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Summary

The intervention monitored during the watching brief did not encounter any archaeological deposits.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The contractor

Gerry Martin is an independent free-lance archaeological contractor with nearly 30 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

Gerry Martin has been commissioned by Mr M.Charlton representing Outreach PLC (the client) to prepare a Specification of Works for a Programme of Archaeological Watching Brief Action relating to the insertion of telephone cables between 1) the east end of Davidson's Bank & Road to Grinsdale & Vallum and Davidson's Bank & dismantled railway in Wall Miles 67 & 68, Beaumont, Carlisle and 2) Hadrian's Wall Vallum between the dismantled railway south of Boomby Gill and the field boundary south east of Mill Beck in Wall Mile 68, Beaumont, Carlisle.

The watching brief action has been requested by English Heritage as part of the SMC conditions for S6227 and S6229, as potential and significant archaeological remains may be encountered and impact upon the Vallum, part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 26088. The study area involves the shallow burial of a telephone cable.

The development of the study area involves the disturbance of topsoil and other extraneous material overlying the Vallum in order to bury the relevant telephone cable.

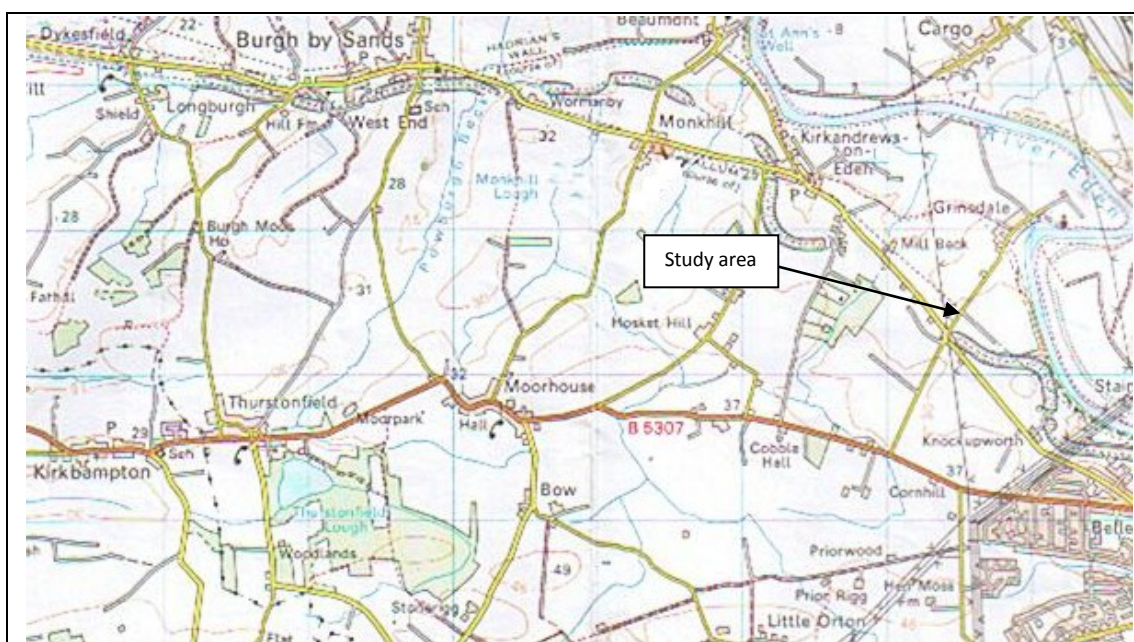


Figure 1. Site location, Grinsdale, Carlisle (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

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 development.

A generic scheme of investigation (WSI) was been produced by the archaeological contractor that details the methods and procedures to be employed during the watching brief action. It was submitted to the curatorial authority (English Heritage) and was subsequently approved.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd were commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork by Outreach PLC following approval by the curatorial body English Heritage.

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.

The project design aims to adhere and pursue the goals set out in the Hadrian’s Wall Research Framework (Symonds and Mason 2009).

Fieldwork took place between February 1st-3rd 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 (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

Grinsdale lies beside the river Eden near Carlisle. Four Roman military marching camps were present in the area. The rich loamy soil encouraged farming around Grinsdale. Linen manufacture and weaving once provided employment in the hamlet.

