



Land at Flockrake Noddle Broxa Forest

Archaeological Watching Brief Report

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Purpose of document

This document has been prepared as an Archaeological Watching Brief Report on behalf of Forestry England, in association with ground works at New Road, Flockrake Noddle in Broxa Forest comprising construction of an access road and turning point. The purpose of this document is to provide an outline of the planned works, the aims and objectives of the watching brief, and the methodology employed. The expected impact and mitigation on an area of the site which forms part of a Scheduled Ancient Monument is also discussed. DigVentures accepts no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the Client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

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Project summary

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Executive summary

DigVentures Ltd was appointed by Forestry England to undertake an archaeological watching brief at land east of Flockrake Noddle, Broxa Forest, North Yorkshire on 11th – 12th April 2022. Under the management of a local construction sub-contractor, groundworks were undertaken involving topsoil stripping, clearance, demarcation of the road and turning point footprint before the excavation of the 75m road. An archaeological watching brief was advised for any ground disturbance works associated with the construction of a access road. All works were undertaken according to specifications outlined in a Written Scheme of Investigation provided by DigVentures (Teale, 2022).

Results Summary

Monitoring of the groundworks revealed no significant archaeological finds or features.

Road construction layers were observed containing no finds. The site yielded a common stratigraphic sequence of topsoil, subsoil and the natural horizon, which was encountered at a maximum depth of 0.40m. Two finds, a modern metal water bottle and one beer glass were found within the topsoil, these were not retained. No archaeological features were identified linked to the prehistoric Bronze Age landscape.

The absence of any significant archaeological features may be because of the limited extent of the excavations. No evidence of the prehistoric monuments or associated activity was encountered, although due to the limited extent of the excavations it does not discount the possibility that features associated with medieval occupation are located in the area. Subject to approval by Forestry England (FE) and the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNP), no further works are recommended.



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1 INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

1.1 Project background

- 1.1.1 DigVentures has been appointed by Forestry England (hereafter “the Client”) to undertake an archaeological watching brief at Broxa Forest, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 97830 92760; hereafter “the site”).
- 1.1.2 The Client undertook construction of a new 75m access road and turning point from the public highway on a site known as Flockrake Noddle in Broxa Forest (Figure 1 - 3). The site is located between two Scheduled Monuments and does not require Scheduled Monument Consent; however due to the archaeological potential of the site, an archaeological watching brief was required during any footprint clearance and excavation works at request of the North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMPA).
- 1.1.3 No previous archaeological investigations have taken place on the site. The first stage of the proposed works involved clearance and demarcation of the road and turning point footprint, as well as clearance of the verge access and afforested area in between the Scheduled Monuments. This report provides a description of the methods employed for an archaeological watching brief undertaken during the planned works across the site. The work was undertaken under the guidance of the NYMPA Archaeologist Nick Mason, and carried out in accordance with the relevant Standards and guidance of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA 2014).

1.2 Scope of document

- 1.2.1 This report summarises the aims and objectives of the archaeological watching brief and sets out the strategy and methodology by which the fieldwork was delivered and presents the findings of the investigation. It adheres to the methods agreed in advance by the Client and NYMPA as outlined in the approved Written Scheme of Investigation (Teal 2022). In format and content, it conforms with current best practice and to the guidance outlined the Management of Archaeological Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England 2015a), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists’ Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Brief (2014).

1.3 Dissemination

- 1.3.1 Copies of this report have been distributed to the client and the North Yorkshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER), and a digital copy was uploaded to the OASIS (digventu1-507000).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Site location, geology and background

- 2.1.1 The site was located at NGR SE 97830 92760, to the north of Reasty Hill / Swang Road in the south-east of the North York Moors National Park approximately 5 miles from Scarborough (Figure 1). The site comprises of mixed woodland and scrub, with open agricultural land to the south. The site sat between Scheduled Monument 1019627 (The Thieves’ Dikes: prehistoric linear boundaries and associated features) and Scheduled Monument 1019625 (Round Barrow on Flockrake Noddle). The works were located between the two scheduled monuments, and were designed to avoid causing any disturbance to them.
- 2.1.2 The site sat at approximately 187m above Ordnance Datum (aOD), sloping gently down towards the north-east. The bedrock of the site was shown as sandstone of the Jurassic Lower Calcareous Grit Formation, with no superficial deposits recorded (British Geological Survey, 2022).



