

**FORMER DAWKINS MOTORCYCLE GARAGE**

**BEDALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**



**Planning Reference 12/00432/FUL**

JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

**Mowbray Construction Ltd**

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

*Summary*

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken on behalf of Mobray Construction Ltd on the site of the former Dawkins Motorcycle Garage (36, Emgate) in Bedale, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 26754 88272), planning reference 12/00432/FUL. The watching brief was on the excavation of the foundations for six new dwellings. The site lies to the east of the historic core of Bedale close to the river and adjacent to the Askew road.*

*The watching brief recorded a layer of varying thickness of dumped sediment which contained small amounts of 18/19<sup>th</sup> century brick, lime mortar and pottery. The layer appears to have been dumped in order to provide a better surface to erect the former building on the site. This layer covered the entire site and sealed an area of post-medieval peat filling a small natural feature towards the western end of the site. Directly below the dumped sediment the natural underlying clays were encountered which were observed to the full depth of the foundation trenches. No archaeological features were encountered during the watching brief.*

## **FORMER DAWKINS MOTORCYCLE GARAGE**

### **BEDALE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

#### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the excavation of the foundations and service trenches associated with the construction of six new dwellings on the site of the former Dawkins Motorcycle Garage (36, Emgate), Bedale, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 26754 88272) (Figures 1 & 2). Planning application number 12/00432/FUL.
- 1.2 The archaeological work was undertaken by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) for Mowbray Construction Ltd in May and June 2013.

## **2.0 BACKGROUND**

### **Historic Background**

- 2.1 The place name for Bedale is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Bedale*. The name is derived from the Old English personal name Beda and *halh* meaning 'Nook of land of a man called Beda' (Mills, 1998, 31) or 'Beda's water meadow' (Morris, 1982, 56). The site is located on the very periphery of the historic core of the settlement and as such there was a moderate potential to encounter buried archaeological remains.

### **Geology and Soils**

- 2.2 The underlying solid geology of the site is Magnesian Limestone of the Permian and Triassic Period (British Geological Survey, 2001) which is overlain by a quaternary geology of glacial sand and gravels (British Geological Survey 1977). The soils that have developed from this geology are the Nercwys Association which are deep fine loamy soils with slight seasonal water logging (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

### **Topography and Land-use**

- 2.4 The site is located on the junction of Bridge Street and Emgate to the west of the level crossing (Figures 1 & 2). The site lies at a height above sea level of *c.*35mOD and is surrounded by mainly residential dwellings with some retail outlets.

