


Old Post Office, Askham Richard

Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief



Site	Old Post Office Main Street Askham Richard York YO23 3PT		
Site Code	AR-OPO19		
County	York City		
Latitude Longitude Grid Reference	(53.924383, -1.1849222) SE 53623 47891	X(Easting) Y(Northing) GPS Coordinates Altitude	453623 44789 53° 55' 27.6672" N1° 11' 5.6652" W 28m AOD
Planning Reference	18/01791/FUL		
Development	Erection of building to rear forming ancillary residential and home office accommodation following the demolition of existing outbuilding		
Text and Images Watching Brief	D. Signorelli G. Signorelli G. Signorelli and Paul Durdin		
Date of Issue	July 2019		
Site Dates	16th-17th April 2019		
Client	Mr. B. Pickering		

Summary

The archaeological watching brief involved the monitoring of the ground reduction by approximately 0.70m in depth. The ground was reduced to accommodate structural work related to the erection of a new extension located at the rear of the Old Post Office house.

The area impacted by the foundations of the new extensions consisted of approximately 50² m. Layers (1), (2) and (3) were removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a tooth less bucket. These made up ground (1) and garden layers (2) and (3) that were 0.80m, in depth sealed archaeological deposits. The base of the earliest archaeological Feature (6) was 1.25m below ground level.

The archaeology encountered consisted of: 20th century made up ground, associated with the erection of the former extension and parking area (Context (1)), garden / agricultural layers (Contexts (2) and (3)). These three contexts sealed a rubble layer (4) most likely associated with a 18th-19th century outbuilding, a northwest to southeast aligned ditch Feature [6], the remains of an 18th century outbuilding foundation wall (Context (8)) and associated 19th century clay pipe drain (Context (9)).

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Introduction

This report summarises the results of a recent archaeological watching brief that was carried out between the 16th-17th April at The Old Post Office, Askham Richard, York (Figure 1).

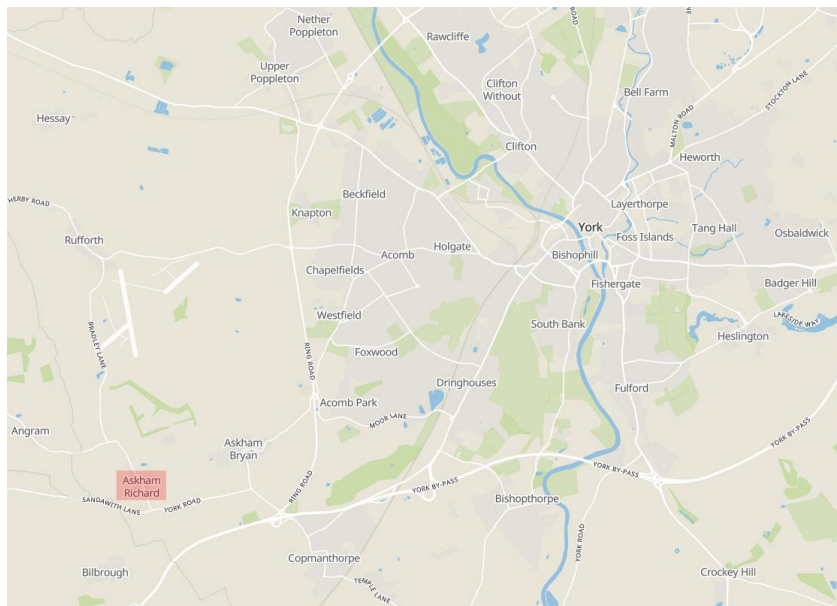


Figure 1: The application site and its location (OS Map.co)

This archaeological watching brief was undertaken to comply with the Approval of Householder Planning Permission Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Planning Condition 4, as granted by the City of York Council (18/10/18) for application (18/01791/FUL).

No groundworks shall commence on site until the applicant has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work (a watching brief on all ground works by an approved archaeological unit) in accordance with a specification approved by the Local Planning Authority. This programme and the archaeological unit shall be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before development commences.

Reason: The site lies within an area of archaeological interest and the development may affect important archaeological deposits which must be recorded during the construction programme.

Related Texts

No additional heritage or archaeological texts are associated with this development.

Aims

The broad aims of the evaluation were:

- To be present during groundworks to observe potential archaeological deposits that are suspected to be present within the development; being based upon prior archaeological interventions within the area and the existing historical narrative of Askham Richard.
- To fully observe and record any such deposits prior to their destruction during groundwork excavation.

