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EVALUATION OF THE SITE OF A NEW DWELLING,
LAND TO WEST OF MARSH HOUSE,
BURGH BY SANDS, CUMBRIA

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BA AIfA

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	ON BEHALF OF EDWIN THOMPSON
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	NY 32159 58979
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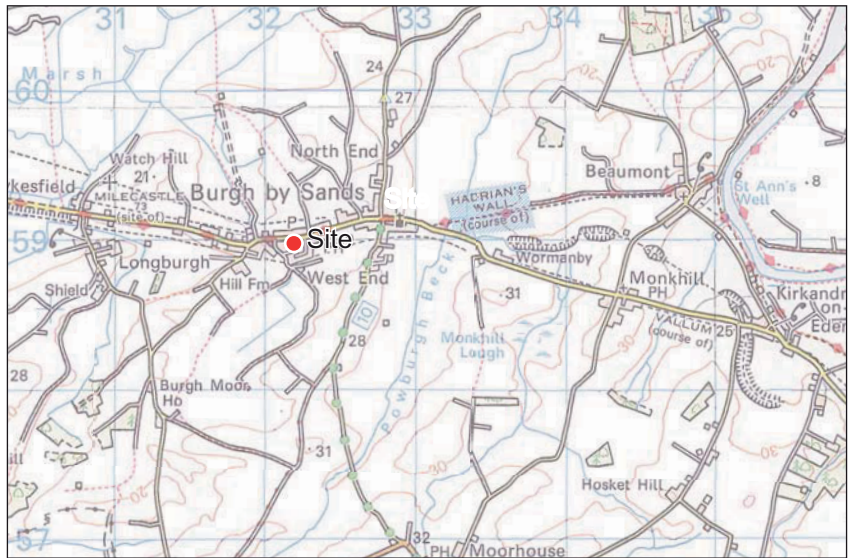
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Illus 1
 Site location

EVALUATION OF THE SITE OF A NEW DWELLING, LAND TO WEST OF MARSH HOUSE, BURGH BY SANDS, CUMBRIA

by Donald Wilson

Headland Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an intrusive archaeological evaluation prior to planning permission being sought for the construction of a new dwelling on a site to the west of Marsh Cottage, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria. The proposed building is located very close to the recorded former line of Hadrian's Wall and over the putative line of the vallum to its south.

A single trial trench was excavated within the proposed footprint of the new dwelling and along the line of a planned new service trench to the south (as close as possible to the line of an existing sewer). The trench measured 13.5m in length and was excavated to provide coverage across the site and in particular to confirm if the E-W running vallum crossed the site. No evidence of the vallum was found and no features of archaeological significance were recorded.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology was commissioned to carry out an intrusive archaeological evaluation prior to planning permission being sought for the construction of a new dwelling on a site to the west of Marsh Cottage, Burgh by Sands, Cumbria. The proposed building is located very close to the line of Hadrian's Wall (National Monument No 26087), and the associated vallum to the south, outside of any scheduled areas and within the Buffer Zone of the World Heritage Site.

The works followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) describing the programme of archaeological works required; this had been submitted to, and approved by, Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria Historic Environment Service and Mike Collins of English Heritage. Given the potential impact of the proposed development further information regarding the archaeological potential of the site was required prior to determination of the planning application. Specifically intrusive trial trenching was required within the footprint of the proposed building and planned service connections to the south.

The site lies at 13m OD and centred on NGR:NY 32159 58979 within an area of landscaped gardens immediately west of Marsh Cottage and to the east of The Croft, both of which are to the south of the main road through Burgh by Sands, Cumbria (Illus. 1).

2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

The main archaeological potential of this site related to the remains of Hadrian's Wall and other features of this frontier. The Wall appears to have been constructed from around AD122 on the orders of the Emperor Hadrian,

following his visit to the province the previous year (Hadrian's Wall Site Management Plan – 2008 to 2014).

