

LEGH-012

Lady Berwick Pit

Martletwy, Pembrokeshire

Site Record

Landsker Explorer – Geospatial & Heritage

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GEOSPATIAL & HERITAGE



SURVEY



MODEL



RECORD



HERITAGE



MAPPING

MAPPING THE PAST • EXPLORING THE PRESENT • PRESERVING THE FUTURE

Contents

1. Introduction

2. Existing Record

3. Site Context

4. The Building

5. Internal Arrangement

6. The Blocked Opening and Rear Channel

7. The Spoil Tip

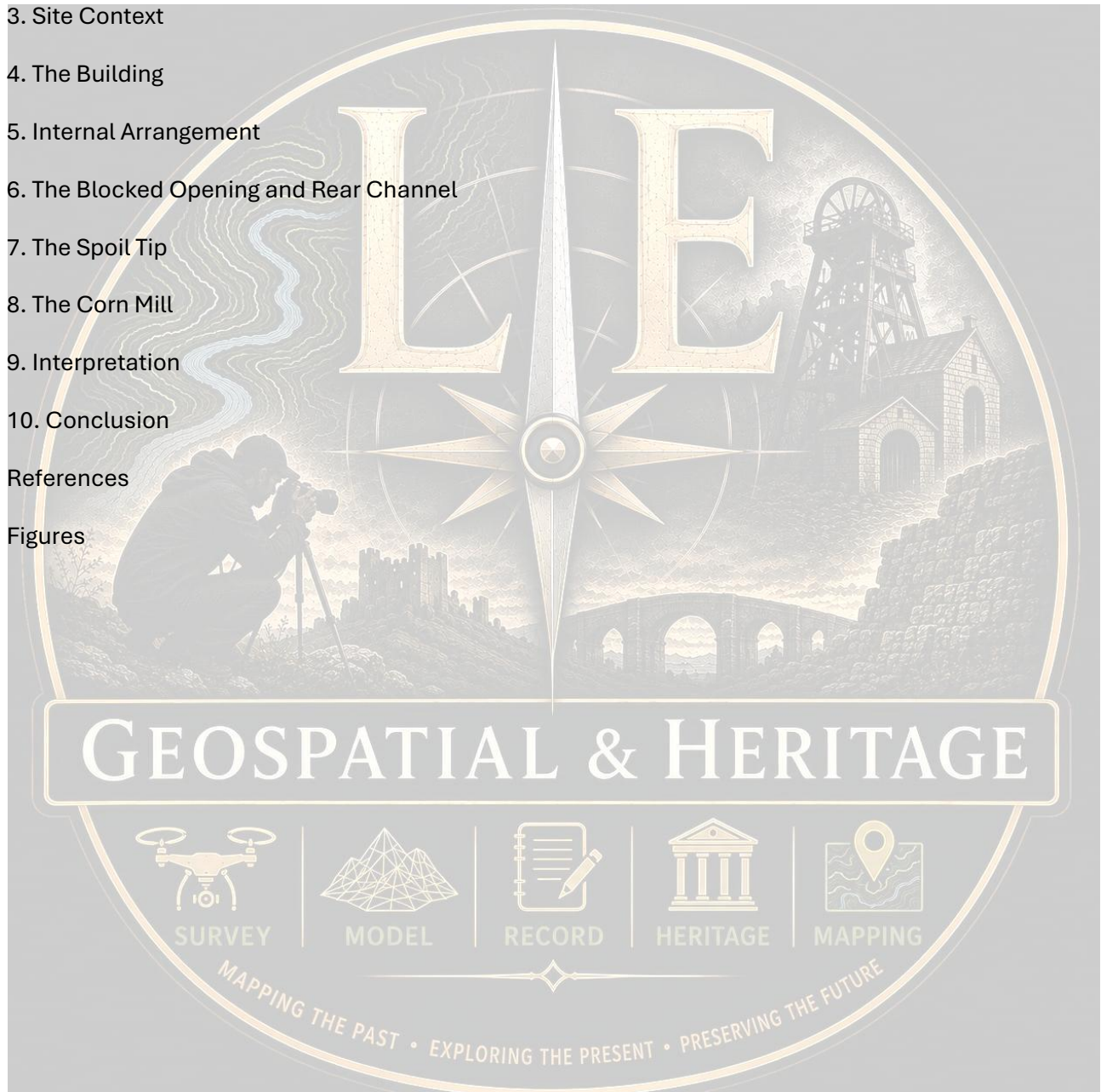
8. The Corn Mill

9. Interpretation

10. Conclusion

References

Figures



1. Introduction

Lady Berwick Pit is one of the least documented workings within the historic Landshipping mining district.

Unlike neighbouring workings, particularly Garden Pit, Lady Berwick rarely receives more than a passing mention within the available documentary record. Historic mine plans identify the position of the shaft, while the Geological Survey records the geology encountered during sinking. Beyond these references, very little has been written specifically about the pit itself and, to the author's knowledge, no dedicated investigation has previously examined the surviving building immediately adjacent to the shaft.

That absence of published work does not mean the site lacks evidence.

It simply means the evidence has remained on the ground rather than in the literature.

This Site Record has therefore been prepared from the site itself.

Rather than beginning with an existing interpretation and attempting to support or challenge it, this investigation begins with the surviving archaeology. Every conclusion presented within this report follows from observations made during field survey, supported by historic mapping and the limited documentary evidence currently available.

One statement appears repeatedly within the existing record.

Lady Berwick is described as an exploratory working.

At first glance there is no reason to question that description.

Standing on the site itself, however, several questions immediately arise.

Immediately adjacent to the recorded position of the shaft stands a substantial masonry building constructed from locally quarried stone with extensive brick incorporated throughout its construction (Figure 1). Beside both the shaft and the building survive a substantial spoil tip composed predominantly of fractured slate and associated waste rock produced during underground excavation (Figure 2).

Neither feature appears isolated.

Neither appears incidental.

