
LAND AT DISHFORTH ROAD, BOROUGHBRIDGE,
NORTH YORKSHIRE.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION BY TRIAL
TRENCHING

OSA Report No: OSA17EV04 (Trial trenching).

May 2017.

OSA

ON SITE ARCHÆOLOGY LTD

25A Milton Street • York • North Yorkshire • YO10 3EP
telephone • 01904 411673 • fax • 01904 414522 • mobile • 07767 385766
e-mail • mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk • web • www.onsitearchaeology.co.uk

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Report Summary.

REPORT NO: OSA17EV04

SITE NAME: Land at Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge

COUNTY: North Yorkshire

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 39832 67475

COMMISSIONED BY: Miller Homes
Lapwing House
Peel House
Calder House
Wakefield
WF2 7UA

TEXT: Graham Bruce

GRAPHICS: Berny McCluskey

FIELDWORK: Graham Bruce
James Stanley

TIMING: Fieldwork
April 2017
Post excavation & report preparation
April-May 2017

ENQUIRIES TO: Nick Pearson
On Site Archaeology
25A Milton Street
York
YO10 3EP
tel (01904) 411673
fax (01904) 414522
mobile (07767) 385766
e-mail mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk

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1.0 Abstract.

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology Ltd on land at Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge. The evaluation was carried out in advance of a proposed scheme for a residential development which has been granted outline planning permission by Harrogate Borough Council. The first phase of evaluation, comprising geophysical survey, was carried out in October 2015. The results of the survey suggested the presence of well preserved archaeological deposits on parts of the development site. Archaeological trenching was carried out in November 2015, when the features identified by the geophysical survey were tested and confirmed to be of archaeological origin. The 2015 evaluation did not test apparently blank areas as defined by the geophysical survey. This 2nd phase of trial trenching has been carried out to test these apparently blank areas. The scope of the 2nd phase of archaeological trial trenching was agreed in consultation with North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Services.

The evaluation consisted of five trial trenches. Four of these trenches revealed only truncated furrows representing earlier agricultural practices and confirmed the results of the geophysical survey. Within one trench an earlier, potentially prehistoric ditch was revealed partially overlain by a furrow and cut by a land drain. This feature had not been identified by the geophysical survey and it is possible that the presence of the land drain and surface debris had obscured the feature.

The development is to comprise the construction of a residential development with associated infrastructure. Any decision regarding the nature and scale of further archaeological investigation on the site lies with the Local Planning Authority and their archaeological advisors, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Services. The results of this phase of evaluation, together with the earlier evaluation and the geophysical survey will be considered to determine the scale of mitigation. The details of the scheme of archaeological mitigation will be presented in a written scheme of investigation to be agreed with North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Services.

