



# Blyth Bebside Railway Station (Northumberland Line) Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland

Archaeological Watching Brief



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## Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new railway station on land west of the A189, Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland, centred on NGR 428383 581280. The monitored works covered 0.76 hectares and were divided into five irregularly shaped areas (trenches 1–5).

The aims of the project have been met. Three modern ditches or furrows and one modern pit were uncovered in the northern and south-eastern parts of the monitored area. Historic mapping shows that the area was an unoccupied field during the 19th and 20th centuries, therefore it is probable that the uncovered features related to agricultural activity. There is no evidence that activity related to the Bebside Colliery extended into the development site.

A small assemblage of finds was recovered, comprising pottery, ceramic building material and glass. All finds were of late 19th to mid-20th-century date.

Environmental remains recovered from the pit had a low potential to inform on the nature of the site and the feature, due to the low amount and poor condition of the wood charcoal recovered.

The absence of archaeological remains relating to the colliery activity and early railway at Blyth means that the site is unable to contribute to the research themes identified for the project.

## Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd for commissioning the archaeological watching brief. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the advice of the Archaeological Advisor, who monitored the project for Northumberland County Council.



# Blyth Bebside Railway Station (Northumberland Line), Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland

## Archaeological Watching Brief

### 1 INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the construction of a new railway station. The monitored works covered 0.76 ha, centred on NGR 428383 581280, on land west of the A189, Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland (Fig. 1).
- 1.1.2 The watching brief was carried out as a condition of planning permission for the construction of a two platform railway station at Bebside, granted by Northumberland County Council (21/00878/CCD) in January 2022. The new station forms part of wider plans to reopen the Northumberland Line from Ashington to Newcastle and is one of six planned new stations.
- 1.1.3 The archaeological monitoring was focused on an area to the east of the existing railway line in order to record any potential remains pertaining to Bebside colliery.
- 1.1.4 The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (AECOM 2021). The Archaeological Advisor approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing. The watching brief was undertaken 15–25 January 2024.

#### 1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide the results of the watching brief, to interpret the results within their local or regional context (or otherwise), and to assess their potential to address the aims outlined in the WSI, thereby making available information about the archaeological resource (a preservation by record).

#### 1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The watching brief was located in an unoccupied parcel of land east of the existing railway and to the west of the roundabout junction of the A189 and A19.
- 1.3.2 The existing ground levels at the site are at approximately 24 m OD.
- 1.3.3 The bedrock is Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation, with superficial deposits of Diamicton Devensian Till (British Geological Survey 2024).

### 2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

#### 2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The archaeological and historical background was assessed in a heritage statement (AECOM 2020) and summarised in the WSI (AECOM 2021). Relevant sections of the summary are presented below, with any relevant entry numbers from the Northumberland historic environment record (HER) included.



## 2.2 Archaeological and historical context

### *Late prehistoric (4000–700 BC)*

- 2.2.1 Cropmarks indicate the presence of a Neolithic penannular enclosure (N11763) on a river terrace above the River Blyth, 670 m west of the site. The enclosure is sub-circular in plan and 13 m in diameter with one or two entrances.

### *Iron Age–Romano-British (700 BC–AD 410)*

- 2.2.2 A large double ditched rectangular enclosure (N11760) has been recorded from cropmarks, 760 m west of the site. The site is probably an Iron Age to Romano-British settlement; the remains of a roundhouse are visible within the enclosure.

- 2.2.3 An Iron Age roundhouse (N22890) was found during evaluation works 630 m south-east of the site, and an irregular feature of the same date was found 970 m east (N22990).

### *Medieval (AD 410–1550)*

- 2.2.4 Bebside and Cowpen formed part of the Barony of Bolam and a manorial hall, demesne farm and grange were present at Bebside. The manor was likely situated at the site of the post-medieval Bebside Old Hall, 1 km west of the site.

- 2.2.5 The earliest record of a mine at Cowpen dates to 1315 and is found in the Tynemouth Chartulary, where it details that the mine was held from the Tynemouth convent by Robert, son of Alan of Cowpen. Subsequently, a coal pit was leased out in 1535 by the prior and convent of Tynemouth in fields at Bebside and Cowpen, while two saltpans and half a coal pit located on the River Blyth were also leased in 1538. The exact locations of any of these mines is unknown.

### *Post-medieval (AD 1500–1800)*

- 2.2.6 Large blocks of ridge and furrow have been identified around the site (N28555 and N28558), though the majority of these have since been levelled or built over.

- 2.2.7 Following the dissolution of the monasteries, the saltpans and coal pits in Cowpen were leased by the Crown, however, activity had almost discontinued by the end of the 16th century, with lessees no longer paying rent, possibly as the coal was of low quality. The coalfields were abandoned in the early 17th century, and it is recorded that 500 yards of railway was left behind (N11756 and N11779). The railway, or wagonway, connected the coal pits and saltpans at the River Blyth and represents the earliest recording of this mode of transport. The location of this wagonway has not been established, but it is thought to be situated approximately 350 m south-west of the site. The wagonway may date to as early as AD 1606.

