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Report on Trial Excavations at West Lodge 2, Malton

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Malton, 3.2.92.

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Introduction

This report covers the results of Trial Excavations at an area of land situated on the western fringes of Malton, between Castle Howard and York Roads, Malton Parish, North Yorkshire; SE 778 714 (Figs 1 and 2). The area is the subject of proposed housing development by Persimmon Homes (Yorkshire) Ltd.

The site lies on a south-east facing spur of the Howardian Hills. The underlying geology consists of Coralline Oolitic limestone of the Middle Lias (OS 1960). The height of the land drops from c.60m AOD at the north-west, adjacent to Castle Howard road, to c.40m at the south-east, along York Road.

A Desk-top Study (Stephens 1991a) had drawn attention to a number of potential archaeological features at the site, visible as cropmarks on aerial photographs (Fig 1). A subsequent Magnetometry Survey undertaken by the Landscape Research Centre Ltd. (Stephens 1991b and Fig 3), suggested the presence of a double-ditched trackway (Anomaly D), two linear ditches (Anomalies J and K), plus less easily interpretable anomalies (Anomalies F, G, H and I, Fig 3).

The purpose of the Trial Excavations described in this report was to determine the nature and extent of the sub-surface archaeological features suggested by the Magnetometry Survey. Information would thus be available to recommend further examination of those features to be destroyed by the proposed development.

The Trial Excavations were conducted in November, December and January 1991-2, directed by the writer, and with the aid of three other officers in the field. The plans were drawn by M Johnson, and the finds by the writer.

All work was funded by Persimmon Homes (Yorkshire) Ltd, and was undertaken with their full co-operation.

Excavation Methods

The areas to be excavated were located by theodolite from the grid established for the Geophysical Survey.

The modern topsoil was removed from the excavated areas using the rear-acter of a JCB excavator with ditching bucket. The areas were then hand-cleaned by coarse trowelling and shovel-scraping where necessary.

Plans and sections were drawn at 1:10 and 1:20 respectively, and a photographic record made in monochrome print and colour transparency. A written record was maintained under the continuous context recording system.

Four areas were excavated (Fig 3): Area 1 was to examine the Anomalies J and K, and their presumed intersection (the Geophysical Survey did not cover the area of the assumed intersection); Area 2 to examine a length of Anomaly J with a view to establishing the nature of this presumed ditch and to ascertain whether or not bank material survived; Area 3 to examine an area of the double-ditched anomaly, Anomaly D, and again seek the presence of a possible accompanying bank; and Area 4, to throw light on the nature of the amorphous anomalies F, G, H and I.

In the report, a commentary follows the description of the excavation results of each Area.

Excavation Results

Area 1

The purpose of this area, which formed a 10 x 10m square (Fig 4), was to test the presence of the assumed intersection between a strong north to south linear anomaly, Anomaly K, and a weaker west to east linear anomaly, Anomaly J (Fig 3).

Excavation revealed three parallel north to south features, cuts 4, 6 and 8 (Fig 4). Cuts 6 and 8 were situated towards the west of the area and were c.1.4m apart. Cut 4 was situated c.4m east of cut 6. The fills of each of these cuts were excavated in 2m long segments.

Cut 4 (Figs 4 and 5) was of shallow-U profile, had a maximum surviving depth of 0.08m and a width of 0.16m. The fill, context 3, was a very dark greyish-brown crumbly, clayey loam, which contained charcoal and coke fragments. Context 3 was cut by a recent plough-mark running north-west to south-east, parallel to the present field boundary.

Cut 6 (Figs 4 and 5) had a maximum surviving depth of 0.19m, with a U-shaped profile and width of 0.23m. The fill comprised context 5, a very dark greyish-brown clayey loam. Finds consisted of four sherds of pottery ranging in date from Romano-British to recent; coal, coke, charcoal, tile, brick, and two clay tobacco pipe stem fragments, plus a piece of twisted copper-alloy wire (Appendix 1).

Cut 8 (Figs 4 and 5) had a surviving depth of 0.07m, with a broad-U profile and a width. The fill, context 7, existed as a very dark greyish-brown clayey loam, which contained coal, coke and charcoal flecks and crumbs, plus a piece of recent bottle glass (Appendix 1).

