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**Blue Dolphin Holiday Park,
Filey, North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

December 2006

Report No. 1621

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Dacre, Son and Hartley

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Blue Dolphin Holiday Park

Filey, North Yorkshire

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Dacre, Son and Hartley to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment prior to the proposed redevelopment of an area of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park, Filey, North Yorkshire.
- 1.2 The study area is located on the western side of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park which is situated on the coast of North Yorkshire. It lies between Filey, 2km to the south-east, and Scarborough around 5km to the north-west, and immediately to the north of the village of Gristhorpe.
- 1.3 The study area comprises all land within a 500m radius of the proposed redevelopment area, centred at TA 0888 8321
- 1.4 The aim of the study is to identify and assess the significance of sites, buildings, and finds of archaeological and historic interest within the study area, and to gain a greater understanding of the wider historic landscape as a whole.

2. Methodology and Sources

Information Sources

- 2.1 The following sources of information have been consulted in order to meet the requirements of the desk-based assessment, and are in line with the guidelines laid down by the Institute of Field Archaeologists for such work (IFA 2001).

Archaeological archives and databases

- 2.2 Information on previous archaeological finds and investigations within the study area was consulted in the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (HER), Northallerton, and from English Heritage's National Monuments Record (NMR), Swindon. The North Yorkshire County Record Office (NYCRO) was consulted for historic estate and enclosure maps, tithe awards and building plans, as well as any further relevant documentation. The East Riding of Yorkshire Archive, Beverley, may hold relevant historic documents but was closed due to relocation at the time of writing.

Listed Buildings

- 2.3 Information regarding Listed Buildings was obtained from the North Yorkshire HER and from English Heritage's 'Images of England' website.

Scheduled Monuments

- 2.4 Scheduled monument information was taken from the government's on-line environmental GIS website 'MAGIC'.

Other designated sites or areas

- 2.5 Information on other designated sites of historic, archaeological or scientific interest was obtained from the North Yorkshire HER and the 'MAGIC' website.

Published and unpublished documentary sources

- 2.6 A range of published and unpublished material has been researched and consulted. This includes academic articles together with general sources on the area and its wider archaeological and historical background. These are listed in the bibliography.

Geological and soil surveys

- 2.7 Information on the underlying geology and soils within the study area was taken from data collected by the British Geological Survey (Kent 1980) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1980).

Walkover survey

- 2.8 A walkover survey was undertaken on the 5th of December 2006, in order to assess the survival of previously recorded and documented features, and to attempt to identify any further archaeological sites visible on the ground.

Previous archaeological investigations*Archaeological excavations*

- 2.9 Excavations were undertaken in the 19th century on the two round barrows that are located within the study area. The earliest excavations were carried out by the Scarborough Philosophical Society in 1834, which discovered a burial, and disturbed a pair of stone cists containing cremations and grave goods. The cists were re-excavated in 1887 by Canon William Greenwell (see Section 3.6).
- 2.10 There have been no further recorded excavations, using modern scientific methods, within the study area.

Archaeological surveys

- 2.11 There have been no archaeological surveys of the study area. However, the coastline to the north comes within an area covered by the 'Artefacts from the Sea' study, undertaken by Wessex Archaeology in 2003 and 2004, to assess archaeological finds along the coast between the River Tees and River Humber. However, there are no records of finds along the section of coast within the study area.

Geophysical surveys

- 2.12 There are no records of archaeological geophysical surveys being undertaken within the study area.

3. The Study Area

- 3.1 Where sites listed in the catalogue (Section 4) are mentioned in the text, the relevant catalogue number is given in bold-type.

Topography and Geology

- 3.2 The study area largely comprises an area of caravan parks, which are situated on a gentle south facing slope at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering. The land rises up northwards to the coast line, where Gristhorpe Cliffs fall away steeply to a thin strip of beach and rocks below. The area of the caravan parks

is largely maintained grass and lawns, crossed by numerous tarmac pathways and roads, which sub-divide the site into areas for static and mobile caravans, together with children's play areas and toilet blocks. Along the north side of the redevelopment area there are a number of earth banks that appear to have been constructed to provide a wind break for the caravans to the south. There is also a large sub-rectangular mound strewn with concrete and brick debris that may have been a platform for a demolished structure.

- 3.3 The underlying geology comprises middle calcareous grit with sandstone nodules (Kent 1980). This is overlain by deep fine loamy soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slight seasonal waterlogging (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1980).

Identified archaeological sites, buildings and features

- 3.4 A total of nine archaeological sites and buildings have been identified within the study area. These sites have been catalogued in Section 4. Suggestions for further archaeological investigations will be recommended where sites or features have been assessed to be of archaeological importance, and where further fieldwork may lead to a greater understanding of them.

Designations

- 3.5 The study area contains no Scheduled Monuments or Listed Buildings.

