



**ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST**

**LAND NORTH OF ELLENBOROUGH PLACE,  
MARYPORT,  
CUMBRIA**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**




**May 2017**

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**ELECTRICITY NORTH WEST**

**Land north of Ellenborough Place, Maryport, Cumbria**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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DESK BASED ASSESSMENTS  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION  
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY  
TOPOGRAPHIC AND LANDSCAPE SURVEY  
HISTORIC BUILDING RECORDING  
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

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## SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong were commissioned by Electricity North West to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment and archaeological watching brief during excavations for the installation of an underground cable to supply electricity to a nearby supermarket at Maryport. Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council, has asked that a section of these excavations should take place under archaeological monitoring, that occurring to the north of Ellenborough Place, Maryport (between NY 03210 36078 and NY 03434 35997). The route of Mote Hill Roman road is thought to run on a south-westerly north-easterly alignment in the vicinity of the excavations at this location (CCC HER 6256), and a Roman pavement was found in the vicinity in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century (CCC HER 830) which may have been a part of this road. In addition, a Roman wharf once existed on the opposite bank of the river (CCC HER 829), to the north-west of the planned cable trench excavations.

The archaeological watching brief, undertaken between 27<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017, monitored the excavation of a trench for the new electricity cable, which ran for a distance of 260m, at a width of 0.5m and to a maximum depth of 1m. At the eastern half of the trench a black levelling deposit originating from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century with slag, brick and sandstone fragments was observed. Approximately 120m from the western end, this deposit ended, and a light brown sandy deposit was observed, overlain by 0.3m of mid to dark brown silty topsoil.

Despite the high potential for archaeological deposits of the Roman period in particular surviving within the immediate vicinity of the archaeological monitoring site, no archaeological finds or features were encountered.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Wardell Armstrong (WA) thanks Rob While of Electricity North West for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work. Also, WA thank groundwork staff of Electricity North West, for all assistance.

The archaeological watching brief monitoring was undertaken by Ariane Buschmann, who also wrote the results. The rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken by Cat Peters. The figures were produced by Helen Phillips and Adrian Bailey. The project was managed by Dave Jackson, who also edited the report.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Project Circumstances**

1.1.1 Between 27<sup>th</sup> April and 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017, Wardell Armstrong (WA) undertook an archaeological watching brief on excavations for a new electricity cable trench to the north of Ellenborough Place, Maryport, Cumbria (centred on NGR: NY 03309 36022; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Rob While of Electricity North West.

1.1.2 Archaeological work was required at the bequest of Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), due to the presence of known archaeological features in the vicinity. The route of Mote Hill Roman road is thought to run on a south-westerly north-easterly alignment in close proximity to the excavations (CCC HER 6256), and a Roman pavement was found in the vicinity in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century (CCC HER 830), perhaps part of this road. In addition, a Roman wharf once existed on the opposite bank of the river (CCC HER 829), to the north-west of the planned cable trench excavations

### **1.2 Project Documentation**

1.2.1 The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) submitted by WA (WA 2017), which was prepared in consultation with Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council. The WSI was approved prior to the fieldwork taking place.

1.2.2 This report outlines the initial desk-based research, the archaeological work undertaken on site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological monitoring.

## **2 METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Standards and Guidance**

2.1.1 The archaeological evaluation was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2014a), and in accordance with the WSI (WA 2017).

2.1.2 The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs (CIfA 2014a) and the Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (CIfA 2014b).

### **2.2 Documentary Research**

2.2.1 A rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken as part of this programme of works and the results are included within this report. The aims of the rapid desk-based assessment were to set out the archaeological and historical background of the site to inform on the potential archaeological finds and features which may be encountered during the cable trench excavations.

### **2.3 The Watching Brief**

2.3.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of all excavations occurring as part of the installation of the new cable in the area to the north of Ellenborough Place (Figure 2). This consisted of the excavation of a trench, to a depth of 1.0m using a mini digger/JCB, which measured c. 0.5m in width and 260m in length. The general aims of the monitoring 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.

2.3.2 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be deposited within Tullie House Museum, with copies of the report sent to the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) in



Kendal, Cumbria, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier **WAA 17, EPM-A, CL11947**.

- 2.3.3 Wardell Armstrong supports 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 WA as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: **wardella2-284776**.

### 3 BACKGROUND

#### 3.1 Location and Geological Context

3.1.1 The site is located within the southern part of the town of Maryport, south of the River Ellen, on Cumbria's coast (centred on NGR: NY 03309 36022; Figure 1). The excavations monitored during the watching brief occurred on land to the north of Ellenborough Place, and south of the River Ellen (Figure 2).

3.1.2 The underlying solid geology within the area of investigation is mapped as mudstone, siltstone and sandstone deposited during the Carboniferous Period approximately 307 to 310 million years ago. This is overlain by superficial deposits of clay, silt, sand and gravel, of Alluvium, deposited up to 2 million years ago during the Quaternary Period (BGS 2017).

#### 3.2 Historic Landscape Character

3.2.1 The Historic Landscape Characterisation (accessed 2017) positions Maryport within 'Area 47: West Cumberland Plain', a coastal area, stretching from the Solway Coast AONB in the north, to Egremont in the south. *"It is generally low-lying and coastal in nature, with generally low, eroding cliffs forming the seaward edge. Its dominant character is urban and industrial... Whitehaven and Maryport are post-medieval planned towns"* (CHLCP 2009, 105).

