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Electricity North West

Baron's Dyke, Walby, Cumbria

**Rapid Desk Based Assessment and Archaeological Evaluation
Report**

June 2014

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**BARON'S DYKE,
WALBY,
CUMBRIA**



**RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
CP10843
26/06/2014**



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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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SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology were commissioned by Christopher Gilder of Electricity North West to undertake a Rapid Desk-based Assessment and archaeological evaluation prior to groundworks associated with three new electricity pole locations and associated staywires. As a consequence of the importance of this site, it was agreed that following the evaluation, a watching brief would be maintained for the duration of the groundworks.

The area of Hadrian's Wall and the *vallum* between Baron's Dyke and Birky Lane, Walby, in Wall Miles 60, 61 and 62, is a Scheduled Monument which survives as a buried feature throughout this section (NHL 1010979). In addition to the Wall and the *vallum*, aerial photography identified the site of two overlying temporary camps to the south of Wallhead, Moss Side 1 and 2 (NHL 1010957). The rarity of temporary camps identifies these features as nationally important. The silted ditches of the buried features within this area are likely to contain environmental evidence which will allow the character of the surrounding environment to be reconstructed for the Roman period.

A period of trial trenching commenced on 23/6/2014 lasting 2 days and comprised of 3 2 x 1 metre pits. These pits were located within a metre of the standing pylons and were excavated to the natural substrate. No archaeological remains were found within the pits.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Archaeology would like to thank Christopher Gilder of Electricity North West for commissioning the project. Wardell Armstrong Archaeology would also like to thank Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service.

The rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken by Fiona Wooler and Sue Thompson. The archaeological evaluation was carried out by Ed Johnson and Helen Phillips. The report was written by Sue Thompson and Ed Johnson and the figures were produced by Adrian Bailey. The project was managed by Frank Giecco, Regional Manager, who also edited the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology were commissioned by Electricity North West to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment, trial trench evaluation and archaeological watching brief prior to and during groundworks associated with the placement of three new electricity poles 303303, 303305 and 303307, and associated staywire at Wallhead, Walby, Cumbria (NY 4570 6094).
- 1.2 The area of Hadrian's Wall and the *vallum* between Baron's Dyke and Birky Lane, Walby, in Wall Miles 60, 61 and 62, is a Scheduled Monument which survives as a buried feature throughout this section (NHL 1010979). In addition to the Wall and the *vallum*, aerial photography identified the site of two overlying temporary camps to the south of Wallhead, Moss Side 1 and 2 (NHL 1010957). The rarity of temporary camps identifies these features as nationally important. The silted ditches of the buried features within this area are likely to contain environmental evidence which will allow the character of the surrounding environment to be reconstructed for the Roman period.
- 1.3 The historic nature of the landscape in which the electricity pole replacement work was undertaken, justified undertaking an archaeological evaluation in advance of groundworks within the scheduled area at Wallhead.

2 SITE LOCATION

- 2.1 Wallhead is located on the line of Hadrian's Wall which is situated approximately 10km to the east of the city of Carlisle, and 4km west of the village of Irthington. Carlisle Airport is located roughly 1km to the south-west of the site. Bleatarn is situated to the east along the line of Hadrian's Wall, and Walby to the west. The buildings at Wallhead are on the north side of Hadrian's Wall but are not included in the scheduled area; the location of the groundworks associated with the placement of the new electricity poles are included within the scheduled area (Figure 2).
- 2.2 Wallhead is located in an area characterised by Natural England as the 'Solway Basin', which is a broad, lowland plain landscape fringed by the low, rugged, relatively remote coastline of the Solway Firth and the Irish Sea. It is framed by the Cumbria High Fells to the south, the hills of the Scottish Borders to the north and the Border Moors and Forests to the north east. The Solway Basin is underlain mainly by mudstones and sandstones of Permo-Triassic (New Red Sandstone). The most important sandstone formation, the St Bees Sandstone, has been much quarried for use as building stone. Erosion of the comparatively weak Permo-Triassic and Jurassic rocks reduced much of the Solway Basin to an area of low relief prior to the onset of the last glaciations. During this period thick ice-sheets crossed the area from Scotland and the Lake District. These carried with them vast quantities of rock debris which was deposited as boulder clay (till), both beneath the ice and from within it as it melted. The surface of boulder clay is locally moulded into drumlins (www.naturalengland.org.uk).

