



MILLER HOMES

**GRAVESTONE OF BLACKIE, THE WAR HORSE AT THE FORMER LIVERPOOL RSPCA
CENTRE, HIGHER ROAD, HALEWOOD**

HERITAGE ASSESSMENT

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CENTRE, HIGHER ROAD, HALEWOOD**

HERITAGE STATEMENT

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DRAWINGS

GM11664-009 Location of the Grade II Listed Gravestone of Blackie, the War Horse

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1.1 This report has been prepared to accompany an application for listed building for the cleaning, re-lettering, and subsequent re-siting of the Grade II listed gravestone of 'Blackie, the War Horse' (**NHLE: 1436263**) as part of approved landscaping works associated with the recent planning approval for the redevelopment of the former Liverpool RSPCA Centre, Higher Road, Halewood for housing with associated landscape, infrastructure and associated works (Planning Reference: 19/00104/FUL). The approved works include for the creation of a raised landscaped area at the current location of the gravestone with associated interpretation board installed at the site of the Grade II listed gravestone of 'Blackie, the War Horse'.
- 1.1.2 The approved landscaping and associated works have the potential to impact upon the significance of the listed gravestone. This Heritage Statement details the proposed works including the methodology for cleaning and re-lettering and provides a proportionate statement of significance in order to assess the impact of the works.
- 1.1.3 Previous works undertaken by Wardell Armstrong LLP include a Historic Building Recording on an eighteenth-century barn and pet cemetery at the Site. These works included an initial recording of the Grade II listed gravestone including initial observation on its present condition.
- 1.1.4 The assessment was undertaken in accordance with terminology expressed within the National Planning Policy Framework and Historic England good practice guidance.

2 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS AND HERITAGE PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1.1 A heritage asset is defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as ‘*A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions because of its heritage interest*’ (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government 2021, Annex 2 page:67).

2.2 Legislation

2.2.1 Designated heritage assets protected by statutory legislation comprise Scheduled Monuments, Protected Wrecks, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

2.2.2 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas are protected under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act (1990). In relation to development proposals, the legislation states that:

‘in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, the local planning authority or, as the case may be, the secretary of state shall have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses’ (section 66).

2.3 National Policy

2.3.1 In ensuring the statutory duty of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act, the NPPF requires that in determining applications ‘*great weight*’ should be given to the asset’s conservation and that ‘*substantial harm to or loss of... grade II listed buildings, or grade II registered parks or gardens, should be exceptional*’ whilst ‘*substantial harm to or loss of...assets of the highest significance, notably Scheduled Monuments, protected wreck sites, registered battlefields, Grade I and II* listed buildings, Grade I and II* Registered Parks And Gardens, and World Heritage Sites, should be wholly exceptional*’ (MHCLG 2021, para:199 & 200).

2.3.2 The significance of a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) is defined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as ‘*the value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. This interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic*’ (MHCLG 2021, Annex 2 page:71).

2.3.3 The setting of a heritage asset (designated or non-designated) is defined as ‘*the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may*

change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.’ (MHCLG 2021, Annex 2 page:71).

2.3.4 Where heritage assets (designated or non-designated) are to be affected by development, *‘local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting. The level of detail should be proportionate to the assets’ importance and no more than is sufficient to understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance’* (MHCLG 2021, para:194).

2.3.5 Developments where substantial harm to or total loss of significance of a designated heritage asset should be assessed against specific tests and should deliver substantial public benefits which outweigh any loss or harm (MHCLG 2021, para:201). Less than substantial harm to a designated asset would require public benefits including the securement of an optimum viable use (MHCLG 2021, para:202).

