

**Nursery Gardens  
Thirsk  
North Yorkshire  
SE 43130 81950**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure List	2
Plate List	2
Non-Technical Summary	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Site Description	4
3. Historical and Archaeological Background	4
4. Aims and Objectives	5
5. Methodology	5
6. Results	6
7. Conclusions	7
8. Bibliography	7
<b>Appendices</b>	
1. Context Listing	13
2. Drawing Archive Listing	13
3. Photographic Archive Listing	13
4. Project Team Details	14
5. Written Scheme of Works	15

<b>Figure List</b>	<b>Page</b>
1. Site Location. Scale 1:50000.	8
2. Area of Development. Scale 1:1250	9
3. Extract from 1856 First Edition OS map. Scale1:10560	10

### **Plate List**

1. General View of Site. Facing South-west.	11
2. View of Drain Trench. Facing East.	11
3. View of Drain Trench. Facing North-west.	12
4. Detail of Drain Trench. Facing North-west.	12

**Nursery Gardens  
Thirsk  
North Yorkshire  
SE 43130 81950**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

*Non Technical Summary*

An Archaeological Recording Brief was conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd at Nursery Gardens, Thirsk, North Yorkshire (SE 43130 81950) during January 2007. The work involved monitoring the groundworks associated with the residential re-development of the site.

*No archaeological features or deposits were encountered during the Watching Brief.*

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief that was conducted on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007 by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on a plot of land Nursery Gardens, Thirsk, North Yorkshire, (SE 43130 81950, Figs.1 and 2). The work was undertaken in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to a Planning Application Consent and involved monitoring groundworks associated with the residential development of the site..
- 1.2 The Watching Brief was designed to provide an appropriate level of recording for archaeological remains, deposits or finds that might be affected by the development, following the archaeology policy issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment contained in *Planning Policy Guidance 16 'Archaeology and Planning' (PPG 16)*.
- 1.3 The site code for the project was MAP 07.02.07.
- 1.4 All work was funded by Mr. T. Watson.

- 1.5 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No. AL 50453A.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The site covers an area of approximately 36m x 37m and is situated within the town of Thirsk, to the west of the Cod Beck, at SE 43130 81950. It is bounded to the east by the Cod Beck, the north by residential properties and the to the west by Nursery Gardens.
- 2.2 The site lies on soils of the Newport 1 Association, which are characterised by deep well-drained sandy soils over a geology of glaciofluvial drift (Mackney 1984, p. 249).
- 2.3 At the time of the Watching Brief, the site had been cleared of vegetation and was covered by a layer of hardcore (Pl. 1).

## **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 The name Thirsk derives for the Old Swedish *Thraesk*, meaning lake or fen (Ekwall 1974). The town is first mentioned in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Tresche*. There were two manors at the time of Domesday, one held by the king and the other by Hugh FitzBaldrick (Williams & Martin 2003). The twin manors are reflected in the growth of the town, which developed as Old Thirsk, to the east of the Cod Beck, and New Thirsk, to the west of the river.
- 3.2 Roger de Mowbray's charter of foundation of the Priory of Newburgh suggests that a borough had been founded at Old Thirsk by 1145 AD (Bulmer 1990). A market was established on St James' Green, to the east of the current development, but it is thought that the establishment of Thirsk Castle on the opposite side of Cod Beck stimulated the development of New Thirsk, the growing economic importance of which was reflected in change of focus of the market to its present location in Market Place.

3.3 The 1856 First Edition Ordnance Survey map (Fig. 3) shows the site as open land or gardens.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

4.1 The aims of the Archaeological Recording Brief were to record and recover archaeological remains, which could be affected by proposed development, and to prepare a report summarising the results of the work.

#### **5. Methodology**

5.1 Due to the position of the site next to the Cod Beck, it was decided to raise the existing ground level by the importation of modern aggregates. The foundations of the new buildings were to be supported on driven piles and , due to the raising of ground level, would not impact on any sub-surface archaeological features or deposits. Consequently, the monitored groundworks only consisted of the excavation of a large drain trench, situated along the northern boundary of the site.

5.2 All excavations were undertaken by a 360<sup>0</sup> mini mechanical excavator, operating under close archaeological supervision.

5.3 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).

5.4 All deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets, which are compatible with the MoLAS recording system.