Methodology

Watching Brief



Figure 2: Image showing the excavation of the foundation for the new extension. Looking east

After the demolition of the existing 18th century outbuilding, all groundworks required to accommodate the erection of the ancillary residential and home office outbuilding were monitored by an archaeologist.

A back-acting mini digger fitted with a toothless bucket was used to strip during groundworks. The machine stripped in shallow spits to enable archaeological deposits to be observed (Figure 2). The watching brief revealed a north west -southeast aligned ditch and the contractor and all sub-contractors facilitated the archaeological recording of this feature.

Archaeological mitigation works involved appropriate investigation and recording of all potential archaeological features and find spots, and has required minimal post-fieldwork analysis, reporting and archiving. There is no physical archive.



Figure 3: Original beam retained, by the owner, from the demolished 18th century outbuilding. Presently, repositioned as a window lintel, in the new build. Inscribed TH 1792- Thomas Hudson, Farmer residing at the plot during the late 18th to early 19th century.

Geology

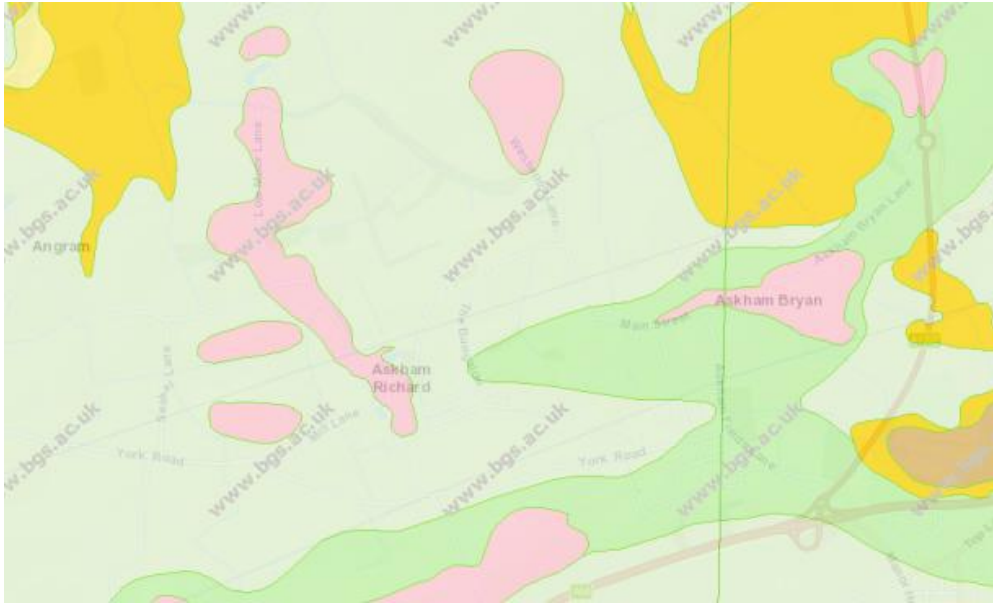


Figure 4: Askham Richard and Askham Bryan geological map

The bedrock geology consists of Sherwood sandstone with overlying Vale of York superficial deposits consisting of sand and gravel. Both Askham Richard and Askham Bryan have the same sand and gravel geology with a band of superficial clay dividing the historic cores of both villages, to the east and west respectively (Figure 3).

The bedrock geology consists of Sherwood sandstone with overlying Vale of York superficial deposits consisting of sand and gravel. Both Askham Richard and Askham Bryan have the same sand and gravel geology with a band of superficial clay dividing the historic cores of both villages, to the east and west respectively.

Archaeological deposits can survive well in this type of geology: good preservation of archaeological features within sand and gravel occurs due to favourable drainage conditions (Arnold, 2005).

Archaeological Summary

Prehistoric and Roman spot finds (a quernstone) and a Grade II Roman Coffin (associated with the Askham Richard's Church-St Mary's) are present in Askham Richard. Earlier settlements are likely to have existed, especially during the Romano British Period. Askham Richard has two Roman roads within its proximity (Margary, 1955):

- Margary 8a- Roman road from York to Aldborough to the north
- Margary 28c-Roman road from Tadcaster to York to the south

The likelihood of archaeological deposits associated with pre medieval periods is possible however, medieval and post medieval evidence is more likely.

