
NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Client Report No. CP/75/08

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF
AT CASTLEGATE HOUSE,
CASTLEGATE,
COCKERMOUTH,
CUMBRIA**

FOR

CHRIS WADSWORTH

NGR NY 1235 3081

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Chris Wadsworth to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment and archaeological watching brief during the course of ground works for the construction of a car park at Castlegate House, Castlegate, Cockermouth, Cumbria (NGR NY 1235 3081) (Planning Application No: 2/03/0699).

The desk-based assessment involved the examination of all pertinent documents and cartographic sources held in the County Records Office in Carlisle, and the consultation of the Historic Environment Record (HER) of Cumbria County Council based in Kendal. In addition, a number of published sources were consulted to provide background information, including the Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society.

The rapid desk-based assessment revealed that the area of the market place, with the church to the south and the castle to the north, may have been the focus of an early medieval settlement at Cockermouth. The line of Castlegate is shown on a plan of the town dated to c.1600, as well as properties along its frontage. The possibility exists therefore, that the location of Castlegate House may have been occupied prior to its construction in the first half of the 18th century.

Historic maps of the site indicate that the area of the new car park has been occupied by gardens and orchards throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, and that features relating to the medieval or post-medieval occupation of the site have the potential to exist in this area.

The watching brief was undertaken between the 11th and 12th of August 2008. Archaeological monitoring was conducted during the removal of ground for a proposed car park measuring c.130 square metres, in the garden to the south of Castlegate House. The actual area removed was c.100 square metres which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.86 metres below ground level (bgl). The excavation was carried out by a mini digger under archaeological supervision.

No archaeological features or deposits were revealed by the groundworks. However, given the archaeological potential of the area, further archaeological monitoring is recommended on any future works at the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Mrs Chris Wadsworth and Glen Beattie of Alpha Design for commissioning the project. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to Jo Mackintosh and Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Service, Cumbria County Council; Stephen White, Local Studies Librarian at Carlisle Library; and all the staff at the Cumbria County Record Office in Carlisle for their help during this project.

The rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken by Fiona Wooler and the archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Angus Clark. The report was written by Angus Clark and Fiona Wooler, and was edited by Martin Railton. The project was managed by Martin Railton, NPA Project Manager.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In September 2003 Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) produced a brief for a rapid desk-based assessment and archaeological watching brief in response to a planning application for the formation of a c.130 square metre car park at Castlegate House, Castlegate, Cockermouth¹ (NY 1235 3081) (Planning Application No.2/03/0699). The proposed car parking area affects an area of archaeological significance, as designated by the Cumbria Extensive Urban Survey², within the core of Cockermouth. Consequently, a programme of archaeological works (a watching brief) during the course of groundworks was required.
- 1.1.2 The desk-based survey comprised a search of both published and unpublished records held by the Historic Environment Record (HER) in Kendal, the Cumbria County Record Offices in Carlisle (CCRO), Carlisle Library Local Studies and the archives and library held by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd. The principal objective of this assessment is to undertake sufficient work in order to identify and characterise the archaeological constraints associated with the development area, in order to assess the archaeological and historical potential of the development site.
- 1.1.3 Castlegate House is Grade II* Listed Building dating to the mid-18th century. The listed building record describes it as: *'Mid 18th century, painted stucco, the lower storey is V jointed ashlar. Modillioned cornice, slate roof, 2 storeys. Entrance has Doric pilasters, with blocked entablatures and pedimented Modillioned cornice, 6 panelled door and fanlight with semi-circular head and curved interlaced glazing bars. 2 x 12-paned sash windows on ground floor and 3 above, cases within reveals, and externally with dummy wood louvered shutters. A very good house, detached, facing the entrance to the Castle'*.

