



CFA ARCHAEOLOGY
Professional cultural heritage consultants - branches nationwide
enquiries@cfa-archaeology.co.uk

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION



Land South of Langley Lane, Birch, Middleton

Archaeological Watching Brief and Trial Trenching
[Planning Ref. 18/00869/FUL](#)

Author:
Jack Litchfield BA MA PhD ACIfA



CFA ARCHAEOLOGY LTD

Offices C1 and C2
Clayton Business Centre
Midland Road
Leeds
LS10 2RJ

Tel: 0113 271 6060

Email: info@cfa-arch.co.uk
Web: www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

Author	Jack Litchfield BA MA PhD ACIfA
Illustrator	Sarah Bailie BA
Approver	Joe Turner BA MSc ACIfA
Commissioned by	Hollins Strategic Land
Date issued	June 2023
Version	1
Planning Application No	18/00869/FUL
Grid Ref	SD 85237 07661

This document has been prepared in accordance with CFA Archaeology Ltd standard operating procedures.

Land South of Langley Lane, Birch, Middleton

Archaeological Watching Brief and Trial Trenching

Written Scheme of Investigation

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION2

2 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES5

3 WORKING METHODS.....5

4 ANALYSIS AND REPORTING7

5 RESOURCING AND PROGRAMMING9

6 REFERENCES 10

FIGURE (BOUND AT REAR)

Fig. 1: Site Location, Watching Brief and Trench Locations

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared on behalf of Hollins Strategic Land. It outlines a phased programme of archaeological works, comprising an archaeological watching brief and trial trenching evaluation to be undertaken at Land South of Langley Lane, Birch, Middleton (NGR SD 85237 07661). This work follows the completion of a geophysical survey.

The Proposed Development comprises a residential housing estate of 23 dwellings, with associated landscaping, access, and service installation works. The archaeological works are required as part of Condition 17 for the consented development (Application No. 18/00869/FUL). Condition 17 states:

No development shall take place until a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The WSI shall cover the following:

1. *A phased programme and methodology of site investigation and recording to include:*
 - a) *a geophysical survey;*
 - b) *an archaeological evaluation through trial trenching;*
 - c) *pending results of the above, targeted open-area excavation and recording (subject to an updated WSI).*
2. *A programme for post-investigation assessment to include:*
 - a) *analysis of the site investigation records and finds;*
 - b) *production of a final report on the significance of the heritage interest recorded.*
3. *Deposition of the final report with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record.*
4. *Dissemination of the results of the site investigations commensurate with their significance.*
5. *Provision for archive deposition of the report, finds and records of the site investigation.*
6. *Nomination of a competent person or persons/organisation to undertake the works set out within the approved WSI.*

The development shall not be occupied until the site investigation has been completed in accordance with the programme set out in the approved WSI and provision made for the completion of all elements of that programme.

Reason: To protect the significance of any archaeological remains on the site in accordance with Policy P2 of the adopted Rochdale Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework.

Reason for pre-commencement condition: There is a risk of disturbance to below ground features of archaeological importance on commencement.

In the first instance, an archaeological watching brief (see Section 3.2) is proposed to be undertaken during the setting out of the site access (Figure 1) and the trial trenching (see Section 3.3) will be conducted across the remaining area of the Proposed Development Site (the Site) prior to any further construction work being commenced.

Should significant archaeological features be recorded during the watching brief and trial trenching an appropriate programme of targeted open-area excavation and recording will be defined in liaison with the Greater Manchester Archaeological Advisory Service (GMAAS), acting on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council. The further archaeological works will be defined by a separate WSI or WSIs.

1.2 Site Location and Description

The Proposed Development Site comprises an area of open pasture in the village of Birch, around 3.5 miles southeast of Bury (Figure 1). To the north, the Site is bordered by hedgerow and trees along Langley Lane. Areas of arable farmland lie to the south, just beyond the Whittle Brook, which runs east-west along the Site's southern border. Birch Stables, with associated open fields and yards, stands to the Site's east. To the west, limited residential development is present on the eastern side of the A6045 Heywood Old Road, which runs northeast-southwest west of the Site.

