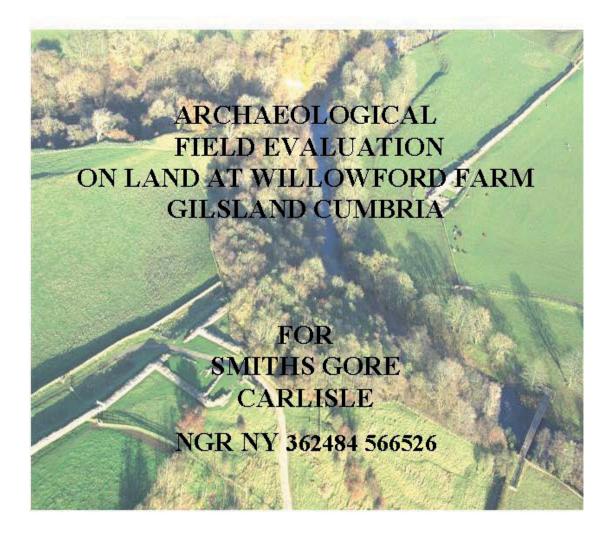
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP404/06



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In December 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land at Willowford Farm, Gilsland, Cumbria (centred on NGR NY 362484 566526). This work was requested by Mike Collins, English Heritage Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist (EHHWA) in response to a planning application by Michael Birnie of Smiths Gore. The main aim of the evaluation was to provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains pertaining to detailing their character, condition, and significance, which would enable the client to proceed in a highly informed way.

The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of a single linear trial trench, measuring 28m x 1.60m, which was placed directly across the projected line of Hadrian's Wall. The results of the evaluation succeeded in identifying archaeological remains dating to the Roman and the later post-medieval periods. The foundation cut for the Wall was partly revealed which showed that the majority of stone used for the Wall had been robbed out for building stone. It is also likely that stone from the Wall had been removed in order to create access to land to the north of Willowford Farm. The Wall Ditch and associated earthen bank were also exposed, however due to the limit of excavation these features were left unexcavated.

During the post-medieval period a single post-hole was placed directly into the Wall foundation cut. However, it presumably relates to farming practices and could form part of a large timber barn or building that has been removed. An earlier post-medieval surface was located in the southern extent of the trench, which was eventually replaced with a modern concrete and tarmac surface.

The evaluation produced a limited finds assemblage, which was predominantly post-medieval in date. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from the top of the Wall Ditch, which possibly indicates that Willowford Farm has medieval origins.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to offer thanks to Michael Birnie of Smiths Gore for commissioning the project. Thanks also go to Liam McNulty and Lauren Harrison for their assistance and enthusiasm throughout the works. Finally, thanks go to David, for diligent and professional machining of the trench.

North Pennines Archaeology would also like to extend their thanks to Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, for his help during this project.

Frank Giecco, Technical Director for NPA LTD, oversaw the daily management of the project. The fieldwork was carried out by Jo Beatty and Martin Sowerby. Additional fieldwork and metal detecting was kindly undertaken by Alan James. Martin Sowerby wrote the report and produced the drawings. Matthew Town edited the report.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on land at Willowford Farm, Gilsland, Cumbria (NGR NY362484 566526) (Fig 1), on behalf of Michael Birnie of Smiths Gore. The aim of the evaluation was to record any significant archaeological deposits, uncovered during wastewater and sewerage improvement works. The works involved the excavation of a pipe trench, which truncates the projected line of Hadrian's Wall and associated ditch. The work was required in a brief provided by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for English Heritage (EHHWA).
- 1.1.2 North Pennines Archaeology Limited (NPAL), accordingly produced a project design (Giecco 2006), detailing the aims, objectives and methodology of the evaluation, in accordance with the Project Brief produced by EHHWA (Collins 2006). The evaluation was undertaken in December 2006.
- 1.1.3 This document sets out the result of the archaeological evaluation in the form of a short report.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was prepared in response to a brief prepared by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist for an archaeological field evaluation. This included a detailed specification of works to be carried out, which consisted of the excavation of a single trial trench and a programme of post excavation and reporting. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

