



Northumberland Line

Ashington Station
Heritage Statement

Northumberland County Council

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Quality information

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 AECOM has been commissioned by Northumberland County Council (NCC) to undertake a Heritage Statement in relation to a proposed new station at Ashington (hereafter referred to as the 'Site') as 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. The Site is centred on National Grid Reference NZ 2728 8762 (see Figure 1).
- 1.2 This Heritage Statement identifies all known designated and non-designated heritage assets within the Site and a defined study area around the Site and assesses the archaeological potential of the Site. It then presents the significance of heritage assets that could be affected by the proposed development and assesses the impact of the proposed development on this significance. It should be noted that reference to 'significance' within this report relates to the heritage value of the assets as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF Annex 2 and paragraphs 189-90) and following Historic England guidance (HE 2019) and therefore differs from that of an Environmental Statement (ES) which uses significance in relation to the level of impact (NPPF paragraphs 195-7).
- 1.3 Heritage asset and resource in this context means the above and below-ground archaeological resource, built heritage, the historic landscape, and any other elements which may contribute to the historical and cultural heritage of the area.

Site Location

- 1.4 The Site is located in a car park to the rear of commercial and office premises situated on the south side of Station Road, in Ashington, Northumberland. The Site lies to the south of Library Gardens and sits on the west side of the existing freight railway line, between it and Kenilworth Road. The site is bounded by Kenilworth Road to the west, the existing railway to the east and residential properties to the south. To the north is a late 20th century commercial building with adjacent covered walkway which crosses the extant railway at Station Road. The Site occupies part of the former Ashington Station.

Scheme Description

- 1.1 The scope of the Northumberland Line passenger scheme (the 'Scheme') includes the provision of new stations and rail infrastructure, the refurbishment and upgrading of existing rail related infrastructure, engineering works together with the operation of new passenger train services. The Scheme also includes the construction of new stations; car parks and highway access. The Scheme includes the temporary use of land for the duration of the construction.
- 1.2 The reopened Northumberland Line will use, with the exception of a 4 mile length of the East Coast Main Line, an existing freight only line. It will involve the construction of six new stations as follows:
 - Ashington;
 - Bedlington;
 - Blyth Bebside;
 - Newsham;
 - Seaton Delaval; and
 - Northumberland Park (existing Metro station requiring new rail platforms)
- 1.3 This report assesses the potential cultural heritage impacts of the proposed station at Ashington (the 'Proposed Development'). Further heritage statements have been prepared for the other proposed station locations, with the exception of Northumberland Park, which does not include the provision of new car parking.

- 1.4 The Proposed Development includes the creation of a ground level car park and platform, with access and egress lanes off Kenilworth Road. Areas for landscaping works, a subsurface attenuation tank, and drainage are also proposed. As part of the Proposed Development, the existing disused platform structure, located on the west side of the existing railway track, is to be demolished as required to accommodate the new platform and station.

Scope

- 1.5 The purpose of this Heritage Statement is to identify and assess the significance of the heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development and to set out the likely impact of the Proposed Development on these assets.
- 1.6 This report sets out the planning and legislative framework within which decisions affecting heritage assets are made. The report establishes a heritage baseline for the Site which incorporates the identification of designated and non-designated heritage assets within the Site and wider study area and sets out the site's topography and geology. The information presented in the baseline is used to establish the significance of the heritage assets affected by the Proposed Development, in terms of both their physical fabric and their setting and determines the potential for unrecorded archaeological remains to exist within the Site. Finally, guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plan Policy, the potential impact of the Proposed Development on the significance of the heritage assets is assessed.

2. Legislation and Planning Policy Context

Legislative Background

The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990

- 2.1 The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (the Act) sets out the principal statutory provisions that must be considered in the determination of any application affecting listed buildings and conservation areas.
- 2.2 Section 66 of the Act states that in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the Secretary of State shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. By virtue of Section 1(5) of the Act a listed building includes any object or structure within its curtilage.
- 2.3 Section 72 of the Act establishes a general duty on a local planning authority or the Secretary of State with respect to any buildings or other land in a Conservation Area to pay special attention to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of a Conservation Area.

Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework

- 2.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), 2019) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. While the EIA methodology forms part of a separate planning regime, the planning decision still takes account of national guidance. As such, it is important to understand where the development fits within this.

- 2.5 Section 16 of the NPPF deals specifically with the historic environment. Where changes are proposed, the NPPF sets out a clear framework to ensure that heritage assets are conserved, and where appropriate enhanced, in a manner that is consistent with their significance.
- 2.6 The NPPF sets out the importance of being able to assess the significance of heritage assets that may be affected by a development. Significance is defined in Annex 2 as being the, '*value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic*'. Significance is not only derived from an asset's physical presence, but also from its setting. The setting of a heritage asset is defined in Annex 2 as, '*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve*'.
- 2.7 Paragraph 189 of the NPPF states that in determining applications, local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets' importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance. Similarly, there is a requirement on local planning authorities, having assessed the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal; to take this into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset (paragraph 190).
- 2.8 In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should take account of the following points:
- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
 - the positive contribution that conservation of heritage assets can make to sustainable communities including their economic vitality;
 - the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness (paragraph 192); and
 - opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.
- 2.9 Paragraphs 193 to 197 of the NPPF introduce the concept that heritage assets can be harmed or lost through alteration, destruction or development within their setting. This harm ranges from less than substantial through to substantial. With regard to designated assets, paragraph 193 states that great weight should be placed on its conservation, irrespective of whether any potential harm is considered to be substantial or less than substantial. The paragraph goes further to say that the more important the asset, the greater the weight should be on its conservation. In paragraph 194, a distinction is made in respect of those assets of the highest significance (e.g. Scheduled Monuments, Grade I and grade II* listed buildings) where substantial harm to or loss should be wholly exceptional.
- 2.10 In instances where development would cause substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated asset consent should be refused unless it can be demonstrated that it is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh that harm or loss (paragraph 195). In instances where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of a designated asset the harm should be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal to provide a balanced judgement (paragraph 196).
- 2.11 With regard to non-designated assets, paragraph 197 states that the effect of the application on the significance of the asset should be taken into account in determining the application. A balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG)

- 2.12 The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) (MHCLG 2019) is a government produced interactive on-line document that provides further advice and guidance to accompany policies in the NPPF. It expands on terms such as 'significance' and its importance in decision making. In particular, paragraph 008 states that 'understanding the significance of a heritage asset and its setting from an early stage in the design process can help to inform the development of proposals which avoid or minimise harm. Analysis of

relevant information can generate a clear understanding of the affected asset, the heritage interests represented in it, and their relative importance' (Paragraph 008, Ref. ID: 18a-008-20190723, Revision date: 23 07 2019).

- 2.13 The PPG clarifies that being able to properly assess the nature, extent and the importance of the significance of the heritage asset and the contribution of its setting, is very important to understanding the potential impact and acceptability of development proposals. This information should be proportionate to the asset's importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on its significance (Paragraph: 009, Ref. ID: 18a-009-20140306, Revision date: 23 07 2019). Setting is also discussed in paragraph 013 which stresses that setting is not only visual, but can be influenced by historic or aesthetic considerations (Paragraph 013, Ref. ID: 18a-013-20190723, Revision date: 23 07 2019).
- 2.14 When considering impacts to a heritage asset, the PPG usefully discusses how to assess whether harm is caused. Paragraph 018 identified that a proposed development asset may have no impact on its significance or may enhance its significance and therefore cause no harm. Where potential harm to designated heritage assets is identified, it needs to be categorised as either less than substantial harm or substantial harm. The guidance goes on to state that 'within each category of harm (which category applies should be explicitly identified), the extent of the harm may vary and should be clearly articulated' (Paragraph: 018 Ref. ID: 18a-018-20190723, Revision date: 23 07 2019).
- 2.15 The NPPF indicates that the degree of harm should be considered alongside any public benefits that can be delivered by development. The PPG states that these benefits should follow from the proposed development and should be of a nature and scale to be of benefit to the public and not just a private benefit. However, benefits do not always have to be visible or accessible to the public in order to be of public benefit. Public benefits may include heritage benefits, such as:
- sustaining or enhancing the significance of a heritage asset and the contribution of its setting;
 - reducing or removing risks to a heritage asset; and
 - securing the optimum viable use of a heritage asset in support of its long-term conservation. (Paragraph: 020 Ref. ID: 18a-020-20190723, Revision date: 23 07 2019).

Local Planning Policy

Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework

- 2.16 In July 2007 the Government announced that Northumberland would be one of the areas within England where its local government structure would be changed, replacing the current two-tier system with a unitary council. NCC became the local planning authority for the area previously covered by the seven local planning authorities of Alnwick, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Blyth, Castle Morpeth, Tynedale, Wansbeck and Northumberland County.
- 2.17 In the past, each of these local planning authorities had produced its own set of documents to guide development in their area. As the seven local authorities have come together there was a need to establish the relevant planning policy documents for the new Council and the geographical area which these relate to. These documents form the Northumberland Consolidated Planning Policy Framework (2017).
- 2.18 With the withdrawal of the draft Northumberland Core Strategy in July 2017, the adopted Core Strategies and the 'saved' policies of a number of planning policy documents put in place by the former County Council and District/Borough Councils will be used to guide development proposals. A number of neighbourhood plans in the County are also at various stages of preparation or 'made'. Once a neighbourhood plan has been approved by referendum, or is 'made' by the council, it will form part of the statutory development plan.
- 2.19 Within this system it is acknowledged that some core strategies and saved policies were created some time ago. In such cases the saved policies are still the starting point for decision making, but the weight to be attached to them will depend on the degree to which they are consistent with the NPPF. Officers will set out the consideration of weight to be afforded to relevant policies when preparing reports in respect of individual schemes.

Wansbeck District Local Plan Schedule of Adopted Policies (effective July 2010)

2.20 The Wansbeck District Local Plan (April 2007) was amended by the Secretary of State's Direction in July 2010 which 'saved' a number of policies. The following heritage-related saved policies are of relevance to the proposed development at Ashington:

GP16 – Setting of Listed Buildings

Planning permission will not be granted for development which would have an adverse effect on the setting of a listed building.

Policy GP20 – Protection of Archaeological Sites

Development which would adversely affect a scheduled or other nationally important archaeological site, and/or its setting, will only be permitted where:

- a) there is no alternative solution; and
- b) the development is in the national interest.

Development which would affect other sites of archaeological significance will only be permitted if:

- a) the archaeological remains would be preserved *in situ* as part of the proposals; or
- b) the significance of the remains is outweighed by the need for and benefits of the development.

Where development affecting archaeological remains is permitted, the developer will be required to make proper provision for the excavation and recording of the site and its remains before and during development and also for post-excavation analysis and publication of findings.

Policy GP21 – Evaluation of Archaeological Sites

Where evidence suggests that a proposed development could disturb archaeological remains, the developer will be required, before their planning application is determined, to provide information on the character and extent of the remains and any measures they propose to mitigate the impact of development. A field evaluation will be required if judged necessary.