2.4 Local Policy

2.4.1 Local policy from the Knowsley Local Plan: Core Strategy (adopted 2016) has been reviewed as part of the assessment. The relevant elements of the policy on heritage are quoted below:

Policy CS20: Managing the Borough’s Historic Environment

1. Development proposals in Knowsley should preserve or enhance the borough’s historic and architectural assets, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, Historic Parks and Gardens and archaeological remains, together with other local areas, buildings and structures of historic importance. The Council will:
 - a. Require preservation of the local distinctiveness and character of heritage assets through sensitive design of new development, including appropriate integration with their setting and immediate landscape;
 - b. Prevent demolition and/or development which would result in substantial harm or the loss of a designated heritage asset or its setting, unless the proposal would result in substantial public benefits which clearly outweigh the harm or loss;
 - c. ~Where a development proposal will result in less than substantial harm to a designated heritage asset or its setting, assess such harm against the benefits or the proposal; and

- d. Facilitate long term conservation and enhancement of local assets and areas of historic importance, including through the preparation of Conservation Area Management Plans.
- 2. The re-use of vacant and underused historic assets will be encouraged with favourable consideration given, where appropriate, to proposals which will:
 - a. Enable a use for a purpose sympathetic to its conservation;
 - b. Retain or introduce public access; and
 - c. Enhance the importance of the asset for tourism, leisure or the economy.
- 3. Development proposals on sites which include, or are considered to have the potential to include, heritage assets or comprising archaeological interest, should be accompanied by a heritage impact statement.

3 ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE AND SETTING

- 3.1.1 The gravestone is located at the western extent of the Site adjacent to Baileys Lane. The gravestone is in need of some minor maintenance to address surface discolouration and the wear to the lettering which has become difficult to read. The overall condition (based on visual observation only) of the stone appears to be good with no visible chips or cracks (Plate 1).



Plate 1: The Grade II Gravestone of Blackie, the War Horse. Photographed 04/05/2021

- 3.1.2 A description of the interests held by the Grade II listed Gravestone of 'Blackie, the War Horse' (NHLE: 1436263) is presented below. These are discussed in proportion to the value of the asset and as far as is necessary in order to determine the potential effect of the proposals on this.

Historic Interest

- 3.1.3 The historic interest of the gravestone stems principally from the association with Blackie the War Horse, the asset providing a physical memorial to the memory of Blackie and his role within the First World War.

3.1.4 The listing description (Appendix 1) identifies historic interest through three themes which are expanded on below:

- Blackie's association with the wartime poet, his master, Leonard Comer Wall, and how their bond is reflective of thousands of soldiers and their horses on the western front during the First World War;
- The strong cultural and historic significance in representing the key role animals played in war; and
- The gravestone's rarity in remembering an individual animal which served in, and survived, the First World War.

3.1.5 At the outbreak of the First World War Leonard Comer Wall was studying at Clifton college and immediately volunteered. Although it is unknown where Blackie was prior to the war it is likely he was born c.1905 and bought from a local farm or business. This was common practice throughout the war where thousands of horses and animals, including pigeons, were bought by the military for the war effort. Wall received his first commission on the 29th of August 1914 as temporary Lieutenant. Blackie, Wall, and his groom Frank Wilkinson were posted to the Western Front on the 9th of September 1915 (Royden).

3.1.6 The trio saw action on the Somme and around Arras before being moved north to Ypres. At Flanders field Wall wrote the well-known poem 'Red Roses', the final line of which became the motto of the 55th Division and placed on the graves of those who died (*Ibid*). It is this poem to which Blackie's gravestone draws some significance.

3.1.7 In June 1917 Wall was promoted to Lieutenant and a week later was in action at Ypres whilst riding Blackie. On the 8th of June Wall, Wilkinson and Blackie were hit by shrapnel from an exploding shell. Wilkinson died instantaneously and Wall died the next day. However, Blackie survived the explosion suffering from injuries which scarred his body for the remainder of his life. After the explosion Blackie continued to serve the war effort (*Ibid*).