Etymological evidence suggests that the name Askham Richard is originally derived from the 'ascha' meaning an enclosure of ash trees. Askham Bryon, located approximately 1km to the east of Askham Richard also shares this name and association with the ash tree. The word 'ascha' has Scandinavian origins; the favoured ash tree, which as a wood is strong and elastic and as a fuel burns well with intense heat (Arnold, 2005).



Figure 5: 1854 Map of Askham Richard and the site (in red)

Little Askham (Richard) and Great Askham (Bryon) were connected by one lordship during the Saxon times. The Domesday records indicate that it was owned by Edwin Earl of Mercia whereby after Edwin's death during the Norman Conquest it was forfeited to William the Conqueror amongst other great swathes of land (Sheahan and Whellan, 1855).

During the 13th century 'Little' and 'Great' Askham's were formally divided:

- Askham Richard- Richard from Richard the 1st Earl of Cornwall
- Askham Bryon – Bryon from Bryon Fitz Alan, Guardian of Scotland

The medieval origins of the linear village of Askham Richard are still visible. The layout of the properties and croft and tofts associated with prior medieval activity remain largely intact in some parts with ridge and furrow field systems located to the east of the development site (Figure 4).

The village has eight listed buildings. The majority of these buildings are mid-18th century and mostly Grade II with the earliest structural origins being embedded within the renovated St Mary's Church. This church has 12th century origins though earlier features such as a Saxon doorway are present. It has two monuments: a windmill with medieval origins and the parish records.

The 1840 Ordnance Survey Map of Askham Richard shows notable features such as Askham Richard Hall and associated ponds and formal gardens, the weir, poor houses, St Mary's Church, Methodist Chapel, Pound and a tannery. It was noted though that a rectangular square earthwork is located to the east of St Mary's Church however no evidence of its existence was uncovered during this preliminary investigation.

The unique and unspoilt characteristic of the village was noted and in 1975 the whole of Askham Richard became a conservation area.

Prior Archaeological Interventions

In 2003 AOC carried out a buildings recording on a post medieval barn at Prospect Farm and, apart from a spot find of a quern stone of possible roman or prehistoric origins, no other data regarding prior ground works was encountered.

Whilst undertaking groundworks at the Old Joiners Cottage in 2018, a significant amount of human remains were encountered- mostly being disarticulated with three articulated human burials being present.

The articulated burials were laid in a supine position and orientated west to east, as is common with Christian burials. Later medieval (11th to 15th century) quarrying is likely to have disturbed this earlier burial ground, which is located outside the parameters of the existing churchyard and St Mary's Church (LS Archaeology, 2018).

