THE OLD STABLES, CHURCH PLACE, STANWIX, CARLISLE, CUMBRIA



WATCHING BRIEF REPORT CP. No: 1167/10 12/04/2010

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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.

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SUMMARY

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were commissioned by Mr Ian Newton to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks relating to the excavation of foundation trenches for a single-storey extension, located to the west of the present property at The Old Stables (NGR NY 4008 5709). The scheme affects an area of archaeological significance within the site of *Petriana* Roman Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 28484). A number of excavations have been carried out within the fort since the 1930s. Excavations located closest to the site boundary occurred in 1931-1932 that uncovered remains of internal buildings and a granary. The scheme of groundworks is located within the fort's interior. As a result, Jeremy Parsons, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Officer, requested that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the course of the excavation of the foundation trenches.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken over one day, on the 6th April 2010. The watching brief monitored the hand excavation of a U-shaped foundation trench immediately to the west of the present dwelling. The excavated material consisted of modern bricks, and demolition material presumably relating to the building shown on historical mapping. Below this demolition layer, the subsoil consisted of a loose brown garden soil. No archaeological remains were identified, and the only artefacts noted were relatively modern in date.

As this archaeological watching brief was conducted as part of a recommendation to observe groundworks in association with the excavation of foundation trenches relating to a single-storey extension at The Old Stables, 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 Mr Ian Newton for commissioning the project. We would also like to thank Mr Newton, and Mr Jamie Newton, for all assistance during the groundworks.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Fiona Wooler. The report was written by Fiona Wooler. The project was managed by Frank Giecco, Technical Director for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Martin Railton, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In March 2010, North Pennines Archaeology were commissioned by Mr Ian Newton to maintain an archaeological watching brief at The Old Stables, Church Place, Stanwix, Carlisle (NGR NY 4008 5709; Figures 1 and 2), during groundworks associated with the excavation of foundation trenches for a single-storey extension to the west side of the present property (Planning Application Ref: 09/0102). The works lie within the site of *Petriana* Roman Fort, a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM No. 28484). Previous excavations in the immediate vicinity to the site boundary revealed remains of internal buildings and a granary associated with the fort. Due to the proximity of the site boundary to the Roman fort, there was the potential for any historic features or structures still present within the development area to be affected by the proposed groundworks. As a result, Jeremy Parsons, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Officer, requested that all ground reduction be subject to a programme of archaeological observation and investigation.
- 1.1.2 All groundworks associated with the excavation of the foundation trenches were excavated under archaeological supervision and all stages of the archaeological work were undertaken following approved statutory guidelines (IfA 2008), and were consistent with the specification provided by NPA Ltd (Giecco 2010) 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 Mr I Newton, for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design by Jeremy Parsons, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, 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, 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).

2.3 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 Tullie House Museum, with copies of the report sent to the County Historic Environment Record at Kendal, where viewing will be made available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the project identifier NPA10, TOS-A, CP 1167/10.
- 2.3.2 North Pennines Archaeology, and Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, 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, as a part of this national project, under the unique identifier northpen3-75373.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

- 3.1.1 Stanwix lies within the lowland plains of the Solway Basin approximately 1.6 kilometres north of the city of Carlisle and is linked to the city by the Eden Bridge (Figure 1). The Solway Basin lies between the Cumbria High Fells to the south, the rugged terrain of the Scottish Border to the north, and the Border Moors and Forests to the northeast (Countryside Commission 1998). The site is located on the north bank of the River Eden. To the south and west of the site boundary is 19th century housing, and immediately to the north and to the east is the playground of Stanwix Primary School (Figure 2).
- 3.1.2 The solid geology of the Carlisle area is comprised of soft, reddish Permo-Triassic sandstones of the St. Bees formation, with the less extensive Kirklinton sandstones, St. Bees Shales, and Stanwix Shales. At Stanwix, similar to Carlisle, the bedrock is overlain to a depth of several metres by drift deposits of glacial till that include sands, gravels and boulder clay (British Geological Survey 1982). The soils of the region are of the Clifton Association, typically composed of stagnogleys, although some fluvial deposits are present along the margins of the River Eden (Countryside Commission 1998).

3.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.2.1 The Roman fort at Stanwix was the fourth station on the line of the wall, when counting from the west, situated between Burgh-by-Sands and Castlesteads (Biggins and Taylor 2000). It has been said that the Roman fort at Stanwix is one of the least known of all of the Hadrian's Wall forts. There had been some evidence of buildings in the southern section of the fort, to the south of Church Street. Anecdotal evidence from the latter half of the 19th century suggests that masonry and pottery were revealed when grave digging was undertaken within St Michael's Churchyard. Although no trace of the fort could be seen in 1875, it was noted that Roman remains had been observed when the church was rebuilt in the 1840s. A slightly raised bank located to the south-western and south-eastern boundaries of the churchyard were considered by Richmond to possibly have been the rampart of the stone curtain wall. A section of road was noted by Simpson in the southern part of the garden to Stanwix House, and Richmond found a small section of curtain wall and part of an interval tower near the southeast corner of Stanwix House garden (*ibid*).