3.1.8 Lieutenant Wall's will, uncovered in 1918, revealed instructions that upon the event of his death Blackie was to be cared for and upon Blackie's death he should be buried with his masters' medals. This dedication Wall had to Blackie is representative of the thousands of soldiers and horses who fought on the western front, the horses whom the soldiers relied upon, trusted and their most faithful companions during the horrors of war (War Horse Memorial 2022).

- 3.1.9 After the war Wall's wishes were followed; his mother bought Blackie, loaning him to the Territorial Riding School in Liverpool. In 1930 Blackie was pensioned off to the Horse's Rest in Liverpool, the precursor to the Liverpool RSPCA Centre, which cared for retired working horses. It is believed, in his later years, Blackie became somewhat of a local celebrity leading Liverpool May Day Horses' Parades alongside a fellow ex-war horse Billy. During the parade he wore his masters' medals, further showing the connection between master and horse (Royden).
- 3.1.10 Blackie resided at the Horse's Rest until his death in 1942. The news of Blackie's death was covered nationally with the announcement posted as far as Portsmouth, Dundee and Belfast. As per Lieutenant Wall's request, Blackie was buried with his master's medals (Royden/War Horse Memorial). A gravestone was erected for Blackie, a rarity for animals who served, and survived, in the First World War. The gravestone also signifies the importance Blackie held to Lieutenant Wall's family, who carried out Wall's wishes, and those who cared for him. The gravestone was listed in 2017.
- 3.1.11 Blackie and Lieutenant Wall are a key example of the bond shared between master and horse during the First World War. The brief time they were together was clearly impactful upon Wall. This bond is something seen throughout the First World War and in modern day society. The celebration of Blackie's life in the form of the gravestone is a constant reminder of his service and the service of other animals throughout the war effect.

Architectural Interest

- 3.1.12 The gravestone comprises of York Gravestone which is a form of hard sandstone. The design of the gravestone has a triangular head with stepped shoulders. The simple design bears similarities to those in military cemeteries. It is this similarity which significance is drawn upon.
- 3.1.13 The letters are cut and finished in black enamel paint. The inscription on the gravestone records Blackie's name, the regiment he served, and the place and date of his death. The gravestone reads similar to those of human soldiers. The level of respect given to Blackie through this gravestone akin to those in the military furthers the connection Blackie had with his master and those who looked after him in his later life. The inscription reads:

‘Black Horse
“Blackie”
Aged 35 years
a Battery 275th Brigade R.F.A. 55th Division
France and Flanders 1915-1918
At the Liverpool Horses’ Rest
1930-1942’

Contribution of Setting

- 3.1.14 The current setting of the gravestone is one of transition, however the former setting prior to the commencement of the approved redevelopment comprised the former pet cemetery where the gravestone was located at the western extent of the cemetery, which was overgrown and no longer in use.
- 3.1.15 The new setting of the gravestone is to comprise a raised, simply landscaped area where the gravestone will form a focal point and where an interpretation panel will be erected to inform visitors on Blackie’s role in the war and his relationship with Lieutenant Wall.
- 3.1.16 The gravestone draws its significance from its historic and architectural interest, as such the wider setting is not judged to contribute to the asset’s significance. The change to the setting of the asset is however judged to offer an enhancement to its significance allowing the asset to be better experienced and its historic interest better appreciated and thus raising its communal value. The addition of the interpretation board will inform and educate visitors on Blackies’ life, the roles horses played in the First World War and the bond between master and horse.

4 PROPOSED WORKS

4.1.1 The works proposed comprise the following:

- Cleaning and re-lettering of the gravestone;
- Re-siting of the gravestone within its current location on raised, landscaped area; and
- Drilling of the gravestone base to allow the stone to be appropriately and securely fixed to a new concrete sub-base.

4.1.2 The works to clean and re-letter the gravestone are necessary as part of the maintenance of the asset and will help ensure its long-term future conservation.

