



March 2000

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# **LAND AT MELKINTHORPE**

## **CUMBRIA**

### **Evaluation Report**

Land at Melkinthorpe,  
Cumbria

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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Report no 1999-2000/061/AUA8966

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
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March 2000

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## SUMMARY

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An evaluation was carried out in January 2000 by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) on a plot of land at Melkinthorpe, Cumbria (NGR NY 554 253), on behalf of Mr G Kirby of Gary Kirby Design, in advance of the construction of a new bungalow. The site is within a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 32822/01) and the work was undertaken in order to inform a Scheduled Monument Consent application, in accordance with a verbal brief from the Inspector of Ancient Monuments, English Heritage.

The project involved the survey of earthworks within an undeveloped plot of land close to the main street, followed by the excavation of two evaluation trenches.

The plot is at the western end of the shrunken village of Melkinthorpe, and is located within a gap between two buildings. To the rear of the plot is a series of aratral-shaped fields, containing ridge and furrow, and within the plot are two irregularly shaped sub-rectangular platforms. The easternmost of these is overlain by the modern road-side wall, which is stepped in from the line of the road. The surface evidence would appear to indicate the presence of two building platforms within the plot, with enclosed medieval field systems behind. On the basis of the observed evidence the investigation of the platforms by trial trenching to evaluate the impact of the development was a requirement to inform the Scheduled Monument Consent Application.

Trench 1 was positioned over a potential house platform in the north-western part of the plot and was within the footprint of the proposed new bungalow. It revealed a cobble spread, which contained eighteenth/nineteenth century pottery.

Trench 2 was positioned on a second platform in the south-east part of the plot. It similarly produced no evidence of medieval occupation. A stone field drain was encountered within the west part of the trench which may be of either medieval or post-medieval date. Two patchy cobble surfaces, sealed below the topsoil, probably date from the post-medieval period.

Despite the surface indications, the evaluation trenches revealed no definitive structural evidence of medieval or post-medieval date. In addition no medieval artefacts were recovered from the trenches.

The surface features have been subject to mitigative recording and, as the evaluation was not able to confirm the survival of a significant archaeological resource on the site, it is considered that the site need not be preserved *in situ*. However, it is recommended that a watching brief be undertaken during the ground works for any development on the site.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks go to Mr G Kirby of Gary Kirby Design, for commissioning the evaluation, and also to Andrew Davison (English Heritage) and Helena Smith, of Cumbria County Council, for their advice and assistance in the course of the setting up of the project. LUAU would also like to thank Mr P Stott, of Peter Stott Landscaping, who provided the mechanical excavator promptly when required.

The survey was undertaken by Matt Town and Dan Elsworth, and the evaluation trenching was carried out by Dan Elsworth, Nick Hair and Peter McNaught. The finds were assessed by Chris Howard-Davis and the drawings were prepared by Graham Suggett. This report was compiled by Nick Hair and was edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF PROJECT

- 1.1.1 A survey and evaluation was carried out by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) in January 2000, at Melkinthorpe, Cumbria (NGR NY 554 253) on behalf of Mr G Kirby of Gary Kirby Design. The site is within a Scheduled Monument (SM 32822/01), which incorporates an area of putative platforms on the road frontage, and an area of broad ridge and furrow behind, and provides for the preservation of important relict elements of the Melkinthorpe shrunken medieval village. The archaeological work was required to assess the archaeological potential of the site, and thereby inform a scheduled monument application to develop the site for the construction of a residential house. A project design (*Appendix 1*) outlining the scope of the evaluation was prepared by LUAU in December 1999. The project design was prepared in accordance with a verbal brief from the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments. The survey was undertaken in early January and the evaluation was undertaken in late January 2000 after the granting of Class Consent for the work.
- 1.1.2 The archaeological recording involved a topographic survey of the study area, which revealed a series of rectangular earthworks on the site which may be house-platforms. This was followed by a programme of evaluation trenching involving the excavation of two trenches (5m x 2m and 7m x 2m). Trench 1 within the north-western part of the plot where the proposed new bungalow was to be sited; and Trench 2 within the south-west of the plot, outside the proposed extent of the new-build. Trench 1 was positioned to test an area where the survey had identified a potential house platform and Trench 2 was designed to examine a second platform.

### 1.2 TOPOGRAPHICAL AND GEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1 **Location:** the site lies at the western end of the medieval village of Melkinthorpe, which is on the edge of the Eden Valley, some 6km south-east of Penrith and 4km east of Lowther. Melkinthorpe is one of the three townships of Lowther parish, the others being Hackthorpe and Whale (Whellan 1860). The study area is bounded on its southern side by the main village street and is between Rose Farm to the south-east and Pennine View to the north-west.
- 1.2.2 **Geology:** the study area is close to the north bank of the River Leith, a tributary of the River Eden. The river valley cuts through typical stagnogley soils of the Clifton Association [711n] derived from reddish till drift geology (Lawes Agricultural Trust 1983). The solid geology below Melkinthorpe comprises Lower Permian sandstones, the Penrith Sandstone (Inst Geol Sci 1980; Arthurton *et al* 1978, 135-9, 186-8, and 302-5).

### 1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The layout of the village is generally indicative of planned nucleated settlement, which typically date to the post-Conquest period. Such settlements have been thought to be deliberate plantations by landlords as a result of the widespread destruction caused by the 'Harrying of the North' (1069-70) and were intended to

attract free tenants to the area (Taylor 1983, 134), although this part of England was not securely part of England until the twelfth century. Roberts, in his description of the village, notes the basic pattern of a north-west/south-east axial street, mirrored to the north-east by a secondary lane, Back Lane. The land to the rear (north-east) of Back Lane forms a rectangular furlong, which retains evidence of ox-ploughing in the aratral, reversed 'S', configuration of the extant field boundaries (Roberts 1993, 131). There is also evidence, in the form of earthworks, for the village having extended further to the north-west, in to the study area. The village itself is recorded on the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record (CSMR) as a shrunken medieval village and there are unclassified earthworks at the western edge, within the extent of the Scheduled Monument (SM 32822/01), which may also relate to the shrinkage of the settlement.