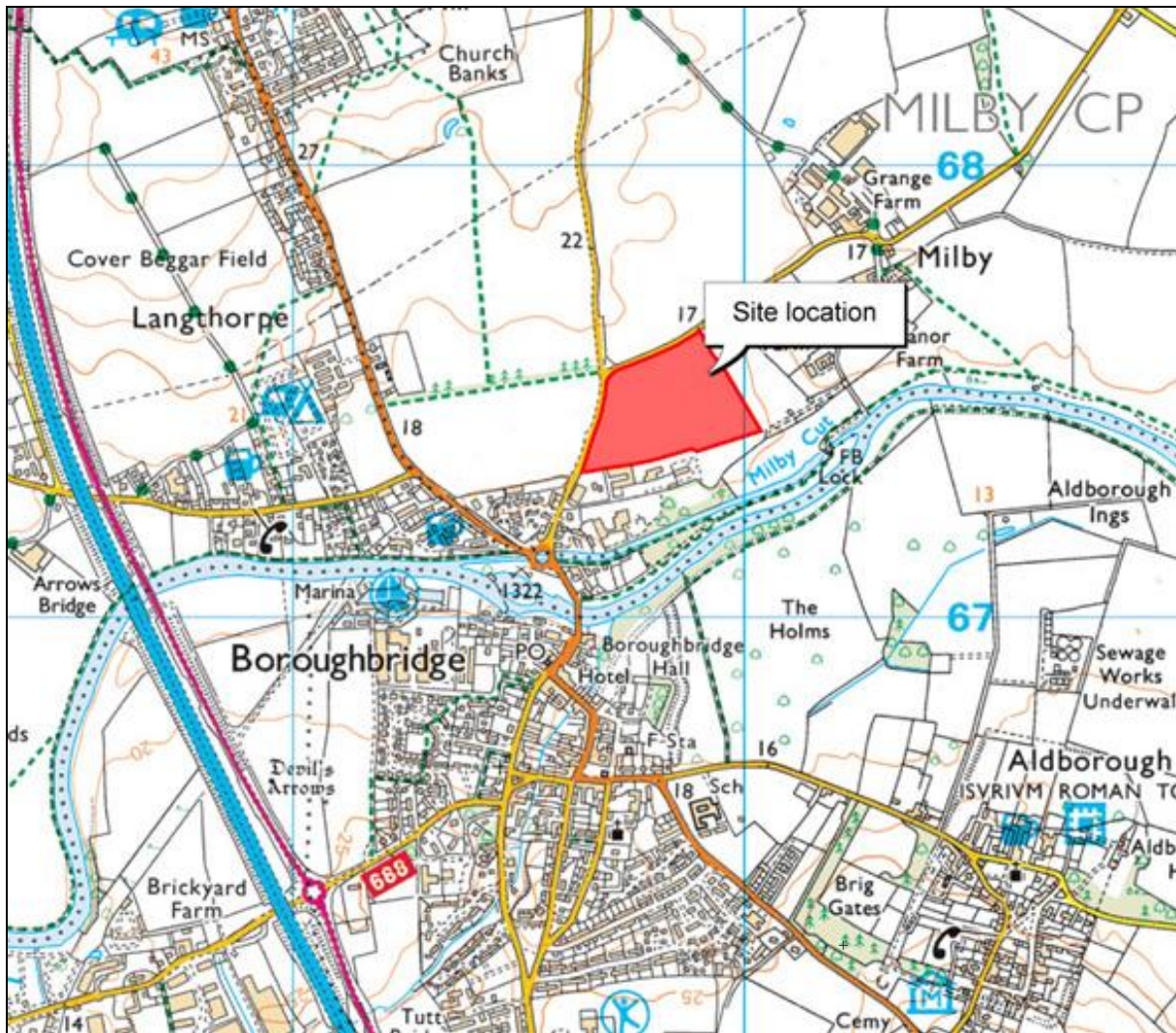


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 39832 67475)

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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

The site consists of an irregular shaped agricultural field north of the town of Boroughbridge on the east side of Dishforth Road (Figure 1). It is surrounded on three sides by agricultural land and to the south by an industrial estate. The field is broadly flat with an average height of 17m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD), and is centred at National Grid Reference SE 39832 67475.

2.2 The underlying bedrock geology of the site comprises largely Late Permian and Mid-Triassic sandstone of the Sherwood Sandstone Group, beneath superficial deposits of Pleistocene silty clay of the Alne Glaciolacustrine Formation (British Geological Survey N.D.).

3.0 Archaeological Background

The following are selected extracts from the desk-based assessment created by CgMs Consulting (Morse, R. 2015. 'Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment. Land Off Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire.' CgMs Consulting Report Number: PC/RM/19764). Not all periods are represented in this excerpt.

(4.7.2, p12) During the Roman period, the site lay c.450m west of Dere Street, a major Roman road from York to the Forth Estuary in Scotland. Within the Swale-Ure Washlands, civil settlements developed along Dere Street and around a number of military bases, notably at Aldborough c.1.2km to the south-east and at Catterick on the River Swale c. 35km to the north-west.

(4.7.4, p12) During the Roman period, the study site would have been located within the rural hinterland of the Roman forts and settlements. Overall, a low-nil potential is identified for sub-surface remains evidencing Roman settlement.

(4.8.4, p13) During the Medieval period the site lay c. 500m south-west of the settlement at Milby, and was part of the Open Fields of Milby. Cropmark evidence mapped by the National Mapping Programme indicates evidence of ploughed out ridge and furrow on a northwest to south-east and north-east to south-west alignment across part of the site. In the adjacent field to the east, the HER records ridge and furrow.

(4.8.5, p13) The Battle of Boroughbridge is a Registered Battlefield located immediately to the south of the site. On 16th March 1322, the Barons' rebellion, led by Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, was crushed at the Battle of Boroughbridge. It was a small but dramatic battle, and is recorded in graphic detail in contemporary accounts. The use of a defensive wall of spears and an offensive arrow storm foreshadowed the devastating success achieved years later against the French at Crecy. Older Ordnance Survey maps marked the battle site to the

south of the bridge, but the location has subsequently been moved further north. The Battlefields Trust states that the present town has largely engulfed the battlefield, though the site can still be easily appreciated on the ground. The mapped area on the HER shows the fullest extent of the battlefield, and is larger than the Registered area.

