Land at Station Road, Drigg

(SD 06515 99152)

Archaeological Evaluation

Planning Application: 4/22/2070/001

Report 480

Carlisle

30th July 2024

Gerry Martin

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd

CONTENTS

FIGURES

SUMMARY

The evaluation fieldwork failed to identify the footprint for any past cultural activity apart from an undated slot **12** in Trench 12.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted during a Planning Application for a residential development in Drigg (figure 1). Planning permission was granted on appeal as Ref: APP/Z0923/W/22/3304774 regarding the original application 4/22/2070/001 with the former Copeland Council.

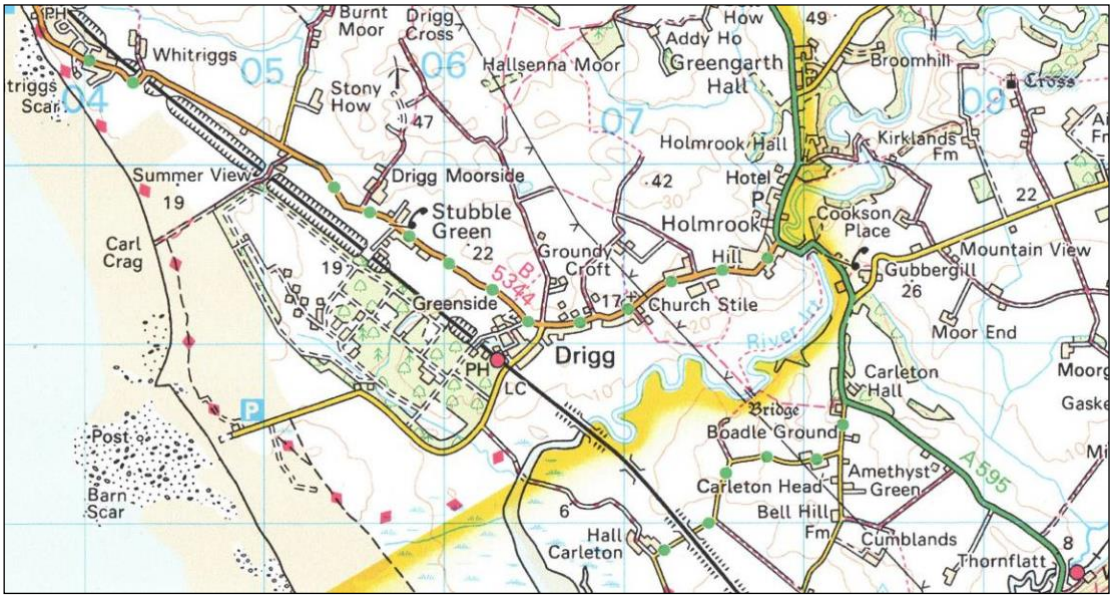

Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

The current proposal anticipates the construction of nine dwellings that form a small close. The development will be served by driveways funnelling onto a single entrance accessing the B5344 (figure 2).

