watching brief on the excavation of foundations for two new-build properties in an open area to the rear of existing properties. The watching brief concentrated on the western of the two properties, where it was considered undisturbed deposits may have survived. Underneath modern make-up deposits, a complex of possibly medieval boundary features were located running parallel with the existing rear wall of the properties. These features included a possible dry stone wall which had been extensively truncated; a likely ditch to the north of the 'wall'; and a substantial round-bottomed ditch to the south of the 'wall'. All of the features ran the full length of new build 1, and the large, round-bottomed ditch, at least, was noted to turn a right angle and run north in the area of new build 2, tracking an existing boundary wall.

**Event No: 13533**

Tyne and Wear Museums, 2004, *Spring Park, Bedlington, Northumberland, Archaeological Evaluation*

Archaeological Evaluation at Spring Park ahead of the construction of nine houses. Five trenches were excavated in total. Trench one, adjacent to the street frontage, measured 10m by 2m and the natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of 0.25m below the present ground surface. A substantial sub-circular pit at the south-western end of this trench, most likely a result of sand extraction for building, produced 18<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Trench two measured 10m by 2m. A possible trench of a robbed-out wall was encountered in this trench. Trench three measured 5m by 2m with a depth of 0.7m. A U-shaped gully in this trench may be the boundary of a burgage plot fronting onto Front Street East. Part of this gully was re-cut and a single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from a soil horizon that sealed the fill of this gully. Plough marks were also discovered in the same layer. At the extreme south end of this trench an 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> century wall was also discovered. Trench four, 5m by 2m by 0.9m in depth, also contained a similar layer of that containing the plough marks in trench three just above the subsoil. Trench five, originally 5m by 2m, was later extended by 3m at the north eastern end. Medieval pottery was recovered from this trench as well as a substantial wall foundation which was sealed with a deposit containing 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery. Remains of a late 18<sup>th</sup>/ early 19<sup>th</sup> century wall was also discovered as well as an area of sandstone flagging of a similar date.

**APPENDIX 3: HISTORIC MAPS**

Figure 7: Armstrong's county map of 1769 showing Bedlington



Figure 8: 1843 Tithe plan of Bedlington  
(reproduced with the permission of the Diocese of Newcastle)



