

BLINKETT FARM, ALLITHWAITE, CUMBRIA



Archaeological Rapid Desk-Based Assessment and Watching Brief: Draft Report



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SUMMARY

Mason Gillibrand Architects, on behalf of Richard Whitton, have submitted proposals for the construction of a caravan park at Blenkett Farm, Allithwaite, Cumbria (SD 39362 75880). The development site is located within an area of archaeological potential and, accordingly, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) issued a verbal brief requesting that an archaeological rapid desk-based assessment and a watching brief be respectively undertaken prior to, and during the development groundworks. Following submission of a project design to meet CCCHES requirements, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were commissioned by Mr Whitton to undertake the programme of archaeological works.

The rapid desk-based assessment, undertaken in April 2007, identified 13 sites of cultural heritage interest within a study area extending 500m from the centre of the development site. These included a number of prehistoric sites, the most significant of which, and located barely 100m to the east, was Kirkhead Cave, from which evidence of human activity has been recovered dating from the Palaeolithic to the Roman periods. The watching brief, conducted over a period of three days in August 2007, monitored the topsoil stripping of an access track, some 300m in length, and 13 caravan bays. The only archaeological feature exposed during the works comprised the remains of a drystone enclosure-period field boundary, shown on the 1851 Ordnance Survey map and removed some time after 1990.

The basal deposits revealed by the groundworks comprised layers of colluvium, likely to represent hillwash from Kirkhead, to the immediate east, and occasional outcrops of limestone bedrock. The colluvium is of particular significance as it may contain significant archaeological remains, including both artefacts and human bones, that have eroded from Kirkhead. Similarly, although the underlying limestone pavement was not revealed other than in intermittent patches, there is a possibility that *in situ* archaeological features and artefacts may remain within natural fissures below the level of the present development. Furthermore, two peat deposits were identified, one of which appeared to have been partially dug-out and maintained as part of the wider scheme of drainage in the area that commenced in the eighteenth century. As such, although the present programme of development has had little impact on the archaeological resource, a number of significant deposits remain on the site, and these would be sensitive to any deeper excavations, and any further development of the site.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Mr Richard Whitton for commissioning the project, and Mason Gillibrand Architects for organising the works. Thanks are also due to Jo Mackintosh at Cumbria Historic Environment Record for her assistance with this project. OA North are also grateful to Mr Stan Crichton for his assistance and liaison during the watching brief.

The rapid desk-based assessment was undertaken and compiled by Kelly Clapperton, whilst the watching brief was undertaken and reported upon by Steve Clarke. The illustrations were produced by Marie Rowland, and the project was managed by Stephen Rowland, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 Mason Gillibrand Architects, on behalf of Richard Whitton, have submitted proposals for the construction of a caravan park at Blenkett Farm, Allithwaite, Cumbria (SD 39362 75880; Fig 1). The development site is located within an area of archaeological potential and, accordingly, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) issued a verbal brief requesting that an archaeological rapid desk-based assessment and a watching brief be respectively undertaken prior to, and during the development groundworks. Following submission of a project design (*Appendix 1*) to meet CCCHES requirements, Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) were commissioned by Mr Whitton to undertake the programme of archaeological works.
- 1.1.2 The rapid desk-based assessment, undertaken in April 2007, comprised a search of both published and unpublished sources held by the Historic Environmental Record (HER) in Kendal, and the archives and library held at OA North. The aim of the rapid desk-based assessment was to provide a suitably researched context to help inform the subsequent intrusive work programme, investigative methodologies, and to assist in the interpretation of any archaeological findings. The watching brief, conducted over a period of three days in August 2007, aimed to examine all soil horizons exposed by the development groundworks, to establish the presence of any archaeological remains, and to record those remains in an appropriate manner.
- 1.1.3 Those elements of the development proposal that would impact upon the archaeological resource included topsoil stripping for an access road and 13 bays for caravans. The original plan also included the excavation of a pond, and for the creation of a roundabout, although due to poor weather, these works were not enacted in 2007. Subsequent correspondence with Mr Whitton has indicated that work on these elements will not be resumed, due to the unsuitability of the underlying sediments. This report details the findings of the desk-based assessment in the form of a historical background, and outlines the results of the watching brief undertaken in August 2007 in a subsequent chapter. As well as discussing the results, the document concludes with an assessment of the impact upon the archaeological resource of the present development.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 The CCCHES-approved project design (*Appendix 1*) was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

- 2.2.1 The rapid desk-based assessment sought to establish the potential of the archaeological resource within the development area through consideration of known cultural heritage sites within the immediate surroundings and, where appropriate, within the wider historical and archaeological context of the region. All statutory and non-statutory sites within a 500m radius of the development site were identified and are located on Figure 2. A further study of cartographic sources, dating from the sixteenth century to the present day, was also carried out, as well as an analysis of readily-available published and unpublished literature relevant to the site.
- 2.2.2 ***Historic Environmental Record, Kendal (HER):*** the Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Records (HER) in Kendal is an extensive database of all known archaeological sites in the county. It also holds a library of published and unpublished documents for consultation.
- 2.2.2 ***Oxford Archaeology North:*** OA North has an extensive archive of secondary sources relevant to the study area, as well as numerous unpublished client reports on work carried out both as OA North and in its former guise of Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU). These were consulted where necessary.

2.3 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.3.1 Close liaison was maintained between OA North staff and the site contractors during the watching brief. The monitored groundworks were carried out by a mechanical excavator using a ditching bucket. The programme of field observation recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features. This work comprised observation during the groundworks, the examination of any horizons exposed, and the recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artefacts found during the excavations. A metal detector was used to scan spoil heaps and the surfaces of exposed subsoil horizons.
- 2.3.2 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of revealed subsoil strata on OA North *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. In addition, an indexed photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was compiled.

