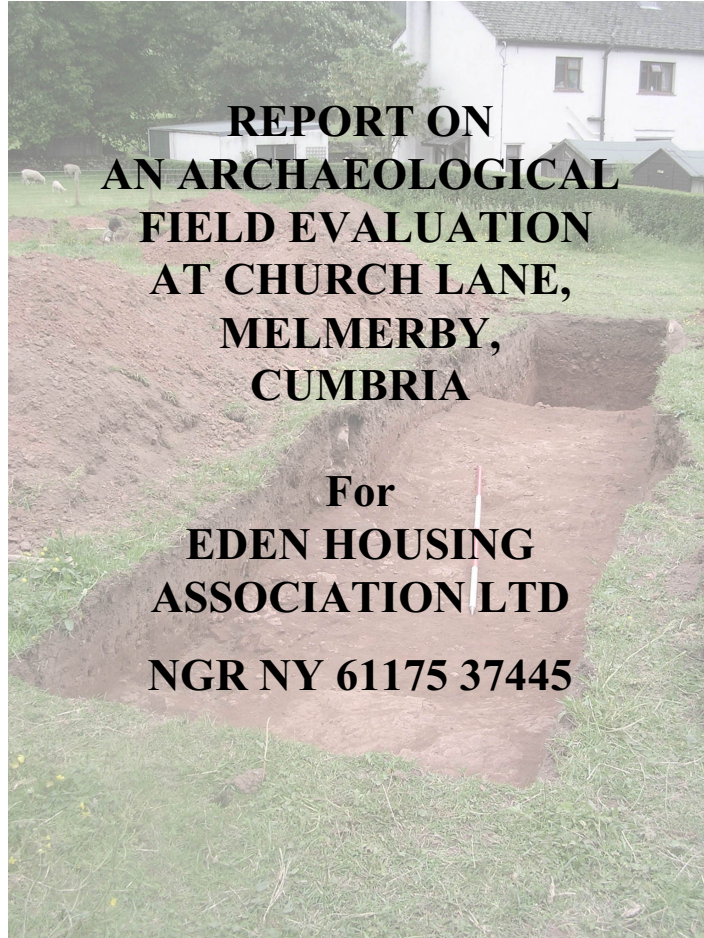

NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. 335/06



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SUMMARY

In June 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria, in advance of a proposed affordable housing development by Eden Housing Association. This work was requested by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service in advance of the planning application which would affect an area considered to have archaeological potential, as identified by a previous Rapid Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment (Hewitt, R and Beatty J, 2005, *Rapid Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for Land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria, NPA report CP/234/05*).

Melmerby is located on the A686 road leading from Penrith in the west over Hartside Pass to Alston in the east, and presently has a population of around two hundred residents. The village is bisected by a winding stream, and is typical of many of the fell side villages in the Eden Valley, with the village buildings primarily constructed of red sandstone and overlooking an 11-acre green, once home to wrestling and cock-fighting and now used for grazing horses.

The results of the desk-based assessment indicated that whilst the potential for prehistoric, Romano-British and early medieval within the development site was low, the actual potential for a later medieval and post-medieval presence was high, based on observations recorded in the Historic Environment Record (CCHER), aerial photograph survey and the knowledge that the village had a tower and church as early as the 13th century. The desk-based assessment also indicated the presence of a potential earlier village, in which the development area was located centrally. This suggested the likelihood of potential property boundaries and strip landholdings, as well as possible medieval building remains.

An archaeological walkover survey was performed in order to identify any upstanding remains or earthworks, and located a suitable earthwork in the south-western portion of the development site indicating a potential building platform.

An assessment of cartographic sources was made, studying material not originally included in the rapid desk-based assessment.

The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of three linear trenches, two measuring 10m x 1.6m and one measuring 9m x 1.6m. The trenches were positioned to adequately sample the development area, including the potential building platform identified by the walkover survey. The trenches sited two archaeological features, a ditch ([104]/[105]) and the butt end of a stone feature ([106]/[107]/[108]/[109]/[110]/[111]), the latter of which can be tentatively interpreted as a stone wall foundation. The evaluation also showed the potential building platform to be an outcrop of natural sandstone, combined with topsoil build-up produced by tree root activity.

