

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording

at

34 School Lane
Fulford

Planning/SMR Reference: **01/00627/OUT & 04/00716/OUT**

National Grid Reference: **SE 6109 4928**

Site Code: **WB2005.028**

for

Edenvale Homes (York) Ltd

Watching Brief Report Number: 814

December 2005

Contents

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Summary..... | 2 |
| 1. Introduction..... | 3 |
| 2. Archaeological Background..... | 4 |
| 3. Methodology..... | 4 |
| 4. Results..... | 5 |
| 5. The Finds..... | 6 |
| 6. Discussion..... | 7 |
| 7. Acknowledgements..... | 7 |
| 8. References..... | 8 |
| 9. Appendices..... | 9 |
| Appendix 1 Context list | |
| Appendix 2 Archive | |

List of Figures

Figure 1 Site location plan

Figure 2 Plan showing the location of the archaeological features in relation to the foundation trenches within the development

List of Plates

Plate 1 The existing site boundary wall along School Lane, looking north-west

Plate 2 The site prior to the commencement of groundworks, looking west

Plate 3 The pit excavated for the disposal of Japanese knotweed, looking south

Plate 4 The pit, with protective liner in place, being filled with knotweed and contaminated topsoil, looking south

Plate 5 The raft foundation for plot 1 being excavated, looking west

Plate 6 The raft foundation for plot 2 being excavated, looking west

Plate 7 The feature (1004)(1005), looking west

Plate 8 The north boundary to the site, as viewed from the north side, looking west

D.P. Rawson and D.J. Jobling, December 2005

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology during groundwork associated with the construction of two new dwellings at 34 School Lane, Fulford, in the City of York.

Only one feature was observed during the works – what appeared to be a backfilled ditch or depression running parallel to, and close by the north boundary of the site. There is a sunken pathway on the other side this boundary, and such a feature may also have run to the south. The boundary appears on the 1853 OS map.

The finds from the site comprised fragments of pantile of 18th- and early 19th-century date, together with sherds of pottery that were very largely of the same date range.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology, on behalf of Edenvale Homes (York) Ltd during groundwork associated with the construction of two new dwellings at 34 School Lane, Fulford, in the City of York (*Figure 1, Plates 1 and 2*).

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The development site is located some 2.5km south of the historic core of the City of York, and some 100m east of Fulford village, on the west side of School Lane. To the immediate north and south, there are residential properties, and to the west, the grounds of Fulford House (now a hotel).

