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# LOW TOWN, GREENHEAD NORTHUMBERLAND

## Historic Buildings Assessment

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JUNE 2019



Prepared for: <i>Mr &amp; Mrs Forwood</i>	By: <i>The Archaeological Practice Ltd.</i>
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<i>Project code: AP 00/19</i>	<i>Stage: Final</i>	<i>Compiled by: RJC/PFR</i>	<i>Control: AR</i>	<i>Completion date: 017/07/19</i>
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# LOW TOWN GREENHEAD NORTHUMBERLAND

## Historic Buildings Record & Archaeological Watching Brief



***Frontispiece:** View from the south-west showing the farmhouse sitting on a prominent position with associated earthworks.*

**PROJECT:** Historic Building Recording and Assessment  
**LOCATION:** Greenhead, Northumberland  
**CLIENT:** Mr & Mrs Forwood  
**SITE GRID REF:** NY 6836 6632  
**FIELDWORK:** June 2019  
**OASIS REF:** thearcha2-  
**PLANNING REF:** 17NP0051LBC

## CONTENTS

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### SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION
2. DESCRIPTION
3. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD
4. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS
5. REFERENCES

### APPENDIX 1:

*Project Design for the production of an Historic Buildings Assessment by The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*

### ILLUSTRATIONS

*Cover: View of the farmhouse through a field wall, from the south-west.*

*Frontispiece: View from the south-west showing the farmhouse sitting on a prominent position with associated earthworks.*

*Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Low Town (circled in red) to the north-east of Greenhead in southwest Northumberland.*

*Illus. 02: View, showing the location of Low Town (circled in red) in the intervallum area of the Hadrian's Wall frontier, near the hamlet of Walltown.*

*Illus. 03: Site view, showing Low Town in its landscape, immediately north of the Vallum.*

*Illus. 04: Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of c.1864, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).*

*Illus. 05: Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey 1896, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red)..*

*Illus. 06: Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of c.1921, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).*

*Illus. 07: Extract from the 6 inch 4th Edition Ordnance Survey 1948, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).*

*Illus. 08: North-east view of the farmhouse*

*Illus. 09: First-floor fireplace at west end, and its maker's plate.*

*Illus. 10: First-floor fireplace at the east end.*

*Illus. 11: Plan and elevations of Lowtown by Butler Craig Associates, amended and annotated by Peter Ryder, June 2019.*

## SUMMARY

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*A programme of archaeological investigation has been carried out to further inform a proposal to remodel for continued residential use a detached property known as Low Town, near Greenhead in south-west Northumberland. The work has been requested by Northumberland National Park Authority Conservation Team (NNPACT) given the archaeological sensitivity of the site. The photographic and measured recording was undertaken in June 2019 prior to the scheme of internal alterations and limited external groundworks proposed as part of the development.*

*It is concluded that this picturesque and attractive little house, its cut dressings and minor architectural features reflecting a status slightly above the average, was built at a date (1800) when one might still have expected more vernacular characteristics in a remote area such as this. It is possible that some of the structure of an older single-storeyed building has been retained in the lower part of the north wall c, but if so its fabric is quite similar and unlikely to be more than a few years earlier. Considerable alterations made to the house, especially internally, detract from its importance, as does the removal of surviving internal features undertaken recently, but this negative impact is counterbalanced by the surviving fabric of the structure and its setting in the context of the Hadrian's Wall landscape, enhanced by earthwork and some built remains of associated structures.*

*The lack of significant historic features of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century origin and the level of proposed impact upon them means that no specific mitigation measures are recommended with respect to the proposed remodelling of the building interior. However, care must be taken to avoid significant impact upon existing stonework structure, particularly the north and south facades, the internal walls of which also retain interesting features.*

*Works to the curtilage of the property and wider environs are beyond the scope of this report but associated mitigation works are dealt with in a separate report on groundworks monitoring.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Location of works (Illus. 01 & 02)

The position of Low Town in Walltown, above the vallum of Hadrian's Wall north-east of Greenhead, is shown on the attached plans (*Illus. 01-03*).

#### 1.2 Project Background

Mr & Mrs Forwood have applied through Land Factor and their agent, Butler Haig Associates to renovate and partly remodel the farmhouse of Low Town, near Greenhead for residential use. The proposed scheme include the creation of visitor accommodation incorporating demolition and rebuilding of a modern, single-storey West extension, internal and external alterations and insertion of new windows and a door opening. The proposals have been discussed with the NNPA Archaeologist and Planning Team and the development subsequently approved on the basis of approved plans and documents, subject to a number of conditions. Given the archaeological sensitivity of the site, two of the planning conditions relate to its cultural heritage importance, namely requirements to carry out an historic buildings record prior to development works, which is the concern of the current document, and a watching brief on groundworks during development which is the subject of a separate report.

Condition 9 of the Listed Buildings consent states that:

*Prior to the commencement of development hereby approved, a programme of historic building recording and analysis shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The programme shall be carried out in accordance with the approved scheme or other such details as may be subsequently agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A copy of the recording and analysis shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority within two months of the work being completed.*

**Reason:** *To ensure that an appropriate record is made on the historic building fabric that may be affected by the development, in accordance with Core Strategy policies 1, 3 and 18 and the NPPF.*

