

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording

at

85 Church Hill
Sherburn in Elmet
North Yorkshire

Site Code: WB2010.049

National Grid Reference: SE 4872 3338

Planning Reference: 8/58/813E/PA 2008/0134/FUL

SMR Reference: 8058 C6810 ST

for

Hogg Builders (York) Ltd

Watching Brief Report Number: 1219

November 2010

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D. Jobling (BA Hons), November 2010

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology during groundwork associated with the erection of six dwellings with associated infrastructure on land at 85 Church Hill, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire.

Monitoring of the house plot foundations together with the significant service trenches revealed a limited number of 19th and 20th century related deposits. Within the southeastern plot, evidence for a 20th century brick lined ceramic drain/culvert was recorded. Within the northern plots, the backfilled remains (from 21st century demolition) of the cellar underlying Manor House farm were recorded. No artefacts were recovered during this current programme of work.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology (HFA), on behalf of Hogg Builders (York) Ltd., during groundwork associated with erection of six dwellings with associated infrastructure on land at 85 Church Hill, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire (Figure 1, Plate 1).

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The development site is located on the south side of Church Hill on the site of Manor House farm and is bounded by agricultural land to the south and residential properties to the west and east.

2. Archaeological Background

Sherburn in Elmet was an important settlement in the Anglo-Saxon and medieval periods, with royal and ecclesiastical connections relating to the Kingdom of Elmet. The site of King Athelstan's palace, which lies to the north of All Saints' Church, is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument of national importance. The focus of early medieval settlement is believed to have been in the area surrounding the church on the western edge of the present village. There may also be early remains of Roman activity and settlement as sarcophagus burials were discovered in recent years in the area of Garden Close, to the east of the proposed development area. There is potential, therefore, for development of the application site to encounter remains of medieval and earlier activity which will further out understanding of the origins and development of Sherburn in Elmet.

Archaeological work undertaken on the adjacent plot for the client in 2006/7 (Atkinson, 2007) revealed the location of a well that had probably been in use in the 19th and early 20th century. No other archaeological deposits or artefacts were recovered.

3. Methodology

The work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology, in accordance with a site specific project design produced by HFA (Atkinson, 2008) in response to a condition placed upon the planning application. The condition stated:

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

(Tilbury, S., 28th June 2007, Heritage and Environment Section, Development and Countryside Service letter reference 8058 C6810 ST)’

The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of the house plot foundations and associated significant service trenches. A series of six visits were made to the site between the 17th August and 12th October 2010.

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.

The site and paper archive will be attempted to be deposited with the relevant museum or archive body. In this instance, it will be the Yorkshire Museum.

4. Results

The access road to the site had been completed prior to the initial monitoring visit.

The Manor House farm, whilst still standing during 2006/2007, had been demolished with the area of the building being levelled and stripped of the modern surfacing, whether that be of topsoil or tarmac surfacing surrounding the property.

Plots 12 had its house footings dug out with the base concrete poured and breeze blocks laid to almost Damp Proof Course level prior to the initial visit to the site. Plot 12 had most of the foundations laid, so it was difficult to see if there were any features running through. However, the following deposits were exposed: a red and brown sandy clay layer (202) was viewed up to a thickness of 0.95m, which overlay natural limestone (203), and below the remnants of the topsoil and modern demolition debris (201) (Figure 2, Plate 2). The overall dimensions for the foundations here were 9.50m north/south, 6.00m west/east and the depth above the basal layer of concrete was 1.30m.

In Plot 13 however, the sections were still visible, and it was noticed the limestone natural (108), was over 0.80m deep, overlaid by red and brown clay (107) to a depth of 0.15m, with modern hardcore surfacing (106) overlaying this up to 0.08m deep.

The construction cut (105) for a brick culvert (102), truncated these layers, backfilled with brown clay silt (104). The bricks used in its construction were 230mm x 70mm (viewed in two dimensions only) and a brown glazed ceramic pipe ran through it, on an east/west alignment. This was only seen in one section (Figure 3-S.1, Plates 3-4). There were two other service pipes on a north-south alignment, (109), which had a diameter of approximately 0.10m and may have connected to the brick culvert, whereas (110) was seen through three profiles of the foundation trenches. Sealing all of this was hardcore layer (106) in turn by the topsoil (101) up to 0.35m thick. The overall dimensions for the foundations here were 9.50m north/south, 6/00m west/east and the depth above the basal layer of concrete was 1.30m.