5.5 A photographic record of the monitored groundworks was maintained throughout the Watching Brief on a digital camera.

## **6. Results**

- 6.1. Two manholes and a connecting drain trench were excavated along the northern boundary of the site. The manholes each measured 1.20m x 1.20m and were excavated to a mean depth of 1m, whilst the connecting drain trench measured 21m in length and was also excavated to a depth of 1m (Pls 2 to 4)
  
- 6.2. Undisturbed deposits of naturally-formed silty clay (context 1002) were seen in the base of both manholes and the connecting pipe trenches at a depth of 1m below existing ground level. Situated immediately above Deposit 1002 was a deposit of natural sandy silt subsoil (context 1001). Deposit 1001 was sealed by silty loam topsoil (context 1000).

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1. No archaeological features were encountered during the Watching Brief, reflecting the fact that the site has been utilised as pastoral or agricultural land on the margins of the town.

## **8. Bibliography**

Mackney, D. 1983 Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1: Northern England. Soil et al. Survey of England and Wales.



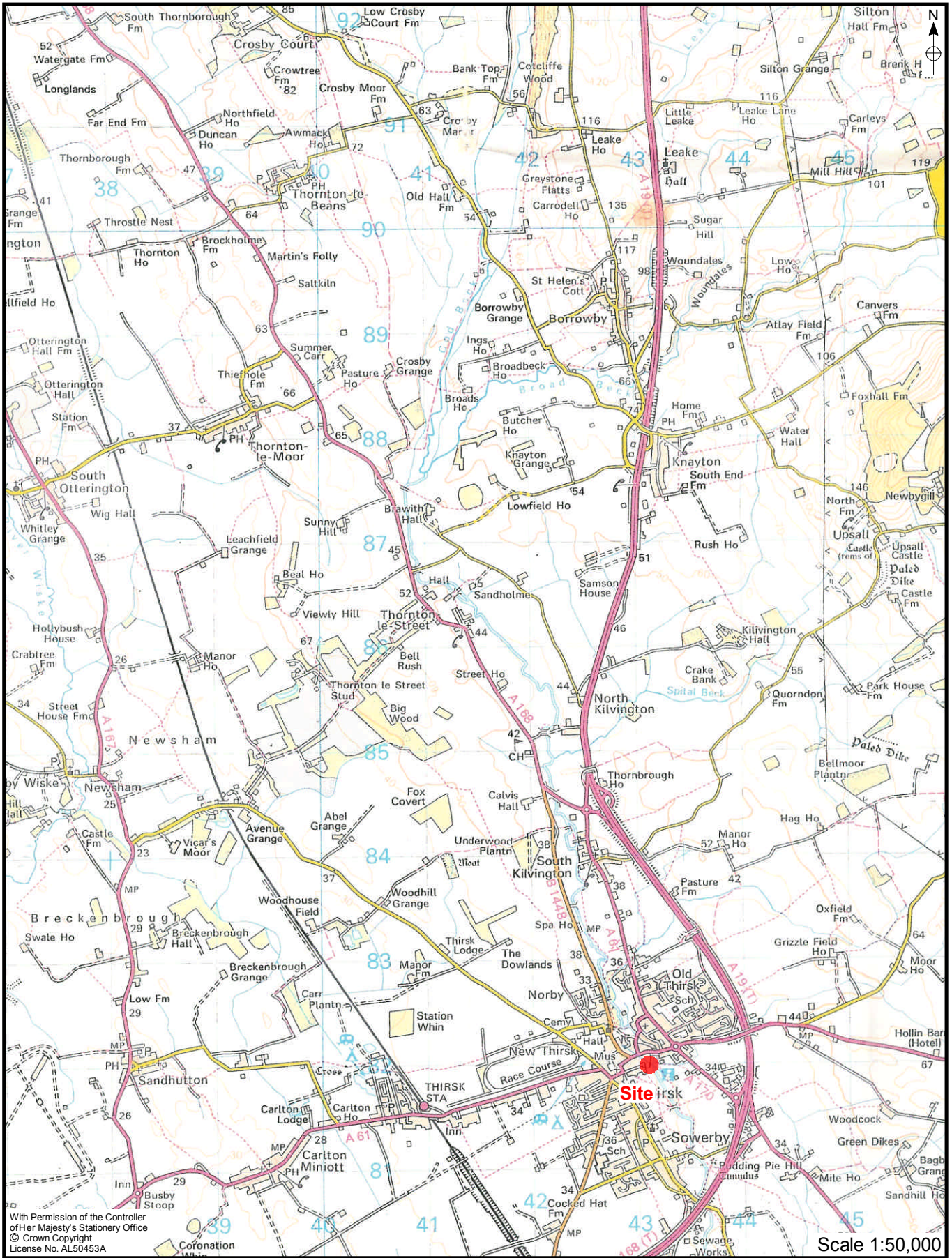


Figure 1. Site Location