No dating evidence for the archaeological features discovered was found during the excavation, although a single sherd of medieval pot was found in the subsoil overlying ditch fill [105]. Three samples were taken for environmental analysis; one from the ditch fill [105] and one from deposits [107] and [109], the latter two being from the potential wall foundation cut. The environmental samples proved to be of little archaeological interest.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to offer thanks to Eden Housing Association Ltd for commissioning the project.

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to Jo Mackintosh of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record (HER), and David Marshall of Eden Housing Association Ltd specifically, for their help during this project.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Tony Liddell and Joseph Doran. The report was written by Tony Liddell, and the drawings were produced by Tony Liddell. The cartographic assessment was undertaken by Cat Peters who also produced the figures for the assessment. The project was managed by Gareth Davies, Project Officer for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Gareth Davies.

1. INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

- 1.1 In June 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, commissioned by Eden Housing Association Ltd, undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria (NY 61175 37445), ahead of a proposed affordable housing development. The work was performed in accordance with the Brief for Archaeological Evaluation issued by Cumbria County Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) in May 2006.
- 1.2 The development site is situated within the archaeological hazard area of Melmerby village, a well preserved medieval green village set within a relict medieval landscape and containing many features of archaeological and historical interest. Consequently, CCCHES advised that a programme of archaeological works would be necessary prior to the proposed development. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (NPAL) were commissioned by Eden Housing Association Ltd to undertake the required archaeological desk-based assessment (Hewitt, R and Beatty J, 2005, *Rapid Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for Land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria, NPA report CP/234/05*) in the vicinity of the development site and then a subsequent archaeological evaluation within the boundaries of the site.
- 1.3 The development site is located to the east-north-east of St. John the Baptist's Church in Melmerby, Cumbria (NY 61175 37445), within a field area of 930 square metres (See *Figure 1*).
- 1.4 The cartographic study area consisted of a zone of radius approximately 2km centred on the proposed development area.
- 1.5 An archaeological walkover survey was performed in order to identify any upstanding remains or earthworks, and located a suitable earthwork in the south-western portion of the development site indicating a potential building platform.
- 1.6 The village of Melmerby lies within a designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) at the base of the western flank of the North Pennines 9km northeast of Penrith and 10km southwest of Alston in the valley of the river Eden, with the development area at the western edge of the village. In the vicinity of the proposed development site, rocks of Palaeozoic origin that can be closely correlated with the Ordovician Skiddaw and Borrowdale Volcanic groups of the Lake District are exposed, overlain by Carboniferous strata of the lower slopes of the main Pennine escarpment. The drift geology is predominantly comprised of sand and gravel, which supports a sandy loam soil.
- 1.7 This archaeological evaluation report provides the additional information required by CCCHES concerning the *location, extent, date, character, condition, significance* and *quality* of any archaeological remains within the development site at Church Lane, Melmerby.

2. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 The work undertaken consisted of the excavation of three trial trenches, a cartographic survey and a visual site inspection/walkover survey.

2.2 *Project Design*

2.2.1 A project design was prepared in response to a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service for an archaeological field evaluation and walkover survey. This included a detailed specification of works to be carried out, which consisted of the walkover survey, the excavation of trial trenches and a programme of post excavation and reporting.

2.3 *Desk-based Assessment/Cartographic Assessment*

2.3.1 A desk-based assessment was not required as part of this archaeological evaluation. It is recommended that this report should be read in conjunction with North Pennines Archaeology client report, “*Rapid Archaeological Desk Based Assessment for Land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria*” (Hewitt, R and Beatty J, 2005). For convenience, a brief summary of this desk-based assessment is provided as the archaeological background of this report. However, it was required as part of this project to complete a Cartographic Assessment of the development area. This can be viewed in *Section 4* of this report.

2.4 *Visual Site Inspection/Walkover Survey*

2.4.1 A visual site inspection was undertaken prior to the commencement of fieldwork, which found neither hazards to health or safety nor any constraints to undertaking fieldwork. It was noted however that a section of fence running parallel with the road would have to be removed in order to facilitate entry of the mechanical digger to the site. An agreement was reached that all effort would be made to prevent breakage, and subsequent reconsolidation would take place.

2.4.2 The walkover survey identified the evaluation area as being a grassed pasture area, currently in use as a horse enclosure. An earthwork of unknown origin and use was identified in the western segment of the field.

2.5 *Field Evaluation*

2.5.1 The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of three linear trenches, two measuring 10m x 1.6m and one measuring 9m x 1.6m. The trenches were positioned to adequately sample the development area, including the potential building platform identified by the walkover survey. Deposits and features of archaeological interest identified within the trenches were investigated and recorded in order to provide a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing their *location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality*.

