



BANKHOUSE PUMPING STATION, MILLOM, CUMBRIA

Archaeological Watching Brief

Oxford Archaeology North



May 2006

United Utilities

Issue No: 2005-6/508

OA North Job No: L9397

NGR: SD 170 822

Document Title: BANKHOUSE PUMPING STATION, MILLOM, CUMBRIA

Document Type: Archaeological Watching Brief

Client Name: United Utilities

Issue Number: 2005-6/508

OA Job Number: L9397

National Grid Reference: SD 170 822

Prepared by: David Tonks
Position: Assistant Supervisor
Date: May 2006

Checked by: Alison Plummer Signed.....
Position: Senior Project Manager
Date: May 2006

Approved by: Alan Lupton Signed.....
Position: Operations Manager
Date: May 2006

Document File Location Alison\projects\L9397\Bankhouse\Report

Oxford Archaeology North

Storey Institute
Meeting House Lane
Lancaster
LA1 1TF
t: (0044) 01524 848666
f: (0044) 01524 848606

w: www.oxfordarch.co.uk
e: info@oxfordarch.co.uk

© Oxford Archaeological Unit Ltd 2006

Janus House
Osney Mead
Oxford
OX2 0EA
t: (0044) 01865 263800
f: (0044) 01865 793496

Oxford Archaeological Unit Limited is a Registered Charity No: 285627

Disclaimer:

This document has been prepared for the titled project or named part thereof and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without an independent check being carried out as to its suitability and prior written authority of Oxford Archaeology being obtained. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for the consequences of this document being used for a purpose other than the purposes for which it was commissioned. Any person/party using or relying on the document for such other purposes agrees, and will by such use or reliance be taken to confirm their agreement to indemnify Oxford Archaeology for all loss or damage resulting therefrom. Oxford Archaeology accepts no responsibility or liability for this document to any party other than the person/party by whom it was commissioned.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Circumstances of the Project	4
2. METHODOLOGY.....	5
2.1 Watching Brief.....	5
2.2 Archive.....	5
3. BACKGROUND.....	6
3.1 Topography and Geology	6
3.2 Archaeological Background.....	6
4. RESULTS.....	7
4.1 Observations	7
4.2 Finds.....	7
5. CONCLUSIONS.....	8
5.1 Discussion.....	8
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	9
Primary Sources	9
Secondary Sources	9
ILLUSTRATIONS	10
List of Figures	10
List of Plates	10

SUMMARY

Following a request by United Utilities, Oxford Archaeology North undertook a watching brief on specified groundworks during the construction of a proposed water transfer pumping station at Millom, Cumbria (SD 170 822). The work was undertaken on 16th and 17th June 2005.

The topsoil strip and the groundworks associated with construction were to be monitored by an archaeological presence. In the event, owing to communication failures, only the topsoil strip in advance of construction was monitored. No significant archaeology was found during the watching brief and there were no recommendations made for further archaeological intervention or work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to United Utilities for commissioning the work and to the staff and contractors of Daniels for their help on site. OA North would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons, Assistant Archaeologist, Cumbria County Council, for his assistance.

The watching brief was undertaken by Kathryn Blythe and David Tonks wrote the report. The drawings were produced by Mark Tidmarsh and the finds were examined by Sean McPhillips. The project was managed by Alison Plummer, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Following the submission of a planning application by United Utilities for the proposed construction of a new water transfer pumping station at Millom, Cumbria (centred on SD 170 822), United Utilities were advised that the proposed works affected an area of archaeological significance. Accordingly, a watching brief was requested by Cumbria County Council Archaeological Services (CCCAS) during specified groundworks associated with the project. Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was duly commissioned to undertake the work which took place on 16th and 17th June 2005. This document sets out the results of the watching brief in the form of a short report.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 The purpose of the programme of fieldwork was to record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features observed during the topsoil strip of the proposed site, and during groundworks associated with the construction of the pumping station. A photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was also compiled. The observed groundworks were effected by mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless bucket.

2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited in the Cumbria Record Office, Barrow in Furness.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1.1 Millom is located on the south-west coast of Cumbria overlooking the Duddon Estuary and it lies within the West Cumbria Coastal Plain character area as defined by the Countryside Commission (Countryside Commission 1998, 25-30). The area is characterised by a varied open coastline of mudflats, shingle and pebble beaches (*ibid*). The majority of the inland area is a medium-scale pastoral landscape of undulating topography with pasture, hedgerows, wind-sheared trees, wetlands and herb-rich meadows (*ibid*). The limestones of west and south Cumbria carry large bodies of haematite iron ore, especially in the Millom area (*ibid*). The drift geology of the Millom area is classed as urban and remains unsurveyed (Ordnance Survey 1983).

