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NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL

**HEXHAM ROAD
THROCKLEY
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

January 2018

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NEWCASTLE CITY COUNCIL

Hexham Road
Throckley
Newcastle upon Tyne

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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SUMMARY

Wardell Armstrong Ltd (WA) was commissioned by David Dixon of Newcastle City Council to undertake a watching brief on Hexham Road, Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne (centred on NGR: NZ 15448 66851). The watching brief was undertaken as part of a phased programme of archaeological work associated with a Section 106 highway scheme along Hexham Road in relation to a planned development at Throckley.

Hexham Road is situated along the line of Hadrian's Wall which was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS) in 1987. The WHS is centred on the military installations constructed from AD 122 on the orders of the Emperor Hadrian and forms the most complex and best preserved of the frontiers of the Roman Empire. The WHS comprises a visual envelope between 1km and 6km from the site in order to serve as a buffer zone to protect the site and its immediate landscape setting from development that is potentially detrimental to its visual amenity. As such the Section 106 highway scheme falls within a scheduled area and could only be undertaken with Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC ref: S00166721) and in accordance with the SMC.

As a result, Claire MacRae, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at Newcastle City Council requested a programme of archaeological investigations during the proposed scheme of works, including a programme of evaluation (Phase 1) and a separate watching brief phase (Phase 2). Significantly, the first phase of works revealed the lower courses of the northern edge of Hadrian's Wall at depths of as little as 0.20m (76.30m aOD) below the present road surface. In addition, an early track/road surface was also revealed during the evaluation which could have been of Roman date, although this was not confirmed. The results of the preceding evaluation were set out in a separate report (WA 2017a) and were used to inform the watching brief stage of works.

The archaeological watching brief was conducted in stages, between 12th July and the 19th December 2017, and comprised the monitoring of 24 separate areas of excavation, some of which were located immediately adjacent to the archaeological discoveries made during the preceding evaluation. The monitored excavation areas largely comprised 1m x 1m trial holes, excavated to depths of between 0.42m – 1m, with additional linear trenches excavated to minimum depths of 0.15m. It is possible that a clay deposit seen in one area may be part of the clay core of Hadrian's Wall. No other additional archaeological remains were encountered during the watching brief phase of works however.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Wardell Armstrong Ltd (WA) thank David Dixon of Newcastle City Council for commissioning the project, and for his assistance throughout the work. WA also thank Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for Historic England, and Claire MacRae, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at Newcastle City Council for their assistance during the project.

The watching brief monitoring was undertaken by Sue Thompson, Megan Stoakley and Adrian Bailey. The report was written and figures produced by Adrian Bailey. The project was managed by David Jackson, Senior Project Officer for Wardell Armstrong, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Circumstances

1.1.1 Between July and December 2017, Wardell Armstrong Ltd (WA) undertook an archaeological watching brief on Hexham Road, Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne. (centred on NGR: NZ 15448 66851; Figure 1). The work was commissioned by David Dixon of Newcastle City Council in order to implement a Section 106 highway scheme along Hexham Road in relation to a planned development at Throckley.

1.1.2 The watching brief was required as Hexham Road is situated along the line of Hadrian's Wall which is a designated UNESCO World Heritage Site (WHS). The Section 106 highway scheme therefore falls within a scheduled area and could only be undertaken with Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC ref: S00166721) and in accordance with the SMC.

1.1.3 The watching brief followed an archaeological evaluation, undertaken as part of the same scheme of works, which successfully identified remains associated with Hadrian's Wall. The results of the initial phase of evaluation have been set out in a separate report (WA 2017a).

1.1.4 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a specification produced by Claire MacRae, Tyne and Wear Archaeology Officer at Newcastle City Council, and a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which was developed in consultation with Mike Collins (Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for Historic England) and Claire MacRae.

1.2 Project Documentation

1.2.1 A project specification outlining the scope of works was produced by Claire MacRae (MacRae 2017). This was followed by a WSI (WA 2017b), which was produced to provide a specific methodology for the archaeological watching brief, in accordance with discussions held between Wardell Armstrong Ltd, Mike Collins and Claire MacRae. The WSI was approved by a representative of Historic England on behalf of Mike Collins prior to the fieldwork taking place. This is in line with government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).

1.2.2 This report outlines the work undertaken on site, and the results of this scheme of watching brief.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Standards and Guidance

2.1.1 The archaeological investigations were undertaken in accordance with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (2014a), and in accordance with the WA fieldwork manual (2017c).

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 24 separate areas of excavation, located along Hexham Road, Throckley (Figure 2). These took the form of test pits and linear trenches. The locations and results obtained from each excavation area are outlined in Section 4 below.

