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**FORD COTTAGE, FORD LANE  
THORNTON LE STREET  
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

P Waterson Esq.

November 2011

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*Summary*

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the various development works at Ford Cottage, Ford Lane, Thornton le Street, North Yorkshire. The watching brief covered the ground reduction, excavation of various foundations and service trenches (Planning Application Planning No 10/02084/FUL). The site lies on the eastern edge of the historic settlement of Thornton le Street (NGR SE 41415 86296).*

*The watching brief recorded a simple sequence of topsoil, subsoil and underlying natural geology. The topsoil contained modest amounts of 18/19<sup>th</sup> century domestic refuse in the form of pottery and glass sherds along with numerous fragments of ceramic brick and tile. A small number of medieval pottery sherds were recovered from the topsoil which indicates that the area of the site appears to have been agricultural land associated with the abandoned medieval settlement immediately to the north.*

*The partial remains of a modern garden feature built from re-used 18<sup>th</sup> century bricks was noted to the west of Ford Cottage.*

*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 watching brief on the various building works at Ford Cottage, Ford Lane, Thornton le Street. The archaeological watching brief was on the ground reduction and excavation of various foundations and service trenches (Planning Application 10/02084/FUL). The site lies on the eastern edge of the historic settlement of Thornton le Street to the west of the Codbeck in Thornton le Street civil parish of Hambleton District (NGR SE 41415 86296). The village is about three miles to the north-west of Thirsk (Figure 1).
- 1.2 The archaeological works were undertaken by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) on behalf of P Waterson Esq. in two phases. The first was the ground works for the garage on the 13 – 15<sup>th</sup> June and the second was the ground works for the house extension on the 24 & 25<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND

### Historic Background

- 2.1 Thornton is a common place-name and derived from the Old English *thorn* and *tun* meaning ‘thorn tree enclosure or farmstead’ (Mills, 1998, 345). In the case of Thornton le Street the addendum le-Street is derived from its situation on the Roman road from York which passes through the parish (Internet Reference 1). The place name has gone through several changes, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century it was *Torentum* or *Torentone*. By the 13<sup>th</sup> century it had become *Thornton in Strata* and in the 14<sup>th</sup> century was *Thornton in the Strete* (Internet Reference 2).
- 2.2 The site is in the grounds of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century, Grade II Listed, Ford Cottage. The cottage lies between the 12/14<sup>th</sup> century, Grade II\* Listed, Church of St Leonard’s to the south and the scheduled earthworks for the medieval village of Thornton to the north. This means that as the site is located in close proximity to known historic and archaeological features there is a moderate potential for further, buried archaeological remains to survive within the development.

### Geology and Soils

- 2.6 The underlying geology of the area is the Upper Lias of the Lower Jurassic period (British Geological Survey, 2001). Overlying this, the quaternary geology is predominantly one of glacial drift (British Geological Survey, 1977). The area of the site is located near the Cod Beck and has seen modification of the drift geology due to the flooding of the beck over time. The soils which had developed from these deposits have been heavily modified by long term and intensive garden type cultivation, resulting in a deep (up to 0.5m) rich loamy topsoil developing across the site.

### Topography and Land-use

- 2.7 The site is in an area of level ground at a height of c.45mOD some 250m to the north of St Leonard’s Church (Figures 1 & 2). The surrounding area is a mixture of residential accommodation and agricultural land.



### **3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the various ground works for the re-development of the site. 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 ground works were undertaken using a mechanical excavator with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. On occasion a toothed bucket was used for the excavation of alluvial boulders, concrete and other demolition debris. The ground works were carried out in two phases. The first phase between the 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> June 2011 consisted of the ground reduction and excavation of the footing for the new garage along with the associated service trench to the west of Ford Cottage. The second phase between on the 24/25<sup>th</sup> November 2011 consisted of the ground reduction and foundations for the new extension to the western end of Ford Cottage (Figure 2 & Plates 1 – 4).

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.

### **5.0 RESULTS**

5.1 The archaeological sequences for these excavations are described in detail below. In the text the context numbers for each archaeological deposit or feature are given in [] brackets.

