

**NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL,
WEST OF HARROGATE HIGHWAYS DEPOT,
PENNY POT LANE, HARROGATE
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING BRIEF

Planning reference NY/2009/0104/FUL



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Jacobs

May 2011

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Summary

An archaeological recording brief was undertaken on the construction of the North Yorkshire County Council Highways Depot to the west of Harrogate on Penny Pot Lane, North Yorkshire (Planning reference NY/2009/0104/FUL). The recording brief was on the ground works for the construction of the depot and its associated road improvement works. The new highways depot lies towards the eastern end of Penny Pot Lane c.5km west of Harrogate (NGR SE 25250 55857) on the site of the former Penny Pot Chicken Farm.

The monitored works were on the stripping of the topsoil on the field to the east of the former chicken sheds, the removal of existing concrete slabs and other structures relating to the sheds and the widening of Penny Pot Lane in the vicinity of the new depot. The recording brief recorded that the green field part of the site was covered in a 0.15-0.25m deep topsoil, whilst the area of the former chicken farm was covered in a c.0.25m thick layer of concrete which had been laid on a c.0.2m thick layer of crushed limestone aggregate. Directly beneath the concrete and aggregate the naturally occurring geology of glacial drift was encountered.

Apart from a very small number of scattered late 19/20th century pottery fragments from the topsoil, no archaeological finds or features were encountered in the area of the new depot.

The majority of the road widening works encountered previously disturbed ground due to the presence of various services. One area towards the eastern end of Penny Pot Lane on its southern side encountered the remains of the earlier (probably original) Penny Pot Lane in the form of a layer of water rolled cobbles.

No other archaeological finds or features were recorded during the ground works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological recording brief on the construction of a new highways depot and re-cycling centre on Penny Pot Lane to the west of Harrogate (Planning reference NY/2009/0104/FUL). The archaeological recording brief was on all of the ground works for both the depot/re-cycling centre and the widening of Penny Pot Lane itself. The new highways depot lies towards the eastern end of Penny Pot Lane c.5km west of the centre of Harrogate in Hampsthwaite civil parish (NGR SE 25250 55857) (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological works were undertaken by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) on behalf of Jacobs between January and April 2011.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Historic Background

- 2.1 The site lies immediately to the north of Penny Pot Lane which was built as a toll road between Harrogate and Fewston in the 1760s or 1770s. As a toll road it typically follows a very straight course. The name is usually believed to be taken from the Penny Pot public house at its eastern end (Jacobs, 2009, 11). An alternative is that the toll was a penny put into a pot at the toll house and the lane and hence the public house were named retrospectively. Penny Pot Lane is also known as Rough Lane on some historic mapping. An earlier study of the archaeological and historical background of the site and its environs (IBID) recorded little or no activity in the area until the medieval period when the site lay within the Forest of Knaresborough. The site has been agricultural in nature since the later medieval period and the enclosures of the 19th century have probably had the biggest impact area since the gradual loss of the Forest of Knaresborough. For further details of the sites historic and archaeological background see Jacobs, 2009.

Geology and Soils

- 2.2 The underlying solid geology of the site is of Namurian millstone grit of the Upper Carboniferous (British Geological Survey, 2001) which is overlain by a quaternary geology of clays derived from glacial drift (British Geological Survey 1977). The soils that have weathered from this are the Dunkesick association which are slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged, fine loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

Topography and Land-use

- 2.3 The site lies in an area of generally level ground with a slight drop of c.1.5m from west to east and is on the northern side of Penny Pot Lane at a height of c.177mOD. The land use of the site was split between the western part on which were the two large chicken barns on a concrete hard-standing and the western part which was pasture.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 The objective of the recording brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the various ground works for the refurbishment. The specific aims were to:

- archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed by the ground works
- recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the ground works

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 All of the monitored ground works were undertaken using a tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. The ground works for the new depot consisted of topsoil stripping of the pasture and the removal of the concrete hard-standing and aggregate base for the former chicken barns. The road widening consisted of topsoil stripping along both sides of the lane to the east of the new depot (Figure 3).