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1 The Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) for Cumbria records that the proposed development lies in the vicinity of two Scheduled Monuments (SMR numbers 18976 and 18977), and generally in an area of great archaeological potential, particularly with regard to the prehistoric era. The SMR records are of spot finds of prehistoric implements and photographic evidence indicates that a prehistoric settlement is located nearby (SMR 4857).

3.2.2 The proposed development lies just due north of the medieval Millom Castle and immediately east of Millom Park. The first documented lord of Millom was Sir John Hudleston, recorded in 1270 as a witness to a deed in the Abbey of St Mary in Furness (Whelan 1860, 404). It is, however, thought that his family is traced back five generations to the time of the Norman conquest in 1066 (*ibid*). The Hudlestone family owned the castle from c 1250 AD to 1774 (LUAU 1995) and there are several surviving charters pertaining to the family and their grants of land dating to the late thirteenth century (Thorley 2004, 145f). The castle was fortified and embattled in 1335 (Whelan 1860, 405).

3.2.3 During the post-medieval period, industrial iron extraction and smelting has had a major impact on the area. This can be attributed to the underlying haematite-rich geology (Countryside Commission 1998). In the early sixteenth century a smithy was constructed at Millom (LUAU 1995) and the Hudlestone family, who still owned the castle at this time, also owned a bloomery forge near the proposed site by a stream now known as 'Furnace Beck' (*ibid*). In the later post-medieval period, ironworks dominated the town's fortunes and the mining of these deposits has left numerous bright red spoilheaps (Countryside Commission 1998, 28), and in some areas large water-filled hollows indicate the occurrence of subsidence above the mined-out deposits (*ibid*). At Hodbarrow, a large wall was constructed to prevent flooding of the underground workings. Since the mine closed, the land enclosed by the barrier was deliberately flooded and is now used as a marina (*ibid*).

4. RESULTS

4.1 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1.1 **Introduction:** in the event, only the area of topsoil stripping of the site compound was subject to archaeological observations (Fig 2). Further groundworks during the construction of the pumphouse were effected in the absence of an archaeological monitor and, therefore, there are no results recorded for those works. The topsoil strip was effected from east to west over a two-day period.
- 4.1.2 **Topsoil Strip:** the topsoil comprised mid-brown silty-clay with occasional medium sub-rounded stones. This was stripped to a maximum depth of 0.3m (Plate 1) and observed, in places, to overlie orangey-brown silty-clay natural with occasional stones (Plate 2).
- 4.1.3 The area was examined for features, but the surface strip went only to the interface of the two strata. Consequently, the natural was only clearly visible in patches and this made archaeological visibility poor. No archaeological features were observed, but several sherds of post-medieval pot and one fragment of flint were recovered from unstratified deposits (*Section 4.2*).

4.2 FINDS

- 4.2.1 In total, seven small sherds of post-medieval pottery, ceramic building material and a single fragment of worked flint were recovered from unstratified deposits in the area of the topsoil strip. The material was generally in a poor condition and quite possibly had been subjected to the rolled effects of ploughing.
- 4.2.2 The pottery was represented by eighteenth and nineteenth century domestic wares such as Yellow ware, factory-made slipware mug and multi-coloured glazed white earthenware plate fragments. Of interest amongst the assemblage was a single sherd of Nottingham produced stoneware bottle that was likely to have a date range falling between the late eighteenth to early nineteenth century.
- 4.2.3 The ceramic building material comprised a single fragment of roof tile that possibly derived from a type of roof furniture that was used to build nineteenth or twentieth century chimneys, although the fragment was too small to ascribe accurate identification.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 The limited nature of the watching brief largely precluded the possibility of identifying archaeological remains during the proposed works. The natural ground was only visible in patches, being largely obscured by a veneer of topsoil which remained after the surface strip.
- 5.1.2 The fragment of worked flint clearly represents and further confirms known activity within the area dating to the prehistoric period, but it is not diagnostic in itself and such a stray find is not unexpected. Similarly, whilst the pottery assemblage was of some interest, relating to activity from the late eighteenth century onwards, no significant archaeological horizons were encountered and no conclusions can be drawn from the works that were undertaken.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Ordnance Survey 1983, Soil Survey of England and Wales

