



De Warenne Academy, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation





**DE WARENNE ACADEMY,
CONISBROUGH, DONCASTER,
SOUTH YORKSHIRE**

Archaeological Evaluation

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Archaeological Evaluation

Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wates Construction to carry out a programme of archaeological evaluation on playing fields adjacent to the De Warenne Academy, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire. This was undertaken due to a previous geophysical survey of the Site indicating the presence of probable archaeology on the Site, although concentrated at the north and west of the Site.

Five trenches *c.* 30m x 2m were excavated in the area of a proposed building and pond, at the south-east of the Site. The same depositional sequence was observed in each of the five trenches, with a dark silty clay topsoil overlaying a natural mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions. Beneath this was the limestone bedrock, which was observed at varying depths across the south-east of the site. No archaeological deposits or features were observed in any of the trenches, other than those of modern origins associated with the lands former use as allotment gardens. This confirmed previous geophysical survey results which showed no archaeological features present within the area at the south-east of the Site. The project archive will be deposited with Doncaster Museum.

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Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Wates Construction for commissioning the project. Wessex Archaeology would also like to thank Andy Lines of South Yorkshire Archaeology Service for assistance and advice during the project.

Richard O'Neill managed the project for Wessex Archaeology. The fieldwork was undertaken by Lucy Dawson with the assistance of Jon Watts. The report was researched and compiled by Lucy Dawson, with illustrations undertaken by Chris Swales.

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Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Wates Construction (hereafter 'the Client') to carry out an archaeological evaluation on playing fields adjacent to the De Warenne Academy, Conisbrough, Doncaster, South Yorkshire (hereafter 'the Site'). The Site is located to the north of North Cliff Road and is centred on NGR 450724 399108 (**Figure 1**).

1.1.2 The work was needed to inform proposals for the development of the Site. This report is required in order to fulfil an archaeological planning condition. The programme of archaeological works was undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology, 2011a), approved by Andy Lines (hereafter 'the Curator') of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS).

1.1.3 The Site formerly contained allotment gardens until the area was given over to be used as playing fields for the adjacent school in the 1960s. A recent geophysical survey of the Site and archaeological watching brief during geotechnical test pitting was undertaken by Wessex Archaeology (2011b and 2011c). The geophysical survey detected anomalies of probable archaeological interest, although these were concentrated to the north and west of the Site.

1.2 The Site, Location and Geology

1.2.1 The Site (centred on NGR 450724 399108) is located in Conisbrough, approximately 7.7km south-west of Doncaster, South Yorkshire. It is bounded to the south-west by North Cliffe Road and to the south-east by allotment gardens. To the north is an outcrop of limestone rock which represents the remains of the disused North Cliffe Quarry, whilst to the north and west are areas of scrubland. The Site occupies a prominent position on a north-facing slope, overlooking the River Don.

1.2.2 The underlying geology of the area is that of glaciofluvial and alluvial deposits overlying the Brotherton Formation and Pennine Upper Coal Measures (British Geological Survey).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

2.1.1 A previous desk-based assessment (Faber Maunsell AECOM, 2008) outlined the extent of archaeological potential within the area of the Site. Below is a summary of the findings.

2.2 Prehistoric (to AD 43) and Romano-British (AD 43–AD 410)

2.2.1 There are three sites of prehistoric date known within the Conisbrough area, with all being recorded flint artefacts. Whilst there is limited evidence from the Romano-British period within the area. Four recorded Romano-British sites were find spots. This may be due to Conisbrough's distance from the Romano-British settlement in the centre of modern Doncaster.

2.3 Anglo-Saxon (AD 410–1066)

2.3.1 The name Conisbrough is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *Cyningesburh*, meaning defended burh of the King or 'Kings fortification'. This may suggest that the area once belonged to one of the Anglo-Saxon kings prior to the Norman Conquest. At the time of the conquest the manor of Conisbrough was held by King Harold who was defeated in the Battle of Hastings.

2.3.2 The settlement at Conisbrough was recorded in the Domesday Book as the Honour of Conisbrough, a large estate made up of the 'burh' and twenty eight vills (small townships). William de Warenne, the son in law of William I, commissioned the first motte and bailey castle. The De Warenne family remained the owners for a considerable time.

2.3.3 One site is recorded as a Pre-Norman cist burial at Conisbrough Church. This was located below a Norman tomb.

2.4 Medieval (1066–1500)

2.4.1 After the death of William de Warenne in 1088, there is little documentary evidence for the history of the castle in the late 11th and 12th centuries.

2.4.2 In the 12th century a large stone cylindrical keep was added in order to make the castle a place suitable for royalty. The stone curtain walls were added soon after, whilst the buildings within the Bailey were not constructed until the 13th century.

2.4.3 By the end of the medieval period the castle started to fall out of use. A survey from 1537 records that the gates, bridge and 33m of wall had collapsed and one floor of the keep had fallen in.