¹ Parsons, J, 2003

² Cumbria County Council/English Heritage, 2002

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Mr Glen Beattie of Alpha Design Services, on behalf of Mrs Chris Wadsworth, for a rapid archaeological desk-based assessment and archaeological monitoring of proposed ground works, in accordance with a brief prepared by CCCHES. Following acceptance of the project design, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 RAPID DESK-BASED SURVEY

- 2.2.1 Several sources of information were consulted, in accordance with the project brief and project design. The study area consisted of a 0.5km radius centred on the proposed development area. The principal sources of information were the Historic Environment Record (HER), maps and secondary sources.
- 2.2.2 ***Historic Environment Record (HER):*** the HER in Kendal, a database of archaeological sites within the county, was accessed. This was in order to obtain information on the location of all designated sites and areas of historic interest and any other, non-designated sites within the study area, which included monuments, findspots, Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. A brief record including grid reference and description was obtained for the various sites within the study area, and was examined in depth.
- 2.2.3 ***County Record Office (Carlisle) (CRO):*** the County Record Office in Carlisle was visited to consult documents specific to the study area. Historic maps of the study area, including surveys, Tithe and Enclosure Maps, Acts of Parliament and early Ordnance Survey maps, were examined. A search was made for any relevant historical documentation, particularly regarding the use of the area, drawing on the knowledge of the archivists. Several secondary sources were also consulted.
- 2.2.4 ***Carlisle Library Local Studies (CL):*** the local studies collection at Carlisle Library was consulted for any relevant aerial photographs, historical engravings and photographs and publications held within the Jackson Collection.
- 2.2.5 ***North Pennines Archaeology Ltd (NPAL):*** various publications and unpublished reports on excavations and other work in the region are held within the North Pennines Archaeology library and any undeposited archives of the sites themselves were examined.

2.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.3.1 The principal objective of the watching brief was to allow for the preservation by record of archaeological deposits, the presence and nature of which could not be established in advance of development. This involved the close monitoring of all groundworks, associated with the creation of a new car park.
- 2.3.2 The aims and principal methodology of the watching brief can be summarised as follows:
- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record them;
 - to carry out further excavation and recording work in adequate time, if intact archaeological remains are uncovered during the project;
 - to accurately tie the area watched by the archaeologist into the National Grid at an appropriate scale, with any archaeological deposits and features adequately levelled;
 - to sample environmental deposits encountered as required, in line with English Heritage (2002 *Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods from Sampling and Recording to Post-Excavation*) guidelines;
 - to maintain a photographic record of all contexts in colour transparency and black and white print, and including a graduated metric scale;
 - to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
 - to prepare a bound report for the Client with each page and paragraph numbered, setting out the salient conclusions;
 - depending upon the results of the work, to prepare a report for publication.

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design, and in accordance with the recommendations in *Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation*³. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA 08 CGH-A.
- 2.4.2 North Pennines Archaeology and CCCHES support the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this archaeological watching brief will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project.

³ Brown, D.H, 2007

3 SITE LOCATION

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The market town of Cockermouth is located in the north-west of Cumbria, just to the south of the main A595 trunk road between Carlisle and Whitehaven, and to the north-west side of the Cumbrian Mountains (Figure 1).
- 3.1.2 The main topographical feature of Cockermouth is its situation at the confluence of two rivers, the Cocker and the Derwent, both of which historically provided not only an effective barrier against attack but also a source of power for the town's industries.
- 3.1.3 Castlegate House is located on the north end of Castlegate, which extends northwards from the Market Place, past the Castle and joins with Castlegate Drive which heads towards Isel to the north-east (Figure 2).
- 3.1.4 Cockermouth lies on the edge of the Skiddaw group of Ordovician Arenig rock. Cockermouth lavas are present within the Basement Beds; these lavas are olivine basalts and occur as four or five flows, the tops and bottoms are vesicular and reach a maximum thickness of about 90 metres. By the close of deposition of the Basement Beds most of the irregularities of the Lower Palaeozoic floor had been filled in and the resultant even surface was gradually flooded by the advancing Carboniferous seas. To the north lies a band of Carboniferous Dinantian Limestone, correlated with overlying Great Limestone of the Alston Block. All the Namurian beds above the first limestone are referred to the Hensingham Group. Westwards from around Cockermouth the basal beds form a coarse sandstone. The overlying beds consist mainly of mudstones with a few thin beds of sandstone, some discontinuous limestone bands and a few thin coals⁴.