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1.1 Electricity North West applied to English Heritage for Scheduled Monument Consent to undertake the replacement of an electricity pole. As this work was likely to impact upon archaeological remains, a condition of the consent was that a rapid desk-based assessment and archaeological evaluation, followed by a watching brief, should be undertaken in relation to the work.
- 3.1.2 A project design (Giecco 2013) was produced, and this has been adhered to in full, in compliance with professional standards and generally accepted best practice.

3.2 RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 3.2.1 The rapid desk-based assessment involved the consultation of the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER), a database of known and potential archaeological sites within the county (excluding the Lake District National Park). This consultation involved the collection of information held within the database for a 500m radius centred on Wallhead, Walby, in order to achieve an understanding of the character of the historic landscape in this area of Cumbria, and to identify sites of archaeological interest within close proximity to the location of the electricity groundworks.
- 3.2.2 Following this, historic maps and published and unpublished material relating to area around Wallhead were consulted at the local studies section of Carlisle Library. Secondary sources such as the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society were also consulted.
- 3.2.3 The desk-based assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (IfA 2011).

3.3 TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

- 3.3.1 The main objectives of the evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they are observed.
- 3.3.2 Three trenches measuring 2m x1m were to be excavated by hand to the top of archaeological deposits, or the natural substrate, whichever was observed first. In the event of encountering significant archaeological deposits at a shallower depth the excavation was to be terminated. Following on from this work an agreed position will be located for the new pole and a further SMC sought for installation in this location.

3.3 ARCHIVE

- 3.3.1 An archive for this project will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations in *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation* (Brown 2011).
- 3.3.2 A copy of the final report will be deposited with Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service at Kendal, where viewing will be made available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier WAA/14, CP10843, BDW-A. The archive will be deposited within Carlisle Archives.
- 3.3.3 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology and Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service support the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project (<http://www.oasis.ac.uk/>). The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large-scale developer funded fieldwork. Details of this project have been included on the OASIS database under the identifier **wardella2-182378**.

4 RAPID DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Information regarding known and potential archaeological sites in close proximity to the site of the groundworks at Wallhead Farm, Walby was obtained principally from the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER) and English Heritage datasets such as the Scheduled Monument descriptions provided on The National Heritage List for England (English Heritage 2013). Some historical mapping and published and unpublished sources were consulted at Carlisle Library.

4.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.2.1 Low Wallhead Farm is situated on the line of Hadrian's Wall. Hadrian's Wall marks one of the frontiers of the Roman Empire. The international importance of the surviving remains has been recognised through designation as a World Heritage Site.

4.2.2 The military importance of the Tyne-Solway route across the Pennines was recognised by the Romans during their early campaigns through northern England and into Scotland in the second half of the 1st century AD. At this time a military road, the Stanegate, was constructed along with a series of forts. Subsequently the Romans largely withdrew from Scotland and there is evidence that the Tyne-Solway route was being recognised as a frontier by the start of the 2nd century AD. The position was consolidated in the early 2nd century by the construction of a substantial frontier work, Hadrian's Wall, under the orders of the Emperor Hadrian.

4.2.3 Stretching over 70 miles from coast to coast, Hadrian's Wall was a continuous barrier built of stone in the east and, initially, of turf in the west. The stone wall was originally designed to be ten Roman feet wide and sections of this width are termed 'broad wall'. A change of plan shortly after construction began led to a reduction in the width of the Wall of eight Roman feet, such sections being termed 'narrow wall'. Today, stretches of both wall types survive, including some sections of narrow wall built on broad wall foundations. For most of its length a substantial ditch on the northern side provided an additional defence. Bridges were constructed over the Wall at the location of river crossings.

4.2.4 From the beginning the barrier was planned to comprise more than just a curtain wall. At regularly-spaced intervals of about a mile along its length lay small walled fortlets known as milecastles. There were attached to the southern side of the Wall and most had a gateway through the Wall to the north; hence, they controlled crossing points through the Wall. Between the milecastles were two equally-spaced towers known as turrets. Together the milecastles and turrets provided bases from which the curtain wall could be watched and patrolled.