- 3.2.2 The main school buildings of Stanwix Primary School straddle the line of Hadrian's Wall defences. Excavations by Simpson (1932-34) and by Simpson and Richmond (1939-40) were undertaken within the Stanwix Primary School grounds. In 1932-34 Simpson traced the line of the stone phase of the Wall across the western edge of the site. To the south and east of the Wall, Simpson found what he thought were a pair of 4th century barracks or stables, beneath which was an extensive gravelled surface (Zant 1997). Simpson and Richmond's work gave a context to internal buildings excavated earlier in the 1930s (Dacre 1985, Caruana 2000).
- 3.2.3 In 1940 trenching on the north side of Church Street revealed the remains of a granary. There were traces of other stone buildings to the north and south. No further archaeological work occurred until 1984 when Carlisle Archaeological Unit found a stretch of the northern fort defences within an earlier ditch to the back of the Cumbria Park Hotel (Dacre 1985). This work disproved the idea that Hadrian's Wall had formed the north side of the defences and demonstrated that the stone fort postdated the rebuilding of the Wall in stone. The significance of the ditch is unclear, although it could relate to the turf phase of the wall, or to an earlier fort (Zant 1997). Of particular interest, it was noted during the 1984 excavation that no old ground surface was identified and the unweathered appearance of the natural subsoil suggested that the area had been terraced at some stage (Dacre 1985, 55).
- 3.2.4 With the exception of a limited evaluation at Barn Close in 1993 that revealed a cobbled surface possibly related to a robbed stone wall, a second wall and two pits that contained 4th century pottery and a coin, no further work was carried out inside the fort until Carlisle Archaeological Unit's evaluation in the school playground in 1997. At this time, all of the work was sited in the western part of the fort. Excavations within the school's playgrounds revealed walls and drains relating to a probable stone building north of the granary that was recorded by Simpson and Richmond in the 1930s. North of the building, was a road or yard in the form of a surface of rammed pebbles found within Trenches 2 and 3. A robber-trench and a layer of sandstone rubble suggested the existence of another stone building to the north of the road/yard. This was sealed by dark soils that were cut by slots and postholes thought to represent the remains of one or more clay-floored timber structures. Ceramic evidence suggests that this activity did not occur before the second half of the 4th century. No medieval activity was noted within the site. Over the entire area, the latest Roman remains were sealed by a loam of post-medieval date (Zant 1997).
- 3.2.5 The fort at Stanwix was large, measuring 185 x 215 metres and occupying an area of 3.96 hectares. The most intensive use of the fort appears to be in the

later 2nd century after the arrival of the *ala Petriana*, a military size cavalry unit and the largest auxiliary regiment that is believed to have been stationed there. The known defences consisted of a stone wall 1.73 metres wide with a clay rampart backing that was fronted by two ditches. There is a noticeable decline in pottery dateable to the 3rd century; however, there is an increase in pottery by the 4th century. It is not known when the fort was abandoned. Timber buildings were located within the fort which were no earlier than the 4th century in date (Stobbs 2008).

- 3.2.6 Previous excavations revealed the *Vallum* at Whiteclosegate to the east of Stanwix. The course of the *Vallum* was traced from Whiteclosegate across Knowefield Nurseries, across the garden of Homeacres into the garden of Barn Close. From Barn Close it turned southwards passing into the garden of Stanwix House, running under Brampton Road and entering Rickerby Park 80 yards south-east of the church. At the western end of the park the *Vallum* again changed directions. Trenches were opened in order to locate the line of the *Vallum* and revealed a small V-shaped ditch of a pre-Roman earthwork, but not the line of the *Vallum*. The *Vallum* was found to have turned northward, keeping parallel to the course of Hadrian's Wall (Simpson 1934).
- 3.2.7 The *Vallum* that was traced in the 1930s was laid out in relation to a smaller fort than the larger stone fort. Nothing is known about the extent of this primary fort except that it must have been considerably smaller than 3.96 hectares. Earliest levels found on the Miles MacInnes Hall site (1986) included timber and other organic remains as well as some samianware that were probably contemporary with the earlier fort. The majority of the samian and coins recovered from this site were contemporary with the enlargement of the fort (Caruana 2000).
- 3.2.8 Less is known about the settlement outside the fort. In 1930 workmen were excavating a trench for a sewer through Kings Meadow in Stanwix. The site was a meadow located between the Eden River and a steep hill where the Roman fort was located. A feature was encountered 4.5 metres below the surface that was several yards long aligned northeast/southwest that thinned out on either end. Roman objects that consisted of metal, a glass bead, two incisor teeth and numerous potsherds that dated to the 2nd century, as well as tiles and a boot sole of 'ordinary military pattern' were found in the area. The deposit appeared to consist of material deposited by water and thought to have belonged to suburban buildings from Stanwix fort. The coins found on this site end with Hadrian and brooches do not date any later than 150 AD. Although accurate dating was impossible, the finds suggest that these buildings were contemporary with Hadrian's Wall. It was thought that a great flood around the middle of the 1st century destroyed the

