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Summary

Prior to the proposed demolition of the derelict remains of the former Seascale Mill, Seascale, Cumbria, Greenlane Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a heritage assessment of the site. This was intended to form a permanent archive of the known history of the building as well as provide information for use in future display boards at the site. The project was carried out in March 2017.

The origins of the mill are uncertain. The earliest reference is from 1726, in a letter about repairs that describes a stone built and slated building that was evidently part of the Seascale Hall estate. Since this has origins in at least the 13th century it is possible that a mill existed on the site from the medieval period, although the majority of the available evidence is from the 19th century. This shows that it was occupied by a succession of people, at least some of whom were described as millers, although in 1891 it was occupied by an agricultural labourer. It was still apparently operating as late as 1893, however, but went out of use in the early 20th. The two structures on the site were evidently ruinous by at least 1988, the mill wheel and gearing having been removed.

The building is not statutorily protected and so is only of local significance as an undesignated heritage asset. The desk-based nature of the heritage assessment means that only a limited understanding of the building can be established without carrying out a more detailed investigation of the physical remains themselves.

Acknowledgements

Greenlane Archaeology would like to thank John Coward Architects for commissioning the project, in particular Mike Darwell for his help during the project. Further thanks are due to the staff of the Cumbria Archive Centre in Whitehaven (CAC(W)) and Carlisle (CAC(C)) for help with accessing their archives, and Mark Brennand, Lead Officer Historic Environment and Commons at Cumbria County Council for providing information held in the Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER).

The project was managed by Dan Elsworth, who also carried out the heritage assessment and wrote the report with Tom Mace, who also produced the illustrations. The final report was edited by Jo Dawson.

1. Introduction

1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 As part of proposals to demolish the derelict remains of Seascale Mill, Seascale, Cumbria (NGR 303555 502553), Greenlane Archaeology were commissioned by John Coward Architects (hereafter 'the client') to carry out a heritage assessment of the site, which was undertaken in March 2017. This was intended to form a permanent archive of the known history of the building as well as provide information for use in future display boards at the site.

1.2 Location, Geology, and Topography

1.2.1 The Seascale Mill site is approximately 1.3km north-west of the centre of the village of Seascale on the Irish Sea coast of Cumbria and lies between 20m and 30m above sea level (Ordnance Survey 2011; Figure 1). It is next to the south end of Sellafield, which is a nuclear fuel reprocessing and nuclear decommissioning site.

1.2.2 Seascale is within the West Cumbria Coastal Plain, which is characterised by varied open coastline of mudflats, shingle and pebble beaches, lowland river valleys, and gently undulating or flat improved pasture with hedgerows, however, the immediate area is dominated by the former power plant and nuclear reprocessing facilities at Sellafield (Countryside Commission 1998, 25). The solid geology comprises mudstone (Moseley 1978, plate 1), which is overlain by glacially-derived boulder clay with, in places, sand and gravel (Countryside Commission 1998, 27).

