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Summary

A possible undated organic deposit may conform to the basal fill of the vallum or a Roman ditch.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The contractor

Gerry Martin is an independent free-lance archaeological contractor with nearly thirty years experience of commercial archaeology in Britain, Norway and Germany. Gerry Martin Associates Ltd specialises in the expedition of fieldwork projects. These include the field management and direction of large capital projects to execution of smaller watching briefs, evaluations, building surveys and excavations.

All projects are carried out in accordance with PPS 5 (2010) and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists and English Heritage. Gerry Martin has achieved the accreditation level of MIfA (Member) with the Institute of Archaeologists (IfA).

1.2 The Commission

Emergency intervention was required by Northern Gas Networks between June 23rd and July 15th 2011 in order to repair a fractured gas main at the junction of Scotland Road and Brampton Road, Carlisle.

The watching brief action has been requested by English Heritage, as potential and significant archaeological remains may be encountered and impact upon the Vallum, part of a Scheduled Ancient Mounument No. 26088.

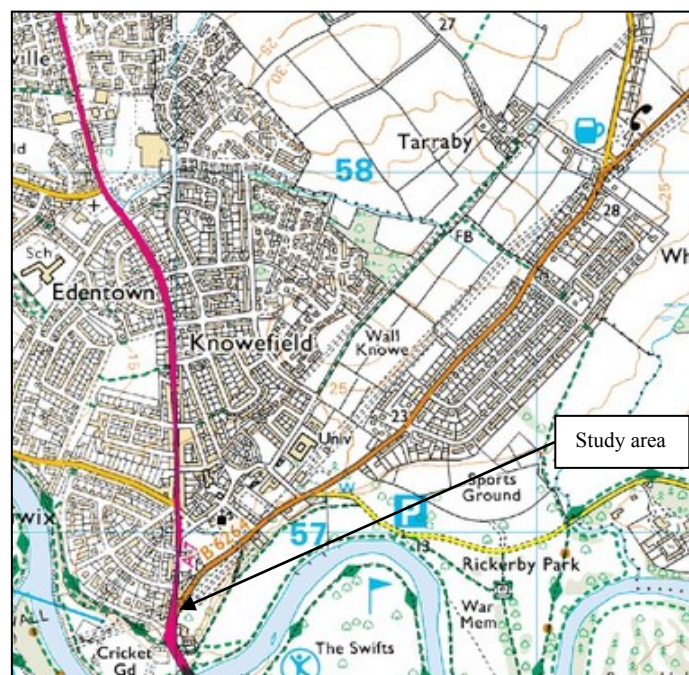


Figure 1. Site location, Brampton Road, Carlisle (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

1.3 In connection with the commission

Because of the archaeological significance and sensitivity of this location, the curatorial planning authority has stated that permission is subject to the “contractor” securing the implementation of a formal programme of archaeological observation and investigation

during the forthcoming repair. An archaeological watching brief was maintained whilst the gas leak was sought.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

Following a request by the curatorial body English Heritage, Gerry Martin Associates Ltd were commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork.

The ensuing report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation, 2008), combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the brief prepared by the curatorial authority.

Fieldwork took place between June 23rd and July 15th 2011.