2.5.2 In summary, the main objectives of the evaluation were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these were they are observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

2.5.3 The trenches were mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the natural substrate. The trenches were then manually cleaned and any putative archaeological features were investigated.

2.5.4 Photography was undertaken using a digital Nikon Coolpix 3100, a Pentax P30 Single Lens Reflex (SLR) for 200 ISO colour print film, and a Pentax K1000 SLR for 400 ISO black and white film.

2.5.5 The trenches were located and surveyed-in using a Geodimeter and Sokkia Data Logger, and tied in to the Ordnance Survey National grid.

2.5.6 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (IFA 1994).

2.6 *Project Archive*

2.6.1 The full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with the current English Heritage guidelines set out in the Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 2nd Ed. 1991). The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository and a copy of the report given to the County Historic Environment Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA-06 CLM-B.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In June 2006, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, commissioned by Eden Housing Association Ltd, undertook an archaeological field evaluation on land at Church Lane, Melmerby, Cumbria (NY 61175 37445), ahead of a proposed affordable housing development. The work was performed in accordance with the Brief for Archaeological Evaluation issued by Cumbria County Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) in May 2006.
- 3.2 This study involved the examination of cartographic sources held in the County Records Office in Carlisle, a walkover survey and subsequent trial trenching.
- 3.3 There is little evidence for occupation in Melmerby and its immediate vicinity during prehistoric times. CCHER records an oval-shaped cropmark of dimensions 39 x 25m at NY623374 which can be seen from the fellside in damp conditions. A burial cist and a quern was apparently found in the vicinity, but has now been lost, and the exact provenance of this find is unclear. Although no date can be ascribed to the cropmark without further investigation, a prehistoric date is a possibility, bearing in mind the supposed proximity of the burial cist and quern.
- 3.4 There is little evidence for Roman activity at Melmerby. CCHER records the find of a Roman coin from in Melmerby (CCHER 17836) but unfortunately the precise location of the find is unclear. The coin was of Alexandria Tetradrachm (AD 123-4) and was in good condition with the inscription *AVTKAITPAIA IACE*.
- 3.5 There is little evidence for early medieval occupation at Melmerby, and this period is poorly known throughout Cumbria as a whole. Nicholson and Burn (1777: 441) record that Melmerby was “the habitation of Melmor, a Dane...who first improved and cultivated the country, about the ninth or tenth century.”
- 3.6 The village of Melmerby seems to have been founded in the medieval period, though in view of its situation almost equidistant between Alston and Penrith, it may have been an important focal point for some time previously. Melmerby Hall (CCHER 5642) is known to be a medieval foundation, though the present building, which dates to around 1570 with some later additions, is not thought to be the original. A defensive tower was built in 1307-27 (Curwen, 1913), and it has been suggested that the rough ground immediately adjacent to the hall may contain the buried remains of this structure (Hopkins; CCHER 5642). Curwen also records that “John de Denum kept a garrison of twelve men at his tower of Melmerby, which was ‘always well defended by the grace of God against the Scots to the great damage and loss of their own men’” (Curwen, 1913 p307). The church of St John at Melmerby (Plate 1) is apparently a 13th century foundation, though Ryder (2005: 150) notes that the present building is 14th century, with some drastic alterations of 1849.
- 3.7 Ridge and furrow cultivation is much in evidence around the village, predominantly, but not exclusively, toward its east and north-eastern edge (CCHER 8154). This distinctive pattern of earthwork ridges paired with u-shaped furrows is a remnant of Melmerby’s

medieval system of arable cultivation. A nucleated medieval village such as Melmerby would have had one, two, or even three vast fields. This system of farming may have had its origins in Anglo-Scandinavian times, and continued in use in some places well into the 19th century, during which time it underwent many changes. It seems highly probable that Melmerby was a large, nucleated medieval village, with a well-developed open field system by the time the church is first recorded in the 13th century. The layout of the village, in conjunction with the existence of a large triangular green, may be indicative of Norman planning, probably in the 12th century (see Roberts, 1977), though, on the basis of its name, it is possible that the village, and perhaps even the church, may be a Viking foundation.

