PROJECT DESIGN
FOR
AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
STRIP MAP and SAMPLE
EXCAVATION
AT
PARSONAGE AVENUE,
RIBCHESTER,
LANCASHIRE

MOSAIC PLANNING
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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology was commissioned by Leon Armstrong of Mosaic Planning to produce a WSI for an archaeological strip map and sample excavation of an area of land adjacent to Parsonage Avenue, Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 6480 3513) to discharge the planning condition that a programme of archaeological analysis be undertaken on the site before development.

1.2 The site is located in an area of high archaeological potential due to its proximity to the Roman fort of Bremetenacum. Previous archaeological work within the site of the proposed development, and within the area surrounding it, has revealed evidence for associated extramural activity.

1.3 The proposed development area is located to the north of the site of the Roman fort of Bremetenacum, a site which was first established as a timber fort during the campaigns of Petillius Cerialis (c.AD72/3). Renovation of the fort was undertaken in the late AD70’s, and was subsequently replaced in stone in the early 2nd century. The prolonged occupation of the fort, from the early AD70s to the 4th century, has suggested that its location was of considerable importance to the security and management of not only the road system and local military security, but also the economic infrastructure of the region.

1.4 Beyond the boundary of the fort itself, there is archaeological evidence for extramural activity, including evidence from within the proposed development area itself. Previous archaeological work has also identified the presence of a Bronze Age cremation cemetery on land immediately to the north-east.

1.5 On the evidence of previous archaeological work undertaken to the north-east of the proposed development area, and the geophysical survey and subsequent trial trenching undertaken as part of a Time Team programme in 1993, it is clear that the potential for features and deposits relating to extramural activity associated with the Roman fort at Ribchester is high. A archaeological evaluation within the development site by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology in 2013 confirmed the presence of significant Romano British occupation within the site (I McIntyre, 2013).

1.6 As a result Doug Moir, Planning Officer (Archaeology) at Lancashire County Council has requested a programme of archaeological mitigation be undertaken on the site. This archaeological work will comprise a strip map and sample excavation over south eastern side of the site in order to record the archaeological evidence contained within the sites, and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the area. This is in line with
government advice as set out in Section 12 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2012).

2 LOCATION AND GEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

2.1 The village of Ribchester is located approximately 12km to the east of Preston, and c.8km to the north of Blackburn, in the Ribble Valley. The settlement is situated on a flood plain on the north side of the River Ribble (Figure 1). The Ribble flows between the Forest of Bowland in the north and the hill country of Pendle in the south. To the north and south of Ribchester the land rises markedly; to the west the land drops gradually to the flat, former mosslands of the Lancashire Fylde (The Conservation Studio 2005, 6).

2.2 The proposed development area is located to the west side of the village, adjacent to Parsonage Avenue and north of St Wilfred’s Church. To the south of the site are Ribchester Playing Fields, which includes a playing field, play area and tennis courts, and to the north and west the site is bounded by fields. Modern housing development forms the north-east side (Figure 2).

2.3 The proposed development area is situated just outside Ribchester Conservation Area, which consists of the village core centred around a small triangular area to the west of the White Bull Inn, and Stydd, which is located to the north-east of the main settlement. The proposed development area is also located just to the north and west of Ribchester Roman Fort (Bremetenacum) Scheduled Ancient Monument (No. 1005110).

2.4 Around Ribchester the bedrock geology is dominated by the ‘Sabden Shales’ formation, previously part of the Millstone Grit Group (The Conservation Studio 2005, 7). The solid geology is masked by thick boulder clay deposits as the River Ribble follows a deeply incised meandering course through thick drift downstream from the rock gorge at Samlesbury Hall. The till exposed at the surface is typically a reddish-brown sandy clay with grey mottling, containing beds of laminated clay, sands and gravels, and rock fragments of Triassic derivation (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000, 3).

2.5 Ribchester Roman town and fort are thought to stand on deposits of a Second Terrace of the Ribble, which rises to c.3-4m above the flood plain. This terrace formation is being actively eroded with about one third of the area of the fort lost to fluvial processes to date (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000, 3).

