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A63 Selby Bypass
Building Record of Brayton Barff Army Camp 2002

by
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Contents

1	Summary
2	Introduction
3	Site location
4	Objective
5	Methodology
6	Description
7	Acknowledgements
8	References

Figures

1	Location of bypass
2	Bypass and area of army camp
3	Plan of army camp and surrounds
4	Simplified base-plan of buildings recorded

Plates

1	Building A, from the south
2	Building A, the interior from the south
3	Building A, the entrance from the south
4	Building A, window sill from the east
5	Building A, the entrance passage from the north
6	Building A, entrance to north end of the structure from the south
7	Building B, from the south
8	Building C, from the north
9	Building C, the entrance from the east
10	Building F, from the south
11	Building F, wall construction from the east

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1.0: SUMMARY

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit undertook a Level 1 record of buildings for Skanska Ltd at a former army camp near Selby, North Yorkshire (centred on NGR. SE581301). The work was carried out in advance of construction of the A63 Selby Bypass. The army camp, which was constructed on sloping ground, was divided by a central parade ground into two main areas. Fragmentary remains of ten buildings were noted and recorded within the bypass corridor. Those in the northern section were identified as barrack blocks, those in the southern section were less domestic in character.

2.0: INTRODUCTION

Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit undertook a Level 1 record of buildings for Skanska Ltd at a former army camp near Selby, North Yorkshire (centred on NGR SE581301, Figs. 1-2). The work was carried out in advance of construction of the A63 Selby Bypass. The fragmentary remains of ten buildings (A-J) were noted and recorded. Some of these structures were identified as barrack blocks, others were less domestic in character.

Subject to approval from the landowner it is proposed to deposit the project archive in an archive store approved by North Yorkshire County Council.

3.0: SITE LOCATION

The site lies southeast of the village of Thorpe Willoughby and immediately southwest of Brayton Barff (Figs. 1-2). At the time of the survey it was disused and overgrown.

4.0: OBJECTIVE

The objective was to obtain a Level 1 record (RCHME 1996) of the buildings within the complex that fell within the bounds of the bypass in accordance with a Project Design (BUFAU 2001) approved by North Yorkshire County Council.

5.0: METHODOLOGY

The positions of the buildings were mapped using a Sokkisha total station and the structures were otherwise recorded by means of a written description supplemented by

monochrome print and colour slide photography. A selection of the photographs taken has been included in this report (Plates 1-11).

6.0: DESCRIPTION

6.1: General layout (Figs. 3-4)

The site lies on sloping ground which falls away to the north; it is roughly rectangular, and can be conveniently divided, from north to south, into three main zones, corresponding with the three principal levels. The central zone is dominated by a large open asphalted space suggestive of a parade ground. The northern and southern zones each have their own architectural characters which suggest that the two areas were devoted to quite separate functions (Fig. 4).

The site is orientated northnorthwest/ southsoutheast, and the buildings are arranged symmetrically in accordance with the layout, but in order to make the following descriptions more easily understandable, this alignment is rendered as north-south, although the drawings remain labelled with compass north.

6.2: Building A

The walls of this early twentieth century structure survive up to 1.5m high in places (Plate 1). It was built of red brick (English bond), and apparently had flat concrete roofs, fragments of which are evident as tumble within the building (Plate 2); the bricks are 9"x 4¼" x 3", are frogged, and bear the stamp 'Carlton Main', suggesting that they were probably manufactured at Carlton Main Colliery near Barnsley, South Yorkshire. The main body of the building is approximately 12m by 5.5m and is aligned north-south. At the south corner a narrow wing (3.75m by 2m) continues the line of the west wall. This wing is open to the south and appears to have contained the entrance to the building (Plate 3). There is no surviving evidence for fenestration on the east side where the walls have been reduced to no more than 1m in height, but the west wall retains the sills of two windows which slope downwards to the interior (Plate 4). These are both 1.22m (4 feet) wide and 1.5m above the existing ground level on the west side.

