
RYTHERGATE, CAWOOD.

REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OSA REPORT No: OSA05WB14.

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OSA

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Report Details.

REPORT NO: OSA05WB14

SITE NAME: Rythergate, Cawood

COUNTY: North Yorkshire

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: NGR SE 5726 3797

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 8/35/18F/PA

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PERIODS REPRESENTED: 19th and 20th century

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1.0 Abstract.

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by On-Site Archaeology at Rythergate, Cawood on behalf of Loversall Estates Ltd. The work was undertaken in order to fulfil the archaeological condition attached to planning application number 8/35/18F/PA comprising the erection of two new dwellings with associated garages and drainage.

The first phase of the watching brief comprised the excavation of a manhole (Trench 1) on the 4th of July 2005. This was followed by observation of the excavation of the foundations of a dwelling house (Trench 2) on the 5th of August 2005 with a further house (Trench 3) intermittently excavated between the 7th and 22nd of February 2006 and a garage (Trench 4) excavated on the 13th of March 2006.

The watching brief revealed the presence of modern intrusions, animal burials, foundations and services dating to the 19th and 20th centuries. No archaeological remains or finds pre-dating these were observed.

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Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 5726 3797).

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2.0 Site Location, Geology and Land Use.

The site is located at Rythergate, Cawood, North Yorkshire centred at NGR SE 5726 3797. It is located 250m to the northwest of the centre of the village of Cawood. The site is bounded by the street frontage of Rythergate to the southwest, the White Cross Ski Club to the northwest, gardens belonging to number 40 Rythergate to the southeast and the embankment forming the River Ouse flood defences to the northeast.

The study area is situated on the Bunter sandstone, overlain by drift geology in the form of sand (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales), 1973, Sheet 71).

