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SUMMARY

The watching brief action revealed that any putative archaeological deposits had been either removed following development of nearby Rickerby Court during 2002 or most probably did not encroach into the study area.

No finds were present that could dispute this assessment.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Carlisle City Council regarding a planning application for planning permission for two townhouses at Rickerby Court, Rickerby, Carlisle as requested under Planning Application 1/09/0637

As potential and significant archaeological remains may be encountered, an archaeological evaluation has been requested from Cumbria County Council. The results of the evaluation will determine whether a mitigation strategy will be required in order to preserve *in situ* any significant archaeological remains.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd has been commissioned by Mr Dexter Routledge, the client, to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation relating to the ground works for this development.

The development of the site will involve the machine removal of superfluous soil and clay within the proposed building footprint as well as the insertion of various service trenches attending to the development.

A desk-based assessment was also required prior to the watching brief taking place.

This document describes the results of that archaeological watching brief and its archaeological context within the desk-based assessment.

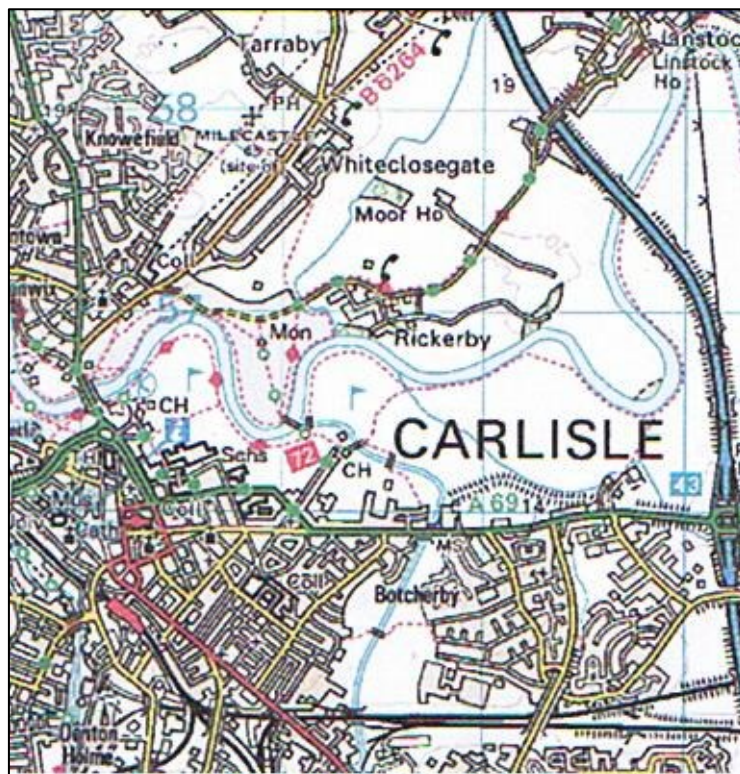


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

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 project design. 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 41420 56910) at the rear of Rickerby House on a slight bluff overlooking the River Eden. Excavation nearby in 2002 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).

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 November 16-17th 2009.

2.2 Walkover survey

A site visit conducted on Sunday November 8th revealed the following observations:

- The study area is located on a marginal area just above the River Eden
- That sub-base material from a previous development was extant indicative of a degree of truncation
- That modern debris and dumps of soil were present following the development in 2002

2.3 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 tree-lined, sheltered, narrow terrace at an approximate height of 17m OD, 5.00m above the north bank of the River Eden as it sinuates through its flood plain.

The land was until recently grounds of the school surrounded by parkland.

