

HEXHAM ROAD, THROCKLEY, TYNE AND WEAR



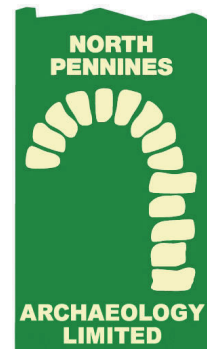
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

CP. No: 946/09

22/06/2009

NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD
NENTHEAD MINES HERITAGE CENTRE,
NENTHEAD,
ALSTON,
CUMBRIA,
CA9 3PD

TEL/FAX: (01434) 382045/043
WWW.NPARCHAEOLOGY.CO.UK



NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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Quality Assurance

This report covers works as outlined in the brief for the above-named project as issued by the relevant authority, and as outlined in the agreed programme of works. Any deviation to the programme of works has been agreed by all parties. The works have been carried out according to the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Standards, Policy Statements and Codes of Conduct. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance set out by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on the preparation of reports.

REVISION SCHEDULE			
	01	02	03
PREPARED BY:	Frances Wood		
POSITION:	Site Assistant		
DATE:	18/06/09		
EDITED BY:	Matt Town		
POSITION:	Project Manager		
DATE:	21/06/2009		
APPROVED BY:	Frank Giecco		
POSITION:	Technical Director		
DATE:	21/06/2009		

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SUMMARY

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by BT Openreach to undertake an archaeological watching brief on groundworks relating to the installation of a new BT duct at Hexham Road, Throckley, Tyne and Wear (NGR NZ 156 668). Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent and Planning Permission was obtained with the condition that a full Watching Brief was carried out during the works, as the site is situated within the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site. The Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken over 1 day on the 11th June 2009. The watching brief monitored the excavation of a shallow trench for the duct. No archaeological remains were noted.

As this archaeological watching brief was conducted as part of a recommendation to observe groundworks in association with the improvement of the BT system, no further work is deemed necessary. However, given the high archaeological potential of the area, it is recommended that any future work be subject to a programme of archaeological investigation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Mick Fewster, BT Openreach, for commissioning the project. NPA Ltd would also like to thank Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, for all his assistance throughout the project.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to the Enterprise Team on site, for their help during this project.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Frances Wood. The report was written by Frances Wood and the drawings were produced by Matt Town. The project was managed by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Martin Railton, Technical Director for NPA Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In May 2009, North Pennines Archaeology were invited by BT Openreach to maintain an archaeological watching brief at Hexham Road, Throckley, Tyne and Wear (NGR NZ 156 668; Figure 1), during groundworks associated with the installation of a new BT duct. The proposed works lie within the corridor of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (Ref # 26069). Because the area is of such high archaeological importance, Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, requested that all ground reduction be subject to a programme of archaeological observation and investigation. 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 All groundworks associated with the installation of the BT duct had to be excavated under full archaeological supervision and all stages of the archaeological work were undertaken following approved statutory guidelines (IfA 2008), and were consistent with a specification approved by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, (May 2009) and generally accepted best practice.
- 1.1.3 This report outlines the monitoring works undertaken on-site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological works.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by BT Openreach, for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design by Mike Collins, Hadrian's Wall Archaeologist, 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 for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 The works involved a structured watching brief to observe, record and excavate any archaeological deposits from the development site. A watching brief is a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons, on a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed (IfA 2008).

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

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record them;
- to carry out further excavation and recording work in adequate time, if intact archaeological remains are uncovered during the project;
- to accurately tie the area watched by the archaeologist into the National Grid at an appropriate scale, with any archaeological deposits and features adequately levelled;
- to sample environmental deposits encountered as required, in line with English Heritage (2002) guidelines;
- to produce a photographic record of all contexts using colour digital, 35mm colour slide and monochrome formats, each photograph including a graduated metric scale;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful of dating purposes;

- to produce a site archive in accordance with MAP2 (English Heritage 1991) and MoRPHE standards (English Heritage 2006).