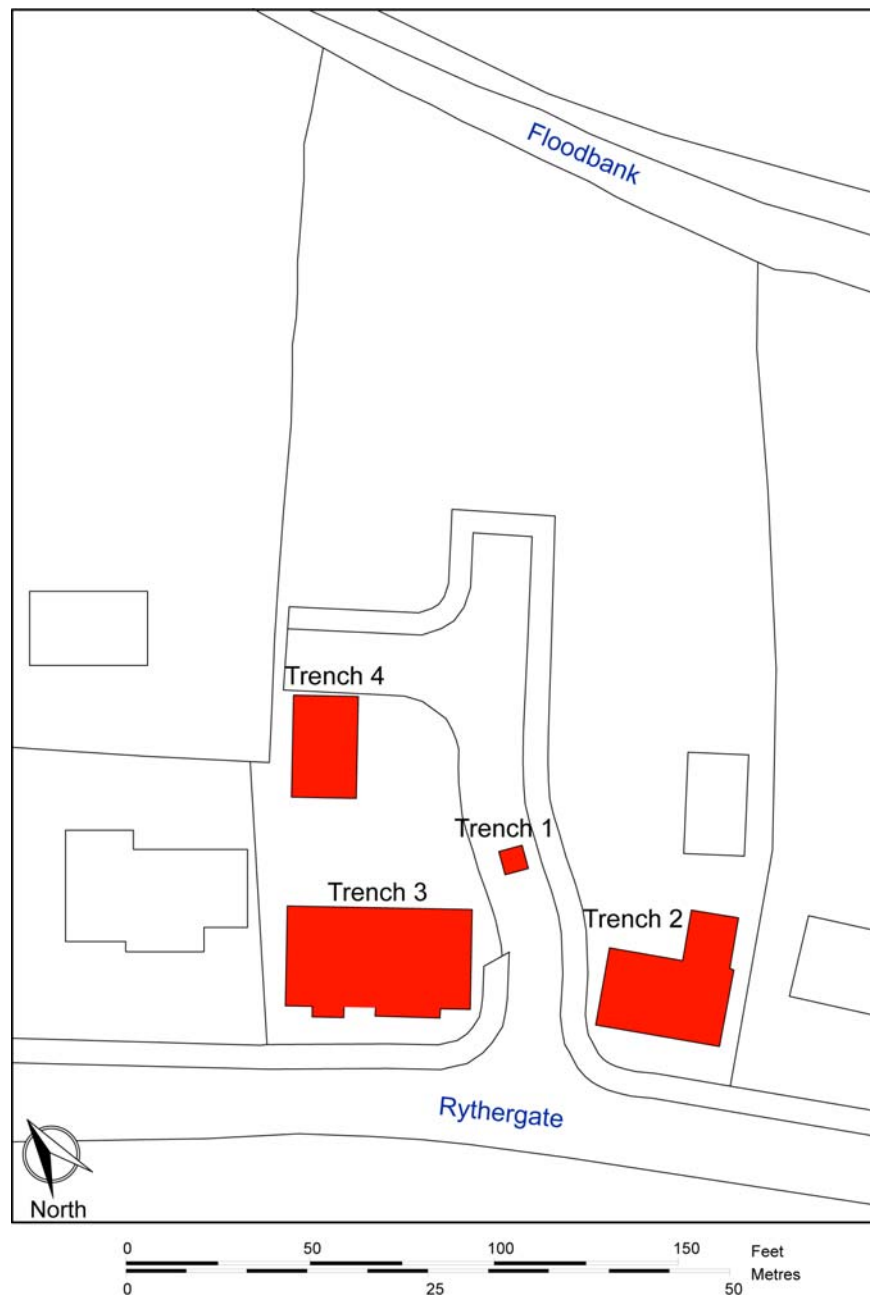


Figure 2. Trench location plan.

3.0 Archaeological Background.

An archaeological desk-based assessment has previously been carried out (OSA February 2003), which provides a detailed account of all the archaeological information in the vicinity of the site. The information presented in the assessment is therefore summarised here.

The assessment found almost no evidence of remains of Prehistoric date indicating that extensive Prehistoric activity did not take place.

The Anglo-Saxon period is represented by no certain archaeological remains in Cawood. Yet, documentary evidence indicates that it is at this time that the earliest predecessor of the modern village was established and Rythergate appears to be one of the earliest routeways through the village. In the later medieval period, Cawood was dominated by the Archbishops holdings, concentrated at the Castle and, to a lesser extent, by the other major property owners in the village, the de Cawood family, presumably based at Kensbury moated site. It was at this time that the village developed as a poly-focal settlement, with distinct parts centred upon the church, Wistowgate and the core of the present village. This core is based upon the Market Place and a developed block of land comprising an incomplete grid of narrow lanes and passages between Rythergate and the River Ouse. The northwest limit of the medieval village was presumably formed by Back Lane. The presence of a large riverside market was almost certainly the result of deliberate planning, to enable commercial exploitation of river and road traffic. This exploitation would have required quays or staithe along the waterfront and numerous late medieval records note the presence of wharfs at Cawood, all of which were in the possession of the Archbishop (Blood and Taylor 1992). The Archbishop's inland port at Cawood was also linked with the exploitation and movement of Magnesian limestone from Huddlestone Quarry, to the west of Sherburn-in-Elmet.

An evaluation conducted in 2004 at this site by *On-Site Archaeology* revealed a few sherds of Roman pottery and a number of archaeological features, including postholes, representing a late medieval structure and ditches of post medieval date (OSA November 2004).

The extent of occupation during the post-medieval period is illustrated by a late 18th century Enclosure Map. This indicates that although occupation was occurring along Rythergate as far out of the village as the present site, this was all concentrated on the west side of the road. The site itself has predominantly remained open land from at least the 18th century until well into the 20th century.

4.0 Methodology.

Trenches 1-4 were excavated using a JCB excavator fitted with a 600mm toothed bucket. Trench 1, excavated for a manhole, was approximately 2m x 2m x 1.5m deep. Trench 2, strip foundations for a dwelling, were 10.50m x 0.90m wide x 0.90-1.0m deep. Before the excavation of the trench, the topsoil had been removed and the natural was exposed across an area approximately 11m x 11m in size. Trench 3, also for a dwelling, was 15.50m x 7.90m x 0.85m deep. Finally, Trench 4 comprised the footings for a series of garages covering an area 8m x 5m x 1.10m deep.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation of the trenches. As the trenches were excavated, close archaeological supervision was maintained in order to identify the presence or absence of any surviving archaeological deposits. Written, drawn and photographic records were also maintained. All depths were taken from the existing surface.