- 2.2.8 By the 17th century, the role of Blyth in the coal industry had changed to transporting mining products. Blyth became established as a coal port following the formation of the Blyth Coal Company and the construction of the Plessey Wagonway. The wagonway was described in 1716 as a 'wooden type' and about five and a half miles long.

- 2.2.9 The drilling of a borehole in 1782, which determined the existence of the Low Main seam at a depth of 92 fathoms near the River Blyth, meant that Blyth had access to profitable coal seams. By 1797 the Cowpen shaft was fitted with a pumping engine and winding machines, allowing the exploitation of the Yard and Low Main seams. Coal was shipped to the river via a wagonway .





### *Modern (AD 1800–present)*

- 2.2.10 A second pit was sunk at Cowpen to a depth of 109 fathoms and was in operation from 1804.
- 2.2.11 The Blyth and Tyne Railway was constructed in 1847 by the owners of Cowpen Colliery, in order to connect Blyth and Hartley, and was incorporated as a public railway by an Act of Parliament in 1852. The railway company built Bebside station in 1850 on the south side of Front Street (N18371). The station was closed by 1964 and was demolished completely by 1972.
- 2.2.12 The site is situated just east of the former Bebside Colliery (N18370), which was sunk in 1855 next to Bebside station to exploit the Main Seam. The first edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1865 shows a cluster of buildings connected by railway to the main line. Colliery terraces are shown along Front Street and Errington Street. The colliery pit was located east of Errington Street.
- 2.2.13 By the 1930s the colliery had undergone modifications in layout and had been renamed Horton Grange Colliery. Features shown on mapping that postdates 1924 include a shaft, chimney and engine house in the east, with a north–south gantry and tramway connected to colliery buildings to the south. This was situated to the west of the main railway line. A wagonway is shown connecting the southern end of Errington Street to the railway and an aerial cable linked to spoil heaps to the west.
- 2.2.14 The terraced housing along Errington Street was demolished between the 1930s and 1960s.
- 2.2.15 The colliery site was developed for opencast mining by the end of the 19th century, covering an area of approximately 76 hectares. Aerial photographs from the 1960s show the extent of the opencast within the Bebside Colliery and to the south of it.

## **3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **3.1 Aims and objectives**

- 3.1.1 The aims and objectives of the watching brief, as stated in the WSI (AECOM 2021) and as defined in ClfAs *Universal Guidance for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* (ClfA 2023a) and *Standard for Archaeological Monitoring and Recording* (2023b), were to:
- determine the presence or absence, character, extent, depth and complexity of potential archaeological remains within the archaeological investigation area;
  - identify and preserve by record any archaeological remains that are located within the archaeological investigation area; and
  - interpret the archaeology of the site within its local, regional and national archaeological context.

### **3.2 Site specific themes**

- 3.2.1 The site has potential for remains relating to the earlier Bebside Colliery and its development. The North-East Research Framework for the Historic Environment: post-medieval and modern research agendas (Research Frameworks 2024) identify research themes that the site has the potential to contribute to:



- PM1 Early coal industry and coal use
- PM2 Early railways
- MO4 Transport infrastructure and technology

3.2.2 Each research theme has accompanying priorities:

- PMii Industrialisation
- MOi Industry
- MOii Transport and communication

## 4 METHODS

### 4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methodology set out within the WSI (AECOM 2021) and in general compliance with the standards outlined in ClfA guidance (ClfA 2023a). The methods employed are summarised below.

### 4.2 Fieldwork methods

#### *General*

- 4.2.1 The archaeological monitoring was conducted on five irregularly shaped areas (trenches 1–5). The monitoring was conducted at night, which has impacted the quality of the photographic recording.
- 4.2.2 The watching archaeologist monitored all mechanical excavations within the specified area. Where necessary, the surfaces of uncovered archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand to aid visual definition. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the watching brief.
- 4.2.3 Spoil from machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts were collected and bagged by context. All artefacts from excavated contexts were retained.

#### *Recording*

- 4.2.4 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A complete record of excavated features and deposits was made, including plans and sections drawn to appropriate scales (generally 1:20 or 1:50 for plans and 1:10 for sections) and tied to the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid.
- 4.2.5 A Leica GNSS connected to Leica's SmartNet service surveyed the location of archaeological features. All survey data is recorded in OS National Grid coordinates and heights above OD (Newlyn), as defined by OSTN15 and OSGM15, with a three-dimensional accuracy of at least 50 mm.
- 4.2.6 A full photographic record was made using digital cameras equipped with an image sensor of not less than 10 megapixels. Digital images have been subject to managed quality control and curation processes, which has embedded appropriate metadata within the image and will ensure long term accessibility of the image set.