Instead, they form a single group of surviving archaeological features occupying the operational area of the pit.

That relationship forms the basis of this investigation.

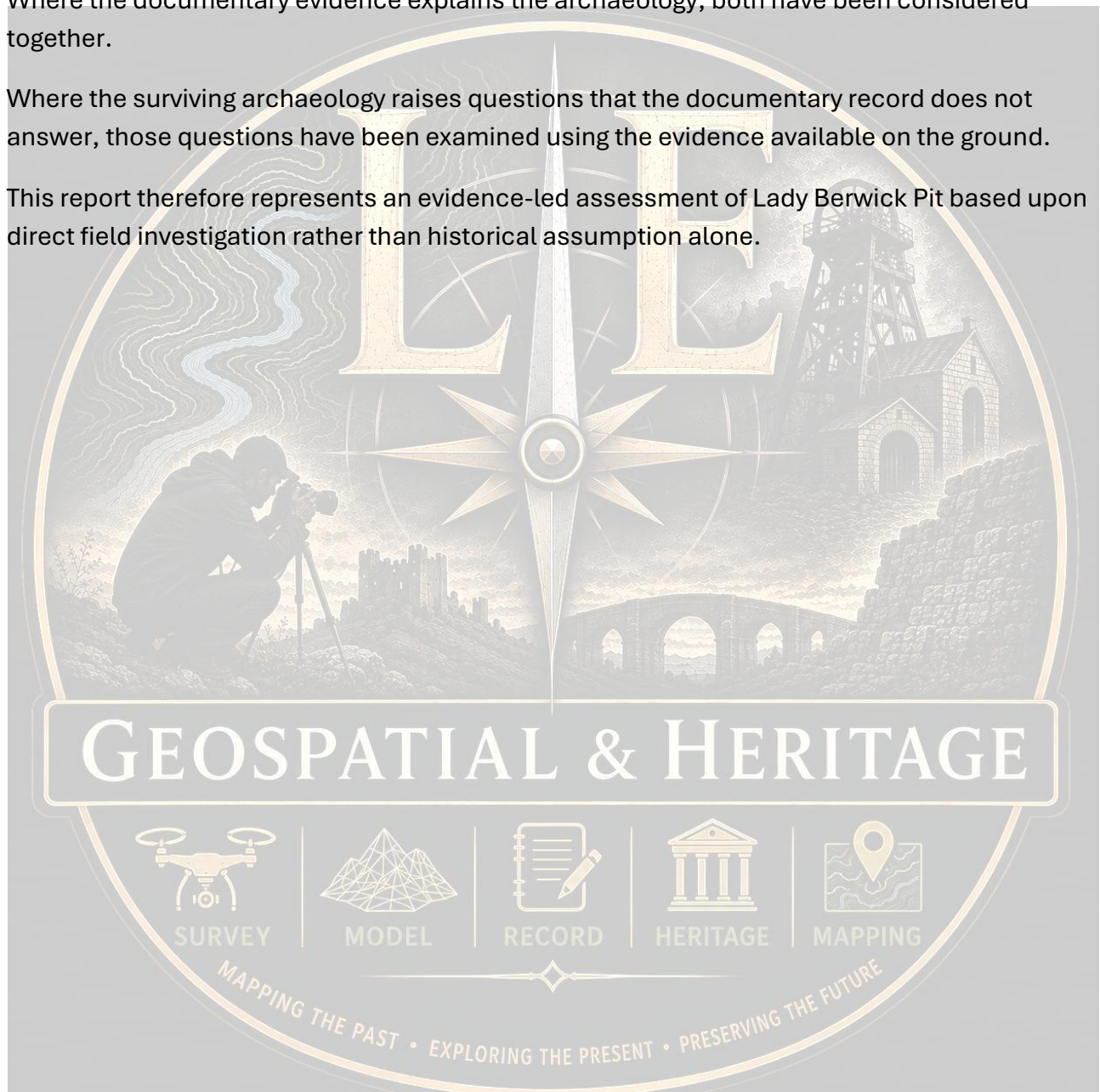
The purpose of this Site Record is not to replace one assumption with another.

It is to record what survives, examine how those surviving features relate to one another and determine whether the physical evidence supports the existing interpretation of Lady Berwick Pit.

Where the documentary evidence explains the archaeology, both have been considered together.

Where the surviving archaeology raises questions that the documentary record does not answer, those questions have been examined using the evidence available on the ground.

This report therefore represents an evidence-led assessment of Lady Berwick Pit based upon direct field investigation rather than historical assumption alone.



2. Existing Record

The documentary record relating specifically to Lady Berwick Pit is remarkably limited.

Historic mine plans record the position of the shaft together with associated workings forming part of the wider Landshipping mining complex (Figure 3). The Geological Survey records the shaft as an exploratory working undertaken to prove the coal measures south of the Old Mill Fault. During sinking, several coal seams were encountered before the shaft reached disturbed ground associated with the fault at a depth of approximately fifty-two yards.

These records are valuable because they establish the geological context of the site.

They also demonstrate that Lady Berwick was considerably more than a shallow surface excavation.

A shaft reaching approximately fifty-two yards represents a significant engineering undertaking requiring considerable excavation before work ceased.

Beyond these references, however, very little documentary material relating directly to Lady Berwick has been identified.

More importantly, surviving archaeology has received virtually no attention.

The standing building is not described.

Its construction is not recorded.

The substantial wall thickness is not discussed.

The internal arrangement is not examined.

No attempt has been made within the available literature to explain the relationship between the building, the shaft and the adjacent spoil tip.

These omissions are entirely understandable.

The Geological Survey was written to record geology rather than industrial archaeology, while historic mine plans were produced to record mining activity rather than standing buildings.

Nevertheless, those omissions leave important questions unanswered.