- 2.2.1 Initially, the field evaluation consisted of the excavation of a single linear trial trench, measuring 30m x 1.6m in accordance to brief provided by Mike Collins. However, due to the proximity of a steep drop to the north and constant heavy rains throughout the fieldwork, the trench was shortened to 28m for health and safety reasons. The evaluation was carried out in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relative importance against known development proposals.
- 2.2.2 In summary, the main objectives of the excavation were:
 - to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
 - to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
 - to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
 - to recover paleoenvironmental material where it survived in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.
- 2.2.3 The trench was mechanically excavated by a six tonne tracked 360 mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the natural substrate. The trench was then manually cleaned and any putative archaeological features were investigated. Archaeological features were recorded using NPA standard *pro-forma* recording sheets utilising guidelines set out in the NPA Excavation Manual (Giecco 2001).
- 2.2.4 Photography was undertaken using Canon EOS 100 and EOS 300V Single Lens Reflex (SLR) cameras. A photographic record was made using digital photography, 200 ISO Colour Print and Colour Slide film.
- 2.2.5 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (IFA 1994).

2.3 PROJECT ARCHIVE

2.3.1 The full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 2nd Ed. 1991). The archive will eventually be deposited within an appropriate repository and a copy of the report given to the County Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 06 WFG-A.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1.1 *The Roman Period:* the extravagant expansion of the Empire, which was undertaken by the Emperor Trajan (98-117), forced Hadrian (117-138) to realise that Rome could no longer afford to continue this policy of expansion to envelop the whole known world as foreseen by Augustus (Frere 1978). During Hadrian's many protracted visits of inspection and reform throughout the Empire he determined to define its limits and consolidate the defences. During the course of these visits, in AD 121 to 122, Hadrian visited Germany to reassess the linear German-Raetian frontier, which most likely represented the first fixed frontier the Roman Empire had seen. In 122 Hadrian came to Britain to establish the northern limit of the Empire. The time of the visit could have followed a period of insurrection by northern tribes culminating the construction of the wall (Taylor 2000).
- 3.1.2 The Stanegate System: the Tyne-Solway isthmus was the first possible strategic frontier line south of Scotland. A road between the Tyne and the Solway was already in existence by the Trajanic period, having seemingly been built under Quintus Petillius Cerialis, governor of Britain from AD 71 to 74, or one of his successors (Shotter 1997). The road, later named the Stanegate or 'stoney street' in medieval times, possibly linked the two forts at Corbridge in the east to Carlisle in the west, both of which guarded major river crossings. It is likely that the road was extended to the east of Corbridge, possibly heading for the fort at Washing Well and subsequently to South Shields. Along the Stanegate a number of military sites have been discovered suggesting that they may be part of the Trajanic frontier. On pottery evidence forts at Corbridge, Vindolanda, Nether Denton and Carlisle had been in existence since the Flavian period (AD 75 -120). Carvoran fort 2km east of Thirlwall has been generally assumed to be of similar date, though what evidence there is from the pottery assemblage, indicates that the fort was occupied during the Trajanic period. The fort at Brampton Old Church is thought to have had a short occupation of about the time of Trajan. Newbrough has yielded pottery of the 4th century, however an earlier fort on this site is generally postulated as it fits a regular spacing of forts along the Stangate. Finally Haltwhistle Burn and Throp, (located 3km to the west of Thirlwall), have shown from pottery assemblages recovered to possibly be of a Trajanic date (Breeze and Dobson 2000).
- 3.1.3 The Stangate system was not efficient enough to police the local tribes of the Brigantes, Selgovae and Novantae effectively. It is suggested that there may have also been interaction between the Brigantes (within Roman Provincial territory) and the Selgovae (in Lowland Scotland). British threats to the Empire had become a pressing concern at the beginning of Hadrian's reign; this is indicated by his biographer who mentions that 'The Britain's could no longer be kept under control' (Taylor 2000).
- 3.1.4 *Hadrian's Wall*: the Wall was a composite military barrier, which in its final form, comprised several separate elements; a stone wall fronted by a V-shaped ditch, and a number of purpose-built stone garrison fortifications such as forts, milecastles and turrets. A large earthwork and ditch, built parallel with and to the south of the Wall, known as the Vallum and a metalled road linking the garrison forts, which is known as

