
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/92/03

**REPORT ON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AND FIELD EVALUATION OF
LAND AT STRAND STREET
MARYPORT
CUMBRIA**

**For
MR D WATSON**

NGR NY 11206 53922

**Planning Application No.
2/03/1088**

C J Jones BA, MA, PIFA
North Pennines Archaeology Ltd
Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre
Nenthead
Alston
Cumbria CA9 3PD
Tel: (01434) 382045
Fax: (01434) 382294
Email: np.ht@virgin.net

20th January 2004



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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In December 2003 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation on land at Strand Street, Maryport, Cumbria. This was in response to a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service following a planning application for a residential development by the client, Mr D Watson.

The work involved the assessment of historic sources held within the Cumbria County Sites and Monuments Record, Kendal and the County Record Office, Carlisle in order to set the site within its proper archaeological, historical, topographical and geographical context. This was followed by the excavation of four linear trial trenches in order to assess the presence/absence, extent, nature and state of preservation of archaeological deposits within a minimum 5% sample of the proposal area.

No in-situ archaeological deposits dating earlier than 1900 were observed within any of the trenches. Trench 1 contained the surviving remains of a basement including two sandstone walls and a sandstone floor. Trench 2 contained the remains of a 20th century smithy, including a sandstone wall, cobbled floor, separate concrete floor surface and a brick structure possibly indicating the remains of a chimney base. Trench 3 contained the foundation of a sandstone wall and extensive demolition rubble. Trench 4 contained the remains of a concrete floor surface and substantial rubble deposits to a depth of 1.90m.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following people and institutions for their help, advice and communication provided throughout the project: Frank Giecco, Joanne Beaty, Faye MacNamara of NPA Ltd, Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service, Mr D and Mr P Watson.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION


- 1.1 In December 2003 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Mr D Watson, to undertake archaeological works on land at Strand Street, Maryport, Cumbria (Planning Application Reference No. 2/03/1088). This consisted of a desk-based assessment and field evaluation. This report fulfils a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service and concludes archaeological work on the site.
- 1.2 The town of Maryport is situated on the west coast of Cumbria, approximately 30 miles south-west of Carlisle and 10 miles north of Whitehaven. The town is located within a landscape of known archaeological remains, particularly of Roman date, including a substantial fort north of the town and the line of a Roman road leading eastwards in the direction of the settlement of *Derventio* (modern Papcastle).
- 1.3 The site is located on land between North Quay and Strand Street and comprises an area of approximately 2,500m². The site consists of a vacant plot of land with sparse grass cover overlying layers of rubble and sand. The land reaches a height of approximately 10m AOD.
- 1.4 The purpose of the assessment was to evaluate the site in order to define the presence or absence of archaeological remains. The fieldwork was undertaken in a single phase of five days duration. Archaeological deposits were excavated in plan and, where appropriate, in section, and were recorded in order to achieve an understanding of their nature, extent, depth and state of preservation. Any artefactual material was collected to facilitate the interpretation and date of the archaeological features. No paleo-environmental material was encountered during the evaluation.

2 PREVIOUS WORK

- 2.1 There has been no direct archaeological investigation on the site of the proposed development.
- 2.2 There has been a great deal of antiquarian interest in Maryport. In 1599 William Camden described the, then extensive, remains of the Roman fort and *vicus* as did William Stukeley in the early 18th century.
- 2.3 In 1766 the Senhouse family sponsored excavations of the Roman camp, discovering a number of features including the arch of a gate, houses, roofing slate and several finds of glass vessels, mirrors, coins, urns and a Roman bath house (Jackson et al, 1969.) In 1820 Joseph Robinson excavated four fields to the north east of the fort including two temple sites. In the 1920s Bailey found evidence of a Roman wharf structure beneath Motte Hill, Glasson (Bailey, 1923.)
- 2.4 Further investigation took place in 1976 when Michael Jarrett undertook a series of small planned excavations. These excavations found a broad chronology for the fort, dating from the early years of the Hadrianic period to c.400 AD. The excavation also defined the extent of stone robbing during the mid-18th century foundation of Maryport (Jarrett et al 1987).

