NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. 151/05

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT CARLISLE COLLEGE, VICTORIA PLACE, CARLISLE

For CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

NGR: NY 405 561

Planning Application Ref: 1/04/0520

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30 November 2006

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In September 2005, an archaeological evaluation took place on land in the vicinity of Carlisle College, on Victoria Place in Carlisle (centred on NY 405 561). The works were in response to the proposed redevelopment of the existing college campus; the first phase involved the demolition of the existing buildings on the southern side of the site and the construction of new college facilities. Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) had been consulted by Carlisle City Council regarding a planning application for the redevelopment, and issued a brief which required that a preliminary site inspection and an archaeological evaluation be undertaken to investigate the survival of archaeological remains within the study area. The results will inform decisions on the approval of the planning application, as to the mitigation of the archaeological remains either *in situ* or by record.

The site inspection carried out immediately prior to the excavation of the trial trenches noted that the existing buildings on the south side of the campus, which had been demolished by the time of the visit, had been built on substantial concrete foundations. These foundations had been excavated to at least 5m depth in places, and the ground was therefore severely disturbed within the footprint of the building. A decision was therefore made, in consultation with the contractors, to excavate the trial trenches in the areas of least impact, along the western and eastern sides of the development area.

The evaluation trenching comprised a total area of 96m², divided into three trenches, targeting areas of impact and archaeological significance; the Assistant Archaeologist for Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service had expressed a preference that the trenches should be excavated along the frontage of Victoria Place (Parsons *pers. comm.*), and the trenches were duly sited to investigate this.

The results of the trenching indicated that the majority of the area had been built up during the latter part of the 19th, and early part of the 20th, centuries, with the deposition of large quantities of brick and other building rubble; these deposits produced large quantities of pottery, bottles and other finds relating to this period. The deposit was up to 3.5m deep at the western side of the site, falling to 1.3m at the eastern side of the site; the activity had truncated the underlying deposits in places. The deposit presumably relates to the development of the area to the south and west for housing around this time (Jones 2004). Within Trenches 1 and 3, remnants of a 19th century ploughsoil were also identified, confirming the assertion that this area was an agricultural field until its development in the 1950s (*ibid*); a land drain was also noted in Trench 1. Trenches 2 and 3 also identified a dark blackish-grey silty deposit at the base of the trenches; the deposit in the latter trench produced several sherds of fairly unabraded Roman pottery, this suggests the possibility that the deposit is a preserved Roman ploughsoil. Despite the presence of this, no cut archaeological features were noted in any of the trenches suggestive of archaeological activity of this period in this area. The natural at the base of all the trenches was a glacially-derived boulder clay.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to Derek Jones of Carlisle College for commissioning and supporting the work, and to Philip Hoyles, Peter Marsh, and all the staff of Thomas Armstrong (Construction) Ltd for their hospitality and assistance on-site. Thanks are also due to Norman of Hewden Plant Hire for his diligent excavation. Jeremy Parsons, Assistant Archaeologist for Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), is also thanked for his advice and assistance during the course of the project.

Matthew Town and Kevin Mousey undertook the trial trenching. The report and drawings were produced by Matthew Town. The report was edited by Juliet Reeves. The project was managed by Frank Giecco, Technical Director for North Pennines Archaeology Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Circumstances of the Project

1.1.1 Planning permission is being sought by Carlisle College for the redevelopment of the college campus at Victoria Place, Carlisle, Cumbria (centred on NY 405 561). The site is located on the edge of the Roman and medieval settlement of Carlisle. Prehistoric, Roman and medieval finds have periodically been revealed immediately to the east of the site (HER nos. 18927 & 19738). Initial consultation with Carlisle City Council and Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) raised no fundamental objections to the development, but the presence of considerable archaeological potential within the area, highlighted in a recent desk-based assessment of the site (Jones 2004), required an archaeological evaluation to be undertaken in the first instance, to establish the presence or absence of archaeological remains in the development footprint. The results of the evaluation would then inform decisions to be taken regarding any application for planning permission for the development, and would suggest mitigation measures designed to preserve any archaeological remains *in situ* or by record. This process is in line with current government advice contained within *Planning Policy Guidance: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16; DoE 1990).

