

SNY 18527

ENY 5852

CNY 10080

Parish 6096

Rec'd 20.06.11

**CHERRY TREE FARM, WHIXLEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING**

**Planning Number 10/03287/FULMAJ**



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

David Holmes Developments Ltd

May 2011

John Buglass Archaeological Services  
Rosebank  
Newby Wiske  
North Yorkshire  
DL7 9EX

01609 773764  
07903 867 160

[johnbuglass@yahoo.com](mailto:johnbuglass@yahoo.com)

Arch Info 2116  
Rec'd 20-6-11

S 18527  
E 5852

C10080  
P 6096

## Contents

### *Summary*

1.0	Introduction	2
2.0	Background	2
	Location	
	Geology and Soils	
	Topography and Land Use	
3.0	Aims and Objectives	3
4.0	Methodology	3
5.0	Results	4
6.0	Finds	6
7.0	Discussion and Conclusions	6
	References	7
	Appendix I – Context Catalogue	7

## Illustrations

Front Cover: Cherry Tree Farm farmhouse

### Figures

Figure 1. Site Location

Figure 2. Trench Locations

Figure 3. Development Layout

Figure 4. Trench 1, plan and section of 19<sup>th</sup> century garden wall footings

### Plates

Plate 1. Trench 1 showing foundations for garden wall. Looking N, scales 1 & 0.5m

Plate 2. Trench 3 looking east, scales 1 and 2m

Plate 3. Trench 4 looking east, scales 1 and 2m.

Plate 4. Trench 5 looking north, scales 1 and 2m.

Plate 5. Trench 6 looking east, scales 1 and 2m.

Plate 6. Trench 7 looking north-east, scales 1 and 2m.

Plate 7. Trench 8. Looking north-east, scales 1 and 2m.

## CHERRY TREE FARM, WHIXLEY, NORTH YORKSHIRE

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCHING

#### *Summary*

*Cherry Tree Farm is on the northern side of the village of Whixley, North Yorkshire and is the subject of a planned re-development (SE 4419 5810). As part of the development process, seven trial trenches of varying size were excavated in order to evaluate the potential for the survival of buried archaeological remains.*

*The historic settlement of Whixley has known origins from at least the 11<sup>th</sup> century and probably earlier. The area of the proposed development can be seen to lie near the centre of the medieval village and from cartographic evidence appears to contain the site of a former Manor House, potentially medieval or early post-medieval in date. It appears that the remains of the manor could survive as a significant mound at the western end of the site. Other features noted within the development area pointed to the possible survival of other buried remains in the form of possible building platforms, all associated with the development of the settlement.*

*The evaluation trenches only recorded 19<sup>th</sup> century or later features and they appear to show that the site has little or no earlier activity within it. The depth of the topsoil/subsoil deposits was found to vary markedly across the site, being particularly deep in the south-eastern quadrant of the site. This seems to be because the south-eastern part of the site is slightly lower lying and as such is prone to localised flooding. This means that it has had regular inputs of silt washed in, which has gradually raised the ground level.*

*This localised flooding appears to be the primary reason why there is no apparent pre 19<sup>th</sup> century activity on the site. A further reason could be due to the location of the site in the core of the historic settlement and close to the church. This location would seem to be ideal for use as a village green and for common-land grazing.*

*The evaluation has shown that there does not appear to be archaeological remains earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century within the development area. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological investigation or mitigation is required for this site.*



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As part of a planning process for the re-development of Cherry Tree Farm at Whixley (SE 4419 5810), a staged series of investigations was undertaken into the potential for archaeological remains to survive within the site. This was in order to try to establish the potential for, and significance of, any buried archaeological remains that may lie within the proposed development. This was to allow the development of a suitable mitigation strategy which could then be implemented as part of the planning process. The first of these investigations was a desk based assessment (DBA) into the historic and archaeological potential of the site (Buglass, 2010). The DBA indicated that there was a moderate to high potential for the survival of archaeological remains and recommended that the site be evaluated by trial trenching. This report details the results of that archaeological trial trenching which was undertaken on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

### Location

- 2.1 The development site lies towards the northern side of the village of Whixley (SE 4419 5810). The northern boundary of the site lies along Church Street and the western boundary is Clockhill Field Lane. The southern and eastern boundaries are to the adjoining properties. The site is in Whixley civil parish in Harrogate District, North Yorkshire and lies entirely within the Whixley Conservation Area (Figures 1 & 2).

