

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD
SOWERBY 33KV CABLE DIVERSION
RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING

Site name: Sowerby 33kv Cable Diversion **Parish:** Sowerby

District: Hambleton **County:** North Yorkshire

Grid reference: SE 4266 8053 **Development:** Undergrounding of overhead powerline

Client: Northern Power Grid **Contractor:** Balfour Beatty Utilities Solutions Ltd

Monitoring Archaeologist: Kevin Collins **NAA Project Manager:** Oliver Cooper

NAA Project number: 1510 **Site code:** SCT19 **Dates of fieldwork:** 16/4/19 to 18/4/19

NAA report number: 19/46 **Report date:** 18/04/19.

Introduction

Archaeological monitoring was undertaken during the diversion of a power line associated with the new Sowerby Sports Village development. The development site was located at the southern side of Sowerby, near Thirsk, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). The original power line running overhead across the site was to be undergrounded to avoid causing an obstruction. This required a trench excavating over a distance of 160m (between SE 42661 80534 and SE 42839 80460).

Reasons for watching brief

Archaeological monitoring was requested by the North Yorkshire County Council Principal Archaeologist to establish the presence or absence of any archaeological remains within the excavated area and to record any such remains. The fields surrounding the development area were known to contain extensive cropmarks of trackways, field boundaries and enclosures of later prehistoric to Roman date (Peter Rowe, pers. comm.). Several are visible on the latest Google Earth images. The NYCC archaeologist also advised that excavation of the area to the south of the existing sub-station recorded a ring ditch, a number of potential cremations and a possible grave, all likely to be Bronze Age in date.