the 'Roman Military Way'. The Wall begins in the east at Wallsend in Tyneside and continues to the west terminating at Bowness-on-Solway in Cumbria, a distance of 80 Roman miles (73.5 English miles or 117 kilometres). The Wall conceived by Hadrian was to be ten feet wide and about fifteen feet high. The front face of the wall most likely sported a crenulated parapet, behind which the soldiers patrolled along a paved rampartwalk (Bedoyere 1998). The foundations of Hadrian's ten-foot wide Wall were laid from Newcastle-upon-Tyne eastward for 23 Roman miles to Chesters in Northumberland, but thereafter, apart from a few short lengths further west, the wall is reduced to eight or sometimes, six feet in width. We can assume that at some time during the early construction of the Wall, a decision was made to reduce its width, probably in order to speed-up the work during times of threat from the tribes of southern Scotland. The wall to the west of the River Irthing was originally built out of turf and about sixteen feet wide, topped by a wooden palisade and walkway and punctuated by timber-framed turrets and milecastles. This 'turf-wall' did not endure long, and it was all replaced in stone within a few years, section by section. It is thought that the reason the western part of the Wall was built of turf was due to the fact that there were no ready supplies of stone or lime close to hand at the time of construction, and it was left to a later date to replace this with a regular stone wall. The interior structures in each milecastle seem to have varied, but all contain at least one recognizable barrack-block. They housed a varying number of men with a conjectured maximum of approximately 64 soldiers, and were effectively large gate-houses, whose garrison were originally stationed to control egress through the Wall, and perhaps to levy a tax on goods carried through.

- Between each milecastle were two smaller turrets, equidistant from each other and the 3.1.5 milecastles to either side. They were of a uniform pattern, about 20 feet square, recessed into the Wall and built-up above the height of the Wall rampart walk. In the original plan the Wall was to be garrisoned and patrolled from the milecastles, and there was no requirement for any large forts to be built on the Wall itself. The wall was to be reinforced when needed, from the forts already in existence along the Stanegate, which runs parallel, to the rear of the wall. This format was to prove inadequate, however, and the wall was soon modified by the inclusion of several auxiliary forts along its length. These garrison forts were of a standard 'playing-card' profile, but varied in size between 3 and 5 acres, depending on the type of unit it was built to house. In the infantry forts, the Wall itself generally formed the northern defences of the camp, which projected wholly to the south, as is the case with the milecastles and turrets. In the cavalry forts, or those of part-mounted units, the forts were generally built across the line of the Wall with three of its major gates opening out onto its northern side, part of the wall having to be demolished in order to accommodate the fort. In some cases forts were sited on top of milecastles, which had to be demolished, as at Bowness on Solway.
- 3.1.6 The original concept of the Wall fulfilled what Hadrian's biographer wrote, that he 'drew a wall along the length of eighty miles to separate barbarians and Romans' (Birley 1976). This concept reflected the form of the German Raetian *limes* in that the Wall relied on the forts of the Stanegate for reinforcements in case of need. Its main purpose was to control movement in and out of the Province, as well as forming a base for military activity on or north of the frontier, and was never intended to be a defensive feature (*ibid*).

