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WATCHING BRIEF

1 WEST COURT

RICCALL

NORTH YORKSHIRE

8/15/269A/PA

SITE CODE: RWC02

NGR: SE 6160 3798

REPORT

September 2002

On behalf of:

MR HOLLIS BILLS
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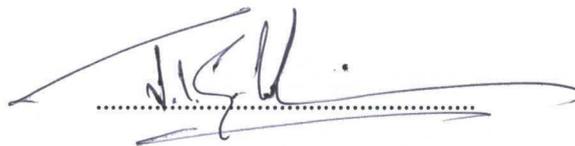
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Summary

A watching brief undertaken during the excavation of the foundation trenches for a new bungalow behind 1 West Court, Riccall, and adjacent to a medieval moated manor, revealed evidence for a medieval ploughsoil and a truncated field boundary orientated north-south. The few finds recovered suggest a 12th - 13th century date for these deposits.

Acknowledgements

Field Archaeology Specialists would like to thank Mr Hollis Bills for his support and interest in the project.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the results of a watching brief undertaken by Field Archaeology Specialists on behalf of Mr. Hollis Bills on the site of a residential development on a plot of land to the rear of 1, West Court, Riccall, North Yorkshire, YO19 6PJ. The watching brief was carried out during the excavation of foundation trenches for a bungalow on 19th September 2002.

1.1 LOCATION AND LAND USE

The site (NGR SE 6160 3798) covered an area of approximately 8m x 12m on land which was previously part of the garden of 1 West Court. It is surrounded on the northeastern, southwestern and southeastern sides by other gardens, and to the northwest is a narrow private road dividing the site from a field containing a Scheduled medieval moated manor site.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the watching brief was to record and ascertain the nature of any archaeological deposits and features which may have been disturbed by the development, in particular any medieval deposits which may have been associated with the moated manor and the medieval settlement of Riccall.

2.0 FIELDWORK PROCEDURE

The foundation trenches for the exterior walls of the bungalow were excavated by a mechanical excavator fitted with a 0.50m wide toothless ditching bucket, while those for the interior walls were excavated with a 0.30m wide bucket. The corners and the base of the trenches were finished by hand. The trenches varied in depth from 0.70m to 0.90m according to the depth of the topsoil. All heights referred to in this report are expressed in metres below the present ground surface.

3.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

The subsoil, C1002, was reached at only 0.40m below the present ground surface on the northern part of the area, although it clearly sloped down towards the south, where it was not contacted at a maximum depth of 0.90m. Overlying the subsoil across the whole area was a layer of greyish brown sandy silt, C1001, homogenous in character with very infrequent stone inclusions. This layer was truncated to the north where the subsoil was at higher level, at least 0.20m deep where it was seen in the southeastern section, and it was only just contacted at the southern part of the site at a depth of 0.80-0.90m from the ground surface. Finds from this layer consisted of occasional fragments of animal bone and some medieval pottery, dating to the 12th-13th century.

Cutting this layer in the eastern corner of the site was a regular linear feature running north-south.