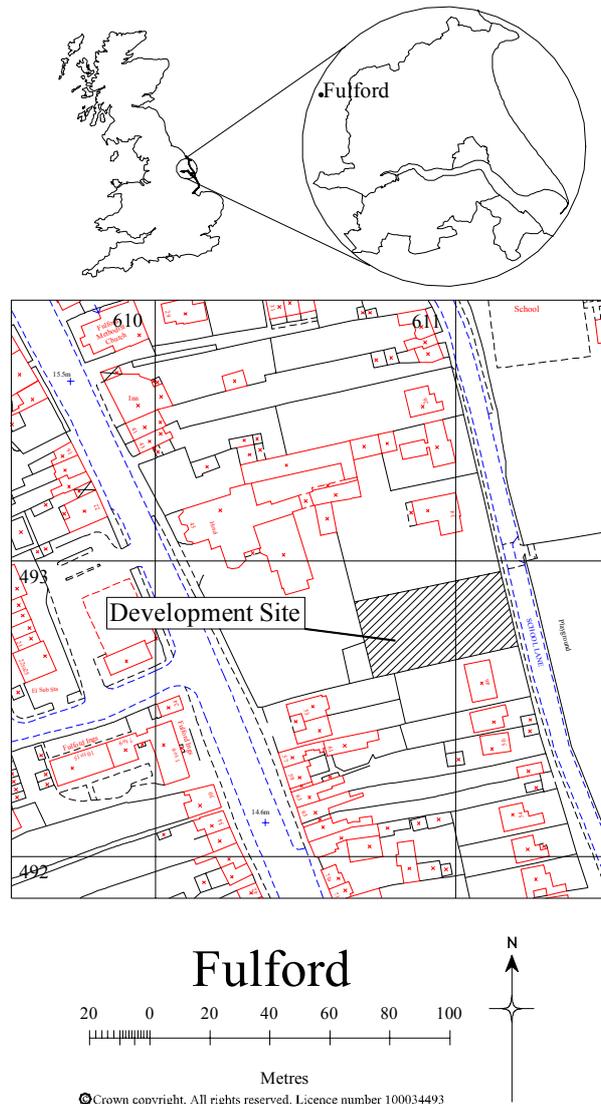


Figure 1 Site location plan

2. Archaeological Background

Fulford is a former medieval village now subsumed within York. The SMR and recent work at the adjacent site of Germany Beck indicate an extensive late-prehistoric and Romano-British landscape. There appears to be no evidence for earlier, perhaps Neolithic or Bronze Age funerary features on the Germany Beck site although the finds assemblage suggests the possibility of such activity. The Germany Beck site also produced an interesting assemblage of Roman pottery.

An archaeological evaluation on the site of the proposed new St Oswalds School was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology (OSA) in December 2002. The evaluation indicated the presence of archaeological deposits and features dating from the prehistoric period to the present day. These deposits included prehistoric pits; ditches dating to the Roman period; medieval ridge and furrow, and a possible Civil War entrenchment. These deposits were preserved between 0.30m and 1.00m below the surface

It is likely, therefore, that any groundworks in this area would encounter archaeological deposits dating from the prehistoric and later periods.

3. Methodology

The on-site work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology, in accordance with the archaeological scheme of investigation produced by the City of York Council in response to a condition placed upon the planning application. Date: 13th January 2005, Planning/SMR Reference: 01/00627/OUT & 04/00716/OUT.

The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of the digging of the foundations and a pit for the disposal of Japanese knotweed. A series of five visits were made to the site between the 20th April and 15th November 2005, during which time it was possible to monitor the excavation of the groundworks specified. Any exposed areas of subsoil and lower stratigraphic units were examined for archaeological deposits.

The excavated dimensions of the foundation trenches were recorded, as were the depth sequences of any exposed stratigraphy. Where archaeological deposits/features were identified, context numbers were assigned and detailed descriptions were made, plans and sections were drawn and a photographic record was maintained.

Archaeological artefacts found during the fieldwork were bagged according to their context, and returned to Humber Field Archaeology for further specialist analysis.

4. Results

Prior to the foundation rafts being excavated for the two plots, a large pit had to be dug and then lined to receive Japanese knotweed and contaminated topsoil from along the southern edge of the site (*Figure 2, Plates 3 and 4*). This pit was located in the south-west corner of the site, and measured some 5.50m x 5.50m x 3m deep. No archaeological features of interest were observed, though a modern land drain was noted as running across the pit on an east-west alignment.

Within the base of the pit there was a dark orange brown silty clay (1003), that was at least 2.00m thick. Above it there was a 0.50m thick layer of very dark brown clayey silt (1002), which was topped by a 0.50m thick layer of good quality very dark greyish brown loamy topsoil (1001).

Plot 1 measured a maximum of 15.30m from east to west, and a maximum of 10.40m from north to south. Excavation was to a maximum depth of 0.40m, so that (1001) was visible throughout the excavated area (*Figure 2, Plate 5*). No archaeological features were observed.

Several sherds of pottery and fragments of ceramic building material were recovered during the excavation of the pit and plot 1, though all these finds were unstratified (1000).

Plot 2 also measured a maximum of 15.30m from east to west, and a maximum of 10.40m from north to south. Excavation was again to a maximum depth of 0.40m, however over much of the plot, (1001) was a little thinner, such that (1002) was visible here (*Figure 2, Plate 6*).

Several sherds of pottery were recovered from (1002), and a feature was observed to run on an east-west alignment along the northern edge of the excavated area. The feature comprised a cut (1004), at least 7.50m long and at least 1.40m wide (*Figure 2, Plate 7*). The depth and profile of this cut were not ascertained. The fill of the cut comprised a yellow brown sandy silt of unknown depth (1005).

With the completion of the excavation of plot 2 the fieldwork was concluded.



Figure 2 Plan showing the location of the archaeological features in relation to the foundation trenches within the development

5. The Finds

The Pottery – Peter Didsbury (M.Phil) (pers.comm)

Context (1000)

4x sherds of unglazed red earthenware from large jars. 19th-century date?

