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SNY	9124
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**SLINGSBY SCHOOL.**

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**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.  
OSA REPORT No: OSA02WB19.**

JUNE 2002.

<b>N. Y. C. C.</b>	
ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
27 OCT 2004	
Pass to.....	JHB
Ack'd.....	
Ans'd.....	

**OSA**

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**ON SITE ARCHÆOLOGY**

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.**


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C 1427  
E 2595  
S 9121

**REPORT NO:** OSA02WB19.

**SITE NAME:** Slingsby CP School, Playground Extension.

**COUNTY:** North Yorkshire.

**NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE:** SE 6975 7480.

**PLANNING APPLICATION No:** 01/01233/CPO.

**COMMISSIONED BY:** PGT & Co. (York) Ltd,  
88 Tadcaster Road,  
Dringhouses,  
York.

*telephone* 01904 700188.

**TEXT:** Graham Bruce.

**GRAPHICS:** Marie-Claire Ferguson.

**FIELDWORK:** Graham Bruce.

**TIMING:** Fieldwork  
7<sup>th</sup> June 2002.  
Post excavation & report preparation  
12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> June 2002.

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

*tel* (01904) 411673  
*fax* (01904) 414522  
*mobile* (07767) 385766  
*e-mail* mail@onsitearchaeology.co.uk.

**PERIODS REPRESENTED:** Medieval.

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## 1.0 Abstract.

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*A watching brief was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology at the behest of Mr M. Baker of TG&P & Co. (York) Ltd, on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 2002, during excavations for the construction of a playground extension. The watching brief was conducted according to a written scheme of investigation provided by North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit. The excavations were to a maximum depth of 0.50m below the modern ground surface. Post-medieval to modern topsoil overlay natural yellow sand, into which a single, shallow ditch had been cut. This contained a small number of sherds of medieval pottery.*



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 6975 7480).

Reproduced from the 1995 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, Topography and Land Use.

Slingsby County Primary School is situated on the west side of The Green, in the centre of the village of Slingsby, North Yorkshire. The site of the proposed playground extension lies to the south of the school buildings and most recently has been covered in short grass, bounded by hedges. The site is notably higher than the street to the south (by approximately 1 metre) and slopes gently down from west to east. The area of the site had recently contained a climbing frame, the concrete foundations of which were still evident, together with a shed that was removed immediately prior to commencement of the development.

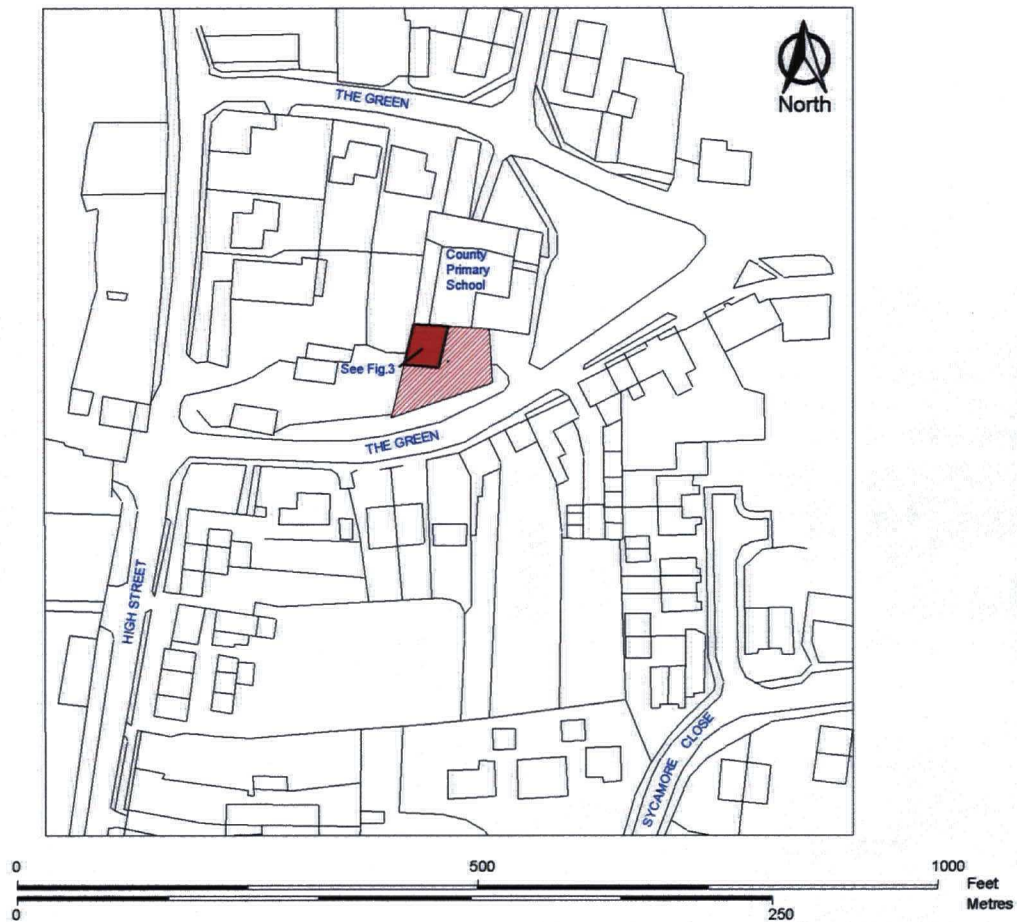


Figure 2. Detailed site location plan, (Scale 1:2500).

