

**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Borough of Burnley, Lancashire
(APP/2016/0021).**

**World War II Spigot Mortar
Emplacement and Ammunition
Store.**



Level 2 Historic Building Record

Document No: 3373.R02

December 2017



Nexus Heritage Controlled Document – Commercial-in-Confidence

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Prepared by:	Anthony Martin	Date: 12.12.17
Checked by:	Anthony Martin	Date: 12.12.17
Approved by:		Date:
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Nexus Heritage
Stanton House
Eastham Village Road
Eastham
Cheshire
CH62 0BJ

Gleeson Homes
108 Mere Grange
Elton Head Road
St. Helens
WA9 5GG

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY STATEMENT

Planning permission has been secured by Gleeson Homes (hereafter the Client) from Burnley Borough Council (hereafter the Council) residential development (APP/2016/0021) on land at Manchester Road, Hapton (hereafter the 'Site'). The Site which extends to an area of c. 14.8ha is situated to the north of the village of Hapton, in Lancashire. The Site is centred, approximately, at National Grid Reference SD 79643 32131.

A condition associated with heritage interest has been applied to the permission:

29. No development of any kind shall take place until the developer has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological recording and analysis in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. A copy of the archaeological recording and analysis shall be lodged with the Local Planning Authority within two months of its completion.

This document provides the results of a programme of historic building recording proposed in response to the spirit and intent of Condition No. 29. The building recording was undertaken on 9th November 2017.

This draft document is offered for consideration to the Council and its archaeological advisor (Mr. P. Iles) for verification with reference to the condition applied to the planning permission and the relevant provisions in *NPPF*.

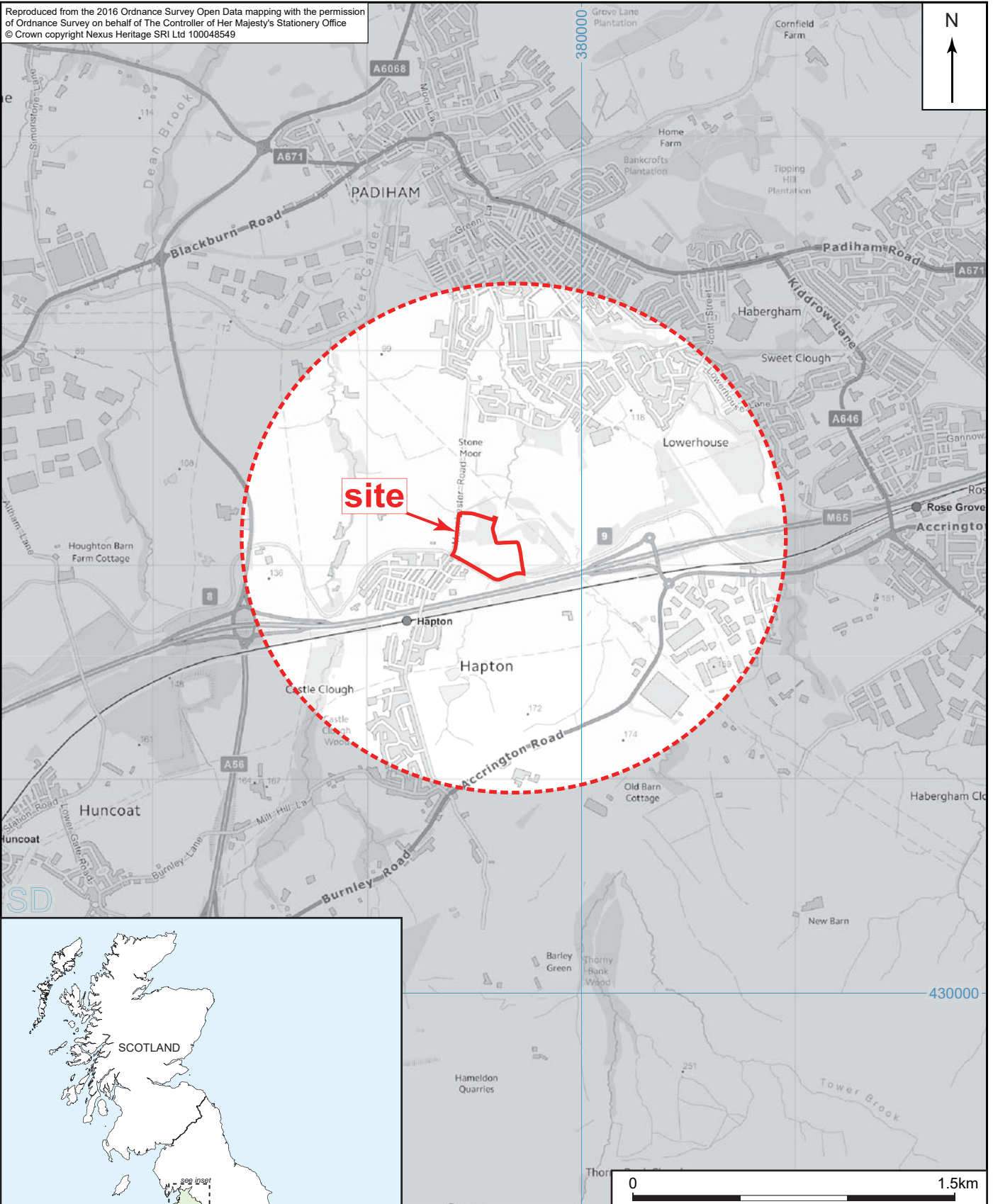
LOCATION AND SITE INFORMATION

The Site is situated to the east of Manchester Road, in the borough of Burnley, Lancashire, centred approximately on National Grid Reference SD 79643 32131 (Fig. 1). The Leeds-Liverpool canal forms the southern boundary, with a stone wall retaining the canal above the Site. Manchester Road forms the site's western boundary. The northern and eastern Site boundaries are formed by undeveloped vegetated / agricultural land.

The World War II spigot emplacements and ammunition store are centred approximately on National Grid Reference SD 79467 32163 (Fig. 2).