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

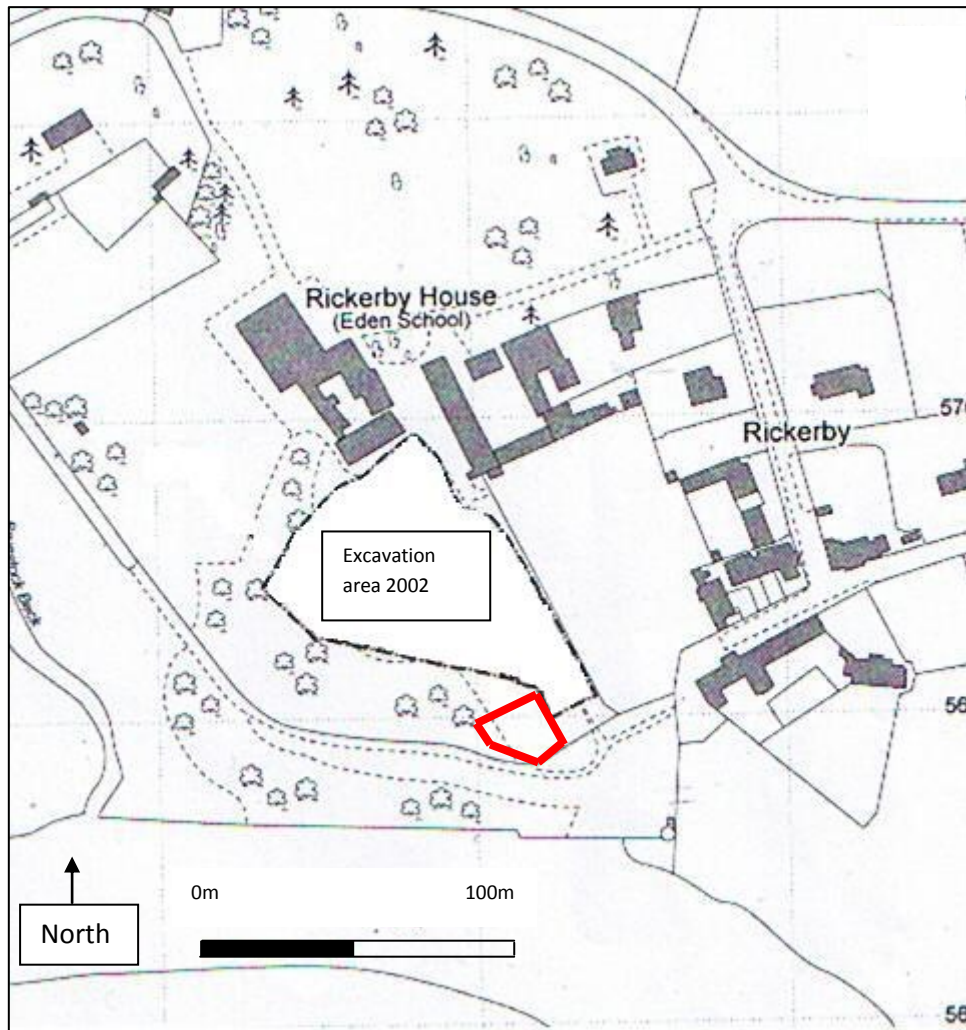


Figure 2. Location study area (red outline) (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Desk-based assessment

The study area (NY 41420 56910) lies approximately 1.5 km 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. Its final incarnation before redevelopment was as a special school, Eden School before closing in 1993 and being refurbished as luxury housing and apartments.

Excavations in 2002 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).



Figure 3. First edition Ordnance Survey map of 1866 showing Rickerby House.

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 number of features (F11, F18 and F 20) could extend into the study area although these gullies (Ibid, 64) would appear to be shallow and probably truncated by later redevelopment.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Development proposals

The development involves the construction of two townhouses with garages within plots 15 and 15a. Plot 15a was reviewed during excavation in 2002 and does not form part of this study. Plot 15, the study area, involved the excavation of foundations for the townhouse.