- 2.5 In 1994 Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU 1994) undertook an excavation of Netherhall Blast Furnace and Coke Ovens, located to the south east of the town, which date to 1752 but were demolished in 1963 (Marshall et al 1977.)
- 2.6 A geophysical survey of the vicus took place in 2000 (News from Hadrians Wall 2000.) This found the site to be the largest associated with the Hadrianic frontier defence system so far surveyed.
- 2.7 In 2001 Carlisle Archaeology Ltd maintained a watching brief of land on South Quay, prior to the development of commercial premises. No archaeological deposits were observed within any of the excavations (Reeves, 2001).
- 2.8 In December 2002 and January 2003, North Pennines Heritage Trust maintained a watching brief on land adjacent to Irish Street, which found the remains of structures thought to have been associated with the 19th century Wharton's Foundry (Jones, 2003).
- 2.9 In June 2003, North Pennines Heritage Trust maintained a watching brief on land at Fleming Square (Miller 2003). The work identified the possible remains of the former Market House, which occupied the centre of the square. No archaeological structures earlier than the 19th century were observed in any of the trenches.



<p>North Pennines Archaeology Ltd Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre Nenthead Alston CUMBRIA CA9 3PD</p> <p>Tel: (01434) 382045 Fax: (01434) 382294 Email: np.ht@virgin.net</p>	<p>PROJECT: STRAND STREET, MARYPORT</p> <p>FIGURE: 1</p> <p>TITLE: Site Location</p> <p>Reproduced from Landranger® 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</p>	
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3 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 The work undertaken consisted of a desk-based assessment, visual site inspection and field evaluation.

3.2 Project Design

3.2.1 A project design was prepared in response to a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service. This included a detailed specification of works to be carried out, which consisted of a desk-based assessment prior to field evaluation.

3.3 Desk-Based Assessment

3.3.1 This involved the consultation of the County Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal and County Record Office, Carlisle in the first instance. This involved the assessment of all readily available primary and secondary documentary and cartographic material and all available aerial photographs. Consultation of this material allowed a comprehensive understanding of the geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context of the site.

3.3.2 The desk-based assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (IFA 1994).

3.4 Visual Site Inspection

3.4.1 A visual site inspection was undertaken in order to note any surface features of potential archaeological interest and to identify any potential hazards to health and safety, such as the presence of live services or constraints to undertaking archaeological fieldwork, such as Tree Preservation Orders and public footpaths.

3.4.2 No constraints or hazards could be identified from a visual site inspection.

3.5 Field Evaluation

3.5.1 This consisted of the excavation of 4 linear trial trenches in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals.

3.5.2 In summary, the main objectives of the evaluation 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.

- 3.2 Each trench was 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. Each trench was 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 400 ISO colour print film.
- 3.3 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994).

4 RESULTS

4.1 The evaluation was directed in the field by Chris Jones, BA, MA, PIFA, Assistant Archaeologist, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. He was assisted by Joanne Beaty, BA and Faye McNamara, BA, Project Assistants.

4.2 A total of four linear trial trenches were excavated, each measuring 20m x 1.6m, providing a total area of 128m².

4.3 All references to cardinal directions refer to site grid north.

4.4 Trench 1

4.4.1 Trench 1 was located parallel to Strand Street, placed over the location of a range of buildings visible on the Ordnance Survey 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions (see figures 3, 4 and 5). The natural substrate was observed at a depth of between 1.20m and 1.40m and consisted of mid brown gravelly sand (103).

4.4.2 This was cut by two parallel walls running roughly east/west forming a narrow cellared room. This room was defined to the south by a sandstone wall (107) measuring 1.50m x 0.50m, and to the north by a sandstone step (111) measuring 1.50m x 0.80m wide. The room still contained its cobble floor (135) (see Plate 1).

4.4.3 The cobble floor surface (135) was sealed by a grey-black silt deposit (130) measuring 1.0m x 1.50m, which was in turn sealed by an extensive rubble deposit (110). To the north of wall 107, the natural substrate (103) was sealed by a rubble deposit (108) containing white mortar > 50% of the context, which appeared to represent a formation layer associated with the construction of the ship yard.

