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PARK PLACE, KNARESBOROUGH.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.
OSA REPORT No: OSA06WB44.

MARCH 2007.

N. Y. C. C. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
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OSA

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Report Summary.

Parish 6100

REPORT NO: OSA06WB44.

SITE NAME: Park Place, Knaresborough.

COUNTY: North Yorkshire.

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 3510 5705

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TIMING: Fieldwork
25th, 27th October & 1st November 2006.
Post excavation & report preparation
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1.0 Abstract.

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by On-Site Archaeology on land at Park Place, Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. This work was required in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to the planning permission for ground-works associated with the construction of a residential dwelling. The archaeological watching brief consisted of a three days on site on the 25th and 27th October, and 1st November 2006.

The watching brief comprised the observation of foundation trench excavation by mechanical excavator for construction of flats. A number of archaeological features including pits and possible post-pits were recorded, and finds dating to the medieval period were recovered.



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 3510 5705).

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2.0 Archaeological Background.

Knaresborough is situated on the eastern side of the river Nidd on an outcrop of Lower Magnesian limestone. Evidence for prehistoric activity in the area consists of findings of flint and stone artefacts in the town and surrounding area. However these finds have tended to be scattered and not in such concentrations as would indicate a permanent settlement.

The main phase of historical activity in Knaresborough is during the Anglo-Saxon to Medieval periods. The earliest documentary reference is in the Domesday Book in 1086 where it is recorded as Chenarsburgh. The first part of the name appears to derive from a personal name, and the latter from burh, a fortified place or defended settlement. No evidence for such fortifications has been found, although the naturally defensible situation of the castle suggests a desirable location for such a site. The first documentary reference to the castle was in 1129-30 and the parish church was in existence by 1114 when it was granted to the Priory of Nostell. The first record of a market at Knaresborough is in 1206 by which time the town was the centre of an iron-working industry, with ironstone being mined in the Forest of Knaresborough.

The town of Knaresborough continued to develop with a woollen industry that had declined by the seventeenth century and was replaced by linen weaving. The linen industry went into decline in the nineteenth century as Knaresborough was eclipsed by the development of nearby Harrogate.

In 1998 archaeological work to the west of the site along Berry's Avenue revealed a portion of the probable Civil War defences. In January 2002, a watching brief was conducted by On-Site Archaeology west of this site which found a number of features of a structural nature, which were themselves cut by a number of pits, securely dated to the late 12th to early 13th centuries (On-Site Archaeology 2002). A similar archaeological sequence was seen during archaeological work by WYAS in 2002 prior to redevelopment of the bus station on the High Street, which is opposite the Park Place site. Structural elements and pits on that site were sealed by a 'garden soil' deposit thought to have formed in the late Medieval period.

3.0 Site Location, Topography and Land Use.

The development site is located at NGR SE 3510 5705 in the historic core of Knaresborough, North Yorkshire. The site fronts onto Park Place (to the west), which itself leads off the Knaresborough High Street. The site occupied a narrow rectangular plot measuring approximately 10m by 4.5m. To the north the site is bounded by a residential property, while to the south there is a restaurant and residential property. To the east of the building footprint is an open garden space, which is part of the development. At the time of the archaeological work a building had recently been demolished so the site was covered by the brick rubble remains of this building. The site is situated on mixed sand and clay glacial deposits and underlying Magnesium limestone.

4.0 Methodology.

Various phases of excavation and ground reduction were monitored during the watching brief, however notification of works to be monitored was sporadic, with some excavation not seen. During the first phase of archaeologically monitored work two foundation pits were recorded along the northern side of the site on the boundary with the adjacent building. These were originally 0.75m wide by 1.1m long, and over 1.7m deep for test pit 1, and 0.95m wide by 0.95m long, and over 2.1m deep for test pit 2. These had previously been excavated by a 360° tracked excavator with a toothed bucket. Test pit 2 was then lengthened to 1.8m in length. The ground was then reduced by approximately 0.2-0.4m across much of the site. The exposed surfaces of the test pits and much of the ground surface was then selectively cleaned by hand in order to investigate any possible archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Where possible, hand excavation then took place on some of the revealed archaeological features to further define their character and form and to recover dating evidence.