⁴ Cumbria County Council/English Heritage, 2002, Page 2

4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 CARTOGRAPHIC SOURCES

- 4.1.1 As part of the documentary search at the Cumbria Record Office in Carlisle (CRO) and Carlisle Library (CL), a consultation of historical maps for town of Cockermouth area was undertaken. A cartographic date range of between 1774 and 1968 was obtained.
- 4.1.2 ***Plan of Cockermouth c.1600 (after Bradbury) (Figure 3):*** this reproduction of a manuscript pictorial map is the earliest known plan of the town drawn c.1600. This plan shows the main street pattern of the town in the early 17th century, with Main Street shown to the west of the River Cocker, Market Place and St Helen's Street to the east, and Castlegate to the east side of the castle, which dominates the drawing. There are properties shown in the approximate location of Castlegate House, and annotated 'Castle Garth'
- 4.1.3 ***Hodskinson and Donald's Map of Cumberland 1774 (CRO) (Figure 4):*** the first readily available map consulted during the rapid desk-based survey was Hodskinson and Donald's Map of Cumberland which was surveyed in 1770 and published in 1774. This map clearly shows the main streets of the town at this date, with Main Street (here shown as Below Bridge) to the west of the River Cocker, and Market Place and St Helen's Street to the east. Castlegate is shown to the east side of the castle, leading towards the castle, 'castle garth', 'bowling green' and Park Lane. A building is shown in the general location of Castlegate House; however the accuracy of this map with regards to individual properties needs to be considered. All Saint's Church and Free School are shown in an enclosure on an elevated position to the south of Market Place, with the course of Bitter Beck shown flowing into the River Cocker just to the north of the church.
- 4.1.4 John Wood's ***Plan of Cockermouth from Actual Survey 1832 (CRO) (Figure 5):*** John Wood's map is the earliest readily available map to clearly show the individual properties, along with names of owners, in the town at this date. Castlegate House is shown with the annotation 'Mr John Hodgson', with the 'Deer Orchard' and 'Tute Hill' to the east of the property. A building immediately to the west of Castlegate House, is shown in the occupancy of Mrs Bragg.
- 4.1.5 ***Cockermouth Tithe Map 1840 (CRO) (Figure 6):*** Tithe maps and accompanying Awards were produced following the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836. The maps generally have plot numbers which are listed in the Award, and provide information such as ownership, occupier, acreage, field name, state of cultivation and tithe payable. The properties on Castlegate at this date are clearly visible, with Castlegate House and the property next door shown on the south side of the road. Castlegate House was allocated Plot Number 559, and the accompanying Award lists the property as under the ownership and occupancy of John Hodgson, and is described as 'House and Gardens'. The property immediately to the west is listed under Plot Number 560 as 'Barn and Garden' in the ownership of George Lucock Bragg Esq., who owned this and several houses on the opposite side of Castlegate; at this date the property was in the occupancy of William Bowes (CRO Ref: DRC 8/47).

- 4.1.6 ***First Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1863 (25" to 1 mile scale) (Figure 7):*** the First Edition Ordnance Survey map shows that the property adjacent to Castlegate House has been demolished by this date and the now vacant space appears to have become part of the garden for Castlegate House. The two properties on the opposite side of the road to Castlegate House, formerly located between the two entrances to the castle, have also been demolished. Small buildings are shown to the north and east sides of Castlegate House and the land to the south of the property appears to be shown as orchard.
- 4.1.7 ***Second Edition Ordnance Survey Map c.1900 (25" to 1 mile scale) (Figure 8):*** by the date of publication of this map, the orchard to the south of Castlegate House has been laid out with paths, possibly as a result of the creation of a more formal garden.
- 4.1.8 ***Third Edition Ordnance Survey Map 1925 (25" to 1 mile scale) (Figure 9):*** this map published in 1925 shows that there has been some changes with the small buildings on the north side of Castlegate House, and that a property has been constructed in the field to the east (Deer Orchard House).
- 4.1.9 ***Ordnance Survey Map 1968 (1:2500 scale) (Figure 10):*** within the 43 years between the publication of the Third Edition and this map, there has been very little change in the form of Castlegate House and the associated gardens.

