



PILOT SURVEY OF HISTORIC SETTLEMENT PATTERNS IN WEARDALE, County Durham

Archaeological Project Brief.

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Proposals

The following project brief is in response to a request by Groundwork West Durham on behalf of the Weardale Society to undertake a pilot survey of a small number of historic settlement patterns of Weardale. The survey is designed to document and illustrate the basic settlement patterns, with a view to compliment other surveys and projects in the Dale.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 This brief is provided for a project being undertaken by Groundwork West Durham on behalf of the Weardale Society and funded by NRF. Tenders are invited for the pilot survey proposed to explore the traditional vernacular architecture of buildings, and the archaeological and historical development of five classic Weardale villages, in County Durham. A consequence will be to promote a holistic view of Weardale villages. It is hoped that the survey will be extended elsewhere in the future, and it will complement other surveys and projects in the dale.
- 1.1.2 Small settlements in upper Weardale are one of the less explored aspects of the historic environment. There exists a classic Weardale layout which seems to date from the medieval and post-medieval periods and comprises a ribbon development of two-row villages (Roberts 1996). For this reason these historic settlements are as much a part of the archaeological landscape as a Romano-British settlement, for example. This is further emphasised when taking into account the influence and management of the settlement over its immediate environs, such as extractive industries, field systems, and areas of woodland.
- 1.1.3 Unlike most other features of the archaeological landscape, however, these settlements are continually being modified by their inhabitants in order to meet the demands of modern life. Up-to-date information of the historical and archaeological importance of a settlement would therefore aid development control decisions as well as maintaining a record prior to any changes for the future.
- 1.1.4 One of the main aims of the project is to liaise with the local community and encourage their participation through meetings and activities. They should also be able to utilise the survey results to develop further projects.
- 1.1.5 For the purpose of the pilot study only five preferred settlements have been chosen, which are aimed at covering a variety of settlement types for both agricultural and industrial activities;
- **Frosterley** (centred NY 025369): farming (Peakfield) and quarrying
 - **Eastgate** (centred NY 951388) **and Westgate** (centred NY 907383): cluster settlements and industry (Height's Quarry), also linked to historic parkland
 - **Rookhope** (centred NY 938428): leadmining
 - **Wearhead** (centred NY 858397) **and Crawleyside** (centred NY 993402): rail links, agriculture and ancient settlements
 - **Edmundbyers** (centred NZ 017501): vernacular architecture, ancient settlements.
- 1.1.6 This brief has been prepared in order that detailed specifications and tenders may be sought from appropriately resourced, qualified and experienced archaeological contractors to undertake the archaeological pilot project outlined below. Any response to this brief should follow English Heritage Guidelines (MAP2 1991) and should be in accordance with standard guidelines, such as the IFA Standard

and Guidance Notes. The project should not commence until approval of a specification has been issued by the Archaeology Officer of Durham County Council.

1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 Evidence of settlement in Weardale originates in the Mesolithic period, with findspots of flint artefacts having been found in a number of places across the valley. People have continued to inhabit the area ever since and there is evidence of important Neolithic and Bronze Age activity within the dale. The later history of Weardale is intimately connected with the great medieval Deer Park of the Prince Bishops of Durham and forest at Stanhope. This covered as much as 30,000 acres and was home to an annual great hunt (Crosby 1989, 6-7). The hunt was a major economic factor in the area and many of the local inhabitants were expected to supply goods and services for these events (*ibid*). By the thirteenth century plans were afoot to convert the Deer Park for a more profitable purpose (Bowes and Wall nd, 4). New farms were encouraged, although initially on a seasonal basis using temporary structures called ‘shielings’ (*ibid*; Crosby 1989, 7). Nevertheless, these soon developed into more permanent villages. Place-name evidence provides an indication of the past land use of the Deer Park; for instance the settlements at Eastgate and Westgate are thought to relate to their position around the original entrances to the Park (Surtees 1925).
- 1.2.2 Contemporaneously, and perhaps even slightly earlier in the late twelfth century (Crosby 1989, 7), efforts were also being made to prospect for iron and lead (Bowes and Wall nd, 4) as an extension of the great Royal mines of the Alston area, just to the west. Mining eventually led to settlements in the area growing in size and complexity. This was aided by a period of increased political and military stability during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Graham 1939), which allowed the settlements to develop at speed.
- 1.2.3 The eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries saw a period of increased national growth and much of the land was improved or enclosed (Crosby 1989, 7). Many of the settlements in Weardale benefited and grew in size (Crosby 1993), with the majority of the inhabitants being both miners and farmers (Bowes and Wall nd, 4). Up until the beginning of the nineteenth century most people were still living in one-storey thatched dwellings. Such small houses would often house both animals and people and were relatively simply furnished (Graham 1939, 77). Larger farmhouses, on the other hand, would often be built ‘*in the form of a miniature border keep*’ (*op cit*, 86-7). Stone was typically used in building from the seventeenth century onwards (Atkinson 2001, 58), with heather thatch and flag floors also being common (*op cit*, 58-9).
- 1.2.4 During the later nineteenth century the iron and lead industries began to decline and quarrying now became the major source of employment (Crosby 1993). However, the general decline that had begun with the demise of the mining was only slowed and not halted by the development of quarrying. By this time most of the settlements in the area had already acquired new churches and chapels, particularly Methodist (Whellan 1894), a number of shops (Crosby 1989, 8), and had developed transport networks, of which many served the mines and quarries (Bowes 1996). By 1866 the collapse of Stanhope Park, which once dominated the