The large main waste service drain cut was made running roughly north/south from the northeastern corner of the development to the existing soakaway which runs beneath the completed access road. The overall width of the cut was 1.00m and ranged in depth between 1.60m at the frontage rising to 1.00m at the south due to the lie of the land heading down the hill away from the street. The observed length was 22.50m. The basal layer throughout was (304) natural limestone greater than 1.70m thick and continued below the level of excavation. Overlying this was (303) 0.05m thick layer of water or chemically altered (i.e. diesel) limestone, probably occurring as a result of gradual percolation. Above this lay (302) a Tarmacadam hardcore supporting layer consisting of a mixture of small stone and crushed brick material up to 0.22m thick in turn sealed by the current surface layer (301), the remains of black Tarmacadam up to 0.05m thick. This upper surface deposit appeared to cover the upper quarter of the development site (Figure 2, Plate 5).

Plots 14 through 17 extend along the northern frontage of the development site. This part of the site was the site of the former farmhouse which was demolished several prior to the current period of archaeological monitoring. At that time, the whole of the former foundations for the farm house appeared to have been taken out and no real evidence of its former footing was apparent throughout this area. The strip foundation trenches for this had an average width of 0.80m and covered an area measuring 23.00m northeast/southwest and 9.50m northwest/southeast. The basal layer throughout was (402) natural limestone (Figure 2, Plate 6).

Cut into this in the northwestern quadrant of the whole of the plots was the buried cellar for the farmhouse (403). The cut (404) measured 6.80m northeast/southwest and a minimum of 4.50m northwest/southeast; the cellar continued to the north outside the area of excavation for the new dwellings (Figures 2, 3-S.2, Plates 7-9). Following the removal of the modern farm demolition related backfill (407), it was noted that the construction of the cellar wall was of faced and squared small, limestone blocks each having average dimensions of 200mm x 220mm x 200mm and were bonded with a lime-based mortar. The internal face of the cellar wall displayed the remains of a light grey blue plaster which appeared quite roughly applied. The wall was one course thick and 12 courses high (2.40m). Set centrally on the northern section face of the cellar was the decaying remains of a vertical wooden post (406) 100mm x 100mm and at least 15000mm in length (the base of the post was covered by demolition debris). It appeared to be supporting a broken York stone slab, likely part of the original ground floor level. As the demolition layer was being removed, the original York stone slab floor was revealed. The floor slabs had varying dimensions in plan, each were approximately 30 to 40mm thick and covered the same area as the

cellar. They were laid directly upon a yellow pea gravelly bed, which appeared more like crushed natural limestone rather than anything else. The back fill of the construction cut, lying between wall 403 and cut 404 consisted of unworked and partially worked fragments of limestone (405), likely rubble originating from the construction of the farm house.

What was of interest also was that the steps leading down from the original ground level to the cellar were also still present, consisting of limestone slabs, each having average dimensions of 600mm x 200mm x 25mm.

Overlying the entirety of the area covered by the new plots was a mixture of demolition-related debris and hardcore material which was the modern ground cover (401) up to 0.20m thick.

There were no other deposits or cut noted in these conjoined house plot foundations.

No further significant excavations are to take place at the development which would have an effect upon the known archaeology of the site. At this point the current programme of work was concluded.

5. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of Heritage and Environment Section of the Development and Countryside Service for North Yorkshire Council or Selby District Council.

The brick lined ceramic drain/culvert (102/103) probably relates to previous infrastructure associated with Manor Farm. The rediscovery of the cellar for the recently demolished Manor farm is also of interest as it demonstrated the high quality of construction of the former farmhouse. The Yorkstone slab flooring was present throughout and very well cut, integral limestone slab steps leading down with the interior walls having the remains of a light blue grey plaster. The majority of the cellar was removed during the excavation of the footings, leaving the northern, frontage wall which project to the north, and thus just outside, the northern extent of the new dwellings.

No direct evidence of medieval or earlier occupation of the site was identified or recorded during this current programme of archaeological monitoring.

6. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to Hogg Builders (York) Ltd. for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The work was carried out in accordance with a site specific project design produced by HFA (Atkinson Op. cit.). The onsite work was undertaken by the author and Karen Adams. The report, illustrations and photographic layout was completed by the author. The report was edited by David Atkinson.