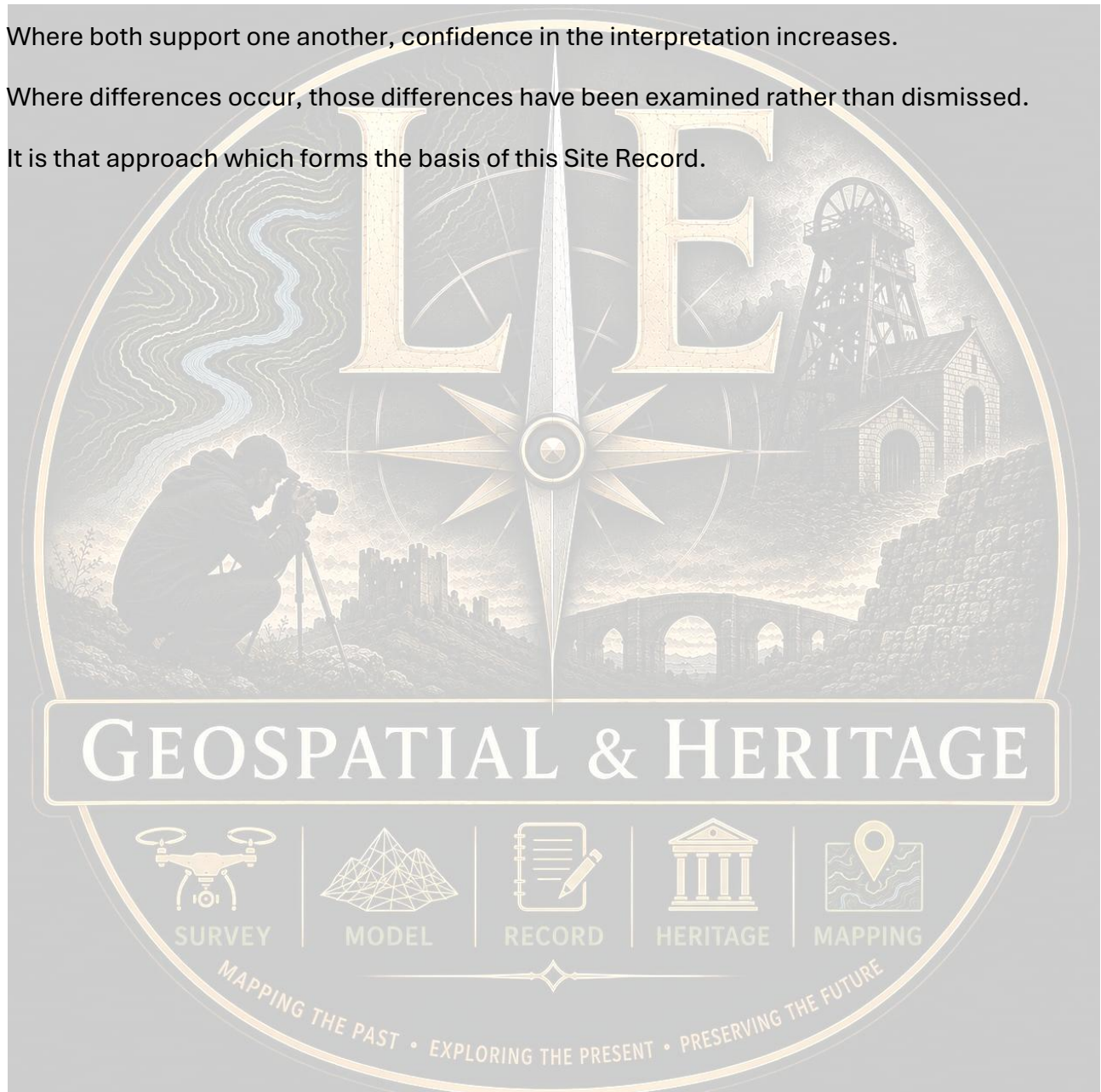
This Site Record therefore relies primarily upon direct observation of the surviving archaeology, using the documentary record to provide historical context rather than determine interpretation.

Throughout this investigation, the documentary evidence has been considered alongside the physical evidence rather than in isolation.

Where both support one another, confidence in the interpretation increases.

Where differences occur, those differences have been examined rather than dismissed.

It is that approach which forms the basis of this Site Record.



3. Site Context

Lady Berwick Pit formed part of the wider Landshipping mining complex, but the surviving evidence suggests it should be considered as an individual working rather than simply as an extension of neighbouring pits.

Historic mapping clearly records the position of the shaft together with the adjacent building and associated spoil tip (Figure 3). Comparison with the modern landscape confirms that the principal archaeological features survive in broadly the same relationship today (Figure 2). Although the site has naturally deteriorated since mining ceased, the overall layout remains readily identifiable.

One observation became immediately apparent during the field survey.

The building examined within this Site Record is not the building identified on historic mapping as the former corn mill.

The mapped corn mill occupied a substantially larger building situated across the road from Lady Berwick Pit. It occupied a different position within the landscape, stood on lower ground and formed part of an entirely separate group of buildings.

The surviving structure examined within this investigation occupies none of those characteristics.

Instead, it stands immediately beside the shaft.

Immediately beside the spoil tip.

Immediately within the operational area of the pit itself.

That distinction is fundamental.

If the surviving building is incorrectly assumed to be the corn mill, its relationship with Lady Berwick Pit is immediately lost. Once the two buildings are separated, however, the archaeology begins to tell a very different story.

The building, shaft and spoil tip should not be viewed as three unrelated features surviving within the same landscape.

They should be viewed as three components of the same mining site.

That relationship is visible both on the historic mapping and on the ground today.

The Geological Survey records Lady Berwick reaching approximately fifty-two yards before work ceased.

That immediately raises practical considerations.

Coal had to be raised from underground.

Waste material had to be removed.

Groundwater had to be managed.

These are not unusual requirements for a nineteenth-century pit, but they are important because they require infrastructure at the surface.

Whatever form that infrastructure took, it had to be positioned where it could directly serve the shaft.

