

**KING'S ARMS LANE,
ALSTON,
CUMBRIA**



**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EVALUATION REPORT**

CP. No: 10037

29/06/2012



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DOCUMENT TITLE: King's Arms Lane, Alston, Cumbria
DOCUMENT TYPE: Archaeological Evaluation Report
CLIENT: Countryside Consultants
CP NUMBER: 10037
SITE CODE: KAL-A
PLANNING APP. NO: 3/09/0193
OASIS REFERENCE: wardella2-128291
PRINT DATE: 29/06/2012
GRID REFERENCE: NY 71800 46575

Quality Assurance

This report covers works as outlined in the brief for the above-named project as issued by the relevant authority, and as outlined in the agreed programme of works. Any deviation to the programme of works has been agreed by all parties. The works have been carried out according to the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Standards, Policy Statements and Codes of Conduct. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance set out by WA Archaeology Ltd on the preparation of reports.

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	7
1 INTRODUCTION	8
2 METHODOLOGY	9
2.1 Project Design	9
2.2 Desk-Based Assessment	9
2.3 The Field Evaluation	9
2.4 The Archive	10
3 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY	11
3.1 Site Location	11
3.2 Topography and Geology	11
4 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT	12
4.1 Introduction	12
4.2 Historical Background	12
4.3 Historic Environment Record (HER)	20
4.4 Previous Archaeological Work	20
4.5 Aerial Photographs	21
5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION RESULTS	23
5.1 Introduction	23
5.2 Results	23
5.3 Archaeological Finds and Environmental Sampling	27
6 CONCLUSION	28
7 BIBLIOGRAPHY	30
APPENDIX 1: HER SITES WITHIN A 500M RADIUS	32
APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT TABLE	35
APPENDIX 3: FIGURES	36

ILLUSTRATIONS

FIGURES (APPENDIX 2)

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION

FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF EVALUATION TRENCHES

FIGURE 3: EXTRACT FROM HODSKINSON AND DONALD'S MAP OF CUMBERLAND 1774

FIGURE 4: FRYER AND HILTON'S PLAN OF THE TOWN OF ALSTON 1775

FIGURE 5: EXTRACT FROM GREENWOOD'S MAP OF CUMBERLAND 1823

FIGURE 6: FIRST EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP C.1865 (25" TO 1 MILE SCALE)

FIGURE 7: SECOND EDITION ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP 1900 (25" TO 1 MILE SCALE)

FIGURE 8: LOCATION OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FEATURES

PLATES

PLATE 1: TRENCH 1 LOOKING EAST	24
PLATE 2: CULVERT (104) LOOKING NORTH	24
PLATE 3: TRENCH 2 LOOKING EAST	25
PLATE 4: TRENCH 3 LOOKING SOUTH	26

SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Countryside Consultants, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a piece of land on King's Arms Lane, Alston, Cumbria (NGR NY 71800 46575). This work follows a planning application for the construction of three new dwellings on the site (Planning Application No. 3/09/0193). Eden District Council granted planning consent for the development, on the condition an archaeological evaluation be undertaken. The work is required as the site lies within an area considered to have a high archaeological potential.

Prior to the archaeological evaluation, a desk-based assessment was undertaken in order to set the evaluation results in their geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context. The desk-based assessment, has revealed that the development area on King's Arms Lane lies in close proximity to the possible location of an earlier medieval church which may have predated an 18th century structure and the subsequent Victorian building which occupies the site of St Augustine's presently. Although there is some evidence for a church at Alston in medieval documentation, there is no physical evidence, as yet, for stonework or features dating to that period within close proximity to the present religious site.

It would appear that the development site lay in close proximity to an area known as the 'Butts', where the local inhabitants would have practised archery. This may indicate that the land to the north of the church may have been open with little in the way of development until the 17th century; it has been suggested that this area of the town was largely an 18th century creation.

Cartographic sources have shown that the development site was largely undeveloped in the second half of the 18th century apart from a small structure, mill race known as the 'Mill Burn' to the south side of the site, and possible property boundary walls. By the second half of the 19th century at least two properties are shown to have existed at the east side of the site, and an offshoot from the mill race was present to the west side, labelled as an 'Aqueduct'. By 1900, a Saw Mill had been established on the site, powered by water from the Mill Burn, and at least one possible dwelling remained to the east.

The desk-based assessment has also revealed that previous archaeological work undertaken at the Butts, to the east of the King's Arms Lane site, revealed evidence for the culverted mill race, or 'Mill Burn'. It was also interesting to note that the natural subsoil was not reached during this excavation despite depths of up to 1.55m below the present ground surface, and that all the excavated features and finds were of post-medieval date. It remains possible, therefore, that similar conditions may be encountered on the present site.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken over three days between the 13th and 15th June 2012. The evaluation involved the excavation of three trenches, totalling 30m² of excavation within the development area. Archaeological remains were identified in all three of the trenches. Trench 1 uncovered the remains of a narrow culvert and associated cobbled surface, believed to be used for the direction of any overflowing water. These features are believed to be remnants from the saw mill industry present on the site in the early 1900's.

Trenches 2 and 3 contained the structural remains of what are believed to be dwellings, visible on the First edition Ordnance Survey Map of c.1865, in the north east corner of the site. By the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1900 only the most easterly of these two houses remained. It is these remains that have been utilised within the construction of the modern concrete floor used for the recently removed garage. This site has been redeveloped for the past 200 years but prior to that, it appears to have been an area of open grassland which indicates the potential for little activity to have been undertaken on the site other than that of a possible agricultural nature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd would like to thank John Widdaker of Countryside Consultants for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work. Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd would also like to thank Jo Mackintosh, Historic Environment Record Officer and Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Officer, Cumbria County Council, Stephen White, Carlisle Library and staff at Carlisle Archive Centre.

