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**SUMMARY**

Within the footprint of the demolished building, the watching brief action revealed that no cultural deposits of any antiquity existed.

## 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 replacement building at Rickerby Cottage, Rickerby, Carlisle (figure 1). The planning application is number 2012/0835.

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 Mr Simon Price, the client, 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 demolition material and the insertion of foundation trenches within the proposed building footprint.

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

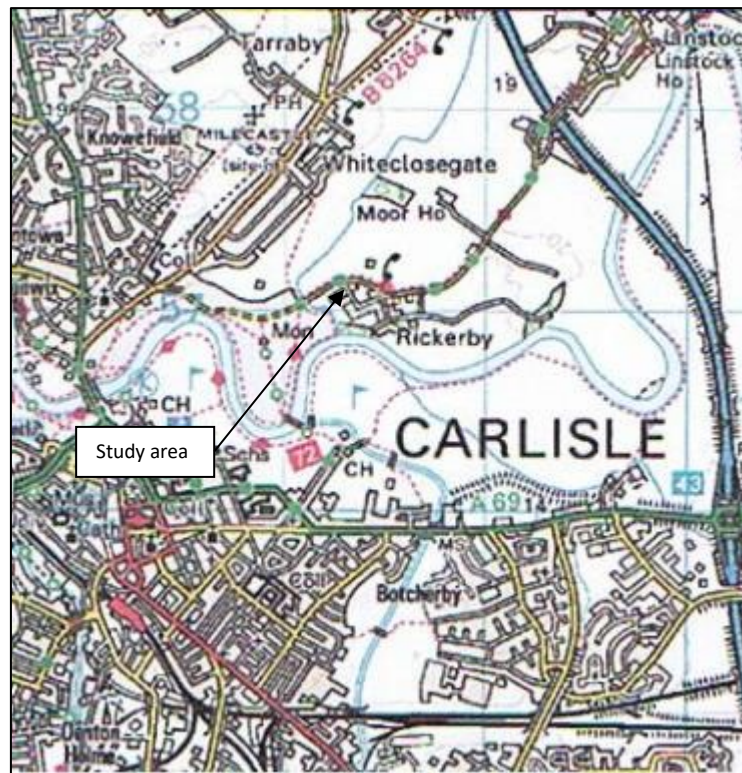


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

## 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 41300 57100) to the north of Rickerby House in close proximity to the House (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).