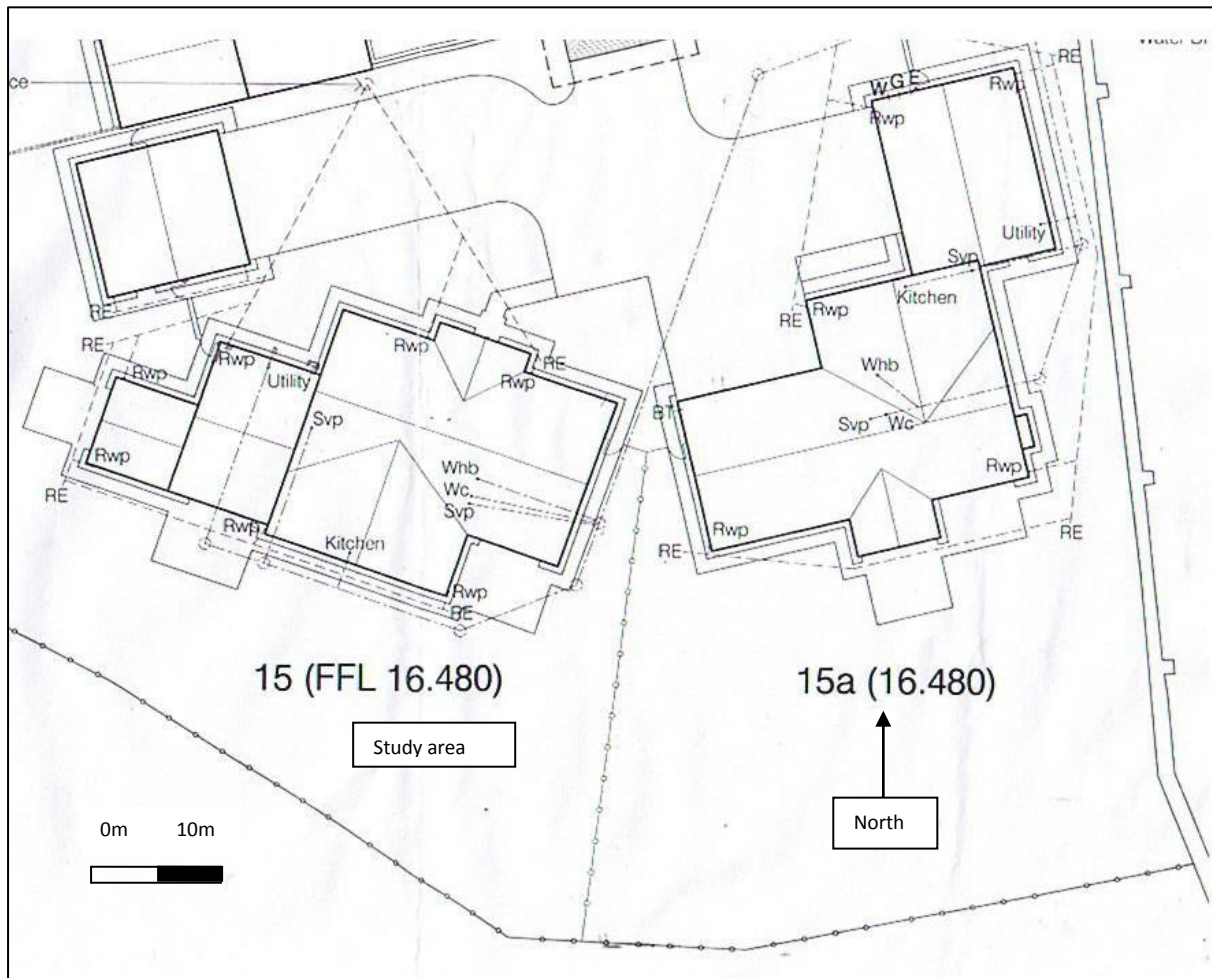


Figure 4. Ground plan regarding the proposed development

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 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 16th -17th November 2009.



Figure 5. View of the study area prior to excavation

5.3 Results

Observations made at the watching brief indicate that an average of 0.50m of modern overburden had been laid during the 1930s within the study area. Towards the north this material was slightly less, approximately 0.30m whilst towards the south, the material was thicker being over 0.75m in depth.

This material suggests that ground was made-up during the early 20th century in order to provide a flat surface. A remnant construction surface (a level of crushed brick and sub-base illustrated in figure 10) survived from the 2002 building phase.

Six specific observations were undertaken during the watching brief, none of which were indicative of any cultural antiquity. These were:

1. A deep modern intrusion 2.00m in width and 1.10m in depth penetrating 0.70m of made-up ground overlaying 0.40m of brown clay subsoil and resting above 0.20m of pink Boulder Clay
2. An observation of 0.20m of made-up ground overlying 0.40m of grey topsoil, sealing 0.40m of brown clay subsoil, capping 0.10m of pink Boulder Clay.
3. A large modern intrusion or pit 2.50m in width and 1.30m in depth
4. An observation of 0.20m of overburden, sealing 0.30m of dark grey silty clay topsoil with a high concentration of roots above 0.30m of yellow clay and sand
5. A large concrete slab on the surface

6. A raft of broken brick 0.30m in depth, overlying 0.30m of dark grey silty clay topsoil above a brown clay subsoil at least 0.30m in depth.

