



Archaeological Evaluation

North Park, Rheda, Frizington

(NY 02682 16804)

Planning application:

Outline approval 4/18/2426/001

Reserved Matters Approval 4/21/2519/OR1

Report 459

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SUMMARY

Initial belief was that the crop-mark under investigation may have an Iron Age origin as it was located on a slight bluff. However, full excavation of the three ditch interventions produced no evidence for pre-Roman use. The ditch enclosure measuring approximately 55m x 49m was deep and seemingly unnecessary for a small farmstead. Although spatial zoning may be ascertained within the enclosure, clarity and survival of features is likely to be minimal.

Closure of the monument probably occurred from the late second or third century but could be later as the pottery appeared to be locally-produced, generic coarse ware.

The enclosure upon abandonment was utilised for an unknown function. Above the backfilled ditch fill, two stone surfaces **22** and **31** were identified that were almost certainly deliberately placed. It was suggested that these *ad hoc* surfaces were to counter settlement in the enclosure ditch but surface **22** was neatly executed (figure 15), akin to a path or entrance into a functional space.

The author has speculated that this may belong to the sub-Roman period and could represent continuity into the 4th century, a period notoriously lacking visibility in the archaeological record.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Origins

Cumbria County Council's Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) was consulted during an Outline Planning Application (Copeland Borough Council) planning reference 4/18/2425/001) relating to proposed residential development on North Park, Rheda, Frizington (figure 1) This development marks Phase 2 of a project that began in 2018 on behalf of Genesis Homes Ltd.

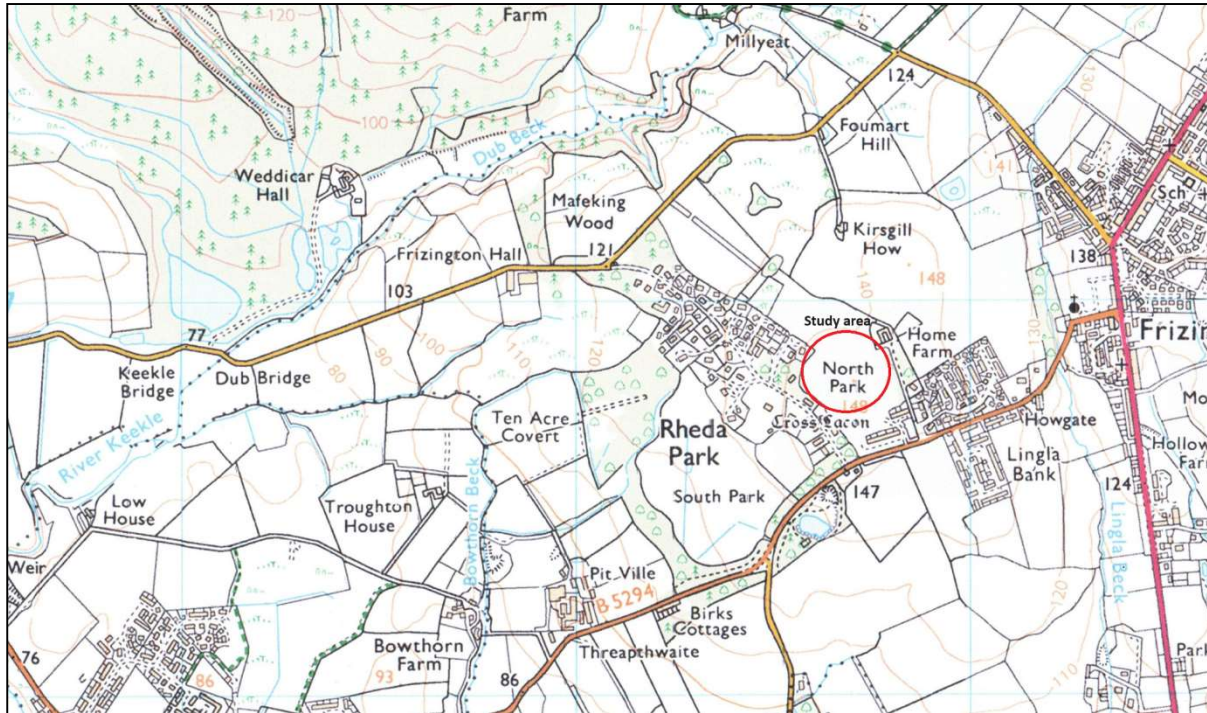


Figure 1. Site location (OS Copyright, Licence no. 100044205)

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 Condition 21 of the subsequent Outline Planning Approval as follows:

Condition 21

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

The written scheme shall include the following components:

- 1. An archaeological evaluation;*
- 2. An archaeological recording programme, the scope of which will depend on the results of the evaluation;*
- 3. Where significant archaeological remains are revealed by the programme of archaeological work, a post-excavation assessment and analysis, preparation of a site archive ready for deposition at a store approved by the local planning authority, completion of an archive report and submission of the results for publication in a suitable journal.*

Reason

To afford reasonable opportunity for an examination to be made to determine the existence of any remains of archaeological interest within the site and for examination and recording of such remains in accordance with Policy DM27 of the Copeland Local Plan.

The study area was subject to a geophysical survey in 2018 and subsequent archaeological evaluation by Wardell Armstrong. The evaluation exercise proved negative and no further archaeological reconnaissance was deemed necessary. This became Phase 1 for the Beckstone Development undertaken by Genesis Homes (4/19/2261/OR1). This Working Scheme of Investigation (WSI) covers Phase 2 which is about to come live.

Jeremy Parsons advised by email 19/10/23 the following course of action in order to expedite the heritage clause within the planning application:

“The site at Rheda was subject to an archaeological geophysical survey in 2018 and the results highlighted buried archaeological remains surviving in part of the site. I enclose a plan showing the remains outlined in red on the attached plan. Although the date of these remains is unknown, they look as though they could be a prehistoric square enclosure. They therefore need to be the subject of an archaeological evaluation in the first instance, to determine their nature and significance. The need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work would be dependent upon the results of the evaluation. If the evaluation demonstrates that the remains are of low interest, no further archaeological work will be necessary. If the evaluation shows the remains are of some significance, then they will need investigation and recording by means of an archaeological excavation.

So, the first step is to commission an archaeological evaluation. The scope of the evaluation should comprise 4 trial trenches, each measuring 15 metres in length, targeting the enclosure highlighted in the geophysical survey.”

Gerry Martin Associates Ltd was commissioned by KCS Agriculture Ltd, to undertake a Programme of Archaeological Evaluation relating to the ground works pertaining to this development.

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 a rectangular enclosure and define any structural remains within the enclosure.

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 Working 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, 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 December 13th-21st December 2023 in relatively wet conditions.



Figure 2. Site curtilage with proposed dwellings

2.2 Development proposals

The development envisages up to 22 dwellings comprising of two, three and four bedroom houses centred on a cul-de-sac forming the Phase 2 development (figure 2).

The study area was subject to a geophysical survey in 2018 that identified a rectangular enclosure. The Phase 1 works to the south were also archaeologically evaluated but proved to be negative.

Investigation of the rectangular enclosure has become the sole remit of this evaluation as stipulated by the curatorial authority

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.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Location, topography and geology

Close to the B5294 road, the area was formerly dominated by heavy industry notably mining of coal and quarrying of iron ore. The study area (NY 02670 16383) lies within a rolling landscape, abraded by river channels on the fringe of the Lake District National Park, approximately 148.00m in height.

The British Geological Survey Geology of Britain viewer, British Geological Survey (BGS) describes the solid and superficial geology as follows:

Pennine Middle Coal Measures Formation - Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. Sedimentary Bedrock formed approximately 310 to 318 million years ago in the Carboniferous Period. Local environment previously dominated by swamps, estuaries and deltas.