#### *Phase 1 Garage Ground Reduction & Foundations (Figure 2; Plates 1 & 2)*

5.2 The watching brief was undertaken on the ground works for the new garage which consisted of an area of ground reduction for the hard standing and driveway for the garage along with its footings. A service trench was also excavated alongside the driveway to connect to the existing drainage system.

5.3 The archaeological monitoring recorded a deep, well developed topsoil [01] (up to 0.5m deep in places) which overlay a thin subsoil [02] which in turn overlay the natural drift geology [03] of the area. The topsoil contained a large number of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, brick and glass fragments along with a small number of abraded sherds of medieval pottery which were retained for spot dating. The artifactual remains are typical of manuring of a garden plot with midden type material.

*Phase 2 Extension Ground Reduction & Foundations (Figure 2; Plates 3 & 4)*

- 5.4 This phase of the watching brief was on the ground reduction for the extension to the north and west of the existing cottage.
- 5.5 The archaeological monitoring recorded the same soil profile to that already recorded for the work on the garage and described above. The deep, well developed topsoil [01] (up to 0.5m deep in places) covered the entire area investigated. As before this overlay a thin subsoil [02] which in turn overlay the natural drift geology [03] of the area. As already observed the topsoil contained a large number of 19/20<sup>th</sup> century pottery, brick and glass fragments. The amount of medieval pottery collected was much less than during the previous works.
- 5.6 A single feature was recorded 4.3m to the west of Ford Cottage. This was a small area of herringbone-laid 18<sup>th</sup> century bricks. The bricks formed an irregular shape (maximum dimensions 1.5m north to south and 1.8m east to west) and were laid on a bed of sharp sand within the topsoil. They are the remains of a modern garden feature re-using 18<sup>th</sup> century bricks.

*Finds*

- 5.7 The spot dating of the pottery noted the presence of 17<sup>th</sup> century Ryedale wares, 15<sup>th</sup> century Hambleton wares along with a range of un-diagnostic fragments of a number of typical medieval Yorkshire wares. In amongst the typical range of late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century finds, a single fragment of clay pipe stem is worth noting. This fragment had the number 3422 moulded in a rectangular cartouche on opposite sides and may represent a maker's mark of some form.
- 5.8 No other archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the ground works.

*Ford Cottage (Plates 5 & 6)*

- 5.9 During the archaeological works it was possible to briefly examine the exterior of Ford Cottage. This examination noted that it appears that the western end wall of the cottage has at some stage been rebuilt. The evidence for this could be seen in four features. Firstly, the irregularity of the stone courses when compared with the southern elevation. Secondly, the presence of a stepped foundation only along the western end. Thirdly, several masons' marks were noted on the exterior face of the blocks of the western wall when there were none showing in the southern wall. Additionally the blocks would normally be laid so that the masons' marks would not be visible. Finally, there appears to be a faint set of initials (CT) with a date (177?) cut into the stonework on the western end towards the southern side, which may represent the date of the rebuild.



## 6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The results of the watching brief described above show that the area of the garden of Ford Cottage does not appear to contain any significant archaeological remains related to the medieval settlement to the north. The presence of a few sherds of medieval pottery would seem to indicate that this area was part of the agricultural land associated with that settlement.

### Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Paul Waterson for inviting me to undertake the project along with William Waterson and Steve, the machine driver from Jacksons, for their freely given co-operation in completing the watching brief.

### References

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- 2 - [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64785](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=64785)

## APPENDIX I

### Context Catalogue

- 01 Garden type topsoil
- 02 Sandy sub soil
- 03 Natural underlying sands and gravels with frequent cobbles and small boulders



