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LAND AT LAYSIDE FARM, BARDON MILL, NORTHUMBERLAND

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT




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Land at Layside Farm, Bardon Mill, Northumberland

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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CONTENTS

SUMMARY	3
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
1 INTRODUCTION	5
1.1 Project Circumstances	5
1.2 Project Documentation.....	5
2 METHODOLOGY	6
2.1 Standards and Guidance	6
2.2 The Watching Brief	6
3 BACKGROUND	8
3.1 Location and Geological Context	8
3.2 Historical and Archaeological Background	8
4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS	9
4.1 Introduction	9
4.2 Results.....	9
5 CONCLUSIONS	13
5.1 Summary.....	13
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	14
APPENDIX 1: FIGURES	15

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

PLATES

Plate 1: Foundation trenches for eastern bedroom module cluster.....	9
Plate 2: Cable trench.....	10
Plate 3: Pit for septic tank.....	11
Plate 4: Service trench east of east bedroom module cluster	12
Plate 5: Southern extent of service trench	12

FIGURES (APPENDIX 1)

Figure 1: Site location	
Figure 2: Detailed site location	

SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong (WA Ltd) were commissioned by Kevin Stephenson to undertake an archaeological watching brief. This occurred during groundworks associated with new holiday accommodation. The works were located in a copse of trees, to the south-west of the farmhouse of Layside Farm, which lies c. 2.4km to the north-west of the village of Bardon Mill, Northumberland (NGR NY 75929 65831).

This watching brief formed the second phase of archaeological work at the site. An archaeological desk-based assessment had already been completed which concluded that a watching brief might be necessary on groundworks relating to the development due to the high number of known Roman assets in the vicinity (Alan Williams Archaeology Ltd, 19). Due to the development's location within a rich archaeological landscape, and following on from the desk-based assessment, Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland County Council, recommended that a programme of archaeological work be in place during all groundworks occurring in relation to the development. As a result, it was a condition of the planning permission for the development that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during all associated groundworks (Northumberland County Council Planning Ref: 16/04711/VARYCO).

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on Monday 8th May, Monday 5th June and Friday 4th August 2017. It monitored the excavation for foundation trenches for the eastern building block module, trenching for electricity and sewerage provision, and the excavation of a pit for a new septic tank.

No evidence for past human activity was encountered during the excavations, with much of the site retaining evidence of 20th century disturbance from tree-planting and rooting. However, the high archaeological potential illustrated by the wider area may mean that a similar programme of archaeological work may be required for any future extensions to the holiday accommodation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong (WA) thanks Kevin Stephenson and family for commissioning the project, and for all their assistance throughout the work. Also, WA thank all groundwork staff for all assistance.

The archaeological watching brief monitoring was undertaken by Cat Peters and Sue Thompson. Cat Peters wrote the report. The figures were produced by Helen Phillips. The project was managed by Dave Jackson, who also edited the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Circumstances

1.1.1 Across three days in May, June and August 2017, Wardell Armstrong (WA Ltd) undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the development of new holiday accommodation at Layside Farm. This occurred within a copse of trees to the south-west of the farmhouse at Layside Farm, which is located c. 2.4km north-west of Bardon Mill in Northumberland (NY 75929 65831; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by Kevin Stephenson.

1.1.2 This watching brief formed the second phase of archaeological work at the site. An archaeological desk-based assessment had already been completed which concluded that a watching brief might be necessary on groundworks relating to the development due to the high number of known Roman assets in the vicinity (Alan Williams Archaeology Ltd, 19). Due to the development's location within a rich archaeological landscape, and following on from the desk-based assessment, Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland County Council, recommended that a watching brief programme be in place during all groundworks occurring in relation to the development. As a result, it is a condition of the planning permission for the development that an archaeological watching brief is undertaken during all associated groundworks (Northumberland County Council Planning Ref: 16/04711/VARYCO).