These sedimentary rocks are fluvial, palustrine and shallow-marine in origin formed in swamps, estuaries and deltas. They are detrital, forming deposits reflecting the channels, floodplains and deltas of a river in a coastal setting (with periodic inundation from the sea).

Superficial Deposits formed up to 2 million years ago in the Quaternary Period consisting of Till, Devensian - Diamicton. Local environment previously dominated by ice age conditions.

These superficial sedimentary deposits are glacial in origin. They are detrital, created by the action of ice and melt water, they can form a wide range of deposits and geomorphologies associated with glacial and inter-glacial periods during the Quaternary.

The study area for the watching brief is covered by the Cumbrian Historic Landscape Characterisation programme from which the following designation was taken (Cumbria CC, 2009):

32. Lamplugh and Ehen Valley

An area of rolling landscape rising towards the Lake District fells this character area straddles the Lake District National Park boundary to the east of Frizington. There is no obvious distinction in terms of historic landscape character between the areas within and without the park.

It is characterised primarily by the extensive area of ancient enclosure. Unlike the Whillimore and Dean Common character area to the west, the settlement pattern within the ancient enclosures does not only consist of discrete settlements but also includes small nucleations, such as Asby, Kirkland, Croasdale and Ennerdale Bridge.

Exactly two thirds of all the settlements pre-date 1770. Other than a few small areas of planned enclosure, the field pattern entirely consists of ancient enclosures with no former common arable fields.

Woodland is sparse but there are small patches of ancient gill woodland and small blocks of plantation in the north of the area. Overall the landscape appears to retain many pre-19th century characteristics.

Legacy: A clearly older and traditional landscape both with regard to settlement pattern and the nature of the fieldscape, strong legibility of landscape elements of medieval origin.

Landscape designation and status: Small parts of the eastern half of the character area are within the Lake District National Park

4. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

4.1 Historical background

The Manor of Frizington was a fee of Beckermeth and was held by a family bearing the local name. It was sold to Sir John Leigh in the early 15th century and succeeded to the Williamson and Patrickson families before being acquired by Sir John Lowther and assimilated into the Lonsdale Estates.

A standing stone cross known as Cross Lacon, written in old deeds as "lakin," suggests that games or semi-religious festivals were held near it. Maypoles were often set up near to market crosses and sports held at which the church turned a blind eye despite the possible pagan origin for sporting festivals held at the cross. The nature of the ground was suitable for rustic sports with this high, dry, and gently sloping hill associated with Lacon or Lakin (Parker 1907, 101-102). This cross appears to have been slightly moved *circa* 1890 (Collingwood 1923, 258).

On the 18th June 1680, Joseph Williamson granted ownership of the freehold property to Thomas Bowman (DBH/36/3/11/12). This freehold may have passed to a Thomas Dixon, gentleman, who was listed as being from Rheda in a letter dated Michaelmas 1732 (DDIX/BOX5/38).

Coal mining was established by the 1720's and there were ironworks at Frizington from 1839 onwards. Limestone quarrying was a very important industry between 1888 and the 1980's, whilst there was earlier lime-burning and tile-making from the mid 19th century. Historically, Frizington was a collection of isolated farms and houses but became a unified settlement as a result of mining opportunities based on a central road.

The Newcastle Courant records on Saturday 14th May 1743 the sale of free rents of 24 freeholders by the owner John Williamson of Frizington.

The waste lands were enclosed under an act of Parliament passed in 1805. Later, the Whitehaven, Cleator, and Egremont Railway held a branch line to the iron mines in this township.

The Cumberland Pacquet and Ware's Whitehaven Advertiser of 12th November 1805 noted a new road from Rheda Gate to Kerskell How to Foulmart Hill and thence eastwards in a straight line until it adjoins the high road leading from Whitehaven to Arlecdon.

In 1860, the area of the township was 1,030 acres and its rateable value was £1,770 10s (Wellan 1860, 370-372).

Probably *circa* 1887 the Cross Lacon estate at Rheda Mansion (figure 3) was converted to formal parkland with two parks established as South Park and North Park surrounded by extensive woodland (figure 2) and initiated by Thomas Dixon a local eminent personality involved in regional politics. He had inherited the estate in 1847 from his father also Thomas Dixon (DDX/46) who was referred to living at Rheda in 1822 (DDIX).



Figure3. Rheda Mansion in the 19th century

At NY 02400 16800, a former stable block to Rheda Mansion was built in 1887 for Thomas Dixon and altered in 1903 for the High Sheriff of Cumberland. It is made from sandstone ashlar blocks and had slate gable end roofs. It was built in a Cumbrian Baronial-Revival style.

In 1894, the Cross Lacon estate was extensively photographed, the collection held at Whitehaven Record Office.

4.2 Archaeological background

A rectangular plan feature measuring approximately 55m x 46m was clearly defined by a geophysical survey undertaken in 2018. Although a late Prehistoric date for this enclosure is preferred, its apparent superimposition over a field boundary or trackway may suggest that its temporal provenance is more recent (figure 4).

The enclosure lies 10m off a modern southern boundary, 30m off a northern boundary, 40m off a western boundary and 50m off an eastern boundary. Its orientation lies counter to the prevailing spatial field organization which appears to be depicted on the first edition ordnance survey map (figure 5).

No internal structures appear to exist within the enclosure.

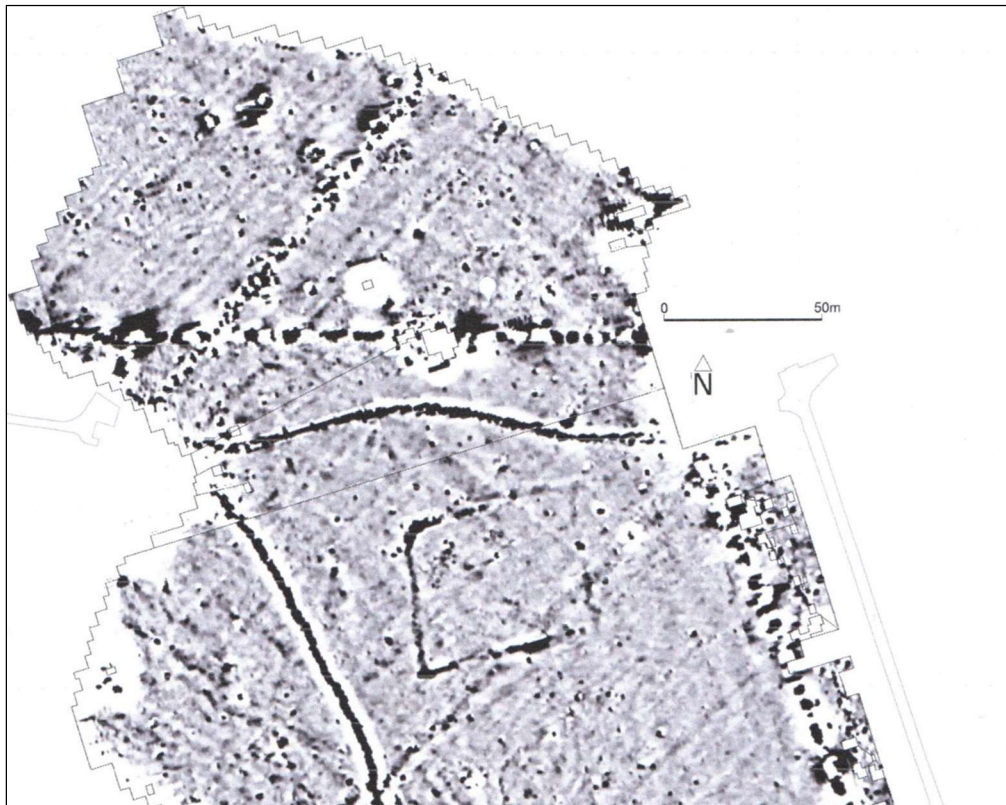


Figure 4. Geophysical survey showing a rectangular feature

4.3 Map regression

Examination of the First Edition Ordnance Survey published in 1867 depicted a series of vacant polygonal plan fields forming the development area, emanating from a settlement called Rheda, that was also known as Rheda Mansion (figure 5).

