
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/159/04

**REPORT ON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
FIELD EVALUATION ON
LAND AT
THE GREY BULL HOTEL
HALTWHISTLE
NORTHUMBERLAND**

NGR: NY 7097 6422

**Planning Reference
20041349
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**FOR
MR R HIND**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2004 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological field evaluation in advance of a planning application for a block of flats and associated car parking on land adjacent to the Grey Bull Hotel, Haltwhistle, Northumberland. The work was required in response to a brief prepared by Northumberland County Council Conservation Team.

The work involved the consultation of the County Sites and Monuments Record in order to assess the existing information regarding the site's historic, archaeological, topographical and geographical context prior to the preparation of a project design. This involved the collection of all readily available information regarding the archaeological landscape of the study area, including the locations and settings of Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Listed Buildings, Parks and Gardens and other, non-designated archaeological remains.

The development area falls within an area of high archaeological potential, within the historic medieval core settlement of Haltwhistle. The site is situated within the centre of the medieval settlement within an area of former burgage plots. Recent excavations within burgage plots across the county have revealed a number of medieval and later features which have produced insight into the form and use of these land parcels in the period.

The archaeological field evaluation revealed no significant deposits within any of the trenches. There were no signs of any medieval activity, the earliest recorded deposits were 19th century in date. The total absence of archaeological deposits is likely the result of major terracing associated with the development of area in the 19th century.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following people and institutions who gave help and assistance during the compilation of this report: Liz Williams of Northumbria County Council Sites and Monuments Record, Karen Derham, Assistant County Archaeologist and Mr Richard Hind.

The field evaluation was directed and the project managed by Frank Giecco, NPA Principal Archaeologist, and the on site excavation and recording undertaken by Frank Giecco and Joanne Beaty. The report was written by Chris Jones, NPA Project Archaeologist, the report was edited by Juliet Reeves.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

- 1.1 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was invited by Graeme Wakefield of Crawford Higgins Associates on behalf of Mr R Hind, to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land adjacent to the Grey Bull Hotel, Haltwhistle, Northumberland.
- 1.2 The work followed a planning application for a block of flats, a scheme that affects an area of high archaeological potential within the medieval town of Corbridge. As a result, Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT) recommended that a programme of archaeological work was to be undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted to and approved by NCCCT.
- 1.3 The work comprised a field evaluation consisting of the excavation of a series of trial trenches measuring between 5m and 10m by 2m in order to investigate 4% of the development area.
- 1.4 The site is situated adjacent to the Grey Bull Hotel, between Main Street and Fair Hill (NY 7097 6422) and lies at the centre of the medieval town, within an area of burgrave plots. The Ordnance Survey 1st Edition map shows the site has been terraced by the mid 19th century, with the original contours of the slope preserved in the lane to the west of the Grey Bull Hotel.
- 1.5 No archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was prepared in response to a brief prepared by Northumbria County Council Conservation Team for an archaeological field evaluation. This included a detailed specification of works to be carried out, which consisted of a desk-based assessment prior to fieldwork, the excavation of a linear trial trench and a programme of post excavation and reporting.

2.2 FIELD EVALUATION

- 2.2.1 The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of a series of linear trial trenches in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant 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 were 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 survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

- 2.2.3 Each trench was mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological deposits, or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Each trench was then manually cleaned and all features investigated and recorded according to the NPA standard procedure as set out in the company Excavation Manual.
- 2.2.4 Photography was undertaken using a Canon EOS 100 Single Lens Reflex (SLR) manual camera. A photographic record was made using 400 ISO colour print 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).
- 2.2.6 A programme of environmental sampling was undertaken following an agreed sampling strategy formulated in consultation with English Heritage and Northumbria County Council Conservation Team.

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 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 04 GBH-A.

