

Invitation to Tender: 'I'll Take the High Road', Community based survey and excavation at Bampton Common, Cumbria

1 Introduction

The Lake District National Park Authority is inviting tenders that will facilitate the survey, excavation and recording of the possible High Street Roman Road on Bampton Common.

The location of this site is highlighted on the attached map in Appendix 1.

The contractor will be required to approach and undertake the specified program of archaeological services as a 'community engagement' focused event, providing support and training in archaeological skills to groups of volunteers. The initial recruitment of volunteers falls outside the contractors brief, although the management and supervision of volunteers, along with a responsibility for their safety and welfare while on-site, is the responsibility of the contractor.

2 Project background

This project forms part of 'Our Common Cause: Our Upland Commons', a National Lottery Heritage Fund project. Please see <https://foundationforcommonland.org.uk/our-common-cause> for further details.

It is a landmark project that will conserve, enhance and broaden understanding of the cultural and natural heritage of commons and commoning in upland England, working in the Lake District, Dartmoor, the Yorkshire Dales and Shropshire Hills.

The project has four central aims:

- Secure and support collaborative management of Common Land;
- Ensure that the health of commons is secured by supporting resilient commoning in a fast-changing world;
- Reconnect the public with the natural and cultural heritage of Common Land;
- Enhance the environmental and ecological benefits offered by Common Land

This is one of 14 sub projects across the thematic strands of Collaboration, Resilience, Commons for All and Commons for Tomorrow. The strands have been designed to deliver the overall aims of the project and each sub-project will deliver a range of outcomes for heritage, people and communities.

This community archaeology project aims to uncover new information about the Roman archaeology and landscape development of the area through a programme of surveys, research, excavation and interpretation.

The project will take place in the Spring/Summer of 2022. We envisage a team of eight volunteers on-site each day for a total of 2 weeks (14 working days) in order to complete the surveys and excavation.

3 Site background

The High Street Roman Road (HER no. 1522 and SM No. 1003275) stretches from Brougham Roman Fort, to the south of Penrith, over the Lake District Fells to Ambleside Roman Fort. 17 km of the route in the Lake District National Park is scheduled, designated as a nationally significant site, 5 km of which cross Bampton Common. It reaches elevations of c.820m (2,690ft).

In 2006 an excavation of 3 trenches on the presumed route of the Roman Road between Froswick and Thornthwaite Beacon on the Kentmere Horseshoe detected the presence of a metalled surface. Features believed to be associated with the prevention of flooding or to stop the encroachment of peat onto the road surface were identified (Greenlane Archaeology, 2006).

Further details of the High Street and adjacent sites can be obtained from the Lake District National Park Authority, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL. Tel. 01539 792712/Fax. 01539 740822/Email Eleanor.Kingston@lake-district.gov.uk

4 Project methodology

Historic England is currently undertaking a project combining aerial photography, interpretation and mapping, and ground-based observation to produce a detailed survey of the route, assessing its interpretation as a Roman road and providing an up-to-date audit of its condition to support management and a scheduling review.

The overall scope and purpose of this project is to take the results of the Historic England study, validate them in the field, arrange geophysical survey and small scale archaeological excavations to confirm the route and location of the Roman Road.

The different components and methodology for the survey and investigation are set out below:

4.1 Survey and Excavation at High Street Roman Road, Bampton Common

The proposed survey and investigation of the High Street Roman Road will include the following:

- Archival and documentary research (see below for further details);
- Topographic archaeological survey of the extent of the archaeological remains using a plane table and disto mounted alidade or disto mounted theodolite survey or any other techniques or equipment that are affordable by amateur groups and that are relatively easy to implement.
- Geophysical (magnetometer and resistivity) survey of the site.
- Small-scale excavation.
- Creation of a site grid using a combination of EDM and GPS technologies.
- Creation of a written gazetteer based on the collection of information in the field using a standard site record form. The gazetteer should include information to be incorporated into the final site report and entry on the Lake District Historic Environment Record (HER). The gazetteer should include the following mandatory description fields: site number, site name, NGR, site description, monument type (using the Historic England site thesaurus), period, condition, threats, management recommendations and photo reference.
- Accurate survey plans depicting archaeological features at appropriate scales.
- Understanding the sequence and development of the site.

- A standard digital photographic record of all features identified during the survey.

4.2 Archive and documentary research

There is a wealth of documentary and cartographic information available for the High Street Roman Road which would add a great deal to our understanding and interpretation.

