

NYCC HER	
SNY	12029
ENY	4225
CNY	
Parish	2152
Rec'd	

Alison Clarke
Archaeological Consultant

18 Ash Grove, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL6 1RQ
Tel: 01609 776501 Fax: 01609 779968

EVALUATION REPORT

AND

SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL

WORK

AT

2a AND 4, CASTLEGATE, THIRSK

ALISON CLARKE

JAN 1996

PARISH 2152
E 4225
S 12029

EVALUATION REPORT AND SCHEME OF WORKS FOR 2A-4 CASTLEGATE, THIRSK

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Agreement made in pursuance of Section 106 of the 1990 Act regarding archaeological work at 2a - 4 Castlegate, Thirsk (fig 1), an archaeologist was appointed to conduct an investigation of the premises and to evaluate the archaeological potential of the site.

Since the Agreement was made, complete demolition of the building was decided against, and a programme of underpinning the existing foundations of the main building was started. The archaeologist was present on site from the beginning of this work to record and evaluate any archaeological features and finds.

The results of this work is outlined below.

BUILDING WORK (fig 2)

1. An archaeological watching brief was carried out on ground disturbance work involved in attempt to underpin the rear wall of the main building. This involved a trench outside the rear wall approximately 80 cm wide and 120 cm long (fig 2, a), and another opposite it on the inside of the rear wall approximately 50 cm wide and 125 cm long (fig 2, b). These revealed the footings of the wall which consisted of two or three courses of brick laid directly into the soil. The fill removed from these trenches was a brown silty clay with brick and tile fragments and occasional charcoal flecks, giving way at approximately 120 cm below the floor surface to a grey-brown wet fine silt or mud with occasional charcoal flecks. The trenches were dug to a depth of approximately 2 metres in an attempt to find good ground, and then abandoned.

A further trench inside the rear wall (fig 2, c) was excavated to a depth of 95 cm from the floor surface, revealing a similar silty brown clay as that in the other two trenches.

2. In the front half of the main building, which is cellared to a depth of 1.75 metres below the floor surface, the brick floor was removed in two places, against the rear wall and the front wall of the cellar. Trenches approximately 50 - 60 cm square (fig 2, d and e) were excavated to a depth of 40 - 43 cm, revealing clean orangey brown clay and sand beneath the brick floor in both places.

3. Outside the main building, within the rear extension, two trial holes were excavated through the concrete (fig 2, f and g), revealing cobbles beneath the concrete which overlay disturbed brown silty sand to a depth of up to 50 cm, below which was clean orangey brown sand.

4. Within the main building, a section of the front wall of the cellar was removed in order to replace it with a strengthened wall. Behind the bricks was a solid section of the ground beneath the footpath of Castlegate. This appeared to be completely comprised of infill, most probably from the trench dug when the wall was originally built. A new foundation trench was dug beneath the removed wall (fig 2, h), and this cut into clean orange silty clays and sands; the natural subsoil.