7. References

Atkinson, D., 2007. Archaeological observation, investigation and recording at Church Hill, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief report 907.

Atkinson, D., 2008. 85 Church Hill, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire: Written Scheme of Investigation.

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

8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Context list

- (100)-Unstratified
- (101)-Redeposited topsoil, mid to dark grey brown sandy loam.
- (102)-Brick surround for drain 103. 0.50m west/east. 0.55m high. Portland cement based mortar.
- (103)-Ceramic foul drainage pipe. 180mm diameter.
- (104)-Silt backfill for drain 102/103.
- (105)-Cut for 102/103. 0.60m wide, 0.60m deep. Straight vertical sides, sharp turn of slop at base, flat base.
- (106)-Hardcore surfacing underlying redeposited topsoil 101. 0.07m thick.
- (107)-Red/brown redeposited clay layer, 0.09m thick.
- (108)-Natural off white yellow limestone.
- (109)-Service drain.
- (110)-Service drain.

- (200)-Unstratified.
- (201)-A mixture of disturbed topsoil and demolition-related debris. 0.35m thick.
- (202)-Natural off white yellow limestone.

- (300)-Unstratified.
- (301)-Black Tarmacadam. 0.05m thick.
- (302)-A mixture of small stone and crushed brick material. 0.22m thick.
- (303)-Chemically altered and degraded natural grey green limestone. 0.05m thick.
- (304)-Natural off white yellow limestone.

- (400)-Unstratified.
- (401)-Demolition-related material and imported hardcore surfacing material. Of varying thickness, averaging 0.20m.
- (402)-Natural off white yellow limestone.
- (403)-Farm house cellar wall.
- (404)-farm house cellar cut.
- (405)-Farm house cellar cut backfill.
- (406)-Centrally set wooden supporting post.
- (407)-Demolition debris backfill of cellar 403.

Appendix 2

Archive

Project Details:

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SMR Casework Reference: 8058 C6810 ST

Author D. Jobling (BA Hons) **Date of fieldwork** 17th August - 12th October 2010.

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Report Number: 1219
November 2010

Quantity

There were no finds

6 x A4 plastic sleeves contain the paper archive

Summary of work

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Monitoring of the house plot foundations together with the significant service trenches revealed a limited number of 19th and 20th century related deposits. Within the southeastern plot, evidence for a 20th century brick lined ceramic drain/culvert was recorded. Within the northern plots, the backfilled remains (from 21st century demolition) of the cellar underlying Manor House farm were recorded. No artefacts were recovered during this current programme of work.

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- 1.2 Correspondence

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- 2.1 Site notes
- 2.2 Staff site visit log
- 2.3 Site plans

3 The Photographic Record:

- 3.1 Photographic Catalogue
- 3.2 Contact Sheets
- 3.3 Reference Prints

4. Final Report:

Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording at 85 Church Hill, Sherburn in Elmet, North Yorkshire. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 1219, November 2010.

