THE FITZ, COCKERMOUTH, CUMBRIA.

EVALUATION REPORT
CP. No: 1268/10
18/08/2010

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Quality Assurance

This report covers works as outlined in the brief for the above-named project as issued by the relevant authority, and as outlined in the agreed programme of works. Any deviation to the programme of works has been agreed by all parties. The works have been carried out according to the guidelines set out in the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA) Standards, Policy Statements and Codes of Conduct. The report has been prepared in keeping with the guidance set out by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd on the preparation of reports.

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FIGURES (APPENDIX 2)

FIGURE 1: SITE LOCATION

FIGURE 2: LOCATION OF THE EVALUATION AREA

FIGURE 3: TRENCH LOCATION PLAN
SUMMARY

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd were invited by Robert Slack of Lakeland Leisure to undertake an archaeological field evaluation on land at Fitz Park, Cockermouth, Cumbria (NY 1063 3073). The site borders the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 27706), which is believed to be the site of a Romano-British farmstead. The site is also situated less than 500m from a newly discovered area of intensive geophysical anomalies that are likely to relate to a significant Roman settlement. The area is therefore considered to have a high potential for below ground remains associated with Romano-British settlement and land use.

As a result of this potential a programme of archaeological work was undertaken which involved the excavation of ten evaluation trenches. No features of archaeological significance were recorded in any of the trenches. No further work is recommended on this phase of fieldwork.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would like to thank Robert Slack, for commissioning the project, and for all assistance throughout the work. NPA Ltd would also like to thank Jeremy Parsons of CCCHES for all his assistance throughout the project. North Pennines Archaeology Ltd would also like to extend their thanks to John Elliot Ltd for their help during this project.

The archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Tony Liddell. The report was written by Frank Giecco. The project was managed by Frank Giecco, Technical Director for NPA Ltd. The report was edited by Matt Town, Project Manager for NPA Ltd.
1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 In August 2010, North Pennines Archaeology were invited by Robert Slack, on behalf of Lakeland Developments, to undertake an archaeological evaluation at the Fitz, Cockermouth associated with the proposed new housing development at the Fitz, Cockermouth. A desk based assessment (Cracknell 2009) and geophysical survey (Railton 2009) have already been undertaken. The site borders the site of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM 27706), which is believed to be the site of a Romano-British farmstead. The site is also situated less than 500m from a newly discovered area of intensive geophysical anomalies that are likely to relate to a significant Roman settlement. The area was therefore considered to have a high potential for below ground remains associated with Romano-British settlement and land use. As a result of this potential, and in accordance with guidance given in PPS 5 and with local planning policy, a programme of archaeological work was required in order to establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains and their nature, extent and state of preservation. This was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation submitted to and approved by CCCHES.

1.1.2 The study area comprised part of a single field of waste ground adjacent to The Fitz, Cockermouth, Cumbria, measuring 1.3ha in total (Figure 1). The site is centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference NY 1063 3073.

1.1.3 This report outlines the trial trench evaluation work undertaken on-site, the subsequent programme of post-fieldwork analysis, and the results of this scheme of archaeological works.
2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

2.1.1 A project design was submitted by North Pennines Archaeology Ltd in response to a request by Robert Slack, for an archaeological watching brief of the study area. Following acceptance of the project design by Jeremy Parsons of Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd was commissioned by the client to undertake the work. The project design was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 THE TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION

2.2.1 The evaluation consisted of the excavation of ten trenches covering 600 m² of the 13000m² study area, which is part of a much larger development area. The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the nature and extent of below ground archaeological remains within the vicinity of the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the evaluation trenches being located to target both geophysical anomalies and apparently ‘sterile’ areas. All work was conducted according to the recommendations of the Institute for Archaeologists (2008).

2.2.2 In summary, the main objectives of the field evaluation were:

- to establish the presence/absence, nature, extent and state of preservation of archaeological remains and to record these where they were observed;
- to establish the character of those features in terms of cuts, soil matrices and interfaces;
- to recover artefactual material, especially that useful for dating purposes;
- to recover palaeoenvironmental material where it survives in order to understand site and landscape formation processes.

2.2.3 Turf and topsoil was removed by mechanical excavator under close archaeological supervision. The trial trenches were subsequently cleaned by hand and all features were investigated and recording according to the North Pennines Archaeology Ltd standard procedure as set out in the Excavation Manual (Giecco 2009).

