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SUMMARY

The archaeological evaluation failed to locate a Roman road along the expected course. Four pieces of evidence may have supported a claim namely

1. A cambered or metalled road surface
2. Ditches containing tumbled cobbles or pebbles from an adjacent road surface
3. Conspicuous quantities of pebbles or cobbles in the overlying soil
4. Buildings or properties respecting an alignment beyond the limits of excavation

All of these elements were not present and the only conclusion that can be drawn was that the road did not transgress into the study area.

Circumstantial evidence suggests that should a road exist, that it would be at least 1.50m under the present road or south of the current road.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted by Cumbria County Council regarding planning permission for a small parcel of land adjacent to west Winds Cottage, Papcastle, (figure 1).

The planning application number was 2/13/0197.

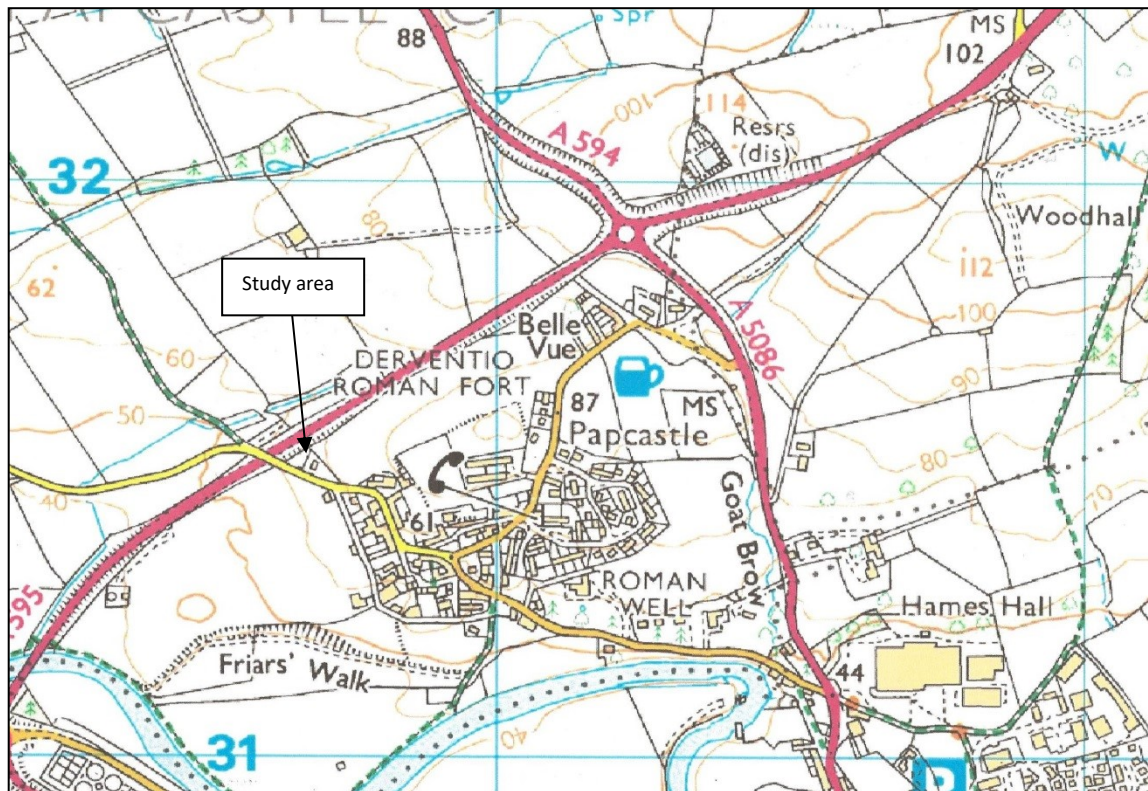


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

As potential and significant remains may occur, an archaeological evaluation was requested by Cumbria County Council.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned by Mr Ian Trehoar, the client to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation relating to the ground works for this development.

The archaeological fieldwork involved the machine removal of topsoil, subsoil and overburden within the evaluation trench.