Emerging: Northumberland Publication Draft Local Plan

2.21 At the time of writing the Draft Local Plan for Northumberland has been submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government and is undergoing examination. Phase 1 of the examination hearings were held during October 2019 and February 2020. Consultation on additional evidence began in July 2020 and runs until September 2020 with associated hearings taking place during October and November 2020. The Publication Draft Local Plan is available and gives a sense of the future direction of planning in the county. The following emerging policies are of relevance to the proposed application.

Policy ENV 7 – Historic Environment and Heritage Assets

1. Development proposals will be assessed and decisions made that ensure the conservation and enhancement of the significance, quality and integrity of Northumberland's heritage assets and their settings.

2. Decisions affecting a heritage asset will be based on a sound understanding of the significance of that asset and the impact of any proposal upon that significance, involving:

- (a) Use of the Historic Environment Record, the Historic Landscape Characterisation Study, any relevant character appraisals or design guides, and/or other relevant records to help inform decision making;
- (b) A requirement for applicants to provide a heritage statement; describing the significance of the asset and any contribution made to this significance by its setting, and assessing the impact of the proposal on this significance.

3. Development proposals, which will affect a site of archaeological interest, or a site which has the potential to be of archaeological interest, will require an appropriate desk-based assessment and, where necessary, a field evaluation.
4. Development proposals that would result in substantial harm to or total loss of the significance of designated heritage assets will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that the substantial harm or total loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that would outweigh that harm or loss, or all of the following apply:
 - (a) The nature of the heritage asset would prevent all reasonable uses of the site; and
 - (b) no viable use of the asset itself could be found in the medium term through appropriate marketing that would enable its conservation; and
 - (c) conservation by grant-funding or some form of charitable or public ownership would demonstrably not be possible; and
 - (d) the harm or loss is outweighed by the benefit of bringing the site back into use.
5. Where development would cause less than substantial harm to the significance of designated heritage assets, this will be weighed against the public benefits of the proposal, including securing the optimum use that is viable and justifiable.
6. Development proposals that affect non-designated heritage assets shall require a balanced judgement, taking into account the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
7. If, following the above assessment, a decision is made that will result in the loss of all or any part of a heritage asset, or a reduction in its significance, developers will be required to record and advance understanding of the asset through appropriate compensatory measures. The results of such measures should be made publicly accessible through appropriate archiving and publication. The ability to create full records in this way should not, in itself, be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be supported.
8. Development proposals that affect heritage assets at risk (national or local) should demonstrate how they will be brought into repair, or appropriately conserved, and the decline halted (and preferably reversed) in a timely manner. Where the asset at risk is a vacant building of permanent and substantial construction (i.e. not a ruin that should remain so), the proposal should secure its reuse in a manner consistent with its conservation.
9. Decisions affecting historic places and sites should take account of the individual and cumulative effect on the visitor economy, the vitality of the area and the quality of place

Other Guidance

Northumberland County Council – Heritage Statement Guidance

- 2.22 Northumberland County Council have produced a short guidance document (Northumberland County Council 2019) outlining information requirements for developments that have the potential to affect listed buildings, unlisted buildings in Conservation Areas or locally listed buildings, including applications affecting their setting.
- 2.23 The document states that this should include a description of the asset and its setting, an assessment of its significance, an explanation of the design concept for the proposed development, a description of the impact of the proposed development, and photographs.

Historic England Guidance

- 2.24 Historic England has published a series of Good Practice Advice (GPA) of which those of most relevance to this appraisal are GPA2 - Managing Significance in Decision-taking (2015), GPA3 - The Setting of Heritage Assets (2nd Edition) (2017), and Advice Note 12 - Statements of Heritage Significance (2019).
- 2.25 GPA2 emphasises the importance of having a knowledge and understanding of the significance of heritage assets likely to be affected by the development and that the “first step for all applicants is to

understand the significance of any affected heritage asset and, if relevant the contribution of its setting to its significance” (paragraph 4). Early knowledge of this information is also useful to a local planning authority in pre-application engagement with an applicant and ultimately in decision making (paragraph 7).

- 2.26 GPA3 provides advice on the setting of heritage assets. Setting is as defined in the NPPF and comprises the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Elements of a setting can make positive or negative contributions to the significance of an asset and affect the ways in which it is experienced. Historic England state that setting does not have a boundary and what comprises an asset’s setting may change as the asset and its surrounding evolve. Setting can be extensive and particularly in urban areas or extensive landscapes can overlap with other assets. The contribution of setting to the significance of an asset is often expressed by reference to views and the GPA in paragraph 11 identifies those views such as those that were designed or those that were intended, that contribute to understanding the significance of assets.
- 2.27 Advice Note 12 outlines a recommended approach to assessing the significance of heritage assets in line with the requirements of NPPF. It includes a suggested reporting structure for a ‘*Statement of Heritage Significance*’, as well as guidance on creating a statement that is proportionate to the asset’s significance and the potential degree of impact of a proposed development. The Advice Note also offers an interpretation of the various forms of heritage interest that an asset can possess, based on the terms provided in the NPPF Glossary (Annex 2: Glossary); namely archaeological, architectural and artistic, and historic.
- 2.28 The explanatory text in the emerging Northumberland Draft Publication Local Plan states that when defining the significance of non-designated buildings that may be impacted by development, the building should be assessed against the criteria for local listing as outlined in Historic England Advice Note 7 ‘Local Heritage Listing’ (2012). This provides a list of criteria as follows: age, rarity, aesthetic interest, group value, archaeological interest, archival interest, historical associations, designed landscape interest, landmark status and social and communal value. Definitions of these terms are provided within that document.

Chartered Institute of Archaeologists

- 2.29 The baseline study has been undertaken in accordance with guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA), specifically the standard and guidance for historic environment desk-based assessment (CIfA, 2020).

3. Assessment Methodology

Sources of Information/Data

- 3.1 The following sources of information have been reviewed and form the basis of the assessment of likely impacts on the cultural heritage:
- Northumberland Historic Environment Record (HER) for non-designated assets, Historic Landscape Characterisation and National Mapping Programme aerial photography transcription data (report dated 6 August 2020);
 - National Heritage List for England (NHLE);
 - Ordnance Survey historic mapping data (consulted online at National Library of Scotland only, due to ongoing covid-19 restrictions);
 - Published and unpublished sources; and
 - online sources, including British Geological Survey (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>) and Environment Agency LiDAR data.
- 3.2 The designated heritage assets within this assessment are identified with their National Heritage List for England (NHLE) reference number. The non-designated heritage assets are identified with their HER

reference number. Non-designated assets identified during the site visit are labelled with an AEC reference number. All assets are identified within the text and can be cross-referenced to the gazetteer in Appendix A and located on Figures 2-3 in Appendix B.

Extent of Study Areas

- 3.3 The study area for the collation of information on heritage assets was defined as 500m from the Site's central point. This distance has been judged as appropriate to provide the context of, and potential for, surviving archaeological remains on the Site given the nature of the Proposed Development and its location. Due to the built-up nature of the Site's surroundings, the study area for identifying assets where there may be impacts caused through changes to setting was initially set at 500m for the identification of potential assets, but following the site visits this was reduced to 250m from the Site for formal assessment.
- 3.4 Within this study area, data was collated in relation to all designated and non-designated heritage assets. All known heritage assets were identified using the data sources listed above.

Site Visit

- 3.5 A site visit and setting assessment of heritage assets within the study area were undertaken on 2nd October 2020 in order to:
- Identify known archaeological sites within the site;
 - Identify historic buildings and related assets including listed buildings, conservation areas and locally listed buildings within the application site and its surrounding study area;
 - Identify areas with the potential to contain any previously unidentified archaeological or historical remains;
 - Identify and assess the setting of heritage assets within the study area; and
 - Identify the location, extent and severity of modern ground disturbance and previous construction impacts.

Consultation

- 3.6 An initial consultation was conducted on 8 September 2020 with the County Archaeologist for Northumberland. The County Archaeologist for Northumberland requested a 500m HER study area.
- 3.7 The Heritage Statement was reviewed by the County Archaeologist for Northumberland prior to submission. Detailed plans of the Proposed Development were not seen by the County Archaeologist but based on the information provided it was deemed likely that no further work be required at assessment stage in relation to archaeology.
- 3.8 During consultation the County Archaeologist stressed the significance of industrial heritage and surviving historic railway infrastructure within the area of Northumberland that the Scheme is sited, and that an appropriate programme of recording/outreach, with particular focus on railway heritage, would be in keeping with the objectives of NPPF 199¹.
- 3.9 Historic England was invited to comment on the Proposed Development and Scheme as part of a public consultation. Comments were received on 14th December 2020, highlighting the 'great opportunity' afforded by the Northumberland Line's reinstatement, to 'strengthen the link between the modern settlement pattern and its past', as well as the opportunity for engaging local people within a community history programme.

¹ 'Local planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible' (MHCLG 2019, paragraph 199).

- 3.10 Consultation was undertaken on 2 December 2020 with the NCC Conservation Officer, regarding the scope of the assessment of built heritage assets and it was agreed that the assets included within the assessment were appropriate for a proportionate assessment of the Site context.

Significance of Heritage Assets

- 3.11 The significance of identified heritage assets has been determined by professional judgement guided by statutory and non-statutory designations, national, regional and local policies, archaeological research frameworks and the modified criteria for Scheduled Monuments used in England by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2013). An assessment of the significance of assets and their setting has been undertaken in consideration of guidance and good practice issued by Historic England. A methodology for the assessment of significance of heritage assets is outlined in Advice Note 12 (Historic England, 2019).
- 3.12 The NPPF (Annex 2: Glossary) defines significance as ‘the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset’s physical presence, but also from its setting’.
- 3.13 Significance is often established by statutory designations such as listed buildings, scheduled monuments and conservation areas. More particular advice as to what makes up significance is set out in Advice Note 12, which establishes a method for thinking consistently about the heritage values that can be ascribed to a place. When assessing the significance of an asset numerous considerations include architectural interest, historic interest, group value, social value, former uses and local distinctiveness.
- 3.14 The terminology used in this assessment relates to the terminology used by NPPF and the Advice Note 12, referring to significance in terms of heritage interest and not heritage values and the methodology for assessing the heritage interest follows Advice Note 12. While heritage interest and heritage values are not completely interchangeable, they are broadly similar.

Archaeological Potential

- 3.15 Assessment of the previously unrecorded archaeological resources draws on three factors:
- An assessment of the potential survival of any known or unknown archaeological deposits to remain extant within the Site based on an evaluation of previous ground disturbance;
 - An assessment for the potential for archaeological deposits to exist within the Site based on the results of the baseline study; and
 - An assessment of the significance of known and potential archaeological assets within the Site, as well as within the defined study area.
- 3.16 The magnitude of impact to buried archaeological remains caused by historic development has been assessed based on available data listed above, with particular attention paid to historic boreholes and available data obtained from previous archaeological evaluations and excavations in the study area.
- 3.17 The potential for an area to contain archaeological remains is rated ‘high’, ‘medium’, ‘low’, ‘negligible’, or ‘unknown’. This rating is based on an understanding of the archaeological resource as a whole and its national, regional and local context. This includes the number, proximity and significance of known and predicted archaeological/historical sites or find spots within the Site and its surrounding study area.