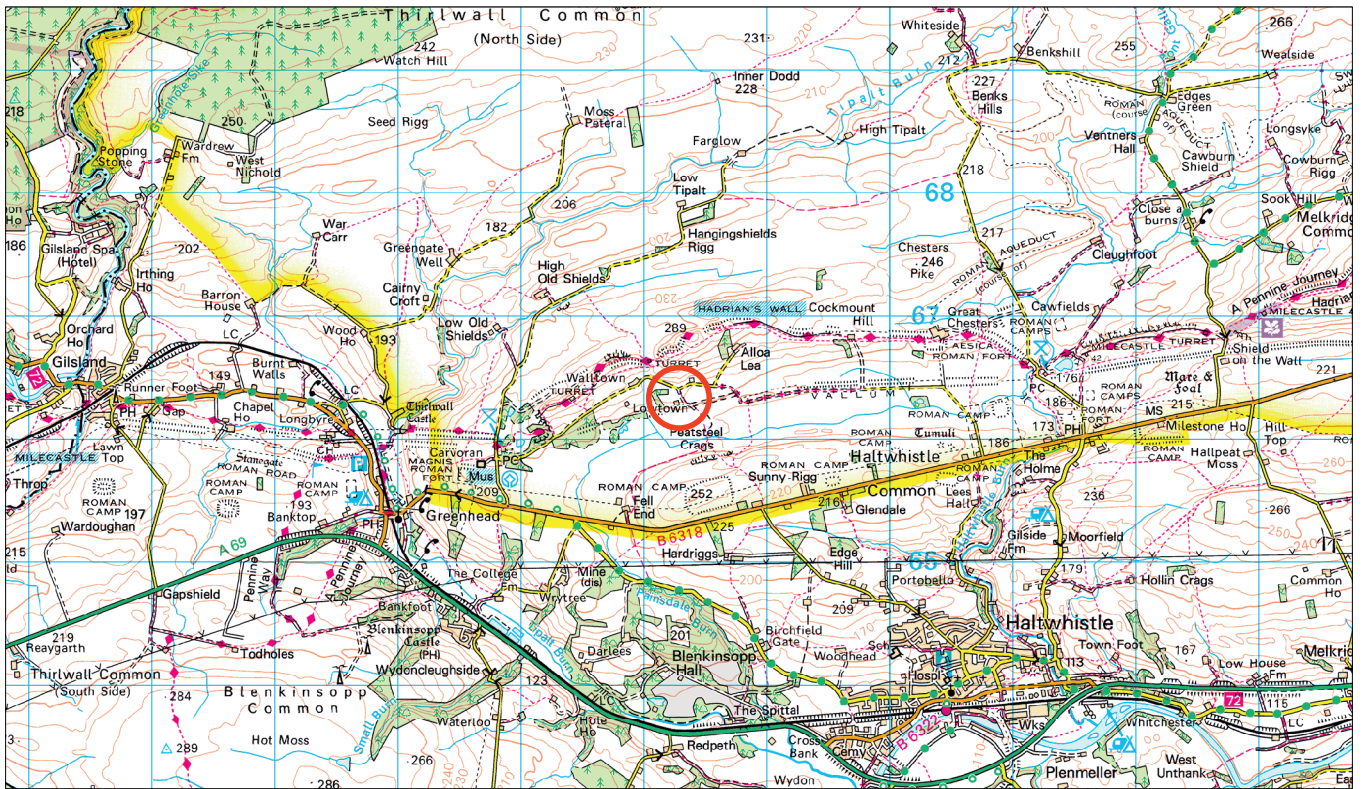
The purpose of this historic buildings report, therefore, is to report on findings of a site investigation carried out in June, 2019 and provide an assessment of the importance of the building on that basis.

#### 1.3 History and Significance of the site

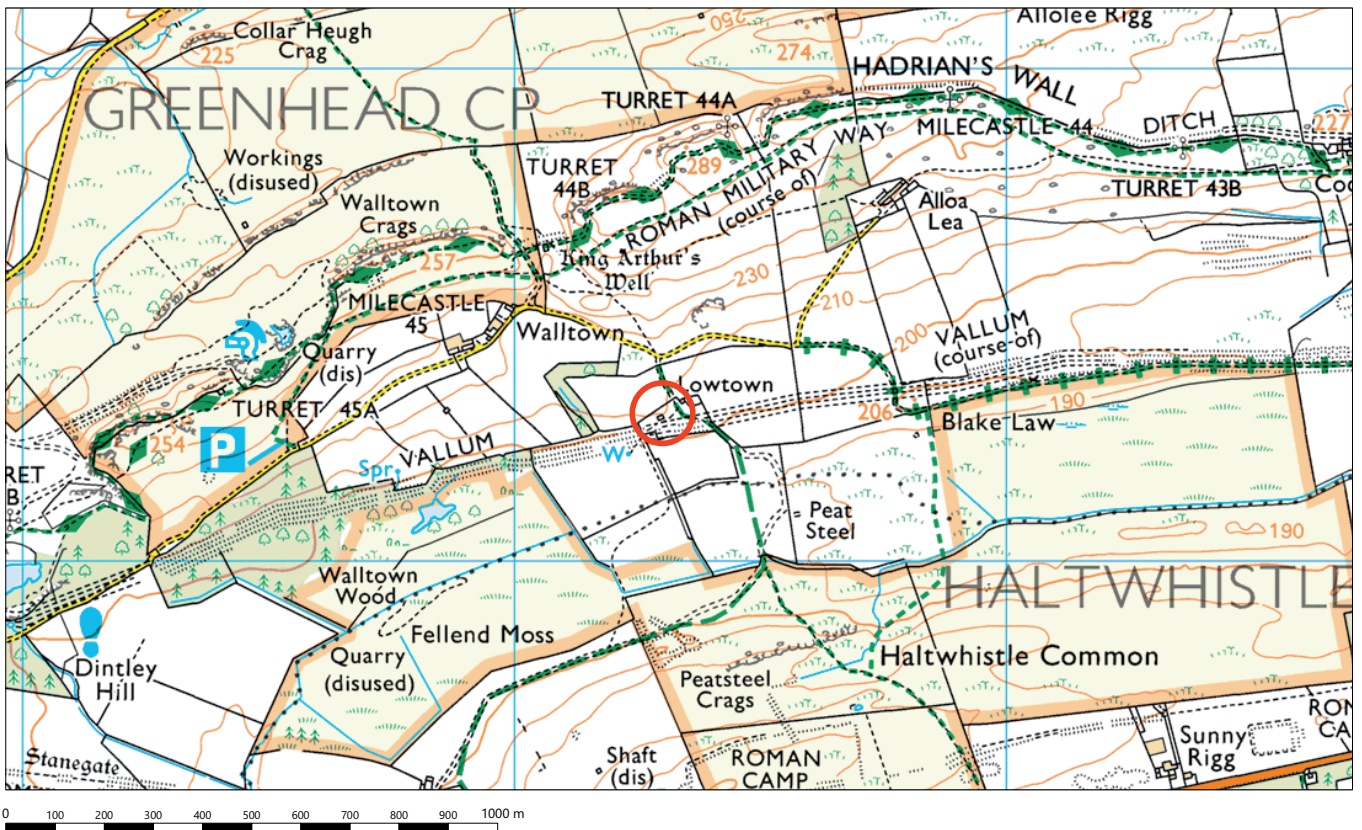
Background historical information on the site is contained in a Heritage Statement prepared by Butler Craig Associates in 2017, a copy of which is retained by NCC Planning Department.

The Farmhouse sits alone in the landscape directly above the vallum of Hadrian's Wall. Access is clearly defined by the "hollow way" track from the public highway running broadly South West. There is some evidence of earthworks, defining small enclosures or building platforms south-west of the property and to the north-east, where there is evidence of a stone-walled enclosure and former buildings, including a combined byre & barn.

