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**BACK LANE, EASINGWOLD.**

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REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.  
 OSA REPORT No: OSA03WB34.

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SNY	8550
ENY	1933
CNY	2295
Parish	2041
Rec'd	02/12/03

NOVEMBER 2003.

# OSA

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Report Summary.

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**REPORT NO:** OSA03WB34  
**SITE NAME:** Back Lane, Easingwold  
**COUNTY:** North Yorkshire  
**NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:** SE 5310 6995 5298269889  
**PLANNING APPLICATION No:** 2/02/041/0938  
**ON BEHALF OF:** R.J. Barugh (Builders) Ltd.  
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**TIMING:** Fieldwork  
23<sup>rd</sup> October 2003  
Post excavation & report preparation  
November 2003  
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**PERIODS REPRESENTED:** Post Medieval/Early Modern

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## 1.0 Abstract.

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An archaeological watching was undertaken by *On-Site-Archaeology (OSA)* during the initial groundwork for two residential dwellings at Back Lane, Easingwold, North Yorkshire. The watching brief was carried out on the 23 October 2003. The total site is approximately 156m<sup>2</sup> in size and lies within national grid reference SE 5310 6995 (See fig 1).

The site revealed some activity during or later than the Victorian period in form of a series of postholes and pits. No earlier features were uncovered below this level.

The level of Victorian/post Victorian activity was uncovered immediately below the present ground level cut into alluvial sediments. It is not unlikely that these sediments are overlying other archaeological features; however the depth of the foundation trenches were insufficient to confirm any earlier activity.



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 5310 6995).

Reproduced from the 1982 Ordnance Survey 1:50 000 maps with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office.  
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## 2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

Easingwold is situated 13 miles NNW of York and 10 miles SE of Thirsk in the vale of York, North Yorkshire. The site is situated on Back Lane within the historic core of Easingwold on the eastern side of the market place. The site was formally the gardens of properties fronting onto the Market Place.

The vale of York is a low lying generally flat or gently undulating landscape with soils formed from glacial till, sand and gravel.

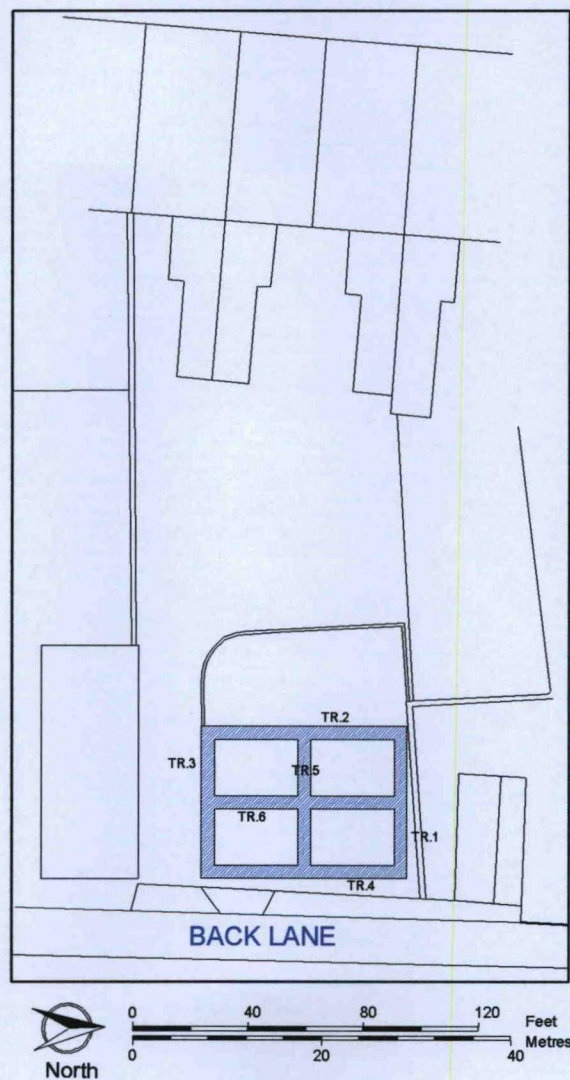


Figure 2. Trench location plan. (Scale 1:400).

