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## SUMMARY

The installation of a traffic sign at Newtown did not compromise the scheduled monument, its footprint being within backfill of an adjacent building.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Project Origins

Gerry Martin was commissioned by Ms Sarah Steel (the client, Cumbria Highways) to prepare a Specification of Works for a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief Action relating to the insertion of a traffic sign. The watching brief action has been requested by English Heritage as potential and significant archaeological remains may be encountered.

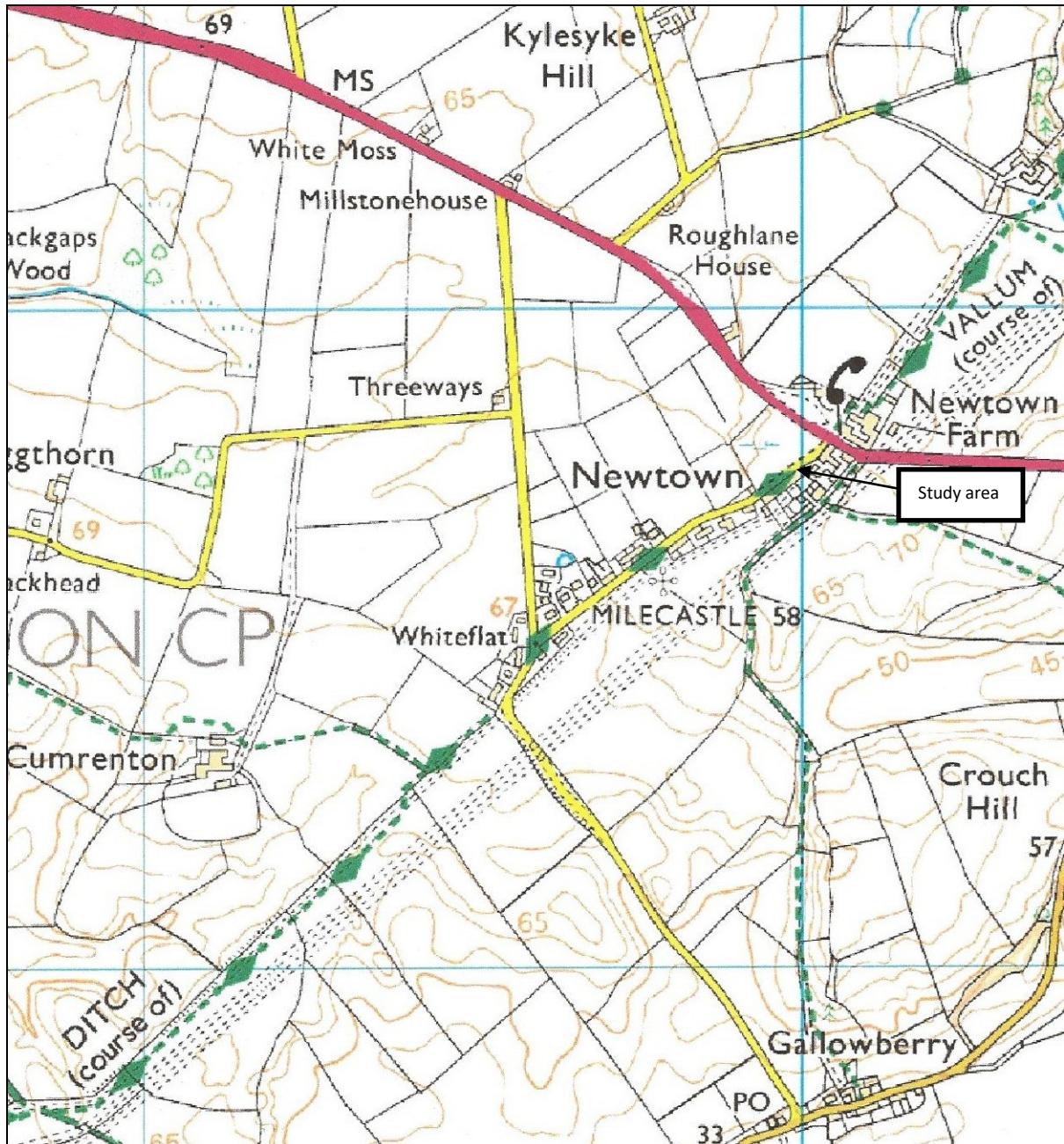


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

Because of the archaeological significance of this location, the curatorial authority (English Heritage) stated that Scheduled Monument Consent Application was subject to the “developer” securing the

implementation of a formal programme of archaeological observation and investigation during the forthcoming groundworks.