4.1.3 The re-siting of the gravestone is required as part of the approved redevelopment of the Site which has sought to incorporate the gravestone within the layout. It is proposed the memorial is located within a purpose-built raised area at its current location to enhance the visibility of the gravestone within the new development.

Methodology for Cleaning and Re-lettering

4.1.4 The proposed works to the gravestone are to be undertaken by Birkenhead Monumental Company (BMC) who have over thirty years of experience hand crafting headstones and undertaking cleaning and renovation works.

4.1.5 The company is a registered organisation with the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM) which guarantees the work undertaken.

4.1.6 The methodology described below have been provided to Wardell Armstrong LLP by David Williams at BMC.

Removal

4.1.7 The gravestone will be carefully removed by BMC. The most appropriate method to access and removed the gravestone from the ground will be subject to a risk assessment on the site. The gravestone will be strapped to their truck and carefully driven to an appropriate point at the Site for it to be off loaded via tailgate and lifted into a lorry for safe transportation to the BMC workshop and premises. The gravestone will remain at the premises until the ground is ready for re-instatement (Williams 2022a).

Cleaning and Re-lettering

4.1.8 This process will be undertaken in three steps. No chemicals or acids will be used in the restoration process.

- The gravestone will be rubbed on all sides with a diamond water fed grinding disc. This will break down the hard, greasy film accumulated through years of exposure to air pollution, traffic film and vegetation staining.
- A low-powered power-wash will then be undertaken to remove the dirt within the pores of the gravestone.
- The lettering will be re-painted with “ONE SHOT” sign painters black enamel paint to restore legibility (Williams 2022b).

Re-instatement

4.1.9 The gravestone will be transported back to Site by appointment.

4.1.10 The gravestone will be re-fixed to the standards specified by the National Association of Memorial Masons (N.A.M.M). The process is as follows:

- Placement of a reinforced concrete foundation slab set level to the ground. A stainless-steel bar is driven through the slab (in a pre-drilled hold) to anchor the slab and preventing it from tilting.
- A section of the bar anchoring the concrete slab to the ground will be left upstanding. A suitable hole is drilled into the underside of the gravestone and the gravestone is then cemented onto the bar to create a secure connection.
- The gravestone, and immediate surroundings, will be thoroughly cleaned with all extraneous material removed (Williams 2022a).

5 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

5.1 Assessment of Impact

5.1.1 The NPPF stipulates three levels of potential impact to designated heritage assets. The NPPF references these as:

- Substantial harm;
- Less than substantial harm; and
- No harm (Significance is sustained or enhanced).

5.1.2 Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) discusses how to assess substantial harm where it states 'In general terms, substantial harm is a high test, so it may not arise in many cases. For example, in determining whether proposals would cause substantial harm to a Listed Building, an important consideration would be whether the adverse impact seriously affects a key element of its special architectural or historic interest. It is the degree of harm to the asset's significance rather than the scale of the development that is to be assessed. The harm may arise from works to the asset or from development within its setting' (Para 19).

5.1.3 The application of the terms 'less than substantial' and 'substantial' is made on professional judgement and experience. With reference to the terminology of the NPPF the level of impact to designated heritage assets expressed by this assessment will be either no harm, less than substantial harm or substantial harm.

5.1.4 As part of the approved landscaping works, the proposed works to the asset require the temporary removal of the gravestone from its current location. During this time, the existing gravesite will be unmarked, and the gravestone will be subject to cleaning and re-lettering, as per the methodology included above.

5.1.5 The works to clean and re-letter follow best practice guidance and propose to use matching techniques to undertake the re-lettering. The restoration will allow the lettering to be visible alongside maintaining the gravestones appearance. The improved visibility of the gravestone lettering reinforces the similarities to the military gravestones and ensures visitors and passers-by can see the historic purpose of the gravestone. The works will restore the original intention of the gravestone and are judged to offer an enhancement to its significance better revealing both the historic and architectural interest it holds.