A geophysical survey of the site was carried out in October 2015 (Archaeological Services Durham University, October 2015. Land east of Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. Geophysical survey. Report 3932). This recorded strong anomalies across the eastern part of the survey area that almost certainly represent a complex of enclosures and internal features, including probable roundhouses. A smaller ditched enclosure was detected in the southwest part of the site. Traces of other possible features were found elsewhere on the site. Several former field boundaries corresponding with those shown on early maps of the area were also recorded, together with evidence for former ridge and furrow cultivation, and later ploughing.

In November 2015 a scheme of archaeological trial trenching was carried out to test the results of the geophysics (Archaeological Services Durham University, November 2015. Land east of Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. Archaeological evaluation. Report 3969). A total of eight evaluation trenches were opened, which targeted the anomalies identified through the geophysics. The trenches confirmed that the anomalies were archaeological and included fragments of Iron Age and Romano-British pottery.

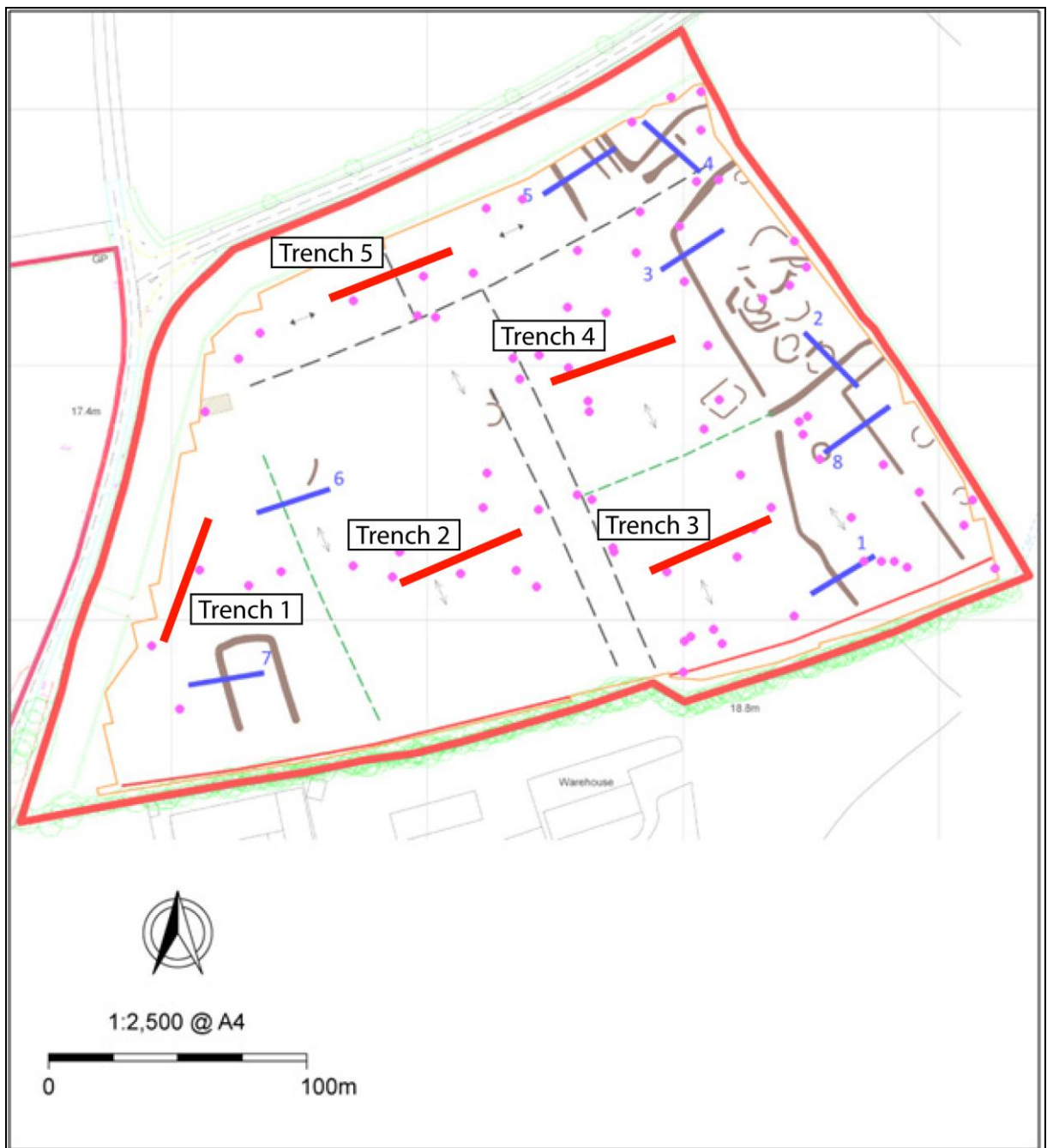


Figure 2. Trench locations (in red) relative to the phase 1 trenches (in blue) and geophysical survey results.

