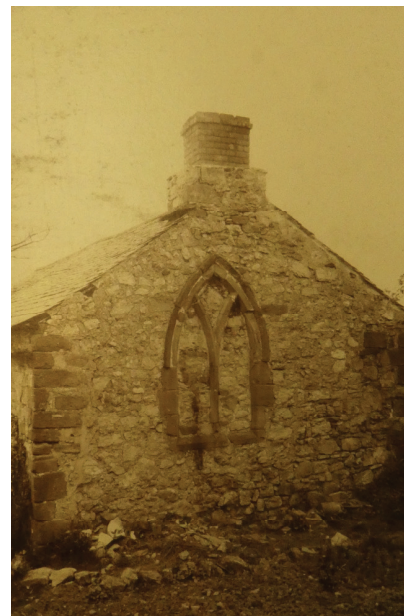# St Helen's, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria

Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment

Client: Mark Wilding

NGR: 321870 474563

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March 2019

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ARCHAEOLOGY

# Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment Cover Sheet

| The Site | |
|---|---|
| Site Name | St Helen's, Dalton-in-Furness |
| County | Cumbria |
| Study area examined | 250m around site |
| NGR | 321870 474563 |

| Client | |
|---|---|
| Client Name | Mark Wilding |

| Planning | |
|---|---|
| Pre-planning? | Yes |
| Planning Application No. | - |
| Development Proposal | Housing development |
| Condition number | N/A |
| Local Planning Authority | Barrow Borough Council |
| Planning Archaeologist | Jeremy Parsons, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service |

| Archiving | |
|---|---|
| Relevant Record Office(s)/Archive Centre(s) | Barrow-in-Furness |
| Relevant HER | Cumbria |

| Staffing | |
|---|---|
| Desk-based assessment | Dan Elsworth |
| Site visit | Dan Elsworth |
| Report writing | Dan Elsworth |
| Report editing | Jo Dawson |
| Illustrations | Tom Mace |
| Date site visit carried out | 1st February 2019 |

# Contents

Client: Mark Wilding

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# Summary

Prior to the submission of a planning application for a proposed residential development on land at St Helen's, Dalton-in-Furness, Cumbria, Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an archaeological desk-based assessment. This examines the known and unknown archaeological resource of the surrounding area and was carried out through the examination of both primary and secondary sources, including the Cumbria Historic Environment Record. A site visit was also carried out in order to make a brief assessment of the site.

The site comprises a single field dominated by the ruinous remains of St Helen's Chapel, which is thought to be of medieval origin. The wider area contains archaeological remains dating from the end of the last Ice Age onwards, although within the more immediate area these are dominated by post-medieval industrial sites, although the line of a possible Roman road runs a short distance to the north. St Helen's is recorded, as St Elen's, from at least 1537, although it is noteworthy that no early references specifically mention a chapel. Early versions of the name of nearby Ellisacales undoubtedly also derive to St Helens, demonstrating that a site of this name existed from before the early 13th century. The chapel was evidently being used as a dwelling by the early 19th century and the census returns describe it as a farm.

The mapping evidence shows that the site was known as St Helens from at least the late 18th century, with a building marked on the site of the chapel from at least 1806. Later maps show that the site increased in size with a number of additional outbuildings during the 19th century, before the construction of a new St Helen's Farm immediately to the east, at which time the chapel stopped being used as a dwelling and began to fall into ruin. By the early 20th century it was in a poor condition and was suffering from collapse. The loss of the decorative east window over the winter of 1946/7 led members of the *Barrow Naturalists' Field Club* to remove the surviving low north window in the following spring before it too was lost.

An assessment of the significance and potential of the site with regard both known and unknown archaeological remains suggests that while the most significant feature is the chapel there is some potential for earlier remains to be present. There are considerable issues with the understanding of the chapel and it is entirely possible that it is not medieval in original at all and is in fact a later folly. Only further archaeological investigation of the site would elucidate this and it is recommended that if the chapel were to be incorporated into proposed development it be subject to further archaeological recording and investigation.

# Acknowledgements

# 1.    Introduction

## 1.1    Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1    The circumstances of the project are set out in the tables on the inside cover of this report.

## 1.2    Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1    The site is located towards the centre of the south-west end of the Furness Peninsula on the western outskirts of Dalton-in-Furness in southern Cumbria, at approximately 45m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 2011; Figure 1). This area, on the north side of Morecambe Bay, is on a sandy coastal plain, consisting of gently undulating pastureland, before the ground rises as it meets the Furness Fells to the north (Countryside Commission 1998, 65).

1.2.2    The solid geology of the area primarily consists of Carboniferous limestone, but is on the edge of a large area of red Sherwood sandstone (Moseley 1978, plate 1). This is overlain by thick deposits of glacially derived boulder clay (Countryside Character 1998, 65).

