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ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SERVICES
WYAS

**Castle Garth
Thirsk
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1493

February 2006

CLIENT

North Yorkshire County Council

ref 3/3/06.

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**Castle Garth
Thirsk
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Contents

List of figures

List of appendices

1. Introduction
2. Historical and Archaeological Background
3. Method
4. Results
5. Conclusion

Bibliography

Acknowledgements

Figures

Appendices

Summary

An archaeological watching brief undertaken during a small-scale programme of works at the site of Thirsk Castle, a scheduled ancient monument, revealed 19th-20th century garden deposits from which a single residual sherd of medieval pottery was recovered. The works did not detect or disturb any archaeological features or horizons.

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List of Figures

Fig. 1. Site location

Fig. 2. Site location showing area of works

Fig. 3. Detail of post-hole locations

List of Appendices

Appendix I. Brief for Archaeological Recording Work ('Watching Brief')

1. **Introduction**

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (hereafter ASWYAS) were commissioned by Peter Penny the Area Rights of Way Officer for North Yorkshire County Council, Environmental Services (hereafter NYCCES), to carry out an archaeological watching brief. This was undertaken in advance of the removal and replacement of 'kissing gates' at three entrances to Castle Garth, Thirsk Castle (Figs 1 and 2).
- 1.2 Thirsk Castle is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (National Monument No. 20454) centred at NGR SE 427 820. It has extant remains of earthworks relating to an 11th-century motte and bailey castle of Norman date.
- 1.3 The underlying solid geology has been mapped as Triassic mudstones (British Geological Survey 1979) and the drift geology as Newport 1 soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).
- 1.4 The fieldwork was carried out between the 31st October to the 4th of November 2005.

2. **Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 2.1 Thirsk Castle is believed to have been erected by Robert de Stuteville in about 1092 and was held by Roger de Mowbray against Henry II in 1174, only to be surrendered to the King in 1175, who then ordered its destruction in 1176. During the 13th century the de Mowbray family continued to hold a manor on the site until its destruction in 1322 by the Scots. From 1376 the Castle Garth was used as a garden but by the end of the 14th century it was laid to grass (English Heritage 1993).
- 2.2 The remaining earthworks of Thirsk Castle include the western bailey rampart and outer ditch located in Castle Garth. To the east of the rampart lies the interior of the bailey area where low rectangular earthworks are thought to represent the layout of building plots and gardens. Further to the east are the remains of the motte, which is separated from the bailey by a broad ditch (English Heritage 1993).
- 2.3 Over the last century building works and landscape gardening has altered the earthworks that represent approximately half of the castle area, with the remaining area extending to the east into encroaching built-up areas (English Heritage 1993).
- 2.4 A small-scale excavation during the 1960s recorded a section through the rampart which revealed an earlier cobbled surface (English Heritage 1993).

- What about the MTP excavation of the Anphair Cemetery below the substance?!?

3. **Method**

- 3.1 North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit prepared a 'Brief for Archaeological Recording Work (Watching Brief)' on behalf of NYCCES. This document was adhered to during the watching brief exercise and is presented in Appendix I. Site recording during the exercise was made following ASWYAS standard methods (ASWYAS 2005).

- 3.2 An archaeologist was present on site during the removal and replacement of 'kissing gate' posts and the installation of information boards at three entrance points to Castle Garth (Fig. 2). The hand excavation of new and the enlargement of existing postholes was carried out under direct archaeological supervision in level spits to the top of the first archaeological horizon or to the required depth to support the new posts.
- 3.3 The site archive, comprising five Watching Brief Monitoring Forms with sketch maps, two Context Record Cards and the single recovered artefact with its associated report, is currently held by ASWYAS. It is anticipated that the archive will be deposited with a recipient museum, at a time to be agreed with the museum.