2.2.4 No finds were retained, as all were modern in date.

2.2.5 All deposits encountered were deemed unsuitable for environmental sampling, and therefore no samples were retained.
2.2.6  The evaluation trenches were scheduled to be backfilled on the 13th of August.

2.2.7  The fieldwork programme was followed by an assessment of the data as set out in the Management of Archaeological Projects (2nd Edition, 1991).

2.3  THE ARCHIVE

2.3.1  A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the specification, and in line with current UKIC (1990) and English Heritage Guidelines (1991) and according to the Archaeological Archives Forum recommendations (Brown 2007). The archive will be deposited within an appropriate repository, with copies of the report sent to the County Historic Environment Record at Kendal, Cumbria available upon request. The archive can be accessed under the unique project identifier NPA10, FZC-A, CP 1268/10.

2.3.2  North Pennines Archaeology, and Cumbria County Council, support the Online AccesS to the Index of Archaeological InvestigationS (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an on-line index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature, created as a result of developer-funded archaeological work. As a result, details of the results of this project will be made available by North Pennines Archaeology, as a part of this national project.
3 BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

3.1.1 Cockermouth lies on the eastern edge of the West Cumbria Coastal Plain, in a pastoral landscape with gently undulating topography (Countryside Commission 1998). Fitz Park lies on the western edge of Cockermouth, immediately to the north of the A66. The parkland is situated within the valley of the River Derwent, which flows from east to west to the north of the park. The Fitz mansion house lies on the east side of the park. Land rises to the southwest behind the mansion house to a height of 60m AOD. This higher ground is occupied by the Romano-British farmstead within Fitz Woods. The land to the west of the proposed development area is occupied by a modern sewerage works. The proposed development encompasses the parkland behind The Fitz and two agricultural fields to the northwest.

3.1.2 The underlying geology is primarily Carbeniferous limestone, which is part of a narrow band, with coal measures and millstone grit to the west, and Skiddaw slate to the east, with overlying Moraninic Drift (British Geological Survey North Sheet, First Edition Quaternary, 1977). The overlying soils of the area are known as Brickfield 2 soils, which are fine loamy soils, with deposits of alluvium close to the River Derwent.

3.2 HISTORICAL CONTEXT

3.2.1 Introduction: this historical background is compiled mostly from secondary sources, and is intended only as a brief summary of historical developments specific to the study area. A desk-based assessment of the site has already been undertaken, a summary of which is included here (Cracknell 2009).

3.2.2 Prehistoric and Roman: during the Roman period, there was a heavy military presence in Cumbria, and there is considerable evidence for Roman military activity to the north of the study area during this period. The earliest known settlement is at Papcastle c.1km to the north of the proposed development area. This dates to the Romano-British period, and may be subdivided into the fort of Devensio, and the extramural settlement (vicus).

3.2.3 The fort and extramural settlement at Papcastle is well served by Roman roads. There were at least five major roads radiating from Carlisle, which served the whole of Cumbria. The road from Carlisle to Papcastle is well documented (Road 75, Margary 1973), from where it runs through the forts at Old Carlisle (Maglona) and Blennerhasset. The modern A595 road follows the original Roman road. From earlier observations it seems fairly clear that the main road 75, continued beyond Papcastle to the south-west. The fort
occupies a strategic position on a hill overlooking a major crossing of the River Derwent. A number of Roman finds have been recovered from fields immediately to the north of the present study area by metal detectorists.

3.2.4 The earliest evidence of past activity within the study area is the Romano-British settlement in Fitz Woods (SAM 27706). This is a sub-rectangular earthwork enclosure, with rounded corners, inner bank, ditch and outer bank, measuring 44m by 38m internally. The site is interpreted as a native settlement of the Roman period; however this has not been confirmed by excavation. The site is covered by mixed deciduous woodland, probably associated the landscaping of Fitz Park. It is possible that further features associated with this earthwork survive in the vicinity of the study area.

3.2.5 There are a number of other possible prehistoric earthworks in the Derwent Valley including ‘Papcastle Dykes’, which have been identified on air photographs of the area. None are known within the immediate vicinity of the study area.

