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Application no. 04/00863/FUL

Report of the archaeological watching brief at West Lilling Farm
(WLI 06), North Yorkshire

June 2006

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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at West Lilling Farm, by Fern Archaeology in June 2006, ahead of a small housing development. The wall-foundation trenches revealed two localised archaeological anomalies of late post-medieval date.

Site location and development

The site is at the northern frontage of West Lilling Farm, Goose Track Lane, North Yorkshire, centred at grid reference SE 64828, 65031 (**Figure 1**). A watching brief was undertaken by Fern Archaeology for G.W. Liddle & Co. during ground disturbances relating to the erection of four new properties. The works involved the demolition of the existing barn buildings to make way for a development of four semi-detached houses with separate garages. The plot area measures approximately 1100m².

The watching brief took place from 12th-14th June 2006. The weather in this period was fair to excellent.

The site code allocated is **WLI 06**.

Historical and Archaeological background

The village of West Lilling has a known medieval origin dating back to the Domesday survey of 1086. Recent archaeological work 200m to the west of the present development uncovered remains of the medieval moated enclosure known from the 1856 Ordnance Survey (OS).

Further archaeological work 800m to the south of the development, in advance of a pipeline corridor, revealed evidence of Roman and subsequent Anglo-Saxon settlement.

With respect to the current development plot, the 1856 OS map shows a row of tenements, which were presumably demolished to make way for the recently removed barn building.

Methodology

The ground disturbances relating to the development involved wall-foundation trenches and service trenches, the latter of which did not intrude below the level of the existing hardcore surface. These works were observed and recorded by the archaeologist on site, Chris Fern. All the wall-foundation trenches were machine excavated into subsoil, a depth of approximately 1m from the modern surface, by a mechanical digger with a toothless bucket. All finds were hand collected and ground layers and anomalies recorded using a single context recording system and *Munsell Soil Charts*. No environmental samples were taken. The context descriptions for these excavations are summarised in **Appendix 1**. All original paper and digital records, drawings and photographs are currently retained by Fern Archaeology and may be consulted upon request.

The illustrations for this report have been produced using *Paintshop Pro 8*. All text processing was done in *Microsoft XP Word*.

Archaeological findings and Interpretation (Figure 2)

Observed within the northwest corner of the plot, at 40.12m *Ordnance Datum* (OD), was an area of blue-black organic clayey sand (C1001) covering an area approximately 16 x 12m. This was encountered immediately below the current hardcore ground surface (C1004) which stands at approximately 40.35m OD. Rapid evaluation established that the anomaly appeared to be cut (C1003) into the natural, suggesting an archaeological character. A section of the fill was machine-excavated, demonstrating an approximate depth of 1.8m from the existing ground surface. Finds from this matrix comprised post-medieval pottery, a juvenile sheep lower mandible, and 'recent' wood and ligneous inclusions. Since this feature underlies the area covered by tenements in the 19th century OS map, it must predate their construction. The waterlogged and organic component would suggest that it represents a backfilled pond or possible springhead. The late 17th or early 18th century *slipware* pottery recovered from the fill suggests that it was probably infilled ahead of the construction of the above mentioned tenements which, from analogy with the extant houses that border the development plot, were probably constructed late in the 18th or early in the 19th century.

A second blue-black clayey sand layer (C1005) was identified to the east of C1001 at 40.05m OD, again with an organic odour, covering an area approximately 10 x 10m. This was located below the existing hardcore ground surface (C1004) and overlay (and had stained) the underlying subsoil (C1000). This also included post-medieval pottery and had a high occurrence of large cobbles. It would seem likely that this layer is also related to 18th-19th century housing development. It is unclear how the two deposits relate to each other or why they should contain such a high organic component. A contaminant element may be possible.

No archaeology or finds of medieval or earlier date were encountered.

The natural subsoil (C1000) occurred at approximately 40.15m OD across the site. The soil type changed frequently across the site from sand to clay, but was typically a light yellow-brown, *Munsell Colour* 10YR 6.8. This was sealed by 0.4m of topsoil (C1002) at the northern verge of the site, but across the rest of the site was immediately apparent below the hardcore layer (C1004), which varied between 0.2-0.5m in depth.

Finds

Four sherds of post-medieval *redware* pottery were recovered from blue-black fill C1001: three are glazed, including one of *green glaze*, which may be early 17th century date. A single sherd of an early porcelain vessel was also recovered. The lower mandible of a juvenile sheep was also collected from this context.

Six sherds of post-medieval pottery were recovered from blue-black fill C1005: one is a *green glaze* sherd; two are *blackware* (or possible *Cistercian ware*); and three are *slipware*.