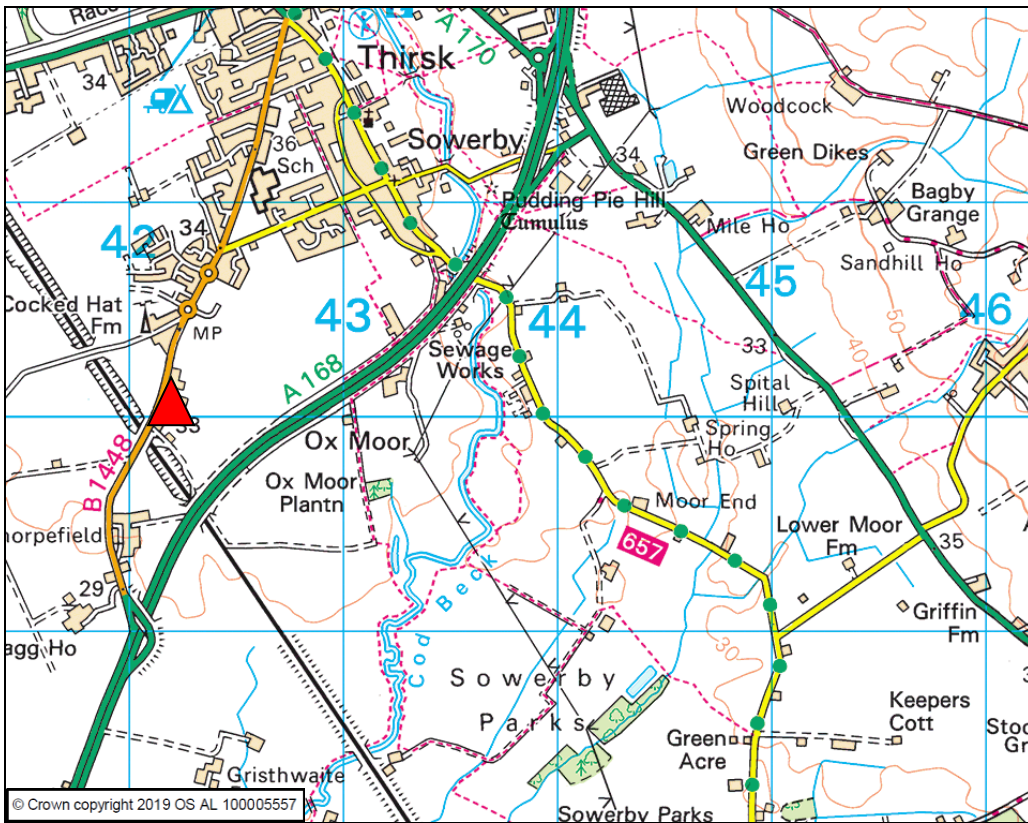


Figure 1. Site location

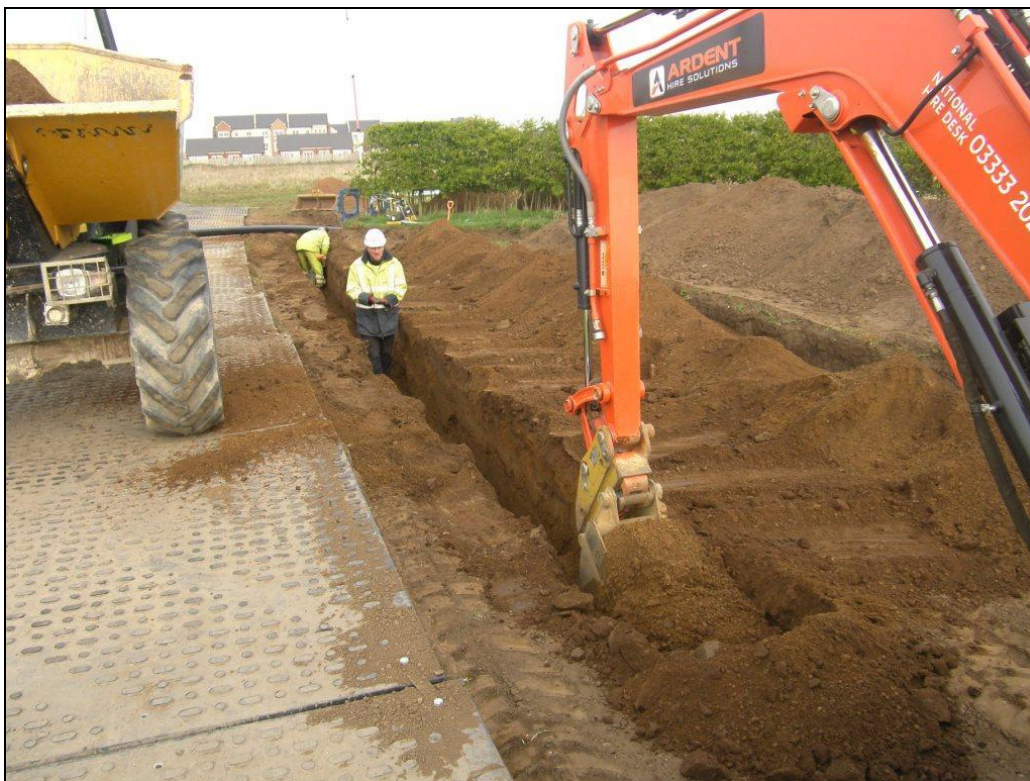


Plate 1. Excavation of cable trench

Results

Prior to the attendance of the archaeologist, a temporary trackway had been laid across the field, and the topsoil stripped off over an area measuring 3.8m wide, centred on the route of the cable trench. Vehicles were not allowed on site until the archaeologist had visited and recorded the stripped surface. The excavation of the cable trench, 0.6m wide and 0.9m deep, was then monitored by the archaeologist. Excavations were undertaken by a small 360° excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

The topsoil was up to 0.3m deep, and overlay a reddish-brown subsoil, presumably a relict ploughsoil, up to 0.2m deep. Only one archaeological feature was identified, a plough furrow (01) aligned north-east to south-west, up to 3.5m wide and 0.18m deep. This was filled by a dark reddish brown silty sand (02) which produced a single sherd of pottery (XXXXX). The furrow fill was almost indistinguishable from the subsoil except that it dried out more slowly in the hot weather.