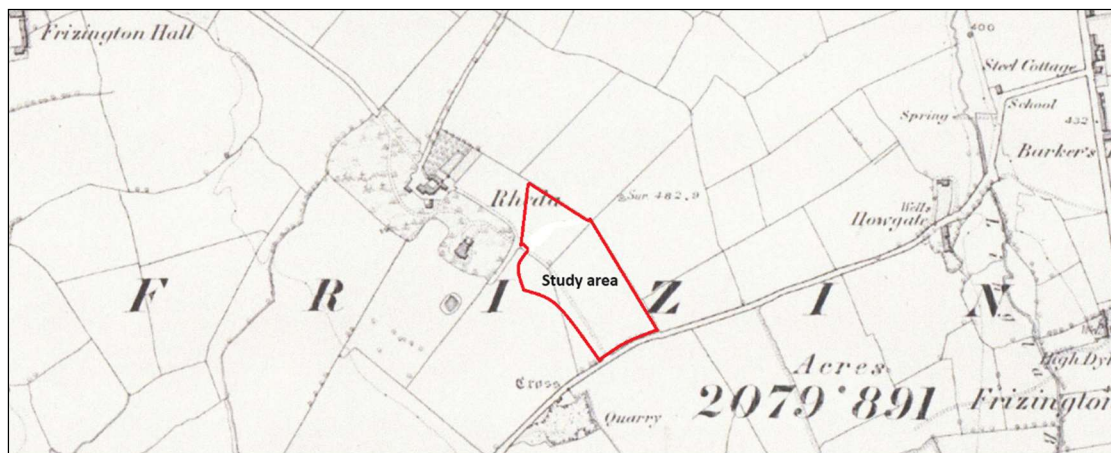


Figure 5. Ordnance Survey map published in 1867

By 1900 and the Second Edition Ordnance Survey was published depicting considerable revision of the spatial organization of the study area with the advent of parkland and afforestation. Centred on Rheda Mansion, the park was divided into two parts; North Park and South Park. The house was approached by a drive emanating from the East Lodge (figure 6).

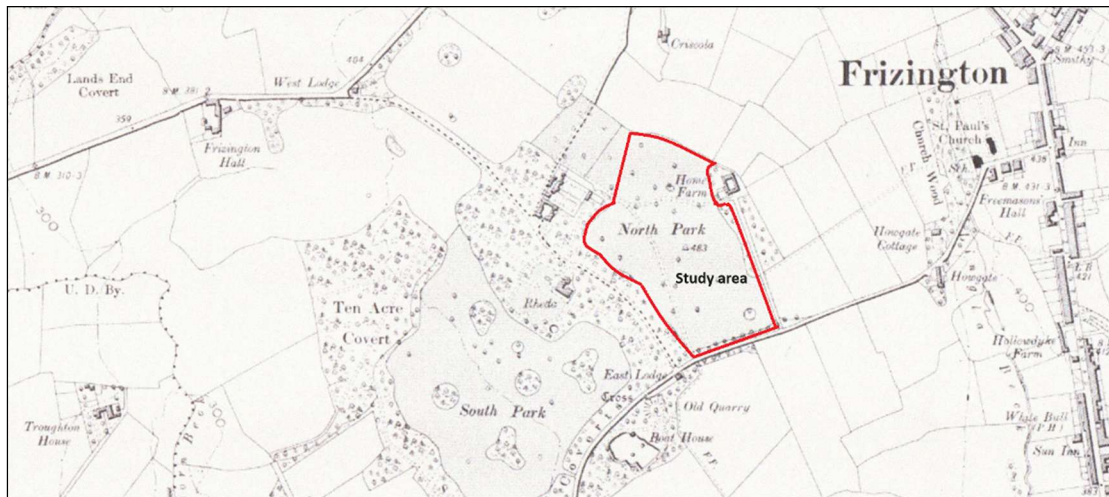


Figure 6. Ordnance Survey map published in 1900

Beside the development area was Home Farm, a newly established farmstead that may have been within the bounds of the estate.

There appears little if any spatial change by 1946 (figure 7).

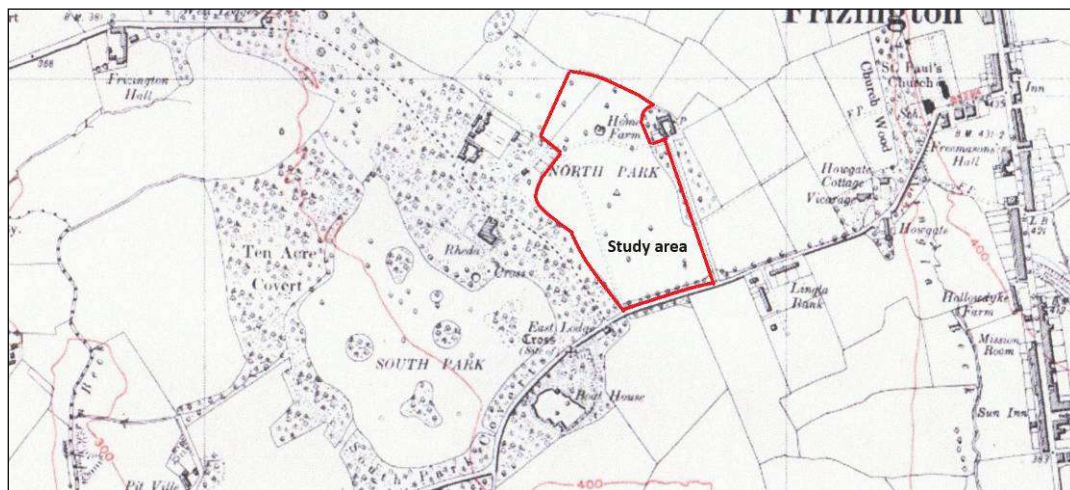


Figure 7. Ordnance Survey map published in 1946

4.4 Historic Environment Record

The Historic Environment Record acknowledges the undated enclosure as HER 44848 (1).

Apart from Hollowdyke Farm (3) (GMA Report 401), most of the other entries pertain to the former estate at Rheda Mansion and its immediate environs.

The only entry bearing any known antiquity was HER 1208 a medieval cross (6) that affords protection in law, approximately 250 metres south-west of Home Farm.

The monument includes the remains of a cross of medieval date, situated on a gentle south west facing slope the edge on the edge of Rheda. The cross, known as Cross Lacon, was constructed from red sandstone and had a shaft topped by a wheel head cross. The cross had a height of 1m, the cross measured 0.5m in diameter and the shaft was 0.3m square. The shaft was set into a chamfered abacus bearing the inscription 'Cross Lacon'. The monument is a Listed Building, Grade II*.

A disused stable block known as the Dower House HER 25394 (9) was subject to a Level II building survey in 2010 by North Pennine Archaeological Trust.

The search recorded ten entries within a five hundred metre radius listed below (figure 8).

