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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
OF LAND ADJACENT TO
1 IRISH STREET, MARYPORT,
CUMBRIA**

**Planning Application Ref. No.
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Report Prepared for:

CAPITA DBS

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT
OF LAND ADJACENT TO
1 IRISH STREET, MARYPORT
CUMBRIA**

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

On the 12th November 2002 North Pennines Heritage Trust was commissioned by Mr Michael Dawson of Capita DBS acting on behalf of Maryport Developments Ltd, to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment of an area of land adjacent to 1 Irish Street, Maryport.

The purpose of this assessment is to consult all readily available primary and secondary source material in order to assess the archaeological importance of the development site.

The site comprises an area of open ground, with localised areas of concrete, self-cemented slag and sparse grass cover. It is located on the South Quay, between Irish Street, Bridge Street and Elizabeth Dock.

The first settlement at Maryport was established during the early second century AD during the Hadrianic period of the Roman occupation of Britain. A Roman fort and town was established as part of the frontier defences of the Roman Empire. Maryport continued to be an important town during the later middle ages which saw the construction of a substantial Norman Motte and Bailey castle in the 12th century.

In the mid 18th century, Maryport as it is now known, was founded by Humphrey Senhouse III and named after his wife. It was a planned town of three phases and grew rapidly during the later 18th century. The town underwent periods of prosperity and decline over the course of two hundred and fifty years. The third phase of development, between 1850 and 1900, saw a dramatic expansion of industrial activity within the harbour area, including a large ship building programme and also included the construction of a foundry on the development site adjacent to Irish Street.

The foundry has since been demolished post 1969 and presently the site is under sparse grass cover.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 On the 12th November 2002 North Pennines Heritage Trust was commissioned by Mr Michael Dawson of Capita DBS, acting on behalf of Maryport Developments Ltd, to produce an archaeological desk-based assessment of an area of land adjacent to 1 Irish Street, Maryport within the Allerdale District of Cumbria (Planning Application Reference No. 2/2002/413).
- 1.2 The site is located on the south quay, between Irish Street, Bridge Street and Elizabeth Dock (NGR NY 03299 36522). The area is shown in figure 1.
- 1.3 The purpose of this assessment is to outline the history and archaeology of the site within a local and regional context, as specified in a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service (CCCAS) dated 3rd September 2002. This brief required the consultation of all readily available primary and secondary documentary and cartographic material referenced within the County Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal, as well as any relevant aerial photographs. Sources consulted included the County Sites and Monuments Record, Carlisle Records Office and Carlisle Local Studies Library in addition to the North Pennines Heritage Trust's own archive and material provided by the Client.
- 1.4 The site comprises an area of open ground, with localised areas of concrete, self-cemented slag and sparse grass cover. The site is presently used by the public for dog walking and access between Bridge Street, the Play Area, Irish Street car park and the promenade. A brief site visit by the author on 15th November 2002 saw no visible contamination or hazards to health evident. A prior site assessment (Capita Geotechnical, May 2002) suggested the sparse grass cover could indicate phytotoxic (i.e. harmful to plant life) soil contamination or a function of the presence of archaeological remains close to the surface.
- 1.5 The solid geology of the region comprises Triassic Sherwood Sandstone for the coastal areas to the north and Carboniferous Westphalian Coal Measures obscured at the surface by superficial deposits associated with the coastal environment at the mouth of the River Ellen, consisting of granular sand and gravel. The map also indicates made ground deposits of unknown character overlie the area containing the site. (British Geological Survey, Sheet 22 at 1:50,000).
- 1.6 The town of Maryport was a planned town created in three phases from 1749 after Mary Senhouse, the wife of the founder Humphrey Senhouse III (Jackson et al 1969). However, the town has its origins in the 2nd century AD as a Roman fort and vicus known as Alauna. The town was later regarded as Ellenborough from the Anglo-Saxon 'burgh' or 'stronghold' (literally Stronghold by the River Ellen).

2. METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.7 Chris Jones, Assistant Archaeologist, undertook the desk-based assessment from the 18th to the 21st November 2002. This involved the examination of all readily available and relevant primary and secondary documentary and cartographic material together with appropriate aerial photographs.
- 1.8 The author consulted the County Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal, County Records Office in Carlisle, Carlisle Local Studies Library and the County Records Office and Local Studies Library, Whitehaven. In addition to these sources of information, the North Pennines Heritage Trust's own archive in Nenthead was consulted. The Client, Capita DBS, provided further information in the form of a geotechnical survey report.
- 1.9 A site visit was made by the author on 18th November 2002.
- 1.10 The main objectives of the desk-based assessment were as follows:
- The formulation of a strategy to ensure the recording, preservation or management of the resource.
 - The formulation of a strategy for further investigation, whether or not intrusive, where the character and value of the resource is not sufficiently defined to permit a mitigation strategy or other response to be devised.
 - The formulation of a proposal for further archaeological investigation within a programme of research.