The evaluation sought to construct a model of the archaeological potential of the site from which an informed strategy can be formulated to preserve *in situ* any significant archaeological remains. Its aims were to:

- Provide a detailed account of surviving archaeological strata and structures
- Determine the depth of survival of any significant archaeological deposits
- Characterize the extent, date, form and importance of any encountered cultural activity

Regarding this particular project, the fieldwork sought to identify the presence of a Roman road leading westwards from the fort of *Derventio* and define any associated monuments that had been encountered on either flank of the road.

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

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) for the archaeological evaluation. The WSI document outlined the contractors' professional competence as well as general project objectives, including the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was 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 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 archaeological evaluation took place between 21st and 22nd October.

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

An electronic version of the archaeological report will also be deposited with the online archaeological resource *Oasis*.

A note will be forwarded to the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Transactions for publication.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

The study area (NY 10679 31510) is located within the garden of West Winds Cottage just to the west of the house.



Figure 2. Disposition of the study area (marked by stakes) prior to excavation

The ground falls steeply to both the west and the south (figure 2) towards an extant road that leads from the village of Papcastle and traverses over the A595 by-pass.

The study area rests upon a rising slope at approximately 66m OD that descends to the south-west where it encounters the River Derwent (figure 3).

The landowner, Mr Ian Trehoar, related that much of the ground had been made-up with rubble and spoil introduced following development on the site.

Papcastle lies on the edge of the Skiddaw group of Ordovician Arenig rock, a series of igneous lavas and basalt. Overlying the Basement Beds was a Carboniferous Dinantian Limestone that formed part of the Alston Block. Overlying later beds were mainly mudstone with thin beds of sandstone and some discontinuous limestone bands (English Heritage 2006, 2).

Soil consists of a heavy, well-drained rich loam that overlies Boulder Clay drift geology.

The study area is within the parish of Papcastle, close to the borough of Cockermouth.



Figure 3. Area 4 of the geophysical survey: sloping terrain leading towards the River Derwent

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Previous archaeological reconnaissance

Roman activity in Papcastle is dominated by the presence of the Roman fort of Derventio (figure 4).

The fort was recorded by William Camden as early as 1586 who described it as “the carcass of an ancient fort whose Roman antiquity is attested by not a few monuments”. This comment suggests that features such as walls and buildings were probably extant albeit in a state of ruin (English Heritage 2006, 6).

The site was identified in 1709 by Gale whilst in 1725 William Stukeley discovered Roman material downhill from the fort as far as the riverside (Railton, 2008, 4).

During the mid-19th century, it was suggested that a rampart and ditch enclosed the area from the fort to the north bank of the River Derwent whilst the fort that stood on the summit of the hill, correctly identified by Stukeley was connected to the fort at Maryport via a westward Roman road (English Heritage 2006, 6).

The first formal excavation of the fort occurred in 1912 under the direction of R.G.Collingwood in order to establish the extent of the site. His conclusions were:

- Two Roman forts existed; one in the north-east corner built from ashlar blocks, the other less well-built but probably largely constructed in the late 2nd century AD
- That it was not an important military site due to the lack of internal remains
- Finds from outside the fort meant that Roman Papcastle was more than a mere fort
- Pottery assemblages indicated that it had been occupied throughout the Roman period

