



## YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST – WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

<b>SITE ADDRESS</b>	Willerby Wold Farm, Fordon Lane, Staxton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire		
<b>CLIENT NAME</b>	Oliver Sutton, Willerby Wold Farm		
<b>YAT PROJECT #</b>	5139	<b>YAT REPORT #</b>	2008/37
<b>MUSEUM ACCESSION #</b>	n/a	<b>GRID REFERENCE</b>	TA 0123 7635
<b>PLANNING REFERENCE #</b>	07/00109/FUL	<b>AAI OPS NOTICE #</b>	n/a
<b>ARCHIVE LOCATION</b>	York Archaeological Trust		
<b>DATE OF VISIT</b>	16 <sup>th</sup> April - 08 <sup>th</sup> August 2008		

### INTRODUCTION

A watching brief was maintained at the above site from April to August 2008, during which ground works were observed in advance of the re-development of a barn complex into artists' studios and gallery space. The area is of archaeological interest due to its location in a range of significant prehistoric landscapes, especially of the Neolithic, features of which include a nearby long barrow and clusters of burial mounds (Stoertz, 21-23) many of which attracted 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian interest and were extensively studied after the Second World War (Manby, King and Vyner, 44) but which continue to produce new information, particularly via aerial photography (Stoertz, 7).

### RESULTS

An existing 19<sup>th</sup> century brick-built, two storey barn, measuring 6m x 16m, aligned east-west and with a later 6m x 27m single-storey brick, timber and steel-sheet extension, was substantially modified during these works. This involved the demolition and re-building of the extension, during which new strip-footings were excavated to a depth of 0.75m BGL. Additionally, the ground level within the brick-built barn was reduced by 0.30m and three former bays were filled in, also necessitating new strip-footings. An area 45m long by 5m wide immediately to the south of the barns was reduced by 0.30m in advance of a disabled access road and small car park. To the south-east of the barns, a larger area was similarly reduced for the main car-park spaces. Finally, ground works to insert new drains and a geo-thermal heating system were undertaken in the paddock to the east of the barns.

Following the demolition of the extension, new strip footings measuring 0.70m wide and 0.75m deep were observed in two 27m long trenches aligned east-west from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, and set 6m apart (figure 2, plates 5 & 6). Natural, in the form of drift geology, comprising very compact orange-brown slightly sandy silty clay with moderate flint fragments, was encountered at around 0.40m BGL. This was the earliest observed deposit except in one small area of the northern trench where it was measured at 0.30m thick and overlaid a layer of compact crushed chalk and flint nodules, interpreted as a glacial feature rather than as an outcrop of solid geology. Above these natural deposits were isolated areas of compact, very light brown gravely chalk shale, within a general layer of compact mid brown silty clay with very frequent flint fragments, interpreted as an agricultural subsoil with modern disturbances. These deposits ranged in thickness from 0.20m to 0.40m and were overlain by a 0.25m thick deposit of compact, mid grey slightly sandy silty clay with frequent fragments of flint and occasional fragments of brick and tile, interpreted as a former topsoil with some areas of possible yard make-up deposits pre-dating the steel and timber barn extension. No deposits or features of archaeological interest were observed.

<b>COMPLETED BY</b>	I Milsted	<b>CHECKED BY</b>	M. Stockwell	<b>PREPARED</b>	29/06/2009
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				<b>PAGE</b>	<b>1 of 5</b>



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During demolition and general ground reduction works around the barn nothing of archaeological significance was encountered (plates 1 & 2). A 0.15m thick dark brown-grey compact sandy clayey silt comprised the topsoil, which overlay a 0.10m thick layer of compact mid brown silty clay which contained very frequent fragments of chalk and flint, and moderate quantities of modern brick. This was interpreted as a levelling deposit associated with previous groundworks, with some of the building material possibly deriving from previous alterations to the barn complex. This layer over lay a very compact, light brown, silty clay which had fewer chalk and brick fragments but contained large sherds of modern glass and some twentieth century pottery fragments. This was interpreted as a subsoil, with modern material compacted into it, again relating to previous building work. Natural deposits were not encountered during ground reduction, but a sequence very similar to that seen during the strip footing excavation was observed when a geothermically heated water system was installed in the adjoining field.

