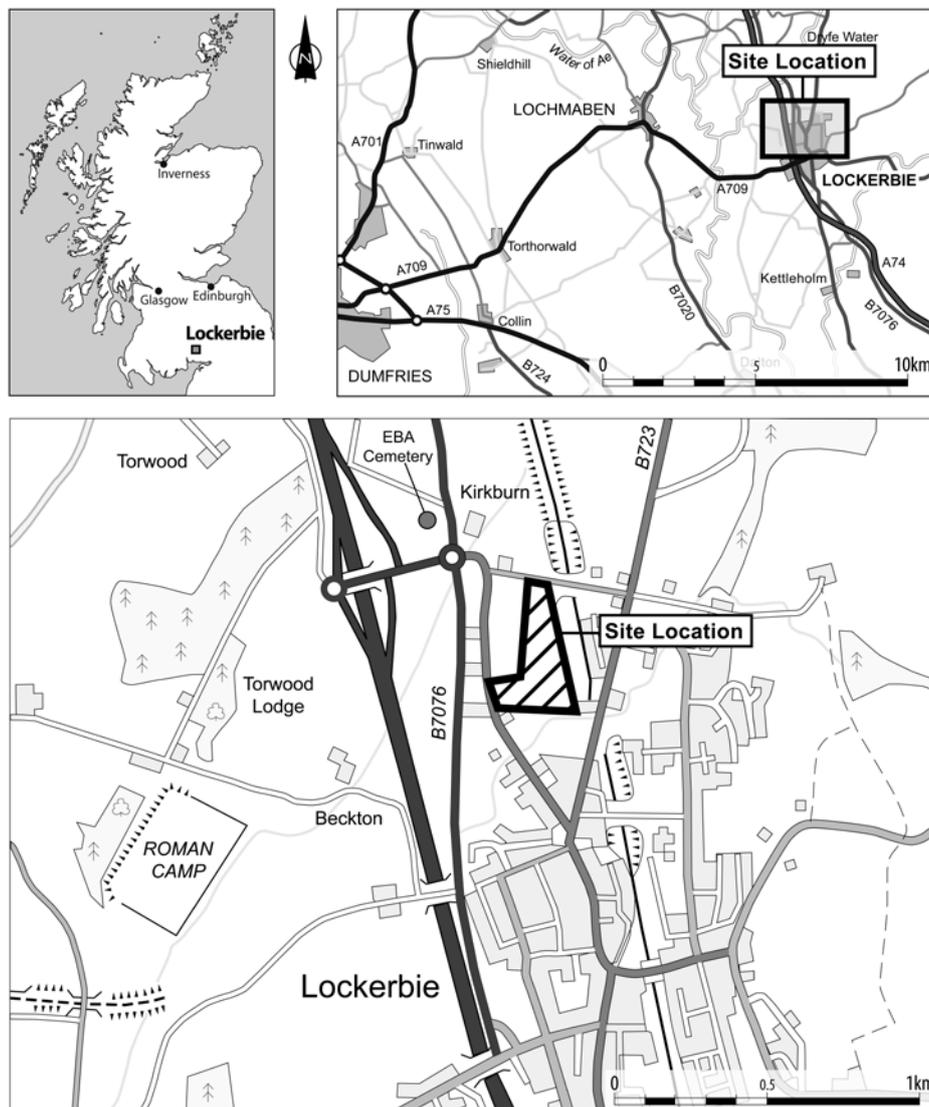


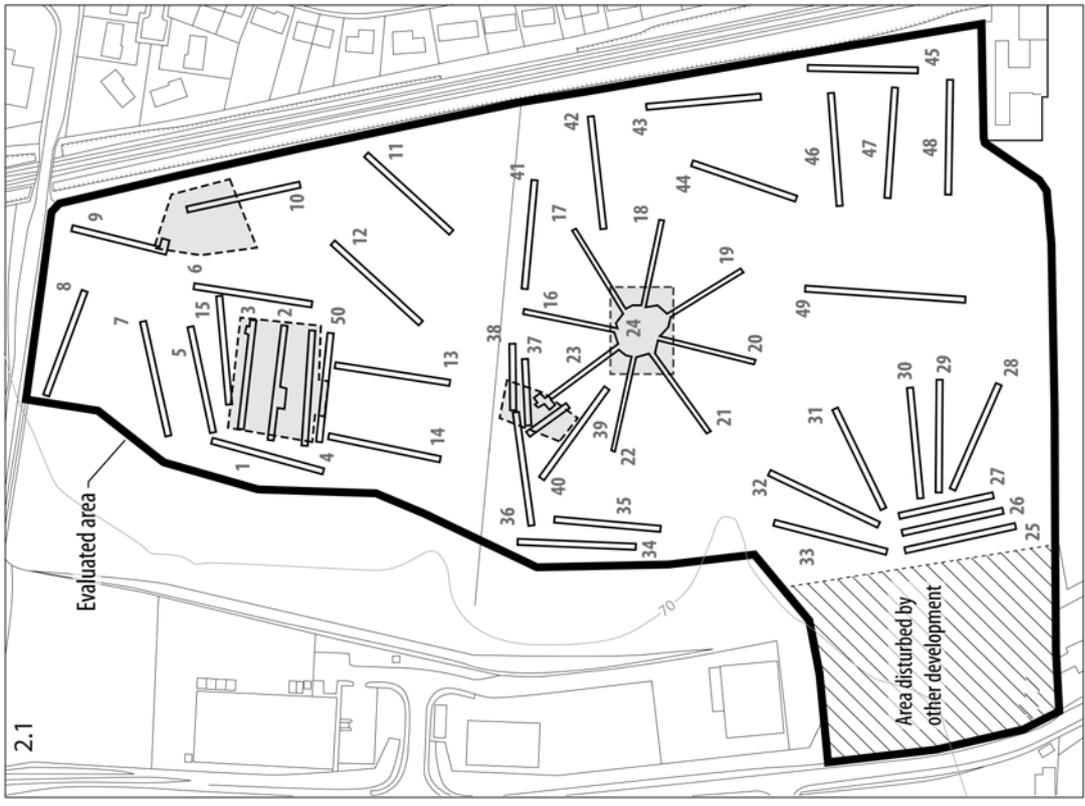