Archaeological background, sites and historic buildings

Prehistoric period

- 3.6 The earliest and most prominent archaeological features within the study area are two Bronze Age round barrows; one located outside the northern edge of the proposed redevelopment area, and the other on the eastern side of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park. The barrow outside the northern edge of the redevelopment area was excavated in 1887 by Canon William Greenwell, who discovered two stone cists one of which appears to have contained a cremation (5). However, these were found to have been previously disturbed by an earlier excavation undertaken in 1834 by the Scarborough Philosophical Society, at which time one of the cist's cover stones and its contents had been removed. The barrow on the eastern side of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park was also excavated by the Scarborough Philosophical Society in 1834 (9; Plates 5 and 6). This excavation discovered a well preserved burial, which had been placed in a hollow tree trunk and wrapped in skins, together with flints and a ring.
- 3.7 Such barrows are common across north and east Yorkshire, with concentrations across the Yorkshire Wolds, to the south and east of the study area. Greenwell himself excavated over 300, most of which appear to have been of an early Bronze Age date (Manby 1980, 314). The majority of the surviving barrows are found on high ground, such as at the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park, which may have allowed them to be used as prominent landmarks acting as territorial boundary markers (Stoetz 1997, 33). Many of these barrows probably owe their survival to the use of the land as pasture, therefore avoiding damage caused by cultivation. There is also evidence of Bronze Age occupation along this section of the North Yorkshire coast, with a late Bronze Age settlement being excavated by Sir Mortimer Wheeler on the

headland at Scarborough, 6km to the north of the study area, in the 1930s (Wheeler 1931).

- 3.8 During the late Iron Age the area around Filey probably fell within the tribal territory of the Parisi, but was also close to the boundary with the territory of the Brigantes, to the north. There were major defended sites at this time on the headland at Scarborough (Pearson 2005, 2), and also to the south at Flamborough Head, defined by Dane's Dykes.

Roman Period

- 3.9 There is no recorded archaeological evidence for activity dating to the Roman period within the study area. However there is evidence of Roman settlement and activity in the surrounding area. A farmstead dating to the late 4th century was excavated in the 1940s at Seamer, approximately 5km to the west of the study area (Mitchelson 1950). At both Scarborough and Filey the remains of late Roman signal stations have been excavated, which would have formed part of a chain of such sites along the Yorkshire Coast to guard against potential attack from the sea. The dating evidence from these suggests that the signal stations continued to function into the early decades of the 5th century (Ottaway 2000; Pearson 2005). It has also been suggested that the course of the present A64 and A1039, to the south of the study area, follows the line of a Roman road (Margary 1973, 424).

Medieval period

- 3.10 It is probable that the study area has remained open farmland from at least the medieval period, although there is no evidence even of medieval agricultural remains surviving as earthworks or field systems within the study area. This may be largely due to the re-organisation of the landscape in the late 18th century, and the probability that this area had been used largely for pasture (hence the survival of the prehistoric features).

- 3.11 There was certainly settlement at Gristhorpe, immediately south of the study area, by the late 11th century, when it was recorded in the Domesday Book (Page 1912, 310). It has also been suggested that St Oswald's Church in Filey was a mid-11th century re-foundation of an earlier monastery, which perhaps had its origins in the 8th or 9th centuries (Sleight 1998).

The 18th and 19th centuries

- 3.12 The modern field and road layout within the study area is largely a result of the enclosure and reorganisation of the area in the late 18th century, following the Filey Enclosure Act of 1788. This saw the establishment of a pattern of regularly defined rectangular fields, comprising of straight hedgerows and lanes, together with farms such as Crows Nest Farm (1) and Cliffe House Farm (6). However, there has been a gradual loss of many of the field boundaries from the late 19th century onwards (see Figs 3 to 6), especially in the late 20th century with the establishment of the caravan parks, although the wider field pattern remains essentially the same.

- 3.13 One of the main activities along the coast between Scarborough and Filey during the 19th and early 20th century was sandstone quarrying. Three such quarries fall within the study area, all situated on the cliff face to the north of

the proposed redevelopment area (3, 4, and 8; Plate 4). These were being worked at different times from at least the mid-19th century into the first half of the 20th century (see Figs. 3 to 6). Stonepit Lane, which runs along the eastern side of the proposed redevelopment area, must take its name from this activity, and its northern end at least, where it deviates from the course of its southern section, may have been laid out especially to serve the quarries (7).

The 20th century

- 3.14 The study area remained largely farmland until after the Second World War. By the 1950s new caravan parks were established along the coast to the north of Filey, each originally associated with an individual farm, such as Crows Nest Farm, or Flower of May farm, outside the western edge of the study area. These have developed throughout the later 20th century with the area now largely characterised by permanent holiday facilities and large scale static caravan sites.

