

Land at Humbleton Farm, Burtree Gate, Darlington

Archaeological Evaluation

Planning Ref: (13/00110/FUL)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report details the results of a programme of evaluation trenching undertaken on land at Humbleton Farm, Burtree Gate, Darlington as a requirement of a planning application for the redevelopment of the site. The trenching was undertaken in order to characterise the potential effects of the proposed development on the archaeological resource.

The trenches consisted of 1no. 50 m x 2 m trench and 2no. 20 x 2 m trenches. These were excavated by machine under archaeological supervision and any features were further investigated and excavated with hand tools. All recording was undertaken to standards as set out in the relevant Chartered Institute for Archaeologists guidance and in accordance with an agreed Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), included as Appendix 2 below.

The evaluation characterised the principal underlying substrate as being in line with the extant BGS mapping but did not uncover any significant archaeological finds or features. The observed stratigraphy and deposits are consistent with pasture which has been ploughed in the past, although probably not for a considerable period of time. Unfortunately, it was not possible to date the evidence of ploughing uncovered as a part of the work; however, this most likely relates to post-medieval agricultural practice.

The results of the evaluation indicate that the potential direct impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource is likely to be minimal.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 PROJECT BACKGROUND

This report has been prepared by Solstice Heritage LLP on behalf of Darlington Farmers Auction Mart Company Limited to outline the results of a programme of archaeological evaluation. The evaluation was undertaken to address a condition of a planning permission (Planning ref. 13/00110/FUL) for the redevelopment of the site.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The proposed works are situated at the farmstead at Humbleton Farm, Burtree Gate, West Auckland Rd, Darlington, centred at grid reference NGR NZ 25958 19235 (Figure 1). The locations of the evaluation trenches are shown on Figure 2 below.

1.3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Archaeological field evaluation is defined as:

“A limited programme of non-intrusive and/or intrusive fieldwork which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. If such archaeological remains are present field evaluation defines their character, extent, quality and preservation, and enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate” (Cifa 2014, 2).

The overarching aim of the evaluation was:

- To assess, through a programme of intrusive trenching, the potential physical impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource.

The objectives of the evaluation were:

- To determine (where possible) the nature, depth, extent, significance and date of buried archaeological remains that may be located within the proposed development area
- To determine the condition or state of preservation of any archaeological deposits or features encountered
- To determine the likely range, quality and quantity of artefactual and environmental evidence present
- To answer any relevant research questions
- To inform the scope of archaeological mitigation works if required
- To produce a report on the findings at the site.

Figure 1 Site Location



Figure 2 Trench location plan

2. POLICY AND GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

2.1 LEGISLATION

National legislation that applies to the consideration of cultural heritage within development and the wider planning process is set out in Table 1 below.

Title	Key Points
Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 (amended by the National Heritage Act 1983 and 2002)	Scheduled Monuments, as defined under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act (1979), are sites that have been selected by a set of non-statutory criteria to be of national significance. Where scheduled sites are affected by development proposals there is a presumption in favour of their physical preservation. Any works, other than activities receiving class consent under The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1981, as amended by The Ancient Monuments (Class Consents) Order 1984, which would have the effect of demolishing, destroying, damaging, removing, repairing, altering, adding to, flooding or covering-up a Scheduled Monument require consent from the Secretary of State for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport.
Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990	Buildings of national, regional or local historical and architectural importance are protected under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. Buildings designated as 'Listed' are afforded protection from physical alteration or effects on their historical setting.
Hedgerows Regulations 1997	The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) include criteria by which hedgerows can be regarded as historically important (Schedule 1 Part III).