5.0 Results.

5.1 Trench 1.

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 1 was a firm banded orange clay natural (102). This was overlain by 0.30m of topsoil (100) and subsoil (101) (Plate.1).

5.2 Trench 2 (Fig.3).

The earliest deposit within Trench 2 was a yellowish grey sandy clay natural (203). This was overlain by a 0.25m thick plastic brownish grey silty clay with no inclusions (202). Above this was a buried soil horizon (201) that was a loose light to mid brown slightly sandy silt 0.25m thick (Plate.2).

Several modern features were cut into the natural. The first of these was a shallow oval pit [204] 0.50m x 0.40m in size and 0.13m deep (Plate.3). It contained a large quantity of animal bone in a greyish brown clayey silt fill (205). A row of five irregularly spaced northeast-southwest aligned postholes [206], [208], [210], [212] and [214] were cut into the natural at the northern edge of the trench. Only one of these postholes, namely [214], was excavated as they were to be preserved *in-situ* (Plate.4). Posthole [214] was very similar in size to [210] and [212] being 0.70m x 0.60m. Vertical sides fell to a flat base 0.50m deep. The smaller postholes [206] and [208] were approximately 0.50m x 0.38m in size. These contained fills (207), (209), (211), (213) and (215) that were identical in appearance, namely a soft dark brownish grey silt. Many of these contained sherds of late 19th and 20th century pottery that has not been retained, and fragments of wood and roots. The fill appears to be a modern backfill, probably topsoil.

Finally, two putative stakeholes were observed. Context [216] measured 0.15m x 0.15m (Plate.5) and context [218] was 0.22m x 0.17m. Context [216] was 0.70m east of [218]. Both were filled with a mid greyish brown slightly sandy silt ((217) and (219) respectively).

Four circular brick land drains cut the natural in Trench 2. Trench 2 was covered by a 0.35m thick layer of topsoil (200). This was a soft, loose dark greyish brown silt containing 19th and 20th century pottery sherds.

