



making sense of heritage

Snake Woodlands, Dr Talbotes Gate

Archaeological Evaluation: Statement of Results

Site name	Snake Woodlands, Dr Talbotes Gate		
Site address	Snake Woodlands, High Peak, Derbyshire		
Site code	89100	Grid ref (centred)	41096 39105
Planning ref	N/A		
Accession code: DERSB 2013.4			
Dates(s) of attendance	28/02/13		
Description of construction activities monitored	Monitored machine and hand excavation of an 8m long and 0.5m wide evaluation trench on the line of a proposed new track (Plate 1).		
Summary of site stratigraphy			
Revealed deposits comprised a yellow sand natural at 0.3m below ground level and overlain by topsoil. Limestone slabs were observed within the topsoil that may have represented an early form of the existing path or consolidation of boggy ground, but their date was unclear (Plate 2). The topsoil was cut by a post-medieval 'spade-cut' drainage ditch.			
Archaeological features	Post-medieval/modern drainage ditch.	Natural features	None
Finds observed	None		
Finds collected	None	Samples	None
Photography	Black and White print and digital	See plates 1 & 2	
Other records	Trench sheet x 1 Section drawing x 1	Day register and journal x 2	Photographic sheets x 2
Current archive location		Wessex Archaeology, Sheffield	
Long term archive location		Buxton Museum	
Interpretation			
Drainage ditch and stone consolidation of path known as the 'Doctors Gate'. The consolidation is unlikely to predate the 17 th century path known as 'Dr Talbotes Gate', and no evidence for a Roman precursor was seen.			
Other information			
Forestry Commission (Client) refused to fund report and summary statement produced in order for record of work to appear on HER.			
Form completed by	APN	Date	03/04/14
Checked by	APN	Date	03/04/14
Additional documentation attached -			
1.	Brief for Investigation		



Salisbury
Portway House
Old Sarum Park
Salisbury
SP4 6EB
Tel: 01722 326867

Rochester
Bridgewood House
8 Laker Road
Rochester Airport Industrial Estate
Kent ME1 3QX
Tel: 01622 739381

Sheffield
Unit R6
Sheaf Bank Business Park
Prospect Road
Sheffield S2 3EN
Tel: 0114 255 9774

Edinburgh
7/9 North St David Street
Edinburgh
EH2 1AW
Tel: 0131 524 9561



Plate 1: Working shot



Plate 2: Stones on line of 'Dr Talbotes Gate'



BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION

Proposal: new forwarder track

Planning application number: N/A

Location: Snake Woodlands, High Peak, Derbyshire

Grid Reference: SK1096 9105

Geology: Millstone Grit

Area of proposal site: c. 30m section of track

Land use and vegetation cover: forestry

Summary

A proposal has been made to the Peak District National Park Authority, by the Forestry Commission, for the construction of a section of track to enable timber to be extracted from the Snake Woodlands plantation.

There is reason to believe that archaeological remains may exist on the site but their extent and state of preservation is unclear. The Peak District National Park Authority has advised that the archaeological implications of the proposal cannot be adequately assessed on the basis of the available information. It has been recommended therefore that an archaeological field evaluation should be carried out.

1.0 Archaeological background

1.1 The line of the new track will cross the line of a long established path which is known as the 'Doctor's Gate' (Derbyshire HER no: 8255). This is marked on OS maps as a Roman road, but it may be of medieval origin.

The route was first recorded in 1627 as "Doctor Talbotes Gate" and still known today as Doctor's gate. It was the Hope to Glossop packhorse route which was replaced by the turnpike in 1821. It is also reputed to be a Roman road joining the forts at Brough and Glossop. No evidence for its Roman antiquity has been discovered to date.

The path in this area comprises rounded gritstone slabs set into the ground on end and bordered by narrower, sharp-cornered slabs standing slightly proud of the path itself. The paved path continues to the north-west, into Charlesworth parish. To the south-east the paving disappears as the path approaches a boggy confluence of gullies above a clough. The line of the trackway cannot be traced further east, but stone revetment and wall footings may have been built to support the route as it approached a clough. The projected line of the trackway would join it with the present Snake Pass. It is possible that the projected section was destroyed by the

buildings of the turnpike to deter travellers from using the packhorse route to avoid paying tolls. Excavations along its route south of Crookstone have found metallurgy.