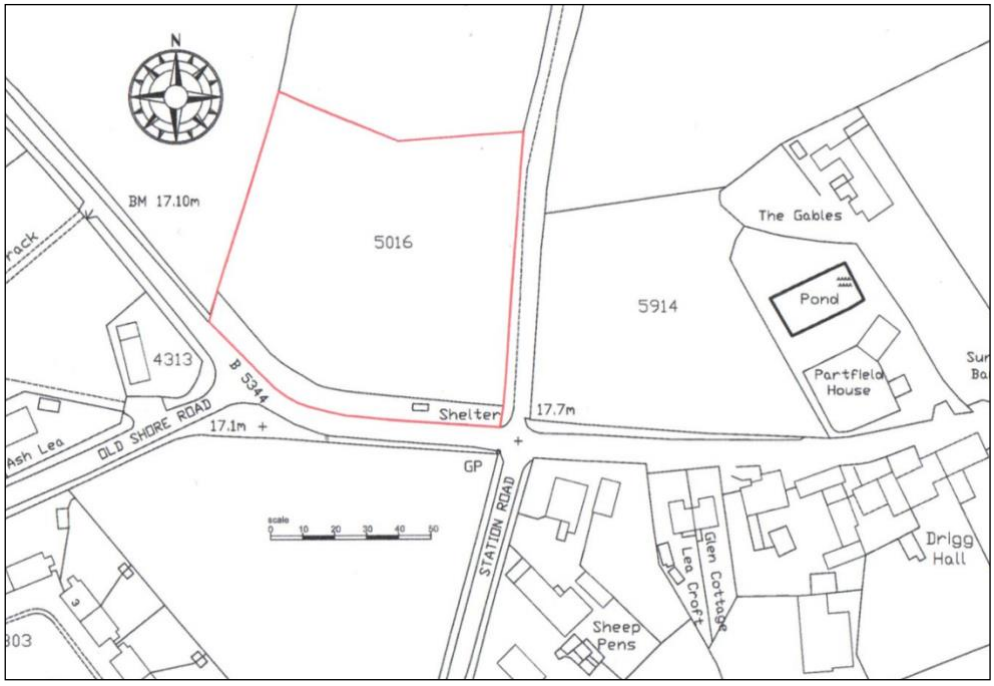

Figure 2. Location of the study area

Although no formal brief was issued, the standard sample size for an archaeological evaluation in Cumbria is 5% of the development area. The development curtilage appeared to be approximately 0.86 hectares equivalent to approximately 430 sqm. With a ditching bucket measuring 1.60m in width, this equated to 270 metres of standard trenching.

It was proposed that nine trenches fifteen metres in length should be located on their individual footprints. The remaining trenching was split as 4 x 30m trenches and 1 x 15m trench. As the street frontage was the likeliest place to find past cultural activity, a configuration comprising the following was proposed; a 30m right-angle trench in the south-east corner and then two trenches beside the road. The remaining 15m trench would be a spur along the access road.

As potential and significant archaeological remains may occur on site, an archaeological evaluation was requested by Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) and incorporated into the subsequent Full Planning Approval as follows:

Action 8

No development shall commence within the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

This written scheme will include the following components:

a. An archaeological evaluation;

b. An archaeological recording programme, the scope of which will be dependant upon the results of the evaluation;

c. Where significant archaeological remains are revealed by the programme of archaeological work, there shall be carried out within one year of the completion of that programme on site, or within such timescale as otherwise agreed in writing by the LPA: a post-excavation assessment and analysis, and submission of a completed archive report.

This condition was confirmed by the appeal as the following:

28. The Historic Environment Officer has highlighted the potential for archaeological interest within this area and recommends a condition to secure a programme of archaeological investigation/recording. There is no information before me to suggest that this would not be a proportionate response to the likely significance of such heritage assets, having regard to paragraph 194 of the NPPF.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned by the owners of the land, to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation relating to the ground works pertaining to this development as outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation approved on July 5^{h} 2024.

The evaluation sought to construct a model of the archaeological potential of the site from which an informed strategy could be formulated to preserve largely *in situ* any significant archaeological remains. Its aims were to:

- Provide a detailed account of surviving archaeological strata and structures
- Determine the depth of survival of any significant archaeological deposits
- Characterize the extent, date, form and importance of any encountered cultural activity

Regarding this particular project, the fieldwork sought to confirm the presence of medieval features associated with a shrunken medieval village and define any structural remains.

All projects are carried out in accordance with NPPF (2023) and the guidelines and recommendations issued by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (2014) and Historic England (2015).

Gerry Martin has achieved the accreditation level of MCIfA (Member) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project Design

In response to a request by Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES), Gerry Martin Associates Ltd submitted a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for the archaeological evaluation. The WSI document outlined the contractors' professional competence as well as general project objectives, including the methodology and the resources needed for the successful expedition of this work.