- 1.3.2 Melkinthorpe does not appear in *Domesday Book*, since this does not cover much of Cumbria, and the first reference to the name of *Melcanetorp* is in 1150, with variants of the name present from 1195 onwards (Smith 1967, 183). The name in all its variants means 'Melkan's hamlet' and is relatively unusual as it contains a personal name element which may be either Irish, as in 'Maelchon', old Irish 'Maelcian' or Old Welsh 'Malican' (Smith 1967, 183) rather than a Norse personal name, such as are more common in much of the north-west of England.
- 1.3.3 Despite the lack of earlier documentary evidence the topographical form of Melkinthorpe was possibly established by the late eleventh century. The nature of the documentary sources indicate that the manor of Melkinthorpe was of average size when compared to the other manors in Lowther parish. In 1415, the parish paid a 1/15th of the tithe as subsidy to the king to finance the French campaigns; Lowther was valued at 13s 4d, Quale (Whale) at 17s, Hackthorpe at 18s and Melkinthorpe at 15s (Curwen 1932, 333). It has a low evaluation in the nineteenth century when Whellan gave the rateable value of the parish as £4,400 18s 3d, of which Melkinthorpe was rated at only £364 2s 5d, whilst Hackthorpe was valued at £1,939 10s and Whale at £ 481 4s 6d (Whellan 1860).
- 1.3.4 There are no known structural remains from the medieval period within the village. Melkinthorpe Hall was at least sixteenth century in date and has been described as a '*little low mean looking building*' (quoted by Curwen 1932, 329); it was still inhabited in the 1860s, but it has now been demolished with only a fine barn remaining (*ibid*, 330). The RCHME (1936) inspection of the village noted only a limited number of buildings of interest (11-17), the oldest of which appear to date to the seventeenth century and contain some panelled doors and corbelled fireplaces. From the seventeenth century the extent of the village was similar to that at present. The Hearth Tax Roll of 1669-1672 identified a total of eleven houses with a single hearth and a further six houses which were exempt (Curwen 1932, 333). By the time of the Window Tax, exacted between 1766 and 1825, 16 were recorded as having up to seven windows, and hence were charged the minimum tax of three shillings. Only one house contained seven windows, that of John Graham (Lows 1995); the location of this house was unspecified.
- 1.3.5 By the mid nineteenth century, the cartographic evidence illustrates that the development of the settlement was static; there has been little change taking place within the village layout from 1837 onwards (WDRC/8/64).

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 PROJECT DESIGN

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted by LUAU in response to a request from Gary Kirby for an archaeological survey and evaluation of the study area. It was designed in accordance with a verbal brief from the English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments. Where practicable this project design was adhered to in full, and the work was otherwise consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.
- 2.1.2 The results of the topographic survey and evaluation are presented within the present report.

### 2.2 TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY

- 2.2.1 An LUAU Level 3 survey (LUAU 1993), which is equivalent to RCHM(E) level 3, was undertaken. The survey involved the detailed mapping of all surface features within the study area and recorded all extant earthworks, particularly those relating to the putative platforms.
- 2.2.2 Survey control was established over the site by closed traverse and internally was accurate to  $\pm 15\text{mm}$ ; the control network was located onto the Ordnance Survey (OS) National Grid with respect to the field boundaries; the heights were tied into OS datum.
- 2.2.3 The surface features were surveyed by EDM tacheometry using a total station linked to a data logger, the accuracy of detail generation being appropriate for a 1:250 output. The digital data were transferred onto a portable computer for manipulation and transfer to other digital or hard media; film plots were output via a plotter. The archaeological detail was drawn up in the field as a dimensioned drawing on the plots with respect to survey markers. Most topographic detail was also surveyed, particularly if it was deemed to be archaeologically significant or was in the vicinity of archaeological features.
- 2.2.4 The survey data were superimposed with the base topography digitised in from a 1:2500 map base in order to provide a topographic context for the site beyond the limits of the study area; the mapping was then created within a CAD system (AutoCAD 14).
- 2.2.5 **Photographic Record:** in conjunction with the archaeological survey, a photographic black and white and colour print archive was generated, which recorded significant features and the general landscape context.

### 2.3 TRIAL TRENCHING

- 2.3.1 Two trenches (7m x 2m and 5m x 2m) were excavated, which were situated in the centre of each of the two putative platforms; the westernmost of these corresponded also to the centre of the proposed new-build. The arrangement of the trenches is shown in Figure 3 and was accurately located by total station surveying.

- 2.3.2 Turf and topsoil were removed using a JCB 2CX mechanical excavator fitted with a 1.20m ditching blade, working under full archaeological supervision. Deposits exposed below the topsoil were cleaned, in their entirety, by hand, and displaced material (stored in appropriate spoil-heaps at the sides of the trenches) was scanned for the presence of archaeological artefacts and other potentially significant materials.
- 2.3.3 Samples for the assessment of palaeoenvironmental potential were taken from soil horizons that appeared to have potential for environmental analysis, but in the event they were insufficient survival of organic remains to warrant environmental assessment.
- 2.3.4 On completion of the site works, the trenches were backfilled to the instructions of the client, but not otherwise reinstated.
- 2.3.5 **Site Recording:** recording was by means of the standard LUAU context recording system, with trench records and supporting registers and indices. A full photographic record in colour slide, monochrome, and digital formats was made. Scaled plan and section drawings were made of the trenches at appropriate scales. Information regarding the photographs was recorded on LUAU record sheets which incorporate a description of each frame, and the direction from which it was taken.
- 2.3.6 **Finds:** finds from the evaluation were cleaned, marked and listed, before being assessed (*Section 4.3*).

## 2.4 ARCHIVE

- 2.4.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 2*) in a manner currently accepted as best practice.
- 2.4.2 The paper and digital archive will be deposited in the Cumbria Records Office in Carlisle, and a copy of this report, together with an index to the archive, will be sent to Cumbria County Council, for inclusion in their Sites and Monuments Record.

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### 3. SURVEY RESULTS

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#### 3.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 3.1.1 At the time of the survey the study area was in pastoral use and covered with short grass. The surface morphology revealed a series of shallow earthworks, which were potentially indicative of relict structures. There were two principal sites (1 and 2), each a sub-rectangular platform, on either side of the plot (Fig 2).
- 3.1.2 **Site 1:** the platform comprised a slightly prominent flat-topped mound, which rises up to 0.2m above the surrounding ground surface of the north-east side. It is most prominently defined along the northern-eastern side, which follows a slightly sinuous course. The south-eastern edge is similarly sinuous, but less well-defined. The south-western and north-western edges, approximately correspond to the lines of the respective modern plot boundary walls. There is a very limited continuation (1.5) of the feature to the south of the boundary wall, which extends almost up to the line of the present road. This would suggest that the boundary wall post-dates the feature, and that the feature was edged by the road. The ground to the north-east of the platform is uniformly level and contrasts with the undulating morphology of the platform.
- 3.1.3 The surface of the platform is slightly undulating with a notable broad bank (1.1 and 1.2), extending north-west/south-east across the platform. This does not have a uniform shape, being more prominent and mound-like at the north-west end. At the south-western side is a series of three shallow hollows (1.3, 1.4 and 1.6) set against the boundary wall. There is no evidence of these hollows to the south of the boundary wall, and it is possible that they post-date the wall.
- 3.1.4 **Site 2:** this is the more prominent of the two platforms, and has a well-defined north-eastern edge that rises up to 0.25m above the ground surface. It has a moderately defined, albeit sinuously shaped, north-western side, and the south-western edge is set against the present road line; the feature is clearly overlain by the present boundary wall. The south-eastern side corresponds to the line of the farm boundary wall, and it was not possible to discern reliably the relationship between this boundary and the earthwork.
- 3.1.5 In general the upper surface of the platform is fairly level, and certainly more so than site 1; however, there is one semi-circular hollow against the south-eastern boundary wall, and there is a mound up against the south-western boundary wall.