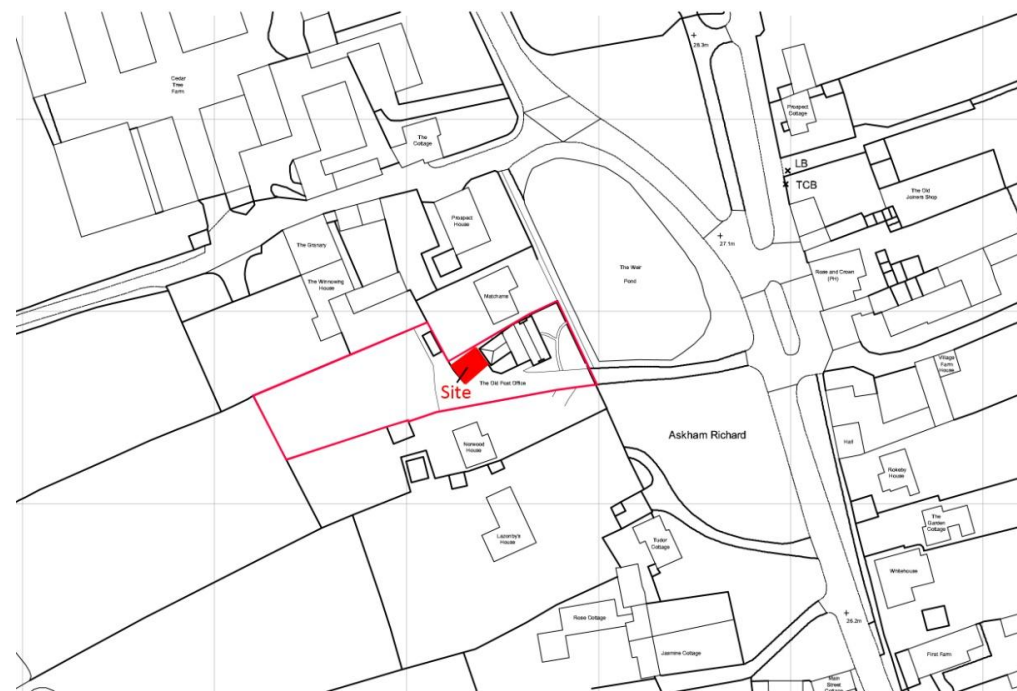


Figure 6: Development site and boundary in red

Results

The archaeological watching brief involved the monitoring of the ground reduction by approximately 0.70m in depth. The ground was reduced to accommodate structural work related to the erection of a new extension located at the rear of the Old Post Office house (Figure 5).

The area impacted by the foundations of the new extensions consisted of approximately 50² m. Layers (1), (2) and (3) were removed using a mechanical excavator fitted with a tooth-less bucket. These made up ground (1) and garden layers (2) and (3) that were 0.80m, in depth sealed archaeological deposits, the base of the earliest archaeological feature (6) was 1.25m below ground level (Figure 7).

The archaeology encountered consisted of: 20th century made up ground, associated with the erection of the former extension and parking area Context (1), garden / agricultural layers Contexts (2) and (3). These three contexts sealed a rubble layer (4) most likely associated with a 18th- 19th century outbuilding, a northwest to southeast aligned ditch Contexts (5) [6], the remains of an 18th century outbuilding foundation wall Context (8) and associated 19th century clay pipe drain Context (9), (Table 1).

Table 1: Context Index

Context Number	Feature Number	Type	Description	Identified As	Date
1	1	Layer	Mixed rubble car parking surface	Car Park Surface	20 th century
2	2	Layer	Top Soil	Old Post Office garden soil	20 th century
3	3	Layer	Agricultural garden soil deposit	Agricultural soil	19 th century
4	4	Layer	Rubble and cobble layer	Rubble and cobble made up ground	18 th -19 th century
5	6	Fill	Fill of linear feature [6]	Fill of a NW SE ditch	pre 18 th century
6	6	Cut	Cut of linear feature[6]	Cut of a NW SE ditch	pre 18 th century
7	7	Natural	Dark yellow brown clay sand	Natural clay sand	
8	8	Structure	Brick foundation wall	Foundation wall of a Georgian outbuilding	18 th century
9	9	Structure	Clay pipe drain	Drain associated of a Georgian outbuilding	18 th -19 th century

Full context data for the following is located in **Appendix 1**.

The ground surface impacted by the new extension consisted of two distinct layers. A layer of mixed rubble and gravel (Context (1)) formerly used as car park, which occupied most of the site. This rubble layer sealed a very dark grey silty clay material (Context (2)) identified as the recent garden top soil. The removal of contexts (1) and (2) revealed the presence of a dark brown clay silt material (Context (3)) and this measured 0.40m in depth. This context, identified as an agricultural layer, was predominantly observed towards the northern part of the development site and appeared to abut the rubble and cobble layer, Context (4).

Context (4) consisted of a layer of cobbles and rubble bonded with a very dark greyish brown silty clay material. This context measured 0.25m in depth and was observed covering most of the southern half of the development site, and was identified as a layer of rubble and cobbles; made up ground associated with the construction of the 18th -19th century outbuilding as the clay drain pie [9] is situated within (4) and (4) abuts the brick foundation wall [8] (Figure 6). Sealed under Context (3) and partly Context (4), was the remains of a linear feature [6] orientated northwest to southeast. This feature had a large U shaped profile with a concave base and measured 1.05m in width and 0.45m in depth. It was exposed to 1.80m. This linear was filled with a homogenous dark grey sandy clay silt. No archaeological remains were found during the excavation of this feature (Figures 8 and 9).