3.2.2 The legacy of this character area is *"a largely modern landscape with many 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century industrial forms including windfarms, moderate survival of 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial features, weak legibility of landscape elements of medieval origin"* (CHLCP 2009, 105).

#### 3.3 Historical and Archaeological Background

3.3.1 A rapid desk-based research exercise was carried out to provide a background to the works, and to outline the archaeological potential of the area based on a study area of up to 0.5km from the site. This was undertaken using online access to Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Record (CCC HER 2017), PastScape (PastScape 2017), and the National Heritage List (NHL 2017) as well as other readily available sources, referenced as relevant within the text. The results are outlined below:

3.3.2 **Prehistoric:** the only evidence for prehistoric activity from within the study area comes from the findspot of a Neolithic polished stone axe, found on Castle Hill in 1886 (PastScape 8997).

- 3.3.3 **Romano-British:** Maryport's Roman fort, Alauna, was an important part of the Hadrianic frontier. The fort itself, and associated vicus, is located to the north of the town, and has attracted attention since at least the 16<sup>th</sup> century. William Camden in 1599 wrote of "*the many expresse footings are evidently to be seen. The ancient vaults stand open, and many altars, stones with inscriptions and statues are here gotten out the ground*" (quoted in Gaskell 2007, 13). The fort is of 2<sup>nd</sup> century origin and was one of a series of Roman structures along the Cumbrian coast, which included fortlets, milecastles and signal towers. Due to the spacing of these structures, it is estimated that two such towers may lie in the vicinity of the area to be affected by the excavations (Roman Towers 24A and 24B; PastScape 875454 and PastScape 1024136).
- 3.3.4 In 1886, a 'Roman pavement' was observed near the then ropery at Ellenborough Place, observed 'some 10ft below surface level' (PastScape 9000; CCC HER 830), which may have been associated with the 'foundations of a massive wall found in Ellenborough Place and Gilmour Street in 1918', suggested to be the remains of a wharf (PastScape 8999; CCC HER 829). The 'pavement' may have been part of a known Roman road which ran south from the fort, Mote Hill Roman road, and is thought to run on a south-westerly north-easterly alignment in close proximity to the site (CCC HER 6256). Three Hadrianic coins and one coin of Trajan Decius have also been found in the study area, at Castle Hill in 1978 (Marron and Jepson 2010, 4).
- 3.3.5 **Medieval:** the early settlement at Maryport was known as Ellenborough, from the Saxon 'burgh', meaning 'fortified site', combined with the name of the river, Ellen (Gaskell 2007, 12). The earthworks and buried remains of a 12<sup>th</sup> century motte lie to the north of Ellenborough Place, Castle Hill motte (PastScape 8996), later utilised as a gun emplacement during the Second World War. This was clearly where activity was concentrated during the medieval period.
- 3.3.6 The Manor of Ellenborough, was possessed by Simon de Sheftling, in whose family it remained until the reign of Edward I, when it was purchased by the Eglesfield family (Gaskell 2007, 14). It was sold again during the reign of Henry VIII to John Senhouse of Seascales, and this family set up residence at Netherhall, to the east of the centre of Maryport, close to the site of a Roman camp. They utilised Roman dressed stone in its construction.
- 3.3.7 **Post-Medieval:** Maryport in its present form was established in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century when Humphrey Senhouse, the then lord of the manor at Netherhall, developed a coal port at the coast, and named the area after his wife (Gaskell 2007, 15). Pennant,

writing in 1772, described the town as “another new creation... the second house was built only in 1750. Now there are above 100, peopled by 1300 souls, all collected together by the opening of a coal trade on this estate” (quoted in Gaskell 2007, 15). In 1749, an Act of Parliament was obtained, enabling the erection of a new pier, the enlarging and deepening of the harbour at Ellenfoot and the levying of duties for its maintenance (Wood 1988). The rise in Atlantic trade emanating from the west coast further encouraged the speculative development of these new ports at Whitehaven Longtown and Maryport (McNeil and Newman 2004).

- 3.3.8 Despite these developments in the vicinity, the area affected by the excavations seems to have remained in the hinterland of this early 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial activity, as indicated on Mitchell’s Plan of Maryport of 1834 (Figure 3). This plan shows the river and Castle Hill to the north, and the road, Ellenborough Place, already in existence. A shipbuilding yard is shown on the north side of the River Ellen, and a ropery with associated buildings is shown on the south side of Ellenborough Place (Figure 3). By this date, the area to the north of Ellenborough Place, but south of the River Ellen appears to have been vacant, with possible field boundaries marked in the area (Figure 3). This whole area is labelled ‘Lands of Humphrey Senhouse Esq.’.
- 3.3.9 The Maryport and Carlisle Railway was incorporated in 1837 to connect Maryport and Carlisle (Gaskell 2007, 15). The main route of the railway line is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 (Figure 4) to the east of the site, running north-east to south-west, and a branch line is shown heading to the docks, on the north side of Ellenborough Place, running across the area affected by the cable excavations. Hatching along the north side of the tracks on the bank of the River Ellen may suggest an embankment was built, rather than a cutting excavated, suggesting the pre-existing archaeological features may not have been affected. Several railway related buildings and cranes are also shown in the vicinity (Figure 4). The ropery, on the south-side of Ellenborough Place, and associated ropewalk, on the north side of the River Ellen are still shown on the 1866 map (Figure 4), though do not seem to survive in 1900 (Figure 5).
- 3.3.10 Between 1866 (Figure 4) and 1900 (Figure 5), this area of Maryport underwent change. The Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (Figure 5) shows a more extensive railway network in the vicinity of the cable trench, spanning the north and south sides of Ellenborough Place. On the southern side of Ellenborough Place, three rows of terraced housing have been constructed, Ellenborough Place, Gilmour Street and Mandle Terrace. The former use of the area as a ropery has been memorialised

