

PLATES 1 AND 2



Site location, prior to excavation, facing north west.



Site location, following excavation, facing south east.

The archaeology will be recorded using professionally approved techniques, standard forms and conventions. All areas of excavation and any archaeological features will be recorded by plans and photographs and sections where possible.

- c. To assess the importance of any remains found and interpret them in terms of their historical context and their relationship with the extant fabric of the building complex.

Nature of Works

It is proposed that two trial holes, each measuring 1m x 1m, are hand excavated. This controlled excavation will provide a suitable sample of the buried soil horizons and an indication of the nature and extent of any archaeology that may survive across the study area.

These excavations shall be made to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any Archaeological features or deposits within the proposed area of ground disturbance.

The trial holes will be excavated down to the upper level of any surviving archaeological deposit or to the required depth of the proposed hedge whichever is the lesser.

There is a possibility therefore that the trial hole will be excavated down to approximately 700 mm below the existing ground level. It maybe felt necessary to remove any archaeological deposits encountered within the course of this excavation to a depth that will not exceed the proposed development in order to establish their character.

In the event that any structural remains are encountered at a level that conflicts with the required depth of dig then this should be the subject of detailed discussions with all relevant bodies prior to a decision being taken as to it's possible future disturbance or removal.

SUMMARY

The archaeological evaluation within the grounds of Knaresborough Castle concluded on Monday 24th July 00. There follows a brief summary on the works.

The trial holes were excavated down to 0.700mm and 0.750mm below existing grounds levels. At which depth a layer, consistent with the attributes of demolition rubble was identified. In both instances, the surface of this layer sloped on a gentle slope to the east. The layer was not excavated as it was agreed that there was adequate overburden to sustain a hedge. No dating evidence was identified on the surface of this layer, however, a mid to late 17th century date is likely, although it cannot be ruled out that the surface of the deposit was truncated and graded prior landscaping.

PLATES 3 AND 4



Trial Hole A, following excavation, facing south.

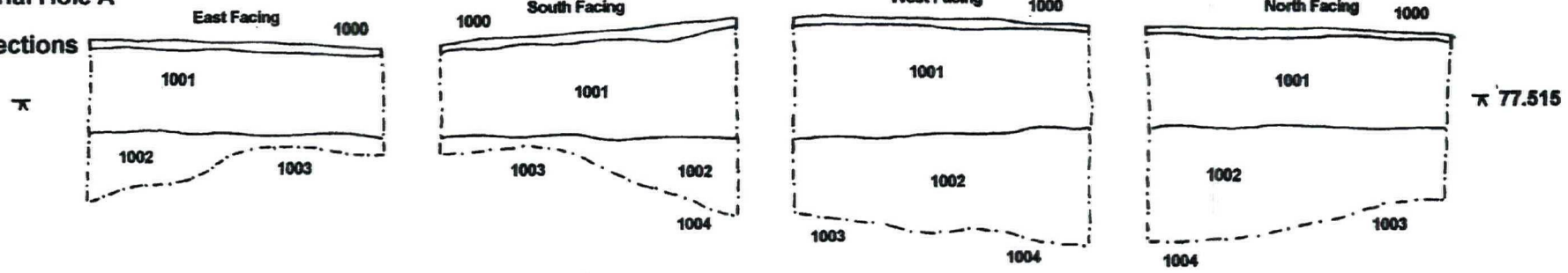


Trial Hole B, following excavation, facing south east.