4. Results

- 4.1 A excavation of a total of 22 post-holes were monitored during the works, eight at the northern entrance and seven at the western and eastern entrances to the site. Each posthole had an average diameter of 0.3m and a depth of 0.65m.
- 4.2 Postholes at the northern entrance revealed a topsoil approximately 0.2m deep, overlying a mid brown sandy-silt deposit with an excavated depth of 0.6m. Pottery of 19th – 20th century date was noted within this deposit that was identified as a former gardening soil. A residual sherd of medieval pottery was also recovered from this deposit (Section 5.1.2).
- 4.3 A similar stratigraphic sequence was observed within the post-holes at the western and eastern entrances to the site, although natural deposits were only encountered within two post-holes at the eastern entrance at a depth of 0.65m, lying below 19th–20th century topsoil levelling deposits.
- 4.4 No archaeological horizons or features were identified within any of the post-holes.
- 4.5 A proposal to bring heavy wheeled plant on to the site to track between the three entrances was prevented as this would have caused deep rutting in the soft ground.

5. Artefact Record

Medieval pottery sherd by C.G. Cumberpatch

- 5.1 A single rim sherd (25g) was recovered from topsoil excavated from the post-holes at the northern entrance. The sherd is of a buff gritty fabric containing moderate to abundant quantities of rounded, clear to translucent quartz with occasional non-crystalline grains, both types up to 1mm in size. The inclusions give a fine rough surface. The sherd is unglazed and there is no indication of sooting or burning. The vessel appears to have been a round or globular jar with an everted rim, resembling types manufactured in the Tees Valley (cf. Wrathmell 1987, fig 17; 17, 21) rather than one of the more barrel-shaped jars typical of West Yorkshire.
- 5.2 In general terms the sherd appears to belong to a widespread regional tradition of buff gritty wares which appears to have lasted somewhat longer in the north-east (13th to 15th century) than it did further south (later 11th to 13th

century). Given this, a precise date for the sherd is difficult to assign but it is clearly of medieval date and certainly predates the 15th century.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 The archaeological watching brief undertaken during a small scale programme of works on the scheduled ancient monument site at Thirsk Castle, only revealed 19th to 20th century garden deposits from which a residual sherd of medieval pottery was recovered. The works did not detect any archaeological horizons or features.

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- Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, 'Soils of Northern England' Scale 1:250,000 Map and Legend
- Wrathmell, S., 1987, 'The Pottery', in G.A.B. Young, 'Excavations at Southgate, Hartlepool, Cleveland 1981-82', *Durham Archaeological Journal* 3

