



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE ADDRESS	Willow Garth, Nosterfield, Bedale, North Yorkshire		
CLIENT NAME	Richard Ogden		
YAT PROJECT #	5638	YAT REPORT #	2012/36
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	n/a	GRID REFERENCE	SE 2781 8032
PLANNING REFERENCE #	10/02297/FUL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	n/a

INTRODUCTION

A watching brief was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust, acting on behalf of Riverside Design Studio Architects, who were in turn acting on behalf of their client Mr. R Ogden, on a site at Willow Garth, Nosterfield, Bedale, North Yorkshire (Figure 1). The watching brief was in advance of the construction of an extension on the northern side of an existing house (Figure 2).

The site is of interest as it lies to the north-west of Thornborough Henges, a prehistoric monument comprising three henges on a north-west to south-east alignment, and an underlying cursus. The north-westernmost of the henges, known as Camp Wood, is visible on Figure 1.

METHODOLOGY

The watching brief was undertaken by J.M. McComish on 4th September 2012. The excavation of six trenches for a new extension on the northern side of the existing house (numbered Trenches A-F, Figure 3) was observed. All excavation was undertaken by the contractors using a small mechanical excavator. The watching brief was recorded in a site notebook and with digital photographs, and the site records are stored at YAT under the project code 5638.

SITE LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site is at the south-eastern end of Nosterfield village, approximately 200m to the north-west of the northernmost of the three Thornborough Henges, known as Camp Wood. The site is bordered to the west and south-west by a road, to the north by an adjacent property, to the south-east and east by grassed paddocks. The ground surface across the site was level.

OBSERVATIONS

An extension on the eastern side of the existing house had already been constructed prior to the commencement of the watching brief (Plate 1). This had involved stripping c.0.3m in depth of deposits across the area of the extension and excavation of foundation trenches. The spoil from this work had been tipped in two piles in an adjacent paddock, one pile of topsoil, and one pile of the underlying deposits which comprised mid brown silty-clay with frequent gravel and cobbles up to 0.1m in diameter. Both spoil heads were searched for artefacts, but the only artefacts present were modern salt glaze sanitary pipes and fittings, and a few sherds of modern machine made blue and white transfer print pottery (Plate 2).

A group of outbuildings to the immediate north of the existing house had also been demolished prior to the commencement of the watching brief. These outbuildings were built about twenty years ago (previous house owner pers. comm.), and the footings of these buildings (Plate 3) were located on a line with Trench C (Context 1001), parallel to and 1.76m east of Trench C (Context 1002), parallel to and 4m east of Trench C (Context 1003), beneath Trench D (Context 1004) and beneath Trench A (Context 1005).

