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SNY	12243
ENY	4304
ONY	6657
Parish	2152
Rec'd	17/9/08

BARNETTS YARD, THIRSK

NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Planning Number 07/00613/FUL



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Mr PL FEARN

September 2008

87057



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Figure 2. South-western end after ground reduction showing depth of burial of power line poles.

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Figure 1. Site Location. Supplied by Client.

BARNETTS YARD, THIRSK,

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

The requirement for an Archaeological Watching Brief had been placed on Planning Application 07/00613/FUL in relation to the various ground works for new dwellings at Barnetts Yard, Thirsk, North Yorkshire (SE 4275 8201). The ground work was carried out by machine excavation on the 15th and 16th September 2008.

The results of the watching brief were generally negative with the remains of many episodes of refuse and soil dumping from the very late 19th century at the earliest through to the latter part of the 20th century being encountered. In addition to this, at least two telecommunication cables had crossed the site which had been relocated in 2007. These had run to the location of two former telegraph poles which in turn had stood next to a pair of large overhead electricity supply poles. All of this meant that there had been considerable ground disturbance in the past. A moderate amount of late 19/20th century pottery was observed in the various dumped topsoils, along with a handful of unstratified late 18th century coarse black ware sherds.

Small, isolated areas of an earlier ground surface were encountered, which all contained late 19/20th century material along with large amounts of coal ash and clinker. This was probably as a result of the disposal of domestic refuse from the buildings surrounding the site onto a convenient piece of land.

No other archaeological finds or features were recorded.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the ground works for the foundations for four new dwellings. The works were in a Barnetts Yard, Thirsk, North Yorkshire (SE 4275 8201).
- 1.2 The watching brief was conducted by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) for Mr PL Fearn and was carried out on the 15th & 16th September 2008.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Historic Background

- 2.1 The settlement of Thirsk is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Tresch*. The name is derived from the Old Scandinavian *thresk* meaning a marsh (Mills, 1998, 343 and Gelling 2000, 34). Thirsk was the site of a modest earthen motte and bailey castle located to the west of the development site and built during the Norman period. During the medieval period and onwards, the main part of the settlement developed to the east of the castle and was centred around the market place and villages greens; much as it continues to do to the present day.

Geology and Soils

- 2.2 The site is on the western side of Thirsk, some 200m north of the A61 road as it enters the town on the western side of the market place. The underlying solid geology is of Triassic mudstones (British Geological Survey, 2001), over which the quaternary geology is a mixture of glacial drift and glacial sand and gravels (British Geological Survey, 1977). The soils that have weathered from this are the Newport 1 Association which are deep, well-drained, sandy and coarse loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

Topography and Land-use

- 2.3 Barnetts Yard is located behind the main row of building on the northern side of the A61 road and forms a small yard within an area of mixed residential and commercial properties. The site is at a height of c.35mOD and originally sloped steeply downwards from west to east with a drop of c.4m along its length.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to mitigate for any negative impacts of the ground works associated with the ground reduction and excavation of the footings. The specific aims were to:
 - archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed by the ground works
 - recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the ground works

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 Ground works excavations were carried out by the contractor, using a small tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. The resulting spoil stockpile was monitored for artefacts.
- 4.2 Drawings would have been produced of any significant archaeological features encountered. All features were recorded photographically at a digital resolution of 5m-pixel using 1m and 2m bi-coloured poles as scales. For the detailed photography a 0.5m bi-coloured scale was used. As no significant archaeological features were encountered only a brief written record was made of the soils and sediments encountered (see Appendix I).