2.6 Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) defines the study area as ‘Ancient Enclosure’ (information supplied by the HER).
3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 For relevance to this present area of study, only those areas where archaeological work has been undertaken in close proximity to the proposed development area will be referred to in order to assess the extent and possible character of sub-surface archaeological remains which could be encountered on the site.

3.2 Ribchester Playing Fields 1968-1969: excavations were carried out by the Ribble Archaeology Society in September 1968 and May-June 1969 on land immediately opposite the present proposed development area, adjacent to Parsonage Avenue. Evidence of four clearly-defined periods of activity from before the 1st century AD to the later 2nd century were identified (HER Event Ref: ELA1100).

3.3 Ribchester Playing Fields 1973: Ribble Archaeology Society undertook an excavation at the south-west end of what is now the playing fields car park, to the north-east of the proposed development area. The line of a Roman road and buildings were uncovered, with pottery ranging in date from the 1st to the 3rd centuries (HER Event Ref: ELA1099).

3.4 Dutton Brook House, Old People’s Home 1980: excavations before the construction of Dutton Brook House by Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeology Unit on land immediately to the north-east of the proposed development site revealed a Bronze Age ring ditch with cremations, a Roman industrial area with a timber building which was demolished c.120AD, and later 2nd and 3rd century defences for the vicus (HER Event Ref: ELA1941).

3.5 Graveyard Extension 1980 and 1989-1990: archaeological evaluation of the graveyard extension in 1980 by the Cumbria and Lancashire Archaeological Unit, confirmed the existence of extensive and waterlogged deposits, and also revealed the presence of an earlier (previously unrecorded) timber fort (Buxton and Howard-Davis 2000, 9). Further work undertaken between 1989 and 1990 uncovered evidence for a corduroy platform and the earthworks of the first Roman fort dated c.AD72-125, and the remains of an industrial building dated to AD125-40, which was interpreted as a fabrica (HER Event Ref: ELA1092).

3.6 Ribchester Geophysical Survey 1993: as part of a Time Team programme, a geophysical survey was undertaken of several areas of land to the north, north-west and west of the Roman fort at Ribchester, including an area within the proposed development area itself (Area B). The survey identified ditches relating to the vicus and part of a Roman road, although no ditches associated with the early wooden phase of the fort were noted. Area B (within the proposed development area) was surveyed in an attempt to locate the ditch surrounding the extramural settlement, as evidence had been found during construction of the adjacent residential estate. The survey revealed a linear
anomaly running through the centre of the survey area, which was interpreted as a ditch. The north-western half of the gradiometer survey was dominated by parallel linear trends which were attributed to agricultural activity; these apparently respected a rectilinear negative anomaly which may have represented a former field division. Subsequent excavation trenches placed over the two arms of the ditch in Area B revealed them to be different, with the least substantial possibly representing an internal division within the extramural settlement (HER Event Ref: ELA1102; GSB 1993).

3.7 *Norweb Cable Trench Watching Brief 1997*: an archaeological watching brief was maintained by LUAU during the excavation of a trench for a new electrical cable in Ribchester. The excavation included a section around the southern corner of the present proposed development area, following part of the field boundary, although this area did not appear to have formed part of the watching brief. The significance of this phase of work, however, is that should further archaeological work be undertaken within the proposed development area site boundary, it must be borne in mind that there may be, according to a plan provided in the LUAU report, an electrical connection point along the western boundary, and that a cable trench was excavated around the southern edges (HER Event Ref: ELA480; LUAU 1997).

3.8 *Ribchester Playing Field Trial Trench 2003*: in March 2003 OAN undertook an archaeological evaluation of part of the playing fields in advance of the construction of two tennis courts on the south side of Parsonage Lane, immediately opposite the proposed development site. The trenches revealed *in situ* Roman deposits at a depth of 0.62m below the modern ground surface. The deposits comprised the remains of a hearth, which appeared to have been associated with craft working, and structural evidence represented by a degraded wooden timber beam. Pottery recovered from the deposits suggested a 2nd century date for this activity (HER Event Ref: ELA827; OAN 2003).