As originally conceived the frontier works consisted of a linear barrier, with milecastles every Roman mile and two turrets in between each milecastle, supported by forts located to the south. In most of Cumbria the original linear barrier appears to have been constructed of turf, and this was only later replaced in stone. Some time before the linear barrier was finished a decision was made to move the forts up to the line of the Wall. The precise purpose of the Wall itself, whether a fighting platform analogous to a castle wall, or as a means of controlling access and securing tolls, is still the subject of fierce debate. Regardless of this the Wall represented the northern boundary of Roman Britain for much of the next 3 centuries.

Running to the south of the wall was the *Vallum*, a 6m wide and 3m deep flat bottomed ditch flanked by earthen mounds 6m wide to each side. This was introduced to the Hadrian's Wall complex at the same time as the new forts were constructed along the line of the wall. It is thought to have demarcated a secure area under direct military control in the immediate vicinity of the wall. The distance between the wall and *Vallum* differs from close proximity to 1 km.

Hadrian's Wall became a World Heritage Site (WHS) in 1987. Although the entire length of the wall is not classified as a Scheduled Monument it is all within the Buffer Zone of the WHS and the areas not scheduled are protected through the planning system. This is the case with the site at Marsh Cottage. More detailed background information concerning the Wall is included in 'Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2008-2014'.

Prior to this intervention a significant number of excavations and surveys had been undertaken in the village of Burgh by Sands. These include the original excavations by Collingwood (1922) that first identified the location

of the fort attached to the wall, known as Burgh II. Two further forts have also been identified in Burgh by Sands. Burgh I lies approximately 800m to the south of Burgh II and was identified by aerial photography in 1975 and excavation in 1978 (Jones 1979). A third fort, Burgh III was located approximately 700m to the west.

Following on from Collingwood's investigations later archaeological research revealed further significant features associated with the wall and Burgh II fort. Among these features are the *Vallum* revealed close to the SE corner of the fort (Austen 1994) and parts of the *vicus* to the south of Burgh II (Hodgkinson, 1993; Reeves and McCarthy, 1999; Reeves 2002; Masser and Evans 2005). Further areas of *vicus* have also been recorded to the east of this fort (Evans and Jones 1980 and Mattingly, Jones and Evans 1982) along with Linford's (1992) geophysical survey which identified possible domestic and/or industrial use of the area.

The information gained from these programmes of work, along with other surveys to the east and west of Burgh by Sands, has led to a putative line for the location of the *Vallum* being mapped. This line was estimated to have been aligned east to west across the proposed development area and it was thought that a north to south orientated evaluation trench across the footprint of the proposed development would locate its position if present.

3. OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the evaluation were to:

- Determine whether or not any archaeological remains were present within the proposed development area;
- Provide sufficient information on the extent and nature of any identified archaeological remains in order to allow informed consideration of the proposed application by Cumbria Historic Environment Service (CHES) and English Heritage (EH).

4. METHOD

4.1 Archaeological Evaluation

Prior to commencement of site works existing archaeological and historic maps relating to the site were checked. This involved consultation of the National Monuments Record and the County Historic Environmental Record in Kendal. The historic maps (Ordnance Survey) were checked in the National Library of Scotland. In addition, primary and published articles and material was consulted where appropriate and including 'Hadrian's Wall Management Plan 2008-2014'.

A single trial trench was excavated within the proposed footprint of the new dwelling and along the line of a planned new service trench to the south (as close as possible to the line of an existing sewer). This was a variation to the WSI, which had suggested two trenches be excavated across the area to be disturbed as part of the proposed development.

The position of a tree and the amount of room available in which to place spoil made the agreed trench plan very difficult to undertake. Therefore it was decided that the most efficient solution was to excavate one single trench that crossed the footprint of the proposed dwelling and associated services. On a site visit Jeremy Parsons (CHES) agreed that this was appropriate to the aims of the evaluation. The trench measured 13.5m in length and was excavated to provide coverage across the site and in particular to confirm if the E-W running *Vallum* crossed the site. The trench was 1.5m wide and was excavated by an 8 ton tracked digger with a flat bladed ditching bucket.

Excavation of topsoil and unstratified modern material was undertaken under direct archaeological supervision. This proceeded up until the first significant archaeological horizon, or clean geological deposits. Subsequent cleaning was by hand. A full and proper record (written, graphic and photographic) was made. All recording used pro-forma record sheets including text descriptions appropriate to the work. Written descriptions included factual data and interpretive elements. Photography used black and white print and colour slide film and a clearly visible, graduated metric scale was used. A register of all photographs can be found in Appendix 1. The stratigraphy of the trench was recorded, even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. All features have been tied into the National Grid and located on a 1:500 map of the area. All deposits and the base of the trench were tied into Ordnance Datum.