2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 1*), and with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The paper and digital archive will be deposited with the County Record Office in Barrow-in-Furness on completion of the project, and copies of the report, together with a synthesis of the archive, will be submitted to the HER in Kendal.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

- 3.1.1 The proposed development is located on agricultural land to the south of the village of Allithwaite and to the immediate west of Kirkhead Wood, overlooking Kent's Bank and Morecambe Bay to the south-east. The landscape of the Cartmel peninsula comprises several contrasting elements, with limestone cliffs and headlands as well as undulating coastal pasture. To the north are the limestone fells, rising to over 200m in height and, to the south, the coastal marshes and mudflats of Morecambe Bay (Countryside Commission 1998).
- 3.1.2 The surrounding geology is dominated by Lower Carboniferous limestone, typically in upstanding blocks (as at Castle Haw, in the immediate vicinity of the development) with limestone scars, cliffs and pavements, and extensive limestone scree slopes (Countryside Commission 1998). Glacial till has formed along the valley floors, and is overlain by Brown Ranker soils (*ibid*, Ordnance Survey 1983). The limestone outcrop of Kirkhead, to the east, is largely wooded, as is Castle Haw, but the valley occupied by the proposed development site has been cultivated through the insertion of an extensive drainage system.

3.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 3.2.1 **Introduction:** the following section presents the results of the rapid desk-based assessment. As such, it is fairly closely-focused upon the development site and its wider surroundings; is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of the archaeology of the region.

Period	Date Range
Palaeolithic	30,000 – 10,000 BC
Mesolithic	10,000 – 3,500 BC
Neolithic	3,500 – 2,200 BC
Bronze Age	2,200 – 700 BC
Iron Age	700 BC – AD 43
Romano-British	AD 43 – AD 410
Early Medieval	AD 410 – AD 1066
Late Medieval	AD 1066 – AD 1540
Post-medieval	AD 1540 – c1750
Industrial Period	cAD1750 – 1901
Modern	Post-1901

Table 1: Summary of British archaeological periods and date ranges

- 3.2.2 **Prehistoric:** the development site lies within an area of high potential for prehistoric archaeology. Barely 100m to the east, located in a fault-scarp cliff line on the lower slopes of the steep Kirkhead limestone outcrop, is the nationally significant scheduled monument of Kirkhead Cave (Site 5; HER 2415; SM 13444). The cave consists of a single chamber 13m long by 7m at its widest point, and is one of only three known Upper Palaeolithic caves in

Cumbria, representing Britain's most northerly known occupation site from an otherwise sparsely represented period (Brennand 2006). Excavations were undertaken in around 1864 by local geologists Bolton and Morris, but are poorly recorded and all the significant finds are now lost (Salisbury 1997). Further excavation was undertaken in 1968-9 by members of the Lancaster Cave and Mine Research Society under the direction of Ashmead and Wood, but only interim reports were published. The latter excavations revealed 10 flint bladelets dating to the Upper Palaeolithic towards the rear of the cave, whilst a *Megaloceros* sp (Irish elk) antler boss, radiocarbon dated to 10,700 +/- 200 BP (HAR 1059; 11050-10400 cal BC), and other associated faunal remains and flints were found in higher deposits (Salisbury 1997). Another 13 flints and further faunal material were excavated from the entrance of the cave (Salisbury 1991, 263). The radiocarbon date would suggest that occupation at the cave occurred in the Windermere Interstadial, a brief period of climatic amelioration shortly before the end of the last ice age. Although the date of the artefacts cannot be disputed, the context of these findings has been questioned in recent years, as the majority of the remains have been heavily disturbed by animal burrowing (*ibid*).

- 3.2.3 Kirkhead Cave is not the only significant site from this early period within the limestone outcrop, and recent excavations by Salisbury (1997) have recovered further Upper Palaeolithic remains from within and around Kent's Bank Cavern (Site 1; HER 5464), some 200m to the north of the present development site. Two flint blades removed from between two rock fall layers bear a striking resemblance to the bladelets from Kirkhead, and may be contemporary. At a lower level, again sealed by rock falls, 31 fragments of human skull and a small horse mandible were identified. More work needs to be done, however, to securely date these findings and, though the skull is reported as unusually thick compared to modern specimens (Salisbury 1997, 9), there are a number of pathological conditions that might lead to the thickening of the outer and inner cranial tables, and of the medial diploe (Roberts and Manchester 1997). Lindale Low Cave, further to the north, is another such site to have produced characteristic Upper Palaeolithic artefacts (Salisbury 1988 and 1992).
- 3.2.4 During the Mesolithic period, the sea level was somewhat lower than that of today, and the limestone outcrops would have provided excellent vantage points over extensive hunting grounds and the nearby coastal and wetland resources. Some finds dating to the Mesolithic have been recovered from limestone caves in southern Cumbria, including Kirkhead Cave, but they have not been thoroughly analysed or published (Hodgson and Brennand 2006). A scatter of flint artefacts were identified on an area some 75m to the east of the development site (Site 7), although these have, again, yet to be published (HER 3334).
- 3.2.5 Although the Neolithic period is synonymous with the adoption of agriculture and more settled habitation, it is likely that hunting and gathering remained a significant feature of the economy well into the period, making Mesolithic and early Neolithic assemblages difficult to differentiate. Indeed, the large Mesolithic assemblage from Leven's Park, 10km to the north-east of the

development site, also included early Neolithic stone tools, indicating a slow transition between the two periods (Hodgson and Brennand 2006). There are a number of characteristic Neolithic stone artefacts from the wider area of southern Cumbria (Hodgkinson *et al* 2001), but evidence in the immediate locale is restricted to a few, poorly provenanced pieces of flintwork from Kirkhead Cave (EH 2007).

3.2.6 To the north of the development area, in Allithwaite, an early Bronze Age cremation cemetery was excavated at the turn of the twenty-first century (Wild 2003). Eight cremation deposits, four within urns, along with two pyre deposits were excavated from natural fissures in the limestone. These were found to represent the remains of 12-15 people and the remains of up to 10 other ceramic vessels; another urn that was discovered in the nineteenth century may also come from this site (*ibid*). Excavations at Whitton's Cave (Site 9; also known as Allithwaite Cave, the site appears not to be recorded on the HER), 200m north-east of the development site, and Kirkhead Cave have revealed Bronze Age deposits, including ceramics and human remains (Salisbury 1997; Hodgson and Brennand 2006; EH 2007). These, however, had been heavily disturbed by animal burrowing. Whitton's cave was investigated in 1971-2 by the Lancaster Cave and Mine Research Society and excavated in 1991-2 by CR Salisbury. Human remains, representing three individuals, were recovered from the entrance chamber, while remains of a possible fourth were found elsewhere. This material was dated to the Bronze Age by the presence of a loosely-associated coarse sherd of incised pottery (Salisbury 1997). Those human remains and bronze artefacts from Kirkhead Cave were recovered in the nineteenth-century excavations, and the context of their discovery is poorly understood (*ibid*). In more low-lying areas to the west of the development site, bronze palstaves have been found near Wraysholme Tower, 600m to the west, and from Flookburgh, the findings being described as: '*many hammers and battleaxes of different sizes, and of different kinds of stone, as well as celts of brass, copper and stone have from time to time been found in most parts of the Cartmel district, particularly at Nun's Hill, Nab Green, Raisholm Tower, and in the meadows below Flookburgh*' (Stockdale 1872, 250).

