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# **NORTH PENNINES ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

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**Project Designs and Client Reports No. CP/108/04**

**REPORT ON  
AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT  
AND EVALUATION OF  
LAND AT RYDAL STREET  
CARLISLE  
CUMBRIA**

**FOR MR N IRVING**

**NGR NY 4070 5545**

**Planning Application No.  
1/03/1115**

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## NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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In April 2004 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was appointed by Mr N Irving to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment and field evaluation of land at Rydal Street, Carlisle, Cumbria, following a planning application for a residential development.

The work involved the consultation of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record and the County Record Office, Carlisle, and consisted of a search of all readily available maps, documents and aerial photographs relevant to the study area. Information was collected regarding the presence of any Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings or other designated sites or areas of historic interest.

The site is situated outside the Historic Centre of the City of Carlisle and lies close to the Botchergate area, an area known to have a considerable number of Roman archaeological remains.

No archaeological remains were identified in any of the evaluation trenches. The site consisted of agricultural land prior to 1824 when terraced houses were first built, these were demolished in 1948. The site has been a children's play area since 1977.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks are due to the following for their assistance during the undertaking of the project: Mr N Irving, Ms Jo Mackintosh of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Record and the staff of the County Record Office, Carlisle.

The trenches were excavated under the supervision of Frank Giecco BA Dip Arch, AIFA, NPA Principal Archaeologist and Technical Director, and the field evaluation was undertaken by Ken Denham BA and Joanne Beaty BA.

The desk-based assessment was undertaken by Joanne Beaty BA and the report written by Chris Jones BA, MA, PIFA and edited by Juliet Reeves BA. Overall responsibility for the project rested with Frank Giecco.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In April 2004 North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by Mr Nick Irving to undertake archaeological work on land at Rydal Street, Carlisle, Cumbria. The work was requested in a brief prepared by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service (Parsons, 2004) in response to a planning application for a residential development (Planning Application Ref1/03/1115). The work consisted of a desk-based assessment, visual site inspection and field evaluation.
- 1.2 This report describes the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment and field study into the presence of and likely impact upon the archaeological resource by a scheme to erect 7 terraced houses on the site of a former children's play area. The work is limited in scope to the identification of archaeological remains present within the proposal area in order to facilitate a mitigation strategy to be decided upon by Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service (CCCAS). It is beyond the scope of this report to provide recommendations for such a mitigation strategy and as a result no such recommendations will be made in this report, which will be presented to the Client and CCCAS.
- 1.3 The site is situated outside the Historic Centre of the City of Carlisle (NGR NY 4070 5545), and lies close to the Botchergate area, an area known to have a considerable number of Roman archaeological remains. Approximately 50m to the west of the site a Roman cemetery was revealed in an archaeological evaluation in 1994. The area is shown in Figure 1.
- 1.4 The purpose of the fieldwork was to evaluate the site in order to define the presence or absence of archaeological remains. The fieldwork was undertaken in a single phase of three days duration. Archaeological deposits were excavated in plan and, where appropriate, in section, and were recorded in order to achieve an understanding of their nature, extent, depth and state of preservation. Any artefactual material was collected to facilitate the interpretation and date of the archaeological features and any paleo-environmental evidence appropriately sampled.

## **2 TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND HYDROLOGY**

- 2.1 The area is situated on low-lying ground of the Carlisle Plain. It is located approximately 0.5km east of the centre of Carlisle within a primarily residential district, in the Botchergate district. The geology consists of the boulder clay of the Carlisle Plain interleaved with alluvial sand and gravels (SSEW 1984).
- 2.2 The principal rivers near the site are the River Eden, which flows approximately 0.5km north of the site, the River Caldew, which flows approximately 0.5km to the south and the River Petteril, 0.5km to the southeast.
- 2.3 The site at present lies within the modern urban landscape of the City of Carlisle, within a predominantly residential district consisting of rows of terraced houses along a planned street pattern. Most of these terraced houses were built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to accommodate the city's rising population and housed those working in the many local industrial factories. The site lies close to the former Victorian Workhouse, now the Carlisle campus of St Martins College of Higher Education.
- 2.4 The site lies less than 0.5km north of the Botchergate and London Road areas, which have been found to contain extensive archaeological remains, including a Roman cemetery.

### **3 PREVIOUS WORK**

3.1 No previous archaeological work has been undertaken on the site.

#### **3.2 19th-century Observations**

3.2.1 In the later 19th century, a number of Roman burials were discovered on both sides of Botchergate, extending from Court Square to London Road and Gallows Hill. Over 40 burials were found at different times, including cremations and inhumations, together with miscellaneous discoveries of Roman pottery.