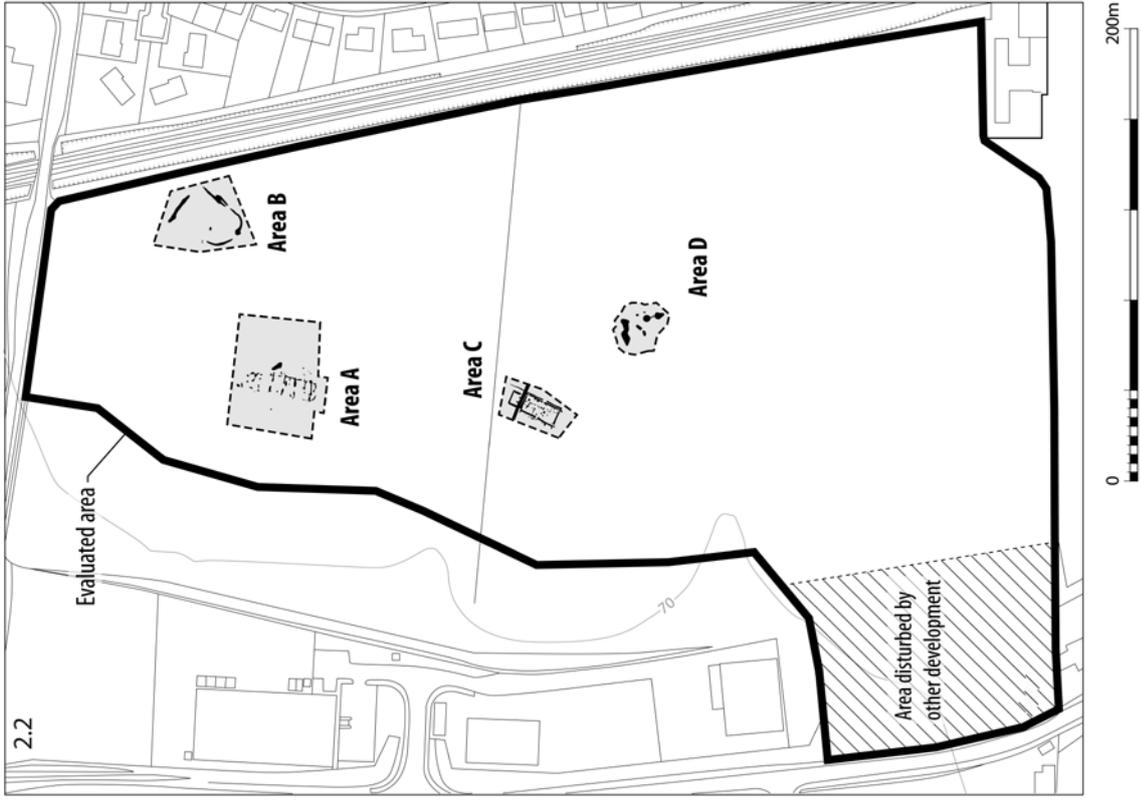
2 INTRODUCTION