4.4.4 A large cut feature of 20th century date (138) which was filled by a dark brown silt containing large rounded cobbles (109) cut both 108 and 110. Contexts 109 and 111 were sealed by a general demolition rubble layer (101).

4.4.5 To the south of wall 107 no further structural features had survived the demolition process with the natural substrate (103) sealed by a heavily iron stained sand deposit (106) which abutted wall 107.

4.4.6 Contexts 106 and 101 and, at the northern half of the trench, 103, were all sealed by a general rubble layer (100).

4.4.7 At the northern part of the trench, context 103 was cut by a series of irregularly shaped pit features (113, 115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125 and 127). No anthropogenic material was recovered from any of the fills

4.5 Trench 2

4.5.1 Trench 2 was located perpendicular to Strand Street, at the south end of the site within the area of the Smithy, identified from the Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition (1901). Natural sand and shingle (103) was observed at a depth of 0.50m below the current surface. This was cut by a series of stone, cobble and concrete structures including a cobble floor surface (144) (see Plate 2), concrete floor surface (140), sandstone wall (139) and brick and a square brick and sandstone

structure (138). The cobble surface (144) appears to be the remains of the yard associated with the smithy with fragmentary wall 139 being all that remained of the smithy structure. The remains of a small square sandstone and fire brick structure is likely to represent the base of a small chimney associated with a hearth in the smithy (see Plate 3).

- 4.5.2 Context 144 was cut by a modern service trench. The structural remains were sealed by a layer of demolition rubble (101) which was in turn sealed by a general rubble layer with sparse grass cover (100).

4.6 Trench 3

- 4.6.1 Trench 3 was located at the west end of the site, parallel to Strand Street and within the area of the patent slip identified on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition. Natural sand (103) was observed at a depth of 1.20m below the current ground surface. A sandstone wall (136) was observed at the south-central part of the trench, orientated east-west and is likely to be a continuation of wall 107 recorded in trench 1. Context 103 was sealed by a layer of black grit (154) 0.10m thick, which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of red sandy clay (153). Context 153 lay beneath a rubble layer (152), which was sealed by a separate layer of red sandy clay (151), sealed by a general demolition rubble layer (100).

- 4.6.2 No significant archaeological features or deposits other than wall 136 were observed within the trench, with no visible traces of the patent slip.

4.7 Trench 4

- 4.7.1 Trench 4 was located at the north end of the site and was orientated east-west. Natural sand (103) was observed at a depth of 1.90m and was sealed by a concrete surface measuring 0.25m in depth. This surface was then sealed by a layer of demolition rubble (149), which was in turn sealed by a general rubble layer (100). No other significant archaeological deposits were observed within this trench.

5 THE FINDS

- 5.1 No significant anthropogenic material earlier than 1900 was recovered from any of the trenches.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 No significant archaeological deposits were recorded in any of the evaluation trenches. The presence of stone walls within trench 1 and 3 corresponds to structures visible on the Ordnance Survey 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions and it is likely this represents a basement for a long narrow building oriented east-west running along the southern side of the slipway and likely to have been the main carpentry workshop for the shipyard. No traces above basement level survive from any of these buildings.

- 6.2 The archaeological remains identified within trench 2 directly relate to the late 19th century Smithy, visible on the Ordnance Survey 2nd edition (1901). The remains represent a cobble floor, concrete floor and a brick foundation, possibly for a chimney. These remains, however, do not add to the current state of knowledge regarding the site, as the buildings were demolished in the late 20th century, and similar cobble floors and wall foundations can still be seen above ground.
- 6.3 Trenches 3 and 4 were located within the environs of the former patent slip, visible on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (1865). No traces of this slipway were observed up to a depth of 2.0 m below ground level.
- 6.4 The results of the field evaluation suggest that the development of the site will have **no direct impacts** upon significant archaeological remains.