4.2.5 As originally planned, and apart from whatever space there was in the milecastles, provision for the accommodation of garrison troops manning the Wall was left with the line of forts which already lay along the Stanegate. At some point a fundamental change of plan took place and forts were constructed along the line of

the Wall itself. There are now known to have been 16 forts either attached to the Wall or in close association with it. Some overlay earlier features such as turrets or milecastles. At this stage, another linear element, the *vallum*, was also added to the defensive system to the south of the Wall. This was a broad, flat-bottomed ditch flanked by a pair of linear banks. It shadows the course of the Wall for almost all its length, sometimes lying very close to it but sometimes up to a kilometre away. The *vallum's* main function was to act as a barrier to restrict access to the Wall from the south. It also had a function in linking the forts along the Wall with a method of lateral communication.

- 4.2.6 Between the course of the Wall and the *vallum*, a metalled track was created, allowing access between various elements of the wall and its defensive features. This was known as the Military Way and is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Figure 4). Over time, the Military Way was extended, linking all of the Wall's defences, within the area bounded by the Wall and the *vallum*.
- 4.2.7 Over 40 temporary camps of many different sizes, some of them still visible as earthworks, have been recorded in the vicinity of the Wall. These generally consisted of a rampart of earth quickly thrown up to surround a military encampment. The rampart may have been surmounted by a timber palisade. Occupation of these camps was generally short-lived and, while very few of these examples have been firmly dated, it seems probably that at least some were work camps used by troops that were involved in the construction of the Wall. Others may have been created as practice camps during military training; temporary camps were widely used during military campaigning to provide overnight security to troops on the move.
- 4.2.8 Wallhead lies on the line of Hadrian's Wall, roughly midway along the scheduled monument. The line of the wall in the vicinity of Wallhead survives as a buried feature. The *vallum* survives south of Wallhead, in part as an earthwork visible as four parallel mounds up to 1.2m high, but largely as a buried feature. The course of the Military Way has been identified to the east of Wallhead as a short stretch of turf-covered mound, 4m-5m wide and up to 0.40m high. It is possible that this section of the Military Way was reused in the medieval period serving as access to Bleatarn Quarry to the east. Although unconfirmed, on the basis of the usual spacing of milecastles and turrets, milecastle 61 is thought to be located near Wallhead (SM No. 1010979).
- 4.2.9 Two temporary Roman camps, designated as a Scheduled Monument, are located to the south of Wallhead. This site, known as Moss Side 1 and 2, lies 400m south of Hadrian's Wall *vallum*, and 300m north of the Stanegate. Camp 1, the smaller of the two temporary forts, is parallelogram in plan and is for the most part enclosed by Camp 2, which is rectangular in plan. The camps survive as buried features including defensive ditches and gateways and were identified as crop marks (SM No. 26031).
- 4.2.10 Throughout its long history, Hadrian's Wall was not always well maintained. It was often neglected and sometimes overrun, but it remained in use until the late 4th century when a weak and divided Roman Empire finally withdrew its armies from

the Wall and Britain. Following this withdrawal it is unclear if the site at Wallhead was utilised in later periods prior to use of the land for agricultural purposes.

- 4.2.11 Late 18th and early 19th century small-scale maps provide some indication of the landscape around the site of Wallhead. Hodkinson and Donald's map of 1774 (Figure 3) clearly shows the line of Hadrian's Wall, annotated as '*Picts Wall*', with buildings on either side of the wall indicated at Wallhead.
- 4.2.12 An archaeological evaluation undertaken in advance of a residential development adjacent to Hadrian's Wall was excavated in the courtyard of Low Wallhead Farm revealed mid 19th century activity associated with the present farm building. No evidence associated the wall was observed during these groundworks (Martin 2005).
- 4.2.13 The excavation of three evaluation trenches at Walby revealed the location and partial extent of the wall ditch north of Hadrian's Wall. Roman pottery was recovered from within what appeared to be deliberate backfill of the ditch (Jones 2004).

5 TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

5.1.1 Between the 23rd and 24th of June 2014, three 2 x 1 metre wide trial trenches were excavated across the area to be affected by work associated with the replacement of three electricity poles. All trenches were excavated within 1 metre of the corresponding standing pole and aligned north-south.

5.2 RESULTS

5.2.1 The three trenches were excavated to the natural substrate which consisted of a compact, orange silty sand as mentioned below. Trenches 1 and 3 contained a shallow layer of mid grey brown silt top soil, 0.15 - 0.2 metres deep. Trench 1 contained a band of subsoil measuring 0.2 metres formed of a mottled mid brown yellow sandy silt with frequent subrounded pebbles and stones. Trench 3 contained a larger subsoil layer measuring 0.4 metres of a light yellow silty sand.