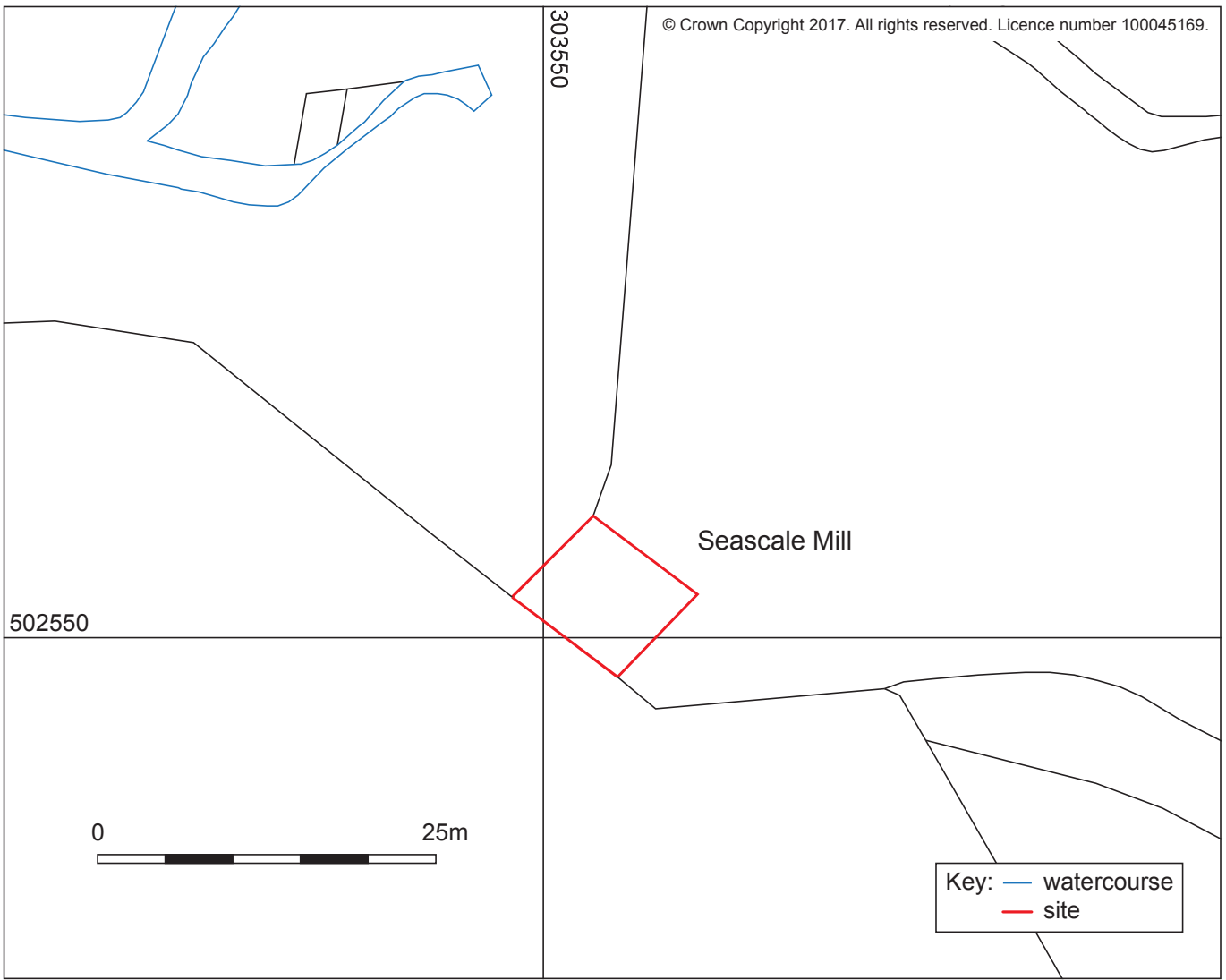
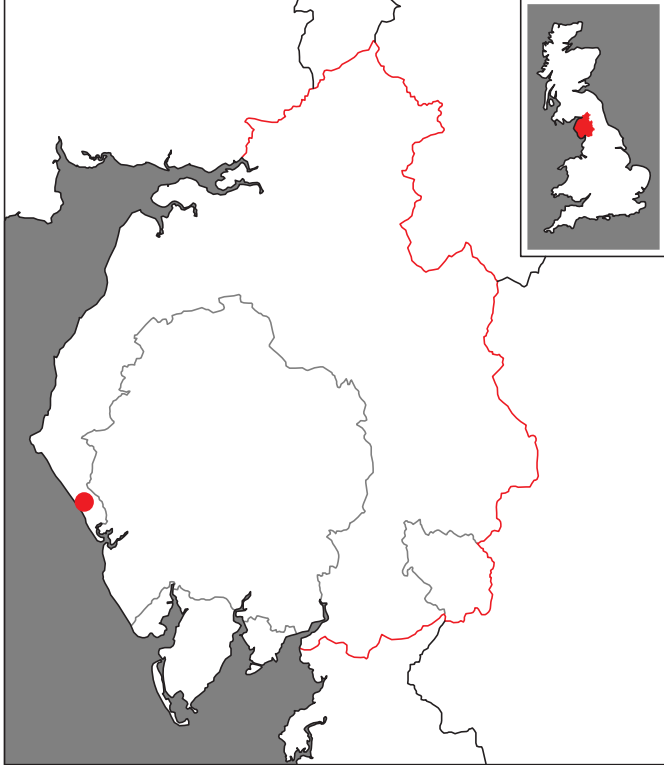