#### 3.2 CONCLUSION

- 3.2.1 Both platforms incorporate a considerable degree of irregularity, both in their shape and their upper surfaces; however, this is more pronounced on site 1. Site 2, and to a lesser extent site 1, respects the present road, and this implies a relationship. Behind the study area is a large aratrally-edged field containing broad ridge and furrow, which would indicate historic cultivation in the field beyond this plot. The platforms are located within a gap between current house plots, and there is a possibility that these are the remains of structures that have become abandoned as a result of shrinkage of the village. The surface morphology is not sufficiently diagnostic to assert unequivocally that these are structural features, indeed it is even possible that these represent no more than erratic tipping or ground disturbance on

a vacant plot. However, they are relatively ancient, being beneath the boundary walls, they have sub-rectangular shapes, and are occupying the typical location for a croft against the street, with supposed tofts behind.



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## 4. EXCAVATION RESULTS

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### 4.1 TRENCH 1

- 4.1.1 Trench 1 measured 7m x 2m and was located in the north-western portion of the field in the area of the proposed new bungalow footprint. It was designed also to investigate site 1, which was identified during the field survey. The trench was aligned with its long axis orientated north-west / south-east.
- 4.1.2 The uppermost deposit was a 0.15m thick layer of black/dark brown friable organic topsoil [11], containing post-medieval pottery and a simple animal bone. This overlay a sandy clay layer [6], a drain [8], and a band of cobbles [7]. The band of cobbles [7] was in the south of the trench, and overlay layer [6]; this band comprised stones between 0.03m and 0.15m in diameter. The cobbles extended across the width of the trench and formed a 1m wide band, and were situated to the immediate north of a break of slope marking the edge of the putative platform. A few sherds of nineteenth century pottery were recovered from within it. Whilst it is possible that the cobbles represent the remains of a very degraded wall, excavation revealed no foundation trench associated with them. It is perhaps more probable that they represent the remains of a narrow metalled trackway.
- 4.1.3 In the north of the trench layer [6] was cut by a steep-sided modern field drain [8]. Two sections of drain [8] were carefully excavated revealing that it was 0.70m deep and at least 0.60m wide; its northern edge extended beyond the limits of the trench. Its fill [9] comprised a friable orangy red sandy clay which contained large limestone chips within its base.
- 4.1.4 Layer [6] was a 0.40m deep deposit of mid-orange brown loose sandy clay which was very light in colour and appeared to represent disturbed natural, perhaps affected by ploughing. Sealed beneath layer [6] was the underlying natural stratigraphy [15] which comprised yellow grey compact clay at a depth of 0.55m below surface.

### 4.2 TRENCH 2

- 4.2.1 Trench 2 was sited in the south-east of the plot to the south of the proposed new build and was 5m x 2m in size. It was positioned on the second putative building platform (2) and extended across feature 2.1. Trench 2 was 5m long and 2m wide and was aligned with its long axis orientated north-east to south-west.
- 4.2.2 The upper deposit was a 0.15m thick layer of grey brown clay loam topsoil [11], which overlay layers [2] and [5], cobble surfaces [1] and [4], and an orange sandy clay lens [3]. The topsoil produced several fragments of mostly nineteenth century kitchenware and tableware, as well as one fragment of clay pipe and an animal bone (*Section 4.3*).
- 4.2.3 In the south-western portion of the trench was a 0.05m thick lens of orange gritty sandy clay [3]. This lens overlay a 2m wide patchy cobbled surface [4], in the central portion of the trench, which then sealed layers [2] and [5]. This cobbled surface [4] was formed of small pebbles up to 0.10m in diameter, with occasional larger cobbles, all set within a slightly gritty clay loam. In the extreme south-western corner of the trench was another patch of cobbles, up to 0.08m in diameter, set within a slightly gritty clay matrix [1] and was cut by stone drain slot [14]. The

stone drain slot was aligned north/south in the south-east corner of the trench and contained a stone drain [13]. Only the eastern side of the slot was visible in the trench and it had very steeply sloping sides which cut into layer [2]/[5] and subsoil [10] (*Section 3.2.4*). The stone drain [13] was formed from two neatly aligned drystone sleeper walls, one course high, set into the eastern and western sides of slot [14]. The drain channel, formed by the cavity between the walls, was capped with unworked blocks of masonry measuring on average 0.40m x 0.30m x 0.15m. The base of the drain channel also appeared to have been constructed of stone flags although this was difficult to ascertain given that the drain was still live and was partially filled with water. The capping stones of drain [13] were sealed by fill [12], which comprised redeposited orange natural clay subsoil, and this formed the uppermost deposit within slot [14].

- 4.2.4 Beneath cobble surface [4] was a 0.20m thick layer of very dark brown slightly gritty clay loam [2], which was cut by drain [13], and was slightly more orangy in character in the north-east of the trench where it was numbered [5]. This overlay the natural subsoil [10], at a depth of 0.5m below surface, which comprised orange plastic clay containing 20% small and medium angular fragments of stone.

### 4.3 FINDS

- 4.3.1 The artefactual assemblage is almost entirely of nineteenth or twentieth century date comprising predominantly nineteenth century ceramics (Table 1 below). However, with the exception of the limited material from the cobbled surfaces in Trenches 1 (1.7) and 2 (2.4), all the material was recovered from the topsoil, and therefore may be expected to be of relatively later date.