Limitations and Assumptions

- 3.18 The assessment made herein relies heavily on known and observed heritage assets within the study area.
- 3.19 The extent of the impacts of the Proposed Development rely on the design and construction data provided.
- 3.20 Due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, it has not been possible to visit the Northumberland HER in person, nor has it been possible to visit Northumberland Archives at Woodhorn, or the local library

archives to gather historic and archaeological information pertaining to the Site and its surrounding landscape.

4. Baseline Conditions

Designated

- 4.1 There are no designated assets within the Site.
- 4.2 The initial 500m study area around the Site contained one listed building, designated at Grade II: Ashington Co-Operative Society premises [1041396]. The Proposed Development does not have the capacity to impact on this asset, and the study area for setting assessment was reduced subsequently to 250m.
- 4.3 There are no World Heritage Sites, Scheduled Monuments, Conservation Areas, Registered Park and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Protected Wrecks within the study area.

Assets in Site boundary

- 4.4 There are three known non-designated heritage assets within the Site:
 - The post-medieval Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway line [NHER 27329];
 - The post-medieval Ashington Station, of which, only the platforms are extant [NHER 27333]; and
 - A north-south wall, which was likely associated with Ashington Station [AEC010].

Physical Site Conditions

Site Topography

- 4.5 The Site is located within the built-up area of Ashington, c. 1.8km north of the River Wansbeck and c. 5.5km west of the North Sea coast. The ground level of the Site is relatively flat, at c. 30m AOD, with a gradual increase to the north and east. Around 1km to the south the ground level slopes down markedly to form the valley of the River Wansbeck and the Blackclose Dean.
- 4.6 The Site is located predominantly to the west of the railway. Aside from the existing railway line and disused platforms, there are three main land parcels within the Site. The first is Station Yard South car park, a large car park acting as town centre parking and for the adjacent Wilko premises to the immediate north of the Site. To the west side of the car park there is an area of green open space within the Site formerly known as 'Library Gardens'. Then to the south of both of those parcels there is an overgrown area that was formerly the site of Essendene Care Home.

Site Geology

- 4.7 The British Geological Survey (BGS) digital data shows that the underlying geology of the Site consists of a superficial deposit of Devensian glacial diamicton till. The underlying bedrock is the Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation – mudstone, siltstone and sandstone.
- 4.8 Six historic boreholes were drilled within the existing carpark area of the Site in 1975, according to the BGS database. These are recorded in the BGS database as: NZ28NE360, NZ28 NE361, NZ28NE358, NZ28NE362, NZ28NE359 and NZ28NE357. The borehole logs have been transcribed in Table 1. Made ground was recorded in all six boreholes, between 0.50m and 0.80m thick. The 'layer' is described only as tarmac and hardcore, and it is unclear whether other materials (deposits) make up this layer. In each borehole the underlying strata is described as clay with stone, coal and sandstone fragments (down to a maximum of 4.40m below ground level). It is unclear, due to their coal inclusions, whether these layers represent a continuation of 'made ground' or the glacial till.

Table 1 Borehole logs

Borehole Number	Description and depths of deposits as meters below ground level (bgl)
NZ28NE357	0 – 0.70m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.70 to 3.0m: firm to stiff grey brown sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 3.0 – 3.70m: stiff grey very shaly clay 3.70 – 4.0m: hard grey shale
NZ28NE358	0 – 0.80m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.80m – 2.30m: firm mottled grey brown sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 2.30 – 4.30m: stiff grey brown shaly sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 4.30 – 4.70m: hard grey shale
NZ28NE359	0 – 0.50m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.50 – 4.40m: firm mottled grey brown sand clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 4.40 -4.90m: hard grey shale
NZ28NE360	0 – 0.80m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.80m – 2.20m: firm to stiff mottled grey brown sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 2.20 – 2.80m: stiff grey sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone fragments 2.80 – 4.90m: loose brown sand and fine gravel with occasional large boulders 4.90 – 5.10m: hard grey shale
NZ28 NE361	0 – 0.50m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.50 – 4.10m: stiff grey brown sandy clay with stones, coal and sandstone 4.10 – 4.50m: stiff grey shaly clay with sandstone fragments 4.50 – 5.0m: hard grey shale
NZ28NE362	0 – 0.50m: made ground (tarmac, hardcore) 0.50 – 4.30m: stiff grey brown sandy clay with shale, coal and sandstone fragments 4.30 – 4.80m: hard grey shale

Walkover Survey

- 4.9 The Site walkover was undertaken on 2nd October 2020 in clear bright weather and full access to the Site was permitted. Aside from the existing railway line and disused platforms, there are three main land parcels within the Site, comprising Station Yard South carpark (Plate 1), the Library Gardens open green space to its west side (Plate 2), and the site of the former Essendene Care Home (Plate 3), to the south.
- 4.10 The Station Yard South carpark area is a level area covered with tarmac. The boundaries of the carpark are open to a large Wilko building to the north (Plate 4) and open to the green space to the west. To the east is a chain link fence and a tree line forms the boundary between the car park and the disused platforms. To the south there is a vegetated boundary between the carpark and the overgrown former site of Essendene Care Home. This is pierced in places by informal footpaths through that area. The carpark occupies the site of former railway sidings and goods shed, but no evidence of these features was observed. The only historical feature identified was the basal courses of a red brick structure [AEC010], aligned north-south and located around mid-way along the eastern boundary of the carpark (Plate 5). The feature was c.10m long. Aside from that feature, evidence of previous ground disturbance was noted in the form of a central north-south aligned drain running through the car park, and trenches for the installation of electric vehicle charging points were noted on the western side of the car park (Plate 6).
- 4.11 The area of green open space known as Library Gardens is a level area of grass (Plate 2) with a footpath running south-west / north-east through the centre. The area contains mature trees to the western boundary onto Kenilworth Road, and a tree-lined access lane cuts through the north part of the area to give access into the Station Yard South carpark. The northern boundary of this area is formed by the hedged boundary to the memorial garden north of the Site. The southern boundary is vegetated onto the former Essendene site. No archaeological features were observed within the part of the Site. In terms of previous ground disturbance, the site visit noted the locations of services in the south-east corner of the area and at the north-west alongside Kenilworth Road (Plate 7).

- 4.12 The former Essendene Care Home site at the south end of the Site is a level area that is currently overgrown and showing evidence of fly-tipping and other anti-social behaviour. No archaeological features were observed in this area. The area lies at a lower level than the green space to its north side, suggesting significant truncation within this part of the Site, probably related to the construction and subsequent demolition of Essendene Care Home. The remains of the engineering brick boundary wall and access drive from the care home can be seen on Kenilworth Road forming the western boundary of the area (Plate 8). These are not considered of historical or archaeological interest.
- 4.13 The setting assessment of assets within the study area confirmed that, due to the built up nature of the Site's surroundings, and the local topography whereby the Site lies at a significantly lower level than the street level in the centre of the town to the north, meant that the 500m study area initially used to identify assets for a setting assessment was too large. Views outwards from the Site are limited by surrounding buildings, and in the case of views north towards the town, the presence of the large Wilko premises immediately north of the Site blocks all views (Plate 4). A ramp to the east side of Wilko links the car park within the Site to street level (Plate 9) and from the top of ramp views into the eastern portion of the Site, overlooking the existing car park, are possible. From this vantage point views are also possible along the line of the existing railway and the disused platforms (Plates 10 and 11). This area previously contained Ashington Station, but no station buildings remain. A more appropriate distance for the setting assessment was identified as 250m from the Site. However, even within this area, in the case of assets to the east side of the railway, the potential change in character between the existing Site, now largely comprising a carpark, and the proposed development, also mainly comprising a car park, would be negligible in views from this side of the railway. Therefore no heritage receptors were identified for assessment to the east side of the railway (Plate 12).
- 4.14 Within the 250m study area the Northumberland HER records the war memorial on Kenilworth Road [NHER 20431], however the war memorial was moved to a new location (NGR: NZ 27224, 87676) in the centre of Ashington Memorial Garden in 2015 (Plate 13 and 14). The memorial records the names of Ashington men who lost their lives in both World Wars. A key view of the memorial is achieved at the entrance into the garden where it is placed centrally in view and centrally as the centrepiece of the garden (Plate 13). The memorial garden lies immediately north of the Site and to the east of the access into the new station on Kenilworth Road. It is bounded by mature trees and hedge to the eastern boundary, hedges to the north and south, and a low brick wall with railings to the west. The memorial garden also features a stone erected to Ashington Airfield and all of the personnel based there between 1916 and 1919 (Plate 15), and a stone erected to military personnel who have lost their lives since 1945 (Plate 16). Also, within 250m of the Site, there are two non-designated buildings on the east side of Kenilworth Road, adjacent to the access road into the proposed new station (Plate 17 and 18). Both buildings are early-20th century and appear for the first time on the Ordnance Survey map of 1924. Whilst the buildings have a direct relationship with the Site, their relatively late date of construction and the negligible change that would take place from the existing situation within their surroundings as a result of the proposed development means that they were not identified as potential heritage receptors within this Heritage Statement. Non-designated assets on Station Road, north of the Site, are suitably screened from the Site by intervening buildings and change in ground level, so they were also not identified as potential heritage receptors in relation to the proposed development.



Plate 1. General view across Station Yard South carpark within the Site, looking south-west.



Plate 2. General view across Library Gardens open space within the Site, looking south-west.



Plate 3. General view across the overgrown site of the former Essendene Care Home within the Site, looking east.



Plate 4. View of the topography to the north of Site, showing the Wilko premises between the Site and Station Road.



Plate 5. Detail on the basal courses of a building [AEC010] on the east side of the Station Yard South carpark within the Site, looking north-east.



Plate 6. View of the trench for the installation of electric vehicle charging points on the west side of the carpark, looking south.



Plate 7. Detail of services in Kenilworth Road to the west of Library Gardens and associated slightly raised area within the Site, looking south-east.



Plate 8. View of the boundary wall and access at the west side of the former site of Essendene Care Home within the Site, looking south-east.



Plate 9. View along the access ramp to the east side of the Wilko building linking the Site to Station Road.



Plate 10. View from the access ramp over the existing railway line and redundant stone platforms of the former Ashington Station [HNER 27333].



Plate 11. Detail of the stone-built redundant platforms of the former Ashington Station [HNER 27333].



Plate 12. View into St John Street to the east of the Site, looking south.



Plate 13. Detail of the Ashington war memorial [NHER 20431], which has been changed several times over the years. This latest iteration is in memorial gardens, looking east.



Plate 14. General view of the Memorial Garden with paths around the outside and the first and second world war memorial [NHER 20431] in the centre, looking north-east.



Plate 15. Detail of the memorial to Ashington Airfield within the memorial garden.



