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NIDD HALL, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Pre-determination Evaluation

Simon Mayes
BA(Hons)

PROJECT SUMMARY SHEET

<i>Client</i>	BOURNE LEISURE LIMITED
<i>National Grid Reference</i>	SE 3019760774
<i>Address</i>	NIDD HALL HOTEL, HARROGATE, NORTHYORKSHIRE
<i>Parish</i>	NIDD
<i>Council</i>	HARROGATE BOROUGH & DISTRICT COUNCIL
<i>Planning Ref No</i>	09/03962/FUL
<i>HAS</i>	858
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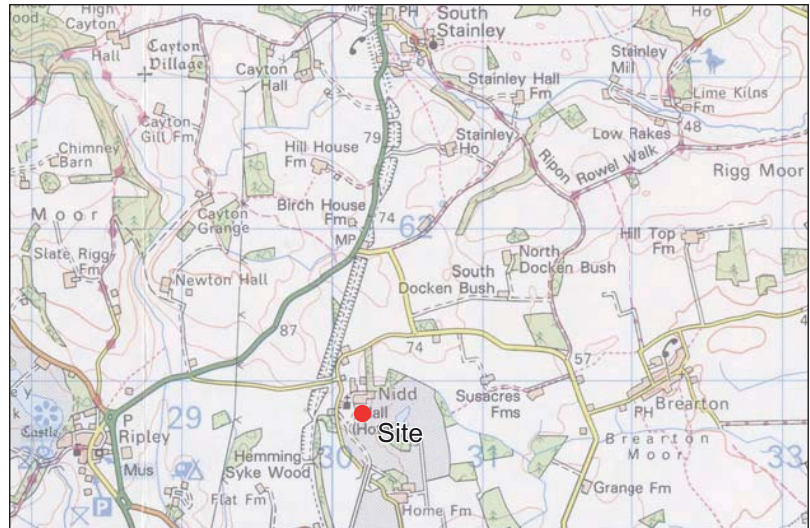
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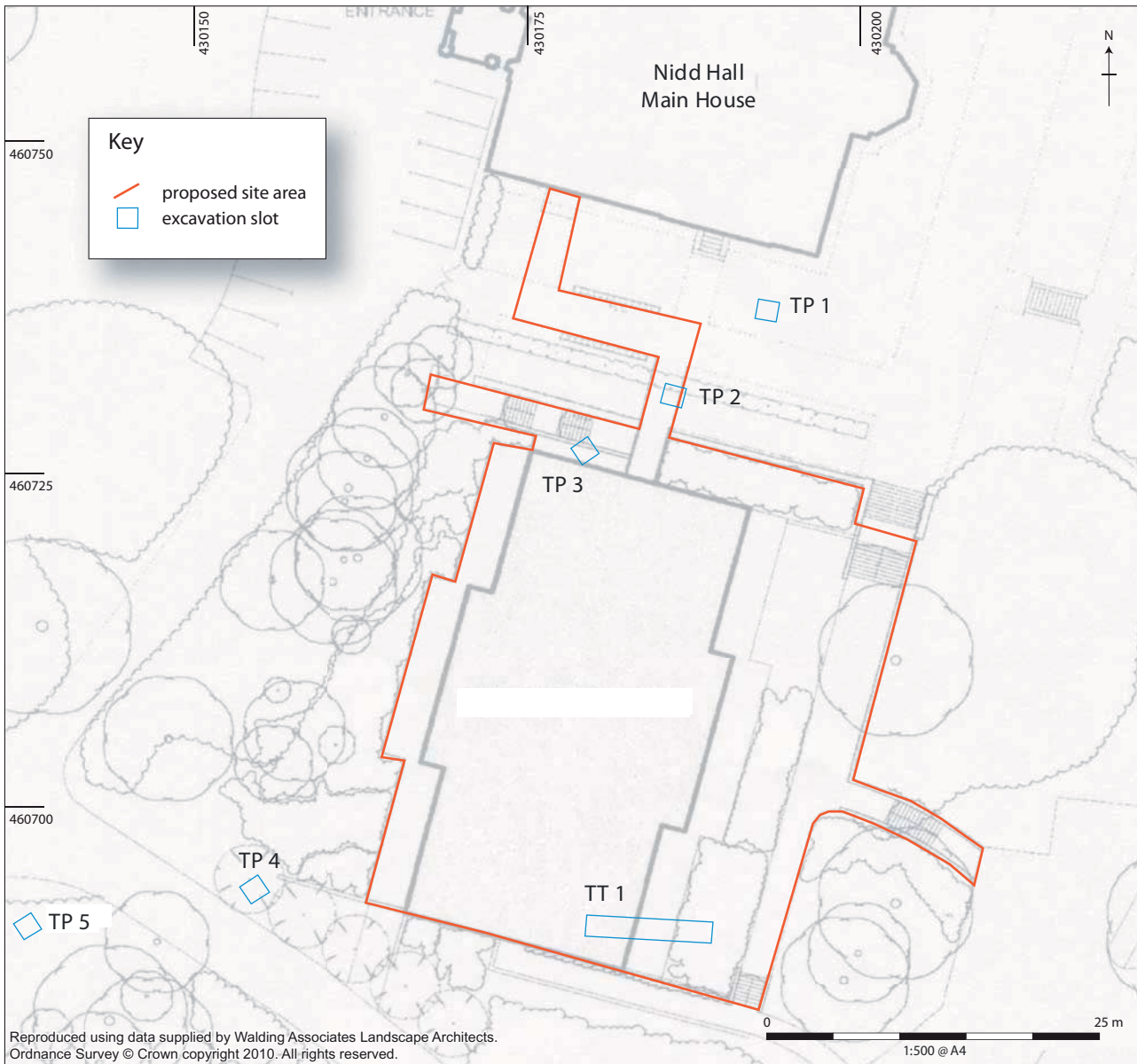
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Illus 1
Site location