## 4.3 Finds and environmental strategies

- 4.3.1 Strategies for the recovery, processing and assessment of finds and environmental samples were in line with those detailed in the WSI (AECOM 2021). The treatment of artefacts and environmental remains was in general accordance with: *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (ClfA 2014a), *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011) and ClfA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (2022a; Type 1: Description).

## 4.4 Monitoring

- 4.4.1 The Archaeological Advisor monitored the watching brief on behalf of the LPA. Any variations to the WSI, if required to better address the project aims, were agreed in advance with the client and the Archaeological Advisor.

## 5 STRATIGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

### 5.1 Soil sequence and natural deposits

- 5.1.1 The natural substrate comprised yellow brown mottled grey silty clay. The top of the deposit was recorded 0.24–0.28 m below ground level (BGL). A 0.08 m thick subsoil deposit consisting of light grey brown silty clay was seen in trench 4 (402) at 0.2 m BGL. The ground surface across the monitoring area comprised dark to mid-grey brown clayey silt topsoil.

### 5.2 Modern (Figs 3–6)

- 5.2.1 Three north-west to south-east aligned ditches or furrows (304, 405/409 and 407/411; 0.44–4.46 m wide x 0.07–0.16 m deep) were recorded in trenches 3 and 4. The features were filled with mid-grey brown silty clay, from which four sherds of modern pottery were recovered.
- 5.2.2 An irregularly shaped pit (413; 1+ x 1.89 x 0.16 m) was recorded in the south-east of trench 4. The pit was backfilled with two fills of dark grey, charcoal-rich silty clay and burnt silty clay. A fragment of modern brick was found in the upper fill of the pit. An environmental sample taken from the pit contained modern roots, coal fragments, clinker/cinder and charcoal.

## 6 FINDS EVIDENCE

### 6.1 Introduction

- 6.1.1 A tiny assemblage of finds consisting of just 16 objects (225 g) was recovered from four features of modern date, and as unstratified finds. The finds were recovered both during the normal course of hand excavation and extracted from the residues of the environmental soil samples. All the objects have been cleaned and quantified by material type within each context (Table 1). The data has been recorded using a digital database, which forms part of the project archive. Reporting conforms to CIFA's *Toolkit for Specialist Reporting* (CIFA 2022a) Type 2, Appraisal level, which aims to characterise the finds assemblage, with specific reference to dating where possible.

**Table 1** Finds by feature, context, material type and count and weight (in grammes)

Feature	Context	CBM	Glass	Pottery	Total
		No/Wt.	No/Wt.	No/Wt.	No/Wt.
U/S	U/S		3/52	8/147	<b>11/199</b>
Ditch 304	303			2/2	<b>2/2</b>
Ditch 407	406			1/8	<b>1/8</b>
Ditch 411	410			1/6	<b>1/6</b>
Pit 413	412	1/10			<b>1/10</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>1/10</b>	<b>3/52</b>	<b>12/163</b>	<b>16/225</b>

## 6.2 Pottery

- 6.2.1 The pottery provides the primary dating evidence for the site and is of late 19th-century date. All the sherds survive in an un-abraded condition, with the unstratified sherds exhibiting particularly fresh breaks.
- 6.2.2 The sherds were divided into fabric groups, using the system developed by Bown (1988) and Craggs (2021), and quantified by number and weight of the pieces. Where possible, details of the vessel form and other diagnostic features have been noted and a spot date for the context has been assigned. The level of recording is consistent with the ‘basic record’ advocated for the rapid characterisation of pottery assemblages (Barclay *et al* 2016, section 2.4.5).
- 6.2.3 The sherds include pieces from mass-produced transfer-printed bowls and plates, stoneware bottle and jar sherds, and a white glazed earthenware bowl sherd of late 19th-century date (Craggs 2021, 346–364). The majority were found unstratified (eight sherds), with the remainder deriving from three ditches (Table 1).

## 6.3 Ceramic building material

- 6.3.1 A single fragment from a brick in a coarse sandy fabric, with inclusions of crushed coal and ironstone, was recovered from pit 413. The coarse fabric is considered to date from the late 19th or early 20th century.

## 6.4 Glass

- 6.4.1 The three fragments of glass (unstratified) consist of the base and body from a mid- to late 20th-century soda bottle and the top of a brown, screw-top beer bottle of early–mid-20th-century date.

## 6.5 Conclusions

- 6.5.1 All the finds are of late 19th to mid-20th-century date and were mostly found unstratified. Although small, the quantities from ditches 304, 407 and 411 and pit 413 are sufficient to indicate that these features belong within a similar period and suggest the disposal of domestic waste from a nearby settlement.