- 2.1.3 The site has shown little change throughout historical mapping sources, having formed part of the 'Suffield Moor' plantation as early as 1885 (National Library of Scotland, 2022).

2.2 Historic Background

- 2.2.1 To the west of the site was SM 1019627 / HER No.6411 - The Thieves' Dikes: prehistoric linear boundaries and associated features (SE 97126 93307, SE 97232 92942, SE 97619 92662, and SE 97791 92877). The listing describes the site as *"five prehistoric linear boundaries situated in Broxa Forest, on a level plateau at the top of the eastern scarp edge of the Hackness Hills. Also included are a round barrow, a rare example of a surviving square barrow and an area of intersecting hollow ways adjacent to the linear boundaries"* (Historic England, 2022). The listing and NYMNPAs HER record also note that several of the earthworks have been levelled for field entranceways and road construction, suggesting the possibility of below ground remains to be present outside of the scheduling areas even where earthworks are not.
- 2.2.2 To the east of the site was SM 1019625 - Round barrow on Flockrake Noddle, 550m SSW of Silpho Brow Farm (SE 97930 92783). The Historic England list entry describes the site as *"a round barrow situated in a prominent position towards the top of the eastern scarp edge of the Hackness Hills. The barrow has an earth and stone mound which stands up to 1m high and has a maximum diameter of 13m. In the centre of the mound there was a slight hollow which was the result of partial excavation in the past. The mound was originally surrounded by a ditch up to 2m wide but this has become infilled over the years by soil slipping from the mound so that it is no longer visible as an earthwork. The barrow lies in an area where there are many other prehistoric burial monuments"* (ibid). Whilst the listing notes that the monument boundary includes a 2m boundary around the archaeological features, there remains the possibility for archaeological features to continue beyond this supposed boundary.
- 2.2.3 Immediately opposite the site across the road lies HER No.78 – Barrow cemetery at Silpho Brown and Suffield Moor. The HER record describes *"a group of fourteen Bronze Age round barrows (continuing with another twenty in the area to the north west, as record HER 79). Some survive as earthworks but many have suffered reduction as a result of deep ploughing and forestry activity"*. There was a high possibility that the burials observed as part of this barrow cemetery might have been present within the site.
- 2.2.4 Post-medieval field systems and ridge and furrow were present immediately north of the site beyond the woodland (HER No.22322) suggested a low to moderate potential for medieval remains on the site.
- 2.2.5 A WWII weapons pit was located to the west of the site at the south of Noddle End, which was originally identified from earthworks present on air photographs (HER No.22319). WWII bomb craters were also present to the east of the site (HER No.22315).
- 2.2.6 No previous investigation has been recorded for the site.

2.3 Planning and Research Framework

- 2.3.1 The watching brief at Flockrake Noddle, Broxa Forest held some potential to address several of the research themes and questions posed by North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPAs), as well as those raised more recently as a result of developer-led archaeology. Investigation had the potential to address some of the following themes:
- Chronology - establishing chronologies for human activity in the past remains one of the most critical aspects of archaeological research.



- Burial features – the evidence for rare examples of round barrow in near vicinity are present and suggest that there was the possibility of below ground remains to be present outside of the scheduling areas even where earthworks are not.
- A better understanding of the development of Bronze Age barrows surrounding the site. This includes research into the linear boundaries situated in Broxa Forest, round barrows, burial practices and survival of humans remains within the barrows construction.