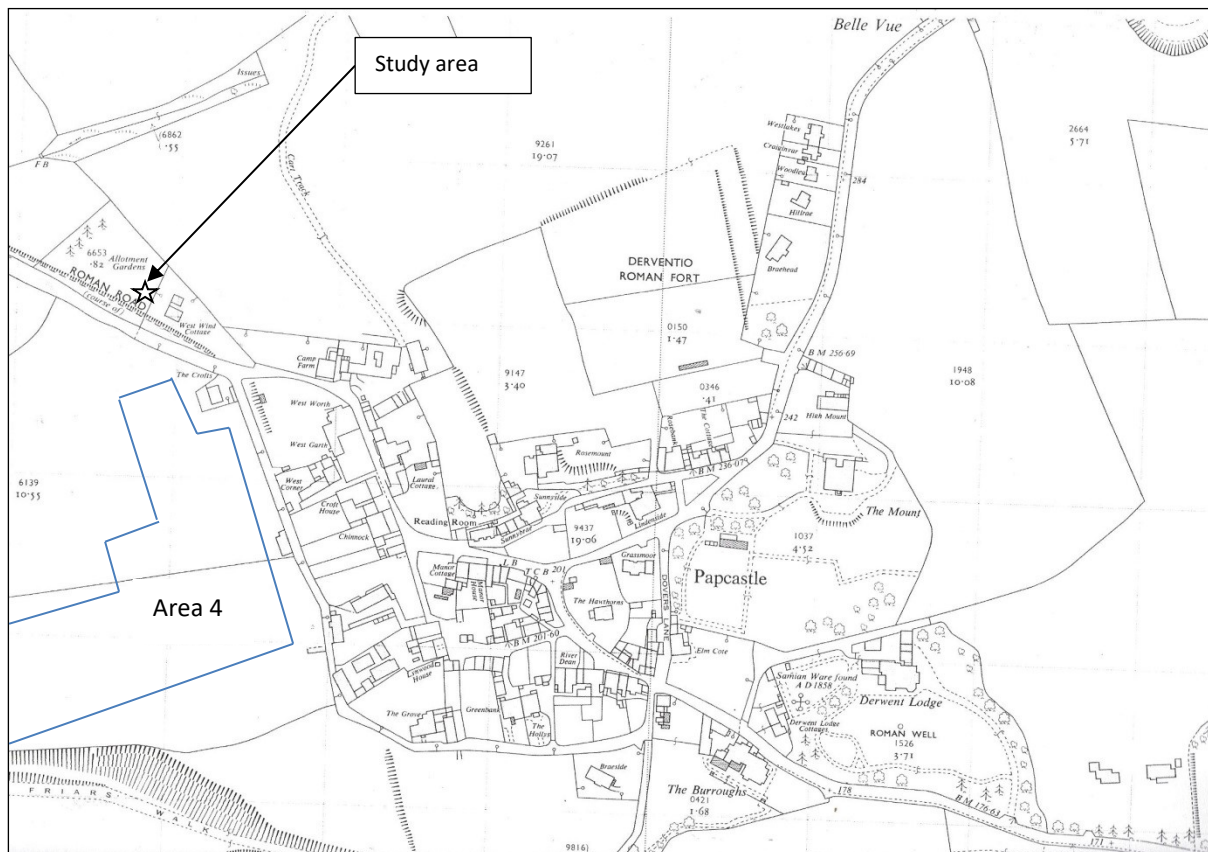


Figure 4. Location of study area at West Winds, Papcastle and the fort of *Derwentio*
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In 1965 Dorothy Charlesworth published her excavations during 1961 and 1962. She had discovered the remains of barrack blocks, the commandants' quarters and a bath house but the internal lay-out of the fort remained poorly understood.

Adrian Olivier in 1984 investigated an area south of the fort that revealed considerable and complex activity within an area acknowledged to be part of the Roman vicus suggesting that civilian settlement was far greater than first thought. He observed:

- The first phase of activity was represented by industrial activity
- Replaced by a large formal building possibly a bath-house, mansion, temple or administrative building
- That this structure may have developed into a religious institution as an altar base was recovered along with an unexpectedly large volume of small finds that may indicate votive offerings

In 1998, Time Team investigated the southern end of Papcastle. Extensive geophysical surveying indicated that the vicus extended southwards (Gaffney 1998, 1-3); a hypothesis tested by trial trenching at Derwent Lodge and Sibby Brows (Hughes & Zant 2010, 285-286).

At Derwent Lodge, two trial trenches suggested the following structural phases.

1. Mid to late 2nd century floor

2. Early 3rd century timber structure
3. Clay and cobble foundation to a monumental building
4. Timber strip building of 4th century date
5. Second timber building also of 4th century date

At Sibby Row, two trial trenches suggested the following structural phases

1. A small ditch or gully sealed by soil
2. Metalled surface with accompanying beam slot
3. Clay and cobble foundation for two-coursed sandstone masonry

Following the 2009 floods, a geophysical survey was undertaken that strongly suggested an extensive range of buildings, enclosures and field systems recorded on both sides of the River Derwent and interpreted as an extra-mural Roman settlement (Graham 2012, 275).

Relevant to this study was the geophysical survey undertaken in Area 4 (figure 3), illustrated as figures 11 and 12 (Graham 2011) and located above on figure 4 (blue outline).