4.2 HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD (HER)

- 4.2.1 The HER in Kendal was consulted for information on known archaeological sites, Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments within a 500m radius of Castlegate House.
- 4.2.2 **HER Sites:** within a 500m radius of Castlegate House there are 12 HER sites; five medieval sites, six post-medieval sites and one site of unknown date. These sites are listed in the table below:

HER No.	Site Name	Grid Reference	Description	General Period	Status
849	Tute Hill	312450 530780	Truncated cone-shaped mound 2.6m high with hollow in the centre, possible windmill site , small motte or round arrow	medieval	Scheduled Ancient Monument
2633	Castle Brewery Windmill	312200 530800	In 1972 the remains of a tower mill could be seen, unique feature built of brick rather than stone. Most likely built in 18 th century	post-medieval	
3027	Market Place	312290 530750	Market place adjacent to Cocker Bridge surrounded by buildings ranging from late medieval to Victorian (all LB Grade II)	medieval/post-medieval	Listed Buildings
3028	St Helens Street Tannery	312940 530830	Possibly late 18 th century, of handmade brick and stone rubble, 2 storeys	post-medieval	Possibly listed
3033	Cockermouth Rope Walk	312300 530900	Rope Walk. No further details known	post-medieval	
3035	Cockermouth Castle and Park	312230 530870	Earliest reference to castle is in 1221, but most of building dates from 1360-70	medieval	Listed Building and Scheduled Ancient Monument
5519	Derwent Mill/Harris Mill	311900 530900	Part of the flax and tow spinning industry of the Harris Brothers created in 1770. Brick building from 1834 not listed, pre-1832 building is Grade II	post-medieval	1 building is Listed
5553	Cockermouth Medieval Town	312100 530700	Area for general Cockermouth sites	medieval/post-medieval	
11071	Castle Tannery	312080 530840	No evidence of site remains	unknown	
15206	Wordsworth House	311850 530700	Mid 18 th century house where William Wordsworth was born	Post-medieval	Listed Building
17806	75-87 Main Street	311900 530675	Trial excavation revealed medieval tenement (See Medieval Archaeology 1981 and 1982)	medieval/post-medieval	Listed Building
41189	Storage Building, Skinner Street	312450 530360	Single-storey, stone-built on bank of the Tom Rudd Beck photographed in 2005	post-medieval	

- 4.2.3 **Listed Buildings:** all of the properties along Castlegate, from the Market Place to Castlegate House are listed, including those in the castle complex, as well as many properties on the south and north sides of Market Place, and on both side of Kirkgate. Main Street also has a high proportion of listed buildings, mainly on its southern side.
- 4.2.4 **Conservation Areas:** Castlegate is located within Cockermouth Conservation Area.
- 4.2.5 **Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM):** there are two Scheduled Ancient Monuments in close proximity to Castlegate house; Tute Hill (SAM 23798) and Cockermouth Castle (SAM 27653). Tute Hill is described in the record as being '*strategically located on a plateau close to the confluence of the Rivers Cocker and Derwent, and includes a slightly oval earthen mound c.18.7m east-west by 16.6m north-south and up to 3m high. The summit of the motte has been truncated and now bears a hollow 0.4m deep. The motte would originally have been constructed during the early/mid-12th century but that was quickly superseded by the present Cockermouth Castle*'.