Table 1 Legislation relating to cultural heritage in planning

2.2 POLICY

2.2.1 NATIONAL

The principal instrument of national planning policy within England is the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (CLG 2012) which outlines the following in relation to cultural heritage within planning and development:

Paragraph	Key Points
7	Contributing to protecting and enhancing the historic environment is specifically noted as being a part of what constitutes 'sustainable development' – the "golden thread" which, when met, can trigger presumption in favour.
17	A core planning principle is to "conserve heritage assets in a manner appropriate to their significance, so that they can be enjoyed for the contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations".
128	During the determination of applications "local planning authorities should require an applicant to describe the significance of any heritage assets affected, including any contribution made by their setting". This information should be proportionate to the significance of the asset and only enough to "understand the potential impact of the proposal on their significance".
129	Paragraph 129 identifies that Local planning authorities should identify and assess the particular significance of any heritage asset that may be affected by a proposal (including by development affecting the setting of a heritage asset) taking account of the available evidence and any necessary expertise.
132	It is noted that significance – the principal measure of inherent overall heritage worth – can be harmed or lost through development within its setting. Heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and any adverse effects require "clear and convincing justification" relative to the significance of the asset in question.
135	At paragraph 135 it states that the effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In

	weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.
139	At paragraph 139 it states that non-designated heritage assets of archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to scheduled monuments, should be considered subject to the policies for designated heritage assets.
141	In paragraph 141 amongst other matters it states that planning authorities should require developers to record and advance understanding of the significance of any heritage assets to be lost (wholly or in part) in a manner proportionate to their importance and the impact, and to make this evidence (and any archive generated) publicly accessible. However, the ability to record evidence of our past should not be a factor in deciding whether such loss should be permitted.

Table 2 Key passages of NPPF in reference to cultural heritage (archaeology)

2.2.2 LOCAL

Under planning law, the determination of an application must be made, in the first instance, with reference to the policies of the local development plan. For the proposed development this is represented by the *Darlington Local Development Framework Core Strategy* (DBC 2011) and saved policies from the *Borough of Darlington Local Plan* (DBC 1997 amended 2001). Key local policies with reference to cultural heritage and the nature of the proposed development are:

Policy	Key Text
CS2(b)	"...All development proposals should...reflect and/or enhance Darlington's distinctive natural, built and historic characteristics that positively contribute to the character of the local area" (DBC 2011, 23).
CS14(E)	<p>"The distinctive character of the Borough's built, historic, natural and environmental townscapes, landscapes and strong sense of place will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced by...Protecting, enhancing and promoting the quality and integrity of Darlington's distinctive designated national or nationally significant building heritage and archaeology as well as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buildings, their settings and features of historic and archaeological local importance in Conservation Areas; • Buildings, features and landmarks on the local list; • Buildings, and features that reflect Darlington's railway, industrial and Quaker heritage; and • Buildings on the local 'at risk' register" (DBC 2011, 57).
E9	<p>'Development affecting the parks and gardens of landscape or historic interest listed below will not be permitted where it detracts from their character or appearance or prejudices either the survival or reinstatement of historic features including designed plantations. Planning permission, if granted, will be subject to conditions aimed to ensure that such features are taken into account in the design and implementation of the required landscape works. Where parkland is in more than one ownership, the council will encourage owners to co-operate so that such landscape works, whether on or off the application site, contribute to the safeguarding or rehabilitation of the designed landscape in its entirety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Park, Darlington; • North Lodge Park, Darlington; • Blackwell Grange, Darlington; • Rockcliffe Park, Hurworth; • Middleton Hall, Middleton St. George; • Walworth Castle; • Redworth Hall; • Hall Garth, Coatham Mundeville; • Newbus Grange, Hurworth; • Neasham Hall' (DBC 1997 amended 2001)

Table 3 Local planning policy

2.3 GUIDANCE

2.3.1 NATIONAL

During the evaluation and preparation of this document, the following guidance documents have been referred to, where relevant:

Document	Key Points
National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) (CLG 2014)	The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) released the guidance to NPPF in March 2014 in a 'live' online format which, it is intended can be amended and responsive to comment, particular as case law develops in relation to the implementation of NPPF. In relation to cultural heritage the NPPG follows previous guidance in wording and 'keys in' with, in particular, extant Historic England guidance documents. The NPPG references many similar terms to the previous PPS5 Practice Guidance.
Conservation Principles, Policies and Guidance (HE 2008)	This sets out the guiding principles of conservation as seen by Historic England and also provides a terminology for assessment of significance upon which much that has followed is based.
Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (CIFA 2014)	This document represents non-statutory industry best practice as set out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists. The evaluation work has been undertaken to these standards, as subscribed to by Solstice Heritage.

