



ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING

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**NEW
SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION**

**BRISTOL DRIVE, BATTLE HILL
WALLSEND, NORTH TYNESIDE**

on behalf of

Miller Construction (UK) Ltd

Project No.: 1200
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NAA 14/40
May 2014

NAA Document Authorisation

Project name		Bristol Drive, Battle Hill		Project number	
Report title		New Sheltered Accommodation, Bristol Drive, Battle Hill, Wallsend, North Tyneside: Archaeological Monitoring		1200	
Report No.		14/40			
Revision	Date	Filename	NAA_1200_Rpt_14-40_doc.pdf		
v.1	14 May 2014	Description	Archaeological Monitoring Report		
			Prepared by	Edited by	Approved by
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This document has been approved for release by: 

NEW SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

BRISTOL DRIVE, BATTLE HILL, WALLSEND, NORTH TYNESIDE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Summary

This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of new sheltered accommodation for older people in the Battle Hill area of Wallsend, North Tyneside. The area of development comprised an approximate rectangle measuring 80m north-west to south-east by 50m, representing the former site of a Lidl supermarket. The supermarket and its associated car park had been demolished in 2012, and the site had then been levelled using hardcore.

The area had the potential to contain the remains of three waggonways, running from nearby collieries to the coal staiths on the riverside. These were recorded in the Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record (HER). Waggonways were the horse-drawn fore-runners of steam railways, and generally comprised a raised embankment with two timber or iron rails, often supported on pairs of square stone sleepers. The embankment and track bed were usually constructed of colliery waste.

The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd for Miller Construction (UK) Ltd between 29 April and 2 May 2014.

The monitoring demonstrated that the majority of the site had been disturbed by previous groundwork to a depth of over 1m. Along the western side of the site, the former location of the supermarket car park, the disturbance was limited to a depth of 0.5m. Monitoring in this area identified the remains of one of the waggonways. Beneath the disturbed layer, the base of the track bed or embankment survived to a depth of 0.3m. A trench measuring 4.5m wide (14' 9") had been cut into the natural clay. Into this had been deposited fine colliery spoil comprising crushed shale, ash and small pieces of coal, incorporating fragments of broken brick.

There were no traces of the other two waggonways, and with the exception of a single whinstone sett (not retained) within the disturbed deposits overlying the site, no contemporary artefacts were identified.

No further work is considered necessary for the site record, which should be archived internally with NAA.

NEW SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION

BRISTOL DRIVE, BATTLE HILL, WALLSEND, NORTH TYNESIDE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of archaeological monitoring during groundworks associated with the construction of new sheltered accommodation for older people in the Battle Hill area of Wallsend, North Tyneside (NZ 308 681; Figure 1).
- 1.2 The area of development comprised an approximate rectangle measuring 80m north-west to south-east by 50m (Figure 2), representing the former site of a Lidl supermarket. The supermarket and its associated car park had been demolished in 2012, and the site had then been levelled using hardcore.
- 1.3 The archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd for Miller Construction (UK) Ltd between 29 April and 2 May 2014 in fulfilment of a condition of planning consent (ref. 13/00601/FUL).

2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Tyne and Wear Historic Environment Record (HER) recorded three waggonways crossing the site, running from nearby collieries to the coal staiths on the riverside (HER numbers 1164, 1168 and 15336; Figure 2). These were recorded as *old waggonway* and *disused* on Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 maps of 1859 and 1897 respectively (Figures 3 & 4). Waggonways were the horse-drawn fore-runners of steam railways, and generally comprised a raised embankment with two timber or iron rails, often supported on pairs of square stone sleepers. The embankment and track bed were usually constructed of colliery waste. While a number of waggonways were rebuilt as steam railways along the same route, many redundant examples were dismantled. It has been observed that the route of many such waggonways crossed areas where the populace experienced extreme poverty, and the valuable construction materials often disappeared as soon as the line fell out of use (A. Durkin, pers. comm). Indeed, it has been suggested that during the miners' strike in the 1980s, the embankments of several waggonways were stripped to provide coal for the welfare fund (*ibid.*). The respective HER entries for the three waggonways are reproduced below.