The spigot emplacements and ammunition store are designated heritage assets. They are designated as a Scheduled Monument under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act, 1979. The spigot emplacements and ammunition store have been assigned the National Heritage List reference 1432881 and the List Entry Summary can be found at Appendix A.

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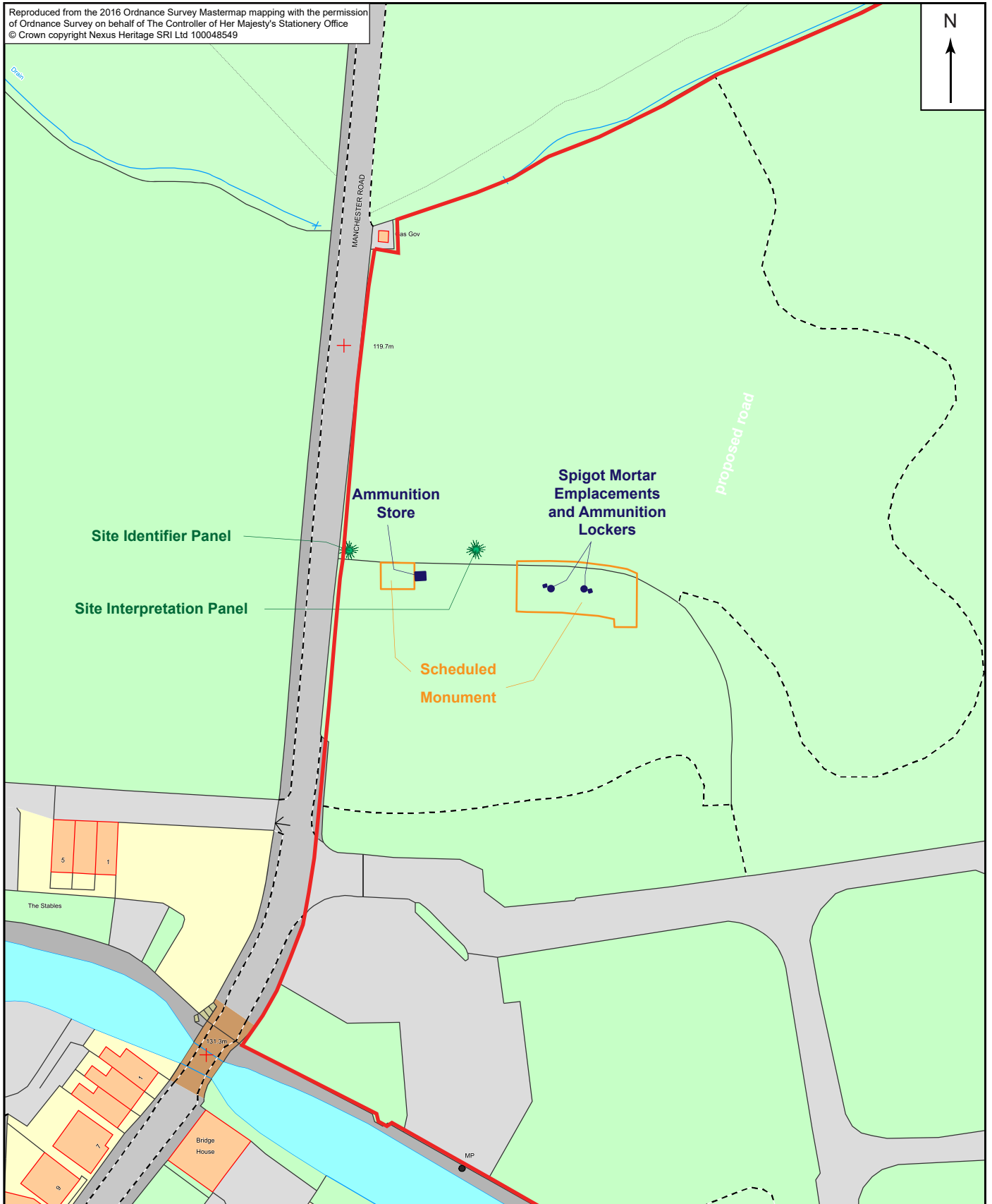
0 1.5km

 **NEXUS** HERITAGE

PROJECT TITLE:
**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Lancashire**

DRAWING TITLE:
Site Location

DATE: 12/12/17	DRAWN BY: RC	FIGURE: 1
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 Boundary of Residential Development



PROJECT TITLE:
 Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
 Lancashire

DRAWING TITLE:
 Site Plan and provisional location of
 Site Interpretation Panels

DATE: 12/12/17	DRAWN BY: RC	FIGURE: 2
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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The planning application was accompanied by a historic environment desk-based assessment (Nexus Heritage 2016) which provided some basic historic and archaeological information on the Site's development and use through time. The spigot mortar emplacement and ammunition store represent one use to which a small part of the Site was put and some further data, expanding on that provided in the historic environment desk-based assessment is provided below.

The spigot mortar emplacement and ammunition store are associated with the large-scale military conflict which took place towards the middle of the 20th century. World War II was a global war that lasted from 1939 to 1945. On 1st September 1939, Germany invaded Poland and on 3rd September, after a British ultimatum to Germany to cease military operations was ignored, the UK (and France) declared war on Germany. Soon after, the UK sent an expeditionary military force (BEF), to aid in the defence of France, and by May 1940 there were ten divisions of the British Army in France.

On 10 May 1940, Germany attacked Belgium and the Netherlands and the BEF advanced from the Belgian border and engaged the German forces. Belgian and French positions on the BEF's flanks failed to hold and the BEF began to retreat with the strategic aim of evacuation across the Channel from Dunkirk, the closest location with good port facilities. By the 21st May 1940 the BEF was trapped, along with the remains of the Belgian forces and the three French armies, in an area along the northern French coast. Between the 27th May and the 4th June 1940, Operation Dynamo, led to the evacuation of the remains of the BEF.

After the capitulation of the BEF, the UK began to prepare for a German invasion and from the summer of 1940 a programme was rolled out to locate and construct a number of defensive measures in the form of road and rail blocks, barbed wire, anti-tank ditches, pillboxes and gun emplacements. The defensive measures were positioned at strategic points such as vital industrial centres, military installations or along defensive delineations identified as Stop Lines.