- 3.8 By the late 18th Century, Melmerby consisted of only forty-seven houses. It is the listed buildings of this date that are the predominant focus of archaeological interest within the present-day village for the post-medieval period. The Shepherds Inn, which remains in use today, is a Grade II listed building with adjoining stables and barn. The lintel above the door is initialled with the letters I.S. F.S. and the date of 1789 (CCHER 21194). The Post Office, on the green is listed Grade II, and is also of late 18th century date (CCHER 21193).
- 3.9 The HER records three forges in Melmerby at various times, one of which was on the Green. The smithy was shown on the first edition OS map but not the second edition map (CCHER 11200). Two quarries are shown in use on the second edition OS map (1900), but have subsequently ceased operation (CCHER 11381). Both the church and Melmerby Hall were restored in the 18th and 19th centuries.
- 3.10 The study area was visited on the 28th of November 2005 by Frank Giecco, Technical Director for NPA Ltd. The only feature of note within the development area was a pronounced rectangular earthwork in the south-west corner of the site. The feature does not appear on any of the early maps of the area; a local resident stated that he recalled a small agricultural building in its place, which at the time was thought may have accounted for its presence.

4. CARTOGRAPHIC ASSESSMENT

4.1 County Record Offices at Carlisle

- 4.1.1 The Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle (CRO(C)) was consulted to collate maps for a regression-analysis of the study area. Information from primary and secondary sources, including archaeological or historical journals, has already been incorporated into the historic background of the desk based assessment (Hewitt and Beatty 2005), and this information has not been duplicated in this study.
- 4.1.2 The Melmerby Hall Estate Record Index (CRO (C) DB/74) was searched for any relevant plans but none were listed. The documents themselves are held in special storage and at least 24 hours advanced notice is required before they can be accessed. Some information was available on the management of the Estate. In 1819 Melmerby Hall was managed by Revd Thomas Pattenson. In 1847 Melmerby Rectory was managed by Revd John Hall of Clifton, Bristol, a patron. In 1871 was the death of Revd Canon J. Hall, who had conveyed the Estate to Revd H. Hall-Houghton (d. 1889). By 1890 the Melmerby Rectory was in the hands of John F. Houghton of Dublin, patron, who died in 1899. By 1899 it was managed by James J. Houghton of Dublin. By 1927 it had passed to Henry Houghton of Dublin and by 1934, his trustees. After 1938 the Estate was managed by F.G.H. Storey (Rural Land Trust Ltd.)
- 4.1.3 As part of the documentary search of the Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle (CRO(C)), an in-depth scan of the early maps for Melmerby was undertaken. A cartographic date range of between 1839 and 1925 was obtained. The Melmerby Inclosure Award of 1838 (QRE/1/115) does not show the village but shows the Inclosure of Melmerby Moor, outside the boundaries of this study, so this has not been included. The development area is discussed below with reference to these early sources, noting any changes to the development area within each period.

4.2 Cartographic Sources

- 4.2.1 ***Tithe Map for Melmerby, 1839 (CRO(C) DRC 8/125)***: the earliest available source is the Estate Map of 1839 (*Figure 3*). The development area is clearly shown as an empty plot of land, but the layout of the land has been radically altered since this period. The tithe map shows that this area of Melmerby retained Medieval field systems in the form of rectangular strip fields extending back from the medieval buildings fronting the streets. These are not completely removed until the Second Edition Ordnance survey Map of 1900 (*Figure 5*) The buildings to the south of the development area are presumably surviving buildings from the Medieval period. It is likely that in 1839, the development area was split, and owned by different people. Plot 154a which covers the north-eastern part of the development area is owned by Revd Joseph Bardgett and occupied by John Brunskill, and is described as a Croft, of arable use. Plot 155a which covers just over half of the development site was occupied by Revd Richard Dugdale and is described as a Garth Garden and Rectory. The owner is not noted. The north-western part of the development site appears to lie outside both Plot 154a and 155a, and

may be part of 174c or 175a, which are predominantly on the western side of Church Lane. Plot These are both owned by St John's Church and associated graveyard.