In January 2006, CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) was commissioned by Dumfries & Galloway Council to undertake archaeological trial trenching in an area earmarked for the construction of a new primary and secondary school for the Lockerbie area. The area lay to the north of the existing Lockerbie Academy on agricultural land bordering the West Coast Mainline Railway (NGR: NY 1339 8273; *illus 1*), within a broad valley that serves the vital role of permitting easy access between the central belt of Scotland and the north of England. Located on what would probably have been an important trade route stretching back for many millennia and situated within Dryfedale,

c 200m to the east of the Kirk Burn at an altitude of *c* 70m OD, this area was considered to have excellent archaeological potential. The topography of the area consists of gently rolling fields with a flat plateau towards the northern end of the site and a low rounded knoll towards the centre. This knoll (SMR No. DG 21026) had been identified in the 1960s, by local archaeologist William F Cormack, as a site of archaeological potential but no invasive fieldwork had previously been carried out. Trial trenching carried out by CFA identified four areas of archaeological significance (*illus 2*) covering a time scale from early Neolithic to post-medieval periods.



Illus 1 Site location map



Illus 2 Plan of the development area

2.1 Archaeological background

The fertile plains of Dryfedale have been well suited for the purpose of settlement since prehistory and this is reflected in the quantity of archaeological sites within close proximity to the Lockerbie Academy site. Of particular note are the Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age cemetery at Kirkburn (NMRS ref NY18SW 16; [Cormack 1963](#)) and a Neolithic lithic-working, ritual and settlement site at Beckton Farm (NY18SW 95; [Pollard 1997](#)). Other sites within the vicinity include a palisaded enclosure at Harthill (NY18SW 15), a burnt mound at Muirhead (NY18SW 100), an enclosure at Torwood (NY18SW 62) and a polished stone axe (NY18SW 21) found at nearby Broomhouse Farm.

The recognition of the Lockerbie Academy site as an area of archaeological potential can be credited to the late William F Cormack, who identified an area of oyster shell and stone at the summit of the low knoll towards the centre of the proposed development area. Having excavated the cremation cemetery at Kirkburn in 1961 ([Cormack 1963](#)), Cormack considered that this knoll had the potential to be a site of a similar nature. It is also largely thanks to the quantities of lithics recovered by Cormack during his fieldwalking exploits that the Neolithic settlement and ritual complex at Beckton Farm were identified and subsequently excavated by GUARD ([Pollard 1997](#)). Given the archaeological potential of the knoll, combined with the fact that Kirkburn and Beckton Farm lie only *c* 300m to the north-west and 400m to the west respectively, a planning condition requiring a programme of archaeological trial-trenching was applied to the proposed development by Dumfries & Galloway Council.

2.2 Setting

The Lockerbie Academy site was situated on the eastern edge of an expanse of open farmland close to the confluence of the Dryfe Water and the Annan Water. As well as being fertile and containing a plentiful supply of water, this location would potentially have had contacts with other areas via the rivers of the Dryfe Water, the Annan Water, the Kinnel Water and the Water of Ae. The site itself was positioned on the edge of higher ground that sloped eastward to a height of 223m. This area is likely to have been better draining than the lower-lying ground containing the major rivers, and a fast-flowing watercourse that ran down from the southern flank of the Hass would have provided a reliable source of clean drinking water.

2.3 Methodology

In agreement with the Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist, fifty trial trenches were excavated amounting to 5000 m² ([illus 2.1](#)). The greatest con-

centration of trenches was placed on the flat plateau towards the northern end of the area and on the rounded knoll in the centre. Fewer trenches were placed on the low-lying ground because it was considered to be of lower archaeological potential.

Four concentrations (Areas A–D; [illus 2.2](#)) of archaeological features were identified and soil-stripping within these areas was extended; intensive hand-cleaning was undertaken to reveal the full extent of the features. The resultant open area excavations had the following maximum dimensions: Area A 50m × 50m; Area B 35m × 35m; Area C 30m × 20m; Area D 25m × 25m. The extent of the subsequent mitigation measures was decided by the Dumfries & Galloway Council Archaeologist.