Context	Description	Period
1.1	one creamware ceramic fragment	Twentieth century
1.1	one late slip-trailed ceramic fragment	Twentieth century
1.1	Sheep metapodial bone	
1.7	Three small fragments local brown-glazed wares	Nineteenth century
1.7	Three small fragments of iron	Twentieth century
2.1	Nine fragments black glazed wares	Nineteenth / twentieth centuries
2.1	Nine frags. whitewares and late slip-decorated wares	Nineteenth / twentieth centuries
2.1	One late stoneware fragment	Nineteenth / twentieth centuries
2.1	Two indeterminate ceramic fragments	Nineteenth / twentieth centuries
2.1	Clay pipe stem	Post-medieval
2.1	Two fragments of bone	
2.4	Two mottled slip-decorated wares	Nineteenth century

**TABLE 1: FINDS FROM THE EVALUATION**

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## 5. DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 EVALUATION EVIDENCE

- 5.1.1 The evaluation trenches revealed no evidence of medieval occupation of the site. No medieval artefacts were recovered from the trenches and no obvious medieval structural elements were encountered during the evaluation.
- 5.1.2 Trench 1, which was positioned over a potential house platform (1), revealed a cobble spread [7], which contained nineteenth century pottery and perhaps represented a narrow trackway. It is possible that the putative building platforms may have been designed to accommodate timber structures; however, no evidence of associated features, such as beam-slots or post-holes, was recorded during the evaluation.
- 5.1.3 Trench 2 similarly produced no evidence of definite medieval occupation. Stone drain [13] may be of medieval date; however, the construction of such drains was also common during the post-medieval period. Patchy cobble surfaces [1] and [4] were located immediately beneath topsoil [11], which contained several sherds of nineteenth century pottery. It would seem probable that these features also date to around this period given the complete lack of medieval artefacts.

### 5.2 STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE

- 5.2.1 The surface evidence of the two putative platforms at the village street frontage, in a presently unoccupied plot within a shrunken medieval village, provided a moderately strong suggestion of the presence of relict structural features. The excavation evidence, however, markedly conflicts with the surface evidence and provides no indication of any sub-surface structural features. While it could potentially be argued that the cobbled surfaces represented residual floor surfaces, these features were stratigraphically late and contained nineteenth century pottery. The tithe award for the area demonstrates that the study area was a vacant plot in the early nineteenth century (1837) (WDRC/8/64) and there is no evidence of there being any surviving structures in the nineteenth centuries.
- 5.2.2 The evidence would suggest that these were not medieval house platforms, although, the possibility that they were structural cannot be excluded. The trenches examined only a minority of the surface of each platform and it is possible that any beam slots or postholes may survive in areas not sampled. It is also not unusual in the North-West to find a paucity of sub-surface evidence, with which to reinforce the abundant surface evidence. In 1991 an evaluation was undertaken at Rufford shrunken medieval village, Lancashire (LUAU 1991), in which there was abundant surface evidence for the street layout and houses. There was also a map of 1732 (DDHe 122/2), produced at the time of the enforced removal of much of the village in the eighteenth century, which clearly showed the locations of all the houses. The locations on the historical mapping corresponded closely to platforms revealed by the surface survey, but when one platform was subjected to trial excavation only shallow stratigraphy and no sub-surface structural elements. In that instance the view was taken that the surface and historical evidence was incontestable and that the negative excavation evidence reflected the fact that the sample excavation that the small excavation sample was not sufficiently large to reveal any structural features.



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## 6. IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### 6.1 IMPACT

- 6.1.1 The potential of the site, identified by the surface survey, has not been confirmed by the trial trenching, and there is a probability that the two mounds have no archaeological significance. However, there is also a limited possibility that they were indeed the relict remains of medieval / post-medieval house platforms, and that the trenching was of too small a sample to identify any structural features. Though there is this slight possibility of an extant archaeological resource it is not possible to confirm, on the evidence of these two trenches, that the proposed house construction will impact on important archaeological deposits.
- 6.1.2 The potential loss of the surface morphology in the proposed development has to an extent been mitigated by the survey recording undertaken as part of the present programme.

### 6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.2.1 The present evaluation is required to inform an application for Scheduled Monument Consent (SMC). As there is no confirmed archaeological resource within the extent of the proposed development, it is not recommended that the site be preserved *in situ*. If SMC is granted it is recommended that this should be subject to conditions to further investigate the site and thereby ensure that the proposed development will not have an undue impact upon significant deposits. It is recommended that all ground works for the proposed development be undertaken under archaeological supervision, with the proviso that if any significant archaeological features are identified that there should be allowance for stoppage of the development works to enable the recording of the features.

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## 7. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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#### 7.1.2 *Lancashire Record Office, Preston*

DDHe 122/2 North part of Rufforth map by T Higginson, 1736

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## APPENDIX 1 PROJECT DESIGN

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Lancaster  
University  
Archaeological  
Unit

**December 1999**

### **PENNINE VIEW, MELKINTHORPE CUMBRIA**

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION PROJECT DESIGN**

#### ***Proposals***

*The following project design is offered in response to a request by Gary Kirby in accordance with a verbal brief by English Heritage, for an archaeological evaluation at Melkinthorpe, Cumbria.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This project design is offered in response to a request by Mr G Kirby for an archaeological evaluation in advance of a residential development at Pennine View, Melkinthorpe, Cumbria (NY 554 253). The site is within the extent of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (SM 32822/01), and the proposed archaeological programme is required to inform an application for Scheduled Monument Consent. The proposal is in accordance with a verbal brief by Andrew Davison of English Heritage.

## 1.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND:

- 1.2.1 Melkinthorpe does not appear in *Domesday Book*, since it does not cover this part of Cumbria and the first reference to the name of *Melcanetorp* is in 1150, with variants of the name present from 1195 onwards (Smith 1967, 183). The name in all its variants means 'Melkan's hamlet' and is relatively unusual as it contains a personal name element which may be either Irish, as in Maelchon, old Irish Maelcian or Old Welsh Malican (Smith 1967, xxxix and 183) rather than Norse personal names which are more common in the north-west of England.
- 1.2.2 The layout of the village is generally indicative of planned nucleated settlement, which typically date to the immediate post-Conquest period. Such settlements have been thought to be deliberate plantations by landlords as a result of the widespread destruction caused by the 'Harrying of the North' (1069-70) and were intended to attract free tenants to the area (Taylor 1983, 134). Roberts, in his description of the village, notes the basic pattern of a north-west/south-east axial street, mirrored to the north-east by a secondary lane, Back Lane. The land to the rear (north-east) of Back Lane forms a rectangular furlong, which retains evidence of ox-ploughing in the arateral, reversed 'S', configuration of the extant field boundaries (Roberts 1993, 131). There is also evidence, in the form of earthworks, for the village having extended further to the north-west in the area of the proposed development. The village itself is recorded on the Sites and Monuments Record as a shrunken medieval village and there are unclassified earthworks at the western edge, which may relate to the shrinkage of the settlement. By the mid nineteenth century, the cartographic evidence illustrates that the development of the settlement was static; there was little change taking place within the village layout from 1837 onwards.
- 1.2.3 Within the study area are a series of rectangular earthworks, which have the potential to be house platforms and to the north-east of the development site is an area of agricultural earthworks, comprising primarily ridge and furrow.
- 1.2.4 **Previous Archaeological Work:** Lancaster University Archaeological Unit carried out an evaluation in 1997 at The Farm at the south-eastern end of the village. This identified the sub-surface remains of a predominantly post-medieval landscape and a nineteenth century horse gin, on the south-eastern side of a barn.
- 1.2.5 The documented history of the site, the surviving field-systems, and the extant earthworks indicate that the village has considerable archaeological significance, and the study area is of particular potential by virtue of the putative house platforms. It is therefore considered appropriate to undertake an archaeological evaluation in order to inform an application for Scheduled Monument Consent.