No.	Her No.	Location	Description	Site type	Period	Status
1	44848	North Park, Rheda	Enclosure	Sub surface deposit	Unknown	-
2	43815	Home Farm, Rheda	Model Farm	Documentary Evidence	Victorian	-
3	45677	Hollowdyke Farm	Farmstead	Demolished Building	Post Medieval	-
4	43816	East Lodge, Rheda	Gate Lodge	Documentary Evidence	Victorian	-
5	43818	Rheda Boat House	Pond, Boathouse, Quarry	Documentary Evidence	Victorian	-
6	1208	Lacon Cross	Cross	Standing Monument	Medieval	II*
7	43813	Rheda Mansion	Mansion House	Documentary Evidence	Victorian	-
8	43814	Rheda, Frizington	House, Building, Farmstead	Documentary Evidence	Georgian	-
9	23594	The Dower House, Rheda Park	Stable	Roofed Building	Victorian	-
10	43817	West Lodge, Rheda	Gate Lodge	Documentary Evidence	Victorian	-

Table A. List of Historic Environment Record entries

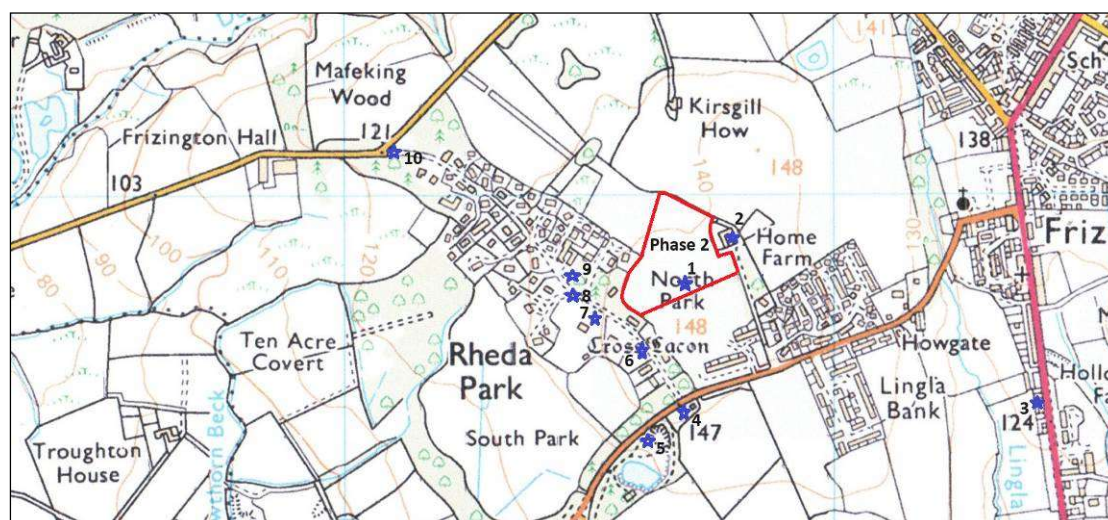


Figure 8. Historic Environment Record

4.5 Walkover

A walkover of the site on 13th December 2023 revealed the following points that were germane to the methodology to be employed for this programme of archaeological reconnaissance. The location of the trenches was on the summit of a small knoll with a fall towards the east and north.

The field was used as pasture and had an open view to the sea with a putative Roman road in the near distance (Jeremy Parsons *pers comm.*). Modern housing encroached from the south whilst a range of 19th century plantation survived towards the west.

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 proforma sheets and field drawings and according to the protocols set out in the GMA manual.

5.2 Evaluation

The study area was archaeologically evaluated between December 13th and December 21st 2023 by Gerry Martin and Trevor Ennis and comprised of four trenches.

The curatorial authority suggested that four trenches fifteen, metres in length should be employed in order to corroborate the dimension and plan of the enclosure. The western, northern and eastern trenches (Trenches 2-4) need only be 1.60m in width, the width of a toothless bucket (figure 9).

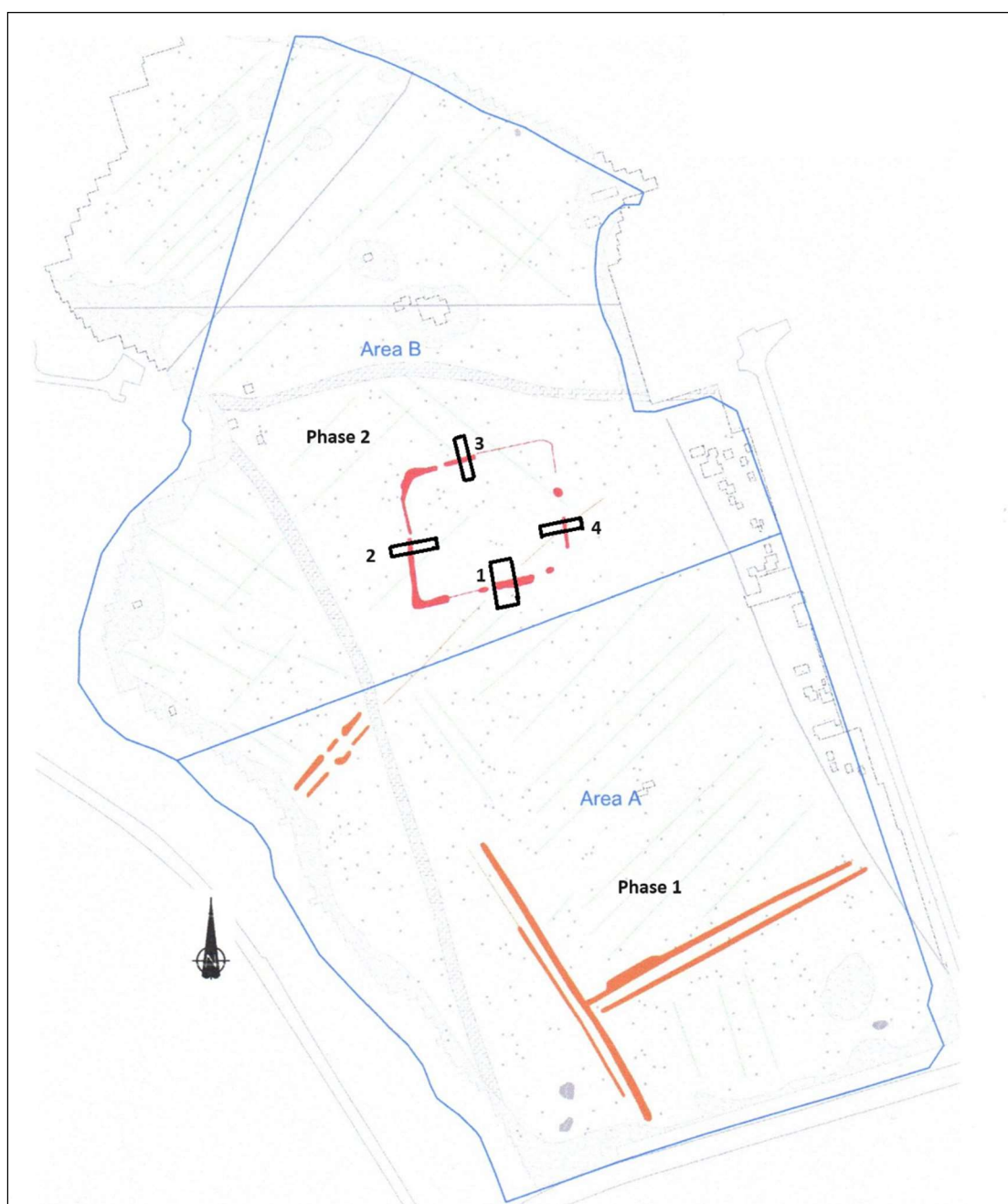


Figure 9. Location of evaluation trenches as specified by the WSI

Trench 1

Scrutinising the geophysical survey, Trench 1 (the southern trench) appeared to be intersected by a field boundary of relatively modern date (figure 4) as it appears to be present on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map (figure 5). Isolating this relationship would provide a relative date between the enclosure and the field system in order to provide definitive proof in plan.

Trench 1 measured 7m x 4m as the location of the enclosure ditch was easily located, based on three previous interventions.