The northern tip of the geophysical survey was 40m west of the study area.

A linear northwest-southeast aligned cropmark was encountered as well as a series of east-west aligned plough scars and land drains.

The cropmark could potentially respect a putative Roman road and may represent a western ditch outlining the road corridor. In general, the road corridor is approximately 27m in width and would therefore not impact by some distance into the study area.

The geophysical survey was undertaken on a steep slope, deeply scarred by ridge and furrow, the results being “somewhat disappointing” (Ibid, 17).

The survey identified three pre-ploughing linear features alongside a number of features that were the result of natural water channels (Ibid, 18).

The clearest feature was a D-shaped enclosure with ploughmarks respecting this feature. Cautious interpretation suggested an earthwork possibly a motte and bailey, a chapel or hospital that references Gilbert Pipard (Ibid, 19).

The closest fieldwork in relation to the study area was a watching brief undertaken at Camp Farm for a cable trench. This revealed no archaeological features, merely 0.25m-0.50m of dark brownish-grey sandy silt forming topsoil overlying yellowish-brown Boulder Clay (Oxford Archaeology 2012).

To the north, a geophysical survey in 1989 was undertaken along the route of the A595 Papcastle bypass. A small ditch was subsequently excavated revealing both modern and Roman ceramics, whilst a series of regularly spaced pits suggested revetting of the ditch (Railton 2008, 6).

The course of the proposed Roman road (HER 11073) would have traversed the area covered by the survey, but none was observed.

No other archaeological interventions have been enacted nearby.

4.2 Map regression

The tithe map (figure 5) shows the study area as a vacant, triangular shaped unit of land respecting the suspected Roman road to Maryport just to the north-west.

The plot measured four acres, three roods and eleven perches and was owned by George Coventry who paid an annual tithe of £1, 12/- and 6d.



Figure 5. Tithe map of 1838 DRC/8/149

The 1867 First Edition Ordnance Survey map displays no change from the tithe map (figure 6) remaining as a vacant plot.

Prominent on both maps (figures 5 and 6) was a spur leading north-west branching from the westerly road leading from the village. Nowadays, this track serves as a footpath but is known locally as the “Roman road”.

Investigating this “road”, it was found to be a narrow holloway flanked on both sides by steep banks approximately 2.00m above the road course that was approximately 1.50m in width (figure 7).