Internally, the walls are cement rendered. An entrance passage contained within the wing leads into the main building. Immediately inside the wing, the passage is flanked by a pair of buttress-like features (Plate 3); the fronts of these slope backwards from the floor, whereas the backs are perpendicular. There is another pair at the end of the passage (Plate 5), and further examples inside the main structure, and they appear to indicate entrances. The line of the entrance passage continues through the building, being demarcated on the east by the edge of a long, rectangular, table-like structure (Plate 2), evidently a working surface of some kind. At its north end a brick partition wall extends towards the north, so lengthening the line of the west passage. To the east, two walls extend towards the east and then return to the north and south respectively, and suggest a passageway on the east side as well. 'Buttress' features at the north ends of these two corridors (Plate 6), co-

terminus with the north end of the workbench suggest entrances into the north end of the building.

6.3: Building B

Building B (Plate 7) now has the appearance of an isolated wall though closer examination shows that it was originally slightly more complex. Probably early twentieth century, it is built of red bricks (English bond), the bricks being $8\frac{3}{4}'' \times 2\frac{3}{4}'' \times 4''$, frogged, and stamped 'Yorkshire Brick C. Castleford'. The wall is approximately 20m long and is aligned north-south. At the north end, attached to the west side, are the remains of a small building. A surviving door post (on the east side) indicates that it was entered from the south. Immediately to the south of the entrance is a buttress. A similar arrangement appears to have existed at the south end of the wall, though the structural remains are now less evident. There are now no indications of function though the terminal buildings or rooms would each have been an appropriate size to have accommodated a lavatory.

6.4: Building C

This structure (Plate 8) lies on the edge of the bypass route and to the west of Building A. It was built, probably in the early to mid-twentieth century, of frogged red bricks (English bond) $9'' \times 4\frac{1}{4}'' \times 3''$. However, no manufacturer's stamp was visible at the time of the survey. Building C is aligned north-south, and facing east. The north end, where the walls survive up to 1m in height, is well defined, though other parts are less in evidence. On the east side, a deliberately executed break in the brick wall appears to indicate an entrance (Plate 9). There is no trace of this eastern wall continuing to the south, but a 4-foot wide concrete path leads towards the entrance and extends beyond the threshold into the building itself. This suggests an opening of at least the same width. This path was bounded to the east by a brick wall (foundations only) which extends along much of the length of the building. A little towards the north of the path this wall appears to have returned to the west, but there are no indications of this on the east wall of the main building. A conclusion that may be drawn, perhaps, is that there was an outer entrance here, giving access from the north to an outer enclosure on the east side of the building proper.

At the south end of Building C, a long wing extends at right angles from the east side to form an L-shaped plan with the main block. This appears to have housed a 6-foot wide entrance passage. The construction method is distinctive, the two walls comprising a series of concrete block pillars, the bay spaces between them being infilled with red brick. This form of construction is encountered elsewhere in the complex (Buildings E-J below).

6.5: Building D

Lying to the north of Building C only a corner of this structure survives, at foundation level. Its fragmentary condition means that little can be said about it other than it having been at least partially brick built.

6.6: Buildings E-J

At the north end of the site is a series of early to mid-twentieth century buildings on the same alignment as Buildings A-D, and uniform to a considerable degree in detail and layout (Plate 10). The walls survive to a height of no more than 0.5m but were built of concrete block pillars (Plate 11), alternately 9" and 14" wide. The resultant bays were infilled with red bricks (stretcher bond), which measure 9"x 4¼"x3". Fragments of corrugated iron hint at the character of the roofing material. Each building is approximately 23m (70 feet) x 7m (23 feet) externally, and divided into twelve 5 foot bays by the concrete pillars. They are spaced 9.20m apart.

At least four of these buildings lie in a row along the northern edge of the site; they are labelled (from west to east) buildings E-H. Buildings F and G were connected at their south ends by a corridor. A second tier of at least two buildings labelled (from west to east) I and J lies 35 feet towards the south. These too are 9.20m apart. Building I is in line with Building F, and Building J with Building G. At the northwest corner of Building J another corridor led west.

The simple plan, division into bays, the uniformity of the buildings and their regular layout suggest that Buildings E to J may have been built as barrack blocks.

Recording of other buildings within the complex, outside the bypass corridor, was outside the scope of this work.

