



Ashington Station Platform Ashington, Northumberland

Historic Building Record



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Logix House
Wrotham Road
Meopham
Gravesend
Kent
DA13 0QB

www.wessexarch.co.uk

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Client name Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd
Address Qora Offices (Q16)
Benton Lane
Newcastle
NE12 8BX

On behalf of Northumberland County Council
Address County Hall
Morpeth
NE61 2EF

Site location Ashington
County Northumberland
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Fieldwork directed by Alice Amabilino
Project management by Matt Rous
Document compiled by Thomas Piggott
Graphics by Thomas Piggott

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1	01.09.2022	External draft	TP	MJR



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd, on behalf of Northumberland County Council, to produce a historic building record of the west platform and an extant wall of the former Ashington Station, Ashington, Northumberland.

Conditional planning permission (21/00387/CCD) has been granted for the construction of a new railway station at Ashington as part of the Northumberland Line passenger scheme. The existing west platform and extant wall are to be demolished to make way for the new station building. Northumberland County Council have requested that a Historic England Level 1 (basic visual) historic building record be made of the platform and wall prior to their demolition.

Ashington Station, formerly known as Hirst Station, was constructed in 1878 as part of an extension to the Newbiggin Line following the expansion of the hamlets of Low and High Hirst. The station underwent several phases of expansion during the late 19th and early 20th centuries to meet the demand of the local inhabitants and freight traffic that used the line. It was eventually closed in the late 1960s as part of the Beeching cuts - recommendations for the consolidation and increased efficiency of British Railways. Most of its buildings were demolished over the following decades.

The west platform measures approximately 85 m in length and is constructed from red brick with the upper three courses corbelled in the direction of the track line. The bricks used in its construction are typical of a mid-late 19th century date. A concrete slab was later added on top of the wall at some point during the 20th century. The wall itself is in a serious state of disrepair with several sections of the wall failing, particularly at its southern end.

The extant wall is located to the west of the platform and comprises of two courses of red stock brick with a third (upper) course of modern Staffordshire blue engineering bricks. The brick used in the lower courses is similar to that used in the west platform suggesting they are contemporary.

The record of the west platform and wall was undertaken on the 28 June 2022.

Acknowledgements

This project was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd, on behalf of Northumberland County Council, and Wessex Archaeology is grateful to Marion Boswell in this regard.



Ashington Station Platform Ashington, Northumberland

Historic building record

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology (WA) was commissioned by Morgan Sindall Construction & Infrastructure Ltd (hereafter 'the Client'), on behalf of Northumberland County Council, to produce a historic building record (HBR) of Ashington Station Platform, Ashington, Northumberland (hereafter 'the Site', **Figure 1**).

1.1.1 Ashington Station is part of the Northumberland Line passenger scheme which includes the provision of new stations, the refurbishment and upgrading of existing rail related infrastructure and the operation of new passenger train services on an existing freight only line. The new Ashington Station forms part of wider plans to improve connectivity and accessibility in the South East Northumberland Corridor and to reopen Northumberland Line from Ashington to Newcastle, via Blyth Bebside.

1.1.2 Conditional planning permission (21/00387/CCD) was granted by Northumberland County Council on 10 September 2021. The following condition was imposed on the work:

32) A programme of archaeological work is required in accordance with Northumberland County Council Conservation Team (NCCCT) Standards for archaeological Mitigation and Site-specific Requirements document (17 March 2021). The archaeological scheme shall comprise three stages of work as set out below. Each stage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

a) No development or archaeological mitigation shall commence on site until a written scheme of investigation based on NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

b) The archaeological recording scheme required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

c) The programme of analysis, reporting, publication and archiving if required by NCCCT Standards and Site-specific Requirements document must be completed in accordance with the approved written scheme of investigation.

Reason: The site is of archaeological interest and to comply with Policy GP21 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.1.3 The historic building recording was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by AECOM (2021). The focus of the historic building recording was on the west platform and an extant wall located in the car park to the west of the railway line. No record of the east platform wall was required.



1.2 Site location and description

- 1.2.1 The Site is located to the east of a car park and to the rear of commercial and office premises situated on the south side of Station Road, Ashington, Northumberland, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) 427281, 587699. The Site lies to the south of Library Gardens and sits on the west side of an existing freight line, between it and Kenilworth Road. It is bound to the west by Kenilworth Road, to the east by the existing railway line, to the north by a late 20th century commercial building and to the south by residential properties.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Aims and objectives

- 2.1.1 The aims and objective of the historic building recording exercise was to create a record of the 19th century railway platform and an extant wall to its west. The historic building recording was completed to the guidelines for Level 1 (basic visual) recording as detailed in the document: *Understanding Historic Buildings: A guide to good recording practice* (Historic England (HE) 2016). The record also complies with the *CifA Standards & Guidance for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2020).