5.1.6 In respect to the reinstatement of the asset on site, the proposals require drilling into the base of the monument. This would lead to a permanent change to the fabric of

the gravestone however this element is required in order to increase stability of the stone, to stop the stone from leaning or being subject to future movement. Although this is a physical impact it will not be visible when appreciating the asset and would not affect an understanding of the function of the gravestone as a memorial nor would it affect the intangible interests held by the gravestone. No harm is judged to result to the significance of the gravestone from the proposed drilling works.

- 5.1.7 The approved landscape design includes the raising of the ground surrounding the asset and the inclusion of a footpath to the gravestone. The placement of the asset would be retained with the ground raised, and a footpath created leading to the asset. This would be instated alongside an interpretation board. The raising of the ground and inclusion of the footpath will make the gravestone a focal point within the development, this is furthered by the housing layout where properties are designed to face the raised bank and the bank will be approached and surrounded by a road thus increasing its visibility. The presence of an interpretation board will demonstrate the significance of the gravestone through informing on the roles of horses in the First World War, the bond with Lieutenant Wall and Blackie's contribution to events within the local area. This is considered to offer enhancement to the asset.

Summary

- 5.1.8 It is concluded that the proposed works to the Grade II listed gravestone would cause no harm to its significance, the works instead having a beneficial impact to significance offering heritage benefits including the following:
- enhancing the significance of the gravestone through appropriate cleaning and re-lettering and enhancing the contribution of its setting through re-siting on a raised area as part of the wider layout of the new housing development.
 - The proposed drilling and fixing of the stone will reduce the risk of future movement of the gravestone; and
 - Appropriate repair of the asset and its incorporation into the new housing scheme will help secure the optimum viable use of the gravestone and support of its long-term conservation.

6 ASSESSMENT AGAINST LEGISLATION AND PLAN POLICY

6.1 Legislation

- 6.1.1 With reference to Section 66 of the 1990 Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act the proposed works would preserve the features of special architectural or historic interest possessed by the gravestone.

6.2 National Policy

- 6.2.1 In accordance with paragraph 194 of the NPPF this report has provided a proportionate account of the significance of the gravestone of 'Blackie, the War Horse', a Grade II listed asset. This assessment accords in full, with paragraph 194.
- 6.2.2 A beneficial impact (no harm) to the significance of the gravestone of Blackie, the War Horse is judged to result from the proposed work and the proposals are in accordance with the requirements of the chapter 16 of the NPPF.

6.3 Local Policy

- 6.3.1 Relevant local policy is presented within the Knowsley Core Strategy.
- 6.3.2 Applicable local policy is presented within Policy CS20. Section 1 of the policy is applicable. The proposals would, having a beneficial impact, be in accordance with the requirement of section 1 of policy CS20 preserving the significance of the gravestone. The proposed methodology for reinstallation of the asset will satisfy Section 1d as this will facilitate long term conservation of the asset.
- 6.3.3 Section 2 would also be applicable as the proposals aim to use an underused historic asset through sympathetically restoring the asset, introducing public access and, through the presence of the interpretation board, enhance the asset for local tourism/leisure activities.
- 6.3.4 This report, and those previously undertaken satisfies section 3.

