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Archaeological Report



Project Name: Sherburn Site 239

Report by: James Lyall

Date: 21/11/2006

Summary

A watching brief was carried out on behalf of Shaun Flinton over a proposed housing development (1 house) on a plot of land 34 metres to the south of Burnside Cottage, Sherburn, North Yorkshire. The plot is situated to the east of a small track heading NNE from St Hilda's Street, centered on NGS grid reference SE 95991/77296. No archaeological features were encountered, either on the housing plot or the services trench leading to the plot from St Hilda's Street.

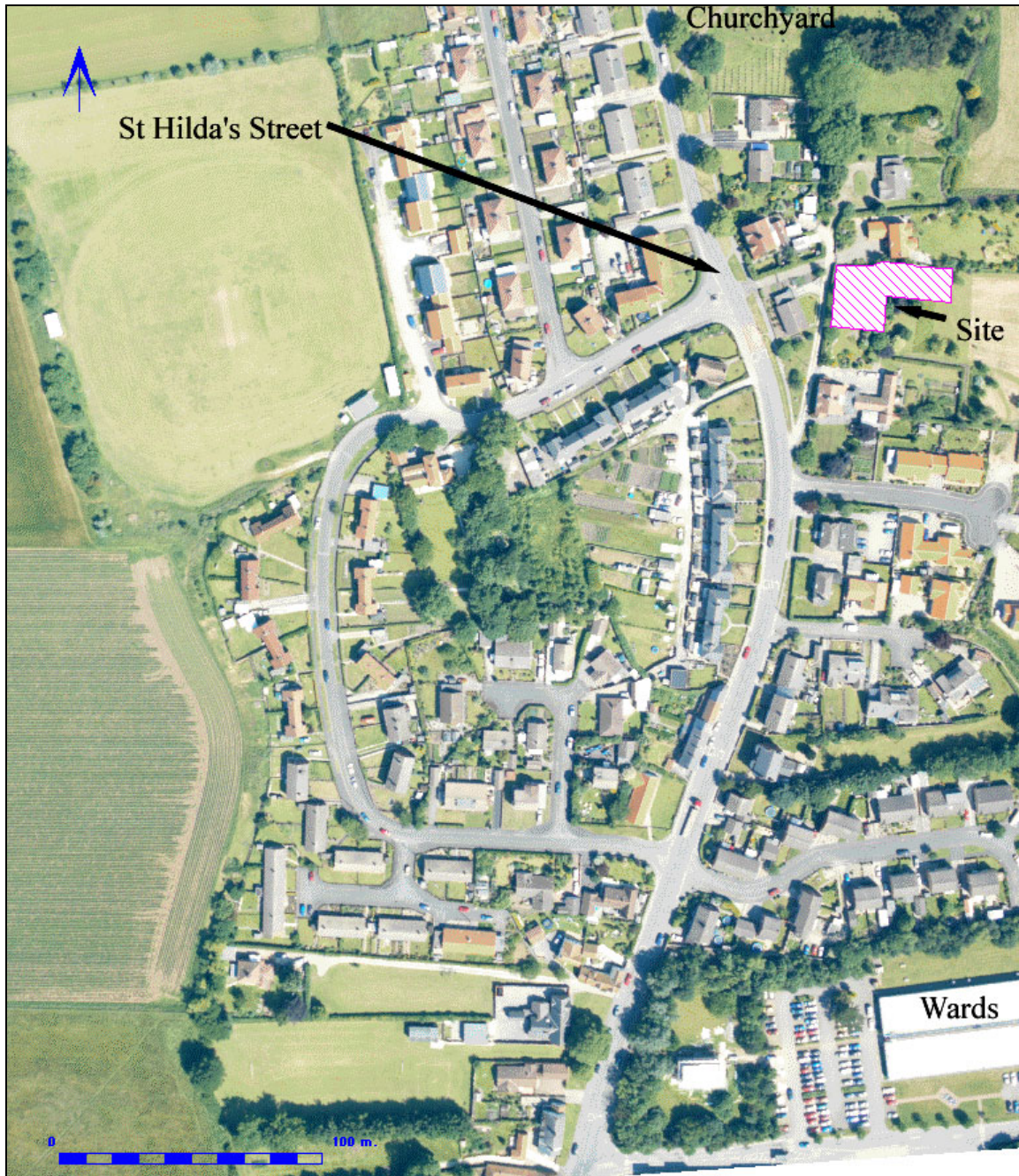


Figure 1 Aerial photograph taken in 2005 with location of site superimposed (scale 100m)

Known archaeology in the area

Geophysical surveys by the Landscape Research Centre around Sherburn have indicated that the entire area round the village is archaeologically significant, with evidence of Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglian settlement (see Figure 2).



Figure 2 Geophysical survey data (greyscale) on a aerial photographic background.

Discussion



Figure 3 Brick-built raised flower bed

The watching brief was carried out on the 20th and 21st of November, 2006, and comprised archaeological supervision of the excavation of a services trench from St Hilda's Street to the new development, and the stripping of the site prior to the construction of a raft footing (see Figure 4 for plan of investigated areas).