Plan to accompany Section 106 Agreement
21/93/152/0435 C

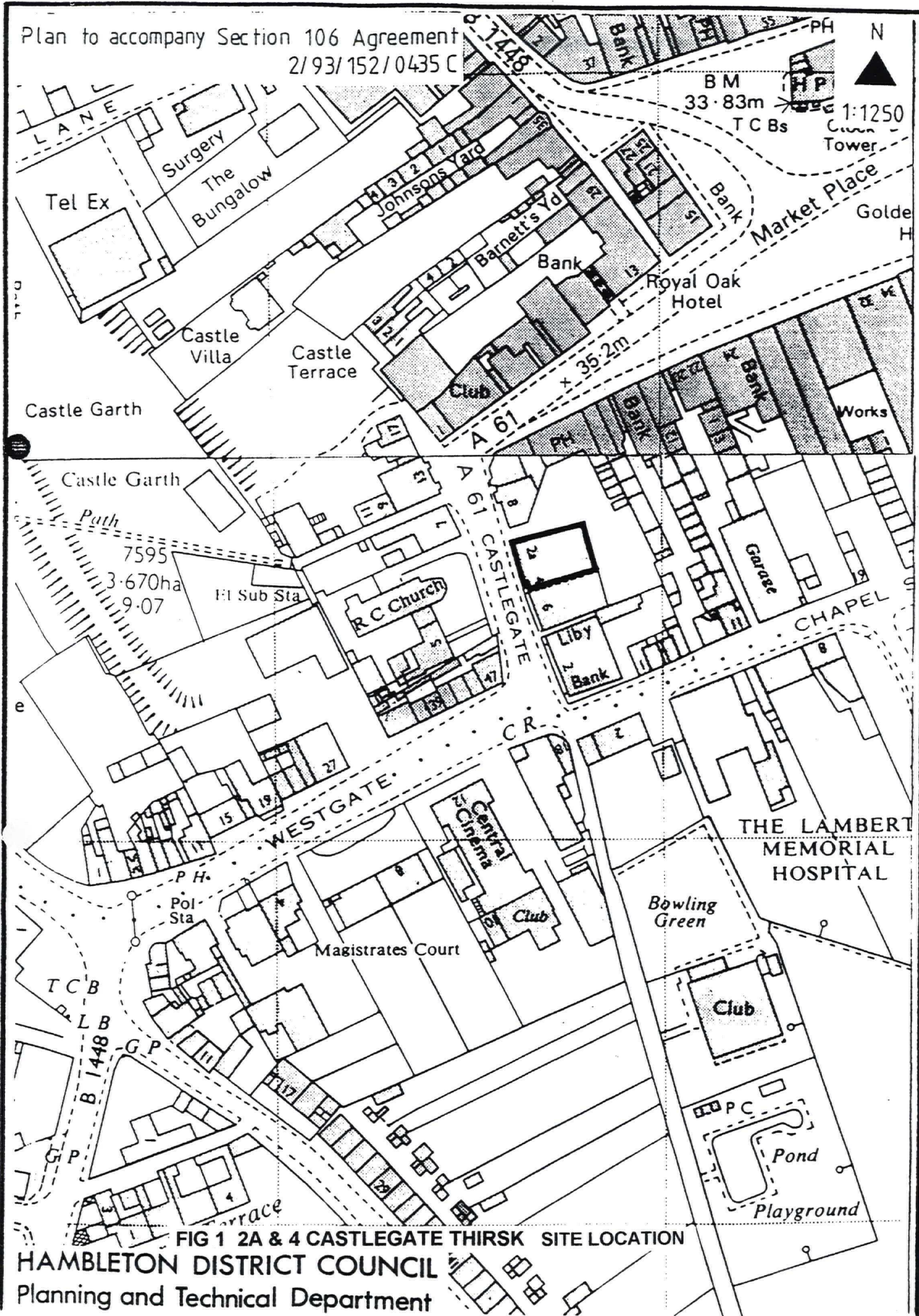
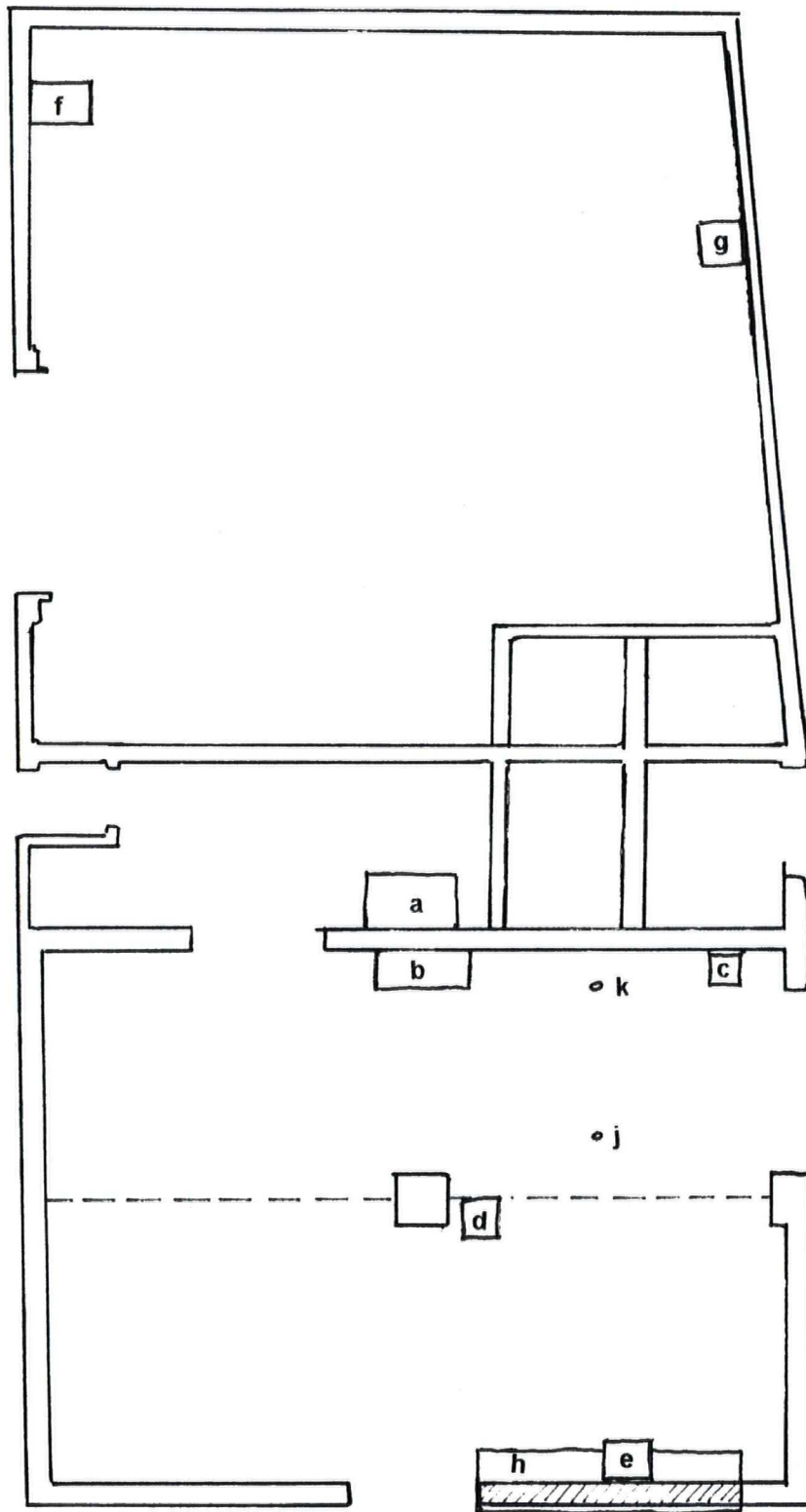