4. Catalogue of archaeological features and buildings

Archaeological features

- 4.1 Catalogue entries have been ordered geographically from west to east, and given a numerical identifier, with the locations shown on Figure 2. The catalogue entry includes a National Grid Reference (NGR) and where an archaeological feature has an associated 'MNY' number the information has been obtained from the North Yorkshire HER, Northallerton. All further information is referenced in the bibliography.

1. **'Crows Nest' farm house** **TA 0855 8308**
A farm house marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854, situated to the south-west of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park (Ordnance Survey 1854; see Fig. 3). This now forms part of the Crows Nest Caravan Park, which covers the fields to the north of the farm house, immediately to the west of the proposed redevelopment area.
2. **Well** **TA 0859 8324**
A well is marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854 to the north of Crows Nest Farm (Ordnance Survey 1854; see Fig. 3), and appears to have continued to exist into the first half of the 20th century (Ordnance Survey 1929a; see Fig. 6).
3. **Quarry** **TA 0860 8356**
A sandstone quarry was located to the north-west of the present site of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park, close to the cliff edge, during the early 20th century (Ordnance Survey 1913; see Fig. 5).
4. **Sandstone Quarry** **TA 0881 8350**
A quarry was located to the north of the present site of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park. It is marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854, but appears to have gone out of use during the late 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1893b; see Fig. 4). However, the quarry seems to have been re-opened

in the early years of the 20th century, when it is again marked on the Ordnance Survey maps (Ordnance Survey 1913 and 1929b; see Figs 5 and 6; Plate 4).

5. **Round barrow** MNY 12511/12512/12513/12514/12515 TA 0887 8341
A Bronze Age round barrow situated outside the northern edge of the proposed redevelopment area. It was excavated in 1887 by Canon William Greenwell, when it was found to contain two cists. One of the cists consisted of four side stones, together with a cap stone and base stone. This was situated around 24ft (7.5m) south-south-east of the centre of the barrow. When Greenwell discovered the second cist it was found to have been disturbed by an earlier excavation, carried out in 1834, during which the cist had been damaged, its cover taken and most of the contents removed. The barrow is depicted as being oval in plan on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854, but it is shown as a smaller round barrow on the 1893 Ordnance Survey map, a reduction in size perhaps caused by Greenwell's excavation (Ordnance Survey 1854 and 1893b; see Figs. 3 and 4). The NYCC HER records that the condition of the barrow has been affected by works carried out on the caravan site to the north of the proposed redevelopment area, and that the north-east and south-west quadrants have been removed.
6. **Cliffe House Farm** TA 0894 8295
A farm house marked on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854, situated at the south-eastern corner of the proposed redevelopment area (see Fig. 3). It continues to operate as a functioning farm.
7. **Stone Pit Lane** TA 0897 8323 (centre)
A road running north to south along the eastern side of the proposed redevelopment area. Its name suggests that it was laid out to serve the quarries along the cliff side to the north.
8. **Sandstone Quarries** TA 0898 8345
Two sandstone quarries were located close to the edge of Gristhorpe Cliff, on the northern side of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park. These were in use during the mid-19th century, when they are shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of 1854 (see Fig. 3). However, by the late 1880s these quarries appear to have been no longer operating (Ordnance Survey 1893b; see Fig. 4).
9. **Round barrow** MNY 12506/12507/12508/12509 TA 0937 8325
A Bronze Age round barrow located on the eastern side of the Blue Dolphin Holiday Park. The barrow was excavated in 1834 by members of the Scarborough Philosophical Society, who discovered a burial placed in a hollow tree trunk, covered by branches, at a depth of about 10ft (3m) from the surface of the barrow. The burial was wrapped in skins and was accompanied by grave goods, including a knife, flints, a ring and some unidentified objects. The human skeletal remains were found to be in an excellent condition and became known as the 'Gristhorpe Man'. This skeleton is usually held at the Scarborough Rotunda Museum, but at the time of writing has been moved to Bradford University's Department of Archaeological Sciences for analysis.

5. Conclusions

- 5.1 The study area contains two Bronze Age round barrows, one of which is located outside of the northern boundary of the proposed redevelopment area, and the other which is located 400m to the east of the proposed redevelopment area. There may be potential for the survival of buried archaeological deposits of a prehistoric date surviving across the wider area of the proposed redevelopment. It has been shown that many Bronze Age barrows across eastern Yorkshire have been used to align boundaries, both contemporary with them and dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods. It is possible that evidence of such boundaries could survive as sub-surface features.
- 5.2 Although there is no evidence of medieval settlement within the study area, there is potential for the survival of elements of the medieval field pattern, and possibly traces of cultivation, as sub-surface features.
- 5.3 Given the potential for the survival of sub-surface archaeological features, particularly at the northern end of the site, it is recommended that any intrusive groundwork deeper than 0.15m below the current ground surface should be subject to archaeological monitoring. A project design detailing the methodology for a watching brief should be submitted to and approved by the North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Section prior to the commencement of the proposed redevelopment.

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