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**Atlas Ward Structures
St. Hilda's Street
Sherburn
North Yorkshire
SE 9649 7688**
Recording.
Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Authorised by

Date:.....

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January 2006

**Atlas Ward Structures
St. Hilda's Street
Sherburn
North Yorkshire
SE 9649 7688**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Archaeological Watching Report

Non-Technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief and Evaluation Excavation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on land at Atlas Ward Structures, St. Hilda's Street, Sherburn, North Yorkshire, from October to December 2005. The work was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition attached to a Planning Application Consent (Ref No: 05/00711/MFUL) and involved monitoring the groundworks associated with the erection of a new workshop and the creation of a new access road.

The monitored groundworks covered a maximum area of 160m x 45m and were undertaken in two stages. In the first stage, an Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted during the partial removal of an existing earth bund that formed the southern site boundary. In the second, an Evaluation Trench was excavated along the line of the southern wall of the proposed new building.

An undated posthole was identified during the Watching Brief, and a small assemblage of finds was recovered from the bund material.

No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the Evaluation Excavation.

Both the Watching Brief and the Evaluation demonstrated that archaeological deposits on the site had been severely truncated during the erection of the existing soil bund and associated building works.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on land at Atlas Ward Structures, St. Hilda's Street, Sherburn, North Yorkshire, from October 31st to December 7th 2005. The work was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition attached to a Planning Application Consent (Ref No: 05/00711/MFUL) and involved monitoring the groundworks associated with the erection of a new workshop and the creation of a new access road.
- 1.2 The project was assigned the MAP site code 02-10-05.
- 1.3 All work was funded by Atlas Ward Structures Ltd.
- 1.4 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No. AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site lies in the village of Sherburn at SE 9649 7688 (Fig. 1) and consists of an extensive complex of factory and administrative buildings within a partly landscaped and partly concreted compound. It is bounded to the west by St. Hilda's Street, to the south by the A64 Malton-Scarborough road, to the east by farmland and to the north by residential properties.
- 2.2 The development area was situated along the southern boundary of the site, immediately to the north of the A64 road. It consisted primarily of a large linear mound or bund that ran from east to west and formed the southern limit of the site (Pl. 1). This feature was created during the expansion of the works during the 1980s.
- 2.3 The site lies on soils of the Newport 1 Association, which are characterised by freely drained medium and coarse sandy soils that form over glaciofluvial or Aeolian sands (Mackney, 1984).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The sandy soils on which the site is situated, attracted large-scale occupation in the Prehistoric period, with a 'ribbon' of settlements following the 30m contour along the southern edge of the Vale of Pickering. This so-called ladder settlement stretches from Sherburn, westwards to Heslerton and beyond, and excavation took place in 1985-6 on an area of this prehistoric settlement circa 1km west of Sherburn (Powlesland 1987). The importance of the area as a focus for settlement continued into the Roman period, with Roman coins and sherds being found at an area immediately north of the primary school (c. 100m west of the development area).
- 3.2 Sherburn itself existed as a settlement before the Norman Conquest, the name being recorded as *Scirebur'*, *Sciresburne* and *Schiresburne* in the Domesday Survey; the name means 'bright, clear stream' (Smith ed. 1937). The parish church of St. Hilda doubtless formed a focus in the medieval settlement, which extended southwards towards the present A64 York to Scarborough road. Hayfield has suggested that the regular appearance of the properties in the southern half of the settlement (including the development area) reflects deliberate periods of expansion in the medieval period (Hayfield 1994). T C M Brewster excavated a major series of medieval stone buildings and yards on the west side of St Hilda Street (c. 100m north-west of the development area – *ibid.*). Brewster also observed three 13th century "kilns" at the front of a property on the west side of the street, almost opposite the entrance to Atlas Ward's; however, whether these were associated with pottery manufacture remains unclear.
- 3.3 An evaluation and subsequent Watching Brief carried out at 18-22 St Hilda Street (c. 200m south of the development area) revealed medieval pits and boundary features, along with a small assemblage of pottery and animal bone, and a background scatter of earlier material, including pottery and flint artefacts (MAP 1995).
- 3.4 In the post-medieval period, the focus of settlement in Sherburn shifted south to the York to Scarborough turnpike road, reflected by the founding of the former Pigeon Pie Hotel and industry such as Kirk's East Riding Brewery in this area.