## 7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

### 7.1 Introduction

- 7.1.1 One bulk sediment (flotation) sample was taken from a pit of modern date and was processed for the recovery and assessment of charred plant remains and wood charcoal.



## 7.2 Aims and methods

### *Aims*

- 7.2.1 The aim of this assessment is to determine the nature and significance of the environmental remains preserved at the site, and their potential to address the project aims. Appropriate recommendations for further work are provided. This environmental assessment has been undertaken in accordance with Historic England's guidelines, *Environmental Archaeology: a guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* (English Heritage 2011).

### *Methods*

- 7.2.2 The sample was 34 litres in volume, pre-soaked in a solution of water and hydrogen peroxide to help break up the clayey sediment, then processed by manual flotation; the flot retained on a 0.25 mm mesh, residues fractionated into 4 mm and 1 mm fractions. The coarse fractions of the residues (>4 mm) were sorted by eye for artefactual and environmental remains and discarded. The environmental material extracted from the residues was added to the flot.
- 7.2.3 The flot and fine residue fractions were examined using a Leica MS5 stereomicroscope at up to x40 magnification. The presence of recent material was noted in the samples, including modern roots, modern seeds, shells of the burrowing blind snail (*Cecilioides acicula*), earthworm eggs, and modern insects.
- 7.2.4 All remains were recorded semi-quantitatively on an abundance scale: C = <5 ('Trace'), B = 5–10 ('Rare'), A = 10–30 ('Occasional'), A\* = 30–100 ('Common'), A\*\* = 100–500 ('Abundant'), A\*\*\* = >500 ('Very abundant/Exceptional').

## 7.3 Results

- 7.3.1 The results are presented in Appendix 2.
- 7.3.2 The flot is of moderate size and is comprised predominantly of modern roots, coal fragments and clinker/cinder. The only environmental evidence present is a small amount of poorly preserved, mineral-coated charcoal.

## 7.4 Conclusions

- 7.4.1 The assessment indicates that there is very low potential in the environmental evidence to inform on the setting/nature of the site/feature, due to the poor preservation and small volume of charcoal present. The mineral-coating indicates fluctuating water levels and renders it difficult to secure taxonomical identifications on the wood charcoal fragments.
- 7.4.2 The presence of large amounts of coal, clinker and cinder is unsurprising as the site lies within a coal mining area.

## 8 CONCLUSIONS

### 8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The aims of the project have been met. Three modern ditches or furrows and one modern pit were uncovered in the northern and south-eastern parts of the monitored area. Historic mapping shows that the area was an unoccupied field during the 19th and 20th centuries, therefore it is probable that the uncovered features related to agricultural activity. There is no evidence that activity related to the Bebside Colliery extended into the development site.



- 8.1.2 The absence of archaeological remains relating to the colliery activity and early railway at Blyth means that the site is unable to contribute to the research themes outlined in the WSI (AECOM 2021).

## **9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION**

### **9.1 Museum**

- 9.1.1 The archive resulting from the watching brief is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. Great North Museum: Newcastle upon Tyne has agreed in principle to accept the archive on completion of the project, under the accession code NEWMA:2023.5. Deposition of any finds with the museum will only be carried out with the full written agreement of the landowner to transfer title of all finds to the museum.

### **9.2 Preparation of the archive**

#### *Physical archive*

- 9.2.1 The physical archive, which includes paper records, graphics, artefacts and ecofacts, will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material by Great North Museum: Newcastle upon Tyne, and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (Brown 2011; ClfA 2014b; SMA 1995).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements will be marked with the site/accession code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
- One cardboard box or airtight plastic box of artefacts and ecofacts, ordered by material type
  - One file of paper records

#### *Digital archive*

- 9.2.3 The digital archive generated by the project, which comprises born-digital data (e.g., site records, survey data, databases and spreadsheets, photographs and reports), will be deposited with a Trusted Digital Repository, in this instance the Archaeology Data Service (ADS), to ensure its long-term curation. Digital data will be prepared following ADS guidelines (ADS 2013 and online guidance) and accompanied by metadata.

### **9.3 Selection strategy**

- 9.3.1 It is widely accepted that not all the records and materials (artefacts and ecofacts) collected or created during the course of an archaeological project require preservation in perpetuity. These records and materials will be subject to selection in order to establish what will be retained for long-term curation, with the aim of ensuring that all elements selected to be retained are appropriate to establish the significance of the project and support future research, outreach, engagement, display and learning activities, i.e., the retained archive should fulfil the requirements of both future researchers and the receiving Museum.
- 9.3.2 The selection strategy, which details the project-specific selection process, is underpinned by national guidelines on selection and retention (Brown 2011, section 4) and generic selection policies (SMA 1993; Wessex Archaeology's internal selection policy) and follows ClfA's *Toolkit for Selecting Archaeological Archives* (2022b). It should be agreed by all stakeholders (Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists, external specialists, local authority, museum) and fully documented in the project archive.