All work was carried out in compliance with the codes and practice of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (of which Headland is a Registered Organisation) and will follow the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.

5. RESULTS

5.1 Archaeological Evaluation

A single trench (Tr.1) measuring 13.5m x 1.5m was excavated across the site (Illus.1) aligned approximately SSE-NNW in order to best reveal any possible E-W aligned features running through the site (in particular the *Vallum*). A maximum height of 13.25m OD was taken at the top of the trench. Full descriptions of the deposits encountered in the evaluation can be found in Appendix 2 & 3 below, the results are summarised here.

The trench was excavated across two areas of landscaped garden separated by an area of flower beds (Illus. 2 & 3). Along the length of Tr.1, 0.4 to 0.5m of topsoil was encountered comprising dark brown silt with frequent small stone inclusions and heavy root bioturbation. A small amount of 19th/20th century glazed ceramic and glass fragments were noted (not collected) within this layer. Below topsoil was a shallow layer of mixed topsoil and geological deposits forming a subsoil of orange/brown sand between 0.10m and 0.20m thick with frequent stone inclusions. Moderate root bioturbation was also noted in



Illus 2
View of Tr. 1 from the south



Illus 3
View of Tr. 1 showing location

this layer but no ceramic fragments. Across the base of the trench a naturally occurring glacial deposit of orange sand and gravel with occasional orange clay lenses and occasional root bioturbation was recorded; a sondage was excavated into this material at one end of the trench.

No visible remains of a ditch or any other negative archaeological features were encountered. An inspection of the spoil failed to provide any Roman artefacts.

6. DISCUSSION

A putative line of the *Vallum*, extrapolated from previous work, ran across the evaluated area. Given that this feature is thought to be up to 6m wide and 3m deep the chances of not being able to identify it were considered to be small. Therefore it must be assumed that the reason it was not seen in the evaluation trench was that the *Vallum* is either to the north or south of the trench's location. It was noted that the ground to the north of the site within the garden and immediately adjacent to the road had a significant incline to the south and perhaps this topography is significant.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Photographic Register

Shot	C/S	B&W/P	Facing	Description
001	37/1	36/1	S	Pre-excavation shot of site
002	36/1	35/1	N	Pre-excavation shot of site
003	35/1	34/1	–	I.D. Shot Film 1
004	34/1	33/1	S	Working shot of trench excavation
005	33/1	32/1	NW	Post-excavation shot of Tr.1 from the SE end
006	32/1	31/1	N	View of Tr.1 showing location
007	31/1	30/1	SE	Post-excavation shot of Tr.1 from the NW end
008	30/1	29/1	S	View of Tr.1 showing location
009	29/1	28/1	S	View of trench from main road

Appendix 2

Trench Record

Tr. No.	Alignment	Dimensions	Description
1	SE-NW	13.5m x 1.5m	Trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.70m. The stratigraphy comprised between 0.40 & 0.50m of topsoil (001) over 0.10 to 0.20m of mixed subsoil (002) over natural glacial deposits (003). No archaeology or artefacts of archaeological significance were recorded.

Appendix 3

Context Record

Context	Tr. No.	Description
001	Tr.1	A dark brown soft silty topsoil with frequent small stone inclusions and heavy root bioturbation. The topsoil was between 0.40m and 0.50m deep over subsoil 002. A small number of 19th/20th century glazed ceramic and glass fragments were revealed (not collected).
002	Tr.1	A shallow layer of mixed topsoil and natural forming a subsoil of orange/brown sand with frequent stone inclusions was recorded between 0.10m and 0.20m deep. Moderate root bioturbation was noted.
003	Tr.1	Glacial deposit of orange sand and gravel with occasional orange clay lenses was recorded at 0.6 to 0.70m depth. A sondage excavated through this revealed the deposit becoming increasingly stone rich. Occasional root bioturbation was revealed.