7.0: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The fieldwork was sponsored by Skanska Ltd. Glynn Barrett and Josh Williams conducted the total station survey assisted by Malcolm Hislop, who also carried out the written and photographic recording and wrote this report. The project was managed for BUFAU by Alex Jones, who also edited the report. Nigel Dodds prepared the illustrations.

8.0: REFERENCES

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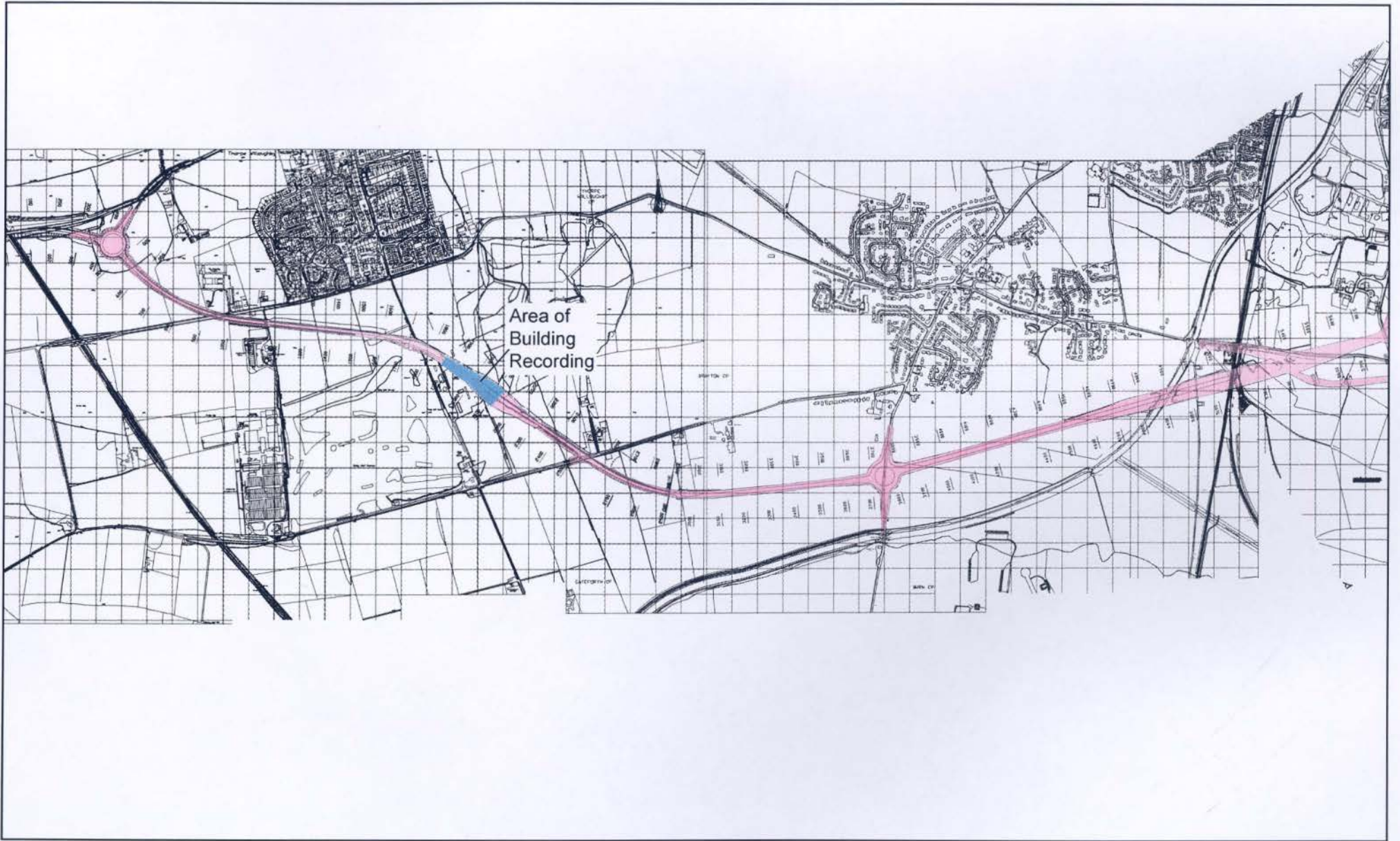


Fig.2



Fig.3



Plate 1



Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11