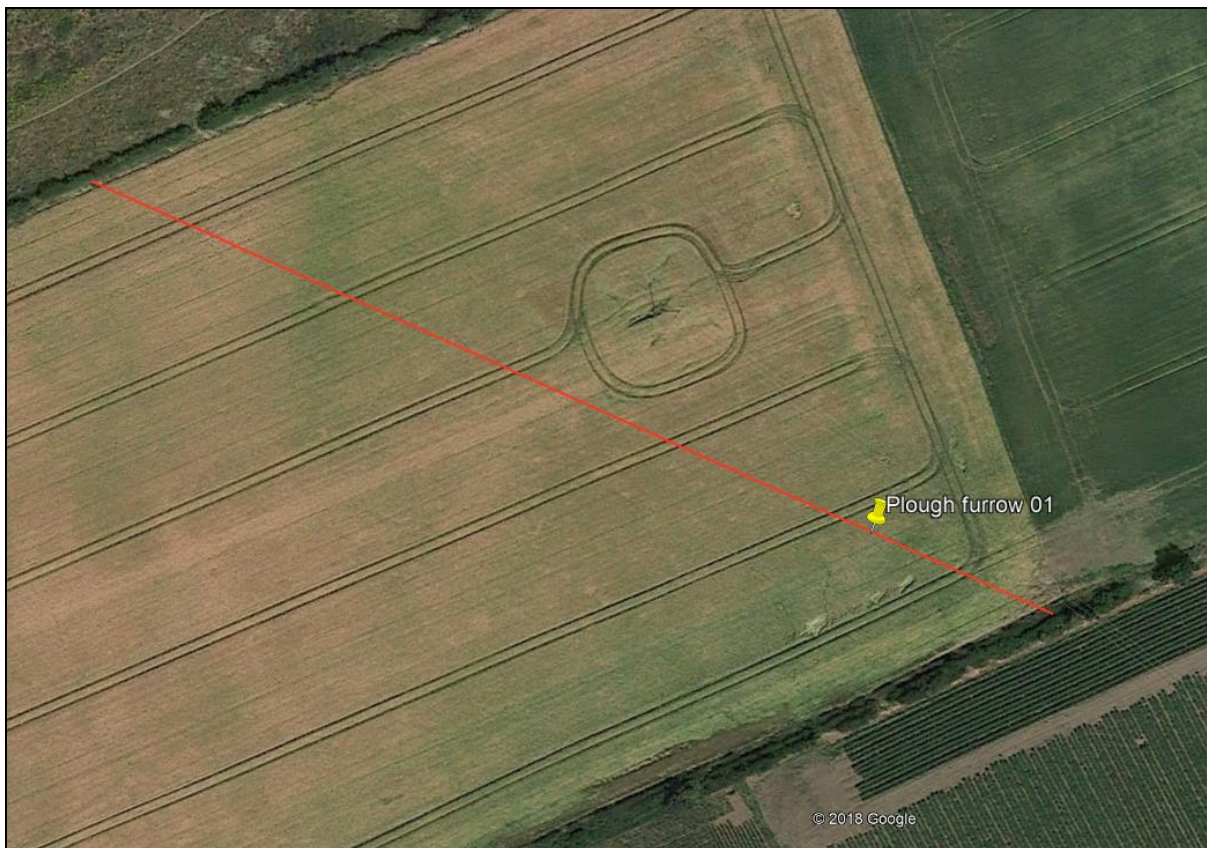


Figure 2. Cable trench location overlain on Google Earth image, showing location of plough furrow 01, and linear cropmark to north © 2019 Google



Plate 2. Medieval plough furrow (01) showing similarity between fill (02) and subsoil

Pottery spot date (Charlotte Britton)

One sherd of pottery was recovered from the 2019 excavations at Sowerby Cable. Recovered from context 2, the pottery dated to the late medieval period (13th – 15th century) and is classified as an oxidised sandy ware, with a reduced inside margin. The sherd displayed a light green glaze on the outside and came from a hollow ware utilitarian vessel, such as a large jar or jug. The pottery was British in origin and likely produced within the local region.

Discussion

The presence of ridge and furrow within the vicinity is not unexpected given that a settlement at Sowerby was recorded in the Domesday survey. The single furrow identified was only distinguished from the surrounding subsoil by its greater moisture retention, and it is likely that much of the observed subsoil comprised the remains of further furrows, although these did not appear in the cable trench. The furrow was perpendicular to the route of the A19 – which itself follows a Roman road – and the alignment has been shared by the 19th-century enclosure boundaries, and the modern ploughing regime, indicating the longevity of field alignment.

No further work is considered necessary for the site record, which should be archived internally at NAA. The potsherd has little further potential and will be discarded.