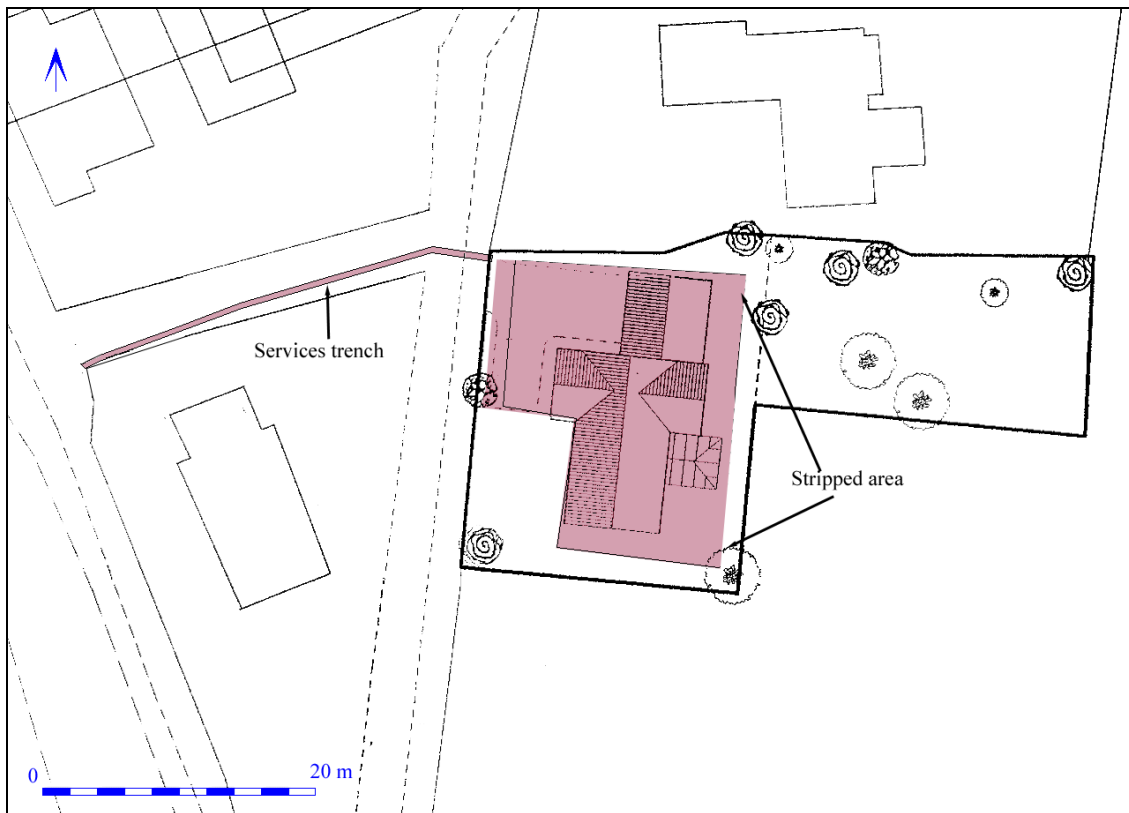


Figure 4 Plan of areas investigated



Figure 5 Services encountered

The services trench 31 metres long was excavated by a 30cm wide toothless ditching bucket, up through a recently laid track from St Hilda's Street, to a depth of up to 75 cm. The material removed was mostly disturbed, by a number of recently laid services (see Figure 5). Windblown sand was encountered at a depth of around 60cm. No archaeological features were encountered during the excavation of this trench. Finds were mostly post medieval and modern, with a single fragment of limestone roof tile the only find of greater antiquity.

One large tree stump remained in centre of the main development area, and this was removed by machine, allowing the depth of soil to be established at this point. The topsoil (a loamy sand), was particularly deep here, just over 40cm, overlying a 70-80cm deep windblown sand deposit. Both of these upper deposits contained small chalk gravel fragments. Under the windblown was the natural yellow sand and calcareous gravel subsoil. The only finds from the tree stump area were two terracotta flowerpots

and a fragment of dressed sandstone, probably derived from the reconstruction of the church in 1911.

As the new house was to be constructed using a raft foundation, only minimal stripping of the soil was required. This varied from a maximum of 30cm in the south-eastern corner to only 5cm in the central north of the area. The archaeological impact of this stripping was negligible, only reaching the top of the windblown sand deposit along the southern edge of the stripped area. Only modern material was noted during the stripping of this area.



Figure 6 Post stripping view looking WSW, showing modern disturbance.

During the course of the watching brief, I was informed by at least two of the local residents that the plot had been the site of a market garden, and at least two modern structures were present (a brick-built raised flower bed and a pond). Also present were the foundations of a small summer house (see Figure 6).

Conclusion

In conclusion, it can be stated that using a raft foundation technique for house construction has in this case successfully avoided impacting any underlying archaeology. No archaeological features were encountered during the watching brief.