HER 1164 Willington Waggonway

- 2.2 Willington Waggonway. Started at NZ 3172 6840, near Old Engine Pit (HER 1166), served Edward Pit, Bigge Pit, Willington Colliery Low Pit, (HER 1165, 1163, 1189). Crossed Willington Dean by Viaduct (HER 1185). An earlier course of this line might be represented by an earlier waggonway (HER 1168). Southern terminus was at Willington Staith (HER 2102). Marked as *disused* on 2nd edition OS mapping, 1895/4 survey. This line followed at least part of the course of the Grand Allies' Willington New Line, from Battle Hill to Low Pit, opened 1820 and worked using an inclined plane system.

HER 1168 waggonway

- 2.3 Waggonway from Killingworth Waggonway (HER 1083) to Willington Waggonway (HER 1164), of which it may represent an earlier course. Passes through Bewick Pit (HER 1161).

HER 15336 waggonway spur

- 2.4 This short length of waggonway linked Bigge Pit (HER 1163) to the New Willington Waggonway (HER 1164) avoiding a circuitous route via Bewick Pit. It was opened in 1829.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The aims of the archaeological monitoring were to identify and record the presence and condition of any surviving archaeological features or deposits.
- 3.2 The objectives were:
- to establish the extent and degree of preservation of any waggonways within the excavations;
 - to identify and record any other archaeological features, deposits or finds;
 - to assess the impacts on the archaeological resource of the area as a basis for future decisions about the preservation of deposits *in situ* or recording in advance of construction;
 - to undertake a scheme of works that meets with the professional standards for archaeological work both nationally and within the local authority within which the development occurred; and
 - to produce a report on the results of the archaeological investigation.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The hardcore backfilling the site was removed from the central area of the site using a 360° excavator, initially using a toothed bucket but substituting for a toothless bucket as it approached the base of the infill. Excavation within the area of the anticipated waggonway then continued under archaeological supervision.
- 4.2 Where potential archaeological deposits or features were identified, machining ceased to enable archaeological excavation and recording to be undertaken.
- 4.3 Archaeological features were photographed and drawn at appropriate scales.

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The monitoring demonstrated that the majority of the site had been disturbed by previous groundwork to a depth of over 1m. Along the western side of the site, the former location of the supermarket car park, the disturbance was limited to a depth of 0.5m. Monitoring in this area identified the remains of one of the waggonways (HER 1168). Beneath the disturbed layer, the base of the track bed or embankment survived to a depth of 0.3m (Plate 1). A trench measuring 4.5m wide (14' 9") had been cut into the natural clay. Into this had been deposited fine colliery spoil (Plate 2) comprising crushed shale, ash and small pieces of coal, incorporating fragments of broken brick. This material may have served as a drainage layer at the base of the embankment, as encountered in a cutting at Weetslade Colliery (Wood 2010, 80–1).
- 5.2 There were no traces of the other two waggonways, and with the exception of a single whinstone sett (not retained) within the disturbed deposits overlying the site, no contemporary artefacts were identified.

6.0 DISCUSSION

- 6.1 Given the degree of previous disturbance to the site, it is perhaps surprising that there were any remains of the 19th-century waggonways surviving. While the central and northern parts of the site had been disturbed to a depth in excess of 1m for the construction of the supermarket and its warehousing, the base of the western waggonway (1168) had been partly protected due to the lesser degree of groundwork associated with the supermarket car park. However, even this survived to a depth of no more than 0.3m, and was discontinuous across the site. It is probable that the remains represented the very base of the embankment, which may once have stood no more than 1m above the surrounding farmland. Excavation by Wood (2010, 79) at Weetslade Colliery revealed a sequence of 1.3m of deposits including two successive track-beds and a number of consolidation layers. The later of the track-beds at Weetslade bore a track with a gauge estimated at 4'6" to 4'8" (*op. cit.*, 82–3),

and it is likely that a similar gauge was in use at Battle Hill, as the Killingworth and Weetslade pits were broadly contemporary.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The monitoring of groundwork demonstrated that, even where previous ground disturbance has occurred, there is some potential for survival of elements of the waggonways. It is therefore recommended that groundwork associated with future development elsewhere along the route of such features is subject to archaeological monitoring.