### Geology and soils

- 2.2 The underlying geology of the site and the surrounding area is of Permian and Triassic sandstones (British Geological Survey, 2001). Overlying this, the quaternary geology is one of glacial drift (British Geological Survey, 1977). The soils that have developed from this are classified as the Escrick 2 association which is derived from glaciofluvial drift and forms a deep, well drained often reddish coarse loamy soil with some slight seasonal water-logging (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

### Topography and land-use

- 2.3 The site is generally level and lies at a height of c.40-41mOD. On the western side of the site there is a very marked rise in the land to form a significant mound about 2.5m high adjacent to Clockhill Field Lane. The area to the north of the current farm buildings up to Church Street is grassed. There are also large areas of grass between the standing buildings, notably on the western and south-eastern parts of the site. The site contains a range of farm buildings of varying dates from 18/19<sup>th</sup> century through to modern including the former farmhouse, two threshing barns, a gin-gang, a wash house and several other barns and workshops.



### 3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The principle aim of the targeted archaeological investigation was to confirm or otherwise the presence and condition of any archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development.
- 3.2 The specific objectives of the evaluation were to:
- investigate the potential for the remains of buildings shown on the historic Ordnance Survey mapping (1<sup>st</sup> edition - 1853)
  - determine, where possible, the presence/absence of any archaeological features within the footprint of all the new buildings on the site
  - recover information relating to the depth and degree of preservation of any archaeological remains within all of these areas

### 4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 The evaluation was in the form of eight trenches of varying size located as per the Written Scheme of Investigation (Buglass, 2011). During the actual evaluation, the position of two of the trenches was slightly modified in order to accommodate mature trees or the alteration of the location of new buildings. These changes are detailed below and the locations of the trenches are shown in Figure 2.
- 4.2 Each trench was initially stripped of turf and topsoil by the contractors, using a tracked mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Once the topsoil had been removed, the exposed ground surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and/or finds. Where there were no obvious features, the deposits were further investigated using the mechanical excavator under direct archaeological supervision. This was carried out in shallow spits until either significant archaeological deposits were encountered or the supervising archaeologist was satisfied the undisturbed natural deposits had been reached.
- 4.3 Once significant archaeological deposits were encountered, they were fully investigated by hand excavation. The trial trenching was carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
- 4.4 The results of the trial trenching were generally negative with only two very minor 19<sup>th</sup> century features being encountered. Because of this the results of each trench were recorded on a Trench Sheet *pro forma* and only a single feature was recorded in drawn detail (Trench 1). All trenches were hand cleaned and photographically recorded with digital images at 5m pixel resolution. 1m and 2m bi-coloured poles were used as scales and a north pointer for orientation. For the detailed photography smaller bi-coloured scales were used. The exposed stratigraphy related to height above sea level derived from an Ordnance Survey datum.



## 5.0 RESULTS

In the text below, context numbers for each archaeological deposit or feature are given as [01], [04] etc. and relate to each discrete stratigraphic unit, a summary of which can be found in Appendix I at the end. The detailed descriptions and original drawings, photographs etc. have all been cross-referenced and form the site archive which will be deposited appropriately at the end of the project.

### *Trench 1 (Figures 2 – 4; Plate 1)*

5.1 This was located on the site of a new double garage on the northern edge of the site to the west of the former farmhouse. Initially the trench was to measure 4x2m (8m<sup>2</sup>) to fit within the building footprint but due to the possible presence of a well to the south of its location it was shortened to 3x2m (6m<sup>2</sup>) in length north-south and was excavated to 0.8m depth (39.88mOD).