All three of the features described above were cut into context 2, a strong brown loamy clay. Context 2 was apparently a natural deposit occupying solution hollows in the bed-rock.

The only indication of a west to east feature (anticipated from Anomaly J), was a straight edge visible in the limestone bed-rock in the south-east of the area. A segment was excavated at this point, into a feature of asymmetrical profile, **cut 14** (Figs 4 and 5), which had a width of 1.12m and a surviving depth of 0.22m.

The basal fill of cut 14 was context 12, c.50% small limestone gravel in a matrix of strong brown highly compact, fine silty clay. Two fills overlay 12, contexts 11 and 13; respectively a 0.12m deep deposit of strong brown fine silty clay, and a deposit of c.75% small limestone gravel in a matrix similar to the make-up of 11. The uppermost fill, context 10, overlay both 11 and 13, and consisted of a strong brown silty clay virtually indistinguishable from context 2. Finally, a dark yellowish-brown loamy clay (context 9), confined to the south-east of Area 4, occurred above context 10.

The three parallel linear cuts 4, 6 and 8, account for Geophysical Anomaly K. The coal, coke, brick and tile fragments apparently combined to give a strong magnetic response, to the extent of suggesting a considerable linear anomaly. The excavation showed the features to be of relatively minor dimension and recent date. Their origin could lie as plough-marks.

The absence of any clear indication of the west to east anomaly, Anomaly J, in Area 4 is somewhat problematic.

The extremely compact nature of the fills of cut 14, and the total absence of finds from them, suggest that this feature is natural, and formed by the solution of the limestone bed-rock, creating deposits of silty clay with varying amounts of small limestone gravel. In turn, the deposits were overlain by 'hillwash' (context 9).

The plan of the limestone bed-rock (Fig 4) illustrates the absence of any continuous west to east linear feature. This absence might be explained by the removal of the feature by agriculture erosion in this vicinity, particularly if the feature were somewhat variable in depth from area to area.

Area 2

Area 2 consisted of a trench c. 11m north to south and 2.5m east to west. The area was located to examine a stretch of the west to east anomaly, Anomaly J, a 2m long segment of which was excavated as cut 29.

Cut 29 (Fig 6) was a linear ditch of flat-based V profile. The width at the top was 1.10m and the depth was 0.45m, cutting into the limestone bed-rock.

Context 28 formed the basal fill, consisting of limestone gravel and larger fragments in a matrix of yellowish-brown fine silt. Context 27 occurred above 28, comprising limestone gravel in a matrix of dark yellowish-brown silty loam. Stratigraphically above 27 was context 26, a dark yellowish-brown silty loam; this fill was followed by context 25, a gravelly dark yellowish-brown silty clay loam. Located above 25 was context 24, a dark yellowish-brown silty clay loam with few coarse components. Lastly, the upper fill of cut 29 existed as a dark brown to brown silty loam with c.50% limestone gravel coarse components (context 23).

The only finds from cut 29 consisted of a fragment of sandstone from context 24, and a piece of burnt limestone from context 27.

Context 23 occurred above the upper fill of cut 29, and existed as a layer of dark brown to brown silty loam, with a few limestone gravel inclusions. Context 22 occurred directly above 23, consisting of a very dark grey clay loam which covered the whole of the area.

The angle of the tip-lines in the fills of the linear ditch, cut 29, suggests that the feature silted up mainly from a northerly, up-slope, direction. No traces of *in situ* bank material remained in the area. The two lower fills of the ditch, contexts 27 and 28, predominantly consisted of limestone fragments and gravel, the deposition of which probably represents the frost-shattering and erosion of the edges of the newly-dug, open ditch, possibly coupled with the deposition of eroded bank material. If the latter process was involved, the tip-lines suggest that the putative bank was to the north of the ditch.

Subsequent to the ditch largely filling up, a 'hillwash' layer, context 22, was deposited over it, sagging slightly into the feature. Modern arable cultivation accounts for the recent ploughsoil, context 21.