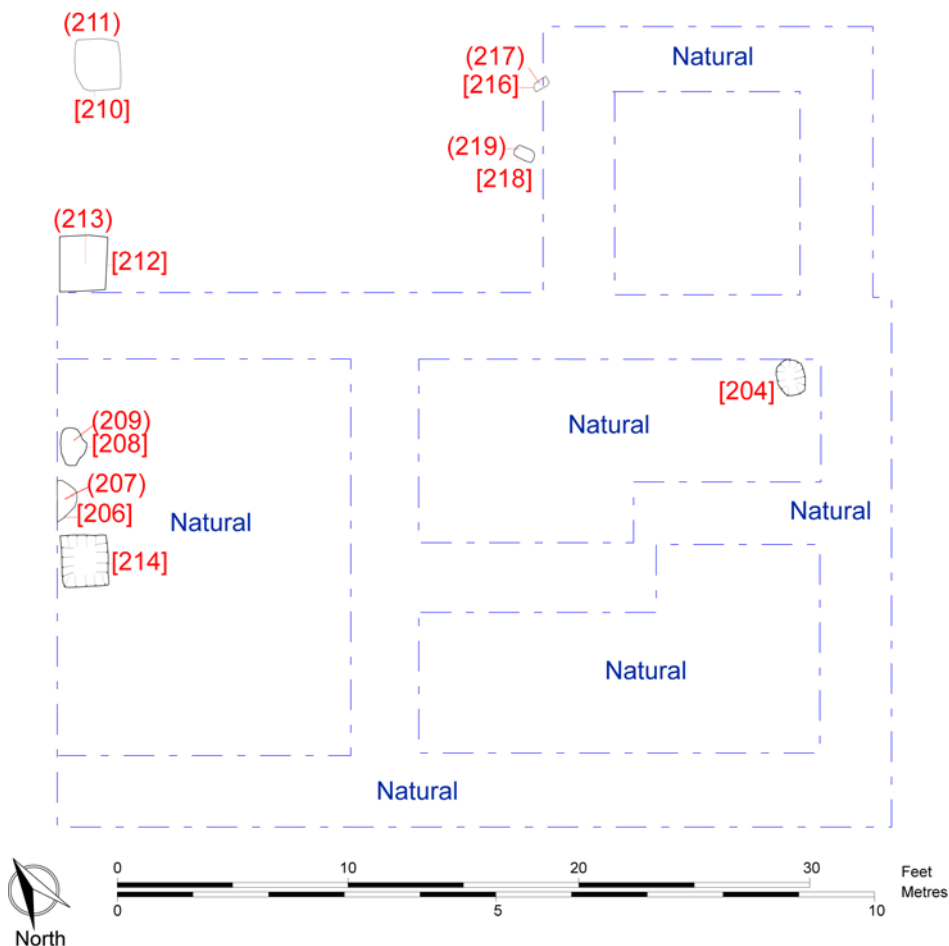


Figure 3. Trench 2 plan.

5.3 Trench 3 (Figs.4&5).

The earliest deposit in Trench 3 was a soft fine light orangey brown sand natural (302). It was exposed to up to a depth of 0.08m and was present in 90% of the trench with exceptions being the areas to the extreme southwest and southeast where it remained buried beneath contexts (301) and (302) (Plate.6).

A single feature was found cut into the natural in the northwest – southeast orientated internal foundation strip 2.90m southeast of the northernmost strip. Pit [306] measuring 0.78m x 0.44m had moderately sloping concave sides that fell to a depth of 0.14m to a slightly concave base (Fig.5; Plate.7)). This pit was filled by a soft, fine brown silty sand (304) with patches of burning and frequent animal bones from a domestic animal, namely a dog. The bones were well preserved and included a skull, ribs, vertebrae, a pelvis and bones from the limbs. Many of these bones were stained black in places from where they had been heat affected by cremation.

The natural was sealed by a layer of mid to light brown sandy silt subsoil/plough soil (301). This was up to 0.40m thick and was found across the trench. Post-hole [304] was a 0.71m deep vertical sided cut with a flat base that cut through the subsoil (301) and 0.06m into the natural. It measured 0.60m x 0.30m and was located 1.30m southwest of the northern corner

of Trench 3. The rotten remains of part of a 0.15m wide post were visible in the section edge and were supported in place by the soft grey/brown silty sand fill (303) (Plate.8).

Context (301) was overlain by context (300), a soft brownish grey sandy silt topsoil with frequent demolition debris such as brick, limestone blocks and rubble, roof slate and concrete fragments and glass. This layer was up to 0.45m deep to the north and west of the trench. In the south and east 6.20m of Trench 3 context (300) was merely 0.12m thick and beneath this, restricted to this area, were contexts (308) and (309). Context (309) was composed of a stone and limestone pebble hardcore with some slabs of concrete up to 0.29m thick and sealed by (308), a layer of tarmac 0.04m thick. This area contained live electricity and water cables related to previous structures at this site and linked to still standing houses in the area.

In the southwestern 0.60m of Trench 3 (and to the southwest of the excavated area) running parallel to the line of Rythergate for 6.0m, context (300) was not apparent. Rather a 0.19m thick layer of a mixed deposit of builders sand, limestone hardcore and a soft dark brown slightly sandy silt (311) was overlain by a 0.05m layer of broken brick rubble fragments (310) that had been sealed with a 0.06m thick slab of concrete hard standing (307) (Plate.9). To the immediate west of concrete (307) were the brick foundations of a northeast – southwest aligned wall (312). This measured 4.20m and was 0.22m thick. The slightly irregular handmade bricks had a creamy mortar with frequent chalk and limestone inclusions. These contexts, with the exception of (312), were removed in a site strip alongside the upper 0.16m of topsoil (300) prior to the commencement of the excavation of the strip foundations.