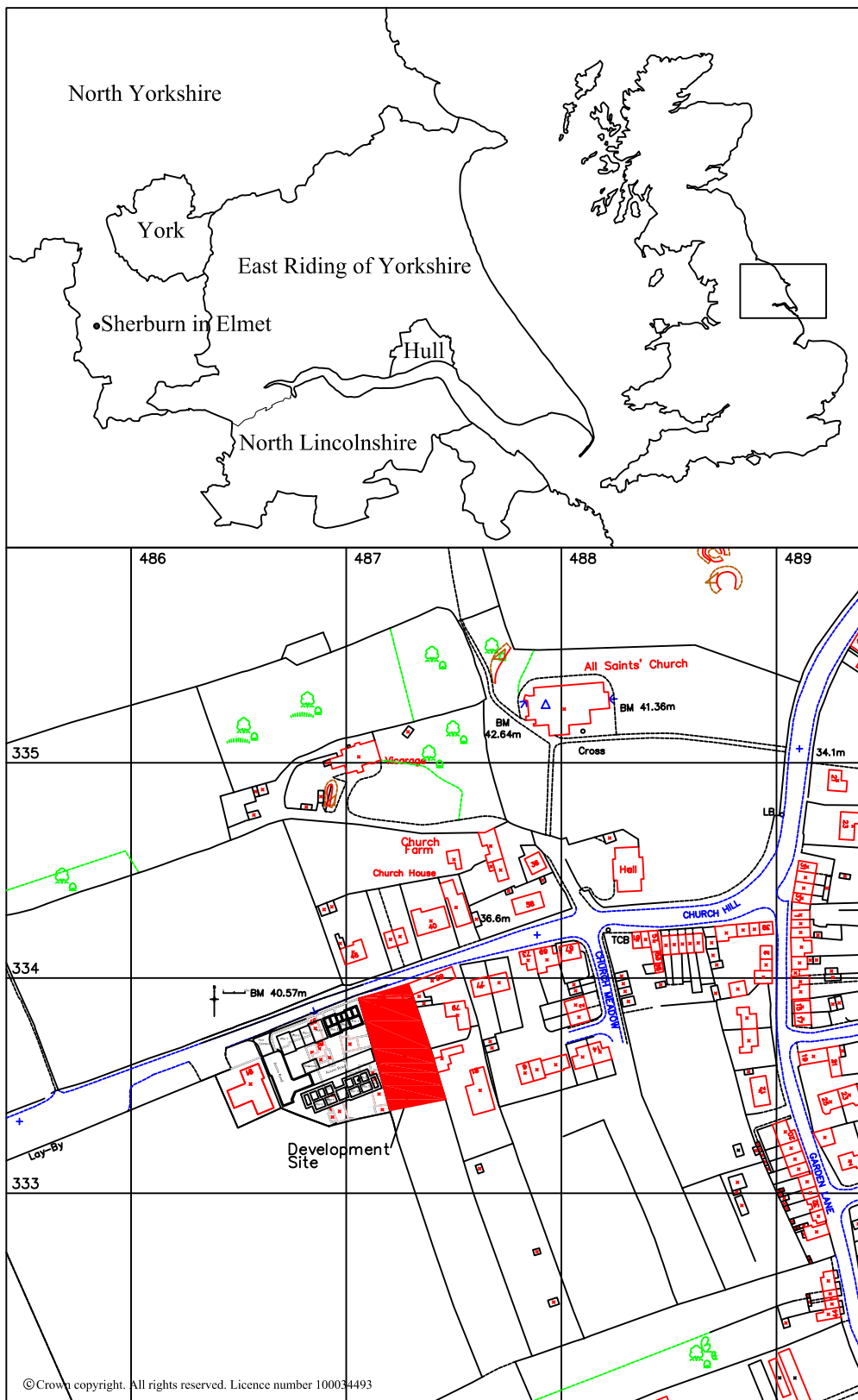
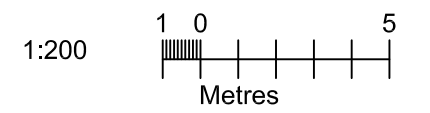
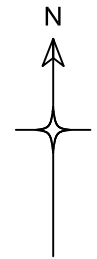
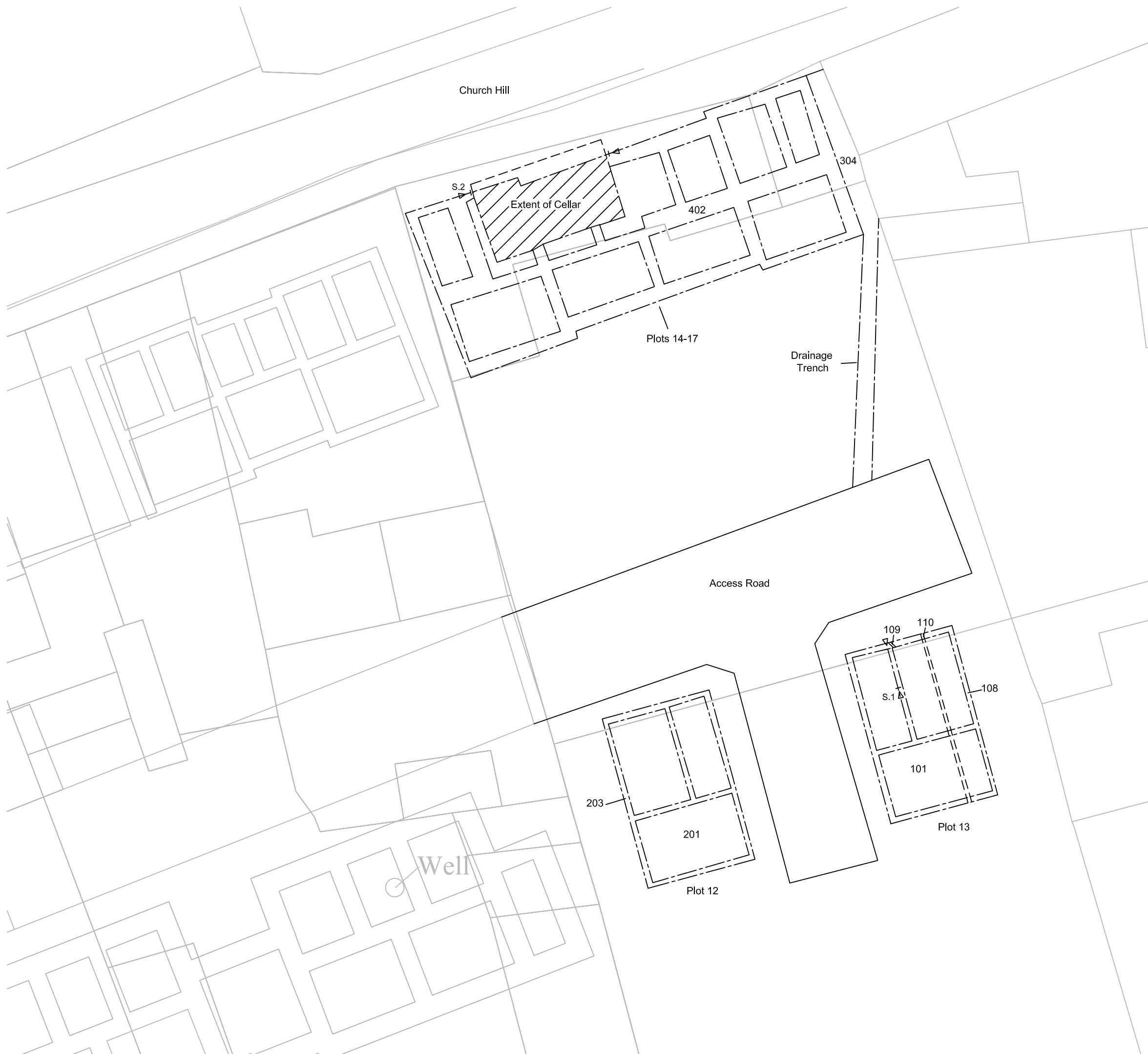