through the street name, Ropery Street, with traces of the earlier building perhaps surviving in the narrow long building on the east side of Ropery Street. The annotation on the map, 'Roman Pavement found (A.D. 1886)', to the south of Ellenborough Place shows where the possible traces of the known Roman road were found (CCC HER 6256; CCC HER 830).

3.3.11 **Modern:** the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1925 (Figure 6), shows a very similar layout to the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1900 (Figure 5), with the area still dominated by the railway branch line and associated infrastructure. The earlier depicted long narrow building at the eastern side of Ropery Street, had been demolished by 1925 (Figure 6).

3.3.12 The 1961 Ordnance Survey map (Figure 7) also shows the area dominated by railway tracks, labelled, 'mineral railway', though the majority of the associated buildings to the east of the excavated area had been demolished in the intervening years. Some houses, 'Wilmar' and 'Brennan House', had been constructed on the south side of Ellenborough Place, on the site formerly associated with railway lines, and the associated tracks and crane are no longer depicted (Figure 7). The railway to the port seems to have been removed by 1989.

3.3.13 Google Earth imagery from January 2003 seems to indicate that the area between the River Ellen and Ellenborough Place had been levelled, and shows tracks giving access to football pitches to the north-east (Plate 1). This is also shown on Google Earth imagery of May 2008 (Plate 2).



*Plate 1: Google Earth imagery, January 2003*



*Plate 2: Google Earth imagery, May 2008*

3.3.14 **Summary:** there is the potential for archaeological deposits, particularly of the Roman period, to be present within the study area. Although the area was dominated by a mineral railway through much of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, there is no evidence to suggest that this involved excavating for railway cuttings, and it could be that pre-existing archaeological deposits were preserved beneath, and thus remain unaffected by post medieval and modern developments.

## **4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS**

### **4.1 Introduction**

4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken between Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017 and Monday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2017. The archaeological watching brief monitored all excavations associated with a new electricity cable connecting a Lidl store with a substation.

4.1.2 The groundworks required the excavation of a service trench to depths of between 0.8m and 1m for the cable over a length of c. 260m.

### **4.2 Results**

4.2.1 A service trench was excavated under archaeological monitoring as part of the watching brief. The trench was aligned east to west, between a boundary wall and footpath, then curved northwards towards the recreational grounds in the north-east. The trench measured 0.5m in width and 260m in length.

4.2.2 The cable trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 1m, revealing a levelling deposit (103) comprising black charcoal, slag and a large number of brick, brick fragments and sandstone fragments (Plate 3-6), measuring between 0.2 – 0.6m in depth. No writing could be seen on the bricks, but they appear to date to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The sandstone fragments might be associated with the construction or repair works at the nearby railway bridge at Curzon Street in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The extent of this deposit was not reached. This was sealed by 0.2m subsoil (100). The subsoil was below c. 0.25m of hardstanding. Centrally within the eastern part of the trench, a concrete platform was revealed at the base of the trench (Plate 5). The platform was approximately 3m long and was left in situ. The full extent of the platform is unknown.

4.2.3 At the western half of the trench, starting approximately 120m from the western end (starting at the height of Ropery Street), a sandy deposit (104) of c. 0.6m depth was revealed, covered by 0.2m topsoil. The level of the sand deposit rises westwards, to a height of approximately 0.6m, before declining again at the last 20m, with an increase in topsoil.

4.2.4 No finds or deposits of archaeological significance were encountered.

## **5 CONCLUSIONS**

### **5.1 Summary**

5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief monitored the service excavations relating to a new electricity cable connecting a Lidl store with a substation.

5.1.2 Despite the potential for archaeological features or finds, particularly of the Roman period, to be encountered during the excavations to the north of Ellenborough Place, no such remains were observed. All groundworks occurring in the area under the watching brief remit, were excavated under archaeological supervision.

5.1.3 The levelling deposit (103) comprising slag, brick and sandstone fragments is most likely associated with the construction of the mineral railway in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, and its subsequent expansion in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The depth of the trench did not surpass the levelling deposit. The concrete floor encountered during the excavation, at the depth of 0.8m, may be associated with the small square building seen on the 1925 map (Figure 6). It had disappeared by 1961 (Figure 7). The entire area was covered in hardstanding after the railway went out of use in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, and converted into a parking area with recreational grounds and various footpaths. No archaeological features associated with the suspected Roman road were encountered. However, with the construction of the embankment and levelling of the ground, it may be possible that archaeological features are preserved below.