### ILLUSTRATIONS

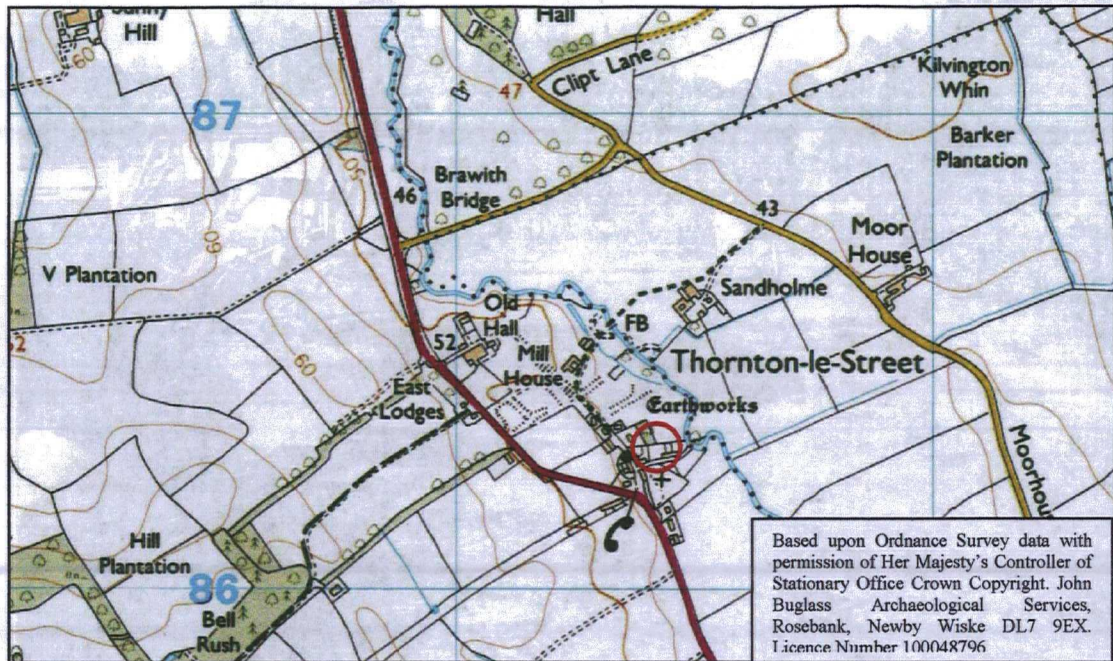


Figure 1. General Site Location.

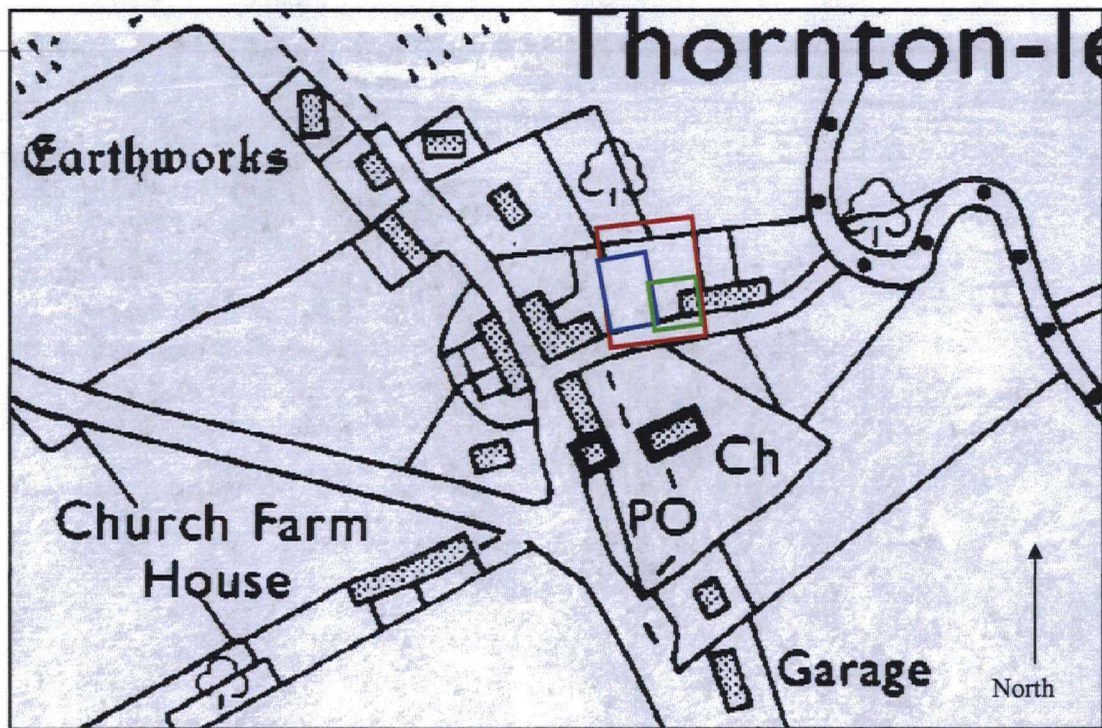


Figure 2. Site Location.



