



NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Rudchester Roman Fort Overhead Line Renewal Northumberland

NGR: NZ 11268 67460

Contractor: Pre-construct Archaeology Ltd (Northern Office)

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Client: Bell Ingram on behalf of Northern Powergrid

Planning Application Number: n/a

PCA Project Number: 369

PCA Site Code: ROR 16

Oasis ID: preconst1-249728

LOCATION

Planning Authority: Northumberland County Council

District: N/A

County: Northumberland

Site address: Land north of Rudchester Farm, Rudchester, Northumberland.

DEVELOPMENT DESCRIPTION:

An appropriately specified programme of archaeological work was required in association with the renewal of overhead electricity lines. The site under observation lies 2.7km west-north-west of Heddon-on-the-Wall, to the south of the Military Road B6318, and to the west of an unnamed road (Figure 1). The scheme involved the monitoring of Pole 93 (NZ 11268 67460) for a replacement pole and stays (Figure 2). The replacement hole was augured with the pole being lifted into position using a tracked machine before the OHLs were transferred to the new pole. The two poles that originally held the lines were cut off just below ground level to reduce the need for further excavations within the site. The replacement stay wire was augured into the ground to reduce the need for excavation; the two original stays were cut off just below ground level.

REASON FOR WATCHING BRIEF:

The work was of archaeological interest because the pole was located adjacent to Rudchester Roman Fort (*Vindobala*); the associated civil settlement and a section of Hadrian's Wall and vallum

from the A69 to the March Burn in Wall Mile 13 (Scheduled Monument No: SM 26039, HA 1017533). As the groundworks were undertaken within a Scheduled Monument, the OHL refurbishments were archaeologically monitored, as a condition of Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC ref. S00077584), on the advice of Historic England to the Department of Culture Media and Sport (DCMS).

In their assessment of the importance of the Scheduled Monument concerned, as set out in its monument record, Historic England records that the wall fort at Rudchester, its associated civil settlement and Hadrian's Wall and Vallum from the A69 to the March Burn, survive well as upstanding turf-covered features. Rudchester is one of the best surviving examples of a Roman fort and has produced significant archaeological finds including a life-size statue of Hercules and five alters dedicated to Mithras.

DATES WORK UNDERTAKEN:

Archaeological work was undertaken at the site on the following dates:

- Thursday 14/04/2016

RESULTS:

During the watching-brief, separate stratigraphic entities were assigned unique and individual 'context' numbers, which are indicated in the following text as, for example [123].

A single hole was monitored for the replacement of Pole 93. The hole was augured to a depth of 2.6m and had a diameter of 0.84m. The water table was observed at 1.48m below ground level and due to the limited scale of excavation the lower contexts were obscured and could not be identified. A total of three contexts were observed during the investigation. However, no artefactual material was evident to date the deposits.

A buried soil horizon consisting of soft dark brownish grey sandy silt [102] was encountered 0.96m below ground level with a minimum thickness of 0.52m. Due to ground water filling the hole, the full extent of the deposit could not be ascertained or the stratigraphic sequence below.

Subsoil consisting of firm mid greyish brown sandy clay [101] was observed 0.36m below ground level with a thickness of up to 0.60m. Inclusions of small sub-angular fragments of sandstone were noted throughout the deposit.

A 0.36m thick soft dark brownish grey clayey silt topsoil [100] formed the current ground surface. No deposits of geological substrate or features of archaeological significance were encountered during the investigation.

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTATION:

Figure 1- Site Location

Figure 2- Pole 93 Location

ARCHIVE DEPOSITION:

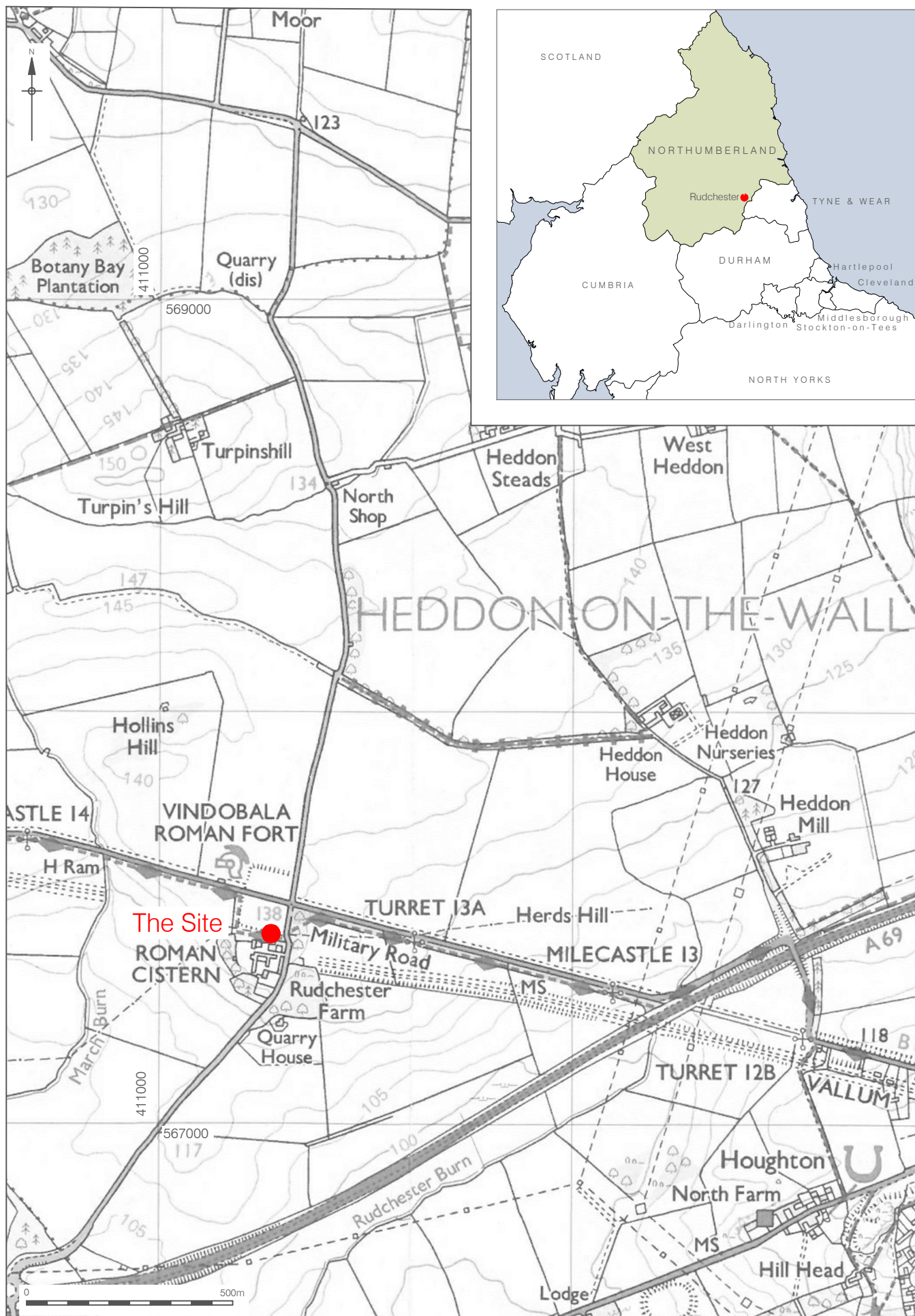
All documentation resulting from this project will be archived internally by PCA.

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Authorised: Jennifer Proctor

Date: 21/04/2016



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19/04/16 JS

Figure 1
Site Location
1:2,000,000 & 12,500 at A4