- 4.2.2 **First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1860- 6" to 1 mile:** the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map (*Figure 4*), shows the continuing survival of the Medieval field systems into the late 19th century. The development site still breaches at least three field plots, as the area is still dictated by the Medieval buildings to the south of the development site, and their associated strip fields. The remains of a Croft are depicted on the opposite side of Church Land, to the east of the development site.
- 4.2.3 **Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 – 25" to 1 mile:** the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map (*Figure 5*) completed 40 years later shows that significant changes had been made to the area around the development site. The whole development area lies within the same field boundary, and the medieval buildings that were in existence to the south of the development site on the Tithe Map and the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, have been demolished. A well is depicted close to the location of the pre-existing buildings. St John's Church and the graveyard retain their positions to the east.
- 4.2.4 **Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925 – 25" to 1 mile:** the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map (*Figure 6*) is virtually identical to the Second Edition Ordnance Survey (Fig 5), but by 1925 a War Memorial has been constructed within the vicinity of St John's Church.

5. EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 Trench 1

- 5.1.1 Trench 1 was 10m long by 1.6m wide and orientated in a northwest-southeast direction. The trench was located to sample the earthwork identified in the field as a potential building platform during the walkover survey (See *Figure 1*).
- 5.1.2 The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator down to an outcrop of solid geology [101] (red-orange sandstone), with a sondage the width of the trench and 1.8m in length located at the south-eastern end of the trench to test depth where the natural sandstone shelf [101] dropped away. The sondage was cut to a depth of 1.3m below turf height, and failed to locate [101], instead revealing natural [102], a fairly compact orange-brown sandy clay with frequent inclusions of degraded sandstone.
- 5.1.3 Following machine excavation, the trench was fully hand-cleaned revealing no archaeological features within the area. Modern (20th century) metallic finds were located on the surface of [101].
- 5.1.4 The potential building platform identified in the desk-based assessment was identified as being the result of an upstanding outcrop of natural sandstone [101] with subsequent modern dumping of material and the past presence of a tree on site with associated root activity and upcast from the tree removal.
- 5.1.5 *Stratigraphic Summary:* The topsoil [100] averaged a depth of 0.38m with the subsoil layer [103] below measuring an average of 0.35m. Below this lay natural [101] until 2.88m from the south-eastern end of the trench, where [101] dove sharply. Butting up against [101] was natural [102], which in this case measured in excess of 0.81m (at the deepest extent cut).

5.2 Trench 2

- 5.2.1 Trench 2 was 10m long by 1.6m wide and located in the northern segment of the site, aligned northeast-southwest (see *Figure 1*).
- 5.2.2 The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator to a maximum depth of 0.83m, exposing the natural substrate [102]. [102] is a fairly compact orange-brown sandy clay with frequent inclusions of degraded sandstone, found also in Trench 1 above sandstone [101].
- 5.2.3 Following machine excavation, the trench was fully hand-cleaned and one feature was observed cutting into the natural geology. The feature was investigated and recorded (see *Figure 2*).
- 5.2.4 The feature was recorded as being cut from the surface of natural [102], the maximum depth being 1.46m below turf height. The cut, [106], was observed to still bear the marks of the original spades that cut it, with nearly vertical sides angling sharply east within the small area observed. The cut contained a mixed orange and yellow clay matrix [110] within which large stones [111] were set. A compact dark red-brown silty

sand deposit [107] had built up against [110]/[111] in antiquity, indicating that the feature had been open to allow for natural silting to take place.

- 5.2.5 There is no dating evidence for this feature and the samples taken produced nothing of interest. Without observing more of the feature it is difficult to ascertain the precise nature of this feature, though it can be tentatively suggested that it may be a wall foundation from the feature's structure.
- 5.2.6 Trench 2 produced no finds barring a sherd of modern/post medieval pottery and a sherd of modern glass.
- 5.2.7 *Stratigraphic Summary:* Overlying both feature [106]/[107]/[110]/[111], and the subsoil, [103], was the topsoil/turf [100]. The topsoil [100] averaged a depth of 0.28m with the subsoil layer [103] below measuring a minimum of 0.12m in the north-eastern end of the trench, deepening to 0.62m in the south-western end. Below this lay natural [102].