Figure 1: Site location

2. Methodology

2.1 Heritage Assessment

2.1.1 The study area for the heritage assessment comprised the buildings associated with the former Seascale Mill. The footprint of the standing remains is approximately 80m². Information relating to the immediate vicinity was also taken into consideration. The heritage assessment was carried out in accordance with the relevant guidelines of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014). This principally comprised an examination of early maps of the site and published secondary sources. A number of sources of information were used during the heritage assessment:

- **Cumbria Archive Centre, Whitehaven (CAC(W))**: the majority of original and secondary sources relating to the site are deposited in the Cumbria Archive Centre in Whitehaven. 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 addition, any details of the site's owners and occupiers were acquired where available;
- **Cumbria Archive Centre, Kendal (CAC(C))**: this was visited in order to examine further early maps and plans of the site, as well as any other relevant sources;
- **Cumbria Historic Environment Record (HER)**: this is a GIS database of all recorded archaeological sites in the county and was consulted to obtain and additional information held within it;
- **Greenlane Archaeology library**: additional secondary sources and unpublished reports were examined to provide information for the site background.

2.2 Archive

2.2.1 A comprehensive archive of the project has been produced in accordance with the project design and current CIfA and English Heritage guidelines (Brown 2007; English Heritage 1991). A paper copy of this report will be deposited in the Cumbria Archive Centre in Whitehaven following the completion of the project. A digital copy of this report will be provided for the client and one will be retained by Greenlane Archaeology. In addition, at a suitable time a digital copy will be provided for the Cumbria County Council HER, and a record of the project will be made on the OASIS scheme.

3. Results

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The site under discussion here only comprises the two elements comprising the ruinous remains of Seascale Mill. The larger and most intact of these is probably the former mill cottage (based on photographs supplied by Mike Darwell) while the smaller, fragmentary, element is probably the actual mill, although without a more detailed assessment on site it is difficult to be certain. There are a range of associated earthworks relating to the associated water management, including a former mill pond and leat. These are only considered in as far as they appear on the early mapping, but would require more detailed fieldwork on site to fully understand. They were previously recorded as part of an earlier survey (Centre for Field Archaeology 1993), although not in detail.

3.2 Heritage Assessment

3.2.1 The results of the heritage 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 (*Section 3.3*). The second purpose of the heritage assessment is to produce a background history of the site. This is intended to cover all relevant periods, in part to provide information that can be used to assess the significance and potential of the site, but more importantly to present the documented details of any sites that are known (see *Section 4*).

3.2.2 Once this information has been compiled the historical and archaeological significance of the sites, its potential, and the degree to which it is likely to be affected is considered (*Section 5*).

3.3 Map and Image Regression

3.3.1 **Introduction:** although there are early, typically county-wide, maps that include the area, they are generally very small scale. The mill is therefore not shown on Donald's map of 1774. The area is also not included on the enclosure map (CAC(W) YSPC 12/41 1810; CAC(C) QRE 1/42 1815) and there is no tithe map for Gosforth parish. Following that the Ordnance Survey maps for the area were produced in the second half of the 19th century, although detailed editions after 1899 were not available in the local archives.

3.3.2 **Ordnance Survey 1860:** this map clearly shows the route of the mill race and the location of the mill buildings to the south-west of Seascale Hall (Plate 1). There are two buildings marked at the site, marked as a corn mill, one to the south-west and one to the north-west of the mill pond (Plate 2). The building to the north-west is aligned approximately north/south and the south end is narrower; the building to the south is aligned north-west/south-east, with a narrower north-west end. The site of a stone circle is shown to the south-west.