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Fiona Wooler. The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Angus Clark and Sue Thompson. The report was written by Fiona Wooler and Angus Clark, and the drawings were produced by Adrian Bailey. The project was managed by Frank Giocco, Technical Director for WAA Ltd. The report was edited by Martin Railton, Project Manager for WAA Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Countryside Consultants to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a piece of land at King's Arms Lane, Alston, Cumbria (NGR NY 71800 46575; Figure 1), prior to the construction of three dwellings on the site (Planning Application No. 3/09/0193). The proposed scheme affects an area considered to have a high archaeological potential and as a consequence a condition has been placed on planning consent requiring a programme of archaeological work to take place (Parsons 2012). This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).
- 1.2 The brief for the works has requested that a desk-based assessment be undertaken prior to the evaluation in order to place the results of the work into its geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context.
- 1.3 The first phase of the archaeological groundwork consisted of an evaluation to assess the archaeological nature and potential of the site. Where significant archaeological remains are identified in the evaluation, there will be a need for a programme of archaeological recording, the scope of which would be dependent upon the results of the evaluation. Such a programme of archaeological recording would require the production of another brief by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (Parsons 2012).
- 1.4 This report outlines the results of the desk-based assessment, the evaluation works undertaken on-site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological works.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Countryside Consultants, for an archaeological evaluation of the study area (Giecco 2012a). Following acceptance of the project design by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

2.2.1 Prior to the archaeological evaluation, a desk-based assessment was undertaken in order to place the site into its geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context. The Historic Environment Record, a database of known historical and archaeological sites in Cumbria (excluding the Lake District National Park) was consulted in the first instance. The assessment then involved the consultation of primary and secondary sources relating to the site most notably historical mapping and articles in the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society, housed at Carlisle Library (local studies) and Carlisle Archive Centre.

2.2.2 The desk-based assessment was undertaken following guidance issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) in *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (2011).

2.3 THE FIELD EVALUATION

2.3.1 The evaluation consisted of the excavation of three trial trenches covering approximately 30m² of the proposed development area. This phase of work involved the investigation and recording of deposits and features of archaeological interest identified within those trenches

2.3.2 In summary, the main objectives of the field evaluation were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;

- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
 - to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.
- 2.3.3 Topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trial trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand and all features were investigated and recording according to the Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd standard procedure as set out in the Excavation Manual (Giecco 2012b).
- 2.3.4 All finds encountered were retained, including those from excavated topsoil, and were cleaned and packaged according to standard guidelines, and recorded under the supervision of Teresa Gilmore, WWA Ltd Finds Officer.
- 2.3.5 All deposits encountered were deemed unsuitable for environmental sampling, and therefore no samples were retained.
- 2.3.6 The three evaluation trenches were scheduled to be backfilled at the discretion of the client, following excavation and recording.
- 2.3.7 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following approved standards and guidance (IfA 2008), and was consistent with the specification provided by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (Parsons 2012) and generally accepted best practice.

2.4 THE ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited within Carlisle Archives Centre, with copies of the report sent to the County Historic Environment Record at Kendal, where viewing will be made available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier WAA12, KAL-A, CP 10037/12.
- 2.4.2 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd and Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, support the **Online AccesS** to the **Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd, as a part of this national project.

3 SITE LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1.1 The town of Alston is located to the east side of the county of Cumbria, at the north end of the North Pennines, at a height of c.290m above mean sea level. The town is bounded to the north by the River Nent which flows into the River South Tyne to the west (Figure 1).
- 3.1.2 The development area is located at the north end of King's Arms Lane, in an area known as The Butts (Figure 2). This is an area of the town which is situated to the north-east of the Market Place and the churchyard, and consists of an irregularly-arranged thoroughfare encompassing a long-established residential area with a more recently developed industrial function. The Butts, Back Garth and Gossipgate collectively form a distinct area that is defined by a combination of its proximity to the Market Place, its relative isolation from the principal roads, and the irregular and historic layout of its plots and buildings (Jessop and Whitfield 2010, 91).

3.2 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.2.1 The Countryside Commission places the town of Alston in a character area known as the 'North Pennines', which is located at the northern end of the Pennine Chain and forms a separate and distinct area of upland moorland and dales. The area has a strong regional identity and is characterised by some of the highest and wildest moorland summits in England. Alston, which is reputed to be the highest market town in England, is the largest upland settlement in the North Pennines. The small market square and cobbled streets provide a focus for the upper South Tyne valley (Countryside Commission 1998, 43-48).
- 3.2.2 The North Pennines coincide with the area known to geologists as the Alston Block. This is a structural unit consisting of a succession of Carboniferous sedimentary rocks which dip gently eastwards towards the Durham Coalfield and North Sea. The area is bounded on the north by the Stublick Fault System along the Tyne Gap, on the west by the Pennine fault System along the Pennine escarpment, and on the south by the Lunedale Fault System (*ibid*, 45).
- 3.2.3 The solid geology of the area around Alston consists of carboniferous mudstones and sandstones with thin limestones and thin coals of the Upper Border ground (English Heritage/Cumbria County Council 2002, 2).

4 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

- 4.1.1 A rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken prior to the archaeological evaluation on the site in order to provide historical information on the land and its environs, which may aid the interpretation of features observed during the fieldwork.
- 4.1.2 The following historical background is compiled mostly from information obtained from the county Historic Environment Record (HER), historical mapping and secondary sources, and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments specific to a 500m radius centred on the proposed development area. A wider area has also been considered, particularly with regard to the prehistoric, Roman and early medieval periods.