One of the defensive measures used was the 29mm spigot mortar. This was an infantry anti-tank weapon devised by Lieutenant-Colonel Stewart Blacker in the early years of the Second World War (Clifford, nd). The mortar, also known as a Blacker Bombard, was supplied to Home Guard units. The mortar weighed between 112lb and 360lb and when used as a static weapon was placed on top of a swivel or pivot set into a concrete pedestal. The weapon was usually located in range of defensive positions, such as road-blocks (Hogg 1995, 42) but here at Hapton it appears to have been located to defend the road, the Leeds-Liverpool Canal and possibly the chemical works. It was able to fire a 20lb high-explosive bomb up to a range of approximately 100m and was operated by a crew of between three and five men. Its slow rate of fire meant that concealment and camouflage were vital. The Defence of Britain Project, a late-1990s field survey of 20th-century military landscape features by the Council for British Archaeology, recorded a total of 351 surviving spigot mortar pedestals.

The spigot mortar emplacements are likely to have been part of a coordinated defensive arc including road-blocks, trenches, pillboxes and machine-gun posts. However, there are no known or visible traces of any such features in the vicinity of Hapton and the Archsearch: Defence of Britain Database records no nearby Second World War defences in its 83 recorded anti-invasion sites in Lancashire.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND METHOD STATEMENT

A method statement was detailed in the Nexus Heritage document *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store Written: Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording* (Nexus Heritage document 3373.R01).

The methodology for the recording was prepared with reference to Historic England's *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice* (2016) and the ClfA's *Standard for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures* (2014).

In summary, a Level 2 recording programme was designed to provide an introductory description followed by a systematic account of the structure's origins, development and use. The record includes an account of the evidence on which the analysis has been based, allowing the validity of the record to be re-examined in detail. It also includes all drawn and photographic records required to illustrate the structure's appearance and fabric and to support an historical analysis.

The aim of the historic building recording is:

- to seek a better understanding and compile a lasting record of the building and disseminate the results.

The specific objectives of the historic building record are:

- to complete an adequate photographic and drawn record of the structures.
- to promote the understanding and appreciation of historic structures.
- to secure an understanding of a structure and its significance.

A Historic England Level 2 Record was undertaken. The **output of the Level 2** Record is defined in the Nexus Heritage document *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store: Written Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording* (Nexus Heritage document 3373.R01) and is reproduced below:

Drawings

Measured plans (to scale) as existing showing the form and location of any structural features of historic significance,

Measured elevations.

A site plan relating the structures to other structures and to any related topographical and landscape features.

A plan or plans identifying the location and direction of accompanying photographs.

Photography

The photographic record will comprise general views towards and away from the structures (in their immediate and wider setting, where accessibility permits) and details of the structures' external appearance. A series of oblique sightlines will show all external elevations of the structures, (where accessibility permits), and give an overall impression of size and shape.

Photographs will indicate the original design intentions of the builder / architect, as inferred from the structures and/or their setting. Any external structural or decorative detail (such as dates or other inscriptions, any signage, makers' plates or graffiti) which contributes to an understanding of the structures and which is relevant to the structures' design, development or use and which does not show adequately on general photographs will be photographed in detail. If the details of characters or numerals or artistic depiction is not clear in any photographs a transcription will be made.

The photographic recording will be undertaken using a high-resolution (16mb) digital camera and a discretely placed scale will be included in each image (unless its inclusion would obscure the item being photographed, in which case two images would be made, one with and without the scale. The colour digital images will be provided as TIFF files on a CD which will be located on the inside of the report cover.

Written Account

A written account will be prepared to include the structures' precise location along with details of any statutory or non-statutory designations. The date of the record, the name(s) of the recorder(s) and the proposed location for the archive of the record will also be confirmed.

Information on the structures' types and purposes, historically and at present, materials, and possible date(s) and phasing, in so far as these are apparent from an appropriate inspection will also be presented as a summary statement. The written account will summarise the structures' form, function, date and sequence of development. The names of architects, builders, patrons and owners will be given if known.

RESULTS

A total of three broad structural groups were present on the site.

- Spigot emplacement 1 with ammunition locker.
- Spigot emplacement 2 with ammunition locker.
- Ammunition Store.

The setting of the structures are briefly described and illustrated by means of photographs. The potential significance of the structures are assessed in the discussion section below.

Spigot Emplacement 1

Description

Spigot emplacement 1 is located at NGR 79484 32158, approximately 50.0m east of Manchester Road, and consists of a circular pit measuring approximately 3.5m in diameter by 0.6m in depth. The pit is surrounded by a low upcast bank measuring approximately 1.0-1.5m in width by 0.3m in height, with a 2.0m wide gap in the north-eastern end providing a gentle sloping entrance into the emplacement.

Within the centre of the pit is a concrete thimble measuring 1.0m in diameter by at least 0.65m in height with a centralised stainless steel pin upon which the bombard was mounted.

At the north-western end an ammunition locker measuring 1.0m in length, 0.8m in width, by 0.65m in height and constructed from three concrete sides and a flat concrete top is situated within the base of the pit against the edge.

Spigot Emplacement 2

Description

Spigot emplacement 2 is located at NGR 79479 32159, approximately 4.5m west of spigot emplacement 1, and consists of a circular pit measuring approximately 3.5m in diameter by 0.6m in depth. The pit is surrounded by a low upcast bank measuring approximately 1.0-1.5m in width by 0.3m in height, with a 2.0m wide gap in the north-western end providing a gentle sloping entrance into the emplacement.

Within the centre of the pit is a concrete thimble measuring 1.0m in diameter by at least 0.65m in height with a centralised stainless steel pin upon which the bombard was mounted.

At the south-eastern end an ammunition locker measuring 1.0m in length, 0.8m in width, by 0.65m in height and constructed from three concrete sides and a flat concrete top is situated within the base of the pit against the edge.