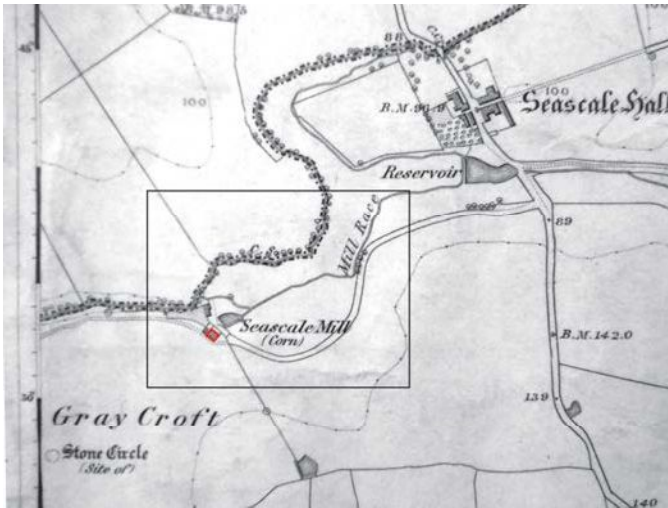


Plate 1 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1860



Plate 2 (right): Detailed extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1860

3.3.3 **Ordnance Survey 1882:** this plan shows the same information as the 1860 edition (Plate 3; cf. Plate 2). In addition, the internal divisions of the building to the south are shown.

3.3.4 **Ordnance Survey 1899:** this map shows the same information as the 1882 edition, although the division at the south-east end of the building to the south is no longer shown but this is probably because of a difference in the manner in which the information was displayed (Plate 4; cf. Plate 3).

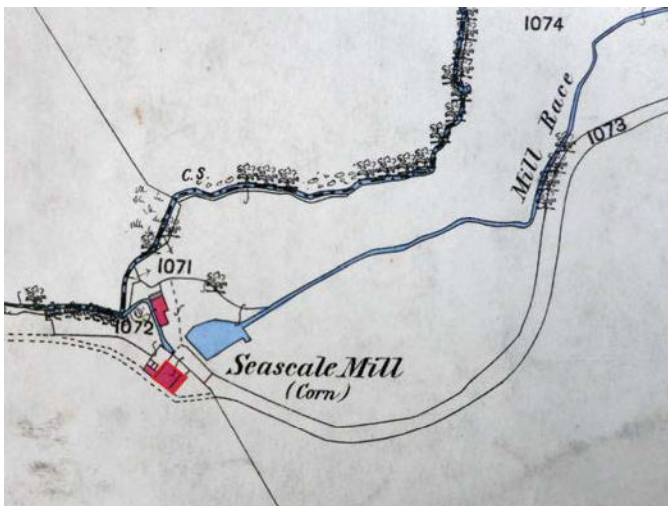


Plate 3 (left): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1882

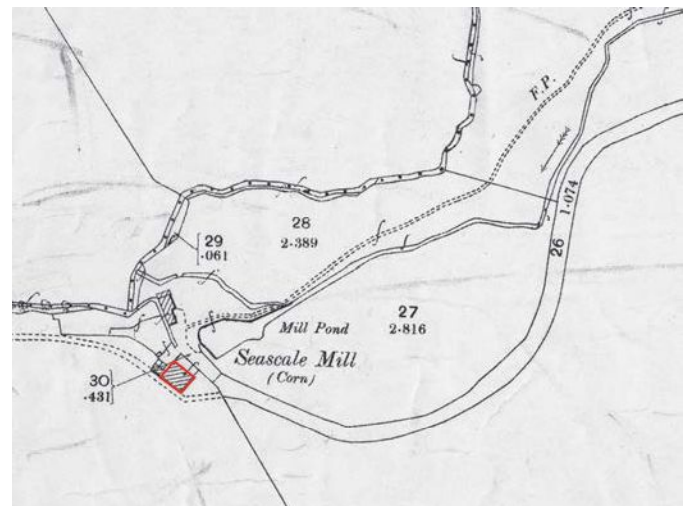


Plate 4 (right): Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1899

3.3.5 **Ordnance Survey 1952:** the mill is clearly marked as disused by this point (Plate 5). Only one building is shown at the site; the north building has been demolished, and the stone circle to the south-west has apparently been restored.