3.2.7 There is a paucity of Iron Age remains in the north-west of England, and the area around Allithwaite fits into this pattern. Climatic deterioration is thought to have led to the abandonment of upland settlement on land that would have become increasingly less viable, and a trend towards defended settlements. It is thus possible that the prehistoric enclosed settlement on Kirkhead dates to this period (Site 6; HER19246). Lying on a level terrace, the settlement comprises a group of enclosures defined by low turf covered stone banks, the outermost of which has a possible entrance to the north-west. There is some evidence for a possible Iron Age settlement at Skelmore Heads near Ulverston, to the west of the development site, and from Warton Crag, near Carnforth, to the south-east. Although Castlehead promontory fort lies about 5km to the north-east of the development site (Thomas 1976), it is dated on typological grounds and, where scientifically dated, would appear to originate in the Later Bronze Age before being abandoned during the course of the Iron Age (Matthews 2002; Hodgkinson *et al* 2001). In circumstances somewhat analogous to the Allithwaite Bronze Age cemetery (Wild 2003), several Iron Age burials have

been recently identified within natural fissures within a limestone pavement at Levens (OA North 2006).

3.2.8 **Roman:** there is very little evidence of Roman activity in the Allithwaite area, although some material recovered from Kirkhead Cave by Bolton in 1864 indicates contemporary activity, albeit with a rather native bent (Salisbury 1997). A coin of Domitian, AD 81-96, was identified, as well as a trefoil shaped fibula, an enamelled pin and amber beads, that may date to the Romano-British period (*ibid*). Similarly, a Roman tombstone from Eller How, 8km to the north of the development site implies the presence of wealthy and Romanised individuals, although the possibility that the stone was redeposited from elsewhere cannot be entirely discounted (OA North 2007).

3.2.9 **Medieval:** physical evidence for early medieval activity within and around the development area is typically sparse, although there are occasional documentary references to settlement within the wider area. Cartmel is first mentioned in AD 677, when its land and British populace were granted to St Cuthbert by King Ecgfrith of Northumbria (Farrer and Brownbill 1914, 254). Indeed, it has been suggested, on toponymic grounds, that a seventh-century church dedicated to St Cuthbert was established at Kirkhead (Taylor 1955), and may be the pre-Conquest chapel at ‘*Kierkepoll*’, mentioned in a charter of 1199 (Dickinson 1945, 50). The name Allithwaite is Scandinavian in origin, stemming from the personal name *Eilifr*, and the suffix *-thwaite*, meaning a clearing, meadow or paddock (Mills 1998). This Nordic influence is likely to have derived from settlement by Hiberno-Norse refugees, who were evicted from Dublin in the ninth century, although the scale of this diaspora and the political and genetic impact is harder to ascertain (Winchester 1985, 99; Newman 2006, 108).

3.2.10 Following the Norman Conquest, the manor and lands of Allithwaite and Flookburgh were owned by Gospatric of Workington. In 1106 the descendants of Gospatric, the Curwens, donated five acres of land to the Abbot of Furness, who established the Priory of Cartmel and the Abbot Hall (HER 2416), just to the south-east of the study area (Taylor 1955). The present listing building is of nineteenth-century date and built upon the site of its medieval predecessor. The Abbot of Furness would rest here before crossing the sands of Morecambe Bay, and a small house was established for guide across the Bay. However, records of burials within the adjacent Chapel Fields (Farrer and Brownbill 1914) would suggest the site was a focus for funerary activity as well as hospitality. Around this time Allithwaite was divided into two wards, Upper and Lower. The Curwens occupying the Lower, and the le Flemings the Upper. In 1200, Thomas son of Gospatric gave the village and manor of Upper Allithwaite to Thomas de Harrington. The manor was independently held, except for Abbot Hall and land around Humphrey’s Head that belonged to Cartmel Priory, until the Battle of Bosworth. The seat of the Harrington’s at Wraysholme Tower, just to the west of the study area, passed into the hands of the King, who in turn granted it to the Stanleys. By 1521 the lordship was held by the Earl of Derby, who sold it to Hugh Dicconsan in 1594 (*ibid*).

3.2.11 **Post-medieval:** although the religious institutions had been major landowners in the area, the Dissolution appears to have had little immediate effect on the village of Allithwaite with its economy typically centred around agriculture, supplemented by a little fishing. The construction of large dykes in the eighteenth century indicated an expansion of agricultural land; these remain a significant feature of the modern agricultural landscape, and areas of reclamation can be identified on earlier editions of the Ordnance Survey. The field boundaries around the dykes, including those within the development area itself, often appear characteristic of enclosure period systems, but the form of several of the drains, and the aratral curvature of some of the fields within the wider landscape suggest an older system of land management, fossilising earthworks created by ox-ploughing. Such fields are particularly noticeable to the north of the study area, and to the north-east around Barn Hey, where there is the impression of preserved croft boundaries. It is not certain whether the Allithwaite corn mill at the north-western edge of the study area (Site 11; HER 16107) dates to this period of expansion; almost nothing survives of the site, but its location within an enclosure-period field system, away from the heart of the historic village, may imply a post-medieval date.

3.2.12 The industrial-period agricultural expansion was aided by fertilising the fields with lime produced in kilns that utilised stone from the local outcrops. Past quarrying activity is evident within the area of the Site 6 prehistoric enclosure. Two such eighteenth- or nineteenth-century structures are recorded on Kirkhead. Site 4 (HER16510) is a listed building (LB number 24251) and is particularly well-preserved, comprising a square stone structure built into the slope of the hill with a round-arched fire hole with a keystone and an inner hearth of brick. The second lime kiln (Site 2; HER16109) was recorded on the first edition 6":1mile OS map of 1851 as standing some 200m to the east of the development site, although its absence from the 1910 edition may suggest it was subsequently demolished. It is uncertain whether the earthwork at Laneside (Site 3; HER 16510) and the steps and platform at Site 10 (HER 16509) relate to this activity in the manner of several of the tracks on Kirkhead (Salisbury 1997).

