
No. 44 HEXHAM ROAD,
THROCKLEY
NORTHUMBERLAND

REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

APRIL 2007



Prepared for: NEDL	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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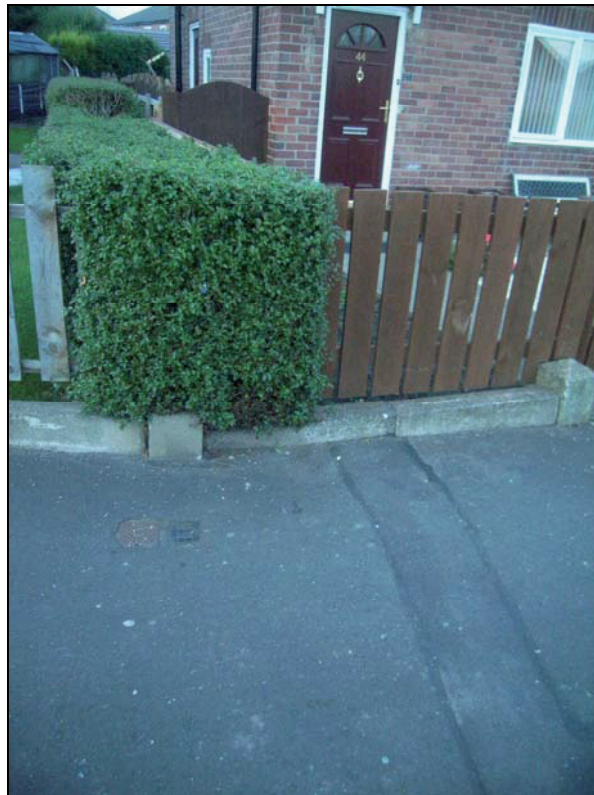
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THROCKLEY
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Prepared by:

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Frontispiece: *The site of the watching brief
Adjacent to and within the front garden of No.44,
Hexham road, Throckley.*

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Frontispiece: *The site of the watching brief adjacent to and within the front garden of No.44, Hexham road, Throckley, following restitution.*

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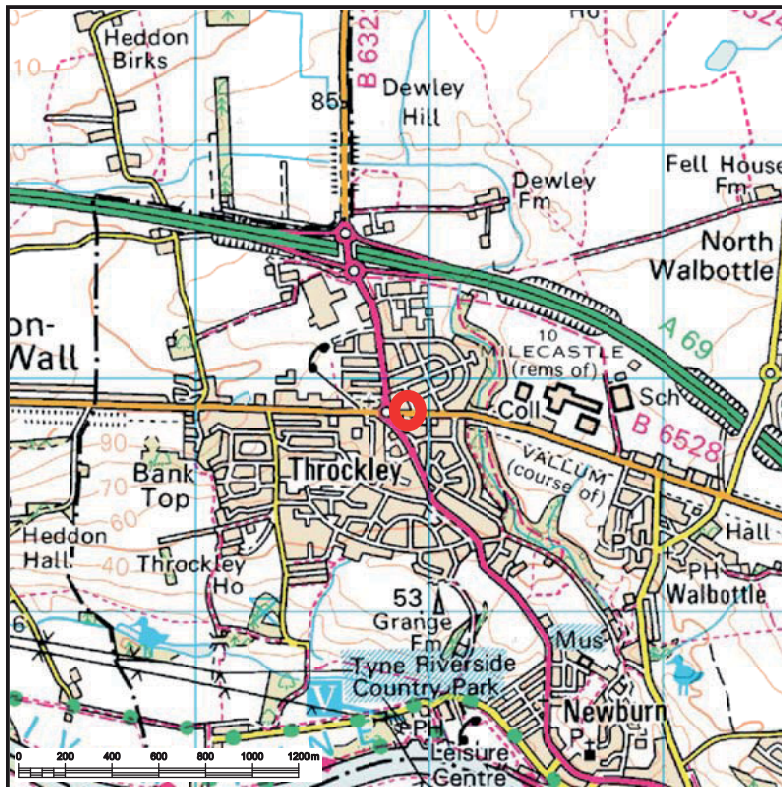
Illus. 05: View of the trench looking north along Hexham Road.