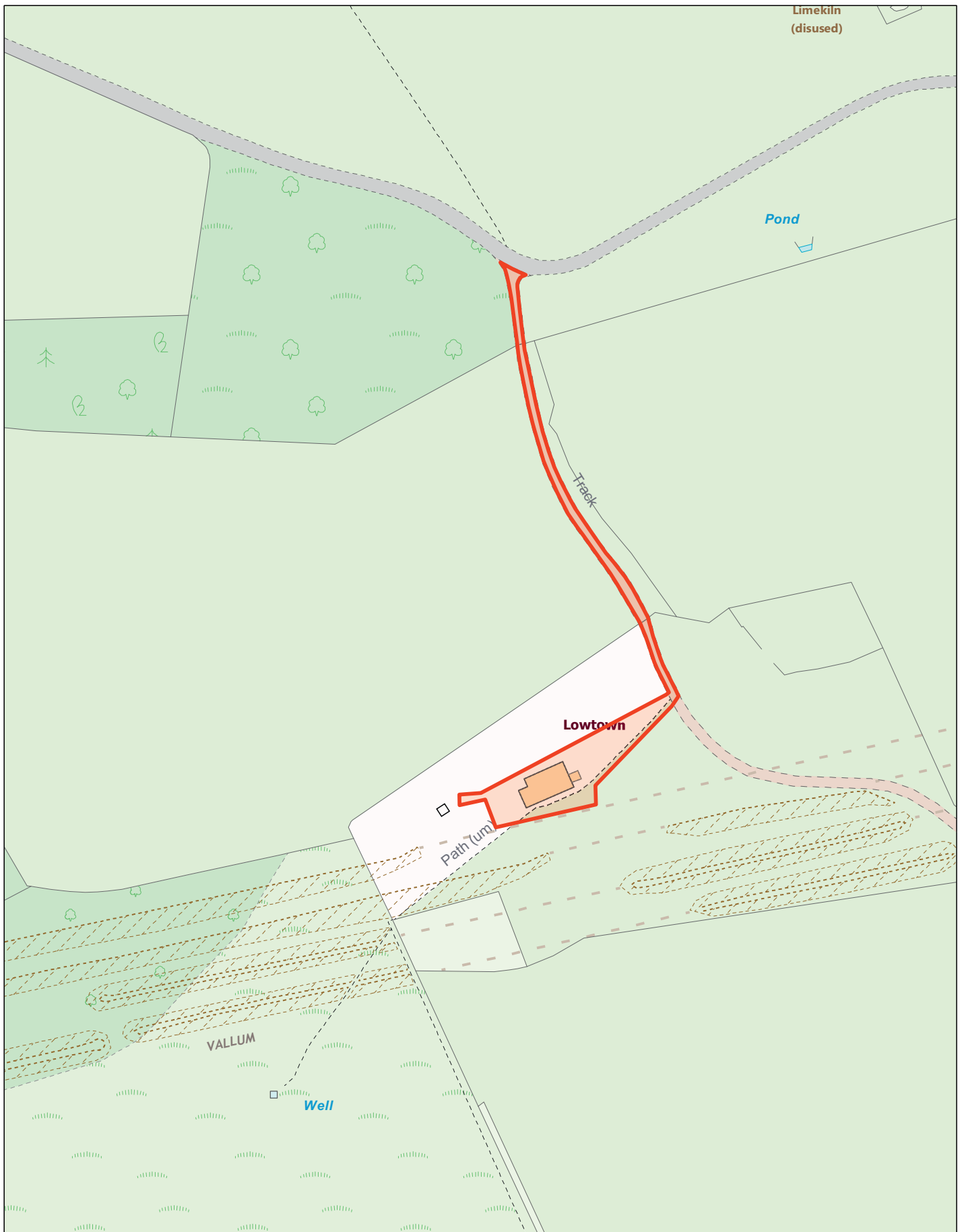
The first and subsequent editions of the Ordnance Survey map series (see *Illus. 04-07*) show at least one additional structure to the north-east of the house where recent field inspection



*Illus. 01: Regional view, showing the location of Low Town (circled in red) to the northeast of Greenhead in southwest Northumberland.*



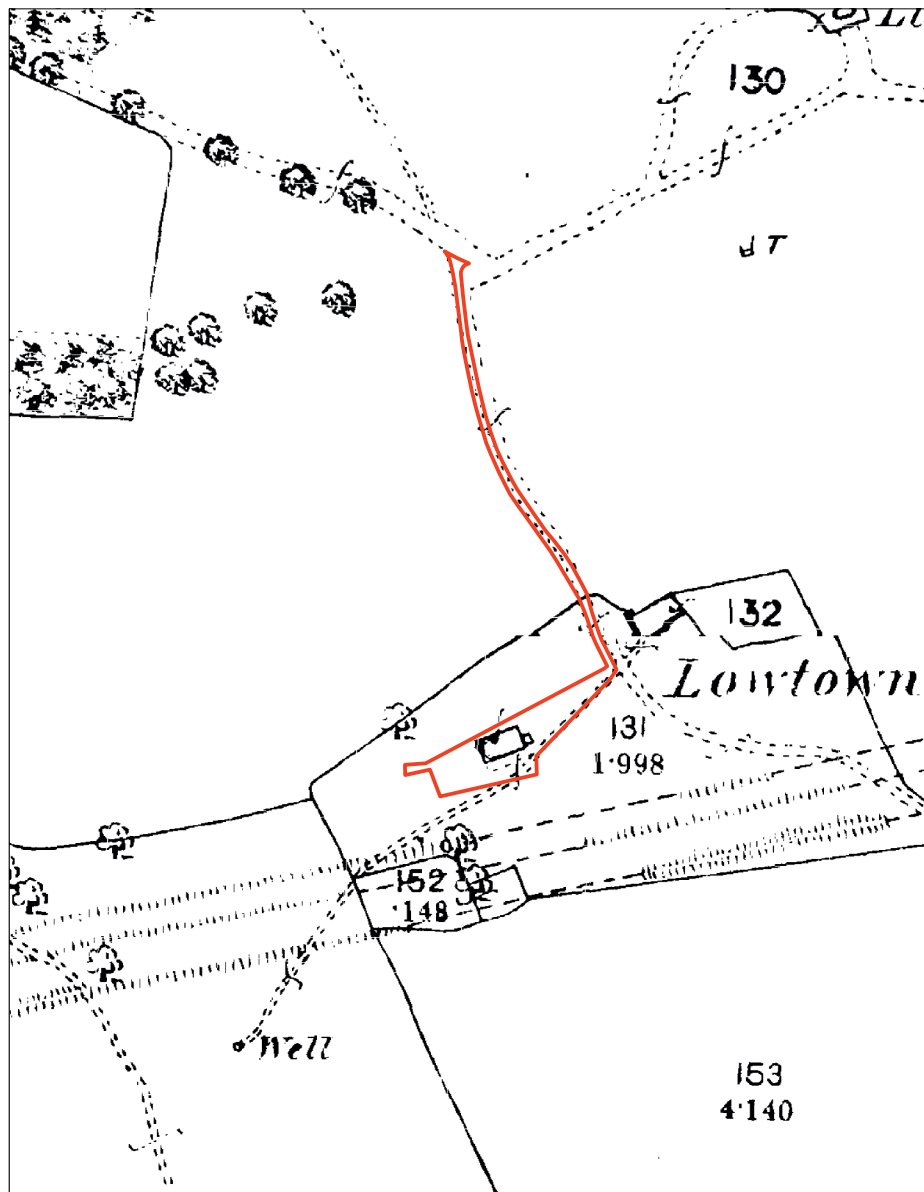
*Illus. 02: View showing the location of Low Town (circled in red) in the intervallum area of the Hadrian's Wall frontier, near the hamlet of Walltown.*