5.2.2 Trench 2 was excavated through a shallow band of turf and mid brown clay silt topsoil measuring 0.05 metres and a 0.4 metre black/grey demolition layer containing brick, concrete, plastics and modern rubbish.

5.2.3 The natural geology comprised compacted mottled orange yellow silty sand with numerous rounded stones across the excavated area.

5.2.4 No archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were noted.



Plate 1 Trial trench 1 facing north



Plate 2 Trial trench 3 facing north.



Plate 3 Trial trench 2 facing north.

6 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The rapid desk-based assessment which was undertaken prior to the groundworks at Wallhead indicated the presence of several archaeological sites of national importance, all relating to the Roman period. Subsequent land use appears to have related to agricultural practices.
- 7.2 The trial trenching revealed no archaeological features within three 2 x 1 metre trenches. All were excavated to the natural substrate.

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Maps

Hodkinson and Donald's Map of Cumberland 1774 (Carlisle Library)

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map c.1865 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Ordnance survey map 1974

Websites

English Heritage:

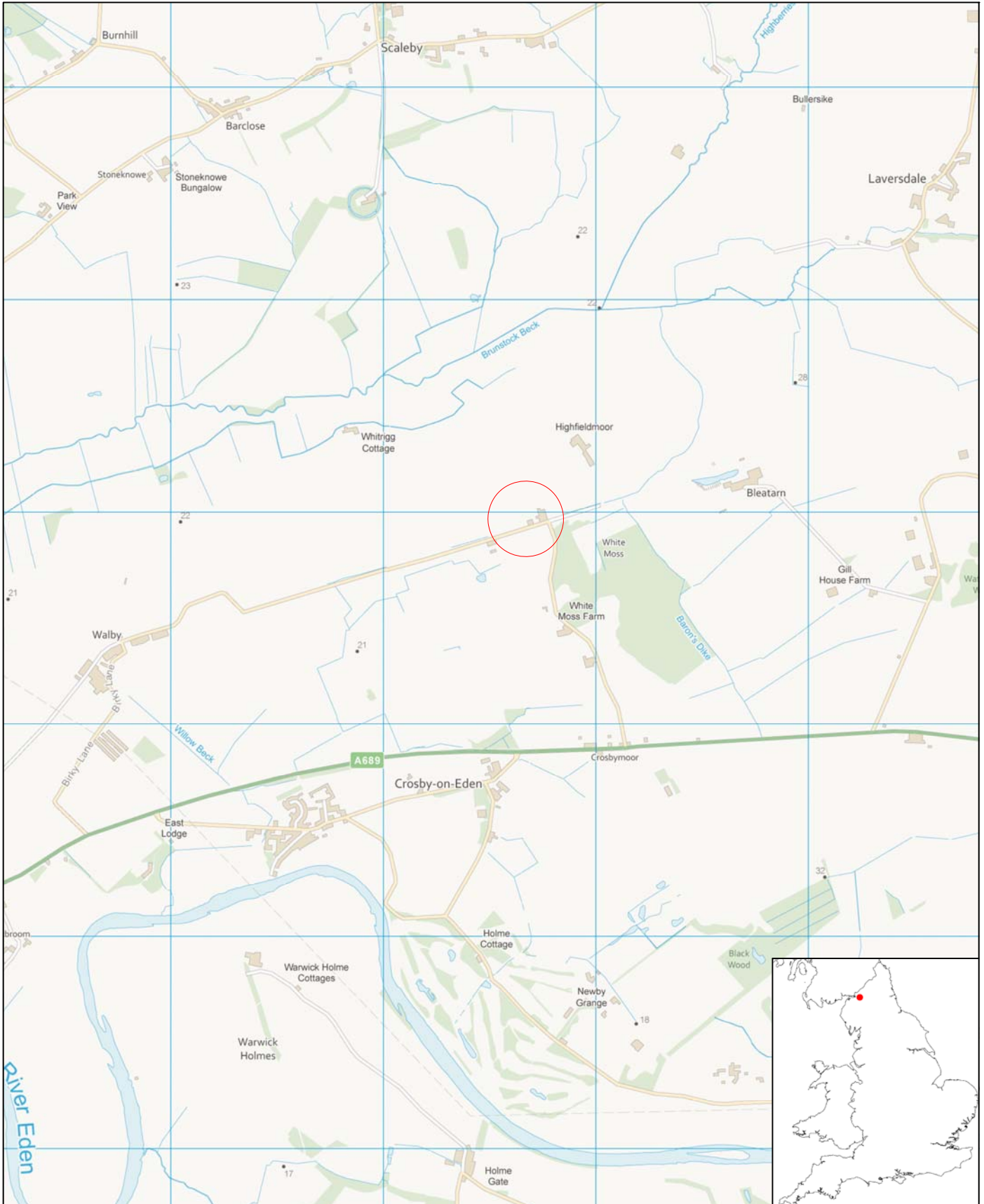
<http://list.english-heritage.org.uk/mapsearch.aspx>