5.2 As this trench was located in the garden of the farmhouse it had a deeper, more well developed topsoil [01] that graded into the subsoil [02] over a depth of 0.4m (base at 40.28mOD). This topsoil/subsoil lay directly over the underlying natural drift geology of an orangey/brown sandy clay with small to large rounded stones. This underlying natural was encountered across the whole of the site at varying depths.

5.3 A 0.4m wide north-south aligned foundation trench [06] had been cut 0.3m into [03] (base at 39.88mOD). This foundation trench had been backfilled with a very loosely compacted mixture of coal ash, topsoil, 19<sup>th</sup> century brick fragments, water rolled cobbles and tabular stone fragments [07]. The cut [06] had straight sides and a flat base. If the line of the foundation trench [06] is extrapolated it could be seen to line up with a change in the garden wall to the north (Plate 1).

5.4 *Trench synopsis/interpretation.* A well developed garden soil over the remains of a removed 19<sup>th</sup> century garden wall.

### *Trench 2 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 2)*

5.5 This was located in the footprint of a new dwelling in the north-eastern part of the site in order to investigate the potential for survival of remains of a building shown on the OS 1<sup>st</sup> edition. The trench measured 7x2m wide (14m<sup>2</sup>).

5.6 This trench was composed of a 0.15m thick layer of topsoil [01] which overlay a 0.20m thick subsoil. This in turn lay directly over the natural drift geology at 39.75mOD. The only evidence encountered for the building shown on the 1853 OS mapping was a modest amount of demolition debris. This was found only in the topsoil/subsoil and consisted of brick, pantile and lime mortar fragments along with the occasional sherd of late 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery.

### *Trench 3 (Figure 2)*

5.7 This was to be located to the south of a barn which is being retained and would be in the area of a gin-gang attached to it. The OS second edition shows an earlier building here and the trench would have been to determine if any



evidence for this building survived. The trench was to measure 5x2m (10m<sup>2</sup>). However, as the demolition phase of the on site works had not occurred it was not possible to access the area for this trial trench.

*Trench 4 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 3)*

5.8 This was on the site of new dwellings in the middle of the site. The trench was originally to measure 20x2m (40m<sup>2</sup>) to fit within the building footprint, but due to the presence of mature trees was reduced to 14.6x2m (29.2m<sup>2</sup>) in length in order to prevent damage to tree roots.

5.9 In this trench the topsoil graded into the subsoil with no clear division. At its eastern end it was a 0.5m thick layer increasing in depth to 0.8m thick at its western end and lay directly over the natural geology [03]. The top of the natural drift geology was at 40.94mOD at the eastern end and 40.20mOD at the western end. Modest amounts of modern demolition debris were present in the turf where it had been used as hard standing. A single, un-diagnostic fragment of 12-14<sup>th</sup> century pottery was recovered from the interface of the topsoil/subsoil and the underlying natural in this trench.

*Trench 5 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 4)*

5.10 Originally this was located to the east of a threshing barn which is being retained and would have been in the area of an extension to it. However, a subsequent re-design of this dwelling removed the extension and replaced it with a free standing garage. The location of this trial trench was moved some 10m to the east to evaluate the area of the new garage. The trench measured 7x2m wide (14m<sup>2</sup>).

5.11 This trench was composed of a 0.15m thick layer of topsoil [01] which overlay a 0.20m thick subsoil. This in turn lay directly over the natural drift geology at 41.55mOD.

*Trench 6 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 5)*

5.12 This was on the site of new dwellings in the south-eastern part of the site. The trench was originally to measure 20x2m (40m<sup>2</sup>) to fit within the building footprint. However, due to the presence of a drain the eastern end of the trench was stopped short at 18m, total area of 36m<sup>2</sup>).

5.13 This trench was composed of a much thicker layer of topsoil/subsoil up to 1.05m deep. The upper portion of this sediment contained very occasional fragments of late 19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. The topsoil/subsoil in turn lay directly over the natural drift geology between 39.08 to 39.93mOD.

