

**Firthland Road
Pickering
North Yorkshire
SE 7939 8393**

Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording Brief

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Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording Brief

Non-technical Summary

An Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording Brief was carried out at Firthland Road Pickering North Yorkshire during April 2007. The work involved monitoring groundworks associated with the erection of residential properties and associated services on the site.

No archaeological features, deposits or finds were identified during the groundworks.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 An Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording Brief was carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd on land at Firthland Road, Pickering North Yorkshire (SE 7939 8393 - Fig. 1) on the 11th, 27th and 30th of April 2007. The work was undertaken in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to a Planning Application Consent (Ref. 06/00483/FUL) and involved monitoring groundworks associated with the erection of residential properties on the site.
- 1.2 All work was funded by A & D Sturdy.
- 1.3 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. License No. AL 50453A.
- 1.4 The project was allocated the MAP site code 04.02.07.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site is located on the northern side of Firthland Road, Pickering, at SE 7939 8393 (Figs. 1 and 2). It is bounded to the north by properties fronting Westgate (the A170 Pickering to Helmsley road), to the east and west by further properties and by Firthlands Road to the south. The site lies on level ground and was previously occupied by an egg-packing plant that has now been demolished.
- 2.2 The Site lies on soils of the Badsey 2 Association, deep well-drained calcareous soils overlying a geology river terrace and lacustrine gravel (Mackney *et al.* 1984).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The extent of prehistoric and Roman settlement at Pickering is unclear, although Bronze Age axes (in both stone and bronze) and a bronze dagger were found in the vicinity. The Costa Beck Iron Age settlement lies c. 2km southwest of the town (Hayes 1988).
- 3.2 The present town of Pickering existed before the Norman conquest, a fragment from an Anglo-Saxon cross in the parish church confirming the existence of a pre-conquest place of worship. The Domesday Survey of 1086 recorded enough arable land to support 27 ploughs, along with meadows and extensive woodland. Prior to the conquest, the manor was held by Morcar and was worth £80 a year. However, Morcar took part in the unsuccessful rebellion of 1069-71, and the manor's fall in value to 20/4d in 1086 probably reflects the 'harrying' of rebel lands, with Pickering falling directly into royal hands by the time of the Domesday survey (Page ed. 1923).
- 3.3 Pickering castle was in existence by the early 12th century, Henry I issuing a charter from the castle around 1136 (Thompson 1958). The foundation of the Borough of Pickering is also believed to date to Henry I's reign.
- 3.4 Westgate formed one of the elements of the medieval borough, with regularly laid-out properties running at right-angles back from the Pickering to Helmsley road. Firthland

Road was formerly known as Backside and gave access into the rear of the properties that lay south of Westgate.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 Following the demolition of buildings that previously occupied the site, a concrete slab and overburden was removed prior to the excavation of the strip foundation trenches (Fig. 3).
- 4.2 The groundworks were undertaken by a back-acting mechanical excavator, operating under full archaeological supervision.
- 4.3 A written and photographic record was maintained throughout the Recording Brief.
- 4.4 All work was undertaken in accordance with a written specification approved by the Historic Environment Team (NYCC).

5. Results

- 5.1 The watching brief included observation and recording of three separate areas during groundworks for the construction of the new dwellings. Plots 1 and 2 were located in the south-western corner of the site, Plots 3-5 in the south-eastern corner and Plots 6-8 located at the northern end.
- 5.2 Following the removal of the concrete slab and modern overburden (contexts 1000 and 1001) within the footprint of the house plots, the resulting ground surface consisted of silty clay subsoil (context 1002 - Pls. 1 and 2). The stripped area was inspected for archaeological features and deposits but none were present. A small quantity of 19th century and later finds (pottery, glass and tile) were recovered from Deposit 1002. A recent brick and stone-lined cellar was exposed in the southern part of the site; the walls were removed and the void consolidated.

- 5.3 The foundation trenches were then excavated, measuring between 0.70m and 0.9m wide and excavated to depths of between 0.7m and 0.90m below the ground level. The sections of the trenches revealed the silty clay subsoil (context 1002 – Pls. 3 and 4), to be 0.4m deep and overlying a silty sandy clay natural deposit that contained large amounts of heavy quartzitic cobbles.
- 5.4 No archaeological features or deposits were noted either in plan or section during the groundworks at the site and the only finds were of relatively modern date and from the subsoil (1002).