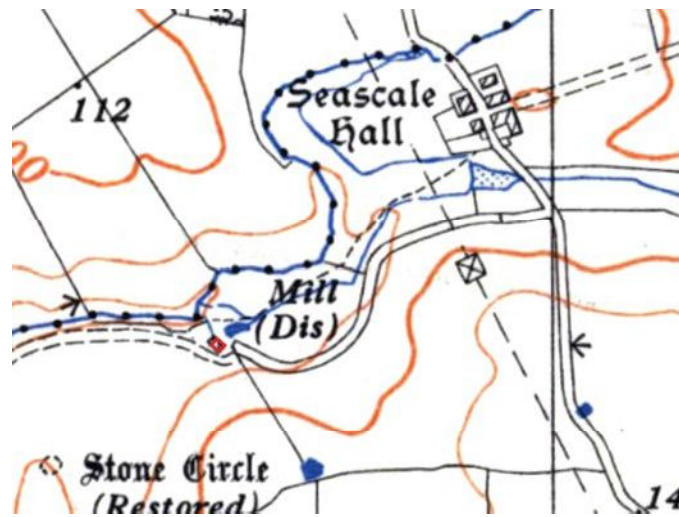


Plate 5: Extract from the Ordnance Survey map of 1952

3.3.6 **Photographs, 1988:** there is a series of photographs of the structural remains at the mill site, taken by Mike Davies-Shiel in 1988 (CAC(C) WDMDS/PC/300/8-20). These cannot be reproduced for copyright reasons, although thumbnail versions are available online on the Cumbria Archive Service Catalogue (<http://www.archiveweb.cumbria.gov.uk/CalmView/default.aspx>). They demonstrate that the building was in similarly ruinous condition at that time to what it is now, although what is described as the 'mill house' still retained its roof structure. A moulded lintel present in this building he considered perhaps reused from Seascale Hall, while the other ruinous wall he seems to identify as the remains of a drying kiln although the remains of the wheel pit and bearing stone for the wheel were still visible at this time adjacent to it.

3.3.7 **Summary:** it is evident from the cartographic sources that there were two buildings at the site of the Seascale corn mill by c1860. Internal divisions are sometimes shown in the building to the south, which still has standing remains at the site, and the footprint of these two buildings remained unchanged until at least the end of the 19th century. The building to the north was clearly demolished and the mill disused by 1952.

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 building through making use of the map evidence presented above (see *Section 3*), where relevant, as well as a range of other documentary sources. The background to the site is also intended to place the results of the assessment in its local context and in order to do so a brief discussion of the earlier history of its wider environs is also necessary.

4.1.2 **Early history:** 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 (Young 2002). The county has evidence for more dense occupation continuing into the Mesolithic (c8,000 – 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 (Elsworth 1998). Coastal areas are widely regarded as typical places to find such remains (Cherry and Cherry 2002), most probably because of the mixed form of economy practiced at the time (Hodgson and Brennand 2006). During the following periods, the Neolithic and then the Bronze Age, settlements and large scale funerary and ceremonial structures appear, and while there are examples of these in the locality these periods are more typically represented by stray finds such as axes (Barrowclough 2010). The Iron Age is less visible in the region as a whole, although there are several examples of hillforts found around Morecambe Bay, which are often considered to be one of the type-sites of the period (Elsworth 2014). The Roman invasion is likely to have had a relatively minimal impact on the native population, especially in the rural areas away from Roman military sites (Philpott 2006, 73-74). Early medieval activity is also rarely demonstrated archaeologically in the area, although place-name evidence suggests that the population was quite mixed with British, Anglian, and Norse elements occurring in many of the local names for example Seascale, which is Norse and refers to a sheiling locate near the sea (Armstrong *et al* 1950, 433), while the name of the parish, Gosforth, derives from the Old English meaning 'goose ford' (*op cit*, 394). The site is located in the parish of Gosforth, and formed part of the manor of Newton and Seascale, which was held by the Senhouse family of Seascale Hall from c1270 until c1707 (Winchester 2016, 143), when it was purchased by a Mr Blaylock, a merchant from Whitehaven (Hutchinson 1794, 584) before they required it again in 1800 only for it to be acquired by Anthony Benn Steward of Newton Manor following the death of Sir Humphrey le Fleming Senhouse in 1841 (Winchester 2016, 143).