4.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

- 4.3.1 A search was undertaken at the HER in Kendal to provide information regarding previous archaeological work in the vicinity of Castlegate House, the results of which are included within the table below:

Site	Date	Type	Results	Contractor	HER Report Ref:
Rubby Banks Road – Flood Defence Wall	1999	Watching Brief	No features or finds were identified which was considered unusual	Northern Archaeological Associates	2/00/278
Bridge Street	2000	Evaluation	5 trenches excavated producing mainly 18 th and 19 th century wares. Site has had considerable dumping and disturbance in modern times	Carlisle Archaeology Ltd	2/00/277
Wordsworth House	2002 and 2003	Evaluation	Undertaken to assess the possible survival of evidence of garden features beneath the lawn	Headland Archaeology Ltd	2/02/381 & 2/03/1087
39 Market Place	2002 and 2003	Desk-Based Assessment and Watching Brief	The DBA revealed that the site appears to have been continuously occupied since medieval times. The watching brief revealed no evidence of surviving structures of deposits within the foundations trenches	North Pennines Archaeology Ltd	2/02/388 & 2/03/1090

Site	Date	Type	Results	Contractor	HER Report Ref:
Cockermouth Castle	2003	Watching Brief	No evidence for medieval features discovered during the excavation of two test pits	North Pennines Archaeology Ltd	2/03/1088
Mitre Court, St Helen's Street	2003	Evaluation	Cobbled surface and drains belonging to the yard of the former Crown and Mitre Hotel revealed	North Pennines Archaeology Ltd	2/03/1089
Station Street	2005	Desk-Based Assessment and Watching Brief	Revealed that by 1832 the southern half of the site was occupied by a large building, which was demolished by 1900 to make way for the construction of Station Street. No archaeological features observed during watching brief	Oxford Archaeology North	2/05/1459 & 2/06/1547
Skinner Street	2005	Building Survey	Recording of a presumed post-medieval storage building and garage on the bank of Tom Rudd Beck	Derek Evans Architect	2/05/1446
High Sand Lane	2005	Watching Brief	Conducted during groundworks for new house. Demolition material observed of previous building and section of cobble	Gerry Martin Archaeological Consultant	2/05/1509

Site	Date	Type	Results	Contractor	HER Report Ref:
			foundation wall		
75-87 Main Street	2008	Excavation	Evidence of the medieval and post-medieval town found at 75-87 Main Street including significant structural remains	Oxford Archaeology North <i>forthcoming</i>	Not yet received by HER
Cockermouth Cottage Hospital	2008	Desk-Based Assessment	The site is located in the vicinity of a possible early medieval settlement, and within a medieval park associated with the castle	North Pennines Archaeology Ltd	

4.4 PUBLICATIONS

- 4.4.1 Writing towards the end of the 17th century, Denton refers to Camden's 1582 description of Cockermouth when he noted that it was a *'mercate town of good wealth, and a castle of the earls of Northumberland. The town is built fair enough, tho it stand low between two hills, upon one of which the church is seated and the castle upon the other right against it, the market lying low between them'*⁵. The town is believed to have medieval origins, coming into being in the 12th and 13th centuries as a result of deliberate town planning⁶. Cockermouth Castle was possibly founded between 1072 and 1106 by Waldeve, second son of Gospatric⁷. Winchester has suggested that the earliest urban core of the town may be the area of the Bitter Beck valley which includes Market Place, St Helen's Street, Castlegate and Kirkgate, with the castle on an elevated position to the north-west, and the church also on an elevated position to the south⁸.
- 4.4.2 At the end of the 18th century, Hutchinson noted that the houses of the town formed two streets *'in an angular figure, from the bend of which runs out the short street that leads to the castle. One of these chief streets [Market Place] stands above the river Cocker, in which are the moot-hall, market-house and shambles, which have a gloomy and antique appearance. These erections are in general great obstacles and disagreeable objects in our northern towns. On the other side [of the] Cocker the corn market is held. The street on the other side of that river [Main Street] runs parallel with the Derwent; is spacious and well built, and here the market for cattle is held. The street ascending to the castle, although not commodious from its steepness, yet seems to be the favourite of people of fortune, containing many elegant houses'*⁹.
- 4.4.3 Cockermouth's geographical and topographical position is seen to have benefited the town throughout its history; it is described in 1790 as having advantages over neighbouring towns *'being an excellent situation for trade and manufactories, the surrounding country populous and fertile having a constant and plentiful supply of water by different streams, several valuable coal-mines, and three sea-ports all within the small distance of 15 miles. The turnpike roads are also in very good order'*¹⁰. The agricultural nature of the town continued into the 20th century, when the town was described as being very much dependant on the hinterland, a desirable characteristic which was regarded in the 1970s as being of benefit to the town and should be maintained¹¹.
- 4.4.4 Writing in 1829, Parson and White observed that the streams and rivers which flowed through the town were of great convenience to the manufacturers of textiles and those in the tanning industry. They describe how trade in the town expanded considerably in the early 19th century, with the population increasing from 2800 to 3800 people¹². This publication lists some of the private residents and trades in the town in 1829. On Castlegate, trades listed include an attorney, a farmer, a gardener, a toy dealer, ,