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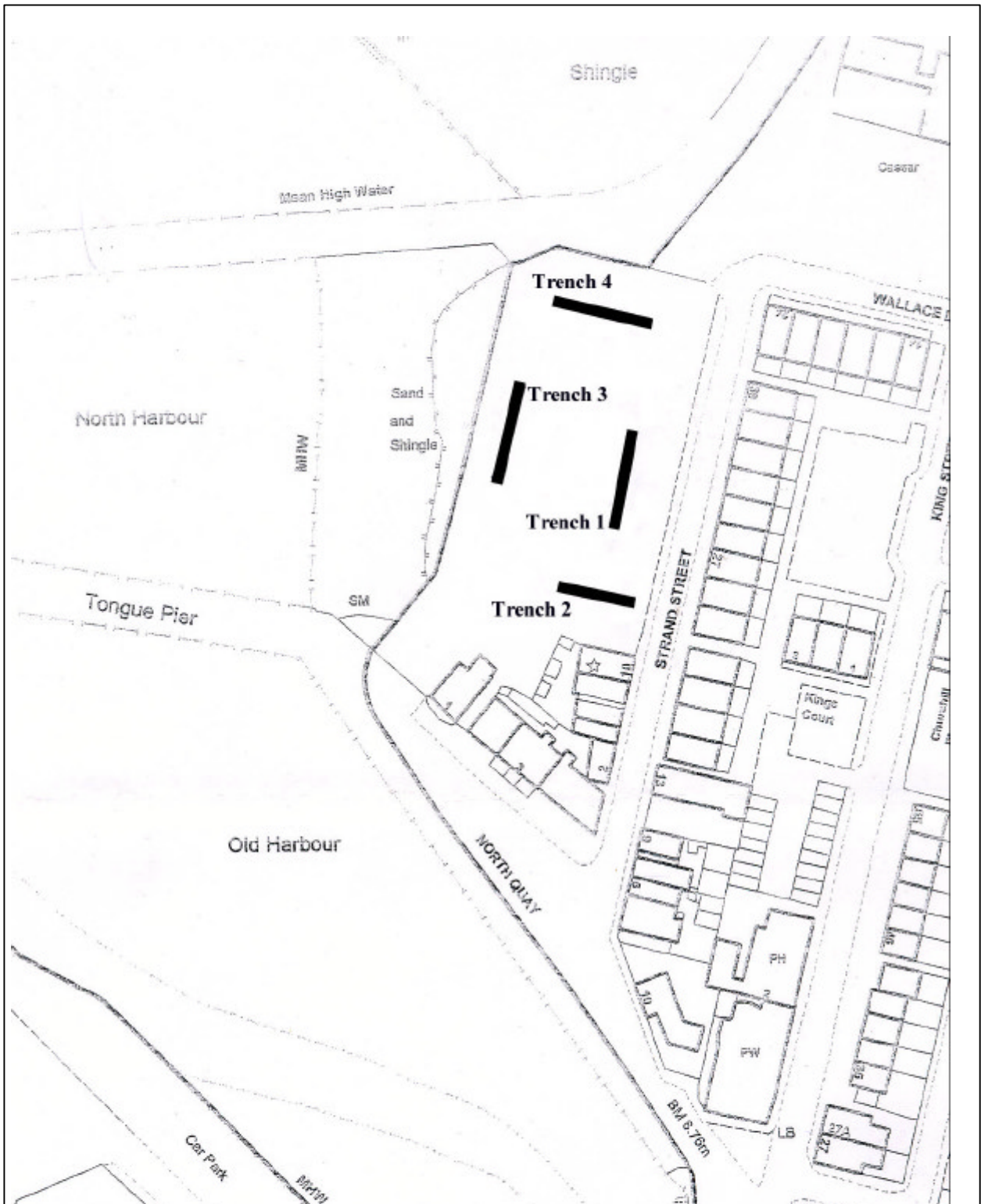
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