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned to undertake the archaeological fieldwork following approval of the project design by the curatorial body.

The ensuing report has been assembled to the relevant standards and protocols of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Evaluation, 2001, 2008 and 2014), combined with accepted best practice and in accordance with the advice prepared by the curatorial authority.

The archaeological evaluation took place on July 15th to July 17th 2024 and was conducted by Gerry Martin and Kurt Rice.

2.2 Development proposals

The current proposal anticipates the construction of nine dwellings that form a small close. The development will be served by driveways funnelling onto a single entrance accessing the B 5344. The immediate street frontage will not be affected by the development except where the driveway passes (figure 3).

2.3 Archive

The archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design and the guidelines set out by Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1991), Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015) and the Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists protocols for an archaeological evaluation (2014).

The archive will be deposited with an appropriate repository, Tullie House Museum, Carlisle and a copy of the report donated to the County Sites and Monuments Record, as requested by the curatorial authority.

The archaeological report will be deposited with the online archaeological resource *Oasis.*

A note will be forwarded to the Cumberland and Westmorland Archaeological Transactions for publication should the results be positive.

Figure 3. Development proposal

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

Drigg lies within the undulating farmland of the West Cumbria Coastal Plain south of Whitehaven, and north of Barrow in Furness. The West Cumbria Coastal Plain lies between the Irish Sea to the west and the Cumbrian High Fells of the Lake District National Park to the east. Drigg lies at a height of approximately 17m AOD above the coastal strip. Predominantly, land use has been for pastoral farming, notably rearing sheep.

The superficial geology comprising of Devensian Till formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.

The solid geology comprises of Permian and Triassic Sandstones with a thick overlay of glacial boulder clay with extensive areas of mud, sand and shingle.

There are no designated assets, scheduled monuments, World Heritage Sites, Registered Parks and Gardens or Registered Battlefields within the study area.

The study area straddles the area covered by the Cumbrian Historic Landscape Characterisation programme: Gosforth and Muncaster Lowlands.

An area of mixed landscape types on the western edge of the Lake District National Park, bounded to the west by the Sellafield character area and to the east by the Central Fells. The southern boundary is marked by the valley of the River Esk, on the north side of which is the well-wooded ridge covered by the grounds of Muncaster Castle. The northern edge partly follows the edge of Calder Abbey Park.

Almost the entire area lies within the Lake District National Park apart from a small area around Greengarth and Holmrook Halls. As with the West Cumbrian Coast, the settlement pattern is a mixture of dispersed and nucleated settlement. The two main nucleated settlements are the villages of Ravenglass and Gosforth, both of which have clearly defined associated former common arable fields, although that belonging to Ravenglass lies on the far side of the River Mite. Between the two settlements, are the former common arable fields belonging to Irton and Santon, both of which are irregular loosely nucleated settlements.

The nucleated settlement of Eskdale Green, at the northern end of Muncaster Castle grounds, is a largely post medieval settlement, the growth of which can be attributed to mining and tourism. The field pattern of the area comprises a mix of former common arable fields, ancient enclosures, small areas of intakes and blocks of planned enclosures. There are also large areas of plantation woodland, with fragments of ancient woodland. The pattern of distribution of these landscape types relates to topography, with the former common fields situated on the low-lying western side of the area, and the planned enclosure plus much of the plantation woodland, on the higher ground rising to the Central Fells.

There is noticeably more woodland within the national park than in neighbouring areas to the west lying outside the park. The character area also includes ancient enclosure interspersed with blocks of planned enclosure, some intakes, and small areas of ancient woodland. Hedgerows are the dominant type of field boundary, with stone walls restricted largely to the planned enclosures of the fell edges. Muncaster Castle, on the southern edge of the area, is a mixture of ornamental parkland, plantations and open fell.

Summary: A mixed pattern of modern and older settlements and field enclosure with strong legibility of landscape elements of medieval origin.

