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**Brandsby House
Sherburn Street
Cawood
North Yorkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief
SE 5725 3765**

8/35/205C/PA

**MAP 04-04-01
August 2001**

**Brandsby House
Sherburn Street
Cawood
North Yorkshire**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report
SE 5725 3765**

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1. Introduction

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on land to the rear of Brandsby House, Sherburn Street, Cawood, during May and August 2001. The work involved monitoring foundation excavations associated with the renovation of Brandsby House and the development of land to the rear of the house for residential accommodation (Selby District Council Decision No. 8/35/205C/PA).

The site lies within the village of Cawood, on the B1222 Cawood to Sherburn road, at SE 5725 3765 (Fig. 1).

The site lies on 831c Wigton Moor Association soils. These are characterised by permeable fine and coarse loamy soils overlying a geology of gravely river terrace and glaciofluvial drifts (Mackney 1984, 305-6).

All work has been funded by Church Hill Developments Ltd.

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2. Historical and Archaeological Background

Cawood is notable for its close connections with the See of York. King Athelstan (926-941) granted the manors of Cawood and Sherburn to Archbishop Wulfstan, and the village became an increasingly important ecclesiastical and political centre during the medieval period. A castle was established following the Norman Conquest and was extended and reinforced in 1266 and 1271 by Archbishop Gifford. The nearby Cawood Forest was stocked with game

for hunting and the castle became an important staging post for military forces travelling North. In 1299 the castle was prestigious enough to host the Court of King Edward I (Bell 1987, 4).

Cawood Castle continued to be an important location into the Sixteenth century and a phase of refurbishment and rebuilding occurred in 1530 when Cardinal Wolsey took up residence there after falling out of favour with Henry VIII. In 1553 the castle was ruined on the orders of the Catholic Queen Mary as a reprisal against the Protestant Archbishop Holgate. Repairs were carried out and the castle and village were the scene of fighting during the Civil War. In 1646 the castle was slighted by Parliamentary Act (*ibid.*, 7).

To the rear of the Brandsby House lies the silted-up Bishop Dyke, running from south-west to north-east across the site (Fig. 2). The Dyke runs from Sherburn-in-Elmet to Cawood, where it joins the River Ouse (Fig. 1). The section running through Cawood is now culverted.

Bishop Dyke is of medieval date and was probably originally built to transport stone from Huddleston Quarry to the River Ouse (Miller & Gee 1983, 168). From 1385 until the mid-Sixteenth century the stone was used by the Dean and Chapter of York for its building works within the city and was also used at other sites including Eton College and King's College, Cambridge (*ibid.*, 167). Quarrying at Huddleston continued until the Victorian period.

A second use of the Dyke was to provide power for mills within Cawood. The earliest documentary evidence of milling within the village dates to 1650, although mills probably existed before that time (Bell 1987, 18).

3. Methodology

Work undertaken involved the monitoring of foundation excavations for a new cottage at the rear of Brandsby House, Trenches 1 and 2, and Trench 3, the erection of a garage block. All works were carried out under full archaeological supervision using a back-acting mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

Archaeological deposits were planned on drawing film at a scale of 1:50. Written and photographic records were also prepared, the latter utilising colour print film.

4. Results

A number of significant archaeological remains were unearthed during the Watching Brief.

Trench 1

The Trench 1 groundworks consisted of a single foundation cut 12.40m x 6.80m in size, excavated to a mean depth of 0.50m below existing ground level.

Traces of a probable floor surface were seen in the south-eastern corner of the site (context 1002, Fig. 3). The visible portion of Floor 1002 consisted of a deposit of brick rubble and gravel within a mid grey/brown sandy mortar matrix and measured 4.10m x 1.0m in extent.

A well-defined foundation cut (context 1008) cut through Floor 1002. The associated well-built wall (context 1001) consisted of a double thickness of dressed limestone blocks 0.50m x 0.20m x 0.20m in size, bonded with a mid cream/yellow sandy lime mortar (Pl. 1). Wall 1001 was 4.70m long. A small sondage was cut through Deposit 1002 (Fig. 3) and showed that Wall 1001 survived to a depth of three courses (Pl. 2). A second length of walling (context 1012) ran south-east from Wall 1001 across the remainder of the site for a distance of 7.80m (Pl. 3). Whilst clearly respecting and continuing the line of Wall 1001, Wall 1012 appeared to be of a different build, in that it contained roughly dressed limestone blocks 0.50m x 0.30m x 0.20m in size, of a markedly inferior finish to those of Wall 1001 (Pl.3). No evidence of mortar bonding was seen, but the wall had clearly been disturbed by Field Drain 1009 and modern groundworks and it is possible that mortared courses survive substantially intact below the level of the current excavation.

