

1.

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for the area of the proposed development at Station Yard, Moor Row, near Cleator Moor, Cumbria (centred on NGR NY 0065 1460) was carried out and completed in 2008 (HBSAI 18/08). The present report (HBSAI 02/22) is a revised and updated version of that report. The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment has been prepared to support an outline planning application for a residential development at the former Station Yard, Moor Row for Nigel Kay Homes Limited. The planning application is to be submitted during December 2022.
- 1.2 The Desk-based Assessment is required as the proposed development site has the potential to contain archaeological remains. A considerable amount of quarrying for stone and mining for both iron ore and coal has taken place in this area of West Cumbria around Cleator Moor during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the location and extent of this industrial activity needs to be defined in order to assess the potential for any surviving archaeology in the area. The present report has been designed to meet the requirements of any Archaeological Brief issued by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) regarding development at the site. The southern half of the site originally formed the railway sidings at Moor Row Junction with the line of the LNW and Furness Joint Railway, Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Branch, marking its southern boundary. The northern half of the site, beyond an east/west aligned embankment that forms the northern boundary of the Station Yard, is presently rough pasture. In total, the proposed redevelopment covers an area of c. 4.45 hectares (Figures 2 and 3). The whole area for the proposed development is included in the current Assessment Report.
- 1.3 The present archaeological contractor and author of the assessment, Mr. P. Cracknell of Historic Building Survey and Archaeological Illustration (HBSAI), did not receive a written Archaeological Specification or Brief for the current project from CCCHES. However, the Desk-based Assessment was carried out and completed in accordance with the specification as set out in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*, 2001.
- 1.4 Accordingly, a Project Design was submitted to Mr. Jeremy Parsons, the Historic Environment Officer for Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES). The Project Design (HBSAI 17/08) was approved by Mr. Parsons and the original Assessment was carried out and completed during October and November 2008. The present Assessment was completed during November and December 2022.

2. SITE LOCATION (Figures 1 and 2)

- 2.1 The site of the proposed development at Station Yard, Moor Row, near Cleator Moor, Cumbria, centred on NGR NY 0065 1460, at a height of c. 80 metres above mean sea level, lies on the northern side of the village of Moor Row (Figure 1). This is an area of West Cumbria that is sparsely populated and characterised by small rural farming hamlets and villages with isolated farmsteads. The nearest large settlements are the small towns of Cleator Moor, only 1.5 kilometres to the east, Egremont, c. 4 kilometres to the south and St. Bees, c. 4 kilometres to the south-west. The larger port town of Whitehaven, which was developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, lies c. 4.5 kilometres to the north-west. While essentially rural in character, the area around Cleator Moor has been subjected to a considerable amount of quarrying for stone and mining for iron ore and coal during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and this industrial activity has impacted heavily on both the archaeology and topography of the area.
- 2.2 The southern half of the site originally formed the railway sidings at Moor Row Junction with the line of the LNW & Furness Joint Railway, Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Branch marking its southern boundary. The disused railway line now serves as part of the Cumbria Cycle Way (Figure 1). The northern half of the site, beyond an east/west aligned embankment that forms the northern boundary of the Station Yard, is presently rough pasture with an area of further open fields extending to the western outskirts of Cleator Moor one kilometre distant. The western boundary to the site is marked by the main north/south road that passes through the village of Moor Row. The eastern boundary to the site is formed by the course of the River Keekle (Figure 2). The majority of the site lies within the Civil Parish of St. Bees, although there is a small area at the western end which lies within the Civil Parish of Whitehaven, while most of the village of Moor Row is in the Civil Parish of Egremont.
- 2.3 Two recent aerial photographs of the Station Yard are reproduced here. Plate 1 shows the layout of the site in 2005, while Plate 2 shows Moor Row and the location of the site on the northern edge of the village in early 2008.
- 2.4 The area lies within the distinct geographical area known as the West Cumbrian Coastal Plain.¹ The West Cumbrian Coastal Plain is a narrow belt of country between the coast and the high fells of the Lake District. North of St. Bees Head, the area coincides with the outcrop of the Coal Measures, Hensingham Group and Chief Limestone Groups, all of Carboniferous age. These rocks are overlain in the Whitehaven area by small outliers of Permo-Triassic ('New Red Sandstone') sedimentary rocks. South of St. Bees Head, the area is coincident with the outcrop of the Permo-Triassic rocks, here mainly composed of the Steeton Bees Sandstone, though with some of the overlying mudstones present in the Barrow-in-Furness area. Glaciation by ice, derived from both southern Scotland and the Lake District, has affected the whole area, leaving a widespread mantle of boulder clay (till) with, in places, sand and gravel. North of St. Bees Head, Coal Measures rocks, mainly sandstone but with some shale, form cliffs, especially around Whitehaven. Inland, natural exposures of Coal Measures rocks are few. The rocks of the poorly exposed Hensingham Group, a series mainly composed of shales and sandstones very similar to the Coal Measures, contribute relatively little to the area's landscape. Beneath the Hensingham Group, the Chief Limestone Group is a sequence of rocks dominated by limestones, though with a few thin shale and sandstone units. The limestones, to the east of Workington, form a narrow fringe between the Lake District fells and the coalfield.

