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Archaeological Assessment & Management Plan

Land Off Portholme Road, Selby, North Yorkshire

NGR SE 614 321

Planning ref 2005/0330/FUL
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Report prepared for
Dransfield Properties Ltd

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**SELBY DISTRICT COUNCIL
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Archaeological Assessment & Management Plan

Land Off Portholme Road, Selby, North Yorkshire

by

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Summary

Pre Construct Archaeology was commissioned by Dransfield Properties Ltd to undertake a comprehensive review and assessment of the archaeological implications of proposed redevelopment of land off Portholme Road Selby North Yorkshire

The site has been subject to pre determination evaluation by desk based assessment and by geophysical survey the latter including both resistivity and fluxgate gradiometry

These methods are complementary and are the two most widely used and accepted methods nationally applied in the non intrusive evaluation of archaeological potential

The results of these techniques have been reviewed and assessed in accordance with relevant national regional and local planning policies and current best archaeological practice

It is concluded that

- Pre-determination evaluation has not identified any remains to preclude development*
- Of the remains known to have existed or been identified within the application area non of them are or potentially of national importance and therefore do not require preservation in situ*
- The geophysical survey was very successful and yet identified few anomalies of potential archaeological interest*
- Whilst these anomalies may be of some archaeological importance their potential to be nationally significant is considered negligible*

On this basis there can be no justification within local regional or national planning policy for further evaluation prior to the determination of planning

It is accepted however that although the site does not contain or likely to contain remains of national importance it may contain archaeological deposits of some lesser interest that will require further investigation and preservation by record or design

This document includes an outline strategy for achieving this post-determination which can be enforced either by the acceptance of a s106 agreement or by the provision of a standard negative condition based on the model in PPG 16 para 30

The approach of this document is wholly consistent with Selby Local Plan Policy ENV 28

Introduction

Dransfield Properties Ltd are seeking to redevelop approximately 2.8ha of land off Portholme Lane Selby North Yorkshire. The site is centred at NGR SE 614 321 at a mean elevation of approximately 6m AOD.

Currently, the site is comprised of a large public playing field in the west and south equating to approximately one third of the application area. To the west is an existing retail food store with the northwest occupied by Selby Abbey C.E. Primary School and the northeast by a pedestrian precinct.

The proposals include:

- the westwards extension of an existing retail food store
- the relocation of the existing Selby Abbey C.E. Primary School
- redevelopment of the existing school premises for retail use

The archaeological implications of the development have been evaluated by desk based assessment (Sumpter 2005) and by geophysical survey (Bunn & Masters 2005).

This document seeks to:

- examine the results of these pre-determination works
- assess the importance of known and potential remains
- establish the necessity and scope for further archaeological works

It sets out the approach for managing the archaeological resource within the application area and has therefore been produced in support of the development proposals. It outlines further survey works designed to further characterize the extent of buried remains, seeks to identify areas requiring mitigation or preservation and provides a flexible framework to take account of new information or constraints as they arise to inform subsequent works.

Archaeological Context

Desk based Assessment

An archaeological desk based assessment (DTA) *New Lane Selby North Yorkshire Archaeological Desktop Assessment* was undertaken by Tony Sumpter (Archaeological Consultant) in March 2005.

This document places the development site in the wider context of what is known of the historical development of Selby. It also discusses remains known to have existed or been found on the site and considers this information to establish the broader archaeological potential of the application area.

In summary the DTA identified

- That the playing field had been in existence since at least 1851 with a bowling green surviving until at least 1838 and a grandstand on the west side since at least 1893
- Prior to construction of the retail food store car park that area had been an orchard since at least 1851 This survived until the mid C20th when it was replaced by a bowling green
- During construction of the Schools south boundary wall c 1966 an undated human skeleton was discovered
- The area now forming part of the pedestrian precinct was formerly a cattle market in the 1890 s
- A tithe bam centred on NGR SE61423 2215 existed at the south end of James Street In 1867 it was described as measuring 95 4 x 8 8m Formerly a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NY 388) of national importance it was de scheduled following demolition in c 1980
- On the east side of James Street on the site of the Cattle Market Late C19th maps indicate a substantial building wrongly described as the Tithe Bam more likely this may be an associated medieval granary
- In 1988 evaluation by trial trenching identified a cobbled surface and c 1m wide stone wall Although undated these were presumed to relate to the possible granary and were preserved by record during a subsequent watching brief
- Quoting work by Clarke (1998) the DTA concludes that the southern boundary of the Benedictine Abbey precinct may be to the south of the site of the former tithe bam

Geophysical Survey

A geophysical survey was undertaken in June 2005 by Pre Construct Geophysics (Bunn & Masters) The survey included both fluxgate gradiometry and resistivity techniques The report contains a detailed methodology section explaining the theory and practice of the two techniques Put simply however gradiometry measures variation in magnetic field and is thus useful for identifying disturbances in the natural soil profile such as archaeological pits and ditches and identifying areas containing burnt or fired material such as hearths or kilns