Archiving

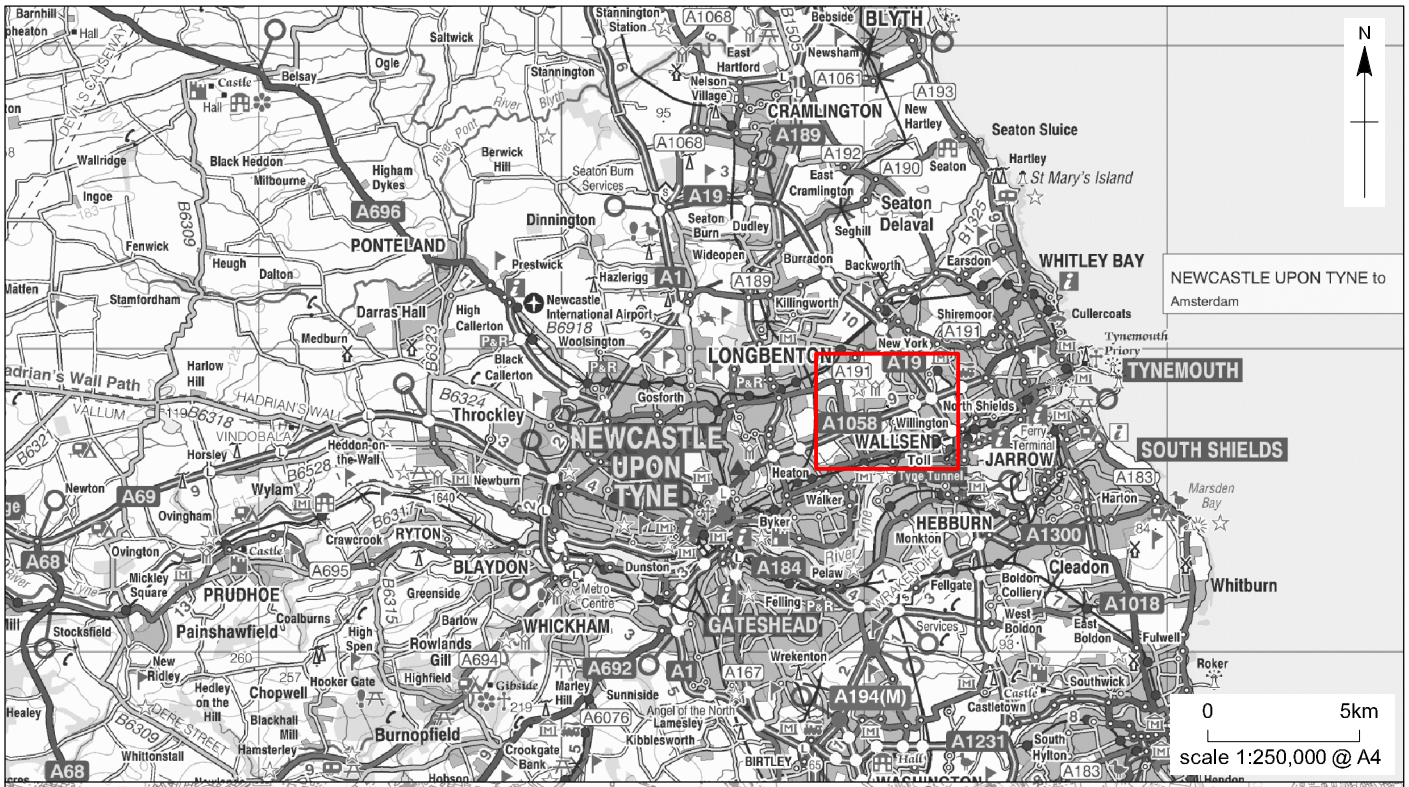
- 7.2 As there were no significant archaeological remains, deposits or artefacts, no further work is considered necessary for the site record, which should be archived internally with NAA.

