

17 Thorpe Lane
Cawood

Archaeological
Watching Brief

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York Archaeological Trust

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WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

17 THORPE LANE, CAWOOD

NORTH YORKSHIRE

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1. INTRODUCTION

Between 15th and 18th September 1995 York Archaeological Trust (YAT) undertook an archaeological watching brief at 17 Thorpe Lane, Cawood (NGR SE 5756 3766) (Figure 1) on behalf of Mr and Mrs A. Daniel as a requirement of planning permission for a two storey extension granted by Selby District Council (Reference 8/35/288/PA).

The watching brief was carried out by David Brinklow for YAT and the original records are stored by the Trust under their project code 1995.P0351.

2. BACKGROUND

Few archaeological interventions have taken place in the village of Cawood in the past. Some work was carried out at Cawood Castle, former palace of the Archbishops of York, during its conversion into a holiday home for the Landmark Trust in 1986 (YAT and Yorkshire Museum accession code 1986.10). A further small scale excavation preceded the construction of houses on the south-western side of Thorpe Lane in 1987 (YAT and Yorkshire Museum accession code 1987.18). Neither project was particularly productive although the former did allow various deductions about the history of the palace to be made.

Much of the analytical work investigating the development of the village has been of an historical nature and this culminated in the publication of an article in Yorkshire Archaeological Journal (Blood and Taylor, 1992). In this it was suggested that the village of Cawood had developed from three separate centres and that the position of Water Row in this development pattern was a matter of some uncertainty. It is thus crucial to the understanding of the history of Cawood that dating evidence for the changes in settlement pattern is collected wherever possible. Hence any opportunity to investigate a site on what was presumed to be the Back Lane to the Water Row settlement could add valuable archaeological data to the current very sketchy picture.

3. OBSERVATIONS

3.1 A single storey building of 19th century or later date had been recently demolished and removed from the site. It was shown on the 1965 edition of the Ordnance Survey 1:2500 scale map (Figure 2 enlarged to 1:1250) and its position was clearly visible on the gable end of the standing building (Plate 1) and on the ground.

Initial site work consisted of the machine clearance of the whole plot to a depth of 0.40m beneath the surface of the modern tarmac path giving access to the rear of Water Row. This involved the removal of a 19th century brick floor and a considerable quantity of loose brick, tile and mortar rubble which was interpreted as demolition debris.

Subsequently, trench footings 1.30 - 1.40m deep were dug on the north, east and south edges of the plot. Test pits to examine the footings of the standing building were hand excavated to depths of 0.80m and 1.00m.

3.2 The long trench (Trench 1) on the south-east edge of the site was examined in detail together with the two test pits (Trenches 2 and 3) adjacent to the standing structure.

The standing section of Trench 1 was sketched by hand and photographed (Figure 3 and Plates 2 and 3). Shortly after the photographs had been taken the trench edge collapsed confirming the author's fear of attempting a detailed record from within the trench. The following features were recognisable in the standing section : single brick thick wall of recently demolished building (1001), drain cut (1002), loose brick and mortar rubble mixed with sandy clay loam - drain cut fill (1003), very loose brick and tile rubble in dark grey ashy matrix (1004), soft dark grey clayey silt (1005) and soft orange brown silty clay (1006).

It is believed that the orange brown silty clay (1006) is the underlying natural subsoil and that the soft dark grey clayey silt (1005) has been deposited upon this, perhaps as a result of flooding. It was not possible from this exposure to determine whether this deposit had been cultivated in the past although no inclusions of tile or any other material of human origin were seen. All of the deposits above this horizon were dated to the 19th century or later. It is clear that the area was raised by dumping, presumably to mitigate against the soft wet conditions, before construction took place.

3.3 Trenches 2 and 3 were excavated by hand to investigate the foundations of the standing building but also provided an opportunity to examine stratification close to the building. Both trenches were recorded photographically (Plates 4 and 5).

Trench 2, nearest to the Thorpe Lane street front, revealed the

brick wall of the 19th century building continuing beneath the existing ground level for four courses of bricks below which were two slightly offset foundation elements, each two courses thick above the basal foundation of brick on edge laid header fashion. These foundations were cut into the dark grey clayey silt which was also observed towards the base of Trench 1. The silt was sealed by dumped demolition deposits of 19th century and later date.