Located between NY 02722 16814 and NY 02720 16820, the trench exposed bedrock comprising laminated sandstone corresponding to the bedding plane which was only 0.25m beneath the existing ground surface (figure 10).



Figure 10. Trench 1 looking south



Figure 11. Ditch section for cut **10**

Clearance of topsoil revealed a northwest-southeast aligned cut **10** that represented the southern limb of an enclosure. The ditch cut measured 2.60m in width and 1.25m in depth with near vertical sides to a slightly concave base (figure 11).

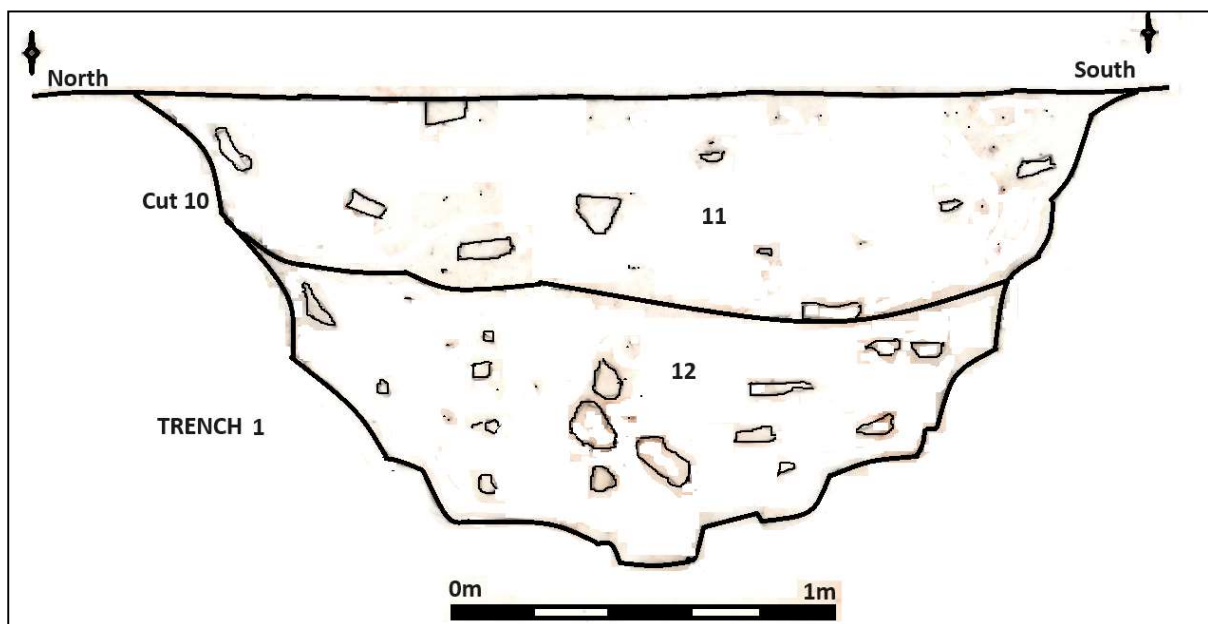


Figure 12. Section across ditch **10**

Ditch **10** contained a lower fill of broken red sandstone boulders and scree within a minimal amount of red silty clay **12** that measured 1.90m in width and 0.60m in depth and was overlain by homogenous, pinkish-grey silty clay that was very stony **11** that measured 2.60m in width and 0.65m in depth (figure 12).

Basal fill **12** consisted of tightly packed sandstone rubble that represented systematic backfilling rather than gradual silting, possibly originating from an adjacent former bank. The debris was possibly capped

by silty clay **11** that contained Roman pottery. There was no indication of a cutting ditch suggested by the geophysics within Trench 1 (figure 13).

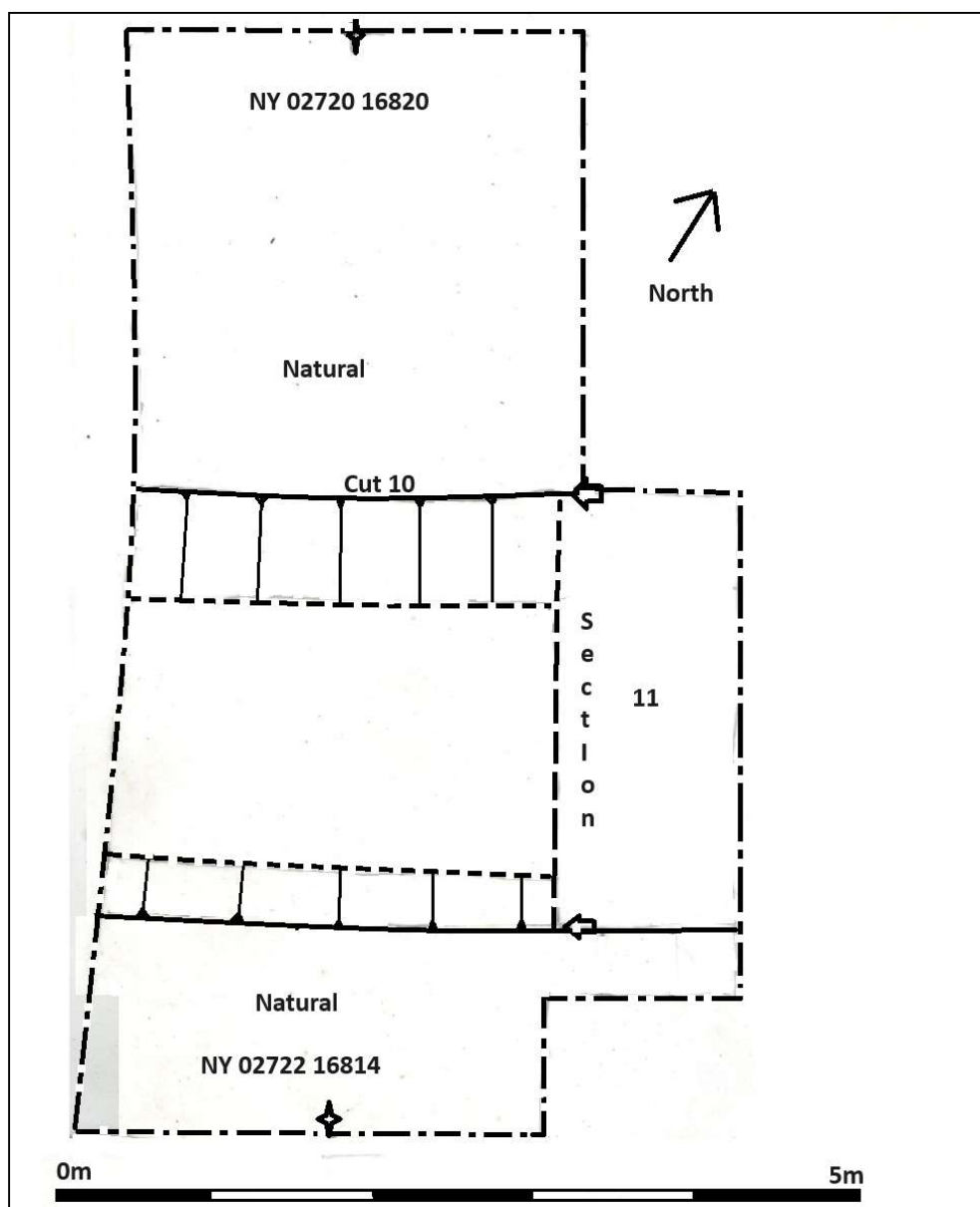


Figure 13. Plan of Trench 1 showing ditch **10**

Trench 2

Trench 2 measured 7.20m x 6.20m as the location of the enclosure ditch was relatively easily located, based on the location of Trench 4. It depicted the backfilled western limb of the enclosure ditch **20** that bore stony surface **22** (figure 14).