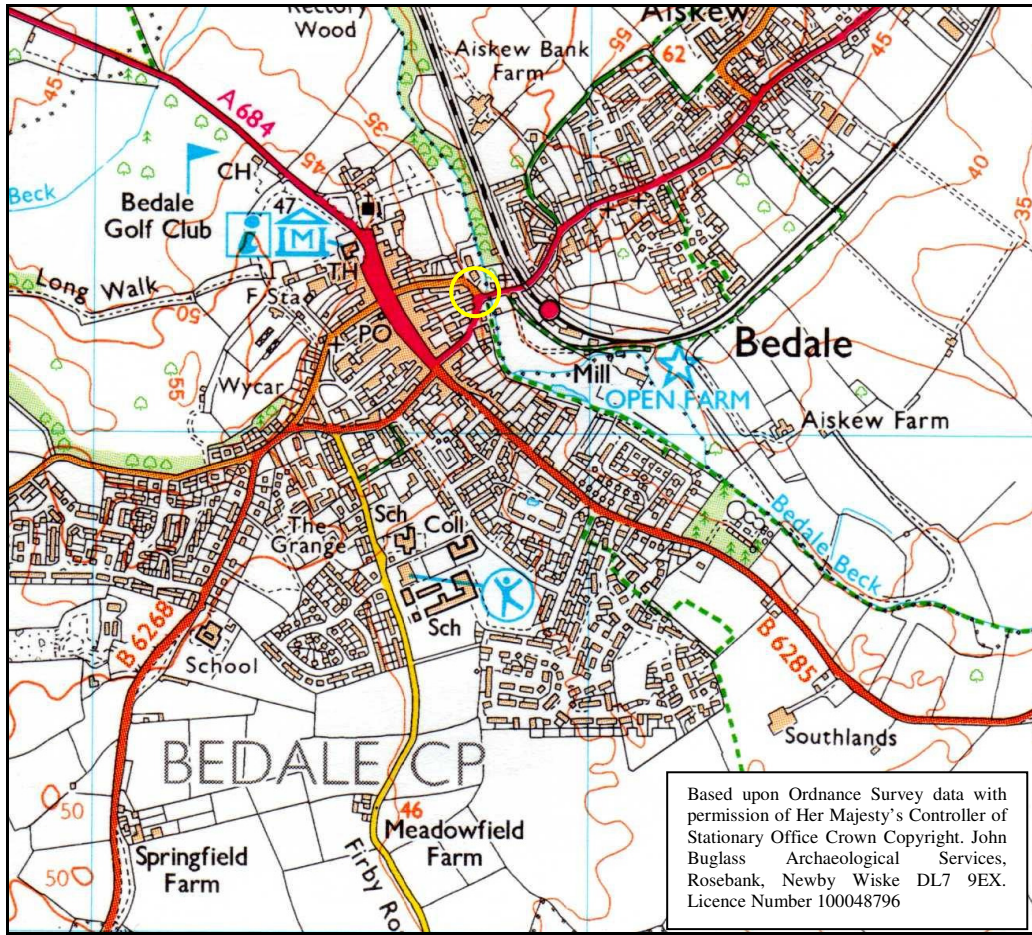


Figure 1. Site Location

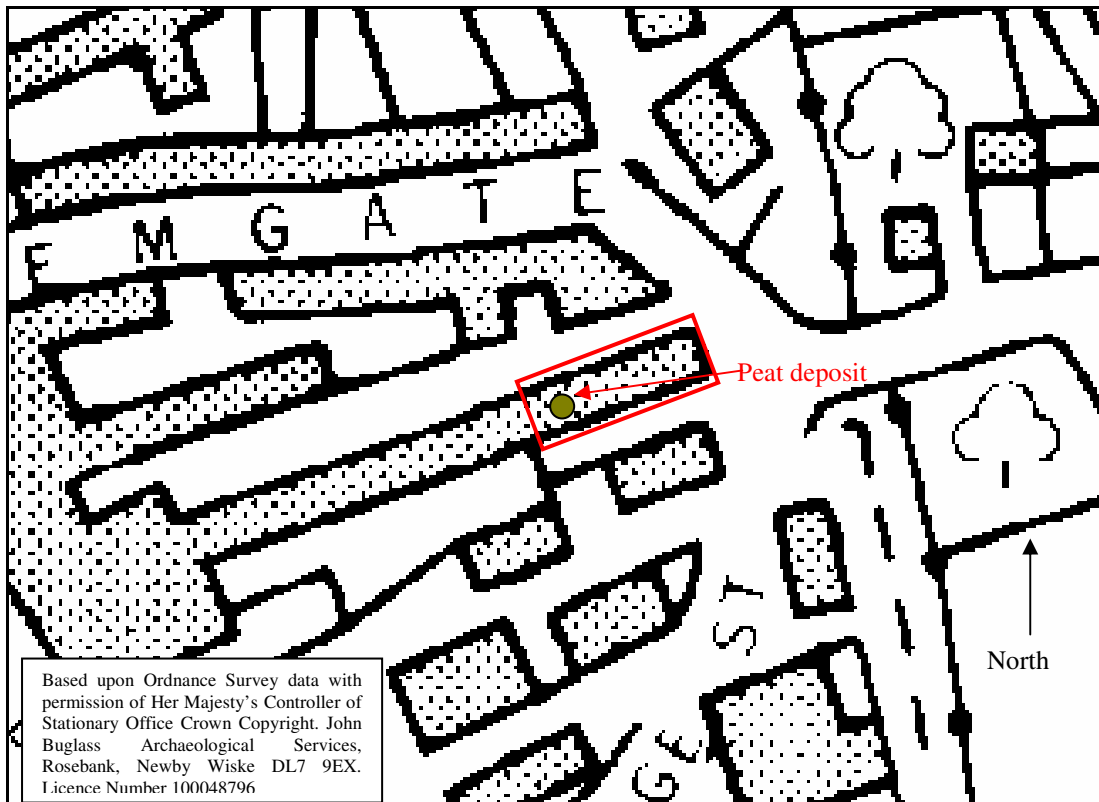


Figure 2. Specific Site Location

### **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 excavation of the service trench. 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 The excavation of the foundations was undertaken by a tracked mini-digger using a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision. Due to the presence of a small area of waterlogged peat at the south-western end of the site the first set of foundations was in the form of a raft rather than strip foundations.

4.2 During the excavation 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 watching brief recorded a very simple stratigraphy across the whole of the site along with the remains of a deposit of post-medieval peat at the south-western end of the site. The area of peat was roughly circular and measured *c.*15m in diameter and started *c.*2m from the south-western boundary of the site (Plates 1 & 2). The peat lay directly below a 0.4m thick deposit of made ground which contained a very small number of fragments of brick, lime mortar and 18/19<sup>th</sup> century pottery. This deposit was observed across the whole of the site and had been deposited directly on top of the underlying natural clays prior to the construction of the former building on the site.

5.2 The peat deposit was found to be up to 1.1m thick in its centre (base at *c.*33.5mOD) and appeared to be the infill of a natural pond type feature. Due to the use of a raft foundation on this part of the site it was not possible to investigate the feature beyond the formation level of the raft. The peat itself was very fibrous with occasional thin lenses of fine, grey silt which appear to represent periodic flooding episodes. No artefactual material was recovered from within the peat though a small amount of 18/19<sup>th</sup> century material was observed on its surface, possibly derived from the deposit above. A sample of the peat was examined by John Carrot of Palaeoecological Research Services and found to contain very little material that could be subject to a more detailed analysis. This combined with its highly fibrous nature means that it was considered to be of a relatively modern origin and as such was not subject to any further analysis.