Acknowledgements

Project management

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Report

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Fieldwork

Bernard McCluskey

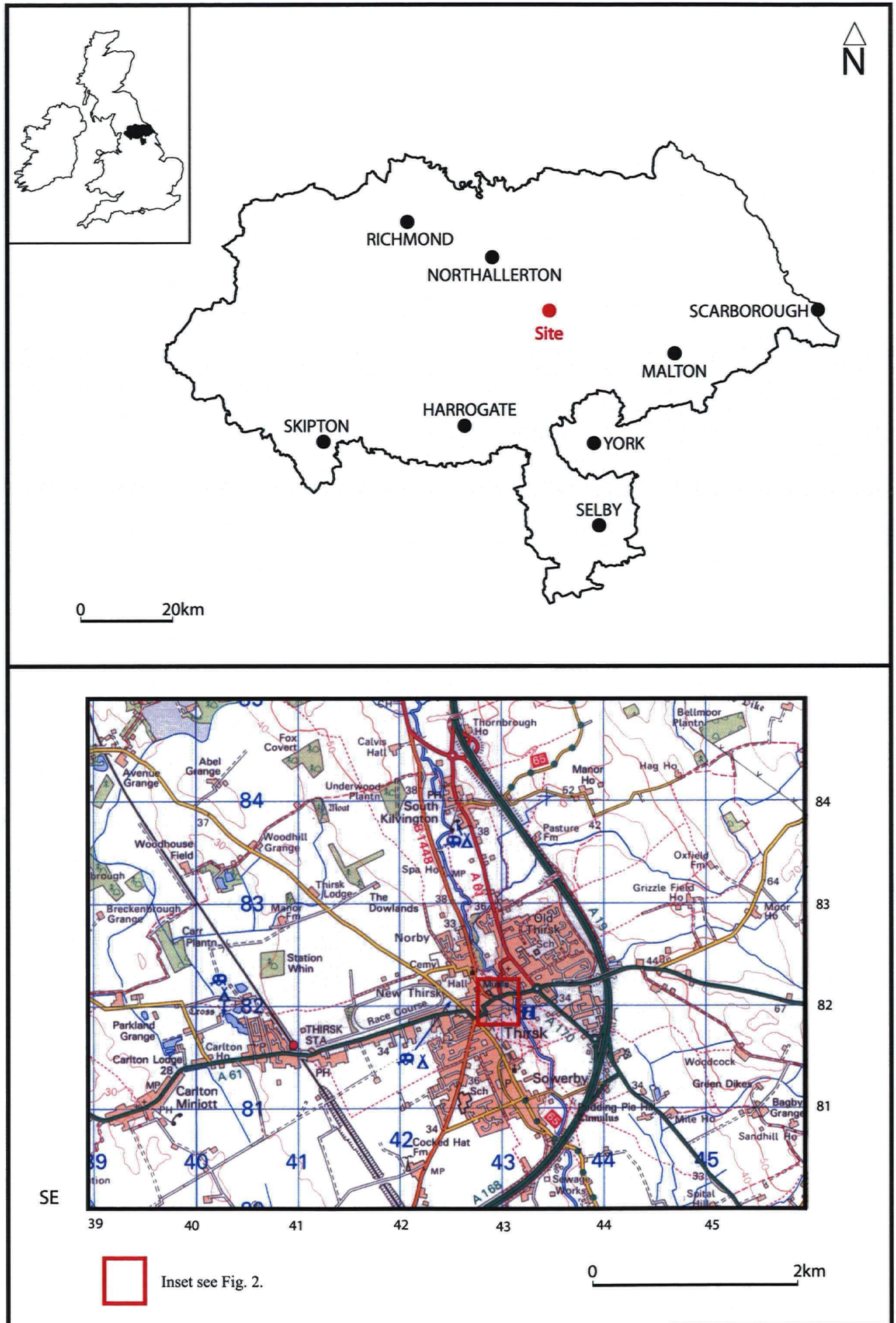
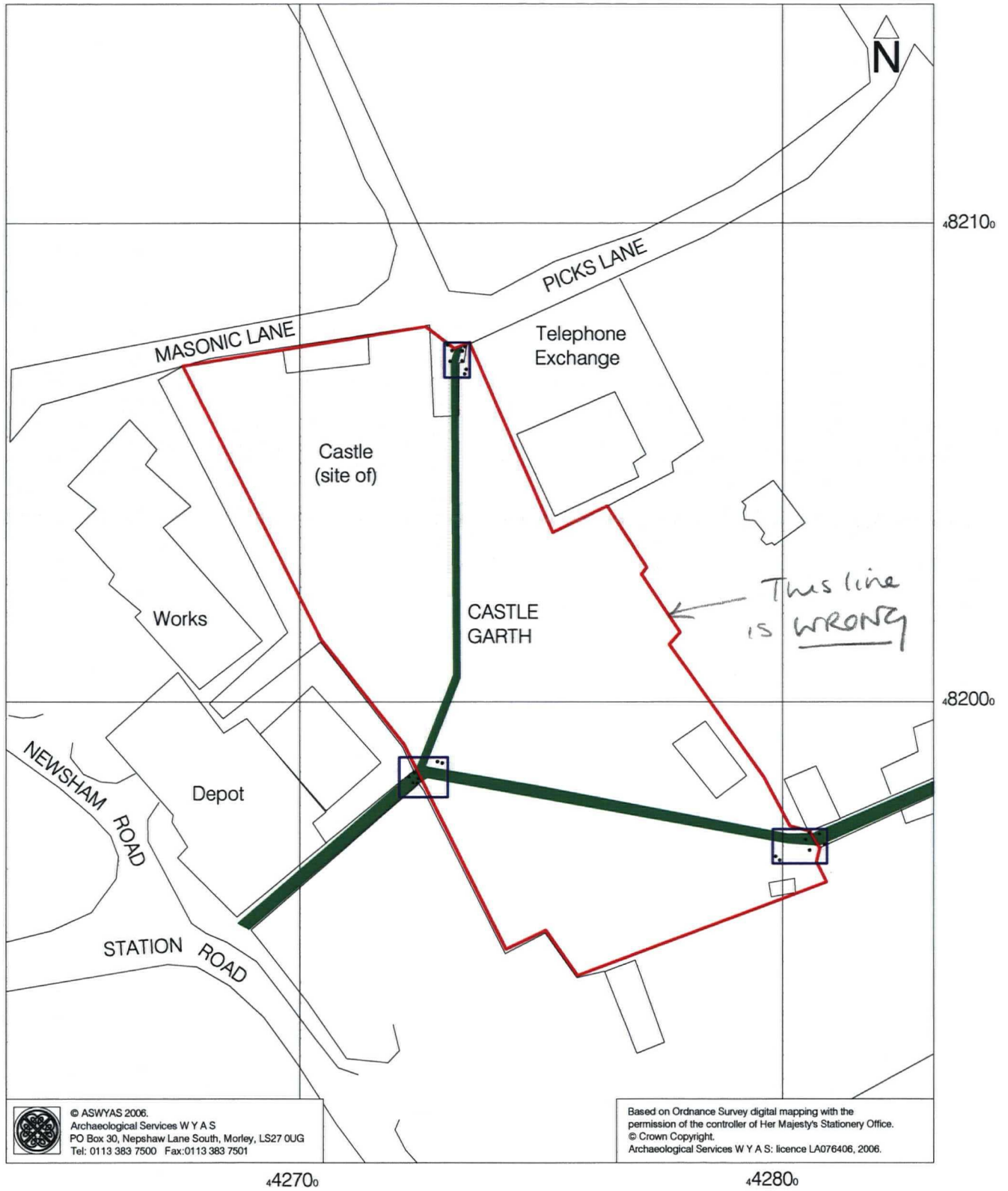