A second phase of work was monitored during which the eastern foundation trench measuring 4.5m by 0.8m and 2.0m deep was excavated revealing in section some of the features recorded in plan previously. The southern foundation measuring 5.3m by 0.9m and approximately 1.2m deep was then excavated. Test pit 2 was extended to the east to 3.3m length, also revealing features in section that had been seen in plan previously. The ground reduction begun in the phase 1 works was completed.

A third phase of work monitored the extension of test pit 2 by a further 3m to the east.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the watching brief. This involved the completion of a context description for each deposit or cut encountered (see Appendix 1), along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. All pre-modern finds that were observed were collected from the machined topsoil together with any finds recovered from hand cleaning and excavation of the features. Heights of archaeological features and deposits were related to the ground surface. A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained however this is unavailable due to unforeseen circumstances.

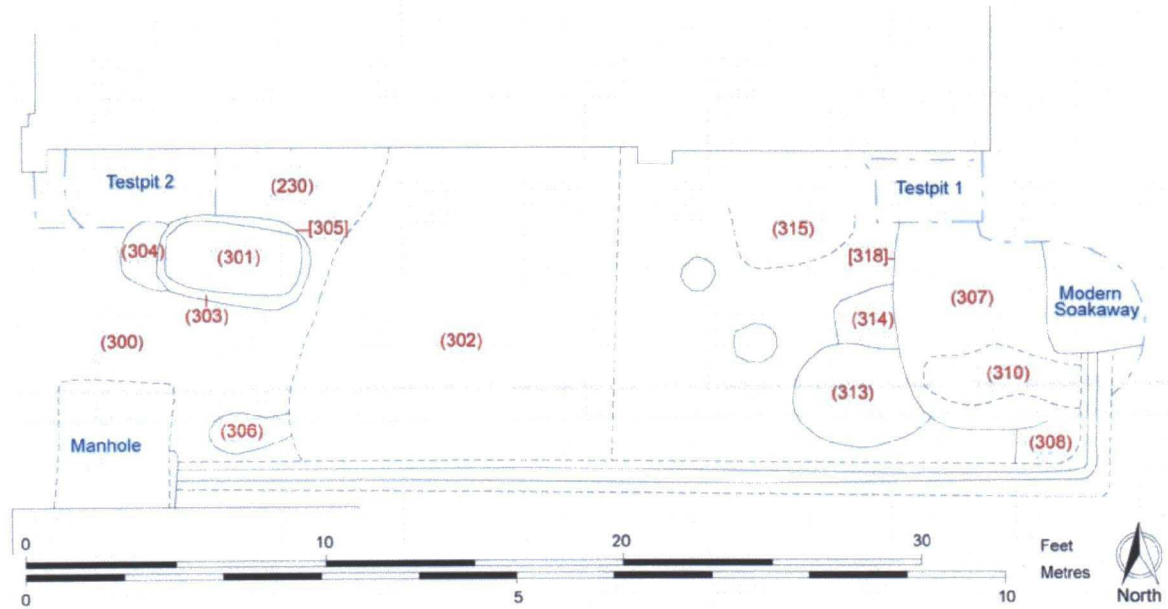


Figure 2. Plan showing location of test pits and excavated features.

5.0 Results.

5.1 Test Pit 1.

The geological natural was seen at a depth of 0.76m below ground level (BGL). Within the test pit it was laminated orange brown clay sand and mid brown sand (105). Over it was 0.22m thick deposit of mid brown clay sand & gravel with inclusions of crushed mortar (104). This was sealed by 0.26m of mid brown clay sand & gravel (103), which was sealed by 0.38m of mid grey brown clay silt garden soil (100).