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The results of the Watching Brief were generally negative; this was primarily due to two factors. Firstly, the development site had been crossed diagonally by at least two telecommunication cables in the past which had been re-located as recently as 2007 along the northern edge of the area. In addition to the cables there had previously been two telegraph poles and a pair of overhead electricity cable poles all located in the south-western corner of the site. These, along with their attendant supporting stays, has also resulted in a high degree of ground disturbance approximately 1.5m into the underlying drift geology.
- 5.2 Secondly, the site had seen extensive dumping of topsoil and 20th century refuse over its western end, which appears to have been related with the erection of the various poles and their supports. It was noted that the pair of modern timber poles for the power lines had been cut approximately 1.5m into the underlying drift geology and had then subsequently been buried to a depth of c.3.5-4m below the current ground (Plates 1 and 2).
- 5.3 As a result of the extensive disturbance and dumping described above, it can be seen that any surviving archaeological features could have been located up to c.4m below the current ground level, depending upon the depth of dumped material. With the reduction of the site to form a more level platform on which to build, an opportunity to observe this potential buried layer was available.
- 5.4 The ground reduction work did expose small areas of an earlier ground level but all of these were found to contain varying amounts of late 19th and early 20th century pottery, metal work, sawn animal bone and large amounts of coal ash and clinker. The earliest artefactual material encountered was a small number of fragments of late 18th century coarse blackware pottery, all of which came from the topsoil or dumped layers.
- 5.5 No other archaeological finds or features were encountered.

6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

- 6.1 From the results described above, it can be seen that there was little potential for any surviving archaeological remains to be present due to the high degree of modern disturbance. What evidence there was indicated that the area had been used as a dump for domestic refuse from the surrounding dwellings onto an area of sloping ground which was possibly unsuitable for building on.

References

- Gelling M (1984) *Place-Names in the Landscape*. Phoenix Press. London.
- Mills AD (1998) *Dictionary of English Place-names*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- 1977 Geological Survey Ten Mile Map South Sheet Quaternary. British Geological Survey
- 1983 *Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1 Northern England*. Soil Survey of England and Wales. Lawes Agricultural Trust, Harpenden
- 2001 Geological Survey 1:625,000 Map South Sheet Solid Geology. British Geological Survey

APPENDIX I

CONTEXT CATALOGUE

- 01 **Topsoil/dumped material:** this was a mid to dark brown soil with stones of various sizes along with building debris, ash, late 19th/early 20th century artefacts.
- 02 **Drift Geology:** the underlying natural geology was of a coarse brown sand with occasional small stones.

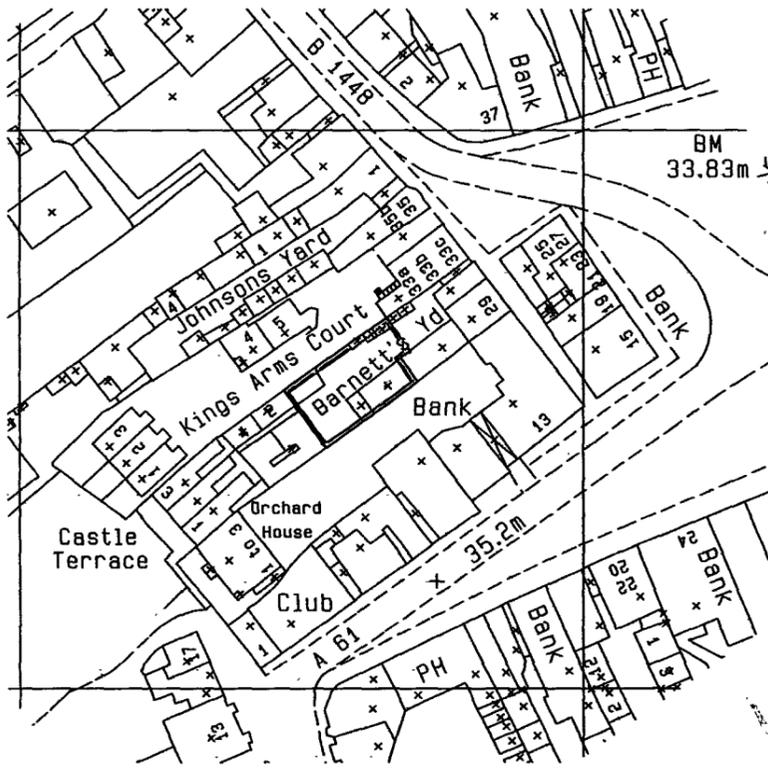
ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. General view of site during ground reduction, looking south-west.