Fig. 1. Site location

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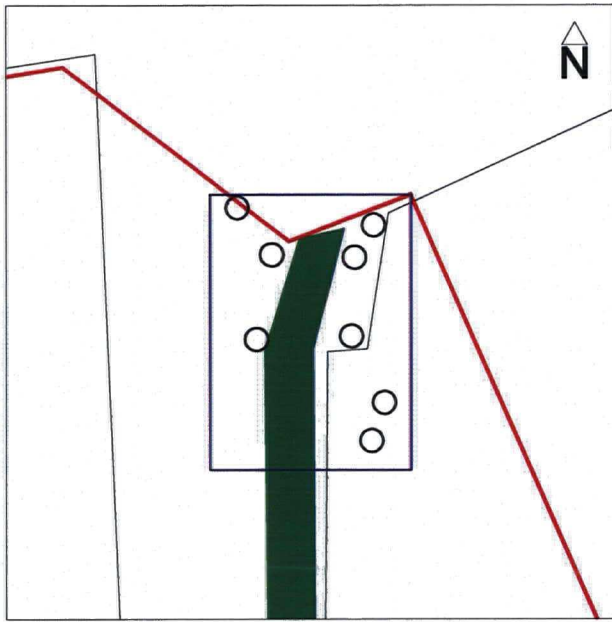


This line is WRONG

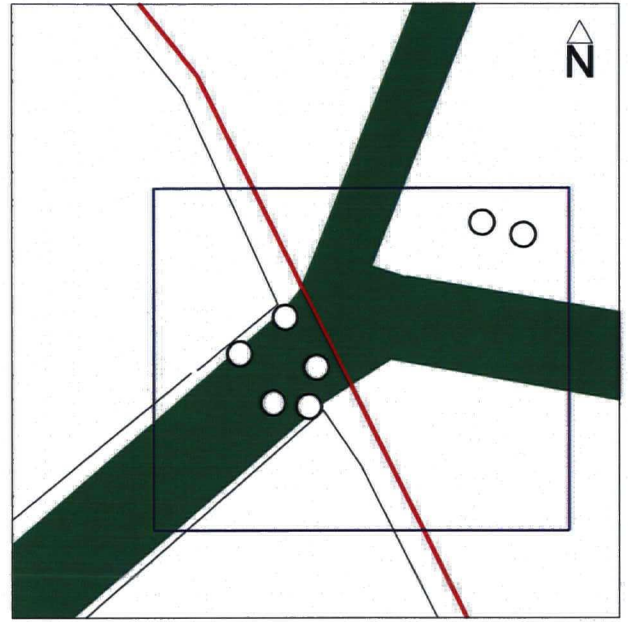
	'Kissing gates' locations
	Scheduled area <i>- incorrect</i>
	Public footpaths
	Postholes