## 1.3 LANCASTER UNIVERSITY ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT (LUAU)

- 1.3.1 LUAU has considerable experience of the archaeological evaluation of sites and monuments of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large projects during the past 18 years. Evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. LUAU has undertaken the earlier evaluation work at Melkinthorpe (LUAU 1997) and has undertaken assessments, evaluation and surveys extensively within the Eden Valley area (eg at Great Asby) and also extensive surveys of Lowther Park on behalf of Lowther Estates and the Lake District National Park Authority.
- 1.3.3 LUAU has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. LUAU and all its members of staff operate subject to the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) Code of Conduct and LUAU is an IFA registered organisation (no 27).



## **2. OBJECTIVES**

2.1 The following programme has been designed in accordance with a verbal brief by Andrew Davison of English Heritage to enable an evaluation of the development area. The required stages to achieve the project objectives are as follows:

### **2.2 LANDSCAPE SURVEY**

2.2.1 An archaeological earthwork survey will be undertaken to record all the extant earthworks within the extent of the study area,

### **2.3 EVALUATION TRENCHING**

2.3.1 Trenches extending over 9% of the development area will be excavated using a mechanical excavator to remove overburden down on to the upper archaeological horizons and sampled manual excavation will be undertaken to assess the character, survival and depth of archaeological deposits.

### **2.4 EVALUATION REPORT**

2.4.1 A written evaluation report will assess the significance of the data generated by this programme within a local and regional context.

## **3. METHOD STATEMENT**

3.1 The site is within the extent of a Scheduled Ancient Monument (Monument SM 32822), and class consent or scheduled monument consent will be required in order to undertake the evaluation trenching in order to satisfy the requirements of the 1979 Ancient Monuments Act. In line with the objectives and stages of the archaeological work stated above the following work programme is submitted.

### **3.2 LANDSCAPE SURVEY**

3.2.1 **Access:** liaison for basic site access will be undertaken through Mr G Kirby.

3.2.2 It is proposed to undertake a level 3 survey (see LUAU survey levels, Appendix 1) of the study area, which is equivalent to RCHM(E) level 3. The survey will involve the detailed mapping of all surface features within the study area and will record all extant earthworks, particularly those relating to the field system and putative platforms. The archaeological survey will record the earthwork and archaeological features surviving within the study area, and also the associated primary topography. The survey will be superimposed with base topography provided by the client as a pre-development survey. The survey will involve the creation of a detailed interpretative hachure survey which will depict the character of the earthworks.

3.2.3 Survey control will be established over the site by closed traverse and internally will be accurate to +/- 15mm; the control network will be located with respect to field boundaries. It will be located onto the Ordnance Survey National Grid with respect to the plot boundaries. The heights will be tied into OS datum.

3.2.4 The surface features will be surveyed by EDM tacheometry using a total station linked to a data logger, the accuracy of detail generation will be appropriate for a 1:500 output. The digital data is transferred onto a portable computer for manipulation and transfer to other digital or hard mediums. Film plots will be output via a plotter. The archaeological detail is drawn up in the field as a dimensioned drawing on the plots with respect to survey markers. Most topographic detail is also surveyed, particularly if it is archaeologically significant or is in the vicinity of archaeological features. The survey drawings will be generated within a CAD system and will be digitally superimposed with the survey provided by the client. Although survey will be generated at sufficient accuracy for a 1:500 output the drawings can be output at any scale as required. The survey would be plotted using RCHM(E) draughting conventions and line thicknesses will be appropriate for reproduction and reduction. The data can also be output as CAD files eg. .DWG or .DXF files if required.

- 3.2.5 In conjunction with the archaeological survey a photographic archive will be generated, which will record significant features and the general landscape context.
- 3.2.6 The survey would be accompanied by a detailed gazetteer description of individual archaeological features, which will relate directly to the survey mapping. This stage of the survey will involve a detailed assessment of the site by an experienced archaeologist.

### 3.3 EVALUATION TRENCHING

- 3.3.1 This programme of trenching will establish the presence or absence of any archaeological deposits and, if established, will then briefly test their date, nature, and quality of preservation. This element of the work is invaluable in order to assess those parts within the proposed study area where there is a potential for archaeological deposits to survive which are not visible on the surface.
- 3.3.2 It is required that 9% of the study area (c 145sqm overall) be subject to trenching, which would therefore involve the excavation of at least 13sqm of trenching (two 5m x 1.5m trenches). It is proposed that one trench be positioned in order to examine the putative platform and the other within the footprint of the proposed new-build house.
- 3.3.3 **Methodology:** to maximise the speed and efficiency of the operation the removal of topsoil and overburden will be undertaken by 0.5 ton mini-excavator, under careful archaeological supervision (with a standard five foot toothless ditching bucket). The mechanical excavation will be undertaken in level spits down to the level of the highest significant archaeological horizon, and below that level excavation will be by manual techniques. The machine will also be used for reinstatement. If further mechanical excavation proves necessary it will be subject to agreement with English Heritage. The sections and trench floors will be manually cleaned prior to undertaking any manual excavation.
- 3.3.4 Manual excavation will examine all sensitive deposits, and will enable an assessment of the nature, date and survival of deposits. The deposits will be investigated sufficiently to establish their character but the full depth of the deposits to natural will not necessarily be established across the whole trench. All trenches will be excavated in a stratigraphical manner, whether by machine or by hand. All features exposed will be sample excavated, which typically would involve the excavation of 50% of discrete features and 25% of linear features. No feature or structure will be wholly excavated as the intention is simply to evaluate only the archaeological resource at this stage. As it is probable that the development will not directly affect the putative platform, the evaluation will minimise the disturbance to the archaeological deposits. Once the topsoil has been stripped and the surface of the feature exposed, a small sondage will be excavated through the feature, in order to establish the character of the and the depth of deposits, but otherwise there will be no wholesale excavation of significant archaeological deposits.
- 3.3.5 **Environmental Sampling:** environmental sampling will be undertaken in accordance with guidance by the LUAU environmental specialist. Subject to the organic survival of the sub-surface deposits, and agreement with the client and English Heritage, an initial assessment of the samples will be undertaken by the LUAU environmental specialist. This would involve drawing on contingency funding (*Section 3.5.6*). Pollen samples would be prepared chemically so that an assessment of the pollen content can be made. The samples will be examined microscopically and a minimum of one hundred pollen grains will be counted and identified where possible. Pollen preservation will be assessed and recorded. From this data it will be possible to provide evidence of the type of vegetation and possible changes occurring during the period that the soil was forming.
- 3.3.6 **Evaluation Recording:** all elements of the work will, as a matter of course, be recorded in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition 1991*) and the best practices formulated by English Heritage's Central Archaeology Service. All excavation, by whatever method, will be recorded by the compilation of context records, and of object records for any finds, and the production of manually drawn accurately scaled plans and section drawings (probably at scales of 1:20 and/or 1:10). A photographic record will be maintained within 35mm black and white and colour transparency formats and a photographic gazetteer will be maintained. The stratigraphy of all trenches will be recorded irrespective of whether archaeological deposits have been identified. Where stratified deposits are identified a 'Harris' matrix will be compiled. Trenches will be accurately located with respect to