The condition (S00059971) concerns the following: “Scheduled Monument No. 26083 and 26084; Hadrian’ Wall and vallum from A6071 to the cottage in the case of the Wall, and to the road to Oldwall, for the Vallum in Wall Miles 57, 58 and 59”.

Should significant archaeological deposits or features be encountered, the archaeological contractor would advise the client (Cumbria Highways), whilst possessing the authority by proxy to re-locate the traffic sign to an area that did not impact upon or compromise any extant remains.

The written scheme of investigation (WSI) was produced by the archaeological contractor and detailed the methods and procedures to be employed during the watching brief action. It was approved by the curatorial authority (English Heritage) prior to any fieldwork being undertaken.

## **1.2 Project outline**

As part of an improved traffic management scheme required for Newtown, a 30 m.p.h. repeater traffic sign necessitated erection.

Scheduled Monument Consent was granted by English Heritage on 20<sup>th</sup> May 2013 and the fieldwork took place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> September 2013.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Project Design**

In response to a request by English Heritage, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI). This document outlined the contractors’ professional competence as well as general objectives required of the project, the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork following approval of the project design by the curatorial body.

The following report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs, 2008), combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority.

Fieldwork took place on September 12<sup>th</sup> 2013.

### **2.2 Archive**

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

### 3. BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Location, topography and geology

The study area NY 50020 62760 lies upon a ridge, at a height of approximately 70m OD overlooking pasture and the Irthing valley to the south.

The study area has been impacted by housing development during the 20<sup>th</sup> century with a strip housing development overlying Hadrian's Wall. The sign was located within a public space (figure 2).



Figure 2. Location of the proposed sign (red dot)

The underlying drift geology comprises pink sandy Boulder Clay and Till of glacial origin overlying Old Red Sandstone from the Permian or Triassic period.

No earthworks or heritage assets were observable during a rapid walk-over.

### 4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

#### 4.1 Desk-based assessment

The study area lies in close proximity to Hadrian's Wall, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SMR 5782) and lies to the north of the Roman vallum. Approximately one mile south is the course of the Roman Stanegate, the Roman frontier that pre-dated the Wall.

To the west lies Roman Milecastle 58, part of the course of Hadrian's Wall (Symonds & Mason 2009, 199).

On the First edition Ordnance Survey map, the study area appears to be adjacent to an extant building (figure 3).

Little formal archaeological investigation has occurred in this locality.