Reference

Wood, P. N. (2010) 'Excavation on the Brunton and Shields Railway at Weetslade, North Tyneside.' In *Industrial Archaeology Review*, Vol XXXII No. 2. Journal of the Association for Industrial Archaeology; 77–90

Ordnance Survey 1859 1:2,500 (25") Map, Northumberland

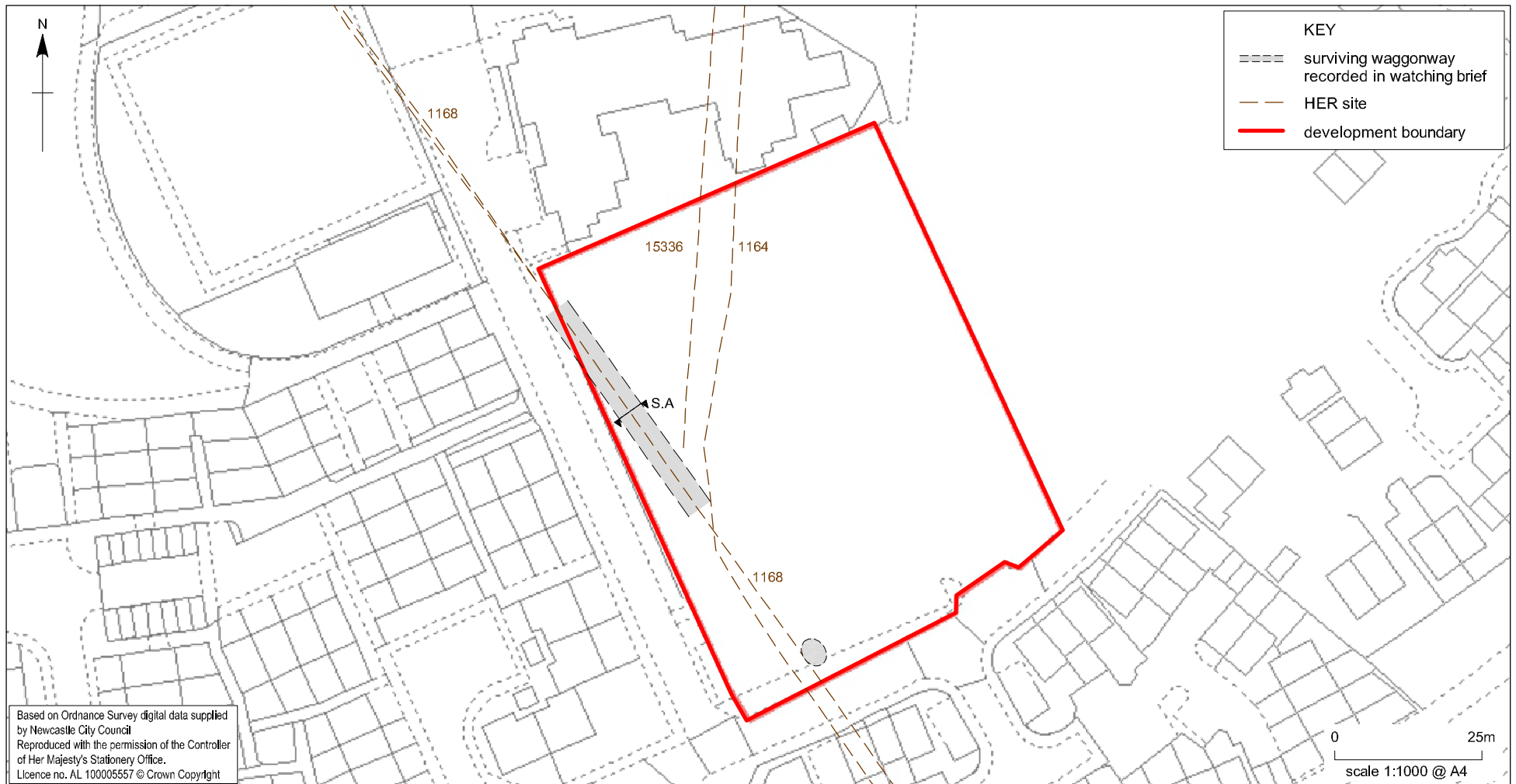
Ordnance Survey 1897 1:2,500 (25") Map, Northumberland