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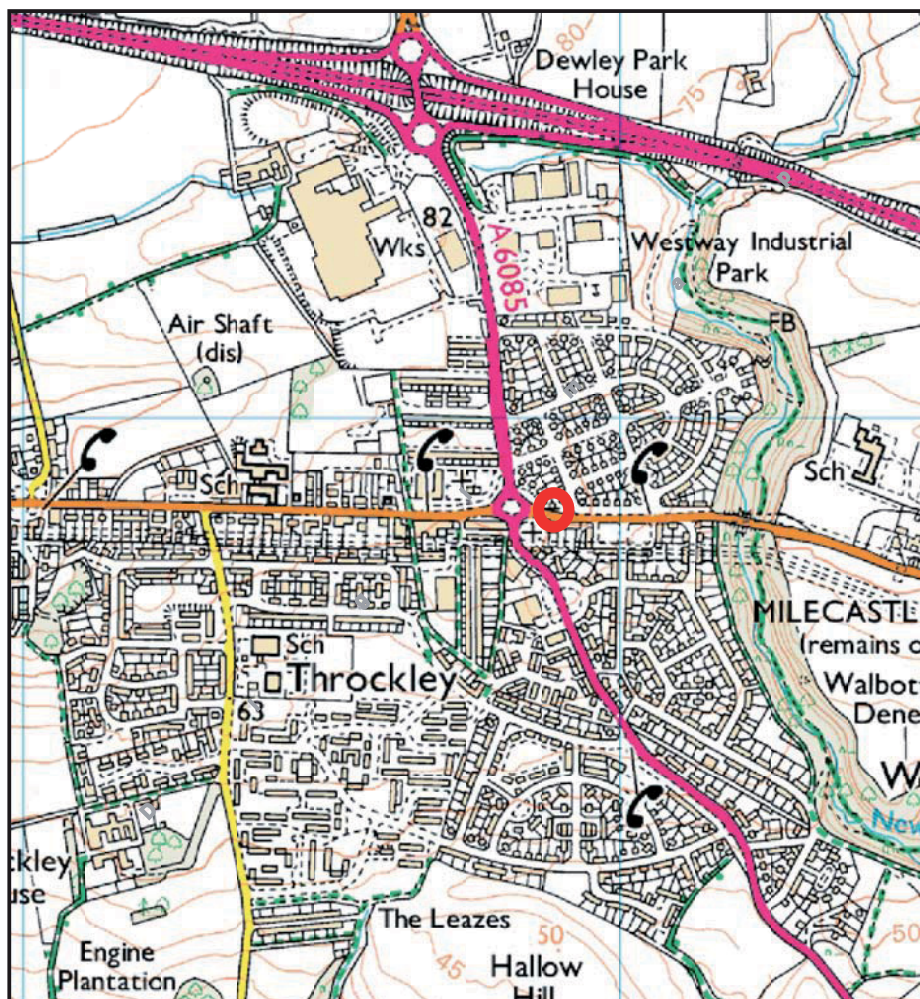
Illus. 07: East-facing section of trench on Hexham road.

Illus. 08: View of the trench extension from Hexham Road into the front garden of No. 44.

Illus. 09: View from the east end of the garden extension trench.



Illus. 01: Plan of Throckley on the west side of Newcastle upon Tyne, with the area of watching brief circled in red.



Illus. 02: Plan of Throckley with the area of watching brief circled in red.

1. PURPOSE OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

An archaeological watching brief was requested by the Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer, acting on behalf of Newcastle City Council, the planning authority, to be carried out at 44 Hexham Road, Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne, in order to monitor the excavation of an electricity service trench for the replacement of an electricity cable. The watching brief was required due to the close proximity of the works to the line of the Vallum ditch of Hadrian's Wall.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE BACKGROUND

The line of Hadrian's Wall is projected on the basis of previous excavations in the vicinity, although the wall has never been revealed in the immediate vicinity of the present site. The character of the structural components of the Hadrian's Wall frontier monument are well understood, although its precise measurements and appearance vary according to local geology and topography, while its survival varies according to the intensity and nature of post-Roman land-use. The following edited extracts from the Tyne & Wear Heritage Environment Record (HER) give an indication of what is known of Hadrian's Wall in the area of Hexham Road (see particularly HER ref. 218):