2.2 Methodology

- 2.2.1 The recording methodology was outlined in the approved WSI (AECOM 2021). The historic building record comprises a photographic record and brief written account.

Documentary research

- 2.2.2 Documentary research was previously undertaken to support the planning application which was included in a previous heritage statement (AECOM 2020). This has been used, together with information within the WSI (AECOM 2021) to inform the historical background section of this report. No further documentary research was completed.

- 2.2.3 The written account includes detail of:

- *A non-technical summary*
- *Site location as an address and in the form of a National Grid reference*
- *A note of any statutory designation*
- *The date(s) of the survey*
- *The circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraints*
- *The results of the historic building recording including a brief narrative to record any features of interest observed*
- *Archive preparation and deposition arrangements; and*
- *Bibliographic and other references and a list of the sources consulted.*

Photographic record

- 2.2.4 The photographic record comprises:



- general views of the platform and extant wall in its wider setting or landscape; and
- the platforms and extant walls external appearance

2.2.5 High quality digital images were taken with a Pentax K-50 (with 16 megapixel capability). A photographic scale of appropriate size was included in all general and specific detailed views, except where considered inappropriate or prevented by on-site conditions or health and safety concerns.

2.2.6 A selection of the photographs are included in this report.

2.3 Record date

2.3.1 The building recording exercise was carried out on the 28 June 2022.

3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 Introduction

3.1.1 The site of Ashington Station has previously been researched as part of a Heritage Statement (AECOM 2020) for the current planning application. A summary of the relevant detail is provided below to inform the history of the Site.

3.2 History of Ashington Station

3.2.1 In 1847, following the successful discovery of a coal seam several decades earlier, the owners of Cowpen Colliery constructed a railway between Blyth and Hartley for the purpose of securing an outlet to the River Tyne along the line that had been constructed from Seghill to Hay Hole in 1840, and subsequently extended to Hartley (AECOM 2020, 9). The whole railway system was named the Blythe and Tyne Railway. In 1852, an Act was passed that incorporated the Blyth and Tyne as a public railway, which enabled free access to Byth.

3.2.2 In the 1860s a number of changes occurred in the surrounding area. A new colliery had been sunk 700 m to the northwest of the Site. Alongside this was a new colliery village with extensive terraces of workers housing, supported by community facilities including a recreation ground, hotel, miners Hall, school, church and Methodist Chapel. To meet the needs of the village and the new colliery a second line was opened by the Blythe and Tyne Railway company that ran to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea railway station, known as the Newbiggin Line.

3.2.3 Following the continued expansion of the miner's village a new station was built between the hamlets of Low and High Hirst in 1878 (<http://disused-stations.org.uk/>). The station was named Hirst Station and provided transport along the Newbiggin Line.

3.2.4 By 1898, the two hamlets of Low and High Hirst had been subject to considerable expansion with the 1898 Ordnance Survey (OS) map showing distinct communities of gridiron-pattern terraces streets to the west of the railway. It is at this point that the station became known as Ashington Station.

3.2.5 Ashington station's facilities were located on the 'up' platform with the principal building resembling the North Seaton station, which had been constructed in 1859. The 'up' platform was served by further structures including a waiting shelter. On the down platform there was a substantial plain, single-storey building that featured a timber and glass frontage.

- 3.2.6 Several additions were made to the station between 1895 and 1924. These included a glazed, ridged awning, with wooden gables on the up platform while several sidings and a goods depot were added in the southwest corner. A two-ton crane was also installed in 1913 that aided in loading and unloading materials for freight traffic.
- 3.2.7 By the 1950s, additional lines with associated platforms had been constructed at Ashington Station, west of the original line. Included with the new lines were a handful of new structures that likely served as storage sheds.
- 3.2.8 In the late 1960s, Ashington Station closed to passenger traffic as part of the Beeching cuts. Dr Richard Beeching identified 2,363 stations and 5,000 miles (8,000 km) of railway line for closure, over half of the stations in use in 1963. Ashington Station was one of those selected for closure with the last passenger journey occurring on the 2nd of November 1964. The line, however, remained in use for freight.
- 3.2.9 Following the closure of Ashington Station most of the smaller buildings were demolished along with the additional sidings. By 1972, only the platforms and signal box survived. The signal box was later decommissioned in 2010 and subsequently demolished to ground level.