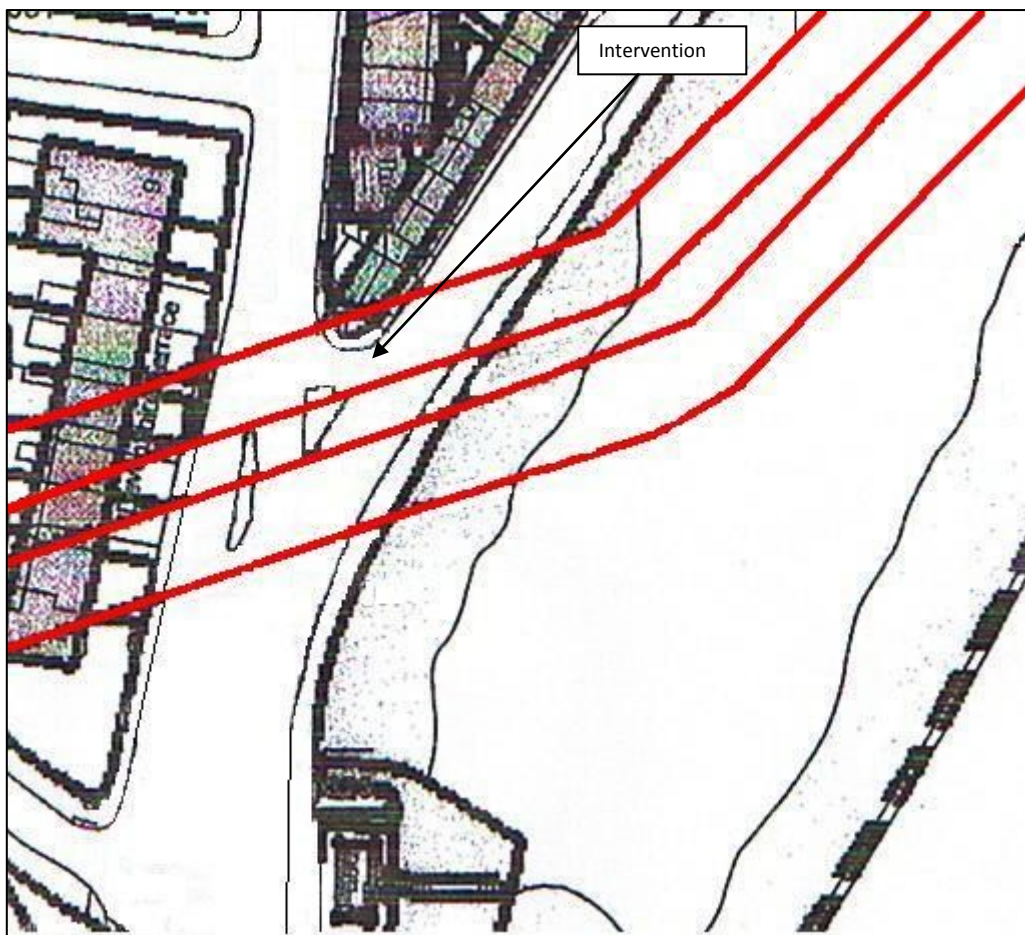


Figure 2. Location of the study area

2.2 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (2008).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The drift geology comprises of alluvial sand and clay resting above Boulder Clay that overlies red sandstone solid geology.

The study area is situated at the junction of Scotland Road and Brampton Road on an incline known as Stanwix Bank.

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Desk-based assessment

The study area (NY 40018 56805) lies just south of Hadrian's Wall in an area 100m southwest of the Roman cavalry fort of *Ala Petriana*.

Excavations by Simpson and Hogg in 1932-34 and by Simpson and Richmond 1939-40 established the positions of the south gate of the Hadrian's Wall fort and the defences of the north-eastern, south-eastern and south-western sides as well as the line of the Vallum.

Internal buildings, including a granary were also located within Stanwix School.

In the spring of 1984, excavations within the car park at the Cumbria Park Hotel, Carlisle uncovered the previously unsuspected north curtain wall, rampart and interval tower of the Roman fort at Stanwix (Dacre 1985, 55).

This work demonstrated that the fort had been enlarged during the Antonine period so that it projected north of Hadrian's Wall. The other critical discovery was that a ditch lay beneath the interval tower. This ditch antedated the enlargement of the fort and is presumed to be associated with Hadrian's Wall discovered by Simpson and Hogg between 1932 and 1934 and confirmed by watching brief during 2008 (Martin 2008).

Between 1997 and 1999, further excavations at Stanwix School identified a turf wall rampart, the earliest structural feature just south of the line of Hadrian's Wall. Cobbled surfaces and demolition deposits were located internally before further timber buildings were established in the fourth Century.

A watching brief at 18-22 Scotland Road, Stanwix, conducted between June and December 2000, confirmed further stretches of the northern curtain wall, a possible heavily denuded rampart and an inter-vallum road inside the wall along with further remains of inner and outer defensive ditches and a cobbled surface on the berm between the inner ditch and the fort wall (Martin 2008, 6-7).

The 1866 First Edition Ordnance Survey map (figure 3) confirms the study area as being within the footprint of Brampton Road.

The study area is believed to be within the circuit of the Vallum (figure 2, red outline).

The Vallum classically comprises a steep-sided ditch usually 6m in width and 3m in depth with a flat base flanked by two mounds north and south, set back approximately 9m from the ditch edge and probably constructed to deny multiple crossings up to the Wall or to delimit a prohibited zone close to the Wall.

The nearest full section excavated across the Vallum was undertaken at Crosby-on-Eden where the bulk of the ditch fill represented tertiary deposition. This would be the expected deposit model for the study area along Brampton Road, Carlisle.