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, 1)

3. PREVIOUS WORK

- 3.1 There has been no direct archaeological investigation on the site of the proposed development. However, there have been a number of excavations and surveys around the area of the Roman fort and elsewhere within the area of the 18th century town.
- 3.2 There has been a great deal of antiquarian interest in Maryport. In 1599 William Camden described the, then extensive, remains of the Roman fort and vicus as also did William Stukeley in the early 18th century.
- 3.3 In 1766 the Senhouse family sponsored excavations of the Roman camp, discovering a number of features including the arch of a gate, houses, roofing slate and several finds of glass vessels, mirrors, coins, urns and a Roman bath (see below) (Jackson et al 1960). In 1820 Joseph Robinson excavated four fields to the north east of the fort including the excavation of two temple sites. Bailey found evidence of a Roman wharf structure beneath Motte Hill at Glasson (Bailey 1923).
- 3.4 Further investigation took place in 1976 when Michael Jarrett undertook a series of small planned excavations. These excavations found a broad chronology for the fort, dating from the early years of the Hadrianic period to c. 400 AD (Jarrett et al 1987). They also defined the extent of stone robbing during the founding of Maryport in the mid 18th century.
- 3.5 In 1994 Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU 1994) undertook an excavation at Netherhall Blast Furnace and Coke Ovens located to the south-east of the town, which date to 1752 but were demolished in 1963. (Marshall et al 1977).
- 3.6 A Geophysical Survey of the vicus took place in 2000 (New's from Hadrian's Wall 2000). This found the site to be the largest associated with the Hadrianic frontier defence system so far surveyed.

4. THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD

- 4.1 There is no known prehistoric settlement within Maryport itself. However, there are a number of significant finds within the area of core settlement. These include a Neolithic stone axe, Bronze Age cup and ring marked stone and finds of Romano British (i.e. native, during the Roman occupation) carved stones.
- 4.2 There are a number of significant prehistoric monuments within the broader region surrounding Maryport. These include Rise How Neolithic site (SMR Pin 840), Rise How Tower Iron Age burial monument (4239), two Bronze Age cremation cemeteries (3092 and 13691) and a Romano-British settlement and trackway (791) at Ewanrigg (Pevsner 1967)

5. ROMAN PERIOD

- 5.1 Roman Maryport was an important part of the Hadrianic frontier defence system. The evidence for Maryport's Roman past includes a second century fort and vicus, or civilian settlement to the north of the fort. The extensive remains of fort and vicus were substantial up until the early eighteenth century and have attracted antiquarian interest. In 1599 William Camden described the remains as having "many expresse footings ... are evidently to be seen. The ancient vaults stand open, and many altars, stones with inscriptions and statues are here gotton out of the ground." (Camden 1599, Cumbria EUS 2000, 3). William Stukeley described the vicus, indicating "the streets were paved in flagstones, 'visibly worn with use' (from Wilson 1997, 29). A Geophysical survey in 2000 discovered the extent of the vicus, the largest of the second century frontier defence system so far surveyed.
- 5.2 Excavations of the camp by the Senhouse family in 1766 found the arch of a gate, houses which had been 'burned to the ground and rebuilt', roofing slates, glass vessels, mirrors, coins, urns (Jackson et al 1969) and a Roman bath (Collingwood 1936). In 1880 Joseph Robinson excavated four fields to the north east of the fort, finding road surfaces, strip houses and other buildings, two of which believed to be temples (Robinson 1880, Wilson 1997, 29).
- 5.3 In the 1920s Bailey excavated evidence of a wharf structure in the form of a massive retaining wall at Ellenborough Place, Glasson. Bailey concluded Maryport was the chief naval station at the time Hadrian's Wall was constructed.
- 5.4 Further excavation in 1976 (Jarrett et al 1987) discovered that the fort was constructed during the early Hadrianic period and continued in use until circa. 400 AD.

