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LAND ADJACENT TO HIND COTTAGE
LOW ELLINGTON, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Mr Dennis White

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Figure 1. Site Location.

Plate 1. Re-used Stone Block from Wall. Scales 0.20m.

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Summary

As a result of a planning application (Number 6.1.5.B.REM) for the erection of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Hind Cottage, Low Ellington (SE 20378 83830) an archaeological watching brief was placed on the topsoil strip and other ground disturbance works for the scheme. The ground works included the excavation of the footings for the new building and the insertion service trenches. The watching brief on the various ground works was undertaken on the 19th October 2006.

The result of the watching brief was largely negative with only the remains of a late 19th or early 20th century drainage running east-west across the site. A very small amount of unstratified mid/late 19th to early 20th century pottery was recovered from the topsoil. In addition to this a single piece of re-used stonework was recorded in the dry-stonewall surrounding the site.

No stratified artefacts were recovered and no other archaeological finds or features were recorded on the development site.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the ground works in advance of the erection of a new dwelling on land adjacent to Hind Cottage, Low Ellington (SE 20378 83830), in Masham Civil Parish.

1.2 The watching brief was conducted by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) for the Mr Dennis White and was carried out on 19th October 2006.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Historic Background

2.1 The settlement of Low Ellington is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Ellintone*. The name has two possible origins both from Old English. Firstly, 'farmstead at a place where eels are caught' and secondly 'farmstead associated with a man called Ella or Eli' (Mills, 1998, 127).

2.2 There is evidence for medieval activity in the form of extensive ridge and furrow agriculture in the surrounding landscape. In the post-medieval period the settlement was occupied by Quakers and their burial ground still exists to the north-west of the settlement.

Geology and Soils

2.4 The site lies on the western side of the valley formed by the River Ure in an area of Carboniferous millstone grit (Butlin, 2003, 10). Overlying this, the quaternary geology is one that has been modified by glacial till and moranic drift but mainly by fluvial action from the nearby river. The soil on the site was very well developed as it had been used as a vegetable plot.

Topography and Land-use

2.5 The plot is situated on the northern side of the settlement at a height of c.100mOD and, as mentioned above, until its development it was in use as a vegetable garden (Figure 1). The site is generally level with a very slight slope running uphill to the north. The site is bounded on the south and east sides by a dry stone wall and to the north and west there is a timber fence. The area surrounding the settlement is under agriculture.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the ground works for the development. The specific aims were to:

- Archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed or disturbed by the ground works
- Recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the ground works

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The stripping of the topsoil and ground reduction was carried out by contractors using a tracked digger with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. The trenches/footings were also cut using a tracked digger with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision.
- 4.2 During all of the ground works the exposed ground surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and the resulting topsoil stockpiles were monitored for archaeological artefacts and environmental material.
- 4.3 No archaeological features were encountered, therefore no detail archaeological recording was undertaken.

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The result of the watching brief was largely negative with only the remains of two late 19th or early 20th century soak-away drains running east-west across the site being observed (Figure 1). The topsoil strip removed a deep (0.45m) layer of well developed topsoil to reveal a sandy, stony subsoil.
- 5.2 Both of the drains had sections hand dug across them to establish their nature and both of them produced early 20th century ceramics from the base of their primary fill. The northerly drain was c.0.25m wide and c.0.30m deep whilst the southerly one was slightly larger at c.0.30m wide and c.0.45m deep. Both of the soak-aways were straight sided, flat bottomed and cut into the underlying subsoil.
- 5.3 A very small amount of unstratified mid/late 19th to early 20th century pottery was recovered from the topsoil, along with three body sherds of early post-medieval pottery. All of the material was from domestic vessels and was probably the result of manuring from a midden or similar. This would also account for the few fragments of domestic animal bone also observed in the topsoil.
- 5.4 In addition to the ceramics, a single piece of re-used stonework was recorded from the partially collapsed dry-stonewall surrounding the site. This was a stone block (0.33m x 0.20m x 0.13m) with a rectangular socket (0.11m x 0.07m x 0.03m) cut into one end (Plate 1). Tools marks from a bolster were visible on parts of the block. The base of the socket was slightly iron stained and there was a possible slight wear depression in the centre of the iron staining. The mortar present appeared to be from its re-use in the wall. Such an item would normally be considered to be a socket for a door post to rotate in. However as these tend to be circular and well worn, it is therefore suggested that this is possibly the remains of a socket to house the actual door or window frame. An examination of the remainder of the walls did not yield any further re-used stone work.

5.5 Just outside the north-eastern limit of the site the remains of the 19th century barn, shown on the Ordnance Survey 1st edition, could still be seen incorporated into the current boundary wall.

5.6 No other archaeological finds or features were recorded on the development site.

6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSION

6.1 From the results described above it can be seen that the development site appears to have been used for domestic horticulture, certainly for most of the 20th century and probably a good part of the late 19th century as well. There was no evidence for medieval or earlier activity, not even in the form of manuring with midden material suggesting that the site had never been extensively used in the past.

J Buglass

25th September 2006

References

- Butlin RA (ed) (2003) *Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire*. Westbury Publishing Otley.
- Mills AD (1998) *Dictionary of English Place-names*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.