4.0 Methodology.

The aim of the current phase of archaeological evaluation was to establish the presence/absence, nature, depth, extent and preservation of any archaeological remains within those parts of the site that the geophysical survey suggested were blank. The results of this evaluation could then be used in conjunction with the earlier phase of trial trenching to determine the scale of any further mitigation measures, either in advance of or during the proposed development. The evaluation was required as part of Condition 24 of the grant of outline planning permission (Planning Reference 15/04164/OUTMAJ).

A total of five evaluation trenches were excavated in this phase, each measuring 50m by 2m at the modern ground surface. These trenches were placed to investigate apparently blank areas as defined by the geophysical survey. The locations of the trenches, the geophysical survey results and the phase 1 evaluation trenches are shown on Figure 2.

The topsoil/overburden within the trenches was removed by a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision down to the first archaeological horizon or natural deposit. Exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect archaeological features revealed through textural and/or colour changes in the deposits. Sections were then excavated by hand through archaeological features and deposits in accordance with stratigraphic principles.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* procedures were followed throughout the investigation. This involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit, structure or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM), which was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey benchmark. A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained. A full list of contexts and detailed description of all deposits recorded is provided within Appendix 1. All archive accumulated during the investigation is also listed in Appendix 1.

Trenches are described starting with the earliest deposit first unless otherwise indicated. All deposits, cuts and other archaeological features are issued with unique context numbers for ease of reference. It is standard practice to distinguish between *deposits* (identified by the use of round brackets) and *cuts* (shown by the use of square brackets).

5.0 Results.

Trench 1

Trench 1 was located within the western part of the site and was orientated north-northeast to south-southwest (Plate 1). Light orange brown sandy clay natural (104) was revealed at a depth of 0.60m at the southwest end of the trench and 0.35m to the northeast (at a maximum height of 16.98m AOD).

The natural was cut by a series of northwest to southeast orientated furrows (given a single cut number of [103]) containing greyish orange-brown sandy silt (102). The furrows survived for a variety of widths between 1m and 2.5m with a maximum depth of 0.15m (Plate 2). Occasional post-medieval to early modern artefacts were recovered.

The furrows were sealed by a 0.20-0.40m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy silt (101), former ploughsoil, which in turn was sealed by 0.40m thickness of the dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil (100).

This trench therefore confirmed the results of the geophysics.

Trench 2

Trench 2 was located within the southern part of the site and was orientated east-northeast to west-southwest (Plate 3). Light orange brown sandy clay natural (204) was revealed at a depth of 0.60m at the southwest end of the trench and 0.30m to the northeast (at a maximum height of 17.14m AOD).

The natural was cut by a series of northwest to southeast orientated furrows (given a single cut number of [203]) containing greyish brown sandy silt (202). The furrows survived for a variety of widths between 1m and 1.5m with a maximum depth of 0.10m (Plate 4). Occasional medieval to early modern artefacts were recovered.

The furrows were sealed by a 0.15-0.25m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy clay silt (201), former ploughsoil, which in turn was sealed by 0.30m thickness of the dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil (200).

This trench therefore confirmed the results of the geophysics.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was located within the southeastern part of the site and was orientated east-northeast to west-southwest (Plate 5). Light orange brown sandy clay natural (304) was revealed at a depth of 0.35m at the southwest end of the trench and 0.30m to the northeast (at a maximum height of 16.84m AOD).

The natural was cut by a series of northwest to southeast orientated furrows (given a single cut number of [303]) containing greyish brown sandy silt (302). The furrows survived for a

variety of widths between 1m and 2.5m with a maximum depth of 0.15m (Plate 6). A single small fragment of potentially medieval tile was recovered.

The furrows were sealed by a 0.10m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy clay silt (301), former ploughsoil, which in turn was sealed by 0.30m thickness of the dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil (300).

This trench therefore confirmed the results of the geophysics.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was located within the central part of the site and was orientated east-northeast to west-southwest (Plate 7). Light orange brown sandy clay and gravel natural (404) was revealed at a depth of 0.40m (at a maximum height of 16.41m AOD).

The natural was cut by a series of northwest to southeast orientated furrows (given a single cut number of [403]) containing greyish brown sandy silt (402). The furrows survived for a variety of widths between 1.5m and 2m with a maximum depth of 0.20m (Plate 8). Occasional sherds of medieval pottery were recovered.

The furrows were sealed by a 0.10m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy clay silt (401), former ploughsoil, which in turn was sealed by 0.30m thickness of the dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil (400).

This trench therefore confirmed the results of the geophysics.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was located within the northern part of the site and was orientated east-northeast to west-southwest. Light orange brown sandy clay natural (506) was revealed at a depth of 0.45m at the southwest end of the trench and 0.35m to the northeast (at a maximum height of 16.91m AOD).