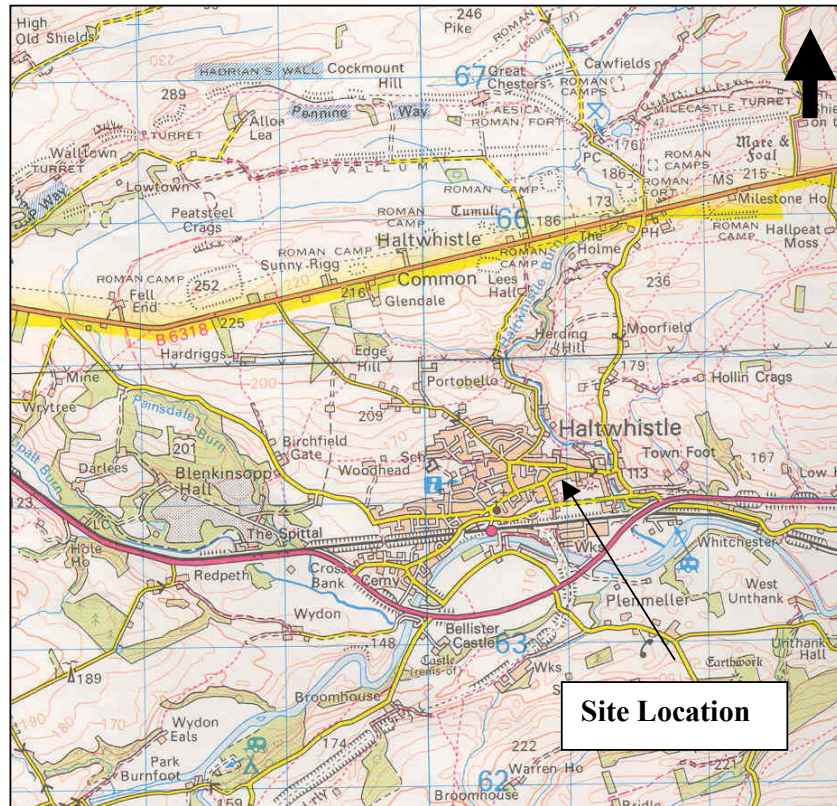


Figure 1a: Site Location. Reproduced from Ordnance Survey Get-A-Map Service 1:50,000 scale by permission of Ordnance Survey® on behalf of the controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright (1997) All rights reserved. Licence Number WL6488