- 3.1.7 The Vallum: shortly after work on the Wall had been completed a large earthwork was constructed a short distance to the south, which followed along almost the full length of the Wall. This earthwork, known as the vallum, consisted of a continuous steep-sided trench, with a flat-bottom. Unlike the ditch fronting the Wall to the north, which had a normal Roman military V-shaped profile this flat-bottomed ditch, twenty Roman feet (5.9m) wide and 20 feet deep, was flanked by 10 feet (3m) high and 20 feet wide mounds, positioned 30 feet (8.9m) away on either side. These features combined created a 120-foot (35m) wide system of earthworks. The vallum usually diverts around forts therefore, it is probably safe to assume that it was created after work on the Wall had commenced. The vallum may have formed part of the original plan but was perhaps the order to start it was not scheduled until Hadrian's Wall was substantially completed. The Vallum followed the route of the Wall closely for almost its entire length, being conspicuously absent in the stretch from Wallsend to Newcastle, but running uninterrupted from the bridge over the River Tyne to the large auxiliary fort at Bowness on the Solway Firth. The vallum runs almost parallel to the Wall all the way to the fort at Stanwix in Carlisle deviating from this route for only a short stretch at Castlesteads. Beyond the large cavalry fort at Stanwix, the vallum proceeds westwards to the Bowness terminus with only three or four relatively minor re-alignments, and mostly ignores, the meandering course of the Wall in this part of the Solway region. It is thought that the vallum was intended to mark-out a kind of rearward boundary or "exclusion zone" behind the Wall, another school of thought is that its main purpose was as a communication route. An idea recently expounded, is that the vallum served no other purpose than to punctuate the northern frontier of Rome, and was deliberately built on a monumental scale on the orders of emperor Hadrian.
- 3.1.8 The Military Way: at first, the Wall garrisons were supplied along roads, which issued from the gates at the rear of each fort and were possibly connected to the Stanegate, which ran parallel with the Wall. These supply-roads were provided to each of the main forts on the Wall, and also to a few of the milecastles. Around the time that the vallum went out of use c AD 140, the Wall was provided with its own purpose-built, metalled supply road, which ran between the Wall and the vallum. This new road connected each of the garrisons on the Wall, and ran through the rear portion of each fort. In addition to providing a shorter and more secure route between each fort, there were branch-roads serving the milecastles, and pathways to all of the turrets probably branched-off from it (Bedoyere 1998). The modern name for this road is the Roman Military Way.
- 3.1.9 There are a number of sites connected with the Wall, which are located within the environs of Willowford Farm. To the east of the farm is Willowford Roman Bridge, which provided a crossing of the River Irthing. Immediately to the east of the farm is Turret 48b and to the south is a temporary marching camp. Also to the south is a small fort or fortlet called Throp. Built into a north-facing wall of one of the buildings which form Willowford Farm is a Roman inscription.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1 In 1994, two archaeological watching briefs were undertaken at Willowford Farm prior to the construction of a concrete farm slurry tank, which necessitated the excavation to cross Hadrian's Wall and ditch. A new section of walling was revealed which showed that the majority of Wall stones had been deliberately removed (Whitworth 1997).

3.3.1 The Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) now known as Oxford Archaeology North (OAN) monitored minor excavations associated with the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail Alignment Project. No significant archaeological features were recorded in the vicinity of Willowford Farm (LUAU 1998).

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The evaluation trench was mechanically excavated to the natural subsoil, or until archaeological deposits were encountered. Subsequently any archaeological features or horizons were excavated by hand, which permitted an examination of the archaeological remains within the site. The trench location is depicted in Figure 3; detailed plans and sections are depicted in Figures 4 to 6.

4.2 TRENCH 1

- 4.2.1 The evaluation trench was located immediately to the north of Willowford Farm and measured 1.6m wide by 28m long, and was orientated north-south (Fig 3, Plate 1). The trench was positioned over the projected line of Hadrian's Wall and associated ditch. The natural subsoil (100), which consisted of a moderately compacted brownish orange silty sand, was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.65m and sloped down from south to north from a level of 130.29m to 128.97m AOD.
- 4.2.2 Towards the southern end of the trench the foundation cut for Hadrian's Wall [103] was recorded cutting the natural subsoil, (100). It measured approximately 3.2m wide and 0.35m deep with almost vertical sides and a flat base. No evidence of facing stones from the Wall, were revealed due stone robbing, however fragments of the core of the Wall (102), was visible. It consisted of large river washed stones varying in size up to 0.30m in diameter. The fill of the foundation cut (101), appears to have been disturbed in the post-medieval period, a single sherd of 19th century domestic ware was recovered as well as several fragments of unidentifiable iron. It is likely that the majority of Wall stones were removed during the construction of Willowford Farm (Fig 4, 5 and 6, Plate 5).
- 4.2.3 Contained entirely within the Wall foundation, was a large sub-rounded posthole [105], measuring 0.70m wide by 0.66m deep. It contained a single fill (104), which consisted of dark almost black organic material, which was formed by a large timber post that was left to degrade in-situ. It is likely that this feature formed part of a fence post/gate post of post-medieval date (Fig 5, Plate 4).
- 4.2.4 Sealing the Wall foundation was a deliberately laid layer of compacted small to medium sized stones, (106) which appeared to form part of an earlier surface again of post medieval date. It is likely that when masonry from the Wall was removed down to its foundation course for re-use elsewhere, it formed a void which had to be filled in order to provide access to the fields surrounding the farm (Fig 4, Plate 3).
- 4.2.5 At the southern end of the trench, the associated ditch [113], was located approximately 10.30m from the Wall. Due to this area of the trench being largely unworkable because of water, it was impossible to expose the ditch and define its full extent. The upper fill of the ditch, (112), contained a large amount of stonework from the wall. It is impossible to say if this was a deliberate infilling of the ditch with stone removed from the Wall or