- 3.5 Geophysical survey of the field immediately to the east of the development site has identified a double ditch linear trackway of probable Iron Age date, running on an east to west alignment immediately to the north of the A64 road (Powersland, *pers. comm.*). The alignment of this feature suggests that it continues into the development area.

4. Methodology (Fig. 2)

- 4.1 The programme of archaeological works was laid down in the *Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Recording, Atlas Ward Structures Ltd.* that was prepared by the Heritage Section of the North Yorkshire County Council (Appendix). There were two distinct elements to the archaeological programme:-

1. An **Archaeological Watching Brief** to be undertaken during the removal of the southern site bund and the creation of the new access road.
2. An **Archaeological Evaluation Excavation** to be undertaken within the footprint of the proposed new building.

4.2 Archaeological Watching Brief

- 4.2.1 The archaeological watching brief covered an area of approximately 160m x 45m and involved monitoring the partial removal and re-shaping of the existing site bund.
- 4.2.2 All excavations were undertaken using a 360⁰ mechanical excavator, operating under full archaeological supervision. Initial excavation and removal of overburden was undertaken with a toothed bucket, whilst the subsequent levelling and grading of the excavated area was undertaken with a toothless bucket.
- 4.2.3 In accordance with the *Written Scheme of Investigation*, the Monitoring Archaeologist dry-sieved 2000 litres of the excavated material from the bund in order to recover any small finds present. Samples for dry-sieving were taken from along the length of the bund and particular attention was paid to the investigation of suspect features and buried soil horizons. A 5mm sieve mesh was used throughout.

4.3 Archaeological Evaluation

4.3.1 The Archaeological Evaluation consisted of a single 60m x 2m trench that was excavated along the line of a series of stanchion bases that were to form the southern wall of the proposed new workshop building.

4.3.2 The initial excavation of the Evaluation Trench was undertaken by a 360⁰ mechanical excavator that was fitted with a toothless bucket. Machine excavations were conducted under full archaeological supervision. Subsequent cleaning and excavation within the trench was undertaken by hand.

4.4 General

4.4.1 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).

4.4.2 All deposits were recorded according to the correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets, which are compatible with the MoLAS recording system.

4.4.3 A photographic record was maintained throughout the Watching Brief via digital camera and throughout the Evaluation on monochrome, colour print and colour slide film.

5. Results (Figs. 3 and 4)

5.1 Watching Brief

5.1.1 The monitored excavations were conducted to a maximum depth of 37.80m AOD. Excavations revealed deposits of mixed natural sands and gravels that were situated at a mean height of 38.30m AOD (context 1003, Pl.2). Deposit 1003 contained moderate quantities of weathered natural flint gravel, together with occasional large (up to 0.30m²) flint nodules, and was of probable glacio-fluvial origin.