5.2 Test Pit 2.

The geological natural (205) was seen at a depth of 0.90m BGL and was a laminated mid brown clay sand and orange brown sand deposit. Over it was a 0.10m deposit of grey brown clay sand silt & gravel (204). This was sealed by 0.30m thick deposit of mid brown clay sand & gravel and crushed mortar (203). A deposit of mid brown sandy gravel (202), that was 0.25m thick was sealed in turn by 0.10m of reddish brown sand silt and mixed brick rubble (201), and a 0.10m thick remnant of the concrete surface (200).

5.3 Ground Reduction.

A number of possible features were recorded in plan following the ground reduction phase of work. A widespread orange brown clay sand & gravel deposit (300) was visible at the western end of the plot. To the western end of the plot an oval feature [305] measuring 1.90m by 0.90m appeared to cut it. It appeared to hold fills of mid grey brown clay sand silt and charcoal (304), dark red brown burnt sandy clay (302), dark grey ash (303), and light grey mortar (301). Further to the south a cream brown crushed mortar fill of a possible feature (306), measured over 0.90m by 0.35m.

To the eastern end of the plot a grey clay sand & gravel fill (314) of a possible feature, appeared to be cut by a feature within which was a mottled orange brown clay sand, clay and cobble fill (313). This possible feature measured 1.0m by over 1.2m. Beside it was a light pink crushed mortar and brick deposit (309) that is likely to be held within a feature, but which did not have well defined edges. This seemed to be cut by a feature within which was a dark brown clay silt fill (308). Fill (308) was cut to the north by a large feature [318] holding a dark brown clay silt final fill (307). Seven sherds of Northern Gritty Ware and a fragment of fired clay were recovered from fill (307) during cleaning of the surface of the feature. This feature measured 2.2m by over 2.0m.

Over fill (307) and potentially within a feature cutting it was a grey brown ashy silt (310), that was over 1.75m long by 0.55m wide. To the northwest of this was a potential feature holding a grey clay sand and gravel fill (315), that measured over 0.80m by over 0.70m. Two other small features, possible post-holes, were recorded, however these were much less clear than the other features, and may have been variations in the underlying deposit.

5.4 Test Pit 2 Extension.

The extension to Test Pit 2 allowed some of the deposits seen during the ground reduction phase to be recorded in section. A number of other features were also revealed. Cutting the natural geology (205) was a steep straight sided feature, whose base was unseen within the confines of the trench. This cut feature [325] held a fill (324) containing a quantity of mortar and a single worked block of stone. Feature [325] was 0.56m deep and over 0.48m long.

Sealing the worked stone in [325] was a mid brown sandy gravel deposit (203); previously seen in Test Pit 2. This was cut by a feature with irregular sides and a concave base, [323] that was 0.52m long and 0.30m deep. It held a creamy brown mortar and cobble fill (322).

Over deposit (203) a patch of similar sandy gravel (321) was differently coloured purple and orange brown, and probably reflects exposure of a portion of deposit (203) to localized heat. Also over (203) was the deposit of orange brown clay sand and gravel (300) that was seen to be 0.15m thick. It was not clear whether this was part of the same deposit as (202) which appears to be stratigraphically contemporaneous.

Deposit (202) was cut by a steep sided feature with a concave base [320] measuring 0.36m long and 0.33m deep. This held an orange brown clay fill (319). This in turn was cut by the steep concave sided feature with an irregular base [305], that was seen in plan during the ground reduction phase. Three of the previously described fills of this feature (302), (304), and (301) were visible in the exposed section.

Deposit (300) was cut by a vertical sided feature with a concave base, [327], that measured over 0.34m wide and 0.82m deep. This held a very dark grey clay sand silt fill (326).