1.1.2 Carlisle College requested that North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (NPAL) submit proposals for an evaluation of the development area. NPAL provided a Project Design in accordance with a Project Brief produced by CCCHES (Parsons 2004). The Assistant Archaeologist for CCCHES approved the Project Design and NPAL were subsequently commissioned to undertake the work in September 2005.

1.1.3 This document sets out the results of the archaeological evaluation in the form of a short report.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and Topography

2.1.1 The development area is situated 0.25km to the east of the Historic Centre of the city of Carlisle, on low-lying ground which forms part of the Carlisle Plain, and which lies at approximately 22m AOD (Figure 1). The development area lies within an urban landscape defined by mixed commercial and residential use, in the Rickergate District of Carlisle. The development area is bounded on the south side by Victoria Place, on the west side by Compton Street, on the east side by Hartington Street, and on the north side by the existing remains of Carlisle College.

2.1.2 The geology of the area consists of boulder clay interleaved with alluvial sand and gravels, which occurs along the rivers and merges into marine alluvium near the upper limits of tidal waters. The boulder clay has been deposited by ice and is derived from bedrock traversed by glacial movement and is heterogeneous (SSEW 1984). The principal river closest to the study area is the River Eden, which flows to the north of the study area. The River Eden is the principal river that passes through the modern city towards the Solway Firth and was an important watercourse throughout the historical development of Carlisle.

2.2 Historical Background

2.2.1 The development area lies just outside the Historic City of Carlisle. Limited prehistoric activity is known within the city, though none apparently directly related to the development area or its immediate environs (Jones 2004, 17). By 73 AD, the Romans had established a fort at the northern end of the present city centre, and this quickly expanded to become a substantial civilian settlement measuring over 40 acres in area. By about AD 200, Carlisle, known as *Luguvalium*, seems to have been granted special status, and it continued to flourish, with a large number of houses, shops, administrative and other public buildings, until the end of the Roman occupation around AD 400. The Roman town extended from the site of the medieval castle, along West Walls and present day Lowther Street to the Victorian Citadel. Present day London Road (the A6) has been the principal road to London since Roman times, and it is along this road that the Roman cemetery extended. Present day Warwick Road (formerly Henry Street) is traditionally considered to have been the eastern route from the historic city, although less well known as the London Road either side of which significant archaeological discoveries have been made. Owing to this lack of certainty the archaeological potential of the Carlisle College site remains an unknown quantity.

2.2.2 From the Middle Ages until the late 18th century, Carlisle was more or less confined to the land within the city walls, apart from three ribbon-like suburbs outside the three city gates. From the end of the 18th century, with the rapid expansion of the town during the Industrial Revolution, the three suburbs grew very rapidly in size, with new housing, factories, roads, and industrial and commercial premises. These developments, together with the advent of the railways, expanded over what had previously been open countryside.

2.2.3 The development site lay outside the principal area of settlement during the medieval period, a territory that, outside the protection of the city walls, was subject to ravaging by frequent raids and invading retinues. It is likely the site consisted of agricultural land during the medieval period, and formed part of the medieval lordship or demesne of Carlisle. The development site itself consisted of agricultural fields within the medieval districts of Six Acre Close and Collers Close (Spence 1994).

2.2.4 During the later 18th and 19th centuries, the construction of factories and their attraction to migrant workers from the adjacent countryside saw a concomitant rise in the urban population and a need for new residential housing outside the traditional city centre. The area to the east of the city remained undeveloped, and the expansion of this part of the city did not take off until the late 19th century when the entire area surrounding the present development site was developed into a residential district. The development site itself appears to have been undeveloped until the 1950s, when the college (then Carlisle Technical College) was first constructed.

2.3 Archaeological Background

2.3.1 There has been no previous archaeological work undertaken within the study area. However, extensive archaeological work has been undertaken in Carlisle, particularly within the town walls (bounded by modern Lowther Street, East Tower Street, West Tower Street, Carlisle Castle, West Walls and the Citadel) and the thoroughfares along Rickergate, Botchergate and Caldewgate. Comparatively little is known, however, of the area outside the Roman and medieval town to the east, modern Warwick Road.

2.3.2 In the late 1980s, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on the site of the Wickes DIY store, to the north of the present site. The work revealed the remains of a Roman camp and also identified the relict course of the River Eden (Giecco, F. pers comm.).