- 5.1.2 Deposit 1003 was truncated by an archaeological feature that was situated towards the east of the site. This proved to be a shallow posthole cut of sub-circular plan (context 1006, Pl.3). Posthole Cut 1006 had a diameter of 0.40m and was 0.70m deep (37.30m AOD). The feature was filled by a deposit of sandy silt (context 1005) that did not contain any finds.
- 5.1.3 Towards the centre of the site, Deposit 1003 was sealed by a 0.10m deep deposit of silty material that probably represented a buried land surface (context 1007, Pl. 4). Deposit 1007 was situated at a mean height of 30.40m AOD and did not appear to extend across the entire site; no trace of the deposit was identified in an exposed section at the eastern limit of the excavation.
- 5.1.4 Since Posthole 1006 was only identified in plan after the removal of the overlying deposits, it is not possible to state with certainty whether this feature was sealed by Deposit 1007 or was a later feature that truncated the soil horizon.
- 5.1.5 Deposit 1007 was sealed by a 0.50m-0.70m deep deposit of aeolian sand (context 1002). Deposit 1002 was situated at a mean height of 38.90m AOD and extended over the centre and eastern part of the site. It was not identified towards the west of the site. (Pl.5).
- 5.1.6 Towards the eastern end of the site, Deposit 1002 and the underlying deposits were truncated by a 16m x 15m rectangular cut of modern origin (context 1008). Cut 1008 clearly extended below the finished formation level of the excavation and contained modern pottery, scrap metal, brick refuse, corrugated sheeting and concrete rubble (context 1009, Pl. 6). It was clear that this deposit represented demolition rubble that had been deliberately buried and sealed beneath the bund during its construction.
- 5.1.7 Deposits 1002 and 1009 were sealed by a deep mound of material (context 1001) that was formed from mixed re-deposited natural sands, subsoil, topsoil, building debris and modern refuse. This material formed the existing bund, the crest of which ranged in height from approximately 40.50m AOD to 42.30m AOD.

5.1.8 Samples from Deposits 1001, 1002, 1007 and 1003 were dry-sieved using a 5mm mesh, as stipulated in the Written Scheme of Investigation. A total volume of 2000l of material was sieved and confirmed that all the investigated deposits were sterile, with the exception of Deposit 1001. This deposit produced a small assemblage of finds that ranged in date from the 12th to the 20th centuries (Appendix 2). This assemblage contained abraded medieval and later pottery sherds that were probably originally deposited within ploughsoil, together with other material that associated with the existing factory complex.

5.2 Evaluation Excavation

5.2.1 The Evaluation Excavation consisted of a single 60m x 2m trench that was situated along the line of the southern wall of the proposed new building. Following initial machine excavation and hand-cleaning, the eight stanchion bases that fell within the footprint of the trench were hand-excavated to their formation level.

5.2.2 Excavations were undertaken to a maximum depth of 37.00m AOD and revealed mixed natural sands (context 1003) in the base and sections of the trench (Pls. 7 and 8). Deposit 1003 was sealed by Bund Deposit 1001, remnants of which were visible in the section of the trench. It was clear that the interface between these two deposits represented the level to which the ground had been reduced during the original construction of the bund. No deposits equivalent to Soil Horizon 1007 and Aeolian Sand 1002 were identified during the Evaluation Excavation and it is likely that both these deposits were removed during the construction of the bund.

5.2.3 Deposits 1001 and 1003 were truncated to a mean level of 37.20m AOD during the current groundworks. Both deposits were sealed then sealed by a 0.20m deep deposit of hardcore (context 1004) that was visible in the section of the Evaluation Trench.

5.2.4 No archaeological features deposits or finds were identified during the Evaluation Excavation.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The archaeological results of both the Watching Brief and the Evaluation Excavation were somewhat disappointing. One small, undated, archaeological feature was identified (Posthole 1006) and a small assemblage of finds was recovered from the bund material (Deposit 1001). However, the programme of archaeological investigation was significant in that it demonstrated the degree of truncation that had occurred to the archaeological deposits across the site. The bund itself appeared to have been formed by mixed subsoil, ploughsoil and natural sands that had been removed during the construction of the existing range of buildings, together with refuse and building rubble from other areas of the site.
- 6.2 Neither the Watching Brief nor the Evaluation Excavation revealed evidence of the double-ditched trackway that has been identified in the field immediately to the east of the site. However, it is possible that the southern ditch associated with this feature runs beneath the surviving portion of the bund, whilst the northern ditch lies outside the current development area, beneath the existing factory buildings.

7. Project Team Details

Fieldwork

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Report

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Illustrations and CAD

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Finds

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8. Bibliography

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