Between 15m and 20m from the southwestern end of the trench the natural was cut by a narrow curvilinear ditch [505]. This was recorded for a total length of 5m within the trench, extending to the north. It was a maximum of 0.80m wide, with an irregular V to U-shaped profile and was 0.30m deep (see Figures 3, 4 and 5, Plates 9, 10 and 11). The single fill (504) of greyish red brown sandy silt contained occasional cobbles and rare flecks of charcoal, but no other inclusions or artefacts.

The ditch was truncated by a northwest to southeast aligned furrow [503], one of several on the same alignment, containing greyish brown sandy silt (502). A land drain had been inserted into the top of this furrow.

The furrows and natural were sealed by a 0.10m thick layer of mid orange brown sandy clay silt (501), former ploughsoil, which in turn was sealed by 0.25m-0.30m thickness of the dark

grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil (500). A single worked flint was recovered from topsoil (500).

This trench therefore revealed an archaeological feature that had not been recorded by the geophysics.

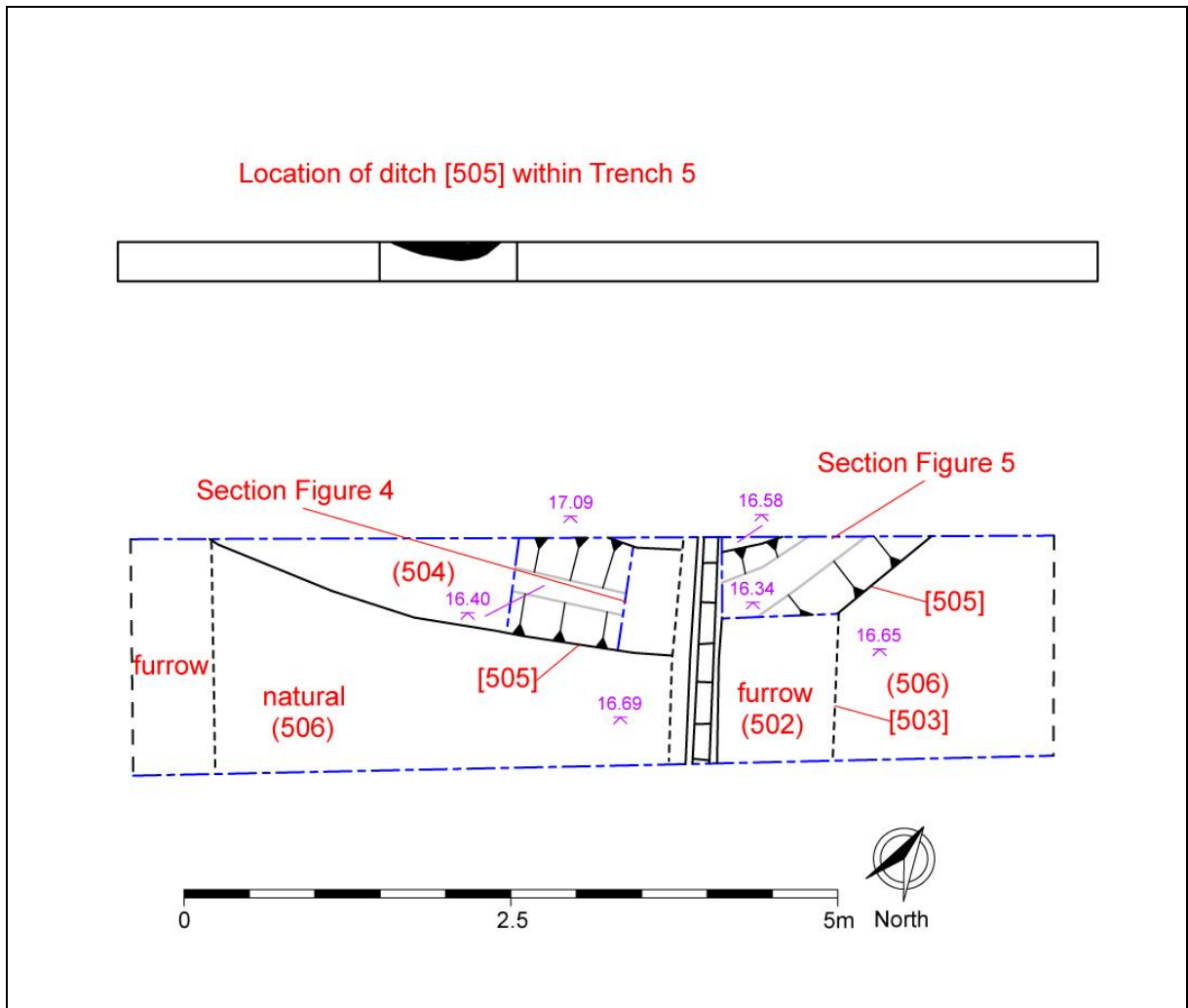


Figure 3. Plan of archaeological features in Trench 5.