¹ Countryside Commission, 1998, page 27

3. AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1 A desk-based assessment of readily available documentary resources was completed in order to set the site in an historic context and to provide details, where available, of any areas of historical and archaeological significance. This is required in order that Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) can decide if the site warrants further archaeological work, in the form of either a Watching Brief during the programme of buildings works or an Archaeological Evaluation/Excavation prior to any building works.
- 3.1.2 The assessment was completed in accordance with the specifications as set out in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*, 2001.
- 3.1.3 At a minimum the assessment includes information derived from both original archive material and secondary sources, in particular the following:-
- Cumbria County Records Office, Whitehaven (CROW)
 - Cumbria County Records Office, Carlisle (CROC)
 - Cumbria HER, Planning Department, Cumbria County Council, Kendal (HER)
 - Carlisle City Library (CL)
 - Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery accessions for the Assessment area (TH)
 - Transactions of the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archaeological Society (CWAAS)
 - Copeland Borough Council, Planning Department, Whitehaven (CBC)
- 3.1.4 In addition, it was considered appropriate to carry out a site visit as the area was unknown to the present author, is a large site covering c. 4.45 hectares, the line of a disused railway crosses part of the site, and this area of West Cumbria has been subjected to extensive quarrying for stone and the mining of iron ore and coal. Accordingly, a walk-over across the entire site was carried out during November 2008 by the present writer in order to determine any potential for surviving areas of previously unrecognised or unrecorded surface archaeology within the area of the proposed development.
- 3.1.5 With the exception of any A3 fold-out illustrations, a complete copy of the report is included on CD-ROM.
- 3.1.6 Three copies of the Assessment Report will be supplied to the Planning Department of Copeland Borough Council.

4. THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 During the eighteenth century the Parish of Cleator, which now includes both the town of Cleator Moor and the village of Moor Row, contained only the two small settlements of Cleator Maines and Cleator Row, which consisted of a few scattered houses ranged in two lines, with a population of c. 330.² At the beginning of the nineteenth century the sites of Cleator Moor and Moor Row were open barren moorland. In 1801 the population of the Parish numbered 362; in 1811, 571; in 1821, 818; in 1831, as a consequence of the closure of a flax factory, the population decreased to only 487; in 1841 it had risen to 763. Even in 1847 the Parish contained only 151 cottages, the inhabitants of which were mainly employed at a flax mill, an iron forge or the local coal pits.³ The reason for the large population increase of the area that occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century is directly linked to the West Cumbrian iron and steel industry. The large deposits of red haematite ore in the Cleator area proved to be the richest and most valuable along the Cumbrian coast. The mining of the iron ore by the Whitehaven Haematite Iron and Steel Company Limited commenced at Cleator in 1842. Cleator Moor and Moor Row were laid out during the mid-nineteenth century to house the workers for both the iron mining industry and the local flax industry.

5. THE RESULTS OF THE ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The present Assessment Report was carried out and completed in accordance with the specification as set out in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*, 2001. In this instance it was compiled from information held by the Cumbria County Record Offices at Whitehaven (CROW) and Carlisle (CROC), the Cumbria Historic Environment Record at Kendal (HER), and Copeland Borough Council Planning Department, Whitehaven (CBC).
- 5.2 The earliest available accurate map of the area is the Hodkinson and Donald map of 1774⁴ (surveyed in 1770) (Figure 4), which clearly shows the village of Cleator one kilometre to the south-east of Moor Row and Scalegill Hall one kilometre to the west of the village. Cleator Moor, a wholly nineteenth century town, is therefore not shown. Several farms, still in existence in 2008, including Shaw Farm and Foulgate Farm (now named Foulseat) to the west of Moor Row, and Crossfield Farm (SMR Reference No. 41321), only 500 metres to the north-east of the present site, are also named. The legend Moor Row appears at the centre of three separate groups of farm buildings. A Moor Row Farm is listed in later Directories as are High Farm, Low Farm and Hollins Farm, and all are possible candidates for the buildings shown on the Hodkinson and Donald map. At this date there is clearly no village at Moor Row, only isolated farmsteads, and there are no buildings within the area of the proposed development.

