

Archaeological Watching Brief – Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI)

Site: Moresby Hall, Moresby, Whitehaven, Cumbria

Applicant: Mr R. Rimmer

Date: April 2026

1. Introduction and Background

This WSI sets out the method and scope for an archaeological watching brief during intrusive groundworks associated with the enabling-development proposals (five dwellings within previously developed land in the northern yard).

The watching brief will ensure that any archaeological remains encountered are identified, recorded and reported in a timely and proportionate manner.

2. Aims and Objectives

Primary aim: to observe and record any archaeological features, deposits or artefacts exposed during groundworks.

Objectives: establish the character, extent, date and preservation of any remains; recover dating and environmental evidence where feasible; ensure an appropriate archive and HER submission.

3. Standards and Guidance

The watching brief will be undertaken in accordance with recognised professional standards and guidance, including applicable national standards for archaeological work and local LPA requirements.

4. Scope of Works (Indicative)

Groundworks subject to monitoring: topsoil/overburden strip (if required), foundation trenches, service/utility trenches, soakaways and drainage runs, and any tree/hedge planting pits.

Areas of hardstanding removal will be monitored where practicable.

5. Methodology

Attendance: an archaeologist will be on call or present during agreed stages of groundworks. The developer will provide a minimum of 48 hours notice for attendance.

Excavation: will be undertaken by the contractor using appropriate plant; exposed features of potential archaeological interest will be cleaned by hand where safe to do so.

Recording: context-based recording system; scaled photography; measured sketches where required; sampling strategy appropriate to deposits encountered.

Sampling: environmental sampling will be undertaken where suitable deposits are encountered; materials for absolute dating will be retained where feasible.

Human remains: if encountered, works will cease in the immediate area, and the Coroner/LPA will be contacted; remains will be treated in accordance with legal and ethical guidance.

Finds: all artefacts will be retained, bagged and labelled; significant finds will be stabilised for assessment.

Unexpected discoveries: a brief pause-and-review procedure will operate to enable proportionate recording and, where necessary, agreement on minor scope adjustments with the LPA archaeologist.

6. Health, Safety and Site Management

All works will comply with relevant health and safety legislation and the Principal Contractor's Construction Phase Plan. The archaeologist will attend site inductions and follow local site rules.

Risk assessments and method statements will be maintained by the archaeological contractor.

7. Reporting, Archiving and Dissemination

A concise report will be produced on completion, including a non-technical summary, methods, results, stratigraphic descriptions, finds/environmental assessments (as required), conclusions and archive details.

A digital archive will be prepared to the requirements of an agreed repository; a HER summary will be submitted.

8. Staffing and Competence

The archaeological contractor will provide suitably qualified and experienced staff for watching brief recording and reporting tasks. Key personnel and CVs can be supplied on appointment.

9. Programme and Communication

Programme: to be agreed with the contractor team. The archaeologist will be notified of programme changes at the earliest opportunity to coordinate attendance.

Communication: day-to-day liaison with the site manager; escalations to the client and LPA archaeologist as required.

10. Insurance, GDPR and Copyright

The archaeological contractor will hold appropriate public liability and professional indemnity insurance.

Personal data will be handled in line with GDPR requirements. Copyright in text, drawings and photographs will be held by the contractor with licence to the client and LPA for planning purposes.

11. Variations and Contingencies

Any material variation to the scope will be discussed and agreed in writing with the client and LPA archaeologist prior to implementation.

12. Sign-Off

Client/Applicant: _____ Date: _____

Archaeological Contractor: _____ Date: _____

LPA Archaeologist: _____ Date: _____