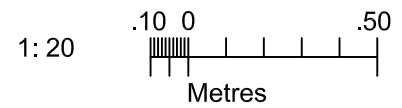
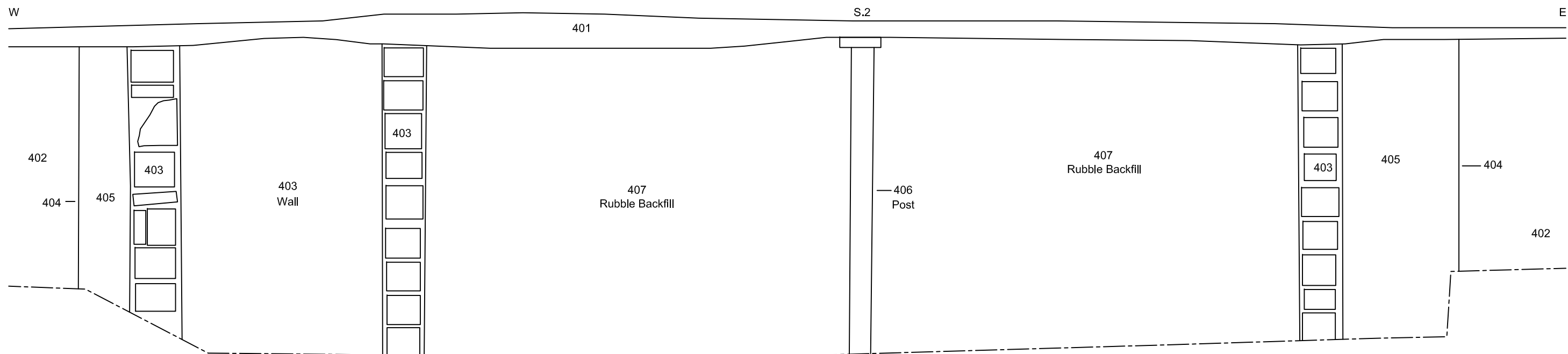
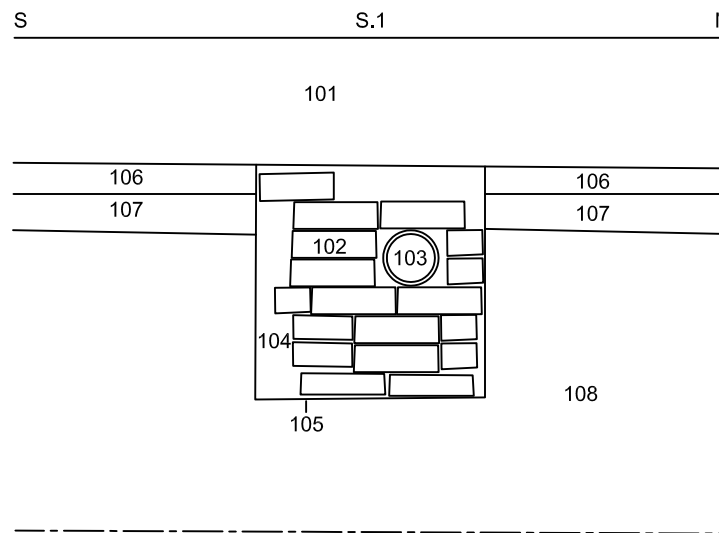