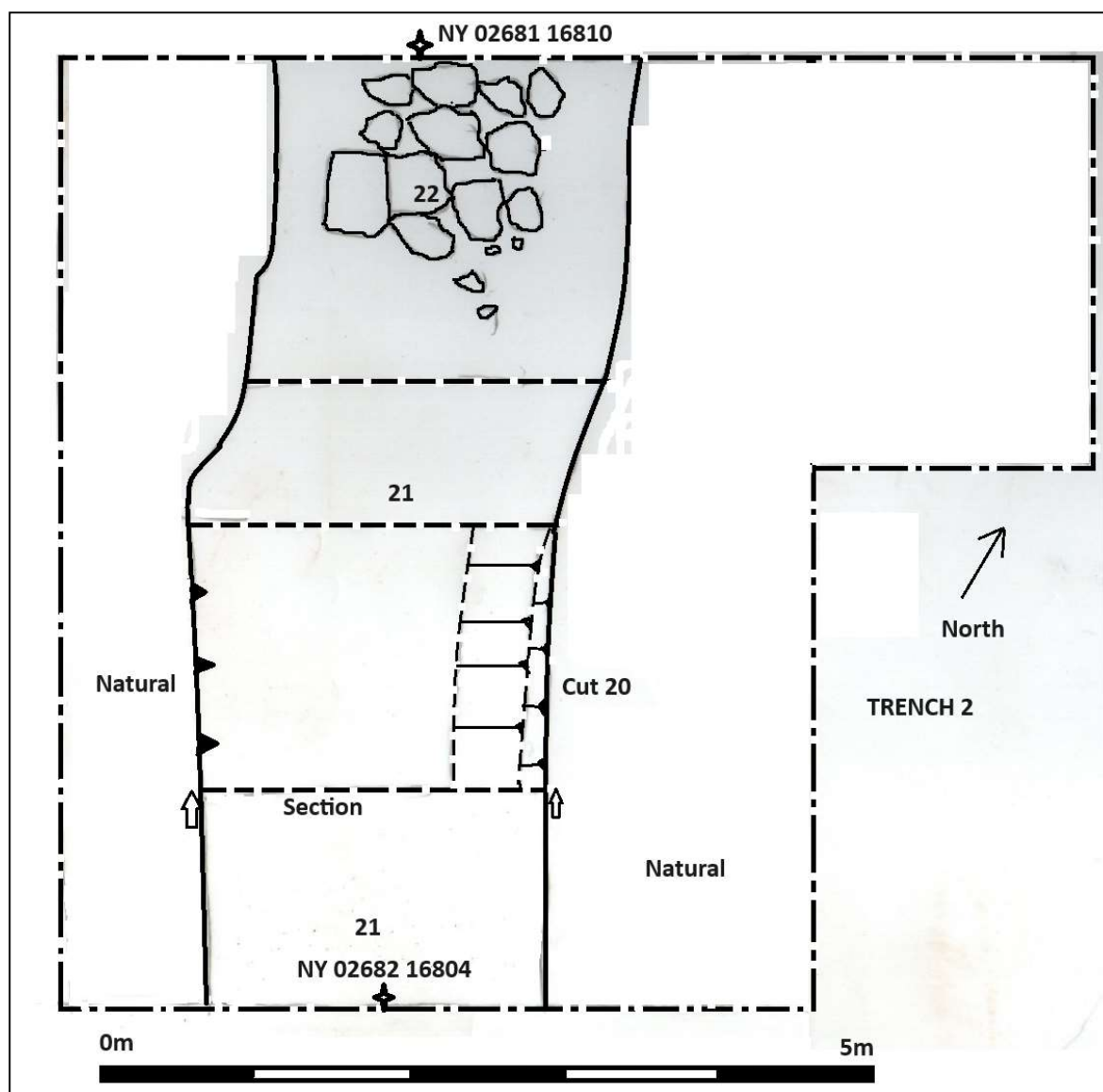


Figure 14. Plan of Trench 2 showing ditch **21** and stony surface **22**

Located between NY 02682 16804 and NY 02681 16810, the trench exposed bedrock comprising laminated sandstone corresponding to the bedding plane which was only 0.25m beneath the existing ground surface (figure 15).



Figure 15. Trench 2 with ditch **20** and surface **22**



Figure 16. Ditch **20**

Clearance of topsoil revealed a northwest-southeast aligned cut **20** that represented the western limb of an enclosure. The ditch cut measured 2.50m in width and 1.12m in depth with near vertical sides to a slightly concave base (figure 16).

Ditch **20** consisted of a basal fill of stony pink clay **23** measuring 0.85m in width and 0.36m in depth sealed by stony pink clay **21** measuring 2.50m in width and 0.80m in depth (figure 17).

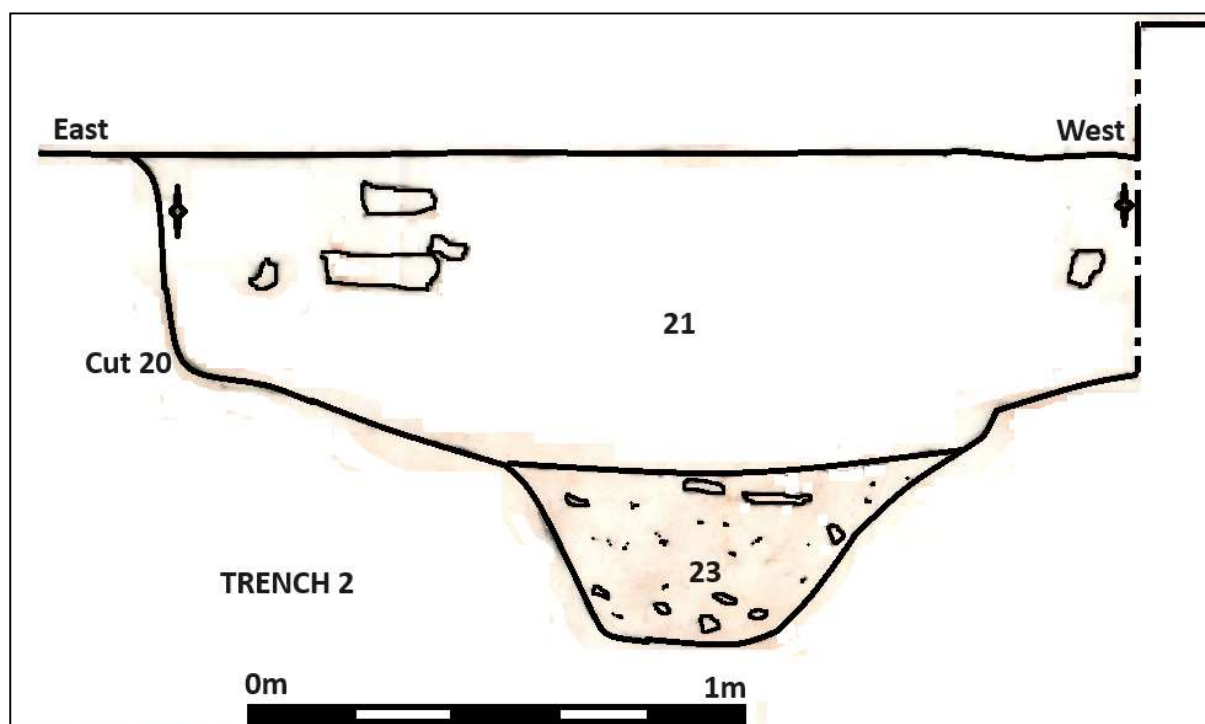


Figure 17. Ditch **20** in section

Upon completion of the backfilling of ditch **20**, a flat, concordant surface of deliberately lain stone slabs **22** was established bearing an unknown function (figure 14).

