

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording
at
Basin Howe Farm
Sawdon

Planning Reference: 07/02513/FL
National Grid Reference: SE 9205 8684
Site Code: WB2009.030

for

Mr and Mrs Mullin

Watching Brief Report Number: 1124
August 2009

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D. P. Rawson, August 2009

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology during groundwork associated with the partial rebuilding of redundant farm buildings at Basin Howe Farm, Sawdon, North Yorkshire, YO13 9EB.

No archaeological features were observed during the programme of works, though a very small assemblage of worked flint was collected.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology, on behalf of Mr and Mrs Mullin, during groundwork associated with the partial rebuilding of redundant farm buildings at Basin Howe Farm, Sawdon, North Yorkshire, YO13 9EB (*Figure 1, Plate 1*).

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The development site is located to the north of the village of Sawdon and is surrounded by agricultural land.

2. Archaeological Background

Immediately to the north of Basin Howe farmhouse is Basin Howe round barrow (National Monument No: 35431). Round barrows are funerary monuments dating from the Late Neolithic period to the Late Bronze Age, with most examples belonging to the period 2400 – 1500 BC. The barrow has an earth and stone mound which stands up to 3m high and has a maximum diameter of 32m. The mound was originally surrounded by a ditch with an outer bank. The ditch has become largely filled in over the years by soil slipping from the mound and the bank has been levelled, so that they are only visible as earthwork features in the north-west quadrant, where the ditch survives up to 5m wide and 0.20m deep and the bank survives up to 3m wide and 0.20m high. The barrow has been disturbed in the past by insertion of a stone-built shed into the southern side of the mound and by the construction on top of the mound of a brick platform to support a water tank.

Despite limited disturbance, Basin Howe round barrow is in a very good state of preservation. Unlike many barrows in this area it does not appear to have been excavated, and will therefore have undisturbed archaeological deposits in the centre relating to the primary burials, which are less likely to survive in the part-excavated barrows. Significant information about the original form of the barrow and the burials placed within it will be preserved. Evidence for earlier land use and the contemporary environment will also survive beneath the barrow mound and outer bank, and within the buried ditch.

This is the only barrow on the eastern Tabular Hills which is known to have been constructed with an outer bank and as such is a rare and important example which illustrates the diversity of burial practice within the area. It lies within an area where there are many other burial monuments as well as a concentration of prehistoric land boundaries. The relationships between these monuments are important for understanding the division and use of the landscape for social, ritual and agricultural purposes during the later prehistoric period.

3. Methodology

The work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology, in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service, Date: January 2006, Planning Reference: 07/02315/FL, in response to a condition placed upon the planning application. The condition stated:

‘No development shall take place on the site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved by the local Planning Authority.’

(Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Planning Decision No 07/02513/FL)

The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of the digging of foundations trenches and service trenches pertaining to the reinstatement of demolished redundant farm buildings and associated services. A series of eleven visits were made to the site between the 27th April and the 19th August 2009.

Any exposed areas of subsoil and lower stratigraphic units were examined for archaeological deposits. The excavated dimensions of the foundation trenches were recorded, as were the depth sequences of any exposed stratigraphy. Where archaeological deposits/features were identified, context numbers were assigned and detailed descriptions were made, plans and sections were drawn and a photographic record was maintained.

Archaeological artefacts found during the fieldwork were bagged according to their context, and returned to Humber Field Archaeology for further specialist analysis.

The archive will be deposited with Scarborough Museum.

4. Results

The round barrow

Though the round barrow was not affected by this programme of works, it was thought worthwhile to conduct a brief inspection of the structure. The barrow is currently ringed by trees and shrubs, and these particularly obscure views of it from the south, east and west. The mound is most clearly visible from the north (*Plate 2*). The trees and shrubs did, in places, encroach upon it (*Plate 3*). The mound is cut into on its south side by a 19th-century blacksmith's shop, and a series of brick sleeper walls support a water tank that is set atop the mound.

Topsoil stripping

The very dark reddish brown topsoil (1001) was partially stripped (to a depth of 0.25m) from an area measuring around 16m from north to south and 10m from east to west (160m²), in the south-west corner of the site (*Figure 2, Plate 4*). No archaeological features were observed in the stripped area.