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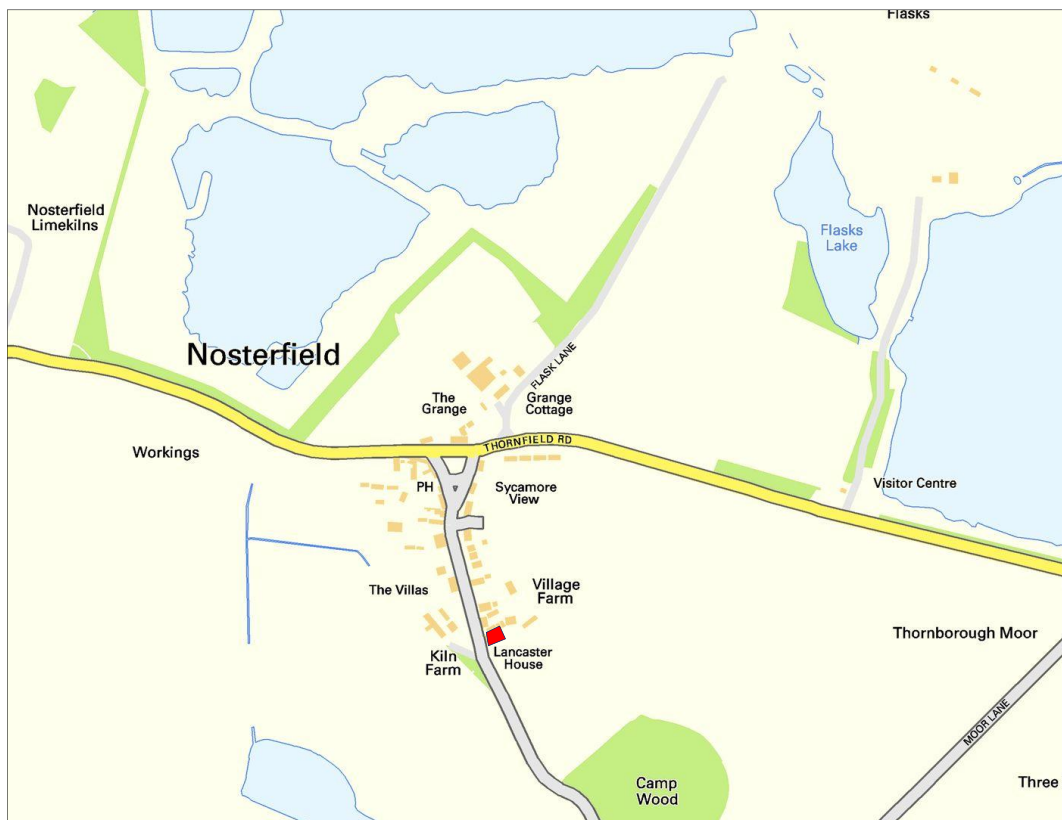


Figure 1 The location of the site in red (not to scale).

Context 1001 was an external stone wall 0.18m wide resting on a concrete footing 0.48m wide and 0.48m thick. Context 1002 was an internal brick wall 0.24m wide in header bond above a concrete footing 0.48m wide and 0.48m thick. Context 1003 was an internal brick wall in stretcher bond 0.11m wide above a concrete footing 0.45m wide and 0.4m thick which had a pipe running through the concrete from the northern side of the house towards a sewer pipe (Context 1012) to the north. Context 1004 was an external stone wall 0.18m wide resting on a concrete footing 0.48m wide and 0.48m thick. Context 1005 was a stone wall 0.35-0.37m wide above a concrete footing 0.5m wide and 0.15m thick. Removal of the concrete footings for these walls proved difficult, due to the thickness of the concrete, and resulted in large voids which had to be infilled and compacted (by machine) prior to excavation of the foundation trenches of the new extension. Located 0.7m to the west of 1002 and immediately south of 1002, were the remains of a ceramic toilet drain (Context 1009), the associated sewer pipe (Context 1008) being located to the immediate north of wall 1004.

To the north of the earlier extension buildings there was a concrete slab 0.15m thick (Context 1006) which covered the area enclosed by Trenches A-D. The area to the north of this concrete slab and to the west of Trench C was covered with plastic sheeting beneath gravel up to 0.12m thick (Context 1007).