5.1.4 No features or finds of archaeological significance were noted during the watching brief.

### **5.2 Development Impact**

5.2.1 The development has not resulted in the loss of any archaeological remains.



## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Mitchell's Plan of Maryport, 1834

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1866 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925 (25" to 1 mile scale)

Ordnance Survey Map, 1961 (1:2,500 scale)

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## APPENDIX 1: PLATES



*Plate 3: Layer of slab (101) followed by black levelling deposit (103)*



*Plate 4: view of the trench looking eastwards*



*Plate 5: concrete floor, looking west*



*Plate 6: Black deposit layer (103)*



*Plate 7: view of the trench, begin of sand deposit*



*Plate 8: Sand deposit with dark brown topsoil*



*Plate 9: view of trench with topsoil and sand deposit*



*Plate 10: declining sand deposit and increase in topsoil*

## APPENDIX 2: FIGURES






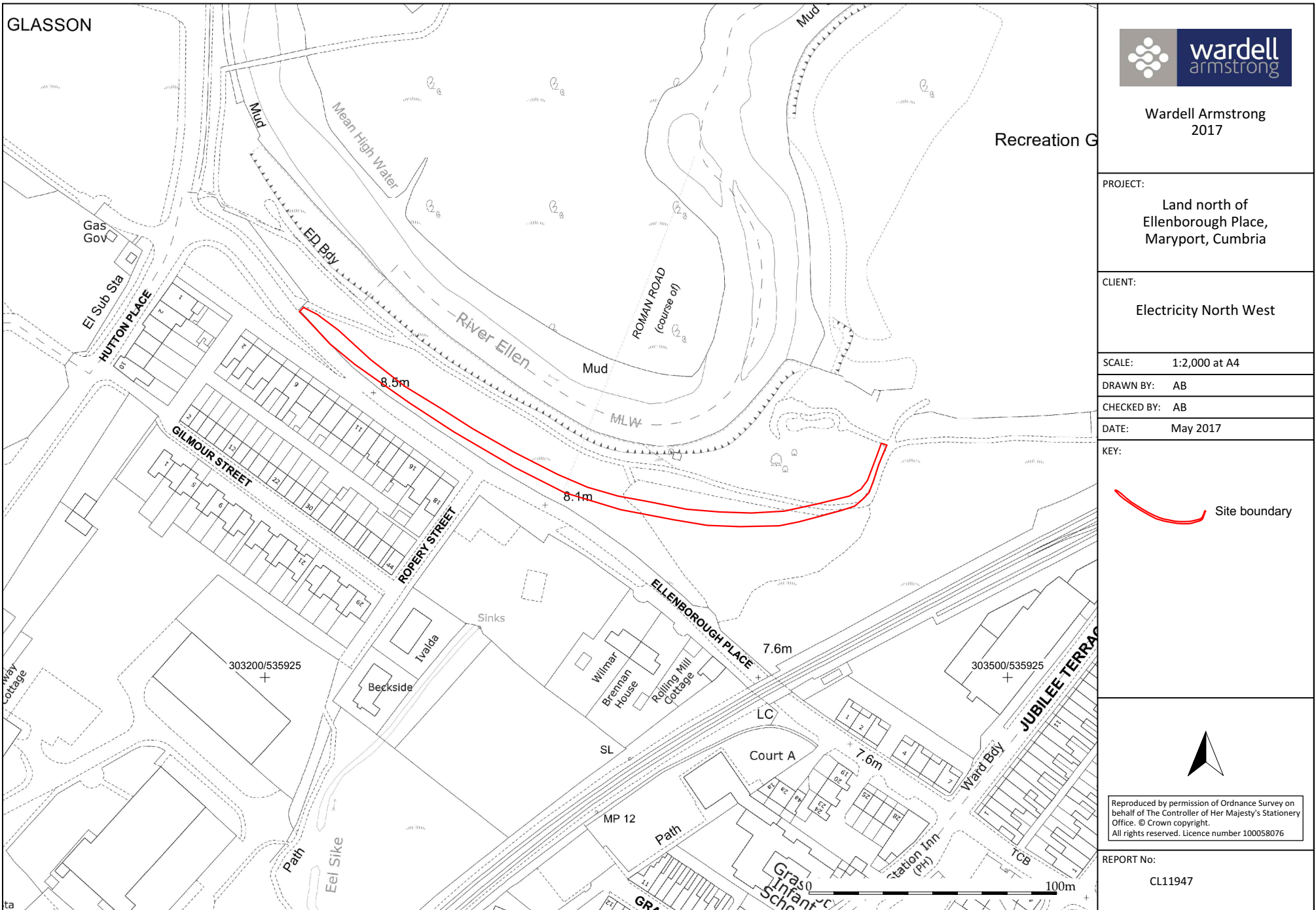
 <p>Wardell Armstrong 2017</p>	<p><b>PROJECT:</b> Land north of Ellenborough Place, Maryport, Cumbria</p> <p><b>CLIENT:</b> Electricity North West</p> <p><b>SCALE:</b> 1:25,000 at A4</p> <p><b>DRAWN BY:</b> HP</p> <p><b>CHECKED BY:</b> AB</p> <p><b>DATE:</b> May 2017</p> <p><b>REPORT No:</b> CL11947</p>	<p><b>KEY:</b></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 100058076</p>
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Figure 1: Site location.





