
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/87/03

**REPORT ON
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
AND FIELD EVALUATION OF
LAND AT WALBY HALL
CROSBY-ON-EDEN
CUMBRIA**

**For
MESSRS PATTINSON**

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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 Walby Hall, Crosby-on-Eden, Cumbria. This was in response to a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service prior to a planning application by the NFU North-West Region.

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 five 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.

The evaluation identified a large ditch in excess of 9m wide and 3m deep, corresponding to the northern wall ditch of Hadrian's Wall. There was no evidence of the counter-scarp bank to the north of the ditch, nor was there any evidence of any defensive cut features associated with the ditch. The ditch appeared to have been deliberately back-filled with a redeposited natural sandy silt containing fragments of Roman pottery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to the following people and institutions for their help, advice and communication provided throughout the project: Frank Giecco, Ken Denham, Patricia Crompton, Joanne Beaty of North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service, Mr N Utting of the NFU North West Region, Mr K Pattinson.

1 INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

- 1.1 In December 2003 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Mr N Utting of the NFU North West Region on behalf of the Client, Messrs Pattinson, to undertake archaeological works on land at Walby Hall, Crosby-on-Eden, Cumbria. This consisted of a desk-based assessment and field evaluation. This report fulfils a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service.
- 1.2 Walby Hall is situated approximately 2 miles east of Carlisle, on land adjacent to the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site (SAM 26088), within the WHS visual envelope (Parsons 2003). The line of Hadrian's Wall and its ditch were located during an excavation in advance of pipe laying east of Walby.
- 1.3 The site is located on open farmland to the north of Walby Hall. The area is shown in figures 1a and 1b.
- 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. Bulk samples were taken in accordance to the NPAL Ltd standard procedure in order to provide detailed paleo-environmental information.

2 PREVIOUS WORK

- 2.1 There has been no direct archaeological investigation on the site of the proposed development.
- 2.2 In 1900 Hodgson and Haverfield excavated a trench across Hadrian's Wall in a 7 acre field called 'William Croft'. The bottom of the ditch was found to be six feet below the present ground surface (Hodgson and Haverfield, 1901)
- 2.3 In 1975 a watching brief was maintained during excavations for the laying of the Frigg gas pipeline. The wall ditch and Vallum ditch were examined in detail at the intersection near Walby (Richardson, 1978).
- 2.4 English Heritage's Central Archaeology Service excavated a series of test pits in the late 1990s, which demonstrated the presence of surviving structural remains of Walby East Milecastle 62 (Wilmott, 1999).
- 2.5 Previous work on the line of Hadrian's Wall includes a trench across the Wall ditch at Burgh By Sands, where the ditch was identified 'from its upper fill of dark brown loam, distinct from the black old ground surface on the south and natural red and yellow clay on the north side into which the ditch has been cut.' The ditch was 8m wide and separated from the north face of the Wall by a flat berm, 9m across (Austen 1994; 45).

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 The desk-based assessment 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 5 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 where 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 palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

- 3.5.3 Each trench was mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket to the top of archaeological deposits. 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.
- 3.5.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994).

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Place Name Evidence

- 4.1.1 The place name *by* element is indicative of a Danish origin for the township of Walby, literally home by the wall (Lee 1998).

4.2 Prehistoric

- 4.2.1 Little is known regarding the prehistoric settlement of the Crosby-on-Eden area. A bone harpoon head was found in peat near Crosby-on-Eden in 1875 (Hodgson, 1894) and Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery was found during an archaeological evaluation undertaken at Carlisle Airport (Carlisle Archaeology 1996). Similar material was found during work in advance of the construction of the A689 Low Crosby bypass (Carlisle Archaeological Unit 1995).

4.3 Roman

- 4.3.1 The Roman period in North Cumbria is dominated by Hadrian's Wall and those settlements associated with it. The construction of Hadrian's Wall begun circa 122 AD, the Cumbrian section of which consisted of a turf bank and later stone wall, a series of milecastles, turrets and signal stations at regular intervals, a large ditch or *vallum* and a military road to the south.
- 4.3.2 The line of Hadrian's Wall travels through Walby, surviving as a buried feature across this section of the wall as depicted on MacLauchlan's survey of the 1850s. The discovery of the wall ditch in close proximity to the current site confirms its course through Walby, which also lies in close proximity to Milecastle 62 which was identified during excavations in the 1990s. The Milecastle survived buried beneath the surface, with the wall buried beneath a farm lane and arable land. Turret 62b also lies within this section, however, no trace of this has been identified.

