

LOW GELT QUARRY, NEAR BRAMPTON, CUMBRIA



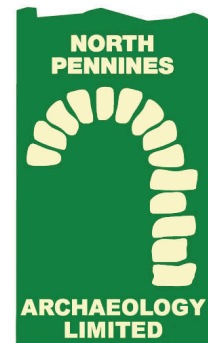
EVALUATION REPORT

CP. No: 1023/09

29/10/2009

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DOCUMENT TITLE: Low Gelt Quarry, near Brampton, Carlisle
DOCUMENT TYPE: Evaluation Report
CLIENT: Scott Wilson Ltd
CP NUMBER: 1023/ 09
SITE CODE: LGQ-A
PLANNING APP. NO: -
OASIS REFERENCE: northpen3-66246
PRINT DATE: 29/10/2009
GRID REFERENCE: NGR: NY 21505 58530

Quality Assurance

This report covers works as outlined in the brief for the above-named project as issued by the relevant authority, and as outlined in the agreed programme of works. Any deviation to the programme of works has been agreed by all parties. The works have been carried out according to the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Standards, Policy Statements and Codes of Conduct. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance set out by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on the preparation of reports.

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SUMMARY

In October 2009, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook an archaeological evaluation at Low Gelt Quarry, near Brampton, Cumbria (NGR: NY 21505 58530). This was at the request of Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Hanson Quarry Products Ltd, and was in advance of the expansion of the current Low Gelt Quarry.

The development site lay c.2km south of Brampton, at Low Gelt, near Hayton, with the evaluation area being bounded on the east by the existing quarry, to the north and west by a motor cross circuit and to the south by pasture and woodland. It was believed that the development site may have contained prehistoric and Roman remains based on its proximity to tentative late prehistoric crop marks and Roman quarries east of the quarry. It was also suggested that there was good potential for both medieval and post-medieval remains, due to the site's location by Thief Street, an old public road said to be used by Border Reivers, and also the site's location next to the medieval village of Hayton.

The field evaluation consisted of four linear trial trenches, located and excavated in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains identifying zones of relevant importance and comparing them to areas of proposed development. The trenching revealed a relatively uniform stratigraphy, with natural sand underlying all trenches with inclusions of gravel, over which was a natural/subsoil horizon, and finally sealed by topsoil.

Any features observed in the turf and topsoil were linked with the motor-cross, specifically the landscaping for the car-park over which the trenches were excavated. The landscaping could be the reason for the lack of archaeological remains on the site if the car-park was stripped and levelled. No archaeological features of interest were observed in any of the trenches. The finds were all of modern date, with the majority being detected during the metal detector survey of the spoil heaps. The modern finds were consistent with the use of the site as a car-park for the motor-cross and pasture land.

The potential for prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval activity elsewhere on the development site is classified as low due to the lack of any archaeological evidence within the sample trenching.

Given the lack of any archaeological features identified during the evaluation it is recommended that no further work takes place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Scott Wilson Ltd for commissioning the project and in particular Nick Finch for his help and assistance throughout the work.

NPA Ltd would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons, Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council, for all his help and assistance throughout the project.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Tony Liddell, Michael McElligott and Sue Johnson. The report was written and the drawings produced by Tony Liddell. The project was managed by Martin Railton, Project Manager for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 In October 2009, North Pennines Archaeology Limited undertook an archaeological evaluation at Low Gelt Quarry, near Brampton, Cumbria. This was at the request of Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Hanson Quarry Products Ltd, and was in advance of the expansion of the current Low Gelt Quarry (NGR: NY 21505 58530; Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 The development site lies c.2km south of Brampton, at Low Gelt, near Hayton, with the evaluation area being bounded on the east by the existing quarry, to the north and west by a motor cross circuit and to the south by pasture and woodland.
- 1.1.3 It was believed that the development site may have contained prehistoric and Roman remains based on its proximity to tentative late prehistoric crop marks and Roman quarries east of the quarry. It was also suggested that there was good potential for both medieval and post-medieval remains, due to the site's location by Thief Street, an old public road said to be used by Border Reivers, and also the site's location next to the medieval village of Hayton.
- 1.1.4 This report sets out the results of the work in the form of a short document outlining the findings, followed by a statement of the archaeological potential of the area, an assessment of the impact of the proposed development, and recommendations for further work.

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 ARCHAEOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

2.1.1 An *Archaeological Specification for Evaluation* (Scott Wilson 2009) and subsequent trench location plan was submitted by Scott Wilson Ltd on behalf of Hanson Quarry Products Ltd for an archaeological evaluation of the development area. The specification and trench location was agreed upon in consultation with the Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council.

2.1.2 Following acceptance of the trench location plan by Cumbria County Council, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Scott Wilson to undertake the work. The specification was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

2.2.1 The field evaluation consisted of four linear trial trenches, Trenches 1-4, all 2.0m in width, two excavated to 62.5m in length and two to 50.0m in length (Figure 2), which were excavated in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals.