The surviving building already occupies exactly that position.

For that reason, its location should not be regarded as incidental.

Its location forms part of the evidence.



4. The Building

The surviving building represents the principal structural feature associated with Lady Berwick Pit.

Although now roofless and partially collapsed, enough of the original fabric survives to allow meaningful assessment of both its construction and likely purpose.

The building is constructed predominantly from locally quarried sedimentary stone bonded with lime mortar. Brick has been incorporated extensively throughout the structure, particularly around openings and in areas where greater structural accuracy or additional strength was required (Figures 4–6).

The first impression when examining the building is not its condition.

It is the quality of its construction.

This was not a lightly built structure.

The surviving walls are exceptionally substantial (Figure 5). Their thickness immediately suggests that the building was intended to support significant loads rather than simply provide shelter.

Internally, the same approach to construction continues.

The principal dividing wall is comparable in thickness to the external walls and clearly forms part of the original design rather than representing a later subdivision (Figure 6).

Taken together, these observations demonstrate that the building was designed as a permanent industrial structure.

That conclusion does not depend upon interpretation.

It is evident from the surviving masonry itself.

The accepted interpretation of Lady Berwick as an exploratory working therefore presents an immediate question.

If the site never developed beyond exploratory work, why invest in a building of this scale immediately beside the shaft?

Wall thickness alone cannot answer that question.

Neither can the use of brick.

Nor can the position of the building.

Individually, each observation simply records part of the surviving archaeology.

When considered together, however, they begin to describe a building intended to perform a significant operational role within the pit.

The building also records evidence of alteration during its working life.

Several openings have been modified.

Others have been blocked entirely.

These alterations indicate that the structure was adapted as operational requirements changed rather than abandoned immediately following construction.

That observation is consistent with a building that remained in active use rather than one erected solely for temporary exploration.

At this stage of the investigation, the building can therefore be described with confidence as a permanent industrial structure directly associated with Lady Berwick Pit.

Its precise function remains to be determined.

The surviving archaeology, however, strongly suggests that it formed an integral part of the mining operation rather than an unrelated building occupying the same landscape.



5. Internal Arrangement

Although the roof has long since disappeared, the surviving walls preserve enough of the original layout to examine how the building functioned internally.

The most significant surviving feature is the substantial internal dividing wall (Figure 9-9.2).

This is not a lightweight partition inserted during a later phase of the building's life. It is built to the same standard as the principal external walls and forms part of the original structural arrangement. Its construction alone demonstrates that the internal layout was planned from the outset rather than adapted from a single open space.

That observation immediately raises another question.

Why divide a building of this size into two heavily constructed spaces?

If the building served only one simple purpose, an internal wall of this scale becomes difficult to explain.

If, however, the building was designed to accommodate more than one operation, the arrangement would become considerably more logical.

Lady Berwick required coal to be raised from underground.

It also required groundwater to be controlled if mining was to continue.

Those are two separate operations, but both require mechanical power.

Rather than constructing separate buildings, it is entirely reasonable that both functions could have been accommodated within a single permanent structure.

This interpretation also fits physical evidence.

The internal wall is not simply dividing space; it appears to separate functions.

Exactly where individual pieces of machinery were located cannot presently be demonstrated from the surviving archaeology alone. No engine bed survives in a recognizable form, and no surviving fixtures can be confidently attributed to specific machinery.

It would therefore be inappropriate to suggest precise locations for winding equipment, boilers or pumping machinery, that evidence simply does not survive.

What does survive is the building itself.

Its construction demonstrates permanence.

Its internal arrangement demonstrates planning.

Its position demonstrates direct association with the shaft.

Taken together, these observations are consistent with a building designed to accommodate more than one operational requirement.

Based on the evidence currently available, the most practical interpretation is that the structure functioned as a combined winding and pumping house, with a steam engine providing power for both operations.

That interpretation should not be viewed as a statement of certainty; it is an interpretation derived from surviving evidence.

At present, it is also the interpretation that accounts for the greatest number of observed features without requiring additional assumptions.



6. The Blocked Opening and Rear Channel

One feature became immediately apparent during the field survey.

A substantial opening within the building has been deliberately blocked (Figure 7).

The blocking is clearly distinguishable from the surrounding masonry and demonstrates that the opening belongs to an earlier phase of the building before being intentionally infilled.

This alteration appears deliberate rather than the result of collapse.

More importantly, the blocked opening aligns directly with a linear feature surviving behind the building.

The original purpose of that feature cannot presently be stated with certainty.

It may represent a transport route, it may represent a drainage feature, or it may have fulfilled more than one function during different phases of the site's operation.

At present, the surviving evidence does not allow one interpretation to be confirmed above another.

One possibility, however, deserves closer consideration.

If the building functioned as a combined winding and pumping house, groundwater removed from the shaft required a means of leaving the building.

The blocked opening provides a direct route towards the rear linear feature.

This relationship appears deliberate.

Equally important is what has not been identified.

During the field investigation, no convincing evidence was found for the infrastructure normally associated with a water-powered mill.

No leat approaching the building has been identified, no wheel pit has been recognized, no practical route has been identified by which sufficient water could enter the building, operate a wheel and then leave through the rear.

The surrounding topography presents additional difficulties.

The road lies between the building and the known water sources, modern flooding also occurs further downslope, in the vicinity of the mapped corn mill rather than beside the Lady Berwick building.

That observation does not, on its own, exclude a water-powered function.

It does, however, require additional assumptions that are not presently supported by the surviving evidence.

