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**High Farm
Throxenby
Scarborough
North Yorkshire**

NGR TA 0150 8900

Archaeological Watching Brief

MAP

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Non Technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken in January and February 2003 during works associated with the preparation of a new access road and an area of car parking revealed a single pit of Neolithic date with an associated assemblage of Grooved ware pottery and worked flint. A background scatter of flint was also recorded but no further evidence of Prehistoric activity on the site was observed. Further activity of late medieval and Post-medieval date was represented by a structure consisting of postholes, floor surfaces and a sleeper beam trench. In addition ditches, pits, postholes and further stone surfaces were recorded.

1. Introduction

During January 2003, ground works commenced on the site of High Farm, Throxenby, Scarborough, North Yorkshire (Figs. 1 & 2 : NGR TA 0150 8900), in preparation for the construction of a new hospice by S Harrison Construction Ltd. Following the demolition of the farm buildings, preliminary works were limited to topsoil stripping of the southern car park and southern access road, which was carried out under archaeological supervision. Archaeological features were encountered and subsequent excavations were undertaken during January and February 2003 by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

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2. Site Description

High Farm lies to the north of Throxenby Hall and west of Moor Lane, Throxenby. Throxenby lies within the civil parish of Scalby, part of the

Borough of Scarborough. The site is bounded to the east by Moor Lane/Throxenby Lane, to the north by residential development, to the west by pasture fields, and to the south by Throxenby Hall (Fig. 1). The farm comprised of a house and a number of agricultural buildings, the majority of which were demolished prior to the redevelopment of the site. To the north and east are areas of pasture. The ground slopes downward from west to east towards Throxenby Lane.

3. Geology

The soils on the site are of the Salop Association, slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged reddish fine loamy over clayey, fine loamy and clayey soils associated with fine loamy over clayey soils with slowly permeable subsoils and slightly seasonal waterlogging, over a Reddish till (Mackney 1983).

4. Previous Archaeological Work

Previous archaeological work on the site was undertaken by Ed Dennison Archaeological Services as part of a detailed assessment of the archaeological and architectural implications of the proposed development. This comprised a non-intrusive descriptive and photographic record of the farm complex and surrounding fields, and a topographic survey (Dennison, 2002a, 2002b).

In addition to several areas of architectural interest within the farm building complex, a total of ten upstanding earthwork features were recorded. These included a probable 19th century trackway, field boundary and building platform, and a boundary of unknown date and function to the north of High Farm.

North-east of the farm buildings were two further banks, one of which was suggested to be the rear boundary of former plots or garths located on the west side of Throxenby Lane.

The probable location of a 19th century pond was also identified to the east of the farm, adjacent to a possible earthwork enclosure. Also to the east of High

Farm was a large level platform defined by a curvilinear bank, on which was a smaller sub-rectangular platform. These earthworks were suggested to be possible 20th century garden features associated with the farm (Dennison 2002b).

5. Methodology

An archaeologist supervised the initial removal of topsoil down to the top of archaeological deposits by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. When archaeological deposits had been reached, machine excavation was halted to allow the archaeological team to observe, clean and assess the remains on the site.

All deposits were fully recorded on standard context sheets, photographs and conventionally - scaled plans and sections.

6. Results

Area 1 (Fig. 3)

This area contained a single modern pond (104). The pond had a wide U-shape profile. It was backfilled with deep, clearly defined dumps/tips of material, which were all dark greyish brown in colour and contained modern finds including bricks (101, 102 & 103).

Area 2

Phase 1 (Fig. 4)

The earliest evidence of activity on the site was a single sub-circular pit (235) measuring 0.95m in length, 0.74m in width, and 0.23m in depth. The pit was located on a natural, flat platform at the southern end of the site. The fill of the pit (202) was greyish brown friable clay silt, containing frequent charcoal flecks and occasional fire-cracked stones. Twenty-five sherds of late Neolithic Grooved Ware pottery were recovered from this context, as well as twenty-six lithic artefacts, including complete tools and debitage and at least two types of raw material (Pl. 1 – Appendices 2 & 3). No other features of this period were identified.

Phase 2 (Fig. 5)

Following the episodic use of the area during the Prehistoric period as suggested by background flint scatters, there was no evidence of any further activity until the medieval period.

Six ditches, two pits, a stone surface, and an indeterminate feature were located during the excavation. The ditches have been lettered for reference.