4.4 Medieval

- 4.4.1 In the medieval period, the Parish of Crosby, variously called the barony of Linstock, and barony of Crosby, was in existence by the early 12th century when it was granted to the priory of Carlisle in the reign of King Henry I, "... there was a grange or country seat erected upon it, as a summer retreat for the religious of that house." (Hutchinson, 1799). The barony consisted of Linstock, Crosby, Walby, Richardby (Rickerby) and Newby, "... Walby was so called of the Picts Wall, whereunto it adjoineth." (Ibid.).

4.5 Post Medieval

- 4.5.1 Donald's map of 1774 shows a cluster of buildings at Walby, although the route of the Wall is shown to take a 'curious turn' (Hodgson 1901), later shown to be an incorrect course of the Wall and Vallum.
- 4.5.2 Walby Farmhouse is an early 19th century, grade II listed building (SMR 20106). It is described as made from Flemish bond brick walls, stone dressings, a slate roof with brick chimney stacks and consists of 2 storeys with 3 bays.
- 4.5.3 Modern Walby consists of Walby Hall Farm, Walby Croft Farm and Walby Grange Farm. The present site is situated on farmland to the north of Walby Hall Farm.

5 RESULTS

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

5.2 A total of five linear trial trenches were excavated, measuring between 10m and 20m in length, providing a 5% sample of a total area approximately 3340m². See Figure 2 for location of trenches.

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

5.4 Trench 1 (Figure 7, 8)

5.4.1 Trench 1 was located at the south-central part of the site, at 90° to the line of Hadrian's Wall and measured approximately 30m x 1.5m, oriented northwest – southeast. Natural subsoil (112) was recorded at a depth of 0.80m.

5.4.2 The wall ditch (110) on the north side of the wall was identified, running approximately east – west within the trench. The ditch measured in excess of 9m wide and 3m deep, and was not fully excavated for reasons of health and safety. The ditch was characterised by a gradually sloping south side, the north side was not visible as it lay outside the trench under a farm track. The ditch was filled by a compact grey silty sand (113), as the ditch was not bottomed it cannot be identified as a primary fill. This was sealed by a thick (c. 2.0m) deposit of redeposited natural silty sand (114) which contained three small fragments of colour-coated Oxford ware, 1 sherd of mortaria of Mancetter-Hartshill type and 1 sherd of abraded grey ware (see Table 1). Context 114 was sealed by a mid-brown sandy silt (102), which was in turn sealed by a 19th century ploughsoil (101), sealed by a later 20th century topsoil brought in to raise a 'hollow' caused by slumping into the ditch (100).

5.4.3 Contexts 102 and 114 possibly relate to the remains of the counter-scarp bank, which had been levelled to deliberately backfill the ditch. Their compaction suggests the ditch had been backfilled during late antiquity rather than in recent history.

5.4.4 A small, irregular shaped pit (103) was observed immediately outside the ditch on the north side. This was filled by a sequence of clay and sand deposits (104, 105 and 106). No anthropogenic material was recovered from this pit. A similar pit (107) was observed at the north part of the trench, filled by sandy clay (108), which again contained no anthropogenic material.

5.5 Trench 2

5.5.1 Trench 2 was located at the southwest part of the site, at 90° to the line of Hadrian's Wall and measured approximately 20m x 1.5m and was oriented northwest – southeast. Part of the wall ditch (110) was identified within this trench as it tapered towards the southwest corner of the field, although this was not excavated within this trench. The ditch was not excavated due to its extent and health and safety issues. No other archaeological features were identified within this trench.

5.6 Trench 3

5.6.1 Trench 3 was located at the northeast part of the site, measuring 20m x 1.5m and oriented east – west. Natural subsoil (111) was recorded at a depth of 0.30m.

5.6.2 No archaeological features were identified within this trench.

5.7 Trench 4

5.7.1 Trench 4 was located at the northwest part of the site, measuring 20m x 1.5m and oriented east – west. Natural subsoil (111) was recorded at a depth of 0.30m.

5.7.2 No archaeological features were identified within this trench.

5.8 Trench 5

5.8.1 Trench 5 was located at the southwest part of the site, measuring 10m x 1.5m and was oriented at 90° to the line of Hadrian's Wall. The wall ditch (110) was identified within this trench but not excavated as a section had been excavated through the ditch in trench 1 and further work was beyond the scope of the evaluation.

6 THE FINDS

| <i>Trench No</i> | <i>Context No.</i> | <i>Oxford (Colour Coated) Ware</i> | <i>Mortaria</i> | <i>Grey Ware</i> |
|------------------|--------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| 1 | 102 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Totals | | 3 | 1 | 1 |

Table 1: Walby Hall WAL-A: The Pottery

6.1 Several highly abraded residual pottery sherds were recovered during the evaluation. These were all Roman in date and style and consisted of 3 sherds of Oxford (Colour Coated) Ware, 1 sherd of Mortaria (Mancetter-Hartshill) and 1 sherd of abraded Grey Ware, all from context 102 (see Table 1).