The geology of the Site consists of mudstone, siltstone, and sandstone of the Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation, with superficial deposits of quaternary Diamicton Till (BGS 2023). The soils are characterised as freely draining and of sandy texture (LandIS 2023).

1.3 Archaeological and Historical Background

1.3.1 Archaeological Assessment and Heritage Statement (Kathryn Sather & Associates, 2018; 2022)

The following archaeological and historical background has been summarised from an Archaeological Assessment and a Heritage Statement produced by Kathryn Sather & Associates to accompany the planning application for the Proposed Development.

Prehistoric

No evidence for prehistoric activity was recorded within the Site boundary or in a 1km Study Area.

The Archaeological Assessment suggested that the Site's topography and location were both deemed suitable to prehistoric hunting practices and thus there may be potential for below-ground archaeological remains, dating to the Mesolithic period (Kathryn Sather & Associates, 2018).

No Neolithic monuments are recorded in Rochdale, but there have been stray finds of stone axes dating to this period.

At Windmill Hill north of Heywood, a cairn with grave goods, is associated with the transitional period between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, known as the Beaker Period.

The only find dating to the Iron Age from the Rochdale area is a chance find of a bronze torque found in Calderbrook, recovered in 1832.

Romano-British

No evidence for Romano-British activity was recorded within the Site boundary or 1km Study Area.

Within the district of Rochdale, single coins, coin hoards, pottery and tiles, a possible spearhead, and a silver arm from a statue have been found.

Early Medieval

No evidence for early medieval activity was recorded within the Site boundary or 1km Study Area.

The suffix *-ton* tends to indicate former Anglo-Saxon settlements, with 'Middleton' being one such example; suggesting the settlement may date to the early medieval period.

Medieval

The site of Langley Hall, which lies around 400m to the southeast of the Site, marks the former location of a medieval moated manor, first cited by documentary evidence in 1332. This is more suggestive of a later medieval presence in the area, with the local landscape likely having been characterised by agricultural activity during the period.

Post-Medieval & Modern

The Lower Whittle Farmhouse (NHLE 1068502), a Grade II timber-framed structure constructed during the 17th century, stands around 630m to the northwest of Site, and has been altered throughout the post-medieval period. Birch itself did not begin to develop at pace until the 19th century, during which time the construction of the Birch Mill took place, providing the village with an industrial centre. By the mid-19th century, the parish church of St Mary's was constructed, indicating the growing population in the village. In 1888, Edgar Wood, whose architecture came to characterise the area, produced a drinking fountain (NHLE 1245928), including horse and hounds drinking troughs, which stands less than 200m to the Site's northwest.

During a historic map regression carried out as part of a 2022 Heritage Statement, it was found that successive editions of Ordnance Survey maps from 1848 to 1992, show the Site as a largely static parcel of open field, likely predominantly used for horse pasture.

1.4 Geophysical Survey (AOC Archaeology, 2022)

A geophysical survey (magnetometry) was conducted across the Site in April 2022. The survey identified several unclear anomalies (Figure 1).

A thin magnetically enhanced linear trend (1) was identified in the centre of the Site, orientated approximately north to south. This was interpreted as a possible drainage feature, or possibly a feature which was natural in origin.

Two areas of magnetic disturbance (2) were identified to the west of the linear trend (1). No clear interpretation was made, though it was suggested the disturbance could have been caused by grazing, or perhaps some form of extraction activity.

To the west of the areas of magnetic disturbance (2), several faint linear trends were recorded. It was suggested that there could be some 'form' to these anomalies, perhaps representing some sort of enclosure, but equally they could relate to temporary horse pens, or underlying geology.

On the eastern boundary of the Site, several faint magnetic linear trends (4) were identified. These were considered most likely to be geological in nature, however an archaeological origin could not be ruled out.

No evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation was identified within the Site. Evidence of geological anomalies was recorded in the Site. A number of isolated dipolar anomalies (ferrous / iron spikes) were recorded throughout the Site which are likely modern in origin.