Trench 3

Trench 3 measured 16.00m x 2.75m investigating the location of the northern limb of enclosure ditch **30**. It revealed a backfilled enclosure ditch **30** that bore stony surface **31** (figure 18). Due to the unknown function of stony surface **31**, the horizon was left in situ although a small sondage corroborated that it sat upon backfill **32** to the ditch (figure 19).

Located between NY 02705 16850 and NY 02701 16862, the trench exposed bedrock comprising laminated sandstone corresponding to the bedding plane which was only 0.25m beneath the existing ground surface (figure 15).

Ditch **30** was left unexcavated but was approximately 2.80m in width. It was sealed by a series of concordant flat stones **31** that only existed within the ditch margin and appeared to articulate an *ad hoc* surface (figure 20).

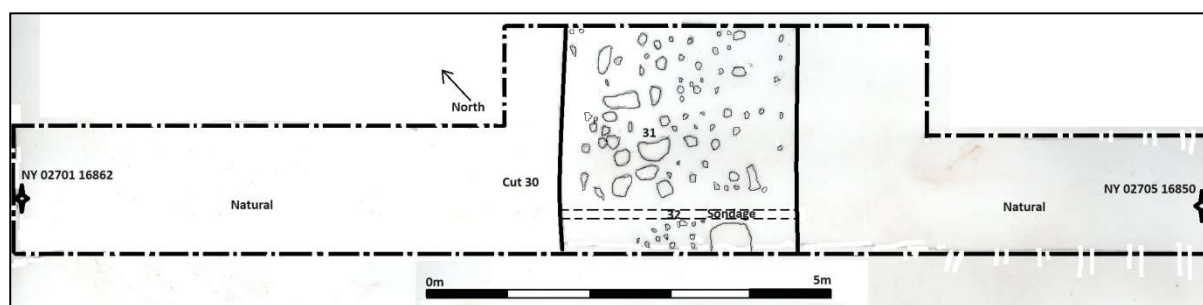


Figure 18. Trench 3 in plan



Figure 19. Sondage through surface 31



Figure 20. Surface 31 sealing ditch 30

Trench 4

Trench 4 measured 14.00m x 2.50m investigating the location of the eastern limb of enclosure ditch **40** (figure 21). It depicted a backfilled enclosure ditch **40** aligned approximately north=south.



Figure 21. Trench 4 before excavation

Figure 22 Ditch **40** in Trench 4

Located between NY 02732 16831 and NY 02745 16837, the trench exposed bedrock comprising laminated sandstone corresponding to the bedding plane which was 0.80m beneath the existing ground surface, separated by topsoil and a possible subsoil or buried soil from a denuded bank (figure 22).

Ditch **40** bore a cut with near vertical sides to a flat, slightly concave base (figure 23). The feature was filled by pink silty clay with sandstone scree **41**. Within fill **41** was evidence of micro-stratigraphy that

suggested some natural clay silting before systematic infilling. Ditch cut **40** measured 2.40m in width and was 1.00m in depth (figure 24).

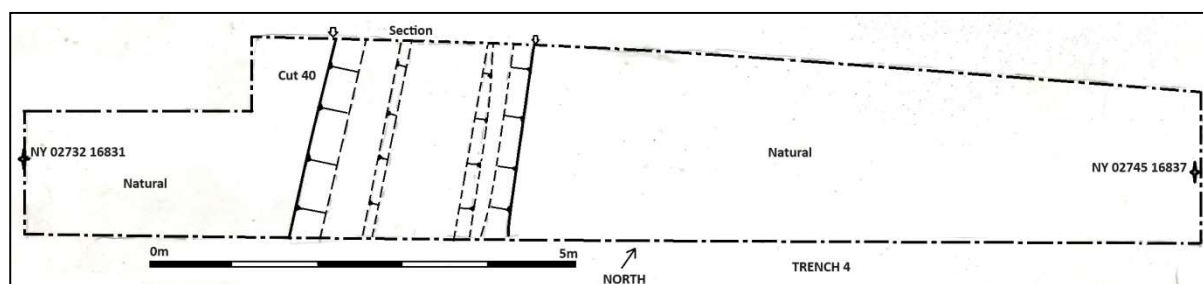


Figure 23. Plan of Trench 4

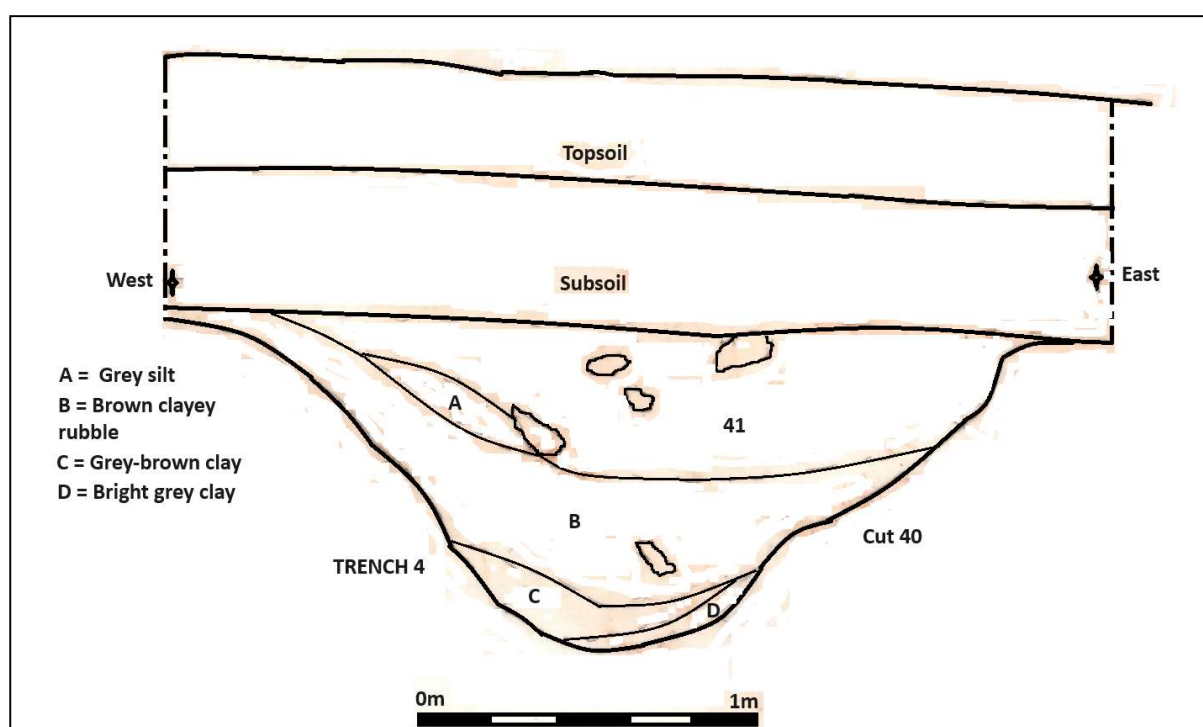


Figure 24. Ditch **40** in section

5.3 Finds and environmental samples

One environmental sample was taken from ditch fill **21**. Roman coarse ware was recovered from the backfill of the enclosure. Upon the surface of Trench 3 from layer **31**, coarse pottery was recovered that may be of 4th century date or possibly sub-Roman grass tempered ware.

The pottery and the sample were examined by Megan Stoakley of Wardell Armstrong Archaeology and her abridged report is as follows:

Twenty-four Roman pottery sherds, weighing 292g, were recovered from five contexts (Table 1).

A minimum number of five vessels is present in this small assemblage which is made up of two rim sherds, 20 body sherds and two base sherds.

