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# NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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Client Reports No. CP/785/08

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF  
AT  
WALLEND FARM,  
GREENHEAD,  
CUMBRIA**

**NGR: NY 6540 6620**

**FOR  
MR R MILBURN**

*Oasis Project Number  
northpen3-48746*

Rachel Horn BSc (Hons) MSc  
North Pennines Archaeology Ltd  
Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre  
Nenthead  
Alston  
Cumbria CA9 3PD  
Tel: (01434) 382045  
Fax: (01434) 382043

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In September 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Mr R Milburn to maintain an archaeological watching brief at Wallend Farm, Greenhead, Cumbria (NY 6450 6620). The site lies in a zone of archaeological sensitivity, between Hadrian's Wall and the Hadrian's Wall Vallum, within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The work was requested by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, following a planning application for the construction of an extension at the site. An archaeological watching brief was required during the excavation of all groundworks associated with this development.

The works involved the excavation of five foundation pits 1.10m in width, 1.80m in length and 1.20m in depth, to hold the supports for an extension to one of the farm buildings. No archaeology was observed within any of the foundation pits and no archaeological finds were recovered. This was consistent with previous works carried out on the site by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (Jones, 2004).

As this report fulfils the requirements for archaeological recording of the developments relating to works at Wallend Farm, no further work is necessary. However, due to the continuing high archaeological potential of the area, and the status of the site as part of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage site, any further development in the area should be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Mr R Milburn for commissioning the project. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to extend their thanks to Neil Dickinson, for his assistance on site.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Rachel Horn, who also wrote the report. The drawings were produced by Rachel Horn. The project was managed by Martin Railton, Project Manager for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matthew Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

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## 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In September 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Mr R Milburn, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of five foundation pits at Wallend Farm, Greenhead, Cumbria (NGR: NY 6540 6620; Figure 1). The development site lies within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site between Hadrian's Wall and the Hadrian's Wall Vallum. The work was requested by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, following a planning application for the construction of an extension at the site. Due to the importance of the site, an archaeological watching brief was required during the excavation of all groundworks associated with this development. This is in line with government advice as set out in the DoE Planning Policy Guidance on Archaeology and Planning (PPG 16).
- 1.1.2 The proposed groundworks involved the excavation of five foundation pits to hold the supports for an extension to one of the farm buildings. These were located to the west of the large cattle barn which was situated at the west side of the farm. All of these groundworks had to be undertaken under full archaeological supervision. The objective of this watching brief was to obtain an adequate record of any archaeological deposits or finds, which were disturbed or exposed by work associated with the development. All stages of the archaeological work were undertaken following approved statutory guidelines (IFA 2002).
- 1.1.3 This report comprises the results of the archaeological work, namely: the archaeological recording of the groundworks associated with the development, and post-fieldwork analysis of the archaeological deposits recovered during the groundworks.

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## 2 METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Mr R Milburn for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. 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 WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 The watching brief comprised a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during groundworks at the site, followed by the systematic examination and accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and artefacts identified.

2.2.2 The aims and principal methodology of the watching brief can be summarised as follows:

- to determine the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains;
- to produce a photographic record of all contexts using colour digital, colour print and monochrome formats as applicable, each photograph including a graduated metric scale;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to sample any environmental deposits encountered according to the NPA standard sampling procedure and in consultation with appropriate specialists;
- to prepare a site archive in accordance with MAP2 (English Heritage, 1991) and MoRPHE standards (English Heritage 2006);
- depending upon the results of the work, to prepare a report for publication.

### 2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design, and in accordance with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage guidelines (1991).

2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd supports the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. Details of the results of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project. The OASIS reference number is northpen3-48746.

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## 3 BACKGROUND

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### 3.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1.1 ***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 crenellated parapet, behind which the soldiers patrolled along a paved rampart-walk (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.

3.1.2 Between each milecastle were two smaller turrets, equidistant from each other and the 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 (Bedoyere 1998).