3.2.6 Medieval: the remains of ridge and furrow earthworks of probably medieval date which have been identified on air photographs of the Derwent Valley, although none have been recorded within the study area.

3.2.7 Post-medieval and Modern: the Fitz estate is recorded from as early as 1620, when Edward Savile, the son of Sir John Savile of Howley, Yorkshire sold the estate to Cuthbert Orfeur of Arkleby. The house was sold again in 1627 to Henry Dalton, who’s son married Elizabeth Bromfield. After her husbands death, Elizabeth married Patricious Senhouse. A branch of the Senhouse family occupied The Fitz until 1991, when it was sold to Mr Robert Slack. The present mansion house is a Grade II Listed Building (English Heritage Listed Building No. 72603) and is a late Georgian mansion, built between 1834 and 1839 (Cracknell 2009). Fitz Park has been managed as parkland since at least the early 19th century.

3.2.8 The line of the London and North-Western Railway, the Cockermouth, Keswick and Penrith Line, was opened in 1864 and ran adjacent to the northern boundary of the study area, to the north of the present road into Cockermouth (B5292). This was closed around 1972.

3.2.9 The most significant modern development close to the study area was the construction of the A66 Trunk Road along the southwest side of the estate. The spoil, excavated from the cut of this road, was deposited across the southeast half of the proposed development area to a depth of up to c.5.2m.
3.3 **PREVIOUS ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK**

3.3.1 An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Carlisle Archaeology Unit in 1999 on the western part of the Fitz Park estate, prior to the construction of a modern housing estate (centred on NGR NY 1114 3034). No report exists for this work; however it is believed that no significant archaeological features were revealed.

3.3.2 The desk-based assessment undertaken for the present development included a visual site inspection of the study area (Cracknell 2009). This identified that the area of made-ground adjacent to the A66 would be unresponsive to a geophysical survey. The area of the Romano-British settlement in Fitz Woods was also visited and found to be tree-covered. Parts of the proposed development area to the east of the monument were also covered in vegetation at the time of the visit.

3.3.3 In June 2008, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, undertook geophysical surveys of c.1.45ha of land to the north of Papcastle, Cockermouth, Cumbria (NGR NY 1115 3160), in advance of a proposed private development at the site. The results of the geophysical survey, on the north side of the survey area, were dominated by the igneous geological anomalies detected in this area. However, the survey successfully detected archaeological features over the remainder of the site. The majority of the features detected were associated with the medieval and post-medieval agricultural use of the site, including the remains of ridge and furrow cultivation, former field boundaries, and possible land drains (Railton 2009).

3.3.4 In October 2009, North Pennines Archaeology Ltd, undertook geophysical surveys of land at Fitz Park. Geomagnetic surveys covering c.5ha of land in total were conducted over two separate locations within the study area. The central part of the study area was not surveyed, due to the presence of a substantial depth of made-ground resulting from the construction of the A66 carriageway. The northern part of the study area was situated in an area of alluvial geology close to the River Derwent. The most notable features detected by the geophysical survey were a series of linear and curvilinear magnetic anomalies, which are interpreted as possible palaeochannels. Modern service pipes and a series of possible land drains were also detected.

3.3.5 The southern part of the study area (the present evaluation area) was considered to have high archaeological potential due to the close proximity of a Romano-British settlement in Fitz Woods. However, the results of the geophysical survey in this area were dominated by the presence of fired/ferrous magnetic material resulting from modern activity, making the value of the geophysical survey extremely limited (Railton 2009).
4 TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The trial trench evaluation was undertaken in a single phase between the 9th and 13th of August 2010. The topsoil was stripped by a 5 Tonne tracked excavator with a toothless bucket.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 Trench 1 and 2: Trenches 1 and 2 were located towards the western limit of the survey area and were aligned east-west/north-south respectively forming a T shape (Figure 3). Both trenches measured 30m in length by 2m in width and were machined to a maximum depth of 0.39m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a 0.20m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring 0.10m in depth. A single ditch of post-medieval date was observed in the southern edge of Trench 2 that formed part of a recently removed field boundary which was still traceable by a line of trees crossing the field on a north-west/south-east alignment. The shallow ditch [103] measured 0.20m in depth and had a U-shaped profile. Its single fill a grey brown silty clay produced 2 sherds of transfer printed ware of 20th century date. No other features of archaeological significance were observed in either trench.