01



02

01: Spigot emplacement 1, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

02: Spigot emplacement 1, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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03



04

03: Spigot emplacement 1, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.

04: Spigot emplacement 1, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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05



06

05: Spigot emplacement 1 ammunition locker, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

06: Spigot emplacement 1 swivel mount, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.



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**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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07



08

07: Spigot emplacement 1 swivel mount, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.

08: Spigot emplacement 2, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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09



10

09: Spigot emplacement 2, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

10: Spigot emplacement 2 ammunition locker, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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11



12

11: Spigot emplacement 2 swivel mount, from the northeast. Scale 1.0m.

12: Spigot emplacement 2 swivel mount, from the northwest. Scale 1.0m.



TITLE:

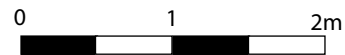
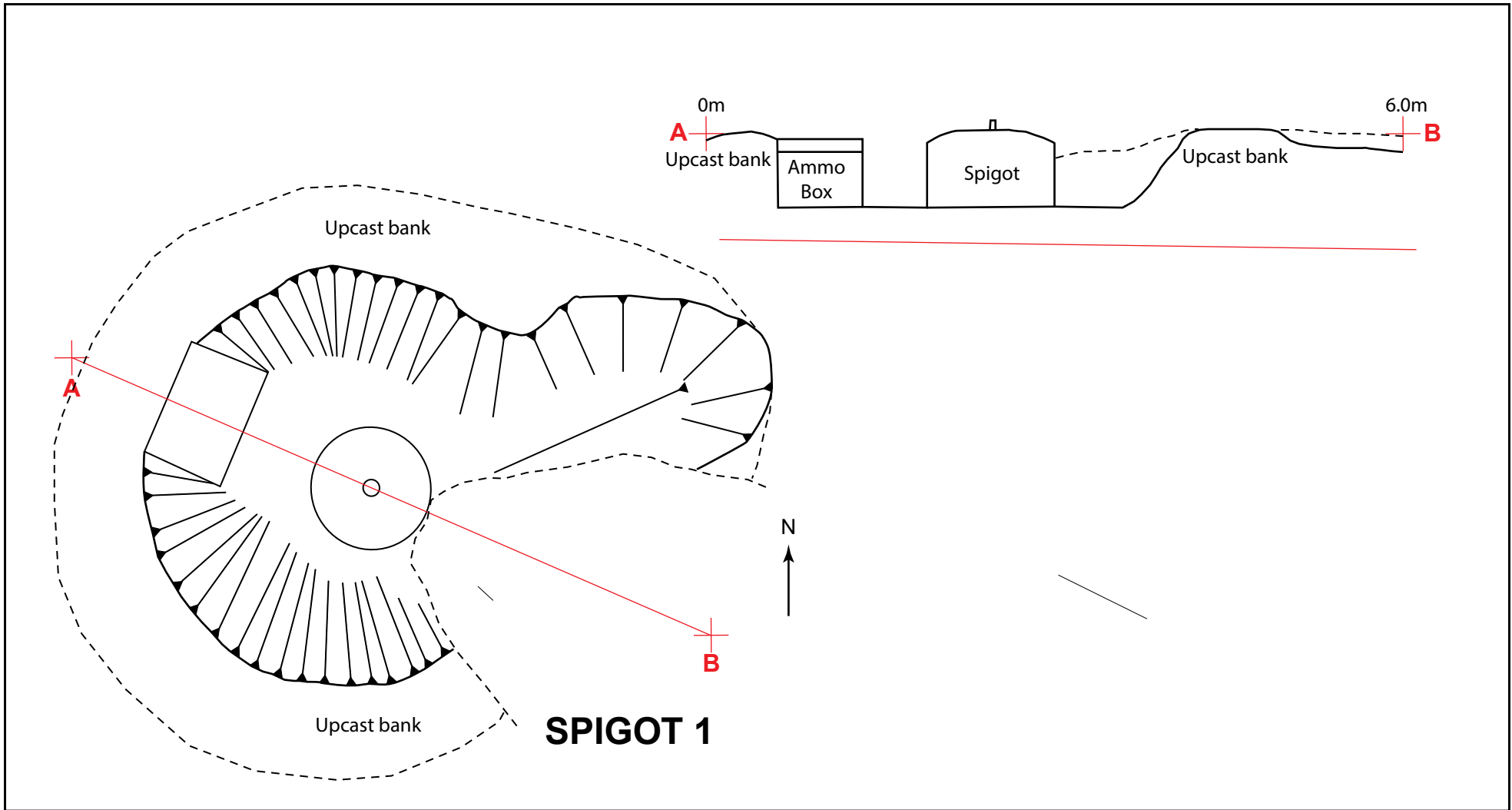
**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

DRAWN BY:

RC



PROJECT TITLE:

**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Lancashire**

DRAWING TITLE:

*Section and plan of Spigot 1.
Scale 1:50 at A4.*

DATE:

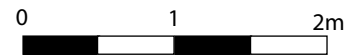
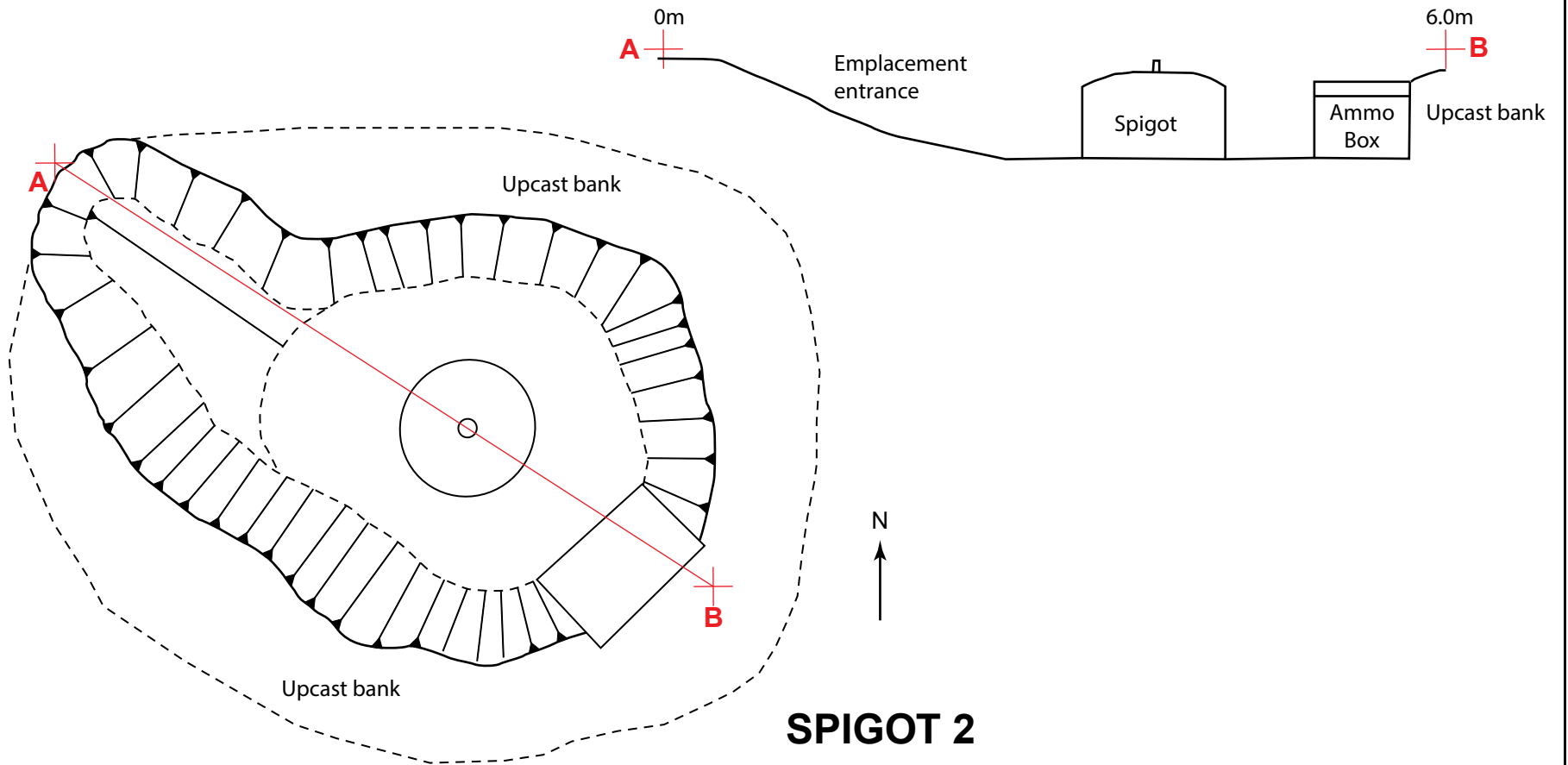
12/12/17

DRAWN BY:

RC

FIGURE:

3



PROJECT TITLE:

**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Lancashire**

DRAWING TITLE:

*Section and plan of Spigot 2.
Scale 1:50 at A4.*

DATE:

12/12/17

DRAWN BY:

RC

FIGURE:

4

Ammunition Store

Description

The Ammunition Store is located at NGR SD 79435 32160, approximately 11.0m east of Manchester Road, and measures 3.9m in length by 1.75m in width orientated east to west. The east and west ends are of red-brick bonded by mortar in 'English bond' style and although truncated, stand to 2.11m in height at the west end and 1.91m at the east. The eastern brick end includes a doorway into the store, now without door and frame, and the sides are of cast concrete measuring 0.91m in height. The brick ends curve gently inward above 1.5m in order to house the corrugated-iron roof, although no trace of this now remains.

The Historic England SAM listing details that the apparent method of construction was the erection of the arched corrugated-iron roof, retained by concrete shuttering to 1.0m in height along the sides inside and out, and then erection of brick walls within the arch at either end, fitted around the inward projecting concrete plinth.

The store is now quite overgrown with vegetation and the northern and western sides are almost entirely obscured by ivy. The overall height of the structure would have been approximately 2.5m.

Analytical Discussion

The Historic England SAM listing hypothesises that the siting of the two emplacements so close together suggests an intention to use one if firing to the north and the other with firing to the south, with the ammunition locker located to the same side of the loader in either case. Although the Blacker Bombard was front muzzle-loaded the operator's handles were located to the right hand side, and so when sited within the confines of a narrow pit emplacement it would have been important to load the mortar from the front-left side – thus supporting the theory that the easternmost emplacement was meant to fire northwards, and more precisely north-westwards.

The effective range of the Blacker Bombard was approximately 100 yards (91m) however the Leeds-Liverpool Canal is located 146 yards (135m) south of the emplacements. This would suggest that they were intended to defend the entrance from Manchester Road into Hapton House and the Chemical Works, from both a northerly and southerly approach along Manchester Road.

The location of the access trench to the southeast of spigot emplacement 1 would suggest that attack was not expected from the east or south, and that the perceived threat would be coming from the southwest, west or northwest. In contradiction to this the entrance into spigot emplacement 2 is located at the northwest side and it can be surmised that this was to encounter a threat from the southwest.

The Ammunition Store with its corrugated-iron roof is essentially an Anderson Shelter and designed to withstand damage from explosives. This was important as the store would have housed the additional ammunition for the mortars, as well as most likely the bombards themselves and their large tripods. The siting of the store 11.0m west of spigot emplacement 2 is to ensure that it was not too far to obtain further ammunition but far enough in case the ammunition store exploded. It is however unusual that the Ammunition Store is located between the emplacements and Manchester Road as it not only places it closer to the direction of attack but also provides hard cover for any infantry advancing on the emplacement positions.



13: Ammunition store, from the east. Scale 1.0m



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**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

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14



15

14: Ammunition store, from the southeast. Scale 1.0m.

15: Ammunition store, from the south. Scale 1.0m.



NEXUS HERITAGE

TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

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16: Ammunition store, from the southwest. Scale 1.0m.