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Land north of  
Ellenborough Place,  
Maryport, Cumbria

CLIENT:  
Electricity North West

SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: AB

CHECKED BY: AB

DATE: May 2017

KEY:



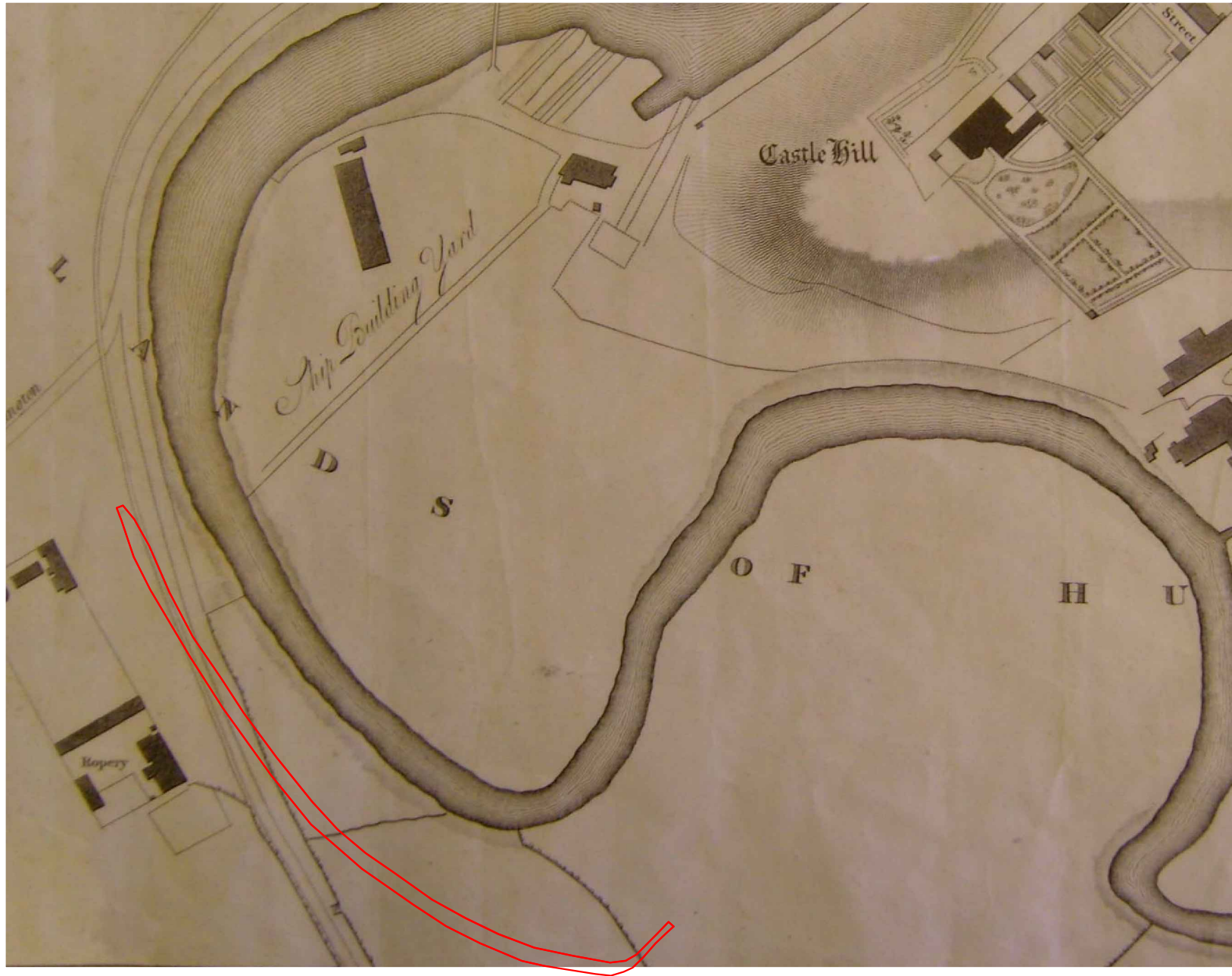
Site boundary



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Figure 2: Detailed site location showing area monitored during watching brief.



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Land north of  
Ellenborough Place,  
Maryport, Cumbria

CLIENT:

Electricity North West

SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: HP

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DATE: May 2017

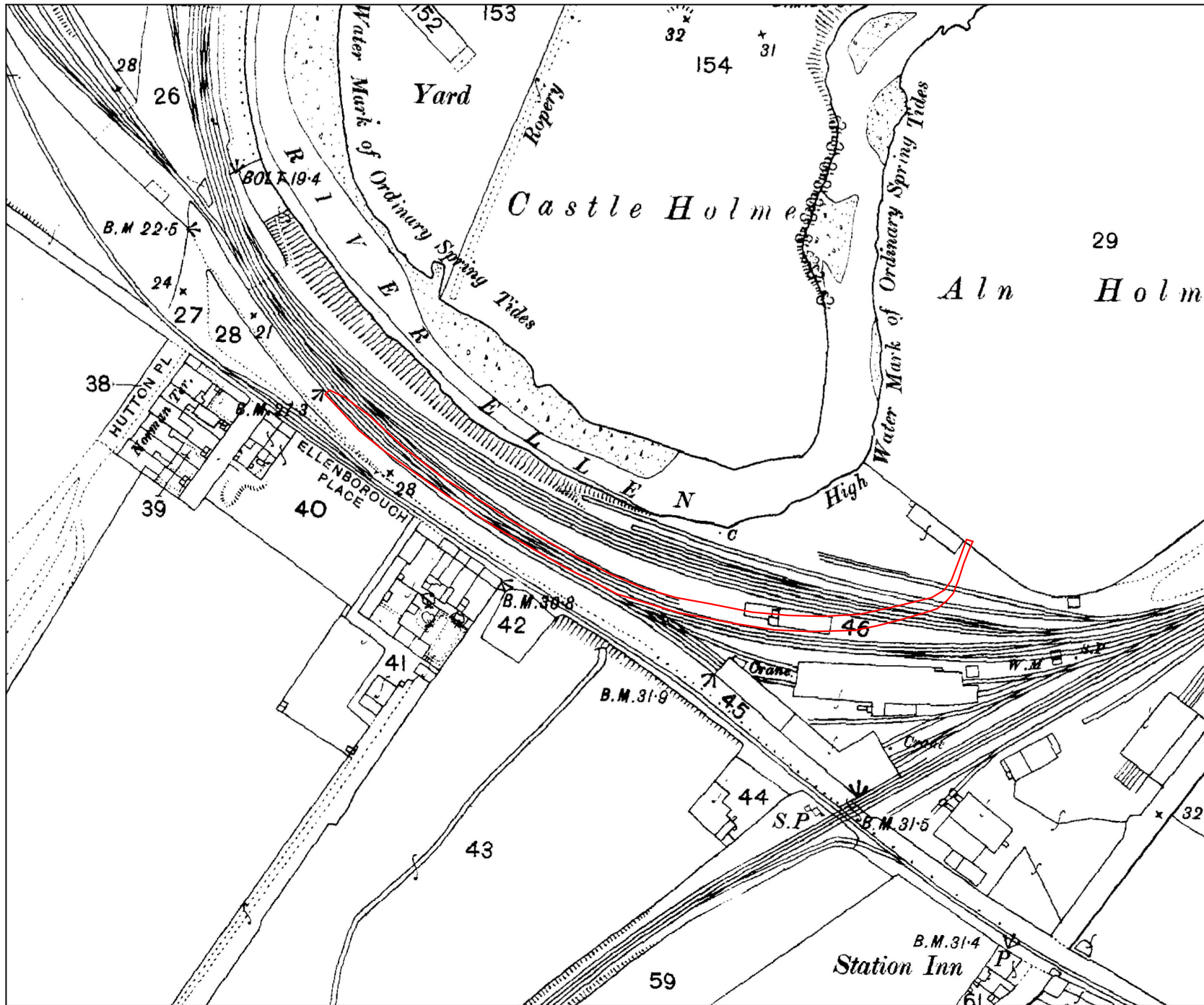
KEY:



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Figure 3: Extract from Mitchell's Map of Maryport, 1834.



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Land north of  
Ellenborough Place,  
Maryport, Cumbria


CLIENT:  
Electricity North West

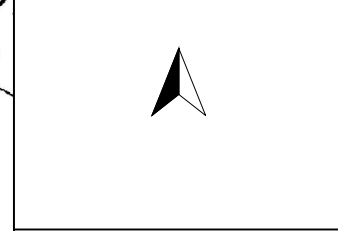
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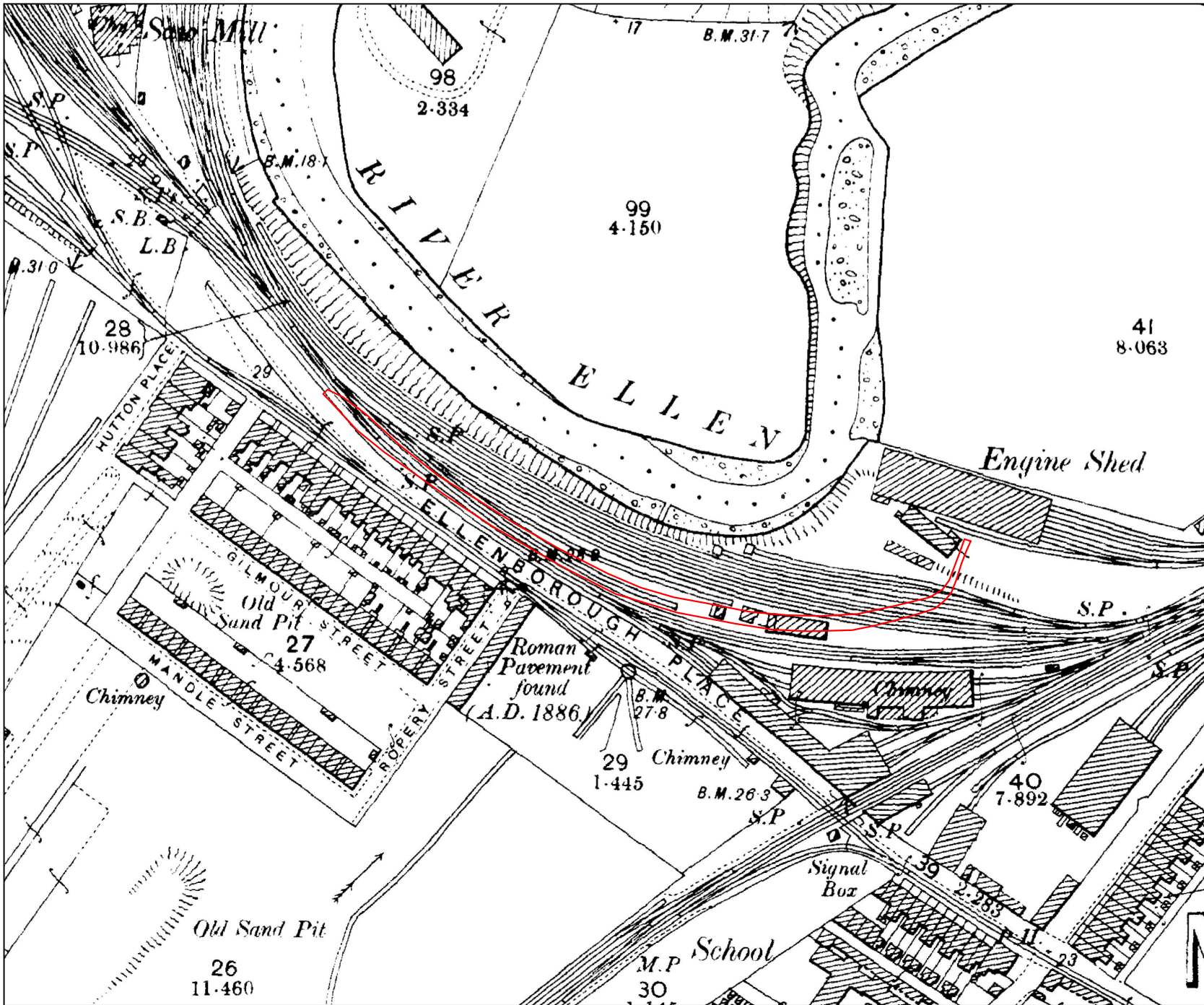
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Figure 4: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1866 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).