² Bulmer, 1901, page 531

³ Bulmer, 1901, page 534

⁴ *The County of Cumberland*

- 5.3 The First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (Figure 5) shows the railway tracks, station and goods yard associated with the London and North-West and Furness Joint Railway, Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Branch, which had only recently opened to both passenger and goods traffic in July 1857. However, at this date the buildings associated with Moor Row Junction, labelled 'Moorrow Junction' on the Ordnance Survey map, are confined to the southern side of the railway line. The area of the proposed development, on the northern side of the main railway line, consists of the parts of two open fields. At this date there is no obvious mining activity in the area and the village of Moor Row has not extended to the fields on the southern side of the main railway line. Similarly, there is no road bridge or foot bridge crossing the railway line at the eastern side of the site near to the station.
- 5.4 By the date of the Second Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1899 (Figure 6) the southern half of the proposed development area has been totally taken over by the sidings and buildings of Moor Row Junction, notably the erection of the large Engine Shed on the eastern half of the site, which measures c. 89 metres in length by c. 20 metres in width (SMR Reference No. 14804). The eastern elevation of the Engine Shed is shown on the cover photograph and Plate 8. By 1899 the road bridge over the railway tracks at the western end of the Junction has been built and a foot bridge is shown adjoining the road bridge on its eastern side, but it is not the cast-iron foot bridge shown in Plate 7, a photograph of 1954. The Station building shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1865 (Figure 5) has either been demolished or extended to produce a much longer building. The western half of this building had been demolished by 1969, when the photograph that appears as Plate 3 was taken. By 1899 the northern spur of the main railway line has been completed and the number of railway tracks on all of the branch lines have been greatly increased. The various Signal Boxes and Signal points, which are shown in Plates 3, 5 and 6, have been erected by this date.
- 5.5 At the date of the Third Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1925 (Figure 7) the cast-iron bridge depicted in Plate 7 has been erected and the earlier foot bridge shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1899 (Figure 6) has been removed. Otherwise the railway sidings at Moor Row Junction have remained largely unchanged since 1865. To the north of the Station Yard site there has been no development and to the south of the Junction the fields remain open.
- 5.6 There are several sites of historical and archaeological importance located near to the site of the present Assessment Area which are listed on the Cumbria County Historic Environment Record (HER). The location of these sites are shown on Figure 2.
- 5.7 The majority of the listed sites are concerned with either the mining of iron ore and coal in the area of Cleator Moor and Moor Row during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries or with the railway system of the nineteenth century. The only site listed on the Country HER to indicate any medieval activity near Moor Row is a known area of broad ridge and furrow (SMR Reference No. 17643) at the western edge of the village, centred on NGR NY 0019 1422, which lies c. 500 metres to the south-west of the present site (Figure 2). The area of ridge and furrow lies on the southern side of the road leading from Moor Row to Scalegill Hall and is evidently poorly preserved (HER Listing).