SECONDARY SOURCES

Countryside Commission, 1998 *Countryside Character, Volume 2: North West*, Cheltenham

English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

LUAU, 1995 *Ghyll Scaur Quarry Extension, Millom, Cumbria*, unpubl rep

Thorley, J 2004 The Estates of Calder Abbey, *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian & Archaeological Society*, 3ser, **IV**, Kendal, 145-146

Whelan, W 1860, *The History and Topography of the Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland*, London

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES

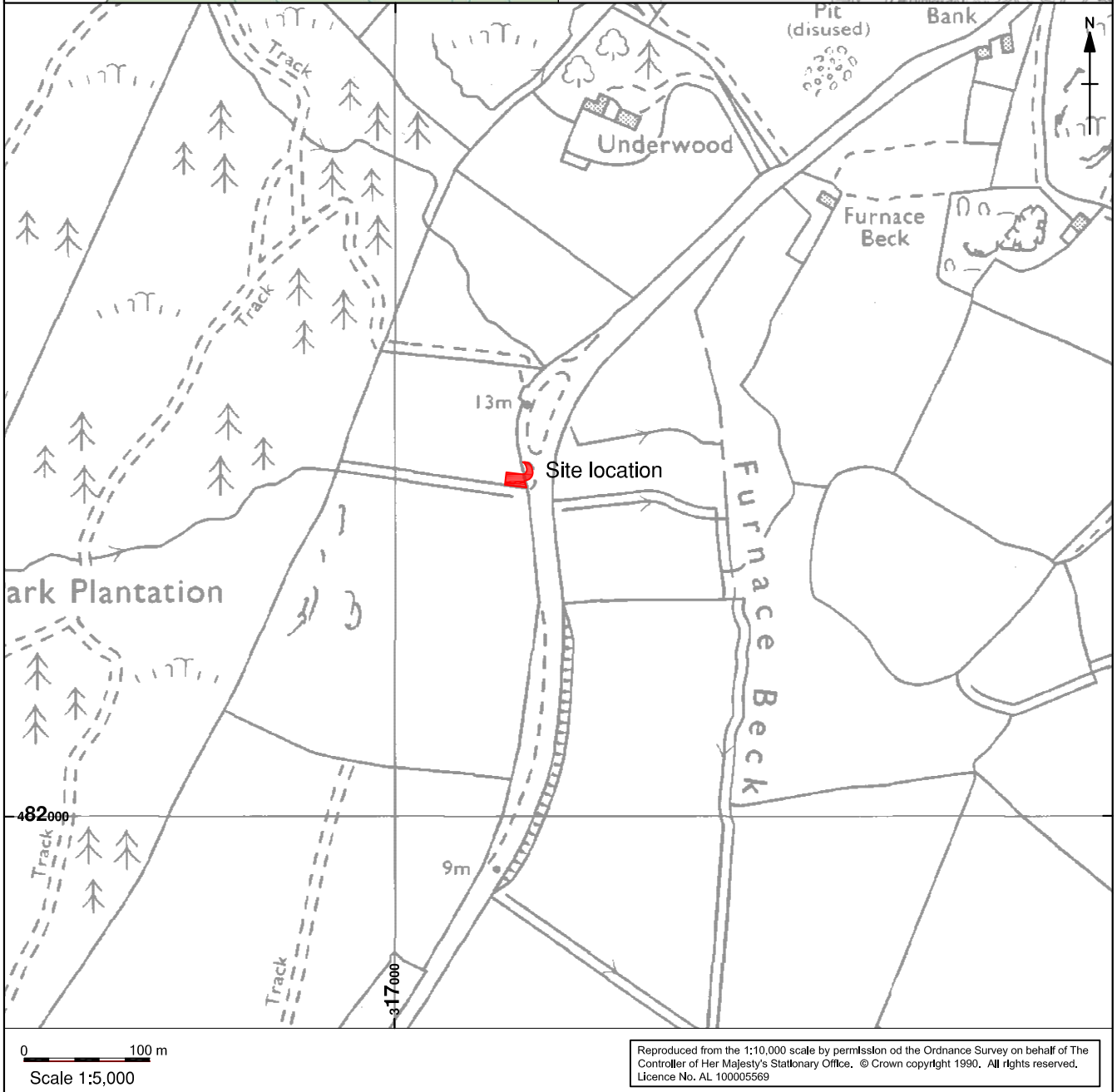
Figure 1: Location Map

Figure 2: Trench Location Plan

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1: Topsoil strip facing south