The study area is in relatively close proximity to Miles Macinness House where during 1985 evidence for a *vicus* attached to the western side of the fort was observed during a watching brief.



Figure 3. Ordnance Survey map of 1865 showing the study area

5. RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

The objective of the watching brief investigation is to carry out a formal programme of archaeological observations and investigations during any operations on site that may disturb or destroy archaeological or architecturally informative deposits or remains. The specific aims of the work are to:

- Provide a record of those works associated with the removal of the topsoil
- Provide a record of any significant archaeological or architectural features encountered by intrusive activities

In order to achieve these objectives, a record of all archaeological informative deposits encountered during the ground operations were made consisting of detailed context records on individual pro-forma sheets and field drawings, according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

The ground-works were undertaken by hand under archaeological supervision. This action consisted of observation of the spoil removal and monitoring the displaced soil. Revealed sections were checked for any past cultural activity and if necessary recorded according to the protocols of the GMA manual.

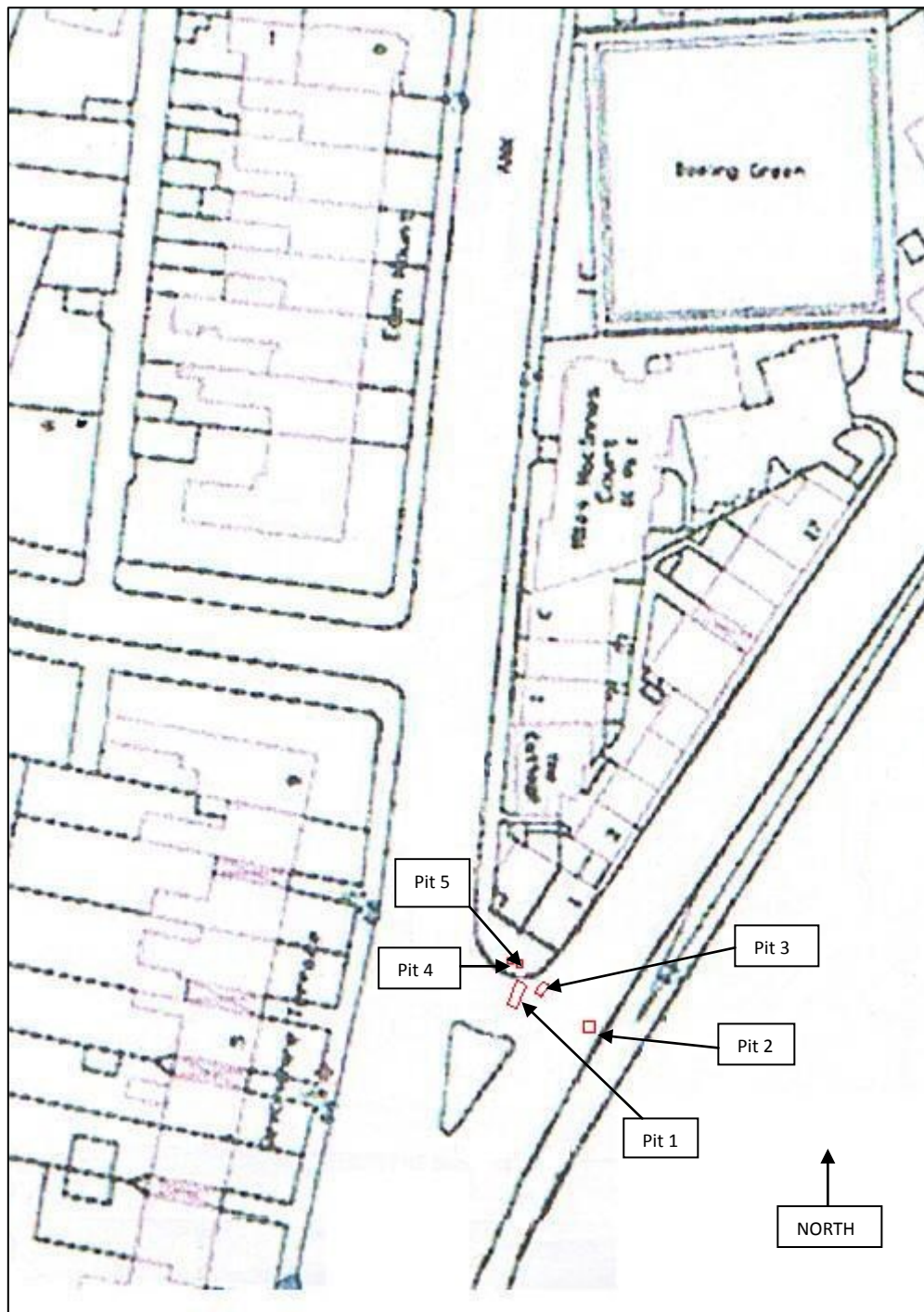


Figure 4. Location of interventions Trenches 1-5

5.2 Results

Five interventions (figure 4) were inserted into the modern ground surface in order to isolate a gas leak summarised below.