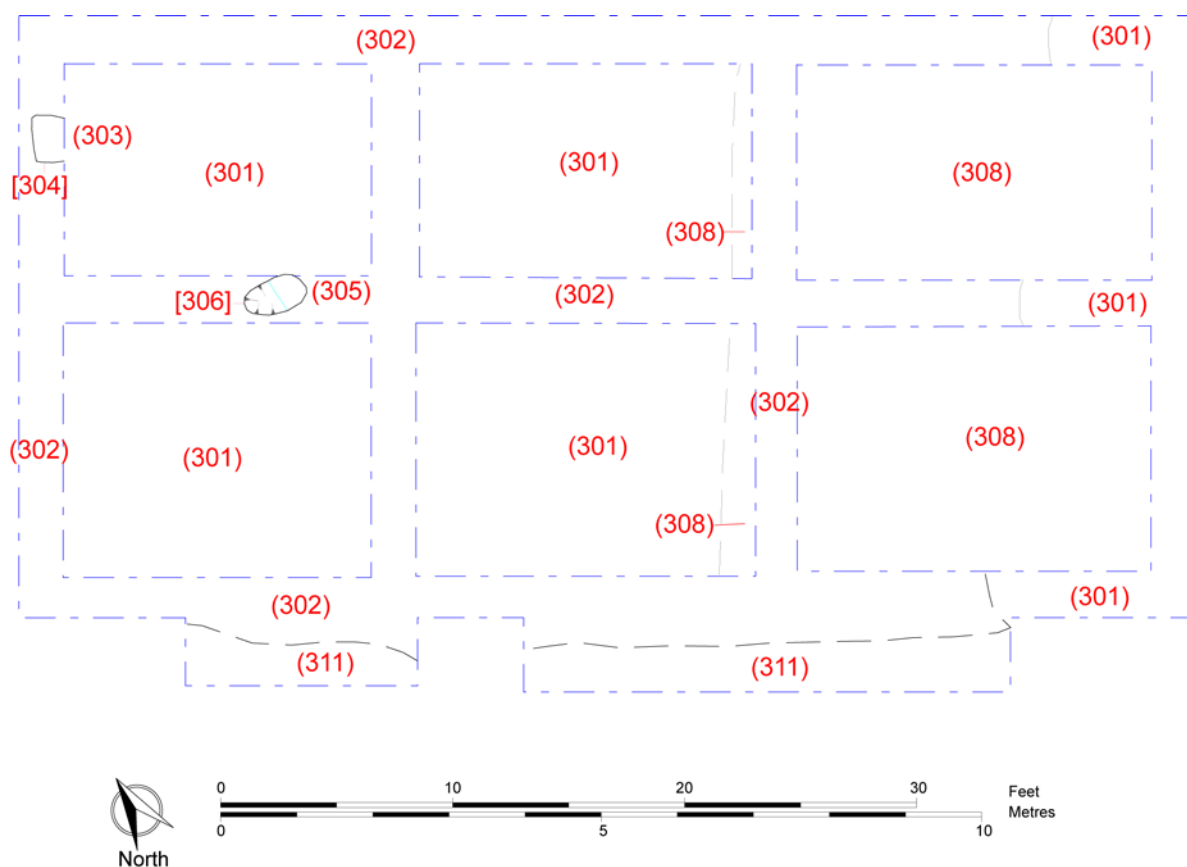


Figure 4. Trench 3 plan.

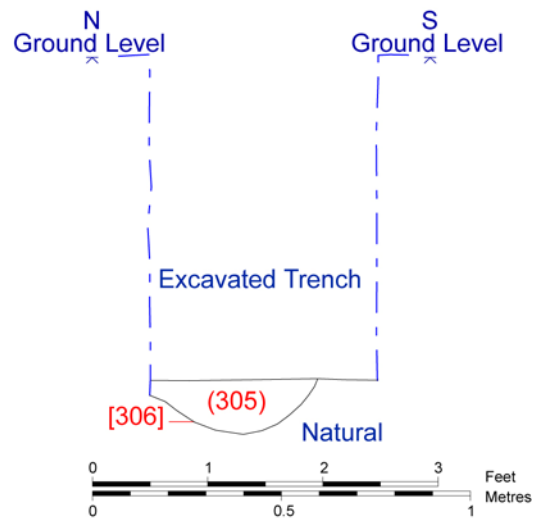


Figure 5. West facing section of pit [306].