4 BUILDING DESCRIPTION

West platform

- 4.1.1 The west platform measures approximately 85 m in length (**Photograph 1**). The platform wall is constructed from red stock bricks measuring 23cm x 11cm x 8cm with seven courses of the wall exposed above the track ballast at its southern end (**Photograph 2**) and eight courses at its northern end (**Photograph 3**).
- 4.1.2 The lower courses of the wall have been laid to alternating courses of stretcher and header with a hard, cementitious mortar used for bonding. The upper three courses are all set to header course and are corbelled, projecting out from the platform edge. The upper course brickwork is heavily abraded with severely damaged mortar evident at its southern end (**Photograph 2**). The type of brick used would be consistent with a mid-late 19th century date indicating that the wall is likely part of the original late 19th century platform.
- 4.1.3 The upper surface of the platform edge is formed from a modern concrete slab layer which lies on top of the brick wall. The surface is formed of individual slabs measuring 3m x 0.5m x 0.1m, which has been bedded to the wall with a thick cementitious mortar. The concrete slab continues to the wall's edge (**Photograph 3**). At the northern end of the platform, sections of the concrete slab are recessed exposing the top face of the upper course of brickwork (**Photograph 4**).

Wall

- 4.1.4 The extant wall is located on the west side of the platform edge within the car park (**Photograph 5**). Only the top three courses of the wall are exposed above the car park brick surface and comprise of two courses of red stock brick laid to stretcher that are set with a cement-based mortar. The top course comprises large Staffordshire Blue coping bricks that have been bedded to their header using a thin cementitious mortar and is of modern origin, likely added during formation of the modern car park.

5 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The historic building recording has met its aims and objectives, recording the exposed part of the west platform and extant wall. The exercise has identified that the brick wall of the

west platform is likely to be an original part of Ashington station, which was constructed in 1878. The outer brick faces are showing signs of weathering with the upper courses failing in several areas. The lower courses of the extant wall to the west of the platform are also likely to be an original part of the station platform.

6 STORAGE AND CURATION

6.1 Preparation of archive

Physical archive

- 6.1.1 The complete physical archive, which may include paper records and graphics will be prepared following the standard conditions for the acceptance of historic building recording projects by the receiving museum and in general following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011).

Digital archive

- 6.1.2 The digital archive generated by the project 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.

6.2 OASIS

- 6.2.1 An OASIS (Online Access to the Index of archaeological investigations) online record (<https://www.oasis.ac.uk/>) has been initiated for the project (**Appendix**), with key fields completed. Once the final report has been approved, a .pdf version of the final report will be submitted. 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 ArchSearch catalogue.

6.3 Security copy

- 6.3.1 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.

7 COPYRIGHT

7.1 Archive and report copyright

- 7.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the *Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003*.
- 7.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research, or development control within the planning process.



7.2 Third party data copyright

- 7.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g., Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of such material.