Key: 05 ● Gazetteer site — Study area (250m radius)
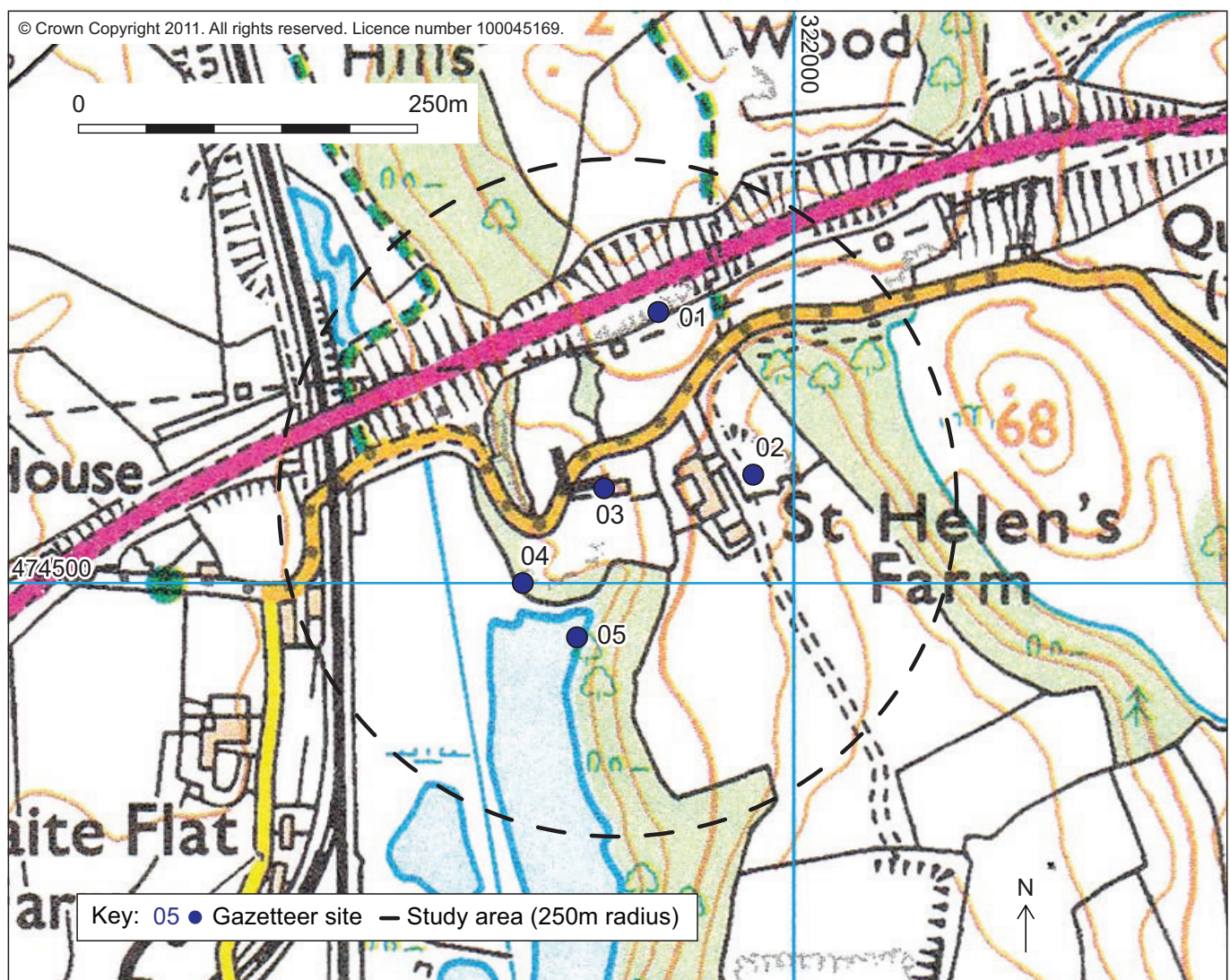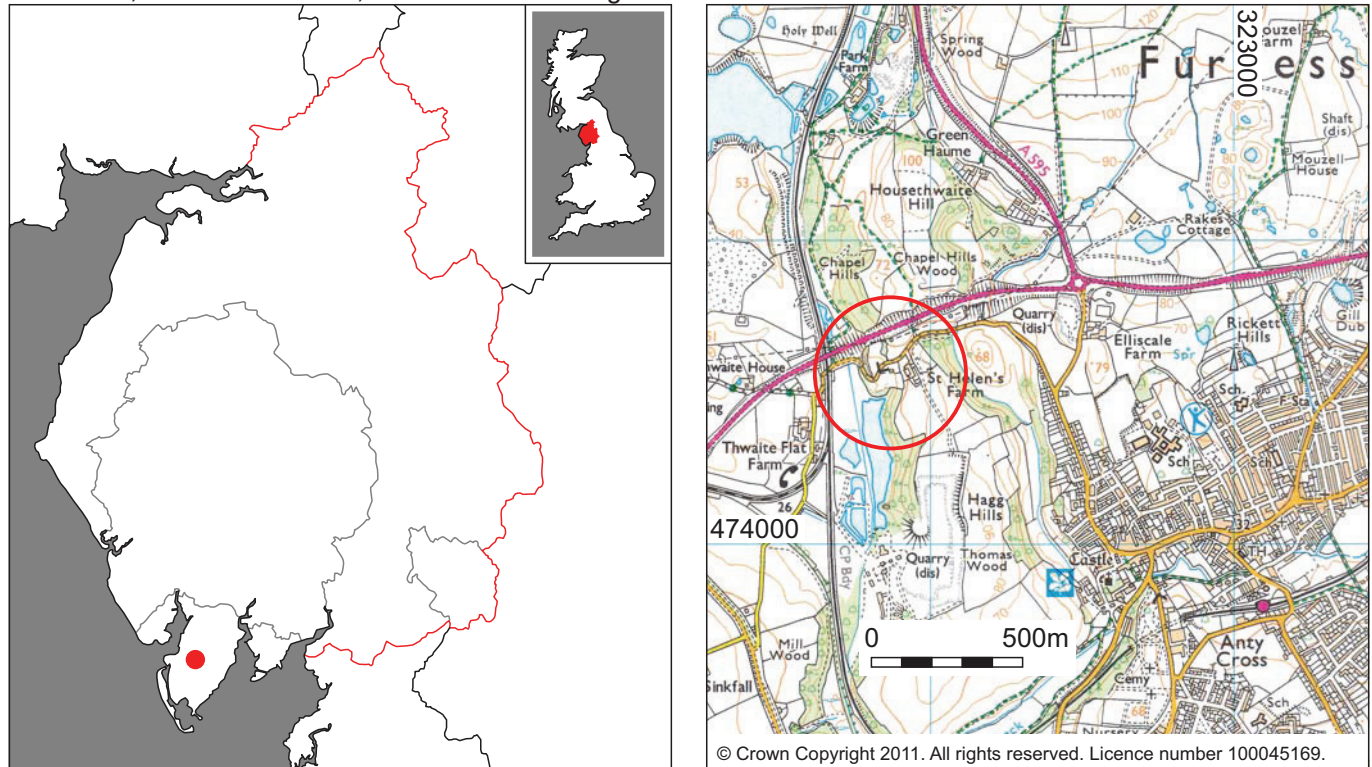
Client: Mark Wilding

**Figure 1: Site location and gazetteer site plan**

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# 1. Methodology

## 2.1 Desk-Based Assessment

2.1.1 A desk-based assessment was carried out in accordance with the guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014a). This principally comprised an examination of early maps of the site and published secondary sources, but also consultation with the Historic Environment Record (HER). A number of sources of information were used during the compilation of the desk-based assessment:

- **Record Office/Archive Centre**: the majority of original and secondary sources relating to the site are deposited in the relevant Record Office(s) or Archive Centre(s), as specified in the cover sheet of this report. Of principal importance are early maps of the site. These were examined in order to establish the development of the site, date of any structures present within it, and details of land use, in order to set the site in its historical, archaeological, and regional context. In addition, any details of the site's owners and occupiers were acquired where available;

- **HER**: this is the primary source of information recording previously known archaeological discoveries. For each site a grid reference, description, and related sources were obtained for inclusion in the gazetteer (see *Appendix 2*). In addition details of previous archaeological work carried out within the study area was also obtained from the HER;

- **Online Resources**: where available relevant sources were also consulted online;

- **Greenlane Archaeology**: Greenlane Archaeology's office library includes maps, local histories, and unpublished primary and secondary sources. These were consulted where relevant, in order to provide information about the history and archaeology of the site and the general area.

## 2.2 Site Visit

2.2.1 A brief site visit, equivalent to an English Heritage Level 1 survey (English Heritage 2007), was carried out covering the proposed development area and other areas that might be affected. Particular attention was paid to the identification of features of historical or archaeological interest, but other relevant features were recorded such as later aspects of the site that may have impacted on the earlier remains or could constrain further investigation. Colour digital photographs showing the general arrangement of the site and any features of interest were taken.

## 2.3 Archive

2.3.1 The archive of the project will be deposited with the relevant Record Office or Archive Centre, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report, together with a copy of the report. The archive has been compiled according to the standards and guidelines of the CIfA guidelines (CIfA 2014b). In addition details will be submitted to the Online AccesS to the Index of archaeological investigationS (OASIS) scheme. This is an internet-based project intended to improve the flow of information between contractors, local authority heritage managers and the general public. A copy of the report will be provided to the client and to the relevant Historic Environment Record, as detailed on the cover sheet of this report.

# 3.　Results

## 3.1　Introduction

3.1.1　A total of five sites of archaeological interest were identified within the study area during the desk-based assessment (Figure 1; summarised in Table 1 below) ranging from the Medieval to the Post-medieval period in date. Sites included in the gazetteer that relate to periods of the study area's history are individually mentioned in the site history (see *Section 4* below).

| Site No. | Type | Period |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Ridge and furrow and enclosure | Medieval |
| 2 | Quarry | Post-medieval |
| 3 | Chapel | Medieval |
| 4 | Pillbox | Post-medieval |
| 5 | Ridge and furrow | Post-medieval |

**Table 1: Summary of the gazetteer sites identified within the study area**

## 3.2　Desk-Based Assessment

3.2.1　The results of the desk-based assessment have been used to produce two main elements. Firstly all available maps of the area were compiled into a map regression, demonstrating how the site physically developed. The second purpose of the desk-based assessment is to produce a background history of the site. This is intended to cover all periods, in part to provide information that can be used to assess the potential of the site, but more importantly to present the documented details of any sites that are known.

3.2.2　Once this information has been compiled the significance of those sites of archaeological interest within the study area, their potential, and the degree to which they are likely to be affected is considered and based on this possible mitigation work is then suggested.

## 3.3　Map and Image Regression

3.3.1　***Estate plans, c1783 and 1806***: two early plans of estates held by the Cavendish family in Furness exist in the archives at Chatsworth House (Chatsworth House 4130, 1806; 4132, *c*1783). These cannot be reproduced for copyright reasons but while the earlier of the two (*c*1783) only labels the land 'St Helens Brow' and shows no structures, the later one (1806), which also has the same label on the land, shows a single rectangular building much like that depicted on the later Tithe map, which is clearly the chapel (**Site 03**).