Figure 1 Site location plan.



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Figure 2 Site plan showing the excavations observed and main deposits exposed. Scale 1:200.



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Figure 3 Recorded features in section. Scale 1:20.



Plate 1 The site of the development, looking southwest.



Plate 2 Plot 12, viewed from the north.



Plate 3 Plot 13, viewed from the northwest.



Plate 4 Section 1, showing brick lined ceramic drain/culvert (102/103) viewed from the northeast. 1.00m scale.

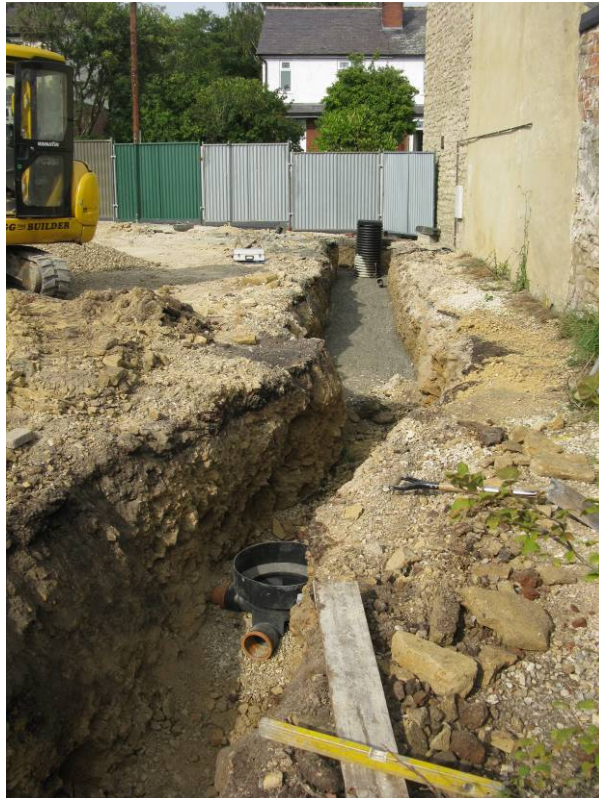


Plate 5 The foul drainage trench connection, part-way through excavation. Viewed from the south.



Plate 6 Plots 14 through 17 overall, looking southwest.



Plate 7 Former farm cellar (403), looking west.



Plate 8 Showing detail of stone slab steps leading down into the cellar (403), looking west.



Plate 9 Showing detail of partially faced limestone with light blue grey plaster for cellar wall (403). Looking north.

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors

The Old School, Northumberland Avenue,
KINGSTON UPON HULL, HU2 0LN

Telephone (01482) 310600 Fax (01482) 310601

Email hfa@hullcc.gov.uk

WEB. www.hullcc.gov.uk



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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