

# CFA Archaeology Ltd

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**St Nicholas Gate Retail Park  
London Road  
Carlisle, Cumbria**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Report No. 3021**

 0131 273 4380

 0131 273 4381

 [info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

 [www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

## **CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD**

The Old Engine House  
Eskmills Business Park  
Musselburgh  
East Lothian  
EH21 7PQ

Tel: 0131 273 4380  
Fax: 0131 273 4381  
email: [info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@cfa-archaeology.co.uk)  
web: [www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk](http://www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk)

Author	Magnus Kirby MA FSA Scot AIfA
Illustrator	Kevin Hicks MA
Editor	Bruce Glendinning BSc PgDip MIfA
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## **CONTENTS**

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Methods Statement	4
3.	Archaeological Results	4
4.	Conclusion	5
5.	References	6

## **Appendices**

	Appendix 1: Photo Register	7
	Appendix 2: Context Register	7

## **Illustrations (bound at rear)**

Fig. 1: Location Plan showing watching brief areas

Fig. 2: FP12 from NE

Fig. 3: FP3 from south

Fig. 4: TR1 from south

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 General**

This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) between December 2012 and April 2013 during ground-works for the Phase 1 redevelopment of the St Nicholas Gate Retail Park, London Road, Carlisle, Cumbria (NGR NY 40801 55046) (Fig.1). The work was commissioned by Construction Partnership UK Ltd.

A Written Scheme of Investigations was produced by CFA on behalf of Rowney Sharman. The WSI was designed to meet the requirements of the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES).

### **1.2 Background**

The St Nicholas Gate retail park dates to the late 20<sup>th</sup> century and is situated on the site of the former St Nicholas Engineering Works which were founded in 1857 and closed in 1987. It lies on the main A6 approach to the city from the south on an area of land bordered by London Road, Woodrouffe Terrace, St Nicholas Bridges and the Carlisle to Settle Railway. The retail park consisted of modern red-brick and concrete retail units, and infrastructure consisting of tarmac roads and car parking.

A desk-based-assessment undertaken for this development by CFA in 2011 (Kirby 2011) identified that the London Road frontage of the retail park may encompass part of the London Road Roman Cemetery, which lies along the route of the A6 leading into the south of the city. It also identified that the medieval leper hospital of St Nicholas was situated immediately to the west of the retail park and that it lay within close proximity to St Nicholas Street Roman farmstead.

Due to the potential survival of features associated with the aforementioned sites, it was decided in consultation with CCCHES that an archaeological watching brief (Fig. 1) should be undertaken during groundbreaking works associated with the construction of a new access to the rear of Unit 5A and 5B, the construction of Unit 5B, road junction alterations on London Road, and the demolition of Unit 6 and Unit 8. In the event, no groundbreaking work was required in relation to Area 1 but three foundation pits lying adjacent to this area associated with alterations to Unit 5A were monitored.

A previous watching brief undertaken in April 2012 (Bell 2012) during the excavation of a foundation trench for Unit 5B did not identify any features of archaeological significance.

### **1.3 Aims and Objectives**

The objectives of the project were to conduct an appropriate programme of archaeological investigation (watching brief) during ground-breaking work within the areas highlighted on Fig.1.

## **2. METHODS STATEMENT**

### **2.1 General**

CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Archaeologists' Code of Conduct, Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation.

### **2.1 Watching Brief**

Topsoil and modern overburden were removed either using hand tools or by a 360° mechanical excavator equipped with a 1.8m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket. All groundbreaking work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

All excavation and on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

The stratification of all excavated areas was recorded whether or not significant archaeological deposits were identified.

## **3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS**

The construction of the new access to the rear of Unit 5 was originally highlighted as a watching brief area, but this area was to be built up and following consultation with CCCHES it was agreed that the minimal groundbreaking that was required would not penetrate the made ground deposits known to survive across the site.

### *Unit 5A*

Although not required by the terms of the WSI three foundation pits (FP11-FP13) were monitored during the works associated with Unit 5A. These measured up to 3.5m<sup>2</sup>. The deposits that were removed within these pits consisted of mixed made-ground (**001**). FP11 was excavated to a depth of 1.3m, but natural subsoil was not reached. FP12 and FP13 were terminated at a depth of 0.7m when they came down onto concrete (Fig.2). There were no archaeological features identified in relation to these pits.