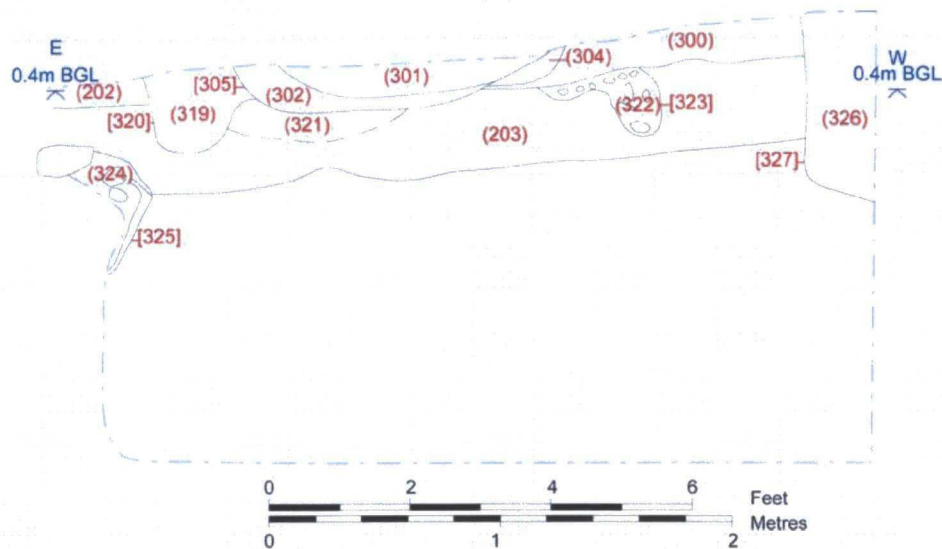


Figure 3. North facing section showing cuts [305], [320], [323], [325] & [327].

5.5 Eastern Foundation Trench.

The natural deposit (105) was overlain by a portion of a deposit that was dark grey sand and gravel. This is probably part of deposit (104) seen in Test Pit 1. This was cut by feature [318], seen in plan during the ground reduction phase. Feature [318] when seen in section was revealed to be a large pit with steep straight sides and a flat base that was 1.35m deep. It held a primary fill (317) made up of laminated light and dark grey ash, that was 0.60m thick. Over this was 1.2m thick fill of mid brown clay and cobbles (316). The top of the pit appeared to have a smaller pit cutting it that had vertical straight sides and a concave base [332], which was 0.72m wide and 0.36m deep. This held a mid brown clay silt primary fill (330) and a pink and black ash secondary fill (331). This was sealed by a dark brown clay silt fill (307) that produced seven sherds of Northern Gritty Ware and a fragment of fired clay.

Pit [318] was also cut by a feature with moderate concave sides and a concave base, [329], that was over 0.80m wide and 0.41m deep. This feature contained a light brown grey sand and gravel fill (328). This sequence was sealed by a 0.25m thick deposit of mid brown clay sand and gravel (103).

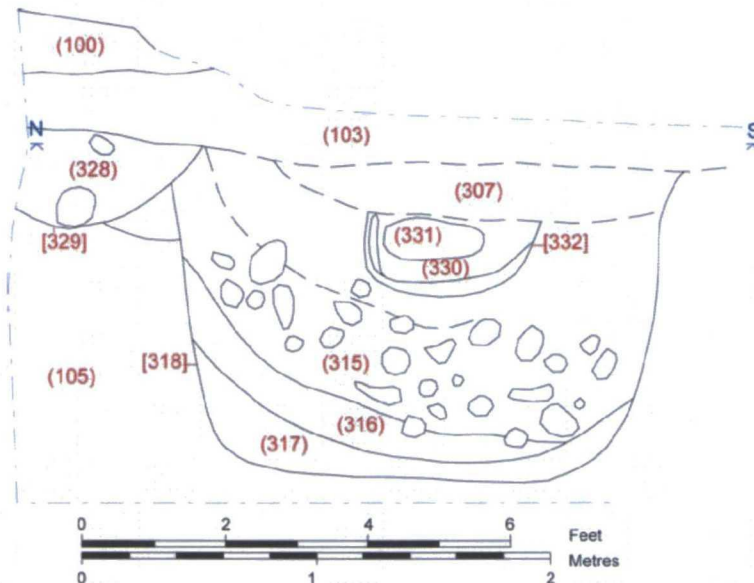


Figure 4. West facing section showing cuts [318], [329] & [332].