FIGURE 4 TRIAL HOLE EXCAVATIONS

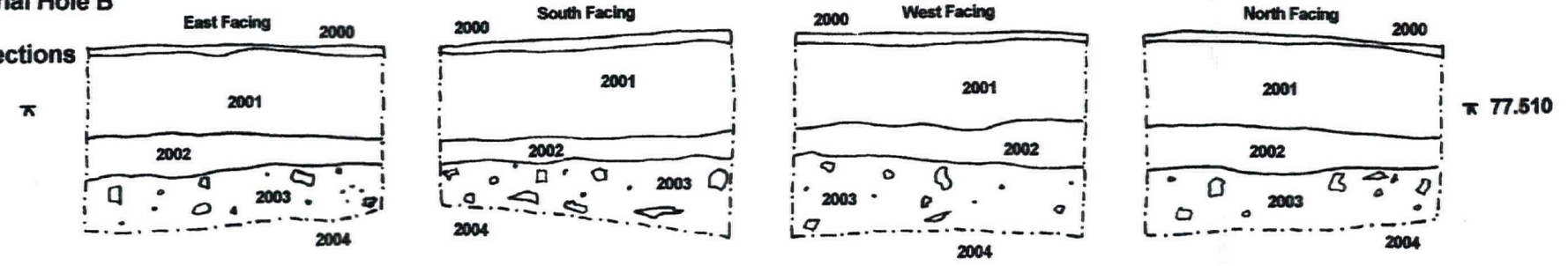
Trial Hole A

Sections

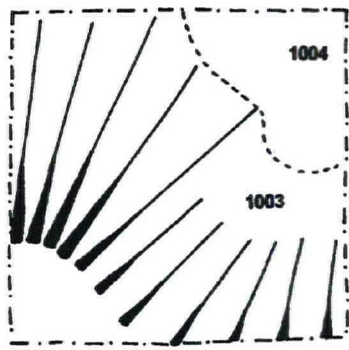


Trial Hole B

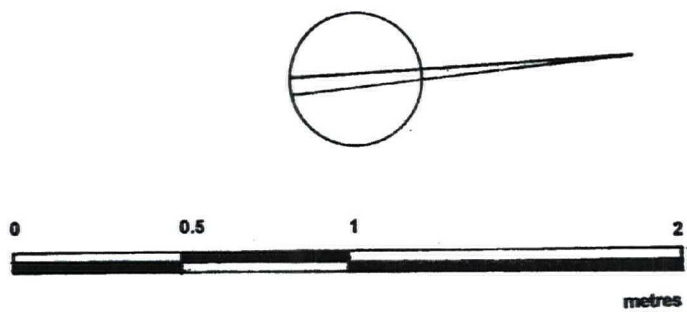
Sections



Trial Hole A Plan



Trial Hole B Plan



All heights in metres AOD.

The demolition rubble was sealed by up to three deposits that all contained 19th and early 20th century artefacts. Each of these layers had been bedded level, indicating that, during the late 19th century, a concerted attempt was being made to landscape the Castle Grounds. From this investigation and other recent works within the grounds, it has been established that the 19th century landscaping works were widespread and largely achieved by importing large volumes of topsoil. Within the northern extent of the grounds, it would appear that the topsoil was supplemented with builder's rubble. The builder's rubble contains a wide variety of inclusions, such as brick, pan tile, clay, sand and sandstone. These materials are not indigenous to the construction of the Castle but are consistent with building materials within the town.

The nature of these 19th century deposits together with the close proximity of these excavations to a sandstone wall, which presently defines the north eastern boundary of the Castle Grounds, would suggest that this miniature wall was constructed as a retaining wall to contain the imported soils.

The evaluation generated a small assemblage of 19th century and modern artefacts. These were dominated by pottery sherds, but also included, bottle, animal bone and fresh water Oyster shell, together with a small quantity of metalwork.

RECCOMENDATIONS

In light of the recent archaeological evaluation on the northern perimeter defences at Knaresborough Castle, the following is recommended:-

- The proposed hedge can be planted, as the works will have little impact on buried archaeological deposits. Furthermore, the nature of the deposits overlying the archaeologically sensitive layer is favourable for plant growth.
- That the excavations, where possible, are restricted to a 1 metre wide strip running parallel to the existing sandstone wall. Within this area it has been determined that the overburden exceeds 700mm in depth.
- That the assemblage of modern finds are not washed and retained for long term storage.

Kevin John Cale

July 2000

APPENDIX A

Area Excavations

Trial Hole A

Type: Trial Hole:hand
N.G.R: 34859 56893

Length: 1m
Width: 1m
Depth: 0.80m

Planform: Square
Aligned: -

Context No's: 1000 - 1004
Object Ref: AAA - AAB

Plate No: 2
Fig. No: 3, 4

The trial hole is situated within a rectangular shaped area of grassed lawn. The area is contained to the west by the perimeter footway, to the east by a miniature sandstone wall that delineates the north eastern extent of the Castle Grounds, to south by a turret of the East Gate, to the north by an isolated section of curtain wall. The existing ground levels slope gently to the west from the perimeter wall. The ground within the Castle Grounds at this point area elevated by up to 0.64m above the Castle Yard to the immediate east.

From the configuration of ashlar masonry on the east gate, it is likely that the trial hole is situated on the line of the now demolished curtain wall. The position and alignment of the existing sandstone wall being misleading.

The trial hole was hand excavated.

The turf (context 1000) measured up to 0.08m in depth. The topsoil (context 1001) was a dark brown (10YR3/2) sandy loam that measured up to 0.38m in depth. The layer was dry, friable and contained a low quantity of inclusions (10%), these were evenly mixed throughout the layer and consisted of root, brick <0.03m in size, pebble, lime and coal fragments. The topsoil contained a small quantity of late 19th / early 20th century pottery, glass, metalwork (Object Ref. AAA). The matrix, nature and the finds identified within this layer were consistent with other topsoil's recently identified and recorded within the Castle Grounds.