5.4 Trench 4.

The earliest deposit in Trench 4 was the natural, comprising strong brown sands with occasional patches of greyish brown sands (402). These were probably alluvial deposits and they were excavated to a depth of 0.70m. The natural was sealed by a thick layer of make-up ground consisting of a friable mid reddish brown silty sand with a moderate amount of CBM (401). This was not completely removed, hence the underlying natural was not exposed in its entirety. The most recent deposit was a 0.35m thick mixed layer of very recent made up ground (400) containing modern CBM overlying thin layers of coal and clinker.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions.

An evaluation at this site conducted in 2004 (*On-Site Archaeology* 2004) consisted of three trenches of which Trenches 2 and 3 overlapped with the area covered by Trench 2 in this watching brief. As discussed in section 3.0, these trenches revealed evidence of medieval activity. However, this watching brief has not revealed any features other than 19th and 20th century intrusions. In total two animal burials were excavated alongside several postholes and two stakeholes. The postholes in Trench 2 appeared to form a northeast-southwest alignment and were probably fence posts. An area of concrete hard standing and brick foundations were found in the same area as electricity and water cables in Trench 3 and seem to represent the remains of a 20th century building.

The archaeological features excavated in the earlier evaluation at this site (OSA November 2004) were only defined after careful cleaning by hand. Therefore, it is suggested that there is a possibility that the limitations of a watching brief, specifically the use of a JCB with a 600mm toothed bucket, obscured any ephemeral features, which were consequently not observed. Furthermore, many of the features that were recorded contained modern pottery and CBM and appeared to be filled with backfill and/or compacted topsoil. Posthole [208] appeared to have been partially excavated giving it an usual shape in plan. It is therefore probable that these features have been heavily disturbed making it extremely difficult to assign an accurate date to them.

7.0 Bibliography.

Blood N. K. & Taylor C.C. (1992). Cawood: An archiepiscopal Landscape. In *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, Vol. 64, 1992.

On-Site Archaeology Ltd (November 2004). Report on an Archaeological Evaluation. OSA Report No: OSA04EV07 (Unpublished).

On-Site Archaeology Ltd (February 2003). Rythergate/Ryther Road, Cawood. A desktop Archaeological Study. OSA Report No: OSA03DT01 (Unpublished).

8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Maximum depth
<i>Trench 1</i>			
100	Topsoil	Trench	0.12
101	Subsoil	Trench	0.18m
102	Orange clay natural	Trench	Unknown
<i>Trench 2</i>			
200	Soft, loose dark greyish brown silt topsoil	Trench	0.35m
201	Loose light to mid brown slightly sandy silt subsoil	Trench	0.25m
202	Plastic brownish grey silty clay layer	Trench	0.25m
203	Yellow grey sandy clay natural	Trench	0.15m +
204	Oval pit	0.50m x 0.40m	0.13m
205	Fill of [204]	0.50m x 0.40m	0.13m
206	Posthole cut	0.35m	Unknown
207	Fill of [206]	0.35m	Unknown
208	Posthole cut	0.50m x 0.38m	Unknown
209	Fill of [208]	0.50m x 0.38m	Unknown
210	Posthole cut	0.76m x 0.60m	Unknown
211	Fill of [210]	0.76m x 0.60m	Unknown
212	Posthole cut	0.52m x 0.40m	Unknown
213	Fill of [212]	0.52m x 0.40m	Unknown
214	Posthole cut	0.70m x 0.60m	0.50m
215	Fill of [214]	0.70m x 0.60m	0.50m
216	Stakehole cut	0.15m x 0.15m	Unknown
217	Fill of [216]	0.15m x 0.15m	Unknown
218	Stakehole cut	0.22m x 0.17m	Unknown
219	Fill of [216]	0.22m x 0.17m	Unknown
<i>Trench 3</i>			
300	Soft brownish grey sandy silt topsoil with frequent building demolition materials	Northern 9m of trench	0.45m
301	Mid to light brown sandy silt subsoil	Trench	0.40m
302	Fine, soft light orangey brown sand natural	90% of Trench	0.08m+
303	Post hole fill of [304]	0.60m x 0.30m	0.71m
304	Post hole cut	0.60m x 0.30m	0.71m
305	Fill of burial pit [306]	0.78m x 0.44m	0.14m
306	Cut of pit	0.78m x 0.44m	0.14m
307	Concrete hard standing	6.0m x 4.20m	0.06m
308	Tarmac, above (309)	Southeastern 6.20m of trench	0.04m
309	Stone and limestone pebble hardcore with fragments of concrete slabs	Southeastern 6.20m of trench	0.29m
310	Brick rubble layer under (307)	6.0m x 4.20m	0.05m
311	Layer of builders sand, limestone hardcore and a dark brown silt, under (310)	6.0m x 4.20m	0.19m
312	Northeast-southwest orientated brick boundary wall foundations	4.20m x 0.22m	Unknown
<i>Trench 4</i>			
400	Mixed make-up ground layer	Trench	0.35m
401	Friable mid reddish brown silty sand	Trench	
402	Greyish brown – brown sand natural	Trench	Unknown