Trench 1

The intervention (4.20m x 1.20m) removed road tarmac to reveal a rubble core comprising irregular shaped stones and pebbles within brown sandy silt 0.46m in thickness.

The trench contained an iron pipe and a gas pipe with modern backfill accumulating within the respective pipe trenches.

However, in the eastern trench section a dark brown sandy clay (figure 5) existed that appeared to contain former organic residues and was at least 0.62m in depth (figure 6). This material probably corresponded to organic remains located towards the base of the vallum or an associated ditch.

Unfortunately, due to the oblique angle of the intervention, the course of the presumed ditch could not be ascertained.



Figure 5. Trench 1, vallum deposit

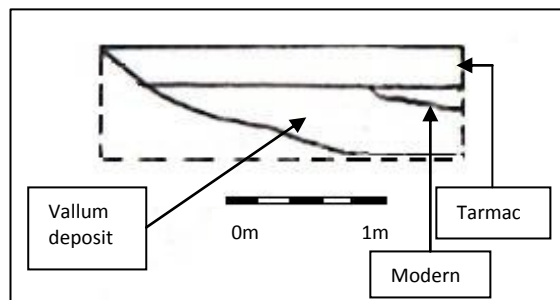


Figure 6. Section looking west, vallum deposit

Trench 2

The intervention (1.68m x 1.43m) removed road tarmac to reveal a rubble core comprising irregular shaped stones and pebbles within light brown sandy silt. This sealed loose, mid brown silty clay (figure 7), a probable re-deposited Boulder Clay, resting above an iron pipe.



Figure 7. Trench 2



Figure 8. Trench 3

Reduced to a depth of 1.13m, the trench was archaeologically sterile.

Trench 3

The intervention (1.56m x 1.72m) removed road tarmac to reveal a rubble core comprising irregular shaped stone within light grey sand 0.18m in thickness. This sealed loose, light brown silty sand with patches of clay 0.61m in thickness resting above mid brown sandy clay at least 0.10m in thickness and a series of red sandstone blocks (figure 8) that probably formed an earlier road.

The trench was archaeologically sterile.

Trench 4

The intervention (0.82m x 0.63m) removed flagstones to reveal a rubble core comprising irregular shaped pebbles and stone within a mid brown clay sand matrix (figure 9). The trench yielded an east-west aligned electric cable within modern backfill to a depth of 0.66m.

The pit was archaeologically sterile.



Figure 9. Trench 4



Figure 10. Trench 5

Trench 5

The intervention (0.58m x 0.58m) removed flagstones to reveal a sandy backfill including irregular shaped pebbles and stone within a mid brown sandy silt matrix (figure 10). The trench yielded a north-south aligned telephone cable within loose, modern backfill to a depth of 0.60m.

The trench was archaeologically sterile.

5.3 Discussion

Four of the five interventions proved to be archaeologically sterile either due to modern activity or truncation with natural drift geology appearing to be close to the current ground surface.

However, in Trench 1 an organic deposit was revealed that probably corresponds with the basal or lower fill of the vallum or a comparable Roman ditch.

On first reflection this feature appears to be the ditch located in front of the vallum (figure 2, red outline) but as no vallum has been isolated on the south side of Brampton Road at this location (Martin 2011, 6) it is possible that the ditch representing the vallum is slightly north of the projection currently scheduled (figure 2, red outline) and that the feature observed on this occasion maybe the vallum rather than the intervening ditch between vallum and Wall.

Although no cultural remains were recovered, it would appear highly likely that this material dates to the Roman period.

6. ARCHIVE

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by English Heritage (1991) and the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994, 2001 and 2007).

The archive will be deposited with Tullie House Museum, Carlisle, a copy donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority and a copy supplied to English Heritage.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The fieldwork was conducted by Carl Savage.

I am grateful to Mr Mark Taylor and Mr Phil Wall (Northern Gas Networks), the client for their collaboration on this project as well as the co-operation of the contractors.

I would also like to thank Mike Collins (English Heritage), the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and other documentary research.

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