The earliest datable pottery sherd was recovered from silty clay upper fill (11) of ditch [10]. The fragment comprises a very heavily abraded wheel-thrown rim sherd of Central Gaulish samian ware

(Terra sigillata: LMV SA / SAM); traces of slip are present on the external and internal surfaces and it weighs 29g. The sherd likely originated from a plain bowl which could be from a number of forms, including types 31R, 38, 44, 81 (Webster 1996, 22 Fig 11). It is of late 1st to early 2nd century date.

Ditch fill (11) also yielded a base sherd of type 1 Dorset Black-burnished ware (DOR BB1), which was in good condition; very little evidence of post-depositional damage was observed on either the edges or surfaces. Weighing 22g, the sherd would have originated from a medium-sized, wheel-thrown storage or cooking pot; the external surface is burnished and the temper has frequent sand inclusions less than 1mm in diameter throughout the clay matrix. It is likely to date to the late 2nd to 3rd century.

Three wheel thrown sherds of type 1 Dorset Black-burnished ware (DOR BB1) were recovered from silty clay lower fill (12) of ditch [10]; weighing 40g, the fragments comprise an everted rim sherd and two body sherds in a black clay matrix with frequent fine sand inclusions less than 1mm in diameter. A moderate level of abrasion is evident on these surfaces and edges. No lattice decoration is evident on two sherds and the external surface of one body sherd has a very small area of lattice decoration which is only just visible. The sherds would have originated as medium-sized storage jars or cooking pots. No sooting is present. The presence of a splayed everted rim in the assemblage potentially places these sherds in the later Roman period, e.g. 3rd century.

Thirteen sherds of very heavily abraded pottery, weighing 139g, were recovered from stony pink clay fill (21) of ditch [20] (Table 1). The wheel thrown pottery sherds comprise locally-sourced, coarse oxidised earthenware (CO OX) in a bright orange clay matrix with frequent fine sand temper less than 2mm in diameter. No decoration is present on any of the sherds and they would have originated from medium to large-sized storage jars or cooking pots. These sherds are of 2nd to 3rd century date; no sooting is present.

Stony surface (31) yielded six body sherds of Huntcliff calcite-gritted ware (HUN CG). Weighing 62g, the sherds originate from a thick-walled bowl or jar; the sherds comprise a dark grey to dull black clay matrix with frequent sub-oval and circular voids which are 3mm4mm in diameter. These voids would have been where the calcite grits would have been located in the clay matrix, that have since been removed. No decoration or sooting was present on any of the sherds. This type of pottery dates to the late 4th century and would have been imported from East Yorkshire (RPA online 2024).

Discussion

The pottery assemblage recovered from the archaeological investigation at Frizington was recovered from three separate trenches to investigate an enclosure ditch. Ditches [10] and [20] were excavated within Trenches 1 and 2; a stony surface (31) was revealed in Trench 3. The pottery from Trenches 1 and 2 span the late 1st to 3rd century while the pottery from (31) is of late 4th century date.

This assemblage of pottery spans the late 1st to late 4th century and is typical of common Romano-British table wares found on archaeological sites of this period. The heavily abraded surfaces and edges on some of the pottery sherds, particularly from ditches [10] [20], suggests that some of these fragments were of earlier date and were not in their original site of deposition. It indicates that these sherds had been abraded prior to final deposition, e.g. fill (11); systematic backfilling of fill (12) may be responsible for the moderate level of abrasion on the three sherds of Dorset Black-burnished ware sherds which are of likely later date than the more heavily abraded samian ware sherds.

Assemblages of Roman pottery are common on archaeological sites across northern and western Cumbria; similar fabrics and types were recovered during archaeological excavations at Papcastle, Cumbria as part of the Discovering Derwentio project (Jackson 2012, 2014a, 2014b & 2016), the Carlisle Millennium project (Howard-Davis 2009), William Street car park on Botchergate, Carlisle (Jackson 2015) and the Northern Lanes, Carlisle (Zant & Howard-Davis et al 2022). Similarly to the Frizington material, the pottery assemblages from the excavations at Papcastle were very heavily abraded; an acidic soil pH may also be responsible for the abraded surfaces at these sites.

The presence of a sherd of Central Gaulish samian ware, despite being of earlier date, would have been used continuously until the late 2nd century and provides evidence of the import of goods from the continent (RPA online 2024). The presence of pottery from East Yorkshire and Dorset also indicates trade with these areas.

An environmental sample was taken from fill **21** of ditch **20** in Trench 2. Five pieces of charred plant remains were recovered from the flotation, three of which were too damaged for identification. The other plant remains include one of barley and one hulled barley (*Hordeum* sp.). A small amount of comminuted charcoal was also detected in the flotation, however, fragments were too small to be retained. A small amount (1g) of magnetic material was recovered through sorting, mostly consisting of magnetic geology.

No finds were recovered from the sample taken from site. There was not enough environment material present to say anything meaningful about the assemblage.

5.4 Discussion

The evaluation fieldwork confirmed the presence of a sub-rectangular enclosure that measured approximately 57m x 49m with the four corners located at NY 02686 16800 (southwest corner), NY 02739 16821 (southeast corner), NY 02727 16863 (northeast corner) and NY 02670 16867 (northwest corner).

Initial belief was that the crop-mark under investigation may have an Iron Age origin as it was located on a slight bluff. In form, it could correspond to similar Iron Age settlements, albeit specimens in Cumbria are infrequent.

The nearest parallel appeared to be at Salterbeck, near Workington where an unexcavated, sub-circular plan enclosure with double ditches formed a scheduled ancient monument (1007071) that measured 69m x 54m.

Full excavation of the three ditch interventions produced no evidence for pre-Roman use. The ditch enclosure was deep and seemingly unnecessary for a small farmstead. Penetrating bedded sandstone, the characteristics of the ditch may have been conditioned by the geology rather than traditional ditch cutting methods.

The stone upcast from the ditch appeared to be considerable in volume, presumably forming an inner bank or rampart that may have been adorned by a palisade. This design would intimate a defensive attribution associated with localised societal stress.

Possibly, the origin of the enclosure has a native influence, which continued in use into the Romano-British period before the enclosure became surplus to requirements and the ditches rapidly backfilled with stone scree from the slighted inner banks.

A significant amount of slate was recovered from ditch fill **21**. This would suggest that within the enclosure, there were rectangular plan buildings with slate roofs indicative of Roman settlement or farmstead rather than circular plan huts, typical of Iron Age occupation.

Closure of the settlement probably occurred from the late second or third century but could be later as the pottery appeared to be locally-produced, generic coarse ware.

The evaluation did not investigate any internal spatial organisation. Any surviving structural elements are likely to be slight, poorly understood, as these features would need to penetrate bedrock, whilst formal buildings probably rested upon the bedrock.

Ingresses were not isolated, but at least one entrance must have existed, presumably connected to a track or spur to a road.

The enclosure upon abandonment was utilised for an unknown function. Above the backfilled ditch fill, two stone surfaces **22** and **31** were identified that were almost certainly deliberate placed. It was suggested that these *ad hoc* surfaces were to counter ground settlement within the enclosure ditch, but surface **22** was neatly executed (figure 15), akin to a path or entrance into a functional space.

Upon surface **31**, Huntcliff Ware originating from East Yorkshire was recovered suggesting continued occupation from AD 360 into the 5th century. Previously recovered from Kirkby Thore (Frank Giecco *pers comm.*) and Pike Hill, Banks (Simpson and McIntyre 1932, 272), the distribution of this pottery suggests widespread occupation in late 4th century Cumbria. The author has speculated that this may belong to the sub-Roman period and could represent continuity into the 5th century, a period notoriously lacking visibility and elusive in the archaeological record.

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