2.3.3 In August 2003, North Pennines Heritage Trust undertook a field evaluation on land at Hardwicke Circus, Carlisle. The work revealed the site to have been situated on the north bank of the former course of the River Eden. No archaeological deposits were observed within any of the trenches.

2.3.4 In April 2004, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook a field evaluation on land adjacent to the site of the former Meadow Brewery. The work revealed a series of stake holes and two postholes sealed by a buried soil horizon. The site was considered to have consisted of meadowland prior to the 19th century when the brewery was constructed, owing to the lack of archaeological evidence prior to this period.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Project Design

3.1.1 A project design was prepared in response to a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) for an archaeological field evaluation. This included a detailed specification of works to be carried out, which consisted of a visual site inspection, the excavation of a series of trial trenches and a programme of post excavation and reporting.

3.2 Site Investigation

3.2.1 A site visit was made on the 20th September 2005. This was in order to note any surface features of potential archaeological interest and to identify any potential hazards to health and safety, such as the presence of live services or constraints to undertaking archaeological fieldwork, such as Tree Preservation orders and public footpaths.

3.2.2 The site inspection noted that the existing buildings on the south side of the campus, which had been demolished by the time of the visit, had been built on substantial concrete foundations. The contractors informed the visiting archaeologist that these foundations had been excavated to at least 5m depth in places, and the ground was therefore severely disturbed within the footprint of the building. A decision was therefore made, in consultation with the contractors, to excavate the trial trenches in the areas of least impact, along the western and eastern sides of the development area. No services or other hazards lay within the proposed position of the trenches.

3.3 Archaeological Evaluation

3.3.1 The archaeological evaluation consisted of the excavation of three linear trial trenches measuring 20m x 1.6m, which provided a 5% sample of an area 2000 m² (Figure 2). This was in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals.

3.3.2 In summary, the main objectives of the excavation 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.

3.3.3 Each trench was mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the natural substrate. Each trench was then manually cleaned where possible and any putative archaeological features investigated.

3.3.4 Photography was undertaken using Canon EOS 100 and EOS 300V Single Lens Reflex (SLR) cameras. A photographic record was made using digital photography, 200 ISO Colour Print and Colour Slide film.

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

3.4 Project Archive

3.4.1 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 Sites and Monuments Record, where viewing will be available on request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 05 CCC-A.

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 Trench 1

4.1.1 Trench 1 was 20m long by 1.6m wide, and was orientated approximately north-south (Figure 2; Plate 1). It was positioned at the eastern limit of the development area, crossing an area of car-parking adjacent to Hartington Street, and east of the demolished college buildings, The maximum depth of the trench was 1.6m; the trench was stepped to allow for safe working at the base of the trench.

4.1.2 The machining removed approximately a 2m length of garden soils **[01]**, mainly a mid-brown sandy silt, from the bank adjacent to the hedge-line, to a depth of 0.2m. The machining within the car-parking area removed approximately 0.1m of tarmac **[02]**, overlying a 0.2m deep layer of sub-base aggregate chippings **[03**], for the remaining 18m of trenching; the north side of the car park was defined by a concrete foundation, which was left *in-situ*. Beneath these deposits, a deposit of deliberately-dumped demolition rubble **[04]** was identified, to a depth of 0.9m; the rubble comprised interleaving and laminated deposits of brick rubble, clay dumps, soil, mortar, sand and clinker, and contained large quantities of late 19th and early 20th century pottery and glass. This was presumably deposited around the time of the development of the area for housing in the 19th and 20th centuries. Beneath the rubble, a deposit of plough- or garden-soil **[05]**, 0.4m in depth, was identified, running for the length of the trench. The soil consisted of light orangey brown clayey silt, and a land drain was also noted associated with this deposit. This presumably relates to the agricultural use of the area prior to its development. The natural **[06]** at the base of the trench consisted of a pinkish-orange boulder clay with small rounded pebbles throughout.

4.1.3 No evidence of any cut archaeological features was found in the base of Trench 1, and no significant archaeological artefacts were recovered during excavation.