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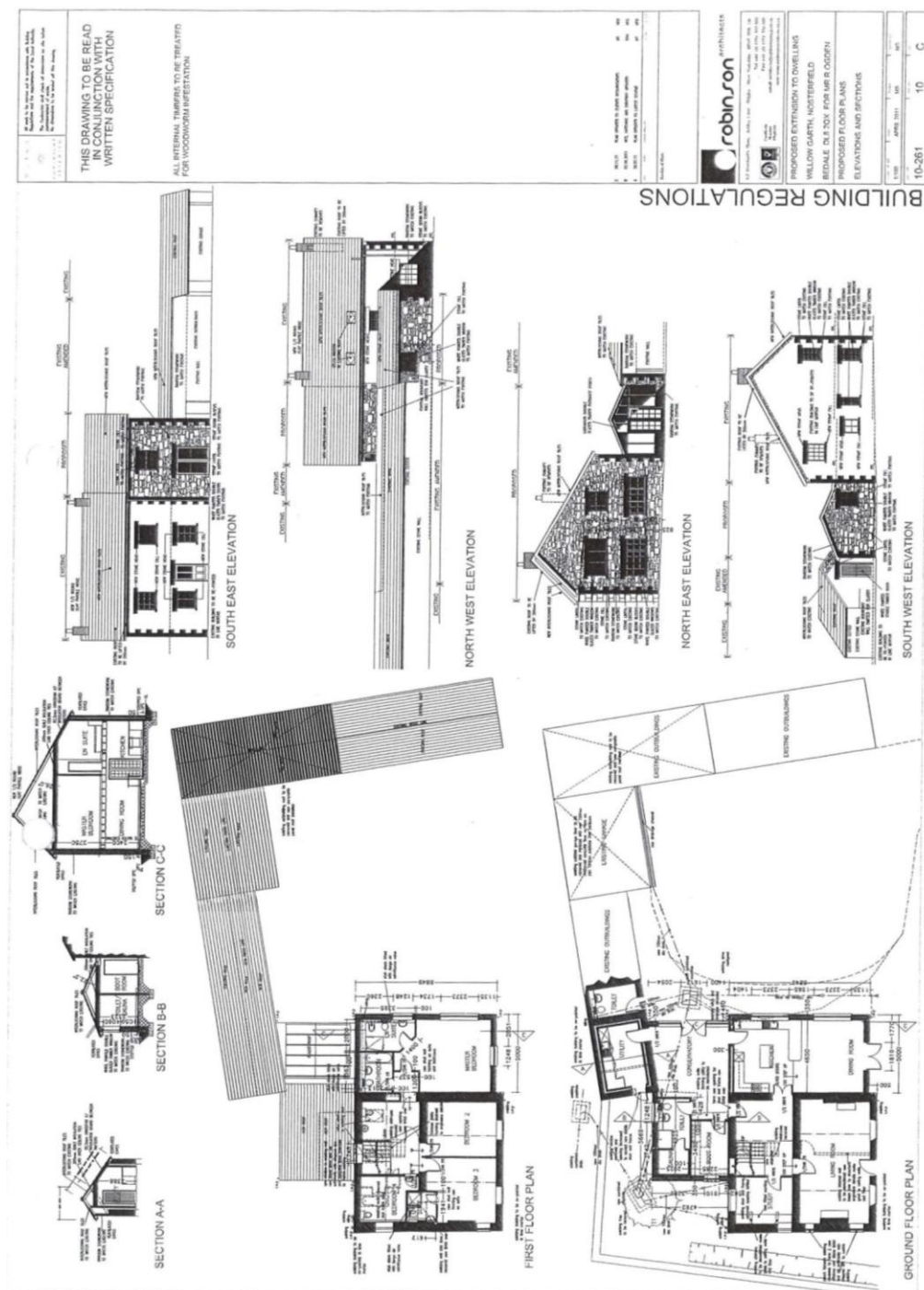


Figure 2 Developer supplied plan showing of the proposed works, not to scale.

