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SUMMARY

Within the footprint of the newly erected henge monument, the watching brief action revealed that no cultural deposits existed in the top 0.70m of topsoil and alluvium.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Carlisle City Council regarding planning permission for a henge monument at Rickerby Park, Rickerby, Carlisle (figure 1).

As potential and significant archaeological remains may be encountered, an archaeological watching brief was requested by Cumbria County Council.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd has been commissioned by Mrs Becky Helm, the client on behalf of Eden Rivers Trust, to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief relating to the ground works for this development.

The development of the site will involve the machine removal of topsoil within the proposed henge footprint.

This report describes the results of that archaeological watching brief and its archaeological context within the known archaeological record summarised in the desk-based assessment.

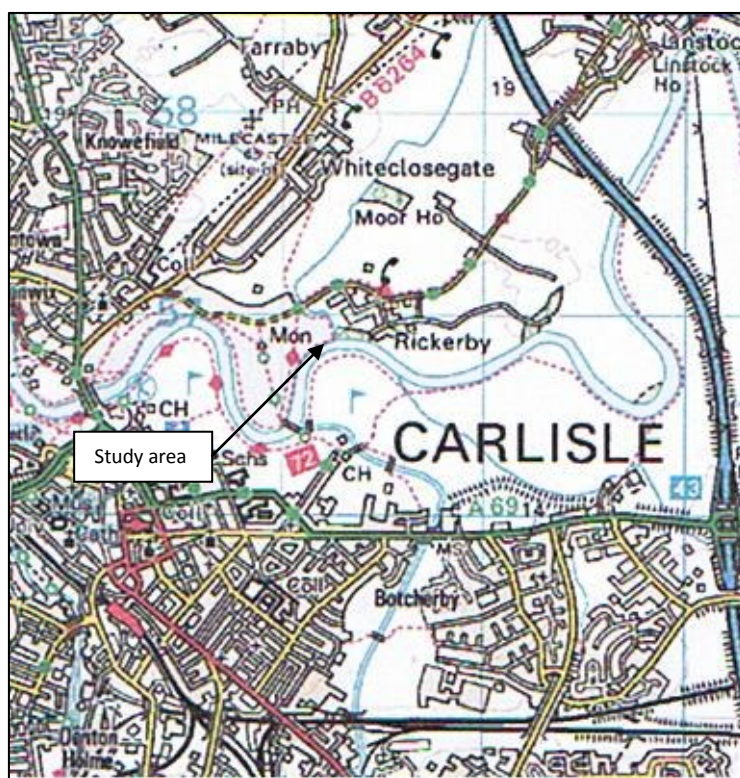


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

In response to a request by Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI). This document outlined

the contractors' professional competence as well as general objectives required of the project, the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

The study area lies (NY 41416 56880) to the south-west of Rickerby House above a river bank overlooking the River Eden (figure 2).

Excavation nearby in 2002 (figure 3) revealed an extensive rectilinear network of shallow ditches and gullies that appeared to form a series of Medieval plots that formed part of the shrunken Medieval Village (SMV) of Rickerby (Masser 2006, 63-65).