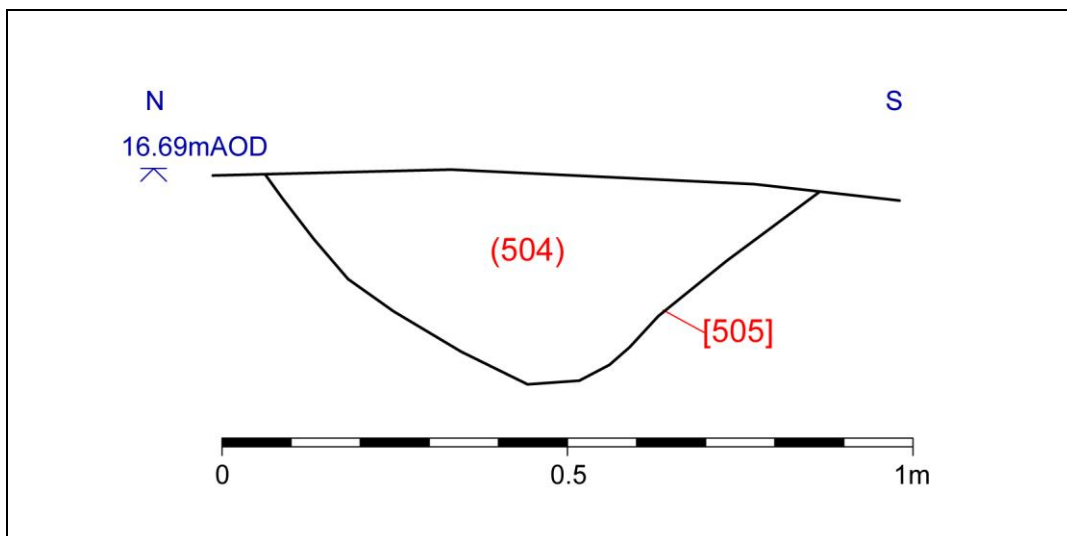


Figure 4. West facing section through ditch [505].

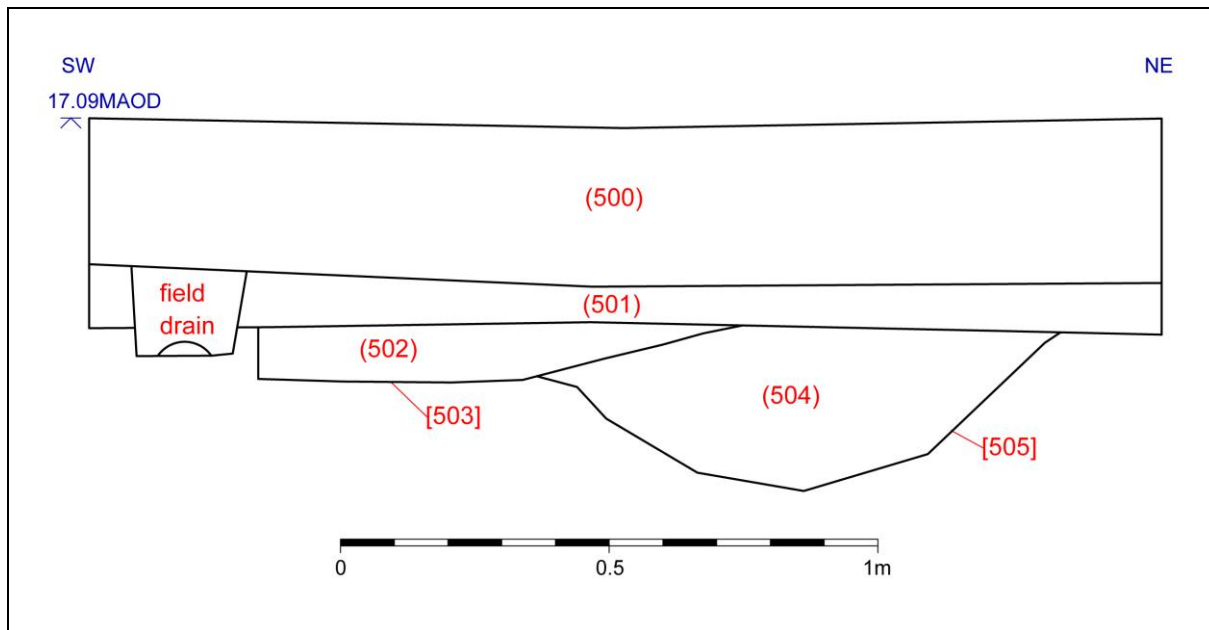


Figure 5. Southeast facing section of Trench 5, including ditch [505] and overlying deposits.