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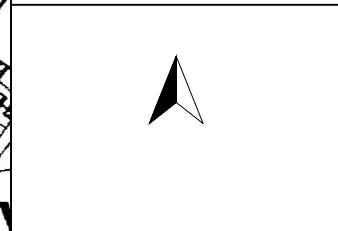
SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

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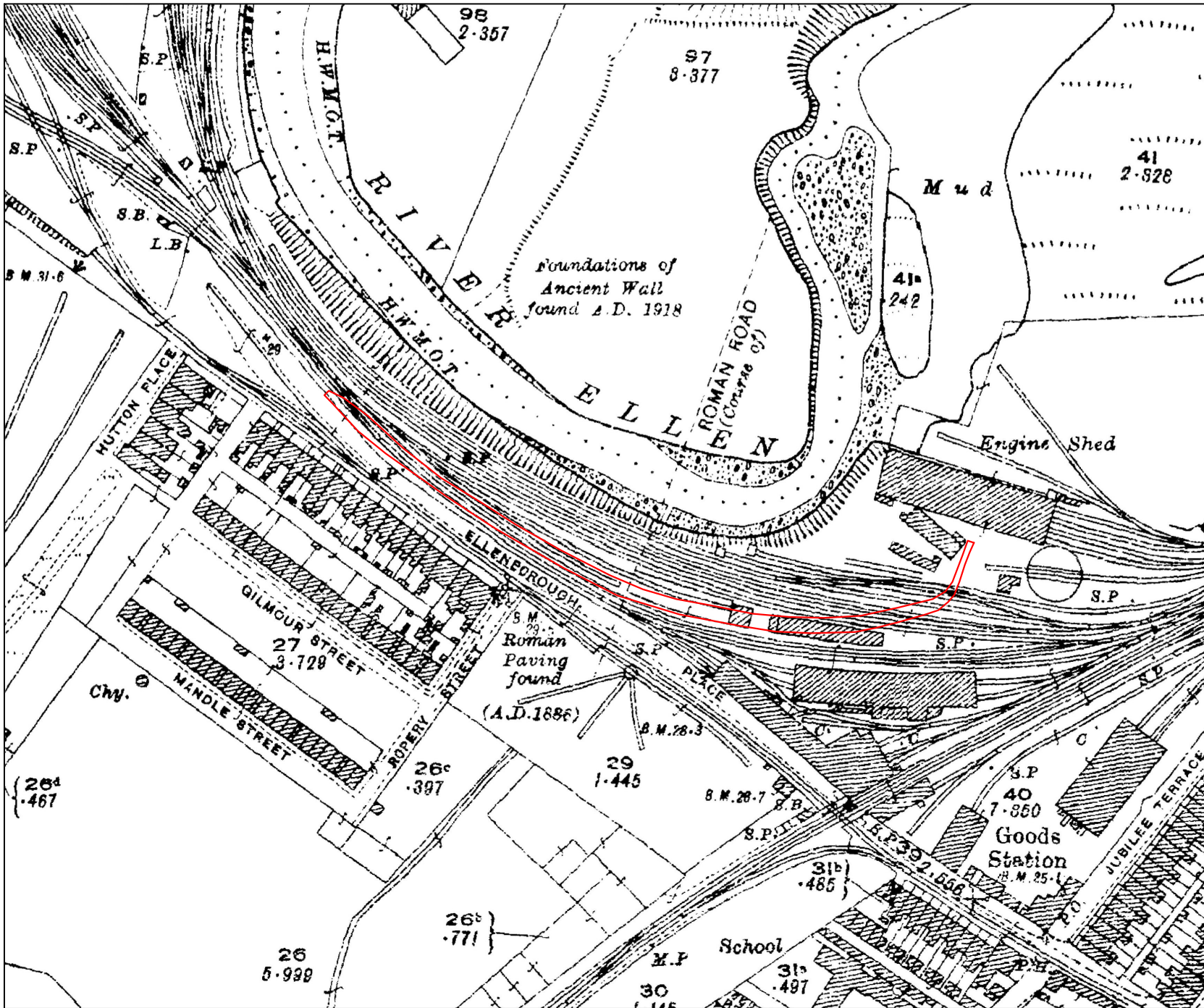
DATE: May 2017

KEY:



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Figure 5: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).



