

April 2000

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**DALTONGATE**  
**ULVERSTON**  
**CUMBRIA**

**Watching Brief Report**

Daltongate, Ulverston  
Cumbria

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Report no 1999-2000/064/AUA8975

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
Passed for submission to client. ..... Date

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The fieldwork was undertaken by Dan Elsworth, and Peter McNaught. The report was compiled by Peter McNaught, and was edited by Rachel Newman and Jamie Quartermaine. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

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## SUMMARY

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Lancaster University Archaeological Unit was commissioned to undertake an archaeological watching brief on a plot of land to the south of Daltongate, Ulverston, in advance of the construction of a semi-detached residential dwelling. The work was undertaken in January 2000 in accordance with a project brief by the Cumbria County Council. The site (SD 2845 7832) is on the western side of Ulverston, but close to the historic centre, which developed from a medieval borough. The project was designed to record any archaeological features encountered during the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of the new properties.

The site comprised a gently sloping area of grassland with small trees at the edges of the plot. A platform for the new build was excavated into the slope, across an area of 18m x 25m, and all ground works were undertaken under archaeological supervision. The excavation demonstrated an underlying sandy clay subsoil, above natural boulder clay. The excavation extended to a depth of 1.2m, into the natural subsoils at the up-slope, western end of the area. No archaeological features were identified in any part of the site.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CONTRACT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 A watching brief was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) during January 2000. A planning application had been submitted by A&A Contracts to build two residential dwellings on a plot of land to the south of Daltongate, at the western side of Ulverston (SD 2845 7832) (Fig 1).
- 1.1.2 The work was carried out in accordance with a verbal brief compiled by the Assistant Archaeologist of Cumbria County Council. The methodology provided for an appropriate level of archaeological observation, and recording of all archaeological features or deposits encountered during the ground works.

### 1.2 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 1.2.1 The site was located opposite the turning for Stockbridge Lane, to the south of Daltongate in Ulverston. It consisted of a vacant plot covering an area of *c* 600m<sup>2</sup> to the rear of a recently constructed sheltered housing complex (Fig 2).
- 1.2.2 The rectangular parcel of land sloped steeply from west to east. This meant that a large volume (*c*1.2m) of soil had to be removed by machine from the western side of the site to create a level platform, on which the new properties were to be constructed (Fig 2). The eastern side of the site was at the same level as the car park belonging to the adjacent properties.

### 1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The site of the proposed development is believed to lie at the edge of the medieval town of Ulverston. Place name evidence suggests that Ulverston may have origins dating from before the Norman Conquest, although this part of Cumbria has little documentary evidence for the period to confirm this hypothesis. In the twelfth century it was included in the grant of foundation of Furness Abbey (1127) and was then granted to Gilbert Fitz Reinfrid in 1196 (Atkinson 1887), who in *c*1200 granted the borough charter (Munby 1985). The elements of the street pattern are typical of that of a planned medieval town, notably the triangular market place and streets with narrow plots (Steanne 1985). Daltongate was probably on the edge of this, but the Ordnance Survey first edition map (OS 1846) shows that by the end of the nineteenth century ribbon development had extended along Daltongate to the west of the study area.
- 1.3.2 The name Daltongate derives from the Scandinavian word '*Gata*' (Erkwall 1960), meaning 'road' and the term therefore refers to the road to Dalton. Dalton was once a busy market town of Furness Abbey, and, until the suppression of Furness, was the most important settlement of the Furness Peninsula (Barnes and Hobbs 1959).
- 1.3.3 Evidence from Ordnance Survey maps (OS 1846, 1888, 1973) show that Daltongate was the main road leading south out of Ulverston until recently, when a bypass was constructed to the south of the town. On Yates' map (Yates and Billinge 1786) dating from 1786 there is no evidence of any structures on the site, and subsequent OS maps shown the study area

as an open parcel of land (*ibid*), which would suggest that there has been no post-medieval development of the site.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 A permanent presence watching brief was maintained during the soil strip, in order to record any deposits and features exposed, during the groundworks for the development. This was undertaken in accordance with a verbal brief compiled by the Assistant Archaeologist of Cumbria County Council. An area of 25m x 18m was mechanically excavated using a JCB 3cx with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. Where appropriate the nature of exposed deposits and their relationships to other deposits were clarified by manual cleaning. The stripped surfaces and displaced spoil were monitored for the presence of displaced artefacts.
- 2.1.2 The stratigraphy and archaeological features were recorded using methods recommended by English Heritage's Centre for Archaeology (CfA). Recording was in the form of context sheets, and scale drawings (plans at 1:50), and photographs (black and white prints and colour transparencies) were taken as necessary.
- 2.1.3 The position of the works and all the features observed within the stripped area were mapped by manual survey techniques.
- 2.1.4 On-site assessment of the deposits suggested that it was not necessary to take environmental samples. The other finds were handled and recorded according to standard practice (IFA guidelines).

### 2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 A full archive of the work has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited with the Cumbria County Record Office in Barrow and a copy of the report will be submitted to the Cumbria Sites and Monuments Record.

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### 3. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

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- 3.1 Prior to excavation the area was covered by grass meadowland. The area excavated measured approximately 18m by 25m and was terraced into a gentle east/west slope. The western side of the area was taken down to a depth of 1.2m and the eastern side was excavated to a depth of 0.3m.
- 3.2 The identified stratigraphy was very uniform across the area. The topsoil consisted of a 0.3m deep layer of garden soil and below this was a 0.3-0.4m thick layer of mid grey brown, sandy clay subsoil. The underlying natural subsoil was made up of orange sandy clay, incorporating angular stones and boulders; the upper level of the natural subsoil was c0.6m below the surface.
- 3.3 No features of archaeological interest were identified in the area excavated, and only two nineteenth century ceramic sherds were recovered from the topsoil.