Area 3

Area 3 had a length of 18m and a width of c.3.5m, and was positioned so as to provide a section at 90 degrees across the double-ditched feature, Anomaly D (Fig 3).

The excavation identified two linear features, cuts 19 and 35, the former to the north of the latter, separated by a c.6m wide ridge of limestone bed-rock (Fig. 7).

Cut 19 (Figs 7 and 8) cut into the limestone bed-rock to a depth of 1m, and had a broad, shallow, flat-based V profile, with a c.0.1m downward step at the northern part of the base. The cut was c.4m wide at the top, narrowing to c.2m at the base.

At the very lowest part of the base of cut 19 occurred context 34, a yellowish-brown fine-grained silt with few coarse components. Directly above 34 occurred context 33, a brownish-yellow gravelly, gritty fine-grained silt. Context 32 was located at the southern part of the base of cut 19 and consisted of a brownish yellow silty material. Context 31 overlay both 32 and 33, and existed as a yellowish-brown silty loam with some limestone gravel coarse components. Contexts 31-4 contained no finds other than a sandstone fragment from 34 (Appendix 1).

The uppermost fill in cut 19 was context 30, which occurred directly above 31. Context 30 consisted of limestone gravel and larger angular pieces laying at all angles in a matrix of yellowish-brown, compact, silty loam. The finds were an eroded Staxton/Potter Brompton Ware sherd, a struck flint flake and a quartzitic pebble (Appendix 1). This fill merged into similar material overlying the bed-rock outside the confines of the feature to the south.

The entire area was overlain by a yellowish-brown clay loam, context 16, which was subdivided into context 20 where occupying the very top confines of cut 19. Context 20 contained three sherds of 2/3rd century calcite-gritted pottery (Appendix 1). The modern ploughsoil, context 15, in turn overlay context 16.

Cut 35 (Figs 7 and 8), the southern feature in Area 3, was of complex profile, the edges falling at c.30 degrees to a convex base, which dropped into channel-like features at the base of both edges. The width at the top was 4.40m, with a depth at the centre of the base of 0.65m, falling to c.1m in the two aforementioned 'channels'.

Occupying the full width at the base of cut 35, and filling the 'channels' at the bottom of the edges, was context 40. This basal fill was a yellowish-brown fine silty material, largely free of coarse components, with finds of five Romano-British sherds: three of 2/3rd century calcite-gritted ware and two of 2nd century greyware (Appendix 1).

Context 39 occupied the full width of cut 35 directly above 40. The matrix was a compact yellowish-brown loamy silt, with coarse components of small limestone gravel. A struck flint flake and three Romano-British sherds were found in 39: two of 2/3rd century calcite-gritted ware and one of greyware (Appendix 1).

Context 37 also took up the full width of cut 35, occurring directly above 39. The context consisted of a friable dark yellowish-brown loam, and contained seven medieval sherds, all somewhat abraded, and four Romano-British calcite-gritted sherds (Appendix 1).

A gravelly lens, context 36, divided 37 from the yellowish-brown material, context 16, mentioned above. There were no finds from context 36.

It can be seen that the two parallel linear features in Area 3, cuts 19 and 35, are somewhat different in form, with contrasting profiles, widths, depths and fills. In addition, cut 35 possessed two linear 'channels' at the base. Therefore the possibility is raised that there are different origins and functions for cuts 19 and 35.

The fills of cut 19 (contexts 30-34) were much stonier than those of cut 35 (contexts 37-40), suggesting different circumstances for their deposition. It is possible that the stony material removed during the original excavation of cut 19 was used to form a bank, which silted and eroded back into the ditch. A very different process is suggested by the largely stone-free fills of cut 35, which were essentially loamy silts.

The 'channels' at the base of cut 35 require explanation. These elements would not seem to be part of the natural weathering process, for similar features are absent from cut 19. A geological origin can be excluded as the 'channels' cut across the orientation of the bedding planes in the bed-rock. A harsh erosive process would be required for the creation of such features. The likelihood is that they are wheel ruts, with a gauge of approximately 1.5m, which is within the range of wheel separation in a trackway at West Heslerton (Powlesland *et al* 1986). Cut 19 would therefore appear to represent a silted-up hollow-way.

