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LAND AT BIRCH COTTAGE, MIDDLE STREET, SWINTON.

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF.
OSA REPORT No: OSA05WB04.

APRIL 2005.

OSA

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S 9525

Report Summary.

E 2844

REPORT NO: OSA05WB04

C3429, C3781

SITE NAME: Birch Cottage, Swinton

M24210

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 7592 7330

04/00085/OUT

ON BEHALF OF: Jon Charters-Reid

04/00897/REM.

Calvert developments

Fairview

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12th April 2005**ENQUIRIES TO:** Nick Pearson

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1.0 Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on grounds adjacent to Birch Cottage, Swinton, North Yorkshire, over four days during March 2005. The excavation of three trenches was observed during the construction of building-foundations and associated utilities, down to a maximum depth of 1.77m below ground level.

The watching brief revealed the first archaeological evidence, albeit indirect, for the production of Humberware in the Vale of Pickering.



Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 7592 7330)

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2.0 Site Location, Topography and Land Use.

The site concerned lies in the centre of the village of Swinton, approximately 3 kilometres west of Malton, North Yorkshire. The site consists of an area of disused garden and hardstanding that is to be developed for new housing. The area of investigation lies at National Grid reference SE 7592 7330. The surface of the site is around 32.00mAOD with a gentle slope down to the north.

3.0 Archaeological Background.

The site lies within an area of archaeological potential along the course of the projected alignment of the Roman road to the west of the fort and associated settlement at Malton. In addition, there are reports of prehistoric remains found within the village of Swinton.

4.0 Methodology.

The watching brief observed the excavation of three trenches involved in the construction of building-foundations and associated utilities. The site had been cleared of all debris and the topsoil removed before any of the trenches were excavated.

Trench 001 initially measured 1.10m x 18.00m at the surface, lying on an approximate east-west alignment and excavated to a depth of 1.37m below the topsoil. A 2.00m extension added to the eastern end, angled towards the northeast was excavated to the same depth.

Trench 002 measured 1.00m x 7.00m at the surface, on an approximate east-west alignment and excavated to a depth of 0.84m below the subsoil. A 1.00m x 1.00m extension was added to the southeast corner and excavated to 1.20m below the subsoil.

Trench 003 consisted of five interconnected trenches each 1.00m x 8.20m that formed the foundation trenches for the new housing.

Trenches 001 and 002 were excavated with a 1.50 tonne mini-digger fitted with a 1.00m wide ditching bucket. Trench 002 was excavated with the same digger fitted with a 0.80m wide toothless bucket.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed through out the watching brief. This included the completion of trench record sheets with a description of each deposit, structure or cut encountered and scaled drawings of sections at 1:20 and plans at 1:50. Digital photographs were taken of each trench and of any features unearthed

5.0 Results.

5.1 Trench 001.

Trench 001 was excavated to a level of 1.77m below the initial ground level.

The natural encountered in this trench was loose brownish yellow sand (1003) at a depth of 0.83m below the ground level. Cut in to this layer was a possible pit [1007] measuring 1.10m in width and at least 1.00m in depth. This feature was filled with at least three distinct fills. The lowest observable fill (1006) consisted of a mid brownish grey sandy silt with an approximate 10% component of small (5-10mm) pieces of stone and measured 0.26m in recorded depth. Above this fill was a band of mid brownish orange gravely sand (1005) 0.25m deep, that appeared similar to the natural until viewed in section. No archaeological components were observed in either these two fills. The highest fill (1004) consisted of mid brownish grey sandy silt with an approximate 5% component of small (5-10mm) and 10% component of medium (10-20mm) pieces of stone. The only finds for the entire feature came from this fill. Approximately 10% of a fragmented, juvenile, mid-sized animal (possibly sheep) were recovered from the western aspect of the base of this fill. A single piece of tile and a single 120mm fragment of pottery (see Appendix 3) were also recovered from the base of fill (1004). This fill measured 0.64m in depth.

Overlying the natural sediment (1003) and the possible pit [1007] was a mid greyish brown sandy silt (1002) 0.43m deep, that contained approximately a 5% component of large (+100mm) brick fragments. Capping this layer was the modern topsoil consisting of a dark greyish brown sandy silt 0.40m deep

5.2 Trench 002.

Trench 002 was excavated to a level of 1.14m below the initial ground level.

Natural deposits were encountered at a level of 0.64m below the surface and consisted of a loose brownish yellow sand (2003). Overlying this was a 0.34m deep loose mid greyish brown sand silt subsoil (2002) containing occasional small chalk fragments at a depth of 0.30m below the ground surface. This layer was covered by dark brown grey silt topsoil (2001) containing occasional chalk fragments with a depth of 0.30m. Cutting in to this layer were observed the remains of a foundation trench (2004) for the building that had recently stood on this site.

5.3 Trench 003.

Trench 003 was excavated to a level of 1.36m below the initial ground level.

Natural deposits were encountered in this trench at a depth of 0.62m below the initial ground level and consisted of a loose brownish yellow sand (3003). Above this layer was a mid grey brown sand silt subsoil (3002) 0.32m in depth. Cut in to this subsoil layer were two clearly 20th century pits. Pit [3005] showed steep concave sides with a concave base and measured 3.20m long by 2.10m wide with a depth of 0.96m. This feature was filled by a single fill of

mixed grey clay silt (3004) and contained flecks of charcoal and chalk along with various engine parts. Pit [3007] showed a wide u-shape profile with concave sides and base and measured 1.60m long by 1.40m wide with a depth of 0.50m. This feature was also filled by a single deposit of mixed grey orange clay silt (3006) containing stone, charcoal and chalk. Above these two features and capping the subsoil was the dark brown grey silt topsoil (3001) measuring 0.30m deep.