6. MEDIEVAL PERIOD

- 6.1 The presence of a substantial motte or Castle mound, ‘a damaged earthwork of 12th century date’ (EUS 2000, 7) indicates the town’s importance during the later middle ages. Situated at the end of a steep sided spur to the south of the town, in a loop of the River Ellen, it commands a strong defensive position over the harbour to the west and over the town to the south and east.
- 6.2 The De Scheftling family owned the medieval Manor of Ellenborough until the Eaglesfields bought it during the reign of Edward I (1272-1307). The Senhouse family acquired the Manor in 1528 through the marriage of John Senhouse with Elizabeth Eaglesfield. It is likely that the town continued to be an important port and administrative centre throughout the medieval period.
- 6.3 Other structures of medieval date occur within the broader region, such as Netherhall tower house, a probable fifteenth century building built from Roman dressed stone and the traces of a deserted medieval village once existed in the area immediately north of the Roman fort and vicus.

7. POST-MEDIEVAL PERIOD

- 7.1 In 1748 an Act of Parliament was passed giving Humphrey Senhouse the authority to create a planned town following the opening of Ellenborough colliery in 1740. (Jackson et al 1969). Nicolson and Burn wrote “In 1747 the number of families in this parish was certified as 64 But an harbour having been since made at Elnefoot and a town there built named Maryport, the number of families is greatly increased ... it is computed there are about 340 families in that town only.” (Nicolson and Burn 1777 from Hughes (1964, 306).
- 7.2 In 1752 an iron smelting furnace was built at Netherhall. In 1755 a wagonway opened from Broughton Moor to the harbour where coal was loaded onto vessels at the mouth of the Ellen.
- 7.3 A second Act of Parliament was passed in 1756 which saw further expansion of the town. In 1765 a ship building yard opened on Strand Street by North Quay. The Extensive Urban Survey makes reference to ‘a former patent slip buried under the shingle facing the north harbour’ (EUS 2000). The shells of some associated buildings adjoin Strand Street and the former Ritsons Yard opposite Castle Hill has a patent slip with masonry still visible on the **Glasson** side of the river.
- 7.4 In 1752 a Glass Works and Pot Mill were established on either side of **Irish Street**. The Glass Works (SMR pin 3577) was in fact a small glass bottle works, ‘a rare example of this class of monument’ and provides a unique example for the study of such works at a time of experimentation with furnace and crucible design (from the SMR entry notes). Shown on a 1745 map, the works is a scheduled monument.

- 7.5 In 1756 a Paper Mill was built on Paper Mill Green, beneath Motte Hill across the river Ellen from Irish Street and a brewery (the Old Brewery) was built at the corner of High Street and Wood Street.
- 7.6 In 1766 William Blennerhasset, Lord of the Manor of Flimby, took a grant of land to export coal mined a Flimby from the port. Door lintels survive either side of the entrance to Crown Inn Yard marked with the initials 'WB'.
- 7.7 The prosperity of the town continued to grow, and by 1770 the ground rents amounted to £87 11s per annum and anchorage dues of £21 (Hughes 1964, 10). However, this prosperity was short lived as Maryport suffered for the Continental Blockade during the Napoleonic Wars and the Wars of American Independence robbed the town of important trade. Maryport further declined with the loss of secondary industries with the closing of the Glass Works towards the end of the 18th century. Bread riots in 1817 emphasise the continuing struggle following the war with France and consequent unemployment and poverty. In 1838 the port became officially subordinate to Whitehaven.
- 7.8 However, the coal industry continued to flourish and from 1819 ships were launched from the yards and by 1854 more coal was shipped from Maryport than from the rest of the Cumbrian ports. This saw a dramatic increase in industrial activity within the harbour area between 1850 and 1900.
- 7.9 A timber yard and sawmill were in existence on **Irish Street** from the 1850s, visible on the Ordnance Survey 1st Edition (figure 2) and as was a railway upgraded from the original wagonway providing transport links between the collieries and the port. Between 1850 and 1900 an Iron and Brass Foundry (J. Wharton's Phoenix Foundry) can be seen between **Irish Street** and Elizabeth Dock as the Saw Mill and Timber Yard have been relocated further south in order to accommodate the foundry buildings. A further development is the creation of a second major dock (Senhouse Dock) in the bay west of Elizabeth Dock. By 1925 the industrial complex behind **Irish Street** has further increased in complexity and a number of buildings are visible on the Ordnance Survey 3rd Edition map. Maryport suffered a further slump in prosperity when the Prince of Wales Dock at Workington was constructed in 1927.

8. MODERN PERIOD

- 8.1 By 1969 the railway is no longer present beside Elizabeth and Senhouse Docks and each Basin largely silted up. However, the foundry buildings are still visible on the Ordnance Survey map for that year. Aerial photographic evidence shows the development area as waste ground. **Irish Street** is flanked to the north by later buildings and to the south by a car park and reclaimed land.