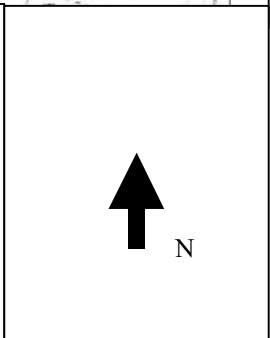
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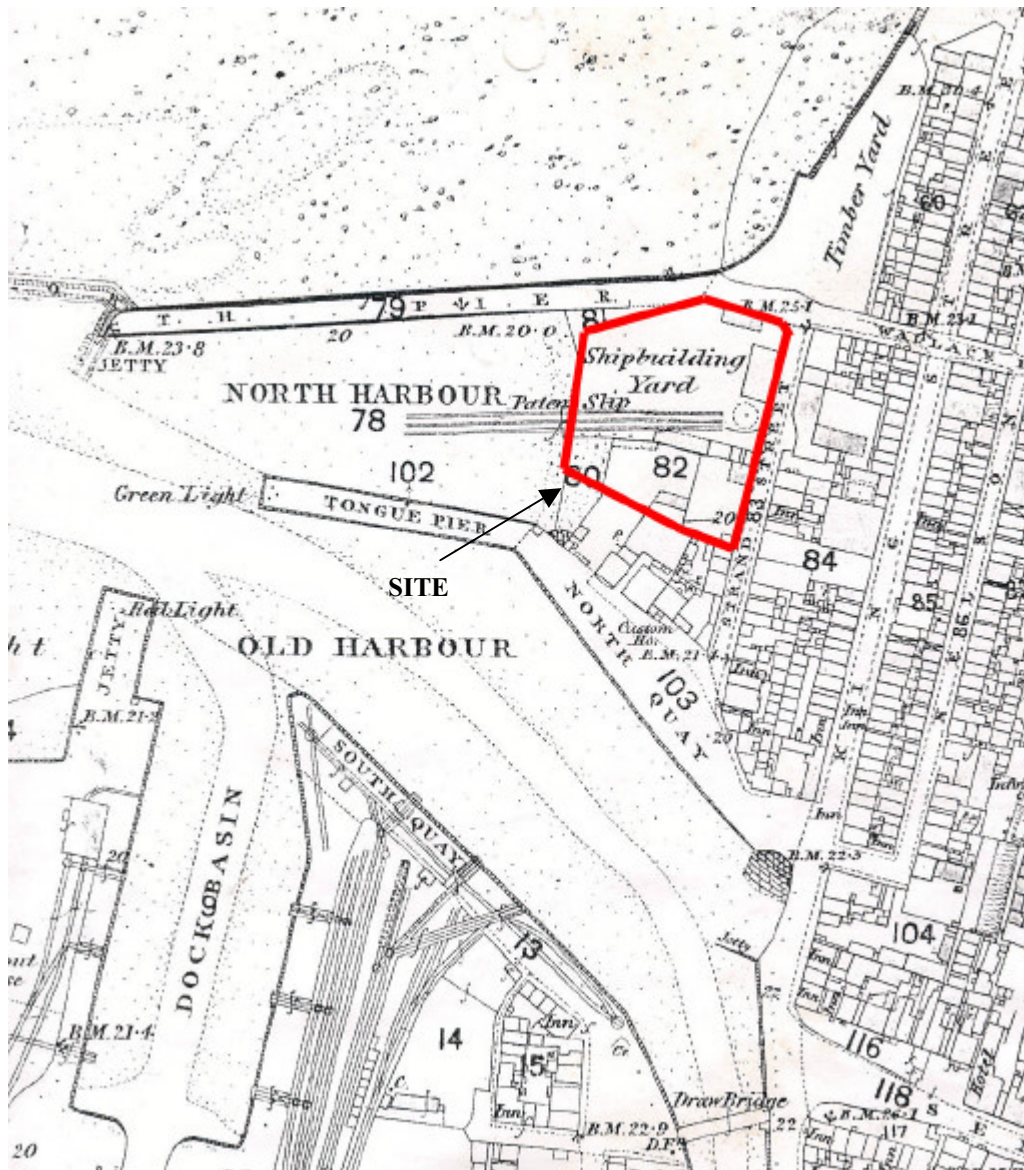