- buildings. The buildings were most probably associated with the *vicus* of the fort as many of the objects were of military equipment, while others were feminine in character. A considerable number of scraps were of waste metals, possible evidence of a metal worker's shop (Collingwood 1931).
- 3.2.9 It is thought that the landscape and the presence of the *Vallum* would have limited the range for settlement to the south. On the western side of the fort a dedication stone from 167 AD was found that may relate to the arrival of the *ala Petriana*. A Roman well with 1st century glass phalera was found on the western side of Scotland Road. To the east of the fort, traces of buildings were found fronting onto the east/west road, 300 metres from the fort, not far from the Roman cemetery. Observations at the Miles MacInnes Hall site (1986) emphasized that a significant part of the civil settlement was to the west of the fort (Caruana 2000).

3.3 Previous Archaeological Work

- 3.3.1 There have been numerous archaeological works undertaken in and around site of the Roman fort at Stanwix, and along the line of Hadrian's Wall. The following is a selection of recent archaeological work located within close proximity to the site of The Old Stables.
- 3.3.2 In 1984 an excavation was undertaken to the rear (east side) of the Cumbria Park Hotel on Scotland Road, which revealed a previously unsuspected north curtain wall, rampart and interval tower of the Roman fort (Dacre 1985).
- 3.3.3 In 1999 Carlisle Archaeology Ltd undertook an excavation at Stanwix Primary School. Four trenches were excavated, two of which were badly disturbed by the construction of the Victorian school, although some archaeological deposits did survive that included a possible floor surface and a layer of cobbling, as well as several sherds of Roman pottery dated to the 2nd century. It was stated that in the remaining two trenches archaeology may survive below the surface of the tarmac (Giecco and Reeves 2000).
- 3.3.4 During the excavation of a service trench, measuring 17m in length, an archaeological watching brief was maintained immediately to the south of The Old Stables in 2006. This work revealed modern overburden overlying a post-medieval soil build-up. No features of any archaeological note were observed (Giecco 2006).
- 3.3.5 An archaeological evaluation undertaken in 2009 on land at 54 Scotland Road, located to the north side of the site of the Roman fort, revealed evidence for Roman activity in the form of an extensive cobbled surface, a wide ditch aligned north to south which was considered to have military

- characteristics, and a well. These features provide evidence for considerable extra-mural Roman settlement or activity to the north side of Hadrian's Wall that may parallel the vicus to the south, located around Eden Mount (Martin 2009).
- 3.3.6 In December 2009 an archaeological evaluation undertaken on land at St George's Crescent, located on the west side of Scotland Road, revealed evidence relating to the Roman vicus of the fort at Stanwix. Well preserved archaeological deposits with a tight date range (AD *c*120-170) extended across the site (Greenlane Archaeology 2010).
- 3.3.7 A watching brief was maintained by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd during the excavation of a service trench along the length of Church Street, Stanwix, in February and March 2010. The excavation of the trench only revealed evidence for a row of cottages which formerly stood on the south side of Church Street, to the north of the church. No archaeological features or finds were retrieved relating to the Roman fort (NPA 2010).

3.4 HISTORICAL MAPPING

- 3.4.1 Several historical maps were consulted prior to the commencement of groundworks at The Old Stables, in order to provide information on any former buildings or features which may have occupied the site, for which evidence may have been encountered during the excavation of the foundation trenches.
- 3.4.2 Stanwix Tithe Map c1839 (Figure 3): the Tithe Map and accompanying Award was the earliest readily-available map consulted to show individual properties in the village of Stanwix in the middle of the 19th century. The Award records the plot numbers shown on the map along with details of land ownership, occupancy, description etc. The following table lists the plot numbers along Church Street and within its vicinity, along with descriptions. The descriptions indicate that Stanwix in the mid-19th century was largely residential in character. Of particular relevance to the present scheme of groundworks are Plot No. 69, which the Award noted was a piece of land owned by Joseph Jackson, and it was described as 'garden', and Plot No. 67, also owned by Joseph Jackson and described as 'croft':

Plot No.	Owner	Occupier	Description
60a	George Head Head	Joseph Dixon	Stanwix Bank
60	George Head Head	Joseph Dixon	Stanwix Bank
61	Joseph Dixon	Himself	Houses, yard etc
62	Rev This Wilkinson (glebe)	Himself	Garden