7 CONCLUSION

- 7.1.1 This assessment, undertaken in full accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, has assessed the potential impact of proposals to clean, re-letter and re-site, on the significance of the Grade II listed gravestone of 'Blackie, the War Horse'.
- 7.1.2 The works aim to make the gravestone a feature within the new housing development whilst informing and educating visitors on Blackie, his bond with Lieutenant Comer Wall and provide a brief insight into how horses were used in the First World War. These elements all feed into demonstrating and enhancing the significance of the Grade II listed gravestone. This will be completed through the addition of an interpretation board which will highlight the historic interest thus demonstrating these factors. It is perceived this will be a beneficial impact.
- 7.1.3 The placement upon the raised area will make the gravestone a focal point in the development, encouraging people to visit and learn about Blackie's life. This will be more focal than its current position; gravestones are a visible point of memorial so increasing visibility is a beneficial impact.
- 7.1.4 The cleaning and re-lettering will again improve the gravestone's condition and the visibility of the lettering. The materials used are not intended to harm the gravestone and the paint is akin to that originally used. The works will be a benefit to the architectural interest contributing to the significance of the asset.
- 7.1.5 The works are judged to enhance the significance of the asset and to offer the following heritage benefits:
- enhancing the significance of the gravestone through appropriate cleaning and re-lettering and enhancing the contribution of its setting through re-siting on a raised area as part of the wider layout of the new housing development.
 - The proposed drilling and fixing of the stone will reduce the risk of future movement of the gravestone; and
 - Appropriate repair of the asset and its incorporation into the new housing scheme will help secure the optimum viable use of the gravestone and support of its long-term conservation.
- 7.1.6 On this basis and as set out within Section 6, the proposals are considered to comply with national and local policy on heritage grounds.

8 GLOSSARY

Archaeological Interest There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially may hold, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point. Heritage assets with archaeological interest are the primary source of evidence about the substance and evolution of places, and of the people and cultures that made them.

Source: Historic England Conservation Principles 2017 (consultation draft)

Architectural Interest The properties of a place resulting from and revealing the art or science of the design, construction, craftsmanship and decoration of buildings and structures of all types.

Source: Historic England Conservation Principles 2017 (consultation draft)

Artistic Interest The influence of human imagination and skill to convey meaning through all forms of creative expression on the physical properties of a place and its setting or on their associations and appreciation. Artistic interest may relate to the influence of a place on art as well as the use of skill and design embodied in its fabric.

Source: Historic England Conservation Principles 2017 (consultation draft)

Harm Changes for the worse, here primarily referring to the effect of inappropriate interventions on the heritage interest of a place that reduces their values to society.

Source: Historic England Conservation Principles 2017 (consultation draft)

Historic Interest The connections between a place and past lives and events.

Source: Historic England Conservation Principles 2017 (consultation draft)

Significance The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.

Source: NPPF 2019

Setting of a heritage asset The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.

Source: NPPF 2019

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APPENDIX 1

Listing Description of Gravestone of Blackie, the War Horse (NHLE: 1436263)

Gravestone of Blackie the war horse – Grade II Listed Building

Official List Entry: 1436263

Summary

Gravestone to Blackie the war horse who served during the First World War, c1942. Sandstone
Reasons for Designation

The gravestone of Blackie the war horse is listed at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Historic interest: * Blackie's close association with his master, the wartime poet Leonard Comer Wall, and the fact that Blackie is buried with his master's medals, reflects the strong bonds shared between thousands of soldiers and their horses on the western front.

* It has strong cultural and historic significance in representing the key role animals played, and the sacrifices they made, in the First World War;

* It is a rare memorial commemorating an individual animal that served in, and survived, the major battles of the First World War;

Architectural interest: * Its modest yet elegant design bears similarities to those in military cemeteries, whilst the inscription recording Blackie's name, regiment, and place and date of death reads like those ascribed to human soldiers.

History

Blackie was a horse that served with the 275th Brigade Royal Field Artillery 'A' Battery - 55th West Lancashire Division during the First World War, alongside his master Lieutenant Leonard Comer Wall. Wall was born in West Kirby, Wirral in 1896 and was educated at Clifton College, Bristol where he was still studying at the outbreak of the First World War. He obtained a commission with the 275th Brigade Royal Field Artillery 'A' Battery - 55th West Lancashire Division during the early days of the war and was posted to the Western Front on 9 September 1915. Details of Blackie's early life are not known, although he is believed to have been born c1905.