Ditch A

Ditch A ran east to west across the northern zone of the excavation area (excavated in three segments, 207, 222 and 254 – Figs. 5 and 6). This ditch was c.2.50m in width and c.0.40m deep with an irregular profile. The ditch was filled by an homogenous deposit of brownish grey, sandy clay silt (206, 223 and 255 respectively), which contained twelve sherds of pottery ranging in date from the 12th to 16th century (Appendix 2). This ditch cut Ditch B.

Ditch B

Ditch B ran north to south from the northern edge of the excavation area to the southern baulk (Figs. 5 and 6). The ditch was c.2.50m in width and c.0.30m in depth with a V-shaped profile. It was filled by two deposits (219 & 220). The earliest of these fills (220) was yellowish grey, sandy clay containing no finds. This fill was probably a slump or collapse of the ditch side. The secondary fill of this ditch (219) was a greyish brown silty clay containing ten sherds of medieval pottery dating from the 14th to the 15th century in date (Appendix 2).

Ditch C

Ditch C (236) was situated at the southern end of the site running in a north to south direction (Figs. 5 and 6). The ditch was c.1.40m in width and c.0.30m in depth with a V-shaped profile. It was filled by a single deposit (237), a brownish grey, clayey silt which contained one sherd of 15th to 16th century pottery (Appendix 2).

Ditch D

Ditch D (excavated as segments 210 and 241 : Figs. 5 and 6) was situated at the south-eastern end of the site running in a north-east to south-west direction. The ditch was c.1.35m in width and c.0.40m in depth with a U shaped profile. The earliest phase of the ditch was situated at its western end, represented by a cut on the northern side (214, filled by 213). The primary fill of the possible recut was 216, a light reddish brown clay silt, overlain by a deposit of brownish grey silty clay (209), which contained six sherds of 16th century pottery. The remainder of the ditch was filled by a light brown clay loam (212 at the western end and 240 in the east). This feature clearly cut Ditch E at its eastern end.

Ditch E

Ditch E was situated at the southern end of the site running in a north to south direction parallel with Ditch C (Figs. 5 and 6). The ditch was 1.80m wide and had a broad-U profile. Two segments were excavated (227 and 243), both filled by brownish grey clay silt (226 and 242 respectively), which contained 13/14th century sherds (Appendix 2).

Ditch F

Both Ditch E and Pit 312 (discussed below) had been cut by a later ditch (247 – Figs. 5 and 6). This contained a terracotta drainage pipe, indicating that this was 18th to 19th century in date.

Pits

Pit 234 was located c.6m east of Ditch C and was oval in shape measuring c.0.25m in length, c.0.35m in width and with a depth of c.0.05m (Fig. 5). It was filled by a greyish brown (233), silty clay containing no finds.

Pit 232 was located c.10m east of Ditch C and was a sub-oval in plan, c.1.52m in length, c.1.10m in width and c.0.15m deep (Figs. 5 and 6). It was filled by a brownish grey, clayey silt (203) containing six sherds of pottery dating to the 14th / 15th centuries (Appendix 2).

A large pit (312) cut Ditch E at its southern end. This pit had a wide U-shaped profile with an irregular base and was c.7m in length, c.2.5m in width and c.0.6m in depth. The fill (311) was a yellowish grey sandy clay containing three sherds of 17th / 18th century pottery (Appendix 2). The function of this pit is uncertain, but judging by its relatively large size it could have been a quarry.

Surface 279 (Fig. 5 : Pl. 4)

Surface 279 was located c.7m from the Structure 1. The surface had an irregular but substantial cobble layer c.3.20m in length, c.2.80m in width and with a depth of c.0.20m. This surface had been clearly cut by two probable wheel ruts (290 and 291). Rut 290 was a narrow linear depression c.0.60m in length, c.0.15m in width and c.0.10m in depth orientated north-west to south-east. Rut 291 again, was a narrow linear depression c.1.10m in length, c.0.15m in width and c.0.10m in depth orientated north west to south east.

Feature 215

A shallow cut (215, filled by 211) was observed to be earlier than the western end of Ditch D (Fig. 6). Of uncertain function, this feature could have a natural origin.

Structure 1 (Fig. 7)

The remains of a structure were located in the south-east region of Area 2, near the eastern limit of a natural plateau. This comprised principally of two linear features, three stone surfaces, two pits and fourteen postholes.