Plot No.	Owner	Occupier	Description
63	Rev Thos Wilkinson	Himself	Churchyard
63a	Rev Thos Wilkinson	Himself	
64	Rev Thos Wilkinson	Himself	Buildings, garden and shrubbery
65	Joseph Jackson	Ann Blain and others	Cottages
66	John Armstrong	Mary Cowen and others	Houses and yards
67	Joseph Jackson	Himself	Croft
68	Thomas Hodgson	Himself and others	Houses, yard and garden
69	Joseph Jackson	Himself	Garden
70	William Carruthers	Himself and others	Houses, yard and garden
71	William Dodgson	Thomas Forster and others	Houses and garden
72	James Robinson	Himself and others	House, stable and garden
73	James Mulcaster	Rev Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson	First Nicholls Croft
74	James Mulcaster	Rev Wilkinson and Thomas Wilkinson	Second Nicholls Croft
75	John James Watts	David Cullen and another	Houses and gardens
76	James Robinson Jnr	Himself	House and garden
77	Charles James Graham	John Smith and others	Houses and yards
78	Elizabeth Beck	Mr Kirby and others	Cottages
79	Jane Lowry widow	R Gibbs and others	Cottages and garden
80	Mrs Jane Kell	Herself and others	Cottage, garden etc
81	John James Watt	John Hill and others	Dwelling houses and yards etc
82	Jane Lowry widow	Rev T Wilkinson	Dwelling house, yard etc
83	Alexander Cockburn	Miss Farrer and others	Dwelling house and gardens
84	James Mulcaster	J Dalston and others	Buildings, yard and lawn
85	Jane Lowry widow	Rev T Wilkinson	Shrubbery and lawn
86	John James Watts	Rev T Wilkinson	Barn Croft
87	Robert George Holland	Mr Fearon	Orchard, garden and houses

3.4.3 *First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1874 (Figure 4):* the First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that by this date the land on which The Old

- Stables would eventually be built was still a large garden on the north side of Church Street.
- 3.4.4 Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1901 (Figure 5): by the publication of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map in 1901, Stanwix School has been constructed and Mulcaster Crescent and Cheviot Road have been laid out to the north of what is now known as Church Place. A building has been constructed within close proximity to The Old Stables, but it appears to have been to the west of the present dwelling
- 3.4.5 *Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925 (Figure 6):* by 1925, The Old Stables appears to have been constructed (L-shaped in form), with the terraced housing of Church Place now visible immediately to its south side. Smaller buildings are shown to the west side of The Old Stables, one of which may be the structure visible on earlier mapping (see Figure 5).
- 3.4.6 *Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map*, 1940 (*Figure 7*): these small buildings have been demolished by the publication of the revised Ordnance Survey map in 1940, however the form of The Old Stables itself remains the same.
- 3.4.7 *Ordnance Survey Map* 1965 (1:1250 scale): The Old Stables appears to have remained as the same L-shaped form by this date, although a small building is shown to exist to the western extremity of the site boundary, and a further addition has been made to the south side, seemingly into the rear yard of No. 1 Church Place.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

4.1 Introduction

- 4.1.1 The watching brief monitoring was undertaken over a period of one day on Tuesday 6th April 2010.
- 4.1.2 The groundworks consisted of the excavation by hand of a U-shaped foundation trench to the south-west side of the present property (Figure 2). The foundation trench measured a maximum of 0.45m in depth and 0.60m in width.

4.2 WATCHING BRIEF

- 4.2.1 Following the removal of paving stones for the former patio located on the site of the proposed extension, the U-shaped foundation trench was excavated, running parallel to the boundary wall with the school playground to the north-west, and projecting slightly south of the present south-east elevation of the house known as The Old Stables (Figure 2).
- 4.2.2 Below the paving slabs was a layer of cement used to bed the patio paving stones (100). Beneath the cement, the excavated material consisted of a mixture of relatively modern brick, and demolition debris to a depth of *c*.0.35m below the present ground surface (101).
- 4.2.3 Beneath this demolition layer, the excavated material was noted to be a loose brown garden soil (102), similar to that observed during the excavation of the service trench in 2006, located to the south of the present groundworks.
- 4.2.4 The northern arm of the foundation trench was excavated parallel to the present brick boundary wall between The Old Stables and the school playground, located immediately to the north-west, consequently this was an area already disturbed by the cutting of the foundation trench for this boundary wall.



Plate 1: *View looking north-east showing the excavated foundation trench to the south-west end of the present house (Scales = 1m each)*



Plate 2: *View looking south-west showing the excavated foundation trench (Scale = 1m)*



Plate 3: Detail of the north-east facing section of the foundation trench showing brick and demolition material (Scale = 1m)



Plate 4: *View looking north showing the foundation trench running parallel with the northern boundary wall with the school playground (Scale = 1m)*

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The watching brief at The Old Stables was undertaken during groundworks for a single-storey extension to the present dwelling. The site is located with the Scheduled Ancient Monument of the Roman fort of *Petriana*, the largest cavalry fort on the line of Hadrian's Wall.
- 5.2 The groundworks associated with this extension to the present dwelling consisted of the excavation, by hand, of a U-shaped trench to a maximum depth of 0.45m. The excavated material consisted of approximately 0.35m of demolition material, most notably brick, which presumably relates to a former building on the site, shown to have existed in 1901, and may still have been extant by 1925, although it appears to have been demolished by 1940, as shown from cartographic sources.
- 5.3 Below this demolition material was 0.10m of loose brown garden soil which presumably relates to the use of the site as part of a garden from at least 1839 to 1875, as shown on historical mapping. This loose garden soil was also observed during the excavation of a service trench to the south of the property in 2006.

