

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATES LTD

The Manor, Bowes, County Durham

NEGATIVE WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site name: The Manor, Bowes.

Grid reference: NY 9936 1350

District: Barnard Castle

County: Durham

Administrative authority: Durham County Council

Development: Residential

Client: Mr Stuart Heseltine

Planning application reference: 6/2010/0160/DM

Site supervisor: Aina Pettersen

Project manager: Paul G Johnson

Date(s): 18th April and 5th May 2011

NAA project number: 1011

Site code: N/A

NAA report number: NAA 11/48

Reasons for watching brief

The watching brief was carried out in connection with groundworks associated with the installation of a water pipe and an electricity cable at The Manor, County Durham as part of a housing development at the site. The monitoring was required in order to fulfil a condition attached to planning permission granted for this small development, comprising the construction of a single house, at the site. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance to a Method Statement approved by Lee McFarlane, Assistant Archaeological Officer, Durham County Council.

The site lay within an area identified as having archaeological potential, east of the Scheduled Monument of Bowes Castle and the Roman Fort of *Lavatrae*, a detailed account of which is included in a desk-based assessment produced for a previous programme of evaluation work carried out on the property. This was undertaken as part of the mitigation works required prior to the construction of a new house to the east of Bowes Manor (ASUD Report 2289). Archaeological remains of medieval and Roman date were identified during groundworks undertaken as part of that evaluation

Results (Plate 1 and 2)

The groundworks associated with this element of the development at Bowes Manor comprised the excavation of a single trench 0.75m deep and 0.30m wide in which both services were laid, running for approximately 75m between the new house and

the perimeter of the grounds of the manor, and subsequently through a section of public highway to the north. The southernmost element of the trench within the grounds of the manor crossed a grassed area fronting the new house, the northernmost section was situated within an area of block paving, comprising a driveway, of recent origin. To the north of the grounds of the manor, the trench turned eastwards, running underneath a modern paved footpath for approximately 45m, before crossing the main road to intercept an existing electricity supply.

All excavations were carried out by a small back-acting excavator operating under constant archaeological supervision.

Within the curtilage of the manor, the trench was not excavated to a depth where natural subsoil was encountered in any area. The trench within the grassed area was cut through recently disturbed topsoil containing pieces of plastic debris. No other finds or archaeological features or deposits were encountered within this area.

The trench within the area of modern block paving was cut entirely through a 0.45m deep deposit of dark grey soil, probably a deposit of reworked topsoil, which in turn was sealed by a 0.30m deep deposit of gravel acting as a sub-base for the present block paving. No finds, other than fragments of machine-made brick were encountered within the excavated soils, perhaps suggesting this deposit was a later import. Sealed directly below the reworked topsoil were the remains of a stone surface comprising unworn, squared, sandstone blocks, its upper surface being situated at approximately 0.75m BGL. The alignment of the stones comprising this surface was almost parallel to the individual blocks of the present driveway, so far as could be reasonably ascertained from the inspection of the base of a trench that was only 0.30m wide. The individual stones of the surface were not clay or mortar bonded, a deposit essentially similar to that which sealed them having worked its way between the joints of the individual blocks. As this surface was not to be disturbed by the development, it was cleaned, photographed and described but otherwise left undisturbed, thus effecting its preservation *in situ*. However, where individual stones had been accidentally disturbed during groundworks, they were found to be bedded on a mixed deposit of slightly gritty, clayey topsoil, with no further stonework beneath.

No features or deposits of archaeological interest were found during the watching brief undertaken on the groundworks within the pavement and carriageway to the north of The Manor. The pipe trench was not excavated to a depth where natural subsoil was encountered, all of the deposits cut by the trench comprised recently disturbed layers of modern material or roadway make-up deposits. No finds of any antiquity were revealed by these groundworks.