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### 3.0 Archaeological Background.

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Easingwold is an old market town with a cobbled market square. The application site lies within the historic core of Easingwold, on the eastern side of the Market Place. The excavations for the construction of the new dwellings have the potential to encounter archaeological remains of the medieval and later periods (this information supplied by North Yorkshire Heritage Unit).

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### 4.0 Methodology.

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The topsoil and subsoil had been stripped from the whole area of development prior to the excavation of the foundation trenches. The excavation of the 6 foundation trenches was carried out with a mini-digger with a toothed 0.70m wide bucket down to a level of 0.60-0.80m. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. A digital photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

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## 5.0 Results.

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Six foundation trenches were excavated to a level of ~0.75m and a width of 0.70m (see Plate 1). The location of these trenches is shown on Figure 2. A number of features of modern date were recorded during the watching brief. In addition to the description given below sample photographs are included in this report. Detailed plans of the features are held in the project archive.

A soft light to mid grey silty sand (1030) was encountered at a level of 0.70-0.75m in all trenches, in trench 6 this was replaced by a brighter loose white sandy layer (1031). Above (1030) was a friable limestone layer (1033) only visible in trench 3 with a depth of 0.15m extending 6m along the trench. Above this was a layer of orange sand (1028), visible in all trenches, with a thickness of 0.60-0.65m encountered immediately below the stripped surface. Cut into (1028) were a series of pits and postholes.

### 5.1 Trench 1.

Trench 1 ran in an east west direction. At the west end of the section of trench 1 was a vertical sided flat bottomed posthole [1001] with a depth of 0.30m and a width of 0.20m. The posthole was filled with a soft dark brown sandy silt containing flecks of CBM (1000). Overlying (1028) to the east end of trench 1 extending 2.5m east-west was a layer of greenish grey sandy silt (1024), which extended the full length of trench 4 in a north-south direction and was again visible in the north facing sections of trench 3 and 5. Also cut into (1028) running across the site in an east-west direction was a Victorian drainage ditch [1011] containing large amounts of building rubble and ceramic pipe fragments. This could likewise be seen in trench 4 and 6.

### 5.2 Trench 2.

In the section of trench 2 running in a north south direction, three postholes [1003], [1005] and [1009] were seen, all exhibited steep sides and flat bottoms with a depth of 0.35-0.47m and a width of 0.25-0.42m forming part of a cluster of postholes with [1001]. All three postholes were filled with a soft dark brown silty sand and contained flecks of CBM (1002), (1004) & (1008) (see Plate 2). A 2.0m wide and 1.6m deep pit with vertical sides and flat bottom [1007] was also encountered in trench 2 south of the postholes. It extended 0.27m into the trench to the east. The extent of the pit to the west is unknown. The pit contained a dark brown silty sand and was compacted with building rubble such a red brick, slate and tiles, fragments of white glazed pot was likewise encountered (1006). Running in an east west direction and seen in the west facing section of trench 2 and south facing section of trench 5 was a 1.0m long 0.30m+ wide ditch [1022] extending into pit [1007]. In the west facing section was a larger pit [1021] with a width of 0.60m and a depth of 0.70m, backfilled with a dark brown sandy silt and large amounts of building rubble (1020).



### **5.3 Trench 3.**

Trench 3 exhibited a pit [1026] cut into (1028) containing dark brown silty sand (1025) (see Plate 3). To the west of the pit was a layer of mixed orange brown sand (1032) extending into the southern part of trench 1. The depth of the layer was 0.50m with a length of 3.30m as seen in trench 3 and breadth of 1.5m as seen in trench 1.