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Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1925 (25" to 1 mile scale), Cumberland Sheet XXIII.3

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APPENDIX: FIGURES

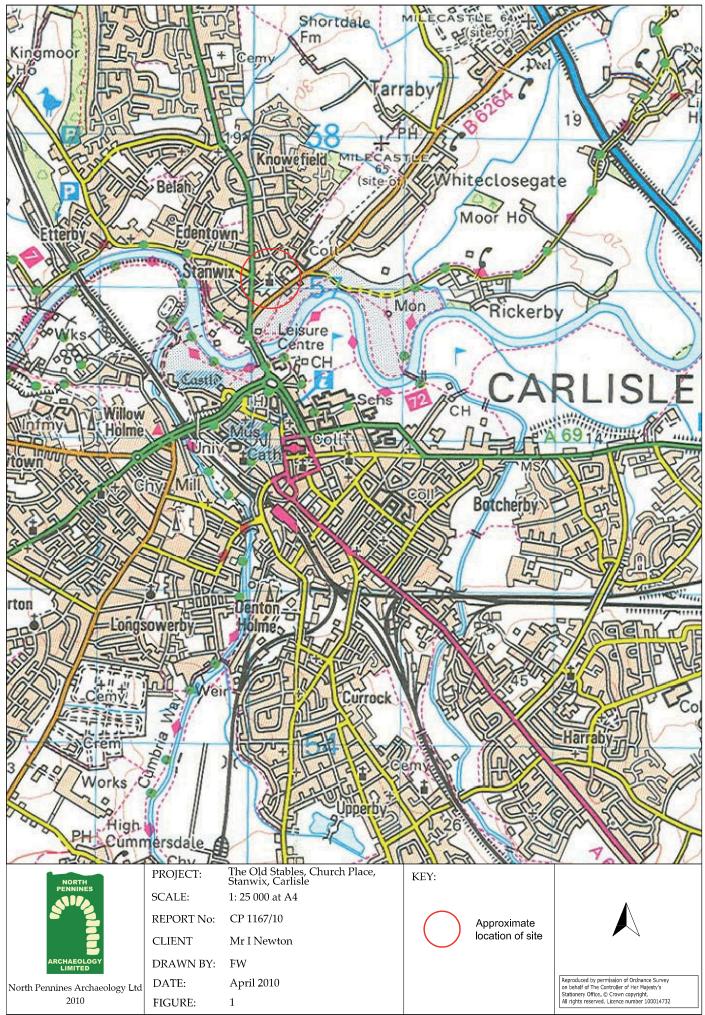


Figure 1: General location of Watching Brief Area