Fig. 2. Site location







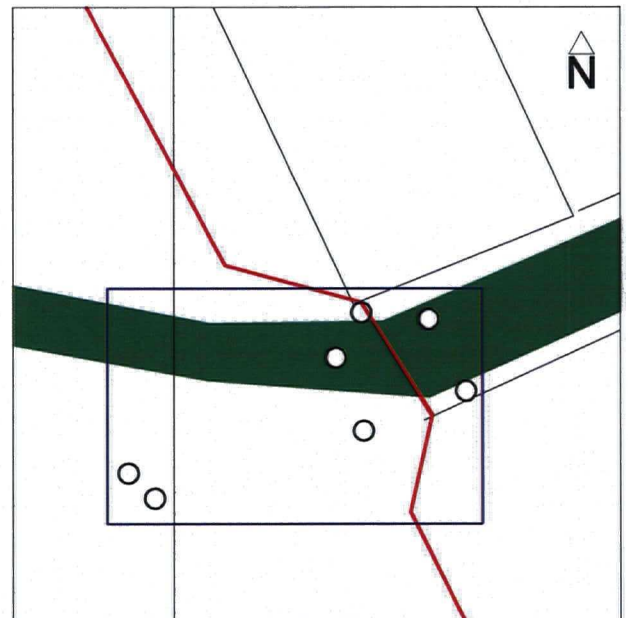
Inset A. Postholes on north side of the site



Inset B. Postholes at the western edge of the site


0m 10m

	'Kissing gates' locations
	Scheduled area
	Public footpaths
	Postholes



Inset C. Postholes at the south-eastern edge of the site

Fig. 3. Detail of posthole locations


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Appendix I

Brief for Archaeological Recording Work (Watching Brief)

Prepared by who?

BRIEF FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING WORK

WATCHING BRIEF

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 An application for *scheduled monument consent* has been submitted in order to carry out a programme of *works to enhance public enjoyment and understanding* on the following *scheduled ancient monument*:

Site : Thirsk Castle.

National Monument Number : 20454

Grid Reference : 44273 48202

- 1.2 It is essential that an archaeological watching brief is maintained during the proposed small scale programme of works as this will involve ground disturbance that may disturb or destroy archaeological deposits. An archaeological recording programme must be carried out as a condition of *scheduled monument consent*. The aim is to examine, record and recover archaeological deposits should they be affected by the works. The results of any such recording will provide further information about the archaeological resource of the monument. Where these deposits are established as significant, further archaeological investigations may be necessary in order to understand the nature, stratigraphic complexity and date of the deposits.
- 1.3 This document provides a brief for an archaeological watching brief that is necessary during a programme of *works to enhance public enjoyment and understanding*. The works consist of the replacement of existing kissing gates at the three access points to Castle Garth, Thirsk. A site plan is enclosed along with specification details for the proposed kissing gates.
- 1.4 The tenderer is to provide a costed method statement in line with the Management of Archaeological Projects, English Heritage (MAP2), 1991. Work will be carried out in accordance with standard guidelines such as the IFA Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs, RCHME, Recording Archaeological Field Monuments and CBA Recording Worked Stone.

2.0 Site Description

- 2.1 The works are located at the three entrance points to the Castle Garth: 1) at the junction of Masonic and Picks Lane to the east of the Masonic Hall; 2) At the east end of the footpath leading north-east from Station Road; 3) at the west

end of the footpath leading from the town square. Gates already exist at these access points but they are in need of repair and do not provide easy access for disabled persons. The existing gates will be removed during the works.
.Scheduling

2.2 The site is owned by Mr. John Bell (the Estate Office, Kirkgate, Thirsk, YO7 1TL), but the works are being undertaken by North Yorkshire County Council (Mr Peter Penny, NYCC, 01609:780780 x2583) and Thirsk Town Council (Town Hall Offices, 49a, Market Place, Thirsk, YO7 1HA, (01845:526445).

2.3 Access to the site can be easily gained from the points already indicated.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 A copy of the Scheduled monument description is included with this information.