Conclusion

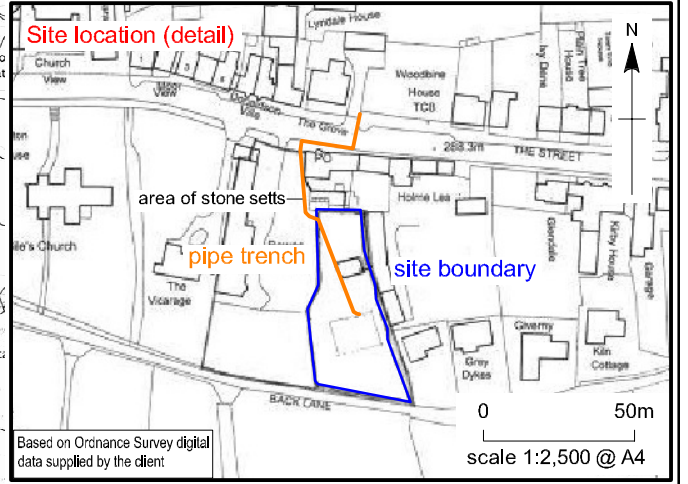
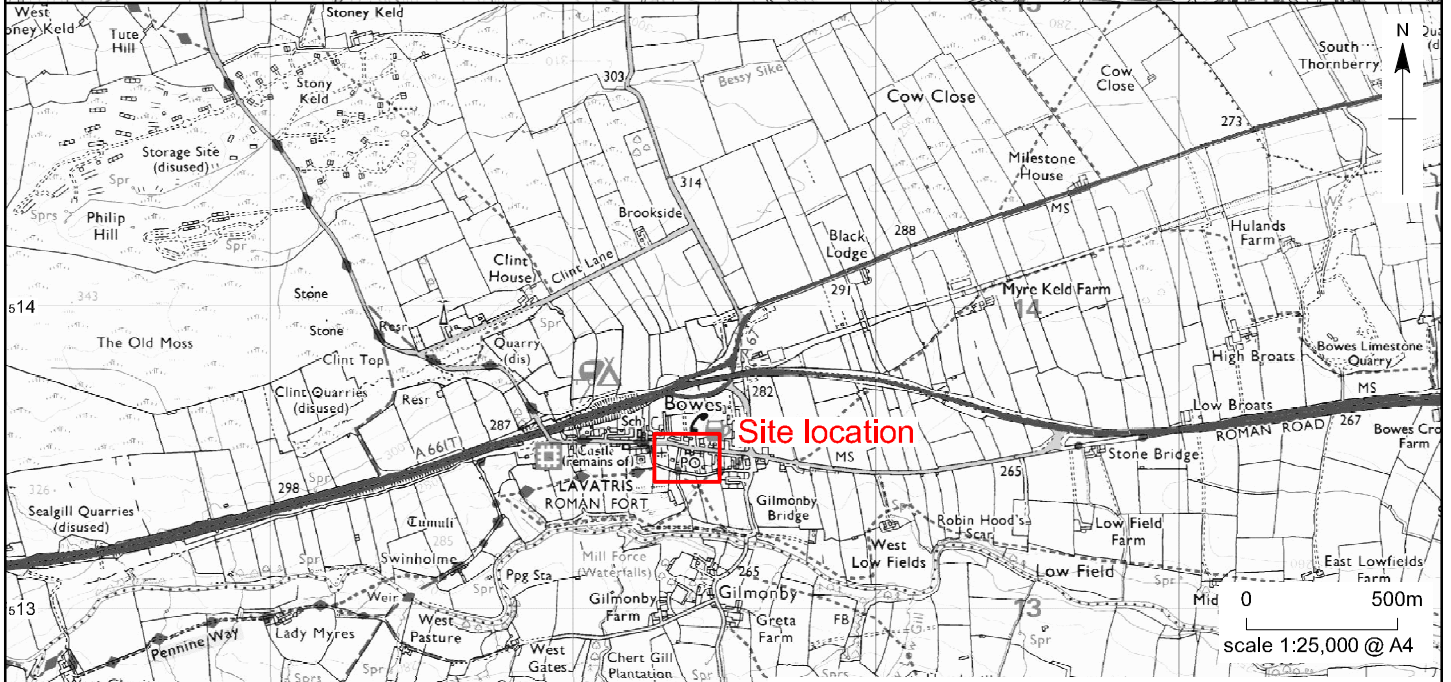
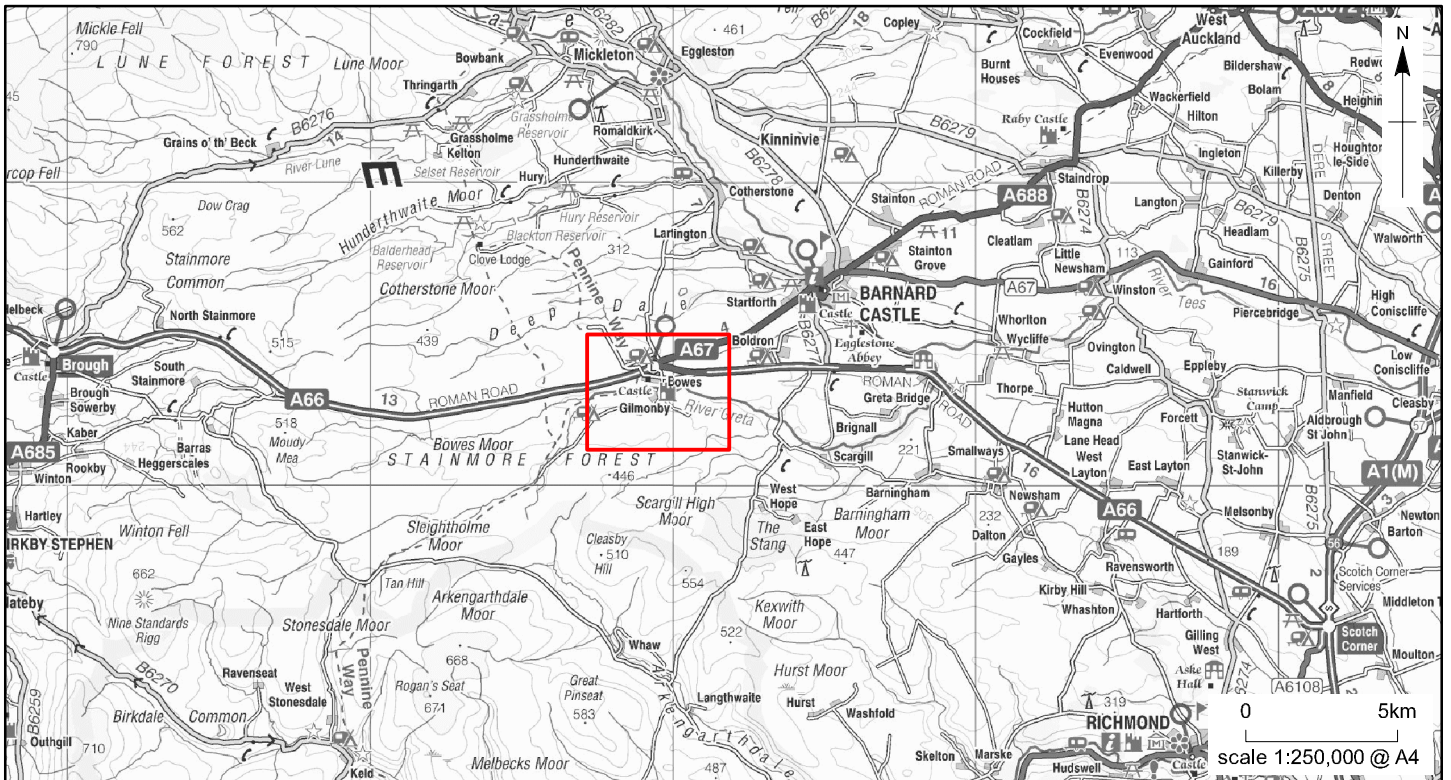
The service trench as excavated both within and outside of the curtilage of Bowes Manor did not identify any archaeological features or deposits that could be attributed to the Roman or medieval periods. The only surface that was identified was sealed by a recent deposit of what appears to have been imported topsoil, probably employed for ground-raising purposes. Given the lack of any intervening deposits attributable to the Roman, medieval or post-medieval periods between the stone surface and the topsoil,