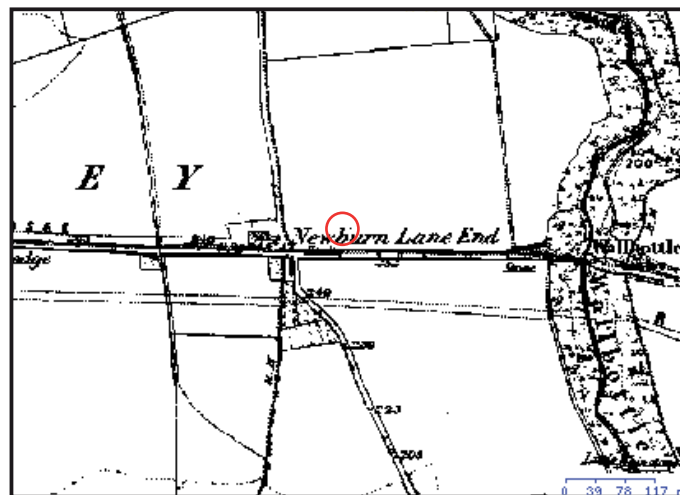
Hadrian's Wall, Walbottle Dene to City boundary; *HER 218, Grid Reference NZ1647 6675; Scheduled Ancient Monument and UNESCO World Heritage Site.*

The curtain wall appears to have lain under north edge of the road west of Milecastle 10 to Walbottle Dene. In 1864 a long stretch of the Wall in this location was removed during road realignment. West of the Dene the Wall runs under the south pavement of the main road. The Vallum can be traced in and out of the Dene. It was sectioned in 1980 in Woodside Avenue (NZ 1612 6679) and shows as slight earthworks in the fields south of the road, west of Throckley Bank Top. The Military Way was not found in the 1980 excavation. Turret 10b has not been found (approx. position thought to be 1552 6685) and Milecastle 11, supposedly seen by MacLauchlan, was not found in 1928 on the south side of the main road west of Throckley Bank Top, or in subsequent investigations in the vicinity in 1929, 1959 and 1983. Recently, a section of Wall was recorded in Hexham Road/Coach Road in 2001 and a section of curtain wall foundation and a cippi pit found in 2003 outside Throckley Middle School. A whole complex of these defensive pits, which are thought to have held entanglements of sharpened branches to act like barbed wire, were recorded there in 2002. A concentration of Roman pottery was also recorded, probably discarded from turret 11b, along with a metalled road surface, probably representing a road to milecastle 11, and prehistoric ard-marks, a ditch and gullies.

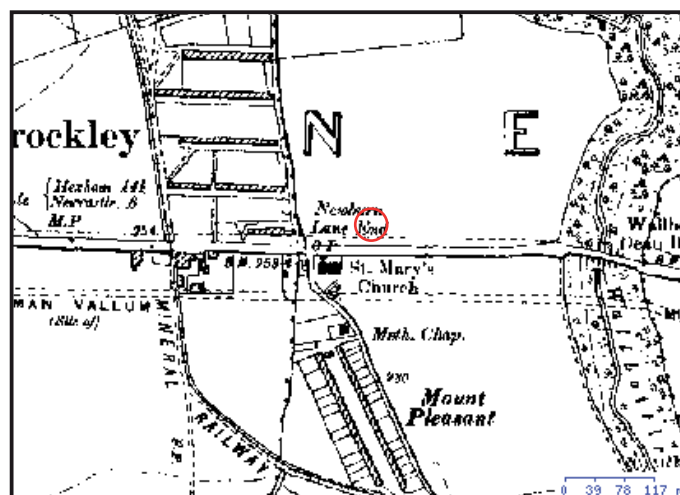
3. WATCHING BRIEF

The aims of the watching brief were to identify and determine the character of any remains uncovered during groundwork on the site, and to make an appropriate record of such finds by photographic and other means. Accordingly attendance by an archaeologist was required during the excavations.