3.3.2　***Tithe map, 1842***: this is the earliest detailed map of the area and as the site is close to the boundary of two townships it is actually shown on two different maps; those for Hawcoat and Ireleth (CAC(B) BPR 1/I/3/1/2 1842a; CAC(B) BPR 1/I/3/1/2 1842b). Of these the Ireleth map only shows a single rectangular building corresponding with the chapel (**Site 03**), which is labelled 'St Helens' (Plate 1), while the Hawcoat map shows this and a further more irregular structure a short distance to the south-west (Plate 2). Neither map has any field numbers for this area so no additional information can be gleaned from the relevant apportionment (CAC(B) BPR 1/I/3/1/1 1840).
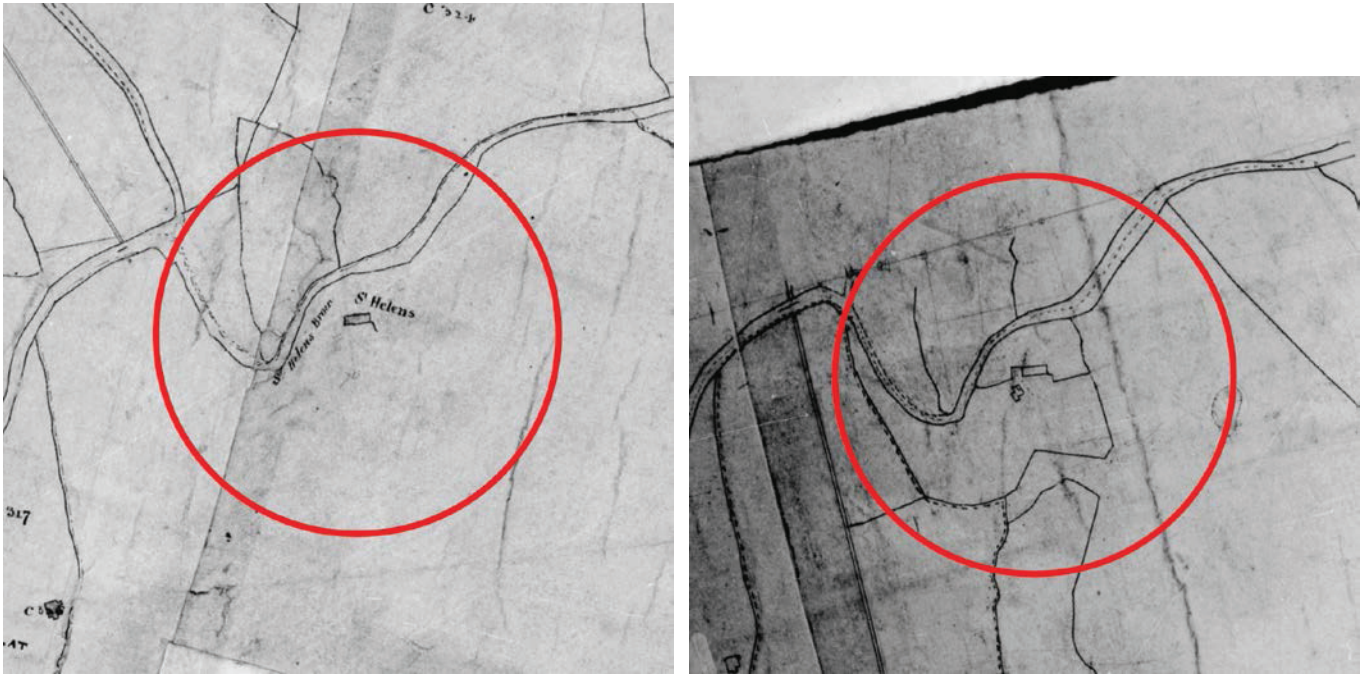
**Plate 1 (left): Extract from the Ireleth tithe map of 1842 showing the site of St Helen's chapel**

**Plate 2 (right): Extract from the Hawcoat tithe map of 1842 showing the site of St Helen's chapel and the nearby structure**

3.3.3   *Ordnance Survey, 1850*: this is the earliest Ordnance Survey map at a useful scale, and it clearly shows that the site contained a single larger rectangular structure, as per the earlier maps, but also that some smaller structure or structures were present to the south-west. The chapel (**Site 03**) is labelled 'St Helen's Chapel' in Gothic script, demonstrating that it was recognised as an antiquity by at least this time (Plate 3).

3.3.4   *Ordnance Survey, 1891*: this is the second edition Ordnance Survey map and it demonstrates that by this time the site had essentially changed very little but it provides considerably more detail (Plate 4). The main building is clearly shown to have two internal subdivisions, although it is unclear how reliable this information is, and there are outshuts on its south side. The detached block to the south-west clearly consists of a number of interconnected elements. The chapel (**Site 03**) is again labelled 'St Helens formerly St Helen's Chapel', with only the latter part in Gothic script.
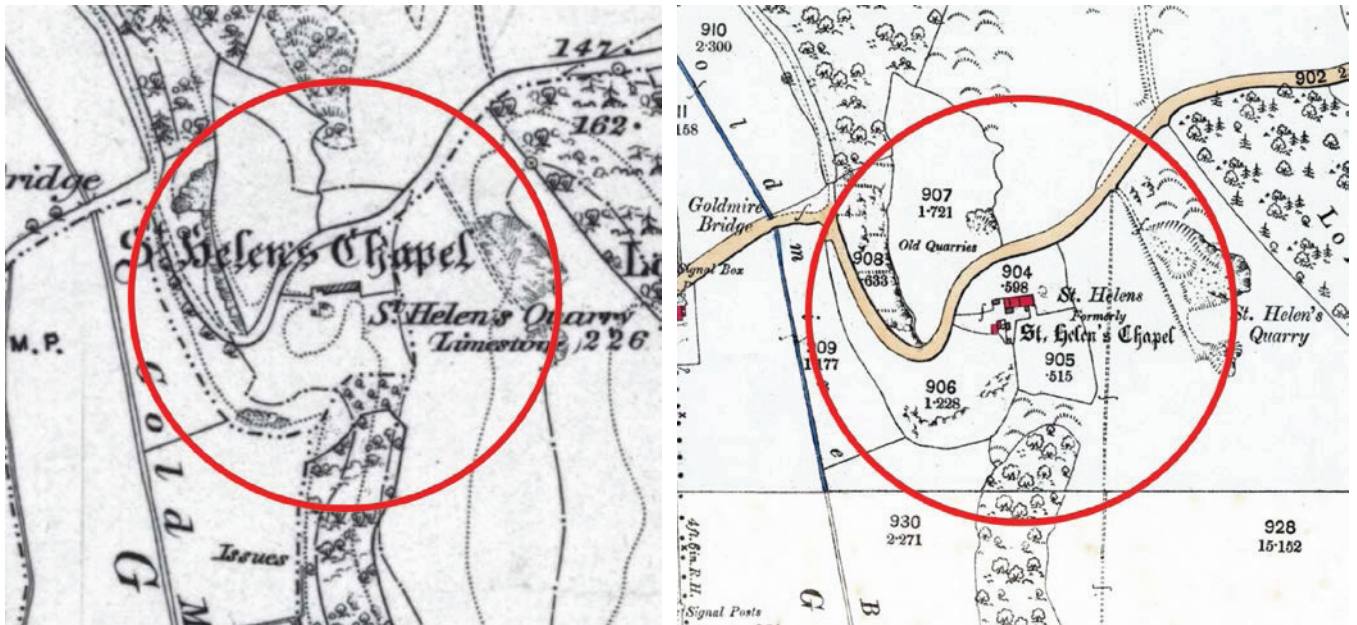
**Plate 3 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1851**

