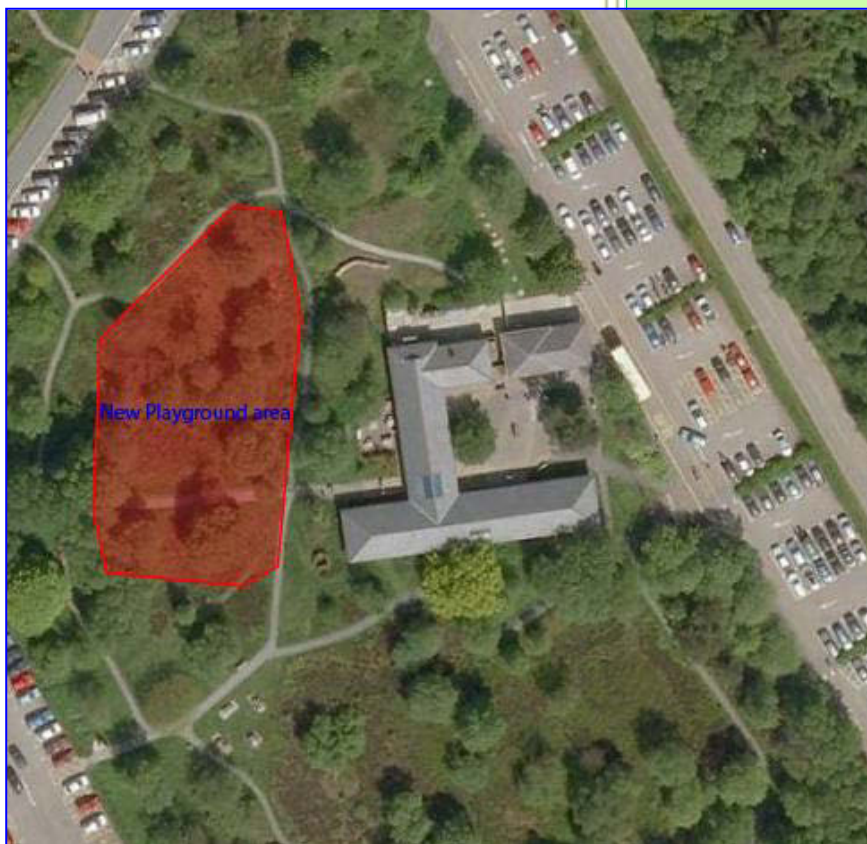


Land to the west of
Sutton Bank Centre,
North York Moors
National Park,
North Yorkshire

Watching Brief Report

LS Archaeology



LS Archaeology
www.lsarchaeology.co.uk
lsarchaeology@gmail.com
01953 618 279
0791 248 5125

Luigi Signorelli BA MA

August 2015



Site:	Land to the west of Sutton Bank Centre, North York Moors National Park, North Yorkshire
Site Codes:	SBCNP 15
County:	North Yorkshire
NGR:	SE 51586 83074
Planning Application No:	
Development:	Children playground area, two to three small round houses, a large sand pit and footpath.
Date of Issue:	10/08/2015
Site Dates:	06/07/2015
Project by:	LS Archaeology Whitwell on the Hill North Yorkshire YO60 7JJ Tel: 07912485125
Client:	North York Moors National Park Authority (NYMNPA)

Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS	III
LIST OF FIGURE.....	IV
1. SUMMARY.....	1
2. INTRODUCTION	1
3. SITE LOCATION	2
4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
5. DEVELOPMENT	4
6. MITIGATION STRATEGY AND METHODOLOGY	5
7. RESULT	5
8. CONCLUSION.....	8
9. BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	9