Resistivity measures changes in electrical resistance deposits with a low water content such as stone walls have a higher resistance than damp soils Thus when the methods are used in conjunction they offer a comprehensive prospecting tool to identify the main types of archaeological deposits to be expected generally and in particular the earth cut features and masonry walls predicted or known from the DTA

The results of the geophysical survey can be summarised thus

- Good correlation between the two surveys and the identification of features known from early OS mapping suggests that a high degree of confidence can be attributed to the results
- Most magnetic and resistance anomalies can be readily identified to either C19th structures or services associated with the sports facility such as land drains and soak ways
- A small group of discrete anomalies grouped predominantly in the north and east of the playing field may have some limited archaeological significance but being very weak may equally resolve as ferrous rich natural pockets

Characterization

The application area appears to fall outside of the main medieval settlement focus possibly within the open field system. Extensive medieval settlement is therefore not expected across the site as a whole although the northern extent may fall within the precinct boundary of the medieval Benedictine monastery.

The most significant remains known to have existed within the site is the former tithe barn and possible granary. From works undertaken in 1988 in connection with the construction of the food retail store and surviving photographs of the remains of the tithe barn prior to and during demolition, it is anticipated that further masonry may survive associated with either of these two buildings or other ancillary buildings.

The geophysical survey did not identify the modelled precinct boundary. The extent of the monastery is not known but has been predicted on the basis of comparison with other monastic sites given the common plan concept of monastic houses. This method does have its limitations however and is dependant on a number of variables most importantly the size and position of the land endowed or subsequently given. The major Cistercian houses of North Yorkshire for example were set out (in general) to the model plan they were founded in isolated and desolate locations where land was freely available. In other situations where monastic houses were founded within existing towns frequent changes to the standard plan were required owing to the limitations of available land.

The Abbey Church is approximately 350m north of the application area and thus for it to be contained within the precinct boundary Selby Abbey must have been endowed with a sizable land holding at foundation.

Alternatively the tithe barn and granary may have formed part of a grange outside of the principal precinct area or may even have been outside the monastic holding.

The record of the finding of a single inhumation burial during construction of the school without any dating evidence is problematic since it is not known if it represents an isolated burial or more extensive cemetery.

The survival of remains within the application area is likely to be variable. Works on the possible granary in 1988 identified the probable medieval cobbled surface and wall at a mere 0.4 – 0.5m below existing ground level. At this depth, any similar or associated archaeological remains within existing developed areas of the north and west are likely to have been truncated and only in moderate to poor condition.

The likely preservation of any further skeletal remains cannot be predicted, but the foundation for a boundary wall is unlikely to have been more than c. 0.6 – 0.8m deep, suggesting that any further illuminations may well have been truncated by the north development of the school or by drainage associated with the playing field to the south.

The playing field does not appear to have been densely developed and thus the survival of any archaeological remains should have been good were it not for the extensive drainage systems. Similarly, bowling greens like golf courses are engineered and can result in the total truncation of any archaeological deposits to depths exceeding 1.3m below existing ground level.

Resource Management

Policy Framework

The primary guidance for dealing with archaeological remains within the planning system is Archaeology and Planning *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16)*. It requires archaeology to be considered a material consideration within the planning system. It draws a distinction between remains considered to be of national importance and those of lesser importance. Where remains or potential remains are considered to be of national importance, there is a presumption in their physical *preservation in situ*. Where good reason can be demonstrated, it allows for local planning authorities to request evaluation of a site to test the importance of any such remains. Remains of lesser importance that cannot be preserved *in situ* should be *preserved by record*. PPG16 is applicable to remains of archaeological significance, whether above or below ground. It outlines a phased approach to assessing sites' archaeological potential and allows for varying levels of intervention dependant upon the importance of the remains and the threat posed by development.

The Local Plan

The importance of archaeological remains as outlined by PPG 16 has been accepted in the Selby District Local Plan (adopted February 2005).

Policy ENV28 states:

- (A) Where development proposals affect sites of known or possible Archaeological interest, the District Council will require an archaeological assessment/evaluation to be submitted as part of the planning application.
- (B) Where development affecting archaeological remains is acceptable in principle, the Council will require that archaeological remains are preserved *in situ* through careful

design and layout

- (C) Where preservation in situ is not justified the Council will require that arrangements are made by the developer to ensure that adequate time and resources are available to allow archaeological investigation and recording by a competent archaeological organisation prior to or during development

Assessment

The desk-based assessment and geophysical survey have identified a number of known and potential remains within the application area

These consist of

- Probable walls and possible floors/surfaces associated with the former tithe barn and possible granary
- Unknown potential for human remains
- A number of discrete geophysical anomalies of possible archaeological interest

