

An Archaeological Watching Brief at East Wallhouses, Northumberland



Looking south across the B6318

ARS Ltd Report 2012/44
July 2012

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2012 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northumbrian Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief on the B6318 near East Wallhouses in Northumberland. The Watching Brief was carried out while repairs were made to a water pipe that was believed to have burst.

The site sits on the line of Hadrian's Wall, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a World Heritage Site. Scheduled Monument consent was granted for a trench to be dug across the road in order for the required repairs to be carried out. There was the potential for Hadrian's Wall, or features associated with the Wall, to be encountered during the watching brief.

The groundwork was initially going to involve the excavation of one trench running north-south across the road outside of the Robin Hood Inn. However, two small trenches dug at either side of the road were able to locate the burst water pipe and allowed a new pipe to be pulled through an existing duct without the need for a larger trench to be dug across the road.

There were no finds, features or buried land surfaces encountered during the watching brief.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Location and Scope of Work

1.1.1. In July 2012 Archaeological Research Services Ltd were commissioned by Northumbrian Water to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with the repair of a water pipe that was believed to have burst.

1.1.2. The site sits on the line of Hadrian's Wall, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a World Heritage Site. Scheduled Monument consent was granted for a trench to be dug across the road in order for the required repairs to be carried out. There was the potential for Hadrian's Wall, or features associated with the Wall, to be encountered during the watching brief. The site is centred at NZ 04959 68354.

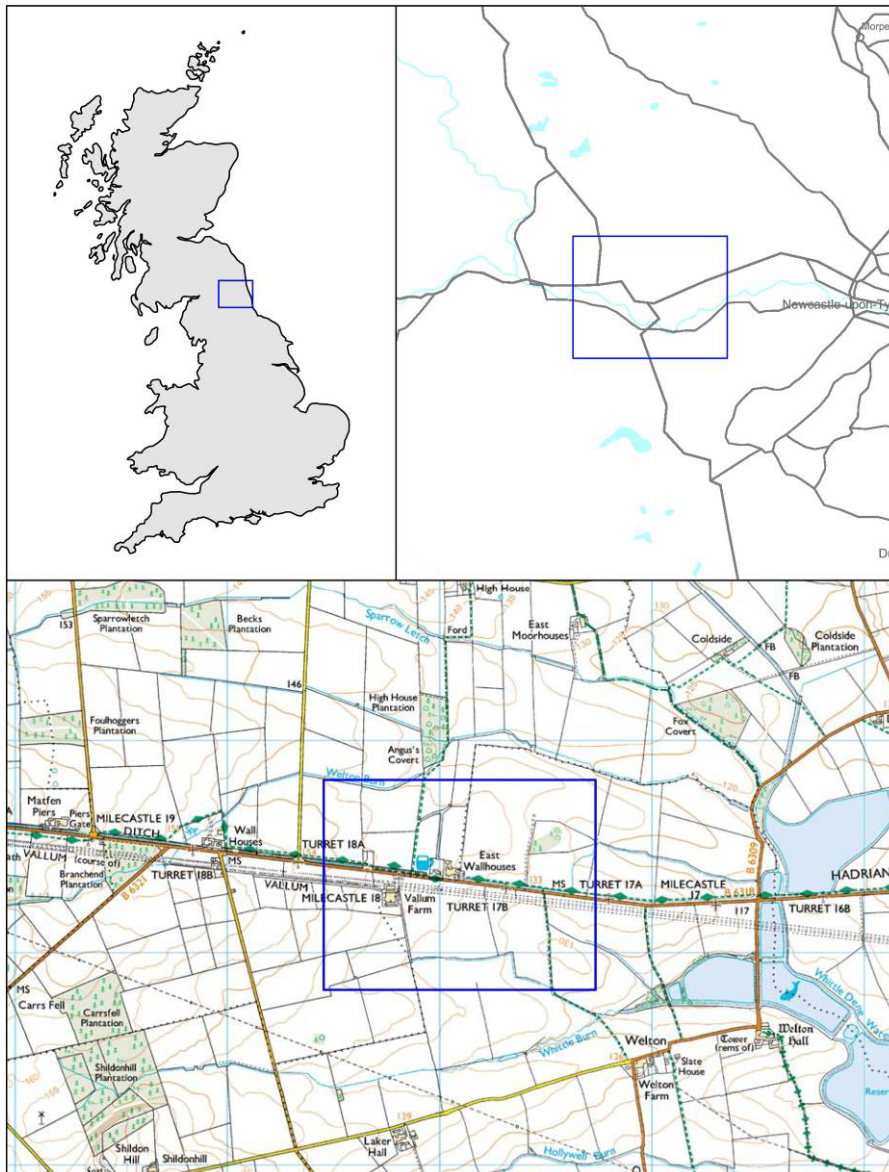


Fig. 1 Location of site.