Plate 16. Detail of the memorial to military personnel who have lost their lives in service since 1945.



Plate 17. View of the early-20th century non-designated buildings to the west of Kenilworth Road adjacent to the proposed access into the new station. This building's appearance suggests that it originated as a Public House, but since the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1950s this building has been the post office.



Plate 18. View of the early-20th century non-designated buildings to the west of Kenilworth Road adjacent to the proposed access into the new station. This one is labelled on the Ordnance Survey maps of the 1950s and 1960s as a library, giving its name to Library Gardens to the south. It is now in use as by Northumberland County Council for family support services. Its original purpose is not known.

Archaeological and Historic Background

Palaeolithic (Up to 10,000 BC)

- 4.15 Due to the retreat of the ice sheets at the end of the last Devensian glaciation and beginning of the Holocene interglacial the North-East region was free of ice by *c.* 15,000 Before Present. In this area however, great depths of till filled the lower valleys, creating terraces in the South Tyne valley and eastern side of the Cheviots.
- 4.16 Evidence of Palaeolithic activity in the North East region is sparse, and when found, is likely to be the result of ballast dumping on the coast (Petts 2006, 14). There are no recorded Palaeolithic remains within the study area.

Mesolithic (10,000 – 3500 BC)

- 4.17 Scatters of Mesolithic lithics have been found widely across the North-East region (Petts 2006,14), and a small number of Mesolithic sites provide evidence of structural remains (Petts 2006,15). Of these, the Mesolithic site at Howick, near Alnwick, is one the best-preserved Mesolithic sites in the British Isles, comprising a sunken-floored hut, with rings of post-holes, stakeholes and a series of hearths (ibid.). The site is located in an estuarine setting, on the coast. Other Mesolithic coastal sites in the region tend to have similar settings, located close to freshwater stream and river courses (Petts 2006, 18)
- 4.18 To date, there are no recorded Mesolithic remains within the study area.

Neolithic (3500 BC – 2000 BC)

- 4.19 The pattern of known Neolithic and early Bronze Age sites (and later) within the region has largely been influenced by differences in site preservation. The exploitation of coal fields (see Post-medieval period below) particularly has had a dramatic impact on the preservation of sites and large-scale landscape disturbance within the locale (Petts 2006, 23).
- 4.20 There is very little evidence of Neolithic activity within the Ashington area. Although Neolithic flint tools were recovered near Woodhorn, *c.* 2km northeast of the Site, there are no known Neolithic settlement remains from within the area.

Bronze Age (2000 BC – 700 BC)

- 4.21 There is very little evidence for Bronze Age activity within the area. The only instance of Bronze Age activity from the Ashington area is a Bronze Age cist burial found in 1894, *c.* 1km south-east of the Site. The burial comprised fragments of bone, within a stone cist accompanied by a pottery vessel, or urn, with two additional urns found nearby.
- 4.22 There are no known Bronze Age remains within the study area.

Iron Age (700BC – AD 43) and Roman (AD 43 – AD 450)

- 4.23 The Iron Age saw a change in settlement patterns, with larger settlements in Northumberland often sited on hill tops and defended by banks and ditches. Over a 100 of such settlements are known of within the county, the largest being at Yeavinger Bell. The Brigantes tribe and possibly the Votadini controlled much of the area by the time of the Roman invasion of AD43. Following the invasion what followed was a period of conquest and alliances with local tribes, including the Brigantes, followed by the Roman governor of Britain establishing direct rule over the north of England in the early AD70s. By AD81 the Roman northern frontier had been advanced into Scotland, but was withdrawn again by AD84 to a line between the rivers Tyne and Solway. The frontier was initially established along the line of the Stanegate, along which a series of forts were constructed, and was later consolidated as Hadrian's Wall. For many north of the wall, the Roman invasion is likely to have had little impact, although the local economy was likely stimulated by more land being brought into cultivation. At least 300 farmsteads are known from this period, many in the area north of the Wall (Northumberland County Council 2008, 10).

- 4.24 Within the area around Ashington, however, there is a dearth of Iron Age and Roman remains, and no remains are known within the Study Area.

Early Medieval (450 – 1066)

- 4.25 With the arrival of the Anglo-Saxons in the mid-5th century, their influence spread quickly and new and powerful kingdoms were formed. Of these, Bernicia (comprising north Durham and south-east Scotland) united with the kingdom of Deira to the south in AD600 to create the kingdom of Northumbria. At its height, the kingdom stretched from the Forth to the Humber, and had palaces at Bamburgh, Yeavering and Millfield.
- 4.26 Woodhorne may be the Saxon 'Wudcestre', a place given to St Cuthbert by King Ceolwulf in AD737. A number of fragments of crosses have been discovered at Woodhorn Church, including a cross head and several cross shafts, dated to between the mid-10th and mid-11th centuries.
- 4.27 There are no known early medieval remains within the study area.

Medieval (1066 – 1540)

- 4.28 In the medieval period, only a few villages are known to have existed within the area, including Woodhorn and Hirst. A medieval tower is known to have existed at Hirst, built by Ralph, the third Lord Ogle, in the late 15th or early 18th century is known to have existed c. 900m east of the Site. A manor house was located next to the tower, built by Thomas Errington in the 17th century. Both the tower and manor house were demolished and built over in the early 20th century.
- 4.29 The fields within Ashington would have been worked during the medieval and post-medieval periods. Although much of the evidence for medieval field systems have been removed due to the significant modern expansion of Ashington and coal mining industry and infrastructure. Pockets of field systems do remain, in the form of ridge and furrow. Known areas of medieval and post-medieval ridge and furrow systems have been identified north of Rotary Parkway [NHER 28850] and post-medieval ridge and furrow have been located in Ashington Park [NHER 28839].

Post-Medieval (1540 – 1900)

- 4.30 The Post-medieval period witnessed an explosion in industry, reflecting as well as causing significant technological advancements. By the end of the medieval period, the coal industry was important both to the country and to the North-East region. With centres first beginning in the lower Tyne and middle Wear, by the early 19th century it had dominated south Northumberland. The development of the coal industry was inextricably linked with the development of wagonways and railways, which enabled the coal to be transported to harbours, from whence it could be shipped. Indeed, 'the development of technology both within the coal industry and in its associated infrastructure (most notably wagonways and railways) was fundamental to the industrial and social development of the North-East' (Petts 2006, 92).
- 4.31 Within the North-East, horse-drawn wagonways developed from the early 17th century until the early 19th century. Some archaeological research has produced evidence for late 18th and early 19th century wagonway development, for example at Lambton D pit and Wylam (Petts 2006, 101). The ports and harbours of the region were crucial for the coal industry, for the transportation of the coal by ship. By the 19th century, the mouths of the Tweed, Tyne, Wear and Tees were dominated by quays and docks, including coal staithes, with smaller coal ports at Blyth (ibid).
- 4.32 The survival of above ground remains relating to the coal industry is low however, owing to levels of urbanisation in the former core areas of the coalfield, including the removal of the spoil heaps that once dominated the landscape (Petts 2006, 92). Very little excavation of remains pertaining to the coal industry have taken place, but where they have, they have demonstrated the extent and potential importance of below ground remains, for example at Wallsend Colliery and Lambton P Pit (Petts 2006, 93).
- 4.33 Geologically, the district surrounding Blyth consist of coal measures overlaid by boulder clay. The coal seams dip eastwards from their outcrops and are found at moderate depths, in a location free of serious faults or mining difficulties (Craster 1909, 223). The history of coal mining within the region is one of competition, the ability to access the most profitable coal seams, and access to harbours, ports and wagonway/railway transportation. After the dissolution of the monasteries the salt pans and coal pits of the

- Cowpen area were leased by the Crown, however, by the end of the 16th century the working of the Crown mines had almost discontinued, with lessees ceasing to pay rent (Craster 1909, 225). The seams worked at this time produced a coarse class of coal, fit only for salt making, not the coastal trade in coal. Pits were located in Cowpen and Bebside, connected with the river by wooden wagonways, the earliest recorded instance of this form of transport.
- 4.34 Towards the end of the 17th century attention was turned to the inland collieries, with Blyth as an outlet for their produce. The Blyth Coal Company was formed and the Plessey Wagonway was constructed, establishing Blyth as a coal-shipping port. The wagonway was of 'the then usual wooden type, and is described in 1716 as extending over the distance of about five and a half miles, terminating in a 'large trunk or gallery to lay coals at the water side and to load ships from', near which a quay and two salt pans had been established' (Craster 1909, 231).
- 4.35 In 1782 after the drilling of a borehole in Cowpen, which proved the existence of the Low Main seam at a depth of 92 fathoms, meant that profitable coal could be accessed in proximity to the River Blyth. It was 'with the winning of Cowpen the period of deep mining in the Blyth district may be said to have commenced' (Craster 1909, 235). By 1797 the Cowpen shaft had been fitted with a pumping engine and winding machines drawing coal from the Yard and Low Main seams. The colliery was connected by a wagonway with a shipping place on the river. A second pit was sunk to a depth of 109 fathoms and worked from 1804.
- 4.36 In 1847 the Cowpen colliery owners constructed a railway between Blyth and Hartley for the purposes of securing an outlet to the Tyne along the line that had been constructed from Seghill to Hay Hole in 1840, and subsequently extended to Hartley. The whole system formed the 'Blythe and Tyne Railway' [NHER 24695] (Craster 1909, 239). In 1852 an Act was passed incorporating the Blyth and Tyne as a public railway, which as a result, enabled the district free access to Byth, and at Blyth, the railway company built new and improved staithes.
- 4.37 The First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map of 1866 shows Ashington Colliery, c. 1.5km to the west of the Site (Figure 4). Before this date, Ashington was represented by a single farmstead located to the south of the present settlement. By 1866, the colliery had been established with a single engine house, smithy and railway line which connected to the East Coast Mainline to the west. The colliery was isolated within the landscape with terraced housing to the east; Cross Row and Long Row.
- 4.38 However, by 1898 the colliery had moved to a new location, c. 700m northwest of the Site. The colliery had expanded significantly with a large area of workings and mine buildings (Figure 5). 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. By this date the hamlet was quickly becoming known as Britain's largest mining 'village'.
- 4.39 Of the extensive terraces of workers' housing, the western portion [NHLER 28841] can be seen on the OS map of 1898 as Seventh to Eleventh Row, each with gardens to the front or rear. By this time, the colliery had shifted slightly from its 1866 location to just north of Eleventh Row. Of these rows of terraced houses, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth and parts of the Eleventh Row survive, with Tenth Row having been demolished for the construction of the A197. The eastern portion of [NHLER 28841] was added in the 20th century on land between the previous rows and the Newbiggin Railway line (Haldane Street, Duke Street, Charlton Street and Cresswell Terrace). Of these, only northernmost houses of Duke Street have been demolished. To the east of this, c. 320m east of the Site, an additional colliery village was established [NLHER 28854], known as New Hirst. Here, the closely spaced terrace houses covered an area of least 64 hectares. By 1898 these included Myrtle Street, Poplar Street and Acacia Street, and by 1924 these had increased to 25 terrace rows.
- 4.40 Separating the two workers' villages, was the Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway, which had been opened up by the Blyth and Tyne Railway between Bedlington and North Seaton in November 1859 [NHER 27329]. The line ran from the main Blyth and Tyne line, north of Bedlington station, northwards, crossing the Wansbeck on a viaduct, to North Seaton Station. Later, the line was extended in sections to Newbiggin. The Blyth and Tyne Railway (B&TR) was established in 1853; however, the line itself was largely already in existence as a series of wagonways feeding the growing coal industry. Most prominent of these was the Seghill railway which also opened for passenger traffic in 1841 (<http://disused-stations.org.uk/a/ashington/index1.shtml>). In 1847, the Seghill line was extended from the River Tyne to Blyth with the aim of taking coal from the fields around Blyth for export along the Tyne. The B&TR bought

other lines as well as phased extensions, including the Newbiggin branch line which was given consent in 1867. The line was successful, and a number of stations were constructed, generally utilitarian in character reflecting the status of the line. However, a station at Ashington (originally called Hirst) did not open as an intermediate station until 1878 (ibid.).

