
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP/226/05

**DESK BASED
ASSESSMENT,
AND
ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD
EVALUATION FOR A
PROPOSED
DEVELOPMENT AT
NEWBIGGIN,
STANTON,
PENRITH**

**FOR
EDEN HOUSING
ASSOCIATION Ltd**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In June 2005 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Eden Housing Association Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk based assessment in advance of a proposed development for a site at Newbiggin, Stainton, Cumbria. Following on from this assessment a 5% field evaluation was carried out over three days between the 13th and 15th of September 2005. No features of any archaeological significance were observed during the field evaluation.

The work involved the excavation of three linear trial trenches which measured 20m x 1.6m, in order to assess the presence/absence, extent, nature and state of preservation of archaeological deposits across the development site.

Although the site was in an area of high archaeological potential, with the potential for archaeological remains from the prehistoric through to the medieval period, no archaeological deposits were observed within any of the trenches. The earliest recorded deposit consisted of cobble filled land drain, which produced 19th century pottery. It is therefore recommended that no further constraint to development is likely to be necessary on archaeological grounds.

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Frank Giecco and Joanne Beaty BA. Archaeological evaluation was carried out by Frank Giecco and Kenneth Denham BA. This report was prepared by Frank Giecco and edited by Juliet Reeves BA and Richard Hewitt BSc MLitt.

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In July 2005 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd carried out an archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (DBA) at Newbiggin, Stainton, near Penrith, Cumbria (Fig 1). The proposed development site, an area of approximately 1600m², was the subject of an intensive desk-based investigation which included consultation of historic maps, documentary sources, and the Cumbria County Council (CCC) Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). The work demonstrated the high archaeological potential of the area and a requirement for an archaeological evaluation of 5% of the site area was issued by Jeremy Parsons of the CCC Historic Environment Service (HES; brief, 3/03/1023)
- 1.2 Evaluation work involved excavation of three linear trial trenches and was also carried out by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. In this report, the results of the DBA and the subsequent evaluation have been presented together for reasons of clarity.
- 1.3 The principal objective of the DBA was to assess the archaeological and historical potential of the proposed development site, and characterise the archaeological constraints associated with the proposed development. Following this assessment, on the basis of the recommendations provided by the CCCHES, evaluation trenching aimed to determine the presence/absence of buried archaeological remains and define the nature and extent of any such existing remains in order to mitigate the archaeological impact of the proposed development.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS WORK

- 2.1 There has been no previous archaeological assessment undertaken within the study area.
- 2.2 A desk top assessment and archaeological evaluation was carried out by Oxford Archaeology North in 2002 on the site of Rose Cottage (figure 3), Newbiggin, Cumbria (NY 46842983) just to the south east of the development site. The area assessed was within the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) hazard area in Newbiggin. The evaluation comprised of two trenches and showed modern disturbance was relatively low. A feature was found in one of the trenches which comprised of series of large cobbles, but no certain date could be given to this feature.
- 2.3 A desk-based assessment and topographic survey was undertaken by Headland Archaeology in 2002 at land adjacent to Rose Cottage, Newbiggin, Cumbria. Its results showed that Newbiggin has significant earthworks of medieval date. An evaluation was carried out by Headland Archaeology in 2002 on the same land. The evaluation showed a group of house platforms backing onto a lane, with probable ridge and furrow marks behind. Earthworks in the centre of the site were probably later in date as they appear on the 1900 ordnance survey map.
- 2.4 Additional work was carried out by Headland Archaeology in 2003 at land adjacent to Rose Cottage. The trial trenches showed that the central area of the

land contained a building with associated yards and paths. Finds from the evaluation were all of 18th and 19th century date.

- 2.5 In October 1989 a metal detector survey was carried out at Silver field, Flusco, Newbiggin, Cumbria. The survey recovered some significant finds of silver brooches of Viking date, which are now in the British Museum.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Place Name Evidence

- 3.1.1 The place name evidence for Newbiggin derives from the Anglo-Saxon term for new building.

