

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD

HALTON BARN, HALTON SHEILDS, CORBRIDGE

**Archaeological Monitoring**

**County Archaeologist's Reference Number:** T51/1; 21874

**Site location:** Halton Barn, Halton Shields, Corbridge, Northumberland

**Grid reference:** NGR 401859 568677

**Development:** Storm Porch

**Client:** Roger Jones

**NAA Monitoring Archaeologist:** Martyn Cooper

**NAA Project Manager:** Mary Fraser

**NAA project number:** 1266

**NAA Site Code:** HBC15

**Date:** 27 July 2015

**Reasons for watching brief**

Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) was commissioned by Roger Jones, to monitor foundation works in advance of the construction of a new storm porch at Halton Barn, Halton Shields, Corbridge, NGR 401859 568677 (**Figure 1**). Situated 5km north-east of Corbridge, Halton Barn lies between Hadrian's Wall and the Vallum, and overlies the Military Way (**Figure 2**). The work was recommended by Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist Northumberland County Council, due to the proximity to the Scheduled Monument of Hadrian's Wall and associated Vallum. The excavations were undertaken in order to discharge Condition No 4 of the planning decision notice (Application No.15/0034/FUL). They were carried out in accordance with the agreed WSI (NAA 15/74) and in accordance with English Heritage (1991, 2006) and ClfA (2014a/b) guidelines.

**Previous Archaeological Investigations**

Halton Barn forms part of a complex of farm buildings converted for residential use during 2005 and 2006. The farm buildings were converted into three residential units and Halton Barn was Unit 2. The application for conversion was subject to an initial staged programme of desk-based assessment and archaeological trial trench evaluation undertaken by The Archaeological Practice (TAP) in 2000/2001. This work successfully located Hadrian's Wall, the Roman Military Way and a range of other features thought to belong to the Roman period (TAP 2000 and 2001). In the light of these results, the layout and design of the development were amended to enable the most important archaeological remains to be preserved in situ.

Between 2005 and 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (NPA) undertook archaeological monitoring during the development of the site, when the buildings were converted from farm buildings to residential (NPA 2006). The six areas of monitoring are shown on Figure 2 (A – F) and the porch extension lies within the eastern part of the Area B investigations, immediately to the south of TAP trial trench 5b (Figure 2).

Within the western part of Area B (Figure 3), two successive post medieval floor layers were revealed. The later stone surface [224], which was embedded in a 0.5m deep layer of brown clayey silt [232], was recorded then removed. The earlier surface [233] was exposed, recorded and left in situ. On completion, the ground was built up above the earlier post-medieval surface to form the modern, sunken, entrance way to the building (Plate 1).

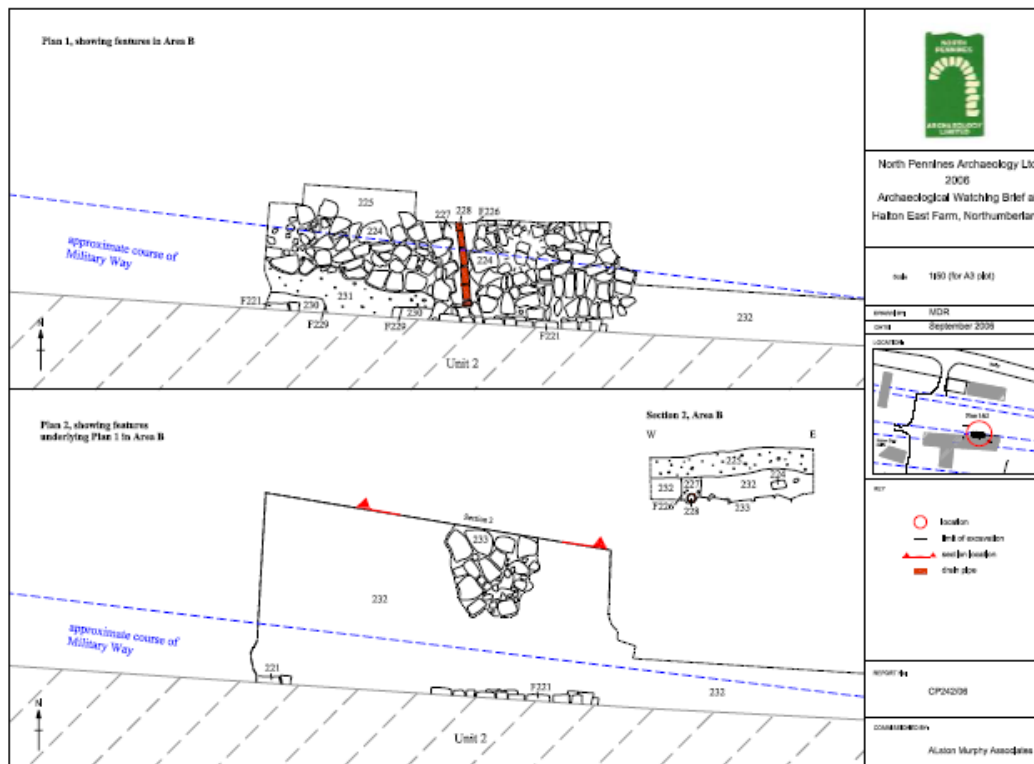


Figure 3: Area B investigation - Plans showing upper and lower metal surfaces within area of proposed porch. (Taken from NPA report CP 242/06 Figure 5) (Not to scale)