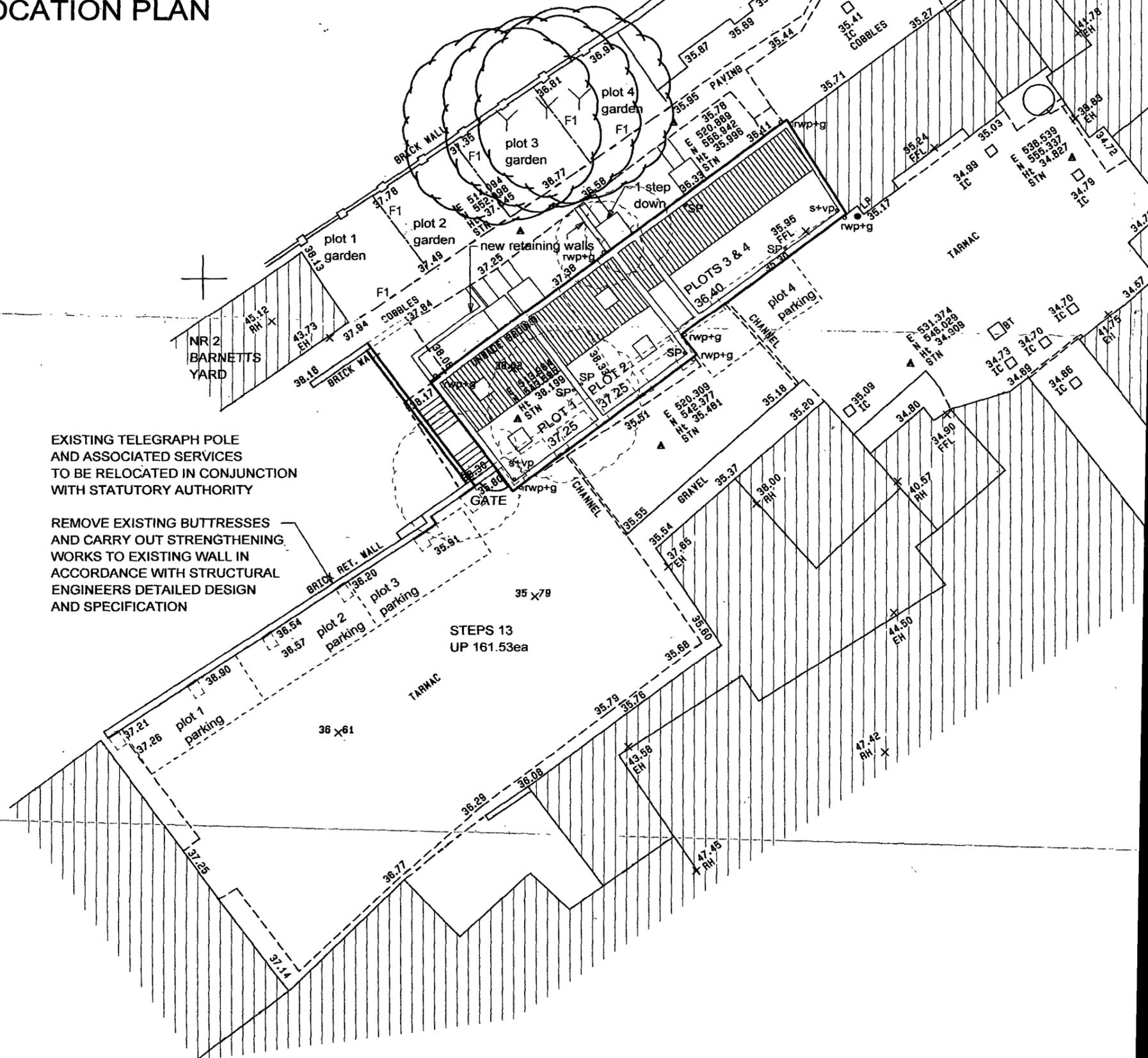


Figure 2. South-western end after ground reduction showing depth of burial of power line poles.



SITE LOCATION PLAN

SCALE 1 : 1250



EXISTING TELEGRAPH POLE AND ASSOCIATED SERVICES TO BE RELOCATED IN CONJUNCTION WITH STATUTORY AUTHORITY

REMOVE EXISTING BUTTRESSES AND CARRY OUT STRENGTHENING WORKS TO EXISTING WALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS DETAILED DESIGN AND SPECIFICATION

STEPS 13 UP 161.53ea

SITE LAYOUT PLAN

SCALE 1 : 200