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LEEMING LANE, LEEMING BAR, NORTH YORKSHIRE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.
OSA REPORT No: OSA03WB06.

FEBRUARY 2003.

OSA

ON SITE ARCHÆOLOGY LTD.

25A Milton Street • York • North Yorkshire • YO10 3EP
telephone • 01904 411673 • fax • 01904 414522 • mobile • 07767 385766

e-mail • mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk

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Report Summary.

NYC 1410
" 2152

REPORT NO: OSA03WB06

SITE NAME: Leeming Lane.

COUNTY: North Yorkshire.

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 2920 8975

PLANNING/APPLICATION No: 2/02/004/0349E

ON BEHALF OF: Craig Peterson
Carlton Developments
4a Front Street
Sedgefield
Stockton on Tees

telephone 01740 625490

TEXT: Tania Kausmally

GRAPHICS: Marie-Claire Ferguson

FIELDWORK: Tania Kausmally

TIMING: Fieldwork
13th, 14th & 20th March 2003.
Post excavation & report preparation
21st March 2003.

ENQUIRIES TO: Nick Pearson
On-Site Archaeology Ltd
25A Milton Street
York
YO10 3EP

tel (01904) 411673

fax (01904) 414522

mobile (07767) 385766

e-mail mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk

PERIODS REPRESENTED: Modern.

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1.0 Abstract.

A watching brief was carried out during groundworks required for the construction of two residential dwellings along Leeming Lane, Leeming Bar. The watching brief included careful monitoring of the topsoil strip of the area of construction as well as the excavation of the foundation trenches for the house situated on the east area of the site (Plot 2). The topsoil strip was shallow and included only the immediate topsoil; the subsoil remained in-situ, which made it difficult to observe any potential archaeological features. No finds of any significance were recovered from the topsoil, where only more recent debris was observed as well as the remains of a simple modern path/road running in a northeast direction from Leeming Lane. The path was immediately below the topsoil. A total of 14 foundation trenches were excavated for the eastern house. Trench 1 revealed very dark organic/peat inclusions, which is probably the remains of a waterlogged pond with stagnant organic debris. Trench 10 included a layer of bleached grey sand, which was believed to be a natural formation. None of the remaining trenches revealed any archaeological deposits and features and consisted of subsoil overlying yellow natural sand.