Wardell Armstrong  
2017

PROJECT:  
Land north of  
Ellenborough Place,  
Maryport, Cumbria


CLIENT:  
Electricity North West

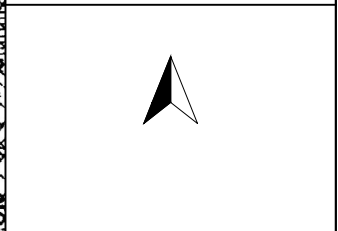
SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: HP

CHECKED BY: AB

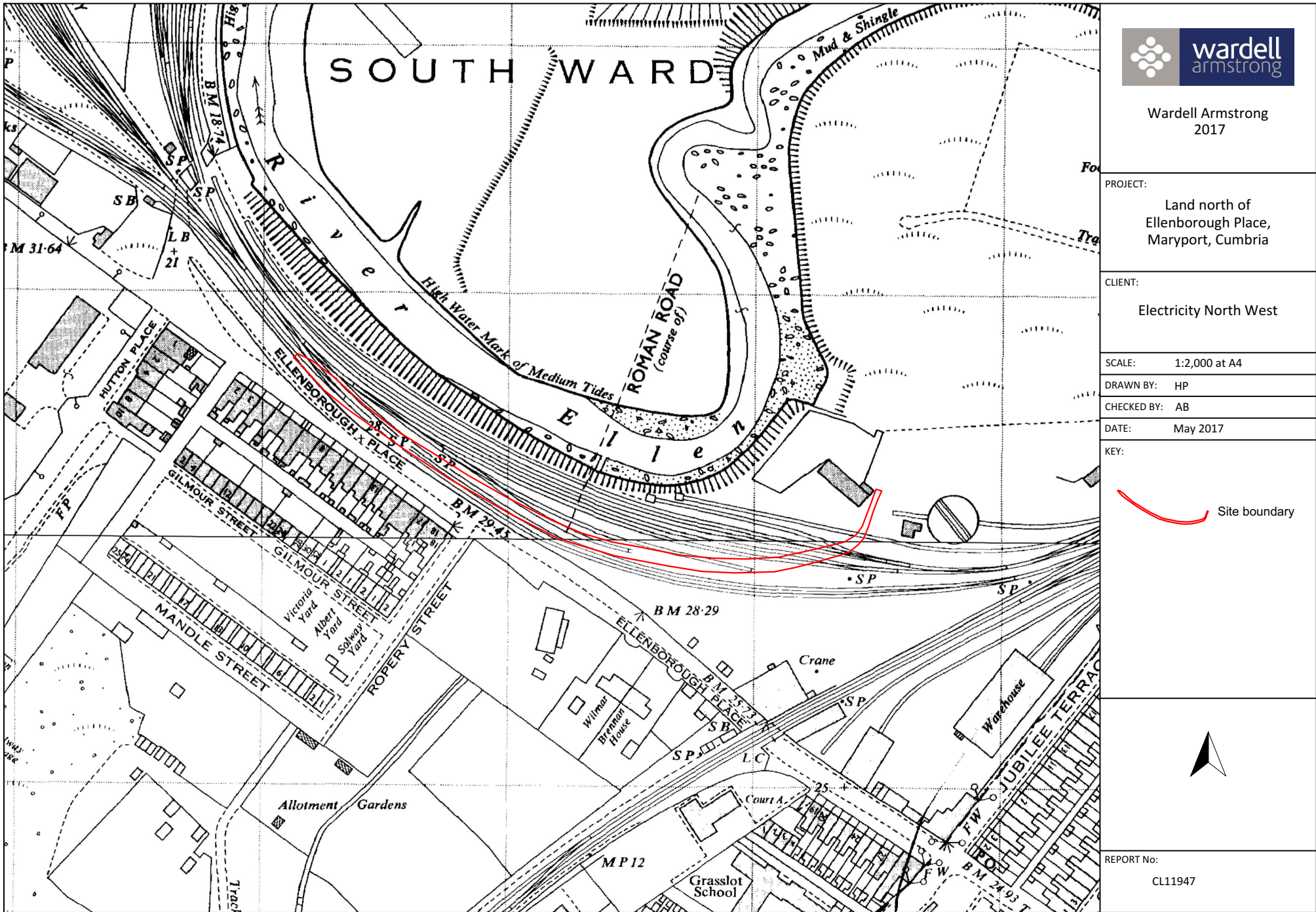
DATE: May 2017

KEY:  
 Site boundary



REPORT No:  
CL11947

Figure 6: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).



Wardell Armstrong  
2017

PROJECT:  
Land north of  
Ellenborough Place,  
Maryport, Cumbria

CLIENT:  
Electricity North West

SCALE: 1:2,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: HP

CHECKED BY: AB

DATE: May 2017

KEY:

 Site boundary



REPORT No:  
CL11947

Figure 7: Ordnance Survey Map, 1961 (25 inches to 1 mile scale).

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Birmingham  
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