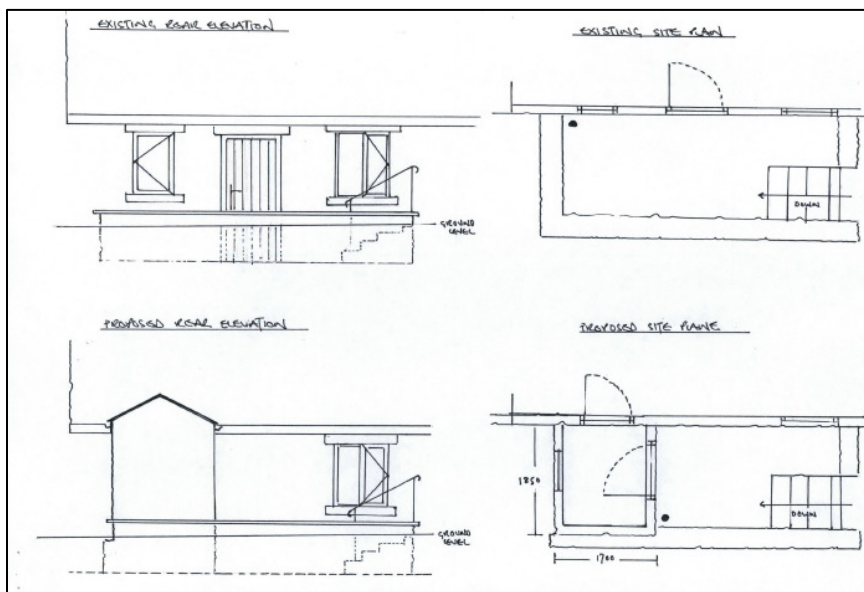
### Scope of works

All current works were contained within the area of the existing entrance well. This entrance lay at 0.7m below the level of the yard, and was bounded by steps leading down from the west, low retaining walls to the north and east, and the building to the south (Plate 1). The surface of the sunken entrance way was laid with stone flags with a drain in the south-east corner. Permission had been granted for the relocation of the existing front door and the construction of a storm porch in front of the relocated door. The area of excavation for the new storm porch consisted of a 2.1m

x 1.7m rectangle, located within the eastern end of the sunken entrance way to the building (**Figure 4**).



*Plate 1: Halton Barn - view of existing door and area of new porch with drain in far corner between the house and retaining wall*



*Figure 4: Planning application drawing showing existing and proposed front elevations and site plan (Ref: 15\_00034\_FUL--Combination Plan\_2-437513) (not to scale)*

## Results

The modern flagstones (100) were removed by hand across the excavation area. This exposed a modern layer of levelling gravel (101), which had been laid down as part of the 2005/2006 construction works. The contractor decided this layer would provide a suitable base for the porch. A 0.5m wide by 0.3m deep foundation trench



for the porch was then excavated along the western edge of the area; this trench cut gravel **101** which was 0.2m in depth (**Plate 2**).



*Plate 2: East facing view showing location of foundation trench and depth of levelling gravel (101)*

At the base of the gravel, the trench also exposed the top of a dark-grey clay layer (**102**). This layer appeared to be disturbed material which included re-deposited sandstone cobbles and was probably related to the backfill operations associated with the 2005/2006 construction of the sunken entrance. These cobbles did not form a coherent metalled surface but were stable enough to form the base of the porch foundations. No finds were recovered and no further excavation was required.



*Plate 3: East facing view of foundation trench showing dark grey clay with re-deposited cobbles (102) below the gravel levelling deposit (101)*

## **Discussion**

The excavated area revealed three layers related to the previous phase of construction works. The flagstones (100) and bedding gravel (101) were modern. The underlying dark-grey clay layer with re-deposited sandstone cobbles (102) may have been associated with the 0.5m-deep layer of brown clayey silt [232] identified by NPA in 2005/6 and the overlying post-medieval cobbled surface [224] which had been identified and removed by NPA to the west of the storm porch excavation area (Figure 3). The upper surface of this clayey silt deposit may have been disturbed during the 2005/6 excavations and this disturbed material together with some of the removed sandstone cobbles used as backfill and levelling material for the foundation of the entrance way. No further archaeological deposits were exposed or disturbed during these works.

## **References**

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014a) *Standard and guidance for an archaeological field excavation and watching brief*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) (2014b) *Standard and guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials*

English Heritage (1991) *Management of Archaeological Projects*

English Heritage (2006) *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

NAA (2015) *Halton Barn, Halton Shields - Archaeological Monitoring Written Scheme of Investigation*. 15/74

NPA (2006) *East Halton Farm Archaeological Monitoring*, unpublished report

TAP (2000) *East Halton Farm Archaeological Assessment*, unpublished report

TAP (2001) *East Halton Farm Archaeological Evaluation*, unpublished report

**Documentation:** Digital photographs, context sheets and site record catalogues

**Archive Deposition:** Internal archive

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