**Plate 4 (right): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1891**

3.3.5   *Late 19th century photograph*: a photograph of the chapel (**Site 03**) taken in the late 19th century exists (CAC(B) Z/29151/53 early 20th century) (Plate 5). Although catalogued as 'early 20th century' it must be older as the same image was reproduced in the article published in 1900 reporting on archaeological investigations nearby carried out in 1879 (Gaythorpe 1900). Based on the various descriptions of the building this photograph must be of the east end (see *Section 4.6*). What is evident is the single large window with moulded tracery, which is blocked. This presumably had had a fireplace added behind it as the wall is finished with a stone chimney stack, although this has been extended with a brick section. The quoins are clearly visible at each corner although it is apparent that on the left (south) side at least one of these is reused and finished with moulded decoration.
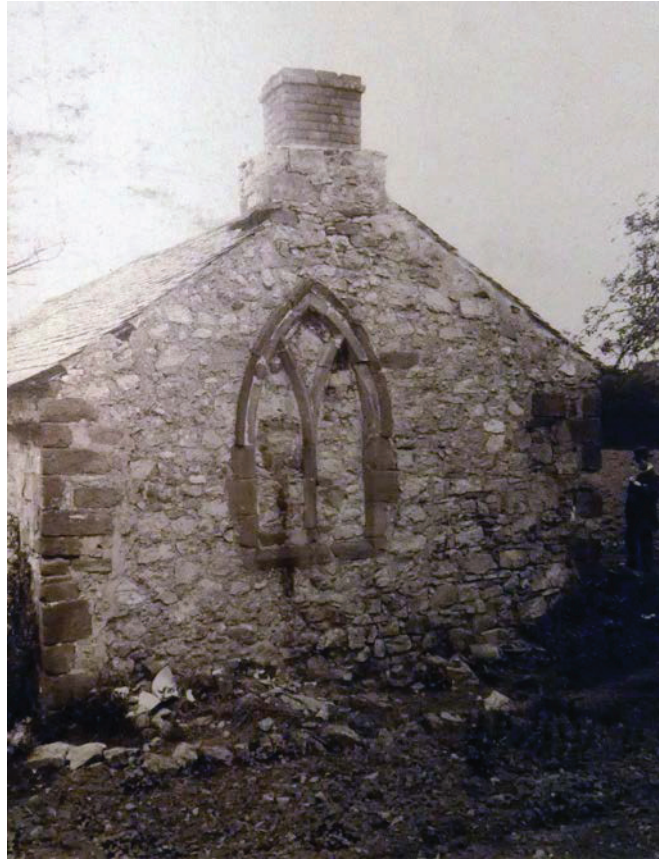
**Plate 5: Late 19th century photograph of St Helen's Chapel**

3.3.6   *Ordnance Survey, 1913*: this shows that there has been considerable change at the site in the preceding 20 years; the chapel has been reduced to a single rectangular block again with no outshuts or internal divisions shown, the detached building has disappeared, but the chapel (**Site 03**) is still labelled 'St Helens formerly St Helen's Chapel' (Plate 6). Most significant is the appearance of a new 'St Helen's Farm' immediately to the east, alongside an adjoining quarry. The rating valuation of 1910, which was added to a version of this map, states only that it is part of a plot occupied by Matthew Geldert, owned by Richard Cavendish of Holker Hall, named just 'Haggs', and described as 'land' (CAC(B) BT/IR 1/16 1910).

3.3.7   *Ordnance Survey, 1919*: this map at a smaller scale shows essentially the same detail as the previous one (Plate 7).

**Plate 6 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1913**

**Plate 7 (right): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1919**

3.3.8 ***Ordnance Survey, 1927***: this map shows essentially the same information as the previous one (Plate 8).



**Plate 8: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1927**

3.3.9 ***Photographs and drawings from 1946-1947***: a series of photographs of the chapel (**Site 03**) were taken as it was partially demolished in March and April 1947 and the windows removed for storage elsewhere. At the same time drawings were made of the building and the windows, although some were made the previous year; these are now kept in two collections (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957; CAC(B) BDX 64/72/1 1946; CAC(B) BDX 64/72/2 1947). These show in some detail the most significant elements of the building as it was at that time.
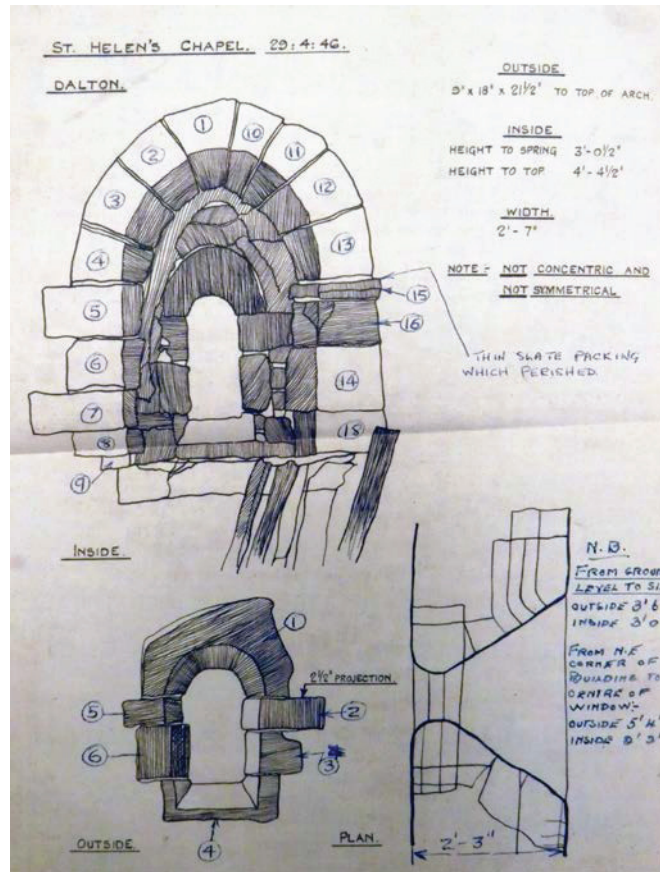
**Plate 9: Drawing of the windows at St Helen's Chapel prior to removal, 1946 (CAC(B) BAHM/2/53 1944-1957**
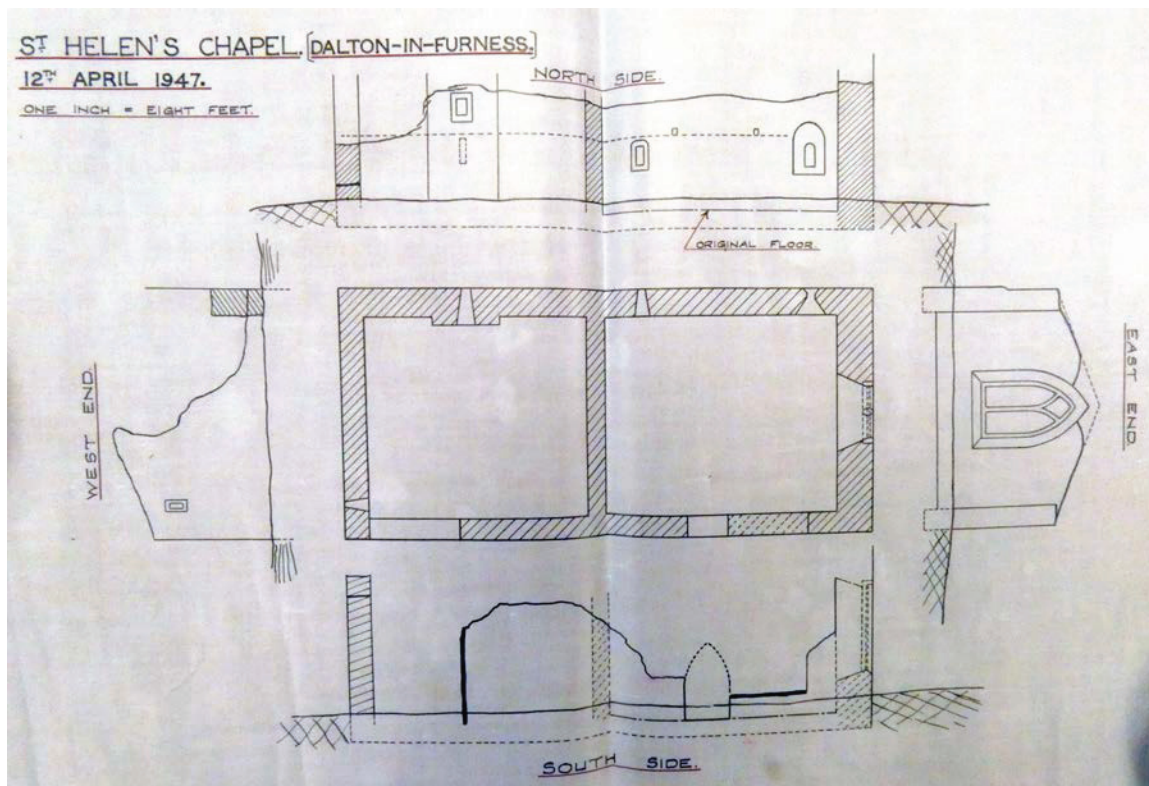