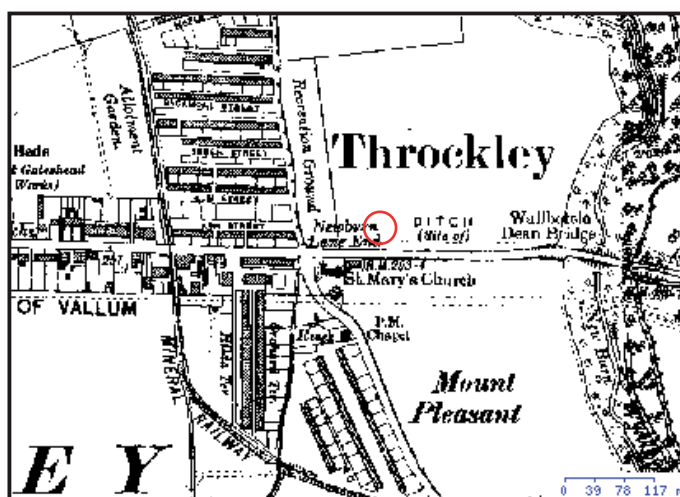
The site of the intervention was located adjacent to no. 44 Hexham Road, Throckley. The trenches were excavated on 5th April 2007 using a mini JCB. Two trenches were excavated, one on a N-S alignment along the street, the second at right angles to the first (on an E-W alignment) led to the adjacent property where the cable was to be fitted.



C.1862



C.1898



C.1920

Illus.03: Extracts from successive Ordnance Survey plans



Illus. 04: The location of the NEDL electricity supply trench (arrowed, at centre) leading from Hexham road to house number No. 44.

4. RESULTS

TRENCH 1: Running N-S, measuring 1.30m long by 0.95m wide and 0.70m deep. The trench contained backfilled silty clay mixed with modern rubbish such as plastic and paper. Existing services were also revealed in the section of the trench.

TRENCH 2: Running E-W, measuring 5.0m long by 0.50m wide and 0.50m deep. The trench contained garden soil, with a modern fill of dolomite close to the house.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The excavations encountered and removed modern mixed deposits covering existing services.

It is concluded, therefore, that the watching brief recorded no deposits or finds of archaeological significance.

It should be noted that the absence of remains in the foundation trenches observed does not preclude the possibility that significant remains exist on the site at greater depths and/or in different areas to those investigated during the intervention reported here.



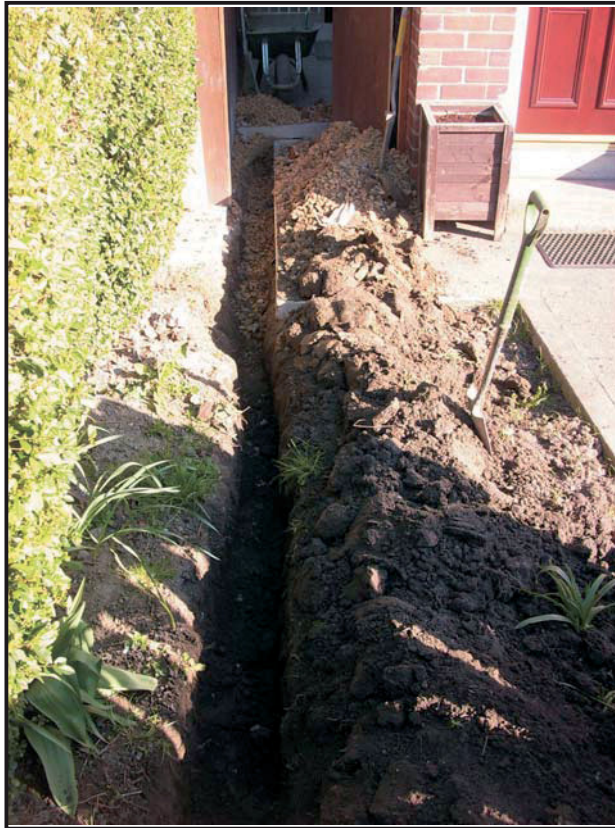
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Illus. 06: Trench on Hexham road viewed from the east side.



Illus. 07: East-facing section of trench on Hexham road.



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