Area 4

Area 4 was situated in order to examine the somewhat amorphous anomalies, Anomalies F, G, H and I (Fig. 3). An area measuring c.24m north to south and 15m west to east, was opened up, with a 3.5m wide and 23m long extension running from the north-west of the main area (Figs. 9 and 10).

Following definition of the area by a cleaning layer, context 38, it was apparent that the edges of the anomalies could be explained, at least in part, by the distinction between the solid limestone bed-rock and a yellowish-brown silty loam that occupied the top of a hollow, or series of hollows, of unknown origin and depth. The yellowish-brown silty loam was divided into context 53 for the main area and 47 for the north-west extension.

Two segments were excavated into context 53, adjacent to the edge of the excavation in the south-east of the area. The same large cut, **cut 58** was revealed in both segments (Fig. 9).

The eastern segment was excavated directly adjacent to the south-eastern edge of the excavated area. The segment was 1m wide and the fills were excavated to a depth of 1m, at which point excavation ceased to so that a deeper segment of 58 could be dug, situated away from edge of the excavation for reasons of safety.

The lowest excavated fill of the eastern segment of cut 58 was context 45, a yellowish-brown silty loam, with coarse components of limestone gravel. The finds from 45 consisted of three iron timber nails, a struck flint flake, bone fragments, oyster and mussel shell fragments and eighty-seven pottery sherds. The pottery comprised eighty-three 2/3rd century calcite-gritted sherds (including thirteen rims, Fig 13.1-3), part of a Samian footring and two rim (Fig 13.4) and one body sherd of 3rd century Crambeck Greyware (Appendix 1).

Context 46 overlay 45 along the southern edge of cut 58. This fill existed as a finer-grained version of context 45, but was otherwise very similar. Finds were a struck flint flake and tiny bone fragments (Appendix 1).

Context 44 occurred physically above both 45 and 46. This fill consisted of a yellowish-brown loamy silt, with a large component of limestone gravel (c.75% of the total). The finds were eighteen 2/3rd century calcite-gritted sherds and single sherds of Gritty Ware and Staxton/Potter Brompton ware, plus a ?4th century bronze coin (Appendix 1).

Stratigraphically above 44 occurred context 43, a yellowish-brown silty loam, with occasional limestone gravel coarse components. Context 43 was somewhat disturbed by animal burrows and roots. There were no finds. Context 43 was in effect similar to the material of contexts 38 (cleaning layer) and 53 above.

The western segment excavated into cut 58 (Figs. 9 and 11) was situated 1m west of the segment described above, and had a width of 2.5m. Excavation ceased at a depth of 1.5m due to safety factors, particularly the instability of contexts 62 and 68.

The lowest excavated fill of the western segment of cut 58 was context 68. This fill was composed of angular limestone blocks between 0.10 and 0.35m in length, and 0.10 and 0.20m in width. There was very little in the way of the brownish-yellow, gritty silt matrix, the spaces between the limestone blocks being largely void. The upper profile of the context showed a southwards dip of 45 degrees, and the blocks exhibited a similar direction of tip. There were no finds.

Context 67 occurred stratigraphically above 68, and existed as a brownish yellow gritty silt, thickening slightly towards the base of the cut. The upper profile of the context showed a drop southwards of an angle of c.45 degrees. There were no finds.

The fill overlying 67 was context 62. This fill was composed of angular limestone blocks up to 0.5 x 0.3 x 0.15m in size, with a matrix of brownish-yellow gritty silt occurring only where the blocks were keyed together, which were otherwise separated by voids. For the most part the blocks pointed downwards from north to south at an angle of 30-40 degrees; however, some blocks pointed downwards from south to north along the southern edge of cut 58.

Context 62 contained four Romano-British sherds, plus animal bone fragments (Appendix 1). Of more note was a considerable part of a pottery vessel, context 65 (Appendix 1), with a friable yellowish-brown loam fill, context 66, containing burnt and partly burnt bone, discussed later. The vessel was situated c.0.30m west of the western edge of cut 62 (see below).