4.2 Trench 2

4.2.1 Trench 2 was 20m long by 1.6m wide, and was orientated approximately east-west (Figure 2; Plate 2-3). It was positioned at the western limit of the development area, running east from a low wall adjacent to Compton Street, and west of the demolished college buildings, The maximum depth of the trench was 4.2m at the western end, sloping down to 2.6m at the eastern end; due to the sheer depth of the trench, and the instability of the sides, it was not possible to access this trench safely (the sides collapsing on numerous occasions). The trench was machined and back-filled in sections, and all recording was undertaken from the surface.

4.2.2 The machining removed a deposit of deliberately-dumped demolition rubble **[07]**, up to a maximum depth of 3.6m; the rubble comprised interleaving and laminated deposits of brick rubble, clay dumps, soil, mortar, sand and clinker, and contained large quantities of late 19th and early 20th century pottery and glass. As for deposit **[04]** in Trench 1, this was presumably deposited around the time of the development of the area for housing in the 19th and 20th centuries, and tipped noticeably eastwards. Beneath the rubble, a deposit of plough-soil **[08]**, 0.6m in depth, was identified, running for the length of the trench. The deposit consisted of a dark blackish-grey clayey silt, and may

be of Roman origin (see section 4.3). The natural **[09]** at the base of the trench consisted of a pinkish-orange boulder clay with small rounded pebbles throughout.

4.2.3 No evidence of any cut archaeological features was found in the base of Trench 2, and no significant archaeological artefacts were recovered during excavation.

4.3 Trench 3

4.3.1 Trench 3 was 16m long by 1.6m wide, and was orientated approximately north-south (Figure 2; Plate 4). It was positioned at the western limit of the development area, and immediately east of Trench 2. The maximum depth of the trench was 3.4m at the southern end, sloping up to 1.8m at the northern end. The trench was stepped to allow for safe working at the base of the trench; however, following a number of collapses at the southern end, and the progressive instability of the sides due to water-logging on the site, it was not possible to complete excavation of the trench to the full 20m length.

4.3.2 The machining removed a deposit of deliberately-dumped demolition rubble **[10]**, up to a maximum depth of 2.7m; the rubble comprised interleaving and laminated deposits of brick rubble, clay dumps, soil, mortar, sand and clinker, and contained a small quantity of late 19th and early 20th century pottery and glass. As for deposits **[04]** and **[07]** in Trenches 1 and 2, this was presumably deposited around the time of the development of the area for housing in the 19th and 20th centuries, and tipped noticeably southwards. Beneath the rubble, a deposit of plough- or garden-soil **[11]**, 0.3m in depth, was identified, running from the southern end of the trench for approximately 8m. The soil consisted of light orangey brown clayey silt, and presumably relates to the agricultural use of the area prior to its development. North of this, a deposit of plough-soil **[12]**, 0.6m in depth, was identified, running for the length of the trench. The deposit consisted of a dark blackish-grey clayey silt, and contained three sherds of Roman pottery; the deposit was duly sampled. The natural **[13]** at the base of the trench consisted of a pinkish-orange boulder clay with small rounded pebbles throughout.

4.3.3 No evidence of any cut archaeological features was found in the base of Trench 3.

5 FINDS

5.1.1 The archaeological assemblage from Carlisle College consists of glass bottles, domestic pottery and ceramic storage jars. These span two broad periods: Roman and Victorian.

5.1.2 The finds indicating Roman activity are three sherds of pottery. The first is a sherd of wheel-thrown pottery with grey fabric and faces, measuring 73mm x 100mm, with mid-sized inclusions of grog (date unknown). The second is a sherd of decorated Samian ware (53mm x 21mm) most likely dating between AD 70 – 150 (Dragendorff 67, 68 and 72), although Samian was imported into Britain throughout the 1st to 3rd centuries AD. The other sherd is of unknown type and date. All three sherds are from Trench 3: context **[12]**.

5.1.3 From Trench 1: context **[04]**, is one animal bone, including knee joint. Also from this context are four sherds of stoneware, and one sherd of white ceramic, all of post-medieval date.

