



*LS*

*Archaeology*

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Report of an Archaeological Evaluation, at;  
Wobeck Lane, Melmerby, North Yorkshire.

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By Luigi Signorelli BA MA  
April 2012

**Site:** Land to the east of Wobbeck Lane, Melmerby, North Yorkshire

**Site Codes:** MWL 12

**County:** North Yorkshire

**NGR:** SE 433523 476719

**Planning Application No:** 6.15.54.H.OUTMAJ 11/04401/OUTMAJ

**Development:** Application for 2 open market dwellings and 12 affordable homes with access road, at Wobbeck Lane, Melmerby, North Yorkshire

**Date of Issue:** 13/04/2012

**Site Dates:** 11<sup>th</sup> April 2012

**Project by:** LS Archaeology Sideways Terrington North  
Yorkshire YO60 6QB Tel: 01653 648493

**Client:** Mr Julian Watson

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## Summary

Two evaluation trenches were excavated on the site east of Wobeck Lane, Melmerby to inform a planning application for the construction of twelve affordable houses, two open market dwellings and access road. Both trenches were located in the area of proposed development; one trench targeting part of a putative enclosure, and the second trench positioned in order to evaluate part of the site immediately east of the enclosure, which is shown on a 1933 aerial photograph, and recorded at the English Heritage National Museum Record .

Neither trench recorded any archaeological deposits or features. Instead the natural sandy silty clay was sealed by modern makeup and top soil deposits.

## Introduction

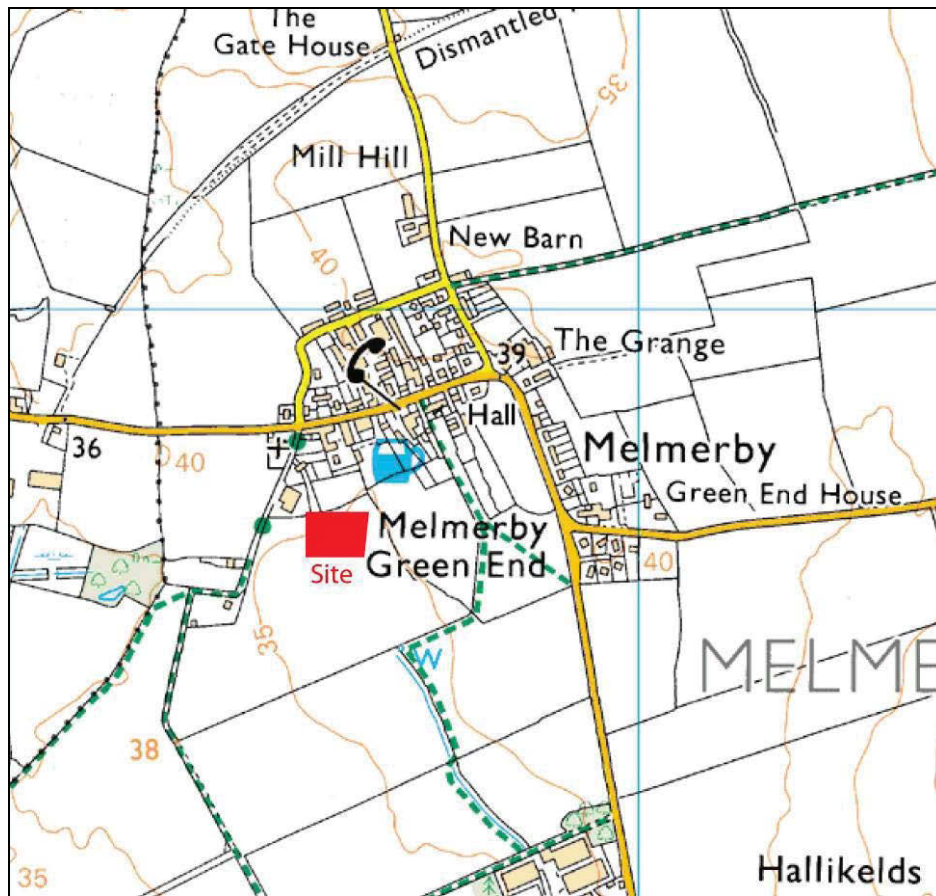


Figure 1: Site location in red (copy from Streetmap.co.uk).