2.2.3 An area of approximately 8m² was stripped of soil (overburden and subsoil), which was retained by the side of the trench for later reinstatement of the area. The trenches formed a gentle dog leg approximated to 15m x 1.1m x 1.6m, with the cuts measuring approximately 0.45m in width. The trenches were stripped of pavement surface and overburden to the required formation levels. Archaeological monitoring and supervision of groundworks associated with the stripping commenced on Thursday 11th June 2009. A summary of the findings of the watching brief is included within this report.

2.3 THE ARCHIVE

- 2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and in line with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage Guidelines (1991) and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2007). The archive will be deposited within The Great North Museum, with copies of the report sent to the County Historic Environment Record at Newcastle City Council, available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA09, TBT-A, CP 946/09.
- 2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, and English Heritage, support the **Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, as a part of this national project.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

- 3.1.1 Throckley is a large urbanized village that lies within the outskirts of the city of Newcastle upon Tyne. It is an area known for its association with coal mining, and is located on the line of Hadrian's Wall and the Vallum. The landscape of the area has been shaped by coal mines and spoil heaps. The area surrounding Throckley is made up of fields and other urbanized villages. The majority of the fields are used for grazing. The river Tyne runs nearby (Countryside Commission 1998). A spot height taken on Hexham Road approximately 5m east of the site reads at 76.8m AOD. The development area forms a block of land along the Hexham Road which runs east-west, and consists of a pavement bordering the main road. The remains of Hadrian's Wall were originally located on the site but are no longer visible, although parts of the Vallum can be seen in nearby playing fields. The area is shown in Figure 2.
- 3.1.2 The underlying geology is from the Upper Paleozoic carboniferous era, leaving coal measures, and a mix of sandstone, shale, seatearth, and coal.

3.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 3.2.1 *Introduction:* this historical background is compiled mostly from secondary sources, and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments specific to the study area.
- 3.2.2 *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.

- 3.2.3 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).
- 3.2.4 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*).

- 3.2.5 *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.

3.3 PREVIOUS WORK

- 3.3.1 Numerous excavations and investigations have occurred in the immediate area around Hexham Road and in the vicinity of Throckley.
- 3.3.2 Limited excavation was carried out on Turret 10a, located at Callerton Road (NZ 1601 6683), Throckley, in 1928. The turret was again excavated in 1980, in advance of construction work (Bennett, 1983). This site is 509 yards west of Milecastle 10. Only the south-east corner was examined and was found to be three feet thick. The east wall stood five courses high and the doorway was at the normal position in the south wall. Prehistoric ard-marks were

found beneath and around the turret. The foundations of the turret were found to consist of slabs set into clean clay. The surviving wall faces above this had been pointed with mortar, with the wall cores consisting of sandstone blocks packed with clay. The interior layers were often intermittent spreads with only two layers seeming to indicate distinct floors. A number of areas of intense burning or charcoal, normally associated with a stone setting, were found in and outside the turret. The pottery found on the site, stratified and unstratified, was all of types common to Hadrian's Wall Period IA and only one sherd (found unstratified) was of a type considered diagnostic of Period IB. Nothing survived to suggest that the Turret 10a had ever been demolished and the recesses built over.

- 3.3.3 Work was also carried out around the site of the alleged Roman Turret 10b lying under a modern road. There are now no visible remains of either turret as the site is covered by the modern road.
- 3.3.4 In 1980, the Central Excavation Unit (English Heritage) excavated the Wall at three points, to the east and west of Turret 10a. In all the locations the Wall was of Standard A Broad Wall construction and had been greatly robbed. The Vallum ditch was sectioned at NZ 1613 6678 where it proved to be 2.10m deep and 2.90m wide at the base.
- 3.3.5 Work was carried out in 2003 by Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd, 2003) in the form of an evaluation at the Middle School in Throckley (NZ 1543 6686), situated on Hexham's Wall. This work located a truncated length of the foundations of Hadrian's Wall, although it failed to locate the ditch expected to the north of the Wall.
- 3.3.6 A further watching brief is currently being undertaken by NPA Ltd in Throckley, report to be forthcoming (*Wood forthcoming*).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The watching brief monitoring was undertaken in one key phase. This was on the 11th June 18, 2009 (Figure 2).