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.2.1 *Place Name Evidence:* as a place name, Alston is first recorded as *Aldeneby* in 1164-71, and has subsequent spellings including *Aldenestoun* c.1208, *Haldeston* in 1279, and *Auston* in 1589. The probably origin of the name is the Old English personal name 'Halfdan' or 'Aldhun', and means 'Aldhun's Farm' (Armstrong *et al* 1950, 172; Lee 1998, 2). Old English was the language spoken by the Anglo-Saxons from the 6th to the 12th centuries (Lee 1998)
- 4.2.2 *Prehistoric (up to c.70AD):* there is some evidence for activity in the area around Alston during this period, although little from the town itself. The earliest traces of human habitation in the vicinity of Alston Moor are two small Bronze Age burial mounds at Kirkhaugh, which is located to the north-west of Alston. They date from between 2000BC and 1700BC. When the barrows were excavated in 1935, one contained the remains of an unburnt burial, a gold earring, broken pottery, a flint arrowhead and flint and stone tools (Robertson 1998, 5).
- 4.2.3 An irregular-shaped flint or chert flake which had possibly been utilised as a knife blade, was found at Nattrass Gill, to the south side of Alston, and donated to Tullie House Museum in Carlisle (Richardson 1998, 13).
- 4.2.4 Robertson has suggested that Alston Moor appears to have been largely uninhabited in prehistoric times although there may have been occasional instances where hunting parties may have visited the area. The native Celts left their legacy in the form of place names, for example the River 'Nent' is the same as the modern Welsh 'nant', which means valley or stream, and the Tyne is a Celtic river name from the root 'ti', 'tei' meaning to dissolve or flow

(Robertson 1998, 5-6). Recent survey work by English Heritage has, however, identified a number of possible prehistoric sites on Alston Moor. Two probable Bronze Age round cairns (funerary monuments) have been newly discovered on lidar (light detection and ranging) aerial photography on a natural bench overlooking the River Nent at NY 7482 4706 (to the east of Alston and Blagill), at a height of approximately 405m. An unusual 'circular enclosure' comprising two concentric rings of ditch with outer bank has also been revealed by lidar near Dryburn, Garrigill, which has been suggested to possibly represent a prehistoric henge (Oakey *et al* 2012, 18-19).

- 4.2.5 The HER database for the study area centred on King's Arms Lane, currently does not contain any entries which relate to this period.
- 4.2.6 *Romano-British (c.70-410AD)*: to the north-west of Alston there is evidence for Roman occupation in the form of Whitley Castle, which may have been an army camp in the early 2nd century, but was certainly a fort from the mid-2nd to the 4th century and served as a halfway stop on the Maiden Way, the Roman road from Kirkby Thore to Greenhead. Robertson suggests that its main purpose was to work and safeguard the lead and silver extractions from the upper reaches of the South Tyne valley. To the south of Alston there is a field which was formerly known as 'Chesters' (often an indication of Roman activity), where shallow pits were apparently worked for alluvial lead ore and silver (Robertson 1998, 6-7). There has been some suggestion that Hallhill Plantation Moated Site, located to the north-west of the town, on the west side of the River South Tyne, may have been Roman in origin (HER No. 775), although this has not been confirmed archaeologically (HER
- 4.2.7 Within in Alston itself, the only possible evidence for activity during this period is derived from the findspot of a glass bead of 'possible' Roman date from the garden of Temple Croft at Town Foot in the 1980s (Richardson 1998, 52; HER No. 19737).
- 4.2.8 *Early Medieval (c.410-1066AD)*: the only evidence for activity during this period, as is common in Cumbria, is from the place name Alston, which as noted in 4.2.1 above, is believed to derive from Old English words 'Halfden' or 'Aldhun' and 'tun' meaning 'Halfdan's' or 'Aldhun's' Farm. There are no recorded fragments of stone sculpture dating to this period, currently known to exist in or around the church, as is evident at other church sites in the county, and therefore, at present, there is no archaeological evidence for an early medieval religious site, unless the curvilinear form of the graveyard boundary can be taken as an indication.
- 4.2.9 Robertson notes that in the 10th century Alston was part of Tynedale, one of the Scottish king's estates in England, and it had been more affiliated to the old kingdom of Northumbria and later the earldom of Northumberland

- (Robertson 1998, 9). It is not known what form any settlement took (if one existed) at what is now the town of Alston in this period.
- 4.2.10 The HER database does not presently contain any entries relating to this period within a 500m radius of the site on King's Arms Lane.
- 4.2.11 *Medieval (c.1066-1540AD)*: although there may have been a church at Alston before the Norman Conquest in 1066, there is no reference to one in Saxon Chronicles and the Domesday Book does not mention Alston, as is common for most of the old county of Cumberland. The earliest reference to a church at the site is 1154, when King Henry II appointed Galfrid as Rector. In 1279, the name of Adam le Clerk of *Aldeneston* appears as Rector, and in 1285 the name of the Rector is given as Gilbert (Clunes Undated). Although there are documented references to a medieval church, the building that stands today dates to 1870, which replaced a 1770 church (Hyde and Pevsner 2010, 95). There does not appear to be any earlier fabric contained within the standing building, which could have provided evidence for a medieval structure on the site. There is, however, a 13th century grave slab present within the church, which was described in Autumn 2007 (Robertson 2007a, 46).
- 4.2.12 There is documentary evidence from the Pipe Rolls of 1130-31, that there was a silver mine on Alston Moor at this date. In their articles '*Alston*' by T H B Graham (1931), and '*The Medieval Mines of Alston*', by J Walton (1946), reference is made to the association between the mines on Alston Moor and the City of Carlisle. Although there are references in this article to the Alston mines, for example in 1356 it was documented: '*from the miners of Aldeneston who work in the king's mines or those who dwell within its limits and bounds of that mine and maintain and find the men to work therein*' (Walton 1946, 30), it is unclear where any settlement (if any existed outside the location of the mines) was situated, and whether it was the site of the modern town. It is also unclear where exactly the mines referred to were located.
- 4.2.13 Following the death of Nicholas de Veteripont in 1315, it was recorded of his estate: '*It was found by an inquest after the death of Nicholas de Veteriponte that he held a capital messuage in Aldreston with 14 acres of arable and 100 acres of meadow ground; 16 tenants who rendered 37s 6d yearly; 33 tenants at Gerrardsgill, who held 33 sheildings; 13 tenants at Amotesalth (Ameshaugh); 22 tenants at Nent and Corbriggate (Corbygates) who had 22 sheildings; also one water corn mill and one fulling mill, and 3000 acres of pasture in Aldreston Moor*' (Robertson 1998, 16). It is clear from this source that there were settlements in and around Alston, including Garrigill, Ameshaugh and possibly Nenthead, at this date, as well as temporary 'shielings' on the summer pasture grounds. It is possible that the water mills referred to may have been located on the site

of later examples, although this has not been confirmed through documentary sources or archaeological work.