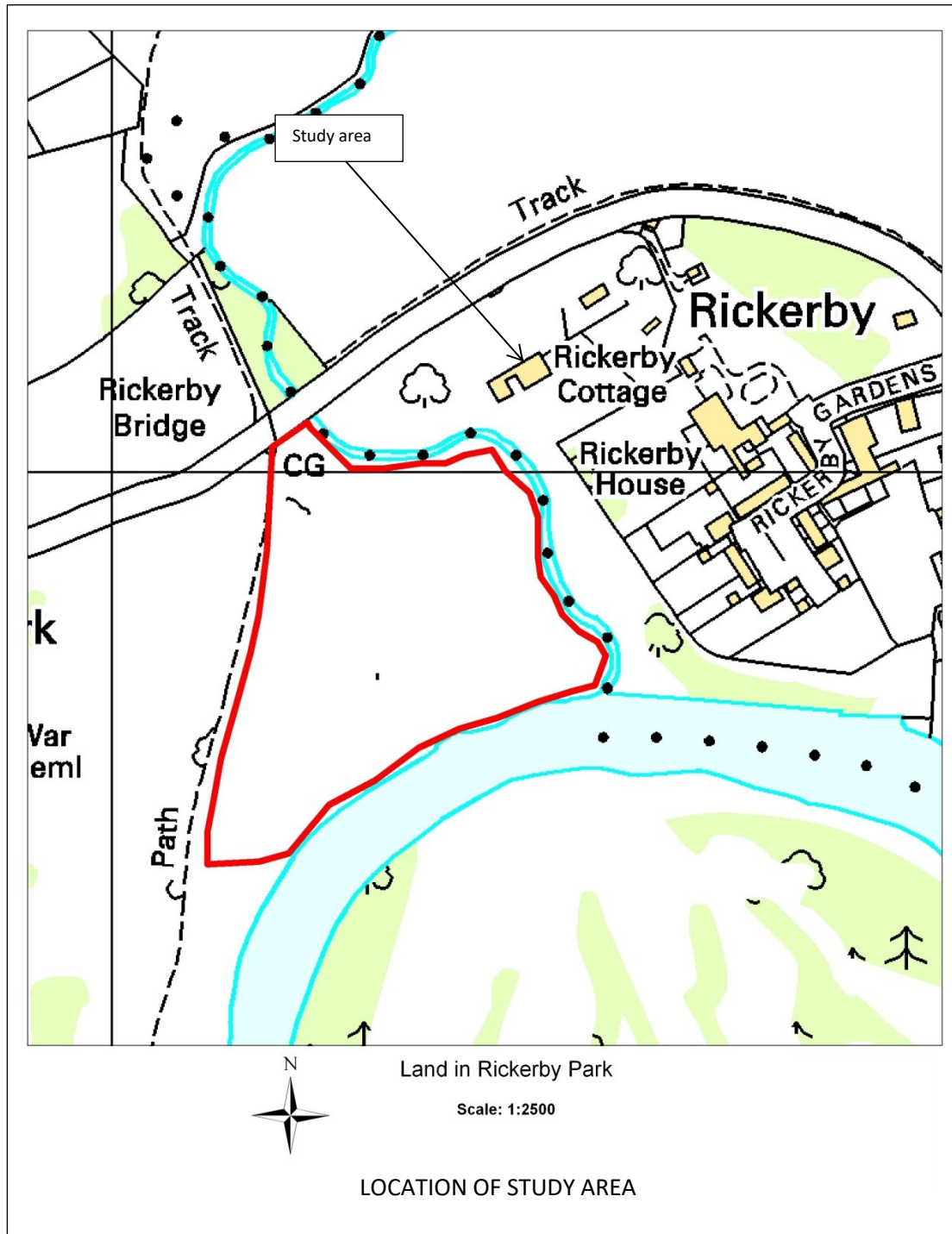


Figure 2. Location of study area

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 February 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> 2014.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

#### **3.1 Location, topography and geology**

The study area is located (figure 2) within a partially tree-lined park, 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 a flood plain.

The cottage would have originally served Rickerby House but ownership has subsequently dispersed.

The land has remained as parkland since the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century.

The site was previously developed in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century when a swimming pool was constructed to a suite of recent buildings.

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

### **4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

#### **4.1 Desk-based assessment**

The study area (NY 41300 57100) 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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 needs school, Eden School, before closing in 1993 and being refurbished as luxury housing and apartments in 2002-2003.

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 11<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> 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).