4.2 THE WATCHING BRIEF

4.2.1 The Watching Brief covered the controlled stripping of deposits around the site prior to the main excavation of the trench.

4.2.2 The pavement surface was broken up using the breaker on a mini digger. The tarmac (100) and paving slabs (103) made up the top layers of the site, and were present across the site to a depth of 0.20m. The Watching Brief aimed to monitor all subsequent groundworks associated with the excavation of the trench. The trench was excavated using a mini digger bearing a ditching bucket with a width of 0.30m.



Plate 1: View of trench nearing completion looking east.

4.2.3 The stratigraphic matrix observed within the excavated area varied from the west end to the east end of the trench.

4.2.4 The uppermost layer removed at the west end of the trench (100) was a layer of grey tarmac that was 0.20m deep and extended from the western end of the trench, for 2.7m to the east, where it abutted (103); the paving slabs making up the footpath. Beneath (100) was (104), a layer of yellow hardcore with a thickness of 0.09m. The lowest layer was backfill material (102) comprising of firmly compacted dark brown clay with inclusions of ceramic ducting sherds and occasional lump of concrete. The final depth at the west end of the trench measured 1.35m.



Plate 2: Section looking north at the west end of the trench

4.2.5 The eastern end of the trench differed in that the uppermost layer removed was made up of cream concrete paving slabs (103) which were 0.05m thick. This extended for 15m from the edge of the tarmac (100) to the eastern edge of the trench. Beneath this layer was a deposit of coarse mid-brown sand (105) which was between 0.15 to 0.20m in depth. A thin layer of (106), which was a backfill material consisting of loosely compacted dark brown soil-like material was visible beneath (105) in some parts of this end of the trench. This measured between to 0.05m to 0.10m in depth. The final depth at the east end of the trench measured 0.35m, and a point taken in the middle of the trench, the depth was 0.39m. The result of this was that the trench was graded with a slope down to the west.

4.2.6 No archaeological remains were noted and natural (101) was not revealed during the course of this excavation.



Plate 3: Section facing south at the east end of the trench.

4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

4.3.1 No archaeological finds were recovered, and no environmental samples were retained during the groundworks.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 *The Watching Brief:* the site was stripped of tarmac and paving slabs to create a working area, under archaeological supervision. No other archaeological remains were noted. The excavation of the service cut was monitored during the watching brief. No archaeological remains were noted.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 As this watching brief was conducted as a condition of groundworks associated with the installation of the BT duct, no further archaeological work is deemed necessary. However, given the site's location in relation to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site, it is recommended that any work conducted in the future be subject to a similar programme of archaeological investigation.



Plate 4: View of deeper west end of trench, looking to the west.

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLE

Context Number	Context Type	Description
100	Deposit	Tarmac
101	Deposit	Natural
102	Deposit	Backfill
103	Deposit	Paving Slabs
104	Deposit	Hardcore
105	Deposit	Sand
106	Deposit	Backfill