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1.2. Geology and soils

1.2.1. The solid geology of the area is limestone, sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of the Yoredale Group. The overlying drift geology comprises superficial deposits of Diamicton till (British Geological Survey 2012).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. An archaeological watching brief was undertaken to establish whether any archaeological features were affected by the ground works and to assess the depth and condition of any features present. The groundwork was initially going to involve the excavation of one trench running north-south across the road outside of the Robin Hood Inn. However, two small trenches dug at either side of the road were able to locate the burst water pipe and allowed a new pipe to be pulled through an existing duct without the need for a trench to be dug across the road.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Evidence for Prehistoric occupation in and around the study area includes a Mesolithic flint tool that was found at Wall Houses. The tool would probably have been used for scraping animal hides.

3.2. A lot more is known about the Roman period in the area than is known about earlier periods. Dere Street and the Devil's Causeway run to the west of the study area while the study site itself sits directly on the line of Hadrian's Wall. Remains of the Wall include the curtain wall itself, turrets, milecastles and forts. The fort at Halton Chesters, to the west of the study area, would have been large enough to provide for a market and civilian settlement. The fort housed a bathhouse and an aqueduct. Milecastle 18 of Hadrian's Wall sits directly to the southwest of the study area and is now visible in the form of a flat platform. The milecastle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and is protected by law. There are also the remains of a temporary Roman camp, built by the army, lying on Carr's Fell to the south of Wall Houses

3.3. During the Medieval period, people lived in villages and hamlets at Whittington, Little Grottington, Bingfield, Clarewood and Halton. Remains of these settlements can be seen in the form of earthworks along with field systems.

3.4. Farming and industry developed in the 18th and 19th centuries including the building of lime kilns. A windmill and a watermill were constructed at Great Whittington.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Two trenches were dug at either side of the road in order to locate two water pipes, one of which was believed to have burst. The southern trench measured roughly 2m x 1.4m with a depth of 0.7m and successfully located two 25mm plastic water pipes. Sounding equipment confirmed that one of the pipes had burst. The northern trench, measuring 3.2m x 1.4m and with a depth of 0.55m, also located the two pipes, one of

which had been partially replaced with a copper pipe. It was determined that this was the pipe that had burst. The replacement pipe was pulled through an existing duct, thus removing the need for a trench to be dug across the road. Both trenches were dug through topsoil with turf (100) that had an approximate depth of 0.1m. Below this, in the southern trench, was a deposit of yellow sandstone rubble within a dark brown sandy silt deposit (101). Below the topsoil and turf (100) in the northern trench, a brown sandy silt deposit (101) was encountered containing concrete and medium sized sandstone fragments.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1. Pulling the replacement pipe through the existing duct removed the need for a trench to be dug across the road at East Wallhouses. The trenches that were excavated at either side of the road were both dug through deposits that had been laid when the pipes were originally installed. As a result, there were no archaeological finds, features or buried land surfaces encountered during the watching brief.

6. PUBLICITY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND COPYRIGHT

6.1. Any publicity will be handled by the client.

6.2. Archaeological Research Services Ltd will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988).

7. STATEMENT OF INDEMNITY

7.1 All statements and opinions contained within this report arising from the works undertaken are offered in good faith and compiled according to professional standards. No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of the report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

8.1. Archaeological Research Services Ltd would like to thank all those involved in this project, in particular Ben Ralston of Northumbrian Water and Rob Young of English Heritage.

9. REFERENCES

Websites

British Geological Survey, 2012
Keys to the Past

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/geoindex/index.htm>
<http://www.keystothepast.info/>

Figure 2:

A plan of the site showing the locations of the two trenches at either side of the road

Key:



Trenches



N



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This Drawing
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20m

0



Figure 3: The southern trench showing topsoil with turf (100) and yellow sandstone rubble (101), looking west. Scale = 1m



Figure 4: The northern trench, looking south. Scale = 1m

East Wallhouses, Northumberland

Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Watching Brief



Archaeological Research
Services Ltd

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This scheme of works relates to groundworks associated with repairs to a water pipe on the B6318 near East Wallhouses, Northumberland (Figure 1). The work is to be carried out by Northumbrian Water. The site sits on the line of Hadrian's Wall, which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and a World Heritage Site. Scheduled Monument Consent has been granted for a trench to be dug across the road in order for the required repairs to be carried out. There is the potential for Hadrian's Wall, or features associated with the Wall, to be encountered during the groundworks.
- 1.2. This document is a written scheme of investigation (WSI) confirming the nature of the archaeological works to be undertaken during a watching brief by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (ARS Ltd) at East Wallhouses in accordance with the guidance from Mike Collins at English Heritage.