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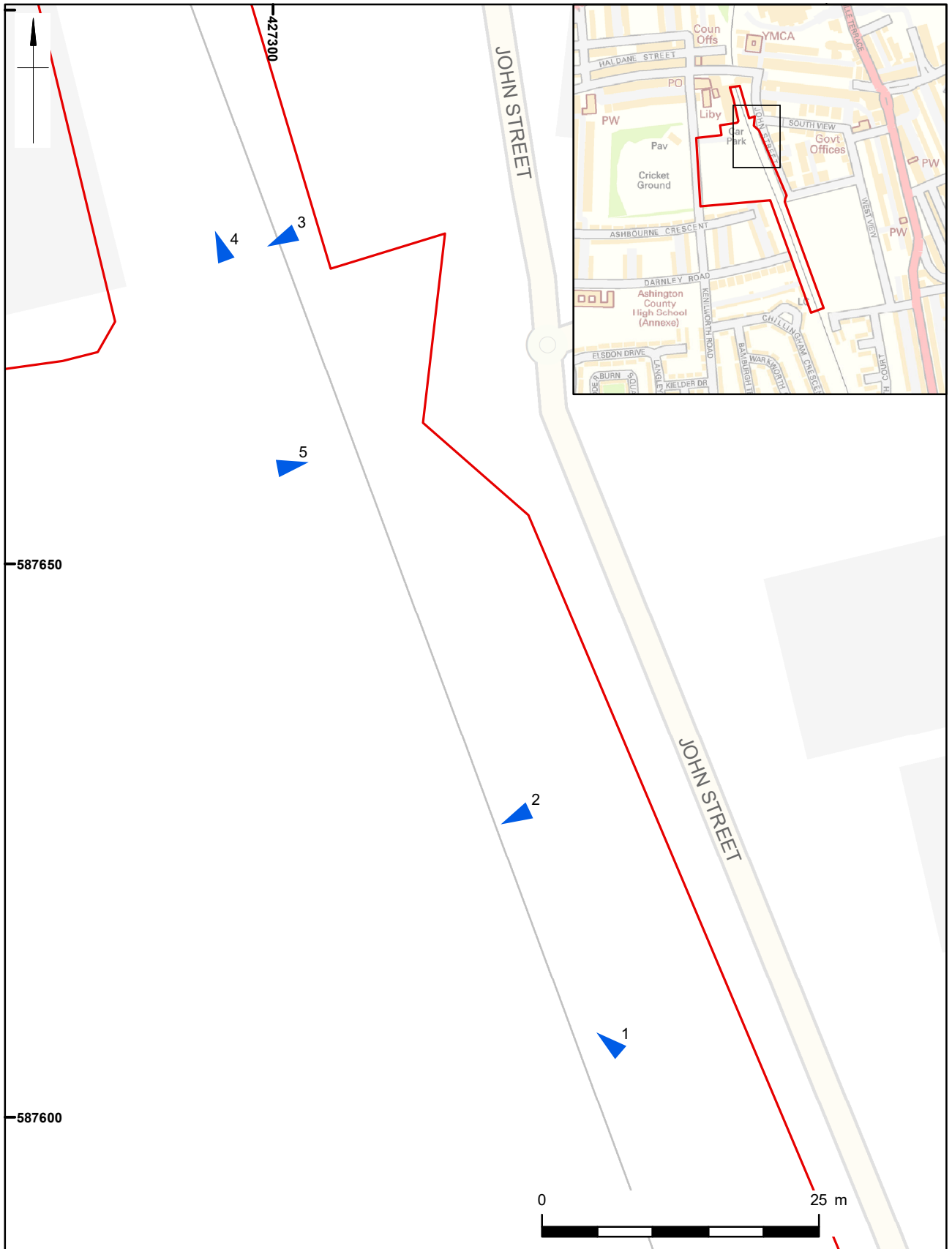
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Internet sources

<http://disused-stations.org.uk/> - Disused Stations: Ashington Station



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	Date:	02/08/2022	Revision Number:	0
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Site location and photograph viewpoints


Figure 1



Photograph 1) View of the West Platform from its southern end, facing north



Photograph 2) View of the West Platform's southern section, facing west


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Photograph 3) View of the West Platform's northern section, facing west




Photograph 4) View of the concrete slab on the northern section of the West Platform, facing north

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Photograph 5) View of the extent wall, facing east

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Photograph 5



APPENDIX: OASIS FORM

OASIS ID (UID)	wessexar1-508465
Project Name	Ashington Station Platform, Ashington, Northumberland
Sitename	Ashington Station Platform
Activity type	Building Survey
Project Identifier(s)	Ashington Station Platform
Planning Id	
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Wessex Archaeology
Project Dates	28-Jun-2022 - 28-Jun-2022
Location	Ashington Station Platform NGR : NZ 27290 87678 LL : 55.1826439388434, -1.57298754204001 12 Fig : 427290,587678
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Northumberland District : Northumberland Parish : Ashington
Project Methodology	<p>The HBR methodology was outlined in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (AECOM 2021). The HBR comprises a photographic record and brief written account.</p> <p>Documentary research</p> <p>Documentary research was previously undertaken to support the planning application by AECOM (2020). This was used, together with the WSI (AECOM 2021) to inform the historical background section of this report. No further documentary research was completed.</p> <p>The written account includes detail of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A non-technical summarySite location as an address and in the form of a National Grid referenceA note of any statutory designationThe date(s) of the surveyThe circumstances in which the record was made, its objectives, methods, scope and limitations, and any constraintsThe results of the historic building recording including a brief narrative to record any features of interest observedArchive preparation and deposition arrangements; andBibliographic and other references and a list of the sources consulted.



Photographic record

The photographic record comprises:

general views of the platform and extant wall in its wider setting or landscape; and the platforms and extant walls external appearance

High quality digital images were taken with a Pentax K-50 (with 16 megapixel capability). A photographic scale of appropriate size was included in all general and specific detailed views, except where considered inappropriate or prevented by on-site conditions or health and safety concerns.



Wessex Archaeology Ltd registered office Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867 Fax: 01722 337562 info@wessexarch.co.uk www.wessexarch.co.uk