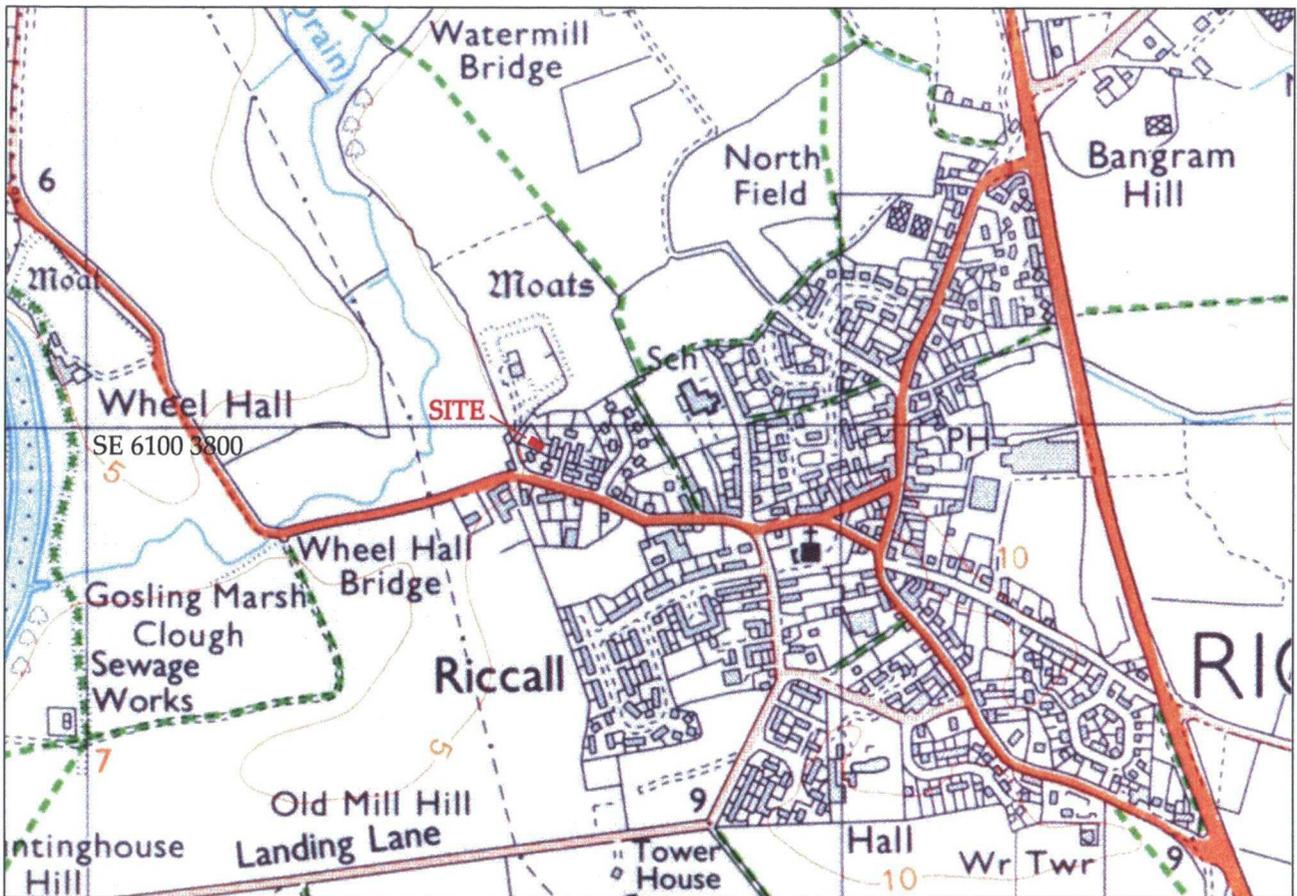


Figure 1 Location of the development area within Riccall (1:10000)