area, was symbolised by the establishment of several new parishes (Whellan 1894).

- 1.2.5 Compared to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries when the villages of the dale were at their industrial peak, today they seem somewhat diminished (Bowes and Wall nd, 5). However, their shared origins and development have resulted in a classic layout with a distinct vernacular architecture. It is this that the survey aims to investigate.

2 OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The pilot study for the Historic Settlement Survey has two main objectives;

- It proposes to document and illustrate the basic settlement patterns of a series of upper Weardale villages in a structured and integrated study. In addition, the survey should identify areas within Weardale that are of archaeological interest to help inform planning decisions and facilitate in development control policy. The information would also be utilised in land management and also in conservation considerations. In this way, a profile of the heritage of each of the five settlements will inform the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the County. Such a process of ‘characterisation’ of the historic environment is high on the agenda of all heritage bodies as a result of the English Heritage *Power of Place* (2000) publication.
- It also aims to encourage and stimulate involvement of the community. Therefore, it should serve as a facilitator for further projects that can be taken up by community groups, and will provide a direction on future research or direction for professional bodies alike. Consequently, the public awareness of heritage issues and resources can be increased by the public dissemination of the results of the profiling exercise, including talks and where possible content development for local websites.

- 2.2 The project will be carried out in the following way to the achieve these objectives:

2.2.1 ***Desk-Based Assessment:*** to collate and assess existing information about the archaeology of each of the settlements and its immediate surroundings. This should determine the nature, survival, quality, extent and importance of any known archaeological remains by means of a brief desk-based assessment, and identify zones of development in the settlements through cartographic evidence.

2.2.2 ***Buildings Investigation and Recording:*** to record a set of buildings, identified by the Weardale Society, within the settlement core of each village.

2.2.3 ***Community Activities:*** to initiate community activities in the form of community meetings to discuss the results of the survey, an activity day to encourage community participation, and a trip to each of the local schools.

3 METHODOLOGY REQUIREMENTS

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1 ***Documentary research:*** a brief assessment of any relevant information on the archaeology of each settlement and its immediate surroundings should be

compiled. This will involve the collation and assessment of any relevant information held in County Durham Sites and Monuments Record (housed at County Hall). This will identify important archaeological sites and assess the potential of known sites. Furthermore, an assessment of relevant published sources including articles in national, regional and local journals should be considered together with any relevant unpublished documents, such as reports compiled by heritage conservation professionals and student theses.

3.1.2 References in the Durham Record Office and the Clayport Library Local Studies Collection should be consulted, along with the Weardale Society, who will provide local expertise and knowledge of the settlements. This will serve to assess the archaeological potential of areas not identified through the SMR.

3.1.3 **Cartographic analysis:** the collation and assessment of all cartographic information relevant to the area is required in order to identify historic land use, to examine the siting of old boundaries and trackways and assess the field systems, and to identify any early buildings. An assessment of the topography and land use of the area through maps and site visits would also be beneficial. This analysis will provide information to assist in the identification of zones of development in each settlement and is likely to inform the Historic Landscape Characterisation of the County.

3.1.4 **Aerial photography:** an assessment of aerial photographic evidence held at the County Durham Sites and Monuments Record and Durham University will provide information on the historic settlements and their landscape settings. Both vertical and oblique aerial photographs should be inspected and catalogued for the project archive. Where relevant it may be necessary for the replotting of appropriate archaeological and topographical information by a suitably qualified specialist at a scale of 1:2500.

3.2 BUILDINGS INVESTIGATION AND RECORDING

3.2.1 The Weardale Society will identify the buildings of historic interest to be examined in each village. A non-intensive photographic record of the exterior of each of the buildings is required and should be included in the archive.

3.2.2 An additional written description and brief analysis should be provided for each building, comparable to the approach taken by the Listing Inspectors of English Heritage.