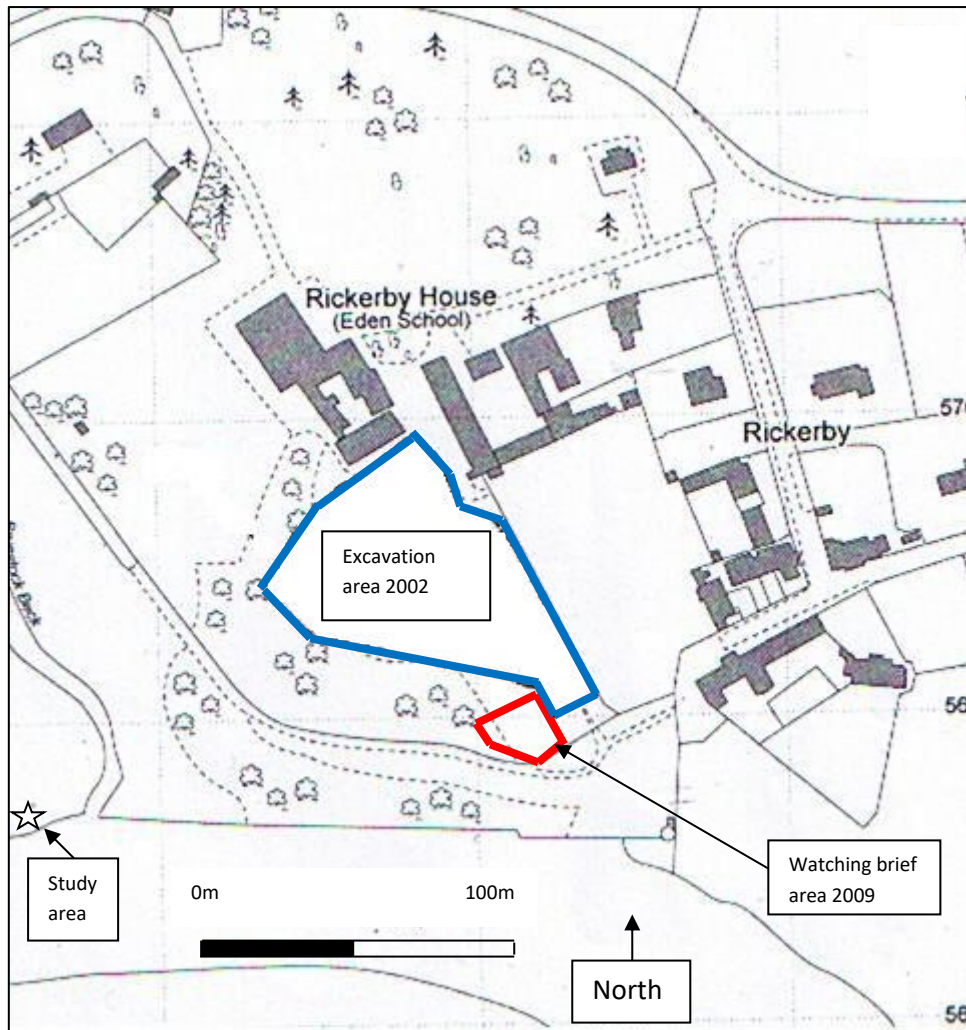


Figure 3. Previous archaeological interventions (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

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 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> 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).

A watching brief for the installation of a henge monument in 2011 was equally fruitless (Martin 2011, 2).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (figure 4) illustrates a single building whose footprint is occupied today. The map shows no other development, an observation that concurs with the 1923 Second edition Ordnance survey map and subsequent cartographic evidence.





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

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Development proposals

The development involves the upgrade of the existing swimming pool complex to form a spa facility, licensed cafe and restaurant, along with camping pods with associated parking and amenity space. This involved the levelling of existing modern buildings and the removal of superfluous demolition and overburden in order to insert a new floor and foundations.

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

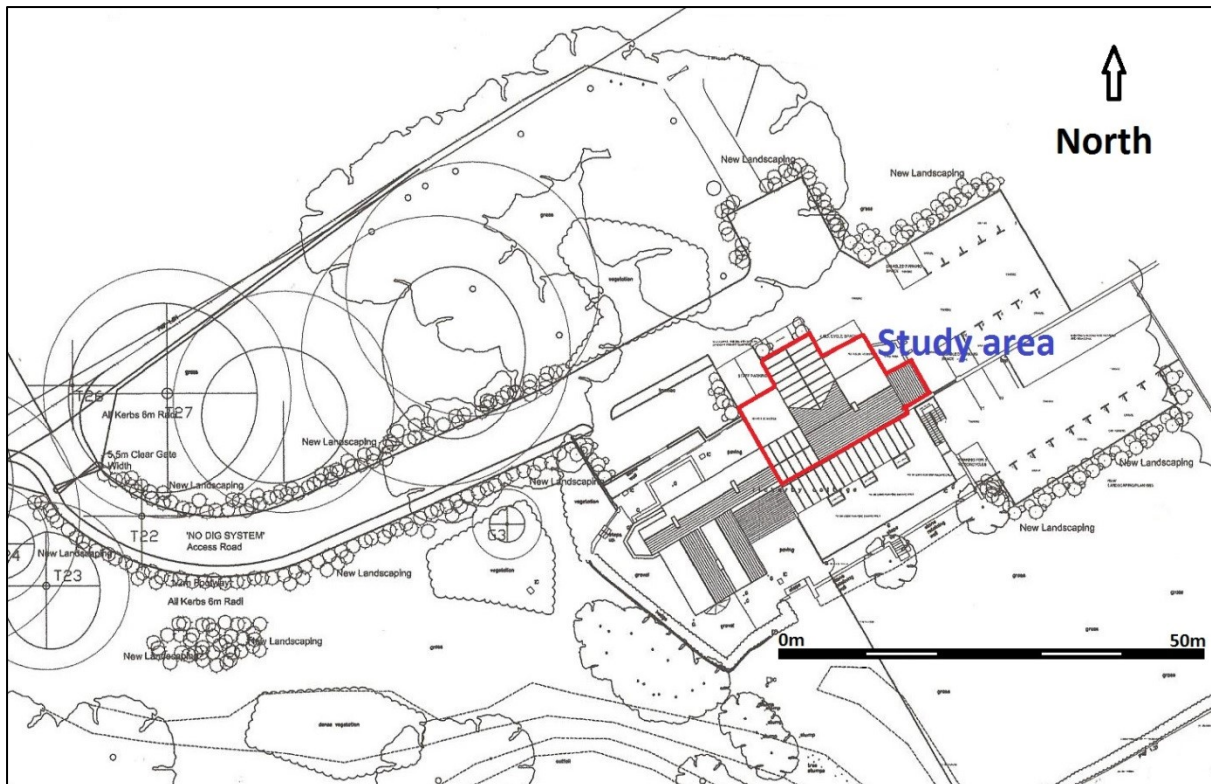


Figure 5. Ground plan illustrating the footprint for the new development

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 fieldwork was undertaken on 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

### 5.3 Results

The footprint for the development consisted of an area measuring 17.00m x 12.40m, broadly rectangular in plan with appendages to the north side (figure 6).