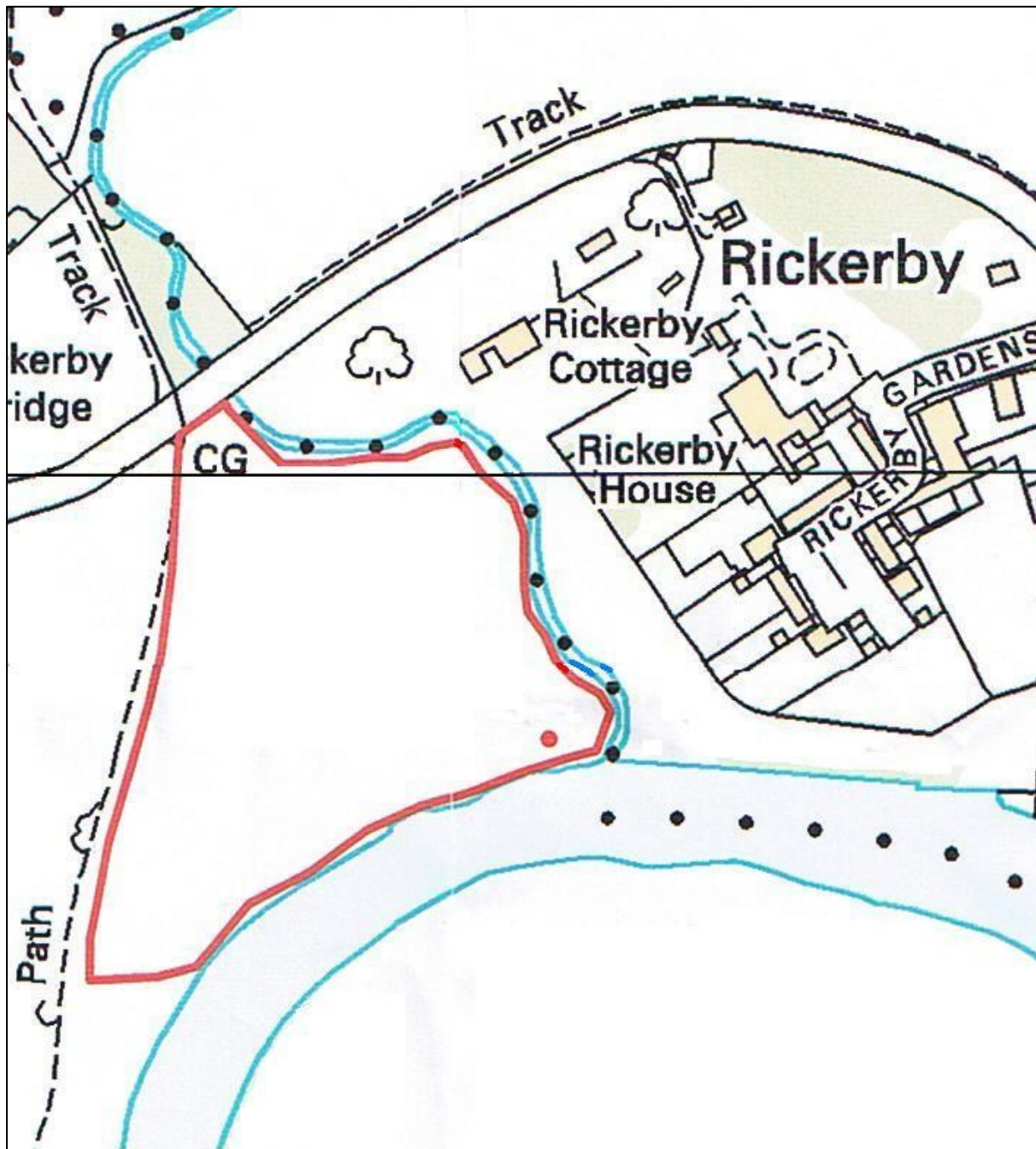


Figure 2. Location of study area involving the henge monument marked as a red dot

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd were commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork following approval of the project design by the curatorial body.

The following 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 on September 5th 2011.

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 (1994).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository 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 study area is located on a partially tree-lined, but generally open terrace at an approximate height of 15m OD, 3.00m above the north bank of the River Eden as it sinuates through its flood plain.

The land has remained as parkland since the mid 19th century.

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

A site visit conducted on Sunday September 4th 2011 revealed the following observations:

- The study area is located on the flood plain just above the River Eden
- That the site was free of obstacles and impediments
- Ground conditions were damp
- That a group of oak trees existed in close proximity to the west

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Desk-based assessment

The study area (NY 41416 56880) lies approximately 1km north-east of Carlisle and just south of the corridor occupied by the line of Hadrian's Wall *vallum* (Scheduled Monument nos. 26116 & 26120) part of a World Heritage Site.