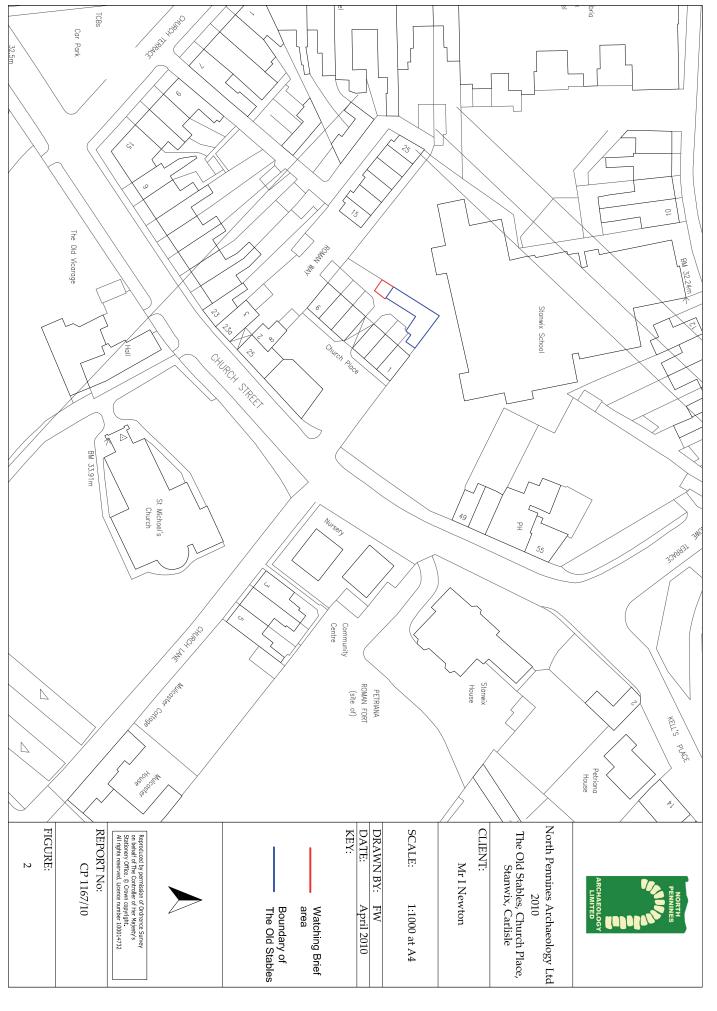


Figure 2: Detailed location of Watching Brief area

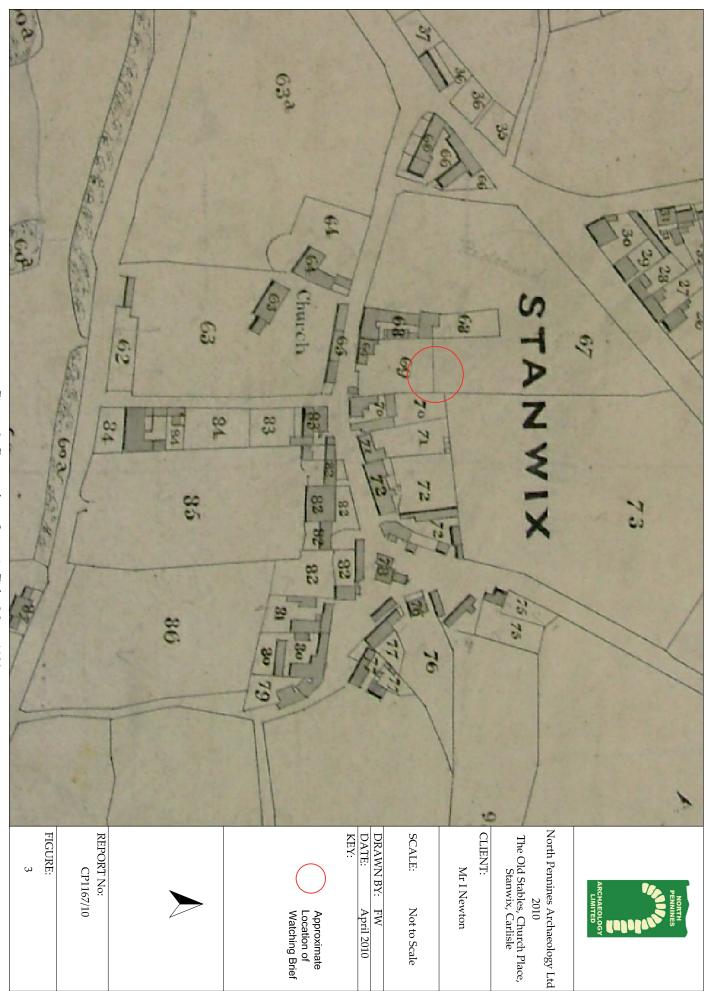


Figure 3: Extract from Stanwix Tithe Map c1839

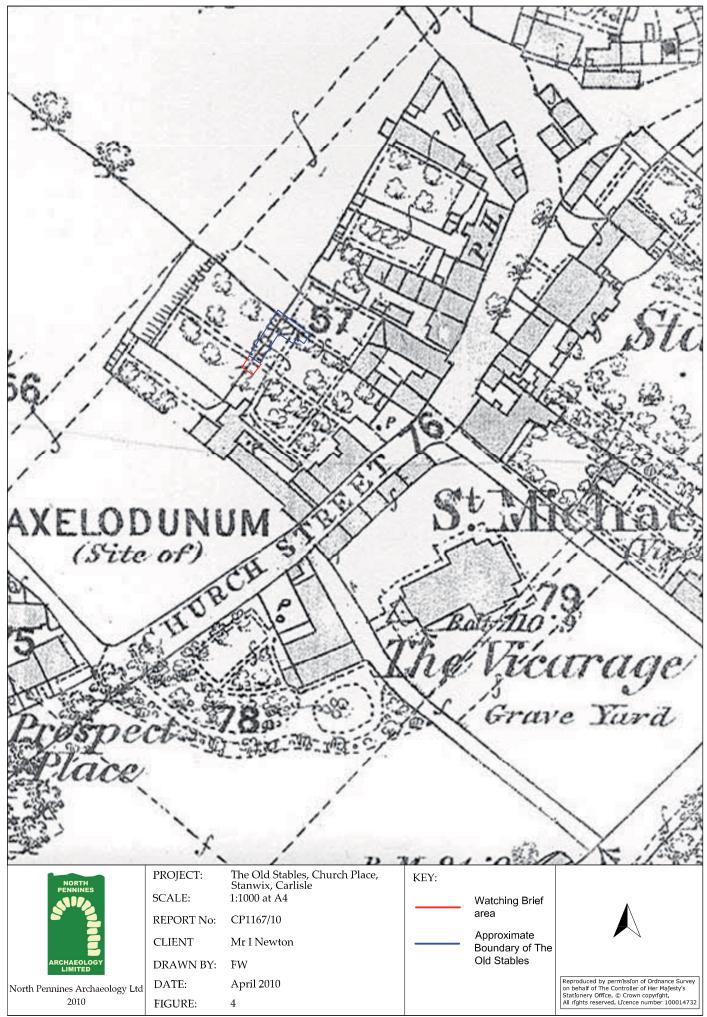


Figure 4: First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1874 (25" to 1 mile scale)