2.3.2 Whilst the watching brief at the field to the east of Flockrake Noddle was limited in its scope, there was still potential that observations made and archaeology recorded could have contributed some information to our understanding of the rich prehistoric Bronze Age landscape in the immediate vicinity should it have extended into archaeological horizons.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Watching brief

3.1.1 The principal aim of the watching brief was to provide further information concerning the presence/absence, date, nature and extent of any buried archaeological remains and to investigate and record any archaeological remains within the area of the groundworks. This included:

- Verifying the archaeological potential of the site.
- Identifying the potential for remains not anticipated by previous research or record.

3.1.2 The watching brief comprised the following:

- Monitoring of clearance works in the footprint of the new road
- Demarcation of the scheduled monuments adjacent to site
- Observation of civil engineering works associated with the road construction
- A digital and photographic record of any archaeological features that may be revealed during the excavations
- Preparation of a summary report.

3.1.3 If archaeological remains were uncovered that relate to the Bronze Age funerary monuments located next to the site, their investigation and understanding were to contribute to the aims and objectives of the Yorkshire Archaeological Research Framework (2007).

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1.1 The watching brief was undertaken on 11th - 12th April 2022 by Indie Jago on behalf of DigVentures. An archaeological presence was maintained during all groundwork on the Site. All works were undertaken in accordance with the standards set out within the WSI provided by DigVentures and the requirements of NYMNPA (Teale 2022). The Client provided reasonable access in order that all features and deposits revealed during groundwork could be fully investigated and recorded appropriately.

4.1.2 Works comprising topsoil stripping and the terracing of steeply sloping land to the level necessary for the construction of wall foundations was carried out using a mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision.

4.1.3 All work was completed under strict archaeological observation, with regular stops to enable examination of the exposed deposits. The methodology outlined in the WSI (Teale, 2022) was



designed to allow a sufficient sample of each feature type / deposit to be examined in order to establish the nature, extent and condition of the archaeological remains.

- 4.1.4 All recording was undertaken using DigVentures recording system, supported by a digital photographic record conforming to standards outlined by Historic England (2015b).

5 RESULTS

- 5.1.1 Excavation revealed a common stratigraphic sequence (Appendix 1) consisting of a natural geology (1003), road construction layers (1002) and topsoil (1001) (Figures 2 and 3). The area of groundworks measured to a maximum of 75m in length, 5m in width and between 0.38m and 0.40m in depth, where the natural horizon was encountered with no archaeological evidence observed. The natural was sandy clay which varied in colour across site being a light pinkish yellow in the south west and a light orange yellow in the north east, excavated to a maximum thickness of 0.32m. Very frequent sandstone pieces and occasional iron stone were observed within the natural. Cut through the natural were tree bowls roughly forming lines running northeast- southwest across site, resulting from modern forestry planting. Above the natural were three layers of road construction deposits, forming the modern tarmac road, (1002), which was the limit of excavation at the point where excavations met the existing road, a maximum depth of 0.7m. The road foundations were a light orangey brown clay sand with frequent sandstone pieces, a sandstone rubble layer and finally a light grey sand. The topsoil or forest soils, (1001) was a moderate mid grey sandy silt with rooting from the tree cover and rare large sub-angular stones, 0.47m at its maximum observed thickness.

5.2 Archaeological finds

- 5.2.1 A small quantity of finds material was recovered from the topsoil layer (1001), a modern water bottle and one beer glass were discovered. The finds confirm the relatively modern date of the topsoil, subsoil and rubble layers and do not contribute further to the research aims and objectives identified. The finds were observed on site and not retained.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

- 6.1.1 This report constitutes compliance with NYMNPA recommendations for archaeological observation during groundworks on land to the east of Flockrake Noddle, Broxa Forest, consisting of topsoil stripping and the terracing of steeply sloping land to the level necessary for the construction of wall foundations for a new access and turning point.
- 6.1.2 Monitoring of the groundworks revealed no significant archaeological finds or features. Layers of road construction were revealed and the topsoil contained modern finds such as a modern metal water bottle. This confirms that the deposits excavated were relatively modern in date. No archaeological remains were identified linked to the Bronze barrows or associated occupation.
- 6.1.3 The absence of any significant archaeological features may be because of the limited extent of the excavations themselves. No evidence of the prehistoric monuments or associated activity was encountered, although due to the limited extent of the excavations it does not discount the possibility that features associated with prehistoric occupation are located in the area. Subject to approval by Forestry England and the North York Moors National Park Authority, no further works are recommended.