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 Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre
 Nenthead
 Alston
 CUMBRIA
 CA9 3PD

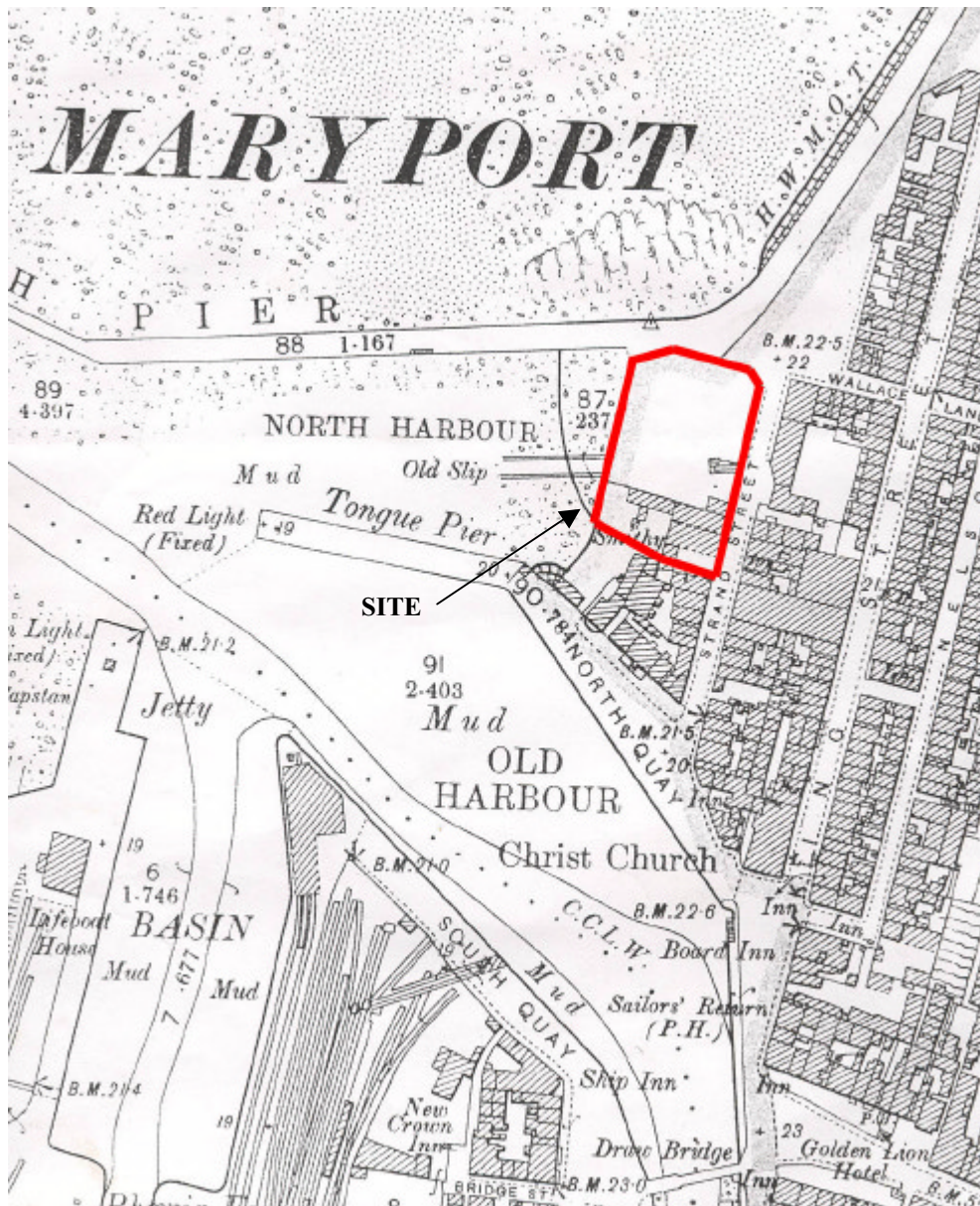
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 Fax: (01434) 382294
 Email: np.ht@virgin.net


PROJECT: STRAND STREET, MARYPORT
FIGURE: 2
SCALE: Based on Ordnance Survey 1:1250
TITLE: Trench Location Plan