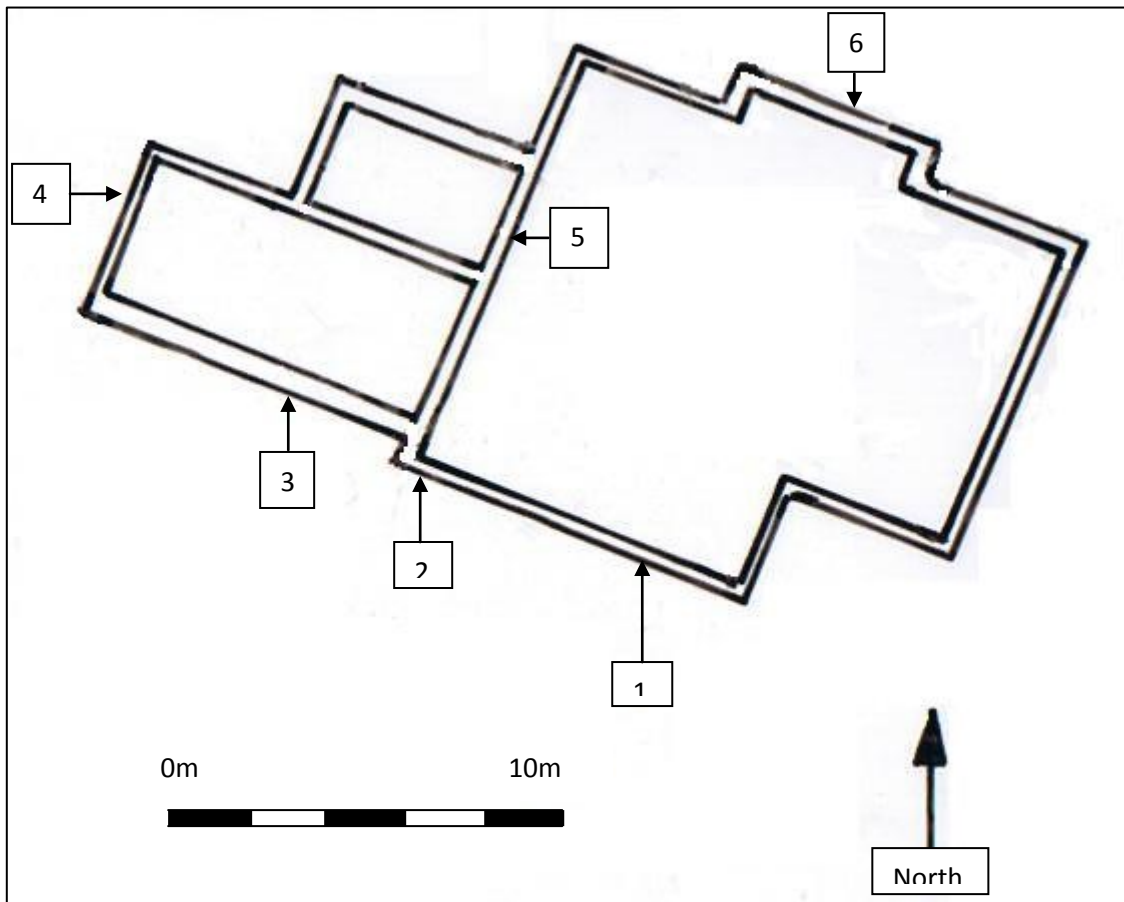


Figure 6. Footprint for the watching brief

Within the study area, concrete surfaces and dwarf brick walls were present that may be synonymous with sheds or temporary outbuildings.



Figure 7. Plan of the excavated footprint



Figure 8. Section in southern trench



Figure 9. Section in the central area



Figure 10. Section in the northern trench

5.4 Discussion

All the sections within the foundation footprint revealed considerable overburden lain during the building programme of 2002 (figures 8-10). In places, this buried dark grey topsoil that overlay a subsoil of sand and clay before sealing glacial Boulder Clay.

Large cutting features were present on the south side of the building footprint necessitating extra concrete being poured but these were of definite 20th century date probably associated with Eden School suggesting this was a marginal area beside the southern limit of the property, land where waste was dumped or stored.

Sheds and other ancillary structures probably existed, all of recent date.

Based on the observations undertaken it appears highly likely that previous truncation had removed any putative archaeological deposits.

No sections revealed cutting features of any antiquity and no unstratified or stratified finds of antiquity were recovered.

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 Kendal Museum 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 Dexter Routledge, the client for his collaboration on this project.

I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons (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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