3.2.13 In the mid-nineteenth century the Lancaster to Barrow-in-Furness railway was established, skirting the coast to the south of the study area and opening up the area to tourism and other leisure activities. Although likely to be associated with Abbott's Hall, the nineteenth-century tower-shaped summerhouse on Kirkhead (Site 8) is representative of the expansion and diversification of leisure activities. The site is a listed building (LB number 24250).

3.3 MAP REGRESSION ANALYSIS

3.3.1 **Introduction:** the following section represents a review of those readily available cartographic sources within the scope of the rapid study, helping to trace the history of the study area, and those sites identified within and around it.

- 3.3.2 **Saxton 1577**: this is the earliest map of the area around Cartmel. It lacks in detail, but locates the settlements of Howker, Flookburgh and Wraysholme Tower (also known as Riseholm Tower). A small building called Cartlone Passage may relate to the Abbot Hall and the guide who took people across Morecambe Bay.
- 3.3.3 **Yates 1786**: this map is far more detailed than Saxton's, locating the buildings and streets of Allithwaite, the houses lining Kent's Bank and Wraysholme Tower. The *Carter or Guide's House* is located to the east of Allithwaite and north of Kent's Bank. No activity is noted on the development site.
- 3.3.4 **Tithe Award of Cartmel 1807**: the area to the north-west of Kent's Bank has been divided into several fields, none of which were subject to a tithe award. The nearest tithe field is to the south-west of the development area, around Wyke Marsh and Bank Moor, which was owned by the heir's of a Mr William Dover.
- 3.3.5 **Hennet 1830**: this map is less detailed than Yates', but gives the position of Wraysholme Tower and the summer house (Site 8). Very little has changed in the general locale, and no obvious development has taken place on the development site.
- 3.3.6 **Ordnance Survey first edition 6":1mile, 1851**: Kirkhead and Kirkhead Wood are located just to the south of The Edge Wood, which was later to become Blenkett Wood. Kirkhead Cave is situated to the west of the Summer House, which sits on the summit of the Kirkhead peninsular. Two limekilns (Sites 2 and 4) are located on the northern slopes of Kirkhead, to the east of the current Blenkett Wood, and a well (Site 12; not recorded on the HER) to the north of Castle Haw, which is to the west of Edge Wood. The Lancaster to Barrow-in-Furness railway crosses the tip of the peninsular and cuts across Wyke Marsh. To the east of Kirkhead is the *Site of Abbot Hall*.
- 3.3.7 **Ordnance Survey first edition 25": 1 mile, 1890**: Kirkhead Cave is located, as well as the Summer House. Only one limekiln (Site 4) is noted to the east of Kirkhead Cave. An 'old shaft' is located to the immediate north of Castle Haw, which relates to a well (Site 12) on the 1851 map. Blenkett Farm is named, and seems to relate to buildings identified shown on the 1851 map; the wood has also been renamed as Blenkett Wood. To the south-west of Kirkhead, and abutting the railway line, some marsh land has been reclaimed and put under agriculture. There have otherwise been very few changes across the site since 1851.
- 3.3.8 **Ordnance Survey second edition 6":1 mile, 1893**: this map is nearly identical to the 1890 version, which is unsurprising, although the 'old shaft' or well to the north of Castle Haw is no longer identified on this map.
- 3.3.9 **Ordnance Survey third edition 6":1 mile, 1913**: this map focuses on the area of the development site itself. To the immediate west there has been a sewerage works constructed, following the line of the dyke running north/south. The 'old shaft' has been re-identified to the north of Castle Haw. Kirkhead Cave is located, and the limekiln to the north-east is now defunct,

described as an 'old limekiln'. No other developments have been identified on or near the development site.

- 3.3.10 ***Ordnance Survey third edition 25": 1 mile, 1919***: changes within the proposed development site have been negligible. To the east there has been some restructuring of Abbot Hall and possible some landscaping immediately around the building. Blenkett Farm, to the north, has expanded also, with the addition of a building to the south-west.

4. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The extent of the development groundworks are shown on Figure 3. These comprised the excavation of a rather sinuous access track, up to 4m wide, that ran for 120m eastward from the Blenkett Farm cattle sheds, before wending its way southward for some 180m. A series of 13 bays for static caravans were stripped of topsoil on either side of the north/south aligned section of the track, each measuring approximately 20m long by 10m wide. The track terminated on a slightly raised coll, the entirety of which was stripped.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 Across the development, the site was stripped of topsoil **100**, 0.1-0.3m thick, down to the subsoil, **101**. The latter comprised a yellowish-brown silty clay, with a high component of angular limestone pebbles and cobbles, and is likely to represent a colluvial deposit eroded from the slopes of Kirkhead. On occasion, small patches of the irregular, upper surface of the underlying limestone pavement were revealed poking through the colluvium (Plate 1), but this exposure was not consistent across the site, nor located within any specific area, relating more to the vagaries of the underlying geology than to any particular design.

4.2.2 Just to the west of the bend in the access track, a rough scatter of unworked limestone boulders on a north/south alignment, **102**, was likely to be the remains of a short stretch of drystone wall (Plate 2). No other archaeological features were identified, and no finds were made, using either the metal detector or through visual examination. However, two peat deposits were located and their putative extents have been marked on Figure 3. That to the south-east of Castle Haw was identified when an L-shaped area was stripped of topsoil (Plate 3); the area was clearly unsuitable as a caravan base, and further excavation was abandoned. The second area of peat was located to the south of the limit of excavation. At some point, this second peat deposit had been partially dug-out and maintained to form a pond, perhaps collecting some of the water from the extensive local drainage system that commenced in the eighteenth century. An examination of the sides of the pond suggested that the peat deposit was likely to be at least 0.6m thick.