3.2 Prehistoric

- 3.2.1 The area surrounding Newbiggin is steeped with prehistoric activity. There are several prehistoric sites in close vicinity. Mossthorns (formerly Newbiggin Moss) to the east of the site has several tumuli and cairns of Bronze Age date. The area to the west near Greystoke has had finds of Neolithic and Bronze Age date. An urn cemetery containing cremated bone and a biconical jet bead was discovered in 1990 during construction of a road through Greystoke Moor plantation. Great Mell Fell, south of Greystoke, has a bronze age tumulus on the summit. At Flusco Pike a stone coffin of possible prehistoric date containing human bones was discovered in the 19th century. The site at Newbiggin is in close proximity to these prehistoric sites, though it is not known if there is prehistoric activity in the study area itself. The evaluations carried out by Oxford North and Headland at land adjacent to Rose Cottage only showed activity from the medieval period onwards.

3.3 Roman

- 3.3.1 There has been some Roman activity in the area as the SMR. shows a Roman coin hoard found at Newbiggin, Dacre, Cumbria. The hoard comprised 67 coins ranging from Vespasian to Marcus Aurelius and probably also Severus Alexander. The coins were found several hundred years ago on the site of Newbiggin although it not known exactly where the find was made. The course of a Roman road runs almost parallel with Newbiggin village from near Whitbarrow village up to Greenthwaite Hall near Greystoke. The fort at Old Penrith is thought to have been occupied from the campaigns of Agricola to the 4th century (Frere, 1967).

3.4 Early Medieval

- 3.4.1 There was a considerable amount of activity in the early medieval period around Newbiggin. There is a shaft of Viking date in Dacre church. The shaft itself is the base of a cross with the cross part missing. The shaft is decorated in Viking style and depicts such scenes as the fall of man with Adam and Eve on either side of a central tree covered with fruit. The shaft is at St Andrews church and is manacled to the south wall, the stone was found during restoration of the east end of the church in 1875. Also found in Dacre church was a Y-shaped drain thought to have been of similar age as the shaft.
- 3.4.2 The most significant find of early medieval date was made in 1989 using metal detectors and divining rods on Silver Field in Newbiggin. During a metal detector survey carried out by Oxford North, a large quantity of Viking silver brooches were found. The brooches were of large pennanular design. "The brooches and fragments found in 1989 can be closely compared with other pennanular brooches of late ninth and early tenth centuries A.D. with a centred

distribution on the Irish Sea.” (Richardson, 1996). These finds, together with a similar brooch in found in 1785 at the same location, are all in the British Museum.

- 3.4.3 Dacre was obviously a significant place during this period in history as it is mentioned in the Anglo-Saxon chronicle as a meeting place for the kings to swear allegiance to King Athelstan of the Northumbrians. The chronicle says that in the year 926 “fiery lights appeared in the north part of the heavens. And Sihtric perished: and King Athelstan obtained the kingdom of the Northumbrians. And he ruled all the kings which were in the island: first Huwal, king of the west-Welsh; and Constantine, king of the Scots: and Unwen. King of the Guentian people; and Ealdred, son of Ealdulf of Bamburgh; And they confirmed the peace by pledge, and by oaths, at the place which is called Eamot, on the fourth of the Ides of July (July 12): and they renounced all idolatry, and after that submitted to him in peace” .
- 3.4.4 From a passage in William of Malmesbury “this place which is called Eamot” appears to have been Dacre, for Malmesbury says “Anlof, the son of Sihtric, then fled into Ireland, and his brother Guthferth into Scotland. Messengers from the king immediately followed to Constantine, king of the Scots, and Eugenius, king of the Cumbrians, claiming the fugitive under threat of war. The barbarians had no idea of resistance, but without delay coming to a place called Dacor, they surrendered themselves and their kingdoms to the sovereign of England.” (Whellan, 1860, p524).

3.5 Medieval

- 3.5.1 Newbiggin itself is within the SMR hazard area (figure 3) because of the extensive earthworks thought to belong to the original medieval village. The study area is just outside the hazard area. The history surrounding Newbiggin in the medieval period is linked to the Dacre family. The name Dacre is thought to have changed from Dacor to Dacre when a member of the family fought in the crusades at the battle of Acre and on returning changed the family name. At Dacre church, dedicated to St Andrew on the north side of the chancel are the effigies of a crusade knight possibly a Templar Knight, which is thought to be connected to the Dacre family from around the time of Henry III. It is thought that a pre-Norman monastery at Dacre was replaced by the medieval church.