NIDD HALL, NORTH YORKSHIRE

Pre-determination Evaluation

by Simon Mayes

A series of evaluation test pits and trial trenches were excavated within the vicinity of the current southern car park and terraced areas of Nidd Hall, where the new proposals would impact through the construction of buildings, a passage, and new roads. The test pits were intended to measure the degree of fill or truncation associated with the terrace and the existing car park. Further down the slope where terracing was likely to have had less of an impact other trenches were opened (mainly within the footprint of the proposed new access road) to test for the presence of buried archaeological remains.

The results achieved by the evaluation demonstrated that extensive modern modification of the ground surface and topography had taken place in the vicinity of the hotel terrace and the car park. In other areas soil horizons seemed intact, but no archaeological remains were located. Historical evidence suggests that the terrace on the south side of the hall was probably constructed around 1896.

1. INTRODUCTION

Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd was commissioned to conduct an archaeological pre-determination evaluation at Nidd Hall Hotel, by Bourne Leisure Limited. The evaluation was conducted in advance of a proposed planning application to construct a suite of new bedrooms, an access tunnel, and a new access road to the car park on the south side of the hall (see Illus 1).

The purpose of this pre-determination evaluation was to assess the likelihood of archaeological survival within the proposed development area and where relevant, test whether any archaeological remains were present. A series of evaluation test pits and trial trenches were excavated within the vicinity of the current southern car park and terraced areas of Nidd Hall, on 18th March 2010.

Prior to the fieldwork conducted by Headland Archaeology (UK), a desk-based archaeological assessment of the site was undertaken in 2008 by Archaeological Investigations Ltd (AI Ltd 2008). This study identified a number of sites within the vicinity of the existing hall, including the medieval village of Nidd, lying to the south and east of the current hotel, and indicated that there was potential for remains relating to an earlier 16th century manor and possibly earlier remains to occur within the development area.