List of Figure

FIGURE 1: PLAY GROUND AREA (IN RED). IMAGE FROM GOOGLE EARTH.....	1
FIGURE 2: SITE LOCATION FROM STREET MAP	2
FIGURE 3: MAP SHOWING THE PROPOSED CHILDREN PLAYGROUND AREAS.....	4
FIGURE 4: SHOWING THE GROUND CONDITIONS. LOOKING NORTHWEST.....	6
FIGURE 5: EXCAVATION OF THE SAND-PIT AREA(AREA1). LOOKING NORTHWEST.....	6
FIGURE 6: EXCAVATION IN PROGRESS OF THE ROUND HOUSE FOUNDATION (AREA 2). LOOKING WEST.....	6
FIGURE 7: EXCAVATION OF THE ROUND HOUSE FOUNDATION (AREA 3). LOOKING SOUTHEAST	7
FIGURE 8: EXCAVATION OF THE ROUND HOUSE (AREA 4). LOOKING EAST	7
FIGURE 9: FOOT PATH LINKING ROUND HOUSE 2 AND 4. LOOKING EAST	7

1. Summary

- 1.1 This is a report for an archaeological watching brief at the land to the west of Sutton Bank National Park Visitor Centre, North York Moor National Park, North Yorkshire (Figure 1, Figure 2). The field work took place in July 2015.
- 1.2 The area monitored under archaeological watching brief, revealed no significant findings.

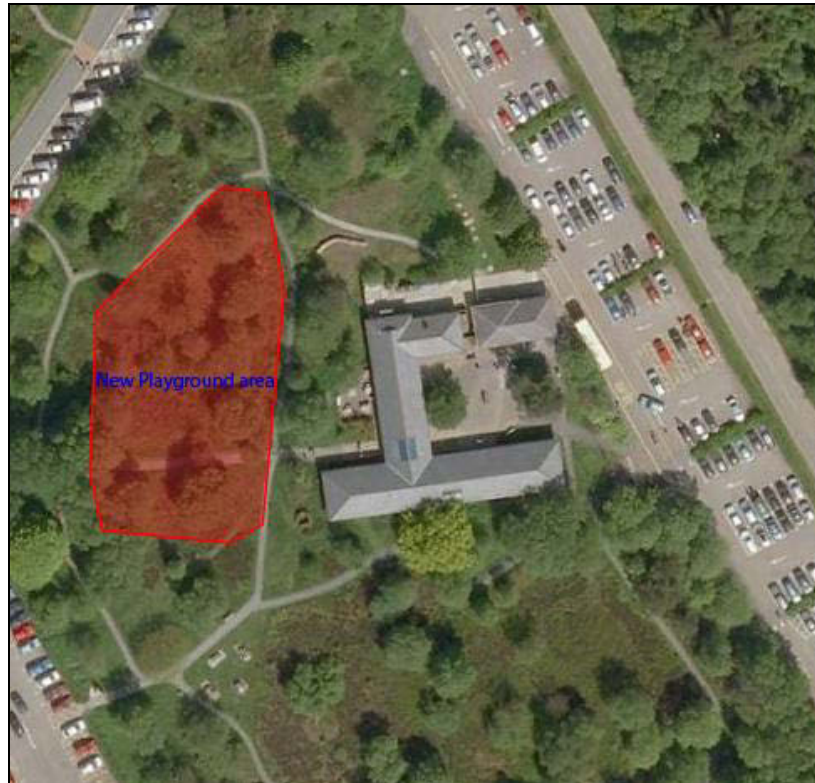


Figure 1: Play ground area (in red). Image from Google earth.

2. Introduction

- 2.1 An archaeological watching brief was carried out on 06 July 2015 by LS Archaeology at the land to the immediate west of the Sutton Bank Visitor Centre, North Yorkshire (Figure 1). The work consisted of stripping the topsoil to create three small circular areas and an ovate shaped area designated for a sand pit.
- 2.2 The investigation was commissioned by Mr. Michael Graham, Assistant Director of Park Services, North York Moors National Park Authority, in response to an archaeological planning condition placed on his development. The condition was set by the National Park Authority (NYMNP) in line with the policies set out in *National Planning Policy Framework*, Section 12 'Conservation and enhancing the historic environment' (Dep. of Communities and Local Government, March 12) and with the guidance of the local development policy (NMY Development Policy 7,

Archaeology and Planning, Planning policy Guidance 16).

2.3 It was the opinion of NYMNP, archaeology department that *'it is likely that groundworks in this area would encounter below ground deposits relating to activity dating from the Prehistoric to the Medieval periods'*.