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background and map regression

The sand dunes to the west are synonymous with the remote prehistoric period that began in the Mesolithic period and continued into the Bronze Age.

Mesolithic artefacts, particularly from the later part of the period, have been found in large numbers eroding from the cliffs and dunes on either side of the estuary of the River Esk, some perhaps reported as early as the 1930s, although little detail is given and it is apparent that finds of various periods were present.

Subsequent investigation in the 1950s and 1960s identified numerous scatters of Mesolithic material (Nickson and McDonald 1955; Cherry 1965; Site 35). Continued fieldwork in the area by John Cherry, identified sites of numerous periods, with his Mesolithic finds the basis of a large excavation carried out by Clive Bonsall in the late 1970s and early 1980s on the south side of the Esk at Eskmeals. This identified large scatters of flint artefacts of late Mesolithic type and timber interpreted as structural remains, although such interpretation remains uncertain.

Eustatic recovery and isostatic rebound brought about changes into the regional sea level and the local topography compounded by the erosion and accumulation of deposits have also indicated that as the ice retreated, the sea level was around 20m lower than at present by around 8,000 BC. A relative sea level rise then eroded the existing glacial deposits before the level again dropped and shingle ridges were deposited, the development of which has been examined in detail in the area around Eskmeals (Whitehead & Elsworth 2010, 8).

On the southern side of the estuary created by the River Irt was the Roman fort of Glannoventa (Ravenglasss) that formed a series of defensive forts articulated as the West Cumbrian Coastal Defences from the late first century AD.

No direct evidence has been suggested in the study area but the beaches in the area may have been used as convenient stopping points for boats travelling along the coast and that trading points might have been established.

Evidence from the period following the demise of Roman control is considerably rarer, but it is noteworthy in consideration of the previous point, that a single coin of Canute was discovered somewhere in the dunes (Ibid, 9).

The medieval period lacks archaeological visibility. Drigg is recorded in documentary sources as early as the 12th century, the name thought to relate to its use as a place of access to the sea, where boats could be beached (Armstrong et al 1950, 377), perhaps a suggestion that it was used as a place for trading. Land in Drigg was held, apart from by individual families, by the Priory of St Bees, Calder Abbey, Conishead Priory, and Furness Abbey through a variety of grants (Ibid, 9).

The study area was probably during the High Medieval period part of Copeland Forest but never a royal forest (Liddell 1966, 109). The earliest suggestion of a private forest in south-west Cumbria occurs in a grant from William son of Ranulph to St Bees Priory circa 1120-1135 which includes the tithe of his venison; reservation of deer to the Lord of the Manor thereby implying a forest (Ibid 110).

To the north, Richard de Lucy between 1200 and 1213 granted to Reginald son of Adam and his heirs the “common right of Braithestaines” and “that they may freely assart and build within their right divisions, saving to me and my heirs hare and hind, wild boar and sow and hawk when all shall be

there". This grant is a licence to break up the waste and it locates Braystones in Copeland Forest at least during the time of Richard de Lucy and that the Forest extended south, beyond the River Ehen (Ibid 111-112).

The grant demonstrates land hunger during the 13th century when there was a population rise and considerable expansion of farmland that became "ancient inclosures" (Winchester 1978, 310).

The earliest cartographic reference was the Drigg Inclosure Award of 1828 (CRO (W) YSPC/16/7 1828). This map depicted land ownership and local topography.

The south end of the dunes is entirely marked as belonging to Lord Muncaster as is much of the central section and the majority of the enclosures shown are named 'Drigghowsand' ('how' from the Norse word 'haugr' meaning hill), with those in the central part of the dunes named 'Low Moor'. The north end illustrates a wide variety of owners, with many of the plots known as 'Herding Nab' (figure 3). The entire area seems to have been largely used as rough grazing at this time (Whitehead & Elsworth 2010, 10).

Figure 4. Drigg Inclosure Award of 1828

The Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1860 shows the same disposition as at the present. A railway had been introduced and the current street distribution established (figure 5).