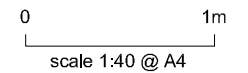
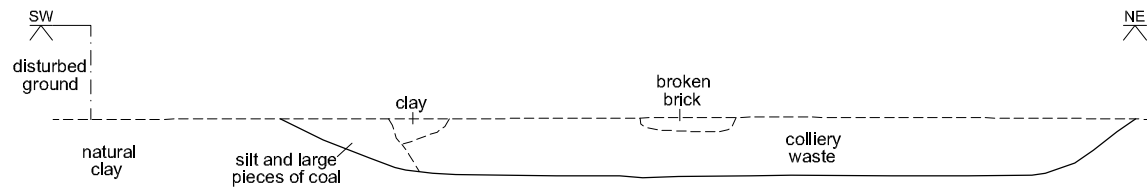
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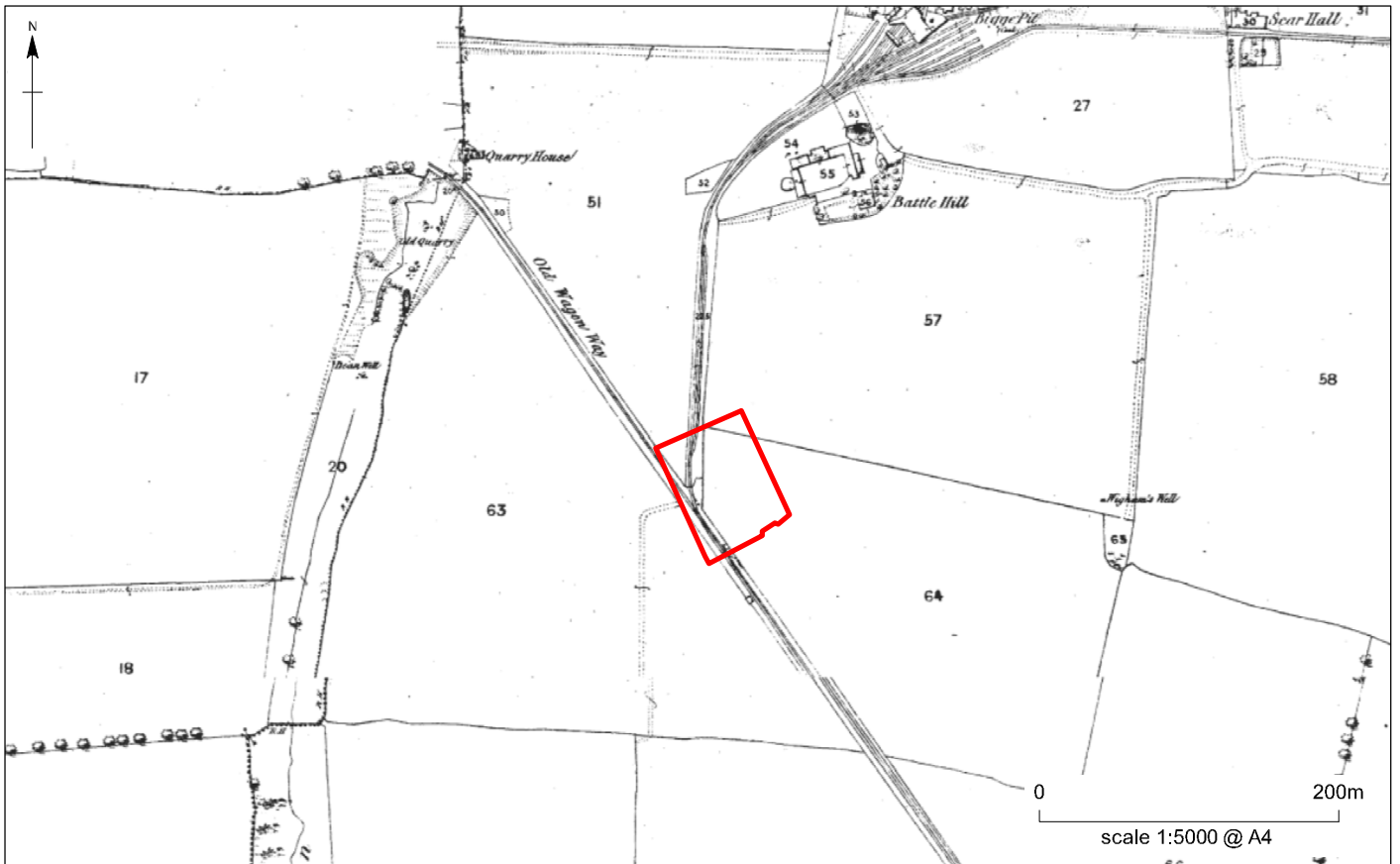
Bristol Drive, Battle Hill, Wallsend: site location