2.4 The archaeologist on site was Luigi Signorelli, LS Archaeology.

2.5 The site code allocated for this project is SBCNP15. No site archive was produced.

3. Site Location

3.1 An archaeological investigation and recording (watching brief) was undertaken at the land to the west of Sutton Bank Visitor Centre, North Yorkshire. The site lies at the top of Sutton Bank, which is located to the north of the A170 road from Thirsk to Helmsley, North Yorkshire. The proposed development consists of the creation of four small play ground areas located to the immediate west side of the Visitor Centre.

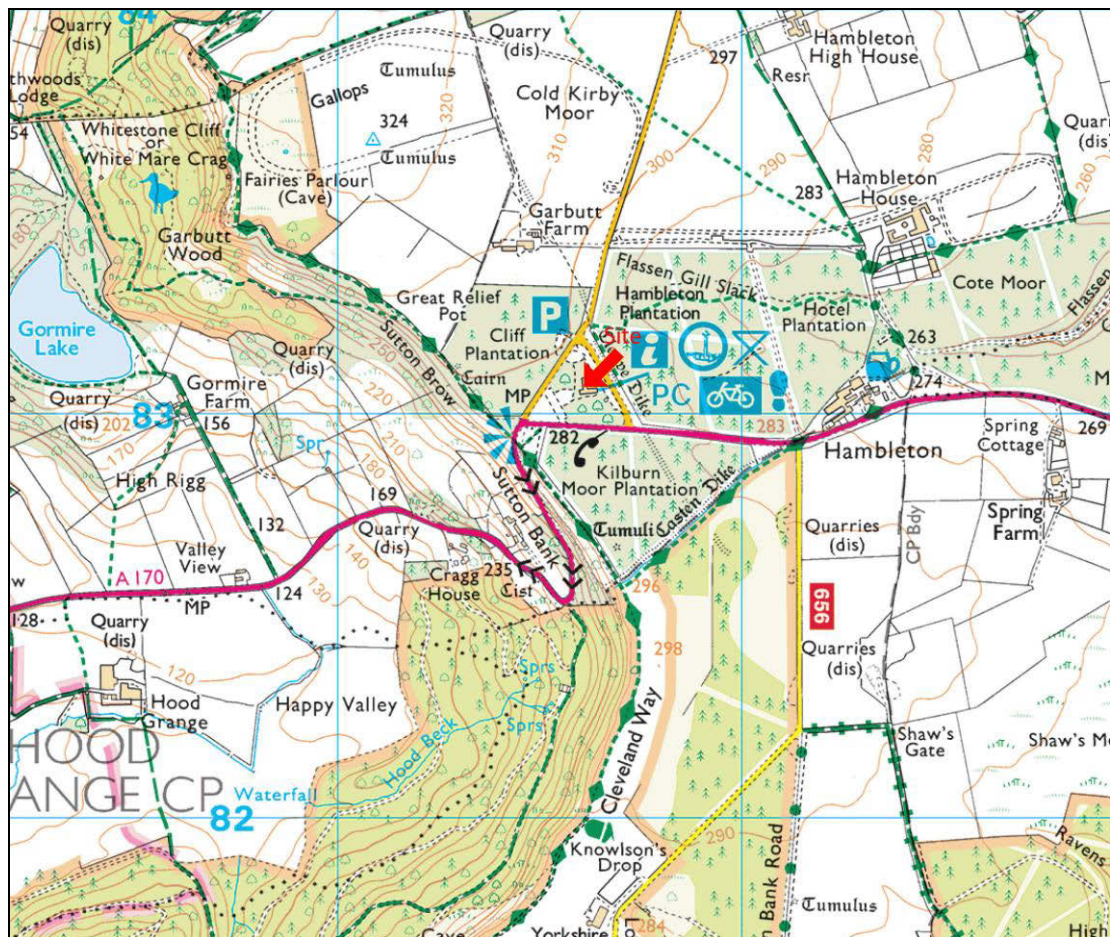


Figure 2: Site location From Street Map

- 3.2 The upper drift geology in this area consists of: West Walton Formation, Amphill Clay and Kimmeridge Clay Formation (undifferentiated) - Mudstone, Siltstone and Sandstone. The sedimentary bedrock formed approximately 151 to 161 million years ago in the Jurassic Period. These rocks were formed in shallow seas with mainly siliciclastic sediments (comprising of fragments or clasts of silicate minerals) deposited as mud, silt, sand and gravel. (British Geology Survey).