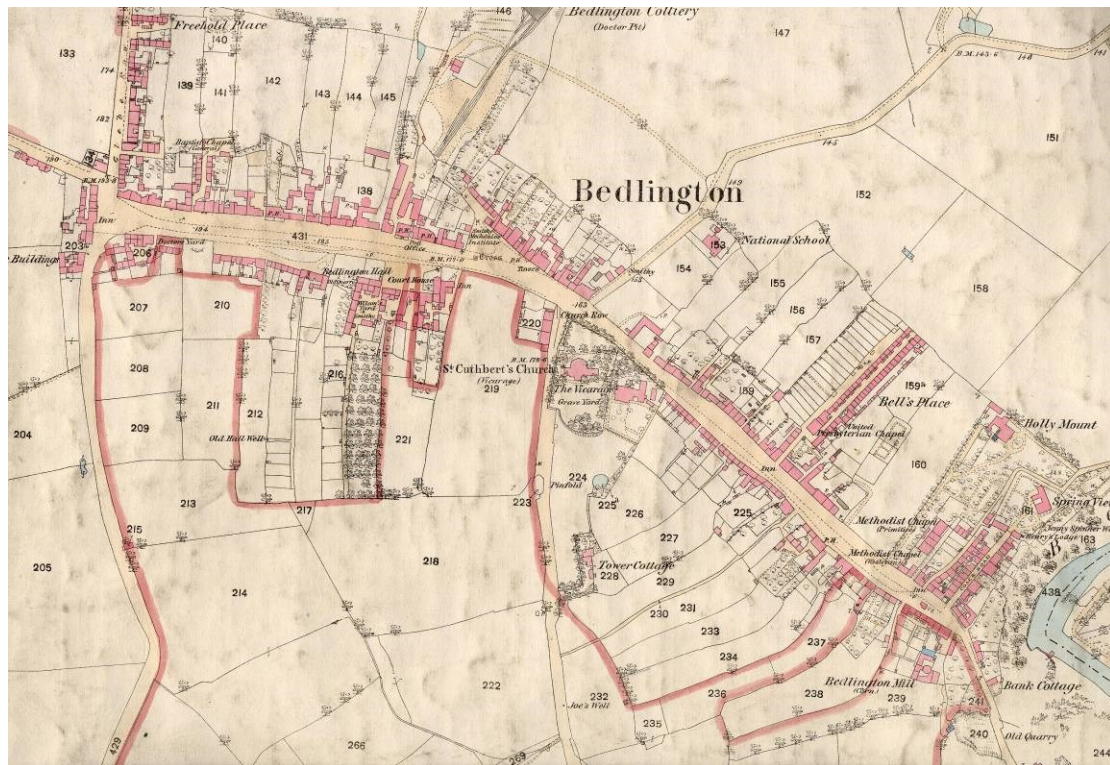


Figure 9: First Edition 25" to one mile Ordnance Survey map of Bedlington c 1860



Figure 10: Second Edition 25" to one mile Ordnance Survey map of Bedlington c 1897



Figure 11: Third Edition 25" to one mile Ordnance Survey map of Bedlington 1920s



## APPENDIX 4: STRATEGIC SUMMARY

### BEDLINGTON STRATEGIC SUMMARY

#### A4.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Bedlington has been the focus of activity since at least the early medieval period. The Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) combined documentary and cartographic evidence with the results of recent archaeological investigations within the study area.