Plate 2: Topsoil strip facing north



Reproduced from the 1:10,000 scale by permission of the Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. © Crown copyright 1990. All rights reserved. Licence No. AL 100005569

Figure 1: Site Location

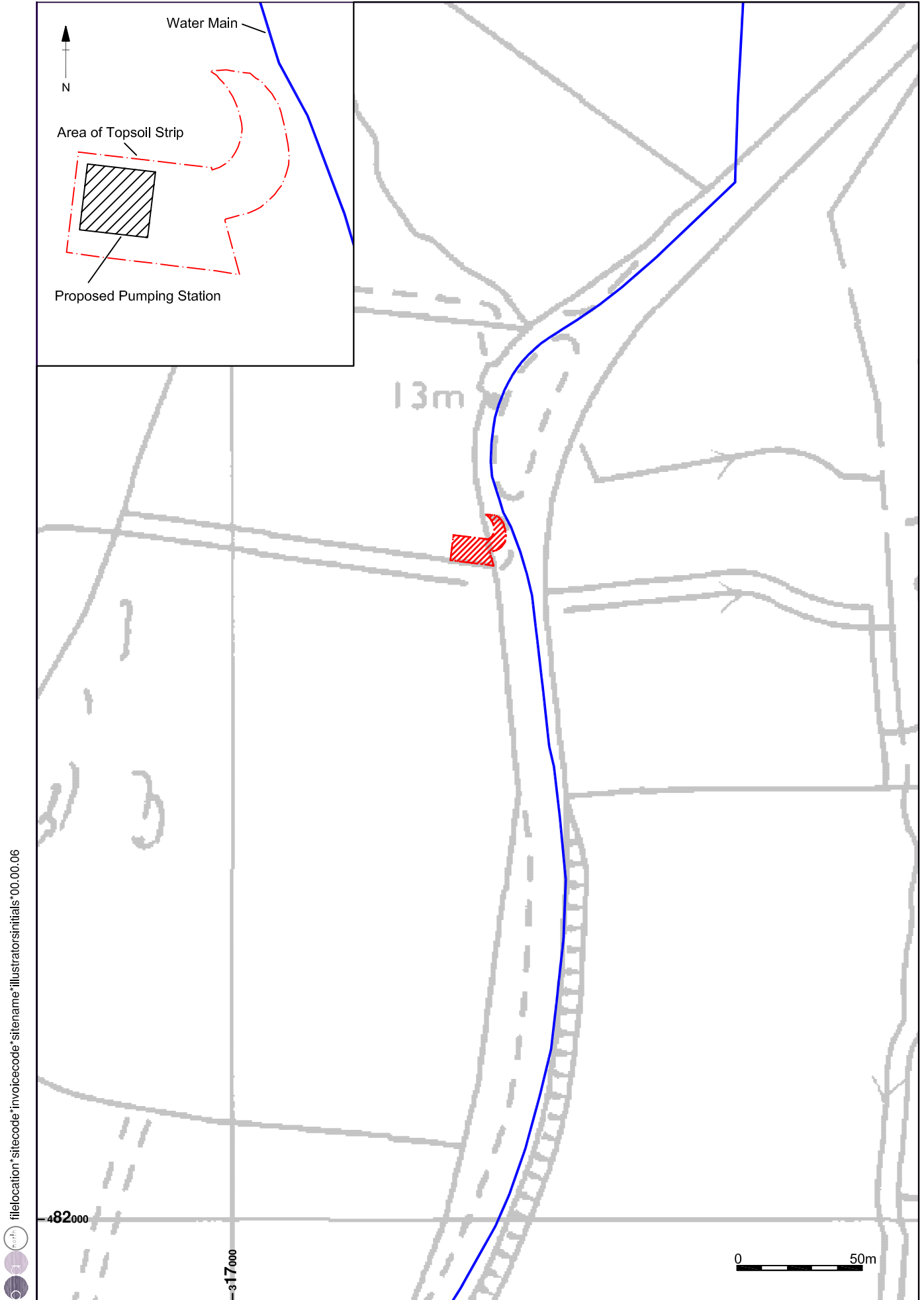


Figure 2: Plan of Topsoil Strip



Plate 1: Topsoil strip facing south



Plate 2: Topsoil strip facing north