9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

9.1 *Drawing Register.*

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	Plan of Trench 2			EH
2	Plan of Trench 3	1:50	22.02.06	EH
3	West facing section of pit [306], Trench 3	1:10	22.10.05	EH

9.2 *Photographic Register.*

Frame	Description	Date	Initials
<i>Trench 1 ~ Digital</i>			
1	Trench 1, view east	04.07.05	JS
<i>Trench 2 ~ Digital</i>			
1	Pit [204], view southeast	05.08.05	EH
2-10	Features detailed in Trench 3 (OSA04EV07)	05.08.05	EH
11-13	General shots of Trench 2	05.08.05	EH
14-17	Features detailed in Trench 2/3 (OSA04EV07)	05.08.05	EH
18	Stakehole [216], view west	05.08.05	EH
19	Postholes [210], [212], [208], [206] and [214], view southwest	05.08.05	EH
20	Posthole [214], view southwest	05.08.05	EH
21	Posthole detailed in Trench 3 (OSA04EV07)	05.08.05	EH
<i>Trench 3 ~ Digital</i>			
1	Concrete hard standing (307), view south	02.07.06	EH
2	Brick boundary wall (312), view southwest	02.07.06	EH
3	Posthole [304], view southeast	21.02.06	EH
4	Trench 3, southwestern strip, view northwest	21.02.06	EH
5	Trench 3, western internal strip, view northeast	21.02.06	EH
6	Trench 3, northernmost strip, view northeast	21.02.06	EH
7	Working shot, view east	22.02.06	EH
8	Working shot, view northeast	22.02.06	EH
9	Section edge of eastern internal strip, view northeast	22.02.06	EH
10	Pit [306], view southeast	22.02.06	EH
<i>Trench 4 ~ Digital</i>			
1	Trench 4 western section	13.03.06	AD
2	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
3	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
4	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
5	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
6	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
7	Trench 4, general view	13.03.06	AD
8	Trench 4 northern section	13.03.06	AD

10.0 Appendix 3 ~ The Plates.



Plate 1. Shot of Trench 1.



Plate 2. Shot of Trench 2. View southwest.



Plate 3. Pit [204], view southwest. (Scale of 0.5m)



Plate 4. Posthole [214]. View southwest. (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 5. Stakehole [216], view west. (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 6. Shot of Trench 3, view east.



Plate 7. Pit [306], view east. (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 8. Post [304], view east. (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 9. Topsoil strip, Trench 3, showing concrete hard standing [307] and modern made up ground, view south. (Scale of 2m)



Plate 10. Trench 4, western section. (Scale of 2m).



Plate 11. Trench 4, northern section. (Scale of 2m).