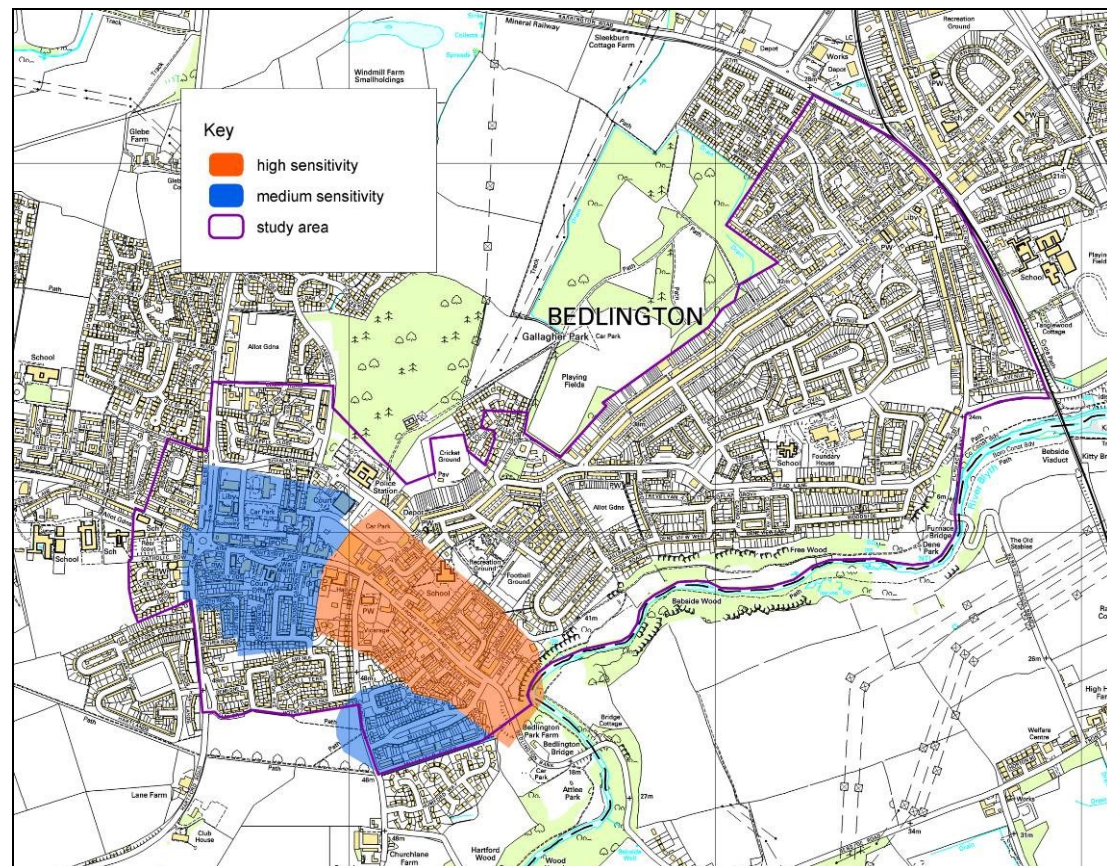


Figure 12: Bedlington areas of archaeological sensitivity

#### Prehistoric

- The available evidence indicates that Bedlington is located in a wider prehistoric landscape from the Mesolithic onwards.
- In 1934, excavations for a new housing development at Mill Field, south of Bedlington revealed 5 Bronze Age cist burials. The area was subsequently built on without archaeological excavations.
- There is also photographic evidence of an enclosure and barrow taken at a comparable time in an unspecified location. If the road on the photograph is Church Lane, the site will have been built upon but if it is Bedlington Bank, this area has yet to be developed.

#### Early Medieval

- Documentary sources indicate that Cutheard, the last Bishop of Lindisfarne and the first of Chester-le-Street purchased the 'ville' of Bedlington in the 10th century. The presence of a 10th century Anglo-Scandinavian sculpture in the present church attests not only to its early medieval origin but also to the influence of the Vikings in that period.

- While a dowsing survey suggests that there are the surviving remains of an earlier church on the same alignment as the existing church, the location, nature and extent of that church have yet to be established by intrusive archaeological investigation.
- Place-name evidence indicates an Anglo-Saxon settlement origin, probably meaning the farmstead of Bedel or Betla. The location, nature and extent of the early medieval settlement is not known.

## **Medieval**

### Church

- Documentary sources indicate that in 1069, the body of St. Cuthbert was laid in Bedlington overnight before continuing to Lindisfarne from Durham.
- The present church appears to date back to at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century with later additions and alterations.

### Settlement

- Documentary sources indicate that by 1183, the settlement had a Bishop's Hall and Court. The precise location of these buildings is not known but it is likely that they were located in the demesne field close to the church on the western side of Church Lane.
- There are varying references to a leper or Lesser Hospital also on the demesne land to the west of Church Lane. This is an unlikely location for leper hospital but could still be the site of a lesser hospital for elderly and infirm monks.
- Sources indicate that there were the remains of arches and burials on the demesne land, particularly on the site of the old school. The accuracy of these sources and the nature, extent or date of archaeological remains in this area has yet to be established by intrusive archaeological investigation. A medieval Bishop's Palace, courts and/or hospital in this area would prove to be of definite significance.
- There are 12<sup>th</sup> century sources indicating that Bedlington had a mill and fishery in that period. The precise location of these sites has yet to be established.
- The medieval town layout appears to be reflected in its post-medieval layout with four distinct blocks of burgage plots running back from Front Street.
- Recent archaeological investigations in Bedlington are increasingly revealing evidence of burgage plot boundaries and activity within the plots.
- While there are no known charters for a medieval market, Bedlington is likely to have had one. It was likely to have been on the site of the later post-medieval market in the wider stretch of road to the west of the church. There also remains the possibility that the block of properties to the north of the church may have been a later infilling of a more extensive market. Evidence remains inconclusive.

## **Post-Medieval**

### Church

- The church was heavily rebuilt on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Settlement

- The form of the settlement is unlikely to have changed much before the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century and it is possible that some of the stone boundary walls still present in the town have a much earlier post-medieval origin.
- The market is likely to have been located in the wider section of road to the west of the church.
- The present Council Offices stand on the site of a 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> century tower house known as Bedlington Old Hall which was demolished for their construction. It is known that the tower house had been incorporated and converted into a row of tenements in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The 18<sup>th</sup> century public house currently known as the Grapes (formerly the King's Arms) on Front Street West may incorporate earlier fabric.
- There remains the possibility that further remains of earlier buildings could have been incorporated into some of the 18<sup>th</sup> century properties surviving in Bedlington. There are a number of 18<sup>th</sup> century houses particularly around Front Street and Market Place, although many were removed in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
- There are several references to Non-Conformist meeting houses in Bedlington but their precise location has yet to be established.