- 4.41 North of Ashington Station, two further railways connected with the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway: the Ashington Colliery Wagonway [NHER 11600] and the Linton Colliery Railway [NHER 28852]. The former is first shown on the 1866 OS map connecting the original Ashington colliery location and the North Eastern Railway to the west. By 1898, after the shift in location of the colliery the wagonway/railway had been extended eastward to meet the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway and the Linton Colliery Railway. The Linton Colliery railway had been constructed between 1866 and 1898, running between Linton Colliery to the north and the later Ashington Colliery location.
- 4.42 Ashington Station [NHER 27333] was located within open land between the new mining settlements at Ashington and New Hirst to the east. The main passenger station was on the up (east) platform, while to the west of the line was the goods yard with a single storey building, probably a waiting room, on the platform. Further along was a railwayman's house fronting onto Station Road, and to the north of the station a signal box is recorded as part of the Bedlington-by-the-Sea branch line [NHER 27334]. The station's platforms are all that remain of the station (Plates 10 and 11).
- 4.43 The 1898 map shows that a number of features related to the railway existed on the Site, including a goods shed and at least two railway sidings.
- 4.44 Aside from these features the Site is shown as an open field at the end of the 20th century.

Modern (1901 – Present)

- 4.45 By 1923 Ashington had significantly expanded. Although more terraces had been established around Ashington, it was New Hirst which had undergone a more extensive expansion by this date with terraces appearing to the south and west (figure 6). Both settlements had expanded along Station Road. In the eastern block of terraces, a mines rescue station was opened in 1913 [NHER 29856], which had been known as the National Union of Miners Hall. The station was one of a number established by the consortium of Durham and Northumberland coal companies.
- 4.46 Ashington colliery had also greatly expanded in size, including a complex network of wagonways fanning over an extensive area. To the north of the Site, the OS map of 1924 shows a wagonway running broadly east-west from the Ashington Colliery complex to Hirst colliery village [NHER 28853]. Due to subsequent development in the area, it is expected that no physical remains are extant.
- 4.47 Ashington Station also appears to have expanded accordingly with a number of structures appearing on the main station side (east) on the 1924 OS map. Within the Site, by 1924 additional railway sidings had been constructed and oil tanks and other structures laid down, west of the railway line (Figure 6).
- 4.48 The present cricket ground and tennis courts are also depicted in the 1924 OS map. Within the cricket ground area, a series of trees were later planted for members of the club killed during WWII [HER N25484]. These accompany the main war memorial which is located in its new position within the Memorial Garden on Kenilworth Road [NHER 20431]. The memorial was erected in 1983 to commemorate those killed in both WWI and WWII and was originally a modernist steel sculpture representing silhouettes of WWI soldiers; however, it was replaced with the 'Unknown Soldier' statue in 2001. Since then, it was moved to the Ashington Memorial Garden in 2015. The memorial garden features interpretation panels detailing Ashington's participation in war. It also has memorials to Ashington Airfield and its personnel from 1916 to 1919 and a memorial to military personnel who have lost their lives since 1945.
- 4.49 By c. 1950 the building to the north of the Site is labelled as the library, and east of this, additional station lines with associated platforms had been constructed within the Site, west of the existing line. To the south of the library and covering a large portion of the Site, the area functioned as a large library garden. To the south of this, at the very southern end of the Site, a large structure was constructed in c. 1960, Essendene Care Home, which has since been removed. According to LiDAR data, this particular area has been heavily disturbed, and possibly infilled.

- 4.50 The line was closed to passengers as part of Beeching's reforms of the 1960s and only the platforms survive. The railway itself remains in use as a goods line, although the signal box, north of Station Road Overbridge, was decommissioned in 2010 and subsequently demolished to ground level.
- 4.51 By the late 20th century and into the early 21st century Ashington Colliery became an open cast coal mine, which spanned an area c. 1.25km by 940m [NHER 28846], but has now been re-landscaped.

5. Assessment of Baseline

Designated Heritage Assets

Listed Buildings

- 5.1 The site visit confirmed that there is no potential for the Proposed Development to impact upon the listed building identified within the initial 500m study area; namely, Ashington Co-operative Society [1041396]. This asset is therefore not considered further within the assessment.
- 5.2 No designated assets are present within the proportionate 250m study area.

Non-designated Heritage Assets

- 5.3 There are no formal locally listed buildings in this part of Northumberland; however, the explanatory text in the emerging Northumberland Local Plan states that non-designated historic buildings identified through assessments such as this one should be assessed against the criteria for local listing when defining their significance. No such historic buildings have been identified with the Site or study area for this assessment.
- 5.4 There are three known heritage assets within the Site. The post-medieval Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway [NHER 27329], which forms the eastern boundary is to be revitalised by the proposed Scheme, to re-instate the operation of new passenger train services. Review of historical mapping shows that a number of spur lines, with associated platforms, and a goods shed existed within the Site, which were later removed and built over. Part of the original Ashington Station [NHER 27333] is extant, as a disused platform, however below ground remains associated with the structure are also expected to be present. Further structures, related to the station and the line, are expected to exist on Site. During the site visit, part of a north-south wall was recorded [AEC010], adjacent to the line and within the Site, which is likely part of the line and station infrastructure.
- 5.5 The role of the railway within the coal industry of the North-East has been contextualised above and is consequently considered to be of medium significance, firmly contributing to regional research agendas.
- 5.6 Immediately to the north of the Site is Ashington Memorial Garden. The memorial garden was created in 2015 and contains the Ashington WWI and WWII War Memorial [NHER 20431], as well as two further memorials to Ashington Airfield and its personnel in WWI, and to military personnel who have lost their lives in service since 1945. All of the memorials are recent, the WWI and WWII memorial being the oldest, dating to 1983, but almost entirely changed since then. The garden also contains interpretation panels detailing Ashington in conflict from the Boer Wars onwards. Despite the recent nature of these features, the acts of service and sacrifice that they commemorate imbue the assets and the garden with communal and social history value, in demonstrating, telling, and commemorating the story of Ashington men in 19th and 20th century conflicts. The garden and additional memorials contribute to the setting and significance of the WWI and WWII War Memorial [NHER 20431] through providing a designed setting appropriate to the peaceful contemplation of the sacrifices made. It is a place to remember local men and their families who have been impacted by conflict, and military personnel more generally who have continued to make sacrifices since 1945. A key view of the memorial is achieved at the entrance into the garden where it is placed centrally in view and centrally as the centrepiece of the garden. The setting of the memorial garden is the busy urban centre of Ashington which provides a contrast with the peaceful green space within.

Assessment of Archaeological Potential

- 5.7 This section assesses the potential for unrecorded buried archaeological remains to be present within the Site. The assessment of archaeological potential and significance is based on the data available at the time of writing and takes into consideration the known archaeological assets within the Site and study area, historical and cartographic evidence presented in the baseline.
- 5.8 There are no known prehistoric, Roman or early medieval remains within the study area. Given the dearth of remains pertaining to these periods, including within the wider area, the potential for their presence on the Site is considered to be low. However, based on the same rationale, if present, such remains would be medium significance, with the potential to contribute to local and regional research agendas.
- 5.9 Medieval: evidence of medieval and post-medieval open field systems is known from within the study area, from fields surrounding the Site as ridge and furrow earthworks. These earthworks would have likely been far more extensive prior to the expansion of Ashington. With the landscaping associated with the library garden and existing car park, as well as the disturbance expected on the eastern half of the Site, associated with Ashington Station and the railway line, the potential for ridge and furrow earthworks to have survived within the Site is low. If present they would be of low significance, with the potential to contribute to local research agendas.
- 5.10 Post-medieval and modern: the eastern half of the Site is firmly located within an area of extensive railway and station infrastructure. By c. 1950 at least five lines, some with platforms, were located at Ashington Station, along with at least one coal depot. Although extant surface remains exist (for example the disused platform), there is the potential for further remains to exist beneath the existing car park. The potential for post-medieval and modern remains is high, and given the regional importance of the railway in context to the coal industry, these are considered to be of medium significance, with the potential to contribute to local and regional research agendas.

Historic Landscape Sensitivity to Change

- 5.11 The Site is located within the South East Northumberland historic landscape character area. The south east arm of the area is dominated by the modern expansions of Blyth, Ashington, Bedlington and Cramlington (Northumberland County Council 2008, 126).
- 5.12 The entire Site and surrounding area are characterised as 20th century settlement (HLC 20459). The Historic Landscape Characterisation records the category as frequent, the trajectory of change as new and low susceptibility to change (Northumberland County Council 2008, 102).

6. Impact Assessment

- 6.1 This section of the Heritage Statement assesses the impact of the Proposed Development upon the significance of the identified heritage assets.

Designated Assets

- 6.2 No impacted to designated assets are identified in relation to the Proposed Development.

Non-designated Assets

- 6.3 The Ashington WWI and WWII War Memorial [NHER 20431], originating in 1983, and Ashington Memorial Garden and the two additional memorials it contains, dating to 2015, were assessed as having communal and social history value in commemorating Ashington men and their families who were impacted by 19th and 20th century conflict, and military personnel more generally. This provides the gardens with local heritage significance. The setting of the garden was identified as the busy urban centre of Ashington which contrasts with the area of peaceful contemplation offered by the memorial garden. The Proposed Development will effectively extend the existing Station Yard South car park to the south-west of the garden, to directly south of the garden, with access from Station Road taken through Kenilworth Road

immediately west of the memorial garden. Whilst this removes an area of green space from the asset's setting, Library Gardens, the change is not considered to introduce features into the asset's setting that would be out of character with its existing setting, or that would impact upon understanding of the purpose of the memorial garden. The contrast between it and the outside is a key part of its setting and the Proposed Development will continue this existing contrasting relationship. The key view towards the war memorial from the entrance to the garden, identified in the site visit, will be unchanged by the Proposed Development. No impacts are therefore identified in relation to Ashington WWI and WWII War Memorial [NHER 20431] and the memorial garden in which it sits.