The site lies within the Medieval settlement of Rickerby (HER no. 19786) that once belonged to Richard de Tilliol of Scaleby Castle whose descendent Adam de Rickerby resided there in circa 1230. Rickerby House was built by the Richardson family in the late 18th century who bought the medieval manor (Masser 2006, 61).

Later, it developed into a 940 acre Victorian park under the guidance of George Head Head, a Victorian banker, the estate passing to Miles MacInness in 1876. Rickerby House later became a

special school, Eden School, before closing in 1993 and being refurbished as luxury housing and apartments in 2002-2003.

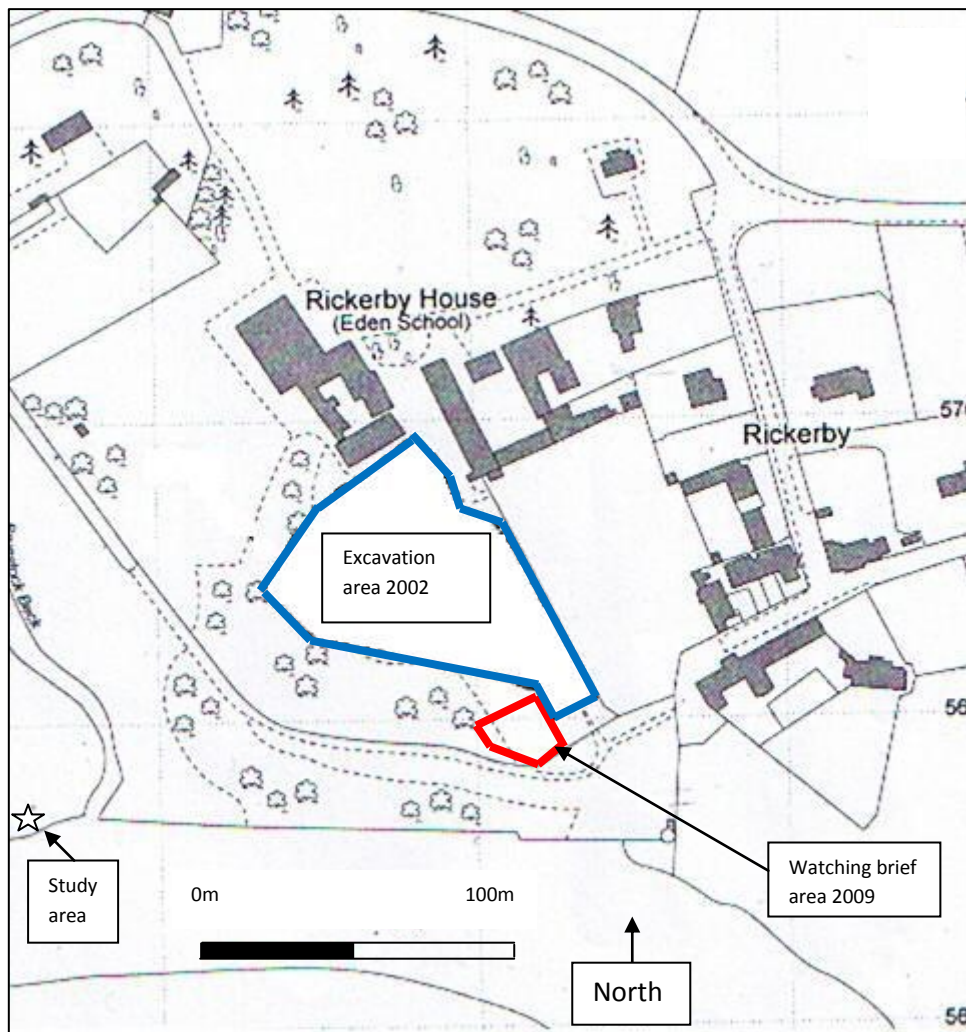


Figure 3. Previous archaeological interventions (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

Excavations in 2002 (figure 3) following archaeological evaluation in 2001 revealed Medieval and post-Medieval remains.