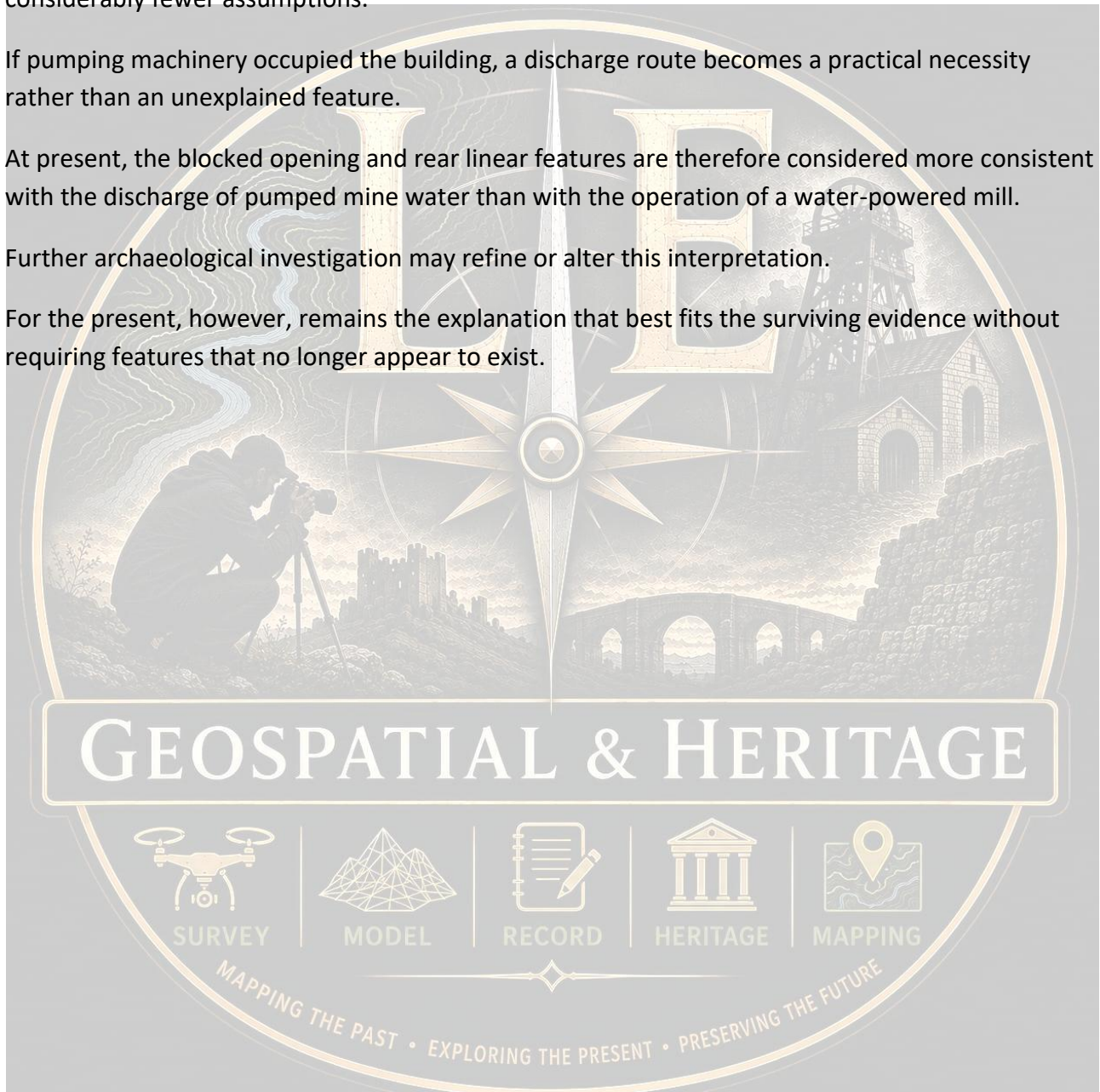
By comparison, the interpretation of water leaving the building rather than entering it requires considerably fewer assumptions.

If pumping machinery occupied the building, a discharge route becomes a practical necessity rather than an unexplained feature.

At present, the blocked opening and rear linear features are therefore considered more consistent with the discharge of pumped mine water than with the operation of a water-powered mill.

Further archaeological investigation may refine or alter this interpretation.

For the present, however, remains the explanation that best fits the surviving evidence without requiring features that no longer appear to exist.



7. The Spoil Tip

The spoil tip is one of the most important surviving features associated with Lady Berwick Pit.

Although the standing building immediately attracts attention, it is the spoil tip that demonstrates the physical scale of work undertaken below ground. Without excavation there could be no spoil, and without spoil there would be little surviving evidence for material being removed during the sinking of the shaft and any subsequent underground development.

The spoil tip survives immediately adjacent to both the shaft and the building (Figures 1 and 2). This relationship is significant. Rather than occupying an isolated position elsewhere within the landscape, the spoil forms part of the same operational area as the surviving building.

The material itself consists predominantly of fractured slate together with associated waste rock removed during excavation (Figure 8).

This is not naturally accumulated material; it is the direct product of mining activity.

The Geological Survey records Lady Berwick reaching approximately fifty-two yards before work ceased. Even if the shaft alone is considered, that depth represents a considerable volume of excavated material. The spoil surviving today is entirely consistent with such an undertaking.

Its size, however, raises a further question.

If Lady Berwick remained little more than an exploratory working, why does the spoil tip appear so substantial?

The term exploratory can easily create the impression of a small, short-lived excavation.

That need not be the case.

A trial shaft may still require considerable investment, significant excavation and extensive surface infrastructure before its commercial potential can be assessed.

The surviving archaeology at Lady Berwick appears entirely consistent with that level of investment.

Equally, the spoil tip should not be considered independently of the building.

The two features are physically connected.

The spoil records the excavation below ground.

The building represents the infrastructure above it.

Neither feature explains the site on its own.

Together, they describe a working pit rather than an isolated exploratory shaft.