The limestone blocks, context 62, were cut by a feature of oval plan, **cut 64**. The dimensions were 0.48 x 0.55m, with a depth of 0.20m. The profile was angular and irregular, reflecting the nature of context 62 which formed the base and sides. Context 63, the fill, was a yellowish-brown clayey silt with some limestone gravel. Finds consisted of a Romano-British sherd and small animal bone fragments (Appendix 1).

Context 61 occurred stratigraphically above 62 along the southern edge of 58. This fill existed as a dark yellowish-brown clayey silt, with some limestone gravel inclusions. No finds were made in this context.

Context 60 was situated directly above 61. This fill comprised an angular limestone gravel in a matrix of yellowish-brown silty material. Context 60 contained animal bone fragments, 'foreign' stone and a struck flint (Appendix 1).

A deposit of small limestone gravel in a matrix of yellowish-brown silt, context 59, occurred stratigraphically above 60, also physically overlying the northern part of 62. There were no finds.

A 0.25m deep deposit of yellowish brown silty loam with limestone gravel (context 57) occupied the central and southern parts of the western segment of cut 58. This fill contained five hundred and sixty-six pottery sherds, the distribution of which was particularly concentrated at the base of the context: five hundred and sixty-three sherds (including twenty-one rims, Fig 14.6-12) came from calcite-gritted vessels; of the remaining sherds, one was of Samian and one from a plain 2nd century Greyware jar. Other finds consisted of a large fragment of box-tile and stone ?roofing tile fragments (Appendix 1).

Overlying context 57 were two gravelly fills which merged at the centre of the segment. Context 56 was the northern of these two fills, being slightly more gravelly than 54 to the south, but sharing a similar matrix of yellowish-brown loamy silt. In effect, 54 consisted of a number of stony, and slightly less stony, interleaving lenses. Context 56 contained twelve 2/3rd century calcite-gritted sherds and two abraded medieval sherds. Twenty pottery sherds were found in context 54, notably eighteen 2/3rd century calcite-gritted sherds and a rimsherd of a 3rd century Crambeck platter (Fig 13.5).

The upper fill of the western segment of cut 58 was context 55. This fill was a yellowish-brown silty loam similar to context 53 which overlay the whole cut. The finds from context 55 were represented by 2 worked flints (one a thumb-nail scraper, Fig 15.16) and eleven Romano-British sherds: nine of 2/3rd century calcite gritted ware and two of Greyware.

The interpretation of cut 58 presents some difficulties; clearly if the feature represents a man-made cut, it must be one of considerable size, such as a large ditch or quarry. If natural in origin, cut 58 might represent a solution hollow or sink-hole. The limestone block fills, contexts 62 and 68, would appear to represent the natural frost-shattering of the sides, with the redeposition of the material within the feature. Contexts 61 and 67 could represent natural silting. The absence of finds from the fills below 62 suggests, that archaeological activity was not present in the vicinity during their deposition, if not that the contexts have a natural origin.

At the stage when the feature had filled up to the level of the top of context 62, a depth of c.1m at the centre, cut 64 was created. The fill, context 63, contained calcite-gritted sherds, and so must be Romano-British or later in date. The pottery vessel, context 65, and associated cremation, context 66, was within 62, and not part of the fill of cut 64; perhaps 65/6 was redeposited in context 62 from the original position by the same erosive process that created context 62.

It is clear from the large amount of sherds from context 57, and the corresponding fill 45, that there was a considerable amount of Romano-British activity in the vicinity of cut 58. The sherds are apparently not 'wasters', so the proximity of a pottery kiln is not to be expected (in any case such a structure would have shown up on the Magnetometry survey as a very pronounced anomaly). However, the almost complete absence of other debris from 45/57, such as animal bone (which is otherwise fairly well preserved in other contexts), does not support the assumption that the deposit represents domestic rubbish. The presence of stone ?roofing tile and

a box-tile fragment suggests the presence of a Romano-British building in the locality, although it is possible that such debris might have originated from some distance away, perhaps even as far as the Roman town and fort, 1km to the east.