### Industry

- There are documentary references to weaving in Bedlington in 1590 which continued into the early 19<sup>th</sup> century.



- Documentary sources indicate that there were two corn mills, Bedlington Mill and Sheepwash Mill by 1637. Bedlington Mill was subsequently used to power the Bedlington Ironworks which was set up in 1759.
- The first documentary reference to coal mining and associated waggonways in the Bedlington area dates back to the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The coal mines continued to expand and develop into the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- A nail making factory was set up in nearby Bebside in 1736 with an associated water powered slitting mill. The nails were sent via the port of Blyth to London.

#### **A4.2 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH AGENDA**

As part of the planning process, it is important to establish the significance of surviving remains, in order to provide an appropriate and informed response for planning applications with the potential to impact on archaeological remains.

As stated in Part Two of the EUS, the most effective way of assessing the significance of archaeological remains is by comparing them with agreed national, regional and local research agendas and frameworks, particularly the North East Regional Research Framework (Petts et al, 2006).

These research agendas are discussed in detail in the EUS and are summarised below.

##### **Prehistoric**

- The location of the enclosure and barrow on the 1930s photograph.
- The possibility that further cist burials may be located in a comparable location overlooking the River Blyth.
- The potential for an associated settlement.

##### **Early Medieval**

- The nature, extent and location of the early medieval settlement and church.

##### **Medieval**

- The location of the earliest surviving fabric in the existing church.
- The location of the medieval Bishop's Palace, court and lesser/leper hospital.
- The nature, extent and development of the medieval settlement and market place.
- The range of industrial and economic activity in the town and any variation or shift in the focus of activity over time.
- The presence of medieval structural remains in later houses.

##### **Post-Medieval**

- The nature, extent and development of the post-medieval settlement.
- The presence of post-medieval structural remains in later houses.
- The accurate location of post-medieval industries including weaving iron working coal mining and waggonways.
- Any evidence of the 18<sup>th</sup> century iron working on either side of the river at Bedlington Ironworks including evidence of the location of the blast furnaces and potentially any iron ore extraction along the banks of the river.
- The impact of industries on the historic core of the town.
- The location of Non-Conformist meeting houses in Bedlington.

### **A4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL REQUIREMENTS IN THE PLANNING PROCESS**

The Extensive Urban Survey (EUS) has identified the areas of greatest archaeological sensitivity and potential in Bedlington as summarised in the previous two sections. The attached plan further condenses the information into areas of high and medium archaeological sensitivity.

As stated in the EUS report, the protection and management of archaeological remains in England is achieved through a combination of statutory protection and protection through planning legislation and policy guidance. This framework is summarised in Part Three of the EUS.

There is a strong potential that archaeological work will be required by the Local Planning Authority on planning applications submitted within the areas highlighted as being of high and medium archaeological sensitivity. Areas outside the EUS area may also be of archaeological sensitivity, particularly remains associated with prehistoric activity and post-medieval industrial activity. It is recommended that developers contact the Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland Conservation at the earliest opportunity, *prior* to the submission of a planning application, to establish if sites are of archaeological sensitivity and will require archaeological work as detailed below.