4. Archaeological Background

- 4.1 Sutton Bank Visitor Centre is sited on the iconic cliffs that look across the Vale of Mowbray and York.
- 4.2 The Centre is situated within a well known Prehistoric landscape, with Bronze age burial mounds scattered to the west and north among the arable fields.
- 4.3 The south end of the hill, also known as Roulston Scar, is the site of one of the most important prehistoric monuments in the region, this a very large hillfort thought to date to the Middle Iron Age Period. Few miles to the north, at Boltby Scar, lays another hillfort (although much smaller) of the same date as the one at Roulston Scar.
- 4.4 It is also thought that the area surrounding Sutton Bank was where the Battle of Old Byland was fought in October 1322, when the Scots had a significant victory against Edward II army.

5. Development

5.1 The planned development is for a children's play ground area, which consists of; the erection of three small round houses and a large sand-pit area, with associated foot paths.

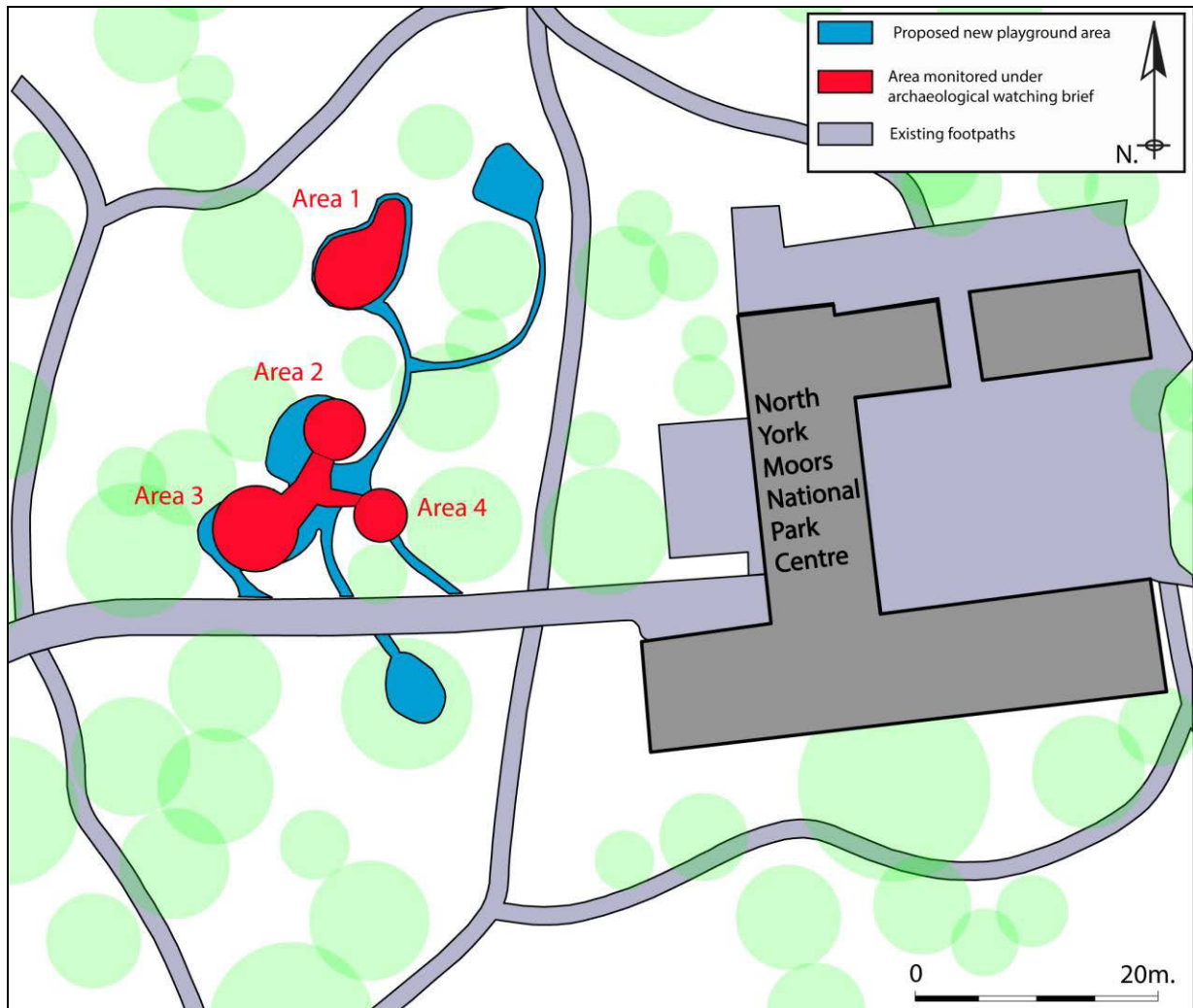


Figure 3: Map showing the proposed children playground areas

5.2 The foundation for the sand-pit (of an ovate shape in plan) measured 5m in width and 10m in length (Area 1).

5.3 All of the round houses have a circular shape in plan, and measuring respectively 3m (Areas 2 and 4), and 5m in width (Area 3).

5.4 All the ground works has been monitored by a qualified archaeologist.

6. Mitigation Strategy and Methodology

6.1 Considering that the development lies within an area of high archaeological sensitivity, the key aims of the evaluation is to understand the impact that the development may have upon any archaeological remains. Specifically the evaluation sought to recover information to establish:

- The depth of topsoil
- The presence or absence of any medieval features
- The presence or absence of any evidence of early activity on site

6.2 The objectives were met by monitoring the removal of top-soil for the area allocated to the round houses and play-ground sand-pit ([Figure 3](#)). The removal of top-soil and any other deposits within the designated areas, were conducted under the supervision of a qualified archaeologist, and the whole operation was done by using a mechanical excavator fitted with a back-actor and straight edged ditching blade/bucket.

6.3 The ground surface consisted of a mixture of decayed tree branches and leaves, grass and a very dark silt and clay deposit.