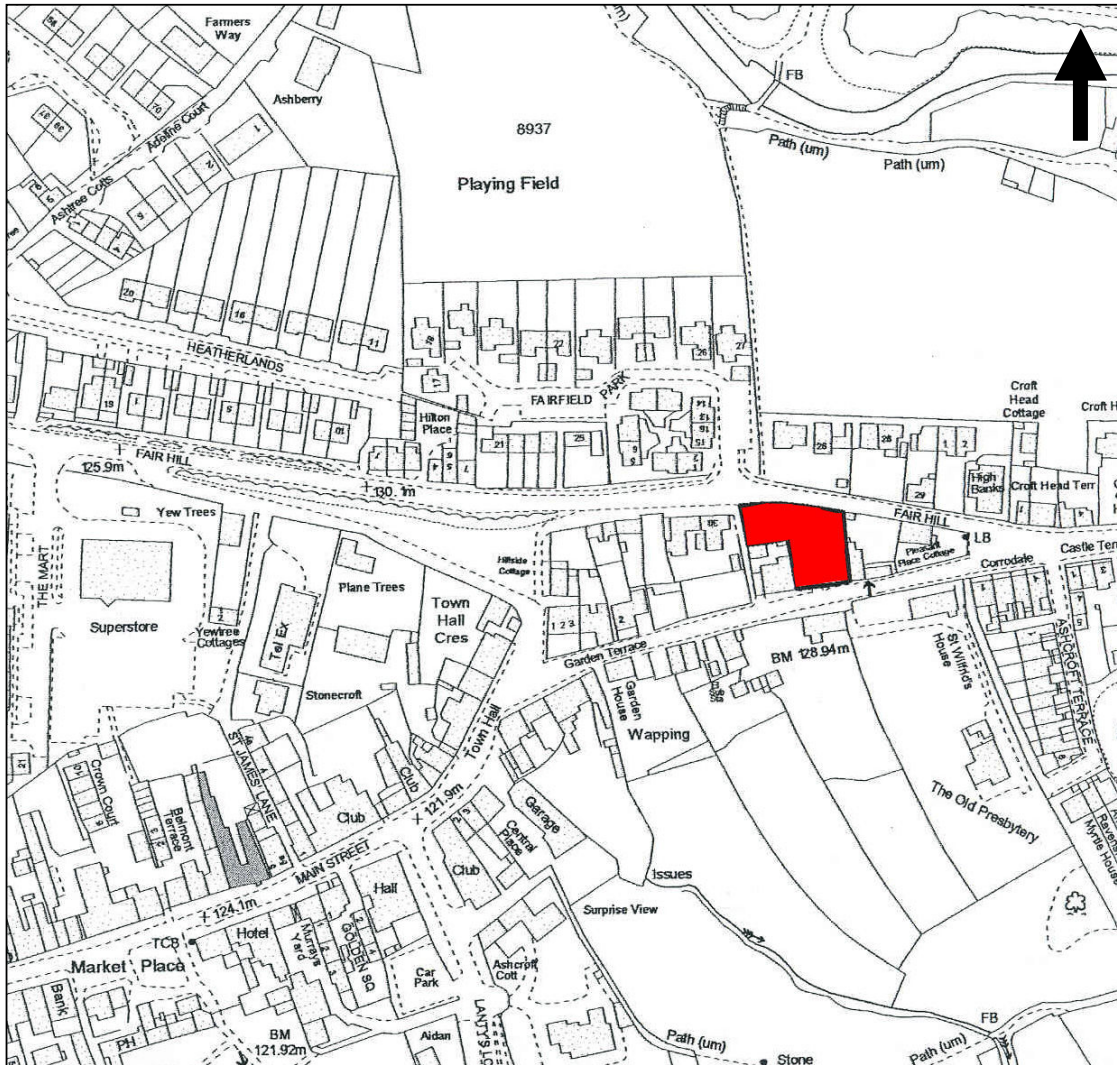


Figure 1b. Site Location. The site is shown in red. Scale:1:2500.

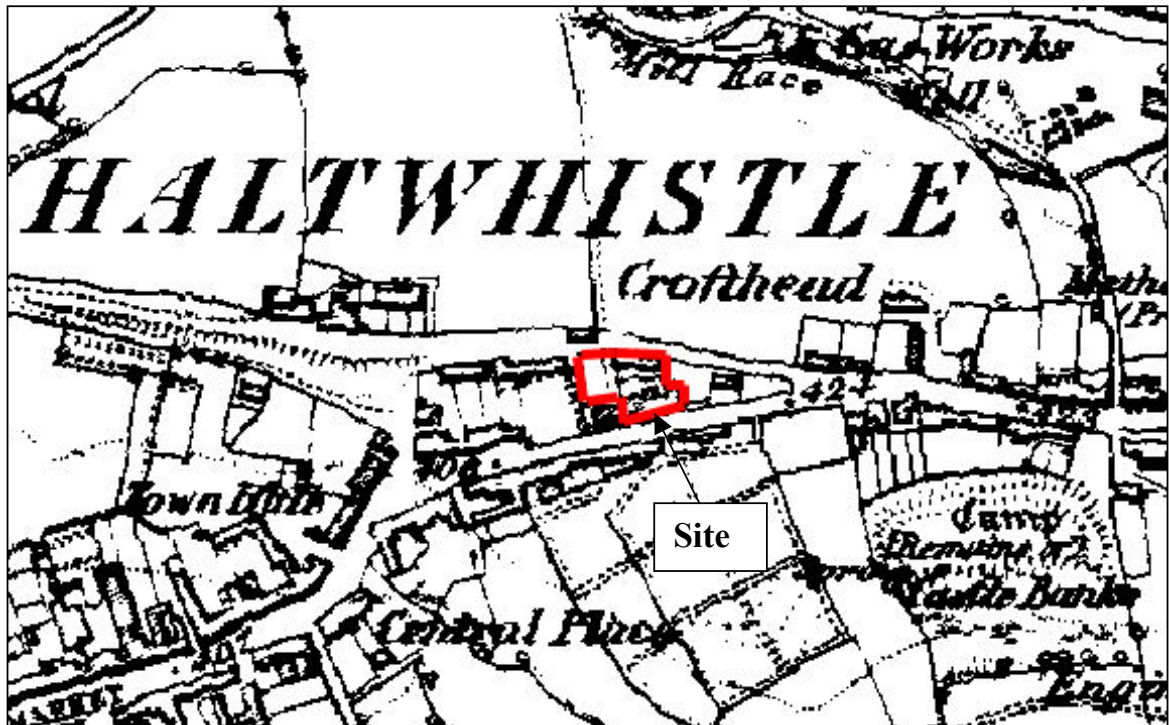


Figure 2. Ordnance Survey 1st Edition. The site is shown in red. Scale: 6 inch to 1 mile.

3 RESULTS

- 3.1 The evaluation was undertaken by a team of professional field archaeologists comprising Frank Giecco BA, Dip Arch, AIFA and Joanne Beaty BA.
- 3.2 The work was undertaken in a single phase of two days duration, and took place on the 1st and 2nd of December 2004.
- 3.3 All references to cardinal directions refer to site grid north.