Conclusion

The evidence from the watching brief suggests that the medieval core of the village of West Lilling does not extend to the vicinity of West Lilling farm. The finds of late post-medieval date indicate that initial occupation in the area dates to this period. Neither was evidence forthcoming relating to the Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement to the south of the site.

Archive

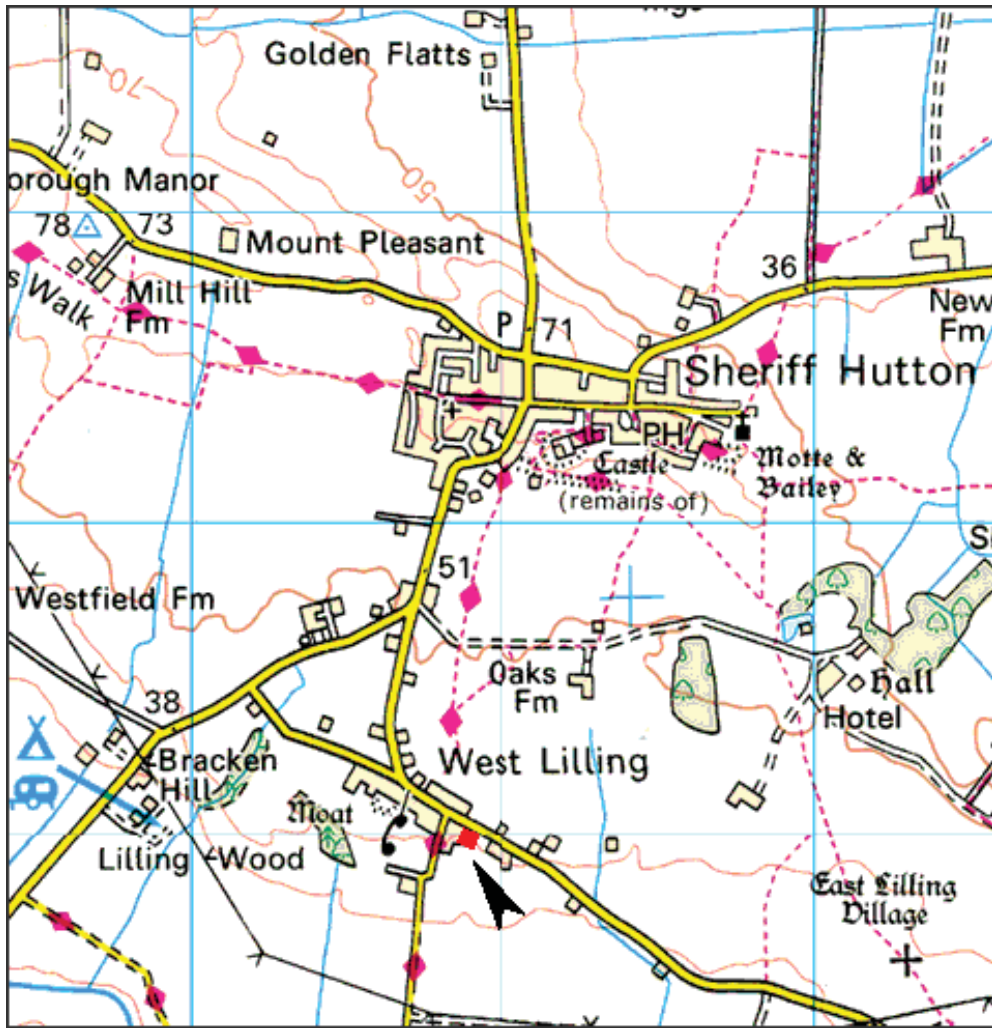
At present the archive, including all digital and paper records, photographs and finds are held by Fern Archaeology.

Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks are due to Mr and Mrs Liddle for their cooperation during, and funding of, the excavation work and reporting.

Appendix 1: archaeological context descriptions

Context	Type	Shape	Munsell Colour	Soil Type	Inclusions	Finds Summary	Dimensions (cms) Length – Width – Depth	Ordnance datum (M)	Date
C1000	subsoil	layer	10YR 6.8	clay and sand	gravel and cobbles	/	- - - - -	+40.15	natural
C1001	fill	not defined	7.5YR 3.0	clayey sand (organic)	gravel, small to medium rounded cobbles	animal bone, CBM, post-medieval pot	12000 – 16000 – 180	+40.12	<i>late post-medieval?</i> 18 th century AD
C1002	topsoil	layer	10YR 5.4	silty loam (loose compaction)	small to medium rounded cobbles	medieval or post-medieval pot	- - 74 – 60	+40.55	modern
C1003	cut	not defined	/	/	/	/	12000 – 16000 – 180	+38.32	<i>late post-medieval?</i> 18 th century AD
C1004	hardcore	layer	/	brick, concrete and stone	/	/	- - - - 20-50	+40.35	modern
C1005	layer	layer	7.5YR 3.0	clayey sand (organic)	small to large rounded cobbles	CBM, post-medieval pot	10000 – 10000 – 20-40	+40.05	<i>late post-medieval?</i> 18 th century AD