Table 4 National guidance documentation consulted

2.3.2 REGIONAL

Archaeological work within Darlington is often required to comply with *Yorkshire, The Humber and The North East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process* (SYAS 2011). The key principles in relation to the evaluation undertaken are summarised in the table below:

Principle	Key Points
2	Archaeological work should be undertaken by professionally qualified and appropriately experienced archaeologists and organisations.
3	All archaeological work will have a scope agreed in advance with the archaeological curator (this document), and any changes to the scope or methodology will be agreed in writing with the archaeological curator.
4	Monitoring of archaeological work by the local archaeological curator will be the norm, and reasonable notice of commencement of fieldwork will be given.
5	Archaeological work will be undertaken in accordance with the best practice guidance of Historic England and CIFA.
6	The local Historic Environment Record should be consulted prior to the commencement of fieldwork.
7	Archaeological work in the planning process should have regard to national and local published research agenda (see section 4.2 below)
9	Reports and required data will be submitted to the archaeological curator and local HER in a timely fashion and in accordance with the agreed WSI.
10	Any comments made by the archaeological curator on reports and outputs will be made within a reasonable timetable of receipt.
11	Where appropriate significant archaeological findings will be submitted for publication in a suitable journal or journals.
12	Any archive produced will be deposited in an ordered and acceptable fashion within a reasonable timetable, the details of which will be given in the report.
13	During the course of archaeological work arrangements will be made, where possible, for disseminating information about the site to the general public.

Table 5 Key principles of the Regional Statement of Good Practice

3. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1 LANDSCAPE AND GEOLOGY

The proposed development site sits within the 'Tees Lowlands' National Character Area (NCA). This landscape is defined as 'a broad, open plain dominated by the meandering lower reaches of the River Tees and its tributaries' (NE 2014, 3). In comparison to the dynamic coastline and large Teeside conurbation, the area around the proposed development site is typically rural: 'agricultural land is intensively farmed, with large fields and sparse woodland, and a settlement pattern influenced both by the river and by past agricultural practices' (ibid. 3).

The Tees Lowlands, as with the Vale of Mowbray to the south, sits on a bedrock geology which straddles the divide between the Carboniferous, Permian and Triassic periods. The proposed development area sits on the dolostone of the Ford Formation (BGS 2017).

In terms of determinant factors on the archaeological remains of the site, however, the more dominant geological influence is that of the overlying superficial deposits. The trenches all sit at the boundary of the sand and gravel knoll, upon which Humbleton Farm sits, and the surrounding glacially derived till (BGS 2017).

Online mapping provided by the UK Soil Observatory (2017) characterises the soils across the development site as 'slowly permeable, seasonally wet, slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils'.

3.2 PREVIOUS WORK

An extensive archaeological evaluation was undertaken by Archaeological Research Services Ltd (Lotherington and Grzybowska 2014) on the surrounding farmland. The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological remains aside from field boundaries and ploughing of the post-medieval period.

Solstice Heritage LLP has also carried out an Historic Building Recording of the farmhouse and two adjacent barns at Humbleton Farm, in fulfilment of a condition of planning permission for the current redevelopment of the site (Scott 2017). The building recording identified the farmhouse as a gradually adapted structure, forming part of a linear range, which most likely originated during the late 18th century. The barns and the linear farmhouse range were shown to have developed into a regular courtyard plan farmstead (Lake and Edwards 2006, 40) during the 19th century.

3.3 POTENTIAL SIGNIFICANCE

The evaluation has the potential to contribute to the wider understanding of changes to the rural landscape during the post-medieval period, particularly in terms of the development of farming practice, identified as part of Research Topic PMviii within the North East Regional Research Framework (Petts and Gerrard 2006, 187). Any potential evidence relating to post-medieval farming practice would likely be of local importance.

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1 FIELDWORK

The evaluation trenches were laid out in the locations agreed in the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) (Appendix 2) and excavation was undertaken and completed between the 3rd and 4th May 2017. The work was undertaken by Chris Scott and Gillian Scott of Solstice Heritage LLP.