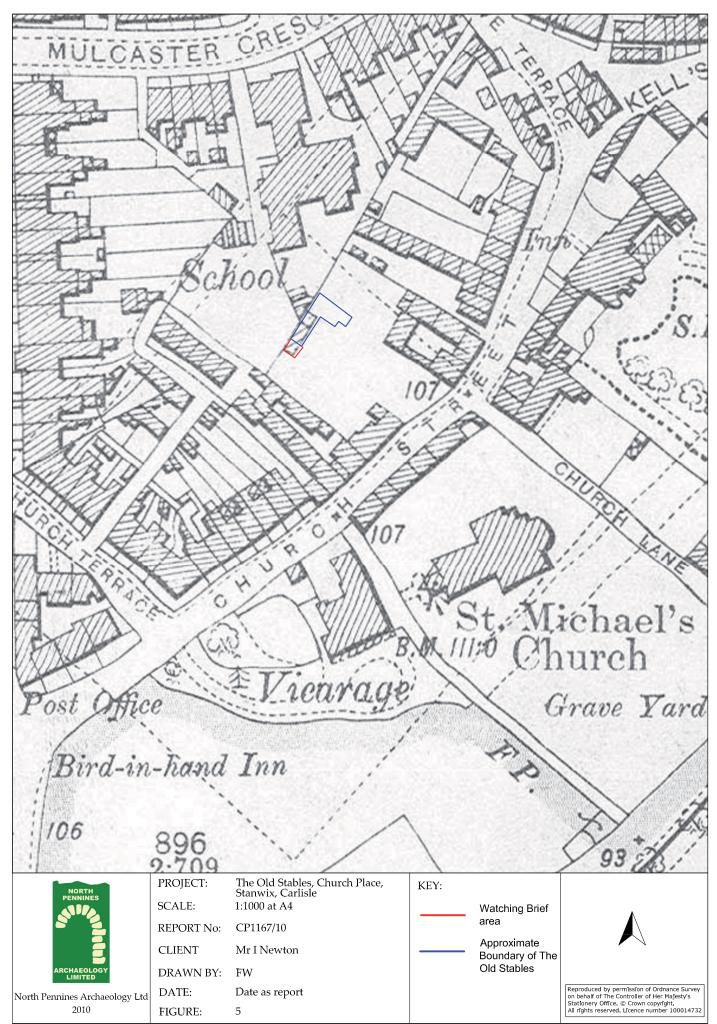


Figure 5: Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1901 (25" to 1 mile scale)

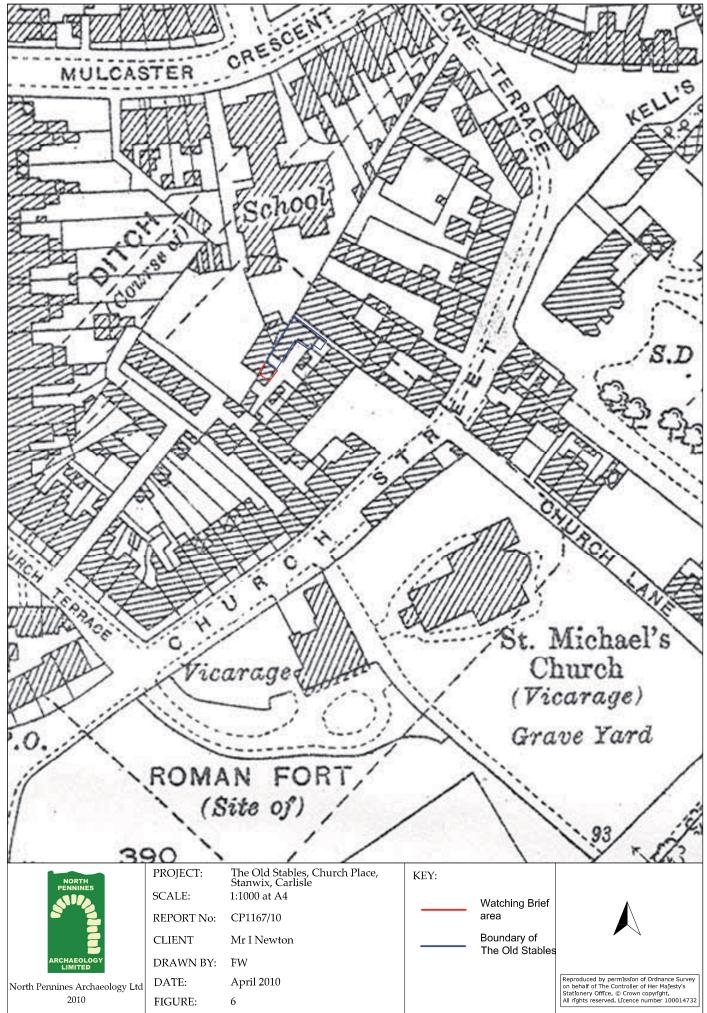


Figure 6: Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1925 (25" to 1 mile scale)