The natural drift geology has been acknowledged as clay requiring field drainage through clay tiles. This strongly suggests that the underlying geology was not favourable for past settlement until recently.

Examination of publicly available Lidar data did not suggest any conspicuous buried field monuments.

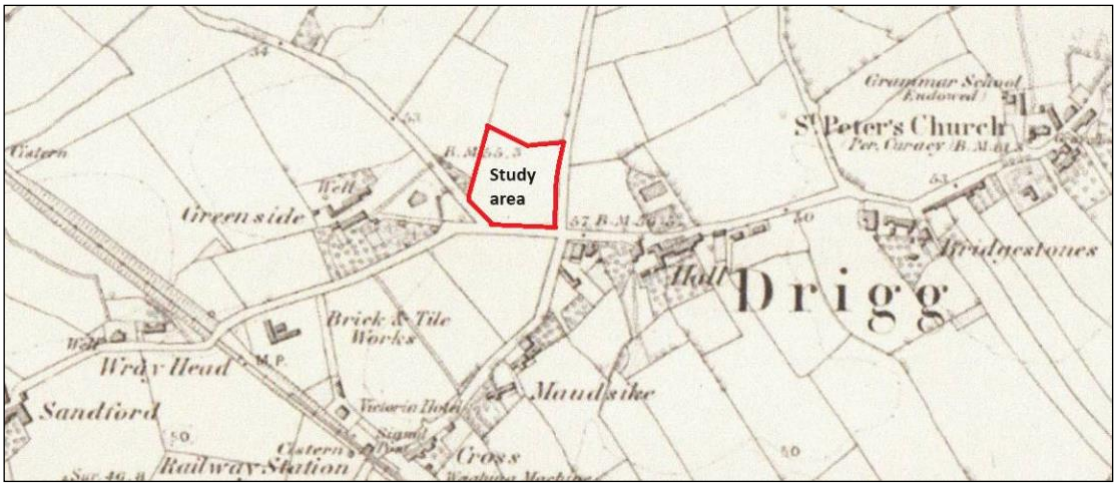

Figure 5. Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1860

4.2 Historic Environment Record

There are no scheduled monuments within the study area or designated gardens and registered parks.

The study area falls between the Cumbria Historic Environment Record. This data base account for only a few non-designated heritage assets found within a five hundred metre radius of the study area and these entries had minimal relevance to the study area. These assets include the following:

- 11855 stone axe, White Garth, find-spot, Neoliothic
- 1389 Stone hammer or mace, find-spot, Neolithic/Bronze Age
- 12153 Drigg Brick & Tile Works, documentary evidence, post-medieval

4.3 Walkover

A brief walkover of the site failed to identify any conspicuous archaeological features. It was noted that the open field was used for pasture and possessed a slight gradient rising from south to north (figure 6). The area to the south was boggy the result of outfall from a French drain.

The western curtilage was formed from an overgrown stone wall approximately 0.70m in height that probably was constructed upon the 1828 Inclosure Award (figure 7)

Figure 6. The study area prior to the evaluation

Figure 7. Stone boundary wall

5. RESULTS

5.1 Methodology

The objective of the archaeological evaluation was to carry out a formal programme of archaeological observations and investigations that sought to construct a model of the archaeological potential of the site from which an informed strategy can be formulated to preserve if necessary *in situ* any significant archaeological remains. Its aims are to:

- Provide a detailed account of surviving archaeological strata and structures
- Determine the depth of survival of any significant archaeological deposits
- Characterize the extent, date, form and importance of any encountered cultural activity

In order to achieve these objectives, a record of all archaeological informative deposits encountered during archaeological fieldwork were made, consisting of detailed context records on individual pro-forma sheets and field drawings and according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

