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**Marfield Quarry**  
**Masham**  
**North Yorkshire**  
**Quarry Extension Phases 3 & 4**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**  
**SE 2110 8277**

<b>N. Y. C. C.</b> <b>ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>	
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2005

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**North Yorkshire**  
**Quarry Extension Phases 3 And 4**  
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**Non Technical Summary**

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd at Marfield Quarry, Masham, North Yorkshire. The work was undertaken during August 2005 and involved monitoring topsoil-stripping operations associated with an extension to the quarry.*

*The only archaeological feature identified during the Watching Brief was a lime kiln of probable post-medieval date that was similar to other examples identified during earlier phases of work in the quarry.*

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy at Marfield Quarry, Masham, North Yorkshire, from August 23<sup>rd</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup> 2005. The work was undertaken on behalf of Lafarge Aggregates Ltd in order to fulfil a condition attached to planning consent 500/32G/CMA for mineral extraction on land to the north-west of the existing quarry workings at SE 8277 2110 (Fig. 1). The Condition states further work on all zones see Written Scheme of Works (Appendix 3).
  
- 1.2 A pre-planning evaluation of the quarry extension was commissioned by Lafarge Redland Aggregates Ltd (now Lafarge Aggregates Ltd) and was carried out between April 1995 and December 1996. The evaluation followed a staged format and consisted of a number of different techniques including a

desktop study (Areas 1-14: MAP 1995i-Fig 2), geophysical survey (GSB 1995- Area 6, 9, 12 & 1996- Areas 8 & 13), fieldwalking (MAP 1995ii- Areas 6, 9, 12) and trial and sample excavations in Areas 6, 9, 12 & 14 (MAP 1997).

- 1.3 The zone monitored during the current Watching Brief covered an area of approximately 3600m<sup>2</sup>. This included the eastern end of Phase 3 and the north-eastern part of Phase 4, formerly Areas 8, 12 & 14 of the pre-planning evaluation (Figs. 3 & 4).
- 1.4 All maps within this report have been reproduced from Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright, License No. AL 50453A.
- 1.5 All work was funded by Lafarge Aggregates Ltd.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 Marfield Quarry is situated in the parish of Ellington High and Low, North Yorkshire, to the north-west of the town of Masham, at SE 8277 2110 (Fig. 1). Phases 3 and 4 of the quarry extension are located to the north-west of the existing quarry workings, approximately 0.9 km to the south of the village of Low Ellington (Figs. 2 & 3). At the time of the Watching Brief, the extension area was in use as pasture and arable land. The topography of the extension area was undulating, rising steeply at the northern limit and more gently rising to the west, with heights between 100m AOD to 110m AOD. A dried-up pond was located close to the northern limit of the extension area and formed a bog at the time of the watching brief (Pl. 1).

## **3. Geology**

- 3.1 The site is located on soils of the East Keswick Association, comprising of brown earths over a parent drift of Palaeozoic and Mesozoic sandstones and shales. Such soils are usually well drained fine or coarse loams, sometimes

with slowly permeable subsoils and subject to slight seasonal water logging (Mackney 1984).

#### **4. Archaeological Background**

4.1 The current Watching Brief was part of an on-going programme of archaeological investigations within the boundaries of the quarry that commenced in 1988 when WYAS carried out a Watching Brief, with later elements by MAP (MAP 1995i, GBS 1995 & 1996, MAP 1999, and MAP 1994-2000).

4.2 The most significant archaeological features that have been identified within the quarry were located in Area 12. Here, four lime kilns were excavated (MAP 1995 & 1996), after being identified by geophysical survey (GSB 1995 & 1996). The lime kilns dated from the late 17<sup>th</sup> to mid 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and were associated with the production of lime for agricultural improvement and building mortar. A rectangular burnt pit of 16<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century date was also identified.

4.3 Two further kilns of late to mid 18<sup>th</sup> century date were identified in Phase 1 (Areas 6 and 8) in 1996 & 1999.

#### **5. Methodology**

5.1 The topsoil within the extension areas (Areas 8, 12 and 14) was removed by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket, under the supervision of an archaeologist. Prior to machine-stripping the existing vegetation, including a hedgerow, shrubs and trees, was removed by a specialist team.

5.2 A drawn, written and photographic record was made of all archaeological features and deposits encountered which were located in relation to existing landscape features and tied into the Ordnance Survey grid.

## 6. Results

- 6.1 The extension area covered a 3600m<sup>2</sup> tract of land that ranged from fairly steep slopes to relatively flat. The topsoil-stripping commenced at the northern end of the site in Area 8, continued westwards into Area 12 (Pl. 2) then returned in an easterly direction into Area 14 (Pl. 4). A lime kiln was identified in Area 14, close to the boundary with the existing quarry workings (Fig. 4). The remaining stripped surface consisted of undisturbed natural material that varied from a pale yellow silty clay to a stony brown silty clay.
- 6.2 The kiln exhibited a keyhole shape in plan and was easily identified by its pink to red penumbra, caused by the scorching of the surrounding subsoil. The kiln pot or chamber (context 2) measured 2.25m in diameter and 0.4m in depth. The natural clay (context 4) that formed the walls and base of the chamber had had oxidised due to exposure to intense heat during firing.
- 6.3 The stoke-hole adjacent to the chamber was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 1.75m x 0.6m wide x 0.2m deep. The stoke hole-sloped slightly towards the chamber, before gradually rising towards the north-eastern end. There was little evidence of burning or intense heat within the stoke-hole, although some reddened clay fragments were present, probably as a consequence of raking out the kiln.
- 6.4 A single deposit (context 1) occupied both the kiln chamber and stoke-hole. Deposit 1 consisted of a silty clay that contained small, medium and large sandstone and limestone fragments, many of which had been scorched. No finds were recovered from the deposit.
- 6.5 A dried-up pond was located towards the northern end of the area, to the south of a farm track. The pond formed a slightly boggy area that was vegetated with reeds and cotton grass. Machine excavation showed that the pond had silted up with a peaty humic deposit that was up to 1m deep. This deposit

overlay a very clean silty sand natural deposit. The pond appeared to be of natural, rather than man-made, origin.

## **7. Conclusions**

- 7.1 The lime kiln was the only archaeological feature identified within the extension area, and although no finds were recovered it seems likely to have been of a post-medieval date consistent with the other excavated examples from the quarry.



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