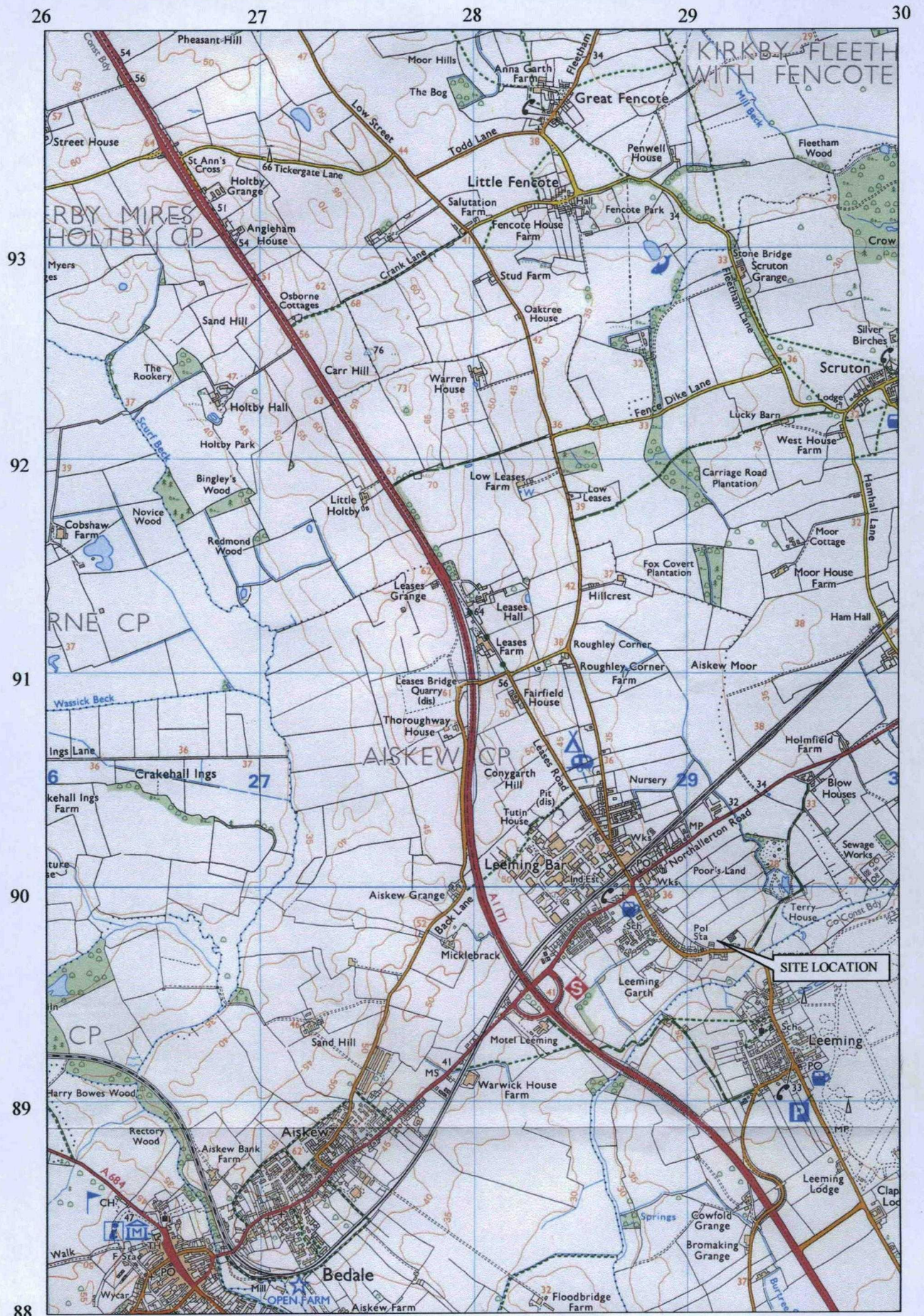


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 2920 8975).

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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

Leeming Bar lies 3 miles east-north-east of Bedale immediately east of the A1. The landscape is gently undulating. The soils of the vale are formed from glacial deposits, mainly from the last glaciation period. Thick glacial till blankets the area where well-developed ridges of sand dominate the natural deposits at Leeming Bar.

The site is situated on the north side of Leeming Lane, on the southeast side of the village of Leeming Bar, between Amberfield House and Elmwood House, centred at NGR SE 2920 8975. The proposed development includes two residential dwellings, fronting Leeming Lane to the south (see fig. 2). The site is at present pasture and is bounded by a large open field to the north and residential housing to the east and west.