3.9 *Dutton Brook House, Trial Trench 2008*: an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land to the rear of Dutton Brook House, located between the proposed development area and the playing fields car park. The evaluation consisted of the excavation of two trenches; in Trench 1, Roman structural components were represented by two oval pits filled with Roman pottery and tile, and interpreted as post-pits for timber uprights. The archaeology in Trench 2 was characterised by a ditch-like feature. A cobbled surface was also revealed which was interpreted as a path or yard to the rear of the late-1st/early 2nd century timber building that had been discovered immediately to the north in 1980. It was noted that Roman truncation had almost certainly destroyed part of the Bronze Age cremation cemetery which had been identified in this area in 1980, although it was recognised that Bronze Age
cremations and Roman deposits may still survive in unexcavated areas to the north-west (HER Event Ref: ELA1942; Baldwin 2008).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Scope of the Work

4.1.1 The proposed development will include the construction of a new housing development consisting of of ten properties and associated infrastructure at Parsonage Avenue, Ribchester, Lancashire. The development site measures approximately 0.7 hectares.

4.2 Research Agendas

4.2.1 The purpose of the archaeological work is to record the archaeological evidence contained within the proposed development area, and to attempt a reconstruction of the history and use of the area. It is expected that, given the location of the proposed development close to the Roman fort of Bremetenacum and possibly within the extra mural settlement, the site may hold important information regarding changing settlement patterns and industrial activity. There is currently much research going on into extra mural Romano British settlement to the in Cumbria at sites such as Maryport, Ravenglass and Papcastle; this project may complement these research projects and provide a contrast to the frontier zone of Cumbria.

4.2.2 It has also been highlighted in the Archaeological Research Framework for North West England (Brennand 2006 & 2007) that Roman trade and exchange is poorly understood, and that research on coastal, estuarine and river environments is required to assess the surviving resource and the potential for Romano-British buried land surfaces and structures.

4.2.3 It is also important to look at the inter-site relationship between military sites, industrial and manufacturing centres, field systems, rural sites and transport networks may provide an insight into mechanism of movement and trade supporting the frontier” (Philpot and Brennard 2007, 61-62).

4.2.4 This project therefore has the potential to contribute to a number of academic aims including:

- to integrate paleoecological and archaeological data to investigate how people’s use of landscape altered it and try to distinguish changes relating to climate from changes related to human activities;

4.2.5 The project is therefore of some significance as it has the potential to inform wider regional, national and multi-period research frameworks.
4.3 Strip Map and Sample Excavation

4.3.1 This technique is appropriate where archaeological remains are thought or even known to be present, but their specific density and complexity are of a level not believed to warrant full in-advance full open area excavation prior to the development programme commencing. The top-soil / plough-soil will be removed (‘stripped’) under direct archaeological control and supervision and the archaeology will then planned and excavated (‘mapped’ and ‘recorded’). This type of mitigation is anticipated to take place at/or immediately before the main construction phase, utilising ground works construction (principal contractor) plant. The area to be stripped has been specified by Doug Moir Planning Officer (Archaeology) measures approximately 3000m$^2$ and is illustrated in figure 1.

4.3.2 The general aims of the evaluation are to:

- Determine the presence or absence of buried archaeological remains within the proposed development site.
- Determine the character, date, extent and distribution of any archaeological deposits and their potential significance.
- Determine levels of disturbance to any archaeological deposits from plough damage or from any other agricultural/industrial practices.
- Determine the condition, depth, date and character of the archaeology recorded in the evaluation and geophysical phases undertaken on the site.
- Identify and record any remains present which were not detected by geophysical survey or trial trench evaluation.
- Disseminate the results of the fieldwork through an appropriate level of reporting

4.3.3 The mechanical excavator will mound all spoil neatly allowing a minimum of 1.2m between the base of the mound and the edge of excavation area.