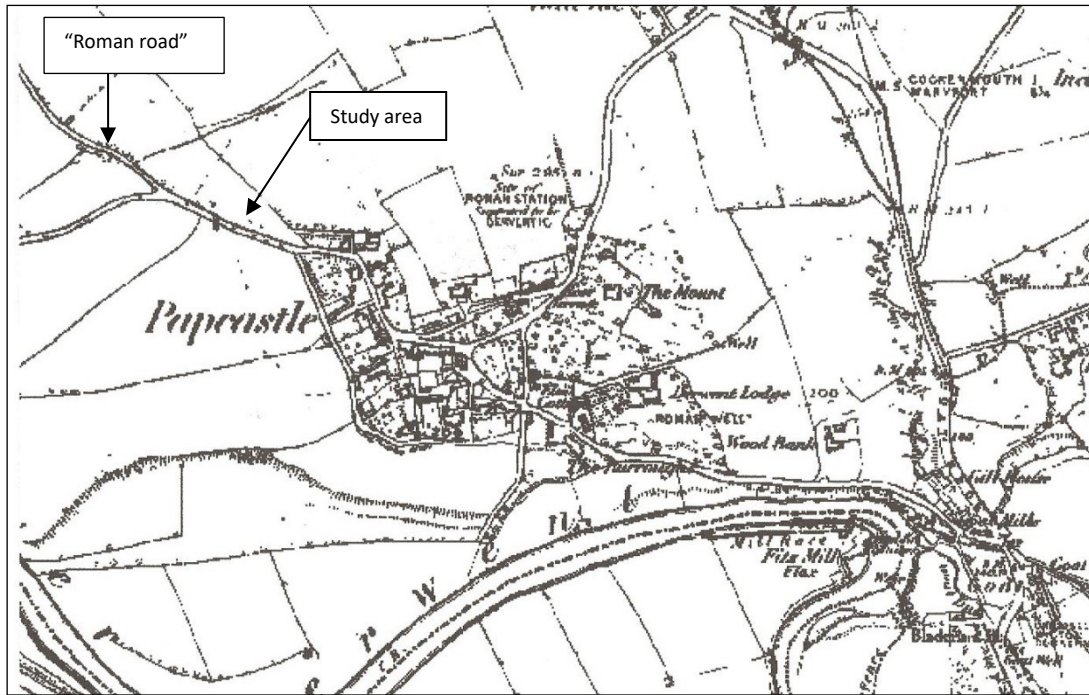


Figure 6. First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1867



Figure 7. "Roman road" looking south

The path was formed from deliberately set stones and boulders forming a flat surface that during wet weather served as an *ad hoc* drain.

The thoroughfare does not appear to be in keeping with a typical Roman road being very narrow, possessing no drainage or camber and being enclosed by banks. A Medieval origin for this route would appear highly probable.

4.3 Site walkover

On 15th October 2013, a site visit in the company of Mr Ian Trehoar the householder was initiated in order to understand the disposition of the site and its surrounding landscape.

The proposed development will take place on the lawn of West Winds Cottage. The terrain falls by approximately 2m from north-south along the course of the proposed intervention. There is also a significant fall from east to west of a similar amount (figure 2).

The study area therefore is not level and has been subject to landscaping when West Winds Cottage was built during the early 1960s.

The current road outside of the study area appears to be raised on a slight terrace that then crosses the A595 that lies within a cutting.

Just to the south of the road is a triangular shaped strip of land approximately 2m lower than the current road and bounded by a hawthorn hedge. This could conceivably have formerly functioned as a road or track.

East of the study area the road narrows with a southern stone wall appearing to slightly diverge southwards from the current road alignment (figure 8), possibly reflecting an earlier alignment.



Figure 8. Looking eastwards towards the village of Papcastle

Therefore, there exists a possibility that if a Roman road was extant then it was south of the study area and up to 4 metres below the height of the ground within West Winds Cottage.

Despite restrictions within the trench, informative observations were undertaken and are listed in the results section below.

5.2 Results

The evaluation trench measured eighteen metres in length aligned on a north-east-southwest axis.

The trench could be divided into two parts; a northern portion and a southern portion. These two areas combined appeared to illustrate a slope that produced a terrace. The terrace was probably naturally formed but enhanced by later agricultural practice.

Southern portion

The southern portion of the evaluation trench measured approximately 7.00m and encompassed a lower terrace, a fall of approximately 0.60m from the upper terrace, that formed the northern portion (figures 10 and 15).

At the southern end, made ground was 1.50m in depth consisting of pink gravel (thickness 0.30m), buried garden soil and rubble (0.50m thickness), sealed by yellow clay (0.25m in depth) dressed with topsoil 0.35m in thickness.