4.2 During the ground works the exposed ground surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and the resulting topsoil stockpiles were monitored for archaeological artefacts. All the works were carried out to previously agreed schemes of work (Buglass, 2010 and 2011).

5.0 RESULTS

Highways Depot and Re-Cycling Centre (Figure 2; Plates 1 & 2)

5.1 The recording brief on the green field part of the site recorded that the majority of the site was covered in a 0.15-0.25m thick topsoil, which directly overlay the natural underlying geology (Plate 1). The only exception was an area along the western boundary of the field where a layer of topsoil and natural clay had been dumped and partially levelled. This area of dumping was from the construction of the chicken farm in the 1980s when the site had been levelled and the resulting material spread along the edge of the adjacent field.

5.2 A small number of sherds of late 19th/early 20th century pottery were recovered during the topsoil stripping. These were evenly distributed across the whole site and were predominantly recovered from the topsoil, although some were at the topsoil/subsoil interface. It would seem that this material represents the results of manuring in order to try to improve the soil quality. In some areas plough scarring was noted in the underlying drift geology. These ran east-west and from their spacing they would appear to be early/mid 20th century. This is probably from ploughing during the Second World War in an attempt to increase agricultural production.

- 5.3 In the area of the former chicken farm the majority of the site was covered in a c.0.25m thick layer of concrete, which had been laid on a c.0.2m thick layer of crushed limestone aggregate. Directly beneath the entire site the naturally occurring geology of glacial drift with occasional large cobbles/boulders was encountered. The underlying geology had been partially cut into when the site was levelled for the construction of the chicken farm in the 1980s. This levelling appears to have cut into the underlying clays by up to 1m along the western side of the site, potentially removing any archaeology that may have been present.

Road Widening (Figure 2; Plates 3 & 4)

- 5.4 The road widening works largely encountered previously disturbed ground due to modern services along both sides of the road (Plate 3). There was one area of exception where a 110m long section of cobbling was observed. The cobbling ran westwards from the entrance to Prospect Farm on the southern side of the road. The cobbles were predominantly water rolled sandstones/grit stones which had been dry laid (that is with no bonding material). The layer was continuous under the current macadam road and on the same alignment. The cobbles [03] were directly under a 0.25m thick subsoil [02] which in turn lay under a 0.16m thick layer of topsoil [01]. The cobbles themselves formed a layer 0.26m thick and survived for 110m east-west. They could be seen to extend both under the modern road to the north and into the verge to the south, though by how much in each direction is unknown. The cobbles had been laid directly on to the underlying natural clay, which had originally acted to help secure the stones.
- 5.5 No other archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the ground works.

6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 As can be seen from the results described above, the eastern green field portion of the development only contained evidence for 19/20th century manuring and mid 20th century ploughing. The western part of the development, which contained the chicken farm, did not yield any form of archaeological evidence. This is possibly due to the development of the chicken farm having lowered the ground level and thus removed any archaeology that may have been present in that part of the site.
- 6.2 The road widening was undertaken mainly in already disturbed ground, apart from a short section near the entrance to Prospect Farm where a section of what was probably the original Penny Pot Lane was encountered.

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Acknowledgements

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APPENDIX I

Context Catalogue

- 01 Loosely compacted dark brown topsoil, 0.16m thick.
- 02 Loosely compacted black/dark grey silty clay subsoil, 0.25m thick
- 03 Loosely compacted yellow sandstone water rolled cobbles, 0.26m thick.
- 04 Natural geology of glacial drift.