### *Unit 5B*

Ten pits (FP1-FP10) were excavated for the foundations of Unit 5A. These measured up to 3.5m<sup>2</sup>. The deposits within these pits consisted of mixed made-ground (**001**). Natural subsoil (**002**) consisting of orange-brown sandy gravel was identified along the northern-western edge of this unit within FP3 (Fig.3) and FP5 at depths 0.5m and 1.3m respectively. Natural subsoil was not reached in the remainder of these pits as the level reached was sufficient for construction. No further excavation below the made ground deposits was required for the construction of the Unit. No features of archaeological significance were identified.

### *Junction with London Road*

Apart from two service location trenches (TR1 and TR2) measuring 3m by 0.5m no deep excavations took place within this area. The trenches identified made ground (001) with a depth of 1.2m – 1.4m overlying orange brown sandy-gravel natural (002) (Fig.4). The remaining programme of works did not penetrate the made ground deposits. There were no archaeological features identified.

### *Unit 6 and Unit 8*

The demolition of Unit 6 and Unit 8 and the grubbing up of their foundations resulted in ground disturbance to a depth of c.0.5m below the current site surface. These units had been built on made ground (001). Natural subsoil was not reached and no features of archaeological significance were identified.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

An archaeological watching brief was carried out during the redevelopment of the St Nicholas Retail Park in Carlisle. Part of this development was situated close to a known Roman cemetery and the site also lay within close proximity to a medieval hospital, but more recent development including the 19<sup>th</sup> century engineering works and the current retail park meant that the potential for the survival of earlier features was considered to be low.

The results of the watching brief demonstrated that the site had been built up with a significant depth of modern made-ground. There were no features, deposits or artefacts of archaeological interest identified.

Following completion of all relevant analyses, the project archive, comprising all CFA record sheets, plans and reports, will be prepared in accordance with the recommendations of *The Management of Archaeological Projects* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed, 1991), and arrangements made for its deposition with an appropriate repository. A copy will also be offered to the National Monuments Record.

The Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service will be notified of the arrangements made for the deposition of the archive.

A summary statement of the results of this archaeological work will be submitted for inclusion on the OASIS website.

Based on the results of the evaluation no further work is recommended, however it is understood that final the decision regarding any further mitigation measures lies with CCCHES.

## **5. REFERENCES**

Bell, M. 2012, St Nicholas Gate Retail Park, London Road, Carlisle: Archaeological Watching Brief. CFA Data Structure Report No. 2041

Kirby, M. 2011, St Nicholas Gate Retail Park, London Road, Carlisle Cumbria: Desk-Based-Assessment. CFA Data Structure Report No.1937

## APPENDIX 1: Photo Register

Shot	Description	Taken From	Conditions
1	FP 11, general shot	NE	Indoors
2	FP 12, general shot	NE	Indoors
3	FP 13, general shot	NE	Indoors
4	FP 3, south-facing section	S	Clear
5	FP 3, NE-facing section	NE	Clear
6	FP 5, south-facing section	S	Clear
7	FP 5, NE-facing section and base	NE	Clear
8	FP 4, south-facing section showing concrete	S	Clear
9	FP 4, NE-facing section and base	NE	Clear
10	FP 8, south-facing section	S	Clear
11	FP 8, west-facing section	W	Clear
12-13	TR 1 during excavation	W	Clear
14	TR 1, post-excavation	S	Clear
15	FP 6, east-facing section	E	Clear
16-17	TR 2 during excavation	W	Clear
18	Unit 6 undergoing demolition	E	Overcast
19	Unit 6, post-demolition	SW	Overcast
20-21	Unit 6, removal of foundations	NW	Overcast

## APPENDIX 2: Context List

Context No.	Fill of	Description
001	N/A	Made ground
002	N/A	Natural (orange brown sandy clay)





Key:

- Watching brief area
- Trial trench
- Foundation pit

**CFA**  
ARCHAEOLOGY LTD  
Old Engine House  
Musselburgh  
East Lothian, EH21 7PD  
t 0131 273 4380  
f 0131 273 4381  
e info@cfaarchaeology.co.uk  
www.cfaarchaeology.co.uk