Excavation revealed a series of three ditches F1, F2 and F14 aligned south-east to north-west that provided the main axes for a series of rectilinear plots dating from the 11th to 13th century. Most structural elements appeared to have been truncated leaving little tangible remains and no clear configuration. A corn drier (F72) was identified as were at least two large pits F29 and F30 (Masser 2006, 64-70).

The function for these plots remains uncertain but excavation suggested that this part of Rickerby was not inhabited and that the plots may have represented gardens, crofts or an area where crops were processed e.g. the corn drier (Ibid, 73).

By the late Medieval period, the settlement appears to have been abandoned as a double-ditched trackway traversed the site although a paucity of pottery from the 13th-14th centuries may intimate decline at an earlier date (Ibid, 70-71).

A watching brief conducted in 2009 (figure 3), to the south of the excavation, revealed that area to have been completely truncated by modern activity probably associated with the former school and redevelopment of Rickerby Court during 2002 and 2003 (Martin 2010, 8-10).



Figure 4. First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 showing Rickerby House.

The Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (figure 4) illustrates a group of trees that appear to be extant today. The map shows no other development, an observation that concurs with the 1923 Second edition Ordnance survey map and subsequent cartographic evidence.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Development proposals

The development involves the erection of six stone monoliths to form a henge with a large stone lain on the topsoil at the centre (figure 5). In order to maintain integrity for the monument, the monoliths have been set in small trenches and fixed with concrete.