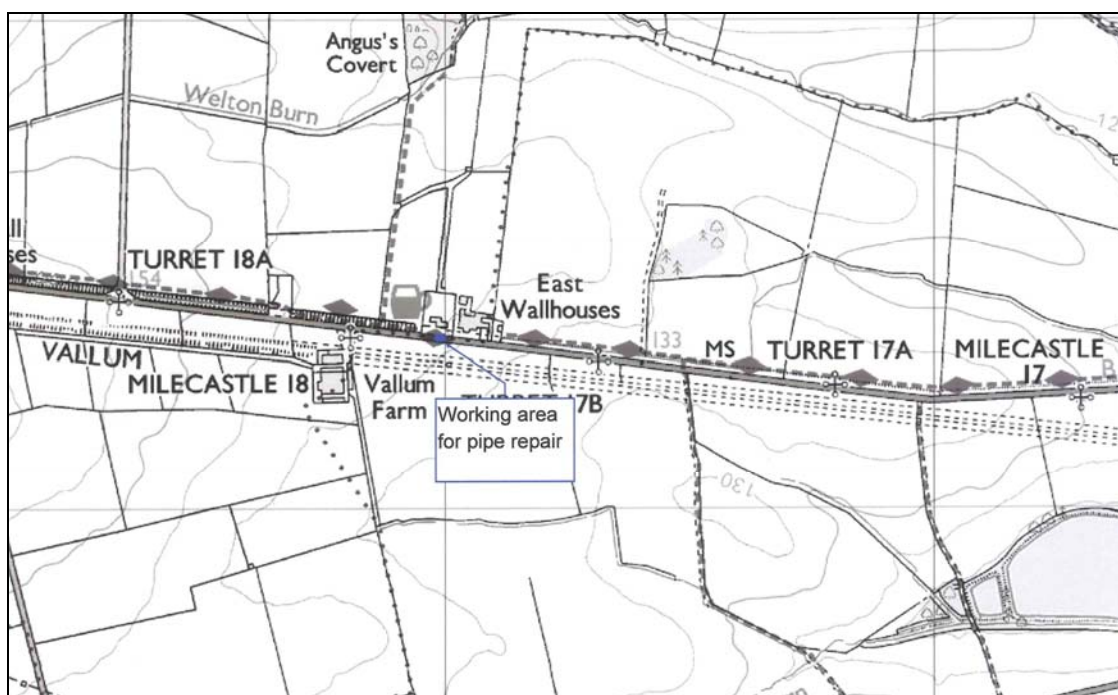


Figure 1: Site location.