The overlying building had been demolished prior to the arrival on site. To the south, the swimming pool had been retained. Previous excavation for this facility would have removed any potential archaeological remains.

An excavating machine with a toothed bucket broke out the slab and removed the bulk of the concrete overburden.

Once the heavy debris was removed, a toothless bucket removed the remaining spoil to reveal a clean horizon of orange clay sandy silt that represented a natural alluvial deposit lain in the distant past prior to cultural engagement in this area (figure 7).

Alluvium was encountered at a depth of 0.50m below current ground height.

New footings 0.70m in depth from the height of the driveway were inserted by machine using a toothless bucket. Once more only natural alluvial geology was encountered (figure 8).



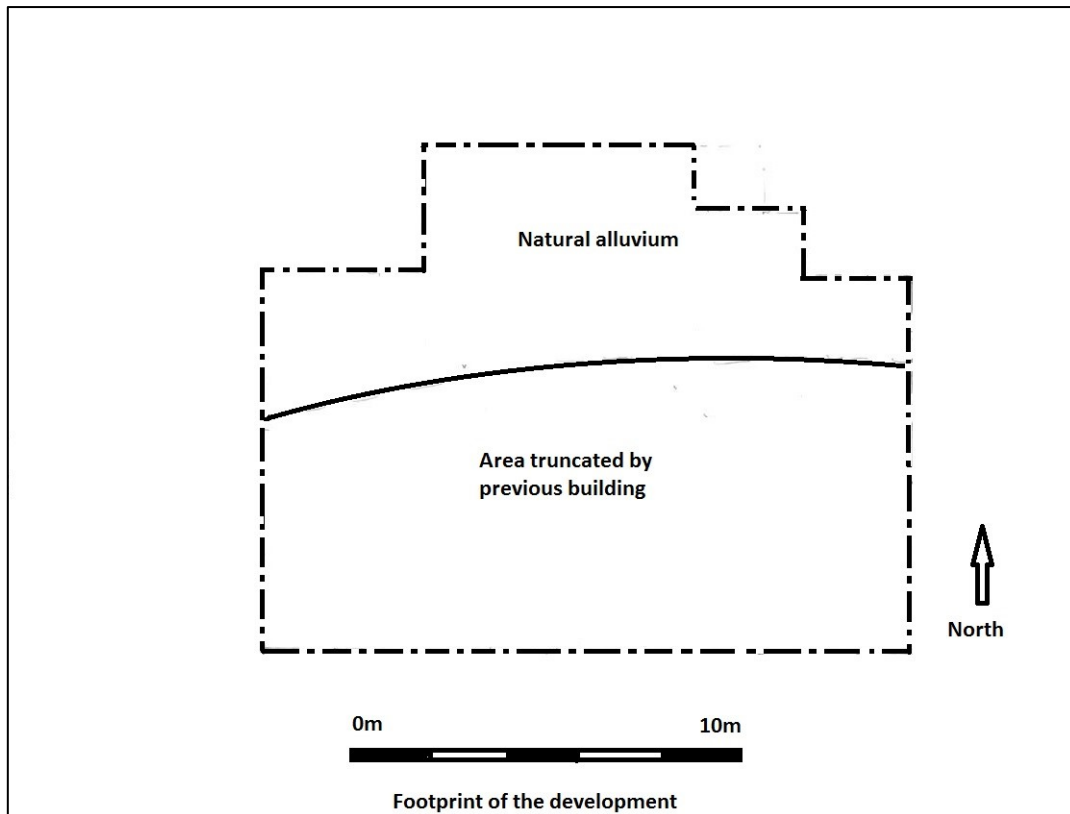


Figure 6. Plan of area subject to the watching brief



Figure 7. Natural alluvium



Figure 8. Excavation of footings

The final act was the removal of demolished building material at the northern end of the study area which was also archaeologically sterile due to modern construction.

The water table due to recent inclement weather was high resulting in an inundation of water above the final invert level.

#### 5.4 Discussion

Modern building activity had removed any putative archaeological remains that may have been associated with the Medieval settlement at Rickerby.

Most probably, 19<sup>th</sup> century development truncated any putative deposits but the establishment of a driveway, landscaping of the area and the excavation of the swimming pool and adjacent buildings

during the late 20<sup>th</sup> century had definitely removed any traces of past cultural activity leaving an archaeologically sterile environment.

## 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 an appropriate repository, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

A copy of the report will also be filed with the on-line archaeological archive *Oasis*.

## 7. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am grateful to Mr Simon Price and Mr Nick Darnley of RCA Interiors, the client for their collaboration on this project.

Jo Beaty undertook the fieldwork at short notice in poor conditions and did a very good job as usual.

I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons (CCCHES) for his 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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