-  First phase ground works
-  Second phase ground works





Plate 1. General shot of site of garage during ground works, looking north.



Plate 2. General view of foundations trench for garage, looking north-east.





Plate 3. General view of foundations trench for extension, looking north-east.



Plate 4. Area of herringbone brickwork, looking south-east, scales 1m.





Plate 5. Initial CT and date 177? in the western end of Ford Cottage

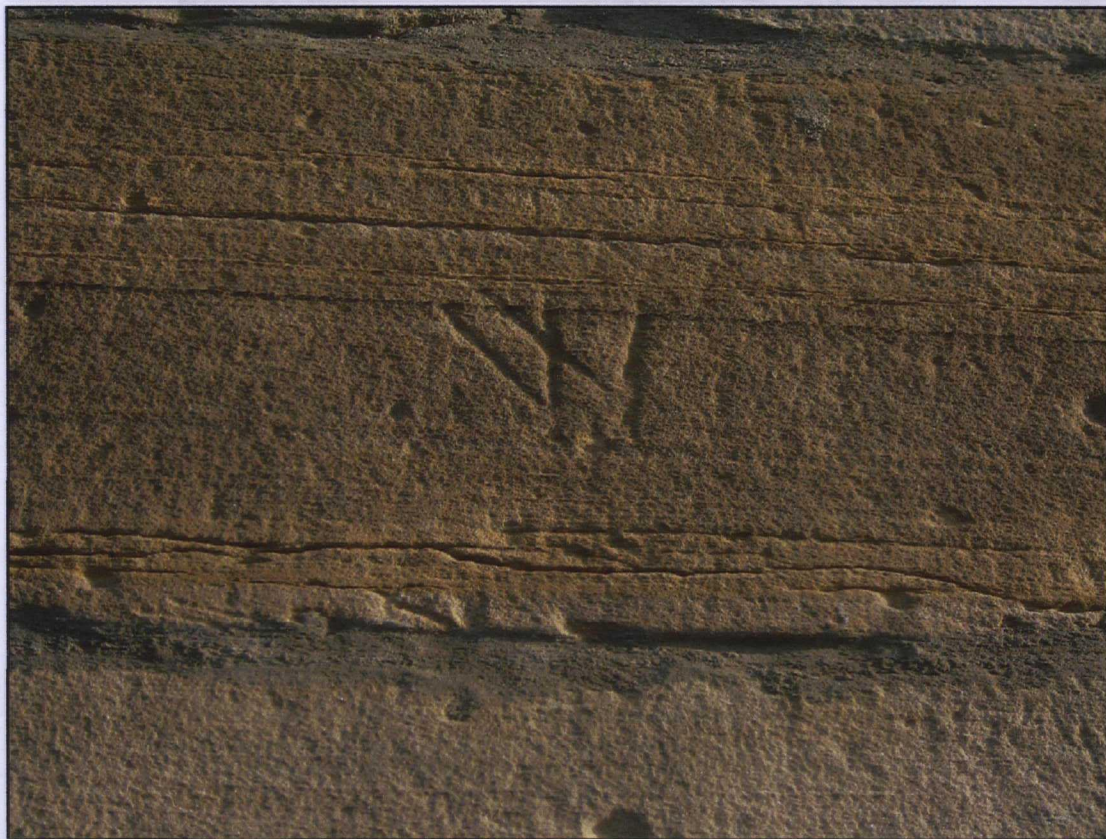


Plate 6. Masons mark in the western end of Ford Cottage.