4.1.3 The early industrial development of the region was stimulated by the mining of coal and iron ore and the iron and steelmaking industries (Countryside Commission 1998, 29). This development was facilitated by the construction of the railways in the 18th and 19th centuries, but industrial decline and the depletion of the coal resource caused the once thriving villages of the area to decline (*ibid*). More recently the region has become a hub of chemical industry, power generation and nuclear reprocessing; the nuclear power station at Calder Hall was constructed in the early 1950s, and the plant at Windscale, later renamed Sellafield, was established in subsequent decades and visually dominate the landscape of the coast in the southern half of the area (Countryside Commission 1998, 25, 29).

4.1.4 **Seascale Mill:** the origins of Seascale Mill are obscure and the majority of the documentary and cartographic sources only relate to the 19th century. However, a copy of a letter dated 6th October 1726 from John Senhouse to Sir William Pennington at Muncaster evidently refers to a dispute over repairs to be made to the mill at Seascale (two copies are present in the archives: CAC(W) DBT/7/43/1-3 1679-1877; CAC(W) YDX 174/49/25 1726). While much of this letter does not provide useful information about the building it does state that '*the tenants were only chargeable with half of the stones & half of the slates or coverings & not more*' (*ibid*). This makes it apparent that it was part of the estate held as part of the manor of Newton and Seascale, based at Seascale Hall, especially as the mill is clearly referred to as 'Seascale Hall Mill' in other sources, and that it was a stone built structure perhaps with a slate roof at this time. The reason for the connection with the Penningtons at Muncaster is not clear but it is possible that they had some manorial right to the site, and, given the history of the Newton and Seascale manor, it is possible that a mill existed at the site in the medieval period. The list of occupiers revealed from directories and other sources (Table 1) and the information contained in the census (*Appendix 2*) show it

was occupied by a succession of people throughout the 19th century, at least some of whom are described as millers. However, in 1891 the occupier is described as an agricultural labourer and there is a remarkable lack of information about the building in the 20th century. It has been stated that Seascale Mill was one of only two still working in Gosforth in 1893 (Members of the WEA Class 1989, 21; no source is given but this is probably based on a statement by Senhouse that '*The only mills now in Gosforth parish are one near Seascale Hall in Seascale township, and one called Rowend in Gosforth township*' (1893, 250)). It is apparent that the mill was out of use and partially demolished by 1952 (see Section 3.3.7) and by at least 1989 its wheel and machinery had been removed (Members of the WEA Class 1989, 22; see also Section 3.3.9 above).

Date	Address	Occupier	Source
1827	Seascale Mill	William Dickinson	CAC(W) DBT/7/43/1-3 1679-1877
1829	Seascale Hall Mill	William Dickinson	Parson and White 1829, 210
1847	Sea Scale Mill	Daniel Tyson	Mannix and Whellan 1847, 333
1883	Seascale Mill	Robert Miller, corn miller	Bulmer and Co 1883, 133
1887	Seascale Mill	Robert Wilson	CAC(C) PROB/1887/W320 1887

Table 1: Recorded occupiers of Seascale Mill

4.1.5 **Previous investigation:** aside from the photographs taken in 1988 (see Section 3.3.9 above) a large area including the mill and associated features was subject to archaeological survey in 1993. This revealed extensive areas of structures relating to water management for the mill, connected to the perhaps significantly-named 'Newmill Beck' as well as areas of ridge and furrow (Centre for Field Archaeology 1993).