LS Archaeology was commissioned by Mr. Julian Watson to undertake an archaeological evaluation by trial trenches. This document serves as a short report on the result of two evaluation trenches excavated at Wobeck Lane, Melmerby. The evaluation trenches were carried out as part of a predetermination evaluation of the site in order to characterize the archaeological potential of the development area in accordance with the criteria set out within PPS5. The work was carried out in consultation with the North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) Archaeologist and in accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) produced by The Landscape Research Centre.

PPS5 (Planning Policy Statement 5) states that;

“Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset’s significance is justified, local planning authorities should require the developer to record and advance understanding of the significance of the heritage asset before it is lost...” (PPS5, HE 12.3).

Melmerby is situated c.6km north east of Ripon and 1.6km west of the A1, in the Mowbray valley. The site lies at approximately 90m above Ordnance Datum. The proposed development area is a rectangular plot of land located on the east side of Wobeck Lane, bounded to the north by Pear Tree Cottage, to the south by farmland.

## Archaeological Background

A possible enclosure has been recorded by the English Heritage, National Monuments Records. The record states that; *'a sub-circular enclosure on uncertain date is visible as an earthwork on air photographs. It is centered at SE 3348 7671. the enclosure is formed by a 5-8m wide bank and has an internal diameter of c.62m. its south side is slightly flattened.'* The source of the data is an oblique aerial photograph, taken on the 6<sup>th</sup> June 1933.



Figure 2: The 1933 aerial photograph, showing evidence of a possible enclosure

## Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the archaeological evaluation were to characterize deposits within the area of the proposed development. Specifically the investigation sought to recover information relating to;

- the use of the site within any archaeological/historical period
- the potential of the site to contain evidence related to a henge monument
- the depth and sequence of deposits on the site in relation to predicted ground disturbance

The objectives were met by excavating two trenches within the development area, which will impact on the putative enclosure.



## Method

Two trenches (1 and 2) measuring respectively 20.00m and 17.50m in length and 1.80m wide, were excavated on the site. The location of these is shown in Figure 2. The trenches were positioned accordingly to the Written Scheme of Investigation and set out using measurements taken from the topographical map of the site.

The trenches were excavated in a series of spits down onto natural subsoil, using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

