

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
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WYAS

**Land at Thornton Hill
Thornton-in-Craven
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report No. 1623

December 2006

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Roger Tiffany Limited

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Land at Thornton Hill

Thornton-in-Craven

North Yorkshire

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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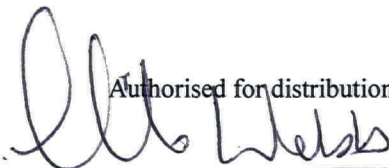
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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Thornton Hill in Thornton-in-Craven, during the excavation of foundation trenches for nine new houses. The excavations revealed no archaeological remains.

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Fig. 2 Site location showing position of house plots and geotechnical test pits (1:500)

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Plate 1 Plot 4 during excavation looking north-east, once tarmac and hardcore layers had been removed

Plate 2 South-eastern corner of Plot 9 showing disturbance by tarmac and hardcore layers; possibly represents a modern road foundation

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Appendix II Inventory of contexts

Appendix III Written Scheme of Investigation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Roger Tiffany Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Thornton Hill in Thornton-in-Craven (Fig. 1) during the excavation of foundations for nine houses. The site is located c.6 km south-west of Skipton (centred at SD 905 483) at approximately 164m above Ordnance Datum.
- 1.2 The works undertaken were in compliance with the archaeological conditions attached to the planning application (Application No: 69/2004/4952) by North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Section (NYCCHS). The aim of the watching brief was to record and recover any archaeological remains affected by the proposed development. The archaeological works followed a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) that was prepared by NYCCHS (Appendix III).
- 1.3 The underlying geology of the site comprises boulder clay overlying Lower Carboniferous Chatburn limestone (Haigh 2005).
- 1.4 The archaeological watching brief was carried out on July 17th, 27th and 28th 2006.

2. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 2.1 Bronze Age artefacts have been found within Thornton-in-Craven, and a Roman Road runs within 200m of the site to the Roman Fort at Elslack. A 12th century manor to the south-east of the village is evidence of medieval activity. This manor was subsequently destroyed during a siege in 1645 during the Civil War.
- 2.2 The most recent use of the site was as an overspill car parking area for the former Thornton Manor Hotel. This was converted into a nursing home approximately 20 years ago. The land since then appears to have been left neglected and abandoned.
- 2.3 Three geotechnical test pits (Fig. 2, Test pits 1-3) were excavated prior to the commencement of the watching brief (Haigh 2005). These showed that the upper levels of the site were made up of the remains of the car park, consisting of between 0.15-0.30m of tarmac above white limestone hardcore. The report also indicated that the natural boulder clay could be found at between 0.20-0.60m below the current ground surface. No topsoil or subsoil layers were evident.

3. Method

- 3.1 All the house foundation trenches and work on site was monitored following the guidelines set out by North Yorkshire County Council in their standard Written Scheme of Investigation (Appendix III).
- 3.2 All potential archaeological features were investigated during the machine excavation of the house foundations and appropriate written, drawn and photographic records were made. Features and trenches were recorded in accordance with ASWYAS watching brief guidelines and site recording manual (ASWYAS 2006a, 2006b).

4. Results

- 4.1 All mechanical excavation was carried out using a 360° tracked excavator, fitted with a toothed bucket, under supervision from a qualified archaeologist. The foundation trenches were 0.60m wide and between 0.60-1.7m deep (Plate 1).
- 4.2 Two blocks of foundation trenches were monitored (Fig. 2). The southern block, Plots 4-6, revealed the following similar stratigraphic sequence; a tarmac layer 0.05-0.10m deep (100), above a layer of limestone hardcore 0.15-0.30m deep (101), overlaying a dark brown clayey sand natural >0.40-1.00m deep (102). Natural ground was visible at the base of all the foundation trenches. Towards the north end of the block a black clayey material 0.30m – 0.10m deep (103) was observed between the limestone hardcore (101) and the lower deposit (102). This represented a re-deposited topsoil deposit. Test pit 3 also confirmed this stratigraphic sequence around Plots 2 and 3 (Haigh 2005).
- 4.3 The northern block of foundation trenches, Plots 7-9, revealed a similar stratigraphy. In the south-eastern side of the block, however, a layer of stones was exposed which appeared to represent a recent road foundation, probably for the hotel (Plate 2).
- 4.4 Plots 4-6 and 7-9 revealed no archaeological remains and it was apparent that the area had been heavily truncated when the former car park area had been constructed. It was evident that any archaeological remains were likely to have been removed during this process as well as the removal of topsoil and subsoil layers. The geological test pits also confirmed similar ground conditions in the area of Plots 2 and 3. After consultation with Gail Falkingham of NYCCHS it was agreed that the archaeological potential for the site was low and that further monitoring of Plots 1-3 was not necessary. The watching brief was duly curtailed.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The excavation of house foundation trenches at Thornton Hill, Thornton-in-Craven revealed only modern deposits relating to a former area of car parking. The site appeared to have been heavily truncated down to within the natural boulder clay during the construction of the car park, thus removing potential archaeological remains. No archaeological deposits, features or finds were identified during the course of the watching brief. The negative results for this site do not preclude, however, the potential survival of archaeological remains in the area.

Bibliography

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ASWYAS, 2006a, 'Site Recording Manual', Archaeological Services WYAS, unpubl.

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