- 4.2.14 The HER presently contains entries for three sites within the 500m search radius which relate to the medieval period; Hallhill Plantation Moated Site, which is located to the north-west of the town, is believed to be medieval in origin, although it has not been excavated archaeologically (HER No. 775, see Section 4.3.2 below); Pottery Finds at Temple Croft (located just to the south of St Augustine's Church) consisting of four sherd of medieval green glazed ware found in the garden of the property (HER No. 19722) and a 'Costrel' Vessel Find, a possible 13th-15th century pottery vessel found in the garden of a house on the site of a converted chapel on the Nenthead road (HER No. 19447; Richardson 1998, 430).
- 4.2.15 The HER search results also contain one entry, 'Tower Hill Place Name Site', located to the west of the town on the west side of the River South Tyne. The entry notes that this may relate to the site of a possible 'pele' tower or some other fortification, given its name, although no such structure still stands (HER No. 11091)¹. There are several examples of fortified dwellings located in and around Alston, and therefore the possibility that 'Tower Hill' may have once had such a structure is not impossible. In their gazetteer of 'The Medieval Fortified Buildings of Cumbria', Perriam and Robinson provide a list of several examples of 'bastle houses' located in the Alston area, for example Annat Walls, Bayles Hill House, Blagill, Bunkershill, and High Lovelady Shield. When noting the town of Alston itself, they observed: '*Alston Town itself contains a large number of houses with living accommodation at first floor level, and these together with the basic pattern of narrow streets were partially a response to climate, but also were defensible*' (Perriam and Robinson 1998, 30). It is not known if there were such houses located in close proximity to the site on King's Arms Lane; 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping appears to show buildings immediately to the east which have external staircases indicating first floor living accommodation, but this may have been a response to the topography rather than of a defensive nature (see Figure 6 for example).
- 4.2.16 *Post-medieval and Modern (c.1540-present)*: at the end of the 16th century, reference was made in a Paine Roll, a code of civil law for Alston Moor, that: '*The Butts [for practicing archery] of Aldston and Garrigill by yearly made before St Helen's Day [18th August] upon paine of three shillings*' (Robertson 1998, 21). The 'Butts' were sites where local inhabitants practiced archery, and the two

¹ Robertson notes that Tower House was the site of a lead shot tower referred to in 1829. This was where lead shot were manufactured by dropping lead down the tower into water to form circular balls. Sopwith had noted that the tower resembled a church. The house remains but all traces of the tower are gone (Robertson 1998, 60)

places referred to were High and Low Butt Hill, Garrigill Village Green, and a part of Alston which is still called the 'Butts' (Wallace 1890, 39), located immediately to the east of the site on King's Arms Lane. This suggests that the site of the Butts was an open space at this time, to allow for the archery practice.

- 4.2.17 There is some evidence that buildings existed at Alston in the 17th century. Robertson notes that in 1611, Henry Hilton, lord of the manor of Alston Moor, began to lease out much of Alston Moor; this appears to have included land in Alston itself, as it is noted that there are date stones of 1611 and 1617 on some buildings in the town, although dates of 1687 and after are probably authentic as the date of construction, since that was the time when the 'Great Rebuilding in Stone' reached the north of England (Robertson 1998, 22; Robertson 2007b, 44). The Butts was seemingly an important part of the town in the 17th century. According to Robertson, houses were occupied by tradesmen such as Jackson 'the periwig maker' and at Garden House, '*a cordwainer plied his trade making top-boots, leather jerkins and breeches*' (Robertson 2007b, 35). According to Hyde and Pevsner, an alley called 'Katie's Lane' runs down from Front Street and leads to 'Old House' and 'Olde Cottage' which is dated 1621, both still with living accommodation on the upper floors (Hyde and Pevsner 2010, 96).
- 4.2.18 The Listed Building descriptions provide some indication for the dates of structures which stand in the town presently, although these are only buildings which have been 'listed' as being of national importance, and therefore it is possible that there are earlier buildings in the town which have not been listed. The Blue Bell Hotel has datestones of 1680 and 1746 (LB No. 73076); a property adjoining the west end of Angel Inn is dated 1687 (LB No. 73109); and the Angel Inn itself, located on Front Street, is early 17th century in date with later additions (LB No. 73110). The Kings Arms Hotel, on Front Street, also seemingly dates to 1687, as shown by an advertisement of 1888. It is presumably from this property that King's Arms Lane took its name. The name 'King's Arms' was apparently a '*proud declaration of loyalty after the restoration of the monarchy*'. King's Arms Lane was also known as Thirwalls Lane (Wilkinson 2009, 63).
- 4.2.19 In his Perambulation of Cumberland at the end of the 17th century, Thomas Denton provides little in the way of observations with regards to how the town of Alston appeared at that date. On describing Alston Moor he noted: '*This was formerly a great wast ground lying involved in the high mountains, onely South Tine creeps through the middle of it in many strait passages, whence it was so called by the Brittaines, for 'Tin' in their language is to 'pen' or 'hem' in, as Tine is here with straight and narrow banks. Mr Camden takes notice that it was famous for his time for copper mines, and it is now more famous for lead mines of incredible*

value found out by Sir Francis Radcliffe, now earl of Derwentwater..the houses stand stragglng all over the parish, as if they were afraid of one another' (Winchester 2003, 343).