Linears

Linear 267 was orientated east to west and measured a maximum of 0.60m in width and 0.16m in depth, with a U-shaped profile and uneven base (Fig. 7). At the western end the cut became very shallow before terminating, apparently truncated by subsequent ground reduction. The eastern side of the cut was also truncated by later disturbance. The linear was filled by a grey clay silt deposit

(259), which contained a number of rounded stone inclusions of 0.10m – 0.20m in diameter. No finds were recovered.

Linear 320 was orientated north – south and aligned at right angles to linear 267 (Fig. 7). It had a U-shaped profile with a flat base and measured a maximum of 0.40m in width and 0.18m in depth. Its northern limit was defined by a rounded terminus, and the cut extended southwards for a minimum of 3.30m, continuing beyond the limit of excavation. The linear was filled by a mid brown silty deposit, with occasional gravel, pebble and cobble inclusions (319). This feature was interpreted as a beam slot, and probably represents an internal division of Structure 1.

Surfaces

Three areas of surfacing were associated with Structure 1 (Fig. 7 : surfaces 329, 252 & 289).

Surface 329 was situated in the south-east corner of the excavated area and lay directly above Ditch B. The surface ran in a north to south direction and was c.3m in length and c.0.40m in width. It comprised of cobbles and stone fragments. The function of this feature is unclear; it may even have been the remains of a wall. There were no associated finds.

Surface 252 was situated roughly 2m south-west of Surface 329, and was c.3m in length and c.1.60m in width (Pl. 3) and comprised of cobbles and stone fragments set within a shallow depression (294). It seems likely that this was a floor surface, albeit in very poor condition suggesting wear damage. The surface extended beyond the excavation area.

Surface 289 was situated roughly 6m south-west of Surface 252. This surface was c.1.80m in length and was c.1m in width and comprised of cobbles and pebbles. It seems likely that this was again the remains of a floor surface. The surface extended beyond the excavation area and was cut by a later pit (277).

Pits

Two pits were associated with Structure 1 (277 and 295).

Pit 277 cut the northern end of Surface 289, and was c.1.60m in length, c.0.70m in width and c.0.20m in depth (Fig. 7). It had a gently sloping profile with a concave base. The fill was a brownish grey silt (262) and contained no finds.

Pit 295 was situated immediately to the west of Pit 277 (Fig. 7), measuring c.2.70m in length, c.1m in width and c.0.20m in depth, it had a gently sloping profile with a concave base. The fill, a grey brown silt containing pebbles and cobbles (293), contained a single sherd of pottery of 12th/14th century date (Appendix 2).

Postholes

Fourteen postholes were also associated with Structure 1. The distribution of the postholes did not form any recognisable plan, but in terms of location can be broken down into two separate groups.

The first group to be discussed can be seen to the west of Linear 320, and consisted of Postholes 261, 269, 271, 284, 285, 286 and 287. These had no stratigraphic relationship with any other features on the site except Posthole 261, which cut in to Pit 277. All of these postholes had diameters of between 0.25m and 0.45m, and depths between 0.20m and 0.45m. The fills (260, 268, 270, 280, 281, 282 and 283 respectively) were all grey brown silts containing no finds except Posthole 261, which contained a single sherd of pottery of to 15th century date (Pl. 4 – Appendix 2).

The second group can be seen to the east of Linear 320, comprising Postholes 302, 304, 306, 308, 322, 324 and 326 (Fig. 7). None of these had any stratigraphic relationship with any other feature on the site. All of these postholes had diameters between of between 0.40m and 0.60m, and depths between 0.20m and 0.60m. The fills (301, 303, 305, 307, 321, 323 and 325 respectively) were all grey brown silts containing no finds.

7. **Summary and Conclusions**

The Watching Brief at the Throxenby site identified a significant number of archaeological features. The earliest activity was represented by a single pit which contained Grooved ware pottery and worked flint. Pit 235 was the only feature of Neolithic date recorded on the site, however, a background scatter and residual flint suggests further activity of this date may exist on the site. An interpretation also suggested within the assessment of the flint assemblage (Appendix 3).

It is clear that little or no further use of the site took place until the late medieval period when evidence for landscaping for Throxenby Hall took place, in the form of boundary ditches and earthworks. Some these boundary ditches were examined during the Watching Brief, along with a structure which was probably an outbuilding within a medieval property that fronted onto the village street of the shrunken medieval settlement of Throxenby.

8. **Bibliography**

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