Excavation for septic tank 1

Though no archaeological features were observed during the partial topsoil strip, it was felt worthwhile to monitor further excavation in the area since not all the topsoil had been removed. An area measuring around 3.50m from north to south and 2.70m from east to west, was excavated to a depth of 2.90m (*Figure 2, Plate 5*). Throughout the base of the excavated area there was a layer at least 2.45m thick of pale greyish yellow, weathered calcareous sandstone (1003). Above this there was a 0.30m thick layer of orange brown sandy clay (1002), topped by some 0.15m of (1001). No archaeological features were observed.

Building B foundation trenches

This farm building was partially demolished and the foundation trenches for the rebuild were some 9.70m long on the west side, 16.30m long on the east side, and 6.80m long on the south side (*Figure 2, Plate 6*). The trenches were 0.60m wide and up to 0.80m deep. No archaeological features were observed and there was a layer of (1002) at least 0.80m thick throughout the trenches – somewhat thicker than was viewed above.

Service trench from septic tank 1 to building B

This was 19.80m long, 0.40m wide and around 0.70m deep (*Figure 2*). (1003) was observed throughout the base of the trench, save near the junction with the building foundation trenches where it gave way to (1002).

Excavation for septic tank 2

An area measuring around 3.60m from east to west and 2.70m from north to south, was excavated to a depth of 2.80m (*Figure 2, Plate 7*). No archaeological features were observed and the stratigraphy was as described for excavation 1.

Service trench from septic tank 2 to building A

This 20m long trench was backfilled prior to being observed (*Figure 2*).

Following the excavation of the latter trench the programme of observation, investigation and recording was concluded.

5. The Finds

Lithics – Ruth Head. MA

Context (1000) U/S

Three flakes of local flint were collected from unstratified contexts. Two are complete. Two have plain striking platforms. Two have pronounced bulbs of percussion and one has a diffuse bulb. This implies that the flints have been removed from a core with a stone harder than the flint itself. One is a secondary flake and two are tertiary or inner removals. They are all of local flint readily available from this area. Two are recorticated showing signs of weathering and one is patinated suggesting its deposition within an iron-rich context, such as sands and gravels.

6. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of the North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

More subtle prehistoric landscape features may have been destroyed by the construction of the complex of farm buildings and the activities associated with them over the last two centuries or more. Nevertheless, that there may be potential for the uncovering of prehistoric features/finds in the locale, is evidenced by the small assemblage of worked flint recovered during this programme of works.

7. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to Mr and Mrs Mullins for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The work was carried out in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) prepared by the North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service. Site work was undertaken by N. G. Adamson and D. P. Rawson. The report was edited by D. Atkinson.

8. References

Guidelines for Finds Work The Institute of Field Archaeologists Finds Group
First Draft, 1991

Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2), English Heritage, 1991

Standard Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) for limited archaeological
recording (“Watching Brief”). North Yorkshire County Archaeology Service

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 **Context list**

(1000) U/S unstratified

(1001) Very dark reddish brown topsoil, up to 0.45m thick

(1002) Orange brown sandy clay, 0.30m to at least 0.80m thick

(1003) Pale greyish yellow, weathered calcareous sandstone, at least 2.45m thick

Appendix 2

Archive

Project Details:

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording at Basin Howe Farm, Sawdon, North Yorkshire, YO13 9EB

Site Code: WB2009.030

National Grid Reference: SE 9205 8684

Planning Reference Number: 07/02513/FL

Author D. P. Rawson **Date of fieldwork** 27.04.09 - 18.08.09

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 1124

July 2009

Quantity

1x Stewart box contains the finds

7x A4 plastic sleeves contain the paper archive

Summary of work

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Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording at Basin Howe Farm, Sawdon, North Yorkshire, Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 1124, August 2009