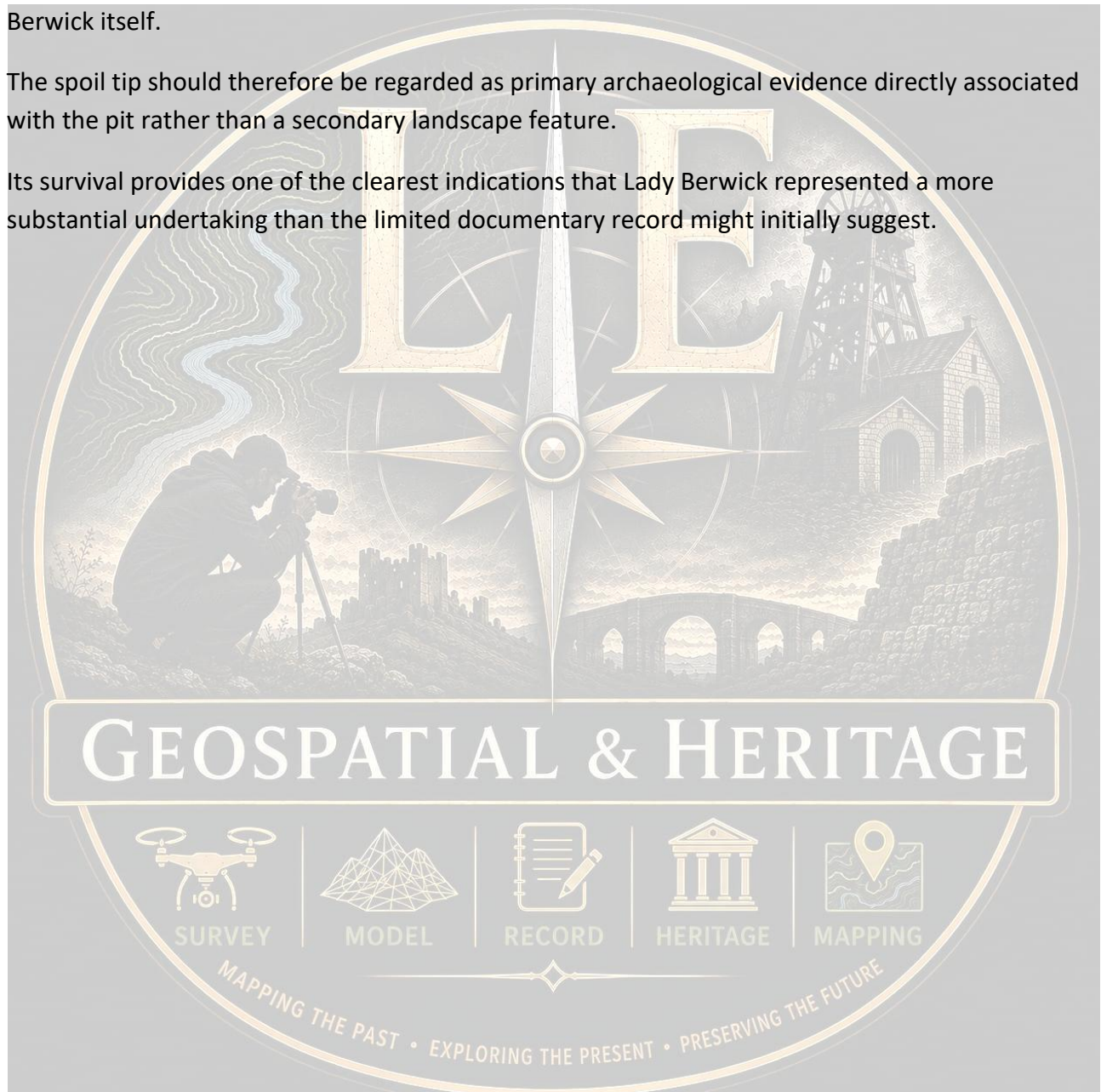
It is also worth noting what the spoil tip does not contain.

No evidence has been identified suggesting that material was imported from elsewhere.

Its composition appears entirely consistent with waste produced during excavation at Lady Berwick itself.

The spoil tip should therefore be regarded as primary archaeological evidence directly associated with the pit rather than a secondary landscape feature.

Its survival provides one of the clearest indications that Lady Berwick represented a more substantial undertaking than the limited documentary record might initially suggest.



8. The Corn Mill

Throughout this investigation, one point has required particular attention.

The surviving building beside Lady Berwick Pit has, at times, been associated with the nearby corn mill.

Historic mapping does not support that interpretation.

The mapping clearly identifies the corn mill as occupying a separate and substantially larger building situated across the road from Lady Berwick Pit (Figure 3).

The surviving building examined within this Site Record occupies a completely different position.

It stands immediately beside the shaft, immediately beside the spoil tip, immediately within the operational area of the mine.

That distinction is fundamental.

If both buildings are treated as one, the archaeological relationship between the surviving structure and Lady Berwick Pit is effectively lost.

Once they are separated, the surviving evidence becomes considerably easier to interpret.

The topography also deserves consideration.

The mapped corn mill occupies lower ground.

Modern flooding occurs within this area following prolonged rainfall.

The Lady Berwick building occupies higher ground and demonstrates no obvious evidence for the infrastructure normally associated with a water-powered mill.

No convincing evidence has been identified for a leat approaching the building.

No wheel pit has been identified during field investigation.

No practical route has been recognised by which water could enter the building, power a wheel and subsequently leave through a conventional tail race.

This does not prove that such infrastructure never existed.

It does mean that the current archaeological evidence does not support its former presence.

By contrast, the relationship between the building and the shaft requires no additional assumptions.