The site is located at SE 30197 60774 and the underlying geology comprises the millstone grit group with overlying deposits of till.

2. METHOD

The original scheme of works required that four test pits measuring 1.5 x 1.5m and two evaluation trenches measuring 1.5 x 15m would be excavated within the proposed development area in order to identify the method of construction of the terraced areas south of the hall.

However due to operational constraints caused by existing vegetation and service runs it was not possible to excavate TT2 as planned, and the proposed original location of TP4 was also not accessible. Therefore test pits one and two were excavated on top of the hotel terrace, test pit three at the base of the terrace adjacent to the car park, TT2 was split into two smaller test pits (test pits 4 and 5) and relocated from within the wooded area to the position of the new proposed road alterations and TT1 was excavated as planned adjacent to the car park and within the proposed footprint of the extension.

The test pits were excavated using a JCB tracked mini digger, fitted with a wide toothless ditching bucket. All trenches were excavated by machine under direct archaeological supervision and were excavated in controlled spits. Machine excavation terminated at the top of the natural geology. On completion of machine excavation, all faces of the trench that required examination or recording were cleaned using appropriate hand tools. The stratigraphic sequence was recorded in full in each of the trenches, even where no archaeological deposits were identified.

All recording followed IfA Standards and Guidance for conducting archaeological evaluations. All contexts, small finds and environmental samples were given unique numbers.

All recording was undertaken on *pro forma* record cards, 35mm colour transparencies and black-and-white prints were taken with a graduated metric scale clearly visible.

Trench locations were established using a Trimble RTK dGPS and accurately related to the National Grid and OSDN. Overall trench plans were drawn on pro-forma record sheets at 1:50, with individual features planned at 1:20, sections drawn at 1:10.

The work was undertaken in accordance with a Project Design drafted by Headland Archaeology (UK) Ltd and agreed with the client (see Appendix 1).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Test Pit 1 & Test Pit 2 (1.5 x 1.5m each)

TP1 and TP2 were located along the top of the terrace in order to establish its method and date of construction. They revealed that the area had a considerable build up of topsoil beneath the turf line (average depth 0.4m) which subsequently overlaid a thin spread of demolition/construction debris, possibly associated with the construction phase of the terraced walkway. The construction spread overlay the natural geological deposits of glacial till. Test pit 1 was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m in order to confirm that imported material had not been used to build the terrace – no change within the natural deposits was witnessed.

3.2 Test Pit 3 (1.5 x 1.5m)

Test pit 3 was located at the base of the terrace edge to determine the degree of truncation associated with the terrace construction and the modern south car park. Excavation revealed the depth of topsoil to be approximately 0.4m, which again overlay a thin layer of building debris demonstrating that the area had been landscaped. The underlying natural was encountered at a depth of 0.5m below the present ground surface.

3.3 Trial Trench 1 (1.5 x 15m), Test Pits 4 & 5 (1.5 x 1.5m each)

The excavation of the trial trench and test pits revealed a shallower depth of topsoil than in the other test pits, and the thin spread of construction debris was absent and there was no evidence for truncation of the natural soil profile. No archaeological remains were identified in these trenches.

4. CONCLUSION

The results achieved through the excavation of the pre-determination evaluation showed that the terrace upon

which the hotel is built was formed (at its southern end at least) by accentuating a natural topographic feature, rather than building up an area with imported materials. The level area occupied by the existing car park appears to have been formed by cutting into the gently sloping hillside running away from the southern side of the house. This landscaping does not seem to have extended as far as the locations of TR 1 and TPs 4 and 5.