Figure 7: Post cleaning image of Contexts (3), (4), (5) and Features [6], [8] and [9]

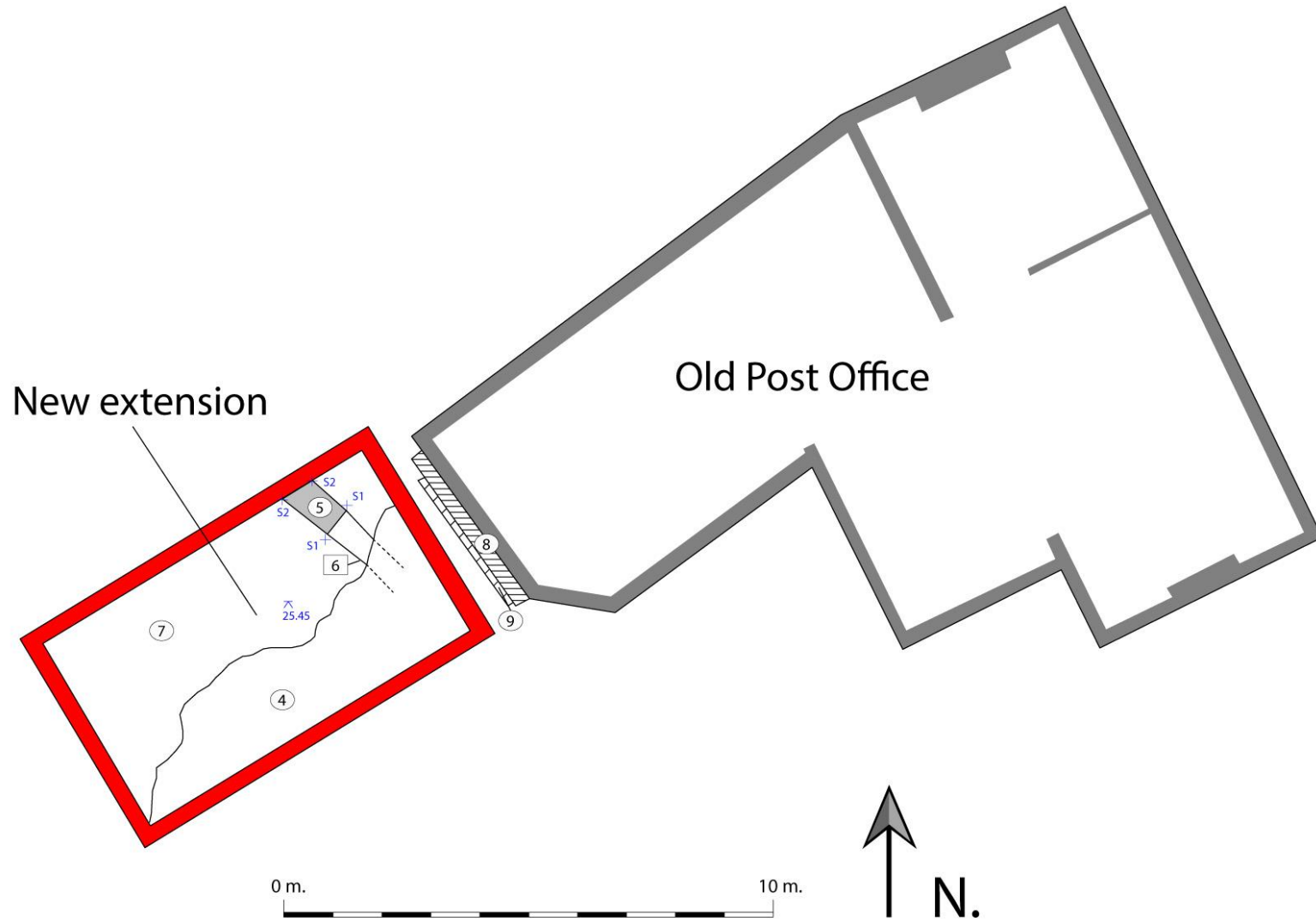


Figure 8: Site Plan

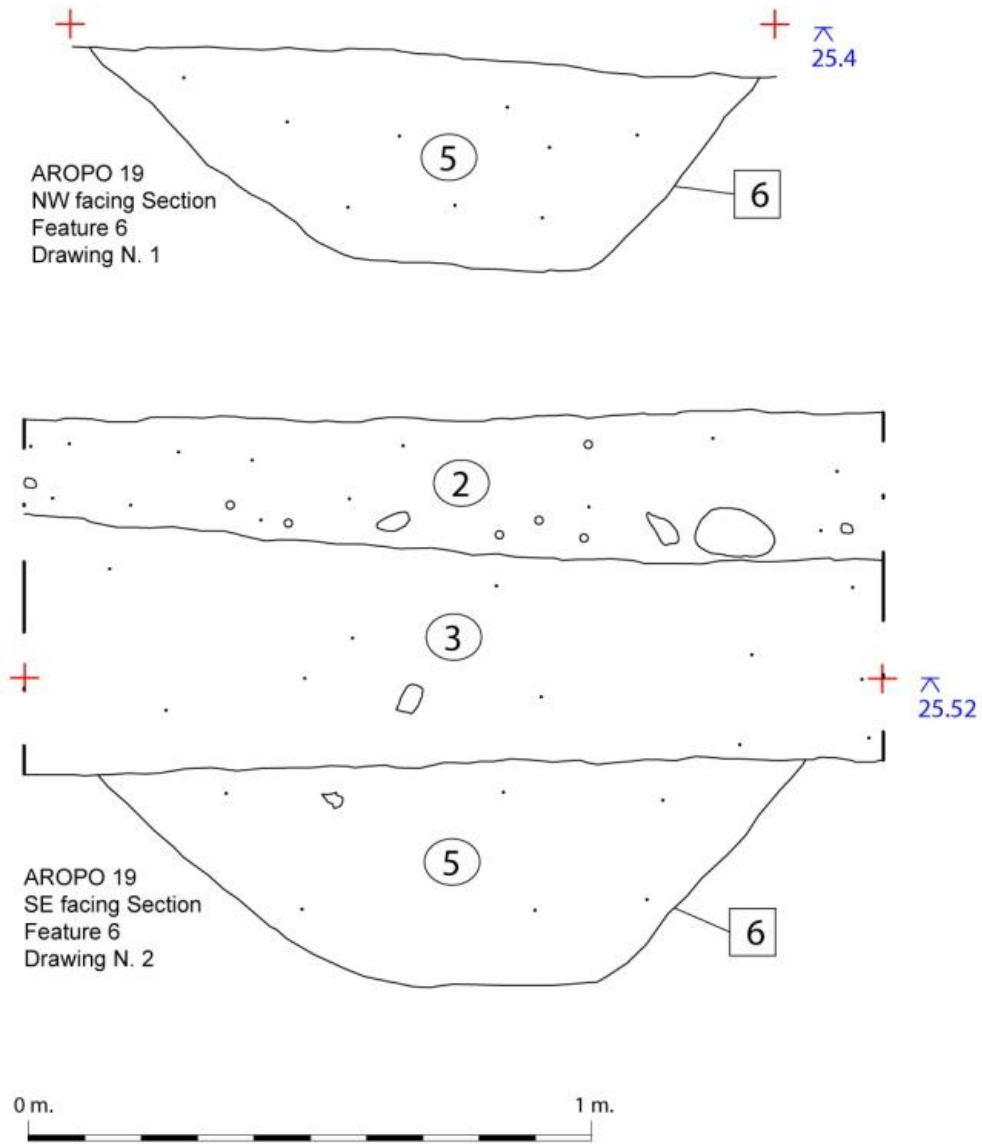


Figure 10: Feature [6] section drawings



Figure 9: Feature [6] section photographs

Abutting Context (4) along the northeast edge of the site were the remains of a red ceramic brick and cream/white mortar foundation wall Feature [8]. This structure was exposed for 4.00m and measured 0.30m in width. Adjacent to the foundation wall were the fragmented remains of a red clay pipe drain, Feature [9]. This drain ran parallel to the foundation wall and appears to have been positioned during the construction of the 18th-19th century outbuilding [8].

The natural, Context (7), consisted of a dark yellowish-brown clay sand and was present at a depth of 0.7 BGL.

Sources Consulted

- Borthwick Institute, University of York
- City of York Archives
- North Yorkshire Archive

Archive

- The client will receive an electronic copy of this report.
- There were no finds observed or retained.
- A copy of the report will be uploaded to OASIS (Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) and then once validated will appear on ADS (Archaeological Data Service).

Conclusion

A watching brief was carried out at the development site to ensure any archaeological deposits were fully recorded prior to their destruction.

The brick foundations of the 18th-19th century outbuilding were recorded. This building was demolished prior to the watching brief and is therefore not recorded in this document. The actual use of this building is unknown however it was noted by the owner that on one of the beams, the date '1792' was inscribed. This may indicate that this outbuilding was constructed in the late 18th century.