2.2.2 The general aims of the investigation were:

- To determine the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains, specifically those associated with Hadrian's Wall and in line with the Hadrian's Wall Research Framework (Symonds and Masson 2012);
- To record any remains where they were observed according to Wardell Armstrong Ltd standard procedures (WA 2017c);
- To produce a photographic record of all contexts using colour digital, 35mm colour print and monochrome formats as applicable, each photograph including a graduated metric scale;
- To recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- To keep any excavation of exposed remains relating to Hadrian's Wall to an absolute minimum in order to prevent unnecessary damage to the scheduled ancient monument;
- To recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survived in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

-
- 2.2.3 All monitored areas were excavated both by hand and by machine with a toothless ditching bucket, under close archaeological supervision.
- 2.2.4 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2011). The archive will be retained at the WA Carlisle office until a suitable repository becomes available. Copies of the report will be sent to the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record (HER), available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier **WA17, HRT-B, CL12008/17**.
- 2.2.5 Wardell Armstrong Ltd 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: **wardella2-306094**.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location and Geological Context

3.1.1 Throckley is a large urbanized village that lies on the outskirts of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is an area known for its association with coal mining and is located on the line of Hadrian's Wall and the Vallum. The landscape of the area has been shaped by coal mines and spoil heaps. The area surrounding Throckley is made up of fields and other urbanized villages. The majority of the fields are used for grazing. The River Tyne runs nearby (Countryside Commission 1998).

3.1.2 Hexham Road runs east-west, and consists of a black asphalt covered road surface with pedestrian pavements on either side. Block slabs cover some of the pavement areas. The remains of Hadrian's Wall were originally located on the site but are no longer visible, although parts of the Vallum can be seen in nearby playing fields. The area is shown in Figure 1 and the areas covered by the watching brief are shown in Figure 2.

3.1.3 The underlying geology is from the Upper Paleozoic carboniferous era, leaving coal measures and a mix of sandstone, shale, seatearth and coal.

3.2 Archaeological Background

3.2.1 Numerous excavations and investigations have occurred in the immediate area around Hexham Road and in the vicinity of Throckley, predominately because of the high potential for Roman remains in the vicinity.

3.2.2 Limited excavation was carried out on Turret 10a, located at Callerton Road (NZ 1601 6683), Throckley, in 1928. The turret was again excavated in 1980, in advance of construction work (Bennett, 1983). This site is 509 yards west of Milecastle 10. Only the south-east corner was examined and was found to be three feet thick. The east wall stood five courses high and the doorway was at the normal position in the south wall. Prehistoric ard-marks were found beneath and around the turret. The foundations of the turret were found to consist of slabs set into clean clay. The surviving wall faces above this had been pointed with mortar, with the wall cores consisting of sandstone blocks packed with clay. The interior layers were often intermittent spreads with only two layers seeming to indicate distinct floors. A number of areas of intense burning or charcoal, normally associated with a stone setting, were found in and outside the turret. The pottery found on the site, stratified and unstratified, was all of types common to Hadrian's Wall Period IA and only one sherd

- (found unstratified) was of a type considered diagnostic of Period IB. Nothing survived to suggest that the Turret 10a had ever been demolished and the recesses built over.
- 3.2.3 Work was also carried out around the site of the alleged Roman Turret 10b lying under a modern road. There are now no visible remains of either turret as the site is covered by the modern road.
- 3.2.4 In 1980, the Central Excavation Unit (English Heritage) excavated the Wall at three points, to the east and west of Turret 10a. In all locations the Wall was of Standard A Broad Wall construction and had been greatly robbed. The Vallum ditch was sectioned at NZ 1613 6678 where it proved to be 2.10m deep and 2.90m wide at the base.
- 3.2.5 Work was carried out in 2003 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd 2003) in the form of an evaluation near to the entrance to Throckley Middle School (NZ 1543 6686), situated on Hexham Road. This work located a truncated length of the foundations of Hadrian's Wall. The ditch, expected to the north of the Wall, was not observed.
- 3.2.6 A number of discoveries were also made close to the location of the present watching brief. These including the discovery of a 7m length of wall during 2001, whilst the foundation was discovered during 2003. During the same investigations, defensive *Cippi Pits* were also noted across a 1km stretch of Hexham Road (Frain, McKelvey and Bidwell 2005).
- 3.2.7 Of particular significance were a number of discoveries made during an initial phase of evaluation, which was undertaken as part of the present scheme of work. The first phase of works comprised two cross-carriageway trenches and four 1 x 1m test-pits located within the southern pavement (Figure 2). No significant archaeological features were revealed within the four test pits, being comprised of services and modern backfill deposits. The southern extent of the two cross-carriageway trenches however, both revealed the lower courses of the northern edge of Hadrian's Wall with the stone and clay core immediately behind, at depths of as little as 0.20m (76.30m aOD) below the present road surface. Within the easternmost trench (Trench 6), it was noted that the natural substrate began to grade downwards at distance of 5.96m from the Wall, suggesting the defensive ditch to the north may survive below the pavement adjacent to Hadrian House. In addition, an undated track/road surface was also revealed within Trench 6 which could be of Roman date, although this was not

confirmed during the evaluation (WA 2017a). The results of this evaluation were used to help inform the watching brief phase of works.