7 RECOMMENDATION AND ARCHIVE

7.1 Preparation and deposition

- 7.1.1 As no significant finds or features from archaeological deposits were observed during the watching brief, no physical archive was produced. The project archive, consisting of this report and associated digitised records, will be uploaded to OASIS. A digital and hard copy of this report has been sent to the Client and the NYCC HER. This report will be appended to the OASIS record. Subject to approval by North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNP), given the absence of archaeological remains, no further works are recommended.

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Figure 1: Site location



Figure 2: Excavation area and section locations

Figure 3: Photos of the excavation areas

APPENDIX 1 - CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Table 1: Contexts

Context	Description	Interpretation/ Process of deposition	Dimensions (m)	
1001	Moderate, mid greyish brown sandy silt with many from forest and rare large sub-angular stone. Clear horizon clarity: one modern metal water bottle and one beer glass - not retained.	Topsoil	Length	75m
			Width	5m
			Thickness	0.23-0.30
1002	Compact light orangy brown clayey sand with frequent sandstone pieces and a clear horizon. Three layers a light greyish sand- then a sandstone rubble layer then an orangey clayey sand layer.	Road Construction deposits (modern tarmac road)	Length	75m
			Width	0.80m
			Thickness	0.40m
1003	Compact towards SW of area it's a light pinkish yellow towards the NE it is a light orangey yellow sandy clay with very frequent sandstone pieces and occasional iron stone. Clear horizon clarity and towards NE end of the area the natural is becoming more stoney.	Natural - with tree bowls , rooting present. These treebowls roughly form lines going NE-SW across area.	Length	75m
			Width	5m