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION

- 5.1.1 Although the rapid desk-based assessment identified a relatively small number of sites within the 500m radius study area, individually and collectively these sites provide a number of clues about the nature and potential of the cultural heritage resource in the immediate area. As such, Kirkhead has been a focus of human activity throughout each of the major periods of human history, with functions ranging from probable settlement in the Palaeolithic, burial in the Bronze Age, possible religious activity in the early medieval period and as a site for industry in the post-medieval and industrial periods.
- 5.1.2 In terms of their dating, their rarity, group value and the temporal diversity of their usage, the cave sites are clearly the most significant elements of the cultural landscape in the area. In the case of Kirkhead Cave, this significance is recognised through its statutory designation as a scheduled monument, whilst Kent's Bank Cave is listed on the HER. Although Blenkett Wood/Allithwaite Cave (Site 9) does not share this recognition, it is still a highly significant site, and is recorded on the English Heritage pastscape database (EH 2007). Although loosely dated to the prehistoric period, the enclosed settlement of Site 6 is of great significance. If it can be dated to the Bronze Age, it has the potential to be related to contemporary activity within the cave sites, whilst an Iron Age date would make the site significant in terms of its rarity within the immediate area. Given the paucity of contemporary physical evidence, any remains associated with the pre-Conquest chapel reputed to have stood on Kirkhead would also be of great significance (Taylor 1955).
- 5.1.3 Although Kirkhead may have been the focus for prehistoric and early medieval activity, and is thus the area of highest potential for archaeological remains from these periods, extension of this zone of potential into the present development site is not unreasonable. It is possible that artefacts and activity debris (including human remains) could have eroded out of the outcrop, becoming redeposited at the foot of the cliff. The scale of this colluviation is illustrated by the fact that each of the cave sites were subject to rock falls, and had their entrances largely blocked by hillwash (Salisbury 1997). As such, it is perfectly reasonable to suppose that such remains could lie within the present development area, particularly given that colluvial deposits were exposed during the present programme of groundworks. Similarly, those Bronze Age artefacts discovered at Flookburgh and Wraysholme Tower, to the west of the study area, may well have been deposited close to, or within water. Prior to drainage, similarly wet conditions may have existed at the foot of Kirkhead, which would certainly have been an impressive vantage point for ritualised disposal and conspicuous consumption. In this respect, the peat deposit at the southern end of the development area and to the south-east of Castle Haw may be of interest should any groundworks take place in this area.

5.1.4 Despite this potential for significant archaeological remains, the only feature of archaeological interest comprised drystone wall **102**. This feature is likely to relate to an enclosure period field boundary shown on the 1851 OS map, and removed since 1990. It should be considered, however, that should prehistoric stone tools have become incorporated within those deposits disturbed by the present development, they would have been extremely hard to recognise due to their small size (particularly in the case of any Mesolithic artefacts) and the background scatter of shattered limestone pebbles.

5.2 IMPACT OF THE PRESENT AND ANY FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

5.2.1 The scheme of development enacted up to August 2007 has had no discernible impact upon the archaeological resource, comprising only the removal of topsoil and otherwise disturbed deposits. However, in consideration of the significance of the archaeological sites in the immediate surroundings, and the presence of erosion deposits within the development area, it is possible that any deeper groundworks, either as part of the present scheme of works, or as part of a separate application in the area, may contact archaeologically sensitive deposits. These might include redeposited artefacts and human and faunal remains within colluvial layers, as well as *in situ* features and artefacts within fissures of the presently largely buried limestone pavement.

5.2.2 The identified peat deposits also potentially represent a significant and sensitive resource, particularly if their accumulation straddles the long period of Kirkhead's occupation. Such deposits would be easily impacted upon by any drainage works and excavation extending into these areas; in such instances, a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling would be appropriate.

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7. ILLUSTRATIONS

7.1 FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location Map

Figure 2: Location Plan Showing Sites of Archaeological Interest Within the Area

Figure 3: Plan of Archaeological Watching Brief Area

7.2 PLATES

Plate 1: Topsoil stripping of caravan platform; working shot showing intermittent exposure of limestone bedrock

Plate 2: Remains of enclosure-period drystone wall *102*

Plate 3: Exposure of surface of peat deposit to south-east of Castle Haw

APPENDIX 1: PROJECT DESIGN

**BLENKETT FARM
CARAVAN PARK,
ALLITHWAITE,
CUMBRIA**

**Rapid Desk-Based
Assessment and
Watching Brief Project
Design**



Oxford Archaeology North

January 2007

Mason Gillibrand Architects

OA North Tender No: t2944
NGR: SD 39362 75880

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Mason Gillibrand Architects (hereafter ‘the Client’), has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) submit proposals for a programme of archaeological work to be undertaken in advance of, and during, groundworks associated with the development of a caravan park at Blenkett Farm, Allithwaite, Cumbria (Grid reference SD 39362 75880). The development site is located within an area of archaeological potential and, consequently, Cumbria County Council Historic Environment Service (CCCHES) issued a verbal brief requesting a rapid desk-based assessment to be undertaken prior to the development and a watching brief to be conducted during any ground disturbing activities associated with the development, including topsoil stripping, landscaping, installation of services, etc. The following document represents a project design to carry out the above programme of work and has been prepared in accordance with communication from CCCHES.

1.2 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

1.2.1 The proposed development site lies on agricultural land to the immediate west of Kirkhead Wood and overlooking Kent’s Bank and Morecambe Bay. A number of significant sites, are known from the surrounding limestone, including the highly important Kirkhead Cave, immediately to the east, which yielded extremely rare evidence of Upper Palaeolithic occupation and, together with Lindale Low Cave, represents the most north-westerly activity known from this period in the country. To the north-west, at Allithwaite, a Bronze Age cremation cemetery located within a natural fissure in the limestone was excavated by OA North. Although there is little known Roman activity in the area, the medieval period is represented by Wraysholme Tower, just one of many pele towers in the area that were erected in this border area during the centuries of almost constant warfare and raiding between England and Scotland. The industrial period in the area is represented by a number of disused mine shafts and old quarries.

1.3 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.3.1 OA North has considerable experience of excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 25 years. Evaluations, desk-based assessments, watching briefs and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North is an **Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17**, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following programme has been designed to assess the potential for preserved archaeological remains and to record the archaeological deposits affected by the proposed development of the site, in order to determine their extent, nature and significance. To this end, the following programme has been designed, in accordance with CCCHES, to provide a rapid desk-based assessment, and watching brief. The results of the rapid desk-based assessment will provide important information on the nature of any archaeological remains uncovered during the watching brief. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:

2.1.1 **Rapid Desk-Based Assessment:** to undertake a rapid desk-based assessment of the existing resource, including primary and secondary sources.