4.2.2 Trench 3 and 4: Trench 3 and 4 were located immediately to the south of the Romano-British farmstead (SAM 27706). Trench 3 was aligned northwest/southeast and Trench 4 northeast/southwest again forming a T-shape (Figure 3). Both trenches measured 30m in length by 2m in width and were machined to a maximum depth of 0.54m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath an approximately 0.20m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring on average 0.10m in depth. No features of archaeological significance were observed in either trenches.

4.2.3 Trench 5: Trench 5 was located across a possible curving soil filled geophysical anomaly in the centre of the study area (Figure 3). Trench 5 was aligned northwest/southeast and measured 30m in length by 2m in width and was machined to a maximum depth of 0.30m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a 0.13m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring 0.05m in depth. No features of archaeological significance were observed in the trench.
4.2.4 **Trench 6:** Trench 6 was located across a second section of possible curving soil filled geophysical anomaly in the centre of the study area (Figure 3). Trench 6 was aligned southwest/northeast and measured 30m in length by 2m in width and was machined to a maximum depth of 0.40m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a 0.16m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring 0.06m in depth. No features of archaeological significance were observed in the trench.

4.2.5 **Trench 7:** Trench 7 was located in the eastern half of the study area, was aligned east-west. The trench measured 30m in length by 2m in width and was machined to a maximum depth of 0.60m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a 0.16m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring 0.06m in depth. No features of archaeological significance were observed in the trench.

4.2.6 **Trench 8 and 9:** Trench 8 and 9 were located immediately to the east of the Romano-British farmstead. Trench 8 was aligned north-south and trench 9 east-west again forming a L-shape (Figure 3). Both trenches measured 30m in length by 2m in width and were machined to a maximum depth of 0.4m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a approximately 0.20m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring on average 0.15m in depth. No features of archaeological significance were observed in either trenches.

4.2.7 **Trench 10:** Trench 10 was located in the eastern end of the study area and was aligned north-west/south-east. The trench measured 30m in length by 2m in width and was machined to a maximum depth of 0.45m at which point the natural clay (100) was recorded. The natural clay was sealed beneath a 0.25m deep deposit of grey brown silty subsoil (102), which was in turn sealed by a thin layer of topsoil measuring 0.06m in depth. The subsoil was highly disturbed by 20th century activity which contained small amounts of black plastic and tree root action. No features of archaeological significance were observed in the trench.

4.3 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING**

4.3.1 No archaeological finds were recovered, and no environmental samples were recovered during the evaluation.
5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 CONCLUSIONS

5.1.1 During the trial trench evaluation, ten trenches were excavated, covering 600m² of the area adjacent to a scheduled ancient monument in Fitz Woods (SAM 27706). The purpose of the evaluation was to establish the nature and extent of below ground archaeological remains within the vicinity, the evaluation trenches being located to target both possible geophysical anomalies and apparently ‘sterile’ areas. All trenches were excavated down to the top of the natural substrate.

5.1.2 All ten trenches were devoid of any archaeological features or deposits.

5.1.3 The results obtained during the present evaluation, and from previous archaeological investigations suggest that the study area has not been intensively used in the past other than for agricultural purposes.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.2.1 As the purpose of this archaeological field evaluation was to establish the nature and extent of below ground remains within the selected study area as specified by Jeremy Parsons of CCCHES, no further work is deemed necessary associated with this present study. However, given the significance of previous archaeological discoveries within the immediate vicinity of the study area, it is recommended that any future invasive work be subject to a similar programme of archaeological investigation.
6 BIBLIOGRAPHY

6.1 SECONDARY SOURCES

Archaeology Data Service (2001) Geophysical Data in Archaeology: A Guide to Good Practice, Arts and Humanities Data Service


Railton, M (2009) Geophysical survey of land at The Fitz, Cockermouth, Cumbria, Unpublished report Ref. CP1031/09
APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT TABLE

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Table 1: List of contexts issued during the evaluation
APPENDIX 2: FIGURES
Figure 1: Location map

PROJECT: Fitz Park, Cockermouth

SCALE: 1:15,000 at A4

REPORT No: CP 1268/10

CLIENT Robert Slack

DRAWN BY: MDR

DATE: August 2010

FIGURE No: 1

The map illustrates the outline of the proposed development area.