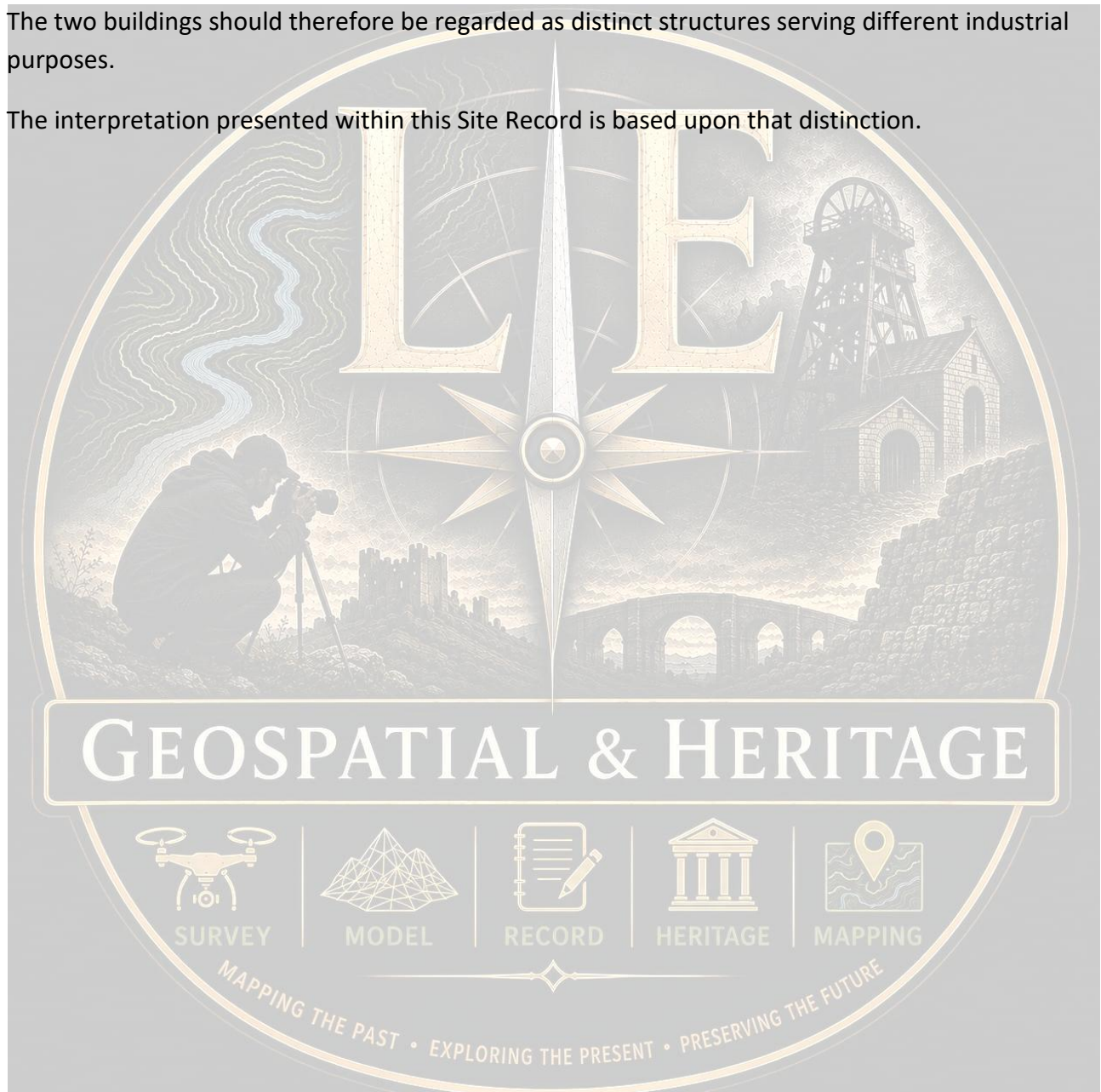
The building already occupies the position expected of infrastructure serving the mine.

That relationship exists both on the historic mapping and within the modern landscape.

For that reason, the surviving building is considered more closely associated with the operation of Lady Berwick Pit than with the separately identified corn mill.

The two buildings should therefore be regarded as distinct structures serving different industrial purposes.

The interpretation presented within this Site Record is based upon that distinction.



9. Interpretation

The purpose of this Site Record has not been to come to a predetermined conclusion.

It has been to examine the surviving archaeology at Lady Berwick Pit and determine whether the physical evidence supports the existing interpretation of the site.

The documentary record describes Lady Berwick as a exploratory working. That description is not disputed.

The question is whether the surviving archaeology reflects nothing more than an exploratory shaft.

On balance, the evidence suggests otherwise.

The shaft reached a recorded depth of approximately fifty-two yards through disturbed ground associated with the Old Mill Fault, immediately adjacent to the shaft survives a substantial spoil tip representing the waste generated during excavation.

Beside both stands a permanent masonry building occupying the operational area of the pit.

The building is constructed using locally quarried stone with extensive brick incorporated throughout its construction, its walls are exceptionally substantial.

Its internal arrangement was planned from the outset; a heavily constructed internal dividing wall separates the building into two principal spaces.

Evidence survives demonstrating that the building continued to evolve during its working life, with openings altered and others deliberately blocked.

None of these observations independently identifies the function of the building.

Considered together, however, they present a coherent picture.

The building was clearly intended to perform a significant operational role within the mine.

It was not a temporary structure, it was not lightly constructed, nor was it positioned independently of the shaft.

The relationship between the shaft, spoil tip and building appears deliberate and functional.

One question has remained central throughout this investigation.

If the building did not serve the mine, what did it serve?

The suggestion that it formed part of the nearby corn mill presents several difficulties.

Historic mapping clearly places the corn mill within a different building across the road.

The surviving building occupies a separate location immediately adjacent to the shaft.

No convincing evidence has been identified for the infrastructure normally associated with a water-powered mill.

Conversely, the building occupies exactly the position expected of permanent surface infrastructure associated with mining operations.

Lady Berwick required winding.

Coal extracted from underground had to be brought to the surface.

Lady Berwick also required pumping.

Groundwater encountered during sinking and subsequent working had to be controlled if mining was to continue.

Both operations required mechanical power.

Both required permanent surface infrastructure.

The surviving building provides a practical solution to both requirements.

Based on the evidence currently available, the most consistent interpretation is that the building functioned as a combined winding and pumping house, powered by steam and serving Lady Berwick Pit directly.

This interpretation should not be regarded as definitive.