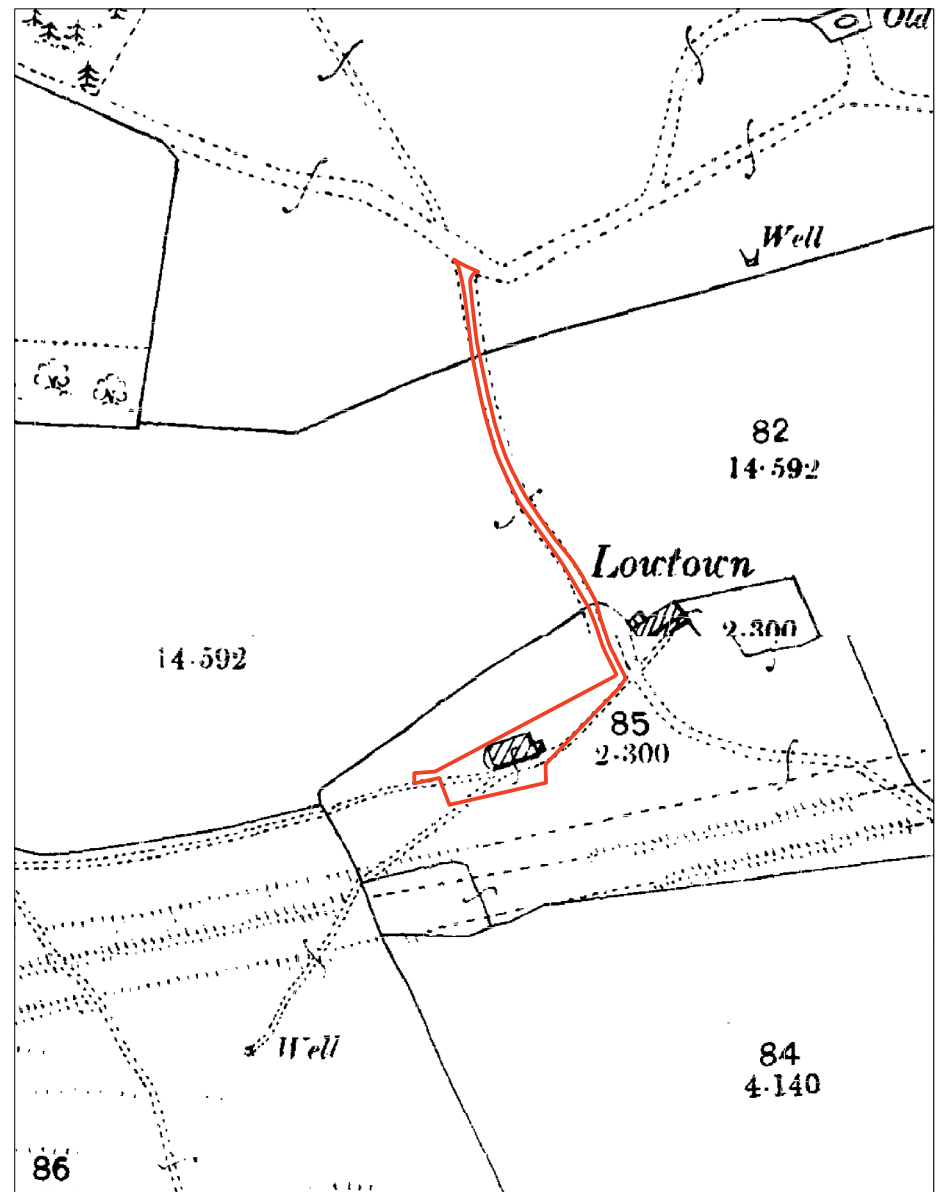
Scale 1:1250

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 m

*Illus. 03: Site view, showing Low Town in its landscape, immediately north of the Vallum.*

