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**The Village Hall
Wharram-Le-Street
North Yorkshire**

NGR SE 8643 6587

Archaeological Watching Brief

MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.

March 2005

**The Village Hall
Wharram-Le-Street
North Yorkshire**

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Archaeological Watching Brief

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Non Technical Summary

On 1st March 2005 an Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken on the strip foundation trenches for an extension to The Village Hall at Wharram Le Street.

The Village Hall was originally the local school built in 1871, and is currently being refurbished for residential use. The excavation exposed a partially demolished brick wall, part of the former yard for the school, and a brick built well/soak-away dating from the late nineteenth century. No other artefacts or features were uncovered.

1. Introduction

This report summaries the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consltancy Ltd on the 1st March 2005. The Archaeological Watching Brief was commissioned by Mr Alex Fox, A.D.F. Building Contractor, as part of a Condition on Planning Permission on all groundworks associated with the building of an extension on the Village Hall, Wharram-Le-Street, North Yorkshire (SE 8643 6587 : Fig. 1).

This document sets out the details and results of the Archaeological Watching Brief as specified in the Written Scheme of Investigation for Limited Archaeological Recording provided by North Yorkshire County Council.

The Archaeological Watching Brief and report has been funded by A.D.F. Building Contractor.

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2. Site Description

The site comprises the existing Village Hall and derelict stores/earth closets to the north. The Village Hall lies in the parish of Wharram, on the south-western edge of the village of Wharram-Le-Street, on land to the north of Station Road, with the Old Vicarage to the West, St. Mary's Church to the north and The Bungalow to the east.

The site measures 30m by 45m, and stands at a height of c. 140m AOD.

The soils on the site are of the Andover 1 Association, shallow well drained calcareous coarse loamy and sandy soils, over chalk on slopes and crests. (Mackney 1983).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

The Development Area lies within the Medieval Village of Wharram Le Street, 40m south of the Medieval Church of St. Mary's, and to the west of the Roman 'villa' site and associated settlement.

There has been limited archaeological work within the area of the village. However, an archaeological Watching Brief in 1999 during the construction of a new dwelling in land adjacent to Red House Farm revealed evidence of the occupation of the site from the 11th to 13th/14th century and agricultural use thereafter (YAT, 1999).

As part of the wider Wharram Percy Research Project, two Roman 'villas' at Wharram-Le-Street and Wharram Grange were investigated by the project between 1978 and 1980 to assess the impact of the continued ploughing of the site. The site investigated at Wharram-Le-Street lies to the east of the proposed development area and contains the source of the Gypsy Race. Through a combination of aerial photography, fieldwalking, geophysical survey and excavation, this area has been shown to contain complex, dense, well-stratified and multi-period remains, the limits

of which are currently unknown. The earliest evidence for activity in the area comprised a number of Mesolithic flints. The earliest structural activity comprised a deep ditch, of pre-Roman date and is interpreted as Bronze Age. The principal features on the site, however, were of the Roman period and comprised a stone building complex of the 3rd to 4th centuries AD. Whilst this is described in the report as a 'villa', the excavators do not rule out the possibility of this being a religious or temple site, given the proximity to the source of the Gypsey Race (Rahtz 1986).

4. Methodology

A Foundation Trench was excavated for a Proposed Extension (Fig. 2). The modern overburden, comprising a concrete and tarmac yard surface and hardcore (limestone chippings), and the strip foundation trench were excavated by mini-digger using a untoothed ditching bucket and a toothed 2-foot bucket under direct archaeological supervision.

A drawn, written and photographic record was made of all features and deposits. Plans and sections were drawn at scales of 1:20 and 1:10 respectively. The written record was compiled on standard forms using a continuous context recording system and all finds recovered were recorded by context.

5. Results (Fig. 3 and Pls. 1-6)

An extension was proposed for the north side of the village Hall, between the two wings. A foundation trench was mechanically excavated between 0.75m and 0.9m wide and c. 6.5m long (east to west and by 1.5m (north-south) at either end. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.95m deep.

Modern overburden consisted of a concrete and tarmac yard surface, hardcore and various services (water and surface drainage). Underneath the hardcore was sandy clay subsoil and natural limestone bedrock was encountered at the base of the trench.

At the north-eastern corner of the foundation trench a domed brick built structure was partially uncovered, measuring 1.35m by 1.3m. It was within a 1.5m wide construction trench, which continued to the east and north.

At the north-eastern corner of the west wing a partially demolished wall was uncovered. This wall was integral to the foundations of the village hall, and continued north to connect with the outbuildings. This wall was four courses high and was bedded onto the subsoil.

6. Conclusions

The Village Hall was originally the local school built in 1871. The features exposed in the foundation trench, a partially demolished brick wall to the west and a brick built well/soak-away to the east, date from the construction of the school. The wall was originally part of the former yard for the school, connecting the school building to the earth closets to the rear. The domed brick structure was part of the surface water drainage system or a fresh water pump.

No Medieval or Roman artefacts or features were uncovered.

7. References

Mackney, D. 1983 Soil Survey of England and Wales.

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