- 3.1.3 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*).
- 3.1.4 **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 not scheduled to be constructed 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.

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## 4 WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 Summary results of the watching brief are presented below, and are illustrated in Plates 1 to 10. The watching brief took place on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008 and consisted of the excavation of five foundation pits in which the supports for the barn extension were to be placed. No archaeological features were observed within any of the foundation pits and no archaeological finds were recovered.

### 4.2 FOUNDATION PIT NO. 1

4.2.1 The groundworks commenced at the area to the west of the cattle barn. A large foundation pit was excavated into which a support for the barn extension was to be placed. This was 1.10m in width, 1.52m in length and had a depth of 1.40m. The stratigraphy in this area consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay that had a depth of 0.10m. This overlay a mid orange silty sand (**102**) with large stone inclusions, which was excavated to a depth of 1.30m.



*Plate 1: Foundation Pit No. 1 under excavation, facing south*



*Plate 2: Section of Foundation Pit No. 1, facing south.*

### 4.3 FOUNDATION PIT NO. 2

- 4.3.1 The second foundation pit was located 6.1m north of Foundation Pit No. 1. This was 0.88m in width, 1.70m in length and had a depth of 1.20m. The stratigraphy was slightly different in this area and consisted of topsoil **(100)**, a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.13m. This overlay a mid grey silty sand **(101)** with small pebble inclusions, this had a depth of 0.47m. Below this lay the mid orange silty sand deposit **(102)**, which was excavated to a depth of 0.58m.



*Plate 3: Foundation Pit No. 2 under excavation, facing south.*



*Plate 4: Section of Foundation Pit No. 2, facing north*

#### **4.4 FOUNDATION PIT NO. 3**

- 4.4.1 The third foundation pit was again located 6.1m to the north of the previous one. This was 1.10m in width, 1.50m in length and had a depth of 1.20m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.10m. This overlay the mid grey silty sand (**101**), which had a depth of 0.10m. Below this was (**102**), the mid orange silty sand with large stone inclusions. This deposit was excavated to a depth of 0.56m.



*Plate 5: Foundation Pit No. 3 under excavation, facing north.*



*Plate 6: Section of Foundation Pit No. 3, facing south.*

## **4.5 FOUNDATION PIT NO. 4**

- 4.5.1 The fourth foundation pit was again located 6.1m to the north of the previous foundation pit. This was 1.00m in width, 1.70m in length and had a depth of 1.20m. The stratigraphy consisted of topsoil (**100**), a dark brown silty sandy clay, which had a depth of 0.20m. This overlay (**102**), the mid orange silty sand with large stone inclusions, which was excavated to a depth of 1.00m.



*Plate 7: Foundation Pit No. 4 under excavation, facing north.*



*Plate 8: Section of Foundation Pit No. 4, facing south.*

## **4.6 FOUNDATION PIT NO. 5**

- 4.6.1 The fifth foundation pit was again located 6.1m to the north of the previous foundation pit. This was 1.10m in width, 1.80m in length and had a depth of 1.25m. The stratigraphy consisted of a mixed hardcore and dark brown silty sand clay layer **(103)**, which had a depth of 0.40m. This overlay the mid orange silty sand **(102)**, which was excavated to a depth of 0.95m.



*Plate 9: Foundation Pit No. 5 under excavation, facing north.*



*Plate 10: Section of Foundation Pit No. 5, facing south.*

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## **5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

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### **5.1 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1.1 The archaeological watching brief recorded all works associated with the excavation of five foundation pits at Wallend Farm, undertaken on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2008. No archaeological features were observed and no finds were recovered from any of the foundation pits. This is consistent with previous work carried out on the site by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (Jones, 2004) .

### **5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.2.1 As this report fulfils the requirements for archaeological recording of the developments relating to the excavation of the five foundation pits, no further work is necessary. However, due to the continuing high archaeological potential of the area, and the status of the site as being part of Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, any further development in the area should be subjected to a programme of archaeological investigation.



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## 6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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## **APPENDIX 1: FIGURES**

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