**Plate 10: Plan and elevations of St Helen's Chapel prior to removal of the windows, 1947 (CAC(B) BDX 64/72/2 1947)**

**Plate 11: The 'low north window' from the exterior prior to removal (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957)**





**Plate 12 (left): The 'low north window' from the interior prior to removal (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957)**

**Plate 13 (right): The 'low north window' during removal (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957)**

**Plate 14: General view of the chapel from the south-west during or immediately after the removal of the windows (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957)**

## 3.4    Lidar and Aerial Photography

3.4.1    *Lidar*: the tree cover within the study area limits the amount of information this shows (Plate 15; Houseprices.io 2018). However, the remains of the chapel (**Site 03**) are visible as an obvious mound.



**Plate 15: Lidar imagery of the site**

3.4.2    *Aerial Photographs*: a range of aerial photographs were consulted at the HER but other than showing sites that were otherwise recorded these did not provide any additionally useful information.

## 3.5     Site Visit

3.5.1     *Introduction*: the site visit was carried out specifically to examine the remains of the chapel at St Helens (**Site 03**) in order to assess its current condition.

3.5.2     *Site Arrangement and Character*: the chapel is located in an irregular plot ground bounded by the road (St Helen's Brow) to the north and by higher ground to the south and east and a steep drop to the west. The chapel building comprises a ruinous structure orientated approximately east/west, which is now heavily overgrown and with extant sections of wall only really visible along parts of the north, east, and south sides. The internal area is largely choked with rubble and vegetation and was only really accessible from the west end. The eastern jamb of the wide doorway visible on the west side of the south elevation in the early photographs and plans is still evident, but no other apertures are now discernible.



**Plate 16 (left): View of the eastern end of the chapel**

**Plate 17 (right): View of the western end of the chapel**



**Plate 18 (left): Detail of the door jamb in the south elevation of the chapel**

**Plate 19 (right): The standing remains of the east end of the south elevation of the chapel**

3.5.3  *Constraints*: there were no obvious constraints to any further archaeological work on the site. However, any more detailed investigation into the remains of the chapel would be difficult in its present condition and would require careful removal of vegetation in order to allow better access.

# 4. Site History

## 4.1 Background History

4.1.1   The background history to the site helps our understanding of the development and use of the site, where known, making use of the map evidence presented above where relevant. The background to the site is intended to place the results of the project in its local context and in order to do so a brief discussion of the earlier history of its wider environs is also necessary.

## 4.2 Prehistoric Period (*c*11,000 BC – 1st century AD)

4.2.1   While there is some limited evidence for activity in the county in the period immediately following the last Ice Age, this is typically found in the southernmost part on the north side of Morecambe Bay. Excavations of a small number of cave sites have found the remains of animal species common at the time but now extinct in this country and artefacts of Late Upper Palaeolithic type (Young 2002). Again, the county was also clearly inhabited during the following period, the Mesolithic (*c*8,000 – 4,000 BC), as large numbers of artefacts of this date have been discovered during field walking and eroding from sand dunes along the coast, but these are typically concentrated in the west coast area and on the uplands around the Eden Valley (Cherry and Cherry 2002). Slightly closer to the site, however, large number of finds of this date and later have been found during field walking (see Evans 2008). These discoveries demonstrate that further remains of similar date are likely to exist in the local area, although in general such finds seem typically to be found in river valleys, lakesides, and coastal areas (Middleton *et al* 1995, 202; Hodgkinson *et al* 2000, 151-152).

4.2.2   In the following period, the Neolithic (*c*4,000 – 2,500 BC), large scale monuments such as burial mounds and stone circles begin to appear in the region and one of the most recognisable tool types of this period, the polished stone axe, is found in large numbers across the county, having been manufactured at Langdale to the north of the site (Hodgson and Brennand 2006, 45). During the Bronze Age (*c*2,500 – 600 BC) monuments, particularly those thought to be ceremonial in nature, become more common still, and it is likely that settlement sites thought to belong to the Iron Age have their origins in this period. It is very likely that the enclosure recorded at Stone Close, near Stainton, has its origins in the Neolithic or Bronze Age (Dobson 1912). Similar sites are also recorded in the local area, including an enclosure on Hoad hill near Ulverston (Elsworth 2014), and another at Skelmore Heads near Urswick (Powell 1963).

4.2.3   Sites that can be specifically dated to the Iron Age (*c*600 BC – 1st century AD) are very rare; the enclosures at Ulverston and Urswick may represent hillforts, a typical site of this period, but they have not been dated (Elsworth 2014). Burials that belong to the Iron Age are extremely rare in the county as a whole, a radiocarbon dated example at Levens being perhaps the only certain example (OA North 2004). There is, in general, likely to have been a considerable overlap between the end of the Iron Age and the beginning of the Romano-British period; it is evident that in this part of the country, initially at least, the Roman invasion had a minimal impact on the native population in rural areas (Philpott 2006, 73-74).

## 4.3 Romano-British to Early Medieval Period (1st century AD – 11th century AD)

4.3.1   Late 18th and 19th century antiquarians considered a Roman military presence in the Furness area beyond question, but by the 20th century there was a complete reversal of opinion (summarised in Elsworth 2007, 31-37). Re-examination of the evidence however suggests a strong Roman influence or "background" presence in the peninsula during the Roman period, which doubtless would have been attractive for its rich iron reserves (Shotter 1995, 74; Elsworth 2007, 37, 41-43). There is little confirmed Roman activity in the immediate area around the site, with the exception of stray finds, although a section of well-built road of possible Roman origin is recorded just outside of the north edge of the study area, and was subject to limited excavation in the 1940s (Close in West 1805, 359; Brady 1971). The early medieval period is not well represented in the area in terms of physical remains, which is a common situation throughout the county. The local area as a whole has a complex mixture of place-names of Celtic British, Anglian (Old English), and Norse type suggesting that the early medieval period

was a time of dynamic and rapid population change (Edmonds 2013). However, physical evidence for settlement of this date is very limited. Local place-names such as Holbeck and Yarlside denote a Norse influence but further afield names such as Roose and Leece suggest the late survival of British people (Ekwall 1922; Coates and Breeze 2000, 317) while across the county the presence of place-names containing the element *eccles* is demonstrative of a surviving post-Roman church structure in some form (Elsworth 2011). The nearest settlement, Dalton, is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 and so clearly existed before that date (Ekwall 1922, 201); its name indicates that it was already regarded as a town by that time, the 'dale' referred to probably that running south towards Furness Abbey.

## 4.4    Medieval Period

4.4.1    The site is on the western outskirts of Dalton-in-Furness, a town of at least medieval origins. It is recorded in the Domesday survey of 1086 and in numerous subsequent medieval documents (Ekwall 1922, 201). Dalton was one of the larger towns in Furness in the medieval period in part through its association with Furness Abbey – the secular court of Furness Abbey was held in Dalton Castle (Walton 1984, 15). Dalton also held a market charter from at least 1239 and was connected to local iron mining from at least the 13th century (Winchester 2016, 117). The most significant aspect of the local area's medieval history was the development of Furness Abbey, which was founded by Stephen, Count of Boulogne and Mortain, later king of England in 1124. He initially gave a site at Tulketh, Preston, to monks of the Savignac order, before granting them land in Furness in 1127 at which point they established a monastic house there (see Farrer and Brownbill 1914 for the following description of the Abbey's history and development). By 1147 the Savignac order had been incorporated into the Cistercian tradition making Furness Abbey the first Cistercian house in England, and further expansion of the site began. The remains of the Savignac monastery are still present above and below ground as well as the more extensive Cistercian monastery, as revealed during recent excavation work carried out as part of recent stabilisation work (Jeremy Bradley pers comm). The monastery grew in prosperity, and at the time of its dissolution in 1537 it was the second richest Cistercian monastery in England. The Abbey had acquired extensive property in the Lake District, Yorkshire, and Lincolnshire and the deep-water port at Piel allowed access and trade with the Isle of Man and Ireland. Sheep farming played an important part in the Abbey's growing wealth, due to the price of wool, as did the continued exploitation of the Furness iron ore deposits, which paved the way for the region's post-medieval development.