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## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1.1 Despite the location of the site, close to the centre of Ulverston, there were no archaeological features identified on the site during the watching brief. The natural stratigraphy present within the excavated area was remarkably uniform and there was no evidence of any activity within this trench. There was similarly no evidence of any evidence of early cultivation, although subsequent ploughing of the ground is likely to have removed any evidence.
- 4.1.2 The impression is that there was no early activity within the study area. However, the site was up to 10m away from the main road (Daltongate), and there is a likelihood that the structures arising from ribbon development along Daltongate, as shown on the OS 1st edition map (1846), were limited to the road frontage.

### 4.2 IMPACT

- 4.2.1 Although no archaeological features were discovered within the extent of the proposed development, this does not rule out the possibility that there was urban activity beyond the limits of the site.
- 4.2.2 Future work in the area around Daltongate may be able to provide more conclusive evidence as to the extent of the medieval town of Ulverston.

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## APPENDIX 1 PROJECT BRIEF

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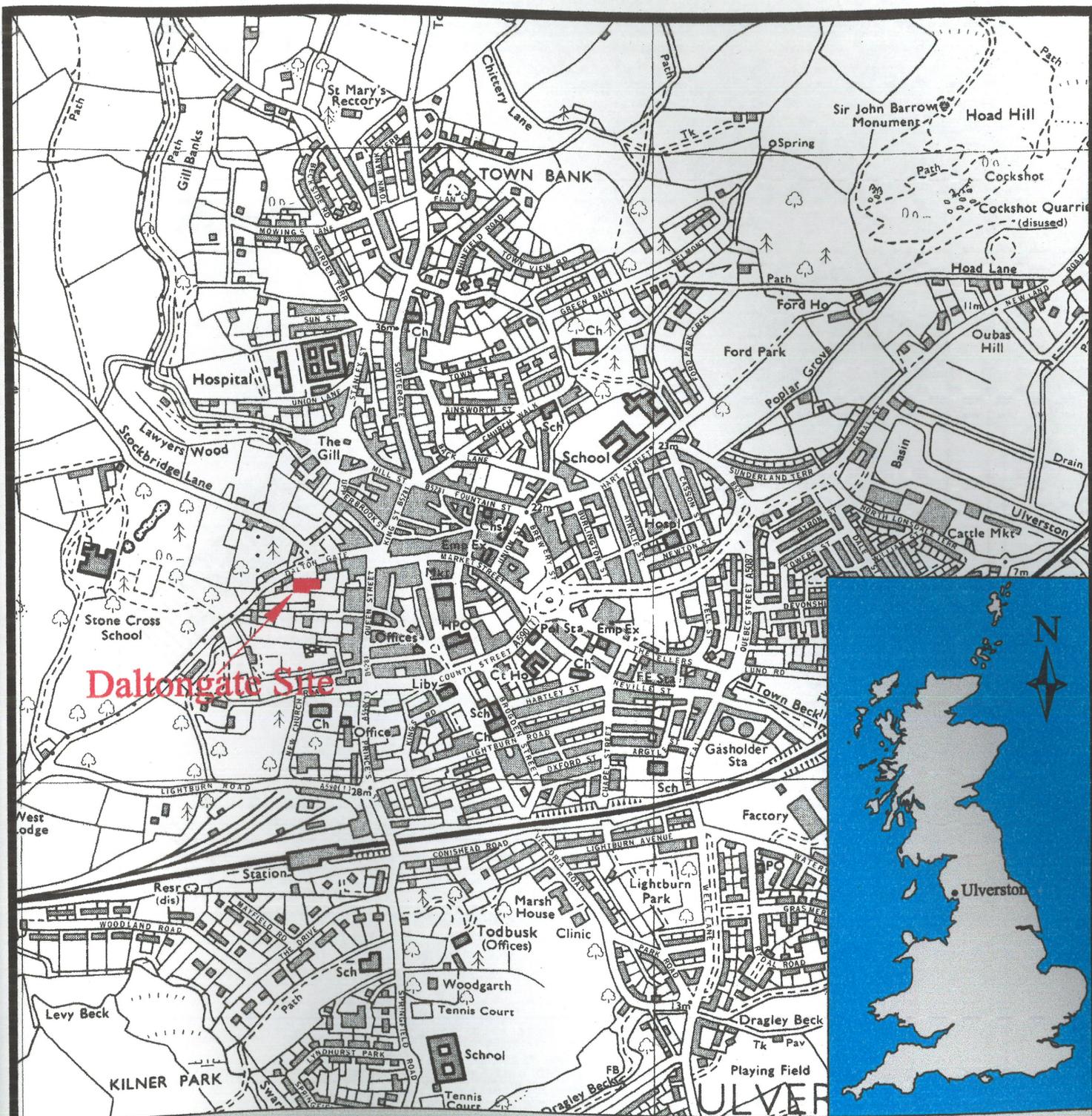
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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Fig 1 Site Location

Fig 2 General Site Map



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000  
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Fig 1 : Daltongate, Ulverston Location Map

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PROJECT:

Daltongate  
 Archaeological  
 Watching Brief

DRAWING NO:

2

SCALE:



DRAWN BY:

JQ

DATE:

February 2000

KEY



Trench Location

TITLE:

Site Location Plan

COMMISSIONED BY:

A&A Contracts



Fig. 2: General Site Plan