Lieutenant Wall was a wartime poet who composed a number of poems during his active service on the Front. One of his poems known as 'The Rose of Lancaster', which was written in Flanders in April 1917, included the line 'We win or die who wear the Rose of Lancaster'. The line was adopted later in 1917 as the motto of the 55th West Lancashire Division and encircles the divisional sign. Metal discs were also produced bearing the crest of the division and the poetic line, which were placed on the graves of those in the division killed during the war. The motto is also carved on the monument to the 55th Division in the Grade I-listed Anglican Cathedral Church of Christ, Liverpool.

In Lieutenant Wall's will he requested that if he did not survive the war that his faithful horse Blackie be buried with his medals or decorations. Lieutenant Wall was killed in action at Ypres whilst riding Blackie on 9 June 1917 at the age of 20. He is buried at Lijssenthoek Military Cemetery, Poperinge in

the Belgian province of West Flanders and his gravestone is inscribed with the line from his poem. He is also commemorated on a memorial plaque inside the Grade II-listed St Bridget's Church, West Kirby, and also on the Grade II*-listed Hoylake and West Kirby war memorial, which stands on the top of Grange Hill. Blackie received severe shrapnel injuries in the same incident, but remained in service on the Front for the rest of the war, and by the end of the war he had taken part in the battles of Arras, Somme, Ypres and Cambrai. He retained the marks of his shrapnel wounds until his death. Driver Francis Frank Wilkinson was Blackie's groom. He was killed in action on 8 June 1917 at the age of 23 and is also buried at Lijssenthoek.

After the war Lieutenant Wall's mother Kate bought Blackie from the Army and lent him to the Territorial Riding School in Liverpool. In 1930 he was 'pensioned off' and retired to live at the Horses' Rest in Halewood where he remained until his death at the age of 37 in December 1942. It is understood that Blackie used to lead Liverpool's May Day Horse Parade along with another ex war-horse known as Billy, and was adorned with his master's medals. Blackie's death received press coverage across Britain, from the local Liverpool Daily Post to the Gloucester Citizen, Portsmouth Evening News, and Dundee Evening Telegraph. He was buried in the north-west corner of the western field fronting Higher Road with his master's medals and a gravestone was erected. The gravestone has been cleaned in recent years making the inscription legible again.