- 4.2.20 As the 18th century advanced, Alston became increasingly dependant on the fortunes of the lead industry. The manor was acquired from the Crown (following the demise of the Earl of Derwentwater) by the Greenwich Hospital in 1734, and it was under their stewardship that the modern era of lead mining began (Robertson 1998, 28). During this period, as times became more settled and prosperity increased, buildings in the town became more substantial, and the 'Great Rebuilding in Stone' began. Houses dated in the Butts indicate that it came to Alston in the 1740s, although these dates may refer to conversion of existing buildings that were constructed between 1680 and 1700. Almost all of the mid-18th century houses on the Butts and the Market Place had first floor entries, and when the 'Back o' the Burn was built, this tradition continued (*ibid*, 32 and 34). Wilkinson has noted that compared with the relative formality of Front Street, the Butts was a quaint but disorganised development. The first reference in manorial records appears in 1750, which described '*draynes..from the several houses newly erected in the Butts'* (Wilkinson 2009, 58).
- 4.2.21 The Listed Building entries, as with the 17th century, provide some indication of the structures that date to the mid-18th century. For example, Hillcrest Hotel is mid-18th century with later additions (LB No. 73073); Corner House, to south of Blue Bell Hotel is of the same period (LB No. 73074); Lyndhurst and No.4 at Townfoot are mid-18th century (LB No's. 73077 and 73078), and The Cottage on Front Street is of the same period with later additions (LB No. 73114).
- 4.2.22 According to Wilkinson, the first church on the site of St Augustine's at Alston was noted to have been decaying in 1723, and by 1763 it was recommended that it was totally rebuilt: '*as the present fabric is so ruinous in every part that it can never be effectively repaired'*. The new church was constructed by Stephenson and Smith in 1769 and measured 66ft long by 40ft wide and included a nave, two aisles, chancel, square tower and a gallery (Wilkinson 2009, 59). Wilkinson provides a photograph of this late 18th century church in his publication 'Old Alston' (*ibid*).
- 4.2.23 The earliest readily-available map consulted as part of the desk-based assessment was Hodkinson and Donald's Map of Cumberland, which was surveyed in 1770 and published in 1774. This source, although at a small-scale, shows the layout of the town as it was at the end of the 18th century, with the settlement lying principally on Front Street and Townfoot. A small vignette of a church is shown in the location of St Augustine's, with the

course of the River Nent shown to its north side. No features are visible in the approximate location of the development area on King's Arms Lane due to the map scale (Figure 3).

- 4.2.24 Fortunately for Alston, a large-scale plan exists which shows the town of Alston as it appeared in 1775, along with numbers which correspond to a list of owners or inhabitants. The area to the north of the church appears developed in the area now known as The Butts, with a mill race clearly visible running along the south side, partly culverted beneath some of the properties. Plot Number 111, which appears to represent the buildings which still stand immediately to the east of the development area, were owned or occupied at this date by John Spencer. To the west of the development area on King's Arms Lane is a mill (Low Mill) which was clearly driven by a waterwheel set on an offshoot of the mill race; this mill was owned or occupied by Robert Hodgson (Figure 4). The proposed development area is shown as largely undeveloped apart from a small structure and boundary walls associated with the buildings to the east and the mill race running along its south side, annotated as 'Mill Burn'. Low Mill was used to grind corn and replaced a ruined water-powered fulling or 'walk' mill, in operation 40 to 50 years earlier. The new corn mill stood as part of the Church Crofts (fields), also known as 'Millers Wives Brow' (see Figure 4). The mill was constructed by Thomas Lee and Robert Hodgson after they had acquired half shares of the site in 1761 (Wilkinson 2009, 68).
- 4.2.25 Writing at the end of the 18th century, William Hutchinson described Alston as: *'a small market town, meanly built, situated on the declivity of a steep hill, inhabited by miners'* (Hutchinson 1797-97, 213). Jollies Cumberland Guide of 1811 referred to it as *'almost wholly inhabited by miners, or people connected with that employ'*. In 1833 Thomas Sopwith noted: *'it contains about 400 houses and is on the whole rather meanly built. The streets are inconveniently steep and narrow'* (Wilkinson 2009, 8).
- 4.2.26 Greenwood's Map of Cumberland 1823 appears to show Alston in generally the same form as it appeared on Hodkinson and Donald's Map of 1774 (see Figure 3). The church is represented by a '+' to the north side of the town, but very little appears to be shown in the area around Butts, apart from a possible road, even though it has been noted that buildings existed from at least the mid-18th century, but this could simply be a reflection of the scale of the map (Figure 5).
- 4.2.27 In 1829, Alston town contained *'about 2500 inhabitants and 400 irregularly-built houses, generally constructed of stone and covered with slate. It is well supplied with water by four pants [wells], situated in convenient parts of the town, and replenished by means of lead pipes, extended from an excellent spring on Broad-pot*

hill. The numerous lead mines in the parish give employment to most of its inhabitants, and are the principal support of this town, in which there is a large common brewery, a shoe, sewing thread, and a shot manufactory, a candle-house, a number of retail shops, two good inns and 20 public houses' (Parson and White 1829, 457-458).

- 4.2.28 The First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of c.1865 clearly shows the town of Alston as it appeared at that date, with the development area on King's Arms Lane located to its north side. There has clearly been some new construction work taken place in this part of the town between Fryer and Hilton's Map of 1775 and this date, for example the creation of Church Row, the construction of the 'Salvin Schools'. The development area is shown as largely open with the mill race or 'Mill Burn' running to its south side, however a branch of this water course leads off it which is labelled 'Aqueduct' possibly to provide water power to some other industry before the mill race reached Low Mill, which is annotated on this map as a 'corn mill'. Two properties are also shown to the east side of the site, formerly buildings on the end of a row, with an apparent boundary wall leading off to the south-east (Figure 6). The properties located immediately to the east of the development site appear to be shown with external staircases indicating they may have been dwellings with first floor living spaces as has already been referred to above.
- 4.2.29 The Mill Burn, which powered Low Mill, also had a branch higher up, to the east, which fed a saw mill operated by Thomas Richardson, joiner and millwright (Wilkinson 2009, 69). It is presumably this saw mill that was shown to have existed within the development area at the start of the 20th century (see Figure 7). The saw mill was referred to by Robertson in his history of Alston Moor, in which he noted: '*Alston, like most if not all towns, had its own saw mill, located on the mill race above the Low Mill, in the Butts where the Council store is now. Its first appearance is in the Trade Directory of 1858, when it was run by the Haldon family, one of whom was also a grocer. The Haldons ran the saw mill until about 1890, when Hugh Kearton, who was already a builder, took it over for about ten years*' (Robertson 1998, 64).
- 4.2.30 In the early 20th century, Alston had two remaining corn mills, High Mill (Lancaster's) which closed in the 1930s, and Low Mill (Haldon's) which closed in the 1950s. The saw mill, which had also supplied marble and granite memorials as a 'specialty', and had produced carts and wagons earlier in the century, closed in the 1920s when its owner, Herbert Richardson, retired (Robertson 1998, 74).
- 4.2.31 The HER database contains 17 entries within the 500m search radius centre on the development site on King's Arms Lane, a full list of which are