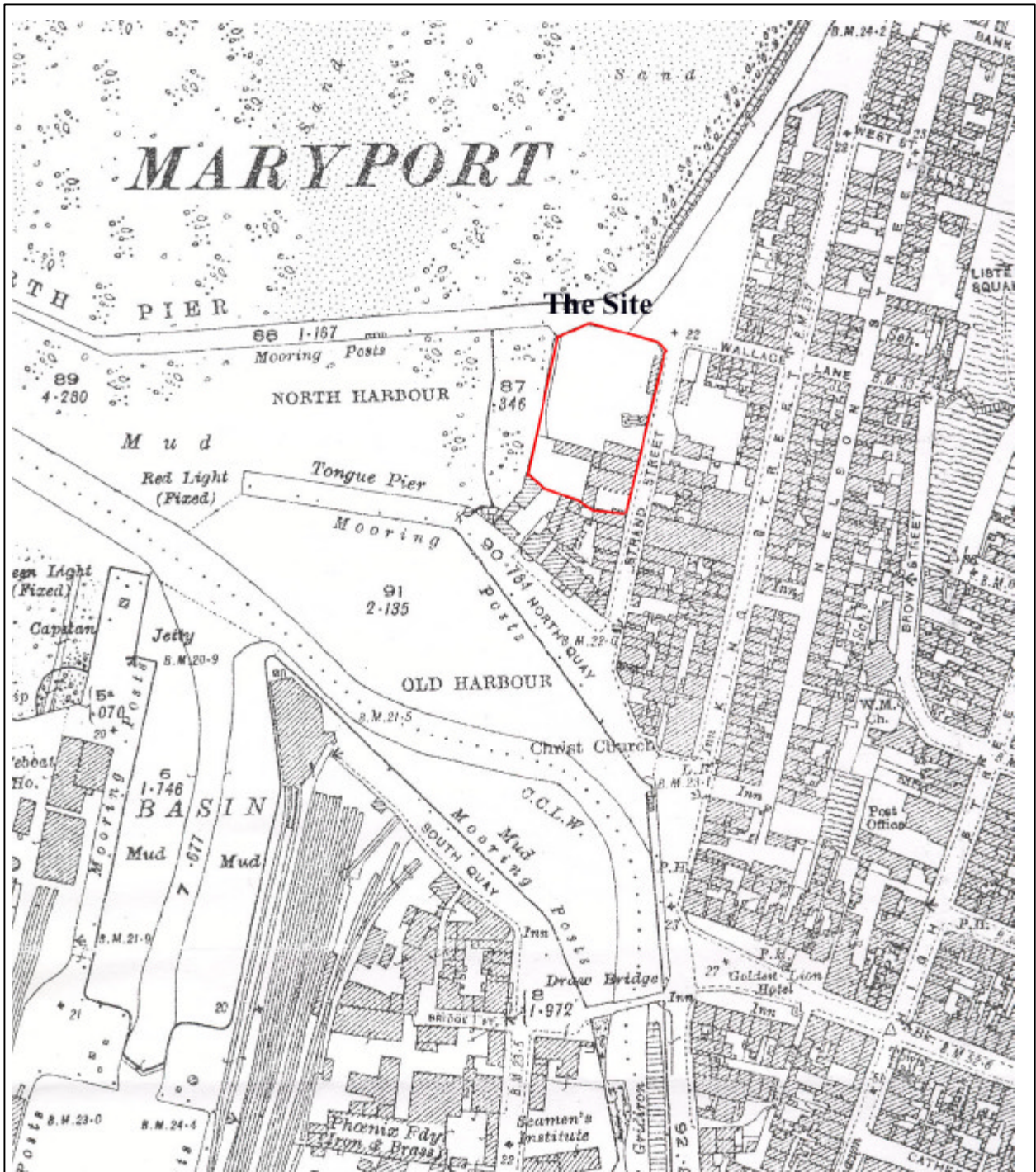




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 Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre
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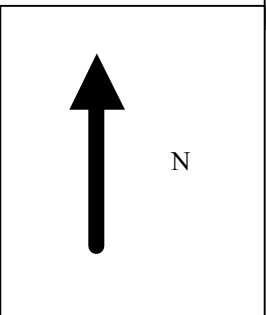
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PROJECT: STRAND STREET, MARYPORT

FIGURE: 5

SCALE: 1:10,560

TITLE: Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition (1925)





**Plate 1: Trench 1: Wall 107 (Foreground), Cobble Floor 135 and Wall 111 (Background)
(Photo: Chris Jones)**



Plate 2: Trench 2 Cobble Floor 144 in the foreground. (Photo: Chris Jones)



Plate 3: Trench 2: Sandstone and brick platform 138. (Photo: Chris Jones)

