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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
AT THE 'LOUNGE SITE' (SUNKEN GARDEN)
HARCOURT PLACE
SCARBOROUGH



The site on 9 October 1939 as demolition of The Lounge commences

Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society
Interim Report 37 2004

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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT THE 'LOUNGE SITE' (SUNKEN GARDEN) HARCOURT PLACE SCARBOROUGH

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THE 'LOUNGE SITE' (SUNKEN GARDEN), HARCOURT PLACE, SCARBOROUGH

NATIONAL GRID REF TA 0436 8846
SITE CODE LS04

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society were commissioned by CPMG Architects (acting on behalf of Barry Jackson) to carry out a pre-application archaeological evaluation of a proposed development site. This report sets out the results of that evaluation.
- 1.2 The land in question is on the south side of Harcourt Place, flanked on the west by St Nicholas Cliff, on the east by Marine Parade and on the south by a block of buildings (Figure 1). Much of the site is known to have been built on, but since about 1939 it has been amenity space comprising a level flagged area at the southern end and a sloping garden with some brick retaining walls at the northern end.

2.0 Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 The objectives of the pre-application archaeological evaluation work within the proposed development area were:-
- 2.2 To carry out a regressive map analysis of building developments on the site, and examine associated documents, in order to assess the likely level of disturbance.
- 2.3 To carry out a desk top study of previous archaeological data on or in immediate proximity to the site.
- 2.4 To determine by means of targetted trial trenching, the nature, depth, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits within the site to be affected by the development proposals

3.0 Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The site lies in an area of particular archaeological sensitivity, on or close to the defences of the New Borough of the medieval town. Information from 19th century maps indicates that the town 'moat', ie the moat or ditch which forms part of the defensive circuit, crosses the site.
- 3.2 The medieval town defences of the New Borough had their origins in the mid 13th century, and are believed to have comprised a town ditch with a rampart behind. 19th century maps indicate that the ditch ran in an east-west direction close to the southern boundary of the present

site. Outside these defences, on or near to the position of the present Grand Hotel, is the site of St Nicholas' Hospital – this is shown on a map of 1725 'The ruins of St Nick Church.'

- 3.3 The point at which the Newborough defences met the south bay is not shown on 18th century maps. There is a reference to the blocking of St Nicholas Street (NYCRO Scarborough Records p20) of 19 Dec 1642 with a reference to the casting of a ditch at the head of St Nicholas Gate. This could mean either that there was never a medieval ditch here or more likely, that it had been back-filled and therefore a new ditch had to be dug at this period. 18th century maps do show a narrow gap between blocks of buildings which could be interpreted as the alignment of the defences. The moat is recorded on the 1852 Ordnance Survey map and again in 1892 as an alignment but not as a physical feature crossing the southern part of the site. It is not clear where the evidence for this is from. There is no evidence that the defences ran along the south bay cliff to join up with the Old Borough wall
- 3.4 There have been no previous archaeological investigations on or near to the site and there have been no recorded finds here in the 20th or 21st centuries. Four finds were recorded by Hinderwell ie two finds of human bones in 1786 and 1791; a tombstone and a reference to a copper plate 'appertaining to a tombstone' found in the cliff. The sites of these are not precisely recorded (Hinderwell p152).
- 3.5 The built history of the site along with that of the block of buildings to the south has been examined. This total area is included in this assessment see Figure 2
- 3.5.1 The 1725 map shows the site as undeveloped. The earliest buildings on the site date from between 1725 and 1745. One, at the north of the present site became part of a larger building known as Granby House whilst the second in the block which is still extant is on the site of or encased in the current 8 Marine Parade. The northern building ie Granby House was demolished between 1892 and 1912 and the site has been partially taken over by road widening.
- 3.5.2 Substantial development took place between 1745-1770 including the greater part of the present block of buildings to the south. During this period the street frontage to Harcourt Place was largely built up and the building which became known as Granby House enlarged. This building was demolished between 1892 and 1912 presumably simultaneously with the 1725-45 building referred to earlier. Also between 1745 and 1770 two buildings were erected on the frontage to St Nicholas Cliff – photographic details of this building exist which show that it was demolished in October 1939 (see Frontispiece). From 1798 the corner of Harcourt Place and St Nicholas Cliff was occupied by Travis' baths (Theakston p78) – the presence of a building on slightly

earlier maps suggests that the baths were an adaptation of an existing building.