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

- 4.1.1 The archaeological watching brief was conducted intermittently over thirteen days between July and December 2017. This comprised the excavation of 24 pits or trenches (Trenches 7 – 30) to locate services and install services for a pedestrian crossing; these measured an average of 1m, in width with lengths varying from 1m up to 11m. Excavation of the test pits was undertaken both by hand, and with a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket to a depth of between 0.15m – 1m.
- 4.1.2 Trenches 7, 8, 9, 10 and 18 were excavated to the south of Hadrian House, and formed the easternmost extent of the watching brief area (Figure 2). Trenches 7 and 8 were small pits excavated by hand to an average width of 0.3m. Trench 7 revealed several layers of rubble and backfill deposits and a service cable was encountered at a depth of 0.7m (Plate 1). Trench 8 was located at the southern end of Trench 6 where remains of Hadrian's Wall were recorded during the previous evaluation. The pit revealed a 0.1m bedding layer of sand for paving slabs above 0.3m dark gritty, stoney deposit with occasional brick rubble inclusions (**801**). This sealed a thin deposit of sandstone fragments (**802**) above a dark grey brown sandy clay (**803**). There were no structural elements seen within the pit and very little stone, although it is possible that the clay deposit (**803**) may have formed part of the core of Hadrian's Wall.
- 4.1.3 Trenches 9 and 10 were located to the east of Trench 6 and measured an average of 5 x 2m and excavated to a depth of 0.15m. Both trenches were excavated using a mechanical excavator and comprised the removal of tarmac and paving slabs, and associated bedding deposits of sand above a mixed brick rubble sub-base. No archaeological remains were noted within these trenches, but this may be due to the shallow depth of the excavations.
- 4.1.4 Trench 18 was excavated to a width of 0.3m and measured 11m in length, and excavated to a maximum depth of 0.35m, revealing a dark grey brown/black silty clay made ground cut by several service trenches.
- 4.1.5 Trenches 11, 12 and 19 were located at the western extent of the watching brief area. Trenches 11 and 12 were excavated either side of Trench 1, where Hadrian's Wall was seen during the evaluation phase. Each trench measured an average of 9 x 0.7m and were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.3m below the existing ground level of the pavement, revealing a mixed grey brown made ground, which showed significant evidence of previous ground disturbance. Trench 12 revealed granite kerb stones

which represent the former line of the current road before the pavement was widened at this point. The current excavations were carried out to the maximum depth of these stones (0.3 metres) and therefore, any archaeological features may have already been disturbed by the former road edge, or could survive at lower levels.

- 4.1.6 Trench 19 measured 3 x 0.4m and was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m through 0.30m tarmac and made ground deposits, revealing a deposit of silty clay. Service pipes were noted throughout the trench.
- 4.1.7 The remaining trenches comprised small pits which were all located on the north side of Hexham Road, between Juno Moneta and Old Post House (Figure 2). These trenches retained average dimensions of 1m² and were excavated to an average depth of 0.42m into made ground (Plates 2 - 4). Frequent disturbance by service trenches was noted throughout these trenches.
- 4.1.8 No archaeological finds were recovered during the watching brief and no deposits suitable for environmental sampling were noted. Therefore, no samples were taken.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The archaeological watching brief comprised the monitoring of 24 separate areas of excavation located on Hexham Road, Throckley. The monitored areas were within the designated World Heritage Site of the Hadrianic Roman frontier system.
- 5.2 The majority of the groundworks monitored during the watching brief comprised the removal of paving slabs and roadside kerbs, to allow for dropped kerbs associated with the new crossing points to be fitted, and small pits for the erection of signage and bollards. Frequent modern disturbance in the form of service trenches and backfill deposits were noted within the majority of the watching brief areas.
- 5.3 Due to the known location of Hadrian's Wall, which was observed during the Phase 1 evaluation works, it was considered likely that further associated remains may be encountered. Although very few additional archaeological remains were observed, it is possible that a clay deposit noted within Trench 8 may have formed part of the core of Hadrian's Wall.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: PLATES



Plate 1: Trench 8



Plate 2: Trench 22 (looking east)



Plate 3: Trench 26 (looking north)



Plate 4: Trench 28 (looking south)

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES






 <p>Wardell Armstrong 2017</p>	<p>PROJECT: Hexham Road, Throckley, Newcastle upon Tyne</p> <p>CLIENT: Newcastle City Council</p> <p>SCALE: 1:25,000 at A4</p> <p>DRAWN BY: AB</p> <p>CHECKED BY: AB</p> <p>DATE: January 2018</p> <p>REPORT No: CL12008</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 100058076.</p>
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Figure 1: Site location.