Within the 19<sup>th</sup> century barn, originally a granary, a ground reduction of 0.35m exposed the top two courses of a stepped brick footing for the exterior walls (plate 3). No construction cut was discernable at the depth, but it is likely to have been shallow and of trench-built form. The earliest observed soil deposit, probably representing the pre-barn surface, was a 0.10m thick, compact, mid yellow-brown sandy clay with fragments of chalk and very occasional brick and tile, punctuated by occasional irregular areas of loose, dark brown silty clay with frequent chalk and brick inclusions, interpreted as the result of root action and/or tree removal. This deposit was over-lain by a probable sub-floor make-up comprising a 0.10m thick layer of compacted chalk-shale in a matrix of grey-brown sandy clay with very frequent brick and tile fragments. This deposit sealed the barn wall footings and was in turn overlain by a 0.10m thick layer of very loose brown soil, interpreted as a disturbance deposit associated with the removal of the concrete floor. Strip footings excavated between the frontal bays in advance of walling-up revealed further stepped brick footings but no other features of archaeological interest were observed (plate 4).

All notes and photographs held by YAT.

### Sources

Manby, TG, King, A and Vyner, BE, 'The Neolithic and Bronze Ages: a Time of Early Agriculture' in Manby, Moorhouse and Ottaway (eds), *The Archaeology of Yorkshire*, (YAS) (Leeds, 2003)

Stoertz, C, *Ancient Landscapes of the Yorkshire Wolds*, (RCHME) (Swindon, 1997)

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				<b>PAGE</b>	<b>2 of 5</b>

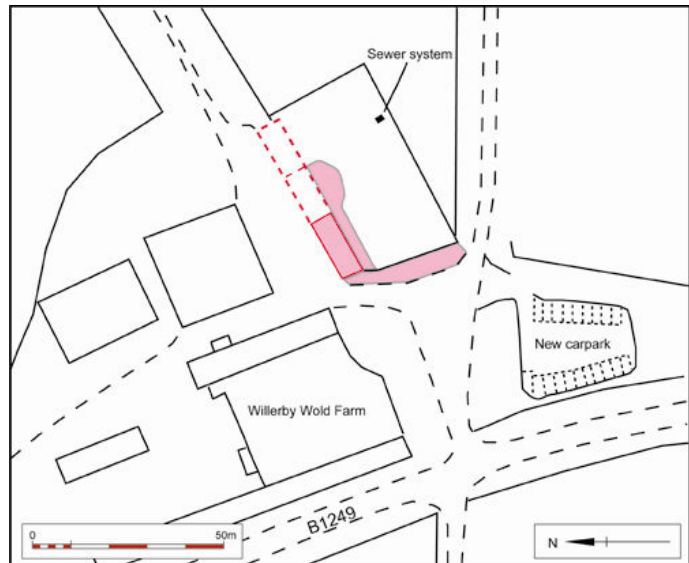


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**Figure 1** Site location



- Existing farm buildings
- Area of ground reduction
- Rennovated barn
- Demolished and re-built barns

**Figure 2** Site plan, derived from developer's drawing

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			<b>PAGE</b>	3 of 5	



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**Plate 1** View of barn looking north-west during exterior ground reduction



**Plate 2** Final ground reduction behind barn, looking north-east

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				<b>PAGE</b>	<b>4 of 5</b>



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**Plates 3 & 4** Exposed wall footings inside barn, after ground reduction and in strip footing



**Plates 5 & 6** Northern and southern strip footings during excavation, looking east

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				<b>PAGE</b>	<b>5 of 5</b>