- the gradual accumulation of material of a period of time. A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from this layer implying that the farm has medieval origins (Fig 4, Plate 6 and 7).
- 4.2.6 On the northern side of the ditch a section of ditch bank, (114) was visible in section, which showed that the bank was constructed entirely out of material removed from the ditch. It consisted of compacted natural subsoil with numerous small sub-rounded stones. The ditch was visible as a shallow earthwork feature continuing eastwards across the field to Willowford Bridge.
- 4.2.7 Overlying the ditch was a spread of loose material (115), consisting of dressed wall stones, within a loose dark brown silty sand. This in turn was overlaid by a thin band of brownish grey silty sand (109), again containing wall stones as well as modern material such as metal piping and discarded farm implements. Layer (110), consisted of mid brown compacted silty loam, which was virtually stone free and extended over the northern area of the trench, this layer could represent a buried soil horizon. The topsoil (111), comprising of friable dark greyish brown sandy silt with occasional sub-angular stones.
- 4.2.8 The make-up of the southern extent of the evaluation trench differed considerably. The natural subsoil was overlaid by (107), a deposit that is similar to (106) (see 4.2.4) and has been interpreted an earlier post-medieval surface. Deposit (107), was overlaid by the modern yard surface and consisted of compacted concrete and tarmac (108).

5 FINDS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The archaeological finds from the evaluation were cleaned and packaged according to standard guidelines, and recorded under the supervision of F Giecco (NPA Ltd Technical Director). During the targeted evaluation, all spoil and archaeological horizons were fully metal detected

5.2 MEDIEVAL AND POST-MEDIEVAL POTTERY

- 5.2.1 The excavation produced only two sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery.
- 5.2.2 A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from layer (112), which consisted of 13th to 14th century, partly reduced green glazed ware. The single sherd being relatively unabraded, may point to a settlement focus adjacent to the Wall on the same site of the present day Willowford Farm. It seems unlikely that material could have been transported from the nearby village of Gilsland due to its remote location.
- 5.2.3 The post-medieval potsherd consisted of fragments of tin-glazed earthenware from unstratified contexts (U/S).

5.3 IRON AND OTHER METAL OBJECTS

5.3.1 Over 40 fragments of iron were recovered, the majority of which (85%+) comprised of modern unidentified objects. The rest comprised of machine made nails, screws and a general assortment of domestic and industrial debris all of post medieval date. Each individual item was assessed on-site and then discarded.

5.4 CERAMIC AND OTHER BUILDING MATERIALS

5.4.1 Three fragments of CBM were recovered from unstratified contexts. Most of the fragments were extremely degraded and thus could not be assigned a date. Two fragments of mortar were recovered from layer (115), which are clearly Roman in origin. Both fragments consist of pale grey lime mortar with numerous flecks of red ceramic.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL

- 6.1.1 The results of the evaluation successfully demonstrated that a section of Hadrian's Wall from which the waste/sewerage pipe will directly impinge upon, had been essentially removed, both in the construction of Willowford Farm and to provide access to land on the north side of the
- 6.1.2 The evaluation also established that the foundation cut for the Wall survived relatively intact. It is likely that the post-medieval compacted surface that was placed above the Wall cut, protected it from any further truncation. The Wall Ditch was exposed at the northern extent of the trench, which was covered with 1.20m of modern overburden and thus should not be affected by the proposed works. The southern extent of the trench consisted of a modern surface; it is likely that the construction of this surface has destroyed any significant subsurface remains.
- 6.1.3 The results of the evaluation indicate that the proposed construction works will not directly impact on significant archaeological remains.