*Trench 7 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 6)*

5.14 This was originally to be located to the east of a barn, which is being retained, and in the area of the access road. However, it was found that the roots of a row of mature trees on the adjacent property would be encountered if the trench was dug in its proposed location. Therefore it was decided to re-orientate it to run north-east to south-west. This was in order that the south-western end was partially in the new roadway and the remainder was in the



area to the west of the former smithy shown on the historic OS mapping. The trench was originally to be 5x2m (10m<sup>2</sup>) but was increased to 9.5x2m (19m<sup>2</sup>).

- 5.15 This trench was composed of a 0.15m thick layer of topsoil [01] which overlay a 0.20-0.25m thick subsoil. This in turn lay directly over the natural drift geology at 41.58mOD. At the north-eastern end of the site there was a large dump of broken pantiles compacted into the turf.

*Trench 8 (Figures 2 & 3; Plate 7)*

- 5.16 This was an additional trench to the original WSI as a re-design of the site layout placed another garage along the eastern boundary. This trench was 2m<sup>2</sup>.

- 5.17 This trench was composed of a deeper, more recent topsoil of 0.2-0.3m thickness (base at 39.84-39.74mOD) which lay over a 0.2m thick layer of 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic refuse [04]. This refuse layer contained coal ash, pottery sherds, butchered animal bone and broken brick and pantile. The base of [04] was at c.39.54mOD. This layer in turn lay over a topsoil deposit [05]. This topsoil deposit gradually gave way to the subsoil [02] over a thickness of 0.7m which in turn overlay the underlying geology at c.38.64mOD.

- 5.18 *Trench synopsis/ interpretation.* The refuse layer appears to have been dumped on the earlier topsoil and has then become covered, possibly deliberately or possibly by silt from localised flooding.

## 6.0 FINDS

- 6.1 Overall very few finds were encountered and all of them originated from the topsoil/subsoil. With a single exception, all of the artefactual material encountered dated to the mid- to late 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century and were typical of domestic refuse. This included:

- blue and white transfer printed ('willow pattern') pottery
- white porcelains
- black coarsewares
- ash and clinker from open fires
- occasional butchered animal bone

- 6.2 The single exception was an un-diagnostic body sherd from a 12-14<sup>th</sup> century soot-blackened cooking pot, which was recovered from the interface of the topsoil/subsoil and the underlying natural in Trench 4.

## 7.0 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 As can be seen from the results described above, the evaluation only recorded minor 19<sup>th</sup> century or later features and appears to show that the site has little or no earlier activity within it.

- 7.2 The depth of the topsoil/subsoil deposits varied markedly across the site. The south-eastern quadrant of the site contained the deepest soils of around a metre

in depth, whilst deposits in the rest of the site were between 0.3m and 0.5m thick. The reason for this seems to be that the eastern part of the site is slightly lower lying and as such is more prone to localised flooding. This means that it has had regular inputs of silt washed in, which has gradually raised the ground level.

- 7.3 The occurrence of this localised flooding may be the primary reason why there is no apparent earlier activity on the site. A further reason could be due to the site's location which is in the core of the historic settlement and close to the church. This means that the area could have been a large, occasionally flooded open space in the centre of the village which was effectively the village green/common grazing.
- 7.4 In conclusion the evaluation has shown that there does not appear to be archaeological remains earlier than the 19<sup>th</sup> century within the development area. It is therefore recommended that no further archaeological investigation or mitigation is required for this site.

## References

- Buglass, J (2010) *Cherry Tree Farm, Whixley. Archaeological Desk Based Assessment.* Unpublished contractors report.
- Buglass, J (2011) *Cherry Tree Farm, Whixley. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Trial Trenching.* Unpublished contractors report.