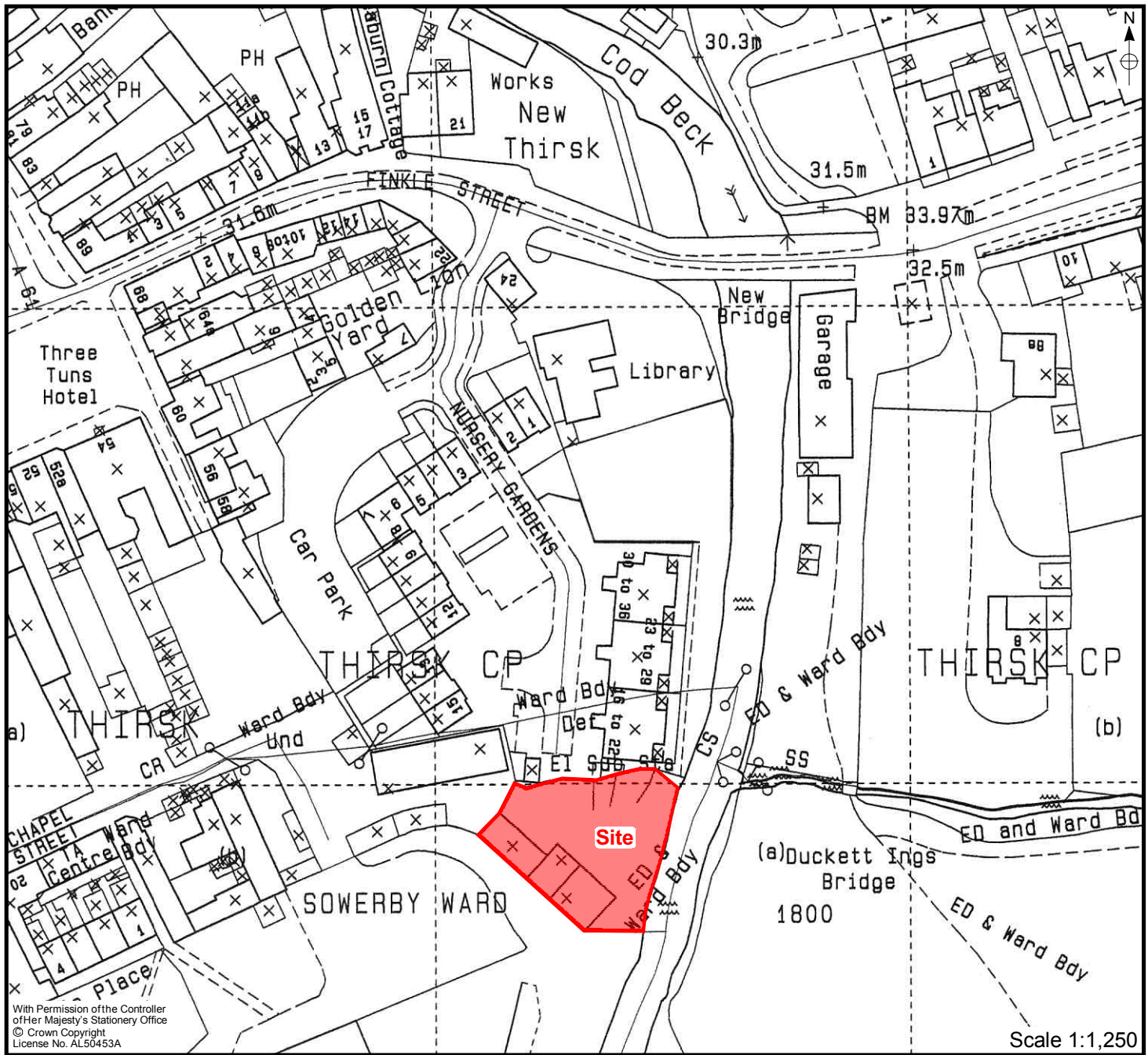


Figure 2. Area of Development



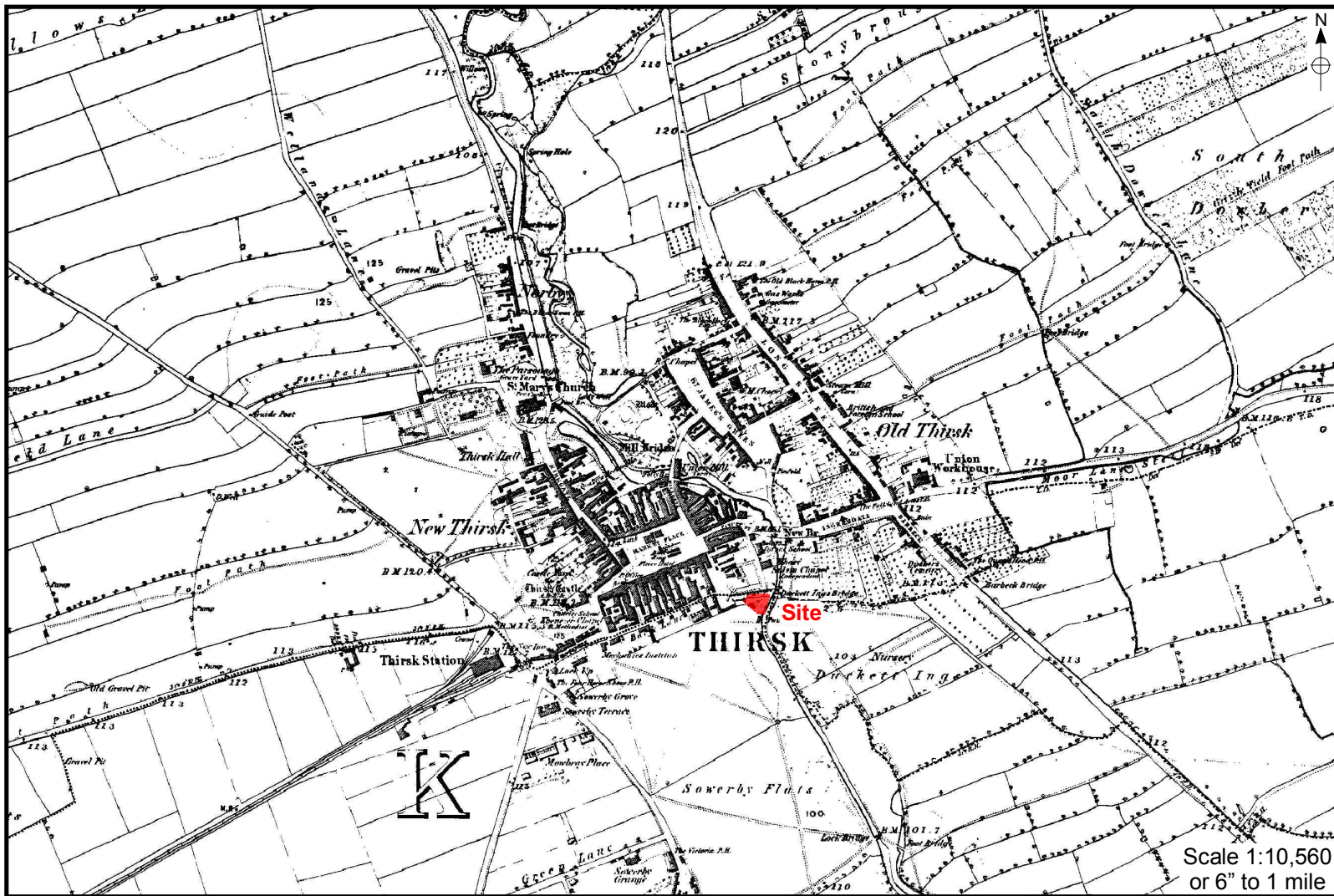


Figure 3. Extract from the 1856 First Edition Ordnance Survey Map



**Plate 1.** General View of Site. Facing South West



**Plate 2.** View of Drain Trench. Facing East





**Plate 3.** View of Drain Trench. Facing North West



**Plate 4.** Detail of Drain Trench. Facing North West

## APPENDIX 1

Nursery Gardens, Thirsk 07.02.07

### Context Listing

Context	Description
1000	Deposit 10YR 5/2, silty loam, topsoil
1001	Deposit 10YR 3/3; sandy silt, subsoil
1002	Deposit 10YR 5/3; silty clay, natural