⁵ Denton, T, 1687-1688, Page 122

⁶ Winchester, A.J.L, 1986, Page 109

⁷ Cumbria County Council/English Heritage, c.2002, Page 8

⁸ Winchester, A.J.L, 1986, Page 117

⁹ Hutchinson, 1794-1797, Pages 110 and 112

¹⁰ The Universal British Directory, 1790, Page 567

¹¹ Johnston and Wright Architects, c.1973, Page 4

¹² Parson and White, 1829, Page 184

watchmaker, and three tanners, one of which is named as John Hodgson, who may be the same John Hodgson who is shown at Castlegate House on Wood's map of the town dating to 1832 (See 4.1.4 above and Figure 5).

- 4.4.5 The Moot Hall and wooden Shambles located in Market Place were demolished in 1829, after which date market activities became dispersed over a wider area rather than being concentrated in one place. This was seen as undesirable for the town, and the possibility of a purpose-built market place was being considered in the 1830s¹³. The Market Hall was constructed to the north of All Saint's Church in 1835-8 at a cost of £5190.
- 4.4.6 Castlegate is a steep and narrow thoroughfare which contains many examples of late 17th and early 18th century houses. Castlegate House is a detached property which stands at the top of Castlegate. It is of three bays, and has a pedimented doorway on pilasters. The property dates from 1739¹⁴.
- 4.4.7 'Ye Merket Place' of 1578 was sometimes referred to as 'High Street'. Castlegate was 'Castle Street' in 1737 and other early references. All of this area of the town was known as 'Above Bridge'. Park Lane, located above the castle, derived its name from Cockermouth Parks, and has only recently been changed to Isel Road¹⁵. Castlegate Drive, which extends from the top of Castlegate in a north-easterly direction towards the former toll bar at St Helen's and then to Isel, was originally known as 'New Road', and was constructed on land given by George O'Brien (1751-1837), then Earl of Egremont. There had been an earlier track on this alignment from the castle to the bridleway from the top of St Helen's Street over Watch Hill to Isel. Askew described this new road in 1866: *'The new road from the top of Castle Street to St Helen's gate is the chief promenade, being fully three-quarters of a mile in length'*¹⁶.
- 4.4.8 Cockermouth Castle was possibly founded between 1072 and 1106 by Waldeve, second son of Gospatric, Earl of Dunbar. He reputedly erected a dwelling at the mouth of the River Cocker, soon after the manor had been granted to him by King Malcolm of Scotland in 1072. The site originated as a ringwork and bailey, and occupies the end of a steep sided ridge in the confluence of the rivers Cocker and Derwent on the north side of the town. It was originally isolated from the adjoining ground to the east by a north-south cross ditch. Following various periods of rebuilding, additions and extensions, the castle was dismantled in 1649 and the inner ditch was filled in. It remained a ruin until 1669-76 when the gatehouse, two rooms and the 'Flagstaff Tower' was made habitable¹⁷. In 1750, the Percies' Cumbrian estates passed to Charles Wyndham, 2nd Earl of Egremont. His successor erected new low domestic ranges against the walls of the outer court. The range on the east side was added by General Henry Wyndham who lived in the castle from 1837 to 1860. It still belongs to this family. The last baron used the title of Lord Egremont given to him in 1963, but his original title was Lord Leconfield¹⁸.