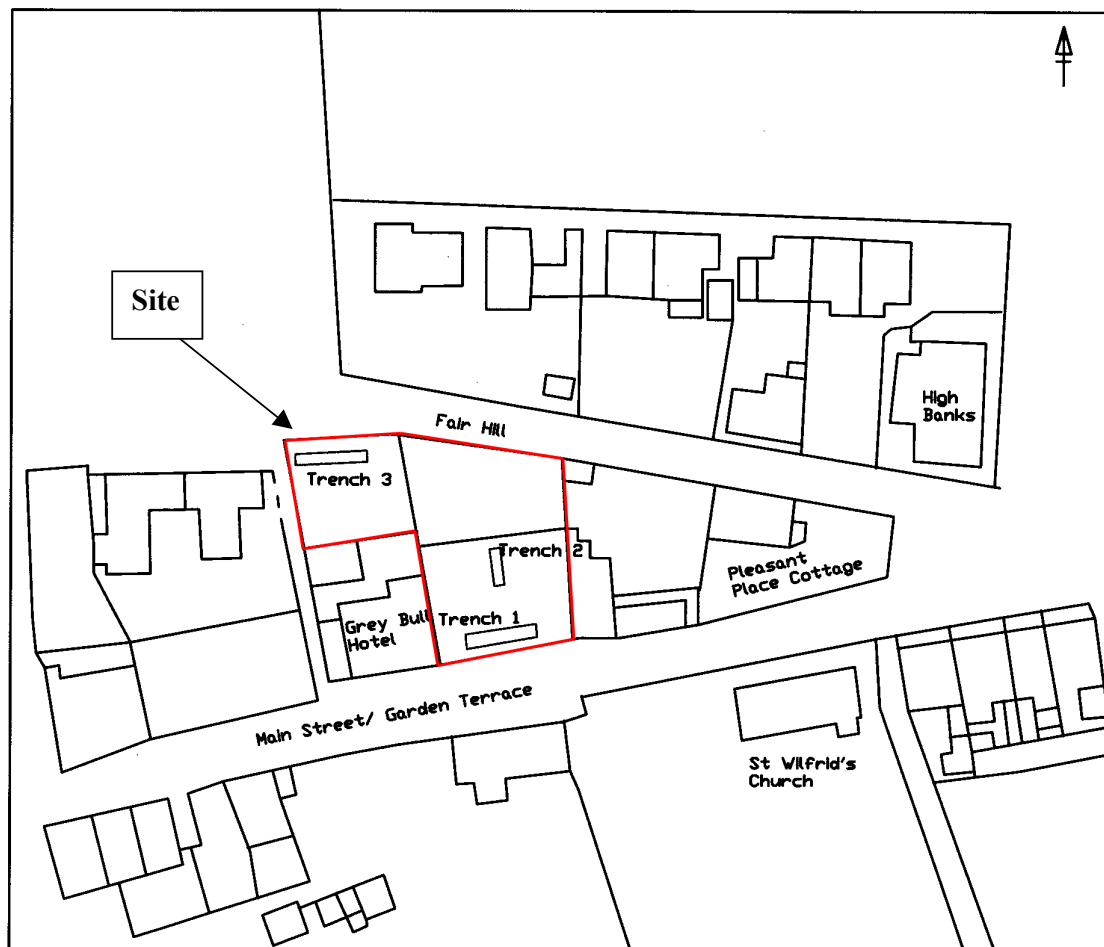


Figure 3: Location of Trenches. Scale: 1:1000

3.4 TRENCH 1

3.4.1 Trench 1 was located at the south part of the site, oriented east-west and measured 10m x 1.60m. The earliest recorded deposit was observed at a depth of between 0.30 – 0.65m and consisted of postglacial light brown sandy till (101). This was sealed by a subsoil layer (110), which was in turn sealed by loamy topsoil (109). The stratigraphy was truncated by a modern drain which consisted of sandstone, mortar and concrete. No archaeological features were observed within this trench.

3.5 TRENCH 2

3.5.1 Trench 2 was located at the centre of the site, oriented north-south and measured 5m x 1.6m. The earliest recorded deposit was observed at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.50m and consisted of boulder clay (120). This was sealed by a demolition spread which consisted of white mortar, black, light brown and dark grey silt and light brown clay (100). Context 100 was sealed by tarmac. Two 19th century wall foundations were observed, oriented east-west. It is likely these are the remains of buildings demolished in the 1950s (Mr R Hind, pers comm.).

3.6 TRENCH 3

3.6.1 Trench 3 was located at the north part of the site, to the rear of the Grey Bull Hotel. The trench was oriented east-west and measured 10m x 1.6m. The earliest recorded deposit was observed at a depth of between 0.30m and 0.50m and consisted of light brown sandy till (101). Context 101 was sealed by a layer of garden soil (119), which was in turn sealed by a layer of redeposited natural sandy till (111). Context 111 was sealed by modern overburden and a layer of tarmac. A modern pit cut the overburden and part of 111. No archaeological deposits were observed within this trench.

4 THE FINDS

4.1 The finds assemblage consisted entirely of 19th and 20th century material. These included fragments of willow patterned porcelain and clay tobacco pipes from within a garden soil layer (119) within trench 3. None of the finds were retained.

5 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 No significant archaeological remains were identified within any of the evaluation trenches. There were no signs of any medieval activity. The total absence of archaeological deposits is likely the result of major terracing associated with the development of area in the 19th century.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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