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**Land Adjacent to the Poplars
 Old Malton Road
 North Yorkshire
 TA 0230 7960**

Archaeological Evaluation

TA 01830 79100

Authorised by

Date:.....

**Land Adjacent to the Poplars
Old Malton Road
North Yorkshire
TA 0230 7960**

Archaeological Evaluation Report

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Staxton
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Archaeological Evaluation Report

Non-Technical Summary

An Archaeological Evaluation undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. at land adjacent to the Poplars, Old Malton Road, Staxton, North Yorkshire (TA 0230 7960) during August 2005

The Evaluation consisted of four trenches that were excavated to a maximum depth of 1.78m below existing ground level (46.70m AOD). No archaeological features of were identified in any of the Evaluation trenches.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report sets out the results of an archaeological evaluation carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on a plot of land adjacent to the Poplars, Old Malton Road, Staxton, North Yorkshire (TA 0230 7960) during in August 2005. The work was undertaken in advance of a proposed development, in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation prepared by the Heritage Unit of North Yorkshire County Council (Appendix 1).

wrong - not included

- 1.2 The Evaluation was designed to provide information to enable an appropriate mitigation strategy to be formulated, following the archaeology policy issued by the Secretary of State for the Environment contained in *Planning Policy Guidance 16 'Archaeology and Planning'* (PPG 16).
- 1.3 A total area of 100m² was examined at locations agreed with the Heritage Unit as stated in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Fig. 2).

- 1.4 The site code for the project was MAP 02-08-05.
- 1.5 All work was commissioned by Margaret Mackinder and funded by the developer, ?.
- 1.6 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, Licence No. AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The proposed development site lies in the parish of Willerby, on the edge of the village of Staxton, at TA 0230 7960 (Figs. 1 & 2). The site covered an area of approximately 54m x 15m and, at the time of the Evaluation consisted of open grassland. The site stands at a mean height of approximately 46.97m AOD.
- 2.2 The site lies on soils of the Newport 1 Association, over glaciofluvial drift (Mackney, 1984) although the excavation showed the site lay on solid chalk bedrock

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 3.1 The earliest known activity in the vicinity of Staxton Farm is represented by a number of Beaker burials from an area 500m to the east of the current site, that was excavated in 1957 (Stead 1960). Beaker sherds were also found at Newham's Pit sand quarry (c. 500m east of the site) by Brewster (Brewster 1957). More recently, a complete beaker, possibly associated with an inhumation, was found during the construction of houses at the former Methodist church 300m to the north-east of the site (pers. comm. J Halliday, beaker in Doncaster museum).
- 3.2 Considerable excavation has been carried out on the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age settlements between Sherburn and West Heselton (Powlesland 1986), but the extent to which that 'ladder settlement' extended to Staxton is unclear. Brewster excavated a

considerable Roman enclosure at Newham's Pit, and also found evidence of Anglian settlement there. A large Anglian cemetery is also known to have existed in the vicinity of the Shell Garage immediately west of Newham's pit, crouched inhumation being found in 1994 (MAP 1994) and further Watching Briefs have been undertaken in the intervening years but no further archaeological features observed (MAP 2002).

- 3.3 Staxton itself existed as a settlement before the Norman conquest. The name, first recorded in 1086, means '*Stakk's* farmstead' and shows Anglo-Scandinavian influence (Smith ed. 1937). Two estates were in the king's ownership at the time of the Domesday survey; at the time of King Edward, five carucates were held by Carle and Torfin, with 1 carucate being the soke of Morcar's manor of Bridlington.
- 3.4 The extent and form of the medieval settlement is not certain. The village pattern seems to indicate a 'Street Village', with north to south-aligned plots bisected by an east to west road (now Main Street). The present site would appear to lie within the southern row of this Street Village plan, and probably originally formed part of a number of the north to south properties to the south of the axis road.
- 3.5 The medieval village was one of three settlements in Willerby parish (the others being Willerby and Binnington), and seems to have been of moderate size. 71 tax-payers were recorded at Staxton by the 1377 Poll Tax, compared to 81 at Willerby and 36 at Binnington. Staxton, along with Potter Brompton has been long believed to be the source of Staxton / Potter Brompton ware (Brewster 1958). Brewster excavated a medieval building at the Hare and Hounds, but the exact location of his trenches is unknown (of which more later). Brewster also recorded a large medieval pit in the plot immediately west of the site (Dean's Kiln), and recovered a group of medieval sherds from the Boythorpe Engineering Works, which lies west of the site. In addition, medieval sherds and chalk rubble were observed when the area immediately north-west of the site was cut back to improve the visibility of traffic exiting Main Street. The supposition is that peasant potters were producing coarse pottery for the East Yorkshire market, possibly from the late 12th to the early 15th century, but there is no clear proof that any of the sites that Brewster recorded at Staxton (or Potter Brompton) were ever concerned with pottery manufacture (Brewster & Hayfield

1992). It is obvious that any evidence of pottery manufacture present on the Staxton Farm development site would be of probable National Significance, and evaluation trenches excavated in 1995 at the Hare and Hounds (MAP 1995) located evidence for buildings and property boundaries associated with a large assemblage of Medieval Staxton Ware pottery.