3.5.3 A further phase of development took place between 1852 and 1892. Numbers 32,33, 34 and 35 St Nicholas Cliff were re-fronted and possibly increased in height to take their present form. A large single storey building was erected behind the 1745-70 building fronting St Nicholas Cliff – this became known as The Lounge and was demolished in October 1939 along with the frontage building. Finally a small extension was added to Granby House which was demolished between 1892 and 1912 along with the principal building.

3.6 This analysis of the building development on the site indicates that there is a small area of land between the locations of 'The Lounge' and 'Granby House' which may never have been built upon and this area was the focus of Trench 1.

4.0 Methodology of the trenching

4.1 Two trenches were hand excavated by SAHS. The locations are shown on Figure 3.

Trench 1 was located in the upper garden area, on the slope and measured 3.0m by 1.0m. This is the area thought to have been undeveloped since at least 1725. The purpose of this trench was to assess the level of survival of archaeological features within the town defences.

Trench 2 was located at the southern end of the lower flagged area and measured approximately 2.0m by 2.0m. but had to be reduced in size due to the presence of concrete slabs and brick foundation walls. The position of this trench was constrained by the presence of the cellars to the west and a drain crossing the centre of the site. The purpose of this trench was to test the survival of the moat or ditch forming the outer part of the defensive circuit

4.2 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on SAHS's pro forma context sheets.

4.3 Sections - The excavations were drawn at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film.

4.4 Photographic record - The photographic record comprises colour prints and colour slides to record all archaeological features encountered.

4.5 Finds and site archive - All artefacts and the site record will be deposited with the Scarborough Museums and Gallery Service in accordance with usual SAHS practice

4.6 Environmental Sampling – because of the nature of the deposits, no environmental samples were taken. There were no significant finds of bone.

5.0 Results Trench 1

5.1 Natural clay was encountered at 33.83 metres AOD ie 740mm below the ground surface at this point (Figure 4A). This natural deposit consisted of a very stiff mid brown clay with a fine grain. Natural was penetrated to a depth of 400mm over part of the site to ensure that it was in fact a natural deposit and this was given the context number 1012 - no artefacts were found and the consistency of the deposit indicates that it had not been disturbed or re-deposited.

5.2 Natural was cut into by two associated features. Feature F1005/F1008 at the west end consisted of the brick walls of the canted end of a structure. The wall consisted of an outer leaf half an brick thick (F1005) separated by a narrow void from a wall one brick thick within which was a concrete floor (F1008). This brick feature was built in an orange brick typical of bricks produced by the local Scarborough brickworks from about the middle of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century. This type of brick and the shape of the feature are consistent with it being part of the Lounge building shown on the 1892 map.

5.3 Cuts F1010 and F1014 at the eastern end of the trench were an interlocking system of drains also cut into the natural and backfilled with a loose rubbly fill (1011 and 1013). These contexts produced exclusively 19th century pottery although 1011 also contained four fragments of stone roof tile which may be medieval or early post medieval and may indicate that material was imported to the site for building up levels. These drains consisted of 4" salt glazed pipes of a mid 19th century date and as one was closely associated with the wall referred to above it is safe to say that they were contemporary with the erection of the building.

5.4 The natural clay was topped by a rubbly layer 1009 again containing post medieval pottery (18th century Delft) and some roof tiles, which was also cut into by the drains whilst the whole was covered by rubbly layers 1003 and 1004 which butted up to the wall F1005. In the case of the natural clay there was no evidence of for example a pre-existing ground surface and it is clear that at this point the natural clay had been levelled down to allow the erection of the 19th century structures.

5.5 Modern deposits of loam and top soil (1000, 1001 and 1002) overlay all these features.

6.0 Results Trench 2

- 6.1 Natural clay was encountered at 33.25 metres AOD ie again at 740mm below the surface (Figure 4B). This natural deposit consisted of a very stiff mid brown clay with a fine grain. Natural was penetrated to a depth of 400mm over part of the site to ensure that it was in fact a natural deposit and given the context number 2005– no artefacts were found and the consistency of the deposit indicates that it had not been disturbed or re-deposited.
- 6.2 This natural clay was overlain by an almost identical clay (2004) which was slightly different in colour and texture being slightly less sandy and which contained two fragments of medieval pottery. There was, however no other evidence that this clay had been disturbed or re-deposited.
- 6.3 The clay had been levelled and was overlain by a thin (10mm) bed of mortar which was overlain at one point by a brick feature consisting of two course of brick on edge walling (2001) separated by 230mm the intervening area being infilled with loose bricks (2002) which were not mortar bonded. Over the remainder of the trench the clay was overlain by a loose concretious mixture (2003) in two layers, and the whole was topped by a concrete slab interpreted as the 19th century floor of 'The Lounge'. The final phase was a sand blinding (2000) and concrete slabs presumably dating from the period after The Lounge was demolished.