3.6 Post-Medieval

- 3.6.1 The post-medieval history of Newbiggin seems to be connected with the Tymparon Hall quarry and limeworks. The Hall and works pre-date 1867 as they are shown on the first edition ordnance survey map of this date (figure 2).
- 3.6.2 The Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Railway opened in 1864. The purpose of the railway was to transport materials back and forth from County Durham to Flusco and Brigham, stone from Embleton and Threlkeld, and slate from Honister. The line also used to transport cattle to Cockermouth, but part of the line has been filled in now and no longer in use.
- 3.6.2 The barns at Tymparon Hall are also on the first edition ordnance survey map for the area. Work carried out by Headland in 2003 at Newbiggin found a building

with associated yards paths and boundaries along with finds of 18th and 19th century date. There are several buildings still surviving in the area of this date.

- 3.6.3 The Hill (SMR 23882) is situated approximately 800m to the south east of the study area is a farmhouse of late 18th century date with roughcast walls and a green slate roof. Oak Bank and barn has an inscribed date of 1771 and is comprised of whitewashed rubble walls with a green slate roof. Town Head farmhouse and adjoining barn (SMR 23883) and Sunbeam (SMR 23884) situated further to the south-east are both of mid 18th century date and are constructed of painted rubble walls and green slate roof.

4 AIMS AND METHODS

- 4.1 The work undertaken consisted of a field evaluation. This consisted of the excavation of three linear trial trenches (figure 4) each of which measured 20m x 1.6m.
- 4.2 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 are observed;
 - to establish the line of Hadrian's Wall in relation to the development site;
 - to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- 4.3 The trenches were mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to the top of archaeological deposits, or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. The trenches were then manually cleaned and all features investigated and recorded according to the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd standard procedure, as set out in the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd Excavation Manual. Photography was undertaken using a Canon EOS 100 Single Lens Reflex (SLR) manual camera. A photographic record was made using 200 ISO colour print film.
- 4.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994).

5 RESULTS

- 5.1 The evaluation was undertaken by Frank Giecco BA, Dip Arch, AIFA and Kenneth Denham BA of North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. They was assisted by Alan James who carried out a metal detector survey of the whole development site. The central area of the site had been stripped of topsoil down to the natural subsoil prior to the commencement of the evaluation (plate 1). The finds were exclusively late 19th and 20th century in date and were not retained.
- 5.2 Three linear trial trenches, all of which measured 20m x 1.6m, were excavated within the proposed development site.
- 5.3 All references to cardinal directions refer to site grid north. Heights refer to the depth below current ground level.

- 5.4 Trench 1 (figure 4) was located at the southern side of the site in an area which had not been topsoil stripped. The trench was aligned SW/NE. Topsoil (100) a light brown silty loam measured between 0.80m and 0.20m in depth and sealed the orange brown natural boulder clay. No features of archaeological note were observed within the trench with the only feature present being the late 20th century foundations of a probable garden shed (see plate 2).
- 5.5 Trench 2 (figure 4) was aligned SW/NE. The trench was located in the centre of the development site in an area which had previously been stripped of all topsoil. The natural boulder clay (101) was observed throughout the trench (see plate 3). No archaeological features were observed within the trench.
- 5.6 Trench 3 (figure 4) was aligned SE/NW and was located in the northern end of the site. Natural boulder clay (101) was recorded beneath approximately 0.25m of topsoil (100). The only feature recorded within the trench was a cobble filled land drain measuring 0.50m in width, 0.35m in depth and extending for over 35m on a SW/NE alignment (plate 4). A section was excavated across this feature and one sherd of 19th century earthenware was recovered.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The three trenches produced no features of archaeological note, with no evidence of any medieval or earlier activity. The central portion of the site which had been stripped of topsoil was also archaeologically sterile. The conclusion from this fieldwork is that this area was positioned beyond the limits of the medieval settlement. If the site was utilised at all during the medieval period it is likely to have been pastureland rather than arable as there was no evidence of any ridge and furrow cultivation in the development site. It therefore seems likely that no further archaeological work would be necessary.