- 3.6 In the post-medieval period, the other two settlements in Willerby parish began to decline; the 1670 Hearth Tax returns list twenty-five households in Staxton, with twenty-one in Willerby and nineteen in Binnington. Staxton benefited from the coaching trade; the Hare and Hounds (known from the early 19th century) and the Stirrup Inn (formerly The Board) bears a date-stone of 1649.

4. **Aims and Objectives**

The aims of the evaluation were:

- To determine by means of trial trenching the nature, depth, extent and state of preservation of archaeological deposits on the site,
- To prepare a report summarising the results of the work, to assess the significance of the archaeological implications of any development.
- To prepare and submit an archive to the appropriate museum.

5. **Methodology**

- 5.1 Four areas were subjected to Evaluation; Trenches 1, 2, 3 and 4. Trench 1 measured 2m x 5m, Trench 2 measured 2m x 20m, Trench 3 measured 2m x 10m and Trench 4 measured 2m x 10m (Fig. 2).
- 5.2 The Evaluation Trenches were stripped of topsoil and recent overburden in shallow spits by a rear-acting excavator using a toothless blade under close archaeological supervision. Machining ceased at the top of the underlying subsoil or natural geological deposits, as no archaeological deposits or features were reached during this procedure.

- 5.3 All subsequent deposits were excavated by hand in stratigraphic sequence.
- 5.4 All work was carried out in line with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct (IFA 1998).
- 5.5 All archaeological deposits were recorded according to correct principles of stratigraphic excavation on MAP's *pro forma* context sheets and Site Manual.
- 5.6 The full extent of archaeological deposits were recorded in plan at a scale of 1:20 on drawing film. Sections of features and individual layers were drawn at 1:10, also on drawing film, and included an OD height.
- 5.7 The photographic record comprised monochrome and colour prints, and colour transparencies, in 35mm format, recording all archaeological features encountered.
- 5.8 All artefacts were retained for specialist analysis. Finds were processed in accordance with English Heritage Guidelines (EH 1995). All finds were cleaned, identified, assessed, dated (where possible), marked (where appropriate), and properly packed and stored according to national guidelines.

6. Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 2 & 3, Pl. 1)

- 6.1.1 Trench 1 was situated at the western edge of the site and was excavated to a depth of 0.70m (47.55m AOD). At the base of the excavations a number of mixed natural deposits were recorded (contexts 1005, 1004, and 1003). Natural Deposits 1003, 1004 and 1005 were sealed by a 0.30m deep silt sandy subsoil layer (context 1002). The sequence in Trench 1 was completed by a 0.35m deep deposit of silty sand topsoil (context 1001).
- 6.1.2 A ?? number of pottery sherds were recovered from the Subsoil Deposit 1002 (Appendix 2).

6.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 2 & 3, Pls. 2 & 3)

6.2.1 Trench 2 measured 2m x 20m and was located along the northern edge of the site (Fig. 2). The trench was excavated to a depth of 1m below existing ground level (47.04m AOD).

6.2.3 A sequence of deposits were identified in Trench 2. A naturally-formed layer of chalk (context 2002) was identified in the base of Trench 2 at a depth of 47.04m AOD. Situated immediately above Deposit 2002 was a 0.62m silty sand subsoil layer (Context 2001), which was in turn sealed by a 0.27m deep silty topsoil deposit (context 2000). Two sondages were excavated in the base of Trench 2 at the request of Silvina Tilbury of the Heritage Section, North Yorkshire County Council (Pls. 4 & 5). These were situated in the eastern and western ends of the trench and measured 1m x 1m. The sondages were hand-excavated to a mean depth of 0.40m, exposing a continuation of Deposit 2002.

6.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 2 & 3, Pl. 6)

6.3.1 Trench 3 located towards the east of the site and was excavated to a depth of 1.78m below the existing ground level (46.70m AOD). Excavations revealed a natural chalk deposit (context 3002) that was sealed by a 0.22m deep silty sand subsoil layer (context 3001). Deposit 3001 was sealed by a 0.27m deep deposit of silty topsoil (context 3000).

6.4 Trench 4 (Figs. 2 & 3, Pls. 7 & 8)

6.4.1 Trench 4 was situated towards the south of the site and was excavated to a depth of 1.26m (46.85m AOD). At the base of the excavations a number of natural chalky deposits were recorded (contexts 4009, 4008, 4007, and 4006). These deposits were sealed by a 0.20m deep remnant of silty subsoil (Contexts 4002, 4003 and 4004). Situated immediately above Deposits 4002, 4003 and 4004 was a 0.20m silty sand subsoil layer (context 2001). The archaeological sequence in Trench 4 was completed by a 0.30m deep deposit of silty sand topsoil (context 4000). At the request of the Silvina Tilbury of the Heritage Section, North Yorkshire County Council, a 1m x 1m

sondage was excavated in the eastern end of Trench 4. The sondage was hand-excavated to a mean depth of 0.80m and revealed only natural deposits (Pl. 9).

6.4.2 A single pottery sherd was recovered from Deposit 4001 (Appendix 2).

7. Conclusions

7.1 The apparent absence of medieval deposits and any associated finds is surprising, especially given the high incidence of medieval artefacts so far recovered from Staxton and the surrounding areas. The lack of pre-18th century material evidence suggests that the current site was situated on marginal land at some distance from the main foci of medieval and earlier activity.

8 Bibliography

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