5.3 Trench 3

- 5.3.1 Trench 3 was 9m long by 1.6m wide and orientated in a northwest-southeast direction (see *Figure 1*). The trench was located into the south-east section of the evaluation site.
- 5.3.2 The trench was opened by a mechanical excavator to a 0.55m exposing areas of the natural substrate [102]. A sondage was dug in the north-western end, the width of the trench and 2m long, to a depth of 1.25m below turf line where natural [101] sandstone was uncovered.
- 5.3.3 Following machine excavation, the trench was fully hand-cleaned and one archaeological feature was discovered in the south-eastern end of the trench cutting into natural [102]. The feature was investigated and recorded (see *Figure 2*).
- 5.3.4 The feature, cut [104], was identified as a ditch running on a north-south alignment containing fill [105], a fairly compact dark brown silty sand with frequent small stone inclusions.
- 5.3.5 There is no dating evidence for this feature, and the environmental sample taken from fill [105] revealed nothing of interest.
- 5.3.6 Trench 3 produced one sherd of medieval pottery, found within subsoil [103].
- 5.3.7 *Stratigraphic Summary:* Overlying both feature [104]/[105], and the subsoil, [103], was the topsoil/turf [100]. The topsoil [100] averaged a depth of 0.23m with the subsoil layer [103] below measuring 0.35m. Below this lay natural [102], with sandstone [101] below that.

6. FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

6.1 Finds

- 6.1.1 A total of three sherds of pottery were recovered from the evaluation, one of which was Medieval in date and found in Trench 3, the other two were 19th / 20th century domestic pottery.
- 6.1.2 The Medieval pottery recovered from [103] Trench 3, was made up of one sherd of green glazed ware (12th-15th century).
- 6.1.3 One sherd of glass was recovered from [100], Trench 2. The date for the glass is modern and for domestic use.
- 6.1.4 Metal detecting and retrieval of finds from the machine excavated soil heaps recovered a number of finds of modern date with nothing of archaeological interest.
- 6.1.5 No other finds were recovered from the site.

6.2 Environmental Remains

6.2.1 *Introduction – Environmental remains*

In the trenches excavated 3 contexts were considered worth sampling. One was from a possible drainage ditch, another was the fill of a cut and the other was the secondary fill of the cut. All three whole earth samples were selected for processing in order to assess their environmental potential. This will help provide further information as to the depositional processes involved in their formation. The methodology employed required that the whole earth samples be broken down and split into their various different components. This was achieved by a combination of water washing and flotation. The recovered remains can then be assessed for content.

Flotation separates the organic, floating fraction of the sample from the heavier mineral and finds content of sands, silts, clays, stones, artefacts and waterlogged material. Heavy soil and sediment content measuring less than 1mm falls through the retentive mesh to settle on the bottom of the tank. Flotation produces a 'flot' and a 'residue' for examination, whilst the heavier sediment retained in the tank is discarded. The method relies purely on the variation in density of the recovered material to separate it from the soil matrix, allowing for the recovery of ecofacts and artefacts from the whole earth sample.

The retent, like the residue from wet sieving, will contain any larger items of bone, or artefacts. The flot or floating fraction will generally contain organic material such as plant matter, fine bones, cloth, leather and insect remains. A rapid scan at this stage will allow further recommendations to be made as to the potential for further study by entomologists or palaeobotanists, with a view to retrieving vital economic information from the samples. Favourable preservation conditions can lead to the retrieval of organic remains that may produce a valuable suite of information in respect of the depositional environment of the

material, which may include anthropogenic activity, seasonality and climate and elements of the economy.

The contents of the samples are listed below in *Tables 1* and *2*:

| SAMPLE NUMBER | CONTEXT NUMBER | SAMPLE SIZE (litres) | FLOT SIZE (cm³) | RETENT SIZE (cm³) |
|----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | 105 | 10 | 10 | 2500 |
| 2 | 107 | 10 | 10 | 2500 |
| 3 | 108 | 10 | 20 | 3000 |

Table 1: Details of samples and contexts.

| DETAILS | | | RETENT FRACTION | | | | | | | | | | LIGHT FRACTION | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Context | Context type | Sample number | Root material | Charred wood | Waterlogged wood | Burnt bone | Bone | Gravel | Stones | Insects | Charred wood | Root material | Charred wheat | Charred oats | Charred barley | Veccia | Chenopodium | Raspberry | Brassica | Dogwood | Other seeds | Charred organic | Woody plant parts |
| 108 | Fill | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 107 | Fill | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| 105 | Fill | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

Table 2: Contents of flot and retent residues from samples.

Key to tables: Fill = ditch, posthole or pit fill. Contents assessed by scale of richness 0 to 3. 0 = not present, 1 = present, 2 = common, 3 = abundant.

6.2.2 Sample 1 (Context 105)

This sample was from the fill of a possible drainage ditch. The matrix was a fairly compact dark brown silty sand with frequent stone inclusions. The retent was made up of only stones and gravel with no organic matter present. The flot contained some charred wheat and oats. There was a seed of the *Veccia* species.