6.0 Conclusions.

Four of the five evaluation trenches (Trenches 1 to 4) confirmed the suggestion from the geophysical survey that the areas within which they were located were devoid of archaeological features. With the exception of multiple northwest to southeast orientated furrows these four trenches all contained no features. The exception to this was Trench 5. Within this trench a single, undated, but potentially prehistoric or Romano-British ditch was revealed. This ditch was not recorded by the geophysical survey. It should be noted that the ditch was partially truncated by a furrow, and cut by a land drain. A combination of these may have lead to this earlier feature being difficult to detect through geophysics.

Any decision regarding the nature and scale of further archaeological investigation on the site lies with the Local Planning Authority and their archaeological advisors, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Services. The results of this phase of evaluation, together with the earlier evaluation and the geophysical survey will be considered to determine the scale of mitigation. The details of the scheme of archaeological mitigation will be presented in a written scheme of investigation to be agreed with North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Services.

7.0 Bibliography.

Archaeological Services Durham University. October 2015. Land east of Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. Geophysical Survey. Report 3932.

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On-Site Archaeology. March 2017. Land at Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire. Report on an Archaeological Metal Detector Survey. OSA Report No: OSA17EV04 (Metal Detector).

8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

8.1 List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Thickness (maximum)	Extent
Trench 1			
100	dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil	0.40m	Tr
101	mid orange brown sandy silt	0.20-0.40m	Tr
102	greyish orange-brown sandy silt	0.15m	1m-2.5m wide
103	NW-SE furrow cuts	0.15m	1m-2.5m wide
104	light orange brown sandy clay natural	-	Tr
Trench 2			
200	dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil	0.30m	Tr
201	mid orange brown sandy clay silt	0.15-0.25m	Tr
202	greyish brown sandy silt	0.10m	1m-1.5m wide
203	NW-SE furrow cuts	0.10m	1m-1.5m wide
204	light orange brown sandy clay natural	-	Tr
Trench 3			
300	dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil	0.30m	Tr
301	mid orange brown sandy clay silt	0.10m	Tr
302	greyish brown sandy silt	0.15m	1m-2.5m wide
303	NW-SE furrow cuts	0.15m	1m-2.5m wide
304	light orange brown sandy clay natural	-	Tr
Trench 4			
400	dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil	0.30m	Tr
401	mid orange brown sandy clay silt	0.10m	Tr
402	greyish brown sandy silt	0.20m	1.5m-2m wide
403	NW-SE furrow cuts	0.20m	1.5m-2m wide
404	light orange brown sandy clay and gravel natural	-	Tr
Trench 5			
500	dark grey brown sandy silt modern topsoil	0.25-0.30m	Tr
501	mid orange brown sandy clay silt	0.10m	Tr
502	greyish brown sandy silt	0.10m	1-2m wide
503	NW-SE furrow cuts	0.10m	1-2m wide
504	greyish red brown sandy silt	0.30m	5m long, 0.80m wide
505	Narrow V-U shaped profile curvilinear ditch	0.30m	5m long, 0.80m wide
506	light orange brown sandy clay natural	-	Tr

8.2 Drawing Register.

Drawing No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	SW facing section [505]	1:20	130417	JS
2	SE facing section [505] and [503]	1:20	130417	JS
3	Tr 5 plan	1:20	130417	JS

8.3 Photographic Register.

Frame no.	Description	View	Inits and date
Digital Download 13/04/17			
1-2	Tr 1	NE	JS 110417
3-4	Tr 1	SW	JS 110417
5-10	Tr 1, furrow [103]	various	JS 110417
11-12	Tr 1 sample section	SE	JS 110417
13-14	Tr 2	NE	JS 110417
15-16	Tr 2	SW	JS 110417
17-22	Tr 2 furrow [203]	various	JS 120417
23-24	Tr 2 sample section	SE	JS 120417
25-37	Tr 3 furrow [303]	various	JS 120417
38-49	Tr 3 sample section	NW	GB 120417
50-54	Tr 3	various	GB 120417
55-71	Tr 4 furrow [403]	various	GB 120417
72-79	Tr 4 sample section	NW	GB 120417
80-85	Tr 4	various	GB 120417
86-160	Tr 5, [505]	various	GB 120417
161-163	Tr 5	NE	JS 130417
164-165	Tr 5	SW	JS 130417
166-176	Backfilled Trenches	various	JS 130417

9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Assessment of finds.