2.1.2 **Archaeological Watching Brief:** to undertake a programme of observation and recording during any ground disturbance to determine the presence, quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.

2.1.3 **Report and Archive:** a report will be produced for the Client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (1991) and in accordance with the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990).

3 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 DESK-BASED ASSESSMENT

3.1.1 A rapid desk-based study will be undertaken as appropriate, depending on the availability of source material, and will seek to cover a 1km radius around the centre of the proposed development site. The level of such work will be dictated by the timescale of the project.

3.1.2 **Documentary and cartographic material:** this work will consult the range of potential sources of information, both primary and secondary, along with any relevant aerial photographs, referenced in the Cumbria Historic Environment Record, Kendal, including OS First and Second Edition maps (both 6" to 1 mile and 25" to 1 mile), and a gazetteer and associated location plan will be produced. Any published documentary sources and unpublished documents will also be examined where relevant and time allows. The study will examine any place and field name evidence for the site and its environs.

3.2 WATCHING BRIEF

3.2.1 **Methodology:** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the whole area of the proposed ground disturbance. This work will comprise observation during all ground reduction and excavations for the proposed development, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.2.2 The watching brief will cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including, topsoil and subsoil stripping, the removal of any peat deposits and any other groundworks which would expose the natural drift geology.

3.2.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified during the observation of groundworks, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions and, where appropriate, sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal).

3.2.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan provided by the Client. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

3.2.5 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.

3.2.6 **Treatment of finds:** all finds will be exposed, lifted, cleaned, conserved, marked, bagged and boxed in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) *First Aid For Finds*, 1998 (new edition) and the recipient museum's guidelines.

3.2.7 **Treasure:** any gold and silver artefacts recovered during the course of the excavation will be removed to a safe place and reported to the local Coroner according to the procedures relating to the Treasure Act, 1996. Where removal cannot take place on the same working day as discovery, suitable security will be employed to protect the finds from theft.

3.2.8 All identified finds and artefacts will be retained, although certain classes of building material can sometimes be discarded after recording if an appropriate sample is retained on advice from the recipient museum's archive curator.

3.2.9 **Human Remains:** any human remains uncovered will be left *in situ*, covered and protected. No further investigation will continue beyond that required to establish the date and character of the burial. CCCHES and the local Coroner will be informed immediately. If removal is essential, the exhumation of any funerary remains will require the provision of a Home Office license, under section 25 of the Burial Act of 1857. The removal of human remains will be carried out with due care and sensitivity under the environmental health regulations.

3.2.10 **Contingency plan:** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Planning Archaeologist or his representative, as to the extent of further works to be carried out. All further works would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the Planning Archaeologist.

3.3 REPORT AND ARCHIVE

3.3.1 **Report:** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the Client, and a further three copies submitted to the Cumbria HER within eight weeks of completion. Copies of the desk-based assessment, and interim statements on the results of the watching brief can be issued within three weeks of the completion of these elements. The report will include:

- a front cover to include the planning application number and the NGR
- a site location plan, related to the national grid
- the dates on which the fieldwork was undertaken
- a concise, non-technical summary of the results
- a description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and results obtained
- plans and sections at an appropriate scale, showing the location of features
- other illustrations and photographic plates showing, as appropriate, features of interest or to demonstrate the absence of archaeological features.
- a description of any environmental, finds, or other specialist work undertaken, and the results obtained
- the report will also include a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived.
- a copy of this project design in the appendices, and indications of any agreed departure from that design

3.3.2 This report will be in the same basic format as this project design; a copy of the report can be provided on CD, if required.

3.3.3 **Archive:** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. It will include summary processing and analysis of all features, finds, or palaeoenvironmental data recovered during fieldwork, which will be catalogued by context.

All artefacts will be processed to MAP2 standards and will be assessed by our in-house finds specialists.

- 3.3.4 The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct. OA North conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format and a synthesis will be submitted to the Cumbria HER (the index to the archive and a copy of the report). OA North practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects with the County Record Office, Kendal. The material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) will be deposited with an appropriate museum following agreement with the client.
- 3.3.5 **Collation of data:** the data generated will be collated and analysed in order to provide an assessment of the nature and significance of the known surface and subsurface remains within the designated area. It will also serve as a guide to the archaeological potential of the area to be investigated, and the basis for the formulation of any detailed field programme and associated sampling strategy, should these be required in the future.
- 3.3.6 The Arts and Humanities Data Service (AHDS) online database project Online Access to index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) will be completed as part of the archiving phase of the project.
- 3.3.7 **Confidentiality:** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

4 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 4.1 OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A risk assessment will be completed in advance of any on-site works and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

- 5.1 **Desk-Based Assessment:** this element is expected to take approximately three days to complete.
- 5.2 **Archaeological Watching Brief:** the duration of this element is dependant upon the duration of any ground disturbing activities on the site.
- 5.3 **Report and Archive:** an evaluation report will be submitted within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork. However, should an interim statement be required this can be issued within two weeks but instruction must be received from the client prior to completion of the fieldwork.
- 5.4 **Written Instruction:** OA North can execute projects at very short notice once written confirmation of commission has been received from the Client. One weeks notice would be sufficient to allow the necessary arrangements to be made to commence the task and inform CCCHES.

6 PROJECT MONITORING

6.1 **Access:** liaison for site access during the evaluation will be arranged with the client unless otherwise instructed prior to commencement of the archaeological investigation.

6.2 Whilst the work is undertaken for the client, the County Archaeologist will be kept fully informed of the work and its results, and will be notified a week in advance of the commencement of the fieldwork. Any proposed changes to the project design will be agreed with CCCHEs in consultation with the Client.

7 STAFFING PROPOSALS

7.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Stephen Rowland** (OA North project manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

7.2 All elements of the archaeological investigation will be supervised by either an OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. Due to scheduling requirements it is not possible to provide these details at the present time. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.