provided in Appendix 1. These sites include Alston Railway Station, built 1852 (HER No. 5524); Alston Brewery, of late 18th century date (HER No. 6990); Alston Gasometer, which has been dismantled (HER No. 11135); Alston Woollen Mill (HER No. 11173) and several chapels such as the Congregational Chapel at The Butts, which is recorded as opened in 1805 and enlarged in 1821 (HER No. 19553) and Alston Primitive Methodist Chapel which was originally constructed in 1823, and rebuilt in 1845 (HER No. 1554).

4.2.32 St Augustine's Church, located to the south of the development area on higher ground, was totally rebuilt once again in 1869-70 in the 13th century style by J W Walton (Hyde and Pevsner 2010, 95).

4.3 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

4.3.1 *HER Sites*: a 500m radius search centred on the location of the proposed development has revealed 27 sites of archaeological or historical interest currently recorded. These entries provide some information on the character of known sites within close proximity. A full list of the HER sites revealed is provided in Appendix 1, and pertinent entries are referred to in the historical background above.

4.3.2 *Scheduled Ancient Monuments*: there is one Scheduled Ancient Monument located within the 500m search radius; at Moated Site at Hall Hill Plantation (SM No. CU373). This site is located on the west side of the River South Tyne and is believed to be medieval in date, although the site has not been excavated archaeologically. The description notes: '*the remains of a broad moat 19ft wide can be seen on the north side and more faintly on the west, where the ground is wet. The third part of the triangle is the river, which has probably changed its course and cut into part of the site. Part of the area within the moats seems to be an artificial mound*'.

4.3.3 *Listed Buildings*: there are a total of 34 listed buildings located within a 500m radius of the development site. The majority of these sites date to the 18th century; however three have been dated to the 17th century, with The Angel Inn on Front Street suggested to be early 17th century in date.

4.3.4 *Conservation Areas*: the development area is located within Alston Conservation Area.

4.4 PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

4.4.1 There are only two schemes of archaeological work which have been undertaken within a 500m search radius centred on the development area on King's Arms Lane, and which are recorded in the HER database:

- *The Butts, Alston - Archaeological Evaluation:* in 2002, North Pennines Heritage Trust undertook an archaeological evaluation on an area of proposed redevelopment at The Butts, located just to the east of the present site on King's Arms Lane. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of three trenches: the earliest deposit identified in Trench 1 consisted of two large stone slabs which formed the roof of a culvert, the trajectory of which could be seen on a town map dating to 1775. The culvert contained the eastward continuation of the Mill Burn Beck, which presumably supplied water to a mill at the top of The Butts. These slabs, which were found at a depth of 0.97m below the ground surface (288.41m AOD), were covered with a mid grey-brown clay, which became increasingly cobble filled with depth. This deposit measured roughly 0.3m in depth and was fairly mixed throughout, contained rubble, mortar, coal, pottery, bone and glass within its fill. This deposit was sealed by a fairly well-laid cobble surface located at a depth of 0.58m below the ground surface (288.80m AOD). The cobbles were bedded into a fine gravel-silt and are thought to be part of a more extensive, exterior cobbled yard. Part of a cobbled surface was also revealed in Trench 2 at 289.48m AOD, and was noted to have consisted of rectangular blocks of stone to depict a pattern and form a shallow draining gully near the south end of the trench. Trench 3 revealed evidence for a possible cellar wall which were interpreted as relating to structures shown on the site on a 1775 plan of the town. The pottery from the evaluation appeared to form an 18th-19th century assemblage, with the exception of one residual fragment of possible late medieval pot. Natural subsoil was not observed in any of the trenches despite excavation to depths of up to 1.55m below the ground surface [as it was in 2002], and it was noted that it remained possible for deposits of medieval or earlier date to lie beneath the post-medieval deposits that were revealed during the evaluation (Reeves 2002; HER Report Ref: 3/052/366)
- *Lowbyre Manor Farm, Alston – Historic Building Survey:* a building survey was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in 2005. The survey revealed that the farm buildings appeared to date to the mid-19th century (Wooler 2005).

4.5 AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS

- 4.5.1 There are several photographs housed at the Historic Environment Record in Kendal which show the site on King's Arms Lane, although not in any great detail. The following photographs are referred to as an example of those consulted:

- *NY7146/C, Oblique taken 19/03/1985*: this view is looking south over the town and clearly shows the site of St Augustine's Church. The proposed development area is visible, and appears to contain a building, possibly single-storey in height, but it is unclear from this photograph if the building was domestic or an outbuilding.
- *NY7246/B, Oblique taken 28/10/1987*: this view looking east over the town shows the church in the foreground with an apparent single-storey building occupying part of the proposed development area.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 The evaluation was undertaken over three days, from the 13th to the 15th June 2012, and consisted of the excavation of three trenches covering an area of c.30m² in total. The site itself was fairly small covering 550m² of land and within it, located fairly centrally, stood an extant modern garage (Figure 2). These factors, along with the deposition of building materials on the site, meant that the trenches were located within an area of suitable access and also utilised the foundation trenches for the primary dwelling (Trenches 2 & 3).