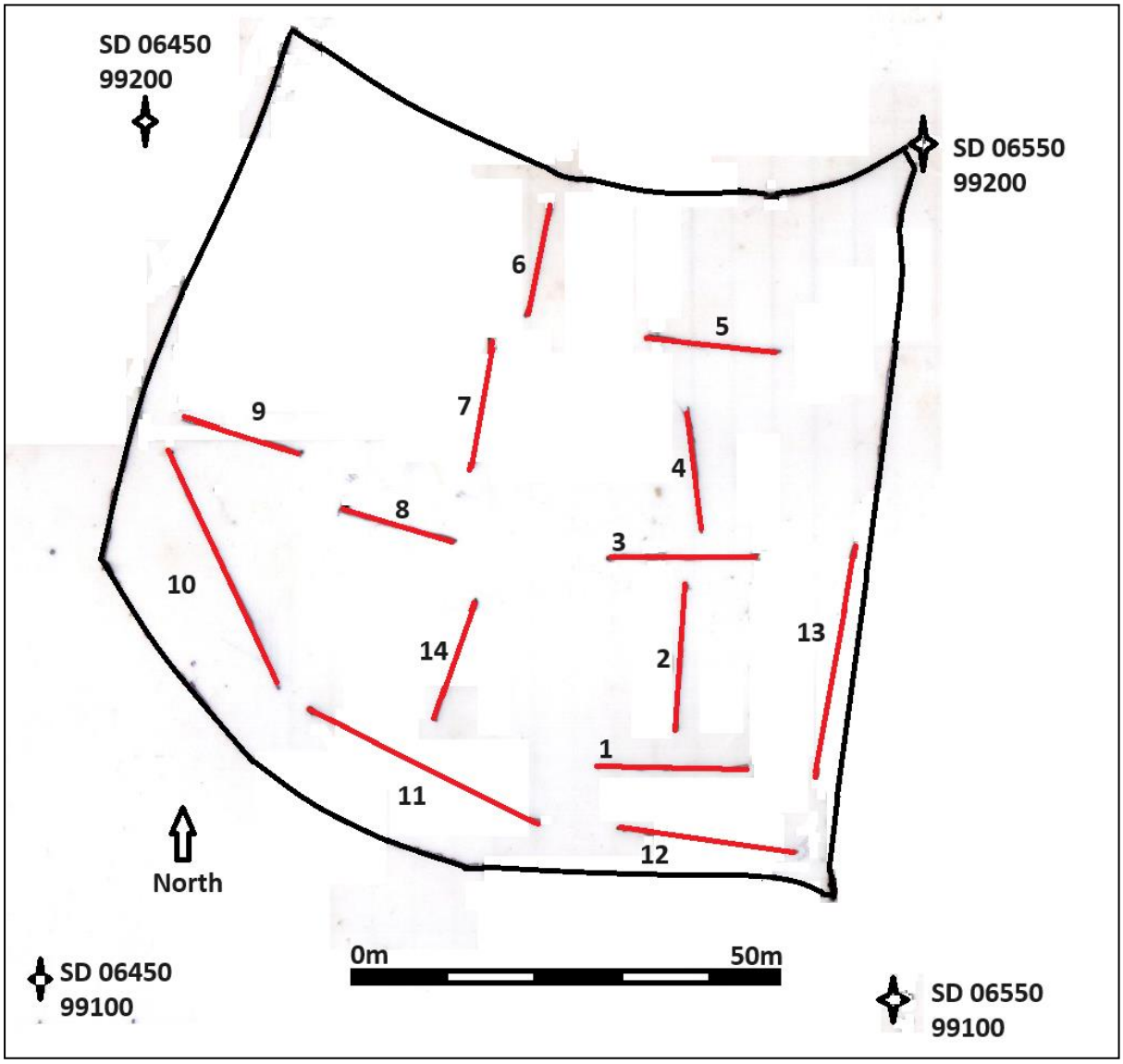

Figure 8. Disposition of the evaluation trenches

5.2 Evaluation

Trenches 1 to 9 investigated the footprint of the dwellings in Plots 1 to 9 respectively and consisted of a series of trenches 15m in length and 1.60m in width.