## Appendix I

### *Context Catalogue*

- 01 Topsoil, a mid to dark brown humic well developed soil
- 02 Subsoil, light to mid brown sandy with some clay
- 03 Natural, orangey brown sandy clay with pockets of sand and some water rounded stones
- 04 Dump of 19<sup>th</sup> century domestic refuse including coal ash, pottery sherds, butchered animal bone and broken brick and pantile.
- 05 Topsoil, an earlier topsoil under 04, identical to 01
- 06 Foundation cut for 19<sup>th</sup> century garden wall
- 07 Fill of foundation cut 06 deposited after removal of the wall. Contained coal ash, topsoil, 19<sup>th</sup> century brick fragments, water rolled cobbles and tabular stone fragments







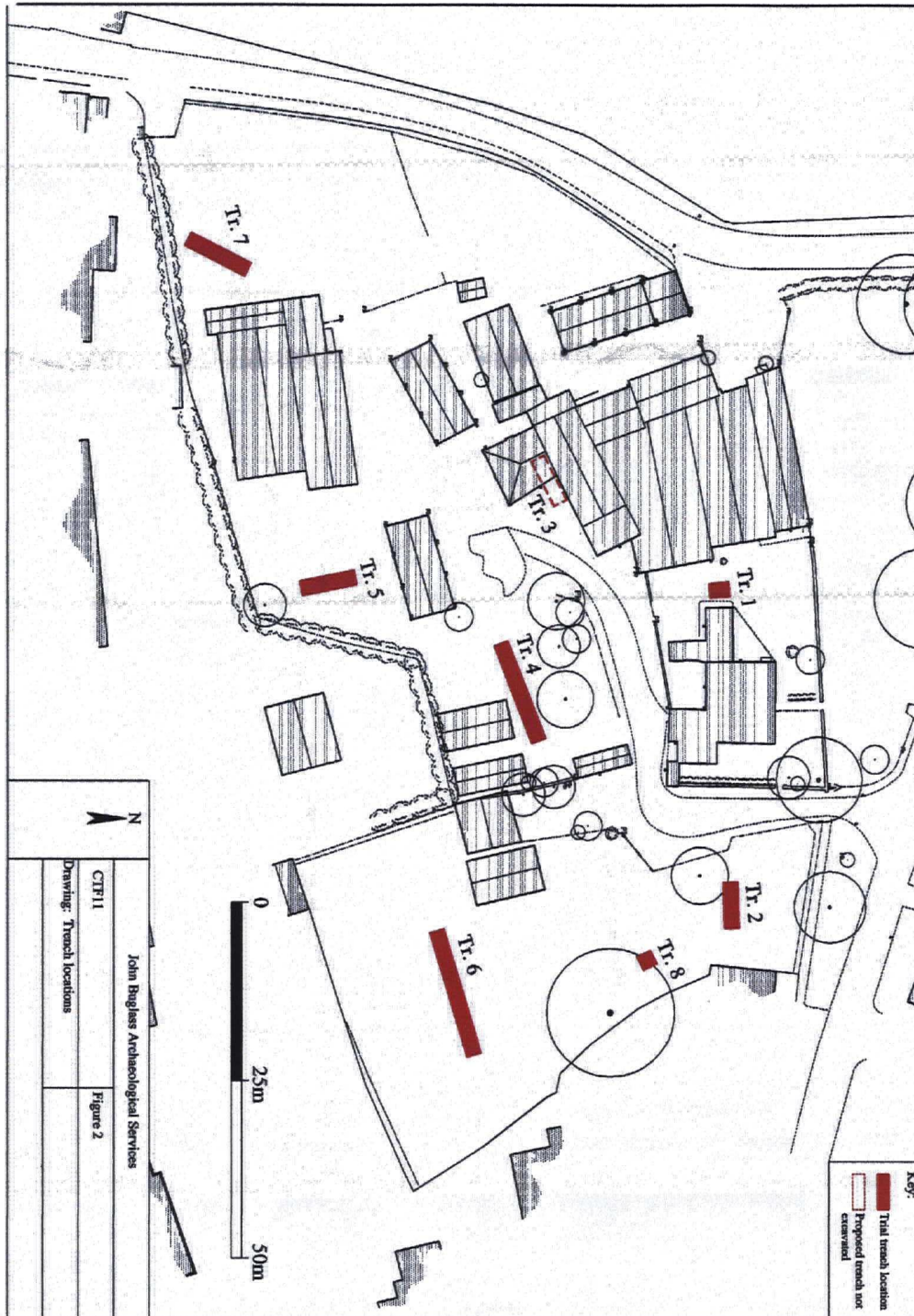


Figure 2. Trench Locations