Pottery

by Chris Cumberpatch

Introduction

The pottery assemblage from Dishforth Road, Boroughbridge (OSA17EV04) was examined by the author on 19th May 2017. It consisted of six sherds of pottery weighing 119 grams representing a maximum of five vessels. The details are summarised in Table 1. The assemblage also included a number of fragments of ceramic building material and fragments of clay tobacco pipes. These are listed in Table 2.

The pottery

The earliest sherds of pottery in the assemblage were of medieval date. A small, very heavily abraded fragment of a local whiteware from context 402 was probably the earliest of the medieval wares and probably dates to the period between the 12th and early 14th centuries. Although not identifiable to source, its character is consistent with the wider local and regional tradition of white and buff-firing sandy wares which preceded the ubiquitous later medieval Reduced Greenwares.

Context 202 produced two sherds of medieval pottery. One of these was small, heavily abraded flake, unidentifiable to source but probably of later medieval date. The second, which was in considerably better condition, was of late medieval or early post-medieval date. It probably came from a dish or bowl and was glazed internally.

Recent pottery was represented by a sherd from a stoneware bottle (context 102) and a sherd from a Brown Glazed Coarseware pancheon or large bowl from context 202. Both dated to the 19th or early 20th centuries.

Discussion

Few conclusions can be drawn from such a small collection of pottery but it serves to highlight the presence of activity in the area throughout the medieval period and in the recent period. Given the small quantity of material recovered, the absence of later post-medieval and early modern material cannot be taken as significant as chance factors could well have played a part in structuring the assemblage.

Further work

The pottery assemblage does not require further work although it is possible that an examination of the ceramic building material might broaden the date range of activities documented on the site. Should further work be undertaken on the site and additional pottery be recovered, the material described in this report should be included in the final report on the site as whole.

On the completion of archaeological work on the site, the entire assemblage should be deposited in the appropriate museum or finds depository where it will be available for future study.

Context	Type	No	Wt	ENV	Part	Form	Decoration	Date Range	Notes
102	Stoneware	1	48	1	BS	Bottle	Thin brown salt glaze ext	MC19th – EC20th	
202	Brown Glazed Coarseware	1	54	1	BS	Pancheon	Brown glaze int only	C19th – EC20th	
202	Green Glazed Sandy ware	1	10	1	BS	Dish / Bowl	Green glaze int only; slight mottling	C15th – C16th	Buff sandy fabric; abundant fine quartz & sparse black grit up to 0.4mm; rare platy rock frags up to 2mm
202	Oxidised Sandy ware	1	1	1	BS/ Flake	U/ID	Traces of green glaze on one side	Late medieval	Abraded fragment
402	White Sandy ware	2	6	1	BS	U/ID	U/Dec	C12th – EC14th?	Very heavily abraded fragment; fine white sandy fabric w/ abundant fine quartz <0.2mm, occ round red grit up to 0.4mm
	Total	6	119	5					

Table 1. Pottery catalogue.

Context	Type	No	WT	ENV	Part	Form
102	Clay tobacco pipe	1	3	1	Stem	Tobacco pipe
202	CBM	2	33	2	Fragment	U/ID
202	CBM	1	1	1	Fragment	U/ID
202	Clay tobacco pipe	1	1	1	Stem	Tobacco pipe
302	CBM	1	26	1	Fragment	U/ID Tile?
402	CBM	1	32	1	Fragment	U/ID
	Total	7	96	7		

Table 2. Other finds.

Flint*by Dave Pinnock*

A single worked flint artefact was recovered from the topsoil (500) in Trench 5. The artefact is a narrow blade characteristic of Mesolithic or early Neolithic flint working technique, although it is difficult to be specific about the date range of a single artefact. The distal termination is a slight step fracture. There is slight evidence for possible use-wear on the proximal half of one edge. Although this is very faint and may be post-depositional, the fact that it is absent elsewhere on the artefact makes it more likely to be use-wear. The artefact is made of opaque grey flint.

10.0 Appendix 3 ~ Plates.



Plate 1. Trench 1 looking southwest.



Plate 2. Trench 1 furrow [103].



Plate 3. Trench 2 looking northeast.



Plate 4. Trench 2, furrow [203].



Plate 5. Trench 3 looking northeast.



Plate 6. Trench 3, furrow [303].



Plate 7. Trench 4 looking northeast.



Plate 8. Trench 4, furrow [403].



Plate 9. Trench 5, ditch [505] looking northeast.



Plate 10. Trench 5, ditch [505] looking southwest.



Plate 11. Trench 5, ditch [505] location.