FIG 1 2A & 4 CASTLEGATE THIRSK SITE LOCATION

HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL
Planning and Technical Department



SCALE 1:100

FIG 2 2A & 4 CASTLEGATE THIRSK WORK COMPLETED

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK

1. The results of the above works were recorded as they progressed, and a trial trench across the rear half of the main building was proposed in order to evaluate the archaeological potential of this area and to determine the extent and depth of disturbed ground between the rear of the cellars and the rear wall of the building.

2. Prior to the excavation of this trench, a soil auger was used to gauge the type and depths of deposits across the rear half of the building where it is not cellared. Two points were chosen, one close to the rear wall and one towards the back wall of the cellar (fig 2, j and k). Both produced a fine brown wet silty clay beneath initial drier brown silty sand, with waterlogging increasing rapidly from a depth of approximately 1.5 metres. Below 1.8 metres the hole was closing up after each extraction of the auger because of the wetness of the soil. The removed soil was all disturbed ground, containing occasional flecks of charcoal and brick fragments, but with no other occupation debris.

CONCLUSIONS (Part 2ii of the Section 106 Agreement)

The work so far undertaken has shown that there are considerable deposits of made ground beneath the building. The poor quality of the ground towards the rear of the building has meant that underpinning, as originally planned, is not possible, and provides an explanation for the subsidence from which it is suffering. Instead, the rear and sides of the main building are to be piled to provide support. This will involve less excavation than underpinning, although the opportunity to observe any archaeological levels is more limited. In view of the lack of archaeological material from the rear half of the interior of the building, as shown by the auger, plans to cut a trench across it have been abandoned.

The deep silty deposits towards the rear of the building seem to indicate a natural depression, either a pond or a stream, which has gradually filled up. The date of the infill is hard to gauge, but a fragment of probably medieval floor tile from within the grey silt would indicate that it was under way in the medieval period. A plan of Thirsk in 1796 (fig 3) shows no indication of water on the site, although Cod Beck to the east is clearly shown. By 1843, the Tithe Map (fig 4) shows a building on the site which may be the current building, by which time the ground must have been roughly at current levels.

It should be the aim of further archaeological work on the site to determine as far as possible the extent and nature of the below ground deposits over the whole site, so as to build up a picture of former ground levels. Any previous use of the site should also be recorded.

BUILDING WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN (fig 5)

1. A strip of ground around the rear wall, on both sides, is to be hand excavated to a depth of approximately 80 cm below the interior floor surface, 50 cm wide inside the building and 80 cm outside (fig 5, A). The underpinning of the side walls will be carried out from inside, driving through the existing brick walls of the cellars and cellar steps which run down from the rear corners of the building. This will involve driving piles down vertically in pairs as indicated on fig 5.

to the enlarged sketch

... ..
... ..
... ..



FIG 3 2A & 4 CASTLEGATE, THIRSK 1792 PLAN

OF THIRSK

1843.



FIG 4 2A & 4 CASTLEGATE, THIRSK 1843 TITHE MAP

2. The remainder of the front wall of the cellars will be removed in the same way as that already done, and a new foundation trench dug (fig 5, B).

3. The ground around the central pillar of the building will be removed to provide new foundations (fig 5, C).

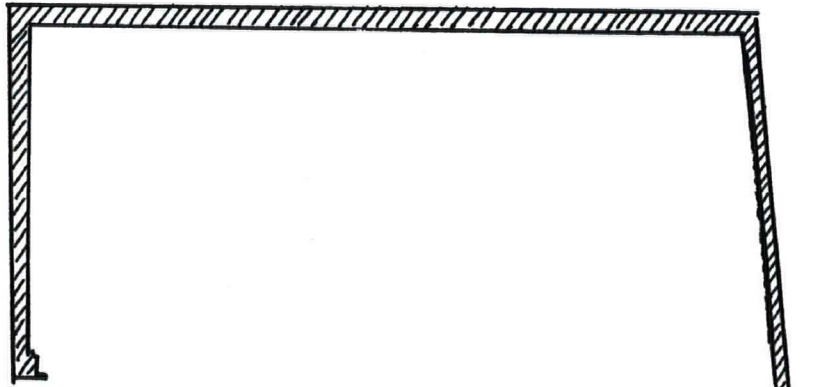
4. The existing extensions to the east of the main building will be entirely demolished, and a new building constructed. This will reach to the limits of the site, and will involve the machine cutting of foundation trenches.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN (Part 2iv - vi of Section 106 Agreement)

1. All of the above works, and any others which involve ground disturbance (such as service trenches etc.) will be observed, and any archaeological features and finds recorded.