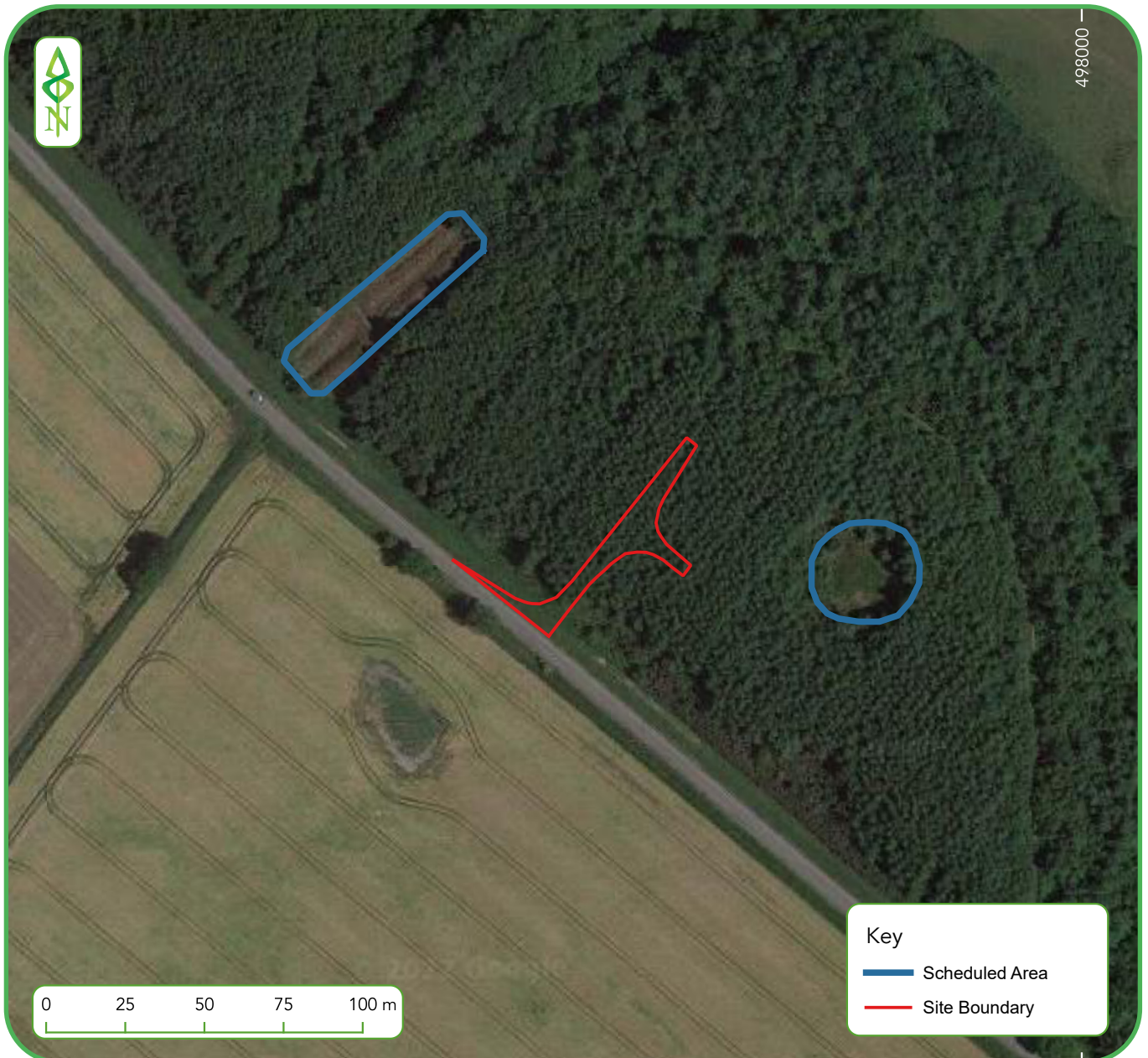
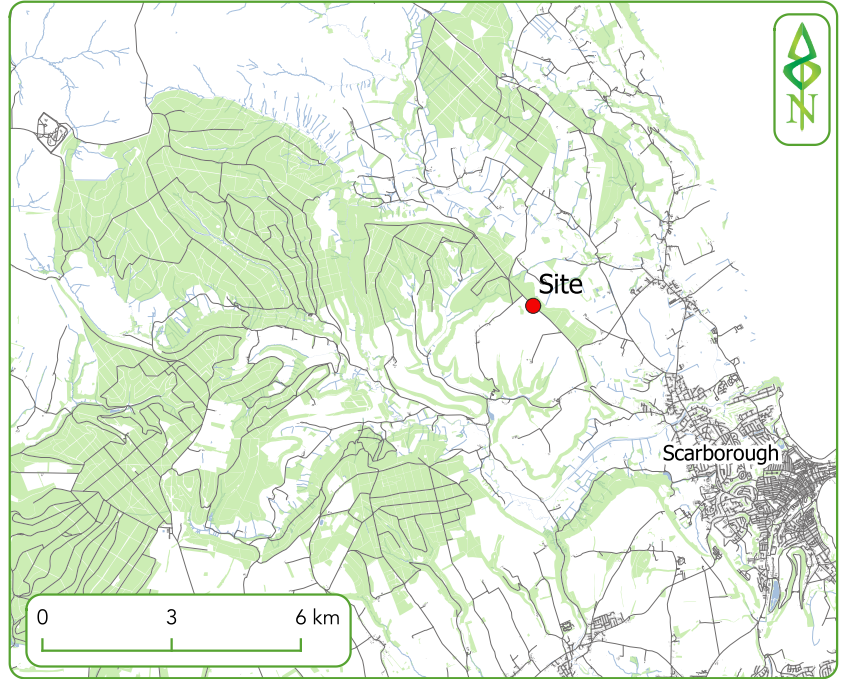


Figure 1. Site location



Figure 2. Excavation area and section locations



Section 01, section of road excavation, forest soils facing SW



Plan view of road facing SW



Plan view of road facing NE



Section 02, section in existing modern road layers, facing NE



Plan view of slip road facing NW



Plan view of road turning area, facing North

Figure 3. Photos of the monitored area for the road.