6.2 In addition to the pottery there were 3 unstratified finds from within trench 1. These included 1 iron nail, 1 unidentified iron fragment and a small lead 'plug-rivet'. The plug rivet is likely to be Roman in date and was used for pottery repair.

7 CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The evaluation has revealed the location and partial extent of the wall ditch north of Hadrian's Wall. The extent of the feature, in excess of 3m deep, did not facilitate the full excavation of the ditch within trench 1. However, the nature of the ditch and the presence of residual Roman pottery within context 114 suggest a probable Roman date.
- 7.2 Two irregular shaped pits were identified to the north of the ditch (110), within trench 1, although they contained no anthropogenic material.
- 7.3 No other archaeological features were identified during the evaluation, and there was a marked absence of post medieval finds from the upper deposits (100 and 101). There is no evidence to suggest any significant activity had taken place subsequent to the back filling of the wall ditch.

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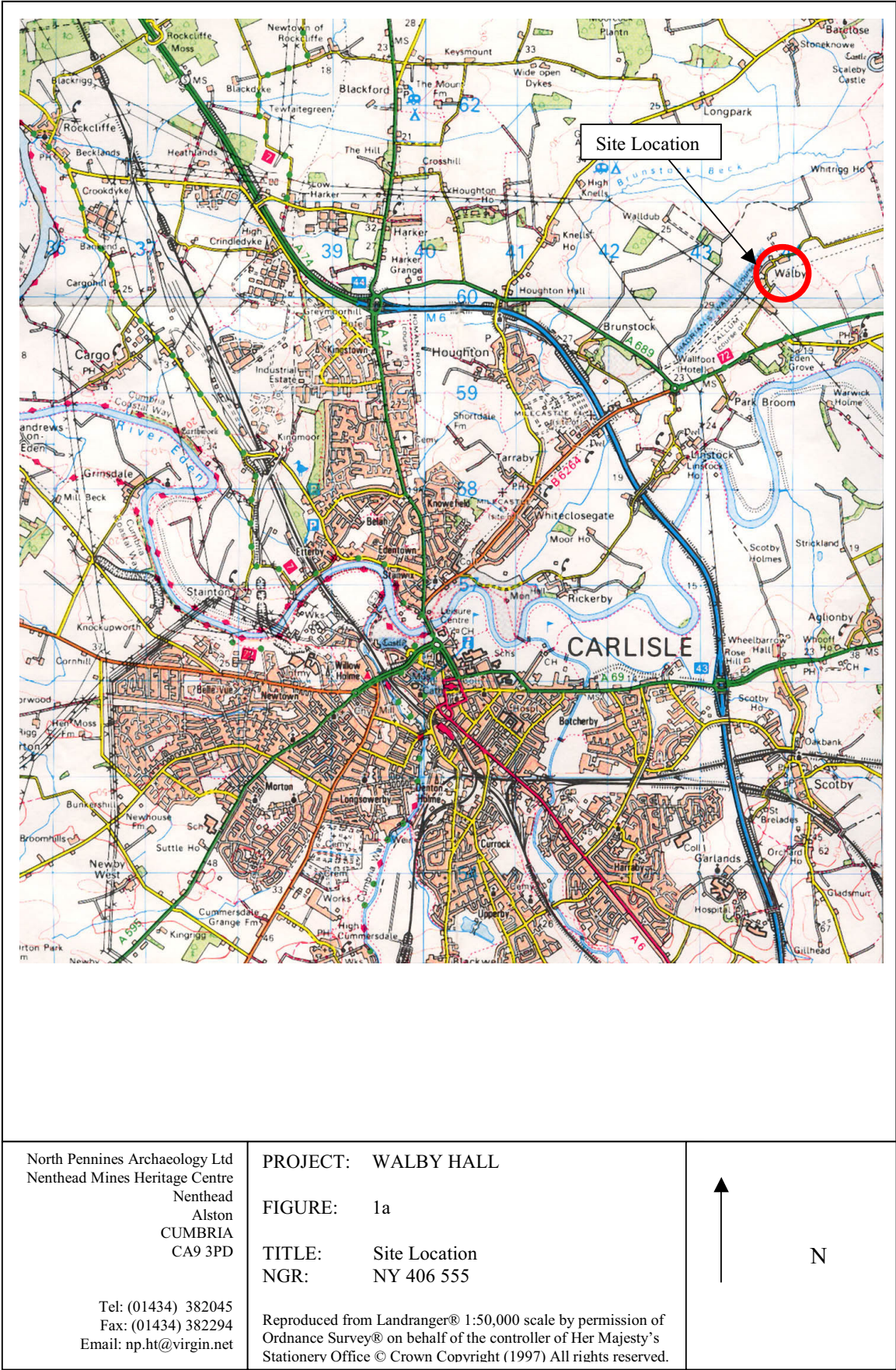
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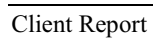
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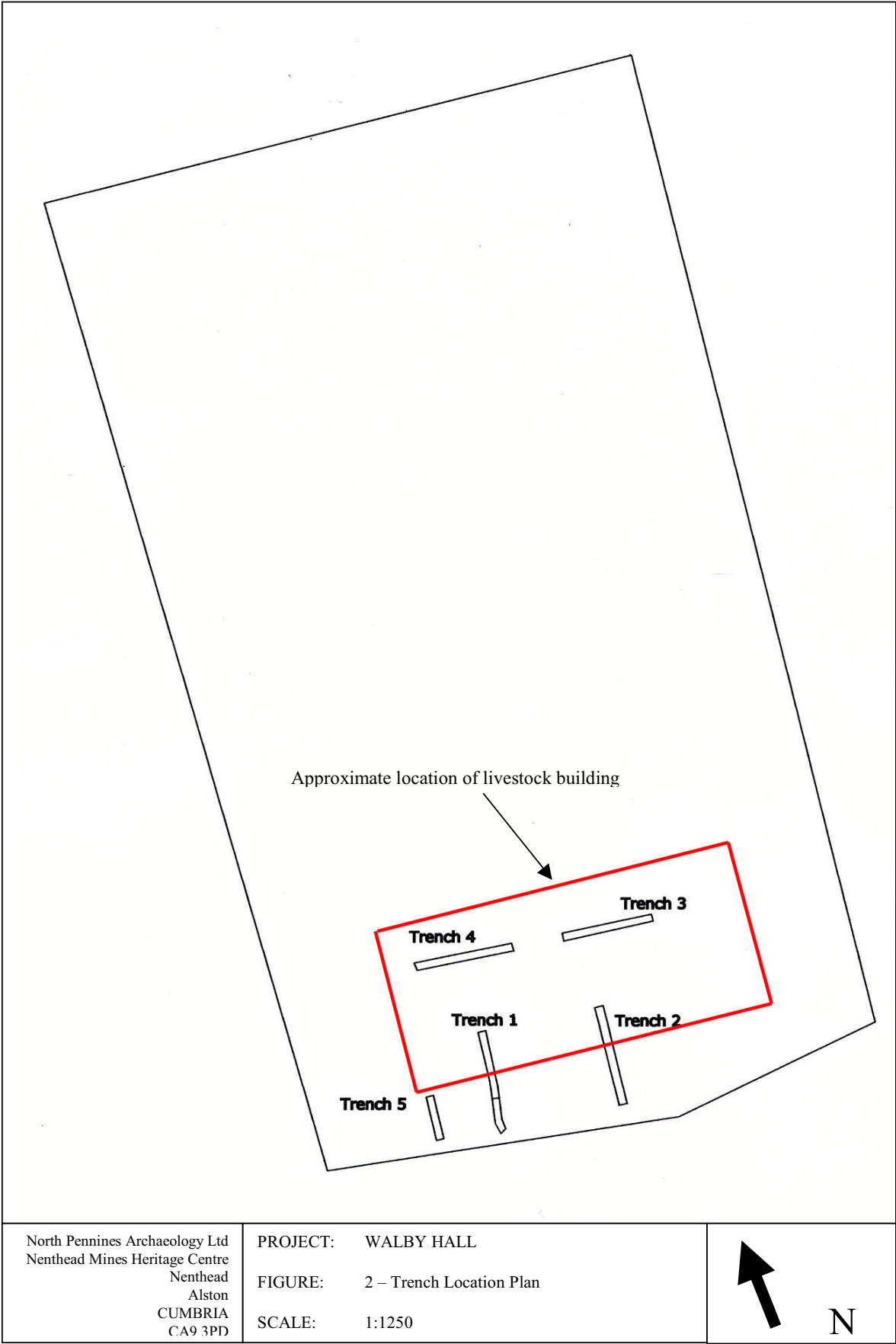
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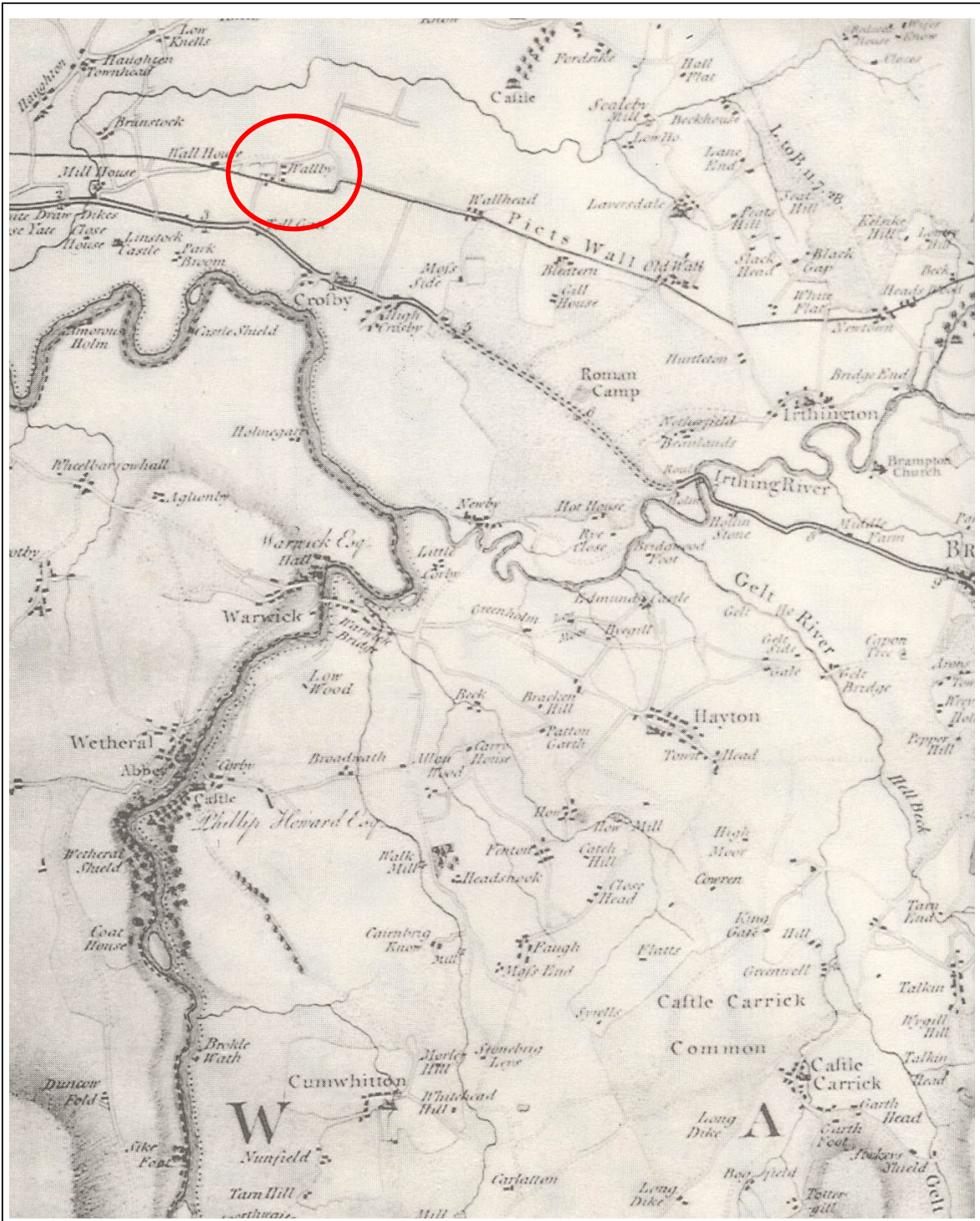