6.2.3 Sample 2 (Context 107)

This sample came from the fill of a cut. The retent of this sample was made up of just gravel and stones with no organic matter present. The flot contained a small amount of fragmentary charred grain, charred wood and some woody plant parts. The grain was too fragmentary to identify.

6.2.4 Sample 3 (Context 108)

This sample was the secondary fill of a feature and was a silty sand, dark red brown in colour. From this fill the retent again produced only stones and gravel. The flot yielded charred wheat grains and charred oats. Roots and woody plant parts were also present.

6.2.5 *Discussion*

The flot samples recovered yielded only a few seeds and small amounts of charred grain. There was not enough material recovered from the flot samples to come to any meaningful conclusions about the material. The most likely cause of the presence of the charred grain is soil management practices whereby the remains of hearths or other burnt features would be spread on the fields to increase output from crops.

6.2.6 *Dating*

There is enough charred organic material for a radiocarbon date to be done but from the evidence of the plant material recovered there seems little advantage to this being done.

6.2.7 *Conclusion and recommendations*

Charred grain was recovered from all of the samples in the flot. It is obvious that there was some on site activity leading to the recovery of the charred grain but it is difficult to determine what the source of this material was given the limited information retrieved from the site.

The potential for further information being gained from the examination of this material is limited and so it is recommended that no further work be done.

6.2.8 *Vertebrate Remains*

No vertebrate remains were recovered from the site.

6.2.9 *Mollusc Remains*

No mollusc remains were recovered from the site.

7. CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of three linear trial trenches positioned to adequately sample the development area.
- 7.2 The evaluation trenches at Church Lane, Melmerby successfully located two archaeological features, a north-south aligned ditch [105]/[106] and a possible west-east aligned wall foundation [106]/[107]/[110]/[111]. With respect to the latter feature, not enough of the physical remains were excavated to allow for a confident interpretation.
- 7.3 No dating evidence for the archaeological features discovered was found during the excavation, although a single sherd of medieval pot was found in the subsoil overlying ditch fill [105].
- 7.4 Three samples were taken for environmental analysis; one from the ditch fill [105] and one from deposits [107] and [109], the latter two being from the potential wall foundation cut. The environmental samples proved to be of little archaeological interest.
- 7.5 In summary, the presence of the two undated features confirms the presence of human activity within the confines of the evaluation area though further work would be required in an attempt to date such activity.

8. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Tithe Map for Melmerby, 1839 (CRO(C) DRC 8/125)

First Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1860- 6" to mile

Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1900 – 25" to 1 mile

Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map, 1925 – 25" to 1 mile

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF CONTEXTS

| Context | Type | Trench | Description |
|----------------|-------------|---------------|--|
| [100] | Topsoil | 1-3 | Topsoil/turf, light brown soil matrix with occasional stones (>0.15m) and root matter. |
| [101] | Natural | 1,3 | Solid red-orange to brown sandstone with degraded surface. |
| [102] | Natural | 1-3 | Fairly compact red-orange to brown sandy clay with frequent inclusions of sandstone (>0.7m). |
| [103] | Subsoil | 1-3 | Fairly compact dark brown sandy-silty loam. |
| [104] | Cut | 3 | Cut for ditch running on a rough north-south orientation in the south-eastern end of the trench. Cut into natural [102]. |
| [105] | Fill | 3 | Fill of Cut [104]. Fairly compact dark brown silty sand with frequent stone inclusions (>0.25m). |
| [106] | Cut | 2 | Cut for stone feature on a rough west-east axis. |
| [107] | Fill | 2 | Lower fill of Cut [106]. Compact dark red-brown silty sand. |
| [108] | Fill | 2 | Upper fill of Cut [106]. Compact dark red-brown silty sand. Similar to [107] with a heavier sand concentration. |
| [109] | Deposit | 2 | Mixed red-orange to brown sandy clay and yellow-brown clay matrix for stones [110] |
| [110] | Structure | 2 | Stone structure set in [109]. Potential dry stone wall foundation. |

Table 1: Index of Contexts

APPENDIX 2 – ILLUSTRATIONS

10 APPENDIX 3 – PLATES



Plate 1: Ditch [104] under excavation. Looking west.



Plate 2: Possible wall butt-end. Looking southwest.

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