5.2 RESULTS

- 5.2.1 *Trench 1*: Trench 1 was located along the southern wall of the existing garage and to the north of the existing mill race and was aligned east west (Figure 2). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m revealing compacted dark orange/brown clay (**101**). This was capped by a compacted deposit of large limestone cobbles (**102**) which had been laid on a slope from north to south, sloping towards the existing mill race. This cobbled surface measured 4.30m in length, 1.40m in width and consisted of a single layer of cobbles, measuring an average depth of 0.25m (Plate 1).
- 5.2.2 Located at the eastern end of the cobbled surface was a narrow culvert (**104**) which was constructed using limestone blocks, the western wall measured 0.42m in width and the channel itself 0.30m in width. The culvert was recorded to a depth of 0.62m but the base was not reached as it became waterlogged at this depth (Plate 2).
- 5.2.3 The culvert had become in filled by soft dark grey/brown silt (**107**). This in filled culvert appears to have been capped by sandstone paving slabs (**105**), as the slabs sat flush to the western wall of the culvert and not over the top of it, it was determined they were a later addition and not part of the original structure. Capping all of these features was loosely compacted dark brown silt (**100**) measuring to an average depth of 0.65m.



Plate 1: Trench 1 looking east



Plate 2: Culvert (104) looking north

- 5.2.4 **Trench 2:** Trench 2 was located midway along the eastern boundary and was aligned east west (Figure 2). This trench ran along the southern extent of an existing concrete slab that was part of a garage that had been recently demolished. The trench was excavated to a width of 2m, a length of 4.2m and a depth of 0.67m.
- 5.2.5 Excavation revealed yellow sandy clay natural **(109)**. Above this sat a limestone block wall **(103)** standing to a maximum of four courses to a height of 0.60m and measuring 0.40m in width (Plate 3). The stonework was bonded with concrete and had been incorporated into the garage construction, being utilised as a foundation on which to lay a modern concrete slab.
- 5.2.6 To the north of the wall **(103)**, sealing the natural **(109)** was a mixed silty rubble backfill layer **(110)**, which measured 0.60m in depth and was used to make up the ground within the former stone built structure.
- 5.2.7 To the south of the wall the trench was excavated 0.67m through dark brown silty topsoil **(100)**. The natural substrate was not encountered in this part of the trench but as this trench was to be used to lay the foundations of the new development the maximum depth at which archaeological remains would be disturbed had been reached, preserving *in situ* any deposits below the new dwelling.



Plate 3: Trench 2 looking east

- 5.2.8 **Trench 3:** Trench 3 was located towards the north east corner of the development and ran adjacent to the western edge of the modern concrete slab (Figure 2). The trench was aligned north south and measured 10m in length, 1.8m in width and 0.80m at its maximum depth. This trench incorporated a section of foundation trench for the new dwelling
- 5.2.9 The excavation revealed the natural yellow sandy clay (109), above which sat a north south aligned limestone block wall, bonded with lime mortar (108). Two prominent sections of the wall remain intact, one section at the northern end of the trench and one at the southern extent. The wall has been heavily disturbed/ robbed out in the middle section due to the presence of modern services within this area. The northern section of the wall remained standing to a height of 0.35m at three courses, to a length of 2m and measured 0.60m in width. The southern section of the wall stood to a height of 0.80m at five courses, measured 2.50m in length and 0.60m in width (Plate 4).
- 5.2.10 Along the western edge of the trench an area of modern disturbance was visible, due to the foundation cut for the garage that exists in the centre of the site, along with the presence of a man hole shaft. A shallow stone filled east west gully was also noted in the centre of the trench but measured only 0.12m in depth and was sterile of finds.



Plate 4: Trench 3 looking south

5.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

- 5.3.1 The finds recovered were all dated to the 20th century and were not retained.
No environmental samples were taken during the excavation.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The desk-based assessment, which was undertaken prior to the archaeological evaluation on the site, has revealed that the development area on King's Arms Lane lies in close proximity to the possible location of an earlier medieval church which may have predated an 18th century structure and the subsequent Victorian building which occupies the site of St Augustine's presently. Although there is some evidence for a church at Alston in medieval documentation, there is no physical evidence, as yet, for stonework or features dating to that period within close proximity to the present religious site.
- 6.2 It would appear that the development site lay in close proximity to an area known as the 'Butts', where the local inhabitants would have practised archery. This may indicate that the land to the north of the church may have been open with little in the way of development until the 17th century, although it has been suggested that this area of the town was largely an 18th century creation, with some of the properties having first floor entrances from external staircases.
- 6.3 Cartographic sources have shown that the development site was largely undeveloped in the second half of the 18th century apart from a small structure, mill race known as the 'Mill Burn' to the south side of the site, and possible property boundary walls (see Figure 4). By the second half of the 19th century at least two properties are shown to have existed at the east side of the site, and an offshoot from the mill race was present to the west side, labelled as an 'Aqueduct' (see Figure 6). By 1900, a Saw Mill had been established on the site, powered by water from the Mill Burn, and at least one possible dwelling remained to the east (Figure 7).
- 6.4 Modern aerial photography has shown that the central area of the development site contained, what appears to have been, a single-storey structure, possibly of light industrial use or a garage.
- 6.5 The desk-based assessment has also revealed that previous archaeological work undertaken at the Butts, to the east of the King's Arms Lane site, revealed evidence for the culverted mill race, or 'Mill Burn'. It was also interesting to note that the natural subsoil was not reached during this excavation despite depths of up to 1.55m below the present ground surface, and that all the excavated features and finds were of post-medieval date (Reeves 2002).
- 6.6 During the archaeological field evaluation three trenches were excavated within the development area, covering 30m². The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the nature and extent of below ground archaeological remains within the vicinity, the evaluation trenches being located to provide a representative

sample of the development area. All trenches were excavated down to the top of the natural substrate.

- 6.7 Trench 1 revealed a narrow culvert **(104)** and an associated sloping cobble surface/bank **(102)**. These are believed to be related to the use of the site as a saw mill in the late 18th Century to the early 1900's. These remains are likely to associate with the use of water as the driving force for a wheel to power the mill in its production of materials. As only a small section of the supposed mill race was uncovered it is hard to draw definitive conclusions as to any further nature or extent of this culverted water course. However, due to the shallow foundations of the garage building present on the site there is a high potential for further associated remains surviving within the central aspect of the site.
- 6.8 Trenches 2 and 3 both contained the structural remains of what are believed to be dwellings visible on the First edition Ordnance Survey Map *c.*1865 in the north east corner of the site. By the Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1900 only the most easterly of these two houses remains and it is these remains that have been utilised within the construction of the modern concrete floor used for the recently removed garage.