Plate 1. General view of peat deposit, looking north-east, scale 1m



Plate 2. Peat deposit, looking north, scale 1m



- 5.3 During the monitoring of the second set of foundations in the centre of the site it could be clearly seen that the overlying made ground covered the whole of the site and had been dumped directly onto the underlying natural clay stratigraphy. It could also be seen that the overlying made ground was much thinner at the eastern end of the site and was practically the modern ground level adjacent to the roadside. It was therefore considered, in consultation with the Heritage Section of NYCC, that it was highly unlikely that there were any archaeological remains in the remainder of the site. Therefore the watching brief was halted at this point with the caveat that should any possible features be encountered the project archaeologist would be contacted immediately.
- 5.4 No other archaeological features or artefacts were encountered during the ground works.

## 6.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 From the results described above it can be seen that the site consisted of a layer of dumped, demolition type material which appears to have been used to cover the natural clay to allow the construction of the former building on the site. The dumped material was probably to help with the drainage of the site due to the very sticky nature of the clays (Plate 3). It was probably the presence of the clay along with the proximity of the river that meant that this site had not been occupied until the recent past.



Plate 3. Made ground overlying natural clay, looking south-east

## References

Mills AD (1998) *Dictionary of English Place-names*. Oxford University Press. Oxford.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Alan Court for inviting me to undertake the project and Kev on site for his freely given co-operation in completing the watching brief.