the original LUAU survey control, by use of a total station survey instrument, and the trenches will be depicted on a digitised 1:2,500 OS map of the area. All archaeological features within the trenches will be planned by manual techniques.

- 3.3.7 **Finds Processing:** finds recovery and sampling programmes will be in accordance with best practice (current IFA guidelines for finds work). All typologically significant and closely datable finds will be contextually recorded. All artefacts and ecofacts will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration. Finds storage during fieldwork and any post-excavation assessment and analysis (if appropriate) will follow professional guidelines (UKIC). Emergency access to conservation facilities is maintained by LUAU. Any discard policy for finds should be formulated with care, and with advice from English Heritage. All finds will be washed, marked and packaged as appropriate. Small finds will be individually packaged, in a manner appropriate to the find type.

- 3.3.9 The artefact assemblage will be examined by the LUAU finds specialist, and the potential for further examination will be assessed. A summary report on the significance, character and date range of the assemblage will be generated.

### 3.4 EVALUATION REPORT

- 3.4.1 **Archive:** the results of Stages 3.1-3.3 above will form the basis of 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. The deposition of a properly quantified, ordered, and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the Institute of Field Archaeologists in that organisation's Code of Conduct. This archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre For Archaeology format, as a printed document, and a synthesis (the evaluation report and index of the archive) will be submitted to the relevant Sites and Monuments Record. The archive will be deposited with the County SMR within 6 months of the end of the fieldwork.
- 3.4.2 Each drawing will be fully titled and line thicknesses will be chosen to allow for ease of duplication and/or reduction. Particular attention will be paid to achieving drawings of the highest quality and accuracy.
- 3.4.3 The archive will be formed of all the primary documentation, including the following:
- Survey Information
  - Context Records
  - Finds Records
  - Sample Records
  - Field / Inked Drawings and digital copies of CAD data
  - Photographic negatives, prints and colour transparencies
  - Written report
  - Administrative records
- 3.4.4 **Report:** two copies of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, a further copy to English Heritage and another to the SMR. The report will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed in Stages 3.1-3.3 above, and will include an index of archaeological features identified in the course of the project, with an assessment of the sites development. It will incorporate appropriate illustrations, including a location map, survey results, copies of the site plans and section drawings, and the trench location plan all reduced to an appropriate scale. The report will consist of an acknowledgements statement, list of contents, executive summary, introduction summarising the brief and project design and any agreed departures from them, methodology, interpretative account of the archaeological stratigraphy and details of the features and stratigraphy recorded from each trench, table of contexts, a complete bibliography of sources from which data has been derived, and a list of further sources identified during the programme of work. If required the report will make recommendations for further mitigative recording. The report will be in the same basic format as this project design. A copy of

the report can be provided on 3.5" floppy disk in either ASCII or Word for Windows format and the drawings can be provided as DXF or DWG files if required.

### 3.5 GENERAL CONDITIONS

- 3.5.1 **Access:** it is understood that there will be unrestricted access for pedestrian and plant traffic to the site.
- 3.5.2 **Health and Safety:** full regard will, of course, be given to all constraints (services) during the survey, as well as to all Health and Safety considerations. The LUAU Health and Safety Statement conforms to all the provisions of the SCAUM (Standing Conference of Unit Managers) Health and Safety manual. Risk assessments are undertaken as a matter of course for all projects. The Unit Safety Policy Statement will be provided to the client, if required. Trenches will be excavated up to one metre away from any standing walls to present any risk of destabilisation of structures.
- 3.5.3 **Confidentiality:** the report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client for the particular purpose as defined in this project design, and should be treated as such. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties or for any other explicit purpose can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.
- 3.5.4 **Project Monitoring:** any proposed changes to this project design will be agreed with the client, and English. If required a meeting with the Inspector of Ancient Monuments and the client can be established at the outset of the project.
- 3.5.5 **Insurance:** the insurance in respect of claims for personal injury to or the death of any person under a contract of service with the unit and arising out of an in the course of such person's employment shall comply with the employers' liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act 1969 and any statutory orders made there under. For all other claims to cover the liability of LUAU, in respect of personal injury or damage to property by negligence of LUAU or any of its employees, there applies the insurance cover of £1m for any one occurrence or series of occurrences arising out of one event.
- 3.5.6 **Contingencies:** a contingency cost is submitted to cover the eventuality of further machining or additional areas of trenching. The environmental work provides for a basic level of analysis of two samples; if further environmental samples need to be analysed (in the event of discovering rich archaeological deposits) or if more detailed analysis is required this will also be covered by the contingency. If removal of any burials is required this will be subject to a variation.

## 4. WORK TIMETABLE

- 4.1 It is envisaged that the various stages of the project outlined above would follow on consecutively, where appropriate. The phases of work would comprise:
- i* **Landscape Survey**  
1 day (on site)
  - ii* **Evaluation Trenching**  
3 days (on site)
  - iv* **Evaluation Report**  
3 days (desk-based).
- 4.1.2 LUAU can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. The project (field work, report and archive) is scheduled for completion within three weeks from the completion of the field work.
- 4.1.3 The project will be under the project management of **Jamie Quartermaine, BA Surv Dip MIFA** (LUAU Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed. All Unit staff are experienced, qualified archaeologists, each with several years professional expertise.