2.2.2 The location and size of the trial trenches were agreed by consultation between Scott Wilson Ltd, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd and the Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council.

2.2.3 The aims of the evaluation can be summarised as follows:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where 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.

2.3 METHODOLOGY

- 2.3.1 The trenches were excavated by a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothless 1.6m wide ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the top of the natural substrate. Each trench was then manually cleaned and any putative archaeological features investigated and recorded according to the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd standard procedure as set out in the NPA Excavation Manual (Giecco 2003).
- 2.3.2 A photographic record was made using digital photography, 400 ISO Black and White print and 200 ISO Colour Slide film.
- 2.3.3 All spoil was surveyed by a metal detector set for both ferrous and non-ferrous detection.
- 2.3.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations (IfA 2008).

2.4 THE ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and in line with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage Guidelines (1991) and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2007). The archive, including the physical and paper archive and copies of the report, will be sent to Tullie House, Carlisle, and will be made available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA09, LGQ-A, CP 1023/09.
- 2.4.2 North Pennines Archaeology supports the **Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS)** project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, and can be accessed under the unique identification number *northpen3- 66246*.

3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

- 3.1.1 The site lies c.2km south of Brampton, near Carlisle, Cumbria, and is at a height of approximately c.115m above sea level (NGR: NY 21505 58530; Figure 1).
- 3.1.2 The underlying solid geology within the area comprises glacial sand and lower boulder clays over Permian and Triassic Sandstones (Scott Wilson 2009).

3.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

- 3.2.1 *Introduction:* this historical background is compiled mostly from secondary sources detailed in the *Archaeological Specification for Evaluation* (Scott Wilson 2009), and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments specific to the study area.
- 3.2.2 *Prehistoric:* aerial photograph analysis of the area by English Heritage produced tentative prehistoric landscape features in the form of crop marks. A bronze *celt* (socketed axe) was found in the 19th century near Hell Beck, and in the 18th century farming removed what is thought to have been a prehistoric cist burial near Gelt Bridge.
- 3.2.3 *Roman:* two quarries exist along the River Gelt in close proximity to the site that bear Roman inscriptions in the rock faces. The *Written Rock of Gelt*, comprising nine Roman inscriptions is located c.0.5km east of the current Low Gelt Quarry; *Pigeon Clint Written Rock* is located directly to the southeast of the Hanson quarry, and comprises a projecting altar cut into the sandstone. These quarries are thought to have provided Hadrian's Wall and associated fortifications with stone.
- 3.2.4 *Medieval:* nearby Hayton was destroyed by Scottish raiders in 1302, and a hill south of the development site is known locally as Watch Hill, said to have been a lookout post manned by villagers to watch for marauding reivers or Scottish forces.
- 3.2.5 Remains of the deserted medieval village of Hayton are still apparent at the edge of the current Hayton, with ridge and furrow on the outskirts and strip fields to the south and west.
- 3.2.6 *Post Medieval:* in 1570, High Gelt Bridge was apparently the site of a battle between royal forces and those of Leonard Dacre, the results of a dispute over the ownership of the Barony between Leonard and the Duke of Norfolk.

3.2.7 *Modern:* the area now occupied by the current quarry site was known as Hollow Bank, and to the west of the evaluation area lies a deep-cut motor cross track, thought to have been constructed between 1977 and 1991.

3.3 PREVIOUS WORK

3.3.1 Archaeological investigations have not previously been noted within the evaluation area, although numerous archaeological investigations have been conducted in the overall vicinity of Brampton.

3.3.2 An archaeological desk-based assessment was produced by Scott Wilson, prior to the evaluation taking place, summarising the archaeology and history of the area. This identified the potential for prehistoric and Roman remains based on the site's proximity to tentative late prehistoric crop marks and Roman quarries east of the quarry. It was also suggested that there was good potential for both medieval and post-medieval remains, due to the site's location by Thief Street, an old public road said to be used by Border Reivers, and also the site's location next to the medieval village of Hayton.



Plate 1. Trench 4 under excavation.

4 EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The excavation of trenches down to the natural substrate, followed by further hand excavation of potential archaeological features permitted an examination of any prospective archaeological remains. All trench locations are depicted in Figure 2.

4.2 TRENCH 1



Plate 2. Trench 1, looking west.

4.2.1 Trench 1 measured 50.0m in length and 2.0m in width, and was orientated roughly east-west .

4.2.2 The natural substrate, context (101), was found to be a friable mottled orange/brown sand with frequent inclusions of gravel, and averaged a depth of 0.40m below the current surface. Above the natural sand was a thin subsoil deposit, context (102), averaging less than 0.10m thick, which was an orange/brown sand with gravel, and could be described more as a horizon between the natural sand and the topsoil than a distinct subsoil. Sealing the subsoil deposit was topsoil and turf, context (100), which averaged a depth of 0.30m. The topsoil comprised a brown sandy silt with frequent gravel and small stone inclusions.