4.0 Objectives

4.1 The objectives of this watching brief are as follows:

- to provide archaeological supervision during the works;
- to identify, sample, record and interpret all archaeological features and deposits exposed if appropriate. It is likely that the deposits encountered will be entirely of modern origin and thus many of the requirements included in Section 5 (Method) will not be relevant. Should archaeological deposits be reached machine/hand excavation will be halted and the archaeological contractor will clean and make an assessment of the potential of the features and deposits exposed. Complex archaeological features and deposits will be fully excavated and recorded; less complex should be sufficiently sampled in order to understand their nature, stratigraphic complexity and date;

5.0 Method

5.1 The archaeological contractor must demonstrate that all staff, including subcontractors, are suitably qualified and experienced and understand the work required of them.

5.2 The archaeological contractor must ensure that plant and machinery is operated in scheduled area with due care and attention.

5.3 A record of all features excavated will be produced using appropriate archaeological context recording. All features will require a full written, drawn and

photographic record.

- 5.4 All measurements will be expressed in metres. Plans will be produced at an appropriate scale using reliable and repeatable control measurements by establishing a metric based co-ordinate system. Sections and elevations will be produced at an appropriate and located using at least two local Ordnance Survey benchmarks that provide height values that are related to mean sea level.
- 5.5 All photographic recording of features will be taken in both 35mm colour slide and black and white print.
- 5.6 An appropriate artefact collection and discard policy should be defined and agreed in advance of any fieldwork.
- 5.7 Loose architectural fragments should be treated as small finds and recorded individually (with reference to the appropriate repository standards and guidelines. See 6.1). The find location should be recorded three dimensionally.
- 5.8 All drawings to be provided as ink on film or where facilities are available as digital drawings in a .dwg or .dxf format.
- 5.9 An appropriate sampling strategy must be prepared in consultation with the English Heritage Regional Archaeological Science Advisor. The archaeological contractor will ensure that all conservation specialists and consultants are identified as part of the contractors team from the outset. The archaeological contractor will ensure that a sum for any sampling and assessment work is identified in the tender return.
- 5.10 On completion of the fieldwork all samples will be processed and artefacts cleaned, conserved, identified, labelled and packaged in accordance with the requirements of the appropriate repository guidelines and standards.

6.0 Archive and Report

- 6.1 The site archive will be prepared to the standards specified in the Management of Archaeological Project (MAP2), English Heritage, 1991, Appendix 3. Archive preparation and deposition should be undertaken with reference to the appropriate repository guidelines and standards, and where necessary the Museums and Galleries Commission (MGC), United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC) standards and guidelines. The archaeological contractor must demonstrate that arrangements have been with an appropriate organisation for the deposition of the project archive in advance of any work on site (in this instance discussion should be held with the Thirsk Museum).
- 6.2 The archaeological contractor will provide for a written report within 3 months (or

shorter period by mutual agreement) on completion of the fieldwork. A copy of the report should be sent to the employer and to the English Heritage, regional *Inspector of Ancient Monuments*, the County Sites and Monument Record and the National Monuments Record, Swindon. The report should contain as a minimum:

- Non-technical summary
- Introductory statement
- Aims and objectives
- Methodology
- Results
- Conclusion
- Index and location of archive
- References and bibliography
- Copy of project design

7.0 Timetable and Monitoring

7.1 Ideally the archaeological fieldwork should start on a date to be agreed with North Yorkshire County Council to ensure completion of the main contract by [date to be agreed with North Yorkshire County Council]. *It is difficult at this stage to calculate exactly the time required for the archaeological contractor to be present on site. However, it would appear that the majority of the archaeological fieldwork would take place in the first day of the main contract. The archaeological contractor must agree and confirm all details of timetable and programme with the principle contractor.*

7.2 The project will be monitored by the *English Heritage, regional Inspector of Ancient Monuments* who will be given at least two weeks notice by the principle contractor, (or shorter period by mutual agreement) in writing of the commencement and timetable of the work.

7.3 The archaeological contractor will report any unexpected discoveries immediately to the project monitor. }

8.0 Health and Safety

8.1 The archaeological contractor should comply with the Health and Safety at Work Act and subsequent additions and amendments. All fieldwork must be carried out under an agreed Health and Safety Policy. A risk assessment should be carried out prior to the commencement of work and the project should have a nominated Safety Officer.

8.2 If the Provisions of Construction, Design and Management (CDM) Regulations 1994 are appropriate the employer will appoint a Planning Supervisor who will

prepare a Health and Safety Plan which will be made available to the archaeological contractor prior to the commencement of work.