A gradual silting process advanced in post-Roman times subsequent to the deposition of 45 and 57, with the formation of 43 and 44, and the corresponding fills 54, 55 and 56.

A group of features remains to be described in Area 4: cuts 42, 49 and 51.

Cut 42 was cut into the limestone bed-rock in the south-west of Area 4, on a north to south alignment (Figs. 9 and 12). The length was 3.50m, with a maximum width of 1.30m. The dished profile gave a maximum depth of 0.08m. Context 41, a dark greyish-brown clayey loam, constituted the fill, and contained a single Romano-British Greyware sherd (Appendix 1).

Cut 49 was a somewhat amorphous feature cutting into context 53, the top fill of the 'hollow' (Figs. 9 and 12). The alignment was north to south, with a length of 10m and a maximum width of 3m. The profile was dished, with a depth of 0.11m. The fill was context 48, a dark greyish-brown silty loam with limestone gravel coarse components. Finds were represented by forty-three Romano-British and medieval sherds (Appendix 1, Fig 15.13-15).

Cut 51 was situated to the north-west of cut 49, again cutting into context 53 (Figs. 9 and 12). A 2m wide segment was excavated into the fills of cut 51, of which a c.8m length crossed the excavated area. There were two fills. The upper fill, context 50, existed as a dark yellowish-brown fine silty loam, with a very few limestone gravel coarse components; finds consisted of six medieval sherds (Appendix 1). The lower fill, context 52, was a dark yellowish-brown silty loam, with some limestone gravel, in which no finds were made.

It is likely that the two cuts, 42 and 49, are remaining segments of a formerly continuous linear feature. The variance in fills could be explained in terms of the different materials that they cut; limestone bed-rock in the case of 42 and loamy material in the case of 49. It was observed that the modern ploughsoil extended directly onto the limestone bed-rock at the southern and north-eastern parts of Area 4, and it is suggested that such erosive ploughing could be responsible for discontinuity along the length of such relatively shallow features as cuts 42 and 49.

The alignments of cuts 42, 49 and 51 are very similar, and correspond to the alignment of a series of linear anomalies, Anomaly E, known from the Geophysical Survey (Fig. 3). The probability is that they represent the furrows of a pre-enclosure Rigg and Furrow field system, which is consistent with the medieval sherds from the fills of both 49 and 51.

Discussion

The earliest traces of human activity on the site are represented by the Neolithic/Bronze Age flint implements. Of note are the two (residual) scrapers in contexts 53 and 55; most of the remainder of the flakes probably represent debris from flint-working. No features of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age date were encountered, hence the flint implements and flakes could be regarded as casual losses.

Perhaps the most significant archaeological features to be examined during the Trial Excavations were the parallel linear cuts, 19 and 35, seen on the Geophysical Survey as Anomaly D. Interpretation of the survey had suggested that the anomaly represented two ditches bordering a trackway. The Trial Excavation showed a sufficient disparity between the two features (outlined above) as to suggest that they represented two phases of activity; a boundary ditch (19) and ?bank, alongside which a hollow-way (35) was created by the passage of wheeled traffic. The traffic apparently left traces in the form of two parallel ruts in the base of cut 35.

Excavation of a double-dyke at Riplingham, East Riding (Wacher 1965), suggested that the eastern of a pair of parallel ditches had been used as a trackway. The Riplingham trackway did not exhibit wheel-ruts in the manner of 35 at West Lodge, but similar ruts were noted in a trackway at West Heslerton (Powlesland *et al* 1986).

A Romano-British date seems likely for the parallel features, 19 and 35, at West Lodge; that they had largely silted up by the end of medieval times is suggested by the presence of medieval sherds in the upper fills.

However, the possibility remains that a prehistoric, even Late Bronze Age, date is plausible for the ditch/trackway. A triple-dyke at Fimber (Mortimer 1905, 189) was dated to the Late Bronze Age from the occurrence of fragments of bronze-working moulds in the fill of a pit cutting the one of the banks. Later excavations at the same site (Ehrenburg and Caple 1983 and 1985) showed the two outer ditches to be of flat-based-V profile, with the central ditch being shallower and narrower, and also of segmented form.