5.6 Southern Foundation Trench.

The only feature of note in this trench was a 1m long segment of un-mortared limestone foundation (312) and its north-south return, which was under the standing brick wall. Against this to the south was a black ashy sand and limestone rubble deposit (311), that may have been an infilled cellar. Three fragments of window glass and a fragment of tile were recovered from the fill. The potential date range for the deposition of these finds is from the mid 14th to mid 17th century or later. The relative rarity of medieval buildings containing glass windows perhaps indicates a later date in that range.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions.

The nature and limited scale of the archaeological work at Park Place, Knaresborough precludes a thorough understanding of past activity on the site. It seems clear however that medieval remains were present prior to the development of the site. The only confidently dated deposit/fill (307) from which a consistent assemblage of finds dating from the late 12th to early 14th century was recovered, was towards the top of a sequence of inter-cutting features. Pit [318] from which these finds were recovered, was the only feature in this sequence that was seen in plan and section, and it had the form and character of a cess pit.

Towards the front of the site some potentially structural features [323] and [325], were seen in section. Feature [323] was probably a simple post-hole, while [325] was more substantial and held a worked stone which may have been part of a foundation or post-pad. These were undated but the stratigraphic sequence indicates that they may be generally contemporaneous with medieval pit [318]. Feature [305] exhibited in-situ burning of the underlying deposits and is probably the remains of a hearth or oven. The feature appears to have had more than a single phase of use, but is undated. Stratigraphically oven/hearth [305] is later than possible structural features [323] and [325] but may be contemporaneous with adjacent post-hole [320].

The limestone foundation (322) underlying the modern wall in the southern foundation trench was thought to be early modern when seen during excavation. The loose ashy deposit (311), which was against this foundation, produced glass and CBM likely to date to the 17th century, which is somewhat earlier than expected. While it is possible that the foundation may be medieval and the infill deposit (311) dates its abandonment, it is more likely that the small assemblage of finds is misleading, and the foundation dates to the 18th or 19th century.

The archaeological watching brief at Park Place, Knaresborough has demonstrated that the site was occupied during the medieval period. Pit features including a probable cess-pit are typical of the types of activity seen towards the rear of medieval tenement plots. The post-holes and possible masonry foundation represent buildings that may also have been found at the rear of a medieval property. Equally however they may represent buildings along the street front, which is likely to be the case if the medieval property strip fronted Park Place as the modern property does. If so, then the oven or hearth is likely to have been within a street front building.

7.0 Bibliography.

Gilham, J., 2006. Archaeological Data Service. York, University of York. Available from : <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/index.html>. [Accessed 026/03/07]

On-Site Archaeology. (2002) An Archaeological Watching Brief at the Crown Hotel, High Street, Knaresborough. On Site Archaeology Report OSA02WB02