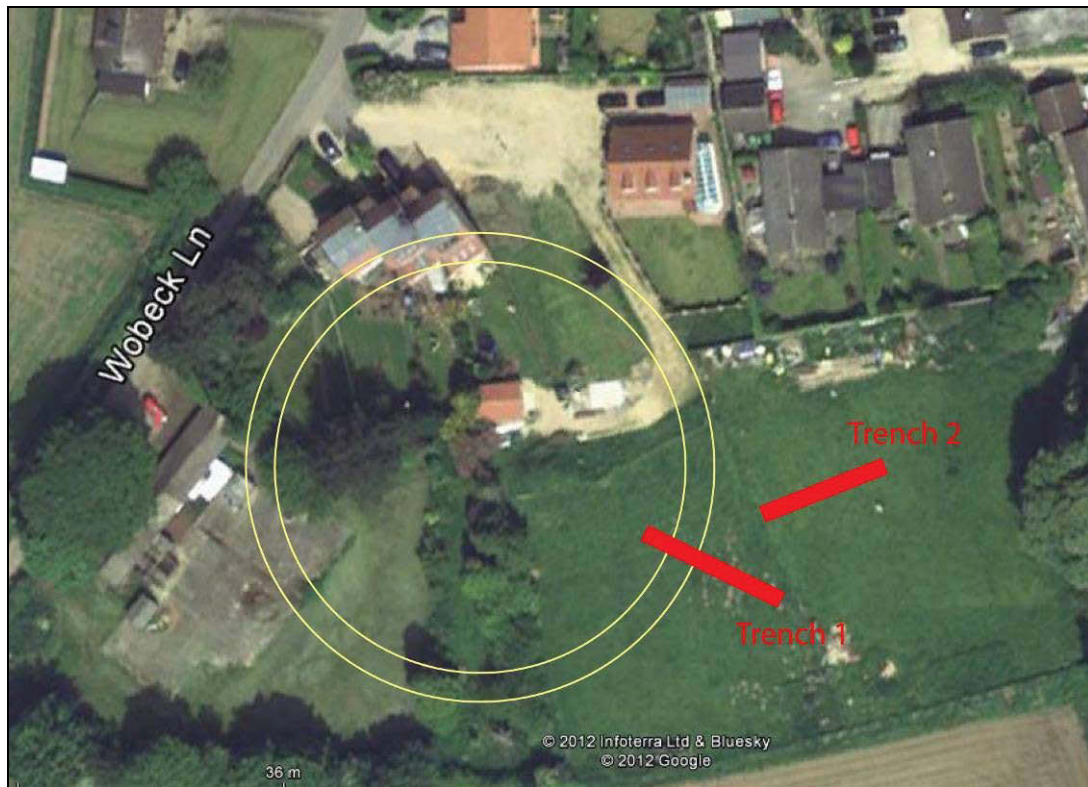


Figure 3: location of the trenches and the putative enclosure (picture from Google Earth)

## Results

The site appears to be on a flat pasture field, divided into two equal spaces by a wire fence. No archaeological deposits or features were recorded in either trench.

### *Trench 1*

This trench measuring 20m in length and 1.8m in width, orientated on a north west to south east direction, was positioned in order to investigate the eastern side of the putative henge monument.

The natural clay silty sand deposit (101) was recorded at a depth of 0.25m below current ground level. It consisted of orange brown clay silty sand with occasional inclusion of small and large cobbles. It was sealed by a 0.25m of dark brown clay sandy deposit (top soil 100).





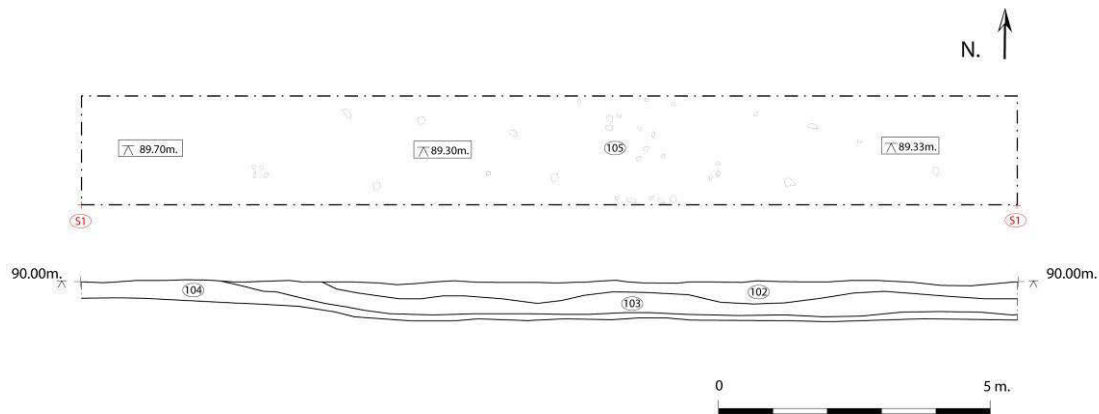
**Figure 4: Trench 1, looking north west**



**Figure 5: Trench 1, South west facing section, showing topsoil, sealing the natural subsoil**

## Trench 2

Trench 2 was located east of the possible enclosure and 20m south from the boundary wall of Pear Tree Cottage (Figure 3). Orientated on an east to west alignment, measuring 17.50m in length and 1.80m in width, this trench was excavated to a maximal depth of 0.70m, where the natural subsoil (105) was exposed.



**Figure 6: Showing the plan of trench 2 and the north facing section**

The ground level of the field in which trench 2 was located, was raised in order to match the level of the field to the west. This was done in 2005 using part of the top soil and rubble originated from the construction of Pear Tree Cottage (see section in Figure 5).