## 4.5    Post-Medieval Period

4.5.1    After the Dissolution, Furness Abbey was seized by the crown and the land was subsequently granted to the king's minister, Thomas Cromwell; two years later it was passed to Sir Thomas Curwen the head of a leading local family (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 311). Thomas Curwen passed the property to his son-in-law John Preston, and in 1671 the then owner Thomas Preston built a mansion house in the grounds of the former abbey. The effect of the Dissolution on the associated outlying settlements is uncertain, but most evidently survived and formed the basis of many of the extant settlements in the area. Dalton was probably the most adversely affected by the closure of the abbey, although its market only began to noticeably decline during the 18th century (Winchester 2016, 117). Throughout the post-medieval period the area's importance as a source of iron ore grew and through its proximity to this so did Dalton, with the town increasing in size particularly in the 19th century and with the coming of the railway (Walton 1984, 65-77).

## 4.6    St Helens Chapel

4.6.1    *History*: the origins of the chapel at St Helens are obscure. It is not specifically mentioned by name in any medieval documents; the earliest account is found in 1537 in the Coucher Book of Furness Abbey and refers to '*Sanct Elen birlay*', a reference to a political unit of Norse origin known as a 'bireley', which later became known as 'Above Town' (Ekwall 1922, 205). However, it is notable that this does not specifically mention a chapel and that at the same time a pool known as '*Sanc Elen doube*' is also referred to, probably in reference to the holy well recorded over 1km away from the chapel (see Fell 1883; Gaythorpe 1900). The name 'St Helen' may therefore have applied to a wider area; a 'St Ellen's

Garth' is recorded in a grant of the site of Furness Abbey in 1607, but this also does not specifically mention a chapel (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 315). It is, however, noteworthy that these early versions of the name use 'Elen' rather than 'Helen'; this is probably a result of the fact that references to St Helen or Helena, legendarily a Briton and the mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine (although this is probably unlikely and she may have been based on an earlier water goddess and later adopted by Christianity) used a variety of spellings (Jones 1986; Harbus 2002). It is therefore significant that nearby Elliscales, the name of which Ekwall clearly struggled with, is recorded as Aylinescal and Alinscales in the 13th century (Ekwall 1922, 206). This is clearly named after St Helen, suggesting that the name and association with the saint existed by this time, but this does not prove that a chapel did.

4.6.2    The chapel at St Helens caught the attention of local antiquarians from an early date, although remarkably the first edition of the *Antiquities of Furness* makes only a passing reference (while describing the supposed route of the Roman road across Furness) to a place called St Helens and does not mention a chapel (West 1774, viii). The first account, and one of the most detailed, is actually found in the second edition of this book (West 1805), in amongst additional notes added by William Close, a surgeon and polymath who lived in Dalton. He describes the building at St Helens as follows:

'*The Chapel of St Hellen has been long converted into a dwelling house, but the eastern window is still entire, and by its gothic form, demonstrates the original appropriation of the edifice. There are several proofs that this was once a place of burial. Human bones have often been dug up in an adjoining garden: and some years ago, the floor of the house being worn below its ancient level, an entire skeleton was found close by the fire side*' (Close in West 1805, 359).

4.6.3    Later descriptions are less detailed but still acknowledge the historical interest of the building. A few decades later Francis Evans also described the chapel, although clearly borrowing heavily from Close:

'St Helen's chapel, *which has probably been so called from its having been dedicated to Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, has been long converted into a dwelling-house, in which capacity it had undergone so great an alteration that only the eastern window, whose Gothic frame is still entire, suggests any idea of its original appropriation*' (Evans 1842, 127-128).

4.6.4    Later discussion of the site has tended to concentrate on remains discovered at the nearby St Helen's well near Park Farm (Fell 1883; Gaythorpe 1900) and this has to some degree conflated the two sites into one, even though they are almost 1km apart. To some extent the chapel gained less attention, perhaps as a result of this, but also because it was occupied as a house during much of the 19th century, as confirmed by a visit made by members of the Barrow Naturalists Field Club in 1893: '*This place, which was formerly a small chantry, is now a farm house, but still shows some traces of Gothic architecture, the old early English east window being still there, and also a small round-headed window of transitional age, but these are the only remaining features of interest*' (Hawcridge and Stables 1893, 10). The census returns confirm that a property known as St Helens and acting as a farmhouse existed in the area, and this was undoubtedly the former chapel (*Appendix 3*). Two wills of occupiers of St Helens exist for Richard Dixon (BDTB/Wills Box 10/40 1886) and his sister Mary Geldert, to whom he left his estate (CAC(B) BDTB/Wills Box 10/39 1887 and a probate: CAC(B) BDTB/Wills Box 13/83 1889). While the documents relating to Mary Geldert provide relatively little additional information, although they do list farming stock and dairying utensils, the will of Richard Dixon lists furniture including a clock and case, table, corner cupboard, six kitchen chairs, an arm chair, a gun, cupboards, crockery, a feather bed and sundry ornaments, as well as his cattle and dairying equipment, and this, alongside the census details, indicates a remarkably large household for such a small building. The map evidence shows that a later farm called St Helens Farms, which still exists, was built between 1891 and 1911, after which the chapel, which is often referred to as St Helen's Cottage, seems to have ceased to be used as a dwelling.

4.6.5    The abandonment of the chapel after the construction of the new farm seems to have led to a relatively rapid decline in the structure. A brief description published in 1914 still stated that '*The remains of St Helen's Chapel… have been turned into a cottage, and the only architectural feature left is a built-up pointed window of 14th-century date in the end wall. It is of two lights with the mullion bifurcating in the head, but the lights are uncusped and there is no hood mould*' (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 315). Within a decade, however, it seems to have been in a ruinous condition; it was reported 24th April 1924 that steps

had been taken '*during the past winter*' for the preservation of various sites, including St Helen's chapel (Anon 1924, 365), although it is not clear what form this took. A later description confirms this and outlines what was known about it at that time:

'*there was the ancient chapel of St Helen's, about a mile from Dalton, on the road to Askham* [*sic*]. *The exact place of this chapel in the general scheme of the parish* [of Dalton] *is not easy to determine. It is too near the parish church to be intended for a chapel of ease. Its history is unknown, and there is no mention of it in any of the records until 1537, yet its remains show that it must have been built in the early 15*[th] *century. It has at one time been converted into a dwelling house, and was occupied as such until the present St Helen's farm was built. Now it is in a very dilapidated and ruinous condition. Parts of the east and north walls are ancient. In the former is the east window, now built up, but its outline and window dressings can be clearly seen on the outside. It is a two light window in a pointed arch, the centre mullion of which is forked near the head, forming with the head a lozenge-shaped small light. In the north wall is a small pointed window or loop of Early English type, deeply splayed on the inside*' (Kelly 1929, 230). The suggestion was again made at this time that St Helen's acted as a chantry chapel (*ibid*); the importance of its location alongside the old road north across the Duddon into Cumberland has also been noted (Melville 1979a). Another visit in the late 1920s also stated that '*this interesting little edifice was rapidly falling into decay, and unless remedial measures are taken it will soon become a shapeless ruin*' (Stables 1929, 14).