9.3.3 Project-specific proposals for selection are presented below. These proposals are based on recommendations by Wessex Archaeology's internal specialists and will be updated in line with any further comment by other stakeholders (museum, local authority). The selection strategy will be fully documented in the project archive.

9.3.4 Any material not selected for retention may be used for teaching or reference collections by Wessex Archaeology.

#### *Finds*

- Pottery (12 fragments): common ware types of modern date and mostly from an unstratified context. No further research potential. Discard.
- Ceramic building material (1 fragment): a single late 19th-century or early 20th-century brick fragment. No further research potential. Discard.
- Glass (3 fragments): modern vessel glass fragments from an unstratified context. No further research potential. Discard.

#### *Palaeoenvironmental material*

9.3.5 There is no further have potential for the analysis of the wood charcoal. The flots should be retained as part of the archive. The assessment results should be added to any further data produced from the site. Recommendations for long-term storage of the flots should be reviewed following further work at the site. The fine residues were discarded after sorting.

#### *Documentary records*

9.3.6 Paper records comprise site registers (other pro-forma site records are digital), drawings and reports (written scheme of investigation, client report). All will be retained and deposited with the project archive.

#### *Digital data*

9.3.7 The digital data comprise site records (tablet-recorded on site) in spreadsheet format; finds records in spreadsheet format; survey data; photographs; reports. All will be deposited, although site photographs will be subject to selection to eliminate poor quality and duplicated images, and any others not considered directly relevant to the archaeology of the site.

## **9.4 Security copy**

9.4.1 In line with current best practice (e.g., Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.

## **9.5 OASIS**

9.5.1 An OASIS (online access to the index of archaeological investigations) record (<http://oasis.ac.uk>) has been initiated, with key fields completed (Appendix 3). A.pdf version of the final report will be submitted following approval by the Archaeological Advisor on behalf of the LPA. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) ArchSearch catalogue.



## **10 COPYRIGHT**

### **10.1 Archive and report copyright**

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Context index

Trench No 1		Length 33 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.24 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m) BGL
101		Topsoil	Dark grey brown silt.	0.0–0.24
102		Natural	Mottled yellow brown and grey silty clay.	0.24

Trench No 2		Length 46 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.20 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m) BGL
201		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt.	0.0–0.25
202		Natural	Mid-yellow brown mottled grey silty clay.	0.25

Trench No 3		Length 164 m	Width 2 m	Depth 0.24 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m) BGL
301		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt.	0.0–0.24
302		Natural	Mid-yellow brown mottled grey silty clay.	0.24
303	304	Secondary fill	Mid-grey brown silty sand with infrequent charcoal flakes and sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.24–0.4
304	303	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE with moderate, straight sides and an irregular/undulating base. Length: >4.00 m. Width: 0.54 m. Depth: 0.16 m.	0.24–0.4



Trench No 4		Length 125 m	Width 48 m	Depth 0.32 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m) BGL
401		Topsoil	Dark grey brown clayey silt.	0.0–0.2
402		Subsoil	Light grey brown silty clay.	0.2–0.28
403		Natural	Mid-yellow brown silty clay.	0.28–0.32+
404	405	Secondary fill	Mid-grey brown silty clay with infrequent charcoal flakes and sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.35
405	404	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: 25.00 m. Width: 0.44 m. Depth: 0.07 m.	0.28–0.35
406	407	Secondary fill	Mid-grey brown silty clay.	0.28–0.38
407	406	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >1.00 m. Width: 1.29 m. Depth: 0.10 m.	0.28–0.38
408	409	Secondary fill	Mid-grey brown silty clay with infrequent sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.39
409	408	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >1.00 m. Width: 1.23 m. Depth: 0.11 m.	0.28–0.39
410	411	Secondary fill	Mid-grey brown silty clay with infrequent sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.38
411	410	Ditch	Linear ditch aligned NW-SE with shallow, concave sides and a concave base. Length: >1.00 m. Width: 4.46 m. Depth: 0.10 m.	0.28–0.38
412	413	Deliberate backfill	Dark grey silty clay with infrequent sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.42
413	412, 414	Pit	Irregular pit with shallow, concave sides and a flat base. Length: >1.00 m. Width: 1.89 m. Depth: 0.16 m.	0.28–0.42
414	413	Burnt deposit	Mid-reddish brown silty clay with infrequent sub-rounded pebbles, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.42

Trench No 5		Length 30 m	Width 22 m	Depth 0.31 m
Context Number	Fill Of/Filled With	Interpretative Category	Description	Depth (m) BGL
501		Topsoil	Mid-grey brown silty clay, with infrequent sub-rounded stone inclusions, poorly sorted.	0.0–0.28
502		Natural	Mid-yellowish brown silty clay with infrequent angular stone inclusions, poorly sorted.	0.28–0.31