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Figure 1. Site location (Scale 1/25000)

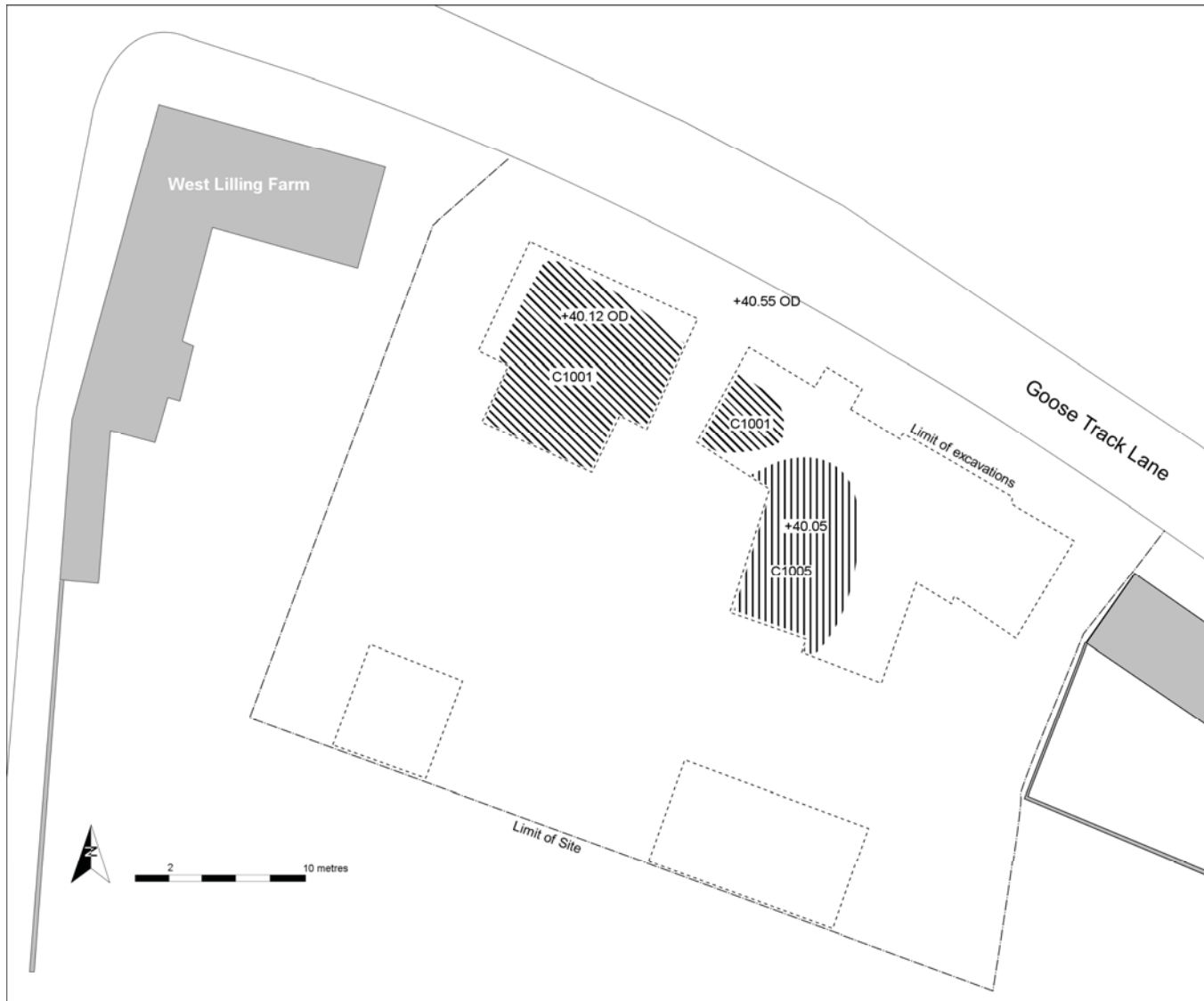


Figure 2. Watching brief observations (Scale 1/400)