2 PROJECT AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the watching brief and trial trenching are:

- To undertake a watching brief which will determine and record the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance, and quality of any archaeological deposits located within the footprint of the proposed access which may be exposed during groundworks;
- To undertake a trial trench evaluation in order to evaluate geophysical anomalies, and 'blank' areas, in order to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality, and date of any archaeological features or deposits;
- To establish the potential impacts of the Proposed Development (where archaeological features may occur) and to allow mitigation measures to be proposed, where appropriate; and
- To disseminate the results of the archaeological evaluation to the wider public in a manner appropriate to their significance.

Relevant research objectives will be derived from the North West Historic Environment Research Framework (Research Frameworks, 2023).

3 WORKING METHODS

3.1 General

CFA Archaeology is a Registered Organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). Work will be conducted with regard to the Institute's Standards documents (CIfA 2020a-c), relevant Historic England guidance documents (Historic

England 2011, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c and 2020), and this WSI. Recording of all elements will be done following established CFA procedures.

A visual inspection of the site will be undertaken in order to identify: any surface features of potential archaeological interest; areas of potentially significant disturbance; and any hazards or constraints which may impact the archaeological work on site.

3.2 Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief will be conducted during the groundworks, required in advance of setting out the Site access (see Figure 1). This area is located in the north of the Site, adjacent to Langley Lane. Topsoil, subsoil and any other overburden will be removed with a toothless grading/ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Excavation will be carried out to the depth of the natural substrate, or to the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever is reached first.

If archaeological deposits are encountered, then machining will cease in that area to allow the supervising archaeologist time to investigate the exposed deposits. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the watching brief will be carried out by hand (see Section 3.4), unless otherwise agreed with the GMAAS.

Once the watching brief has been completed, sign-off will be sought from GMAAS to allow the access construction to continue.

3.3 Trial Trenching

Five trenches, measuring 50m by 1.8m (entailing a c.3% sample of the Site), have been sited across the Site in order to evaluate geophysical anomalies and 'blank' areas.

The trenches will be machine excavated with a toothless ditching bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Excavation will be carried out to the depth of the natural substrate, or to the first significant archaeological horizon, whichever is reached first. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation will be carried out by hand (see Section 3.4), unless otherwise agreed with the GMAAS.

The trenches will be backfilled on completion of excavation and once sign-off has been received from GMAAS. The location of the trenches will be recorded using industry standard surveying equipment and tied to the National Grid. Vertical survey control will be tied to the Ordnance Survey Datum.

3.4 Recording

All excavation and on-site recording will be carried out according to standard CFA procedures, principally by drawing, by photography, and by completing standard CFA record forms. The stratification will be recorded even if no deposits of archaeological significance are discovered.

Samples of all features of archaeological interest will be excavated in order to establish their likely date, nature, extent and condition. All such excavation will be conducted by hand.

Sections will be recorded by means of a measured drawing at an appropriate scale. Sections will normally be drawn at 1:10. Cut features will be recorded in profile, planned at an appropriate scale, with their location accurately identified on the appropriate trench plan. The height of a datum on the drawing will be calculated and recorded. The locations of sections and plans will be recorded on the site plans, relative to the site grid.

Photographs will include an appropriate scale, and will be recorded on photographic registers which detail subject, location, and direction of shot. Photographs taken will adhere to Historic England's guidance '*Digital Image Capture and File Storage*' (Historic England 2015b). Photographs should be taken with a high-resolution digital SLR camera, with sensors exceeding 12 Mega pixels, at the highest quality setting. Digital images will be converted to uncompressed baseline v.6 TIFF for archiving.

Any human remains encountered will be reported to the appropriate authorities and left *in situ*. If removal is necessary, this will comply with the relevant license, regulations, and government guidance.

All artefacts, including faunal remains, will be retained for analysis. Post-excavation storage requirements will be assessed. Modern finds (20th century onward) will be recorded but not retained. Collection and post-excavation work on artefacts will follow current ClfA guidance (2020b).