Figure 1



Section A

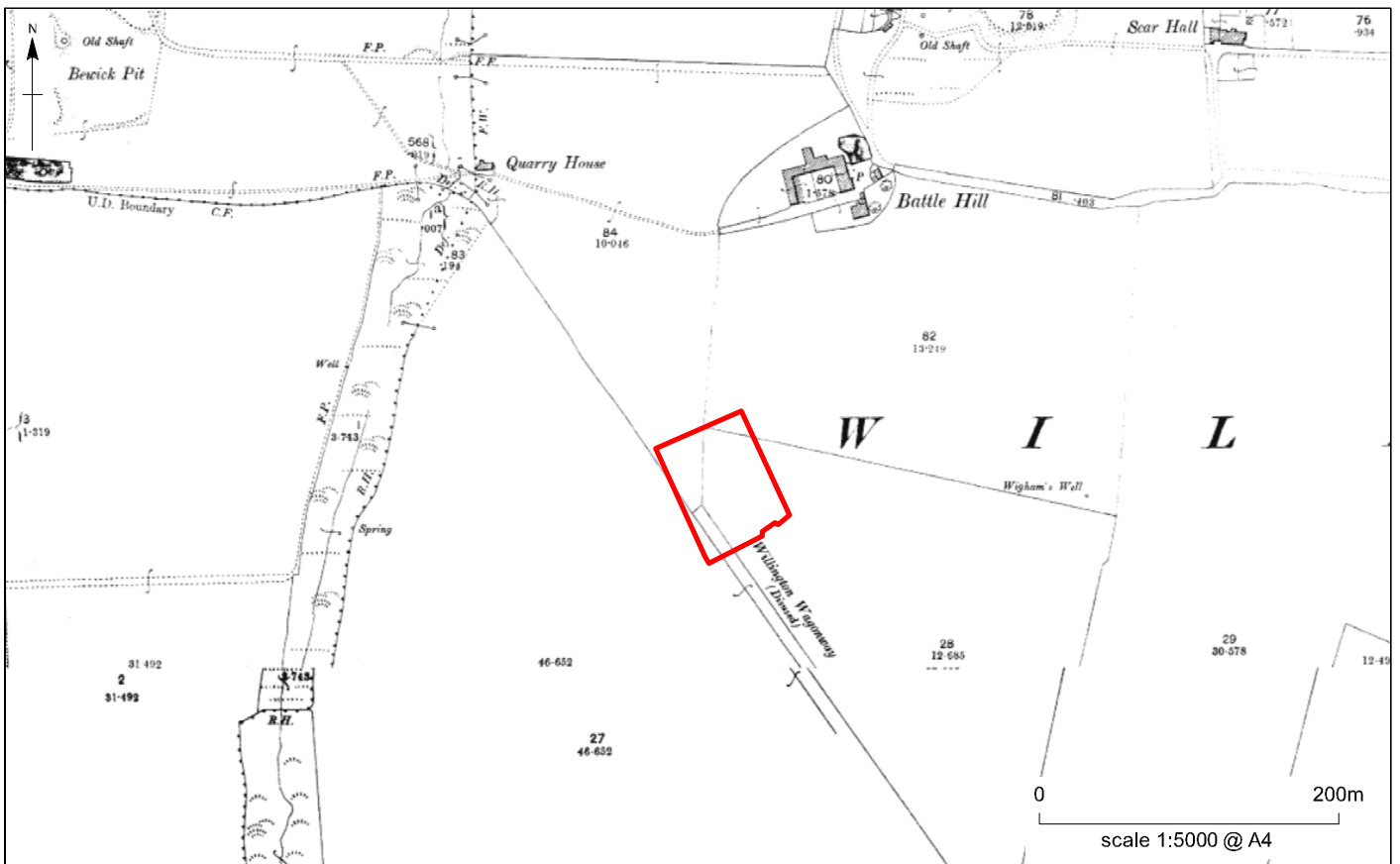




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Bristol Drive, Battle Hill, Wallsend: Ordnance Survey map of 1859

Figure 3



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Bristol Drive, Battle Hill, Wallsend: Ordnance Survey map of 1897

Figure 4