**Figure 7: Trench 2 looking west**



**Figure 8: North facing section of trench 2**

Context 104, the original top soil was in part buried by a deposit of rubble (103) which measured 0.35m in depth.

In order to re-turf this part of the field a layer of dark brown silty sand mixed with small and large pebbles (102) measuring 0.30m in depth, was laid above deposit 103.

## Results

The evaluation has recorded a sequence of natural deposits in trench 1 and an addition of modern deposits in trench 2, and a complete lack of any cultural material. From the evidence recorded in the trenches the ground does not appear to have been ploughed nor any material, such as midden waste, used to improve the soil in the past was present. The lack of any inclusion in the soil sealing the natural clay silty sand subsoil could be indicative of the use of this part of the site as pasture in antiquity.

Form the result of trench 2, the ground level of this part of the site appeared to have been raised by 0.55m with the use of waste top soil and rubble originated from the construction of Pear Tree Cottage, in 2005.

The area of the site appears to be of low archaeological potential.

## Conclusion

The evaluation has recorded no archaeological deposits or features within either of the two trenches. On the basis of the results of the trenching alone this area of the site is considered to have a low archaeological potential.

**G. Signorelli**  
April 2012

## Bibliography

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[http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob\\_id=1407675](http://www.pastscape.org.uk/hob.aspx?hob_id=1407675)



## Appendix A:

### OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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#### Printable version

**OASIS ID: Isarchae1-123511**

#### Project details

Project name	Archaeological evaluation
Short description of the project	Two evaluation trenches were excavated on the site east of Wobeck Lane, Melmerby to inform a planning application for the construction of twelve affordable houses, two open market dwellings and access road. Both trenches were located in the area of proposed development; one trench targeting part of a putative enclosure, and the second trench positioned in order to evaluate part of the site immediately east of the enclosure, which is shown on a 1933 aerial photograph. Neither trench recorded any archaeological deposits or features. Instead the natural sandy silty clay was sealed by modern makeup and top soil deposits.
Project dates	Start: 11-04-2012 End: 11-04-2012
Previous/future work	No / Not known
Site status	Area of Archaeological Importance (AAI)
Current Land use	Grassland Heathland 2 - Undisturbed Grassland
Monument type	ENCLOSURE Uncertain
Significant Finds	NONE None
Significant Finds	NONE None

#### Project location

Country	England
Site location	NORTH YORKSHIRE HARROGATE MELMERBY Wobeck Lane, Melmerby

Study area	60.00 Square metres
Site coordinates	SE 433523 476719 53.9231666792 -1.339779909730 53 55 23 N 001 20 23 W Point
Lat/Long Datum	Position derived from charts
Height OD / Depth	Min: 89.00m Max: 90.00m

### Project creators

Name of Organisation	LS Archaeology
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Project brief originator	L Signorelli
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Project design originator	L Signorelli
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Project director/manager	L Signorelli
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Project supervisor	L Signorelli
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### Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
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Digital Media available	'Images raster / digital photography'
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Paper Archive Exists?	No
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### Project bibliography 1

Publication type	A forthcoming report
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Entered by	L Signorelli (gigi.signorelli@hotmail.co.uk)
Entered on	16 April 2012



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## OASIS:

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## Appendix B:

### Contents of the Site Archive;

The archive consists of few digital photographs. No paper records were produced.

Contest No	Type	Trench	Description
100	Deposit	1	Comprised a dark brown clay silt mixed with occasional small pebbles measuring in depth 0.25m. Identified as top soil
101	Deposit	1	Consisted of an orange brown clay silty sand containing sporadic large and small cobbles. Identified as Sub soil / Natural
102	Deposit	2	Post 2005 Top soil. Originally this deposit was the ground surface of the area now occupied by the Pear Tree Cottage. Measuring in depth 0.30m.
103	Deposit	2	Make up ground. Rubble debris from the construction of Pear Tree Cottage. Measuring in depth 0.35m
104	Deposit	2	Original top soil. Same as deposit 100 in trench 1. Measuring 0.10m in depth
105	Deposit	2	Sub soil / Natural

**Table 1: List of contexts**