

CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

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Hackthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria.

Archaeological Excavation.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

- 1.1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological excavation undertaken between 20 October and 24 October 2003 by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) at Hackthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria (NGR: NY 5425 2316). The proposed development comprises housing. The work was commissioned by Story Homes.
- 1.1.2 A Methods Statement was prepared by CFA, based upon documents sent to CFA by Story Homes on 4 July 2003, which included a copy of the Brief for an Archaeological Excavation prepared by the Cumbria County Council Archaeology Service (CCCAS), and a copy of a report on an archaeological evaluation carried out by Oxford Archaeology (North).

1.2 Background

- 1.2.1 The development area to the west and north-west of Lowther Castle Hotel in the heart of Hackthorpe, a village with medieval origins.
- 1.2.2 A desk-based assessment and trial trenching evaluation were undertaken by Oxford Archaeology (North) in 2001 (Heawood 2001). Two evaluation trenches in the development area identified features of archaeological interest: a possible structural beam slot or boundary ditch; a pit containing charred plant remains and pottery dateable to the 12th to 14th centuries; and another pit contained industrial residues but no dating evidence. Based on the lack of later dating evidence from the site this pit was considered to be of medieval date as well. As a consequence of the evaluation, further excavation work in the north-eastern extent of the site was requested by CCCAS.
- 1.2.4 The area excavated measured approximately 28m by 24m (Fig. 1). The area was under pasture at the time of the excavation and was crossed by a gravel track.

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of the project were:
1. To provide a record of the archaeology of the site prior to its development.
 2. To address a series of academic aims, including:
 - To contribute to an understanding of the nature and extent of medieval rural settlement in the Eden Valley.
 - To contribute to an understanding of the environmental conditions, economy and diet of the people within the rural context of medieval Cumbria.

- To contribute to an understanding of the nature and reasons behind the apparent contraction and relocation of some rural settlements in the 14th century.
 - To contribute to an understanding of rural medieval industrial activities in the Eden Valley.
 - To generally contribute to medieval pottery research of Cumbria.
3. To inform wider regional, national and period based research frameworks.

2. WORKING METHODS

- 2.1 CFA Archaeology Ltd follows the Institute of Field Archaeologists' Code of Conduct and Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations.
- 2.2 In accordance with the terms of the Brief, a trench with a total area of c.670m² was stripped of topsoil
- 2.3 The removal of topsoil was conducted by a 360° tracked excavator equipped with a smooth-bladed ditching bucket under close archaeological supervision, to reveal the subsoil surface or the surface of the first significant archaeological level. This surface was then cleaned by hand to define the archaeological features present and a base plan produced.
- 2.4 All further excavation was carried out by hand. The features and deposits discovered were excavated and stratigraphic relationships recorded.
- 2.5 All deposits and features were excavated and sampled according to standard CFA procedures. Between 25% and 33% of any linear or curvilinear features were excavated by hand; post-holes and pits were half- or quarter-sectioned and their sections recorded by drawing before being fully excavated. Bulk samples were taken of all stratified deposits to allow consideration of whether they have potential for conducting palaeobotanical or other soil analyses.
- 2.6 All artefacts and ecofacts were collected and retained for processing in accordance with IFA and English Heritage guidelines. CFA used a C-Scope CS 1220 XD metal detector to scan spoil and features to aid the recovery of metal artefacts.
- 2.7 All on-site recording was carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography and by completing standard CFA record forms.

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Appendix 1 contains a context list. Three-figure numbers in bold below refer to context numbers in that list.
- 3.1.2 Topsoil consisted of a loose brown loam which reached a maximum depth of 0.8m on the west side of the trench. The depth of topsoil reduced to 0.2-0.4m on the north-east side of the trench. Natural consisted of pink sand subsoil with outcrops of sandstone bedrock across the site, particularly in the centre of the trench. The bedrock surface was uneven and required extensive cleaning by hand after topsoil stripping.
- 3.1.3 An underground electricity cable was identified running NE-SW across the south-east side of the trench (Fig. 1).