4.3.5 All subsequent excavation following the exposure of archaeological deposits will be by hand by a team of experienced archaeologists. The field team will carry out all excavation, cleaning, recording and sampling of surfaces and archaeological features within the soil strip area using appropriate hand tools. All investigations will follow the normal principles of stratigraphic excavation and follow IfA guidelines.

4.3.6 Features will be recorded (in plan and section) with sampling as appropriate. A minimum of 50% of identified archaeological features will be excavated and complete features, such as pits and postholes, will be excavated by half-section and linear features, such as ditches and gullies, will
be sectioned appropriately. Particular attention will be paid to the intersections of linear features.

4.3.7 The archaeological contractor will ensure that access to the investigations is granted at all times to representatives of Wardell Armstrong, the Clients and the Planning Archaeologist for Lancashire County Council, who will wish to be satisfied through site inspection that the archaeological works are being conducted in accordance with the agreements made and to the proper professional standards.

4.3.8 All written records will utilise the WAA pro-forma record sheets. Plans and sections will be drawn on water resistant permatrace. Plans will be drawn to a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10. A combination of multi and single context planning will be utilised. A full photographic record in monochrome and digital formats will be maintained. All electronic survey work will be undertaken using a TST and will be transferred into a CAD environment. The site will be levelled with respect to the Ordnance Datum, and the excavation will be tied into the National Grid.

4.3.8 Finds will be managed by Megan Stoakley, WAA Finds and Archives Officer. Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Ltd will undertake first aid conservation, but if further conservation is required there will be extensive consultation with appropriate specialists (see Section 4.5). All non-modern finds will be collected and retained for processing. Ceramics and animal bone will be collected in bulk and recorded by context. Significant in situ finds will be recorded in three dimensions prior to collection. A metal detector will be utilised both to scan excavated spoil, and to maximise the recovery of metal finds from alluvial deposits. All appropriate procedures will be followed in the event of the discovery of artefacts covered by the provisions of the Treasure Act 1996.

4.3.9 Any environmental evidence found during the work will be sampled as recommended by the English Heritage regional Scientific Advisor, and undertaken according to the Wardell Armstrong Archaeology standard sampling procedure and nationally agreed procedures (English Heritage 2002), the recommended sample sizes for dry deposits being 30-60 litres and for wet deposits the sample sizes should be approximately 5 litres.

4.3.10 Should any human remains be encountered, Doug Moir Planning Officer (Archaeology), the client, the police and the Coroner’s office will be informed immediately upon the discovery of the remains. The removal of any human remains will be done under a Section 25 Licence obtained from the Ministry of Justice and Environmental Health Regulations. The relevant English Heritage guidelines, in particular the recently published ‘Guidance for best
practice for treatment of human remains excavated from Christian burial grounds in England’ (English Heritage 2005), will be adhered at all times.

4.4 Finds

4.4.1 Finds assessment will be under the direction of Megan Stoakley, WAA Finds and Archives Officer. WAA will undertake first aid conservation, but if further conservation is required following the production of an assessment report, there will be extensive consultation with appropriate specialists, Lancashire County Council and the Client.

4.4.2 Assessment of each category of artefactual and palaeoenvironmental material will be undertaken by suitably qualified archaeological specialists as soon as possible following the completion of the fieldwork. Specialist services may be provided, as necessary by:

- Prehistoric Pottery  Blaise Vyner, Archaeological Consultant
- Lithics    David Jackson, WAA
- Roman Pottery  Louise Hird, Archaeological Consultant
- Medieval Pottery  Ian Miller, Oxford Archaeology North
- Post Medieval Pottery  Jo Dawson, Greenlane Archaeology
- Glass    Hugh Wilmott, University of Sheffield
- Wood    Ian Panter, York Archaeological Trust
- Leather    Tim Padley, Tullie House Museum
- Textiles    Eleanor Palmer (Lancashire Museums Service)
- Conservation  Archaeological Services, Durham University