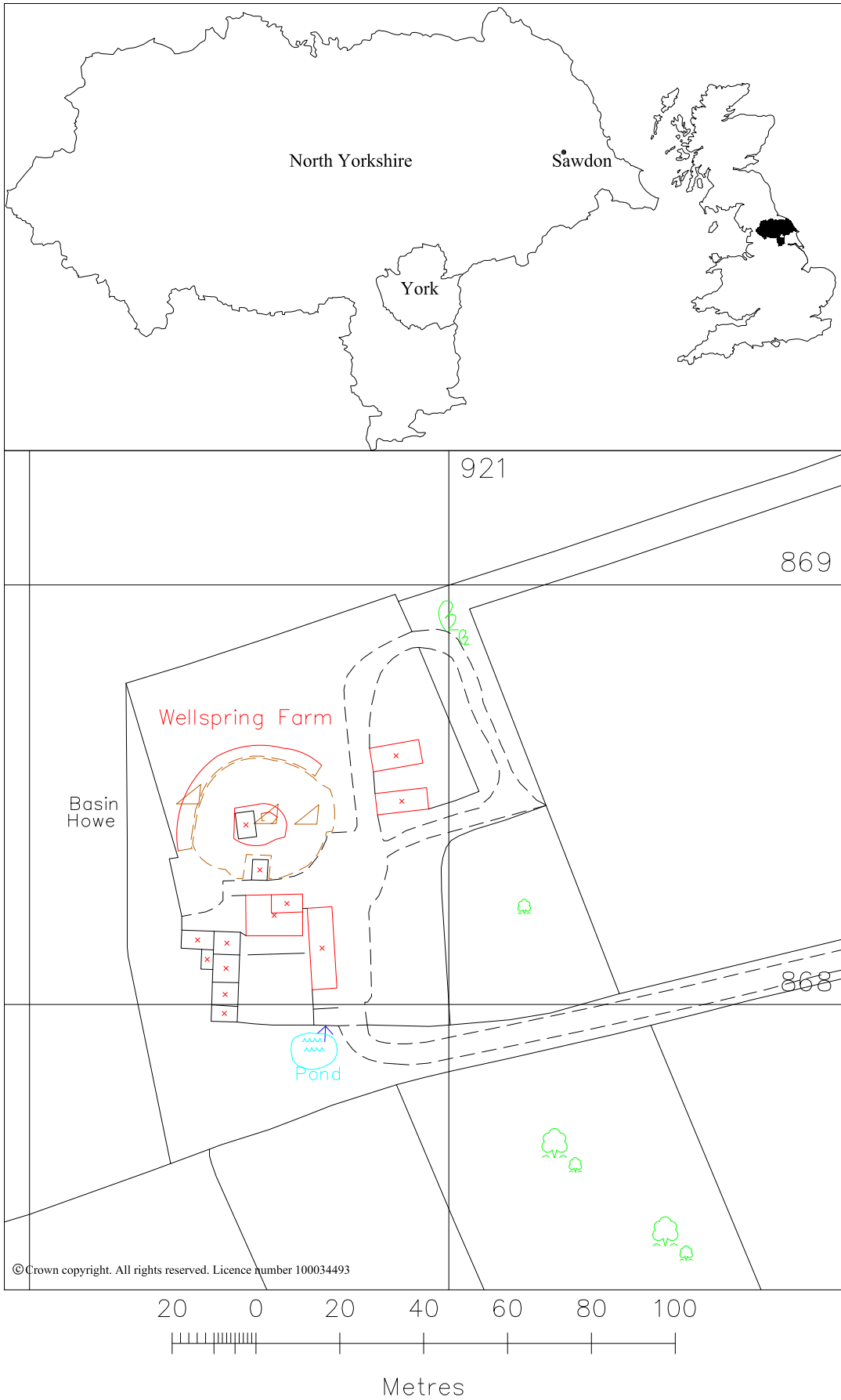


Figure 1 Site location plan

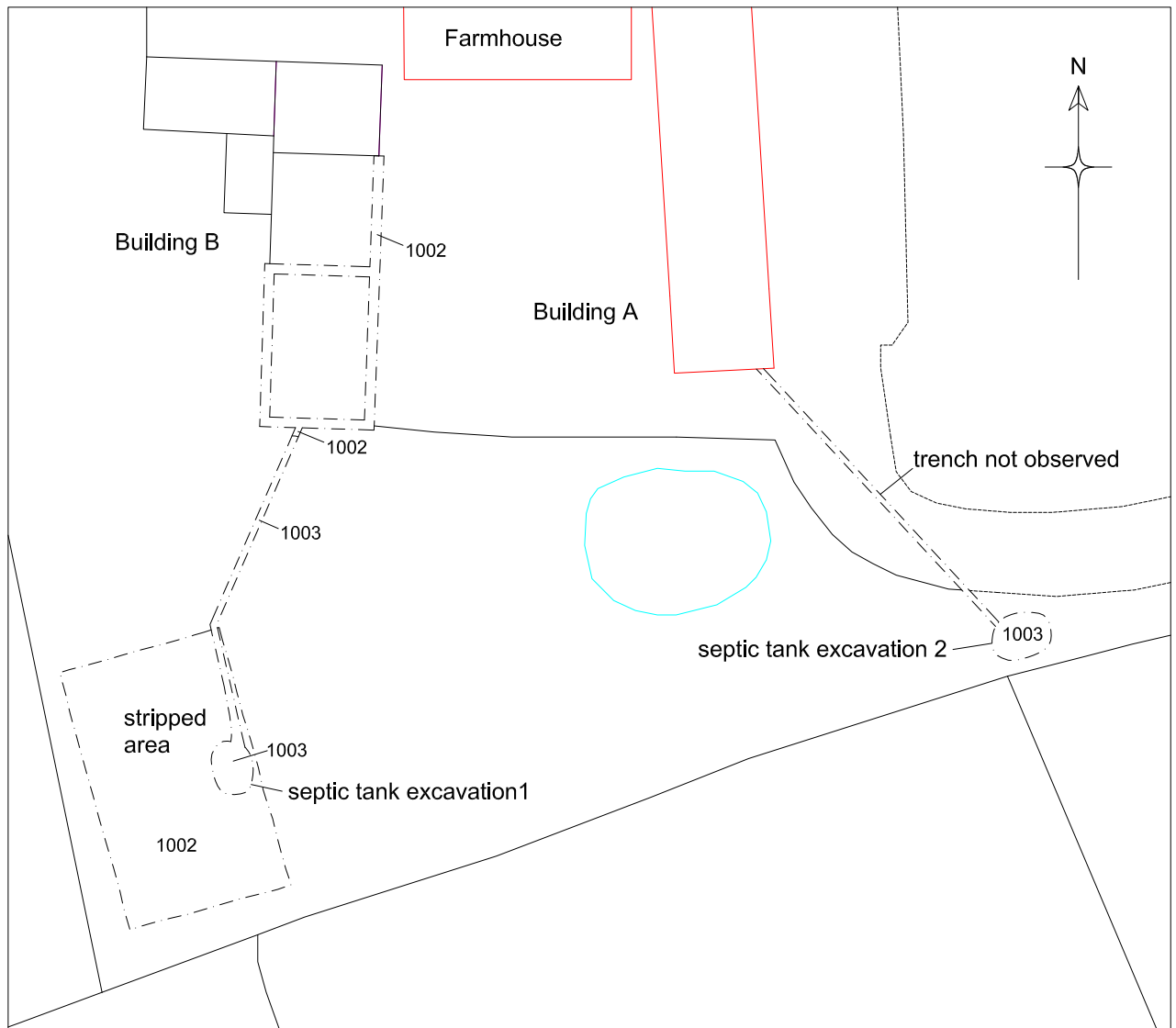


Figure 2 Plan showing the location of various excavations within the development



Plate 1 The site viewed from the south



Plate 2 The round barrow viewed from the north-east



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Plate 4 The topsoil stripped area and the first septic tank (klargestær) installation, viewed from the north



Plate 5 Contexts (1001)-(1003), septic tank excavation 1



Plate 6 Foundation trenches for building B extension, viewed from the south



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Project Management • Desk-based Assessment • Field Survey • Excavation Watching Briefs
• Finds Research • Post-excavation Analysis • Inter-tidal Work

Humber Field Archaeology is an independently-funded part of the Humber Archaeology Partnership, a partnership serving The East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Kingston upon Hull City Council