## APPENDIX 2

### Drawing Archive Listing

Drawing	Scale	Type	Description
1	1:200	Plan	Overall plan of watching brief area

## APPENDIX 3

### Photographic Archive Listing

#### Digital Camera

Frame	Description	Scale	Facing
1	Overall photograph of site	N/A	South west
2	General view of site	N/A	South-west
3	View of drain trench	1 x 1m	East
4	View of drain trench	1 x 1m	North-west
5	View of drain trench	1 x 1m	East
6	Manhole 2	N/A	West
7	General working shot	N/A	East
8	General working shot	N/A	East

## APPENDIX 4

### Project Team Details

#### Fieldwork

Charles Rickaby

Nigel Cavanagh

#### Post-excavation

Nigel Cavanagh, Charles Rickaby *report*

Charles Rickaby *Appendices*

Nigel Cavanagh *editorial*

Dave Knight *CAD and illustrations*



## STANDARD WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI) FOR LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING (“WATCHING BRIEF”)

### Nursery Gardens, Thirsk

- 1 The purpose of the work is to record and recover archaeological remains which are:
  - a) affected by proposed development only to a limited and clearly defined extent,
  - b) not available or susceptible to standard area excavation techniques, or
  - c) of limited importance or potential.The work will not require the construction programme or development to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.
- 2 The WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements needed to comply with an archaeological planning condition or obligation. The scheme does **not** comprise a full specification or Bill of Quantities, and the County Council makes no warranty that the works are fully or exactly described. No work on site should commence until the implementation of the scheme is the subject of a standard ICE Conditions of Contract for Archaeological Investigation or similar agreement between the Developer and the Archaeologist.
- 3 The Archaeologist will notify by letter or e-mail the County Archaeology Service ([archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk)) and English Heritage at least 10 working days in advance of the start of work on site.
- 4 The removal of overburden (that is vegetation, turf, loose stones, rubble, made ground, Tarmac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) will be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.
- 5 Removal of overburden by machine will be undertaken using a back-acting excavator fitted with toothless or ditching bucket only. Where materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils (B horizons) or deep, uniform fills of features may also be removed by back-acting excavator but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with archaeological supervision. Bulldozers or wheeled scraper buckets should not be used to remove overburden above archaeological deposits. Where reinstatement is required, topsoil should be kept separate from other soil materials.
- 6 Metal detecting within the development area, including the scanning of topsoil and spoil heaps, should only be permitted subject to archaeological supervision and recording such that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.

- 7** Where structures, finds, soil features and layers of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators notice archaeological remains, they should immediately tell the Archaeologist. The sampling of deposits for palaeo-environmental evidence should be a standard consideration, and arrangements should be made to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.
- 8** Heavy plant should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until they have been recorded, and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Sterile subsoils (C horizons) and parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision. Where reinstatement is required, subsoils should be backfilled first and topsoil last.
- 9** Upon completion of fieldwork, samples should be processed and evaluated, and all finds identified, assessed, spot-dated, properly stored, and subject to investigative conservation as needed. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. The Archaeologist should arrange for either the County Archaeologist or an independent post-excavation specialist to inspect the archive before making arrangements for the transfer of the archive to an appropriate museum or records office.
- 10** A summary report should be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should contain planning or administrative details of the project, a summary of works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context where appropriate, and catalogues of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings, roads and field boundaries. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally scaled plans, sections, and photographs. Where few or no finds are made, it may be acceptable to provide the report in the form of a letter with plans attached.
- 11** Copies of the summary report should be provided to the client(s), the County Heritage Section (HER), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works are on or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage. A licence should be granted to the accepting museum and the County Council to use the documentation arising from the work for its statutory functions and to give to third parties as an incidental to those functions.
- 12** Upon completion of the work, the Archaeologist should make their work accessible to the wider research community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>). Submission of data to OASIS does not discharge the planning requirements for the Archaeologist to notify the County Archaeology Service of the details of the work and to provide the Historic Environment Record (HER) with a summary report on the work.
- 13** Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR) information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure

might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'. Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. The Archaeologist should inform the client of EIR requirements, and ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.

- 14 The County Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible of the discovery of any unexpected archaeological remains, or changes in the programme of ground works on site. Any significant changes in the archaeological work should be specified in a variation to the WSI to be approved by the planning authority. If human remains are encountered, they should be exhumed subject to the conditions of a Home Office licence.