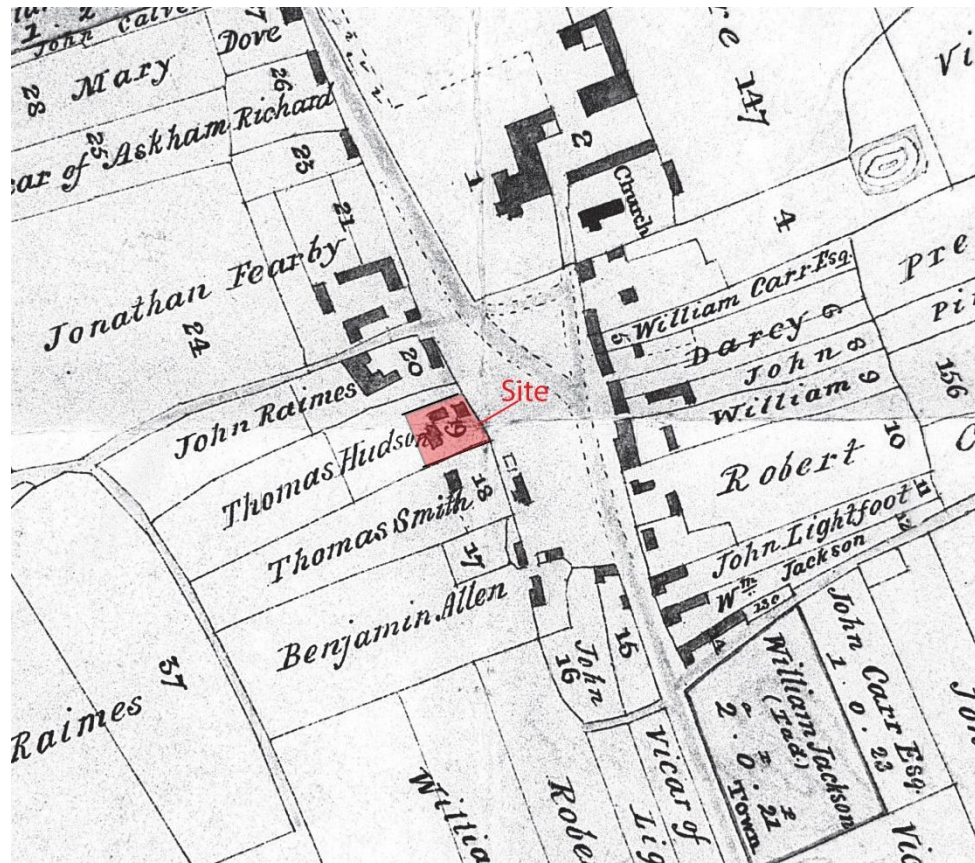


Figure 11: 1803 Enclosure Map with the site under ownership of Thomas Hudson. Thomas Hudson was listed under Farmer in the Baines Directory of 1823.

A ditch [6], orientated NW SE was present and this contained a very sterile fill that yielded no dating evidence.

Similar types of ditches have been observed and investigated in the nearby village of Askham Bryan (NAA, 2006). Ditches were identified as post medieval drainage and/or field boundaries.

The 1853 map of the Old Post Office has a curvilinear land feature indicated on the site (Figure 11) crossing the rear of the property in the same orientation as the observed ditch [6]. This land feature is not indicated on the property Enclosure Map (Figure 10) therefore that suggests the feature does not constitute a significant boundary (Figure 10).