- 6.4 Three non-designated assets have been identified within the Site. The Proposed Development will retain the Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway [NHER 27329], remove and replace the platform associated with Ashington Station [NHER 27333], and possibly remove associated wall [AEC010]. Removal of the platform will impact the significance of the platform as a heritage asset.
- 6.5 The baseline assessment has demonstrated that the very southern end of the Site was heavily disturbed in c. 1960, and that the eastern half of the Site has been disturbed through construction of the railway, Ashington Station and associated infrastructure. In turn, some level of relatively shallow disturbance has occurred to these remains through the construction of the existing car park. The proposed car park straddles all of these areas. The construction of the proposed car park, platform, paths, roads are likely to include, but not limited to, significant ground preparation works. Such works are likely to impact on known and unknown archaeological remains, both extant and preserved below ground, related to earlier manifestations of the railway and station infrastructure, either through part truncation or removal. There is likely to be an impact to the significance of these features.
- 6.6 The location of the proposed attenuation tank, which will have relatively deep cuttings, is located outside of the historical limits of the railway line and station infrastructure. As such this is expected not to impact on that particular heritage resource.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 There are no designated heritage assets within the Site.
- 7.2 The settings of designated heritage assets within and initial study area of 500m of the Site were considered for assessment, however no potential for impacts were identified as a result of the Proposed Development. The Proposed Development therefore passes the tests of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 by conserving designated heritage assets and their settings. The development is in accordance with paragraphs 193 and 194 of the NPPF and Policy GP16 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan.
- 7.3 Paragraph 197 of the NPPF states that 'the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that directly or indirectly affect non-designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset'. Policy GP20 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan states that developments affecting archaeological sites will only be permitted where the significance of the remains is outweighed by the need for and benefits of the development.
- 7.4 The heritage statement has identified non-designated heritage assets within a 250m study area where there is the potential for impacts as a result of the Proposed Development, through change to their settings. The assessment concluded that there would be no impact to the significance of Ashington WWI and WWII War Memorial [NHER 20431] and the memorial garden in which it sits as a result of the Proposed Development.
- 7.5 There are three known non-designated heritage assets within the Site, including the post-medieval Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch railway [NHER 27329], which forms the eastern boundary of the Site; Ashington Station [NHER 27333], of which only the platform remains, above ground; and the wall of extant building [AEC 010], which is likely part of the historical line and station infrastructure. In addition to this, the Heritage Statement has assessed the potential for unrecorded buried archaeological remains

(additional railway lines and railway line and station infrastructure), to be present within the Site. The statement has demonstrated that although the Site has experienced some disturbance, this is likely to have removed buried archaeological remains only in specific areas. Given the regional importance of the railway in context to the coal industry, features associated with the line are considered of medium significance, with the potential to contribute to local and regional research agendas. It is recommended that the existing platform at the former Ashington Station [NHER 27333] is retained as much as possible, and that sections that will be impacted by the proposed development are recorded prior to removal.

- 7.6 The historic landscape character of the Site has been assessed as having a low sensitivity to change, since it lies firmly within a 20th century settlement.
- 7.7 Policy GP21 of the Wansbeck District Local Plan states that where desk-based assessment indicates that a development could disturb archaeological remains, the developer should undertake further evaluation of the site prior to determination of the planning application. Given the lack of potential for remains that predate the post-medieval period and the level of disturbance at the Site, a post determination watching brief mitigation is recommended to record archaeological remains associated with the historic railway infrastructure. Detailed plans of the proposed development were not seen by the County Archaeologist but based on the information provided it was deemed likely that no further work be required at assessment stage in relation to archaeology.
- 7.8 Comments received by both Historic England and the County Archaeologist emphasised the significance of industrial heritage within the region that the Proposed Development is sited, and that the settlement pattern that industry gave rise to allows the area to retain its clear sense of place and character. The settlements that will be served by the Northumberland Line owe their existence to this industrial past; the railway serves as a reminder of the origins of these settlements and provide context and foundation for their development into the future. The revitalisation of the historic railway brings the overarching heritage benefit of restoring this historic transport link and context, and reconnecting the former industrial communities along its route. Both Historic England and the County Archaeologist recommend a programme of community engagement as part of the Scheme's development and the Conservation Officer has highlighted the opportunity offered by the scheme to reference the historic railway in its marketing and branding for heritage and tourism benefit.

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Appendix A Gazetteer of Heritage Assets

Designated Heritage Assets

Asset ID	Designation and Grade	Secondary reference	NGR	Name	Type	Description	Period
1041396	Listed Building Grade II	-	NZ 2766987796	Ashington Co-Operative Society Premises	Co-op	Shopping arcade with offices and ballroom above built in 1924 by Harrison, Ash and Blyth of Newcastle. The ground floor was remodelled as a department store 1976. Front in white terracotta moulded to resemble tooled ashlar, returns and rear yellow brick in English Garden Wall Bond. Baroque style.	Post-medieval

Non-designated Heritage Assets

Asset ID	NGR	Name	Type	Description	Period
11600	NZ23608810 NZ26108800	Ashington Colliery wagonway	Railway, wagonway, railway siding	The Ashington colliery wagonway (later known as the Ashington colliery railway) is visible on historical air photos. The wagonway is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1866, running between the North Eastern Railway and Ashington Colliery.	Post-medieval
20431	NZ272877	Ashington War Memorial	War memorial	Cubic concrete block surmounted by soldier, originally erected in 1983. Asset was moved from this recorded location to Ashington Memorial Park in 2015.	Modern
25484	NZ2713687575	Ashington Cricket Ground, Langwell Crescent, Ashington	War memorial, cricket pavilion	The cricket ground has a tree for each member who died during WWII with a dedicatory bronze plaque at the rear of the pavilion.	Modern
27329	NZ3090487773 NZ2749483060	Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea Branch	Railway	The Ashington and Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch line was opened by the Blyth and Tyne Railway between Bedlington and North Seaton in November 1859.	Post-medieval
27333	NZ2729687697	Ashington Station	Railway station	Ashington station opened in 1878 and operated until 1899. Only the platforms remain.	Post-medieval
27334	NZ2726787780	Signal box north of Ashington Station	Signal box	Part of the Bedlington to Newbiggin-by-the-Sea branch line	Post-medieval
28839	NZ26758738	Ridge and furrow in Ashington Park	Ridge and furrow	Post medieval ridge and furrow is visible as low earthworks and cropmarks in Ashington Park in historical air photos.	Post-medieval

28841	NZ26488780	Ashington workers village.	Workers village, terrace, garden	The rows of terrace house and associated gardens that made up the Ashington worker's village	Post-medieval
28846	NZ26718853	Open cast coal mining north of Ashington	Coal workings	Extensive open cast coal mining is visible on land to the north of Ashington. Most of these workings, which date to the late 20th century and early 21st century have now been re-landscaped.	Modern
28850	NZ27478808	Ridge and furrow north of Rotary Parkway, Ashington	Ridge and furrow	Medieval and/or post-medieval ridge and furrow is visible as cropmarks and earthworks on historical air photos.	Medieval, post-medieval
28852	NZ2700288180	Linton Colliery Railway	Railway	The Linton Colliery Railway was constructed between 1866 and 1898, running between Linton Colliery and Ashington Colliery. Early in 20th century it was continued southward to link with the Newbiggin Branch.	Post-medieval
28853	NZ27468798	Section of wagonway linking Ashington Colliery to Hirst colliery village	Railway	A section of early 20th century wagonway is visible as earthworks on historical air photos	Modern
28854	NZ27948757	Hirst colliery village	Workers village	The Hirst colliery village is depicted on late 19th and early 20th century maps and is visible on post war and more recent air photos.	Post-medieval
29586	NZ2740287685	Mines Rescue Station	Mines rescue station, shop	Opened in November 1913, one of a number established by consortium of Durham and Northumberland coal companies.	Modern
29587	NZ2701287360	Ashington Community High School	School	A mining school until it became part of what was formerly Ashington Grammar School	Modern
AEC010	NZ 27315 87610	Building remains	Site of building	Identified during site inspection. The basal courses of a red-brick building aligned north-south along the eastern boundary of the Station Yard South carpark.	Post-medieval, modern

Appendix B Figures



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Client: **Northumberland County Council**

Project Title: **NORTHUMBERLAND LINE**

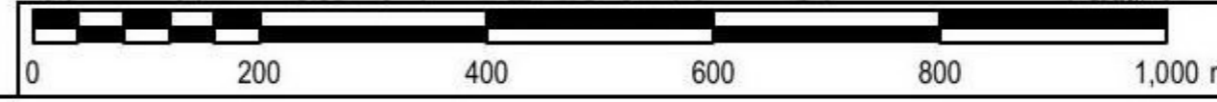
Drawing Title: **FIGURE 1 - SITE LOCATION PLAN**

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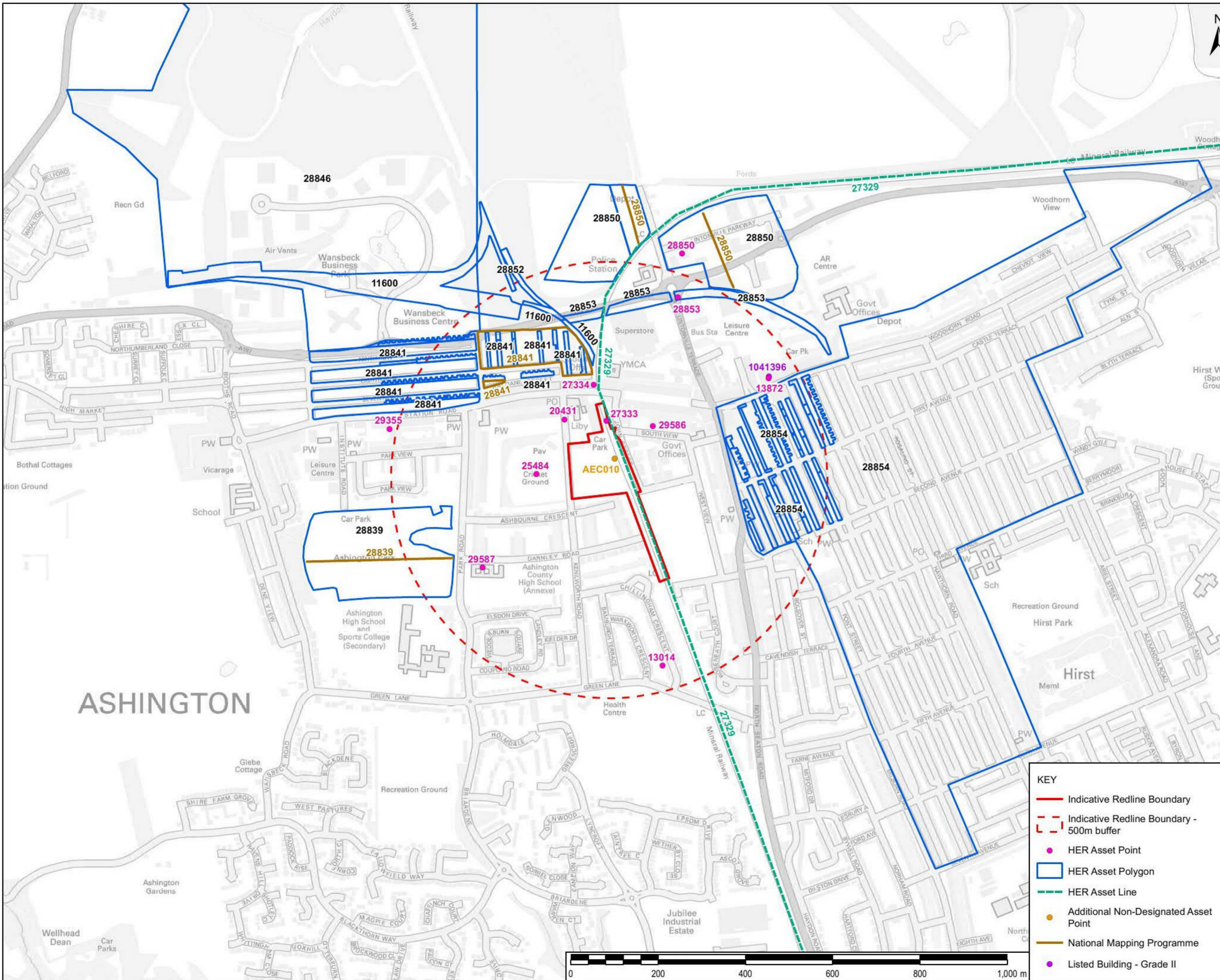
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Drawing Title: **FIGURE 2 - LOCATIONS OF HERITAGE ASSETS**