3.2 Features (Fig. 1)

- 3.2.1 A number of features (**001-018**) were identified after hand cleaning of the excavation trench. After excavation, many of these were discovered to be infilled stone holes or accumulations of material within natural dips and hollows in the subsoil or around bedrock outcrops (**002-004, 007, 009, 011-013 and 015**). One feature was identified as an animal burrow (**006**) and another proved to be a root channel (**017**).
- 3.2.2 Three possible small pits were identified (**010, 014 and 016**; Fig. 1). Feature **010** was roughly circular in plan and measured 0.31m in diameter by 0.07m deep. Its fill (**010/2**) was dark brown, fine silt. Feature **014** was sub-circular in plan and measured 0.2m by 0.2m by 0.2m deep. Its fill (**014/2**) was mid-brown, fine silt incorporating patches of re-deposited subsoil. Feature **016** was roughly circular in plan and measured 0.48m by 0.55m by 0.24m deep. It was filled with mid-brown, fine silt (**016/2**).
- 3.2.3 A linear ditched feature (**005**) was found (Fig. 1). It was aligned roughly east-west and measured 4.4m long by 0.6m wide by 0.12m deep. It was filled with mid-brown, fine silt (**005/2**).
- 3.2.4 A spread of charcoal-rich material (**008**) was truncated by the south edge of the trench. It did not fill a cut but rather formed a thin layer following the profile of the subsoil. It was 0.7m long by 0.05m wide by just 0.01m thick.
- 3.2.5 Oxford Archaeology (North)'s evaluation trench 3 (**018**) was revealed in section in the eastern edge of the excavation trench. It measured 1.5m wide by 0.35m deep. It was not visible during topsoil removal.
- 3.2.6 Oxford Archaeology (North)'s evaluation trench 2 (**001**) was located during topsoil removal on the west side of the trench (Fig. 1). It was 1.5m wide by at least 7m long.

- 3.2.7 A machine excavated trial pit measuring 1m by 2m cut the south-east end of evaluation trench 2 (**001**). This trial pit was excavated by Story Homes prior to the excavation. Its identification was confirmed by Story Homes,.

3.3 Summary

- 3.3.1 A small number of features were discovered during the excavation, and although the date and function of these is unclear it is possible that they are medieval in origin. A shallow linear ditched feature (**005**) may be the remains of a former field boundary ditch or a beam slot. Three small pits (**010**, **014** and **016**) were found, which did not appear to form any pattern and did not contain any datable material apart from one piece of bottle glass from the fill of Feature **010**.
- 3.3.2 The nature of the natural, with sandstone outcrops near the surface, has allowed the accumulation of material in natural dips and hollows and around stones. Many of these accumulations could be misinterpreted as archaeological features.

3.4 Finds

- 3.4.1 A small number of finds were recovered, principally from site cleaning after removal of the topsoil. These consisted of glass, an animal tooth, and glazed and unglazed wheel-thrown ceramics, some of which are medieval in date.
- 3.4.2 Although industrial residues were found during the evaluation, none were found during the excavation.
- 3.4.3 Eight sherds of glazed and unglazed wheel-thrown pottery were recovered from the excavation.
- Four sherds of Medieval pottery were found in Features **006** (an animal burrow), **007** (a pocket of topsoil) and during surface cleaning. These were from four different vessels. A piece of handle with green glaze and three small unglazed body sherds were found. These were types and fabrics current between the 12th and 14th centuries (G. Haggerty pers comm) and are likely to be residual as they are all abraded. The types of pottery recovered are similar to those found during the evaluation.
 - Four sherds are of 19th and 20th century date and came from surface cleaning and the fill of the trial pit (G Haggerty pers comm.).
- 3.4.4 The bottle glass found during surface cleaning and in Feature **010** has been identified as late 19th/early 20th century date (R. Murdoch pers. comm.).
- 3.4.5 A single cattle tooth (J. Thoms pers. comm.) was found during surface cleaning.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A small number of features of uncertain date and function were found during the excavation, including a shallow linear ditched feature and three small pits or postholes. During the evaluation pottery dateable to the 12th to 14th centuries was recovered and some of the pottery recovered during the present excavation is of a similar date. This Medieval pottery is all likely to be residual as the sherds were all heavily abraded and were not recovered from stratified contexts. Some finds of 19th and 20th century date were also recovered. The artefacts are of little archaeological significance. The features discovered during the evaluation and excavation are considered to be of probable medieval date.
- 4.2 No further post-excavation work is required on material collected during the excavation. The results will be published as a short note in the *Medieval Settlement Research Group* annual report. A summary report will be submitted to the *Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian Society* within one year of the completion of fieldwork. The online OASIS form will be completed as part of the project.
- 4.3 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*, 2nd ed, 1991, and arrangements made for its deposit with an appropriate repository. A copy will also be offered to the National Monuments Record.
- 4.4 The County Archaeology Service will be notified of the arrangements made for the deposit of the archive and the transfer and storage of finds

5. REFERENCES

- Heawood, R 2001 *Land at Hackthorpe, Penrith, Cumbria*. Draft Evaluation Report. Issue no. 2000-2001/116, Oxford Archaeology (North).