4.5 Environmental

4.5.1 Detailed work on environmental samples will take place at the unit’s premises at Carlisle. Further specialist services will be utilised at the University of Durham, if required. Any environmental evidence found during the work will be sampled in agreement with Lancaster County Council under the guidance of Sue Stallibrass, English Heritage Regional Scientific Adviser, North-West Region, and undertaken according to the Wardell Armstrong Archaeology standard environmental sampling procedure and nationally agreed procedures (English Heritage 2011 Environmental Archaeology: A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods from Sampling and Recording to Post-Excavation).

4.5.2 Any wooden structures identified will be recorded in situ where possible, and sampled in accordance with English Heritage recommendations (English
Heritage 2010 *Waterlogged Wood: Guidance on the recording, sampling, conservation and curation of waterlogged wood*. Representative samples will be selected in order to answer specific questions, including species identification, environmental conditions, and for dendrochronological dating, in agreement with Lancashire County Council. Large timbers will be lifted and stored on site, until they can be delivered to York Archaeological Trust for specialist conservation if required.

4.5.3 Environmental samples will be processed under the direction of Don O’Meara, WAA Environmental Officer, in consultation with Sue Stallibrass. The sampling is likely to take the form of bulk samples of 30 litre volume. This is in order to assess the environmental potential of deposits across the site, including the fills of ditches, gullies, pits and postholes, buried soils, silts and occupation layers. Don O’Meara will also assess any animal bone recovered during the evaluation. Articulated human remains will be assessed by Megan Stoakley, WAA Finds and Archives Officer, who is a professionally trained osteoarchaeologist.

5 REPORTING AND PUBLICATION

5.1 Post Excavation Assessment Report

5.1.1 The fieldwork programme will be followed by the production of an assessment report, the process being adopted as set defined by the Institute for Archaeology (IfA) which were developed from the former MAP2 guidelines. The stratigraphic information, ecofacts and artefacts recovered from the fieldwork shall be assessed for their potential for further (full) analysis in relation to the project’s research aims and the broader context of regional and national archaeological research priorities.

5.1.2 The report will contain illustrative material including maps, plans, sections, drawings and photographs, as necessary. A location plan of the site, at an appropriate scale and tied into the OS National Grid, will be included. A plan showing the location and layout of the areas of investigation, at an appropriate scale, will also be included.

5.1.3 The report will state the aims and objectives of the work and outline the methods adopted in the course of the work. It will include details of the planning history of the site, site geology and a summary of the archaeological and historical background.

5.1.4 The report will contain a phased summary of the archaeological sequence encountered at the site, containing brief descriptions of archaeological structures, features and deposits and incorporating details of artefacts or environmental evidence (where sampled).
5.1.5 The report will also include recommendations for further full analysis and any potential additional site mitigation, where required, in order to meet identified research objectives.

5.2 **Archive Report**

5.2.1 If required, and following on from the recommendations of the assessment document - an appropriate programme of post-excavation analysis will be undertaken to prepare a research archive for the project, as detailed in ‘Appendix 6’ of MAP2.

5.2.2 As necessary, this could involve the compilation of an ‘Archive Report’, detailing the stratigraphic history of the site and a full textual account setting out the significance of the structural, artefactual and palaeoenvironmental evidence.

5.2.3 The ‘Archive Report’ will include the results of full analysis of palaeoenvironmental samples and ceramic material and all other categories of artefacts, as well as the results of appropriate absolute dating analysis, such as radiocarbon dating.

5.2.4 A separate costing for the full post-excavation analysis and production of a archive report will be provided upon request, following consultation with Lancashire County Council and the relevant archaeological specialists.

5.3 **Publication**

5.3.1 If justified, a publication article may be produced for submission to a suitable archaeological journal, in agreement with the client and Lancashire County Council. The cost of this article will be provided (if required) upon completion of the post-excavation analysis as part of an updated project design.