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Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:
07/12/17

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17

17: Ammunition store, from the west. Scale 1.0m



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**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

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18: Ammunition store internal, from the east. Scale 1.0m



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**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:
07/12/17

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19



20

19: View from the ammunition store towards spigot emplacements 1 and 2, from the west.

20: View from spigot emplacement 1 towards spigot emplacement 2 and ammunition store, from the east.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

07/12/17

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21



22

21: View from spigot emplacement 1 towards Manchester Road and the Leeds to Liverpool canal, from the northeast.

22: View from spigot emplacement 2 towards the ammunition store, from the east.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

DATE:

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RC



23: View from spigot emplacement 2 towards Manchester Road and the Leeds to Liverpool canal, from the northeast.



TITLE:

**Spigot Emplacements,
Manchester Road, Hapton.**

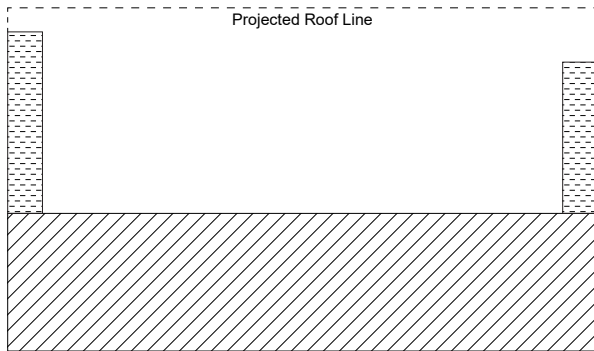
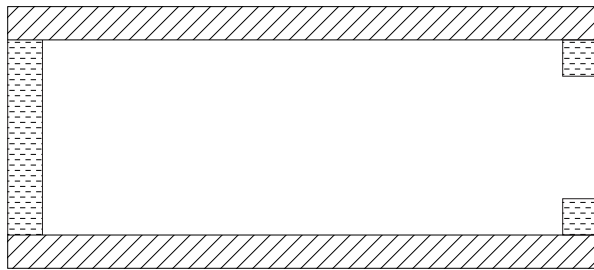
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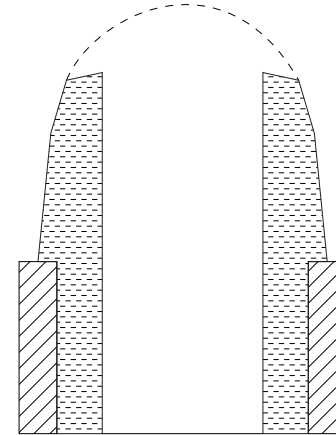
RC

Plan of Ammunition Store



South Facing Elevation of Ammunition Store

Projected Roof Line



East Facing Elevation of Ammunition Store



Brick



Concrete



PROJECT TITLE:

**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Lancashire**

DRAWING TITLE:

*Elevations and plan of Ammunition
Store.*

DATE:

12/12/17

DRAWN BY:

RC

FIGURE:

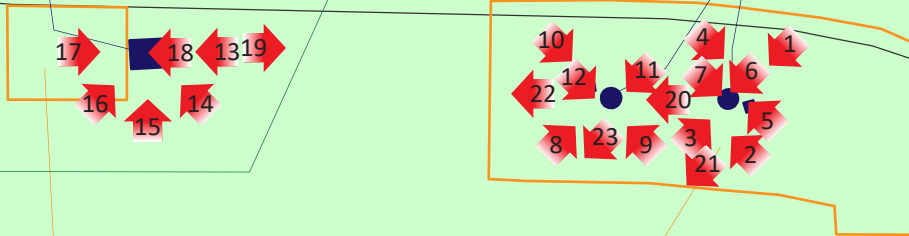
5



Ammunition Store

Spigot Mortar Emplacements and Ammunition Lockers

Scheduled Monument



 Boundary of Residential Development

0  20m



PROJECT TITLE:
**Land at Manchester Road, Hapton,
Lancashire**

DRAWING TITLE:
*Location and Orientation of
Photographs.*

DATE:
12/12/17

DRAWN BY:
RC

FIGURE:
6

HEALTH AND SAFETY

There were no incidents or accidents to report.

ARCHIVE

The recipient organisation for the project archive is the Lancashire Archives in Preston and copies of the drawn, written, and photographic record of the recording work will be deposited at the Lancashire Record Office.

Nexus Heritage will conform to the arrangements for archive preparation and submission prior to commencing the works and provide copies of the relevant correspondence and accession number to the LHER.

The archive has been prepared, compiled and presented for long term storage according to the format requirements of the recipient organisation and the County Archivist and as set out relevant standards including

- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials* (2014 edition).
- The Institute for Archaeologists' *Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives* (2014 edition)

The archive index is as follows.

A hard copy of this document

A hard copy of the Nexus Heritage document *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store Written: Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording* (Nexus Heritage document 3373.R01).

A CD containing a .pdf copy of this document, the Nexus Heritage document *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store Written: Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording* (Nexus Heritage document 3373.R01) and 51 digital photographs

Hand written notes (x1 sheet of A4)

Original drawings on drafting film (2 x drawings on 1 x sheet)

This index acts as a synopsis of the archive and is therefore lodged with the Lancashire Historic Environment Record.

CONCLUSION

This building record has carefully considered the historical background to the spigot emplacements and ammunition store and has addressed the aims and objectives of the project adequately.

The methods adopted during this building recording can be considered as successful in as much as they enabled an accurate record of the building and its setting to be made. The evidence recovered was of a consistent standard and was able to meet all of the expectations of the project aims.

SOURCES

Published works

Brennand, M. (ed), 2007. *Research and archaeology in north-west England: an archaeological Research framework for North-West England: research agenda and strategy.*

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2014. *Standard for the Archaeological Investigation and Recording of Standing Buildings or Structures.*

Historic England, 2016. *Understanding Historic Buildings: a guide to good recording practice*

Nexus Heritage, 2016. *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store: Historic Environment Desk-Based Assessment* (Nexus Heritage document 3312.R01a).