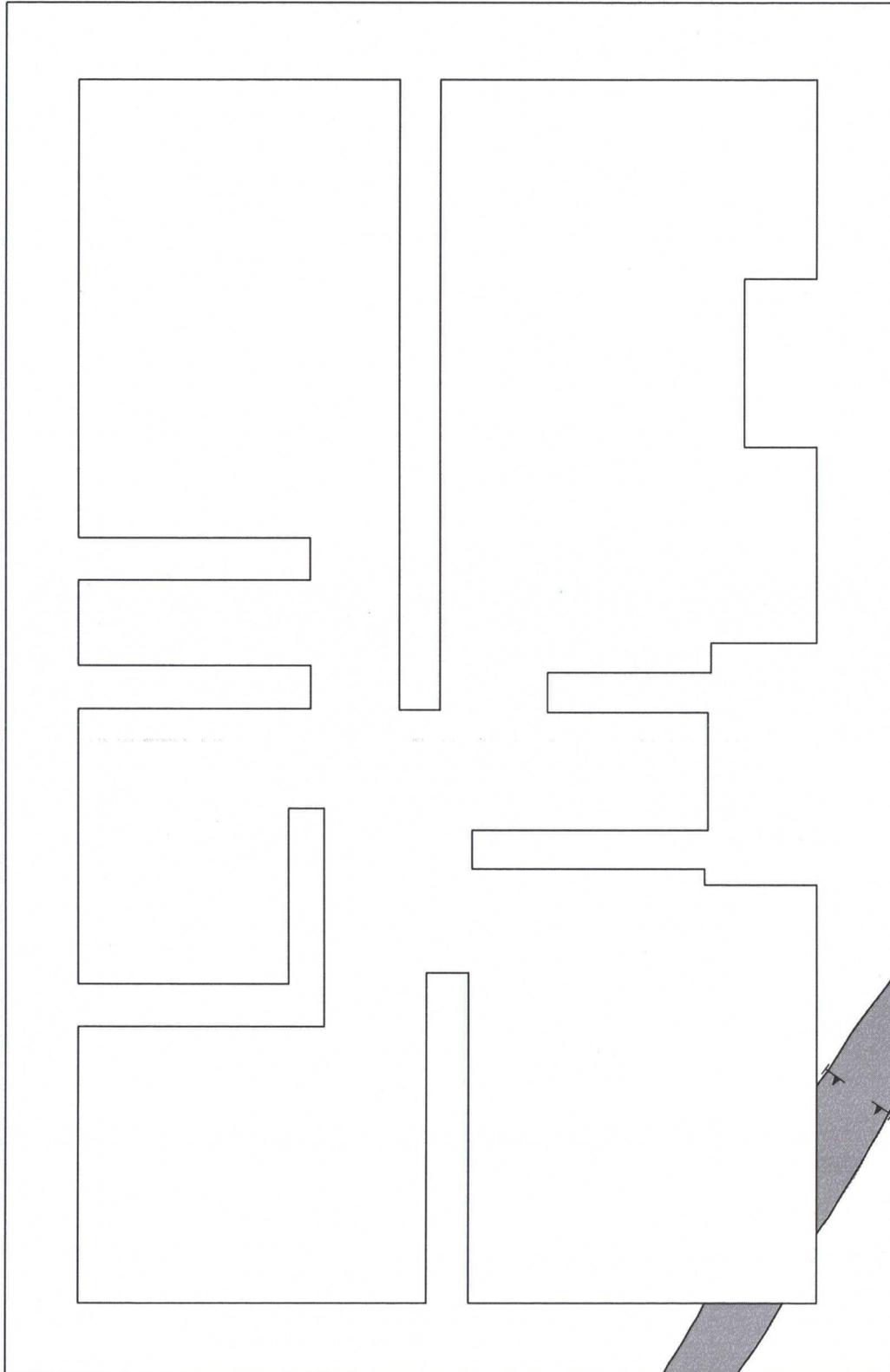
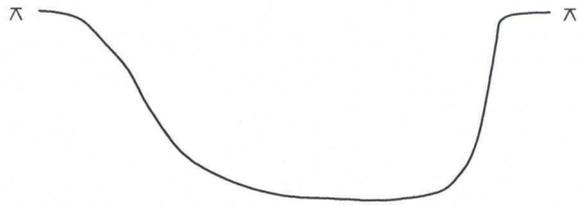


Figure 2 Location of the watching brief within the site (1:2500)



Profile through F1 (Scale 1:10)

Datum at 0.70m below ground surface



F1

line of profile

Layout of excavated foundation trenches showing F1

Scale 1:50



Figure 3

It was only 0.50m wide and 0.25m deep where sampled. The fill of the feature was very similar to the surrounding layer, C1001, but was slightly lighter in colour and contained more pottery. Because of the nature of the watching brief, it was only sampled in a very small area.

Sealing this feature and layer C1001 was the topsoil, C1000, which was 0.30m deep at the northern and 0.80m deep at the southern corners.



Plate 1 Pre-excavation photograph of F1 looking northwest

Table 1 Summary of contexts and features

Context /feature	Type	Description
1000	Topsoil	Very dark grey clean fine sandy silt with very few stone inclusions, occasional flecks of charcoal and CBM. Soft consistency. (10YR 3/1)
1001	Layer	Pale greyish brown homogenous slightly sandy silt with evenly distributed frequent charcoal flecks and occasional sherds of medieval pottery. Very wet. (10YR 5/2)
1002	Subsoil	Orange/brown soft fine slightly silty sand with darker rust coloured stains and flecks. (10YR 4/6)
1003	Fill	Grey deposit of very fine slightly silty sand with occasional charcoal flecks, small stones, some sherds of pottery and a fragment of animal bone. Disturbed by roots (bracken?). Very wet. (7.5YR 5/1)
F1	Gully	Linear feature orientated north-south, approximately 0.50m wide and surviving to a depth of at least 0.25m. U-shaped in profile.

3.1 FINDS

Very few finds were recovered from the site. The topsoil was remarkably clean, containing only occasional modern rubbish, including a small amount of brick and tile hardcore from a recent path, none of which was retained. Finds from the archaeological deposits were recovered and identified as dating predominantly to the 12th and 13th centuries.