3.2.2 In 1895 an urn full of bones was found in Tait Street, and another is recorded opposite Tait Street (Charlesworth 1978, 125). At the Crown Inn, at the northern corner of Crown Street and Botchergate, Haverfield recorded the discovery of two small vessels, one containing a pipeclay figurine of Venus and burnt bone (*Ibid*, 126). As burials in Roman times were usually located outside the occupied areas, there is a clear case for regarding Botchergate as lying outside the core settlement of Carlisle.

#### **3.3 The Co-Operative Society/Collier Lane Site**

3.3.1 During July and August 1997, Carlisle Archaeological Unit undertook a rescue excavation prior to the redevelopment of the former Co-Op building at 40-78 Botchergate, Carlisle. As most of the frontage buildings were to be retained, the investigation focused on the area to the rear, adjacent to Collier Lane, which was to be cleared and built over. A complex sequence of Roman activity was revealed, including part of a substantial earthwork (Zant 1997).

#### **3.4 Cecil Street Car Park**

3.4.1 In 1994 Carlisle Archaeological Unit undertook an evaluation in the Cecil Street car park, south of Tait Street, where remains of cremation burials were located, together with field boundaries defining fields that are probably Roman in date. Here the depth of archaeological deposits varied between approximately 0.6m and 1.45m below the modern ground surface (McCarthy and Flynn 1994).

#### **3.5 Other Investigations**

3.5.1 In 1985, a number of gas-pipe trenches below the western pavement of Botchergate were watched to determine whether archaeological remains could be identified. They revealed road metalling, thought at the time to belong to the Roman and medieval road, the projected line of which lies below Blackfriars Street and extends towards the Roman fort at Tullie House.

3.5.2 In 1997 traces of a small Roman settlement of uncertain function were found at St Nicholas Yard during an excavation by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit. The work revealed two broad, shallow ditches, which appeared to be separated by a metalled surface. Traces of possible burials and other features were also located. The excavations also revealed putative medieval features including an oven and the remains of walls, possibly associated with the former 12<sup>th</sup> century leper hospital (Howard-Davis and Leah 1999).



- 3.5.3 During July and August 1997, Carlisle Archaeological Unit undertook a rescue excavation on land at 40-78 Botchergate, revealing a complex sequence of Roman period activity, including part of a large linear earthwork (Zant and Giocco 1999).
- 3.5.4 A series of evaluations followed by large-scale excavations were carried out by Carlisle Archaeology during 1998 and 1999 between Tait Street and Mary Street on the eastern side of Botchergate, revealing Roman deposits including a number of cremation burials (Zant and Giocco 1999; Giocco 2001).
- 3.5.5 An evaluation was carried out in July 2000 by Carlisle Archaeology at King Street, revealing extensive archaeological deposits throughout the site, the vast majority of Roman date (Reeves 2000).
- 3.5.6 In January-February 2003, North Pennines Heritage Trust undertook a field evaluation on the site of the corn mill, Harraby Green, Carlisle, which revealed the substantial below ground remains of the latest phase of the mill and also probable remains of medieval settlement, consisting of a clay and cobble foundation and a number of medieval pottery fragments in an area north of the post medieval and modern mill (Jones 2003).
- 3.5.7 In February 2004, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd undertook a field evaluation on land adjacent to St Nicholas Bridge, across the line of the Canal Branch of the London, Midland and Scottish Railway from London Road. The results of the evaluation included a series of stakeholes which were observed cut into the natural subsoil within trenches 1 and 2, one of which contained medieval pottery. A number of fragments of redeposited Roman and medieval pottery were found within a layer of buried ploughsoil. Pre-1900 deposits were significantly truncated by deposits associated with the London and North Western Railway, which included a Wagon Repair and a Creosoting Shed, both of which survive on site.

## 4 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 The work undertaken consisted of a desk-based assessment, visual site inspection and field evaluation.

### 4.2 Desk-Based Assessment

4.2.1 This involved the consultation of the County Sites and Monuments Record in Kendal in the first instance, and the County Record Office, Carlisle. This included the assessment of all readily available primary and secondary documentary and cartographic material and all available aerial photographs, to achieve as fully an understanding as possible regarding the nature of the geographical, topographical, archaeological and historical context of the site.

4.2.2 The desk-based assessment was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments* (IFA 1994).

### 4.3 Visual Site Inspection

4.3.1 A visual site inspection was undertaken in order to note any surface features of potential archaeological interest and to identify any potential hazards to health or constraints upon archaeological work, such as the presence of live services, Tree Preservation Orders or problems of access to the site.

### 4.4 Field Evaluation

4.4.1 The field evaluation consisted of the excavation of a series of linear trial trenches in order to produce a predictive model of surviving archaeological remains detailing zones of relevant importance against known development proposals.