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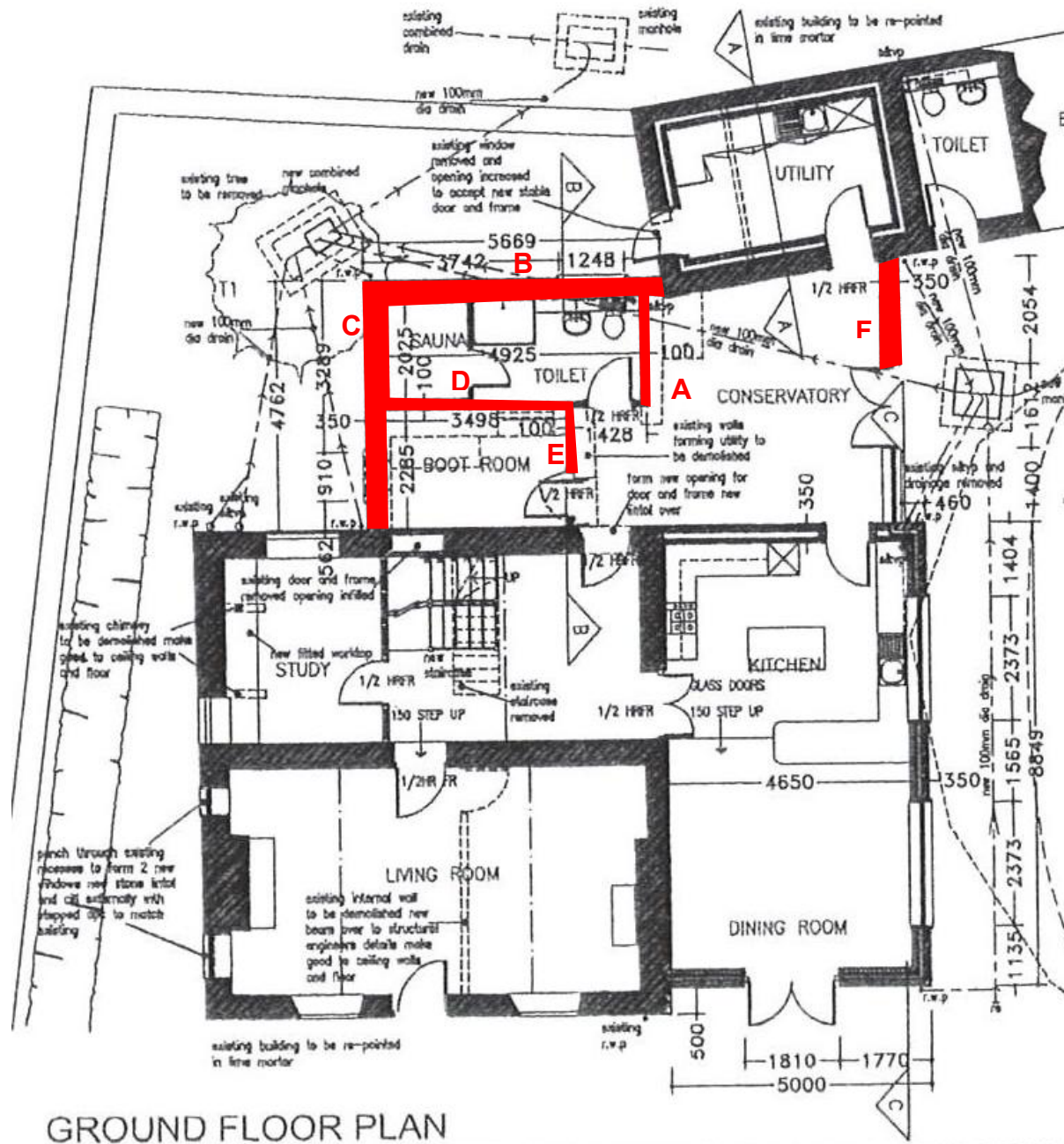


Figure 3 Foundation trenches observed, not to scale.

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Plate 1 The newly built extension on the eastern side of the house.



Plate 2 Finds on the spoil heap resultant from the construction of the extension on the eastern side of the house, scale unit 0.1m.

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Plate 3 The footings of the earlier outbuildings, facing east, scale unit 0.1m

TRENCH A

Trench A was 2m in length, 0.8m deep and 0.55m wide. Beneath wall 1005 there was a deposit of mid-dark brown silty-clay with small stones up to 40mm x 50mm x 20mm in size (Context 1010), the frequency of the stones increasing with depth.