7.3 Assessment of the finds from the evaluation will be undertaken under the auspices of OA North's in-house finds specialist **Christine Howard-Davis BA MIFA** (OA North project officer). Christine has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England. However, she has specialist knowledge regarding glass, metalwork, and leather, the recording and management of waterlogged wood, and most aspects of wetland and environmental archaeology.

7.4 Assessment of any palaeoenvironmental samples which may be taken will be undertaken by **Elizabeth Huckerby MSc** (OA North project officer). Elizabeth has extensive knowledge of the palaeoecology of the North West through her work on the English Heritage-funded North West Wetlands Survey. Assessment of any faunal material will be undertaken by **Andrew Bates MSc** (OA North Supervisor).

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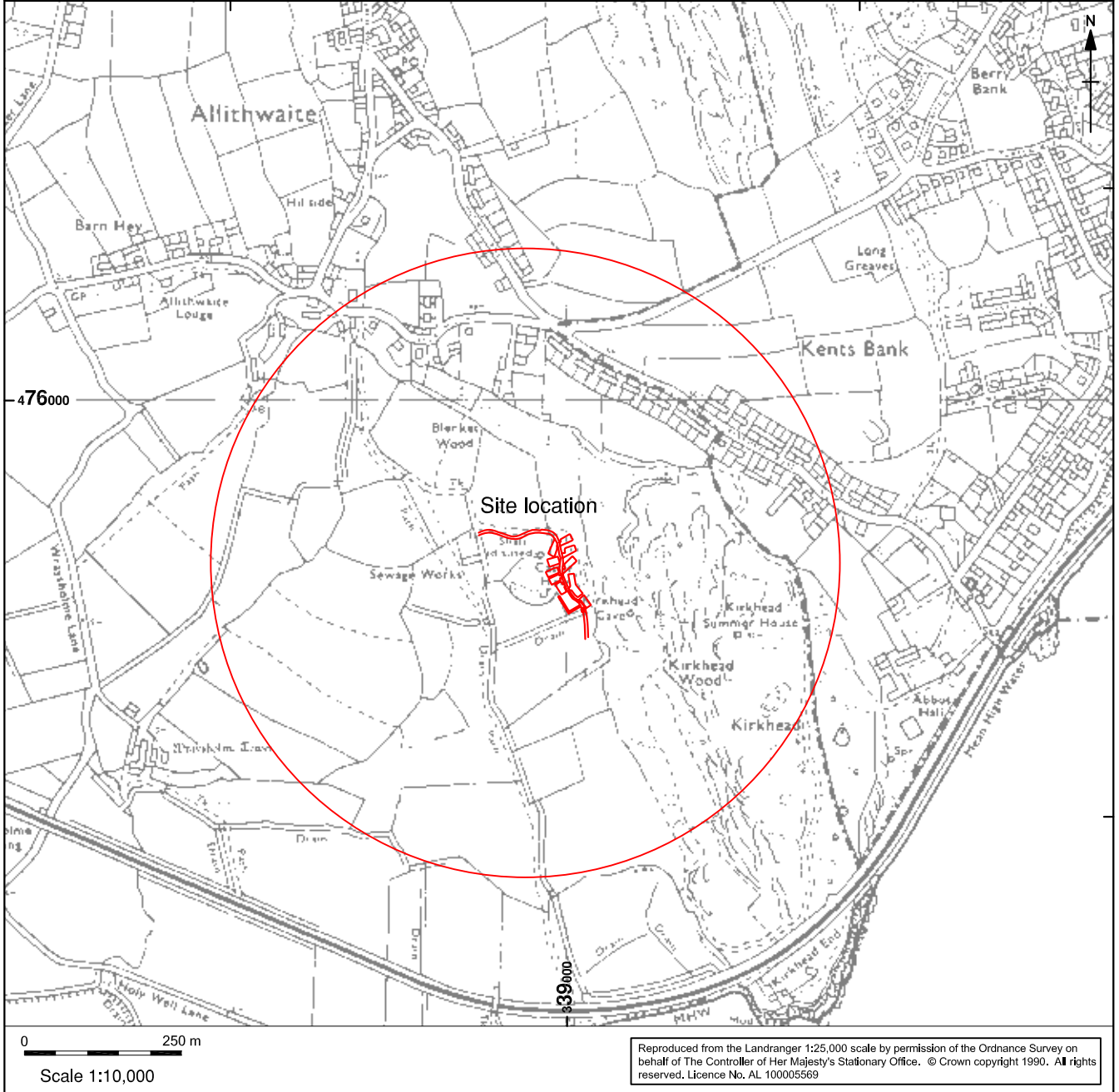