8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
<i>Testpit 1</i>			
100	Mid grey brown clay silt. Garden soil.	?	0.38m
101	Dark grey silt sand. Fill of foundation.	>0.75m x 0.10m	>1.7m
102	Vertical straight sides, unseen base. Cut for adjacent foundation.	>0.75m x 0.10m	>1.7m
103	Mid brown clay sand & gravel. Make-up deposit?	Trench	0.25m
104	Mid brown clay sand & gravel with moderate crushed mortar inclusions. Deposit.	Trench	0.16m
105	Laminated orange brown clay sand and mid brown sand. Geological natural.	Trench	>0.70m
<i>Testpit 2</i>			
200	Concrete. Remnant of mostly removed surface.	?	0.10m
201	Reddish brown mixed brick rubble and sand silt. Make-up deposit.	Trench	0.10m
202	Mid brown sandy gravel. Make-up deposit?	Trench	0.25m
203	Mixed mid brown clay sand & gravel & crushed mortar. Make-up deposit?	Trench	0.30m
204	Grey brown clay sand silt & gravel. Buried soil horizon?	Trench	0.10m
205	Laminated mid brown clay sand & orange brown sand. Geological natural.	Trench	>1.2m
206	Vertical straight sides, base unseen. Cur for adjacent foundation.	>0.95m x 0.10m	>2.1m
<i>Ground reduction</i>			
300	Orange brown clay sand & gravel. Make-up deposit?	Site?	?
301	Light grey mortar. Fill of pit [305].	1.25m x 0.70m	0.13m
302	Dark red brown burnt sand clay? In-situ burning or fill of pit [305]?	1.55m x 0.90m	0.23m max
303	Dark grey ash? Fill of pit [305]?	0.65m x 0.30m	?
304	Mid grey brown clay sand silt & occasional charcoal. Fill of pit [305].	0.40m x 0.60m	0.10m
305	Steep concave sides & irregular base. Cut of pit.	1.95 x 0.90m	0.23m
306	Cream brown crushed mortar. Fill of unexcavated feature.	>0.90m x 0.35m	?
307	Dark brown clay silt. Fill of pit [318].	2.1m x >1.5m	0.24m
308	Dark brown clay silt. Fill of unexcavated feature.	0.65m x 0.40m	?
309	Light pink crushed mortar & brick. Deposit?	0.40m x 0.90m?	?
310	Grey brown ashy silt. Fill of unexcavated feature?	1.7m x 0.55m	?
311	Black ashy sand and limestone rubble. Cellar infill?	>1m x 0.70m	1.2m
312	Un-mortared limestone rubble foundation.	>1.3m x >0.8m	?
313	Mottled orange brown clay sand & clay & cobbles. Fill of unexcavated feature.	1.0m x >1.2m	?
314	Grey clay sand & gravel. Fill of unexcavated feature.	>0.60m x >0.55m	?
315	Grey clay sand & gravel. Fill of unexcavated feature.	>0.80m x >0.70m	?
316	Mid brown clay silt & cobbles. Fill of pit [318]	2.1m x ?	1.22m max
317	Light – dark grey ash. Primary fill of pit [318]	1.90m x ?	0.60m max
318	Steep straight sides & flat base. Cut of pit.	2.2m x >2m	1.35m
319	Orange brown clay. Fill of post-hole [320]	0.36m x ?	0.33m
320	Steep straight sides & concave base. Cut of post-hole.	0.36m x ?	0.33m
321	Purple and orange brown sandy gravel. In-situ burnt deposit?	0.73m x ?	0.14m
322	Cream brown mortar & cobbles. Fill of post-hole [323]	0.52m x ?	0.30m
323	Steep straight sides and concave base. Cut of post-hole.	0.52m x ?	0.30m
324	Stone and mortar. Possible foundation in [325]	0.48m x ?	0.56m
325	Steep straight sides & unseen base. Cut of possible foundation.	0.48m x ?	0.56m
326	Very dark grey clay sand silt. Fill of possible service trench [327]	>0.34m x ?	0.82m
327	Vertical straight sides & concave base. Cut of possible service trench.	>0.34m x ?	0.82m

328	Light brown clay sand & gravel. Fill of pit [329]	0.80m x ?	0.41m
329	Moderate concave sides & concave base. Cut of pit.	0.80m x ?	0.41m
330	Mid brown clay silt. Fill of pit/post-hole [332]	0.72m x ?	0.36m
331	Pink & black ash. Primary fill of pit/post-hole [332]	0.65m x ?	0.36m
332	Vertical straight sides & concave base. Cut of pit/post-hole.	0.72m x ?	0.36m

9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

9.1 *Drawing Register.*

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	Plan of TP1 & 2 and ground reduction features.	1:50	25-10-06	D.S.
2	Section of northern foundation trench	1:10	27-10-06	D.S.
3	Section of eastern foundation trench	1:20	27-10-06	D.S.
4	Plan of phase 2 & 3 trenches and southern foundation trench features	1:50	27-10-06	D.S.

10.0 Appendix 3 ~ Assessment of the Pottery, Ceramic Building Material, Fired Clay & Glass.

Alan Vince.

10.1 Summary.

A small collection of finds from an archaeological watching brief at Park Place, Knaresborough, West Yorkshire, undertaken by *On-Site Archaeology Ltd*, was submitted for identification and assessment (Site Code: OSA06 WB44). The finds date to the medieval and late medieval to early post-medieval periods.