¹³ Bradbury, J.B, 1995, Page 92

¹⁴ Bradbury, J.B, 1987, Pages 14 and 16

¹⁵ Bradbury, J.B, 1995, Page 210

¹⁶ Bradbury, J.D, 1995, Page 211

¹⁷ Cumbria County Council/English Heritage, 2002, Page 8

¹⁸ Salter, M, 1998, Page 41

5 WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 INTRODUCTION

- 5.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken between the 11th and 12th of August 2008. Archaeological observation was conducted during the removal of land for a proposed car park measuring *c.*130 square metres. The actual area removed was *c.*100 square metres which was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.86 metres below ground level (bgl). The excavation was carried out by a mini digger under archaeological supervision (Figure 2).
- 5.1.2 Initially topsoil (100) was removed from an area measuring 3.6m by 5.8m and piled to the south of the excavation to provide a storage space for topsoil from the site. This area was 0.62m in depth and stopped on the undisturbed natural (101). Topsoil (100) and subsoils (102) and (103) were removed from the rest of the excavation area to a depth of 0.34m until the natural was revealed (101). Some of this spoil was re-deposited, to backfill the previously opened area, and the rest was deposited in the entrance in preparation for removal by tipper waggon the following day. By the end of the day the entirety of the site was opened up down to natural (101) to an area *c.*100 square metres (Plate 1).



Plate 1: Overview of excavation at the end of day one (looking west)

- 5.1.3 On the second day the previously excavated spoil was removed by tipper wagon, taking six loads throughout the course of the day, and removing the vast majority of the spoil. The natural (101) that was covering the site was taken down an additional depth of 0.52m at the eastern side, and then graded down towards the entrance in accordance with the builder's job specifications.

5.2 RESULTS

- 5.2.1 The natural subsoil (101) was visible from a depth of 0.62 metres bgl and consisted of an orange to mid brown sandy soil which contained small pebbles no greater than 50mm in size. Above this, at the southern end of the site, was a 0.62 metre-depth of topsoil (100). This consisted of loose black loam with the occasional inclusion of small stones measuring less than 0.05m in size. Across the rest of the site, directly above the natural (101), was a loose dark brown/black silty soil with frequent gravel inclusions (103), less than 0.07m in diameter, reaching a maximum depth of 0.34m. In the southeast corner, spanning an area 2.30m in length and 1.10m in width, was a loose grey/dark brown silty soil (102) which contained frequent gravel stones and rubble less than 0.10m in size. This deposit continued outside the area of excavation both to the south and to the east (Plate 2).



Plate 2: South section of excavation showing contexts (100) to (103)

- 5.2.2 In the northern section a loose yellow/light brown fine gravel and soil deposit (105) was visible, which contained frequent very small stones less than 2mm in size. This deposit was situated 0.17m bgl and was 0.15m thick. In the western section of the excavation deposit (104) was visible. This consisted of a loose mixture of rubble comprising of large cobbles, bricks and slates and was situated 0.03m bgl and was 0.5m thick. The area running adjacent to the wall of the building had been previously excavated to install a fresh water drain so it is likely that this rubble is backfill for the previously excavated trench.
- 5.2.3 No archaeological features were encountered. One modern glass bottle and two blue tiles were recovered, after the removal of a stump, in context (103). The disturbance caused by root action meant that none of the finds were *in situ*, and so these were discarded.

6 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The rapid desk-based assessment has revealed that the area of the market place, with the church to the south and the castle to the north, may have been the focus of an early medieval settlement at Cockermouth. The line of Castlegate is shown on a plan of the town dated to c.1600, as well as properties along its frontage. The possibility exists therefore, that the location of Castlegate House may have been occupied prior to its construction in the first half of the 18th century.
- 6.2 The area of the new car park was situated in the garden to the south of Castlegate House. Historic maps of the site indicate that this area has been occupied by gardens and orchards throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. However, features relating to the medieval or post-medieval occupation of the site have the potential to exist in this area.
- 6.3 The archaeological watching brief was undertaken over two days during excavation for the new car park. No archaeological features or deposits were revealed by the ground works. However, given the archaeological potential of the area, further archaeological monitoring is recommended on any future works at the site.

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APPENDIX: FIGURES