4.4.2 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 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 paleoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

- 4.4.3 Each trench was mechanically excavated by a JCB 3CX excavator equipped with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision, to the top of archaeological deposits, or the natural substrate, whichever was encountered first. Each trench was then manually cleaned and all features investigated and recorded according to the NPA standard procedure as set out in the company Excavation Manual.
- 4.4.4 Photography was undertaken using a Canon EOS 100 Single Lens Reflex (SLR) manual camera. A photographic record was made using 400 ISO colour print film.
- 4.4.5 All work was undertaken in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations* (IFA 1994).

## 5 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

### 5.1 Place Name Evidence

5.1.1 The place name Rydal probably means ‘valley of the Rothay’, a contraction of ON *rautand*, ON, *a*, and ON *dalr* (Lee 1998, 71). The street was originally called Union Street and was built in 1824 by the Union Building Society, which was demolished during slum clearance in the 1930s and renamed Rydal Street (Perriam 1992).

### 5.2 Prehistoric

5.2.1 There is extensive evidence for prehistoric activity within and around Carlisle, including the remains of ard marks from prehistoric ploughing at Blackfriars Street and Lowther Street. Neolithic and Bronze Age pottery was found at Scotby Road, including Grooved Ware and Beaker pottery, and a collared urn and burnt mound were excavated at Garlands Hospital (Perriam 1992, 3). Flints of Neolithic and Bronze Age date have also been found, and two socketed Late Bronze Age axes were found at Kings Meadow, Stanwix (SMR No. 525). It has been suggested that the promontory on which Carlisle Castle now stands has been a defended site since at least the Iron Age and possibly a pre-Roman *dun*.

### 5.3 Roman

5.3.1 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. The withdrawal by the Romans from Scotland in the 80s, and later the building of Hadrian's Wall from AD 122, probably had a substantial impact on the settlement. 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.

5.3.2 Outside the core part of the Roman town of Carlisle, in the period between the Flavian period and the mid 2<sup>nd</sup> century, many forts were built, some of which were temporary camps, others were more substantial. Some doubtless housed troops on active campaigns, whilst others probably provided accommodation for soldiers redeployed during the withdrawal from Scotland and in the context of an evolving frontier policy. In addition, there are many small farmsteads, whose economy would have been linked in some way to that of Carlisle and the needs of the military.

5.3.3 The corridor either side of London Road and Botchergate has long been known to contain Roman remains, with some 39 burials recovered during building works in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and other remains recovered during systematic archaeological excavation during the 1990s (Carlisle Archaeology, Lancaster University Archaeological Unit). Little is known, however, regarding the extent of the Roman cemetery (and settlement) or the nature and extent of medieval settlement.

## 5.4 Medieval

- 5.4.1 Following the withdrawal of the Legions in the early part of the 5<sup>th</sup> century, Carlisle probably continued to be occupied, and it housed an important monastic community from the 7<sup>th</sup> century. The arrival of the Normans in 1092 heralded a period of major change, during which the city was enclosed by walls. Throughout the Middle Ages and up to the Jacobite rebellion in 1745, Carlisle was a major frontier city on the borders of England and Scotland.
- 5.4.2 From the Middle Ages until the late 18<sup>th</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.
- 5.4.3 The site of Rydal Street 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.

## 5.5 Post Medieval and Modern

- 5.5.1 Following the union of the English and Scottish Crowns with the accession of James I to the English throne in 1603, a programme of pacification of the borderlands began. This saw a modernisation of tenureships of great benefit to northern landowners and a breakdown of the traditional forms of Border service (Spence 1984; 64). This process of modernisation led to the undertaking of two detailed surveys of the Socage or manorial lands of Carlisle, by Thomas Johnson in 1608 and Aaron Rathbone in 1611 (Ibid, 67). Figure 3 shows the site Rydal Street lies within an area of open land some 14 acres in extent, known in 1611 as ‘Aglianbye lands’, a place name which survives in the nearby Aglionby Street (Ibid.).
- 5.5.2 During the later 18<sup>th</sup> and the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the introduction of the factory system and increasingly complex technologies gave rise to a substantial population increase in urban areas throughout Britain. In Carlisle, 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. A prime area, immediately outside the historic core, was the area north and east of Botchergate. Rydal Street, or Union Street as it was called in 1824, lay close to the Union Workhouse, which constituted one of the poorest areas of the expanding city. The area was characterised by narrow streets and cramped, back-to-back terraced housing.