Fig. 1 - Site plan showing features

APPENDIX 1: Context List

001	Evaluation trench 2 identified in plan
002	Linear spread of topsoil left along a small natural scarp
003	Smear of topsoil left along a small natural scarp
004	Shallow irregular feature filled with topsoil
005/1	Cut of linear feature
005/2	Fill of Feature 005
006	Animal burrow
007	Pocket of topsoil filling a small natural scarp
008	Spread of charcoal-rich material
009	Possible linear feature: likely to be a result of machining
010/1	Cut of small pit/posthole
010/2	Fill of Feature 010
011	Shallow linear spread of topsoil
012	Stone hole
013	Irregular spread of material filling natural hollow
014/1	Cut of possible posthole
014/2	Fill of Feature 014
015	Irregular spread of material filling natural hollow
016/1	Cut of possible posthole
016/2	Fill of Feature 016
017	Root channel
018	Evaluation trench 3 identified in section

APPENDIX 2: Photographic Register

Colour Slide: Film 1

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-2	Panorama of site from spoil heap	West	Cloudy
3-4	Feature 010 pre-excavation	East	Wet
5-6	Feature 008 pre-excavation	North	Wet
7-8	Feature 007 pre-excavation	NW	Wet
9-10	Feature 009 pre-excavation	West	Cloudy

Colour Slide: Film 2

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-2	Feature 006 pre-excavation	North	Cloudy
3-4	Feature 016 & 012 pre-excavation	NE	Cloudy
5-6	Feature 004 pre-excavation	SE	Cloudy
7-10	Feature 005 pre-excavation	South	Cloudy
11-12	Feature 014 pre-excavation	NW	Cloudy
13-14	Feature 017 pre-excavation	West	Cloudy
15-16	Feature 015 pre-excavation	SW	Cloudy
17-18	Feature 001 pre-excavation	SW	Cloudy
19-20	Feature 003 pre-excavation	SW	Cloudy
21-22	Feature 002 pre-excavation	SW	Cloudy
23-24	Feature 011 pre-excavation	North	Cloudy
25-26	Feature 012 half-sectioned	East	Cloudy
27-28	Feature 016 half-sectioned	East	Cloudy
29-30	Feature 004 half-sectioned	East	Cloudy
31-32	Feature 005 half-sectioned	East	Cloudy

Colour Slide: Film 3

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-2	Feature 005 sectioned	West	Sunny
3-4	Feature 014 half-sectioned	SE	Sunny
5-6	Feature 017 sectioned	East	Sunny
7-8	Feature 015 sectioned	East	Sunny
9-10	Feature 003 sectioned	East	Sunny
11-14	Feature 002 sectioned	South and East	Sunny
15-16	Feature 011 sectioned	East	Sunny
17-18	Feature 010 half-sectioned	East	Sunny
19-20	Feature 008 half-sectioned	North	Sunny
21-22	Feature 007 half-sectioned	East	Sunny
23-24	Feature 006 half-sectioned	East	Sunny
25-26	Feature 009 sectioned	East	Sunny
27	Work shot		Sunny
28-29	Feature 005 sectioned	SW	Sunny
30-31	Feature 005 sectioned	NW	Sunny
32-33	Trial hole and evaluation trench 2	SW	Sunny
34-35	Possible feature at NW end of evaluation trench 2	SW	Sunny
36	Evaluation trench 3 in section	West	Sunny

Colour Slide: Film 4

Shot	Description	Taken from	Conditions
1-2	Evaluation trench 3 in section	SW	Sunny
3-4	Feature 014 fully excavated	East	Sunny
5-6	Features 012 & 016 fully excavated	North	Sunny

APPENDIX 3: Field Drawings Register

Drawing no.	Sheet no.	Plan/section	Scale	Description
1	1	Plan	1:50	Site plan showing features
1	2	Plan	1:50	Site plan showing features

APPENDIX 4: Small Finds Catalogue

Context	Description	Weight (g)
Surface cleaning	2 glazed sherds of ceramic, 19 th century date.	21
Surface cleaning	1 cattle tooth.	20
Surface cleaning	2 pieces of pale green bottle glass – neck of a medicine bottle, base of an embossed lemonade bottle. 19 th /20 th century date.	73
Surface cleaning	1 piece of dark green glass.	4
Surface cleaning	1 sherd wheel-thrown unglazed ceramic, probable flower pot. 19 th /20 th century date.	4
Surface cleaning	1 piece of handle, abraded. Dark grey core, white to pale orange surfaces. Remnants of green glaze. Medieval, 14 th century in date.	46
c.007/1	1 small body sherd, abraded. Orange fabric. Unglazed. Medieval in date, possibly 14 th century.	5
F.006	1 small body sherd, abraded. Dark grey fabric, orange exterior surface. Unglazed. Medieval in date, possibly 12 th century.	2
F.010 fill	1 piece of pale green bottle glass, base. 19 th /20 th century date.	11
F.017 fill	1 small body sherd, abraded. Orange fabric. Unglazed. Medieval,	3

	possibly 14 th century date.	
F.017 fill	1 piece of clear glass.	0.3
Fill of trial hole	1 sherd glazed ceramic, 19 th /20 th century date.	12

APPENDIX 5: Sample Register

Sample no.	Context	Quantity	Description
1	008/1	1 small bag	Charcoal-rich fill