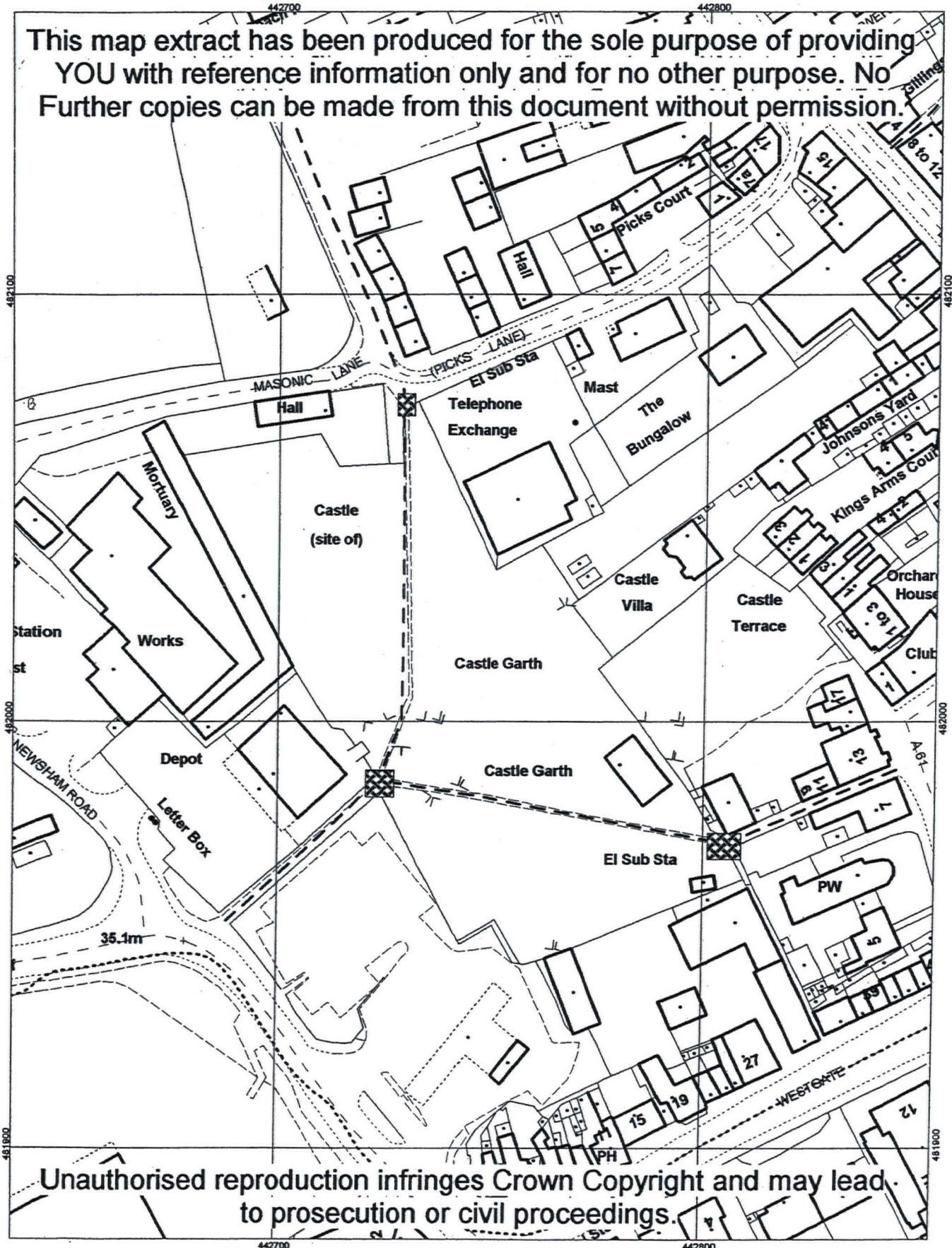
- 8.3 On arrival on site, the archaeological contractor will report to the principle contractor and confirm all working arrangements. The archaeological contractor will have the power to suspend works when necessary, but they must ensure that this does not unreasonably disrupt the work schedules of other contractors.



Composed By P.Penny on 3 December 2004 Scale 1:1250

Key: Footpath - - - - - Bridleway - | - | - | B.O.A.T. - ^ - ^ - ^ Continuation of Path - - - - -

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