4.6.6    It is clear that despite these concerns very little was done to preserve the building and it was not subject to any detailed recording during this period. It was only in 1947 that a record was made of the building, primarily by members of the *Barrow Naturalists' Field Club* (BNFC):

'*it was a plain rectangular structure, 45' x 20' 6" outside, with an east window of two lights in a pointed arch, the centre mullion of which was forked near the head, forming, with the head, a small lozenge-shaped light. This window was blocked up at the time the building was converted into a residence, and collapsed completely during the winter of 1946-7. In the north wall was a small round-headed window or loop of early English type, deeply splayed on the inside – from the north-west corner to the centre distant 5'4" outside and 2'2" inside, the sill being 3'6" from the ground on the exterior and 3' on the interior.*

*There were slight indications of an original south doorway and window. A separate compartment had been blocked off at the west end, which has been conjecturally described as a living-room for a resident priest, but it was impossible to indicate in 1947 if this apartment (the cart-shed mentioned above) antedated the 18*[th] *century conversion. Part of the east and north walls were definitely ancient and have been said to suggest an early 15*[th] *century construction. The building itself was fairly crude, the walls mostly consisting of boulders and stones from the shore, roughly squared and plastered, but the corner stones, east and north windows were of Furness red sandstone, well worked, with one or two stones bearing masons' marks, from which it is supposed that this material, discarded and disused at some alteration, was donated either from Furness Abbey, or more likely, from Dalton Church, which was Abbey property.*

*The low north opening showed no sign of having been glazed or blocked up – even during the chapel's use as a dwelling. It may have been closed by a shutter, but there was nothing to indicate this*' (CAC(B) BAMH/2/53 1944-1957).

4.6.7    The low north window in particular roused considerable interest; the suggestion was made at this time that it might have served as a 'lepers' window', to allow the infected to observe Mass without entering the chapel (*ibid*). In 1944 James Hobbs and James Melville of the BNFC spoke to a representative of the National Trust, Mr BL Thompson, about the building, with a view to them possibly taking it on and also the Ministry of Works (*ibid*; Melville 1979b). While it was apparent that its condition precluded this it was suggested that it might be worthwhile removing the north window before the building suffered further collapse. Permission was then obtained from the Holker Estates and with support from the *Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society* (CWAAS) the window was removed by members of the BNFC on April 12th 1947 (see *Section 3.3.9* above). Various proposals for what to do with the window following its removal were made, including building it into one of a number of local churches, but none of these ever came to fruition and the window is now located within the church at Dalton.

# 5.    Discussion

## 5.1    Introduction

5.1.1    The discussion of the results of the desk-based assessment is intended to determine the archaeological significance and potential of any known remains (above or below ground) and the potential for any as yet unidentified remains being present. The system used to judge the significance of the remains identified within the development area, or those thought to have the potential to be present within the development area, is based on the criteria used to define Scheduled Monuments (DCMS 2013, Annex 4; *Appendix 1*). Of the five sites of archaeological interest identified within the study area, only one – **Site 03** the remains of St Helen's Chapel, is located within the proposed development area. The proposed development area is also situated within a wider area of known archaeological interest, so there is clearly potential for further remains of archaeological interest to be discovered, which are otherwise unknown at present.

## 5.2    Significance of Known Resource

5.2.1    The level of significance of any sites within the proposed development area is categorised, according to each criterion, as high, medium, or low, and an average of this has been used to produce an overall level of significance for each site (see Table 2 below: H=high, M=medium, L=low). A single site of archaeological interest lies within the proposed development area (**Site 03**) and so its significance has been considered using the criteria outlined above. As can be seen in Table 2 it is considered to have a medium to high level of significance. This is likely to be higher if the presence of burials on the site, as recorded by William Close, can be demonstrated to be true.

| | |
|---|---|
| *Period* | H |
| *Rarity* | H |
| *Documentation* | M |
| *Group value* | M |
| *Survival/condition* | L |
| *Fragility/Vulnerability* | H |
| *Diversity* | M |
| *Potential* | H |
| **Significance** | **M-H** |

**Table 2: Significance of Site 03**

5.2.2    There are no Listed Buildings within the study area.

## 5.3    Potential for Unknown Archaeological Remains

5.3.1    Details of the archaeological remains present within the study area are presented in the results of the desk-based assessment (*Section 3*; *Appendix 2*). The potential for as yet unidentified archaeological remains to be present, however, is based on the known occurrence of such remains in the study area and also in the local environs (see *Section 4*). Where there are no remains known within the study area the potential is based on the known occurrence within the wider local area. The degree of potential is examined by period and the results are presented in Table 3 below; in each case the level of potential is expressed as low (L), medium (M), or high (H):

| Period | Present in study area? | Potential |
|---|---|---|
| Late Upper Palaeolithic | N | L |
| Mesolithic | N | L |
| Neolithic | N | L |
| Bronze Age | N | L |
| Iron Age | N | L |
| Roman | N | M |
| Early Medieval | N | M |
| Medieval | Y | H |
| Post-medieval | Y | H |

**Table 3: Degree of potential for unknown archaeological remains by period**

5.3.2   In consideration of the above table while further, previously unknown, remains of both medieval and post-medieval remains are likely to be present due to the existence of other sites of these dates within the study area, in particular the chapel, other remains are also possible. Roman and early medieval remains are considered to be of medium potential because of the proximity of the possible Roman road to the site and the likelihood that the chapel's origins pre-date the medieval period. On the basis of the association with St Helena this is possible, but it still remains relatively unlikely.

## 5.4    Disturbance

5.4.1   The proposed development area is likely to have seen some disturbance, primarily due to its proximity to a range of industrial sites, specifically quarries, but also the railway and the buildings at St Helen's Farm, which was created in about 1900. While the chapel (**Site 03**) has clearly seen some disturbance, primarily in the form of the rapid decay of the remains in the early 20th century, there are still substantial parts of the building standing and there is unlikely to have been much below-ground disturbance.

## 5.5    Impact

5.5.1   At present no specific proposals for the development of the site are available but is clear that the remains of the former chapel (**Site 03**) are of considerable potential and significance and that it would be adversely affected by any building work. The fact that there are possibly burials on the site also has legal implications in terms of any groundworks that might disturb such remains, which would need to be taken into consideration.

## 5.6    Conclusion

5.6.1   It is clear from the preceding sections that the only site of archaeological interest within the proposed development area – the remains of St Helen's Chapel (**Site 03**), is also the most significant. There are, however, a number of issues connected to the identification of this building as a medieval chapel. The available evidence does not absolutely prove that it was originally a medieval chapel; the earliest documentary reference to 'St Helens' is only from 1537 and it does not specifically mention a chapel. Earlier references to Elliscales also evidently include a reference to 'Helena' but again do not prove the existence of a chapel. The burial discovered within the chapel is recorded in only one source (Close in West 1805, 359) and must have been extremely shallow given the description, which might suggest that it was not a proper burial at all. It is also worth noting that on Chapel Island, which formed part of the estates of Conishead Priory, a sham chapel was constructed in the early 19th century (one of a number of Gothic follies) attached to an extant cottage (CAC(B) BDX 53/10/12 nd; CAC(B) BDX 53/10/13 nd). The earliest evidence for the chapel building at St Helens is a plan of 1806, prior to that it is not shown. It is also noteworthy that the investigation into the building in the 1940s suggested that material had been reused, probably from Dalton Church although Furness Abbey was thought to be also a possibility, and that the structure almost appears to have been built as a dwelling, as suggested by the cart entrance at the west end and the blocked east window that must have had a flue in the wall behind it (see Plate 5).

5.6.2 The only way to better understand the building would be through further archaeological investigation, ideally following the removal of the vegetation cover. If the building were to be in some way incorporated into any development proposals this might then also require further archaeological recording and excavation once rubble had been cleared from the structure and better access was available, depending on what form any development took.