Nexus Heritage, 2017. *Land at Manchester Road, Hapton, Borough of Burnley, Lancashire (APP/2016/0021) World War II Spigot Mortar Emplacement and Ammunition Store Written: Scheme of Investigation for Historic Building Recording* (Nexus Heritage document 3373.R01).



Spigot mortar (Blacker Bombard) position

List Entry Summary

This monument is scheduled under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 as amended as it appears to the Secretary of State to be of national importance. This entry is a copy, the original is held by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Name: Spigot mortar (Blacker Bombard) position

List entry Number: 1432881

Location

130m NNE of Leeds-Liverpool Canal bridge No.121, Manchester Road, Hapton.

The monument may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County: Lancashire

District: Burnley

District Type: District Authority

Parish: Hapton

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: Not applicable to this List entry.

Date first scheduled: 21-Dec-2016

Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Asset Groupings

This list entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List entry Description

Summary of Monument

A Second World War position for using a 'Blacker Bombard' 29mm spigot mortar on a fixed swivel mounting, including two emplacements and an associated store and surviving as visible earthworks with concrete fittings, and an upstanding brick and concrete structure.

Reasons for Designation

The spigot mortar position at Hapton is scheduled for the following principal reasons: * Rarity: the Hapton spigot mortar position is a rare example nationally given that two emplacements are located together and close to an associated store; * Regional significance: this is one of only a handful of spigot mortar emplacements known in the north-west of England; * Intactness: the position survives well and is readable, retaining a diversity of original features; * Date: spigot mortar emplacements were an important component of the nation's Second World War defence policy and are therefore representative of this period; * Historical interest: the site has the potential to enhance our understanding of the construction, function and use of this type of defensive structure during the war.

History

From the summer of 1940 England's defences were strengthened against the threat of German invasion. Large numbers of diverse types of defensive structures were built across the whole country, from road and rail blocks to earthwork gun emplacements, barbed-wire entanglements, anti-tank ditches and pillboxes. The full range of such structures was generally complementary, with a variety often built together, either at vulnerable or strategically

important nodal points, around vital installations such as airfields, or arranged in linear defensive systems called 'Stop Lines' that were intended to obstruct the enemy's advance. Following the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 there was a grave shortage of anti-tank guns and ammunition. One possible solution to this deficit was an infantry anti-tank weapon designed by Stuart Blacker, a Lieutenant Colonel in the Territorial Army. Known as the 'Blacker Bombard', this was based on his earlier version of a spigot mortar (unlike conventional mortars with a barrel, a spigot mortar has a steel 'spigot' onto which the projectile slides). Blacker's idea was to swivel-mount a spigot mortar with a trigger firing mechanism for ease of transportation and operation, and to use it in an anti-tank role. Despite initial objections to the idea from high-ranking military and government officials, a demonstration of the weapon on the 18 August 1940, at which Prime Minister Winston Churchill was present, led to it being put into full production on Churchill's orders. An initial 16,000 were made in July 1941 and were split more or less evenly between the regular forces and the Home Guard. By mid-December c8,000 had been issued, and the initial order was increased to 28,000; ultimately nearly 29,000 were made.

An important development came on 14 September 1941, when a design was issued (Directorate of Fortifications and Works drawing 55280) for a fixed mounting for the weapon. Previously heavy folding legs had been used to mount spigot mortars. The new design provided an alternative in the form of a fixed emplacement comprising a concrete 'thimble' of approximately 1m diameter and 1m in height, with a central steel pin which would engage the underside of the weapon and form a swivel mounting. The thimble was to be sited in a pit c1.2m deep with access all around, and the drawing showed a deeper approach trench and up to four concrete ammunition lockers recessed into the walls of the weapons pit. By using these pre-prepared emplacements, the weapon could be made much more portable but still be fired with sufficient accuracy and protection for the crew – and it could also still be mounted on the legs if desired. The order of priority in deployment was (i) on beaches, (ii) for nodal point defences, including those held by the Home Guard, and (iii) on airfields. The Bombard was widely used to cover roadblocks, and GHQ recommended that where possible pedestal mounting should be used in preference to the portable mount. In theory, sufficient materials for four emplacements were to be issued with each weapon, but in practice fewer than 8,000 of these static mountings were issued. When installed, many of these deviated significantly from the standard drawing; when sited at strategic locations such as camp entrances, the pit was often omitted, and because of shortages of materials, pits for ambush positions

were also often improvised without the ammunition lockers and approach trench. The volunteer field survey 'The Defence of Britain Project', which was run by the Council for British Archaeology in the late 1990s, recorded 237 Blacker Bombard pedestals surviving in England and while not a comprehensive survey this provides some indication of the very high rates of attrition since the war.

The Blacker Bombard position at Hapton was built within the grounds of Hapton House, which first appears on the 1893 1:10,000 OS map, with the land adjacent to the S occupied by the Hapton Chemical Works. This map shows the low retaining wall to the north of the emplacements, and shows the site of the pits as part of the house's garden. The 1912 edition more clearly marks the steps down through the wall and appears to indicate that the house and chemical works were in the same ownership at that date. The house still appears on the 1:10,000 OS map of 1965, but not on the 1979 edition. No detailed history of the construction of the position is known and it does not appear on any map. However, as it does not form part of a Stop Line, it is likely to have been created by a Home Guard unit, perhaps related to the factory. The site has been photographed by local group Hapton Heritage but no investigation is known to have taken place.

The siting of the two emplacements so close together suggests an intention to use one if firing to the N and the other if firing to the S, with the ammunition locker to the same side of the loader in either case. The position is within firing range of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal bridge 121 and although here the canal did not (as it did further to the E) form part of a Stop Line, the western pit could have been used to protect the canal crossing, or in ambush of enemies entering the grounds of the house. The eastern position could have been used for firing across the slightly lower ground to the N. This is an unlikely direction of enemy approach; however moving targets could easily be set up here, and it would be highly suitable for practice firing. The associated store is likely to have been used for storing the weapons themselves, additional ammunition not in ready use (and at a safe distance from the emplacements), and the large folding legs for the spigot mortars.

Details

A Second World War 'Blacker Bombard' spigot mortar position including two emplacements and an associated store.

PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS: the monument includes two circular weapons pits

visible as low earthworks with exposed concrete structures (pedestals and ready-use ammunition lockers), with an approach trench, and an associated brick and concrete store.

DESCRIPTION: situated within a former private garden, currently (2016) part of an industrial site due to be redeveloped for housing, the site is located on a level platform approximately 1.2m high which is retained by a stone wall approximately 0.5m to the N. Approximately 120m to the S is the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, from which the ground falls gently to the N.

The first weapons pit is situated c45.5m to the E of the road. This comprises a circular pit c0.5m deep and 3m in diameter, with a central concrete thimble 1m in diameter, a peripheral concrete locker 0.8m wide and 0.4m long with flat top and sides, and surrounded by a low bank c1-1.5m wide. The bank has a gap on the W side, c2m wide at the top sloping down to c1.5m wide at the base. The locker is situated due E. The concrete thimble retains (in good condition) the stainless steel pin on which the Bombard was mounted. The second weapons pit is of similar dimensions and located 4.5m further to the E. However, its locker is located at the NW. Its thimble and pin are in similar condition. It is served by an approach trench which is visible as a very shallow depression c1m wide. This leaves the pit to the N of due E and runs eastward for c4m before running S for c9m.

The store stands c11m to the E of Manchester Road and measures 3.85m long and 1.75m wide, with the long axis aligned E-W. This is a brick (English bond) and concrete structure with the remains of its corrugated-iron roof: this is essentially an Anderson shelter design, adapted to create a store. The brick ends including a doorway in the E facing end, and concrete sides. The brick ends are slightly truncated but stand to c2m tall; they curve gently inwards above c1.5m and the curve suggests that the overall height would have been c2.5m. The concrete sides stand c1m tall. The apparent method of construction was the erection of the arched corrugated-iron roof, retained by concrete shuttering to 1m high along the sides inside and out, and then the erection of brick walls within the arch at either end, fitted around the inward-projecting concrete plinth.

EXTENT OF SCHEDULING: the scheduled monument includes the known extent of the position and comprises two discrete areas. The first is focussed on the weapons pits and approach trench, and the second on the store. The areas are defined by a 2m buffer around the visible remains for their protection and management.

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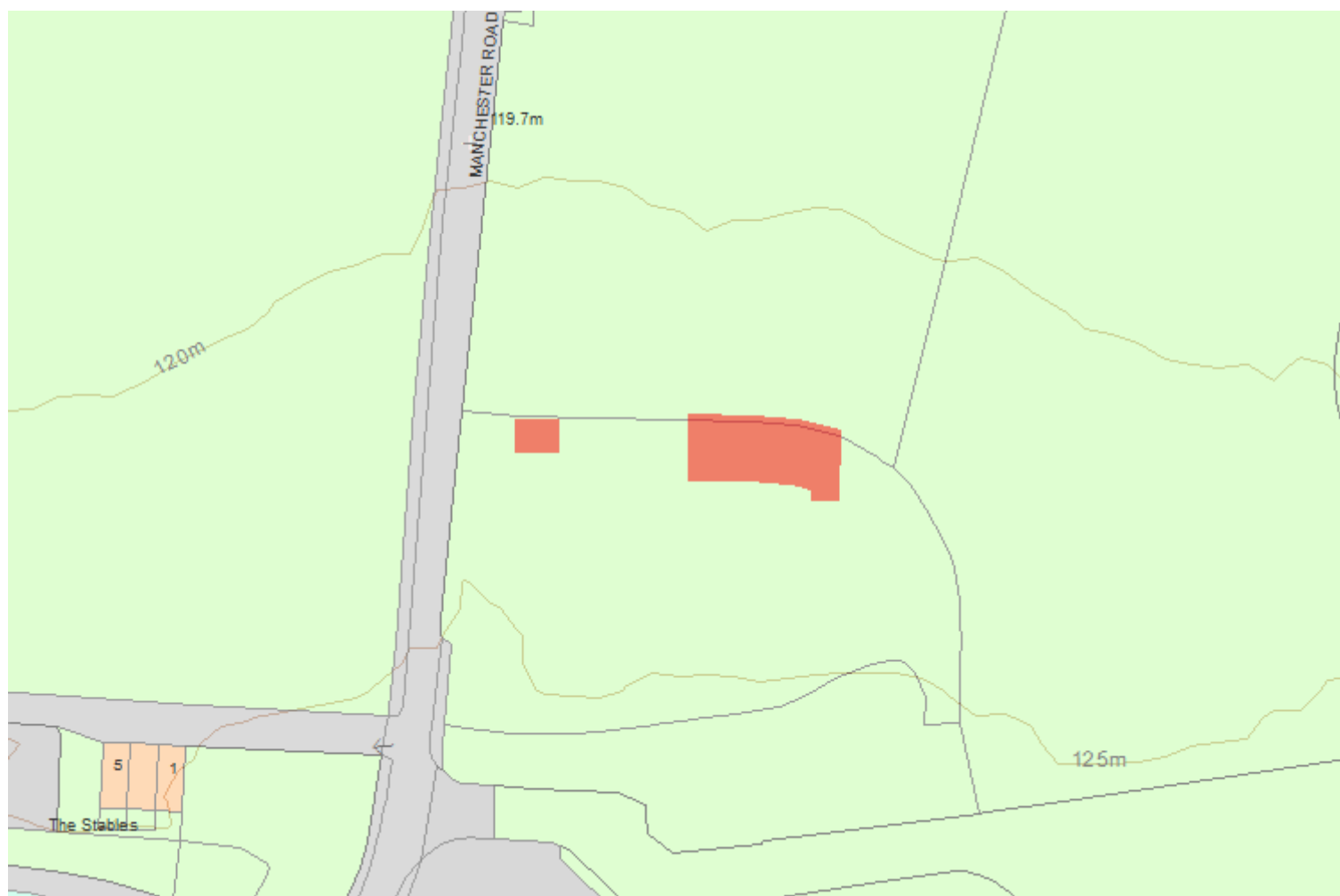
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Map



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