9. GEOTECHNICAL SURVEY RESULTS

- 9.1 In May 2002 10 trial pits were excavated by Capita Geotechnical within the boundary of the site. These pits were excavated in order to investigate the presence and level of contamination potentially arising from former industrial activities and to determine the nature and thickness of any Made Ground present and the nature of the underlying superficial deposits. The depths ranged from 1.35m to 2.50m. The full results of the trial pit excavations are contained within the Capita Geotechnical report and lie beyond the scope of the present study. However, a number of interesting results were obtained from the survey:
- 9.2 It is difficult to assess the archaeological importance of the results of the trial pits. It is clear that only with controlled archaeological monitoring can archaeologically meaningful results be produced. However, there were some indications that archaeological material survives below the present ground surface. Trial pit 5 found bricks and a metal 'T – beam' at c. 1.70m within a matrix of light, mid-brown banded fine to coarse sand included by sub-rounded, rounded and sub-angular gravel and cobble.
- 9.3 Trial pit 7 found a layer of light to mid grey fused/cemented slag at a depth of 0.55-0.75m sealed by a matrix of fine to coarse sand beneath a grass surface. Trial pit 9 found a layer of dark grey/black ashy clinker containing glass, pottery and brick at a depth of 0.30-0.60m sealed by a sparse grass cover over fine to medium gravel of slag, partly cemented with mid brown fine to coarse sand and brick fragments.
- 9.4 In addition to the trial pits, two boreholes were drilled to depths of 8.0m and 5.24m below ground level. These found a matrix of compact red clay at 5.50m (glacial till) sealed by raised beach deposits between 1.10m and 5.50m, sealed by made ground and topsoil.
- 9.5 No groundwater was present in any of the trial pits, but was encountered in borehole 1 at a depth of 5.4m below ground surface.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 The desk-based assessment of the proposed development site has found that the site was an area of intense industrial activity during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It is not clear precisely when the buildings relating to Wharton's Phoenix foundry were demolished but it is likely that this occurred in the 1970s. Without detailed archaeological monitoring of any further excavations it is not possible to define the extent of the survival of archaeological remains on the site. However, there is the potential for survival of building foundations and yard surfaces beneath the present ground surface.
- 10.2 Maryport continued to be an important port and ship building centre until the early 20th century. Documentary and cartographic sources show a number of industrial complexes including shipyards, docks, a sawmill, foundry, glass works, pot mill and paper mill within close proximity of each other.
- 10.3 The town, as Alauna, Ellenborough or Elnefoot and Maryport respectively, was an important Roman and Medieval town. Originally built as a part of the Hadrianic frontier defence system, it continued to be an important administrative centre during the later middle ages centred around the 12th century castle as the *caput* of the De Scheftling, Eaglesfield and Senhouse families respectively. In the absence of any evidence directly relating to either a Roman or Medieval presence on the development site, this local context must be taken into consideration given such a deep-rooted history of human settlement.

11. SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 Given the previous land use of the development site, the documentary and cartographic evidence consulted in conjunction with a site visit, suggest a **medium level** of survival of archaeological remains. However, any groundwork should be carefully monitored by a professional archaeologist and recorded should such remains be found.
- 11.2 A complete project archive is to be kept at the North Pennines Heritage Trust's main offices in Nenthead under a unique project identifier in addition to the County Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal. All finds should be made available to the nearest repository (Whitehaven Museum or Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle).
- 11.3 All work to be undertaken should do so under the guidance of Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service and in accordance with the code of conduct of the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

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APPENDIX

Catalogue of Sites held in the Cumbria County Sites and Monuments Record.