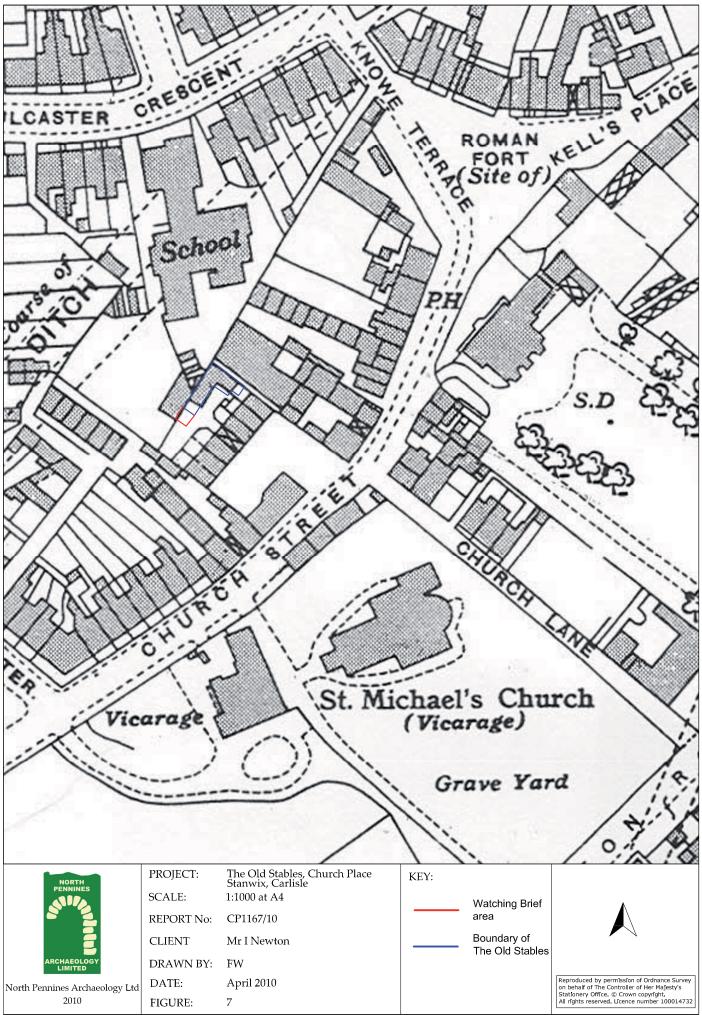


Figure 7: Fourth Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1940 (25" to 1 mile scale)

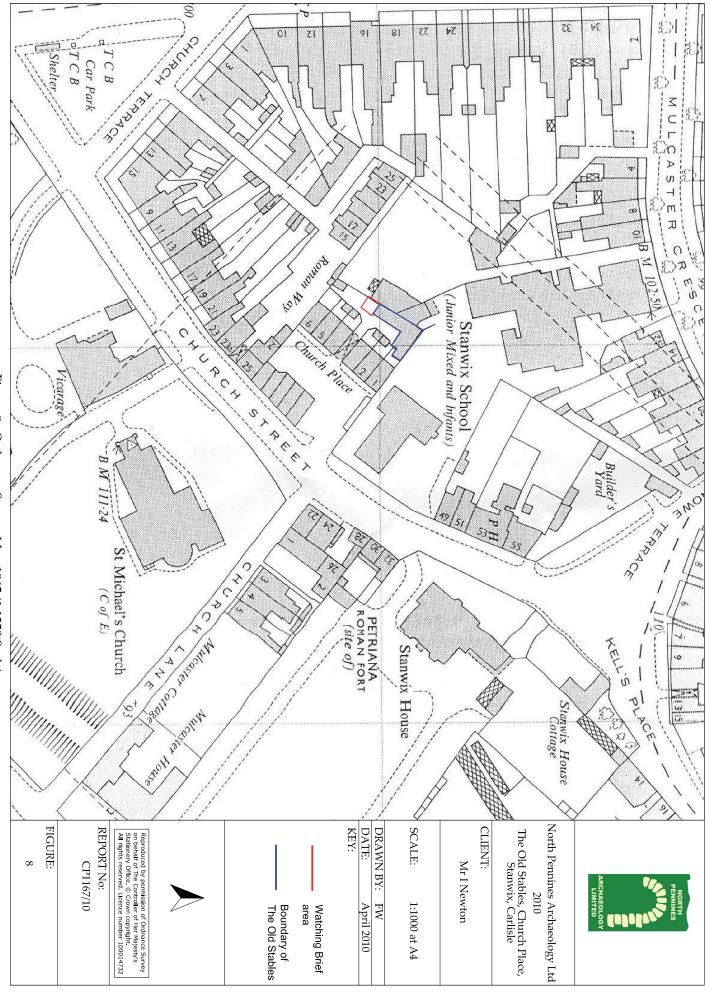


Figure 8: Ordnance Survey Map 1965 (1:1250 Scale)