3.2.3 It is envisaged that it may lead to local initiatives relating to the internal inspection of buildings and detailed recording of observed features.

3.3 COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

3.3.1 Tenders are required to provide a broad programme for community involvement. This should consider encouraging student participation from schools in and around Weardale. In addition, it is intended that there should be a series of public meetings or activity days within the Weardale community to actively encourage any further information that may contribute to the primary research work, and to maintain contact and provide updates. This should culminate with a number of exhibitions or meetings to present the findings. A list of possible topics for further or future research to be tackled by local groups should be presented.

3.3.2 Durham University and Durham County Council are currently developing the North East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment, which aims to identify research priorities for the North East Region. The appointed contractor/consultant should make reference to existing communities in the research area.

4 REPORT

4.1 The archaeological study should result in a report. The overall report should include individual statements on each village studied, presented to a standard format. Each village section should be presentable as stand alone documents when removed from the final report, with each settlement having a relevant bibliography, together with relevant figures and plates.

4.2 The overall report should summarise the available evidence in an ordered form, synthesise the data, and comment on the quality and reliability of the evidence. As a minimum it should include:

- a front cover/frontispiece
- a concise, non-technical summary of the results
- a contents list and acknowledgements
- background to the project
- the dates on which the project was undertaken
- a description of the methodology employed, and procedures
- individual village reports
- a site location plan for each village, related to the national grid
- appropriate illustrations and plates
- a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived
- a copy of this brief and the successful project design with details of any agreed departures from either document.

4.2 The report will identify areas of defined archaeology. An assessment and statement of the actual and potential archaeological significance of the identified archaeology within the broader context of regional and national archaeological priorities should be made.

4.3 Two black and white draft versions of the report, due (*to be advised*), are to be sent to Groundwork West Durham, who will forward them for review and comment.

4.4 The final report must be completed by (*to be advised*). Five bound colour copies will be submitted to Groundwork West Durham. These will be disseminated as follows; one copy to Groundwork West Durham, one copy to the Archaeology Officer at Durham County Council, and three copies to the Weardale Society.

4.5 An electronic version in MSWord format on a CD should also be forwarded to the Weardale Society for their use.

5 ARCHIVE

- 5.1 The archive should consist of copies of the relevant documentary material arranged in date sequence for each village including bibliography with cartographic and pictorial sources. Photographs should be included for each village including negatives, photocopies, prints and transparencies. This could culminate in a database for each village of the collated information and sources.
- 5.2 An archive must be prepared in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991), and the appointed consultant/contractor must consult the Durham County Council Archive Guidance Note..
- 5.2 The County Archaeology Service must be notified of the arrangements made.

6 PROJECT MONITORING

- 6.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the Heritage Programme Co-ordinator at Groundwork West Durham with advice from the County Archaeologist based at Durham County Council when required. Therefore, the successful project proposal must be submitted to and approved by the Archaeology Officer, and sufficient notice must be given prior to the commencement of the project.
- 6.2 Proposals to meet this brief should take the form of a detailed specification or project design prepared in accordance with the recommendations of MAP2 (1991), and must include:
 - a detailed description of the proposed methodologies to be employed
 - a description of the report that will be produced
 - the relevant experience of the organization and key personnel and an outline of experience of County Durham, in particular Weardale
 - details of key project staff, including the names of the project manager, supervisor and any other specialist sub-contractors to be employed (ensuring that the project team displays the appropriate levels of expertise to comply with all relevant Codes of Practice of the IFA)
 - details of project staffing, expressed in terms of person days
 - a projected timetable for all work including the production of the report and submission of the archive
 - a breakdown of costs; each settlement is required to be costed individually with a total amount for the survey in the range of £16,000
- 6.3 Any significant variations to the specification must be agreed by the Archaeology Officer in advance.
- 6.4 The contract will be based on a fixed price basis with any subsequent agreed departures from the brief subject to negotiation.
- 6.5 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to establish safe working practices in terms of current health and safety legislation, to ensure site access and

to obtain notification of hazards if required. In addition, indemnification will be required for any property owners or landowners against any loss, damage or claims as a result of the survey and accept liability for any personal injury, loss or damage sustained whether by negligence or otherwise.

7 PUBLICATION

- 7.1 The information gathered in the survey will be used in the design and development of a booklet to be produced by the Weardale Society as part of the Mineral Valleys Project. Appropriate acknowledgements will be included.
- 7.2 Provision should be made for a summary report to be submitted to a suitable regional or national archaeological journal within one year of completion of fieldwork, if relevant results are obtained.

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www.durham.gov.uk/recordoffice

www.keystothepast.info

www.pastperfect.org.uk

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