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# Appendix 1: Significance Criteria

After DoE 1990, Annex 4: '*Secretary of State's Criteria for Scheduling Ancient Monuments*'

i) *Period*: all types of monuments that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation;

ii) *Rarity*: there are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of monument, both in a national and regional context;

iii) *Documentation*: the significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of record of previous investigation or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records;

iv) *Group Value*: the value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement and cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group;

v) *Survival/Condition*: the survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features;

vi) *Fragility/Vulnerability*: highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or unsympathetic treatment; vulnerable monuments of this nature would particularly benefit from the statutory protection which scheduling confers. There are also existing standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment and which are similarly well suited by scheduled monument protection, even if these structures are already listed historic buildings;

vii) *Diversity*: some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, others because of a single important attribute;

viii) *Potential*: on occasion, the nature of the evidence cannot be specified precisely but it may still be possible to document reasons anticipating its existence and importance and so to demonstrate the justification for scheduling. This is usually confined to sites rather than upstanding monuments.

# Appendix 2: Site Gazetteer

**Site Number**: **01**
**NGR**: 321900 474700
**HER No**: 4855
**Sources**: HER
**Designation**: None
**Type**: Enclosure, ridge and furrow
**Description**: Ridge and furrow and possible enclosure east of Goldmire Bridge. The site does not appear to match the aerial photograph assigned to it. However, on the ground just west of the public footpath were what looked like two sides of a small enclosure. The site could not be accessed in August 2001 due to Foot and Mouth restrictions.
**Period**: Medieval

**Site Number**: **02**
**NGR**: 321970 474580
**HER No**: 16226
**Sources**: HER; Ordnance Survey 1891a
**Designation**: None
**Type**: Quarry (site of)
**Description**: Site of St Helen's Quarry, marked as disused on 1973 map.
**Period**: Post-medieval

**Site Number**: **03**
**NGR**: 321860 475570
**HER No**: 2262
**Sources**: HER; Close in West 1805; Evans 1842; Hawcridge and Stables 1893; Farrer and Brownbill 1914; Fell 1883; Gaythorpe 1900
**Designation**: None
**Type**: Chantry Chapel
**Description**: St Helen's Chapel, near Thwaite Flat. Formerly a small chantry now a farm house. It has an eastern window of Gothic architecture, and a small round-headed side window of transitional age. The remains of St Helen's Chapel were turned into a cottage prior to 1914 (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 315). An eastern built-up pointed window of 14th century date of two lights existed at this time: the mullion bifurcated in the head, but the lights were uncusped and there was no hood mould (*ibid*). St Ellen's garths, Furness Abbey, occur in the grant of the site in 1607 (*ibid*). According to the Ordnance Survey in 1958 the cottage was roofless and in ruins. At that time the arch of the window had fallen and the stones belonging to it had been removed to the vicarage at Dalton-in-Furness in the hope that the window could be re-erected in some form at a later date. See also HER 2195 – Chapel Meadow Building. The remains of the window have been re-erected inside the Church of St Mary, Dalton [HER 2284], but this appears to be a temporary arrangement.
**Period**: Medieval

**Site Number**: **04**
**NGR**: 321800 474500
**HER No**: 16913
**Sources**: HER
**Designation**: None
**Type**: Pillbox

**Description**: There is a World War II pillbox at this location. The area is heavily overgrown and the pill box could not be seen from the nearest vantage point in September 2001. It is still shown on modern Ordnance Survey maps and presumably still exists. There was also a roadblock site at SD224717.
**Period**: Post-medieval

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**Site Number**: **05**
**NGR**: 321840 474460
**HER No**: 13292
**Sources**: HER
**Designation**: None
**Type**: Ridge and furrow
**Description**: This shows traces of straight and narrow ridge and furrow. No access August 2001 due to foot and mouth restrictions.
**Period**: Post-medieval

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# Appendix 3: Census Information

**1841 Census** (HO 107/Piece 529/Book 1/Folio 19/Page 5 1841)

| Place | Name | Age | Profession | Born in Lancashire? |
|-------|------|-----|------------|---------------------|
| Sent Hellens | Jane Dixon | 55 | Farmer | Yes |
| | Richard Dixon | 25 | Farmer | Yes |
| | Thomas Dixon | 20 | Tailor | Yes |
| | Matthew Dixon | 15 | Agricultural Labourer | Yes |
| | Mary Dixon | 15 | | Yes |
| | Ealenor Dixon | 8 | | Yes |

**1851 Census** (HO 107/Piece 2275/Folio 155/Page 9 1851)

| Place | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|-------|------|-----|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| St Hellings | Jane Dixon | 66 | Head | Farmer of 10 acres | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Richard Dixon | 39 | Son | Iron Mine Carter | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Matthew Dixon | 29 | Son | Drainer Master employing 3 men | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Mary Dixon | 24 | Daughter | Farmer's daughter | Dalton, Lancashire |

**1861 Census** (RG 9/Piece 3171/Folio 60/Page 2/1861)

| Place | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|-------|------|-----|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| Saint Hellens | Richard Dixon | 48 | Head | Farmer | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Mary Geldert | 34 | Sister | House Keeper | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | George Dixon | 5 | Son | Scholar | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Mary Jane Geldert | 2 | Daughter | - | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Isabella Geldert | 10 months | Daughter | - | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | John Geldert | 39 | Boarder | Miner | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Harriet H. Town | 16 | Servant | Servant | Dalton, Lancashire |

**1871 Census** (RG 10/Piece 4242/Folio 119/Page 32 1871)

| Place | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|-------|------|-----|---------------------|------------|----------------|
| St Hellens House | Richard Dixon | 60 | Head | Farmer of 10 acres | Broughton, Lancashire |
| | John Geldert | 49 | Brother-in-law | Miner | Ulverston, Lancashire |
| | Mary Geldert | 44 | Wife | House Keeper | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | George Geldert | 15 | Son | Farm servant | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Mary J Geldert | 12 | Daughter | Scholar | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Betty Geldert | 8 | Daughter | Scholar | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Matthew Geldert | 6 | Son | Scholar | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Robert D Geldert | 3 | Son | Scholar | Dalton, Lancashire |

**1881 Census** (RG 11/Piece 4281/Folio 10/Page 13 1881)

| Place | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Helens Farm | Richard Dixon | 68 | Head | Farmer of 12 acres | St Helens, Lancashire |
| | Mary Geldert | 54 | Sister | House Keeper | St Helens, Lancashire |
| | George Dixon | 25 | Nephew | Labourer at Iron Mines | St Helens, Lancashire |
| | Margaret J. Geldert | 20 | Niece | General and Domestic Servant | St Helens, Lancashire |
| | Matthew Geldert | 16 | Nephew | Agricultural Labourer, Farm Servant | St Helens, Lancashire |
| | Robert D. Geldert | 14 | Nephew | Agricultural Labourer, Farm Servant | St Helens, Lancashire |

**1891 Census** (RG 12/Piece 3479/Folio 45/Page 20 1881)

| Place | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Hellens Cot | Matthew Geldert | 26 | Head | Farmer, employer | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Margaret Geldert | 32 | Sister | Domestic House Keepr | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | George Dixon | 37 | Half Brother | Agricultural Farm Labourer | Dalton, Lancashire |

**1901 Census** (Class RG13/Piece 5338/Folio 36/Page 1)

| Name of house | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Helen's Farm | Matthew Geldert | 36 | Head | Farmer, employer, working at home | Dalton-in-Furness |
| | George Dixon | 45 | Boarder | Iron ore labourer | Dalton-in-Furness |

**1911 Census** (Class RG14/Piece 25634)

Number of rooms in the this dwelling including the kitchen but not including the scullery, landing, lobby, closet, bathroom, warehouse, office, or shop: 6

| Name of house | Name | Age | Relationship to head | Profession | Place of birth |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| St Hellens Farm | Joseph Ashburner | 43 | Head | Iron Miner | Dalton, Lancashire |
| | Mary Alice Ashburner | 33 | Wife | | Scorton, Lancashire |
| | Ellen Ashburner | 7 | Daughter | At School | Barrow-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | Elizabeth Ashburner | 3 | Daughter | | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | Isabel Ashburner | 1 | Daughter | | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | William Ashburner | 1 month | Son | | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | Matthew Geldert | 46 | Lodger | Farmer, employer | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | George Dixon | 55 | Lodger | General Labourer, Iron Ore Miner, worker | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |
| | Fred Coward | 15 | Servant | Farm Labourer, worker | Dalton-in-Furness, Lancashire |