Although the site was very wet, with groundwater lying at approximately 0.70m below the ground surface, the archaeological deposits did not appear to contain any waterlogged environmental material such as plant or insect remains, but seemed to be denatured and sterile. For this reason no

samples were taken for specialist analysis.

Table 2 Summary of finds

Context	Description	No. Frags	Date
1001	Gritty ware jar	2	13th century
	Red sandy ware jug	1	13th century
	?Brandsby-type jug	1	13th century
	Possible cervid metapodial	1	
1003	Gritty ware	3	12th-13th century
	Splash-glaze ware jugs	2	12th-13th century
	?Red ware	1	?Post-medieval
	Unidentified mammal bone	1	

4.0 ASSESSMENT

The archaeological deposits recorded on this site, C1001 and C1003 (F1), are thought to relate to medieval agricultural activity. The homogenous nature of C1001 suggests that it was the remains of a truncated ploughsoil. There was a remarkable absence of finds from this layer, and the few that were recovered all came from its interface with the topsoil. The linear feature, F1, contained backfill very similar to C1001 but contained a slightly higher concentration of pottery. This feature may be interpreted as the remains of a plough furrow, or a truncated field boundary ditch, the latter being a more likely interpretation, since the pottery sherds showed little sign of abrasion. If this is the case, it would appear that the field continued to be ploughed after the ditch went out of use, and the ploughsoil gradually backfilled it. With the exception of one small fragment of possible post-medieval pottery from C1003, all other finds were dated to the 12th-13th centuries.

5.0 ARCHIVE

Copies of this report will be held by the North Yorkshire Sites and Monument Record, English Heritage, Field Archaeology Specialists and Mr Hollis Bills, who will also retain the finds.

APPENDIX A NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - STANDARD WRITTEN
SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI) FOR LIMITED
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ("WATCHING BRIEF")

- 1 The purpose of the work is to record and recover archaeological remains which are:
 - a) affected by proposed development only to a limited and clearly defined extent,
 - b) not available or susceptible to standard area excavation techniques, or
 - c) of limited importance or potential.The work should not require the construction programme or development to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.

- 2 The WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements needed to comply with an archaeological planning condition. The scheme does **not** comprise a full specification, and the County Council makes no warranty that the works are fully or exactly described. The details of implementation must be specified in a contract between the developer and the selected archaeological contractor.

- 3 The removal of overburden (that is vegetation, turf loose stones, rubble, made ground, Tarmac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) should be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.

- 4 Removal of overburden by machine should be undertaken using a back-acting excavator fitted with toothless or ditching bucket only. Where materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils (B horizons) or deep, uniform fills of features may also be removed by back-acting excavator but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with archaeological supervision. Bulldozers or wheeled scraper buckets should not be used to remove overburden above archaeological deposits. Where reinstatement is required, topsoil should be kept separate from other soil materials.

- 5 Metal detecting within the development area, including the scanning of topsoil and spoil heaps, should only be permitted subject to archaeological supervision and recording such that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.

- 6 Where structures, finds, soil features and layers of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators notice archaeological remains, they should immediately tell the Archaeologist. The sampling of deposits for palaeo-environmental evidence should be a standard consideration, and arrangements should be made to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.

- 7 Heavy plant should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until they have been recorded, and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at

that location. Sterile subsoils (C horizons) and parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision. Where reinstatement is required, subsoils should be backfilled first and topsoil last.

- 8 Upon completion of fieldwork, samples should be processed and evaluated, and all finds cleaned, identified, assessed, spot-dated, and properly stored. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. The Archaeologist should arrange for either the County Archaeologist or an independent post-excavation specialist to inspect the archive before making arrangements for the transfer of the archive to an appropriate museum or records office.
- 9 A summary report should be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should contain planning or administrative details of the project, a summary of works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context where appropriate, and catalogues of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings, roads and field boundaries. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally scaled plans, sections, or photographs. Where few or no finds are made, it may be acceptable to provide the report in the form of a letter with plans attached.
- 10 Copies of the summary report should be provided to the client(s), the County Heritage Unit (SMR), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works are on or adjacent to, a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage.
- 11 The County Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible of the discovery of any unexpected archaeological remains, or changes in the programme of ground works on site. Any significant changes in the archaeological work should be specified in a variation to the WSI to be approved by the planning authority. If human remains are encountered, they should be exhumed subject to the conditions of a Home Office licence.