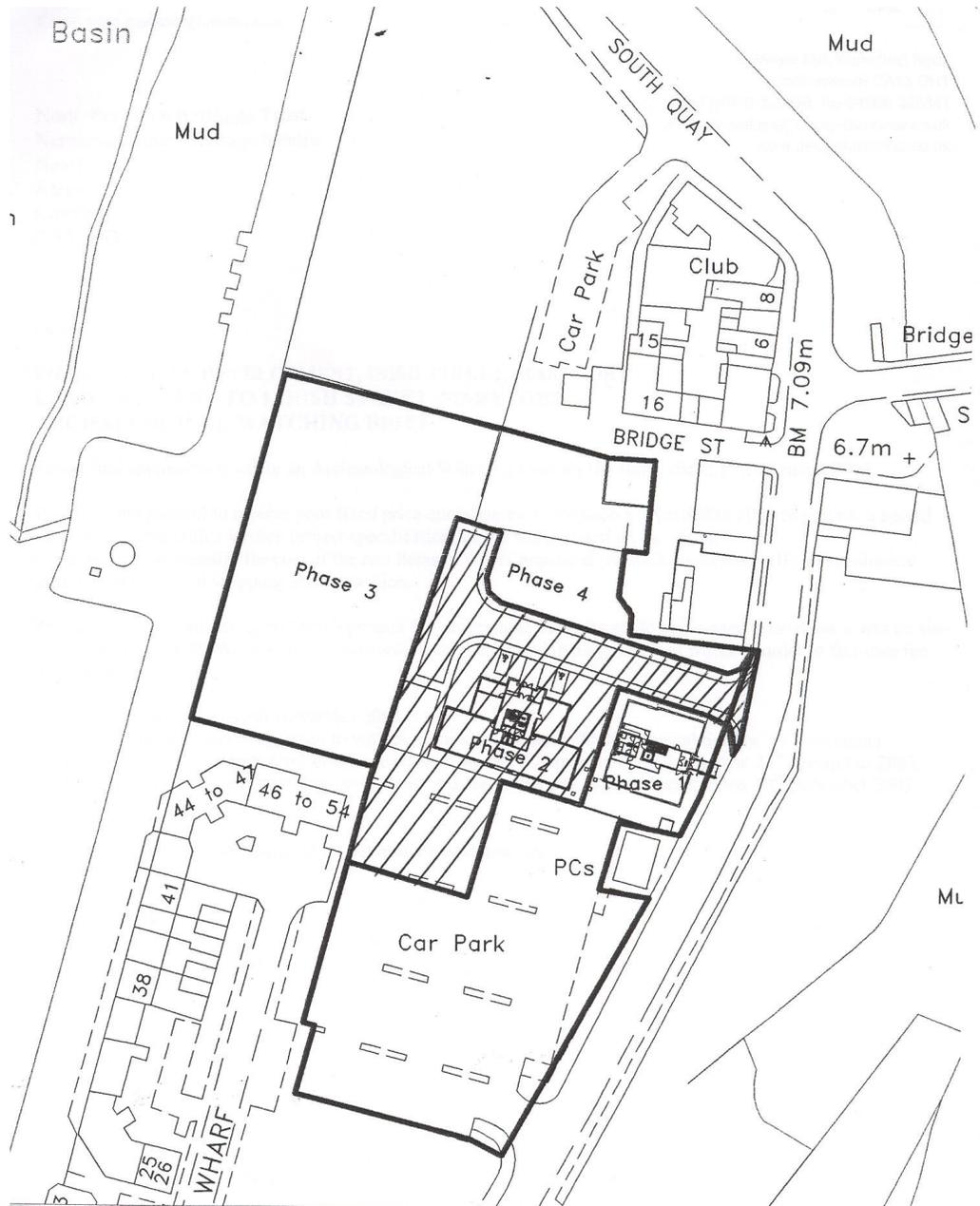
SMR PIN	Site Name	Scheduled
827	Castle Hill Motte and WWII Gun Emplacement	Yes
1832	Maryport Harbour Road Bridge	
2976	Maryport Harbour Shipyard	
3067	Maryport Harbour Saw Mill, Timber Yard	
3073	Maryport Harbour Crane	
3554	Maryport Paper Mill	
3577	18 th Century Bottle Works	Yes
3583	Well Site, Well Lane	
3613	Ritson's Smithy	
3616	New Wall Quay, Jetty	
3670	Wood Bridge	
3672	Maryport Harbour Railway, Tramway	
3886	Maryport Harbour, Elizabeth Dock	
3867	Maryport Harbour Timber Yard	
4966	Maryport Harbour Dry Dock	
6255	Maryport Harbour, Phoenix Iron Foundry	
6258	Town Market Place	
6300	Maryport Harbour Roman Incense Jar Find	



Above: The site looking south-east towards Castle Motte. (Photo: Author)
Below: The site looking north-east towards the town. (Photo: Author)



Above: Plate 3. View of Castle Motte from the car park looking across Irish Street. (Photo: Author)
Below: Plate 4: Elizabeth Dock as it is today (Photo: Author)



<p>Project:</p> <p>AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT OF LAND ADJACENT TO 1 IRISH STREET MARYPORT</p>	<p>SITE LOCATION PLAN</p> <p>FIGURE 1</p>	<p>NENTHEAD MINES HERITAGE CENTRE NENTHEAD ALSTON CUMBRIA CA9 3PD Tel: (01434) 382045 Email: np.ht@virgin.net</p> 
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