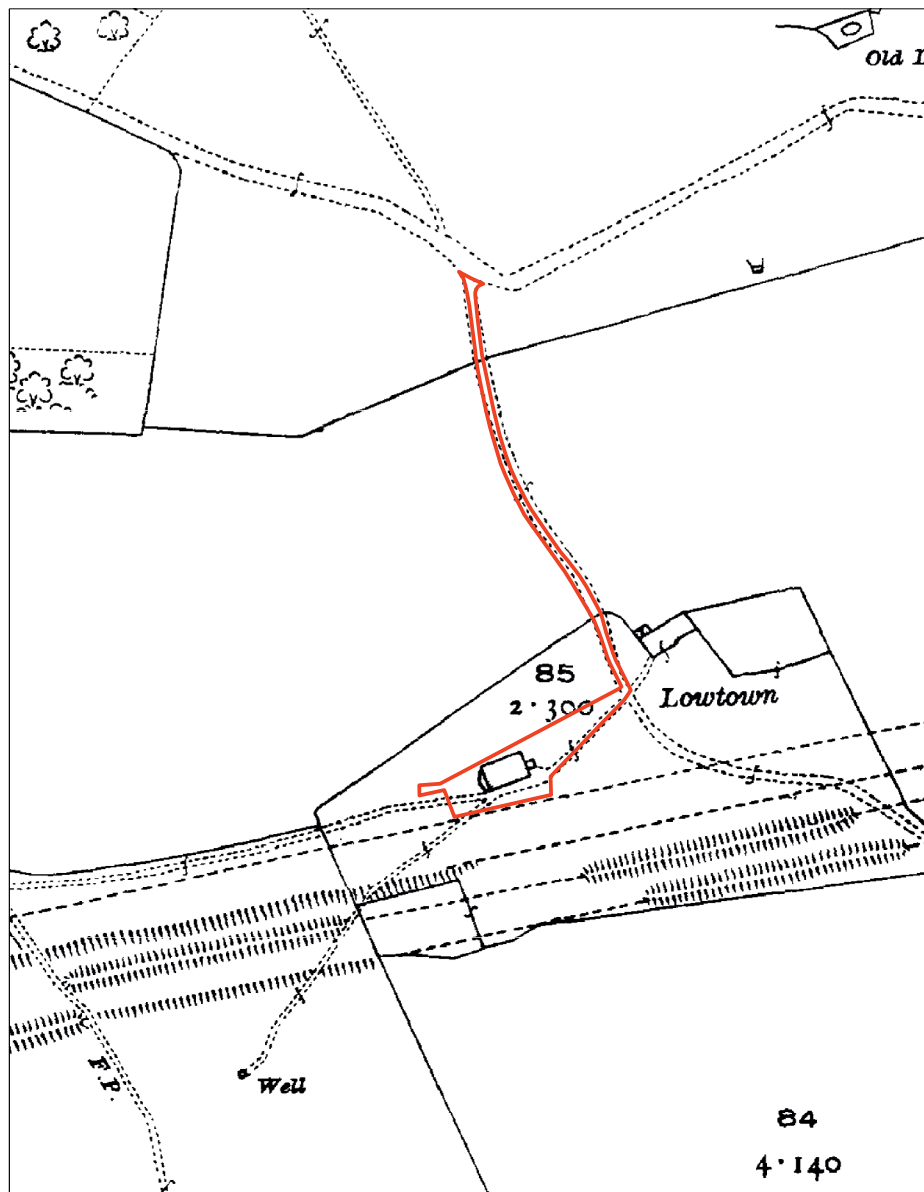


**Illus. 04:** Extract from the 1st Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of c.1864, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).

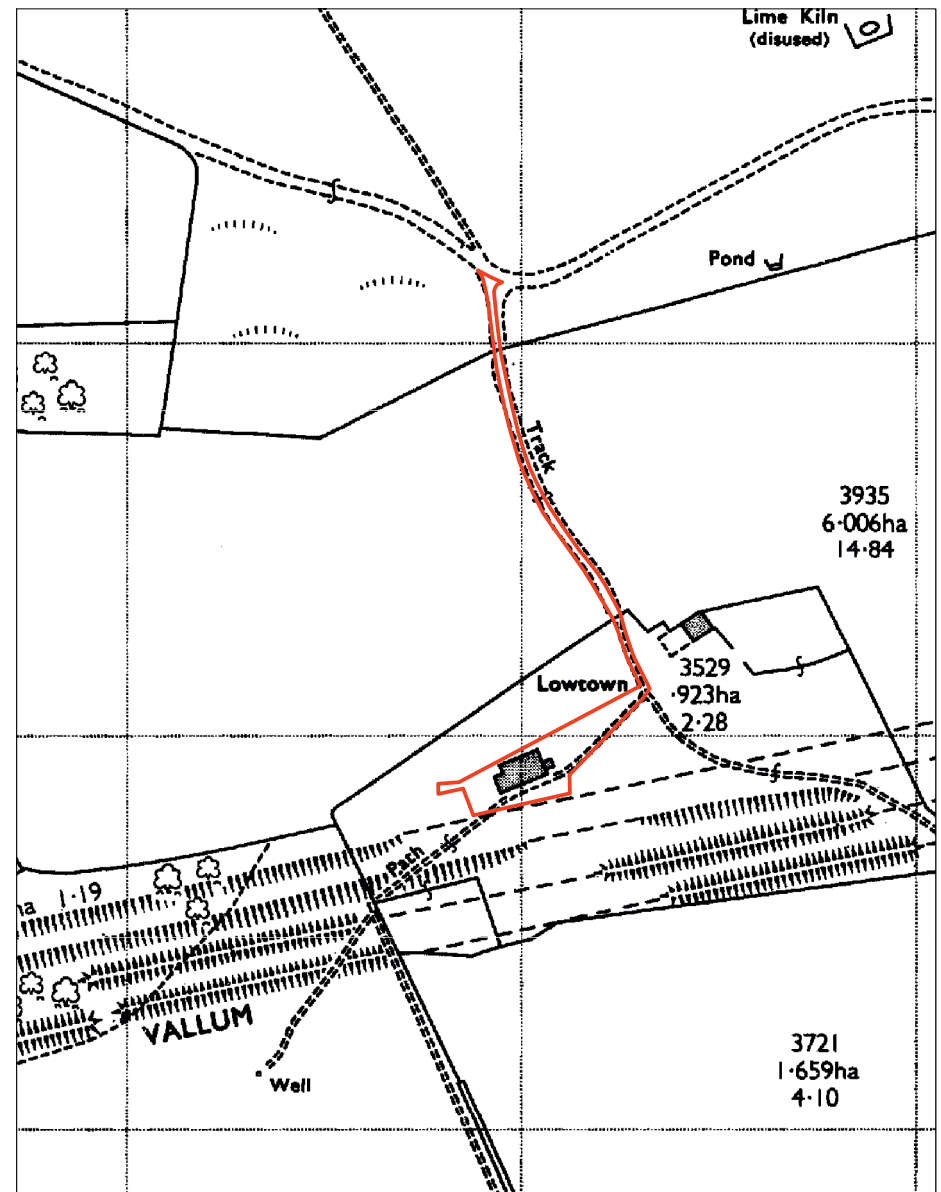


**Illus. 05:** Extract from the 2nd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of c.1896, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).





**Illus. 06:** Extract from the 3rd Edition Ordnance Survey Plan of c.1921, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).



**Illus. 07:** Extract from the c.1973 Edition Ordnance Survey Plan, showing the location of the development site (highlighted in red).

noted the presence of a ruined field wall and building foundations of a combined byre and barn. In front of the farmhouse is a level terrace with a boulder revetment, towards the west end of which is part of an earlier wall foundation, potentially of early post-medieval origin. North and west of the farmhouse are a number of apparent building platforms, probably of medieval or early post-medieval origin. John Horsley noted in the 1720s that a settlement of some kind had existed here which had evidently fallen into ruin by that time.

Lowtown Farmhouse itself is Listed Grade II (Ref 11/83 List Entry 1303081):

*“Farmhouse. Dated 1800 on door lintel. Squared stone and dressings. Stone tiled roof with rebuilt brick and dressed stone chimneys. 2 storeys, 2 bays. Squared tooled quoins. Replaced door and 2-pane overlight at right. Doorway has raised alternating jambs and oval plaque on lintel with illegible initials and date 1800. Replaced sashes in raised surrounds. Roof has coped gables. Left end brick stack. Right end stone stack with top ledge. Lean-to addition on right return.”*

The house was constructed c.1800 and has undergone subsequent alterations notably internally, to meet the changing needs of farm workers and to meet modern living standards (an old electricity connection is apparent, for example), which may explain the lack of internal features included in the list description. Prior to site clearance which had occurred before formal historic buildings recording, the following description was made by Butler Craig Associates in 2017:

*The only current door to the property is on the Southern elevation but there is evidence of a previous door to the North elevation which has been previously stoned up. However both jambs and lintel to this door are clearly visible externally. This doorway does not align with the door to the South elevation and is not visible internally.*