10.2 Description.

10.2.1 Ceramic Building Material.

A single fragment of flat roof tile was recovered. The tile has a fabric which contains angular fragments of quartz, probably derived from the Millstone Grit, and rare red mudstone, of Millstone Grit or Coal Measures origin, in a fine red-firing sandy groundmass. It was probably produced from a Quaternary clay on the west side of the Vale of York and could therefore be of local origin. Flat roof tiles of this sort were in use from the mid 12th to the 17th century and in some areas their production continued even later.

10.2.2 Fired Clay.

A single fragment of fired clay was recovered. The fragment has two original, roughly smoothed, faces and is c.35mm thick. The fabric contains moderate fragments of heat altered limestone, angular quartz grains of probable Millstone Grit origin, moderate burnt out straw voids and a fine sandy groundmass. The fragment is almost completely oxidized with a light grey core. The colour and the alteration of the limestone inclusions suggests a firing temperature in excess of 850 degrees C, which raises the possibility that the object was deliberately fired rather than accidentally burnt in a domestic fire or conflagration. It may therefore be waste from some industrial process (a kiln, hearth or oven) or it may be a fragment of daub infill from a panel within a timber-framed building.

10.2.3 Glass.

Three fragments of light green window glass were recovered. They have patches of black decay with some areas of the original glass surviving to the surface. Their appearance suggests a late medieval or early post-medieval date (i.e. mid 14th to mid 17th century). However, before the later 16th century window glass would have been used only in relatively high status structures.

10.2.4 Pottery.

Seven fragments of pottery were recovered. All were of medieval date and are of Northern Gritty ware (NGR). This ware was produced at several centres on the western side of the

Vale of York, utilising weathered Carboniferous mudstones and a quartz sand almost entirely derived from Carboniferous sandstones. Detailed study of Northern Gritty ware from Ingantheorpe Manor on the A1 north of Wetherby, and its comparison with material from other sites, including Knaresborough, indicates that the Ingantheorpe manor pottery was probably made somewhere to the west of the site, the nearest source of suitable clays, and that the Knaresborough samples were probably produced in the same centre. Samples from medieval production centres at Baildon, Grantley, Follifoot and Winksley were analysed and were not the source of the Knaresborough and Ingantheorpe Manor pottery (Vince 2005).

The pottery consisted of fragments of jars, some with internal plain lead glaze, used for cooking and with sooting on the exterior, and jugs, with an external plain lead glaze. In some cases the glaze appears to have been applied together with a red iron-rich slip, or the vessels were red-slipped before glazing. This is also a feature of the Ingantheorpe Manor NGR pottery.

10.3 Assessment.

The finds come from two deposits, 307, which produced the fired clay and pottery, and 311, which produced the flat roof tile and the glass. Deposition dates of late 12th to early 14th century or later and mid 14th to mid 17th century could be assigned to these two deposits.

10.4 Further Work.

No further work is recommended on any of the finds although it would be useful for the author to retain a fragment of the fired clay for scientific analysis, since it is presumably produced from clay obtained locally.

Context	Cname	Subfabric	Description	Form	Part	Nosh	NoV	Weight	Condition	Use
307	NGR		Unglazed	JAR	BS	2	2	9		
307	NGR		Plain int gl	JAR	B	1	1	42		SOOTED EXT
307	NGR		Plain ext gl	JUG	BS	3	3	18		
307	FCLAY	Fine sandy groundmass; m lst	Oxid on both sides with light grey core; probably a panel infill	Daub	Bs	1	1	53		
311	MTIL	Saq	Moulding sand on base	Flat	Bs	1	1	73		
311	PMGL	Ltgr	Slightly different thicknesses; condition is consistent with late med/early post-med date	Wind	Bs	3	2	3	Moderately decayed	

10.5 Bibliography.

Vince, Alan (2005) *Characterisation Studies of locally-produced Wares from the A1, near Wetherby*. AVAC Reports 2004/54 Lincoln, Alan Vince Archaeology Consultancy.