"To distinguish the earthwork boundaries of the Bronze Age from the vast complex web of boundaries, trackways and field systems in Eastern Yorkshire is extremely difficult", to quote Manby (Manby 1980, 327). More evidence is required from the West Lodge ditch/trackway before any further conclusions may be drawn, as, indeed, it is to support the conclusions of this report.

Aerial photographs show the parallel features extending for c.600m to the north-west of the site (Fig 1), which suggests that they were of considerable importance as elements in the landscape.

The west to east linear feature, Anomaly J, a segment of which was excavated as cut 29, does not readily fall into a pattern with the parallel ditch/hollow-way, as it is

on a rather different alignment (Fig 3). The absence of dating evidence does not aid interpretation of what could be essentially seen as a field boundary.

The linear ditch, cut 29/Anomaly J, continues as a cropmark to the west of the site for at least 250m, at which point it apparently joins with a pair of rectangular enclosures (Fig 1).

The large ?ditch/?quarry, cut 58, in Area 4 is also somewhat problematic in terms of interpretation. It is probable that the cut does not extend far outside the eastern edge of the excavated area, for it is to be assumed that it would have been visible on the Geophysical Survey. Whether the cut is of natural or man-made origin, a considerable Romano-British presence is attested by the amount of sherds of that date found in the fills cut 58. The creation of cut 64, cutting into fill 62, also reflects a degree of Romano-British activity.

It is unclear whether the cremation vessel (65/6) was deliberately placed within context 62; the fact that no cut was visible for it suggests that it may have been redeposited by erosion into 62. The cremation could be part of a larger group of unknown extent, or equally, on present evidence, a 'stray' individual burial.

In the medieval period, the site formed part of an Open Field system; this is attested by the presence of cuts 42, 49 and 51, interpreted as furrows, in Area 4 and the north to south parallel linear features (Anomaly E)revealed by the Geophysical Survey. Specifically, in pre-Enclosure times, the site formed part of an Open Field of Old Malton, known as Court Field (Robinson 1978, 18).

The site has been the subject of arable agriculture up to 1991. The proposed development completes, at least for the foreseeable future, what was a long, and no doubt varied, land-use stretching back as far as the Bronze Age.

Recommendations

It can be seen from the results of the Trial Excavations, described above, that further archaeological excavation is called for in those areas to be affected by the proposed development. The following items are proposed:

(i) The archaeological examination of the ditch/hollow-way, Anomaly D, where intercepted by plots 78,79,101,102 and the road bed (Fig 16). A c.50m length of these features should be revealed and sufficient of the fills excavated to give more information on the ?wheel ruts and to provide more dating evidence. In addition, environmental analysis of the fills should supply important information concerning the environmental history of the area.

(ii) The further examination of the large hollow in Area A, with a view to establishing the extent and origin of the large ?ditch/?quarry (cut 58). Also to determine the extent of the cremation cemetery implied by the occurrence of the cremation located in the Trial Excavation, the excavation of which will require a Home Office Burial Licence. It is noted that this area will form a turning circle under the available development plan (Fig 16) and destruction of archaeological deposits is to be anticipated by the associated sewers and other service trenches.

(iii) The excavation of a length of the east to west linear ditch (cut 29/Anomaly J) revealed in Area 2, where the ditch is to be intercepted by the road bed and plot 95 (Fig 16). Of priority would be the recovery of dating evidence for this feature.

(iv) It is further proposed that a Watching Brief be conducted on the installation of the roads and sewers in the southern sector of the development area (Fig 2), which had not been subject to Geophysical Survey, in order to establish the possible presence of archaeological features. The Watching Brief might lead in turn to further excavation in this area, where necessary. From an archaeological point of view, the most satisfactory method would be to strip the topsoil from the area of the road beds with a machine using the rear acter and toothless blade, to the surface of the bed-rock, or to the point where archaeological deposits occur. The area could thus be examined in advance of the development work, and it is noted that this strategy had the effect of rapidly advancing the necessary archaeological work involved in the Watching Brief at West Lodge Gardens.

(v) A full programme of environmental sampling, including land snail analysis, should be carried out on excavated deposits.

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