All mechanical excavation (through overburden and non-anthropogenic levelling layers) was undertaken with a toothless ditching bucket under constant supervision of a suitably qualified archaeologist. The trenches consisted of 1no. 50 m x 2 m trench and 2no. 20 x 2 m trenches.

Where archaeological features and deposits were encountered, these were recorded to the standards outlined in the agreed WSI and the relevant CIfA Standard and Guidance. All features and deposits were recorded on *pro forma* record sheets, drawn in plan and section at a suitable scale, and photographed. In addition to any specific features or deposits, a general record of the trench stratigraphy was made on *pro forma* record sheets, a plan and section of each trench was made at a suitable scale and photography was completed. Detailed methodology was outlined in the agreed WSI, and this has been included as Appendix 3 below.

4.2 POST-FIELDWORK

The primary site archive comprises site records and digital photography. This has been used to compile this report, all of which will be deposited with a local repository museum in digital and paper format as the principal record of the evaluation work. The physical archive comprises primary field records (no artefactual material was recovered), and advice will be sought on the detailed requirements for retention and deposition. An OASIS record has been completed for this work, including a digital version of this report, the reference for which is **solstice1-284606**. Deposition of the physical archive will be undertaken following acceptance of the final project report.

4.3 CHRONOLOGY

Where chronological and archaeological periods are referred to in the text, the relevant date ranges are broadly defined in calendar years as follows:

- Palaeolithic (Old Stone Age): 1 million – 12,000 BP (Before present)
- Mesolithic (Middle Stone Age): 10000 – 4000 BC
- Neolithic (New Stone Age): 4000 – 2400 BC
- Chalcolithic/Beaker Period: 2400 – 2000 BC
- Bronze Age: 2000 – 700 BC
- Iron Age: 700 BC – AD 70
- Roman/Romano-British: AD 70 – 410
- Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-Scandinavian: AD 410 – 1066
- Medieval: AD 1066 – 1540
- Post-medieval: AD 1540 – 1750
- Industrial: AD 1750 – 1900
- Modern: AD 1900 – Present

4.4 QUALITY ASSURANCE

Solstice Heritage LLP commits all fieldwork and post-fieldwork assessment, analysis, reporting and dissemination to be undertaken to the standards stipulated by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) as is outlined in Appendix 2 below. The project has been managed by Chris Scott, who is a fully accredited member of the CIfA (MCIfA level).

4.5 ASSUMPTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Data and information obtained and consulted in the compilation of this report has been derived from a number of secondary sources. Where it has not been practicable to verify the accuracy of secondary information, its accuracy has been assumed in good faith. All statements and opinions arising from the works undertaken are provided in good faith and compiled according to professional standards.

No responsibility can be accepted by the author/s of this report for any errors of fact or opinion resulting from data supplied by any third party, or for loss or other consequence arising from decisions or actions made upon the basis of facts or opinions expressed in any such report(s), howsoever such facts and opinions may have been derived.

4.6 COPYRIGHT

Solstice Heritage LLP will retain the copyright of all documentary and photographic material under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act (1988). The County Durham HER will be granted licence to use the report for its purposes, which may include photocopying.



5. RESULTS

5.1 TRENCH 1

Trench 1 was excavated to the east of the barns at Humbleton Farm, roughly aligned south-east to north-west, within an area of pasture. The trench measured 50 m x 2 m in plan (Figure 3). It was excavated through a mid/dark brown clayish loam topsoil (101) with an average thickness of c. 0.15 m. Below the topsoil (101) was a mid-orange/brown sandy clay subsoil (102) with frequent inclusions of small gravel. This subsoil (102) had an average thickness of c. 0.1 m. Underlying the subsoil (102) the natural mid-orange glacial sandy clay/till substrate (103) was encountered. The till was generally encountered at a depth of c. 0.25 m below existing ground level and sloped gently downward from north-west to south-east with the surrounding ground.

Along the entire length of the base of the trench, cut into the natural substrate (303), were parallel plough furrows, aligned roughly east to west, following the direction of the slope. These were tested by excavation and found to represent shallow furrows of c. 1.4 m in width and c. 0.10 m in depth, with an uneven, rounded profile typical of such features. No finds were recovered.

No other archaeological finds or features were present within the trench.