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### 3.0 Archaeological Background.

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The school lies within an area of considerable archaeological interest within the heart of the former medieval settlement and close to the Castle. Whilst the majority of the standing remains of the Castle are parts of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century mansion constructed by Sir Charles Cavendish, there are some elements of medieval masonry, together with a substantial ditch, presumably also of medieval date (Salter, 2001, p.99). Royal licence was granted in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century to Ralph de Hastings for the conversion of existing buildings into a castle and park. The nature of the earlier buildings is uncertain, but these may have originally included a lodge of Norman date, (Ingham, 2001, p.106).

There is therefore high potential for the survival of remains dating from the medieval period. Archaeological evaluation of land to the north west of the school in 1995 encountered evidence for former medieval buildings and land-use at depths of between 0.50m and 1m below the present ground levels. (The above information has been provided by Gail Falkingham, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit unless otherwise referenced).

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## 4.0 Methodology.

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The overburden was removed by a JCB excavator fitted with a toothless bucket down to the level of the first visible archaeological horizon. Excavation was to a maximum depth of 0.50m in the northwest corner of the site, with a level basal limit. Due to the pre-existing slope of the site this meant that the total depth of excavation became progressively shallower further to the east. The exposed surface was then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Once this had been completed, sections were hand excavated through the archaeological features that had been identified.

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



## 5.0 Results.

Due to the differing depths of excavation across the site the full sequence of archaeological deposits was only exposed along the western side of the site. This revealed that the natural, soft yellow sand (002) was present at a depth of 0.50m below the modern surface. A single archaeological feature had been cut into this natural deposit. This was a shallow (maximum 0.15m deep), linear ditch [004], aligned east to west. The ditch was 0.60m wide and a total length of 3.70m was exposed, the west end continued beyond the edge of excavation, whilst the east end remained covered in unexcavated topsoil. The ditch contained a single fill (003) of friable, mid yellow brown, silty sand, containing occasional pebbles, flecks of charcoal, a small assemblage of pottery, dated to the late 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> century, (see Appendix 3) and also a single flint flake, (see Appendix 4). The ditch and natural were sealed by homogenous mid grey brown, sandy silt topsoil (001), a maximum of 0.50m thick. Occasional fragments of roof slate, tile and 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> century pottery were observed within this deposit, but these were not retained. The lower portion of this topsoil was left in-situ across approximately two-thirds of the area of the new playground.

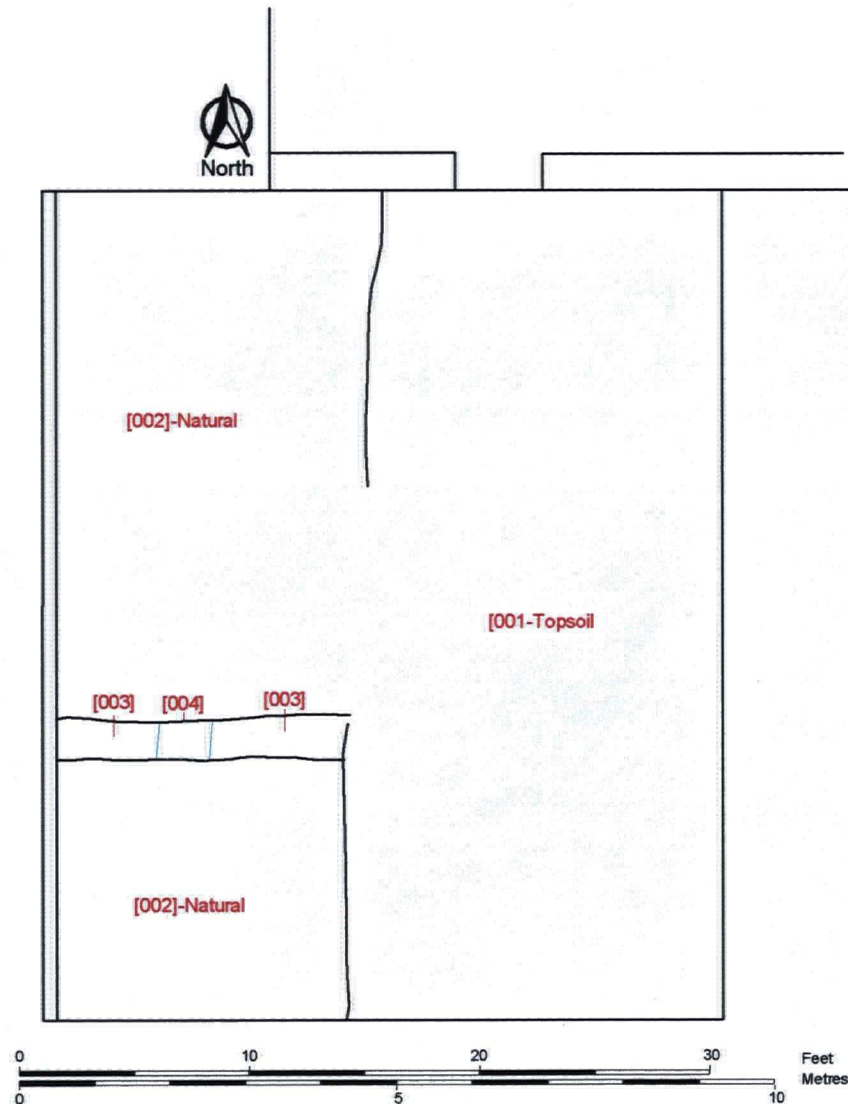


Figure 3. Plan of ditch [004], (Scale 1:100).