[Accessed on 03/02/2014]

Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record Online (2014):

[Accessed on 03/02/2014]

APPENDIX: FIGURES






 <p>Wardell Armstrong Archaeology 2014</p>	<p>PROJECT: Baron's Dyke, Walby, Cumbria</p> <p>SCALE: 1:25,000 at A4</p> <p>REPORT No: CP10843</p> <p>CLIENT: Electricity North West</p> <p>DRAWN BY: AB</p> <p>DATE: June 2014</p> <p>FIGURE: 1</p>	<p>KEY:</p> <p> Site location</p>	 <p>Reproduced by permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. Licence number 100019512</p>
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Figure 1: Site location.

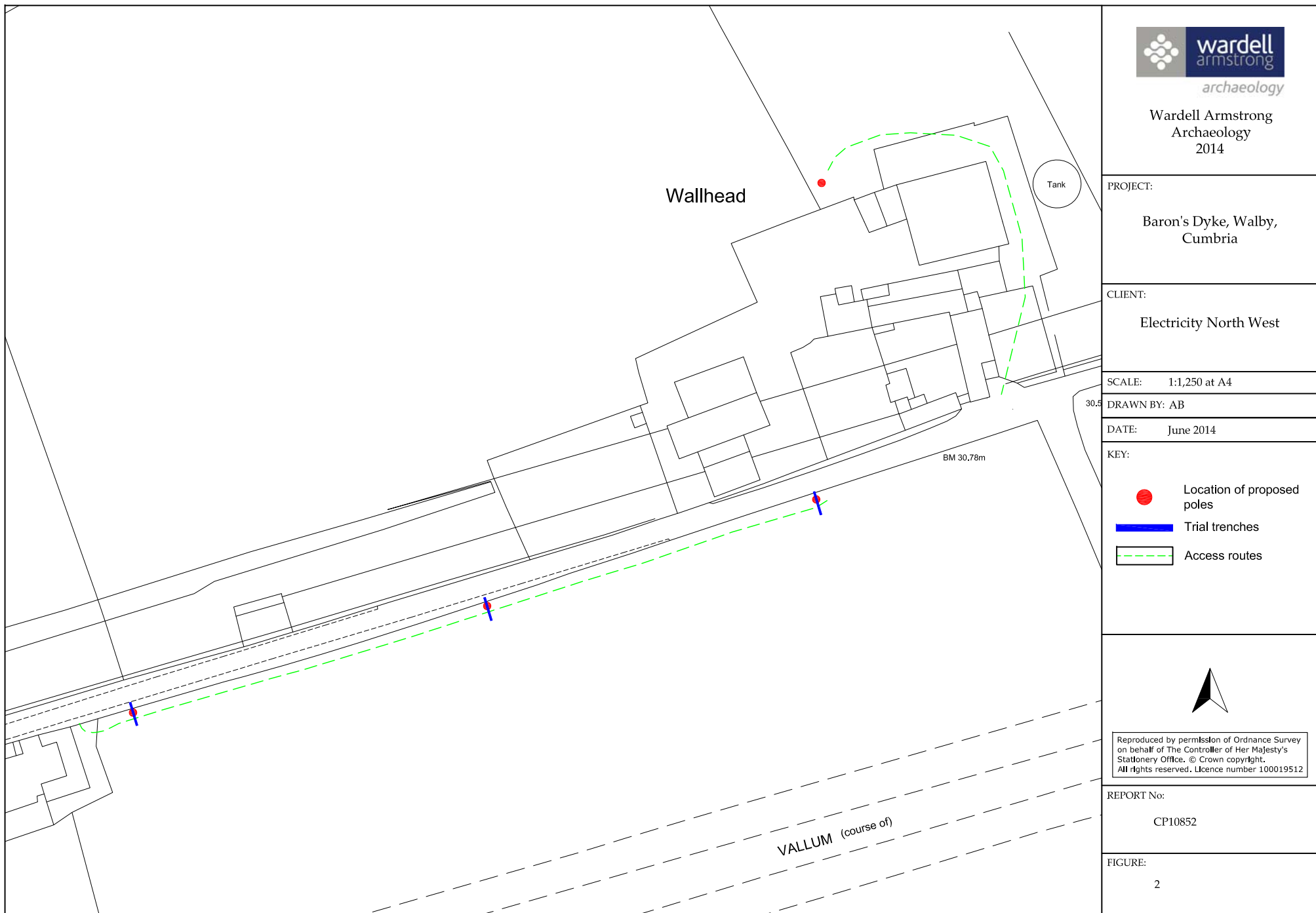
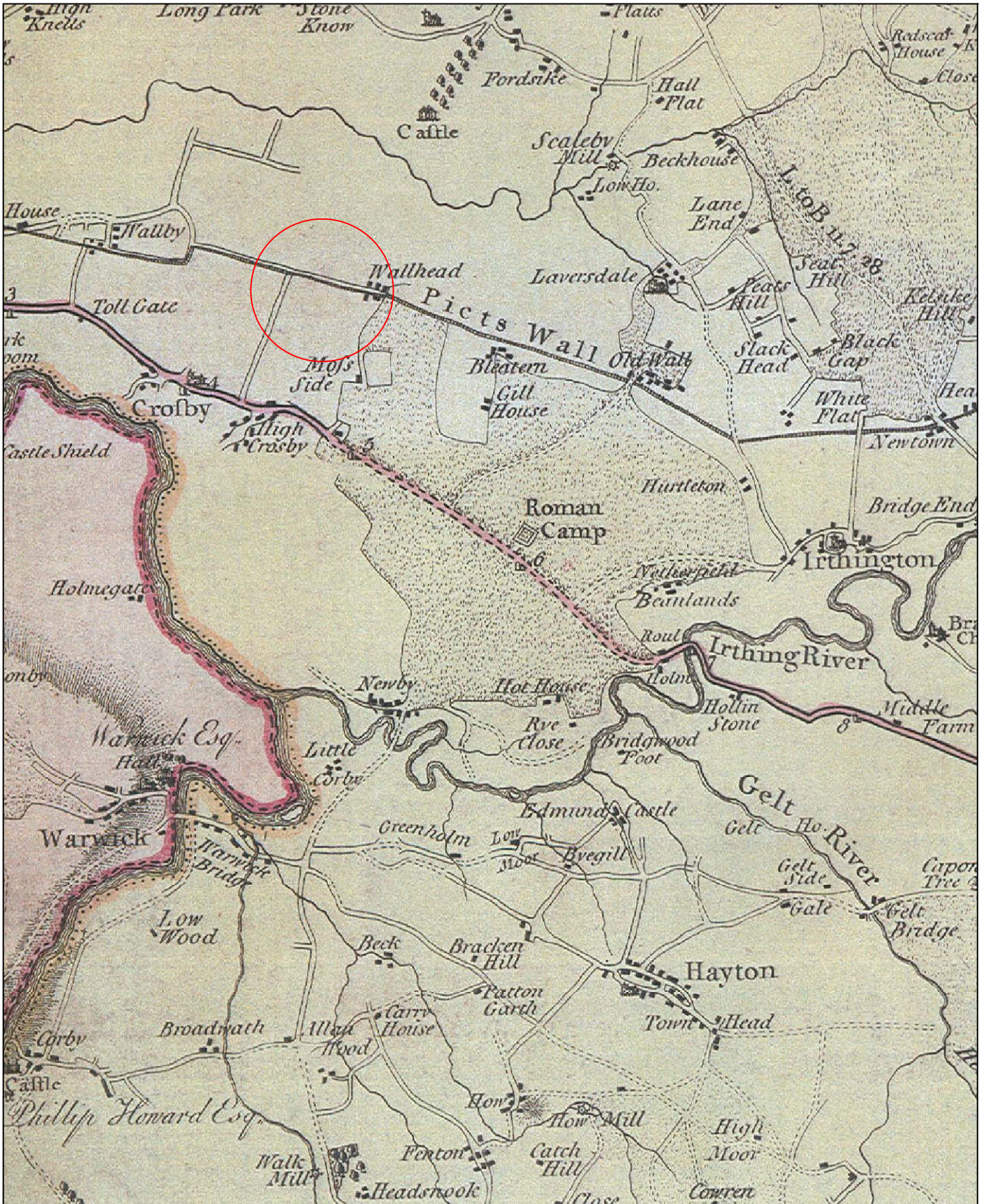


Figure 2: Detailed site location.






