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**Rarey Drive
Weaverthorpe
North Yorkshire
(SE 96883 70817)**

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

N. Y. C. C. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES	
12 JAN 2006	
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2005

**Rarey Drive
Weaverthorpe
North Yorkshire
(SE 96883 70817)
Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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Non Technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. at Rarey Drive, Weaverthorpe, North Yorkshire, during August 2005. The work involved monitoring groundworks associated with the construction of three dwellings. No archaeological features or deposits were identified during the groundworks.

1. Introduction

1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd carried out on land off Rarey Drive, Weaverthorpe, North Yorkshire (SE 96883 70817) on the 11th August 2005. The archaeological work was undertaken in order to fulfil a condition attached to a Planning Application Consent (Ref No: C426705/00127/FUL) and involved monitoring groundworks associated with the erection of a terrace for three dwellings. *in accordance with a WSI agreed with NYCC (see Appendix 2)*

1.2 All work was funded by Redworth Construction.

1.3 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. License No. AL 50453A.

2. Geology and Soils

2.1 The site is located within the village of Weaverthorpe and lies immediately to the south of the minor road from West Lutton to Wold Newton at SE 9689 7083. It is bounded to the south and east by residential properties, to the west by Rarey Drive and to the north by the West Lutton-Wold Newton road.

2.2 At the time of the Watching Brief, the development area consisted of an undeveloped plot that was under a cover of rough grassland, site of former garages.

2.3 The at the site lies on soils of the Coombe 1 Association, which are characterised by well-drained calcareous fine silty soils over a geology of chalky drift and chalk (Mackney 1984).

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

3.1 The Great Wold Valley, through which the Gypsey Race flows, forms a huge landscape of Prehistoric features, known largely from cropmarks on aerial photographs, but also represented by earthworks (Stoertz 1997).

3.2 Some of the most notable cropmark features in Weaverthorpe parish are the massive multiple dykes that are believed to represent an Iron Age stock-management system (Riley 1990).

3.3 Other cropmark features plotted by the RCHME show a series of linked rectangular enclosures forming an Iron Age/Romano-British 'ladder settlement' that runs eastwards into Weaverthorpe from the direction of Helperthorpe, parallel to, and on both sides of the Gypsey Race (Stoertz 1997, Map 1). The cropmarks on the north side of the Gypsey Race are obscured by the built-up area of the village, plus the earthworks and pasture to the south of the church. However, it is entirely possible that the ladder settlement continues eastwards to the vicinity of the evaluation area and beyond.

3.4 An 'umbonate' bronze brooch with enamelled decoration of 2nd century AD date was recently found in the field (metal-detecting find by Mr Ken Umpleby).

3.5 The Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian periods are poorly documented at Weaverthorpe, but the fact that the village was mentioned in the Domesday Survey (1086), along with the origins of the place-name, point to the fact that

there was an Anglo-Scandinavian settlement there. Weaverthorpe was recorded as *Wifretorp* in 1086, the name meaning *Vidfari's* village (*Vidfari* being an Old Scandinavian personal name meaning 'far-traveller' (Smith 1937).

- 3.6 Physical evidence of pre-conquest activity is provided by a stycca from the second reign of Aethelred II (AD 844-49 - another metal-detecting find from the site by Mr Umpleby, identification by Craig Barclay, formerly Yorkshire Museum).
- 3.7 The Domesday Survey shows Weaverthorpe to have been the pre-conquest centre of a broad estate of the Archbishops of York, worth £14 in the time of King Edward (1066). However, the village was waste in 1086, perhaps as a result of William of Normandy's harrying of the north in 1069.
- 3.8 Herbert of Winchester obtained Weaverthorpe manor during the incumbency of Archbishop Thomas II (1108-1114). An inscription on the sundial over the south door of St Andrew's church records the construction of the church by Herbert. It is believed that the earthworks immediately south of the church relate to his manorial centre.
- 3.9 Weaverthorpe appears to have the form of a street village with fairly regular north-south rows of properties separated by a central street and the Gypsey Race (Fig. 2). The development area is situated at the eastern end of the northern block of rows, but it is not clear whether it formed part of the medieval village. The large bank (now ploughed out) at the northern boundary may have separated the properties of the village from the arable fields, if so this places the development area within the medieval village.
- 3.10 The main archaeological intervention to have taken place at Weaverthorpe was the excavation by Brewster in 1960 of an area enclosed by an earthwork bank and ditch, prior to the eastward extension of the churchyard (Brewster 1960). A Romano-British pit was located along with 3rd/4th century pottery. Two rectangular dwellings with chalk walls were interpreted as a hall and ancillary

buildings, abandoned in the 14th century. The enclosing earthworks were examined by Raymond Hayes and others in 1951, when Gritty Ware sherds were recovered from beneath the bank, indicating a post-conquest date for its construction.

3.11 No archaeological deposits were revealed during a watching brief on road works to the south-west of the church (MAP 2003).

3.12 An archaeological evaluation took place at a proposed development site, c. 75m north of Rarey Drive. Features of probable Iron Age/Roman and medieval date were recorded. (MAP 2004).

4. Methodology

4.1 The work involved observation of foundation trenches during and after excavation. A written and photographic record was maintained during the Watching Brief.

5. Results

5.1 The results of the Watching Brief were negative, with no features or deposits of an archaeological nature present. The foundation trenches for the new dwellings measured 0.6m wide and 0.8m deep (Pl. 1 & 2). The only deposits encountered were the natural chalk bedrock, visible in the base of the trenches and a 0.7m deep overlying deposit of chalky clay subsoil (Pl .2). No finds were recovered.

6. Conclusions

- 6.1 The archaeological work failed to locate any archaeological features or deposits and only identified the natural bedrock and clay, both of which are naturally occurring in the area. The negative results show little evidence that any archaeological remains were present within the development area.

7. Bibliography

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