- 5.5.3 By 1821, a process of infilling had commenced on much of the land between Botchergate and Collier Lane, especially at its northern end near the Citadel, but to the south, around the present site, the land was still largely unencumbered by buildings and the lane itself seems to have petered out at about the point of the present junction with Crown Street. By 1847, the date of the Tithe Award (map 1848) Crown Street had been laid out. By 1865 (Fig 4) there were modifications to the Botchergate frontage and small buildings erected to the rear and along Collier Lane. At that time the present site was occupied by a timber yard. By 1924 much of the Botchergate frontage had been remodelled whilst extensive infilling had taken place to the rear and much of Collier Lane was built up.
- 5.5.4 The 1<sup>st</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey map (figure 4) shows Union Street flanked on either side by terraced houses, at the far end of which the former Meadow Brewery was situated. Between 1865 and 1901, substantial development had taken place, visible on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey (figure 5). The brewery was no longer in use as such, although the buildings have survived and there was continuous urban sprawl within a 1km radius of the site now occupied by the Rydal Street Play Area.
- 5.5.5 Within this fast-developing area, a large open space was maintained on the western side of South Henry Street. This became the Auction Mart, built in 1877 and described in Jackson's Postal Directory in 1880 as 'Carlisle Auction Market: The Great Northern Central for Live Stock Exchange in England'. This livestock market was famous throughout northern England, and sold cows, sheep, pigs and poultry. It continued to function into the 1970s, after which the car park was established.
- 5.5.6 The area remained in residential use throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, when the slums of Union Street were demolished and rebuilt as Rydal Street in the 1948 and council houses were constructed (Perriam 1992). Further developments took place in 1977 when a sheltered housing complex for the elderly was built. The play area was also built at this time.

## 6 RESULTS

6.1 The evaluation was undertaken by a team of professional field archaeologists under the direction of Ken Denham, BA, Archaeological Supervisor. He was assisted by Joanne Beaty, BA, Archaeological Project Assistant.

6.2 A total of two linear trial trenches were excavated, each measured 10m x 1.6m, providing a 5% sample of the undeveloped area.

6.3 All references to cardinal directions refer to site grid north.

### 6.4 Trench 1

6.4.1 Trench 1 was located at the western part of the site, on the Rydal Street side and was oriented northwest – southeast. The natural substrate was observed at a depth of 1.20m- 1.30m and consisted of alluvial gravel mixed with boulder clay (101). This was sealed by a buried soil horizon consisting of light brown silt (105) which contained fragments of redeposited Roman and medieval pottery. Context 105 was sealed by a series of 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition layers (102, 103, 104) consisting of mixed clay and sand with lenses of mortar, brick and slag, which were in turn sealed by a layer of thin topsoil (100).

6.4.2 No surviving structural archaeological remains were observed within this trench.

### 6.5 Trench 2

6.5.1 Trench 2 was located at the eastern part of the site, on the South Street side, perpendicular to trench 1 and was oriented northeast – southwest. The natural substrate was observed at a depth of 1.30m – 1.50m and consisted of mixed clay and alluvial gravel (101). There was no stratigraphic variation between trenches 1 and 2. Context 101 was sealed by a buried soil horizon consisting of light brown silt (105) which contained fragments of redeposited Roman and medieval pottery. Context 105 was sealed by a series of 20<sup>th</sup> century demolition layers (102, 103) consisting of clayey sand (103) sealed by a layer of brick rubble (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin topsoil layer (100).

6.5.2 No surviving structural archaeological remains were observed within this trench.

## 7 THE FINDS

7.1 There were four sherds of pottery and 1 fragment of bone recovered from context 103. These included Roman (two sherds of Oxford ware), Medieval (1 sherd of green glazed reduced grey ware and 1 sherd of red gritty ware). The bone included 1 fragment of burnt animal bone

7.2 Four sherds of pottery, 1 fragment of bone and 1 charcoal fragment were recovered from Context 105. The pottery included 2 sherds of reduced greyware and 2 sherds of red gritty ware. The bone included 1 fragment of burnt animal bone.

7.3 There were also a number of unstratified finds, all of 19<sup>th</sup> century or later date. These included 12 fragments of iron nails and unidentified iron objects, six sherds of 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery and 1 half penny.

## **8 CONCLUSIONS**

- 8.1 No significant archaeological features were identified in any of the evaluation trenches. The earliest archaeological deposit consisted of a buried former ploughsoil, which contained several redeposited Roman and medieval pottery sherds. This was sealed by a layer of brick rubble which contained lenses of clay, mortar and slag and which are entirely consistent with the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century slum clearance of the terraced housing along Union Street.
- 8.2 The excavated evidence is consistent with the view that the site consisted of agricultural land outside the major Roman and Medieval settlement, prior to the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was occupied by terraced housing between 1824 and 1948, when the buildings were demolished. The site has been occupied by a children's play area since at least 1977.



## 9 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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1611 Carlisle Socage Manor

1845 Botchergate Tithe Map

Ordnance Survey 1<sup>st</sup> Edition 1865. HMSO © Crown Copyright

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