## Appendix 2 Environmental assessment

Feature Type	Feature	Context	Sample Code	Sample vol. (l)	Flot vol. (ml)	Bioturbation proxies	Grain	Chaff	Cereal Notes	Charred Other	Charred Other Notes	Charcoal >2mm (ml)	Charcoal	Other
Pit	413	412	262381_401	34	175	90%, A, E	-	-	-	-	-	<1	Mature, mineral coated, poor condition	Clinker/cinder (A***), Coal (A***)



### Appendix 3 OASIS summary

**OASIS ID (UID):** wessexar1-522572

**Project Name:** Watching Brief at Northumberland Line at Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland

**Activity type:** Watching Brief

**Sitecode(s):** 262381

**Project Identifier(s):** 262381

**Coordinates:** NZ 28383 81280

**Planning Id:** 21/00878/CCD

**Reason for Investigation:** Planning: Post determination

**Organisation Responsible for work:** Wessex Archaeology

**Project Dates:** 15-Jan-2024 - 25-Jan-2024

**HER:** Northumberland HER

**Administrative Areas:**

Country: England

County/Local Authority: Northumberland

Local Authority District: Northumberland

Parish: Blyth

**Project Methodology:** The archaeological monitoring was focused on an area to the east of the existing railway line, in order to record any potential remains pertaining to Bebside colliery that were not removed by open cast mining. The machine stripping of four irregular shaped trenches were monitored by a qualified archaeologist. A sample of archaeological features and deposits was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the watching brief.

**Project Results:** Three shallow ditches on a north-west to south-east alignment. A shallow, irregular shaped pit that contained burnt material was also recorded. The features were modern in date.