CFA's palaeoenvironmental scientist will assess the environmental potential of the Site, and will advise on whether deposits offer potential for conducting palaeobotanical or other soils analyses, or to allow a sieving programme to be undertaken if appropriate. They will assess the potential for the preservation of faunal remains, and ensure that sampling is carried out in accordance with current guidelines (Historic England 2011).

4 ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

4.1 Post-excavation

All finds, where appropriate, will be retained, washed, and assessed in accordance with accepted professional standards.

For all categories of material recovered, including finds, palaeoenvironmental, industrial, and other specialist samples, an assessment by an appropriately experienced specialist will be undertaken. Samples will be processed and sorted, and any artefacts recovered will be provided to the appropriate specialist(s) to be considered alongside the hand-recovered material. Basic stratigraphic information will be supplied to the project specialists.

All finds are to be treated in accordance with current best practice guidance (Historic England 2011). Finds will be cleaned and quantified according to accepted principles and in line with appropriate period/material guidelines.

4.2 Reporting

The report will contain:

- A concise, non-technical summary of the project results;
- A front cover/frontispiece which includes the planning application number and the national grid reference of the site;
- The dates during which the work was undertaken;
- A description of the site location and geology;
- An explanation of any agreed variations from the WSI, including justification for any work not undertaken;
- A description of the methodology employed, work undertaken and the results obtained;
- Contexts and feature descriptions;
- Maps and other illustrations at an appropriate scale;
- A list of, and spot dates for, any finds recovered, and;
- A description of any environmental or other specialist work undertaken and an outline of the results obtained;
- A discussion of how the work contributed to the aims and objectives set out in the WSI; and
- Recommendations regarding the need for, and scope of, any further archaeological work;
- A bibliography.

4.3 Archiving

CFA Archaeology is ISO 9001 accredited, and all internal archiving and digital record systems are fully compliant with ClfA Standards and Guidance, specifically guidance on Planning and Data Management Plans for Archaeological Projects (ClfA 2023). The digital archive will be subject to a selection process, depending on the results of the works, and the resulting digital archive will be deposited with the Archaeological Data Service (ADS) in line with guidance from ADS (2023) and ClfA (2020c).

A draft copy of the report will be sent to the GMAAS for any comments prior to being finalised. One digital copy of the final report (PDF-A format) will be deposited with the Greater Manchester Historic Environment Record (HER) following completion of fieldwork.

An online OASIS form will be completed as part of the archaeological work.

The landowner will be encouraged to transfer the ownership of finds to the receiving archive, anticipated to be the Manchester Museum, and the requirements of the museum will be adhered to.

5 RESOURCING AND PROGRAMMING

5.1 Key Personnel

Phil Mann (BA MCIfA) is a Project Manager for CFA Archaeology. Phil has project managed numerous archaeological projects of all periods throughout the country including those undertaken for large infrastructure projects.

Field Director for CFA will be selected from CFA's pool of Field Officers, depending on availability, all of whom have appropriate experience. The CV for the selected Field Officer can be forwarded prior to the start of the project.

Dr Shelley Werner (BSc MPhil PhD) is CFA's Graphics Manager, responsible for the organisation and management of all GIS, CAD, and Illustrative material. She is an experienced illustrator with specialist knowledge in GIS consultancy, archaeological fieldwork and standing building survey, and has worked on a variety of projects in Scotland and England.

Post-excavation and environmental coordination will be managed by CFA's post-excavation manager, **Christina Hills**; CVs for CFA's 'in house' specialists or external consultants can be supplied on request.

5.2 Health and Safety

All CFA staff have been inducted into CFA's Health and Safety Policy. All work for the project will be subject to Risk Assessment procedures.

5.3 Monitoring

Close contact will be maintained with the client and GMAAS for the purpose of monitoring the project. Important or unexpected discoveries will be communicated to GMAAS, and a monitoring visit will be arranged if appropriate. Contact numbers, and a notification of works commencing, will be forwarded a minimum of one week in advance of the work starting.