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## APPENDIX 2

### CONTEXT LIST

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- [1] Small patch of cobbles in south-west corner of Trench 2
- [2] Brown gritty clay loam layer in Trench 2
- [3] Orange gritty sandy clay lens in Trench 2
- [4] Cobbles within gritty clay loam matrix in the centre of Trench 2
- [5] Orangy brown sandy clay, same as [2], in north-east of Trench 2
- [6] Orange brown sandy clay layer in Trench 1
- [7] Linear cobble spread in south of Trench 1
- [8] Modern drain in north of Trench 1
- [9] Fill of modern drain [8] in Trench 1
- [10] Orange plastic clay natural subsoil in Trench 2
- [11] Grey brown clay loam topsoil in Trenches 1 and 2
- [12] Fill of stone drain slot [14] in Trench 2
- [13] Stone drain in slot [14] in Trench 2
- [14] Slot for stone drain [13] and fill [12] in south-west corner of Trench 2
- [15] Natural grey clay subsoil in Trench 1

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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Fig 1 Melkinthorpe Study Area Location Map

Fig 2 Earthwork Survey Plan

Fig 3 Trench Location Plan

Fig 4 Trench 1 and 2 Plans



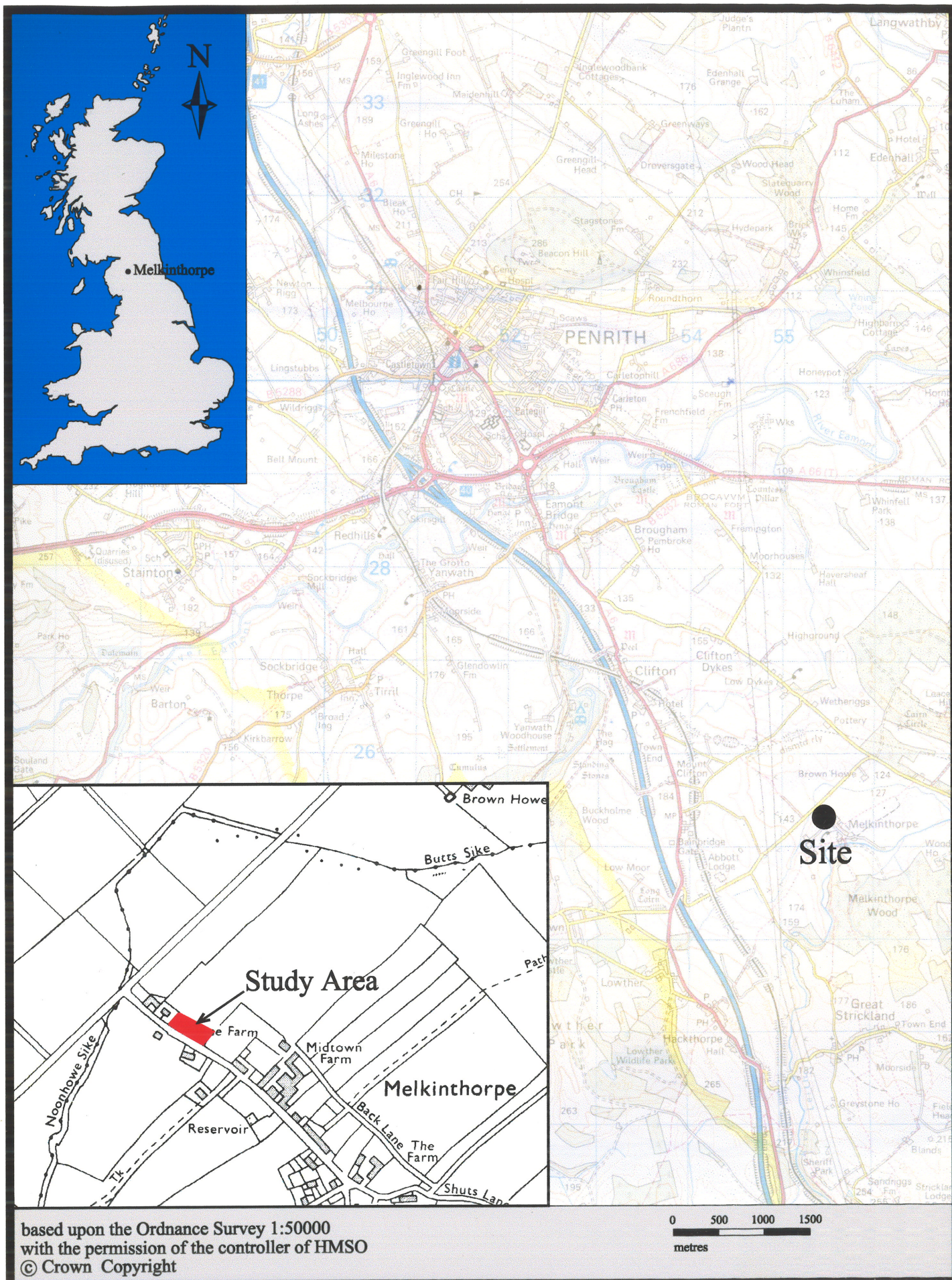
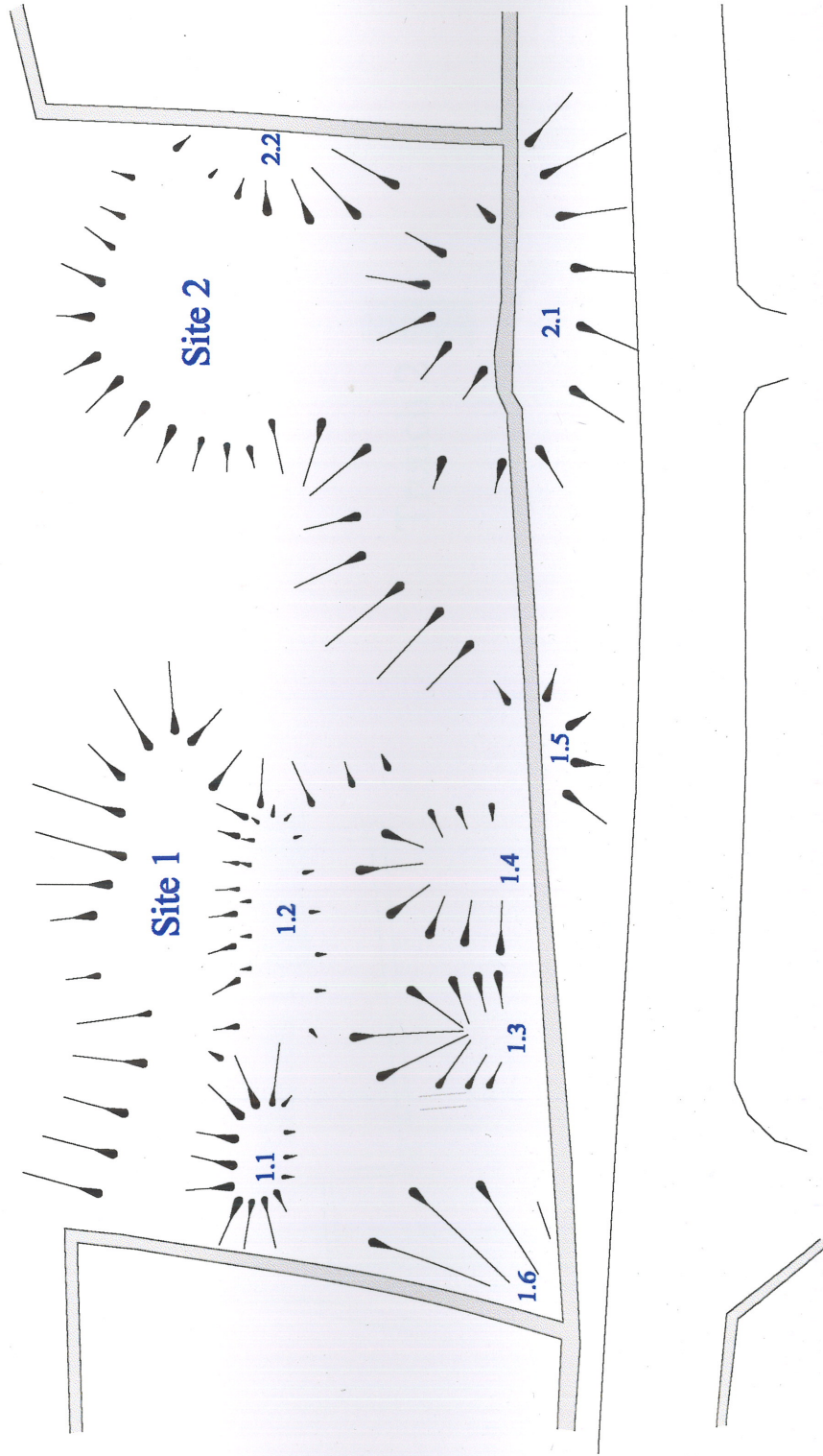
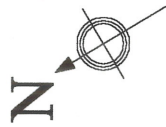