5.1.4 The rest of the artefact assemblage consists of glass bottles and pottery of a variety of types dating broadly to the 19th century. These include sherds from nine Hamilton Bottles – Trench 2: context **[07]** - of 19th century date, and two 19th century beer bottles. There are fifty-six shards of 19th and 20th century pottery including blue-and-white ware, also from Trench 2: context **[07]**.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

6.1 Introduction – Environmental remains

6.1.1 In the three trenches excavated only one context was considered worth sampling. The sample came from a plough soil of the Roman period. The whole earth sample was processed in order to assess its environmental potential. This will help provide further information as to the depositional processes involved in its formation. The methodology employed required that the whole earth sample be broken down and split into its various different components. This was achieved by a combination of water washing and flotation. The recovered remains can then be assessed for content.

6.1.2 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.

6.1.3 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.

6.1.4 The contents of the samples are listed below in Tables 1 and 2.

SAMPLE NUMBER	CONTEXT NUMBER	SAMPLE SIZE (litres)	FLOT SIZE (cm^3)	RETENT SIZE (cm^3)
1	12	5	5	1000

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	Grass	Chenopodium	*Papaver* sp.	Brassica	Dogwood	Other seeds	Charred organic	Woody plant parts
12	Dep	1	0	1	0	1	0	3	2	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0

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

Key to tables: Dep = deposit. Contents assessed by scale of richness 0 to 3. 0 = not present, 1 = present, 2 = common, 3 = abundant.

6.2 Sample 1 (Context 12)

6.2.1 This sample was from a plough soil of probable Roman date. The matrix was a black soil with inclusions of small stones and gravel. The retent was made up of stones and gritty gravel with charred wood and burnt bone. The flot contained seeds of *Chenopodium* and a seed of the *Papaver* species (poppy). Roman pottery was recovered from this context

6.3 Discussion

6.3.1 Seeds recovered from this site were not charred. They have either been fossilised or are from modern sources. The likelihood is that they are fossilised in the soil. The seeds of *Chenopodium* may have come from a crop of fat hen grown as a subsistence food, although this crop is usually more likely from a Medieval source rather than a Roman period sample, as there was little need for subsistence food in the Roman period.

6.4 Conclusion and recommendations

6.4.1 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.

6.5 Vertebrate Remains

6.5.1 There were no vertebrate remains recovered from the site. The burnt bone is too small and fragmentary to be identified to species or even whether it is human or animal. It is not thought necessary to have this analysed by a bone specialist due to the lack of other relevant material from the site.

6.6 Mollusc Remains

6.6.1 There were no mollusc remains recovered from the site.

7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1 The results of the evaluation supported the initial assessment of the site (Jones 2004), which indicated that the site had been largely undeveloped up until the 20th century, and the construction of the college in the 1950s. The presence of large quantities of dumped 19th century material suggests that the area was built up during the late 19th or early 20th century, probably around the time of the development of the area for housing. Beneath these deposits, small sections of buried post-medieval plough-soils were identified, indicating this area was probably originally used as a field. Of interest were the deposits of blackish-grey silt identified in Trenches 2 and 3, which yielded fragments of Roman pottery from the latter trench. The deposits appear to indicate that the area may also have been used as agricultural land as far back as the Roman period; the absence of cut features would appear to confirm that this area was marginal to the main Roman settlement, and as such has been marginal land throughout history.

7.2 The development area will not directly impinge on any significant archaeological remains, and as such the work undertaken should be sufficient to allow the development to proceed.

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9 APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF CONTEXTS

Context	Type	Description
01	Deposit	Trench 1 - Topsoil
02	Deposit	Trench 1 - Tarmac
03	Deposit	Trench 1 – Sub-base
04	Deposit	Trench 1 – 19th Century Make-Up Deposits
05	Deposit	Trench 1 – Post-medieval Plough-soil
06	Deposit	Trench 1 – Natural Boulder Clay
07	Deposit	Trench 2 – 19th Century Make-Up Deposits
08	Deposit	Trench 2 – Possible Roman Plough-soil
09	Deposit	Trench 2 – Natural Boulder Clay
10	Deposit	Trench 3 – 19th Century Make-Up Deposits
11	Deposit	Trench 3 – Post-medieval Plough-soil
12	Deposit	Trench 3 – Possible Roman Plough-soil
13	Deposit	Trench 3 – Natural Boulder Clay

Table 1: Index of Contexts

10 APPENDIX 2 – ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

Plates