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ArcheType

Park House

Stanwick Park

Archaeological Watching Brief

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**Park House, Appleby Lane, Stanwick Park, Richmond DL11 7RP
Single Storey Extension Planning Decision No. 1/43/7N/FULL**

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

Introduction

In June 2010 Richmondshire District Council gave full planning permission and Listed Building Consent to Mr & Mrs Westgarth for the erection of a single storey extension at Park House, near Stanwick St John, Richmond. NGR NZ190 105.

Clause 10 of the planning conditions states that: *No development shall take place within the application area until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the Local Planning Authority.*

In July 2011 Vivienne Metcalf of ArcheType was asked by Mr Paul Westgarth to undertake the archaeological work required by the planning condition. The required specification for the archaeological works was submitted to and approved by Richmondshire District Council during the week beginning July 25th 2011, and work commenced on August 1st following.

Background

Park House was included on the statutory list of Listed Buildings at Grade II in May 1987 (UID 323409). Further details may be viewed on the National Heritage List website. It was constructed in 1847 for the Duke of Northumberland, of sandstone rubble with ashlar dressings and Westmorland slate roofs. The house is of similar style and quality to 3 other houses of the same period on the estate, which together form an important group. (Fig 3)

The house is situated close to a number of earthworks and ditches associated with the major Scheduled Monument at Stanwick :

SM26950, "Stanwick Late Iron Age oppidum, Iron Age and medieval settlement, early Christian church and sculpture and post-medieval emparkment" and may lie within a sub-enclosure of this major tribal centre earthwork complex. The area is of high archaeological importance for the Late Iron Age, Romano-British and Early Medieval (7th to 9th century AD) periods. It is associated with the system of linear earthworks known as 'Scot's Dyke', which extend from the oppidum (a fortified "town" or settlement) at Stanwick south to the river Swale at Richmond, and probably formed an important administrative boundary during the unsettled period of Early Medieval history.

An archaeological 'watching brief' on the development works would enable the recovery and interpretation of any archaeological material from this area.

Archaeological Watching Brief

The archaeological watching brief took place on August 1st 2011. The planning consent was for a large conservatory extension on the north side of the house. The dimensions for this were 13m west-east by a maximum of 7m north-south, and the ground disturbance included the excavation of foundation trenches and the replacement and extension of existing drains (Figs 4 & 5). All excavation work was undertaken by mechanical excavator and hand-finished as necessary.

The underlying sub-soil in this area is clay, possibly of glacial origin, of a brownish-ginger colour with a few stone inclusions; these had decayed anaerobically to a dark grey and were friable. For a width of approximately 4m adjacent to the north side of the house this subsoil was overlain with a building rubble and cement makeup to a depth of approximately 300mm, supporting a gravel and paved path of late 20th century date. No finds other than broken brick and some fragments of iron were recovered from this area, and none dated to a period earlier than the early/mid 19th century.

Map evidence indicates the presence of a range of small domestic buildings in this area in the 19th century (Figs 1 and 2). The demolition of these probably provided the material for the makeup of the gravel and paved path.

Excavations close to the house revealed that the building's walls were supported on wider stone plinth foundations, which were constructed on stone slabs approximately 100mm thick, which in turn overlay a layer of mortar or cement which was also approximately 100mm thick. (Fig 6)

Beyond the paved area the ground sloped downwards, and the subsoil was overlain by a dark brown humic garden soil underlying turf. Towards the west end of this a curved line of roughly-dressed stones was preserved in the soil. (Fig 7). This seems to represent an earlier boundary between the lawn and a parking area which is shown on mid-20th century maps dating between 1930 - 1954. These are still in copyright so are not reproduced here; they can be viewed at:

http://maps.northyorks.gov.uk/connect/?mapcfg=historic_maps

The garden soil contained a quantity of broken earthenware, mostly fragments of blue-and-white domestic pottery, dating to the mid-Victorian period and consistent with the early occupation of the present house. The sherds were retrieved during machine excavation, and later washed and examined, but none was retained.

Conclusions

No evidence was recovered from the watching brief to suggest that the site of Park House had ever been occupied prior to the construction of the present building in 1847. The finds recovered were consistent with the known construction date of 1847 for the present building.

The present garden to the north of the house has replaced a line of domestic outbuildings which were probably contemporary with the construction of the main building. These were demolished, possibly in the early to mid-20th century, and a garden laid out in this area to the north of the main house. The garden was redesigned at least once, in the mid to late 20th century.

Maps

The maps reproduced here are held in the North Yorkshire County Record Office at Northallerton.

Fig 1. 6" OS map sheet 25 dated 1857. NCYRO reference MIC 1803/295

Fig 2. 6" OS map sheet 25 dated 1857. NYCRO reference MIC 1831/202

Historic maps of this area still in copyright can be viewed at:

http://maps.northyorks.gov.uk/connect/?mapcfg=historic_maps

Further details of Listed Buildings, among other heritage matters, can be obtained from English Heritage's National Heritage List at:

www.english-heritage.org.uk/list

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Fig 3. Park House, Stanwick Park. North elevation.



Fig 4 & 5 (below). Park House, Stanwick Park, showing the foundation trenches cut through building rubble overlying clay.





Fig 6 . Park House, Stanwick Park. The north-east corner of the house, showing the offset stone plinth overlying a white-flecked grey concrete foundation.



Fig 7. Park House, Stanwick Park. The stone edging of the lawn in the mid-20th century garden, revealed during machine excavation.