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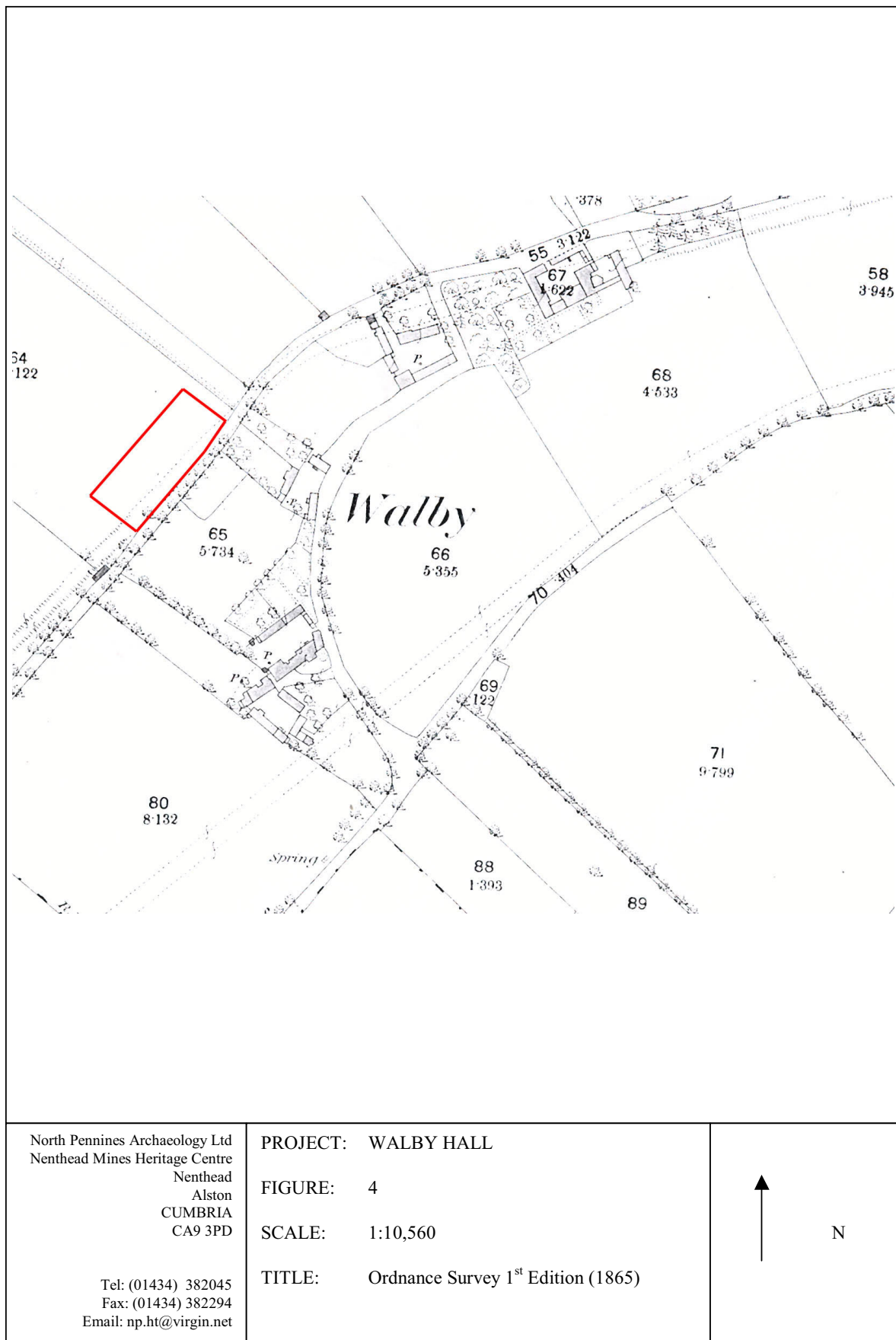
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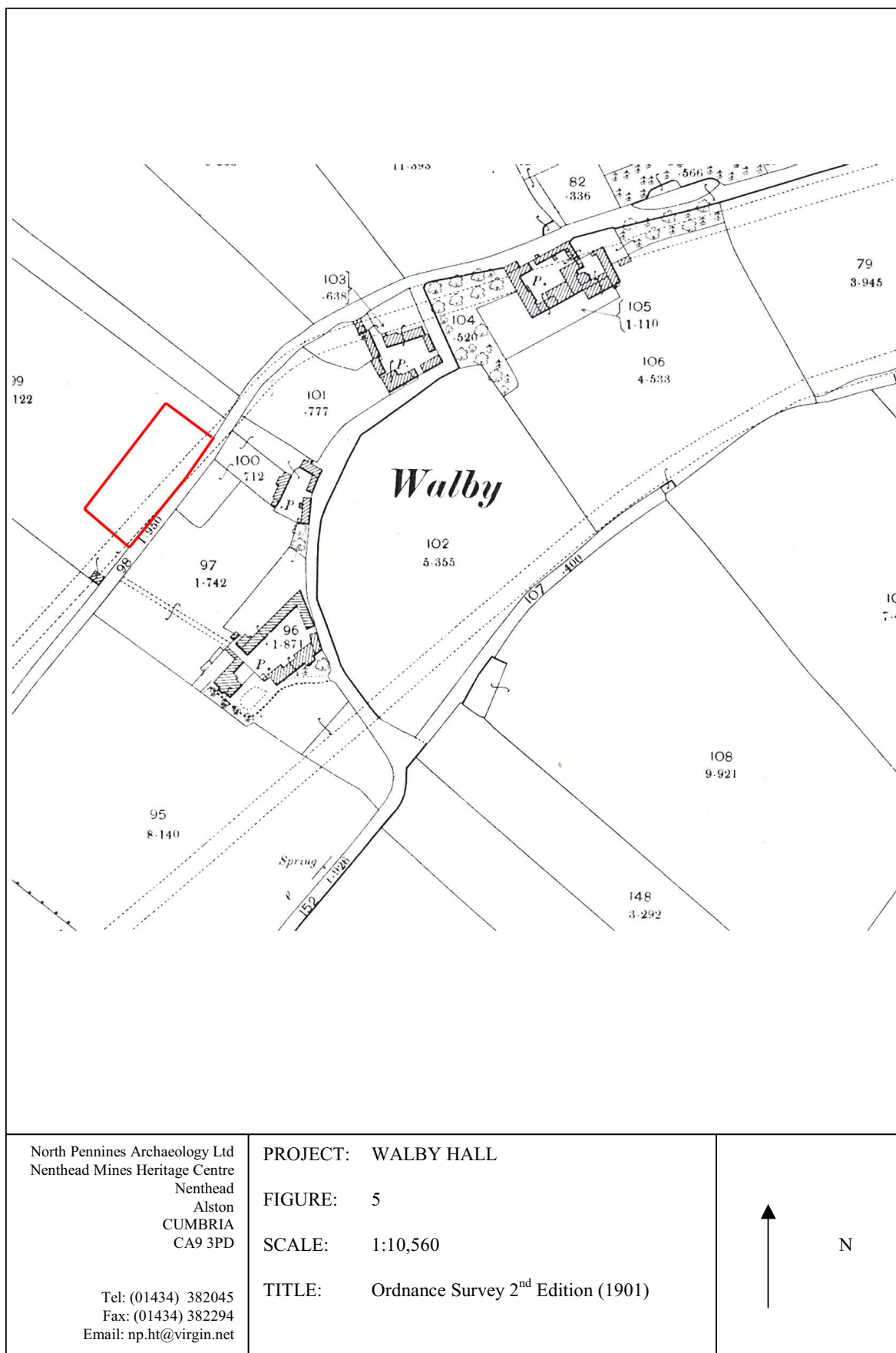
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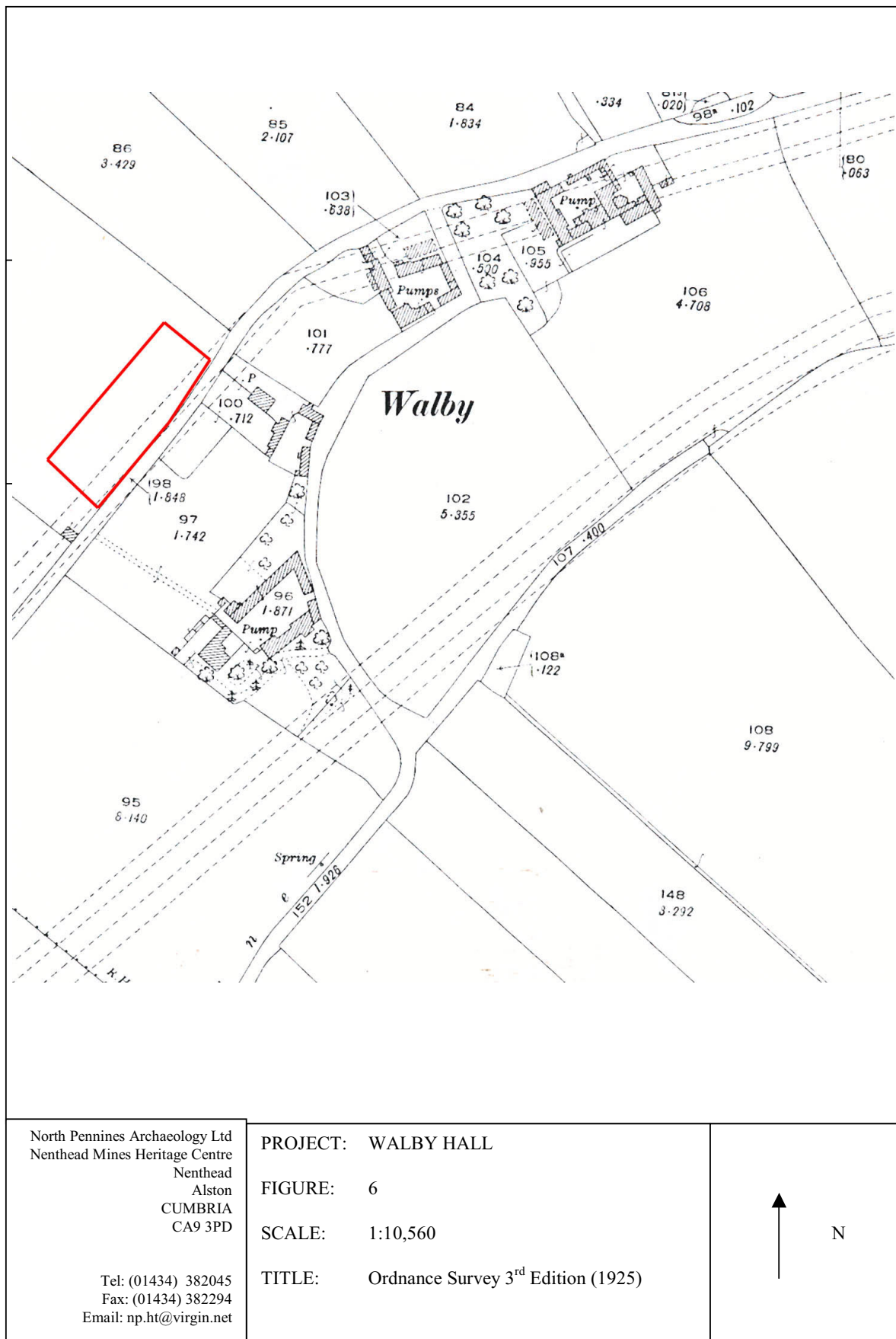
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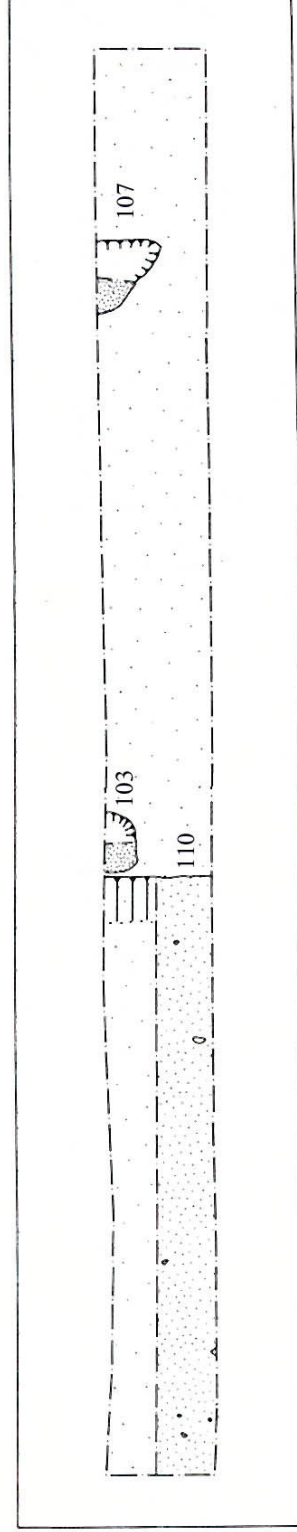