5. Discussion

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The discussion of the results of the heritage assessment is intended to determine the archaeological significance and potential of the structure. The system used to judge the significance is based on the criteria used to define Scheduled Monuments (DoE 1990, annex 4; *Appendix 2*). As the proposed scheme only comprises the demolition of the standing buildings making up the site, discussion of the site's significance only covers the footprint of the building, and no consideration of previously unknown below-ground archaeological remains is included, as the ground is considered to have been substantially affected by the construction of the current structure.

5.2 Significance

5.2.1 The building is neither a Listed Building nor a Scheduled Monument. It is therefore only significant at a local level as an undesignated heritage asset.

5.3 Potential

5.3.1 An understanding of the building that can be gained from a purely desk-based assessment of this type is limited, but it is likely that the building will have seen at least some phases of alteration and that there is the potential for more to be learned through more detailed investigation. This would be best achieved through formal building recording as defined by Historic England (English Heritage 2006; Historic England 2016). It is also clear from the known history of the local area that there is some potential for archaeological remains pre-dating the standing buildings to be present on the site (see *Section 4.1.2* above), although these would be likely to have been affected or destroyed by subsequent disturbance (see *Section 5.4* below).

5.4 Disturbance

5.4.1 While it is uncertain exactly what condition the building is currently in it is evidently derelict and it is likely that the majority of any internal features of historic interest will have been removed or destroyed. It is also not clear what further alterations the original building had been subject to prior its abandonment in the early 20th century, but these would also have affected any early fabric.

5.5 Conclusion

5.5.1 It is apparent from the results of this assessment that while the origins of the building are uncertain there was clearly a mill on the site from at least the early 18th century. The naming of the beck from which it took water 'Newmill Beck' (Centre for Field Archaeology 1993) perhaps suggests that it was in fact a relatively late construction. It continued in use into the 19th century, was certainly out of use by the middle of the 20th century or perhaps earlier, and has been in a derelict and essentially ruinous condition for at least 30 years.

6. Bibliography

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Appendix 1: Census Details

1841 Census (HO 107/Piece 156/Folio 9/Page 3)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
William Dickinson	35		Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
Jane Dickinson	30		Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
Mary Dickinson	3		Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
Frances Dickinson	1		Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
Ruth Dickinson	10	Female servant	Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
John Sands	15	Male servant	Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
William Phsaclas(?)	15	Male servant	Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland
Joseph Dickinson	20	Male servant	Seascale Hall Mill	Cumberland

1851 Census (HO 107/Piece 2437/Folio 508/Page 13)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
Daniel Tyson	31	Miller	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Gosforth
Jane Tyson	23		Seascale Mill	Lancashire, Broughton
John Tyson	1		Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Gosforth
Ann Tyson	16	General servant	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Eskdale

1861 Census (RG 9/Piece 3953/Folio 77/Page 9)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
Richard Knight	32	Miller	Seascale Mill Cottage	Cumberland, Witbeck
Elizabeth Knight	23		Seascale Mill Cottage	Cumberland, Millom
Richard Knight	6 months		Seascale Mill Cottage	Cumberland, Gosforth

1871 Census (RG 10/Piece 526/Folio 55/Page 8)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
Robert Wilson	52	Miller	Sea Scale Mill	Cumberland, Bootle
Ann Wilson	57		Sea Scale Mill	Cumberland, Haile
Eleanor Wilson	21		Sea Scale Mill	Cumberland, Bootle
William Noble	21	Millers servant	Sea Scale Mill	Cumberland, Gosforth

1881 Census (RG 11/Piece 5194/Folio 66/Page 4)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
Robert Wilson	62	Miller	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Bootle
Ann Wilson	61		Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Haile
Eleanor Wilson	30		Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Bootle
Thomas Wilson	3		Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Gosforth

1891 Census (RG 12/Piece 4319/Folio 125/Page 10)				
Name	Age	Occupation	Address	Place of Birth
Thomas Dover	34	Agricultural labourer	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Hayton
Jane Dover	43		Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Wigton
Mary Park	21	Dress maker	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Wigton
Sarah Jane Dover	9	Scholar	Seascale Mill	Cumberland, Parton

Appendix 2: 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.