1.2 Project Documentation

1.2.1 The project conforms to a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), prepared by Dave Jackson of Wardell Armstrong (Jackson 2017), following on from a Brief, issued by Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist at Northumberland County Council (Derham 2015). This was in line with professional guidance and good practice, as outlined by the Chartered Institute for Archaeology (CifA 2014a).

1.2.2 This report outlines the results of the watching brief monitoring, relating to groundworks occurring in relation to the holiday accommodation development to the south-west of Layside Farm.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards and Guidance

2.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken following the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2014a), and in accordance with the WSI (Jackson 2017) and Brief (Derham 2015).

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 The Watching Brief

2.2.1 The watching brief comprised the monitoring of all groundworks occurring in association with the provision of new holiday accommodation to the south-west of Layside Farm, Bardon Mill, Northumberland (Figure 1). This included the foundation trenches for the eastern building block module, associated service trenching and a pit for a new septic tank (Figure 2). 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.

2.2.2 Copies of this report, available upon request, will be sent to the Northumberland Historic Environment Record.

2.2.3 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project specification, and the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011) adhering to European best-practice (EAC 2014). The archive will be deposited with Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier **WA 17, BMN-A, CL11980**.

2.2.4 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 Ltd as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference for the project is: **wardella2-292341**.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and Geological Context

3.1.1 The site is located within a small copse of trees to the south-west of the farmhouse of Layside Farm. Layside Farm lies c. 2.4km north-west of Bardon Mill in Northumberland (Figure 1). To the north of the site lies an east-west orientated asphalt track leading to Layside Farm, to the east are buildings, and to the south and west, land, associated with Layside Farm. The wider area consists of predominantly pasture on undulating land. The development site is centred on NY 75929 65831 (Figure 2).

3.1.2 The underlying solid geology in the area is mapped as mudstone, sandstone and limestone of the Stainmore Formation, a sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 313 to 326 million years ago (BGS 2017). These rocks were formed in marginal coastal plains with lakes and swamps periodically inundated by the sea or estuaries and deltas (*ibid*).

3.2 Archaeological Background

3.2.1 The site lies within a rich archaeological landscape, illustrated by its location within the buffer zone for Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (NHL 1000098), and 1km south-west of Vindolanda, an important Roman fort and civil settlement on the Stanegate (NHL 1014820). A desk-based assessment highlighted the presence of further known archaeological sites in the area, including a probable Iron Age enclosure 800m to the south (HER 15329) which is unlikely to have occurred in isolation. The majority of other known sites in the area are of Roman origin, and include the Stanegate, a roman road c. 400m to the north (NHL 1014820) and four temporary Roman camps (NHL 1010941, NHL 1010940, NHL 1010943 and NHL 1010942), one of which lies less than 200m to the north-west. Surviving ridge and furrow has also been identified in the field immediately to the north of the site.

3.2.2 As a result of this potential, Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist for Northumberland County Council, recommended the archaeological monitoring of all groundworks. As a result, it became a condition of the planning permission, that archaeological monitoring of the groundworks was required for the development, including those associated with the sewage treatment works (Northumberland County Council Planning Ref: 16/04711/VARYCO; Northumberland County Council Planning Ref: 15/01365/FUL).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on Monday 8th May, Monday 5th June and Friday 4th August 2017. It monitored the excavation for foundation trenches for the eastern building block module, trenching for electricity and sewerage provision, and the excavation of a pit for a new septic tank. The locations of the watching brief monitoring are shown in Figure 2.

4.2 Results

4.2.1 The watching brief monitored the excavations for the foundations for the easternmost planned bedroom module cluster towards the centre of the site (Figure 2) the western bedroom module cluster has been delayed and may be completed at a later date. These foundation trenches measured between 0.9m and 1.1m in width and between 1.1m and 1.4m in depth. A dark grey-brown loose topsoil which measured between 0.05m and 0.2m in depth was encountered overlying a mid-brown clay subsoil which overlay a dark grey clay with orange flecks and some stone inclusions (Plate 1). These deposits were mixed in places, probably as a result of 20th century planting of the tree copse in the area.