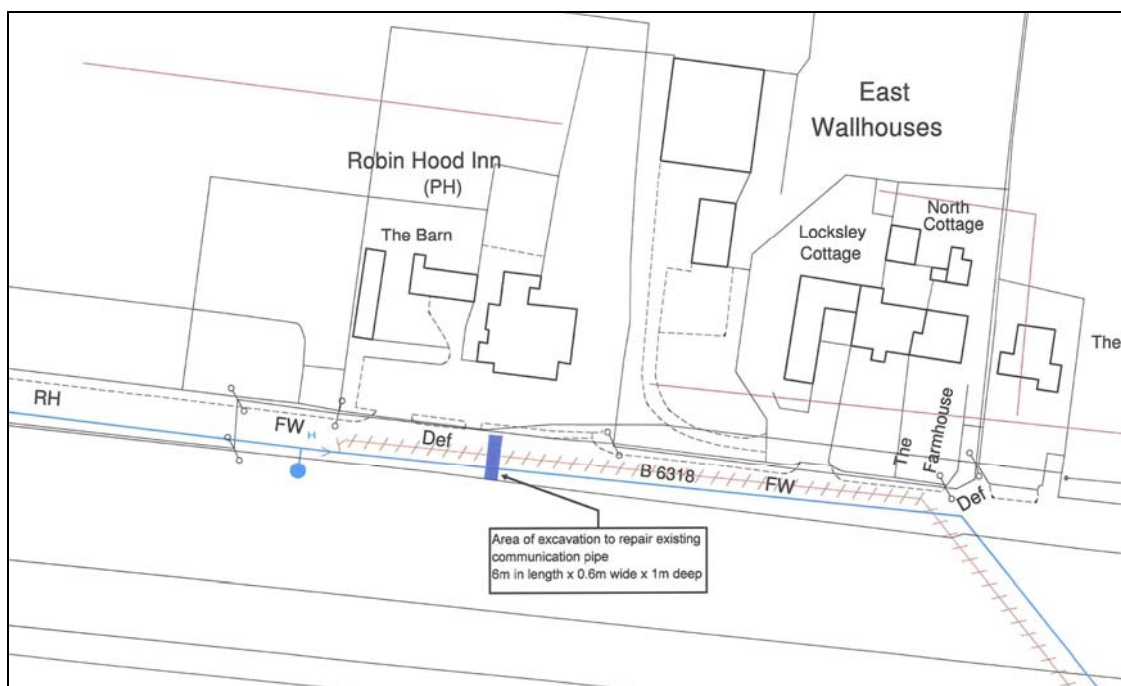


Figure 2: Trench location plan

2. Site Specific Requirements

2.1. The client for this work is Mr. Ben Ralston of Northumbrian Water. The nature and extent of the works has been confirmed with the client. This involves the excavation of a trench measuring 6m long, 0.6 m wide and 1m deep across the road (Figure 2). The watching brief will cover the following groundworks for the development:

- Groundworks associated with excavation in order to repair a water pipe
- 2.2 The work to be undertaken is an archaeological watching brief which aims to ensure that important remains are adequately dealt with by preservation by record prior to destruction.
- 2.3 Should archaeology be discovered a course of action will be discussed with Mike Collins of English Heritage and a representative of the developer, and be approved prior to further work being undertaken on the site. An assessment will be made of the importance of the remains and any provision for their recording or preservation *in situ* as appropriate.

3. Project Management and Standards

- 3.1. The project will be carried out in compliance with the codes of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) (2008) and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Excavations (1995).
- 3.2. All staff employed on the project will be suitably qualified and experienced for their respective project roles and have practical experience of archaeological excavation and recording. All staff will be made aware of the archaeological importance of the area surrounding the site and will be fully briefed on the work required by this specification. Each member of staff will be fully

conversant with the aims and methodologies and will be given a copy of this written scheme of investigation to read. All members of staff employed by Archaeological Research Services Ltd are fully qualified and experienced archaeologists, this will ensure that appropriate decisions regarding environmental and dating sampling will be made in the field.

- 3.3. All staff will familiarise themselves with the archaeological background of the site, and the results of any previous work in the area, prior to the start of work on site. All staff will be aware of the work required under the specification, and will understand the project aims and methodologies. Liaison will be undertaken with the client and building recording contractor to ensure that both schemes of work form a coherent whole in respect of the site investigation.

4. Methods

- 4.1. Unstratified modern material will be removed by a machine using a toothless ditching bucket, under continuous archaeological supervision. The topsoil or recent overburden will be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits. No machinery will further disturb areas that have been stripped, until they have been checked by the representative of Archaeological Research Services Ltd.
- 4.2. All archaeological features and deposits will be recorded on a plan of the site.
- 4.3. All features exposed will be excavated by hand. Sampling will typically comprise 50% of every discrete feature; 25% of linear/curvilinear features with non-uniform fill and 10% of linear features with a uniform fill.
- 4.4. In the event of human burials being discovered, they will be left *in-situ* and, if removal is deemed necessary, this will be undertaken in accordance with the relevant Ministry of Justice regulations. If removal is essential, work will comply with relevant Home Office regulations. If burials are removed they will be lifted in their entirety and fully recorded.
- 4.5. Appropriate procedures under the relevant legislation will be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasures Act 1996.
- 4.6. Deposits that have the potential for providing environmental or dating evidence will be assessed while the work is in progress. An environmental sampling strategy has been agreed with the English Heritage Scientific advisor for North- East England, Jacqui Huntley. The sampling strategy comprises the following:
 - All intact archaeological contexts will be sampled. Small pit features will be 100% sampled while bulk samples of 40 litres will be taken from larger feature contexts, such as linear ditch fills.
 - Any samples recovered will be floated on site in graduated sieves with the smallest being 500µm and the flots and residues collected. Samples will be analysed by Archaeological Research Services Ltd and an assessment report prepared in accordance with MORPHE (Management Of Research Projects in the Historic Environment) 2006.
- 4.7. During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts and environmental samples will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this will include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions and immediate selection for conservation of valuable material).