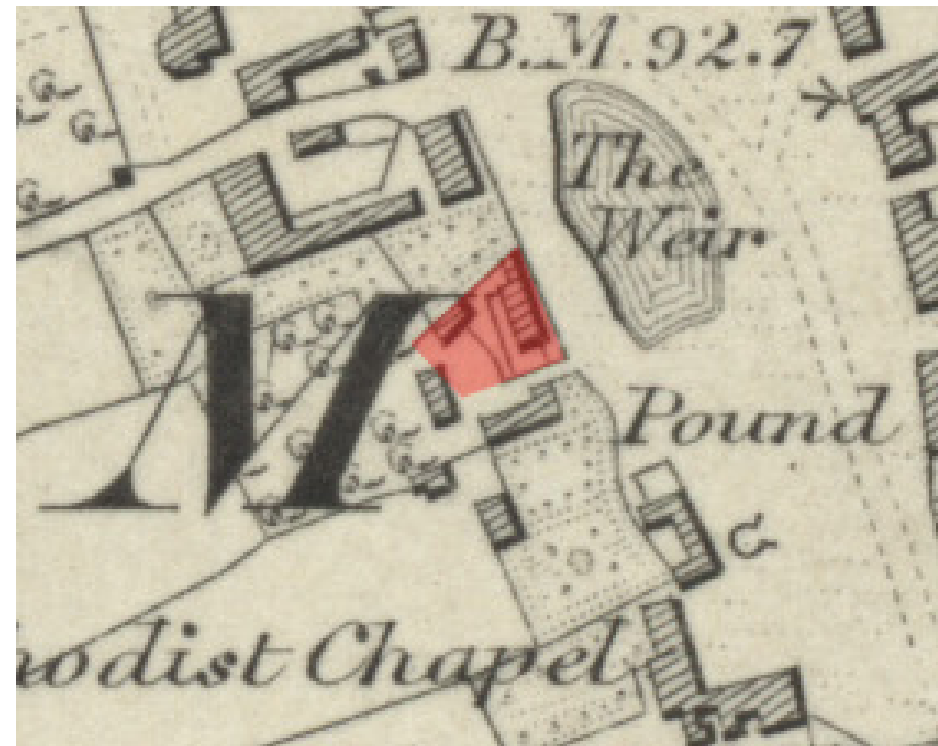


Figure 12: Close up of the property with the curvilinear land feature (potentially Feature [6])

Bibliography

Cifa, (2014); Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief.

Cifa , (2014); Standard and Guidance Appendices.

Cifa, (2014); Code of Conduct.

NAA, (2004); Cultural Heritage Appraisal: Proposed Waste Water Pumping Station Askham Bryan, York. Northern Archaeological Associates

NAA, (2006); Archaeological Monitoring: Waste Water Pumping Station Askham Bryan, York. Northern Archaeological Associates

LS Archaeology (2018); The Old Joiners Workshop, A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

Sheahan, J.J and Whellan,(1855); History and Topography of the City of York; The Ainsty Wapentake; and the East Riding of Yorkshire; Embracing a General Review of the History of Great Britain, and a General History and Description of the County of York

Online Resources

mapapps.bgs.ac.uk

heritagegateway.org.uk

historicengland.org.uk

genuki.org.uk

Cartographic Reference

1954 Ordnance Survey Map

Newholme cum Dunsley Enclosure 1803

Appendix 1 Context Data

Context	Feature No.	Feature Type	Description	Shape	Profile	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Drawing Numbers	Finds/ Samples
1	1	Layer	Rubble deposit made of a mixture of 40 %fragmented bricks/ mortar, 20% cobbles, 20% gravel and 20% silty sand. Identified as made up ground.	Layer	Layer	N/A	N/A	0.10	N/A	Several fragments of 20th century tiles and plastic present recorded through not retained.
2	2	Layer	Very dark grey (10YR 3/1) 80% silty clay sand mixed with 20% gravel. Occasional fragments of CBM present	Layer	Layer	N/A	N/A	0.30	N/A	None
3	3	Layer	Dark brown (7.5YR3/2) 90% clay silt with 10% gravel.	Layer	Layer	N/A	N/A	0.40	N/A	None
4	4	Layer	Very dark greyish brown (10YR3/2) 40% silty clay, 40% cobbles and 20% gravel. Occasional of reddish- brown silty sand and gravel. Abuts [8] and [9] is situated within it.	Layer	Layer	N/A	N/A	0.25	N/A	Ceramic building material fragments. 19th century
5	6	Fill	Homogenous dark grey (7.5YR4/1) 98% sandy clay silt with 2% fine gravel and cobble inclusions. Sporadic cobbles found at the base of the ditch.	Linear	U shaped	1.20 excavated	1.05	0.45	Section 1-2	None
6	6	Cut	Liner feature orientated NW to SE. Edges cut the	Linear	U shaped	1.20 excavated	1.05	0.45	Section 1-2	N/A

Context	Feature No.	Feature Type	Description	Shape	Profile	Length (m)	Width (m)	Depth (m)	Drawing Numbers	Finds/ Samples
			natural at 45 degrees with a shallow concave base.							
7	7	Natural	Dark yellowish brown (10YR4/6) 80% clay sand, 15% cobbles and 5% gravel inclusions.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
8	8	Structure	Brick foundation wall. Ceramic red 19th century bricks laid in running bond.	Linear	Rectangular	4.00 exposed	0.3	0.10 seen	N/A	None
9	9	Structure	Red clay pipe, 13cm in diameter, sectional pipe pieces 40cm in length. Ran NNW SSE adjacent to foundation wall [8]. No cut for pipe was observed.	Linear	Circular	3.50 exposed	0.13	0.13	N/A	None