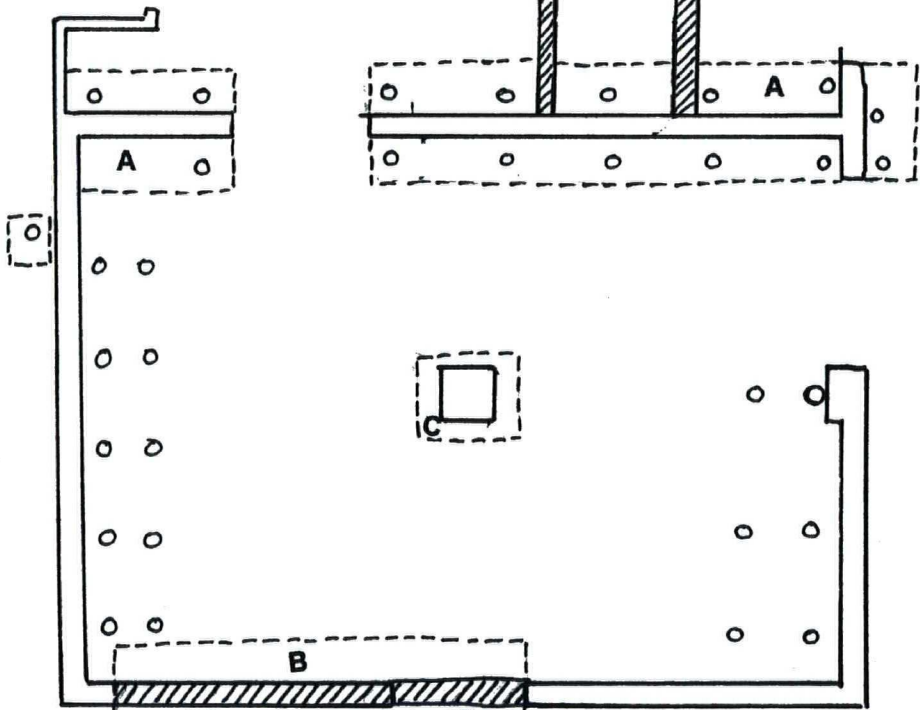
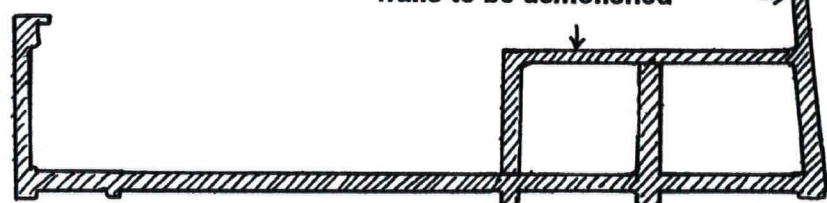
6. Subsequent to field work, all finds will be processed, and observations and findings will be recorded in a report, including maps and photographs as appropriate, in accordance with the North Yorkshire County Archaeology Section Guidelines for Watching Briefs (copy included in Appendix 1).

Alison Clarke 24 January 1996



SCALE 1:100

walls to be demolished



cellar wall to be demolished

FIG 5 2A & 4 CASTLEGATE, THIRSK WORK TO BE UNDERTAKEN

APPENDIX 1

NYCC STANDARD WATCHING BRIEF

1. The aim of the archaeological watching brief is to enable recording and recovery of archaeological remains which are a) affected by proposed development only to a very limited and clearly defined extent, b) inaccessible by standard area excavation techniques, or c) of limited importance or potential. The watching brief should not require construction work within the development site to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.
2. Contractors removing overburden (that is vegetation, turf, loose stones, rubble, modern sterile fill materials, Tarmac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) shall be supervised by the Archaeologist undertaking the brief.
3. Overburden should be removed by machine, using a back-acting excavator fitted with a toothless, ditching or grading bucket only. Where overburden is exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils and other soil materials below the overburden may be removed by machine but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with constant archaeological supervision.
4. 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.
5. The contractors shall inform the Archaeologist of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.
6. Where structures, soil features and finds of archaeological interests are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist shall be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, and where appropriate hand excavate, sample and record these features and finds. Heavy plant or excavators shall not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Where archaeological remains are observed by contractors or plant operators, they shall immediately notify the Archaeologist.
7. Upon completion of fieldwork, samples shall be processed and all finds shall be cleaned, identified, assessed, spot dated, and properly stored. A field archive shall be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections and photographs. Arrangements should be made for the transfer of the archive to a museum or records office.
8. A summary report shall be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report shall contain planning details about the site, a summary of the works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context, and a catalogue of finds, features and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped and respect to nearby buildings and roads. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally scaled plans, sections, or 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.
9. Copies of the summary report should be sent to the developer and the County SMR.