1.2 There are other sites and finds in the immediate area. Further details can be obtained from the Derbyshire Historic Environment Record.

2.0 Requirement for an evaluation

2.1 The proposed development could severely damage or destroy any archaeological remains which may be present on the site. It has been recommended therefore that an archaeological evaluation should take place to obtain further information on the presence and preservation of any archaeological deposits.

2.2 The objectives of the evaluation should be to gather sufficient information to establish presence/absence, character, extent, state of preservation and date of any archaeological deposits within the areas of proposed development.

2.3 The evaluation should investigate the area indicated on the accompanying plan.

3.0 Evaluation Techniques

The evaluation techniques chosen should be selected to cause the minimum amount of damage to areas of archaeological deposits and should comply with all health and safety regulations. It is envisaged that the following work would be required:

3.1 Stage 1: a 3m x 1.5 m hand-dug trench is to be excavated across the line of the 'Doctor's Gate' path in the location shown on the accompanying plan. The requirements outlined in section 5 below should be closely followed.

3.2 Contractors should be appropriately insured for the nature of the work which is to be undertaken.

4.0 Excavation guidelines

Where trenches are to be opened the following guidelines should be observed:

4.1 All topsoil or recent overburden should be removed down to the first significant archaeological horizon in successive level spits.

4.2 Trenches to be recorded according to the normal principles of stratigraphic archaeological excavation.

4.3 The stratigraphy of any trial trench is to be recorded even where no archaeological deposits have been identified. No archaeological deposit should be entirely removed unless this is unavoidable, and then not without the specific approval of the Conservation Archaeologist.

4.4 Any human remains which are excavated must initially be left *in situ* and, if removal is necessary, this must comply with the relevant Home Office regulations.

4.5 The actual areas of trenching and any features of possible archaeological concern noted within the trenches, should be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, summary scale drawings, and written descriptions.

4.6 The archaeological contractors will be responsible for locating any service pipes, cables etc., which may cross any of the trench lines, and for taking the necessary measures to avoid disturbing such services.

5.0 Site Monitoring

5.2 With regard to site inspections, the contractor will liaise with the Contract Manager and/or the PDNPA Conservation Archaeologist in order that the general site stratigraphy can be assessed in the initial stage of trial trenching and/or so that the site can be inspected when field work is near to completion, but before any trenches have been backfilled.

6.0 Report

6.1 A report shall be produced to include background information, a summary of the works carried out, and a description and interpretation of the findings. The report should also include:

6.1.1 A location plan showing all excavated areas with respect to nearby fixed structures and roads;

6.1.2. Illustrations of all archaeological features with appropriately scaled hachured plans and sections;

6.1.3. Specialist descriptions of artefacts or ecofacts;

6.1.4 An indication of potential archaeological deposits not disturbed by the present development.

6.1.5 Data files relating to measured survey should be provided as both a print out and in an electronic format.

6.2 The report should not give an opinion on whether preservation or further investigation is considered appropriate, but should provide an interpretation of results, placing them in a local and regional context.

6.3 The results of the work will be published in the appropriate issue of Archaeology and Conservation in Derbyshire and, if of regional or national significance, within an archaeological journal.

7.0 Deposition of Archive and Finds

7.1 Upon completion of fieldwork samples shall be processed and all finds shall be cleaned, identified, assessed, spot-dated and properly stored. A field archive shall be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, photographs and electronic data (in a format to be agreed by the repository museum).

7.2 After agreement with the landowner, the field archive should be deposited with Buxton Museum. The archaeological contractor should contact Ros Westwood, Buxton Museum and Art Gallery, Terrace Road, Buxton, Derbyshire, SK17 6DA tel: 01298 24658 at the beginning of the project, to arrange this.

8.0 Standards

8.1 The above activities will be undertaken in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for archaeological field evaluation* (revised September 1999)

February 2013