6.0 Conclusions.

In trench 001 natural was encountered at a depth of 0.83m whilst in trenches 002 and 003 it was encountered at a depth of 0.34m and 0.32m, respectively. This difference is explained by the landscaping of the adjacent property, into which trench 001 is cut and is the reason for the construction of a retaining wall.

Archaeological remains were only encountered within trench 001, consisting of a single small pit [1007]. The assessment of the pottery sherd indicates activity in the later medieval or early post-medieval period on or near the site, being identified as Humberware (see Appendix 3). Along with the bone remains recovered from the top fill (1004) this pit was possibly used for refuse. It would be unusual for any such pit to be found in isolation so suggests that others may be present within the area

Modern remains were encountered within trenches 002 and 003. In trench 003 this consisted of two pits, [3005] and [3007], containing modern machine debris. In trench 002 the remains of the building that previously occupied this land was visible (2004).

7.0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
Trench 001.			
1001	Dark brown grey silt (topsoil).	Whole trench	0.40m
1002	Mid grey brown sand silt (subsoil).	Whole trench	0.43m
1003	Mid brown orange sand (natural).	Whole trench	+0.94m
1004	Mid grey sand silt. Occasional medium stone. Frequent juvenile animal bone. Single pottery sherd, 14 th -16 th century. Fill of pit [1007].	+1.06m	0.64m
1005	Mid brown orange sand gravel. Frequent medium stone. Fill of pit [1007].	+1.00m	0.25m
1006	Mid grey sand silt Occasional small stone. Fill of pit [1007].	+0.96m	+0.26m
1007	Cut of pit. Sharp concave sides. Not fully excavated. Late medieval.	+1.06m	+1.00m
Trench 002.			
2001	Dark brown grey silt (topsoil).	Whole trench	0.30m
2002	Mid grey brown sand silt (subsoil).	Whole trench	0.34m
2003	Mid brown orange sand (natural).	Whole trench	+0.50m
2004	Visible foundation trench modern building.	+2.00m	0.20m
Trench 003.			
3001	Dark brown grey silt (topsoil).	Whole trench	0.30m
3002	Mid grey brown sand silt (subsoil).	Whole trench	0.32m
3003	Mid brown orange sand (natural).	Whole trench	+0.74m
3004	Mixed grey clay silt. Charcoal, chalk and iron. Fill of pit [3005]	3.2m	0.96m
3005	Cut of pit. Concave sides, concave base. Modern.	3.2m	0.96m
3006	Mixed grey orange clay silt. Charcoal, chalk and stone. Fill of pit [3007]	1.6m	0.50m
3007	Cut of pit. U-shape. Concave sides, concave base. Modern.	1.6m	0.50m

8.0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index

9.1 Photographic Register.

Frame	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
Film DIGITAL				
1	Trench 001. Section. West facing.	0.5	10.03.05	IAM
3	Trench 001. West facing.	-	10.03.05	IAM
4	Trench 001. East facing.	-	10.03.05	IAM
6	Section Pit [1007]. Oblique.	0.5	15.03.05	IAM
7	Section Pit [1007]. Southeast facing.	0.5	15.03.05	IAM
10	Modern wall. North facing.	0.5	15.03.05	IAM
11	Modern wall. West facing.	0.5	15.03.05	IAM
12	Modern Pit [3005]. East facing.	0.5	16.03.05	IAM
13	Trench 003. North facing.	-	16.03.05	IAM
14	Trench 003. West facing.	-	16.03.05	IAM
15	Modern Pit [3005]. East facing.	0.5	16.03.05	IAM
16	Trench 003. South facing.		16.03.05	IAM

9.0 Appendix 3 ~ Pottery Assessment Report.

Alan Vince

A sherd of late medieval pottery was recovered from a watching brief at Swinton, North Yorkshire. The sherd probably dates between the later 14th and the early 16th centuries.

9.1 Description.

9.1.1 Medieval Pottery.

A single sherd of Humberware was recovered from context 1004. The sherd comes from a large jug or jar and has an external red slip with spots of external glaze. The vessel has a reduced core and interior and an oxidized outer margin.

The sherd was examined at x20 magnification and sparse rounded white grains, probably Rhaxella chert, were seen, ranging up to 2.0mm across. The groundmass contains no visible inclusions. The Rhaxella chert derives from the Middle Jurassic strata, which outcrop on the northern side of the Vale of Pickering, whilst the fine-textured groundmass is finer than local boulder clay but is similar to the Oxford Clay and the Speeton Clay (although the latter usually contains glauconite, which would probably have been visible at x20 magnification). Therefore, a source in the Vale of Pickering, perhaps utilising an outcrop of Oxford Clay, is possible. Pottery production is known at Helmsley (documentary evidence) and at Castle Howard (archaeological evidence for the production of Hambleton ware, a 15th-century whiteware).

9.2 Assessment.

The sherd is large and fresh and probably indicates activity in the later medieval or early post-medieval period on the site. It provides the first archaeological evidence, albeit indirect, for the production of Humberware in the Vale of Pickering.

Appendix A

Context	class	Cname	Subfabric	Form	Part	Description	Nosh	NoV	Weight
1004	POTTERY	HUM	FINE GROUNDMASS;R CHERT <1.0MM	JUG	BS	EXT RED SLIP	1	1	27

10.0 Appendix 4 ~ The Plates.



Plate 1. General view of site.



Plate 2. Trench 1, pit [1007] facing southeast. (Scale of 0.5m).