- 5.8 The passenger station at Moor Row Junction opened in July 1857, when services to Whitehaven commenced from Cleator and Egremont. From October 1879 until April 1931, Moor Row Station was also the starting point for passenger trains over the Cleator and Workington Junction Railway line to Workington Central. The station closed to advertised traffic on June 16th 1947, when the briefly-revived Egremont workings expired. The Station Yard stayed open until March 1964 and various sidings remained in use when Plate 3 was taken on the 3rd June 1969. At this date the Station House on the southern platform is clearly disused and was demolished before 1973 (Plate 4). Similarly, the tall LNWR signal box on the southern platform, which was still in use in 1969 (Plate 3), had also been demolished by 1973 (Plate 4). By 1973 only a single line for goods traffic from Whitehaven to Egremont and a branch line to Rowrah remained in operation for the local iron ore traffic (Plate 4).
- 5.9 Within the vicinity of the area of the present proposed development there are several sites associated with industrial mining which are listed on the County Historic Environment Record (HER), with their location shown on Figure 2. The site of 'Moor Row No. 4 Pit Iron Mine' (SMR Reference No. 12743) lies 500 metres to the south of the Station Yard site (Figure 2) and is shown on the Ordnance Survey map of 1925. Some 60 metres to the south of No. 4 Pit at NGR NY 0073 1403 there is the site of 'Moor Row Old Shaft' (SMR Reference No. 12744) which is marked as an old 'Iron Ore Shaft' on the Ordnance Survey map of 1925. Four hundred metres to the north-east of Station Yard lies the site of 'Montreal No. 4 Pit' at NGR NY 0100 1478, which was opened by Mr. John Stirling in 1862 and abandoned in 1925 (SMR Reference No. 14182). This was one of a series of thirteen iron ore and coal pits - Nos. 1-12 and a new No. 1 Pit - that were in operation at various dates during the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that belonged to the Montreal Mines and Colliery Company, based around a railway network from Moor Row Junction. John Stirling Esq. was the proprietor of the company. The site of 'Montreal No. 12 Pit', again an iron ore mine, lies only c. 250 metres to the east of Station Yard, on the eastern bank of the River Keekle (SMR Reference No. 14798) at NGR NY 0094 1457 (Figure 2). This pit was also opened in 1862 by Mr. John Stirling and abandoned by 1925. The site of a nearby fifth pit lies only c. 250 metres to the south of the Station Yard at NGR NY 0066 1437. This is the area of the 'Dalzell Moor Row Mine' (SMR Reference No. 16827) and the iron ore Pits 1, 2 and 4. Dalzell's No. 2 Pit was opened in 1880 and abandoned in 1925, although there was a mine near Low Farm in use in 1860. The whole area around Cleator Moor and Moor Row has been heavily exploited by the iron and coal mining industries of the nineteenth century. For example, in 1901 there were six pits in operation belonging to the Montreal Mines and Colliery Company, of which five were given over to the mining of iron ore with the sixth producing both iron ore and coal. In addition, the Glebe, Longlands and Row Foot Pits near Cleator Moor were all worked by Messrs. S. And J. Lindow.⁵ None of the known pit sites seems to impinge on the area of the present development site at Station Yard, Moor Row.

⁵ Bulmer, 1901, page 534

- 5.10 The remaining sites within the vicinity of Station Yard which are listed on the County HER are concerned with the development and expansion of the railway system during the mid-nineteenth century and are shown on Figure 2. The course of the London and North-West and Furness Joint Railway, Whitehaven, Cleator and Egremont Branch is recorded on the County HER (SMR Reference No. 12215). The line opened in 1857 and Moor Row Junction handled both passenger and goods traffic. The railway tracks were finally dismantled after c. 1973 (see Plate 4). The course of the line now forms part of the Cumbria Cycle Way. Plates 3 to 8 show the station and sidings at Moor Row Junction in use at various dates between c. 1920 and 1973. A section of the Cleator and Workington Junction Railway, which branches from the LNW and Furness Joint Railway line at Moor Row Junction and was built to serve several of the iron ore sites such as the Crossfield and Montreal mines at Cleator Moor, is now dismantled and the course utilised as part of the Cumbria Cycle Way, and is recorded to the east of the present site (SMR Reference No. 12214). The Cleator and Workington Railway was built in 1877 and opened in 1879. It was constructed as a response by the local iron ore mine owners to the increased freight charges imposed on the existing lines. A short rail line branched south from the main line just to the west of Moor Row Junction and served Moor Row No. 4 Pit Iron Mine (SMR Reference No. 12743) and has been assigned the same SMR Reference Number. A short spur from the same line also served the Dalzell Moor Row Mine (SMR Reference No. 16827). The line has been dismantled, although its course is still visible on the western side of Moor Row at NGR NY 0042 1447. At the western end of the station platform there was originally a cast iron footbridge spanning the railway tracks just to the east of the still extant road bridge. The bridge is shown in Plates 5 and 7, which date to 1938 and 1954. The footbridge had been dismantled before 1973 (see Plate 4). The large Moor Row Engine Shed originally stood towards the eastern end of the Station Yard site, aligned east/west. This building is recorded on the County HER (SMR Reference No. 14804). Plate 8 shows the front or western elevation of the Engine Shed in c. 1920. This photograph shows four railway tracks leading to four separate entrances, each with a pair of large wooden doors. By 1954 it would appear that the southern half of the building had been demolished (Plate 6) to allow for the laying of additional tracks on the northern side of Moor Row Junction. The Engine Shed had certainly been totally demolished by 1973 (Plate 4) and possibly before 1969 (Plate 3). At the date of the present survey there are no visible remains of the building.
- 5.11 To the best of my knowledge, no archaeological work has been carried out within the boundaries of the Station Yard or in the two fields that adjoin the Yard on the northern side and which form part of the proposed development site. However, an Archaeological Assessment was carried out by Lancaster University Archaeology Unit of the area of the Westlakes Science and Technology Park during 1999. This site lies c. 800 metres to the north-west of the Station Yard. The results of the documentary survey and site visit provided no evidence for any archaeological activity within the assessment area which pre-dated the post-medieval period, although the field boundaries were considered earlier. An Evaluation and Photographic Survey of the site was carried out by North Pennines Heritage Trust during 2003 (HER Report Reference 4/03/422). A full photographic survey of all field boundaries was completed and followed by the excavation of a series of linear trenches across selected field boundaries. The results of the fieldwork ascertained that the field boundaries dated from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, with no evidence for any 'pre-enclosure activity within the area of the survey'.