Plate 1: Foundation trenches for eastern bedroom module cluster, facing south-west

4.2.2 The excavation of a narrow trench was also carried out under archaeological supervision, to the south of the asphalt surfaced track leading to Layside Farmhouse (Figure 2). This measured 0.3m in width and 0.55m in depth, and ran from an existing electricity pole to the west of the farmhouse, westwards, to the entrance for the new

holiday accommodation. This trench showed signs of modern disturbance, in the form of a black plastic pipe and brick fragments. A dark grey-brown loose topsoil which measures up to 0.7m in depth was encountered overlying a mid-brown clay subsoil which overlay an orange clay (Plate 2).



Plate 2: Cable trench, facing west

- 4.2.3 The new holiday accommodation also required sewage provision, and an associated pit for a new septic tank was excavated under archaeological monitoring (Figure 2). This measured 2.3m by 2.5m and reached a maximum depth of 0.5m, into the natural, as the tank would be above ground and the area would later be banked up to accommodate it. These groundworks revealed a mid grey-brown sandy silt topsoil up to 0.3m in depth overlying a light orange-brown sandy clay, with an orange clay at the base (Plate 3).
- 4.2.4 Service trenches were also excavated, surrounding the east bedroom module cluster and extending southwards to link with the new septic tank location, and into the field to the south, though this extension was later abandoned (Figure 2). The trenches measured 0.6m in width and had a maximum depth of 0.8m. The area around the module cluster encountered a make-up deposit which measures 0.4m in depth, overlying a mid brown topsoil/ subsoil deposit which measured 0.2m in depth. This overlay an orange-brown sandy clay natural (Plate 4). Further to the south, no make-up deposit was encountered, and the topsoil was heavily disturbed by roots and overlay the same orange clay natural (Plate 5).



Plate 3: Pit for septic tank, facing south



Plate 4: Service trench east of east bedroom module cluster, facing south



Plate 5: Southern extent of service trench, facing north

4.2.5 No finds were encountered during the excavations, and no deposits were deemed appropriate for environmental sampling during the project.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Summary

- 5.1.1 An archaeological watching brief was undertaken, covering groundworks associated with a development for new holiday accommodation to the south-west of Layside Farm. Archaeological work was required as a condition for planning permission for the development. This was because the area lies in a rich archaeological landscape, and within the buffer zone for Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (NHL 1000098). Several other known Roman period sites are known from the vicinity, as highlighted by a desk-based assessment (Alan Williams Archaeology 2015).
- 5.1.2 The watching brief monitored excavations relating to the new holiday accommodation, including foundation trenches, service trenches, and a pit for a new septic tank.
- 5.1.3 No evidence for past human activity was encountered during the excavations, with much of the site retaining evidence of 20th century disturbance from tree-planting and rooting. However, the high archaeological potential illustrated by the wider area may mean that a similar programme of archaeological work may be required for any future extensions to the holiday accommodation.

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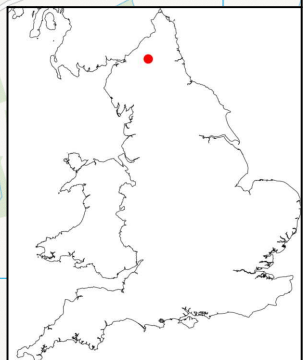
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National Heritage List (2017), <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/>, accessed 8th August 2017


APPENDIX 1: FIGURES




Wardell Armstrong
2017

PROJECT: Land at Layside Farm, Bardon Mill, Northumberland
 CLIENT: Kevin Stephenson
 SCALE: 1:25,000 at A4
 DRAWN BY: HP
 CHECKED BY: AB
 DATE: August 2017
 REPORT No: CL11980

KEY:
 Site location



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Figure 1: Site location.