PROJECT:
Hexham Road, Throckley,
Newcastle upon Tyne

CLIENT:
Newcastle City Council

SCALE: 1:750 at A3

DRAWN BY: AB/HP

CHECKED BY: AB/HP

DATE: January 2018

- KEY:
- Watching brief Areas
 - Proposed course of Hadrian's wall based on Phase 1 evaluation
 - Trenches monitored during watching brief
 - Phase 1 trenches



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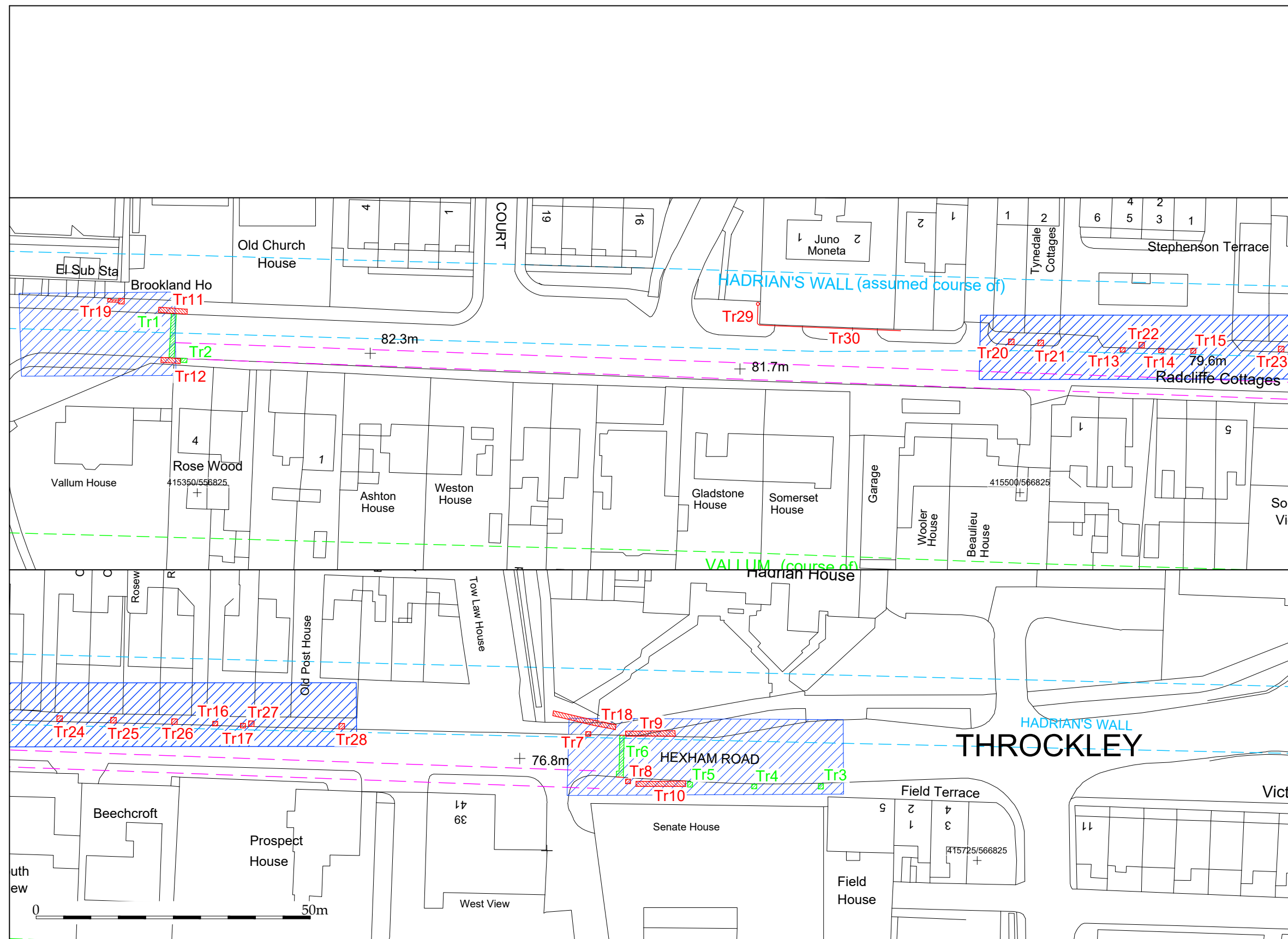


Figure 2: Location of watching brief areas.

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