The nature and extent of archaeological work required as part of the planning process will depend on the location of the development in relation to the most archaeologically sensitive areas, the size of the development and the level of previous disturbance on the site. This could comprise one or more of the following:

#### **Pre-application work**

1. PPS5 indicates that, where assessment and/or evaluation are required on a site, the results of this work will need to be submitted in support of the planning application, and therefore will need to be completed prior to the submission of the application
2. The EUS is used as an aid in the decision making process and helps to highlight large or particularly archaeologically sensitive sites which may require further, site specific, assessment or evaluation. In order to locate trial trenches or test pits most effectively, the commissioned archaeological contractor will need to provide a detailed project design for the agreement of Northumberland Conservation prior to work commencing. The project design will need to include:
  - i. A summary of all known archaeological remains and investigations in the surrounding area
  - ii. Historic maps of the specific site indicating earlier site layouts and the location of structures and features
  - iii. Any geotechnical, test pit data or records indicating the build-up of deposits and/or modern truncation of the site
3. The subsequent evaluation will need to work to the parameters agreed in the project design. Where undated features and deposits are revealed environmental sampling, analysis and radio carbon dating is likely to be required. The results of the fieldwork and any necessary post-excavation analysis or assessment will need to be provided in a report submitted with the planning application to enable an appropriate decision to be made.
4. It is important to have a good understanding of the nature and significance of historic buildings, any surviving features, fixtures and fittings or potential re-use of earlier buildings or material prior to the building's alteration or demolition. Dependant on the specific building and the nature of the proposed works, an application may require historic building assessment to be submitted with the planning application. This will enable a decision to be made on the appropriateness of the scheme and the nature and extent of any mitigation requirements required

#### **Post-determination mitigation**

1. The formulation of an appropriate mitigation strategy will be required and this will be based on the results of the evaluation. The majority of these options can be dealt with as a condition of planning permission comprising one or more of the following:

- i. Preservation *in situ* of important archaeological remains revealed during evaluation. This could have an impact on the viability of the scheme and whether planning permission should be granted
  - ii. Full excavation prior to construction work commencing for significant remains that do not necessarily warrant preservation *in situ*. This will also require post-excavation assessment, full analysis, publication of the results and long-term storage of the archive at the appropriate museum
  - iii. Strip and record prior to construction work commencing for a high density of less significant archaeological remains. The level of post-excavation work will depend on the significance of the archaeology revealed. Significant remains will require post-excavation assessment, full analysis and publication of the results. Archaeology of lesser significance may simply require an appropriate level of analysis and reporting. Long-term storage of the archive at the appropriate museum will be required
  - iv. Watching brief during construction work for a low density of less significant archaeological remains. An appropriate level of analysis, reporting and long-term storage of the archive at the appropriate museum will be required
  - v. No further work in areas where no archaeological remains are found
2. Small-scale development such as small extensions within the area of high archaeological sensitivity may not require pre-application evaluation and in some instances can be dealt with by an archaeological watching brief during construction. Given the high sensitivity of this area, the level of archaeological work required will very much depend on the nature, extent and depth of groundworks and the level of any previous disturbance on the site. An appropriate level of analysis, reporting and long-term storage of the archive at the appropriate museum will be required
3. The need for historic building recording is assessed on the significance of the building, its surviving fixtures and fittings, the potential re-use of earlier building fabric and the nature and extent of the proposed works. Sufficient information will be needed to assess the significance of the building either from existing records or the production of an historic building assessment prior to the determination of the application. An appropriate level of building recording will be identified in response to all these factors, adhering to English Heritage Guidelines
4. Ecclesiastical faculties involving groundwork and work on the historic fabric of the church are likely to require archaeological work of the nature detailed above.

***NB*** *The nature and extent of archaeological work is gauged for each individual site. It is therefore recommended that prospective developers contact the Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland Conservation at the earliest opportunity before the application is submitted to discuss the potential requirements on development sites in Bedlington and the surrounding area.*

This document and plan have been produced based on the available evidence at the time that the EUS was produced. Our knowledge of the archaeology is continually being updated and as such this information should only be used as a broad indication of the archaeologically sensitive areas. In some instances development outside the highlighted areas may be required.

#### **Further Guidance**

Any further guidance or queries should be directed to:

Assistant County Archaeologist  
Northumberland Conservation  
Development & Delivery  
Planning Economy & Housing  
Northumberland County Council  
County Hall, Morpeth, NE61 2EF

Tel: 01670 620305  
e-mail: [archaeology@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northumberland.gov.uk)