it would not be unreasonable to posit a post-medieval or modern date for this surface. However, because it was preserved in situ, this could not be unequivocally proven. In support of this posited date, some the historic mapping presented in the ASUD report (ibid) indicates the former presence of a range of buildings within this part of the manor grounds. These appear to have been arranged in a manner that was perpendicular to the surviving manor building. It would seem likely that these buildings may have been equipped with associated yards or driveways, and the alignment of the stone surface of identified as a result of this work suggests that it was laid in a similar orientation to the present drive surface at the site. This alignment, in turn, reflects the arrangement of both the manor and its former associated range. The lack of finds other than machine-made brick fragments from the only soil deposit identified during the course of this work is at odds with the finds retrieved from topsoil deposits during the course of the earlier evaluation to the south-east. These included pottery dated from the Roman period through to the post-medieval period again supporting a late date for the surface identified here.

Archive deposition: The site records will be archived internally.

References

- NAA (Northern Archaeological Associates Ltd) (2011) *The Manor, Bowes, County Durham. Archaeological Watching Brief Methods Statement*
- ASUD (Archaeological Services of Durham University) (2009) *The Bowes Manor, Bowes, County Durham. Archaeological Evaluation (and rapid desk based assessment) Report. ASUD Report 2289*



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The Manor, Bowes: site location

Figure 1



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*The Manor, Bowes: stone surface in
base of pipe trench*

Plate 1



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The Manor, Bowes: trench section through road

Plate 2