- 5.12 The area of the proposed development near Moor Row, Cumbria is not well known by the present archaeological contractor and it was considered appropriate to carry out a site visit and walkover of the site. Accordingly, an initial site visit was carried out in the company of Mr. Alan O'Connor on the 23rd October 2008 during heavy rain, which made any site photography impractical. A second site visit was completed on November 29th 2008, which included a walkover of the two fields on the northern side of the site (Figure 3), presently given over to rough pasture. The site photographs reproduced here as Plates 9 to 17 were all taken during November 2008. O'Connor Fencing Limited have owned the Station Yard site since 1984 and until recently the area served as their Works Yard. When O'Connor Fencing Limited purchased the property there were no standing buildings that related to its original use as Moor Row Railway Sidings. The buildings at the site which were all demolished during 2008 were all modern (see Plates 1 and 2). The whole area of the Station Yard site is covered by either tarmac or concrete and displays the scars of the demolished modern buildings. The buildings relating to the LNW and Furness Joint Railway, notably the Engine Shed (HER Reference No. 14804), two Signal Boxes and the Station House had all been demolished by c. 1973 (See Plate 4). The site walkover of the two fields to the north of the Station Yard (Areas B and C on Figure 3) revealed no obvious archaeological features. The course of the LNW and Furness Joint Railway Line now forms part of the Cumbria Cycle Way. The edge of the northern platform is still visible today (Plates 1 and 9-11) and the edge of the southern platform probably survives below the grassed earthen bank on the southern side of the Cycle Path (Plate 11).

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 An Archaeological Desk-based Assessment for the area of the proposed development at Station Yard, Moor Row, near Cleator Moor, Cumbria (centred on NGR NY 0065 1460) was carried out and completed in 2008 (HBSAI 18/08). The present report (HBSAI 02/22) is a revised and updated version of that report. The Archaeological Desk-based Assessment has been prepared to support an outline planning application for a residential development at the site for Nigel Kay Homes Limited. The Assessment was completed during November and December 2022.
- 6.2 The present report was completed in accordance with the guidance given in the IFA *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Desk-Based Assessments*, 2001. In addition, two site visits were carried out as the area was previously unknown to the present author and the site was large - in the region of c. 4.45 hectares.
- 6.3 The southern half of the site originally contained the extensive sidings to Moor Row Junction Railway Station. The northern part of the site consists of parts of two open fields which, at the date of the survey in October and November 2008, were in rough pasture. The present Assessment Report is required by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) in order to establish the potential for any archaeological remains at the site and to consider whether further archaeological recording, in the form of either an Archaeological Watching Brief during development work or an Archaeological Evaluation/Excavation prior to the onset of development, is appropriate.
- 6.4 From the Assessment Area there are no finds of any archaeological importance listed on the County HER. The town of Cleator Moor and the village of Moor Row were only laid out during the middle of the nineteenth century, and all of the sites listed on the County HER in the vicinity of the development area relate to either the mining industry or the development and expansion of the railway system, which also date to the nineteenth century. The only site listed on the Cumbria HER that is within the boundaries of the present development area is the large Moor Row Engine Shed (SMR Reference No. 14804) which had probably been entirely demolished by c. 1973. There are no visible remains of any of the buildings which related to Moor Row Station or the associated Station Yard at the date of the survey which was carried out during November 2008. In addition, the walkover of the two fields which form the northern half of the development area revealed no visible archaeological features.
- 6.5 Documentary research shows that during the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth centuries the area was open, barren moorland, with no evidence for any farms or settlements within the vicinity of the development site. Similarly, with the exception of a known area of broad ridge and furrow cultivation at the western edge of the village of Moor Row (SMR Reference No. 17643), there appears to have been no medieval settlement in the area. As a result of both the site survey and the documentary research it would appear that the archaeological potential for the site of the proposed development is limited and possibly non-existent.

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