*There are attached lean to outbuildings to the East and West elevations of the property. The East outbuilding is constructed of stone and corrugated fibre cement (ACM) whilst the West extension is of constructed of corrugated steel on a timber frame. The corrugated extension to the West contains the remains of a fireplace and “set pot”. This feature also explains the alteration to the flue and stack to the West gable.*

*Internally, at ground floor there are virtually no remaining internal walls. The existing floor (believed to be concrete and not original) is covered with debris and old manure. The only features remaining at ground floor are an old range to the West elevation, a cupboard to the South reveal of the range, a stone “larder” shelf and part of the East room wall (South jamb) along with a single internal door.*

*At first floor level there are remains of a landing and stud walls along with two fireplaces.*

*Generally, remaining ceilings and walls are a mixture of fibre cement boards and dilapidated lath and plaster including some areas of dry lining. External walls are either dry lined with fibre cement boards or lime / cement plastered. Photographs are included with the application illustrating the condition of the property.*

The following description was made following a site visit by Peter Ryder and Richard Carlton in order to carry out Historic Buildings recording as a Condition of planning approval on June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

## 2. HISTORIC BUILDING DESCRIPTION

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This is a small house which stands c 350 m south-east of the farm of Walltown, and c 500 m south of the line of Hadrian's Wall, and almost directly upon the line of the Roman vallum. The house forms a significant element in a notable historic landscape; the Roman remains – and Vallum earthworks – are of national importance, but there are also evidence of terracing and other buildings north and east of the house, which may be of medieval or earlier post-medieval origin, and the Alloa Lee quarry and its limekiln are only a short distance to the north-east.

The building is a simple rectangle in plan, externally 11.0 m by 6.0 m over walls 0.55 m thick, and of two storeys. There has been a small added outbuilding at each end, a pent-roofed shed on the east and a corrugated iron structure, now gone but for its concrete floor and a water-boiler and stack, on the west. It is built of coursed roughly-squared stone, with cut sandstone quoins and dressings, and has a roof of graduated stone flags.



*Illus. 08: North-east view of the farmhouse.*

### 2.1 Exterior

The south elevation is of two irregular bays, with a shallow plinth increasing in depth with the fall in the land to the south-east corner; the western has a vertical pair of windows, whilst right-of-centre there is a doorway and further right again a single first-floor window. The windows all have alternating-block jambs, with a raised border on all four sides; their carpentry has now been removed. The doorway has a raised alternating-block surround with in the centre of the lintel (now cracked) a raised oval panel with faint remains of an incised inscription; the date '1800' is visible and the letters below might be discernible with oblique lighting. The angles have neatly-cut alternating quoins, and the gable ends have a cut coping, briefly returned on its footstones in a manner quite common in buildings of this period; the right end has a stepped stone stack and the left end a similar one rebuilt in 20th century brick.

The east end is featureless; the small outbuilding set against it has a plain square-headed doorway on the south. The west end has an attached stack, rising slightly left-of-centre to die into the base of the present end stack; it rises from a 20th century brick boiler with its fireplace in a canted angle facing south-west, and a circular set-pot.

The rear elevation is of similar fabric to the others, except it has a single course of thinner stones at mid-height; the northern angle quoins below this are rather larger. There is a plain blocked doorway with a roughly-shaped lintel, but jambs of plain walling stones, set a little

right-of-centre, and a ground-floor window near the left end, with an alternating-block surround of cut blocks but no raised border. There are no first-floor openings but immediately below the eaves three larger blocks, corresponding to two normal courses, mark the positions of the roof trusses.

## 2.2 The Interior

The interior of the house has now been stripped out, and its upper floor and partitions removed. It originally had two rooms on each floor, divided by an entrance lobby inside the front door and a stair rising from north to south with doorways at its head into the two bedrooms. Sockets for upright-section joists remain in each side wall; a gap on the north, to the east of the blocked north door, indicates the position of the removed stair and the 'ghosts' of the first-floor partition walls are still visible above.

On the ground floor only the larger western room has been heated; a bold projection from the east wall holds a large fireplace with a narrow chamfer to jambs and lintel, within which is a 19th or early 20th century range with a maker's plate for 'JOHN LIDDELL & SONS, HALTWHISTLE'. Above the projection reduces in size and there is a smaller first-floor fireplace with 19th century ironwork with a beaded frame and a shaped hood ornamented with a foliate loop; there is a timber strainer above. At the east end there is only a fireplace to the upper floor, carried on two substantial stone corbels. The plain stone fireplace retains two quadrant-plan cheek plates of cast iron, with raised foliate cross designs. Again there is a timber strainer above.