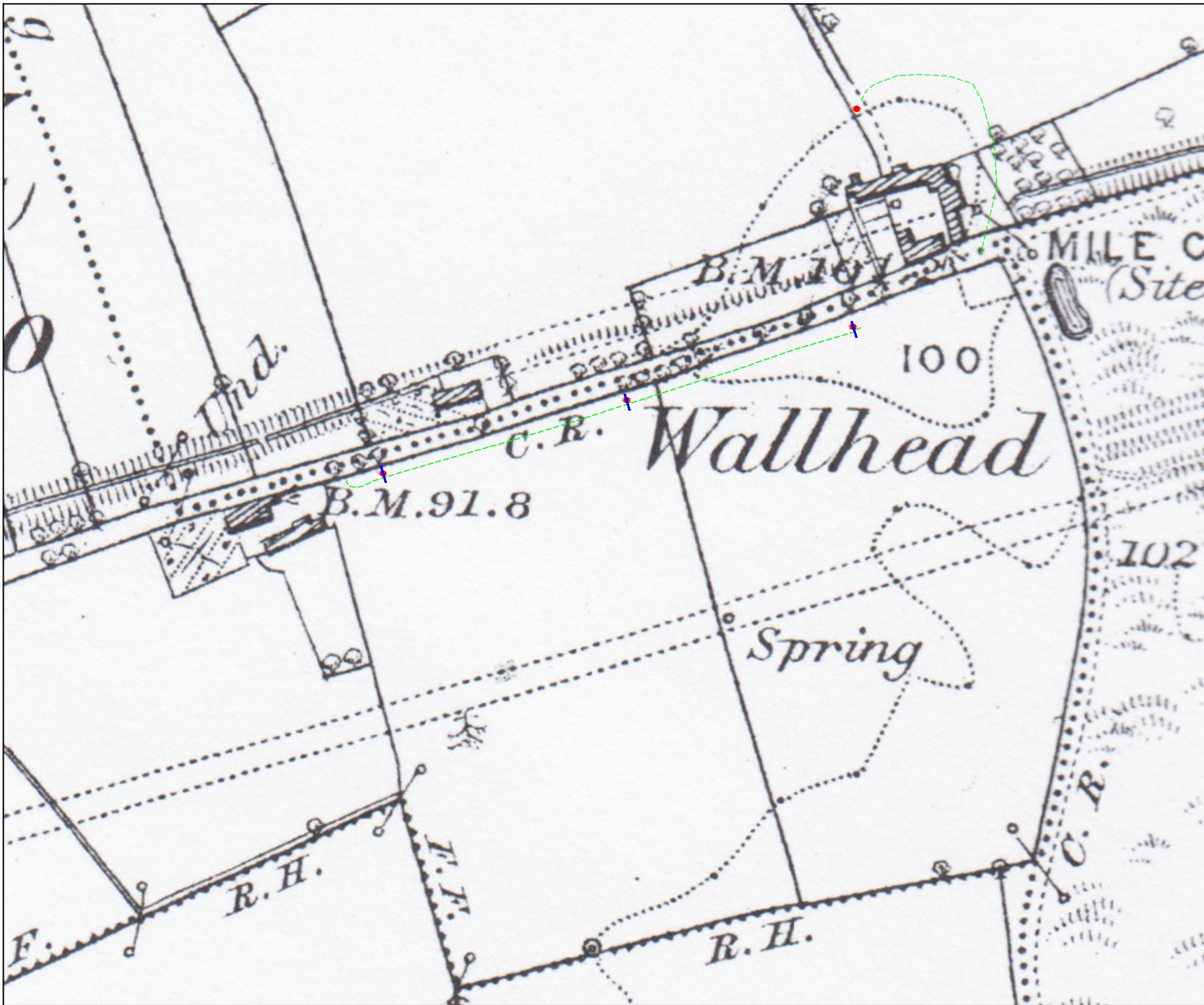
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Figure 3: Extract from Hodkinson and Donald's Map of Cumberland, 1774.