7.0 Interpretation

- 7.1 The 19th century maps referred to earlier in the report show the course of the town moat crossing the site however the trial excavations did not reveal any evidence of this feature. It is possible that all traces of the ditch were destroyed during construction work between the mid 18th century and the late 19th century. The existence of natural clay close to the surface in both trenches with a difference in level between the two of only 580mm indicates a substantial amount of levelling occurred at that time across the site. However, it is also possible that the moat never crossed the site and that the 19th century maps show a hypothetical alignment rather than a physical feature. It is possible that the moat ran more to the south, possibly crossing beneath the block of buildings to the south of the site. The marked drop in ground level in this direction offers some support for this idea. Alternatively, it is possible that the moat did not reach as far as the present site but ended further to the north where a marked break in slope along the line of Harcourt Place possibly indicates the original line of the cliff top. Indeed, it is debatable if the ditch actually stretched as far as the cliff top since the earliest view of the town dating from the 1530s clearly shows it filled with water. For this to have worked then ditch must have ended some distance back from the top of the cliff in order to stop water seeping away down the cliff face.

7.2 Trench 2 contained a later clay context which contained pottery and bone which might be interpreted as a disturbed feature due to clay being thrown up from the moat excavation. However with no other evidence for the moat, it is more likely that this deposit simply results from the building activity which took place in the 18th and 19th centuries.

7.2 The presence of stone roof tiles may indicate that material has been imported to the site during building operations alternatively there may have been a spread of building debris following the demolition of the St Nicholas hospital. However these contexts also contained relatively modern pottery and the layer did not seal pre-existing archaeology.

8.0 Recommendation

8.1 The evaluation and associated trial trenching has indicated that conventional foundations are not likely to impact upon important archaeological deposits so far as can be ascertained and assuming the present ground levels. However any proposals to lower the ground such as reducing the height of the sloping garden to create basements and cellars may impact upon archaeology the location of which of it has not been possible to ascertain

8.2 It is therefore recommended as follows:-

- Details of the foundation design and positioning and ground lowering should be discussed with the County Archaeologist before submission of the Planning Application and details should be included with the Planning Application.
- Any lowering of the ground levels at the garden end of the site ie the land north of the flagged area should be subject to a programme of archaeological monitoring in accordance with an approved method statement.

9.0 References

Building bye-laws deposited plan 5522, March 1931
Hinderwell, T. 1832 The History & Antiquities of Scarborough 3rd edition
NYCRO Scarborough Records vol II
Pearson, T. 1987 An Archaeological Survey of Scarborough
Theakston's Guide to Scarborough, 2nd edition 1841

MAPS & PLANS CONSULTED

1538	View of Scarborough	
1725	A new and exact plan of Scarborough	J Cossins
1747	A plan of Scarborough	W Vincent
1770	a plan of Scarborough	published in Jeffries
1798	A plan of Scarborough	published in Hinderwell, 1798
1811	A plan of Scarborough	published in Hinderwell, 1811
1828	A plan of the Town and Environs of Scarborough	J Wood
1842	A plan of Scarborough from an actual survey	A G Tyson
1850	Plan of Scarborough	J Petch

- 1852 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:1056
- 1992 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:500
- 1912 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500
- 1929 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500
- 1939 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:2500
- 1965 Ordnance Survey plan of Scarborough at a scale of 1:1250

10.0 Acknowledgements

The excavation was directed by the Christopher Hall with site supervision by Susan Wood. The team consisted of Frank Beeley, Steve Bence, Chris Evans, Sue Ogilvy and Geoff Wood. Frances Hall assisted with finds processing.

Additional research was carried out by Susan Wood.

ANNEXES

- Figure 1 Extract from the 1:500 scale Ordnance survey map of 1892 showing the site boundary and other features
- Figure 2 Extract from the 1:500 scale Ordnance survey map of 1892 showing the development of the site
- Figure 3 Extract from the 1:100 scale site survey showing the location of the trenches
- Figures 4A &4B Sections of Trenches 1 and 2
- Photographs of trenches 1 and 2 at completion
- Travis's Baths from Theakstons Guide.
- Catalogue of photographs taken during the excavation
- Catalogue of pottery finds