Figure 3 Trench 1 after excavation facing south. Scale 1x1 m, 1x2 m

Figure 4 Plan and Section of Trench 1

5.2 TRENCH 2

Trench 2 was excavated to the north of the barns at Humbleton Farm, roughly aligned east to west, within an area of pasture. The trench measured 20 m x 2 m in plan (Figure 5). It was excavated through a mid/dark brown clayish loam topsoil (201) with an average thickness of c. 0.2 m. Below the topsoil (201) was a mid-orange/brown sandy clay subsoil (202) with frequent inclusions of small gravel. This subsoil (202) had an average thickness of c. 0.19 m. Underlying the subsoil (202) the natural mid-orange glacial sandy clay/till substrate (203) was encountered. The till was generally encountered at a depth of c. 0.37 m below existing ground level and sloped gently downward from south to north with the surrounding ground.

Close to the western extent of the trench, cut into the natural substrate (203) were two parallel plough furrows, aligned roughly north-east to south-west, following the direction of the slope. These were tested by excavation and found to represent shallow furrows of c. 0.5 m in width and c. 0.08 m in depth, with an uneven, rounded profile typical of such features. No finds were recovered.

No other archaeological finds or features were present within the trench.



Figure 5 Trench 2 after excavation, facing east. Scale 1x2 m, 1x1 m

Figure 6 Plan and section of Trenches 2 and 3

5.3 TRENCH 3

Trench 3 was excavated to the west of the barns at Humbleton Farm, roughly aligned south-east to north-west, within an area of pasture. The trench measured 20 m x 2 m in plan (Figure 7). It was excavated through a mid/dark brown clayish loam topsoil (301) with an average thickness of c. 0.2 m. Below the topsoil (301) was a mid-orange/brown sandy clay subsoil (302) with frequent inclusions of small gravel. This subsoil (302) had an average thickness of c. 0.17 m. Underlying the subsoil (302) the natural mid-orange glacial sandy clay/till substrate (303) was encountered. The till was generally encountered at a depth of c. 0.37 m below existing ground level and sloped gently downward from east to west with the surrounding ground.

No archaeological finds or features were present within the trench.



Figure 7 Trench 3 after excavation, facing north. Scale 1x2 m, 1x1 m

6. DISCUSSION

The evaluation characterised the principal underlying substrate as being in line with the extant BGS mapping but did not uncover any significant archaeological finds or features. The observed stratigraphy and deposits are consistent with pasture which has been ploughed in the past, although probably not for a considerable period of time. Unfortunately, it was not possible to date the evidence of ploughing uncovered as a part of the work; however, this most likely relates to post-medieval agricultural practice.

7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1 CONFIDENCE, CONSTRAINTS AND LIMITATIONS

There were no significant constraints on the fieldwork. As such, it is considered that the results of the evaluation should be treated with a relatively high degree of confidence.

7.2 RESEARCH POTENTIAL

No features, deposits or artefacts were recovered with which to address any research agenda questions or priorities.

7.3 POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The results of the evaluation indicate that the potential direct impact of the proposed development on the archaeological resource is likely to be minimal.

7.4 PROJECT ARCHIVE

The physical and digital archive for this project is currently held by Solstice Heritage LLP pending acceptance of the final evaluation report. Following this, the archive will be prepared and deposited in line with the agreed WSI and CifA Standards and Guidance.

8. SOURCES

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APPENDIX 1 – CONTEXT REGISTER

Context Number	Type	Description	Probable Date
101	Deposit	Topsoil in Trench 1	Industrial to Modern
102	Deposit	Disturbed subsoil in Trench 1	Industrial to Modern
103	Deposit	Natural substrate in Trench 1	Glacial
201	Deposit	Topsoil in Trench 2	Industrial to Modern
202	Deposit	Disturbed subsoil in Trench 2	Industrial to Modern
203	Deposit	Natural substrate in Trench 2	Glacial
301	Deposit	Topsoil in Trench 3	Industrial to Modern
302	Deposit	Disturbed subsoil in Trench 3	Industrial to Modern
303	Deposit	Natural substrate in Trench 3	Glacial

Table 6 Context Register

APPENDIX 2 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