Figure 1: Site location

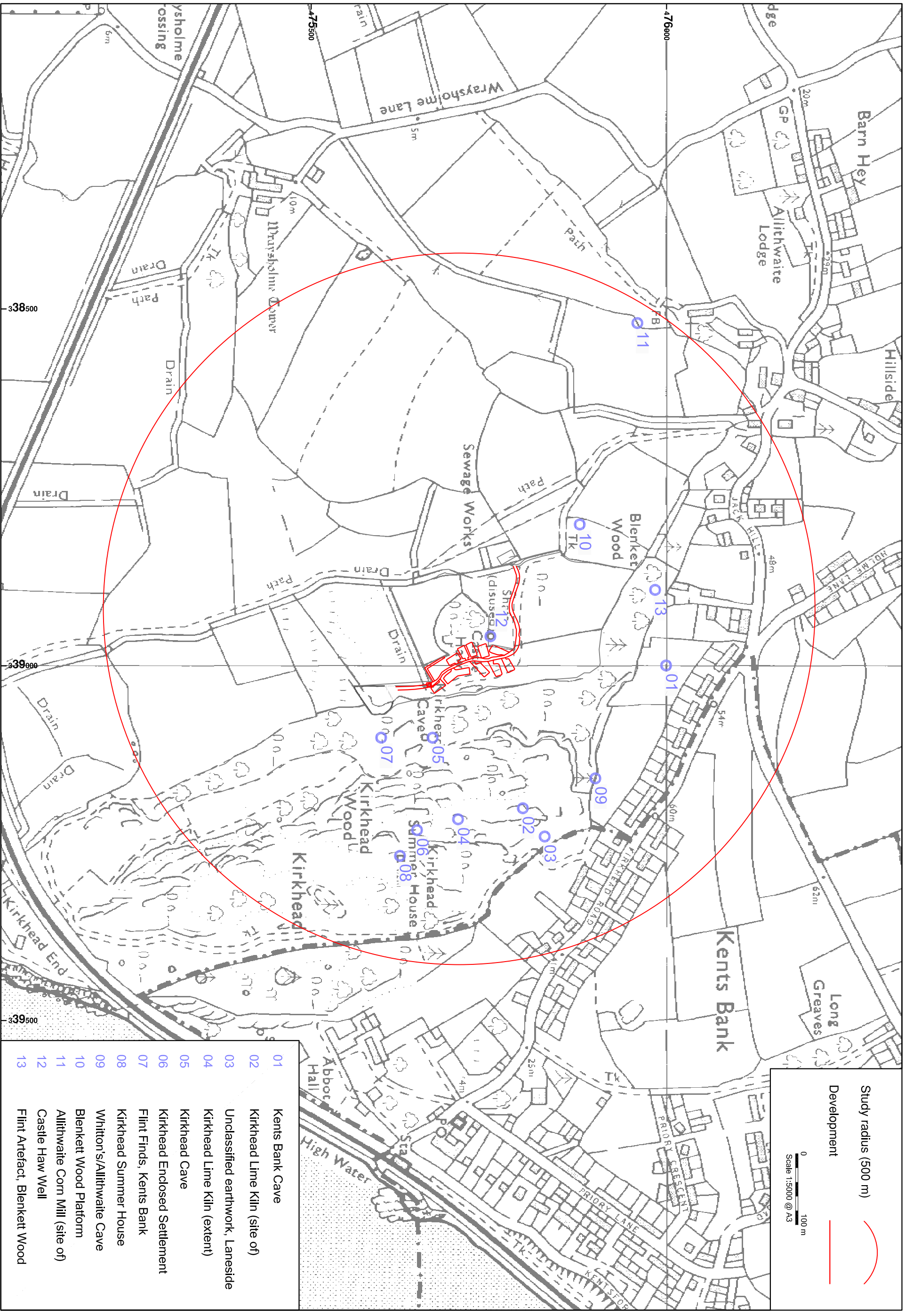


Figure 2: Location plan, showing sites of archaeological interest in the area

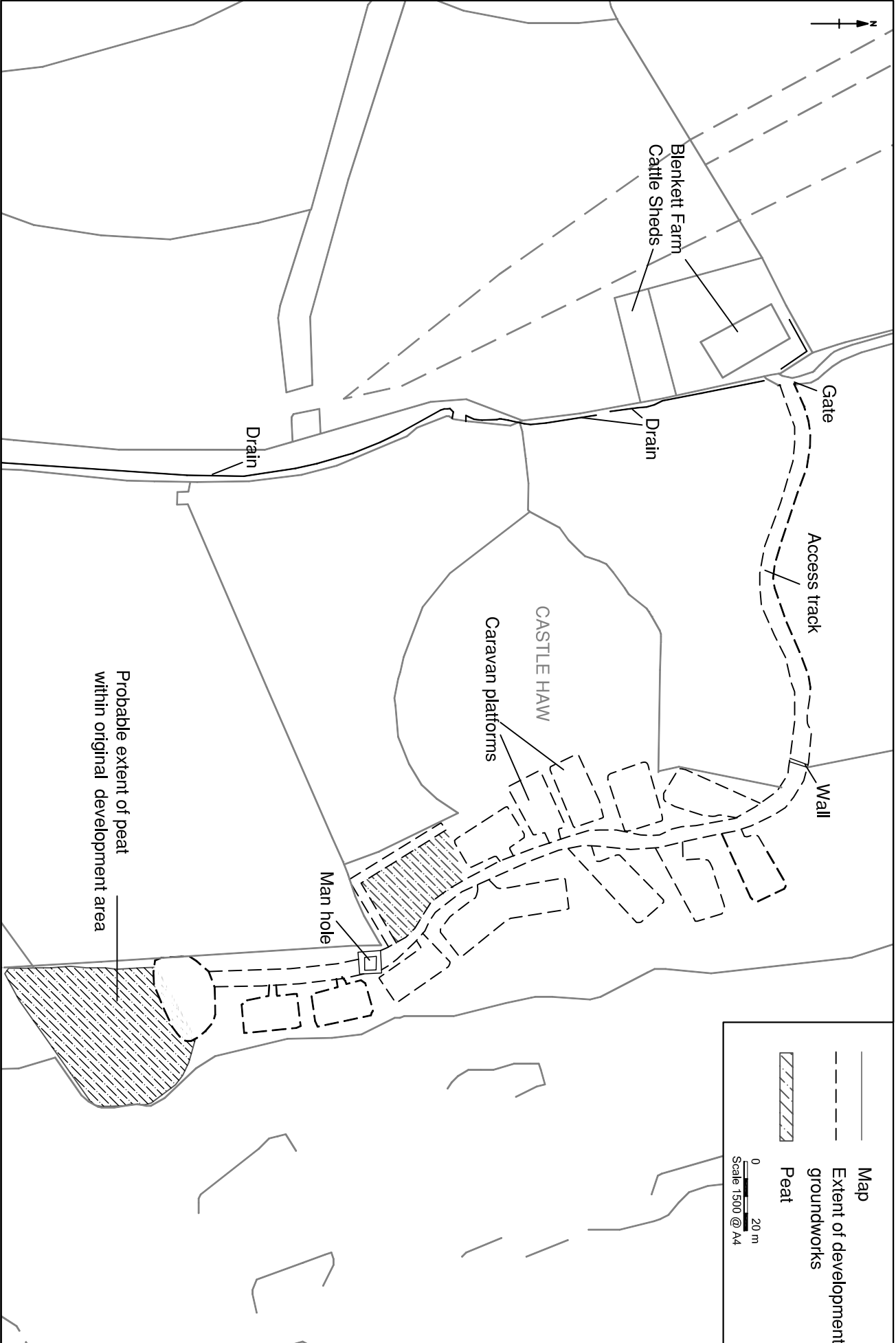


Figure 3: Plan of watching brief area



Plate 1: Topsoil stripping of caravan platform; working shot showing intermittent exposure of limestone bedrock



Plate 2: Remains of enclosure-period drystone wall *102*



Plate 3: Exposure of surface of peat deposit to south-east of Castle Haw