It was proposed that the street frontage was investigated as Trenches 10, 11, 12 and 13 as a series of 30m x 1.60m trench located beside the road.

Trench 14 investigated the access road as a single 15m x 1.60m trench (figure 8).

Trench 1

Trench 1 (figure 9) yielded a topsoil of grey-brown clayey silt measuring 0.40m in thickness above a yellow-brown sand drift geology (figure 10) and was aligned east-west between SD 06513 88127 and SD 06530 99127. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from one modern land drain. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 2

Trench 2 (figure 11) yielded a topsoil of brown silty clay measuring 0.20m in thickness, sealing clean grey slightly silty clay measuring 0.30m in thickness, above a yellow-brown sand and clay drift geology (figure 12) and was aligned north-south between SD 06524 99131 and SD 06524 99131. The trench identified no archaeological features. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 9. Trench 1 looking east

Figure 10. Section of Trench 1

Figure 11. Trench 2 looking south

Figure 12. Section of Trench 2

Trench 3

Trench 3 (figure 13) yielded a topsoil of brown silty clay measuring 0.30m in thickness, sealing clean grey silty sand measuring 0.10 in thickness, above a yellow clay drift geology (figure 14) and was aligned east-west between SD 06515 99152 and SD 06532 99151. The trench identified no archaeological features. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 13. Trench 3 looking east

Figure 14. Section of Trench 3

Figure 15. Trench 4 looking south

Figure 16. Section of Trench 4

Figure 17. Trench 5 looking east

Figure 18. Section of Trench 5

Trench 4

Trench 4 (figure 15) yielded a topsoil of brown sandy silt measuring 0.30m in thickness, sealing a pale yellow sand measuring 0.05m in thickness, above an orange-brown sand drift geology (figure 16) and was aligned north-south between SD 06524 99169 and SD 06526 99155. The trench

identified no archaeological features apart from one modern land drain. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 5

Trench 5 (figure 17) yielded a topsoil of grey-brown silty clay measuring 0.40m in thickness, sealing a grey silty sand measuring 0.10m in thickness, above an orange-brown sand drift geology (figure 18) and was aligned east-west between SD 06518 99178 and SD 06533 99176. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from two modern land drains. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 6

Trench 6 (figure 19) yielded a topsoil of brown sandy silt measuring 0.40m in thickness, sealing a grey-orange yellow sand measuring 0.10m in thickness, above an orange sand with pockets of pink Boulder Clay forming drift geology (figure 20) and was aligned north-south between SD 06507 99194 and SD 06503 99180. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from one modern land drain. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 19. Trench 6 looking south

Figure 20. Section of Trench 6

Figure 21. Trench 7 looking south

Figure 22. Section of Trench 7

Trench 7

Trench 7 (figure 21) yielded a topsoil of brown clayey silt measuring 0.25m in thickness above a pink Boulder Clay drift geology (figure 22) and was aligned north-south between SD 06498 99161 and SD

06500 99161. The trench identified no archaeological features. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 8

Trench 8 (figure 23) yielded a topsoil of brown silty clay measuring 0.20m in thickness above a pink Boulder Clay drift geology (figure 24) and was aligned east-west between SD 06483 99156 and SD 06496 99153. The trench identified no archaeological features. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 23. Trench 8 looking east

Figure 24. Section of Trench 8

Figure 25. Trench 9 looking east

Figure 26. Section of Trench 9

Figure 27. Trench 10 looking west

Figure 28. Section of Trench 10

Trench 9

Trench 9 (figure 25) yielded a topsoil of brown silty clay measuring 0.15m in thickness above a pink-yellow clay drift geology (figure 26) and was aligned east-west between SD 06464 99167 and SD 06480 99163. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from one modern land drain.. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 10