Plate 1: General site shot of stripped central area of site



Plate 2: Detail of 20th century foundations of small building within trench 1



Plate 3: The natural boulder clay within trench 2



Plate 4: The cobble filled 19th land drain in trench 3

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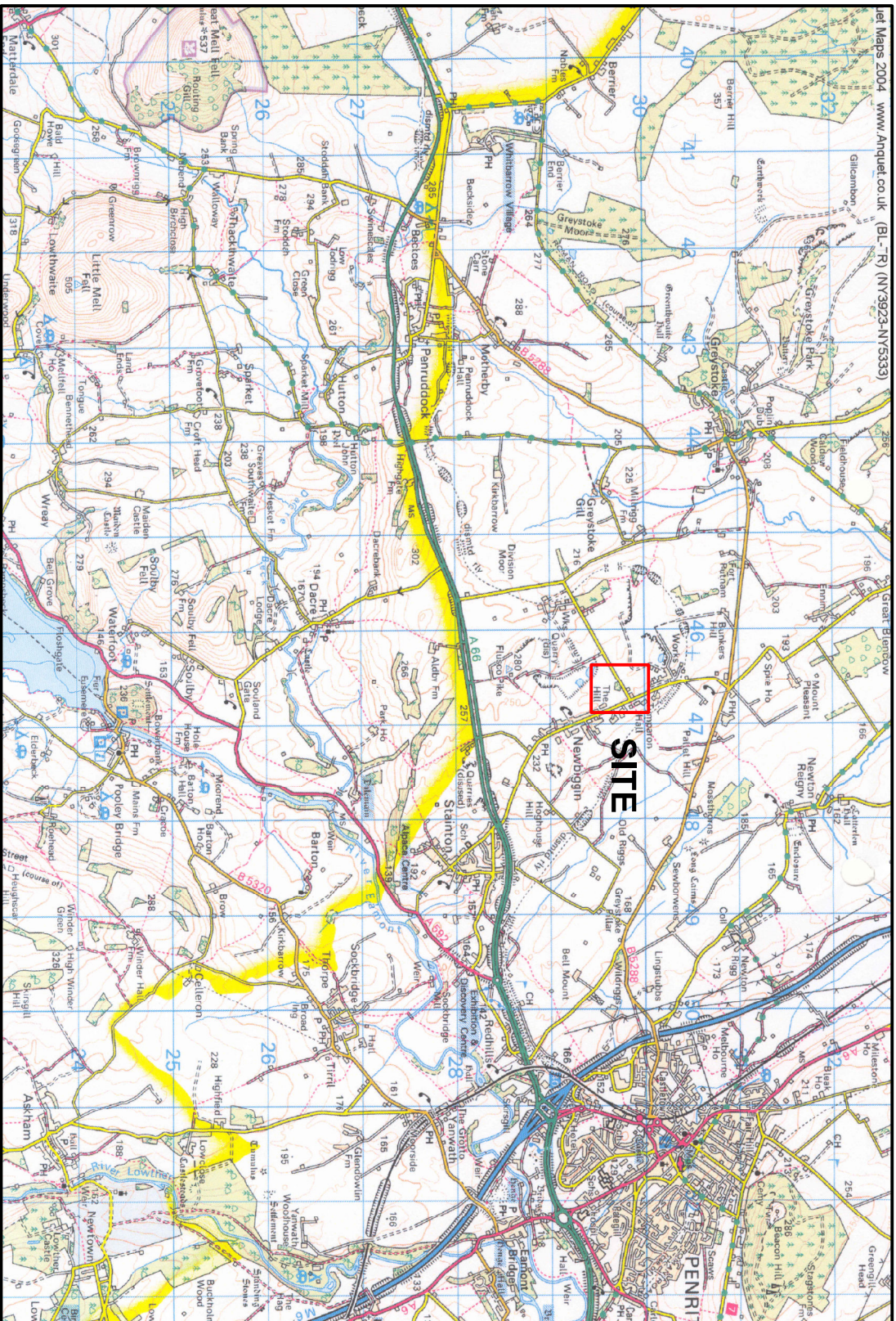
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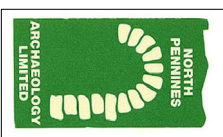
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APPENDIX 1 - ILLUSTRATIONS



Jet Maps 2004 www.jetmap.co.uk (BL-R) (NY923-NY533)



North Pennines Archaeology Ltd
2005
Newbigin, Stanton

DRAWING No:
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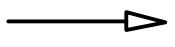
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DATE:
29/07/05

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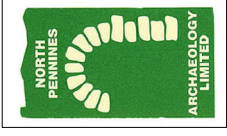
KEY



TITLE:
Site Location

COMMISSIONED BY:
Eden Housing Association

Figure 1: Site Location



North Pennines Archaeology Ltd
2005
Newbiggin, Stainton

DRAWING No:
1

Scale
1:10,560

DRAWN BY:
FG

DATE:
29/07/05

LOCATION:

KEY



TITLE:
1st Edition OS

COMMISSIONED BY:

Eden Housing Association

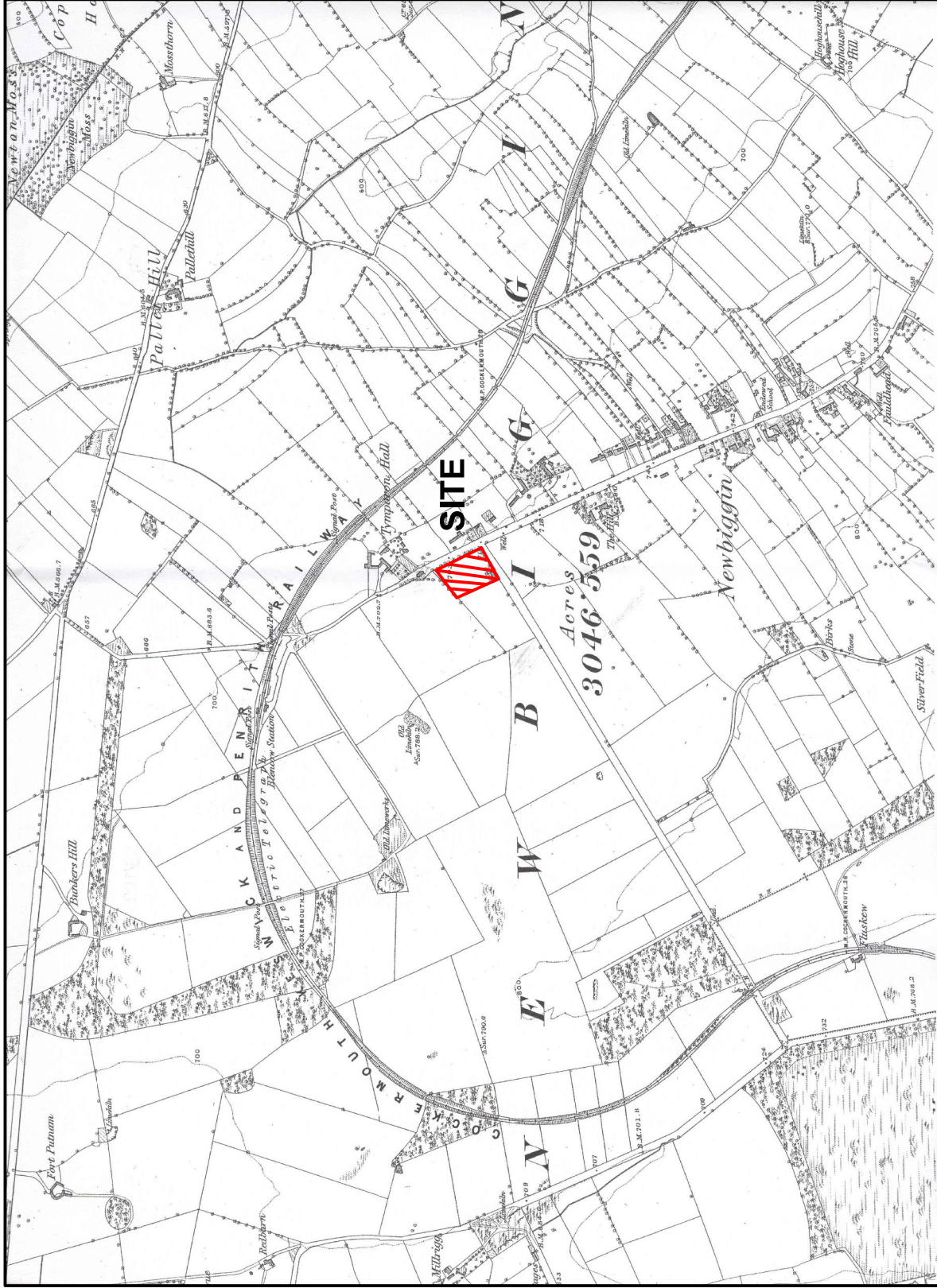
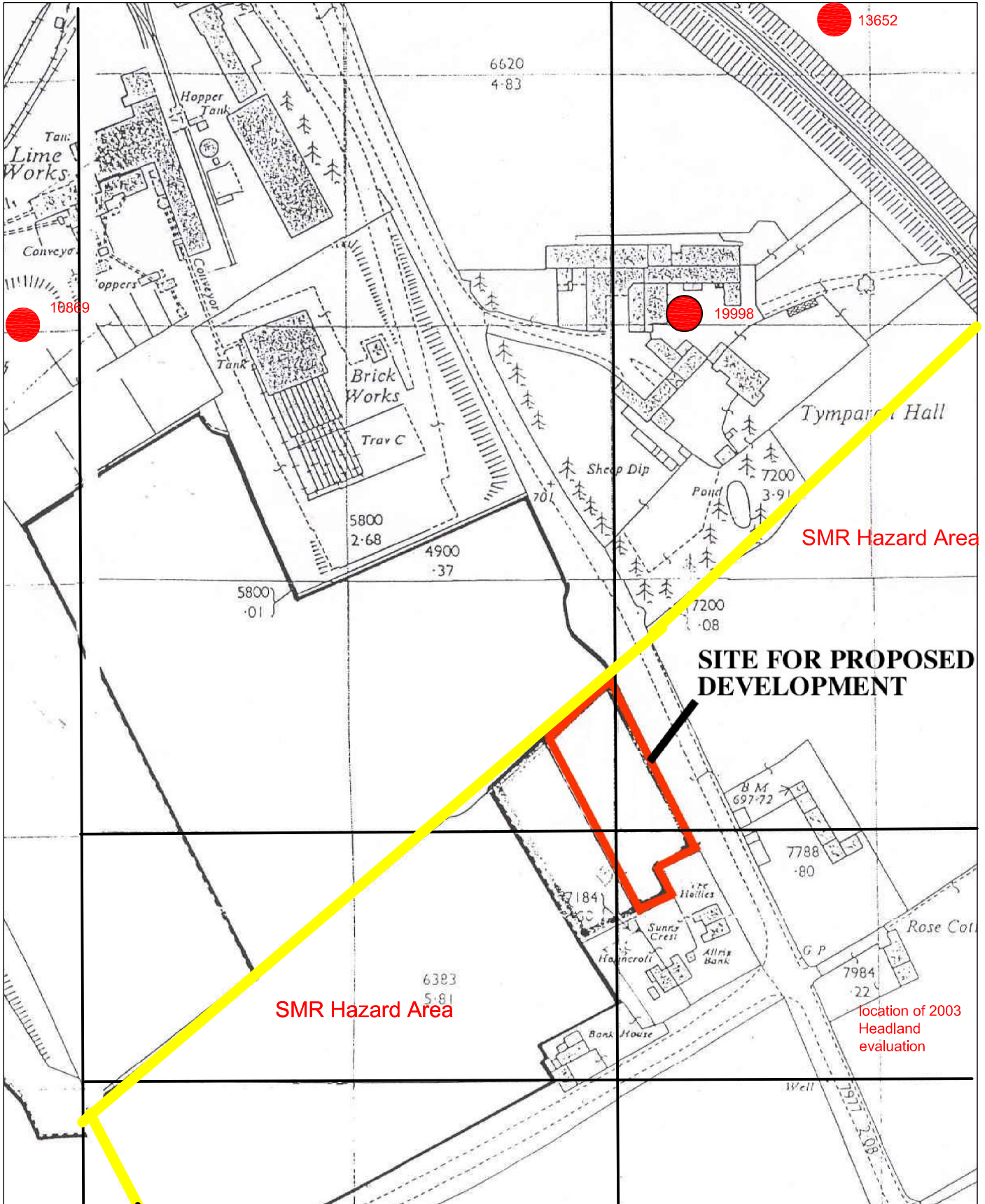


Figure 2: 1st Edition Ordnance Survey (1867)






 <p>North Pennines Archaeology Ltd Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre Nenthead, Alston Cumbria CA9 3PD Tel: (01434) 382045 Fax: (01434) 382294 Email: info@nparchaeology.co.uk</p>	PROJECT:	Newbglgn, Stalton, Penrith	LOCATION:	KEY  = SMR PONTS  = Limit of Hazard Area
	DRAWING No:	3		
	SCALE:	1:25,000		
	TITLE:	Site Plan		
	CLIENT:	Eden Housing Association		
DRAWN BY:	FG			
DATE:	29/07/2005			

Figure 3: Site Plan