ILLUSTRATIONS

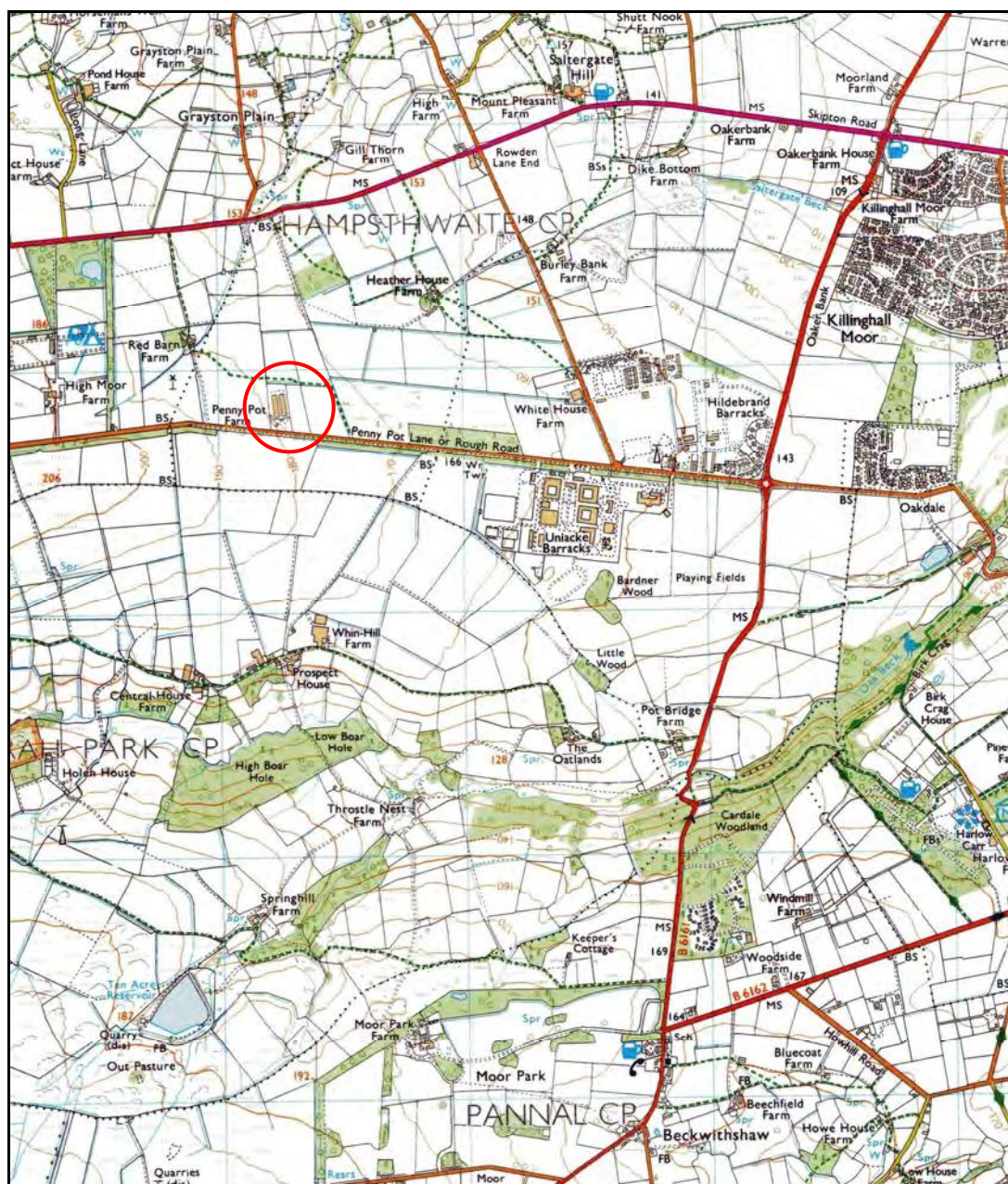


Figure 1. Site Location

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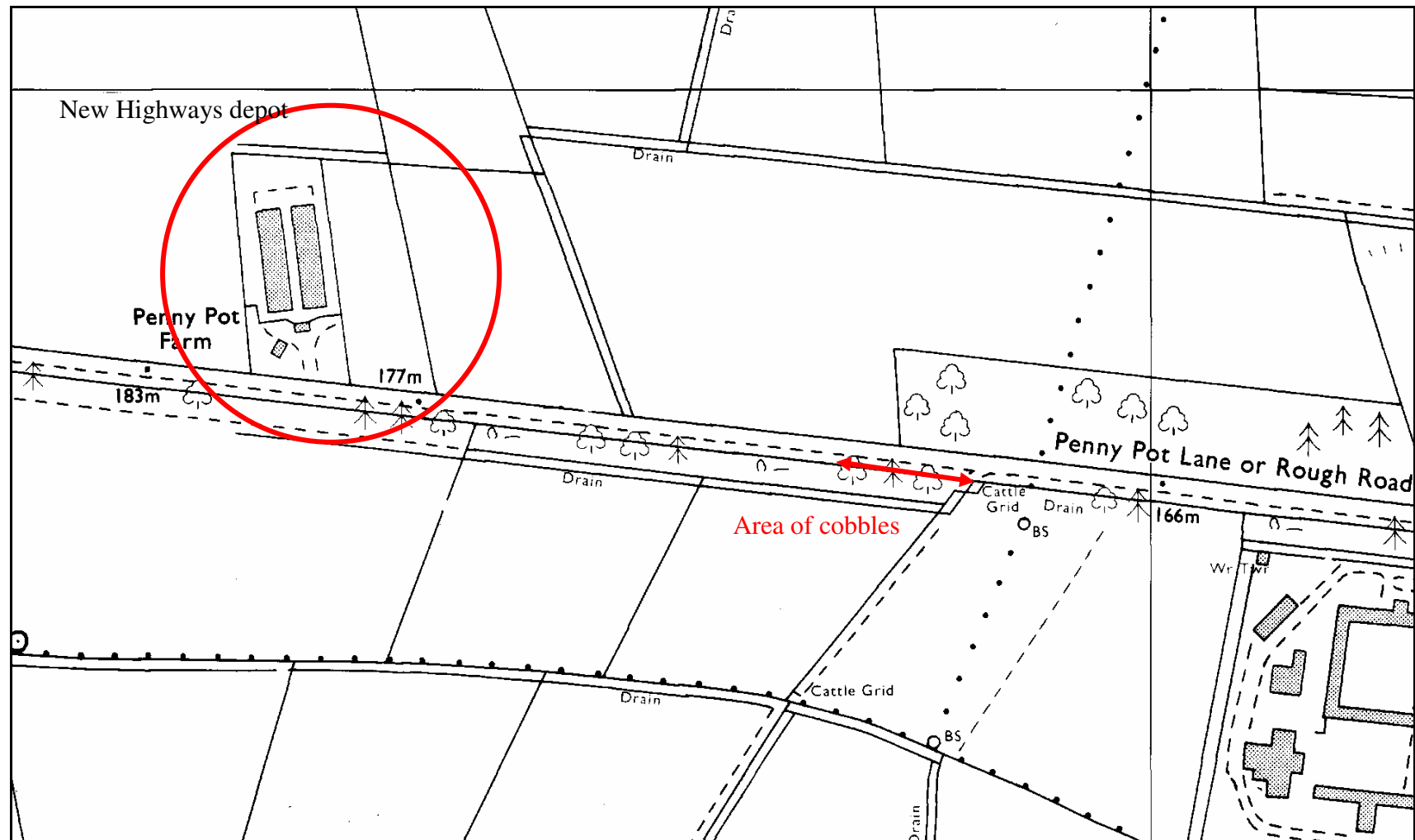


Figure 2. Location of cobbled area (not to scale).



Plate 1. General view of eastern portion of the site after stripping, looking south.



Plate 2. General view of crushing hard standing and site stripping, looking SW.



Plate 3. General view of road widening, looking north-north-west.



Plate 4. Section of earlier road exposed during widening. Looking south, scale 1m.