5.2 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

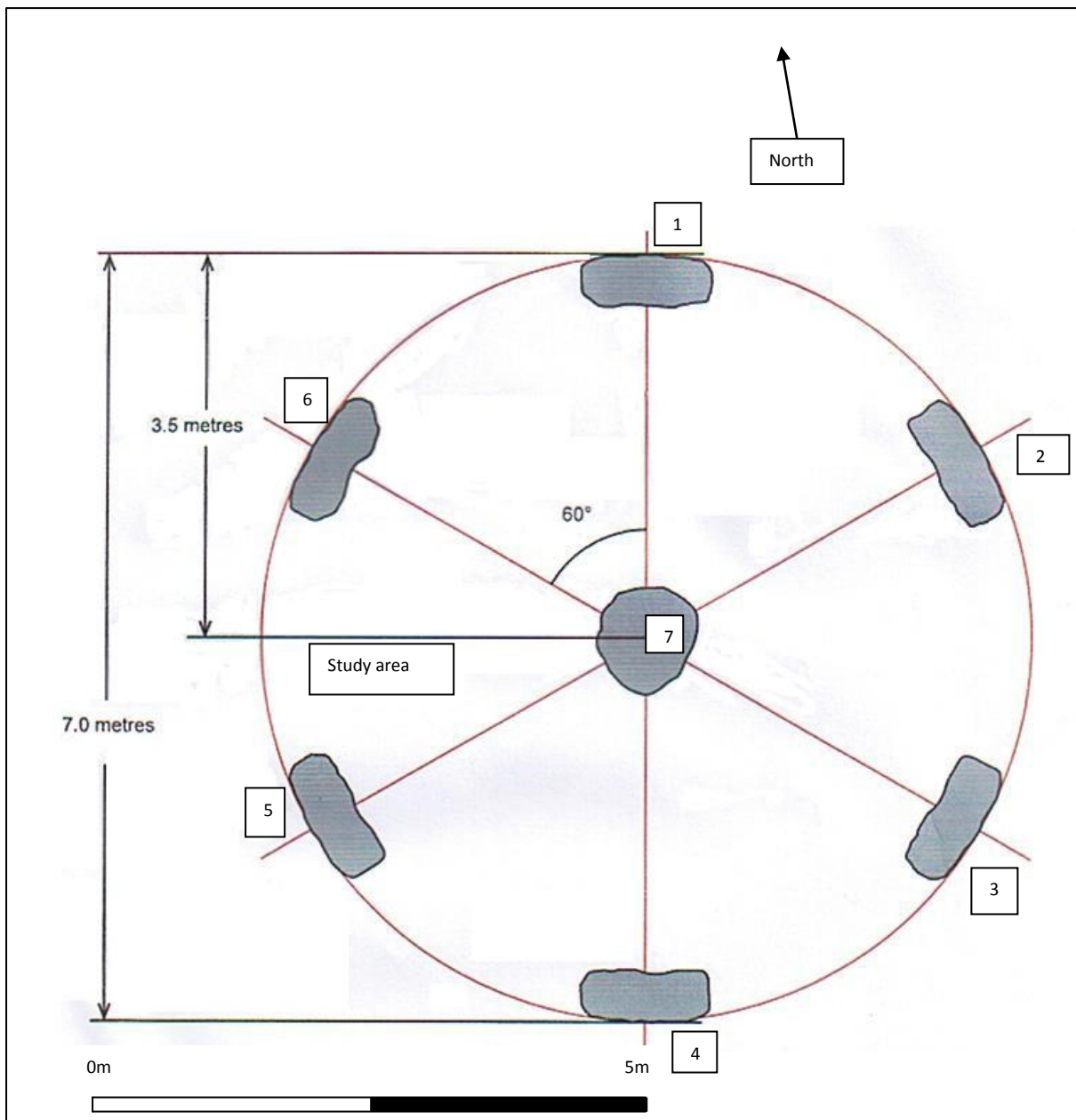


Figure 5. Ground plan illustrating the footprint for the henge monument

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 proforma sheets and field drawings, according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

The ground-works were undertaken by machine 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.

The work was undertaken on 5th September 2011.

5.3 Results

Six specific observations were undertaken during the watching brief, none of which were indicative of any cultural antiquity. These were trenches for stones 1 to 6 (figure 5). These trenches are summarised as follows:

- Trench 1, 1.80m x 0.65m x 0.25m in depth. No soil development within a fine red brown sandy silt topsoil
- Trench 2, 1.90m x 0.65m x 0.50m in depth. A fine red brown sandy silt topsoil developing into a similar alluvium
- Trench 3, 1.50m x 1.40m x 0.50m in depth. A fine red brown sandy silt developing into paler red brown sandy silt approximately 0.40m below the surface (figure 6)
- Trench 4, 1.90m x 1.05m x 0.60m in depth. A fine red brown sandy silt topsoil developing into paler red brown sandy silt 0.40m below the surface (figure 7)
- Trench 5, 1.80m x 1.00m x 0.60m in depth. A fine red brown sandy silt developing into a redder, red brown sandy silt towards the base of the trench
- Trench 6, 2.00m x 1.10m x 0.70m in depth. A fine red brown sandy silt topsoil developing into paler red brown sandy silt 0.40m below the surface
- Stone 7, rested on the topsoil with a minimal amount removed in order to level the stone

All trenches revealed clean, homogenous silt the result of river deposition on its flood plain, a view supported by the total lack of stone or pebbles within its matrix. Below approximately 0.40m, the soil profile became paler and redder the result of a reduction in humic material from the overlying cattle pasture.



Figure 6. Trench 3



Figure 7. Section in Trench 4

5.4 Discussion

Clean soil observed to a depth of 0.70m has been laid by fluvial action producing rich pasture. To this depth, the study area remains archaeologically sterile. Putative cultural deposits could exist below this horizon but were not encountered during this fieldwork nor suggested by residual cultural material in the topsoil.

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 and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mrs Becky Helm, the client for her collaboration on this project.

I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons and Mark Brennard (CCCHES) for their guidance with the archaeological brief, 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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