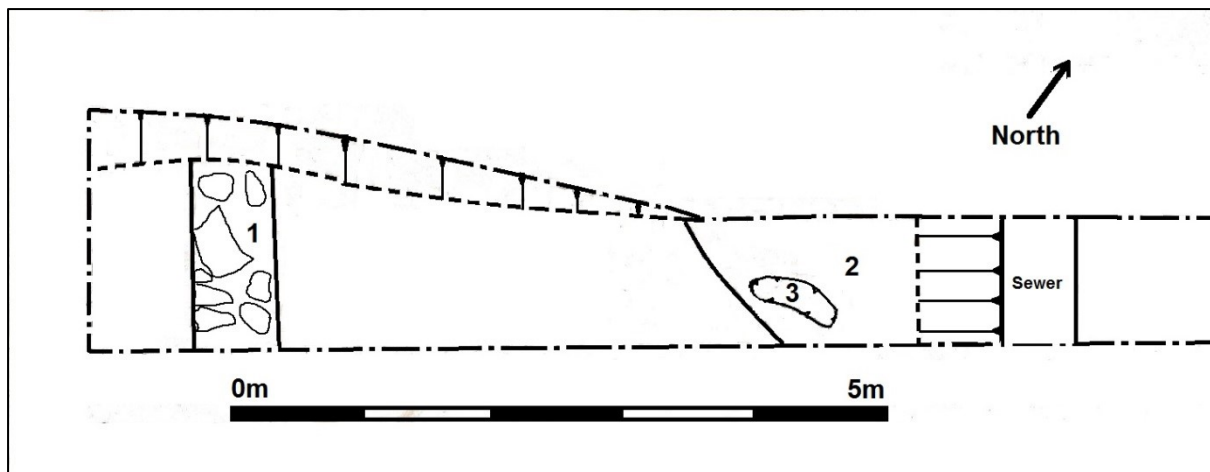


Figure 10. Plan of southern portion of the evaluation trench

Rubble that probably was part of the modern road construction seen in the main site section, respected a slighted dry stone wall **1** (figure 11). Modern pottery and a glass milk bottle were within the backfill indicating a mid-20th century date for deposition.

Wall **1** was aligned east-west and could be traced eastwards as an extant garden wall. The wall foundation comprised rough, angular stone without mortar in a construction trench 0.65m in width (figure 12).

Beside the terrace was a spread of brown silty clay **2** containing very occasional rounded stone 0.20m in thickness. Initial thoughts suggested that this deposit may represent backfill to a ditch respecting the terrace. Upon excavation, it was evident a spread of soil had probably slumped or accumulated beside the bank separating the two terraces (figure 13).



Figure 11. Modern road make-up



Figure 12. Wall 1

Following removal of spread **2**, a kidney-shaped cut **3** was encountered. The sides belonging to this feature were vertical with an uneven base filled by brown sand and clay. Water quickly accumulated within the cut. No cultural artefacts were present and it appears probable that this feature may represent peri-glacial action (figure 14).

Figure 13. Soil spread **2**Figure 14. Natural intrusion **3**

Northern portion

The northern portion of the evaluation trench measured approximately 11.00m and encompassed an upper terrace that possessed a gentle fall of 0.50m from north to south. (figures 16 and 17).

The natural yellow brown clay surface of the terrace produced no cultural features.

Overlying the clay drift geology was buried yellow clay silt 0.15m in thickness, overlain by a buried soil consisting of brown silty loam 0.25m in thickness. A dressing of topsoil containing building debris 0.35m in thickness was the final deposition horizon.

Finally, a small trial hole was inserted at the northern end of the trench to confirm that natural drift geology had been encountered (figure 17).

5.3 Pottery and other finds

No pottery of any antiquity was present within either the stratified deposits or the topsoil.

Worked stone, ceramic building material, mortar and industrial residues, materials that may identify settlement were also totally absent.

Finally, indicators of a displaced or truncated road surface such as small pebbles and cobbles were also absent.



Figure 15. Lower portion of the trench



Figure 16. Upper portion of the trench

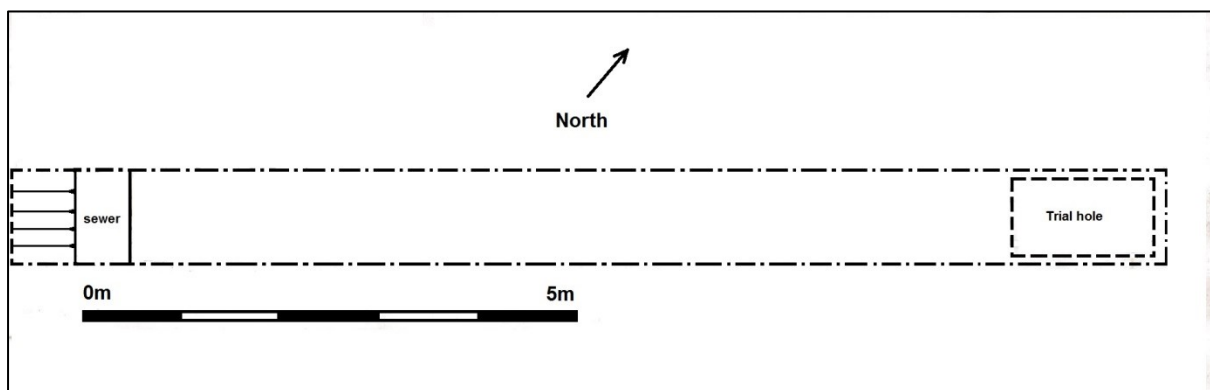


Figure 17. Northern portion of the evaluation trench

5.4 Environmental samples

No features warranted environmental sampling as all cultural deposits were of modern date.