### **5.4 Trench 4.**

Trench 4 extended 10m in a north-south direction contained layer (1024) described above.

### **5.5 Trench 5.**

In the north facing section of Trench 5 to the west, cut into (1028) was a 0.80m deep and 0.40m wide posthole [1017] filled with a soft very dark brown silty sand with inclusions of CBM (1016)

### **5.6 Trench 6.**

Trench 6 ran in a north south direction and exhibited three postholes, two seen in the east facing section and one in the west facing section. To the north end was posthole [1013] had a width of 0.60m and depth of 0.80m with a tapered end and flat bottom. 4.40m south of [1013] was a similar shaped posthole [1019] both contained a soft very dark brown fill with CBM fleck (1012) and (1018). In the west facing section was another posthole [1015] almost adjacent to [1013] this had a width of 0.50m and depth of 0.46m and contained a dark brown silt sand mixed with large red bricks (1014).

Overlying the series of pits and postholes was the topsoil (1027) which had been removed from site prior to the watching brief. This could however be seen in section along the edges of the development and exhibited a depth of 0.70m and was a soft greenish brown silty sand with flecks of lime.

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## 6.0 Discussion.

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A series of 8 postholes were encountered during the watching brief. These were mainly present in the north-western part of the trenches. The depth and width varied but the general shaped was vertical sides with flat bottoms. Dating evidence from the postholes consisted of white glazed pot and modern building debris suggesting they were Victorian or possibly later and may well be associated with the now demolished garages on site, though the postholes do not form any clear structural pattern. [1007] the large square pit possibly connected with ditch [1023] may be a disused soak away which at a some point in time was back filled with building debris, again the dating of both [1007] and [1023] is recent. The two pits [1021] and [1026] were both filled with building rubble though the function of the pits is unclear it is not unlikely that their primary function was rubbish pits.

To the east running in a north-south direction along the road was a layer which may have been the fill of a roadside ditch, though no cut was observed it was clear that the layer was confined to the east end of the site. Layer (1032) in the SW corner of the site appeared to be a layer of topsoil mixed with natural and probably form part of a bedding trench.

None of the features were intercutting and were all cut straight into natural. All features were dated to be Victorian or later and appear to be part of a single phase of occupation. The layers (1028) (1030) and (1031) are likely to be alluvial sediments which may have been deposited over archaeological features<sup>1</sup>, however the depth of the trenches did not allow any observations of stratigraphy below the level of layer (1030).

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## 7.0 Conclusions

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The main phases of activity on this site can be said to be nineteenth century and later. The groundworks for this development will have had little impact on any archaeological deposits.

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<sup>1</sup> York Archaeological trust: Alluvial archaeology in the Vale of York [www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/valeofyork.htm](http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/valeofyork.htm)