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8 APPENDIX 1

LIST OF CONTEXTS

Context	Туре	Description
100	Layer	Natural
101	Fill	Fill of [103]
102	Masonry	Hadrian's Wall stones
103 Cut		Foundation cut for Hadrian's Wall
104 Fill		Fill of [105]
105	Cut	Post medieval Post-hole
106	Layer	Cobbles
107	Layer	Compacted layer
108	Layer	Modern hardcore surface
109	Layer	Rubble
110	Layer	Thick band of silty sand
111	Layer	Topsoil
112	Upper Fill	Fill of [113]
113	Cut	Wall Ditch
114	Deposit	Earthen bank of Hadrian's Wall
115	Layer	Loose rubble

Table 4: Index of Contexts

9 APPENDIX 2

FIGURES AND PLATES



Plate 1: Trench Location, Hadrian's' Wall in the background and the Wall Ditch in the foreground, facing south



Plate 2: Hadrian's Wall, showing trench location, Willowford Farm to the right of the picture, facing east



Plate 3: Cobbled surface (106), facing north



Plate 4: Posthole [105], facing east



Plate 5: Cut [103], showing Wall core (102), left side of picture, facing east



Plate 6: Wall Ditch [113], facing north



Plate 7: Wall Ditch [113], facing south



Plate 8: Hadrian's Wall, facing east towards Willowford Roman Bridge, taken from site