- 4.2.3 Modern plastic and aluminium can fragments were found within the topsoil. The metal detector survey of the spoil heaps uncovered three modern iron nails. All modern finds were discarded.
- 4.2.4 The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits of interest.

4.3 TRENCH 2



Plate 3. Trench 2, looking west.

- 4.3.1 Trench 2 measured 50.0m in length and 2.0m in width, and was orientated roughly northeast-southwest .
- 4.3.2 The natural substrate, context (101), was friable mottled orange/brown sand with frequent inclusions of gravel, and averaged a depth of 0.65m below the current surface. Above the natural sand was a deposit of subsoil, context (102), averaging 0.33m thick, which was an orange/brown sand with gravel, and like Trench 1 could be described more as a horizon between the natural sand and the topsoil than a distinct subsoil. Sealing the subsoil deposit was topsoil and turf, context (100), which averaged a depth of 0.32m.
- 4.3.3 The metal detector survey of the spoil heaps uncovered one modern iron nail in topsoil (100) and one modern two pence piece. All modern finds were discarded.

4.3.4 The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits of interest.

4.4 TRENCH 3



Plate 4. Trench 3, looking north.

- 4.4.1 Trench 3 measured 62.5m in length and 2.0m in width, and was orientated northwest-southeast.
- 4.4.2 The natural substrate, context (101), was friable mottled orange/brown sand with frequent inclusions of gravel, to a maximum depth of 0.60m below the current surface. Bands of pure natural sand were also noted crossing the trench in a northeast-southwest direction. Above the natural sand was orange/brown sand with gravel subsoil (102), averaging 0.14m thick, which like the other trenches could be described more as a horizon between the natural sand and the topsoil than a distinct subsoil. Sealing the subsoil deposit was topsoil and turf, context (100), which averaged a depth of 0.36m.
- 4.4.3 The metal detector survey of the spoil heaps uncovered one modern one pence piece. The modern coin was discarded.
- 4.4.4 The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits of interest.

4.5 TRENCH 4



Plate 5. Trench 4, looking north.

- 4.5.1 Trench 4 measured 62.5m in length and 2.0m in width, and was orientated northwest-southeast. A linear bank was noted running across this trench, orientated east-west and aligned with the main door of the motor-cross.
- 4.5.2 Context (101), the natural substrate, was friable mottled orange/brown sand with frequent inclusions of gravel, to a maximum depth of 0.40m below the current surface. Bands of pure natural sand were also noted crossing the trench in a northeast-southwest direction. Above the natural sand was orange/brown sand with gravel subsoil (102), averaging 0.10m thick, which like the other trenches could be described more as a horizon between the natural sand and the topsoil than a distinct subsoil. Sealing the subsoil deposit was topsoil and turf, context (100), which averaged a depth of 0.30m.
- 4.5.3 The metal detector survey of the spoil heaps uncovered part of an iron gate hinge. The modern find was discarded.
- 4.5.4 A modern dog burial was uncovered c.22m from the southeastern extent of the trench, partially obscured by the east facing section. The cut for the burial extended to the topsoil, and fragments of a modern confectionary wrapper was found within the cut, confirming the burial as modern in origin.

- 4.5.5 The trench contained no archaeological features or deposits of interest.
- 4.5.6 No archaeological finds were recovered, and no environmental samples were retained during the groundworks.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1 The trenching revealed a relatively uniform stratigraphy, with natural sand underlying all trenches with inclusions of gravel, over which was a natural/topsoil horizon, and finally sealed by topsoil.
- 5.1.2 Any features observed in the turf and topsoil were linked with the motor-cross, specifically the landscaping for the car-park over which the trenches were excavated. The landscaping could in fact explain the lack of archaeological remains on the site if the car-park was stripped and leveled.
- 5.1.3 No archaeological features of interest were observed in any of the trenches. The finds were all of modern date, with the majority being detected during the metal detector survey of the spoil heaps. The modern finds were consistent with the use of the site as a car-park for the motor-cross and pasture land.
- 5.1.4 The potential for prehistoric, Roman, medieval and post-medieval activity elsewhere on the development site is classified as low due to the lack of any archaeological evidence within the sample trenching.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 Given the lack of any archaeological features during the evaluation it is recommended that no further work takes place.

6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLE

Context	Context Type	Description
(100)	Deposit	Brown sandy silt with frequent gravel and small stone inclusions
(101)	Natural Substrate	Orange-brown sand with gravel
(102)	Deposit	Orange-brown sand with gravel and inclusions of brown sandy silt.

Table 1. List of Contexts issued during the Evaluation

APPENDIX 2: FIGURES