5.5 Discussion

Construction of a typical Roman road required a significant land-take and planning.

Following clearance of trees and scrub, two outer ditches 27m apart were set out to form the road corridor. The road would be defined by two ditches, 9m apart at the centre, the intervening space forming the roadway.

A camber would be formed from initially large stones, then small stones and pebbles were melded together in order to produce a tight, metalled surface. Run-off from the camber would be discharged via roadsides ditches or drains normally either side of the road (Bagshaw 1979, 15).

Similar roads have been recently discovered in Papcastle (J.Parsons *pers comm*) but no such road was present within the study area.

Discussion must therefore focus on why no Roman road was found and whether an alternative route may be promoted.

Erosion and weathering through excessive traffic and wear could have truncated the original surface.

If this was the case, differential deposition may have preserved some elements of the road, most notably where erosion left traces of pebbles and stone in the accompanying ditches.

Ditches would have been vital at this location as surface water flowed both westwards and southwards.

No accompanying ditches were present which accompanied by the lack of pebbles and boulders in the topsoil confirms that the course of the Roman road did not pass through the site.

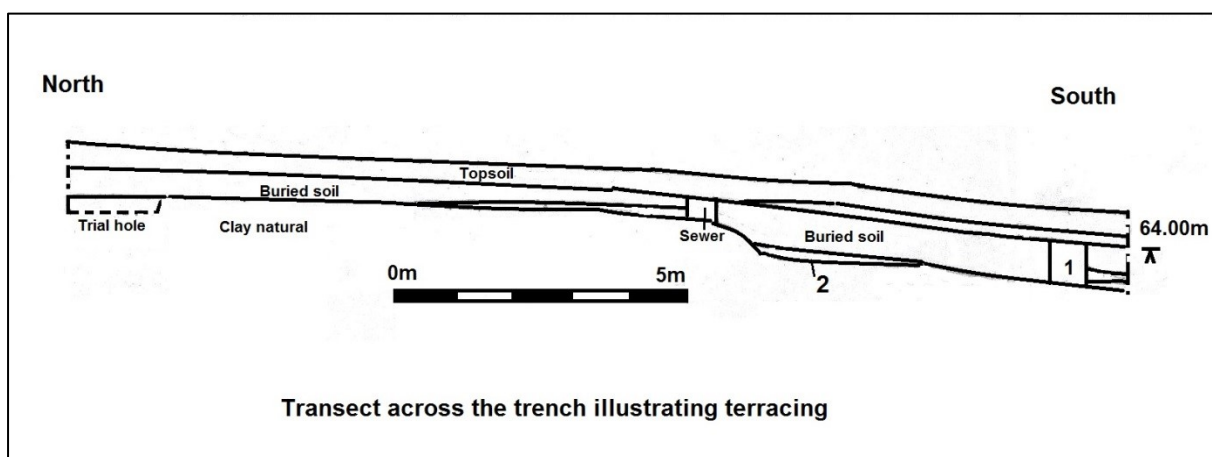


Figure 18. Transect across the site illustrating terracing

Possibly, there has been a misinterpretation of earlier observations.

West Winds Cottage is located on a fairly steep slope. In order to avoid soil erosion, cultivation was often undertaken on either natural terraces or enhancing a terrace by benching into the slope.

This probably accounts for the terraced character observed in the main site section (figure 18.)

Within the southern end of the trench, the modern ground surface had been made to a height of 1.50m, a height that the current road stands upon.

Although unproven, it is feasible that the Roman road existed below the current road, occupying one of the terraces.

On the south side of the current road, the land falls steeply suggesting that spoil may have been deliberately dumped in order to produce a slight embankment for a widened road.

Accompanied by the outline hedgerow and the alignment of properties on the southern side of the road, there is a reasonable case that the Roman road was either below or just to the south of the current road.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Mr Ian Trehoar, the client for his collaboration on this project.

Ian, David and Stephan provided Assistance during the fieldwork in appalling weather.

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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