2.4 Summary of phasing

The earliest site identified was the remains of a Neolithic timber hall, which was situated on top of the flat plateau towards the north-west end of the site (Area A). Pottery recovered from the Neolithic structure was of the Carinated Bowl ceramic tradition, suggesting a date of 3950 BC to 3700 BC. These dates have been backed up by radiocarbon dating taken from grains of charred emmer wheat, hazelnut shell and willow, which produced an earliest date of 3950–3700 cal BC (2σ) and a latest date of 3770–3630 cal BC (2σ) ([Table 1](#)). They are broadly contemporary with the dates obtained from the Neolithic timber halls excavated at Balbridie Farm, Aberdeenshire ([Ralston 1982](#); [Fairweather & Ralston 1993](#)), Claish, Stirling ([Barclay et al 2002](#)) and Warren Field (also known as Crathes), Aberdeenshire ([Murray & Murray 2004](#)).

At the summit of the rounded knoll in the centre of the area (Area D) a Bronze Age phase consisting of a cremation and inhumation cemetery enclosed by a possible ring-cairn was identified. The Bronze Age cemetery was initially dated by the presence of a Collared Urn of a type generally dating between 1900 BC and 1600 BC and a copper alloy dagger of Butterwick type, of which comparable examples have been dated to between 2200 BC and 1950 BC. Radiocarbon analysis produced an earliest date of 2140–1910 cal BC and a latest date of 1910–1690 cal BC (2σ).

At the base of the rounded knoll, the remains of an Early Historic timber hall were identified (Area C). The interpretation of this structure as belonging to the Anglian period was initially based on the ground plan, which closely resembled examples from Yeavinger, Northumberland ([Hope-Taylor 1977](#)), Sprouston, Borders (known from cropmarks only) and Doon Hill, East Lothian ([Hope-Taylor 1980](#)). This interpretation is supported by radiocarbon dates taken from charred barley, which give an earliest date of 430–620 cal AD (2σ) and a latest date of 595–670 cal AD (2σ). The Anglian timber hall reoccupied the site of a post-built structure, which was interpreted as a timber hall, possibly belonging to an earlier British tradition. Radiocarbon dates

Table 1 Radiocarbon dates from the Neolithic structure

SUERC Lab No.	Context	Type	Species	Date BP	Calibrated 1 σ BC	Calibrated 2 σ BC
19247	F114/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4950 \pm 35	3770–3660	3800–3650
19248	F114/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4920 \pm 30	3710–3655	3770–3640
19249	F17/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4990 \pm 40	3900–3700	3940–3650
19250	F17/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	5020 \pm 30	3940–3710	3950–3700
19254	F144/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4925 \pm 30	3715–3650	3770–3640
19255	F144/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4915 \pm 30	3705–3655	3770–3640
19256	F149/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4955 \pm 35	3775–3690	3800–3650
19257	F149/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4915 \pm 25	3705–3655	3760–3640
19258	F117/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4980 \pm 30	3780–3705	3920–3660
19259	F117/02	Charred grain	Emmer wheat	4890 \pm 30	3695–3645	3720–3630

taken from the primary fill of two of the post-holes of the earlier structure gave dates of 550–660 cal AD and 600–675 cal AD (2 σ), which is broadly contemporary with the dates obtained for the Anglian hall, suggesting that the post-built structure immediately preceded it.

A corn-drying kiln was identified cut into the same knoll as the Bronze Age cemetery (Area D). Corn-drying kilns have been in use in the north-west of the British Isles since Roman times (Scott 1951), but the vast majority of those recorded are post-medieval in date (Cormack 1981). Radiocarbon dating on charred oats taken from the fire-pit of

the Lockerbie Academy kiln gave an earlier date of 1450–1640 cal AD and a later date of 1510–1800 cal AD (2 σ). The Hearth Tax Lists of 1692 indicate that corn-drying kilns were relatively rare in Dumfriesshire (Adamson 1970–72), but were comparatively common in Wigtonshire, with perhaps one for every half-dozen households (Cormack 1981).

A segmented ditched enclosure was located towards the north-east end of the site (Area B), but the poor survival of this feature combined with a lack of finds and palaeobotanical evidence means that it remains undated and poorly understood.