6 REFERENCES

Legislation, Policy and Guidance

Archaeological Data Service (ADS) 2023 'Guides to Good Practice'.
<https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/help-guidance/guides-to-good-practice/>.

Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) 2014 'Code of Conduct'. Reading: CIfA (revised October 2022).

CIfA 2020a 'Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation'. Reading: CIfA .

CIfA 2020b 'Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief'. Reading: CIfA .

CIfA 2020c 'Standard and Guidance for the Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives' Reading: CIfA.

CIfA 2023 'Planning – Data Management Plan'.
<https://www.archaeologists.net/digdigital/planning>.

Historic England 2011 'Environmental Archaeology; A Guide to the Theory and Practice of Methods, from Sampling and Recovery to Post-excavation'. Swindon: Historic England.

Historic England 2015a 'The Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment, (MoRPHE), Project Managers' Guide'. Swindon: Historic England .

Historic England 2015b 'Digital Image Capture and File Storage'. Swindon: Historic England .

Bibliographic

AOC Archaeology 2022 'Land off Langley Lane, Middleton, Lancashire: Archaeological Geophysical Survey'. Report No. 40373

Kathryn Sather & Associates 2018 'Langley Lane, Birch Village, Middleton: Archaeological Desk Based Assessment'.

Kathryn Sather & Associates 2022 'Langley Lane, Birch Village, Middleton: Heritage Statement'.