- 4.8. In the event that hearths, kilns, ovens or areas of in-situ burning (of whatever period, date or function) are identified during the watching brief, provision will be made to collect at least one archaeo-magnetic date to be calculated from each individual hearth surface (or in the case of domestic dwelling sites a minimum of one per building identified). Samples will be collected from the site and processed by a suitably trained specialist for dating purposes. In the event that such deposits or structures are identified, the Conservation Team will be contacted to discuss the appropriate response. This specific aspect of the sampling strategy will also be discussed in advance with English Heritage.

5. Recording

- 5.1 The site will be accurately tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:2500 or 1:1250 map of the area.
- 5.2 A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic as appropriate) will be made for all work, using pro-forma record sheets and text descriptions appropriate to the work. Accurate scale plans and section drawings will be drawn at 1:50, 1:20 and 1:10 scales as appropriate.
- 5.3 The stratigraphy of the trenches will be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified.
- 5.4 All archaeological deposits and features will be recorded with above ordnance datum (AOD) levels.
- 5.5 A photographic record of all contexts will be taken in colour transparency and black and white print and will include a clearly visible, graduated metric scale. A register of all photographs will be kept.
- 5.6 Where stratified deposits are encountered, a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled.

6. Access

- 6.1 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will give the County Archaeologist and the English Heritage Inspector for Hadrian's Wall 10 working days (or less if so agreed) notice of the commencement of fieldwork.
- 6.2 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will afford access to the County Archaeologist or their representative and the English Heritage Inspector for Hadrian's Wall at all times, for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological watching brief.
- 6.3 Archaeological Research Services Ltd will maintain regular communication with the County Archaeologist and the English Heritage Inspector for Hadrian's Wall to ensure that the project aims and objectives are met.

7. Finds Processing and Storage

- 7.1. All finds processing, conservation work and storage of finds will be carried out in compliance with the IFA guidelines for Finds Work (2001) and those set out by UKIC (1990).

- 7.2 Artefact collection and discard policies will be appropriate for the defined purpose.
- 7.3 Bulk finds which are not discarded will be washed and, with the exception of animal bone, marked. Marking and labelling will be indelible and irremovable by abrasion. Bulk finds will be appropriately bagged, boxed and recorded. This process will be carried out no later than two months after the end of the excavation.
- 7.4 All small finds will be recorded as individual items and appropriately packaged (e.g. lithics in self-sealing plastic bags and ceramic in acid-free tissue paper). Vulnerable objects will be specially packaged and textile, painted glass and coins stored in appropriate specialist systems. This process will be carried out within two days of the small find being excavated. Prehistoric pottery will not be cleaned or be subject to any abrasion or loss of adhering residues.
- 7.5 During and after the excavation all objects will be stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (including controlled storage, correct packaging, and regular monitoring, immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material). All storage will have appropriate security provision.
- 7.6 The deposition and disposal of artefacts will be agreed with the legal owner and the Museum of Antiquities prior to the work taking place. All finds except treasure trove are the property of the landowner.
- 7.7 All retained artefacts and ecofacts will be cleaned and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the recipient museum.

8. Site archive

- 8.1 The archive will be compiled in an orderly fashion to the standards and format set out in MORPHE (2006, 31, paragraph 2.5.3) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990). The archive will be deposited with the Great North Museum within 6 months of the fieldwork once all post-excavation work is completed and the final report produced.

9. Report

- 9.1 One copy of the report will be submitted to the client. Three additional copies will be produced, one for the Northumberland HER, one for the Northumberland archives, and a final copy for English Heritage. These will be produced within fourteen working days of the completion of the fieldwork. Each report will be bound with each page and paragraph numbered and will include as a minimum the following:
 - Executive summary
 - A site location plan to at least 1:10,000 scale with 10 figure central grid reference
 - Contractor's details including date work carried out
 - Nature and extent of the proposed development, including developer/client details

- Description of the site location and geology
- Trench plans to a suitable scale and tied into the national grid so that features can be correctly orientated
- Discussion of the results of field work
- Context & feature descriptions
- Features, number and class of artefacts, spot dating & scientific dating of significant finds presented in tabular format
- Plans and section drawings of the features drawn at a suitable scale
- Additional plans/map extracts to display noted and recorded archaeological features as appropriate
- Recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work including publication
- Bibliography

10. OASIS

10.1 ARS Ltd will complete an on-line OASIS form for this watching brief. ARS Ltd is a registered contractor on the OASIS system and has uploaded archaeological reports before.

11. Dissemination/Publication

11.1 A short article will be prepared for a local journal if appropriate.

12. References

Institute of Field Archaeologists. 1995. *Standard and Guidance for archaeological excavation.*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2000. *Code of Conduct.*

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008. *Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials.*

UKIC (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation). 1990. *Guidelines for the Preparation of Archives for Long-Term Storage.*