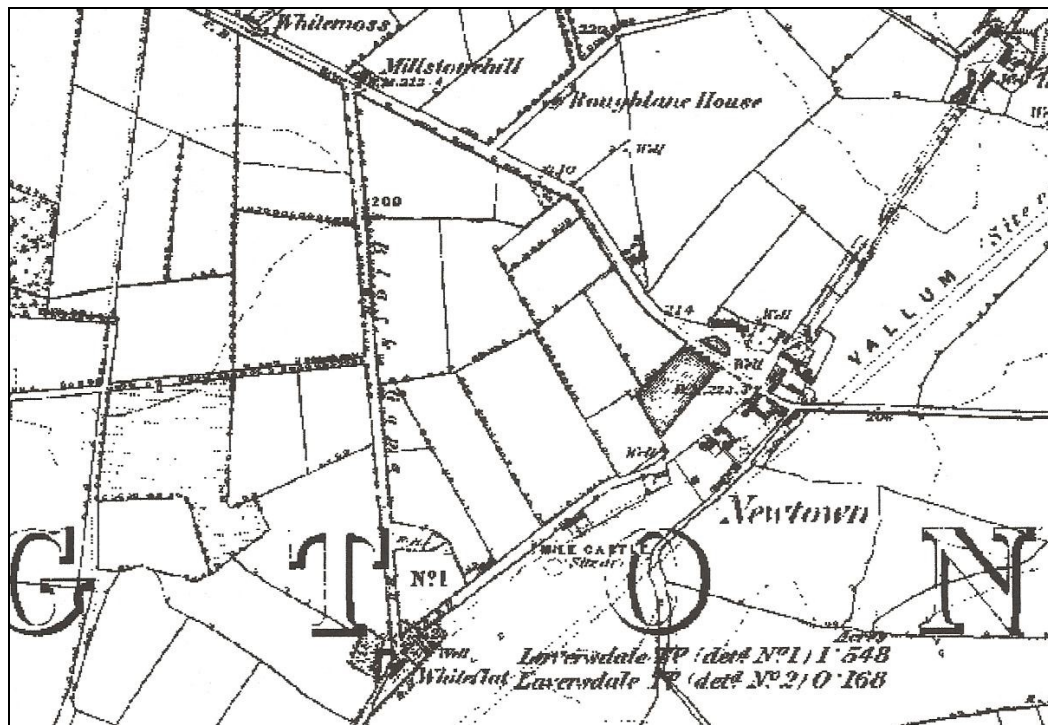


Figure 3. Ordnance Survey map of 1868 illustrating the study area

An archaeological intervention in 2002 at NY 502 629 within Wall Mile 57 observed very badly damaged remains of Hadrian's Wall accompanied by a possible laid surface of compacted sandstone forming a course between 1.00 and 1.50m in width. Situated immediately in front of the north face of the Wall, this feature appears to represent a linear feature parallel to the Wall (Hodgson 2009, 139).

This action may represent robbing of the wall, most probably in historic time. It is known that 300 Scotsmen made a day foray into Cumberland on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1600 or 1601 attacking the townships of Newtown and Irthington, Crown possessions leased to Lord Scrope (Prevost 1968, 61).

As a response to this plight, it is conceivable that stone was robbed from the Wall to fortify local settlement following this action.

An evaluation was conducted at Old Wall Cottage, Irthington in 2003 along the course of Hadrian's Wall, but the single trial trench produced only "negative results" (Walker 2003).

A watching brief at Croft House, Newtown approximately 50m from the course of the wall also proved negative (Martin 2004).

Likewise, a watching brief at Polperro, Newtown also proved to be negative (Martin 2012).

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Methodology

A Working Scheme of Investigation was presented by the archaeological contractor for approval by the curatorial authority English Heritage to monitor the excavation work. The WSI was approved by English Heritage prior to the fieldwork commencing.

The objective of the watching brief investigation is to carry out a formal programme of archaeological observations and investigations during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological or architecturally informative deposits or remains. The specific aims of the work are to:

- Provide a record of those works associated with the removal of the topsoil
- Provide a record of any significant archaeological or architectural features encountered by intrusive activities

In order to achieve these objectives, a record of all archaeological informative deposits encountered during the ground operations were made consisting of detailed context records on individual proforma sheets and field drawings, according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

The ground-works were undertaken by hand under archaeological supervision. This action consisted of observation of the spoil removal and monitoring the displaced soil. Revealed sections were checked for any past cultural activity and if necessary recorded according to the protocols of the GMA manual.

## 5.2 Results

A small pit 0.60m x 0.60m was dug by hand to a depth of 0.60m totalling 0.28sq m approximately 1.00m off an extant building and within the existing pavement (figure 4).



Figure 4. Location of the traffic sign (red dot).

The reception pit unearthed 0.10m of tarmac, resting above sandstone rubble that overlay sandstone natural bedrock.

The intervention revealed archaeologically sterile deposits (figure 5).

No artefacts were present within the spoil.



Figure 5. Reception pit for traffic sign

### 5.3 Discussion

Although the development was in close proximity to the accepted line of Hadrian's Wall, there was no evidence that these works impacted upon its integrity.

The upcast removed comprised modern tarmac and natural red sandstone with no past cultural remains.

### 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Ms Sarah Steel for commissioning the project and for her assistance with the plans and development details.

I would like to thank the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and David Bowcock and his staff at Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and documentary material.

Finally, I would like to thank Jo Beaty for undertaking the fieldwork at short notice.

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