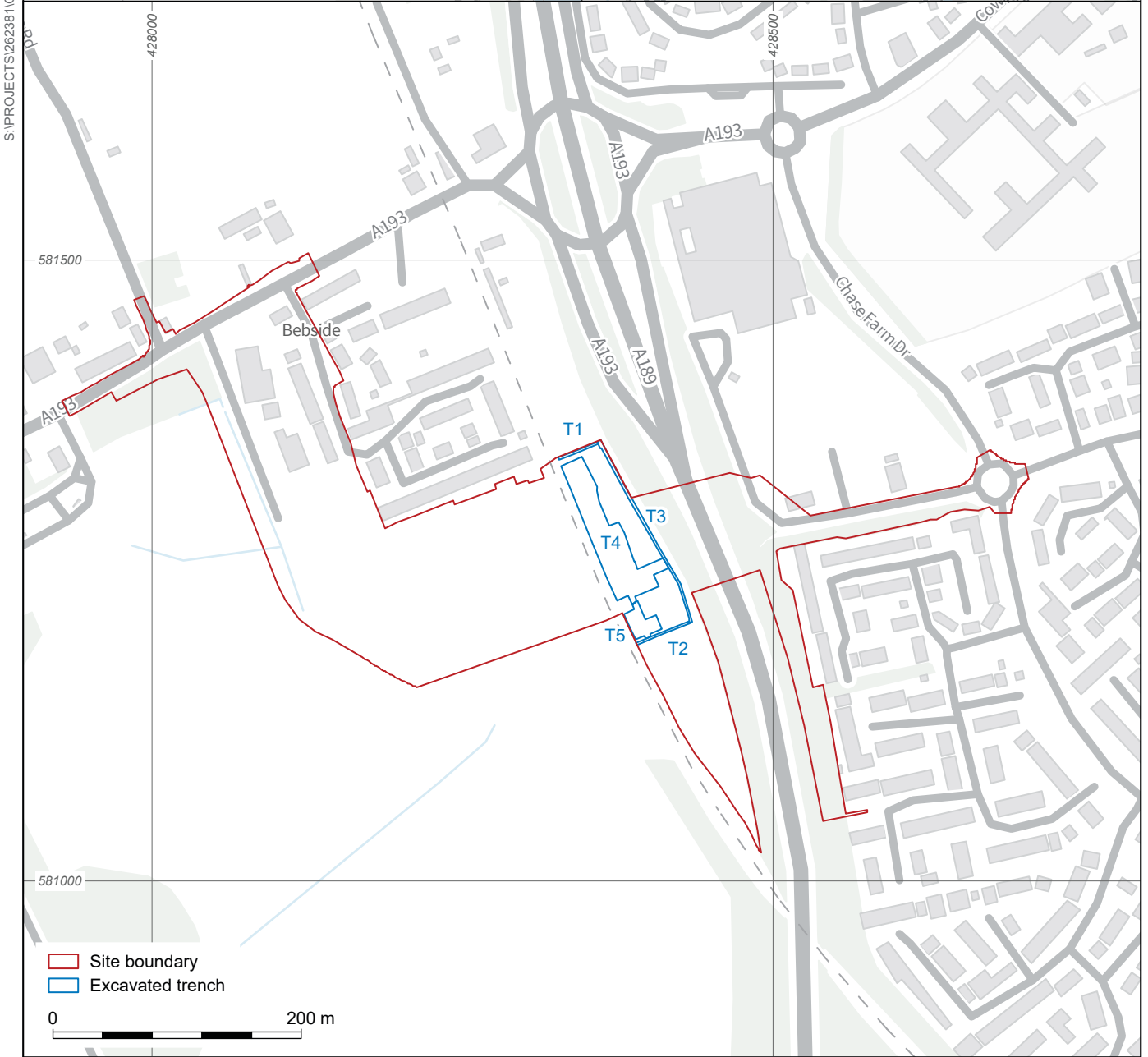
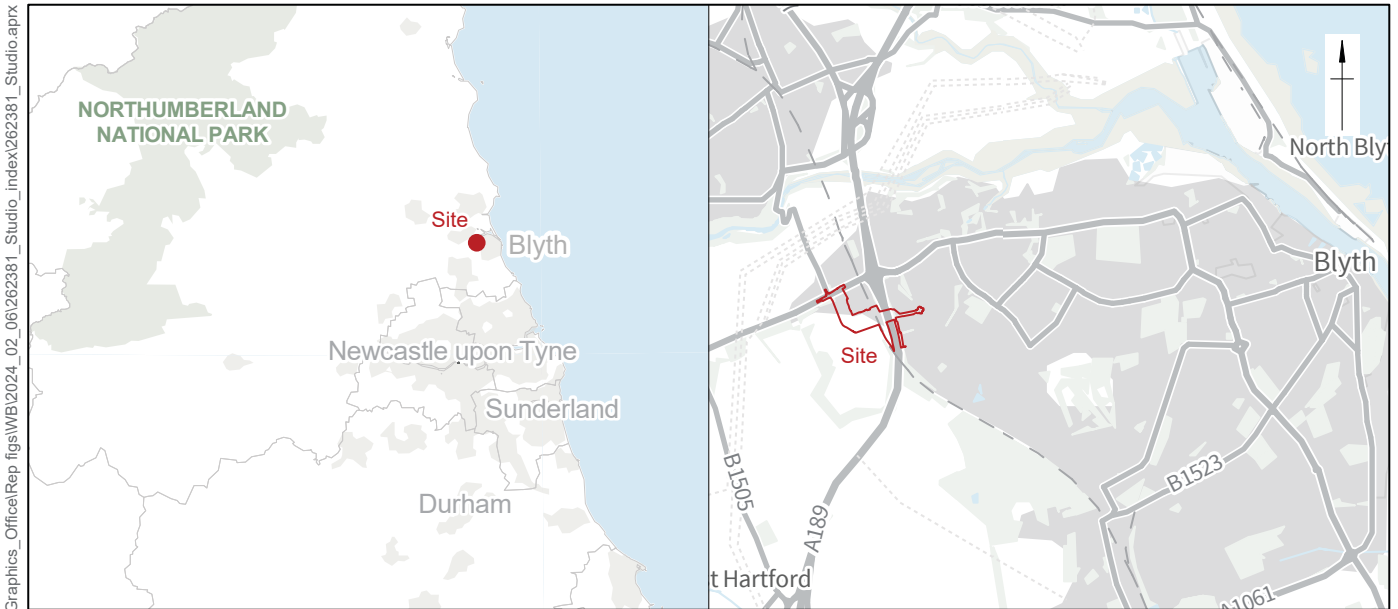
**Archive:**

Physical Archive, Documentary Archive - to be deposited with Great North Museum: Hancock;

Digital Archive - to be deposited with Archaeology Data Service Archive;

**Reports in OASIS:**

Jackson-Slater, C., (2024). *Blyth Bebside Railway Station (Northumberland Line), Bebside, Blyth, Northumberland: archaeological watching brief*. Sheffield: Wessex Archaeology. 262381.03.