The topsoil sealed a layer of made up ground (context 1002). This light grey brown (10YR5/2) sandy silt layer varied in depth, within the north west corner the layer measured 0.08m in depth, increasing to 0.42m in the south east corner of the excavation. The layer was moist and loosely compacted with a fine-grained matrix. The layer contained a very low quantity of inclusions (5%), namely, sandstone fragments measuring <0.06m in size. The layer contained a small quantity of late 19th / early 20th century pottery and glass fragments (Object Ref. AAB). It would appear that the layer was deposited following the construction of the miniature sandstone wall in order to raise ground levels within the Castle Grounds.

The excavation was reduced down onto a demolition level (context 1003). This medium brown (10YR5/4) loamy sand was loose and moist. The layer contained a high quantity of inclusions (70%), namely; angular sandstone / limestone fragments <0.10 m in size, grit, sand and grey mortar blotching. The surface was found to be relatively level within the north western corner of the trial hall at 0.39m below the existing ground level sloping to the east and south east on a gentle/moderate gradient to 0.74m below the existing ground level. The layer has been interpreted as rubble associated with the demolition and removal of stone from the curtain wall during the mid / late 17th century, however in the absence of datable finds this cannot be proven.

Within the south eastern corner of the excavation, a highly compacted layer was identified (context 1004). This layer of dark brown (10YR3/1) sandy loam was highly compact and appeared to pass beneath the south eastern extent of the demolition material (context 1003). The surface of the layer sloped gently down to the south east. A moderate (25%) quantity of ash, coal and cinder were imbedded within the surface. The layer has the characteristics of a treaded surface and as such would have afforded access from Castle Yard into the Castle during the 17th century programme of demolition. The surface was devoid of finds.

Trial Hole B

Type: Trial Hole:Hand
N.G.R: 34861 56902

Length: 1 m
Width: 1 m
Depth: 0.80 m

Planform: Square
Aligned: -

Context No's: 2000 - 2004
Object Ref: AAC -

Plate No: 2, 5, 6, 7
Fig. No: 3, 4

The trial hole is situated within a rectangular shaped area of grassed lawn. The area is contained to the west by the perimeter footway, to the east by a miniature sandstone wall that delineates the north eastern extent of the Castle Grounds, to south by a turret of the East Gate, to the north by an isolated section of curtain wall. The existing ground levels slope gently to the west from the perimeter wall. The ground within the Castle Grounds at this point area elevated by up to 0.50m above the Castle Yard to the immediate east.

From the configuration of ashlar masonry on the east gate, it is likely that the trial hole is situated on the line of the now demolished curtain wall. The position and alignment of the existing sandstone wall being misleading.

The trial hole was hand excavated.

The turf (context 2000) measured up to 0.07m in depth. The topsoil (context 2001) was a dark brown (10YR3/2) sandy loam that measured up to 0.27m in depth. The layer was dry, friable and contained a low quantity of inclusions (10%), these were evenly mixed throughout the layer and consisted of root, brick <0.03m in size, pebble, lime and coal fragments. The topsoil contained a small quantity of late 19th / early 20th century pottery, glass, metalwork (Object Ref. AAC). The matrix, nature and the finds identified within this layer were consistent with other topsoil's recently identified and recorded within the Castle Grounds.

The topsoil sealed a layer of made up ground (context 2002). This light grey brown (10YR5/2) sandy silt layer varied slightly in depth, within the west the layer measured 0.14m in depth, increasing to 0.20m in the eastern edge of the excavation. The layer was moist and loosely compacted with a fine-grained matrix. The layer contained a very low quantity of inclusions (5%), namely, sandstone fragments measuring <0.06m in size. The layer contained a small quantity of late 19th / early 20th century pottery and glass fragments (Object Ref. AAC). It would appear that the layer was deposited following the construction of the miniature sandstone wall in order to raise ground levels within the Castle Grounds.

The excavation was reduced down onto a 19th century builder's rubble (context 2003). This medium brown (5YR4/4) clayey sand was moist and loose. The layer contained a high quantity of inclusions (75%), dominated by brick fragments, pan tile, clay blotching, water worn pebble and sandstone fragments measuring <0.10m in size. Upon excavation the layer was found to increase slightly in depth from west to east from 0.10m to 0.18m in depth and contained a moderate quantity of late 19th century pottery, glass, metalwork, butchered animal bone, fresh water Oyster shell. The layer resembles similar deposits identified during recent works within the Castle Grounds and within previous groundworks within the Castle Yard, where it has been interpreted as builder's rubble derived from works within the town during the latter half of the 19th century.

The excavation was reduced down onto a demolition level (context 2004). This medium brown (10YR5/4) loamy sand was moist and firm. The layer contained a high quantity of inclusions (70%), namely; angular magnesian limestone fragments <0.10 m in size, grit, sand and pink (7.5YR 5/4) mortar blotching. The surface was found to slope gently to the east from 0.55m to 0.70m below the existing ground level. The layer has been interpreted as rubble associated with the demolition and removal of stone from the curtain wall during the mid / late 17th century, however in the absence of datable finds this cannot be proven.

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