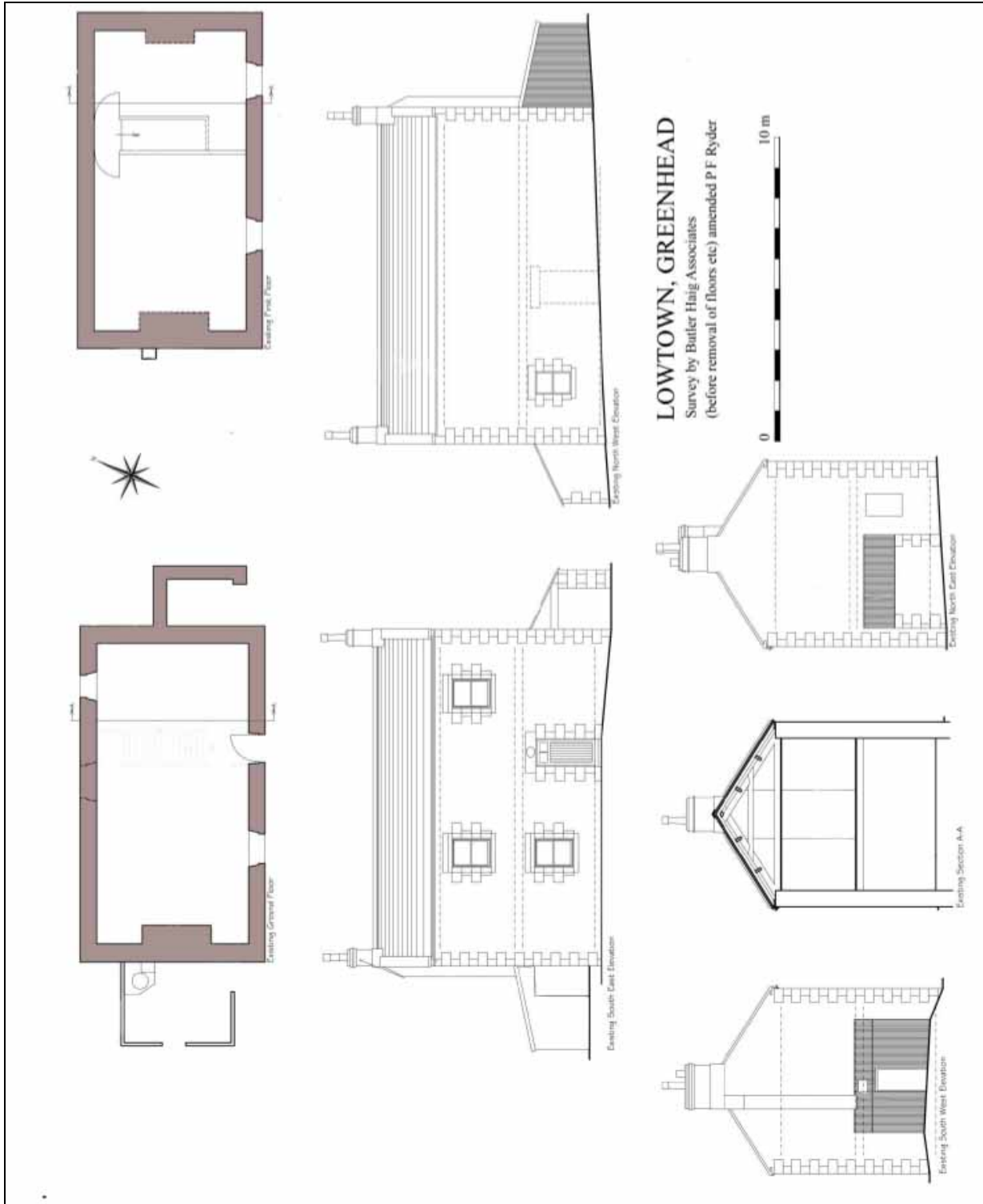


*Illus. 09: First-floor fireplace at west end, and its maker's plate*



*Illus. 10: First-floor fireplace at the east end.*

The roof is of four bays; principal rafter trusses have collars halved on from the east and carry two levels of purlins, with splayed scarfs on the back ls of the principals, and the ridge is carried between their overlapped ends.



Illus. 11: Plan and elevations of Lowtown by Butler Craig Associates, amended and annotated by Peter Ryder, June 2019.

### 3. THE PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD

*Table 1: Catalogue of Photographs taken as part of the Structural Record*

<b>Photo no.</b>	<b>Description</b>
1	North elevation of the farmhouse
2	External view of blocked north door
3	View of farmhouse from north-west
4	View of farmhouse from north-west, with intervening earthworks, probably building platforms.
5	West elevation of the farmhouse
6	View from west of pot boiler setting in area of former extension
7	Vertical view of pot boiler setting in area of former extension
8	Close-up oblique view of pot boiler setting in area of former extension
9	South elevation of the farmhouse
10	External view of south door
11	Dated plaque above the south door
12	South elevation of entrance to east extension.
13	Detailed view of quoins and footings at south-east corner of the farmhouse
14	View of farmhouse from the south-east.
15	View of farmhouse from east north-east
16	Internal West wall of the farmhouse
17	Internal lower west wall fireplace
18	Maker's mark on internal lower west wall fireplace
19	Internal upper west wall fireplace
20	West end of internal North wall
21	Oblique view of internal North wall from SW.
22	Blocked door in internal North Wall
23	Internal view of the east end of the North Wall
24	Oblique view of internal North wall from SE.
25	Internal East wall of the farmhouse
26	North part of internal East wall.
27	Fireplace at former first floor level in the east wall.
28	Projecting east wall fireplace viewed from the south.
29	Oblique view of internal South wall from NE.
30	Central part of internal South Wall.
31	Internal view of upper east window in the south wall.
32	Oblique view of South doorway from NE.
33	Oblique view of east GF window from NE.
34	Oblique view of east side of east GF window opening from NW.
35	Surviving fragment of painted plaster on the east side of east GF window opening.
36	Landscape view to SE from the south door.
37	Landscape view to the south from the south door.
38	Landscape view to SW from the south door.
39	View of internal west windows in the south wall.
40	The roof structure viewed from the east.
41	Detailed view of the roof structure from the east.
42	Distant view of the house from structural and earthwork remains to the east.
43	View of limekiln north-east of the house
44	View towards Low Town from lime kiln to the north-east.

## 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 4.1 Structural History

It is concluded that this picturesque and attractive little house, its cut dressings and minor architectural features reflecting a status slightly above the average, was built at a date (1800) when one might still have expected more vernacular characteristics in a remote area such as this. It is possible that some of the structure of an older single-storeyed building has been retained in the lower part of the north wall c, but if so its fabric is quite similar and unlikely to be more than a few years earlier. Considerable alterations made to the house, especially internally, detract from its importance, as does the removal of surviving internal features undertaken recently, but this negative impact is counterbalanced by the surviving fabric of the structure and its setting in the context of the Hadrian's Wall landscape, enhanced by earthwork and some built remains of associated structures.

The lack of significant historic features of pre-19<sup>th</sup> century origin and the level of proposed impact upon them means that no specific mitigation measures are recommended with respect to the proposed remodelling of the building interior. However, care must be taken to avoid significant impact upon existing stonework structure, particularly the north and south facades, the internal walls of which also retain interesting features.

## APPENDIX 1

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### LOW TOWN, GREENHEAD, NORTHUMBERLAND:

Project Design for the production of an Historic Buildings Record, *Prepared by The Archaeological Practice Ltd.*

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

The following represents a project design for a programme of archaeological investigation to further inform a proposal to conserve, renew and convert to residential use Low Town, near Greenhead in south-west Northumberland.

Given the archaeological sensitivity of the site, the Northumberland National Park Authority Conservation Team (NNPACT) has stipulated that the built and archaeological remains of the site should be recorded in advance of, and during development works which are likely to impact on archaeological remains of potential regional significance. Specifically, the work is intended to record and interpret any significant archaeological features found to exist within the development area.

#### 2. SCHEME OF WORKS

*It is proposed to carry out the recording as follows:*

**Stage 1:** Photographic recording of the house. It is proposed to record the building by written description, colour digital photography and production of a phased plan based on the architect's ground plan.

**Stage 2:** Following the fieldwork it is proposed to produce a site archive and fully illustrated report on the work, including mounting and cataloguing record photographs & drawings.

##### 2.1 Location of works

LOW TOWN lies north-east of Greenhead in south-east Northumberland.

##### 2.2 History and Significance of the site

Lowtown Farmhouse itself is Listed Grade II (Ref 11/83 List Entry 1303081). It sits alone in the landscape directly above the vallum of Hadrian's Wall. There is some evidence of earthworks, defining small enclosures or building platforms south-west of the property and to the north-east, where there is evidence of a stone-walled enclosure and former buildings, including a combined byre & barn. The first (1866) edition Ordnance Survey map shows at least one additional structure to the north-east of the house where recent field inspection noted the presence of a ruined field wall and building foundations of a combined byre and barn. In front of the farmhouse is a level terrace with a boulder revetment, towards the west end of which is part of an earlier wall foundation, potentially of early post-medieval origin. North and west of the farmhouse are a number of apparent building platforms, probably of medieval or early post-medieval origin. John Horsley noted in the 1720s that a settlement of some kind had existed here which had evidently fallen into ruin by that time.