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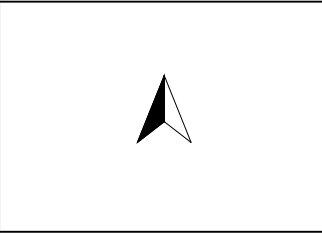
SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: AB

DATE: June 2014

KEY:

- Location of proposed poles
- Trial trenches
- - - Access routes



REPORT No:
CP10843

FIGURE:
4

Figure 4: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1865.

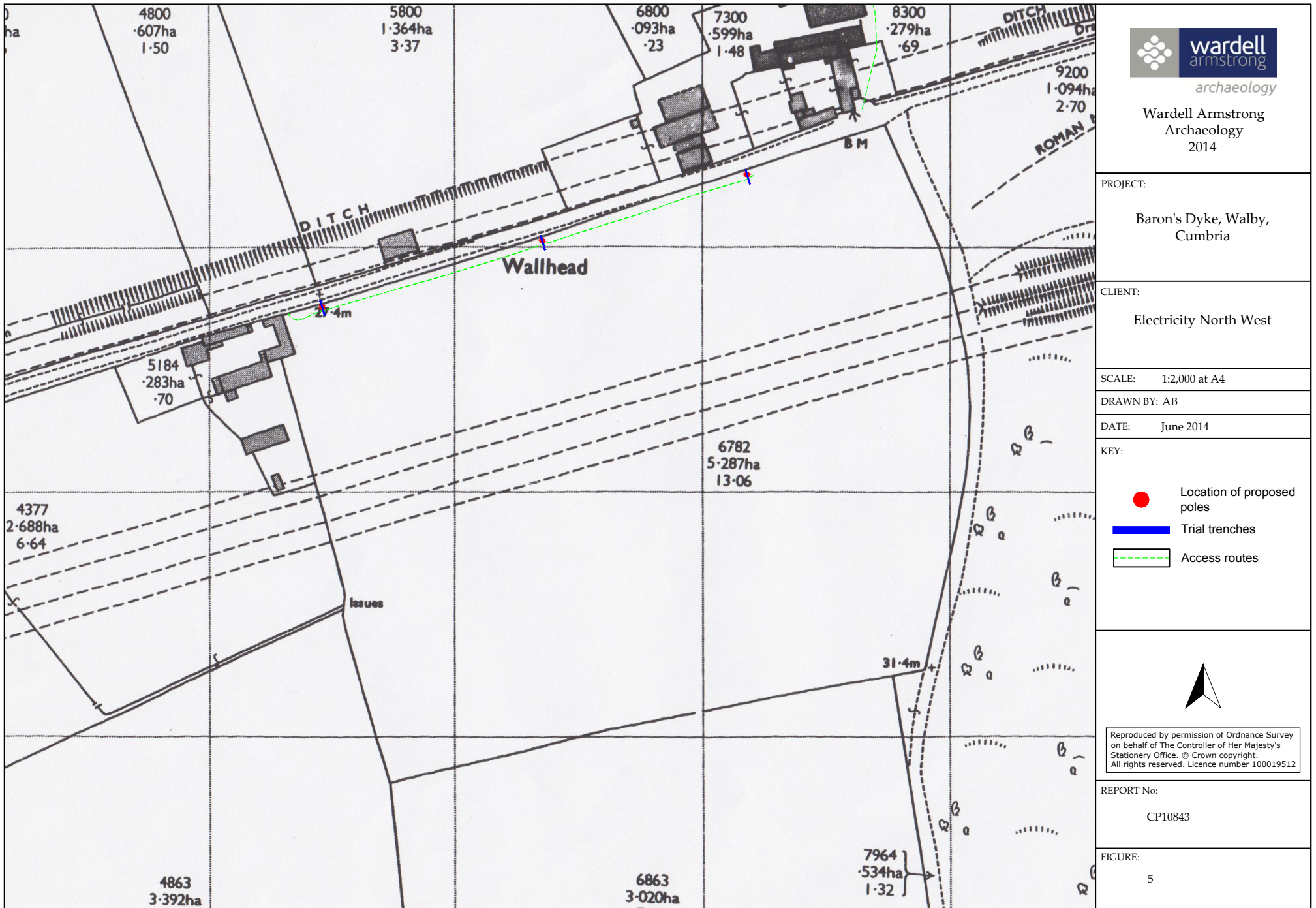


Figure 5: Ordnance Survey Map, 1974.

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