Trench 10 (figure 27) yielded a topsoil of brown sandy clay measuring 0.30m in thickness, sealing a light grey clay measuring 0.10m in thickness, above an orange-brown sand with pockets of yellow clay forming drift geology (figure 28) and was aligned northwest-southeast between SD 06463 99161 and SD 06476 99135. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from three modern land drains. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 29. Trench 10 looking west

Figure 30. Section of Trench 10

Figure 31. French drain

Figure 32. Trench 12 looking west

Trench 11

Trench 11 (figure 29) yielded a topsoil of brown sandy clay measuring 0.25m in thickness, sealing a light grey clay measuring 0.10m in thickness, above a greyish-yellow clay forming drift geology (figure 30) and was aligned east-west between SD 06479 99132 and SD 06506 99120. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from one modern land drain and a stone-filled French drain (figure 31). The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 12

Trench 12 (figure 32) yielded a topsoil of brown sandy clay measuring 0.25m in thickness, sealing a grey sand and gravel measuring 0.10m in thickness, above a golden brown sand forming drift geology (figure 33) and was aligned east-west between SD 06515 99120 and SD 06541 99116.

The trench identified a possible undated archaeological feature slot **12** (figure 34). This comprised of brown silty sand **10** within a north-south aligned cut **12** bearing a concave profile 0.11m in depth and 0.76m in width (figure 35).

Figure 33. Section of Trench 12

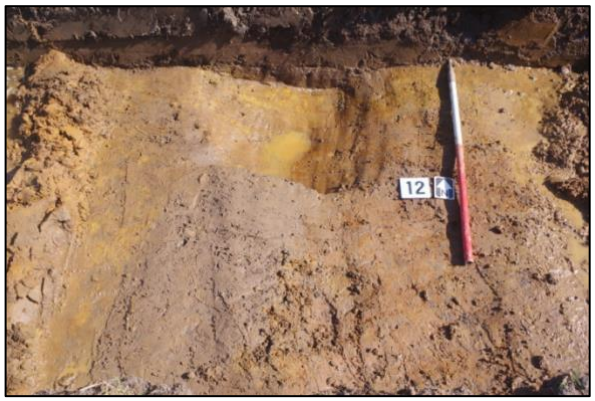

Figure 34. Plan of slot 12

Figure 35. Section of Slot 12


Figure 36. Trench 13 looking north

Figure 37. Section of Trench 13


Figure 38. Trench 14 looking north

Trench 13

Trench 13 (figure 36) yielded a topsoil of grey-brown silty clay measuring 0.40m in thickness, sealing a yellow clay forming drift geology (figure 37) and was aligned north-south between SD 06515 99122 and SD 06544 99154. The trench identified no archaeological features apart from a modern live water pipe. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Trench 14

Trench 14 (figure 38) yielded a topsoil of brown silty clay measuring 0.45m in thickness, sealing a yellow clay forming drift geology (figure 38) and was aligned north-south between SD 06494 99132 and SD 06494 99146. The trench identified no archaeological features. The trench was deemed as archaeologically sterile.

Figure 39. Section of Trench 14

5.3 Finds and environmental samples

No finds were recovered and no environmental samples merited collection.

5.4 Discussion

The evaluation fieldwork failed to identify the footprint of any past cultural activity apart from an undated slot in Trench 12.

The disposition of the terrain was largely unfavourable for settlement. Ground was at the time of the evaluation reasonably dry but there was faunal evidence for waterlogging to the south suggesting the land had previously been rough pasture before drainage The field was used for grazing and therefore flint scatters if they existed, were not visible.

The archaeological evaluation verified the conclusions of the initial assessment, confirming that land drainage and mineralisation emanating from issuing ground water were the reasons for a lack of any previous cultural activity.

6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Graeme Morgan of Sunshine Properties West Coast Limited, the client for his collaboration on this project and providing details of the project.

I would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons (CCCHES) for his guidance with the archaeological brief, the staff of Carlisle Library with my research into the local history of the area and the staff of Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle with the map regression and other documentary research.

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