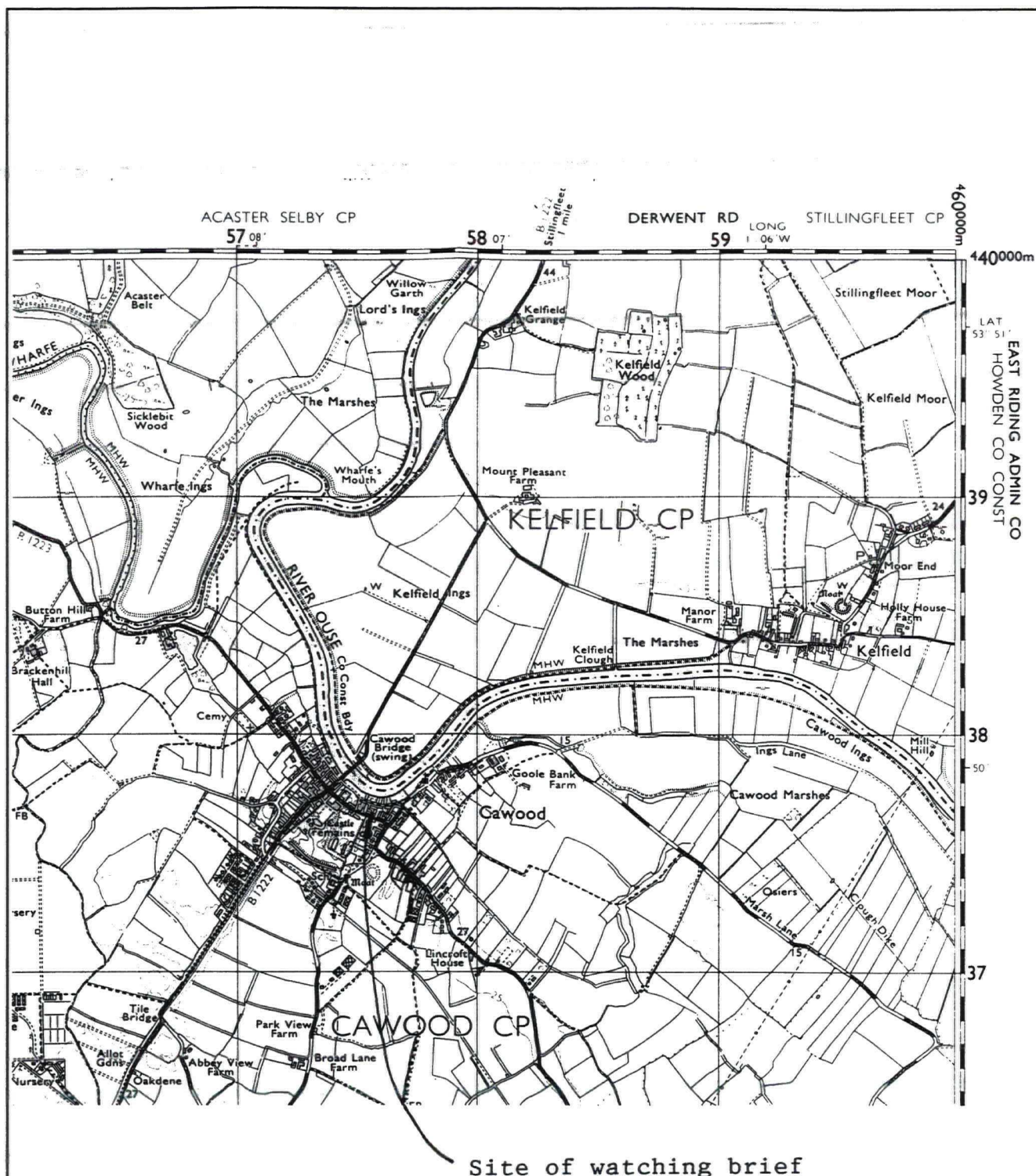
Trench 3 close to the rear corner of the building revealed a similar picture to Trench 2. In this case however, only a single offset foundation element of two courses of bricks was visible above a basal foundation of roughly cut small limestone blocks. These foundations were also cut through the dark grey clayey silt and sealed by 19th century demolition deposits but here the silt overlay a clean pale grey brown sandy silt which appeared to be alluvial in origin. This was only seen in this one trench at a depth of 0.80m beneath the surface.

4. CONCLUSIONS

No dating evidence for activity before the 19th century was recovered from this watching brief although the basic stratigraphic history of the deposits was plotted. It seems likely, as the Enclose Map of 1780 suggests, that much of the area to the south of Water Row was not built over until the 19th century and that evidence for the earlier history of this part of the village of Cawood is more likely to be found closer to the earlier properties which survive on Water Row and to the east of Church End.

References

Blood (N.K.) and C.C.Taylor, Cawood: An Archiepiscopal Landscape, Yorks. Arch.Jnl. Vol.64, 1992, pp 83-102.



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17 Thorpe Lane, Cawood Site Location

SITE CODE: P0351

NGR: SE 5756 3766

SCALE: 1:25000

Figure 1

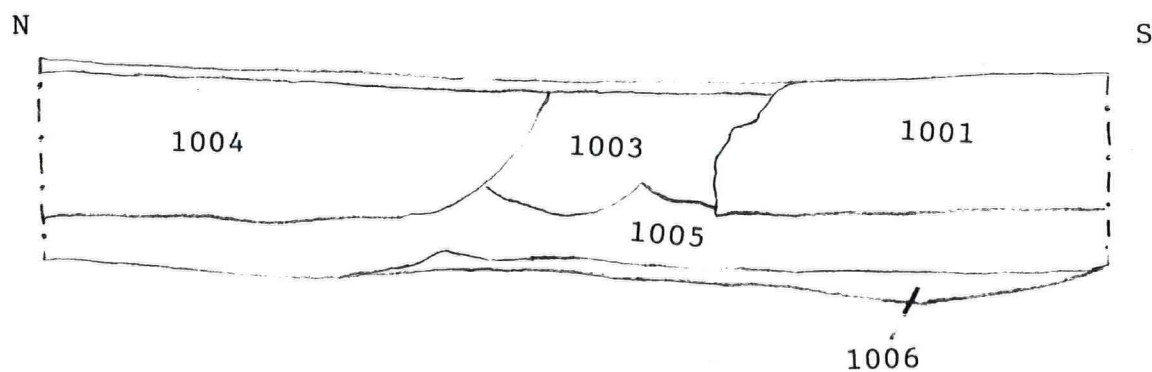


17 Thorpe Lane, Cawood Trench Location

NGR: SE 5756 3766

SCALE: 1:1250

Figure 2



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17 Thorpe Lane, Cawood Trench Section

SITE CODE: P0351

NGR: SE 5756 3766

SCALE: 1:50

Figure 3