Fig 1 : Melkinthorpe Study Area Location Map





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PROJECT:

Melkinthorpe  
Archaeological  
Evaluation

DRAWING No:

2

SCALE:



DRAWN BY:

GJS

DATE:

January 2000

KEY

Existing Walls

Line of Road

TITLE:

Earthwork Survey Plan

COMMISSIONED BY:

Mr. G. Kirby

Fig. 2: Earthwork Survey Plan



Fig. 3: Trench Location Plan



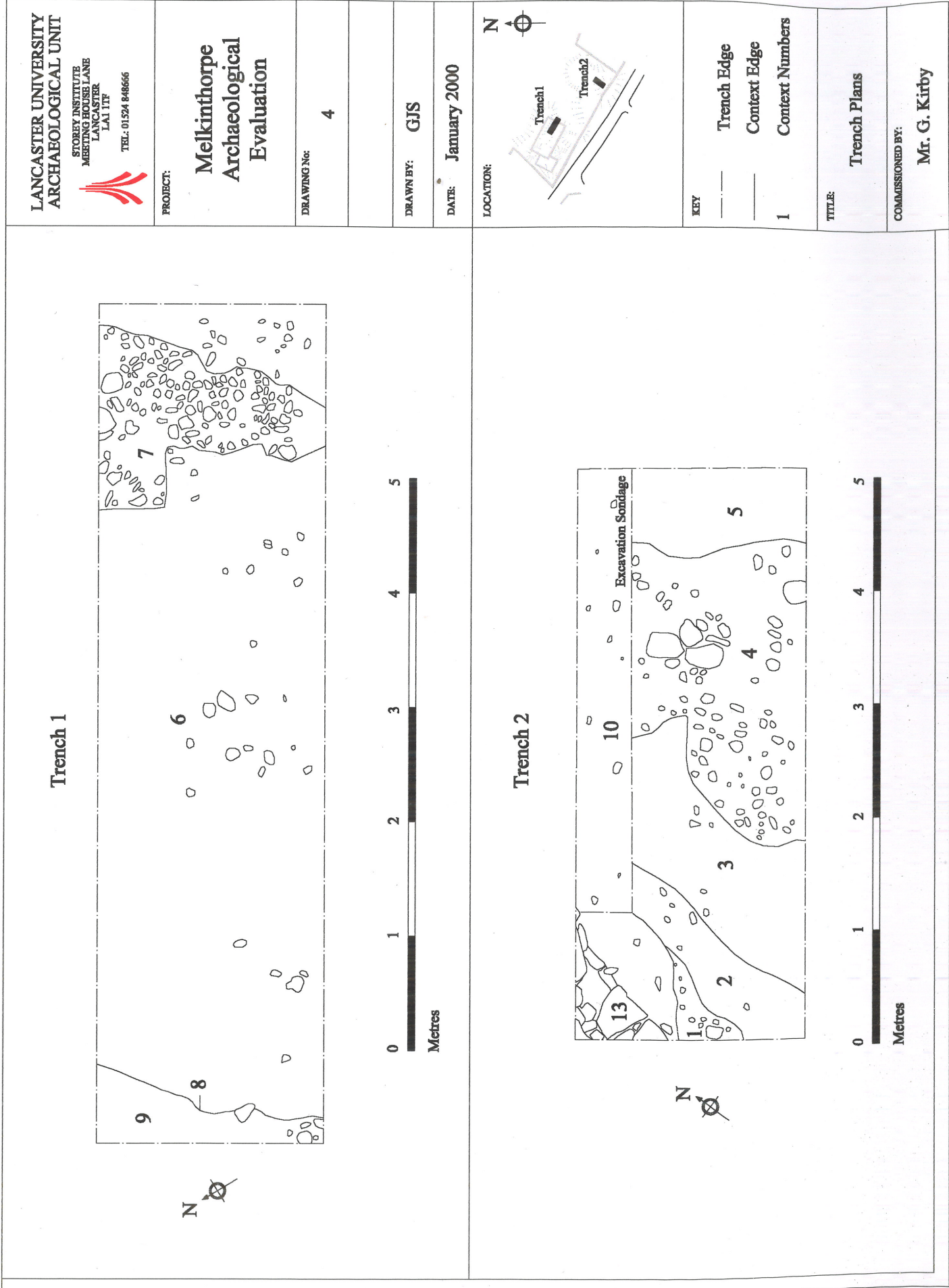


Fig. 4: Trench 1 and 2 Plans

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## PLATES

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Plate 1 Study Area plot looking towards Platform 2

Plate 2 Trench 1 showing cobbled surface [7] in the foreground > north-west



Plate 1 Study Area plot looking towards Platform 2



Plate 2 Trench 1 showing cobbled surface [7] in the foreground > north-west