TRENCH B

Trench B was 5.67m in length, 0.8m deep and 0.55m wide (Plate 4). Modern deposits Contexts 1006 and 1007 butted against one another in the area of Trench B. Following the removal contexts 1006-7 a modern metal pipe (Context 1013) was encountered, which was 0.4m below ground level, and this was in turn above a modern ceramic sewer (Context 1012) which was located 1.8m to the west of the eastern end of the trench and 0.5m below ground level. Context 1012 was aligned NNE-SSW while Context 1012 was aligned north-south. The deposits above Context 1013 were hand dug southwards to determine if the pipe was live, but it had clearly been disconnected terminating to the west of the southern end of Trench A. The area around the end of sewer pipe 1012 was removed by machine to enable a temporary plastic sewer pipe to be inserted into 1012, but this caused the upper portions of Trench B to collapse slightly. Beneath the sewer pipe Context 1010 was encountered, but in the case of Trench B this deposit also incorporated occasional large cobbles up to 0.25m in diameter. At the base of the southern end of Trench B the very base of the trench the upper surface of a deposit of gravel was encountered (Context 1011).

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Plate 4 Contexts 1012-1013 facing north, scale unit 0.1m.



Plate 5 Trench B facing west, scale unit 0.1m.

A tree stump located c. 1.25m north-west of the western end of Trench B was removed which created a void c.2m wide and 1m deep which was then levelled up using material from elsewhere on the site. The deposits removed comprised frequent tree roots in a matrix of mid-dark brown silty-clay.

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TRENCH C

Trench C was 4.75m in length, 0.8m deep and 0.55m wide and 0.6m wide at the base but up to 1m wide at the top (the increased width at the top resulting from the removal of wall 1001). The southern end of Trench C butted against the existing house, and exposed the footings of the house which stepped out 0.15m at a depth of 0.2m below the floor level of the house, and continued to the full depth of the trench (Plate 5). These footings incorporated concrete indicating that the walling above at this location was of modern date.

Elsewhere within Trench C the removal of the modern deposits associated with the demolished outbuildings (including a length of plastic drain pipe), exposed Context 1010. Within the upper part of this deposit at the northern end of the trench there were two sheep rib bone fragments each approximately 50mm in length, a small portion of a sheep jaw bone and a sheep clavicle, these were not retained as they were clearly of modern date, being clean and un-eroded.



Plate 6 The footings of the existing house, Trench C facing south, scale unit 0.1m.

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TRENCH D

Trench D was 2.5m in length, 0.7m deep and 0.4m wide. The uppermost 0.5m of deposits observed was the wall and footing of an earlier outbuilding (Context 1004), beneath which Context 1010 was encountered.



Plate 7 General view across the site showing the excavated foundation trenches B (right hand side of image), C (top of image) and D (centre of image)

TRENCH E

Trench E was 1m in length, 0.7m deep and 0.4m wide. The uppermost 0.5m of deposits related to Context 1003 which was a wall of the earlier outbuilding, beneath which context 1010 was encountered.

TRENCH F

Trench F was 1.5m in length, 0.7m deep and 0.68m wide. The uppermost deposit was gravel 0.15m thick (Context 1014), beneath which there was mid-dark brown silty-clay with small stones, Context 1015, which is the equivalent of Context 1011 further to the west. Beneath 1015 was a deposit of naturally occurring gravel and small cobbles in a matrix of mid brown silty-clay, Context 1016 (Plate 8).

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Plate 8 Section of Trench F, facing west, scale unit 0.1m.

SUMMARY

All the contexts observed in the foundation trenches related to outbuildings of late 20th century date, and there was no sign of any earlier features of a structural nature, or of any earlier cut features, neither were artefacts of prehistoric to post-medieval date present. The deposit of silty-clay (Context 1010) seen in all the trenches became increasingly stony with depth, and may have accumulated gradually over a long period of time; it was above naturally occurring gravel (Contexts 1011 and 1016).

Although the ground works for the extension to the east of the present house were not observed, the spoil resultant from these works suggests that the deposits in the area were identical to contexts 1010 and 1016.

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