5.3.2 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology and Lancashire County Council support the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project. This project aims to provide an online index and access to the extensive and expanding body of grey literature created as a result of developer-funded archaeological fieldwork. As a result, details of the results of this study will be made available by Wardell Armstrong Archaeology, as a part of this national project.

6 **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

6.1 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology is fully compliant with HSE guidance and legislation. It is the duty of all personnel, under the Health and Safety at Work Act etc 1974, to take reasonable care for the health and safety of
him/herself and other persons who may be affected by his/her acts or omissions at work. He/she must also co-operate with the Technical Director regarding any duty or requirement imposed on the Technical Director or any other person by or under any of the relevant statutory provisions so far as it is necessary to enable that duty or requirement to be performed or complied with. Any personnel contravening relevant statutory provision may be prosecuted in a Sheriff Court (Scotland) or Magistrates’ Court. All personnel taking part in field work have a responsibility to adhere to sensible standards of behaviour. Personnel are made aware that fieldwork activities have inherent hazards which staff members minimise with appropriate safety precautions. However, the potential dangers make it imperative that personnel co-operate by behaving responsibly in order to reduce the risk of accidents.

6.2 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology Health and Safety Statement conform to the provisions of the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (SCAUM) Health and Safety Manual. Field projects are undertaken according to the SCAUM Health and Safety in Field Archaeology (SCAUM 1986) and according to the Wardell Armstrong Standard Safety Procedure. Risk assessments are undertaken prior to any fieldwork taking place and staff are fully briefed regarding on site hazards and safe working procedure. Full consideration will be given to health and safety issues during all fieldwork for this project.

7. STAFFING AND COMPANY SUMMARY

7.1 The work will be undertaken under the overall direction of Frank Giecco, BA (Hons), MA, MIIfA, WAA Regional Manager. The strip map and sample excavation will be undertaken by a WAA Project Supervisor or Project Officer and up to four project assistants, to be confirmed at commencement of the excavation. The amount of archaeological staff onsite will be dictated by the amount and complexity of the archaeological remains uncovered. The client will ensure that adequate resources are put in place to allow for work detailed in this project design to be successfully implemented.

7.2 Wardell Armstrong Archaeology (formerly North Pennines Archaeology) is the archaeological contracting division of Wardell Armstrong LLP. The company has a fully staffed professional field team and is highly experienced in the assessment and recording of archaeological sites and monuments throughout the north of England and south-west Scotland. Based near Carlisle, Cumbria, the company has considerable experience extending over more than fifteen years of archaeological investigation.
8 WORK TIMETABLE

8.1 It is anticipated that the project will commence in the September of 2014, following the acceptance of the project design by Lancashire County Council and run for between two and three weeks.

8.2 Arrangements will be made for Doug Moir, Planning Officer (Archaeology) at Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS), to visit the site during the archaeological work. A report detailing the results of the fieldwork will be available within 8 weeks of the completion of the fieldwork.

8.3 Copies of the assessment report will be deposited within Lancashire County Council HER and the WAA archive no later than three months following the completion of all fieldwork.

9 ARCHIVE, OWNERSHIP AND STORAGE OF FINDS

9.1 The site archive will be prepared to the standard specification in the Management of Archaeological Projects, appendix 3 (1991), and Brown, DH, 2011, *Archaeological Archives A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation*.

9.2 All finds belong to the landowner, but initially they will be transferred to the Wardell Armstrong Archaeology’s premises at Carlisle. Agreement will be sought on the final deposition of finds prior to the fieldwork commencing.

9.3 During and after the excavation, all recovered artefacts will be stored in the appropriate conditions to ensure minimal deterioration and loss of information (this will include controlled storage, correct packaging, regular monitoring of conditions, immediate selection for conversation of vulnerable materials). All work will be carried out in compliance with IFA Guidelines for Finds Work and those set by UKIC.

9.4 Ultimately it is recommended that the curation of both finds and the site archive should be vested in The Museum of Lancashire, Preston.
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