Any remains surviving within the application area relating to the tithe barn granary and any similar remains not identified will be of only limited significance. The tithe barn *a priori* is less than of national significance as a de scheduled monument and as such requires no further evaluation to test its significance which is now considered to be of only local importance

Similarly the probable granary has previously been evaluated and deemed less than of national significance in 1988 when the portion destroyed by the retail food store was preserved by record. Any further remains that may still survive will be of only negligible to local importance

The significance of possible human remains is more difficult to determine. However given that substantial building works for the construction and extension of Selby Abbey C E School and drainage operations in the playing field to the south only resulted in the vague report of a single burial, the potential for an extensive cemetery seems doubtful

The lack of any grave goods or other artefacts suggests that the burial was not that of a priest associated with the Abbey. It is concluded that the probability of significant further human remains of such a sample size to increase the state of current knowledge of local diet, trauma, longevity and regional or international trade is limited and unproven. The possibility of further human remains within the site does not merit further evaluation prior to determination of the planning application, the further identification, investigation and treatment of any such remains can be achieved by the adoption of the management plan below in accordance with current best practice and the 1857 Burial Act

Similarly the small numbers of discrete geophysical anomalies identified do not correspond to any coherent pattern indicative of significant settlement of any period

On balance it is concluded that none of the known remains or potential remains highlighted by the pre determination evaluation by desk-based assessment or geophysical survey have any potential

to be construed as being of or potentially of national importance and they do not therefore preclude development

The submission of the pre determination evaluation documents and this assessment will fully comply with the Selby Local Plan Policy ENV 28 (A)

Policy ENV 28 (C) can be fully complied with by the adoption of the following management plan for securing the preservation by record of any remains affected by the redevelopment proposals

Policy ENV (B) is unlikely to be fulfilled owing to the shallow depth that known remains has been identified at. However the following management plan also includes provision for establishing if preservation *in situ* is possible even if only locally within the application area

Although pre determination evaluation and this assessment consider that the potential of the site to contain remains of national importance requiring preservation *in situ* is low there is always an outside possibility that such remains may be discovered during the post-determination works outlined below. In such a case there is still a remedy for their physical preservation *in situ* by scheduling under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979

Thus in summary, there is no reason for any further assessment or evaluation prior to determination of the planning application on the basis that the potential for the site to contain remains requiring preservation *in situ* is low and that even if such remains are identified post determination their preservation can still be ensured

Archaeological Management Plan

Although no remains or potential remains of national importance have been identified or suspected within the application area the site does have a moderate high potential for remains of more modest importance and significance

Such remains may have the potential to further the understanding of the development of locality and thus require appropriate consideration within the proposed redevelopment framework

This section proposes an outline scheme to ensure that the remaining archaeological potential of the site is properly addressed during development and that sufficient resource and protocols are in place to fully comply with the requirements of Policy ENV 28

Its implementation and fulfilment can be ensured either by entering into a s106 agreement or by the acceptance of a standard negative condition based on the model proposed in PPG 16 para 30

Aims & Objectives

The overriding aim will be to effectively manage the archaeological remains within areas affected by the redevelopment both to the satisfaction of the local planning authority and to the standards set by the development team

This will require a flexible and reflexive approach whereby the formulation and development of specific research aims evolves as the project develops

Notwithstanding the above a number of potential generic research aims and objectives are already evident and will inform the initial stages of further archaeological works post-determination

- To establish chronological changes in use of the application area by
 - 1 establishing changes in occupation or agricultural settlement
 - 2 investigating changes in landscape flora and domesticated species by sample excavation and environmental sampling
- To establish if the Abbey precinct extended as far as the application area
- Seek to establish the relative chronology of the tithe barn granary and any other structures
- Establish the presence and extent of any further human remains and investigate their full significance
- Ensure any remains that cannot be preserved *in situ* are preserved by record
- Produce a fully integrated report publication and documentary archive

Implementation

To ensure the above a staged programme of archaeological works will be undertaken prior to commencement of the main construction phase. The scope and necessity for any subsequent works will be dependant upon the results of these works and consultations with the local planning authority

Stage 1	<i>Consultation</i>	Production of project design in consultation with the archaeological advisor to the local planning authority Document to include detailed methodology for post determination trial trenching and reporting
	<i>Trial Trenching</i>	Further evaluation of the site to define the extent of known remains and the nature of geophysical anomalies
	<i>Consultation</i>	Submission of trial trenching report and further consultation with the archaeological advisor to the planning authority Decision regarding the necessity and scope of further works and updating of project design as required
Stage 2	<i>Mitigation</i>	Further archaeological works either pre main construction phase or during development
Stage 3	<i>Post-Excavation</i>	Production of site archive in accordance with MAP 2 and production of <i>Assessment of Potential</i> Further consultation
Stage 4	<i>Completion</i>	Production of final report publication and deposition of project archive