6.4 The watching brief was carried out on 6th July 2015.

7. Result

7.1 The site consists of a mixture of non mature trees overgrown grass and brambles. The ground is mostly formed by decayed tree branches and leaves. The foundations for the round houses and the sand-pit were excavated to a depth of 0.30m using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless bucket.

7.2 The topsoil, a very dark brown silty clay and organic material mixed with small sandstone angular gravel measuring 0.25m in depth, appeared to overlay a reddish brown clay deposit mixed with small and large sandstone fragments, interpreted as the natural ground surface.

7.3 No archaeological features were encountered during the monitoring of all the ground works.

7.4 The excavation of the footpaths consisted only on the removal of the turf to a depth of 0.10m, this only impacted on the top-soil, as a result no archaeology was recorded within the limits of any of the footpaths.



Figure 4: Showing the ground conditions. Looking northwest



Figure 5: Excavation of the sand-pit area (Area 1). Looking northwest



Figure 6: Excavation in progress of the round house foundation (Area 2). Looking west



Figure 7: Excavation of the round house foundation (Area 3). Looking southeast



Figure 8: Excavation of the round house (Area 4). Looking east



Figure 9: Foot path linking round house 2 and 4. Looking east

8. Conclusion

- 8.1 The monitoring of the excavation for the foundation of three small round houses and an ovate sand pit, associated with the creation of a new children play ground at the Sutton Bank Visitor Centre, revealed that no archaeological features were present within the monitored areas.

9. Bibliography

English Heritage: The National Heritage List for England - list.english-heritage.org.uk
Heritage Gateway - www.heritagegateway.org.uk

MAGIC - www.magic.gov.uk

English Heritage 2006. Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE) London

IfA, 1996, *Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation*, Institute for Archaeologists, Revised October 2008

IfA, 2001, *Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials*, Institute for Archaeologists, Revised October 2008

Institute for Archaeologists 1994 (revised 2001, 2008). 'Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief'

(NPPF) 2012 National Planning Policy Framework

NERC, 2011, *Soils Data for England and Wales*, National Environmental Research Council