Table 1: List of Contexts issued during Watching Brief

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES

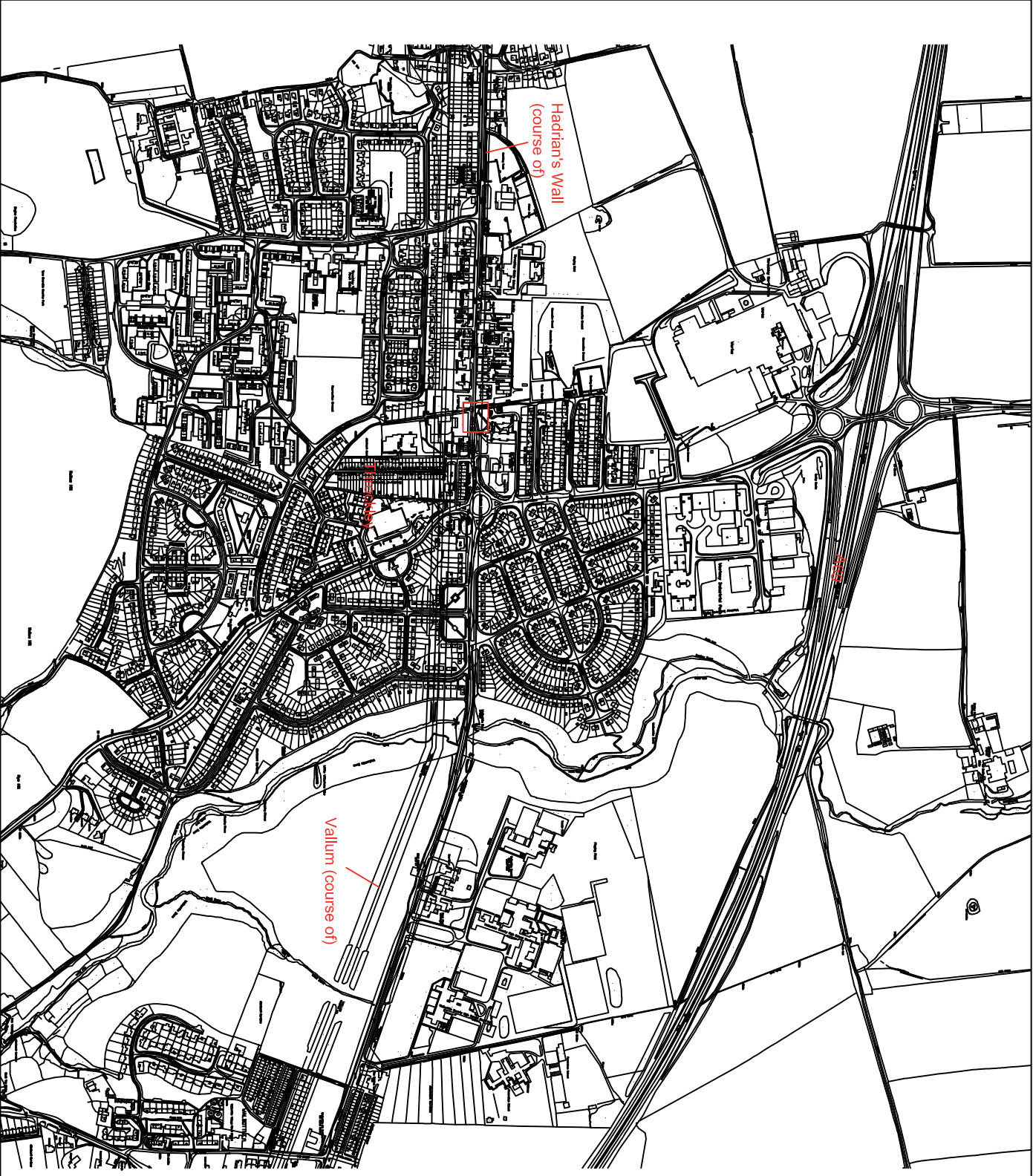


Figure 1 : Site Location




North Pennines Archaeology Ltd
2009
Hexham Rd, Throckley

CLIENT:
BT Openreach

SCALE: 1:10,000 at A4

DRAWN BY: FW/MT
DATE: 21/06/09

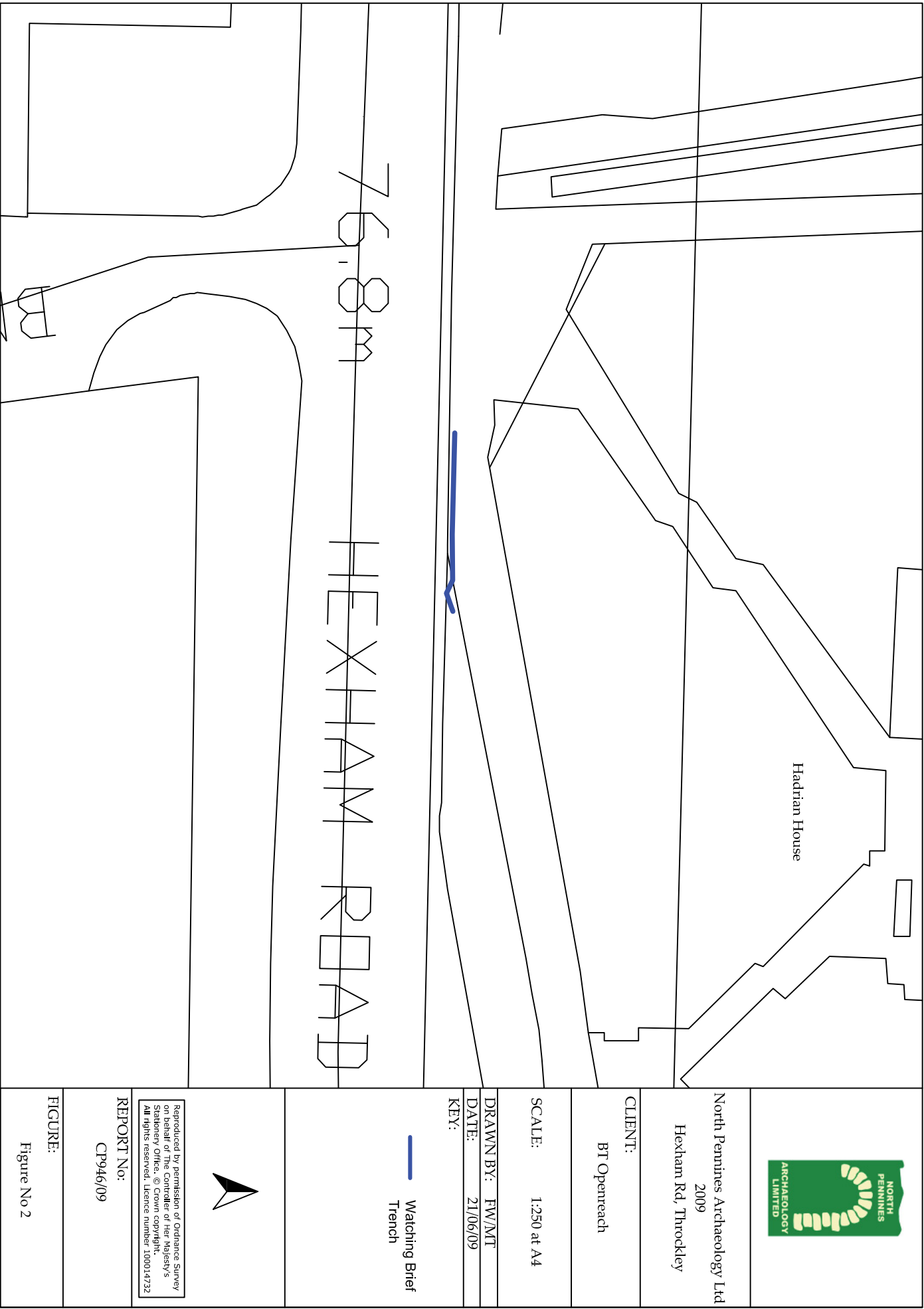
KEY:
 Figure 2



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FIGURE:
Figure No 1



North Pennines Archaeology Ltd
2009
Hexham Rd, Throckley

CLIENT:
BT Openreach

SCALE: 1:250 at A4

DRAWN BY: FW/MT
DATE: 21/06/09

KEY:
 Watching Brief
 Trench



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FIGURE:
Figure No 2

Figure 2 : Location of Watching Brief