While there is no scope within the current project for detailed investigation of primary source material, some assessment of the readily available secondary source material should be undertaken.

In each case the contractor should seek to obtain good copies (or photographs of relevant parts) of all historic maps and other documents considered particularly important to the project and reproduce them within the final report. The contractor should also make a full study of the previous survey of the site and other relevant material held in the Lake District Historic Environment Record.

The contractor should outline a methodology for data collection and outline sources for detailed interpretation of the site. This should include liaising with the landowner.

4.3 Geophysical Survey

A geophysical survey is required in order to demonstrate the extent and the character of the surviving subsurface remains. This work must be carried out at least in part by volunteers under supervision.

4.4 Excavation

Small-scale excavation is required in order to determine the extent and character of the archaeological remains identified by topographic and geophysical survey. The exercise should be considered as an extended evaluation with an opportunity to teach excavation skills to volunteers.

The exact location and extent of the excavation will be agreed with LDNPA archaeological staff on site, using the results of the topographic and geophysical surveys. The scale of the excavation will be limited and will have to take into account available time and the use of volunteers. A starting point is likely to be 2 trenches in the order of 5 metre x 1.6 metre or equivalent which could be extended if required.

It is envisaged that the following work will be required:

- The artefact content of the topsoil should be assessed. Techniques might include measured surface artefact collection, a series of topsoil test pits, or sampling of the topsoil from trenching. The proposed strategy should be agreed with the LDNPA archaeological staff and will be expected to take account of the prevailing ground conditions on the site.
- A programme of trial trenching across the site in order to establish the extent, date, nature and preservation of archaeological deposits. The locations of trenches will be based on results of the geophysical and topographic surveys. Topsoil removal and subsequent excavation will be by hand.

- Where possible and appropriate, features and deposits should be investigated to understand the full stratigraphic sequence in each trench, down to natural deposits. All deposits should be fully recorded on appropriate context sheets, photographs, scale plans and sections.
- The excavation should include a programme of sampling of appropriate materials for environmental and/or other scientific analysis and a basic analysis of suitable deposits (restricted at this stage to establishing the presence or absence of significant material). Special attention should be paid to sampling securely dated deposits and features and specifically any waterlogged and/or burnt deposits encountered.
- The following analyses should form part of the excavation, as appropriate. If any of these areas of analysis are not considered viable or appropriate, their exclusion should be justified in the subsequent report:
 - Advice is to be sought from a suitably qualified specialist in faunal remains on the potential of sites for producing bones of fish and small mammals. If there is potential, a sieving programme should be undertaken. Faunal remains, collected by hand and sieved, are to be assessed and analysed, if appropriate.
 - The advice from a suitably qualified soil scientist should be sought on whether a soil micromorphological study or any other analytical techniques will enhance understanding site formation processes of the site, including the amount of truncation to buried deposits and the preservation of deposits within negative features. If so, analysis should be undertaken.

C14 dating

If feasible, samples for at least two C14 dates should be collected from appropriate contexts and processed.

4.5 Post Excavation

The nature and timescale of this project dictates that a costed proposal for post-excavation be included by potential contractors at this stage.

4.6 Report writing

After the completion of the fieldwork and documentary research, the contractor should use the information generated to produce a comprehensive and well illustrated report that brings together and presents the results of the investigations. The report should include the following:

- location plans at an appropriate scale, related to the national grid;
- a concise, non-technical summary of the results;
- a description of the project and its methodology;
- an outline of the history of the region;
- a summary of the known historical and social history of the site investigated based upon secondary source material;
- plans at an appropriate scale (and style in the case of the geophysical plots) of the topographic and geophysical surveys;
- detailed written descriptions and plans of the individual features recorded through topographic survey.;

- a complete photographic record of all features;
- a complete gazetteer of all features recorded during the project ;
- an interpretation of the function of the site including relative chronology of extant features and general phasing;
- interpretation of the combined results of topographic and geophysical survey and excavation;
- for the excavation, plans and sections at an appropriate scale showing location and position of trenches dug, features and finds located;
- section drawings should include heights OD;
- plans should include OD spot heights for all principal strata and features;
- a list of and date for any significant finds recovered;
- a description of archaeological features and deposits identified;
- a description of any environmental or other specialist work undertaken, including slag analysis, and the results obtained;
- an interpretation of the results and of their potential archaeological significance;
- a full bibliography of sources consulted and a list of any further sources identified but not consulted;
- an index to the project archive;
- a copy of the brief and agreed project design and an indication of any variations.