## 8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
1000	Fill of PH [1001], soft dark brown silty sand w. fleck of CBM	0.20m	0.30m
1001	Cut of PH w. vertical sides and flat bottom	0.20m	0.30m
1002	Fill of PH [1003], soft dark brown silty sand w. fleck of CBM	0.42m	0.47m
1003	Cut of PH w. steep concave sides and flat bottom	0.42m	0.47m
1004	Fill of PH [1005], soft dark brown silty sand w. fleck of CBM	0.25m	0.35m
1005	Cut of PH w. vertical sides and flat bottom	0.25m	0.35m
1006	Fill of pit [1007], soft dark brown silty sand w. large amounts of building rubble	2.00m	1.60m
1007	Cut of square pit with vertical sides and flat bottom	2.00m	1.60m
1008	Fill of PH [1009], soft dark brown silty sand w. fleck of CBM	0.30m	0.40m
1009	Cut of PH with steep stepped sides and flat bottom	0.30m	0.40m
1010	Fill or Victorian drainage ditch [1011]. Soft dark brown silty sand compacted with building rubble.	10.00+x0.70m	0.70m
1011	Cut of drainage ditch with vertical sides and flat bottom	10.00+x0.70m	0.70m
1012	Fill of PH [1013], Very dark brown silty sand w. CBM	0.60m	0.80m
1013	Cut of PH steep concave sides and tapered flat bottom	0.60m	0.80m
1014	Fill of PH [1015], Very dark brown silty sand w. large pieces of CBM	0.50m	0.46m
1015	Cut of PH	0.50m	0.46m
1016	Fill of PH [1017], Very dark brown silty sand w. large pieces of CBM	0.40m	0.80m
1017	Cut of PH w. vertical sides and flat bottom	0.40m	0.80m
1018	Fill of PH [1019], Very dark brown silty sand w. large pieces of CBM	0.70m	0.56m
1019	Cut of PH steep concave sides and tapered flat bottom	0.70m	0.56m
1020	Fill of pit [1021] soft dark brown silty sand w. large amounts of building rubble	0.60m	0.80m
1021	Cut of pit with steep concave sided and tapered concave bottom	0.60m	0.80m
1022	Fill of ditch [1023] soft dark brown silty sand w. large amounts of building rubble and glass bottles	1.0x0.30m+	0.40m
1023	Cut of narrow rectangular ditch with vertical sides	1.0x0.30m+	0.40m
1024	Layer of greenish grey silty sand (possible roadside ditch fill)	10.00mx2.5m	0.70m
1025	Fill of pit [1026] Very dark brown silty sand w. CBM	1.00m	0.40m
1026	Cut of pit with concave sides and flat bottom	1.00m	0.40m
1027	Topsoil, greenish brown soft silty sand	Whole site	0.70m
1028	Natural alluvial sediment, Layer of orange sand	Whole site	0.60-0.65m
1029	VOID	-	-
1030	Natural alluvial sediment layer of light-mid grey silty sand	Whole site	0.15-0.50m
1031	Natural alluvial sediment layer of white sand	6.0m	0.15m
1032	Layer of orange brown soft silty sand	3.30mx1.50m	0.50m
1033	Layer of friable limestone	6.50m	0.15m

## 9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

### 9.1 Drawing Register.

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	East facing section of trench 2	1:50	23-10-03	TK
2	East facing section of trench 6	1:50	23-10-03	TK
3	West facing section of trench 6 (North half)	1:50	23-10-03	TK
4	West facing section of trench 2 (North half)	1:50	23-10-03	TK
5	North facing section of trench 5	1:50	23-10-03	TK
6	North facing section of trench 3	1:50	23-10-03	TK

### 9.2 Photographic Register.

Frame	Description	View	Scale	Date	Initials
Digital					
1	East part of trench 1, layer (1024)	S	1m	23-10-03	TK
2	Postholes [1001], [1003] & [1005] Trench 1 & 2	W	1m	23-10-03	TK
3	Pit [1007]	W	1m	23-10-03	TK
4	PH [1009] and drainage trench [1011]	W	1m	23-10-03	TK
5	PH [1013]	W	0.5m	23-10-03	TK
6	PH [1015]	E	0.5m	23-10-03	TK
7	PH [1017]	S	0.5m	23-10-03	TK
8	PH [1019]	W	1m	23-10-03	TK
9	Pit [1021]	E	1m	23-10-03	TK
10	Ditch [1023]	N	1m	23-10-03	TK
11	Trench 5 general view	SE	1m	23-10-03	TK
12	Trench 2, south part	SSE	1m	23-10-03	TK
13	General shot of site	E	-	23-10-03	TK
14	General shot of site	SW	-	23-10-03	TK
15	Trench 3	SE	1m	23-10-03	TK
16	Pit [1026]	S	1m	23-10-03	TK

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10.0 Appendix 3 ~ The Plates.

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*Plate 1. View of site from road.*



*Plate 2. Features in Trenches 1 & 2.*



*Plate 3. Trench 3.*