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The Recording Brief identified no archaeological features or deposits within the development area. Although relatively recent truncation (such as the cellar) may have removed any archaeological deposits, the total absence of any finds dating earlier than the 19th century may suggest that earlier activity was concentrated at the street frontage to the north.

7. References

- Hayes, R H 1988 Costa Beck Iron Age Site. In Wilson P R ed. *North-East Yorkshire Studies: Archaeological Papers*.
- Mackney, D *et al.* 1984 Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1: Northern England. Soil Survey of England and Wales.
- Thompson, M W 1958 Pickering Castle, Yorkshire. HMSO.
- Page, W ed. 1923 The Victoria History of the County of York, North Riding, Volume 2.



Figure 1. Site Location

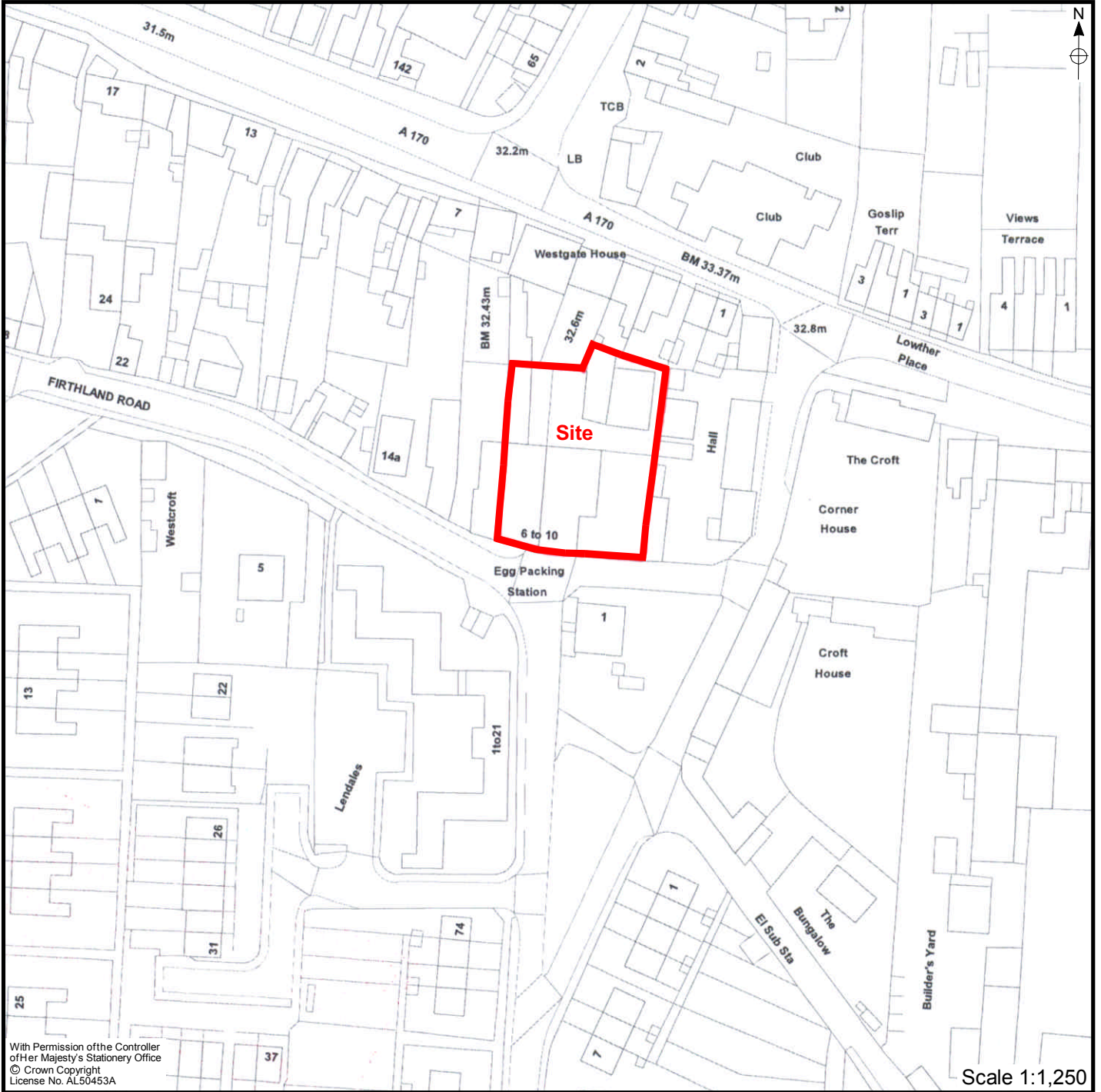


Figure 2. Area of Development

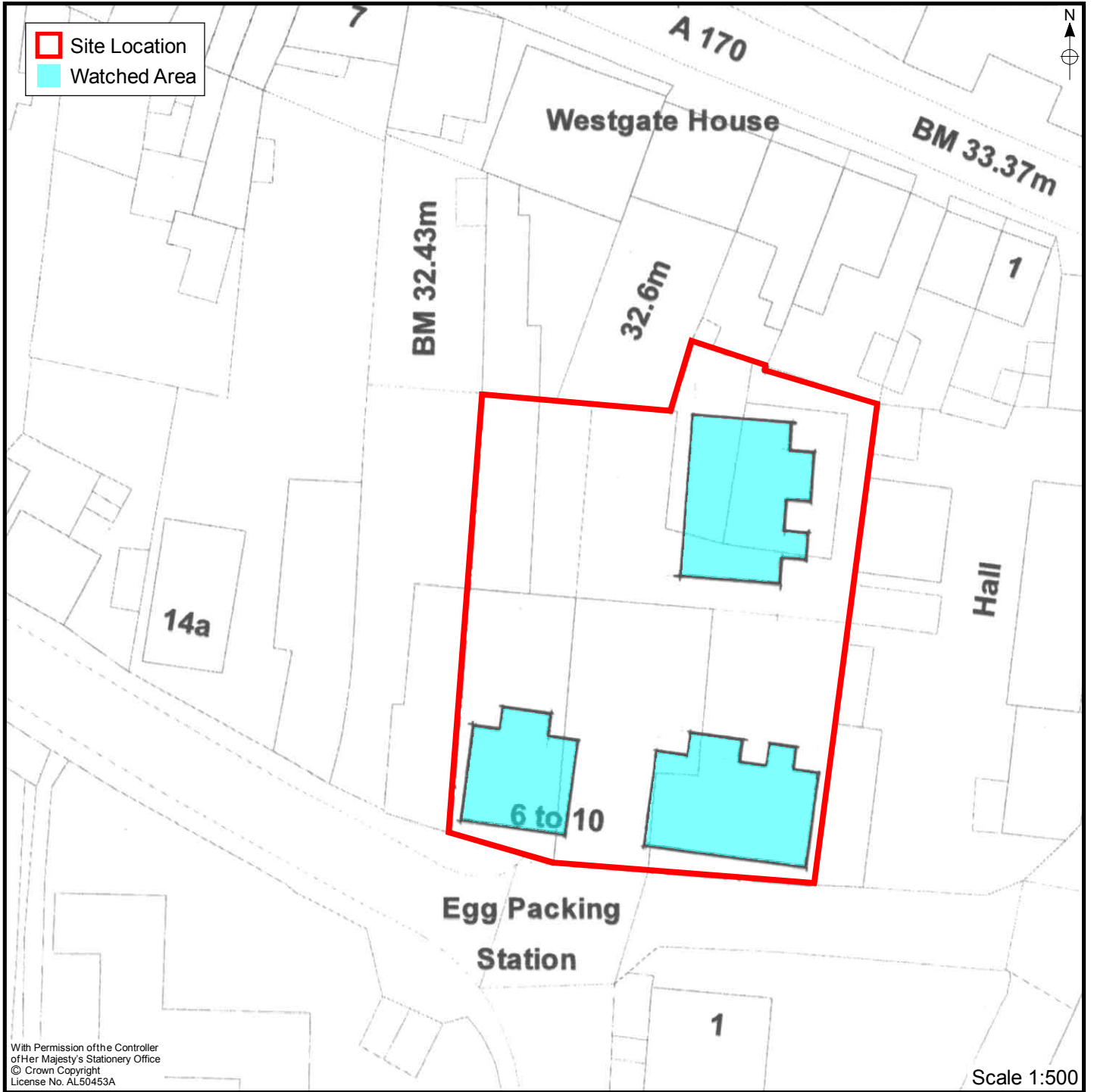


Figure 3. Area of Watching Brief



Plate 1. General View of Site. Facing North West



Plate 2. View of Excavated Footings. Facing North East



Plate 3. Foundation Trench Section. Facing East



Plate 4. Excavation of Foundation Trench. Facing South East