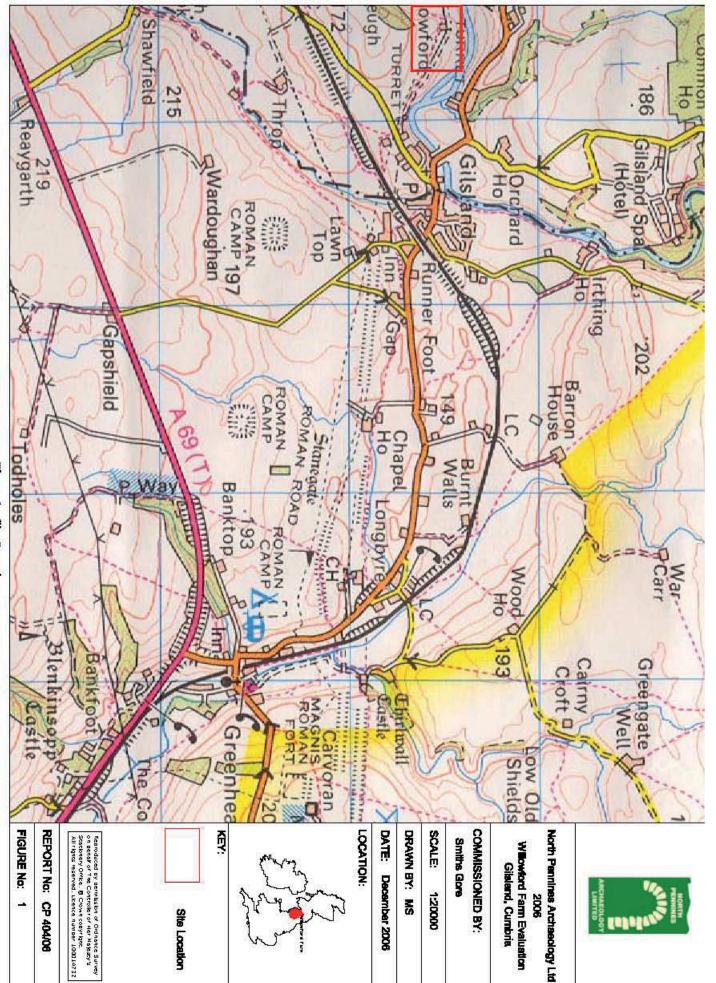


Figure 1 : Site Location

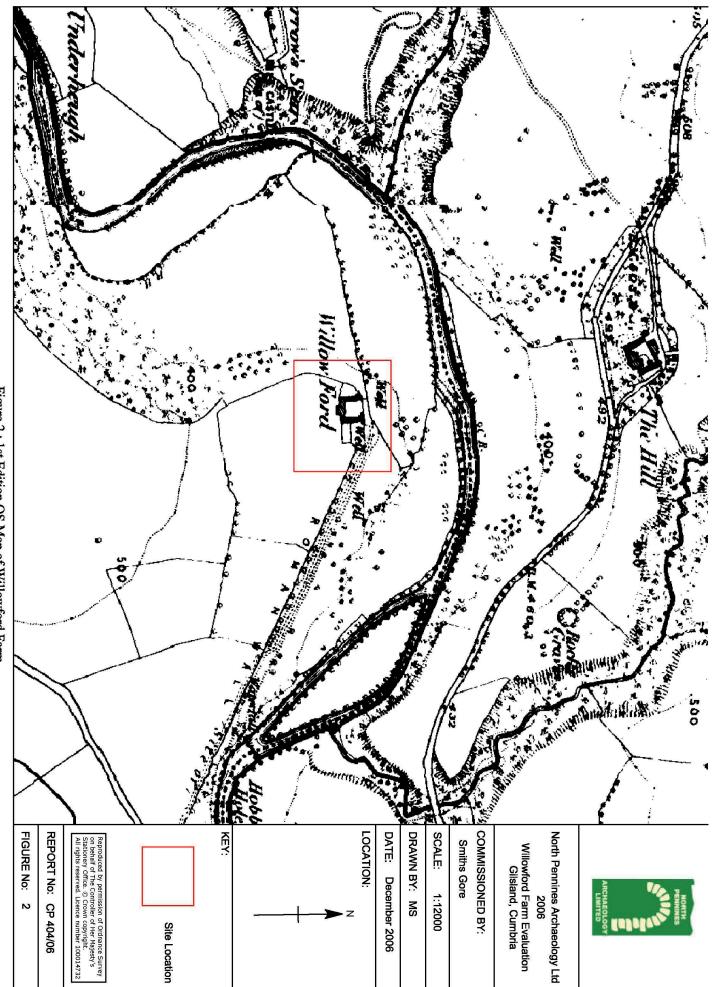


Figure 2: 1st Edition OS Map of Willowford Farm