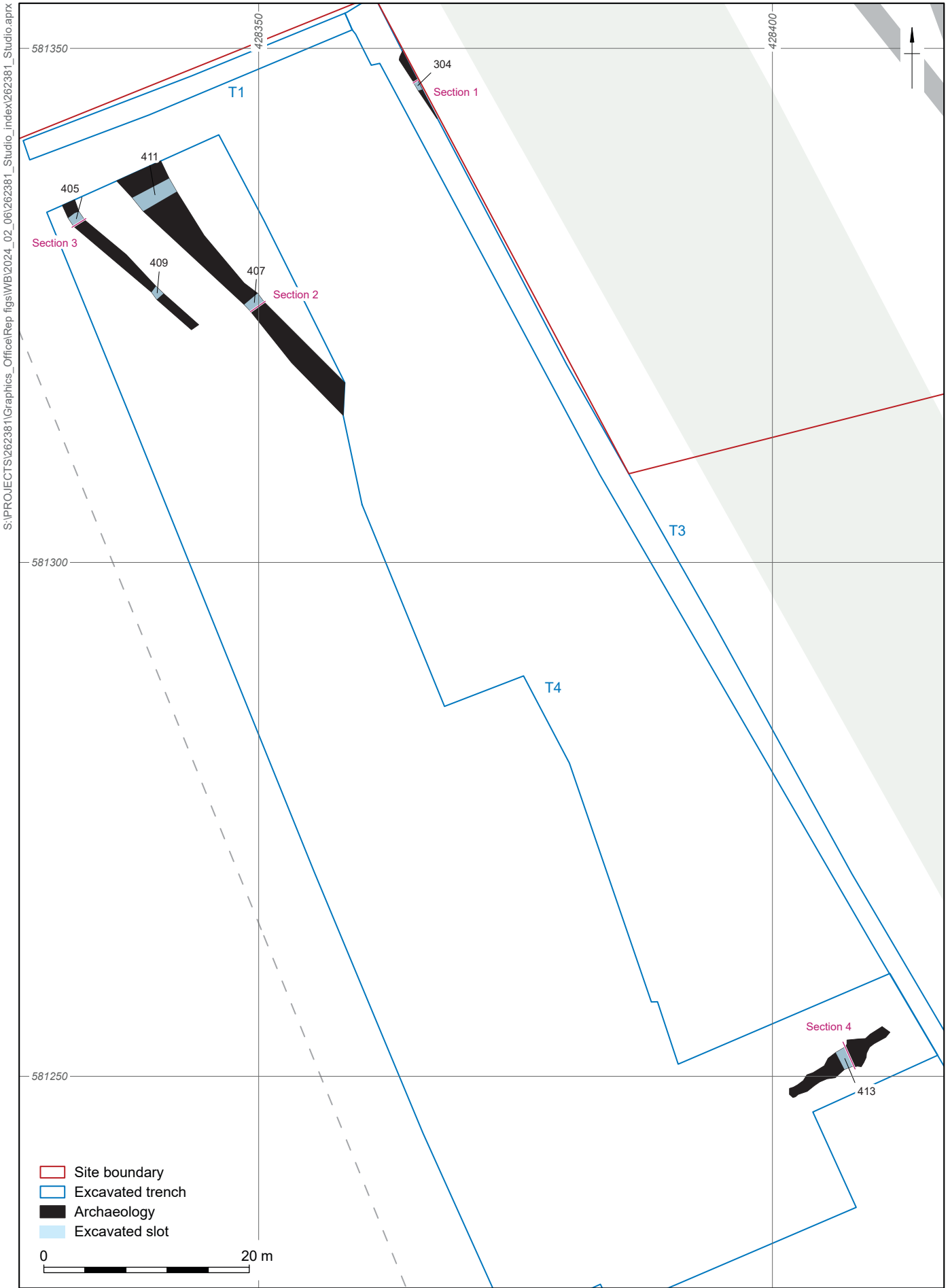


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Figure 1: Site overview and location





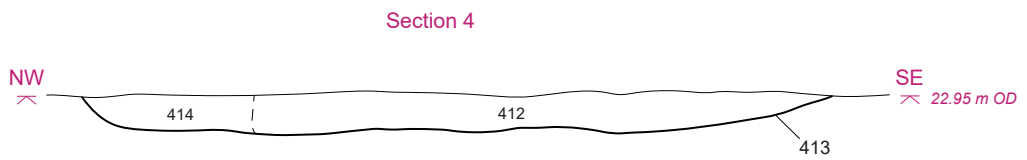
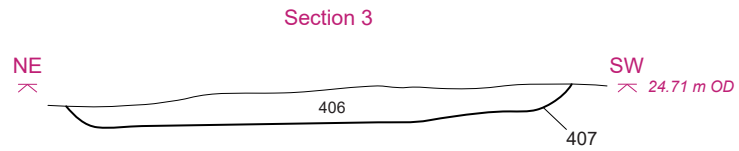
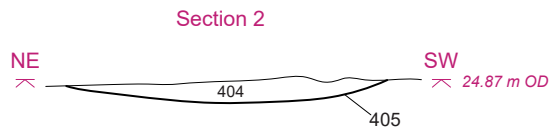
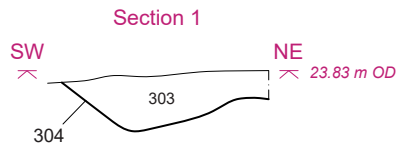
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Figure 2: Plan of trenches 3 and 4







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Figure 3: Sections



Figure 4: Ditch 304, view from the south-east



Figure 5: Ditch 405, view from the south-east, 1 m scale



Figure 6: Pit 413, view from the south-west, 2 m scale



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