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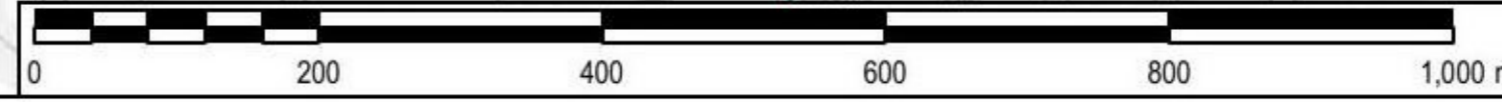
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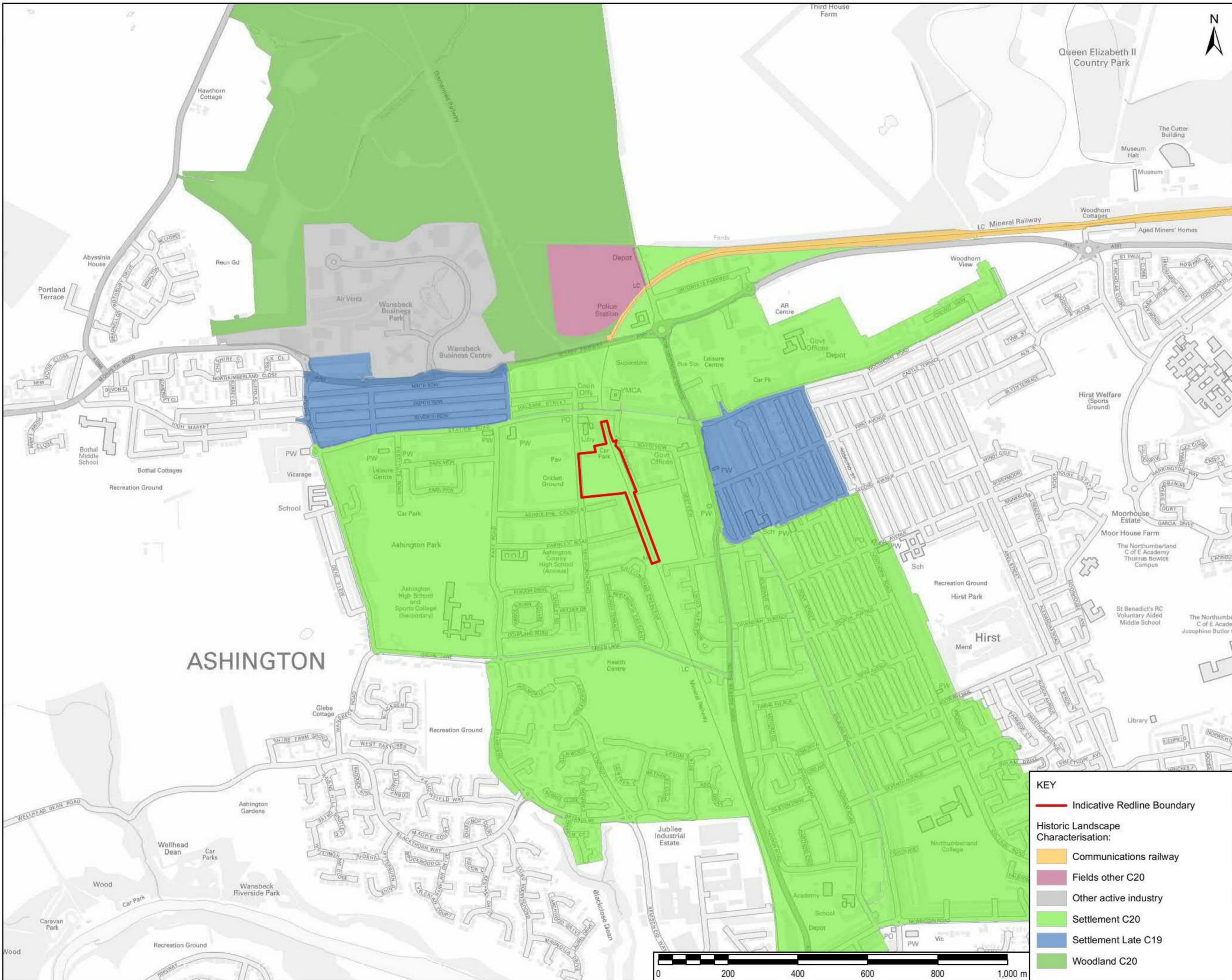
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 - - - Indicative Redline Boundary - 500m buffer
 - HER Asset Point
 - HER Asset Polygon
 - - - HER Asset Line
 - Additional Non-Designated Asset Point
 - National Mapping Programme
 - Listed Building - Grade II





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Drawing Title: **FIGURE 3 - HISTORIC LANDSCAPE CHARACTERISATION**

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 - Communications railway
 - Fields other C20
 - Other active industry
 - Settlement C20
 - Settlement Late C19
 - Woodland C20