4.7 Introductory Day and Presentation of results

In addition to the work described above, the contractor will be required to attend an Introductory Day and deliver a presentation on the programme of work and techniques of survey for the project. The contractor will also be expected to prepare and deliver a presentation on the results of the site investigation and documentary research to an audience of project volunteers shortly after the completion of the report. The responsibility for booking venues and advertising the events will fall to the LDNPA/Our Upland Commons Team.

5 Survey outputs

On completion of the project a draft report containing the results of the investigations should be completed and passed to the LDNPA for comment and review. The draft report should include copies of all maps, photographs and other illustrations that will appear in the final report.

The draft report will then be examined and any comments returned to the contractor along with any suggested amendments within two weeks.

After reviewing comments on the draft report the contractor will provide the following:

Six bound paper copies of the report. Each copy should be accompanied by a set of paper plans if not included in the bound report.

Three separate digital copies of the complete report (including all digital mapping information in formats compatible with both MapInfo and AutoCAD packages). The digital media should also include complete and 'ready to print' copies of the project report in both Word and PDF formats. Please note that the PDF version should be suitable for sharing via e-mail (i.e. less than 10MB in size).

A series of files that contain hard copies (or digital folders containing digital copies) of all archive and documentary information examined as part of the project.

6 Site conditions

We have permission from a private landowner to survey and excavate the site. The meeting point and parking for volunteers will be agreed with the landowner prior to the start of the project.

In order to transport equipment (and volunteers) to site it may be necessary to hire a 4 x 4 vehicle. Costs for this should be included in the tender.

There are health and safety implications with working on sites in the high fells, particularly in wet and poor visibility weather. It is therefore important that the contractor visits the site and exchanges risk assessments with LDNPA archaeological staff before the commencement of any fieldwork on site. This will also provide the contractor an opportunity to ensure that there is mobile signal available for the GPS technologies on site and establish survey control prior to the start of the project.

7 General terms

The Our Upland Commons partner organisations will retain copyright over the resulting report and all associated archival material (including all digital maps and photographic material), and shall have absolute control over the use and dissemination of that information. The Our Upland Commons partners fully recognises the originator's moral right to suitable accreditation in any publication of the results.

The survey results will be incorporated in the Lake District Historic Environment Record.

The project will be undertaken by the contractor acting on an independent basis. Staff working on the project will not be deemed employees of the National Park Authority. Tenders should reflect this fact and more specifically the Contractor will take sole responsibility for the payment of tax, National Insurance contributions, etc. If VAT is payable, this too should be indicated in the bid.

8 Timescale

Given the 'community engagement' focus of this project it is critical that the professional contractor can commit to delivering this project to a fixed timetable. A proposed timetable will be discussed and agreed with the contractor prior to the start of the project.

9 Costing

The budget for all of the work covered by this brief (including post-excavation and reporting) is £9,150, with £500 available for equipment/vehicle hire. There is no possibility of any addition to this. We are therefore seeking a proposal for a programme of work that is good value for money, meets the requirements of this brief and is realistic (both in scope and timescale).

We ask that contractors provide a detailed breakdown of costs as part of the tender including travel, accommodation, report writing and production etc. Specific costs will be needed for all elements of the work program (on-site staffing, materials, documentary research, report writing, preparation for presentation etc).

10 Personnel

The contractor will provide at least:

- one suitably qualified member of staff to undertake basic documentary research (2 days);
- one suitably qualified member of staff to give presentations at events to start and end the project (2 days);
- one suitably qualified member of staff to lead the topographic survey (3 days). Support will be provided by Lake District Archaeology Volunteer Network Supervisors and LDNPA staff, to help train and supervise the volunteer survey over 7 days;
- one suitably qualified member of staff to direct the excavation (7 days) and to compile the report (number of days to be proposed by contractor and agreed with LDNPA);
- one suitably qualified geophysicist to lead the geophysical survey (4 days).

Our Upland Commons and LDNPA staff will assist with the events at the start and end of the project.

11 **Contacts**

The principal project contact is:

Eleanor Kingston (Lead Strategy Adviser: Historic Environment)
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 Kendal
 Cumbria
 LA9 7RL

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12 **References**

Greenlane Archaeology (2006) Kentmere Horseshoe: Archaeological Evaluation

Appendix 1

Figure 1: Location map of High Street Roman Road