#### 3. METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

##### 3.1 General

3.1.1 The Field Investigation will be carried out by means of written description following observation, archaeological photography and annotation of existing survey records.

3.1.2 All work will be carried out in compliance with the codes of practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavations.



3.1.3 All archaeological staff will be suitably qualified and experienced for their project roles. Before commencement of work they will have been made aware of what work is required under the specification and they will understand the aims and methodologies of the project.

### **3.2 Level 2 Historic Buildings Record of the building (Stage 1, above)**

**3.2.1** Each elevation of each upstanding wall in the building will be photographed in a manner suitable for rectification.

**3.2.2** The record photographs will be in colour digital format (unmodified jpegs at 15 megapixels).

**3.2.3** All photographs will be in sharp focus, well lit and will include a clearly visible 1m or 2m scale.

**3.2.4** The record photographs will be accompanied by a Catalogue in table format.

**3.2.5** The site of the record photographs will be placed in the context of the buildings complex as a whole by providing record photographs of the wall in relation to other buildings and features.

### **3.3 Analysis and Reporting of Recovered Data (Stage 4, above)**

3.3.1 Three copies of the report will be provided within two months of the completion of fieldwork. Each will be bound, with each page and heading numbered. Any further copies required will be produced electronically. The combined report on the building recording and watching brief will be bound, with each page and paragraph numbered. It will include as a minimum the following:

- A summary statement of methodologies used.
- A location plan of the site.
- Plans and sections of all features recorded.
- A summary statement of results.
- A table summarizing the deposits, features, classes and numbers of artefacts encountered and spot dating of significant finds.
- Conclusions

#### Recommendations

3.3.2 Following completion of the analysis and publication phase of the work, an archive (the Research Archive) containing all the data derived from the work done during the analysis phase will be prepared. The archive will be prepared to the standard specified by English Heritage (English Heritage 1991) and in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute of Conservation guidelines. This will include the indexing, ordering, quantification and checking for consistency of all original context records (if used).

3.3.3 The archive will be submitted to the GNM, Newcastle upon Tyne, within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork.

3.3.4 Arrangements will be made to deposit the Site Archive (including Finds) and the Research Archive with the designated curatorial authority, the Museum of Antiquities, within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork. Additionally, a copy shall be offered to the National Monuments Record (NMR).

3.3.5 Summary reports of the project will be prepared, if necessary, for inclusion in *Archaeology in Northumberland* and submitted to the Northumberland SMR Officer, by December of the year in which the work is completed.

3.3.6 An entry for inclusion in the Northumberland County Sites and Monuments Record will be prepared and submitted.

3.3.7 OASIS - The Archaeological Contractor will complete the online form for the Online Access to Index of Archaeological Investigations Project (OASIS), following consultation with the Northumberland SMR Officer. The Contractor agrees to the procedure whereby the information on the form will be placed in the public domain on the OASIS website, following submission to or incorporation of the final report (see 2.6) into the Northumberland County SMR.

#### **4. EXECUTION OF THE SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION**

4.1 The Developer has appointed The Archaeological Practice Ltd. as a professionally competent Archaeological Contractor, on agreed terms, to execute the scheme as set out in the brief supplied by the County Archaeology Service (NCCCT).

4.2 The present project design must be submitted for approval and, if necessary, modification by the County Archaeology Service (NCCCT) before work on-site can proceed.

4.3 The Developer will allow the County Archaeology Service and the appointed contractor all reasonable access to the site for the purposes of monitoring the archaeological scheme, subject only to safety requirements.

4.4 The archaeological contractor appointed to manage the execution of the scheme shall ensure:

4.5 the appropriate parties are informed of the objectives, timetable and progress of the archaeological work

4.6 the progress of the work is adequately and effectively monitored and the results of this are communicated to the appropriate parties.

4.7 significant problems in the execution of the scheme are communicated at the earliest opportunity to the appropriate parties in order to effect a resolution of the problems.

4.8 The archaeological contractor will carry, and will ensure that other archaeological contractors involved in the scheme carry appropriate levels of insurance cover in respect of Employers Liability, Public and Third Party Liability & Professional Indemnity.

4.9 The archaeological contractor will liaise with the appointed CDM Planning Supervisor and prepare or arrange for the preparation of a Safety Plan for the archaeological work.

4.10 At or before the commencement of the scheme the Developer, the appointed Archaeological Contractors, the County Archaeological Officer (NCCCT) and other appropriate parties will agree arbitration procedures to be followed in the event of any unresolvable difficulties or disputes arising.

4.11 Careful assessment has led to the definition of a number of research objectives which identify with a high degree of likelihood the kind of archaeological deposits which the investigation will encounter. Nevertheless, it is possible that discoveries will be made which could not reasonably have been foreseen on the basis of all the information currently available. Any difficulties arising from unforeseen discoveries will be resolved by discussion between all the parties involved. There will be a presumption, the investigation having been carried out in accordance with the schedule set out in this document, and to the satisfaction of the County Archaeological Officer (within NCCCT), and all other considerations being equal, that no executive or financial obligation shall attach to any particular party in the event of unforeseen discoveries being made, and that the executive and financial responsibility for dealing with such unforeseen discoveries shall rest outside the currently agreed WSI.

4.12 The Archaeological Contractor(s) appointed to execute the scheme will procure and comply with all statutory consents and licences under the Disused Burial Grounds (Amendment) Act 1981 regarding the exhumation and interment of any human remains discovered within the site, and will comply with all reasonable requirements of any church or other religious body or civil body regarding the manner and method of removal, re-interment or cremation of the human remains, and the removal and disposal of any tombstones or other memorials discovered within the site. The Developer will incur all costs resulting from such compliance.

## 5. TIMETABLE AND STAFFING

It is proposed to carry out the historic buildings recording fieldwork over a period of 1-2 days. Further time required to produce an appropriately illustrated report on the work, as detailed above.

*Table 1: - Staffing levels associated with individual tasks.*

Activity	Personnel	Max. Person days
<b>Stage 1:</b>	PA	2
<b>Stage 2:</b>	PA/AA	2

### **Personnel:**

<b>Archaeological Practice</b> PA: Project Archaeologists RC & PFR AA: Assistant Archaeologist	<b>Sub-Contractors</b> ASUD: Palaeoecology Research Services LAJ: Lindsay Allason-Jones
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