Details

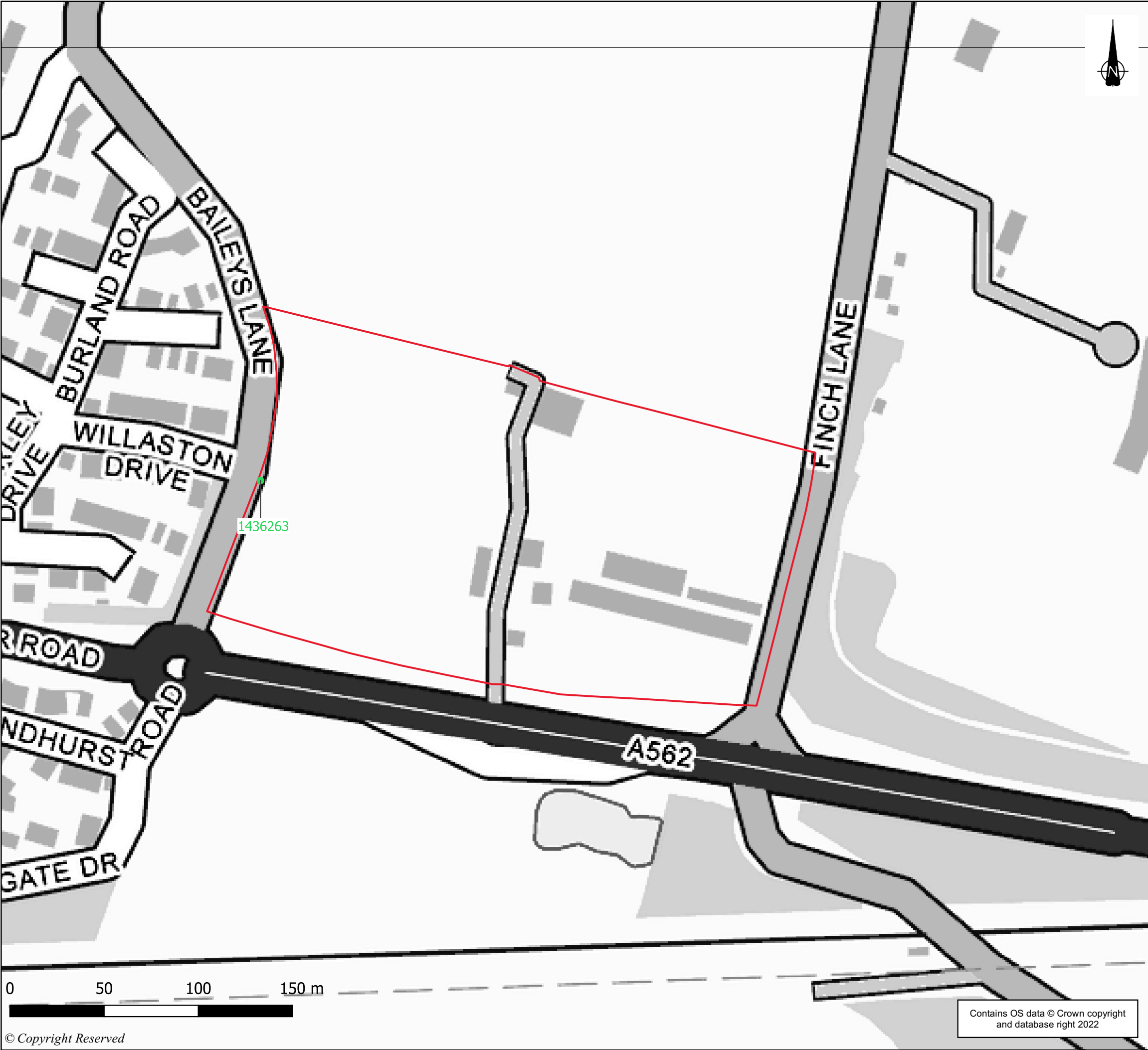
Gravestone to Blackie the war horse who served during the First World War, c1942. Sandstone.

Location: the gravestone is located in an overgrown area in the far north-west corner of a field on the western side of the site and is accessed via a linear grassy walkway alongside the northern edge of the field boundary.

DESCRIPTION: the gravestone is constructed of sandstone and has a triangular head with steps to each end. The inscription reads: 'BLACK HORSE/ "BLACKIE"/ AGED 35 YEARS/ A BATTERY 275TH BRIGADE R.F.A. 55TH DIVISION/ FRANCE AND FLANDERS 1915-1918/ AT THE LIVERPOOL HORSES' REST/ 1930-1942'. The grave has been covered by modern artificial turf and is surrounded by a modern low ornamental white picket fence.

This List entry has been amended to add the source for War Memorials Online. This source was not used in the compilation of this List entry but is added here as a guide for further reading, 27 October 2017.

DRAWINGS



DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

- KEY
- Site Boundary
 - Grade II Listed Gravestone of Blackie, the War Horse

REVISION	DETAILS	DATE	DRN	CHKD	APPD
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CLIENT	MILLER HOMES
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PROJECT	GRAVESTONE OF BLACKIE, THE WAR HORSE AT THE FORMER LIVERPOOL RSPCA CENTRE HIGHER ROAD, HALEWOOD
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DRAWING TITLE	LOCATION OF THE GRADE II LISTED GRAVESTONE OF BLACKIE, THE WAR HORSE
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DRG No.	GM11664-009	REV	v1
DRG SIZE	A3	SCALE	1:2,000
DATE	March 2022	DRAWN BY	VA-J
CHECKED BY	LG	APPROVED BY	CB



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