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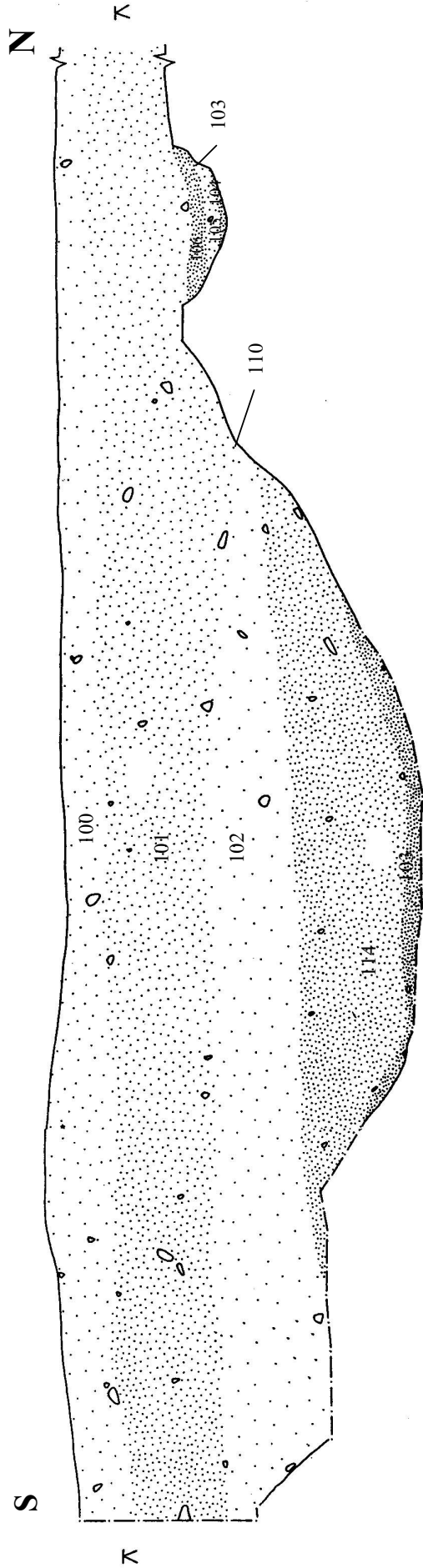


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PROJECT: WALBY HALL
FIGURE: 7
SCALE: 1:40
TITLE: Trench 1 Plan of Archaeological Features.
DRAWN BY: JR





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FIGURE: 8

SCALE: 1:20

TITLE: Section through Wall ditch (110)

DRAWN BY: JR