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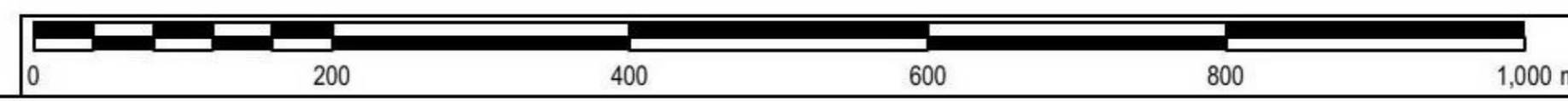
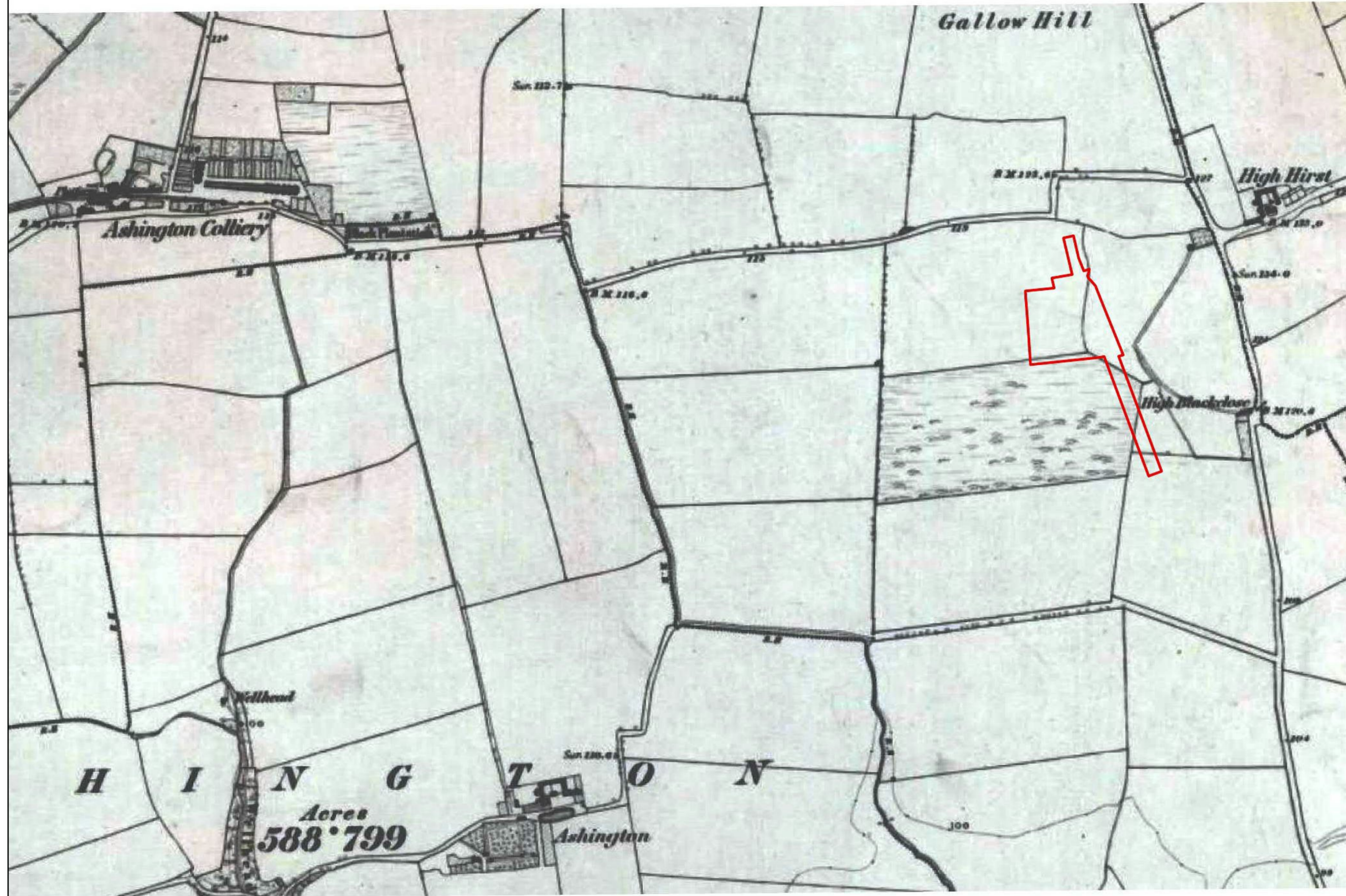
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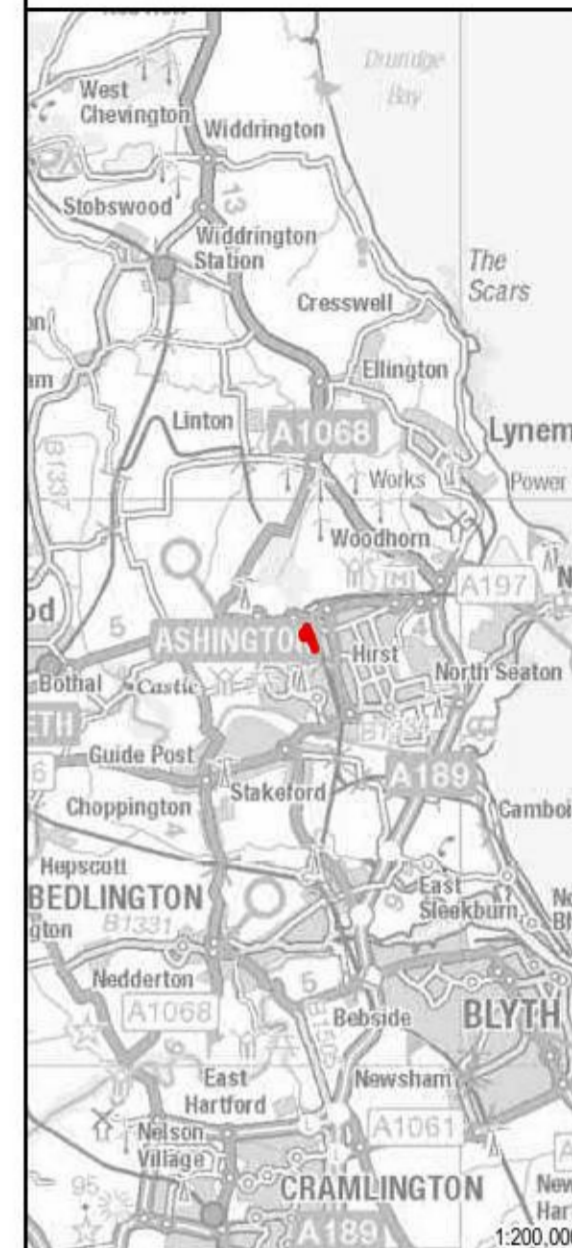
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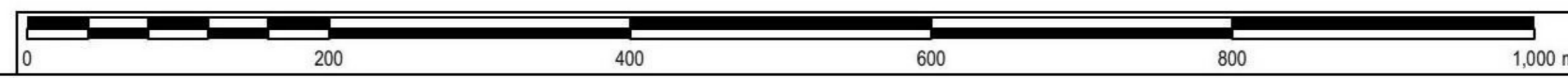
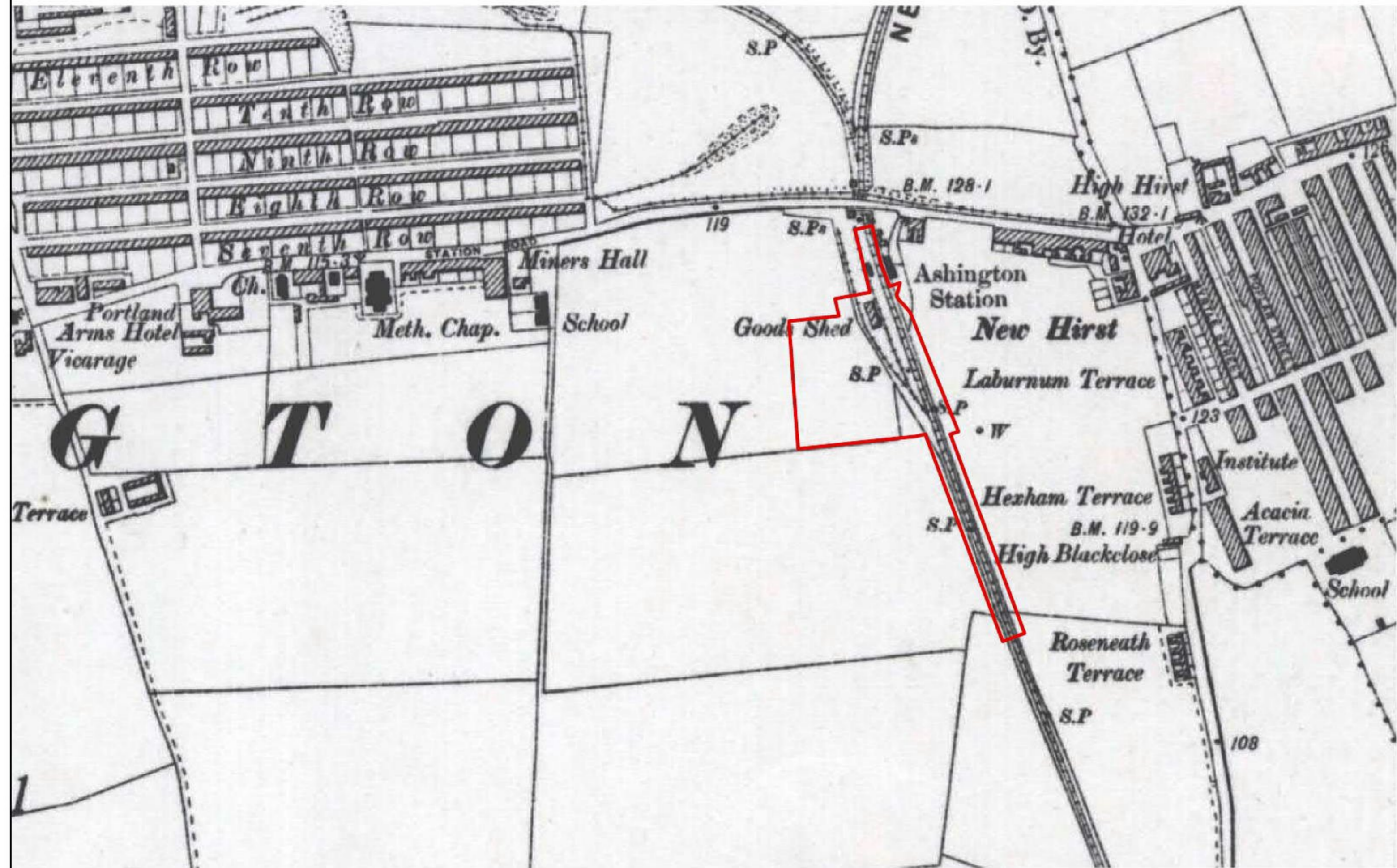
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**FIGURE 5 -
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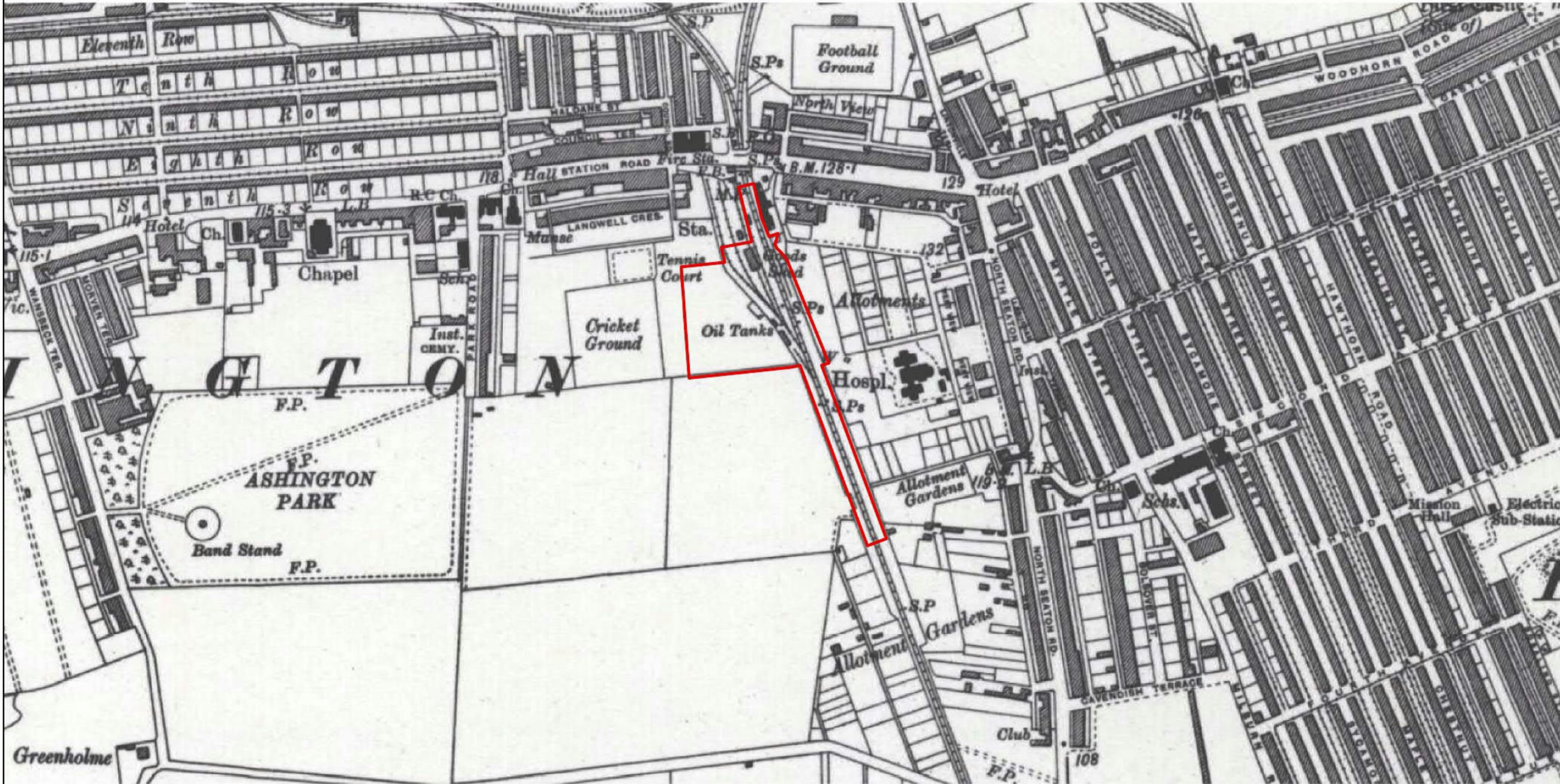
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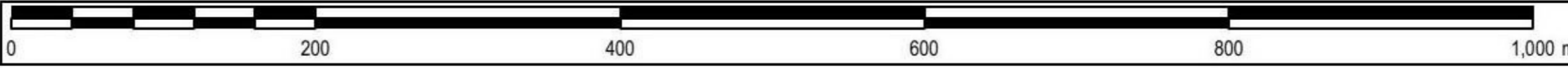
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