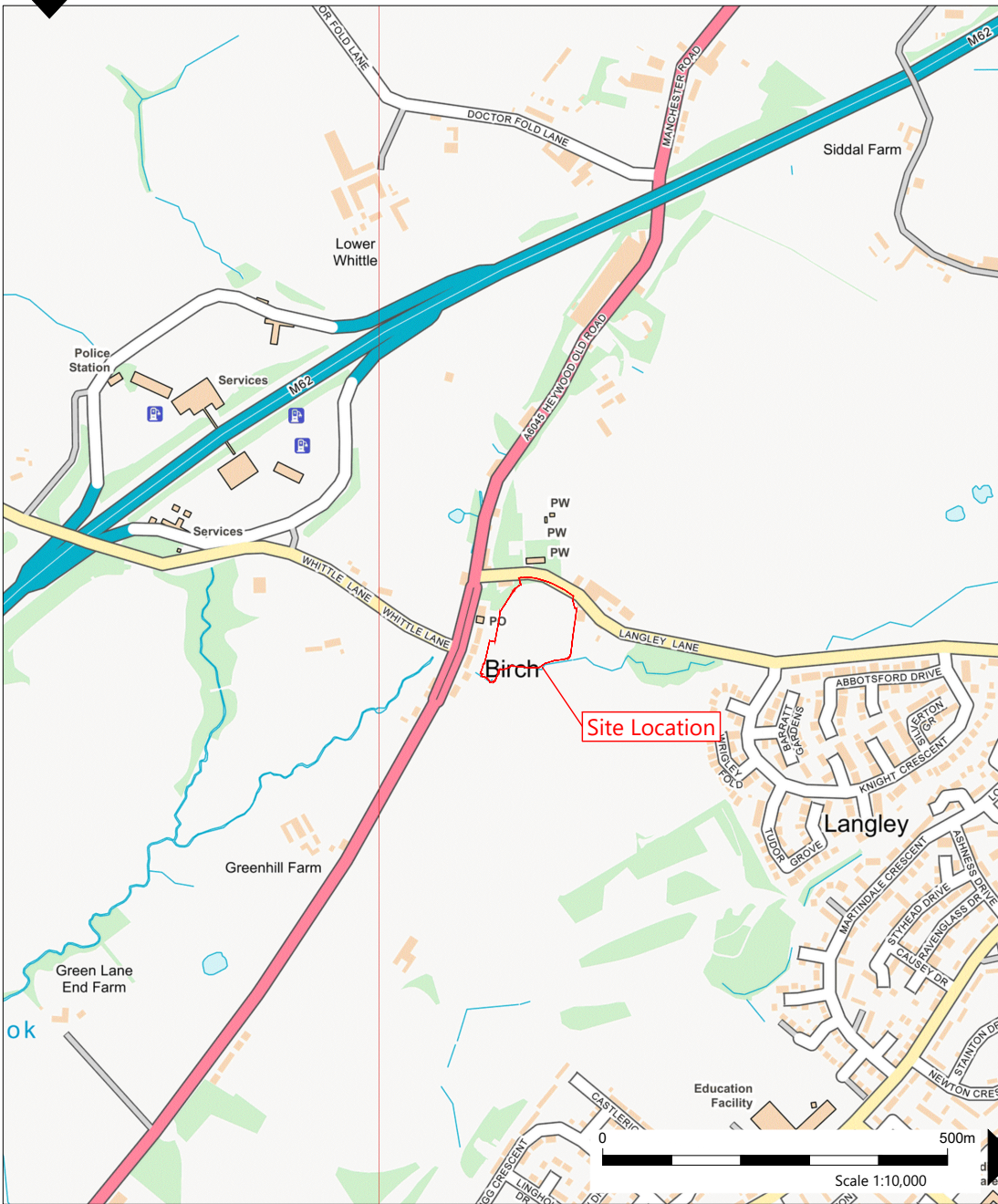
Online Resources

British Geological Survey 2023 'Geology of Britain (viewer)'. <https://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/>. [Accessed 25/05/2023].

LandIS 2022 'Cranfield Soil and Agrifood Institute Soilscales'.
<http://www.landis.org.uk/soilscales>. [Accessed 25/05/2023].

Research Frameworks 2022 'The North West England Regional Research Framework'.
<https://researchframeworks.org/eoe/>. [Accessed 25/05/2023].

FIGURES



- Key:**
- Site Boundary
 - Proposed Access
 - Watching Brief Area
 - Trial Trenches
- Geophys Interpretation © AOC Archaeology
- Area of Disturbance (Unclear Origin)
 - Geology/Natural
 - Area of Disturbance (Modern)
 - Ferrous / Iron Spike
 - Linear Trend Field Drain

Reproduced with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. CFA Archaeology Ltd, Old Engine House, Eskmills Park, Musselburgh EH21 7PQ AL100034785



Title: Site Location, Watching Brief and Trench Location		
Project: Land South of Langley Lane, Birch, Middleton		
Client: Hollins Strategic Land		
Scale at A3: Varies		
Drawn by: SB	Checked: JT	Date: 31/05/2023
Report No: WSI		Fig. No: 1



CFA ARCHAEOLOGY
www.cfa-archaeology.co.uk

HEAD OFFICE - Musselburgh

Old Engine House
Eskmills Park, Musselburgh
East Lothian, EH21 7PQ

t: +44 (0) 131 273 4380
e: enquiries@cfa-arch.co.uk

Leeds

Clayton Works Business Centre
Midland Road
Leeds, LS10 2RJ

t: +44 (0) 113 271 6060
e: yorkshire@cfa-arch.co.uk

Milton Keynes

Suite 11, Letchworth House
Chesney Wold, Bleak Hall
Milton Keynes, MK6 1NE

t: +44 (0) 1908 226 124
e: miltonkeynes@cfa-arch.co.uk

Carlisle

Warwick Mill Business Village
Warwick Bridge, Carlisle
Cumbria, CA4 8RR

t: +44 (0) 1228 564 531
e: cumbria@cfa-arch.co.uk

Sheffield

Office 5, Ecclesfield Business Centre
46 Stocks Hill, Ecclesfield
Sheffield, S35 9YT

t: +44 (0) 114 327 1108
e: sheffield@cfa-arch.co.uk

Leicester

Business Box
3 Oswin Road, Brailsford Industrial Estate
Leicester, LE3 1HR

t: +44 (0) 116 279 5156
e: leicestershire@cfa-arch.co.uk

Hertfordshire

Amwell House
9 Amwell Street, Hoddesdon
Hertfordshire, EN11 8TS

t: +44 (0) 845 017 9847
e: herts@cfa-arch.co.uk