Floor 1002 was overlaid by an occupation deposit (context 1004) consisting of mid grey/brown clayey silt containing occasional limestone fragments, charcoal, pottery sherds and animal bone fragments (Appendix 2). Context 1004 measured 4.0m x 3.0m and was bounded along its northern edge by a mid grey silty clay deposit (context 1007). Deposit

1007 contained finds dating to the late Seventeenth century, whilst those from Deposit 1004 dated to the late Eighteenth century.

It was impossible to clarify the stratigraphic relationship between contexts 1004 and 1007 as the deposits were observed in plan only. However, it is possible that the interface between the deposits represents the line of a robbed-out returning wall running approximately parallel to Wall 1001.

Deposit 1007 continued to the west and was cut by a shallow trench 0.30m wide x 5.20m long, running south west to north east across the trench (context 1009). Cut 1009 contained a Post-medieval field drain consisting of cylindrical unglazed terracotta pipes (context 1010). To the south of Wall 1001, both Deposit 1007 and Field Drain 1009 were truncated by a modern ash-pit (context 1011) containing plastic, glass, scrap iron and other refuse.

During excavation it was noted that Wall 1001 had been re-used as the foundation course for a later brick building. A wall (context 1014) composed of a double thickness of hand-moulded red bricks, 0.24m x 0.11m x 0.05m in size and surviving to a single course in height, had been mortared to the upper surface of Wall 1001. These bricks were removed during excavation, but traces of two returning walls (contexts 1003 and 1005) were left in situ.

At the eastern edge of the excavation area, Wall 1003 consisted of a single course of unmortared edge-laid red bricks, 0.24m x 0.11m x 0.05m in size, running south-west by north-east for 1.40m and laid directly onto Deposit 1004. Context 1003 (partially removed during initial excavations) was seen to run into the northern trench baulk and is probably a foundation course for a demolished Eighteenth century brick wall.

Wall 1005 was of Eighteenth century date and consisted of a double thickness of bricks identical to those forming Wall 1003, surviving to a single course in height and mortared to the upper surface of a stone returning wall running north-west from Wall 1001 (context 1013). Wall 1013 was identical in construction to Wall 1001 and ran for approximately 1.0m before being obscured by Wall 1005 (Pl. 4). Partial removal of Wall 1005 at the northern end

of the trench showed it to occupy a 0.40m x 0.10m deep foundation cut (context 1006), cut through Deposit 1007, with no evidence of the earlier stone wall surviving at this point.

All the archaeological features recorded above were sealed by mixed grey-brown silty modern deposits (context 1000) containing building rubble, topsoil etc. Several high-quality dressed stone blocks were recovered from this fill during excavation (Pls. 5 & 6).

Trench 2

Trench 2 groundworks were associated with the erection of an extension to the rear of Brandsby House, on the site of a demolished single story range which contained the kitchen, bathroom and scullery (Pls. 7 & 8). Following demolition, a 7.70m x 4.15m area immediately to the rear of the property was excavated to a mean depth of 0.50m (Fig. 2).

Excavation involved the removal of a 3.80m x 3.60m modern concrete and hardcore floor surface, covering the area of the former kitchen and bathroom (context 2000). The floor was 0.15m thick. Directly below this was a mid grey-brown silty soil deposit (context 2001). Deposit 2001 contained quantities of brick rubble and roughly-dressed limestone building material similar to the stone used in Wall 1013. No archaeological features were seen within the deposit, and no evidence of earlier floor surfaces was noted.

Below Deposit 2001, at a mean depth of 0.50m from existing ground level, was a mid-grey silty clay deposit (context 2002). Deposit 2002 was similar to Deposit 1007 observed in Trench 1, but contained very few finds. Only two pottery sherds, of Twelfth century date, were recovered (Appendix 2). A small sondage pit cut by contractors to test the subsoil showed Deposit 2002 to be approximately 0.50m in depth, overlying deposits of natural sand.

Trench 2 excavations failed to reveal any archaeological features. In particular, no structures were seen which might inform and clarify the ground plan of the building represented by Walls 1001, 1012 and 1013, uncovered in Trench 1.

5. Discussion

Excavations in Trench 1 revealed clear evidence of a substantial stone building, represented by Walls 1001, 1012 and 1013. The building was probably of medieval date, but certainly dates before circa 1800, when its walls were reused as foundations for a small brick-built cottage.

Initially, the earlier stone building was thought to be part of the demolished castle complex, the gatehouse of which still stands immediately to the north-east of site. However, the south-western front of the gatehouse was the original entrance frontage of the castle, with the castle buildings extending north-east to the River Ouse (Bell 1987, 10). The Trench 1 building is therefore clearly outside the castle bounds. This is confirmed by the fact that the site also lies to the west of the line of the former Bishop Dyke. It is unlikely that any of the castle buildings would extend west of such an obvious extant landscape feature. An alternative hypothesis is that the building may have been associated in some way with the transport of goods along the Bishop Dyke. The location of the building, parallel to the Dyke and at the rear of the site, as opposed to occupying the street frontage, may support this theory.

6. Bibliography

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