1x sherd of English brown stoneware. Probably of 19th-century date and from Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire

2x sherds of Frechen stoneware (?) Tiger glaze. 16th/17th-century date onwards

Context (1002)

1x sherd of an English stoneware of 18th/19th-century date

1x sherd of an English stoneware of a mid-19th – 20th-century date

1x sherd of white dipped ware of 18th/19th-century date

It was recommended that the pottery be discarded.

The Ceramic Building Material – John Tibbles (*pers.comm*)

Context (1000)

2x fragments of pantile from two separate tiles. Both had been moulded on sand.

The first fragment was 0.13mm thick, showed signs of weathering, and was probably of 18th-century date.

The second fragment was 0.16mm thick, and was probably of 18th -or early 19th-century date.

It was recommended that the pantile fragments be discarded.

6. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of the City of York archaeologist, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority.

The thickness and quality of the topsoil suggest a long history of intense cultivation within the site. Most probably the site was part of a garden, or park landscape developed by the owners of the Georgian Fulford House (to the west of the site and fronting onto Fulford Road). Certainly, the east boundary wall of the site is an impressive brick structure, most probably built in the 18th or early 19th century and then heightened later in the 19th century (*Plate 1*).

The north boundary of the site (now represented by a timber fence), appears to be shown on the 1853 OS map. That this boundary is long standing, is attested to by the sunken path that runs east-west along the south side of the mature garden landscape to the north of the site (*Plate 8*). Thus the feature (1004)(1005) may be a similar sunken path which has long since been backfilled.

7. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to Edenvale Homes (York) Ltd for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The on-site work was carried out in accordance with an archaeological scheme of investigation prepared by John Oxley of the City of York Council. The report text was edited by David Atkinson, whilst the finds were spot dated by Peter Didsbury, an independent pottery specialist, and John Tibbles, a ceramic building material specialist and HFA member of staff.

8. References

Guidelines for Finds Work The Institute of Field Archaeologists Finds Group
First Draft, 1991.

Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2), English Heritage, 1991.

Oxley, J., Archaeological Scheme of Investigation: Watching Brief. City of York
Council, 2005

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Context list

- (1000) U/S, Unstratified.
- (1001) Very dark greyish brown loamy topsoil, 0.50m thick
- (1002) Very dark brown clayey silt, 0.50m thick
- (1003) Dark orange brown silty clay, >2.00m thick
- (1004) Cut. Above (1002). At least 7.50m long and at least 1.40m wide. The depth and profile of this cut were not ascertained
- (1005) Fill of (1004). Yellow brown sandy silt of unknown depth

Appendix 2 Archive

Project Details: A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording at 34 School Lane, Fulford, City of York

Site Code: WB2005.028

National Grid Reference: SE 6109 4928

Planning Reference Number: 01/00627/OUT & 04/00716/OUT

Museum Reference or Accession Number: To be assigned by York Museums

Author David Rawson **Date of fieldwork:** April-November 2005

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 814, December 2005.

Quantity

3x clear plastic A4 wallets contain the paper archive

The finds were discarded after assessment, however several sherds of pottery were retained by P. Didsbury for the regional reference collection held by HFA

Summary of work.

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Site Code: WB2005.028

National Grid Reference: TA 5118 4807

Museum Reference or Accession Number:

Index to Archive

1 Background:

1.1 Specification

1.2 Correspondence

2 Site Data:

2.1 Site notes

2.2 Staff site visit log

2.3 Site Plans/Sections

3 The Photographic Record:

3.1 Photographic Catalogue

3.2 Contact Sheets

3.3 Reference Prints

4.The Finds Record:

4.1 Ceramic Building Material Spot Dating

4.2 Pottery Spot Dating

5. Miscellaneous

5.1 Developer's Plans

6. Final Report: A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording at 34 School Lane, Fulford, City of York. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 814



Plate 1 The existing site boundary wall along School Lane, looking north-west



Plate 2 The site prior to the commencement of groundworks, looking west



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Plate 5 The raft foundation for plot 1 being excavated, looking west



Plate 6 The raft foundation for plot 2 being excavated, looking west



Plate 7 The feature (1004)(1005), looking west



Plate 8 The north boundary to the site, as viewed from the north side, looking west

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Project Management • Desk-based Assessment • Field Survey • Excavation Watching Briefs
• Finds Research • Post-excavation Analysis • Inter-tidal Work

Humber Field Archaeology is an independently-funded part of the Humber Archaeology Partnership, a partnership serving The East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Kingston upon Hull City Council