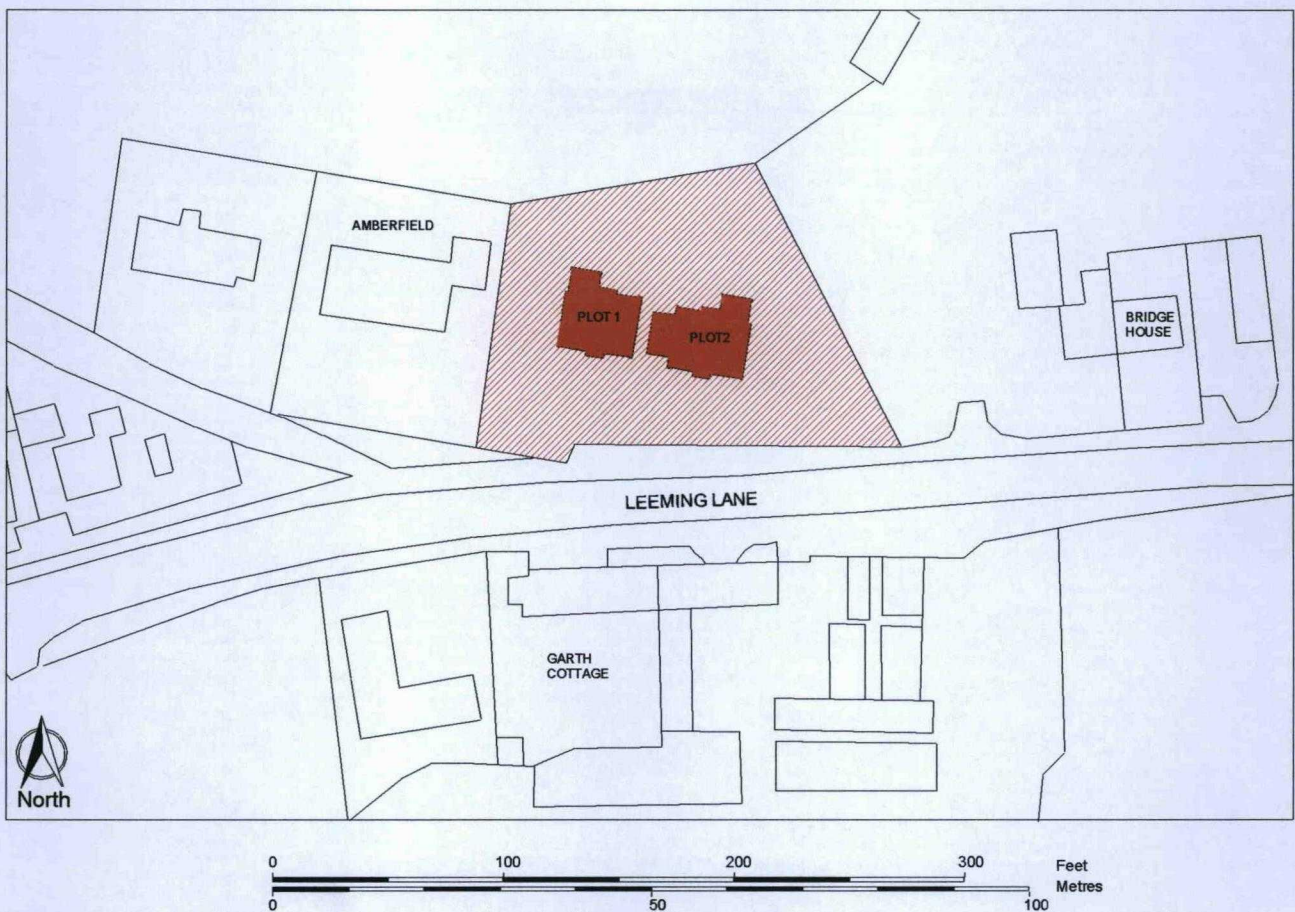


Figure 2. Detailed site location plan showing location of plots monitored. (Scale 1:1000).

3.0 Archaeological Background.

3.1 *Iron Age & Romano-British (c. 600 BC - AD 410).*

Leeming Lane forms part of major a Roman road, *Dere Street*, which, along this particular stretch links the Roman towns of *Isurium* (Aldborough) with *Cataractonium* (Catterick).

3.2 *Anglo-Saxon to Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1540).*

The name Leeming is believed to date back to the time of the Norman Conquest. Its probable origin is lime, which in the Old Frisian dialect of Yorkshire is *leahme*. A chapel was erected in Leeming itself in 1424 but had become so dilapidated it was rebuilt in 1839.

4.0 Methodology.

The overburden was removed by a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a toothless bucket down to the surface of the subsoil. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Once this had been completed, the 14 foundation trenches for the plot 2 (eastern dwelling) were excavated with a JCB, fitted with a toothed 1m wide bucket to a depth of 0.70m, these were cleaned by hand in order to identify any possible archaeological features. A general view of the layout of these trenches is shown in Plate 1.

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 photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

5.0 Results.

The natural geology consisted of fine yellow sand, (1004) and was present at a depth of approximately 0.90m below the existing ground surface. The natural was uncovered in Trench 10 and was overlain by a grey bleached deposit of sand (1000), which was sectioned but was clearly also natural. This had an irregular outline and a shallow depth of 0.17m, with a length of approximately 3.0m and width between 0.10-1.0m. Overlying the grey bleached sand to the north in Trench 1 was 0.20m thin layer of black organic rich material (1003, see Plate 2), heavily disturbed by tree roots from modern trees in this area. This is believed to be the remains of a stagnant waterlogged area such as a pond containing abundant organic debris. Context (1003) was also apparent in the opposite section but was not observed in any of the adjacent trenches. Overlying (1003) was (1002), a 0.10m thick layer, which consisted of a mixture of yellow sand, subsoil (1001) and black inclusions from (1003). The subsoil (1001), a very soft light greyish brown sandy clay exhibited a consistent thickness in all 14 trenches, measuring 0.50-0.60m in depth. A typical section of this is shown in Plate 3. Above the subsoil was a recent but disused path constructed from building debris and tarmac (1005), running in a northwest direction from the present field access on Leeming Lane towards an outhouse in the open field to the north of the site. This was overlain by 0.20m depth of topsoil (1000), which was removed during the initial strip of the site. The topsoil consisted of dark greyish brown sandy clay with occasional pebbles and frequent roots.

6.0 Conclusion.

For the purpose of the watching brief it is clear that within the confines of the area of excavation no archaeological features, deposits or artefacts were present. Although the site lies immediately north of a major Roman road and in an area containing evidence of medieval activity in the adjacent village of Leeming, the development site was completely void of any activity prior to the Victorian period.

7.0 Bibliography.

<http://www.biffvernon.freeseve.co.uk/introduction.htm>

<http://www.genuki.org.uk/big/eng/YKS/NRY/Burneston/Burneston90.html>

9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
1000	Topsoil. Soft Dark Greyish brown sandy clay w. occ. pebbles	Whole site	0.20m
1001	Subsoil. Light greyish brown sandy clay	Whole site	0.50m
1002	Deposit. Mixture of Yellow sand, subsoil (1001) and black inclusions from (1003)	+1.0mx1.40m	0.10m
1003	Peat/organic deposit of black soft silt	+ 1.0mx2.0m	0.20m
1005	Recent temporary path made from building rubble and tarmac	3.0mx30m	0.15m
1004	Natural. Yellow sand	Whole site	-
10000	Deposit of Natural Grey bleached sandy	3.0mx1.0m	0.17m

10.0 Appendix 3~ The Plates.



Plate 1. General view of plot 1 foundations.



Plate 2. Organic deposit, (1003).



Plate 3. Typical section of subsoil.