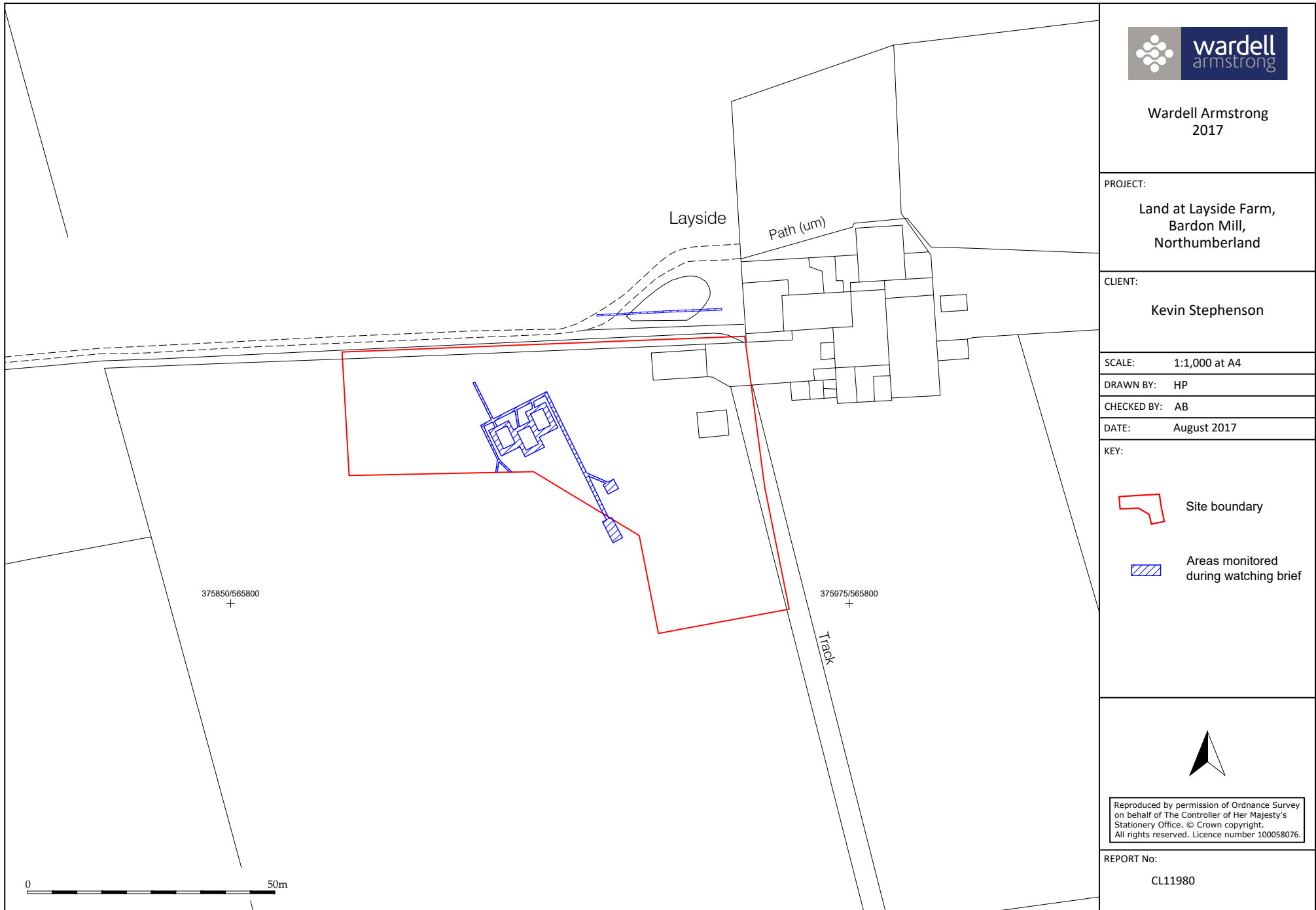


Figure 2: Detailed site location.

STOKE-ON-TRENT
Sir Henry Doulton House
Forge Lane
Etruria
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ST1 5BD
Tel: +44 (0)178 227 6700

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