Grinsdale church, St Kentigern, was built in 1740 outside the village and just above the river on the site where a 12th century church once stood. It has a small west tower, a three bay nave, and a two bay chancel with arched windows. The church was restored in 1895.

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

The study area (NY 36450 57300 to NY 36700 57900) runs alongside a narrow no-through road (figure 2) just off the B5307 leading to the hamlet of Grinsdale within the parish of Beaumont at approximately 16m OD. The area was flat with the cable lain into a furrow within the glass verge on the western side of the lane.

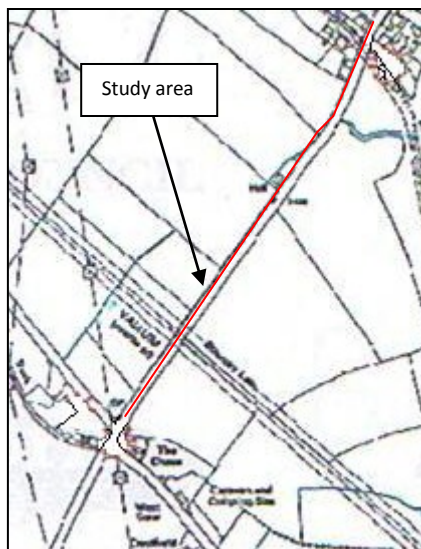


Figure 2. Location of the study area (cable trench in red outline)

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Desk-based assessment

The study area lies approximately 3km east of the Roman fort at Carlisle between milecastles 67 and 68.

Towards the east, the Wall and Vallum are close together but diverge close to Knockupworth Gill; the Wall following the bank of the River Eden, the Vallum maintaining a straight course for Mill Beck.

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.

Within this stretch of the Wall and Vallum, there have been few archaeological interventions although two Roman marching camps have been identified by aerial photography near Knockupworth, the closest being identified as a crop-mark (Camp 1) at Nowtler Hill (SM 10593).

5. RESULTS

5.1 Development proposals

In order to improve telecommunications services to the village, a new cable trench was required traversing the Roman vallum.

Some open area machine excavation was required but principally the cable was lain within a machine tilled trench affording little disturbance to any putative archaeological remains.

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

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.

5.3 Results

The watching brief programme monitored the reduction of extraneous material within a trench measuring 0.20m in width and 0.40m in depth.

Regarding machine excavation, the watching brief can be summarised as follows:

- Where the trench traversed the vallum there was no past cultural deposits uncovered nor any archaeological finds
- Machine excavation was required for the tarmac (0.15m in depth) and hard core (0.25m) heading towards the B3507 (figure 3)
- Beside the BT junction box (opposite Croft View, Grinsdale), the cable run began. A spread of clay approximately 7.00m in length and 0.20m in depth was visible followed a metre northwards by a spread of brick debris (figure 4). No structure was visible.

On Wednesday 2nd February a cable was lain within a “mole drain”, a ploughed cut that self-fills as the telephone cable is unreeled. Work began at the junction of the B3507 near Nowtler Hill (figure 5) from an existing cable duct and continued to Grinsdale village Hall (figure 6).

Archaeological watching brief Church Street, Grinsdale

The trench was between 0.20m and 0.30m in depth and 0.04m in width.

No finds or archaeological deposits were seen or recovered. Where the intervention crossed field entrances boulders were found, providing hard standing for traffic entering in and out.

No environmental samples merited recovery.



Figure 3. Machine cut trench through tarmac Figure 4. Connection to a BT junction box



Figure 5. Trench leading to the B 3507



Figure 6. Trench leading to Grinsdale village

5.4 Discussion

The watching brief recovered no archaeological material and the development did not impact upon any putative archaeological remains.

Where the cable trench traversed the vallum, the monument was not compromised.

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 Mr Malcom Cooper, the client for his collaboration on this project and to the ground workers in particular Tony Swinderbank for their co-operation.

I would also like to thank Mike Collins (English Heritage) for his guidance, 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.

Finally, I would like to thank Jo Beaty for undertaking the watching brief stoically under dreadful weather conditions.

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