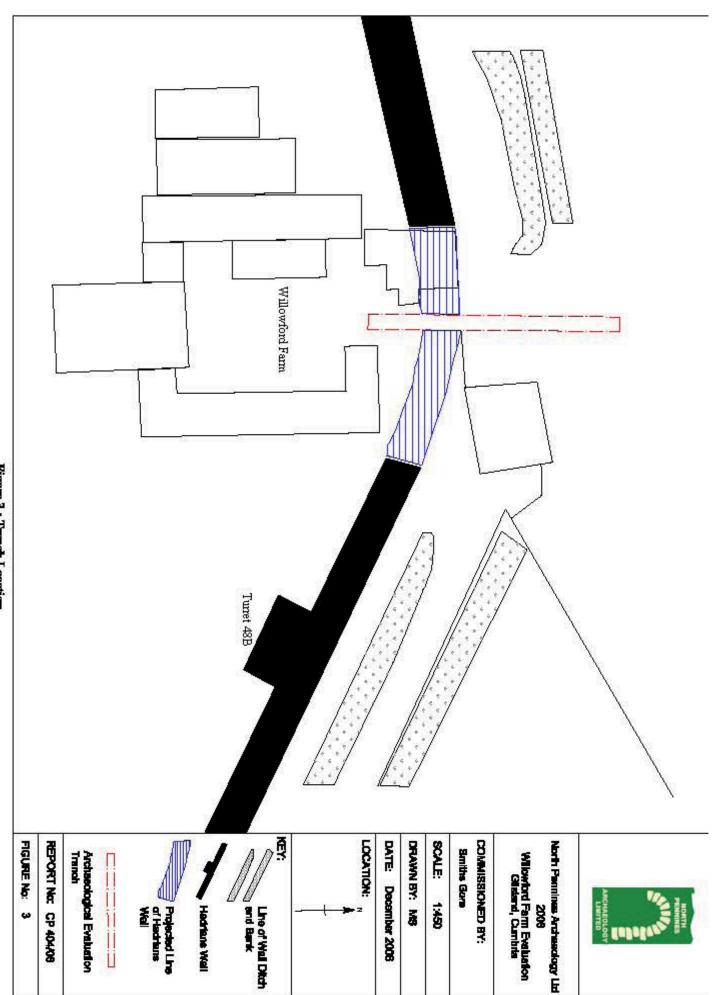


Figure 3: Trench Location

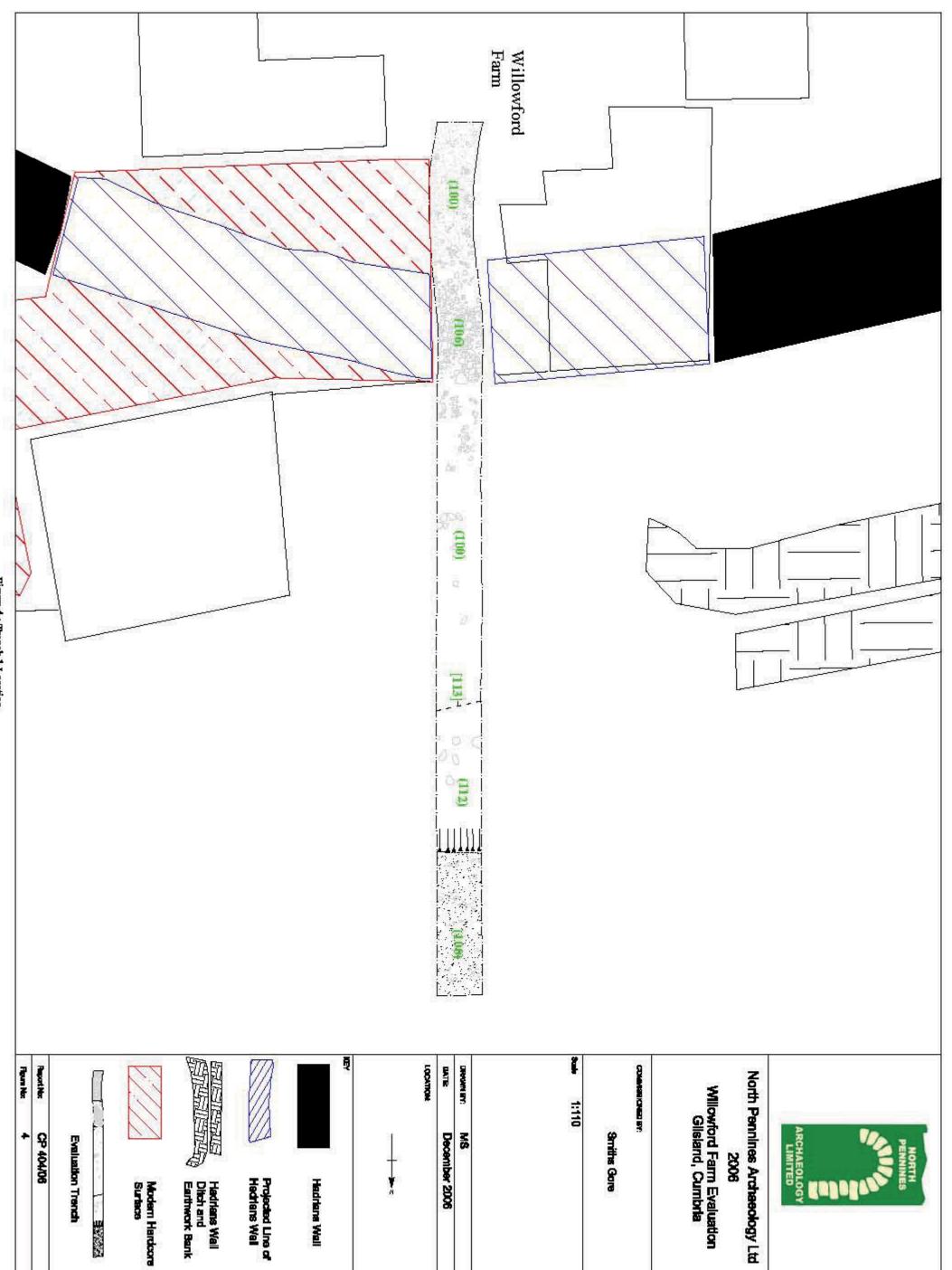


Figure 4: Trench 1 Location