No surviving machinery remains in situ, no contemporary description identifying the building has presently been located.

Absolute certainty is therefore neither possible nor claimed, archaeological interpretation rarely deals with certainty.

Instead, it considers which explanation best accounts for the available evidence while requiring the fewest unsupported assumptions.

At present, the combined winding and pumping house interpretation satisfies that requirement more successfully than any alternative considered during this investigation.

It explains the building's location, it explains the scale of its construction, it explains the internal arrangement, it explains the relationship with the shaft, it explains the relationship with the spoil tip, whilst also providing a practical explanation for why such a substantial permanent building survives beside a pit traditionally regarded as little more than exploratory.

10. Conclusion

Lady Berwick Pit has remained largely overlooked within the published history of the Landshipping mining district.

While neighbouring workings have attracted considerable attention, Lady Berwick has remained little more than a name on historic plans and a brief description within the Geological Survey.

Surviving Archaeology tells a more detailed story.

This investigation has demonstrated that the principal components of the site remain identifiable despite the passage of time.

The shaft survives as a recorded feature.

The spoil tip survives as substantial physical evidence of underground excavation.

The masonry building survives as the principal structural element associated with the pit.

Together, these features form a coherent archaeological landscape.

Comparison between the documentary record and the surviving archaeology demonstrates that important questions remain unanswered.

The existing description of Lady Berwick as an exploratory working is not inconsistent with the surviving evidence.

The suggestion that no permanent surface infrastructure existed is considerably more difficult to reconcile with what survives today.

The building immediately adjacent to the shaft represents a significant investment in labour, materials and engineering.

Its position, construction and internal arrangement strongly suggest that it fulfilled an operational role directly associated with the mine.

Based on the evidence currently available, that role is interpreted as a combined winding and pumping house serving Lady Berwick Pit.

Whether future investigation confirms or modifies that interpretation remains to be seen.

What is clear, however, is that Lady Berwick deserves considerably more attention than it has previously received.

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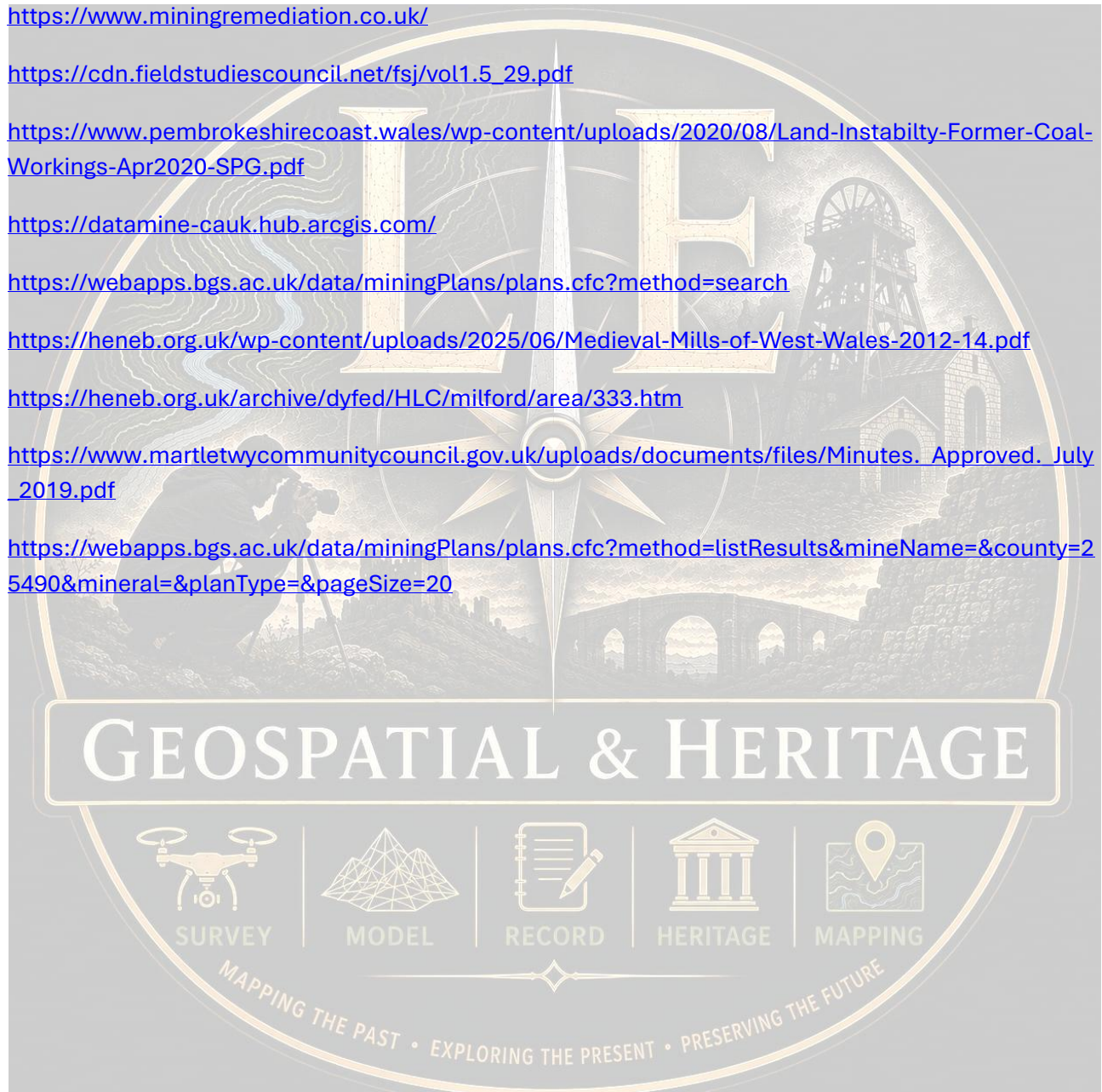
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12. Figures

Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9



Figure 9.1



Figure 9.2