Fig. No: 1 Revision: A

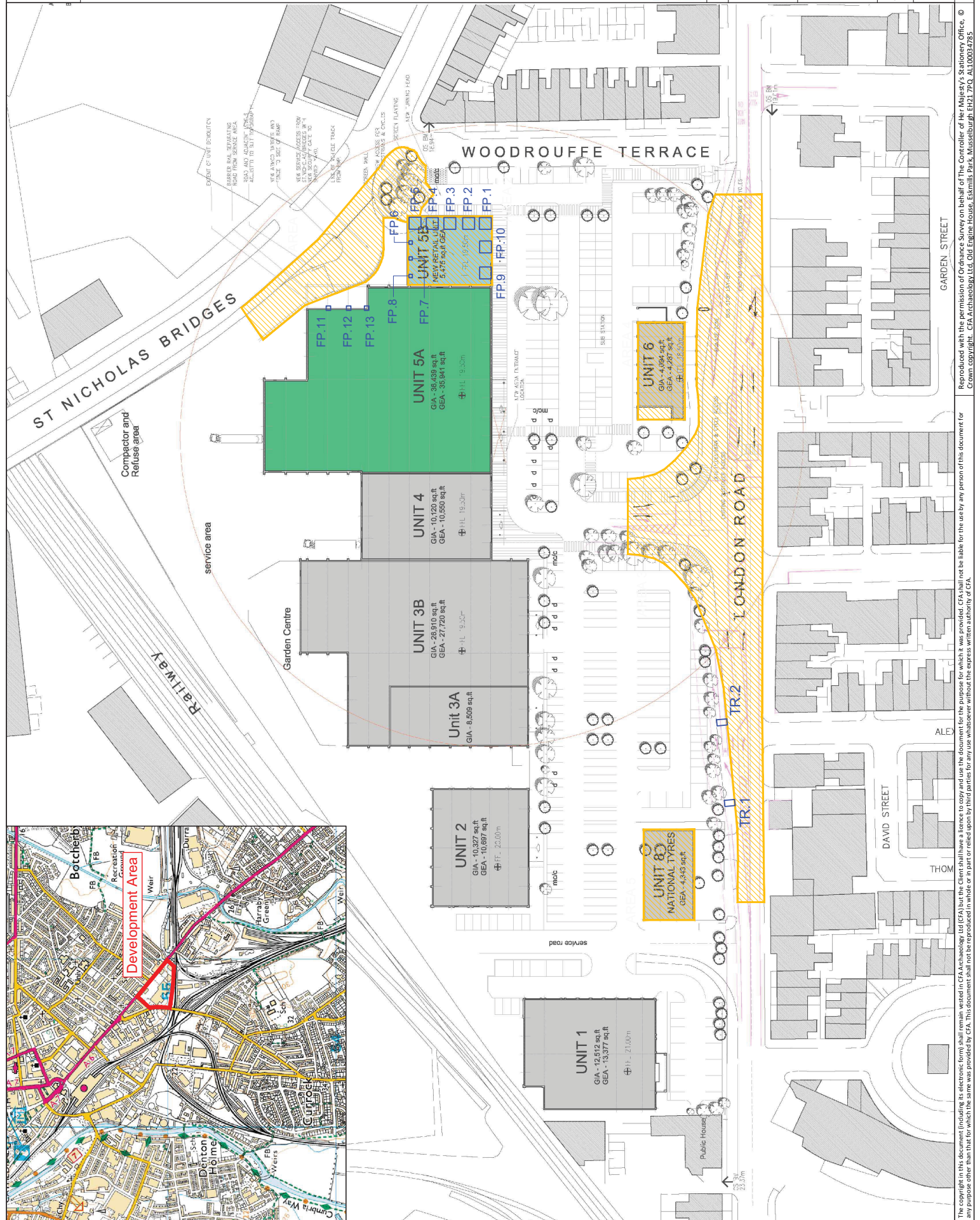
Title: Location plan showing watching brief areas

Project: St Nicholas Gate Retail Park  
London Road,  
Carlisle, Cumbria

Client: Construction Partnership UK Ltd

Scale at A3: 1:1000

Checked: KH  
Drawn by: BG  
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Fig.2 - FP12 from NE



Fig.3 - FP3 from south

Fig. No: <b>2-3</b>	Revision: <b>A</b>	Project: <b>St Nicholas Gate Retail Park, London Road</b>	
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Fig.4 - TR1 from south

Fig. No: <b>4</b>		Revision: <b>A</b>	Project: <b>St Nicholas Gate Retail Park, London Road</b>		
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