It is therefore possible draw the following conclusions about the potential for the proposed development to impact previously unknown archaeological remains:

1. There is a low potential for the survival of remains pre-dating the construction of the existing Hall on the top of the terrace due to truncation caused by landscaping.
2. There is a moderate potential for the survival of remains such as garden features post-dating the construction of the existing Hall to survive on the top of the terrace.
3. There is a low potential for the survival of any archaeological remains in the area of the south car park due to truncation caused by landscaping and the construction of the car park.
4. There was no evidence that the areas that would be affected by the re-aligned access road had been affected by landscaping. However, no archaeological remains were located in this area despite the more extensive trenching, and no small finds (such as pieces of pottery) were recovered from the topsoil, suggesting that if archaeological remains are present in this area their density is low.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Site registers

Trench register

Test Pit	Orientation	Length & width	Excavated depth (max)
1	Located on the top of the southern terrace/walkway	1.5m x 1.5m	1.2m
2	Located on the top of the southern terrace/walkway	1.5m x 1.5m	0.5m
3	Located at the base of the southern terraced walk way	1.5m x 1.5m	1.05m
4	Located to the west of the main build area within the rout of the proposed access	1.5m x 1.5m	0.8m
5	Located to the west of the main build area within the rout of the proposed access	1.5m x 1.5m	0.8m
Trench	Orientation	Length & width	Topsoil depth
1	E–W, located within the area of proposed development	1.5m x 15m	0.6m

Context register

Context	Test Pit	Description	Depth
1001	1	Topsoil, mouldable/friable, Buff black loam, Root disturbance, no inclusions	0.3m
1002	1	Fragmented orange sand stone with fragments of white soap/mudstone, irregular shaped small to medium in size	0.1m
1003	1	Natural. Loose gritty loam, mainly comprising of irregular flat stones (0.05–0.1m 20%) and medium to large (0.15m–0.3m) increasing in size and intensity with depth	0.8m
2001	2	Topsoil, description as seen in TP1	0.2m–0.3m
2002	2	Shallow spread of demolition with inclusions of red brick ceramic pipe and slate	0.15m
2003	2	Natural, same as TP1	0.15m
3003	3	Topsoil, description as seen in TP1, but greater build up	0.4m
3002	3	Mixed deposit with inclusions of red brick and rubble (5%)	0.1m
3003	3	Pale/buff brown loam, friable with small irregular shaped stone inclusions, tree root disturbance	0.3m
3004	3	Natural, same as TP1	0.2m
4004	4	Topsoil, description as seen in TP1	0.3m
4005	4	Natural, same as TP1	0.5m
5001	5	Topsoil, description as seen in TP1	0.3m
5002	5	Natural, same as TP1	0.5m
TT1			
1001	1	Topsoil, natural, same as TP1 but shallow in depth	0.1m–0.2m
1002	1	Natural, same as TP1	0.4m–0.6m

Annotated plans register

Drawing no.	Section	Plan	Description
1	–	Surveyed site plan	Location plan and details

Photographic register

Photo no.	Colour Slide	Monochrome	Digital	Direction Facing	Description
01	420/36	421/35	2330	E	Area of T1 & T2 before excavation
02	420/35	421/34	2331	W	Area of T1 & T2 before excavation
03	420/34	421/33	2332	N	Trench 1, section detail
04	420/33	421/32	2333	W	Trench 1, section detail
05	420/32	421/31	2334	S	Trench 2, section detail
06	420/31	421/30	2335	NW	Trench 2, section detail
07	420/30	421/29	2336	NW	Trench 3, general view of area before excavation
08	420/29	421/28	2337	NE	Trench 3, section detail
09	420/28	421/27	N/A	S	Trench 4, section detail
10	420/27	421/26	2338	E	Trench 4, section detail
11	420/26	421/25	2339	S	Trench 5, section detail
12	420/25	421/24	2340	E	Trench 5, section detail
13	420/24	421/23	2341	E	TT1, view along trench
14	420/23	421/22	2342	E	TT1, view along trench
15	420/22	421/21	2343	N	TT1, section detail
16	420/21	421/20	2344	N	TT1, section detail