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## 6.0 Discussion and Conclusion.

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The single ditch found during the watching brief is unlikely to have acted for drainage due to the light sandy character of the natural subsoil and it is too shallow to have formed a meaningful barrier in its own right. It was possibly therefore originally dug to accommodate a hedge and form a boundary in that way. The dating of this feature, by the pottery, to the late 14<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> century, does not obviously relate to the known historical development of the castle. This excavated boundary post-dates the conversion of the Norman buildings and associated emparkment in the first half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century and pre-dates the construction of the Elizabethan mansion.

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## 7.0 Bibliography.

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Ingham B. (2001). Yorkshire Castles.

Salter M. (2001). The Castles and Tower Houses of Yorkshire.

## 8.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts.

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
001	Mid grey brown sandy silt Topsoil	11m x 11m	0.50m
002	Soft yellow sand. Natural	11m x 4m	?
003	Mid yellow brown silty sand. Ditch fill	3.7m x 0.60m	0.15m
004	E-W orientated linear ditch. Sharp top edge, shallow sloping sides, rounded bottom edge, flat base.	3.7m x 0.60m	0.15m

## 9.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index.

### 9.1 Drawing Register.

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	Site plan, showing ditch 004	1:50	07-06-02	GB

### 9.2 Photographic Register.

Frame	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
Film #D/060602				
1-3	Ditch 1004, looking west	0.5m	07-06-02	GB
4-5	Ditch 1004, looking west, with Castle in background	0.5m	07-06-02	GB
6-7	General view of excavation area, with JCB to side and Castle in background	0.5m	07-06-02	GB

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## 10.0 Appendix 3 ~ Pottery Assessment.

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*Alan Vince<sup>1</sup>, 25 West Parade, Lincoln. LN1 1NW.*

Four sherds of pottery were recovered from context (003) at Slingsby School during a watching brief carried out by On-Site Archaeology (OSA02WB19). The sherds are small but not abraded and do not seem to be typical of those found in ploughsoil which are normally interpreted as manuring scatter.

### 10.1 Description.

Two of the sherds are of Staxton ware. This ware was produced at a number of centres in East and North Yorkshire, primarily Staxton and Potter Brompton in the Vale of Pickering. From excavations at Wharram Percy it is thought that production started at some point in the 12<sup>th</sup> century and continued into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. One sherd is a bowl rim and the other a jar body sherd with sooting on the exterior.

Two sherds are of Humber ware. They are too small to identify the vessel form but one comes from the base of a vessel with a stacking scar from the rim of a jar on it. This ware was produced at several centres in the Humber Basin, but principally at West Cowick, from the later 14<sup>th</sup> to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Later vessels are often high fired with a purplish glaze whereas one of these sherds has a green glaze (the colour being caused by reduction rather than addition of copper) and the other is unglazed.

### 10.2 Assessment.

The sherds could all be of similar date, in the late 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, or they might be the result of long-lived activity. It is impossible to say which on the basis of such a small collection. Nevertheless, they do seem to indicate settlement on or near the site rather than a manuring scatter.

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<sup>1</sup> 25West Parade, Lincoln, LN1 1NW

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## 11.0 Appendix 4 ~ Flint Assessment.

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*Antony Dickson, O.S.A. June 2002.*

### **11.1 Introduction.**

One lithic piece was submitted for analysis from the archaeological watching brief at Slingsby School, North Yorkshire. The flint is described with reference to the dorsal face frontward and the distal end at the top. Due to the fact that only one broken flake was retrieved during the watching brief no date could be inferred, suffice to say that the artefact would fit comfortably into Neolithic/ Bronze Age date range.

### **11.2 Description.**

*Context 003: 1 broken flint flake, weight 3 gm*

The flint has a slightly coarse brownish grey patina suggesting that it has been burnt. Due to this no further comment on the original colour and thus the flint's likely provenance can be made. The flake has been broken at the distal end and suffered recent damage to the right edge near the platform, probably brought about through post depositional processes. The remaining edges show either further damage and/or abrupt retouch that were introduced prior to the flint being burnt. The proximal end of the flint has a wide platform with a pronounced bulb of percussion suggesting a hard hammer technology employed during working. No further work is recommended.

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## 12.0 Appendix 5 ~ The Plates.

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*Plate 1. Area of excavation, with Castle in background.*



*Plate 2. Ditch 004 (Scale of 0.20m).*