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APPENDIX 1: HER SITES WITHIN A 500M RADIUS

The following table lists all the HER entries which are located within a 500m search radius centred on the development area on King's Arms Lane:

HER No.	Site Name	Description	Grid Ref	General Period
775	Hallhill Plantation Moated Site, Alston Moor	According to Collingwood the feature is a moraine-mound with a level space at the south end bisected by trench. It also contains a depression in the SW corner, possibly a hut circle. Two medieval bronze vessels were found in 1939 <i>Scheduled Ancient Monument (CU373)</i>	E:371480 N:546700	Medieval
5524	Alston Railway Station	Alston Station and Goods Shed. Built 1852 as terminus to Alston branch of Newcastle-Carlisle Railway. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371700 N:546700	Post Medieval (Victorian)
6189	Alston Trackways	What appear to be number of old trackways, some of them hollow ways, can be seen on an aerial photograph. May also be some ridge and furrow	E:372250 N:546505	Unknown
6990	Alston Brewery	A former late 18 th century brewery, consisting of brewmaster's house, a tavern, a waterwheel house, a wine, spirit and beer store and a hayloft above. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371600 N:546200	Post Medieval (Georgian)
11091	Tower Hill Place Name Site	The name 'Tower Hill' is perhaps indicative of a Pele Tower or some other fortification	E:371430 N:546460	Unknown
11131	Alston Mill Dam	Site of an old mill dam shown on the First Edition OS map c.1865	E:372110 N:546240	Unknown
11132	Alston Moor Quarry	Site of a quarry shown on First Edition OS map	E:371650 N:546950	Unknown
11134	Alston Ropery	A ropery site shown on First Edition OS map	E:372050 N:546260	Unknown
11135	Alston Gasometer	Gasometer, now dismantled and site built over	E:371750 N:546700	Post Medieval
11136	Alston Lime Works	Constructed after 1868, not shown on First Edition OS	E:371575 N:547050	Post Medieval

		map		
11173	Alston Woollen Mill	Old woollen mill. The building is still extant, although the mill had become disused by 1899	E:371800 N:546670	Post Medieval
11174	Newcastle and Carlisle Railway, Alston Branch	Railway ended at Alston. The line split into three, one set to station, one set to sidings and one set to a marshalling yard (with turntable)	E:370000 N:549000	Post Medieval (Victorian)
11176	Teesdale Craggs Quarry	A quarry site which was worked during 1861, and is now disused	E:372060 N:546760	Post Medieval
19553	Congregational Chapel, The Butts	Now Gossipgate Gallery. Opened in 1805 and 'considerably enlarged' in 1821, this is a typical early 19 th century chapel	E:371905 N:546615	Post Medieval (Georgian)
19554	Alston Primitive Methodist Chapel	Primitive Methodist Chapel, now the central three houses of Chapel Terrace, on the north side of Nenthead Road, was originally built in 1823. However, the construction was poor, it was rebuilt in 1845	E:372140 N:546330	Post Medieval (Georgian)
19555	Wesleyan Chapel	The Wesleyan Chapel at Alston is now two dwelling houses (Chapel House and Holme Lea), situated on the east side of Overburn. Shown on the First Edition OS map	E:371980 N:546400	Post Medieval (Georgian/Regency)
19556	St Pauls Wesleyan Methodist Church	A large 'town chapel' of 1867-9, it was designed by Haswell and built by Thomas Cranston	E:371960 N:546310	Post Medieval (Victorian)
19722	Pottery Finds, Temple Croft	Four sherds of medieval green glazed ware were found in the garden of the donor. Two are base sherds from a large vessel	E:371780 N:546430	Medieval
19737	Glass Bead Find	A small blue bead found in the garden of the donor at Temple Croft	E:371780 N:546430	Unknown
19740	Bead/Spacer Find, Temple Croft	A small perforated object, ivory white in colour, was found by the donor in the garden of Temple Croft	E:371780 N:546430	Unknown

19747	'Costrel' Vessel Find	This vessel was found in the garden of a house at Alston on the site of a converted chapel, probably in the 1960s. 'Costrel' vessels have a fairly broad chronological range from the 13 th -15 th centuries. They are pottery representations of the leather hip-flask	E:372140 N:546320	Medieval
40363	Lowbyer Manor Farm	Farmhouse is late 18 th /early 19 th century, with farm buildings of possible mid-19 th century date. <i>Farmhouse is Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371720 N:546914	Post Medieval (Georgian/Victorian)
41851	Low Mill, Alston	A mill belonging to a Robert Hodgson is shown on a map of 1775, and still shown on Second Edition OS 1900, but modern maps show it has since been partially demolished and renamed Mill Cottage	E:371730 N:546560	Post Medieval (Georgian)
41961	Alston Quaker Meeting House, Front Street	Meeting House, built at right angles to road, dated 1732. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371940 N:546385	Post Medieval (Georgian)
42133	Arboreal Sunset View	A three-storeyed two-bay house of roughly-coursed rubble with lintel incised 'WD 1752'	E:371870 N:546600	Post Medieval (Georgian)
42134	Front Street, Townfoot	House with byre below, mid 18 th century. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371745 N:546510	Post Medieval (Georgian)
42138	Cross View Cottage, Market Place	House, 18 th century with later alterations. <i>Grade II Listed Building</i>	E:371880 N:546520	Post Medieval (Stuart)

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT TABLE

Context Number	Context Type	Description
100	Deposit	Topsoil
101	Deposit	Natural Clay
102	Deposit	Cobbled Surface
103	Structure	E-W Wall
104	Structure	Narrow Culvert
105	Deposit	Sandstone Slabs
106	Deposit	Garage Foundations
107	Deposit	Fill Of Culvert (104)
108	Structure	N-S Wall Remains
109	Deposit	Natural Sandy Clay
110	Deposit	Mixed Rubble Infill

Table 1: List of Contexts issued during Watching Brief

APPENDIX 3: FIGURES