2.4.4 A number of sites in the Conisbrough area date to the medieval period and include St Peter's Church, a Grade I listed building, and a sculpture built into the east wall of the Conisbrough Church. Documentary evidence indicated the presence of pottery kilns and a Hermitage Chapel, whilst archaeological evaluation works have also identified medieval features including ridge and furrow.

2.5 Post-Medieval (1500-1800)

2.5.1 The majority of development in Conisbrough occurred during the post-medieval period, and included not only domestic development in the form of housing, public houses, wells, but also industrial development. During the early 19th century the Doncaster and Swinton Railway was constructed with a station at Conisbrough. Adjacent to this Kilner Brother opened a glass works for the manufacture of bottles and jars.

2.5.2 The first edition OS map of the area shows the land now occupied by De Warenne Academy as open fields, bounded to the north by a steep rise in the land called Hill Cliff, and North Cliff sandstone quarry.

2.6 Modern (1800-present)

2.6.1 Development continued during the 19th and 20th centuries, and included Fullerton Hospital opened in 1905. Two air raid shelters have been noted within the area, one being within the school grounds, although not believed to be extant, whilst other buildings included a miners' Memorial Chapel, the Grade II listed church of St Alban, and a Grade II listed war memorial. Northcliffe School was opened in 1929 by Sir Percy Jackson, a wealthy coal mine owner, for the children of the mill workers.

2.6.2 The historic mapping of the school grounds remains largely unchanged until the first school building appears on the 1930 OS map. The Site now occupied by the school fields, on the opposite side of North Cliff Road, is depicted as being used as allotment gardens until the 1962 OS map when the majority of the land is labelled as playing fields. The expansion and development of the school over the later editions of mapping is mirrored by the gradual expansion of Conisbrough.

2.7 Recent Archaeological Investigations

2.7.1 As part of the current development project, Wessex Archaeology was commissioned to carry out a geophysical survey of the Site and a watching brief during geotechnical test pitting (Wessex Archaeology, 2011b and 2011c). The survey detected anomalies of probable and possible archaeological interest including possible sections of a ditched field system.

2.7.2 The magnetic background over the entire Site was significantly disturbed by the presence of modern services, extant sports equipment and remnants of activities related to the former use of the Site as allotment gardens.

3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 Aims

3.1.1 The main aims of the work were:

- to record as far as reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of any surviving archaeological remains observed;
- to provide sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made about the need for additional archaeological mitigation required within the area affected by the initial construction works.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 The objectives of the work were:

- to determine the phasing and degree of complexity of the horizontal and/or vertical stratigraphy present;
- to determine the approximate date or date range of the remains, by means of artefactual, stratigraphic or other evidence;
- to determine the condition, state of preservation and wider archaeological or historic significance of the remains;
- to prepare plans and documentation, sufficient to enable the Local Planning Authority and the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service to make an informed decision regarding the future treatment of any remains;
- to collate the results of the evaluation and any detailed excavation and recording, including all necessary analyses.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 Five trenches, c.30m x 2m, were excavated to the south-east of the Site (**Figure 1**), targeting areas of a proposed building, pond, landscaping and access. Each trench was set out using a survey grade GPS within +/- 100mm accuracy. All work was carried out in accordance with that set out in the Written Scheme of Investigation (Wessex Archaeology, 2011a).

4.2 Site Visit

4.2.1 The archaeological evaluation was carried out on the 9th and 10th of November 2011. During the groundworks the weather was overcast with some rain. The topsoil was saturated, although visibility was good.

4.3 Machine excavation

4.3.1 Trenches 1-5 were excavated using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, working under continuous direct supervision of a suitably experienced archaeologist. Machining ceased at the first archaeological horizon, or natural geological deposits.

4.4 Standard Methodologies

4.4.1 All excavation and recording was undertaken by qualified archaeologists employed by Wessex Archaeology. All archaeological remains encountered were recorded and excavated in accordance with current industry best practise (Institute for Archaeologists 2008a).

4.5 Recording

4.5.1 All archaeological features and deposits encountered were recorded using Wessex Archaeology pro forma recording sheets and a continuous unique numbering system. A stratigraphic matrix was compiled to record the relationships between features and deposits.

- 4.5.2 A full photographic record was produced consisting of 35mm monochrome prints and colour transparencies. Digital images were also taken to support the record.

5 EVALUATION RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 Five trenches were excavated at the southeast of the Site, targeting the area of the proposed building and pond. The previous archaeological geophysical survey of the Site had shown little in terms of possible archaeological features within the south-east of the Site. Geological test pits were excavated at each end of each trench in order to ascertain the depth of bedrock across the Site. The topsoil contained modern finds across the Site, associated with the use of the Site as playing fields and included football boots and bicycle handlebars. These were not retained.

5.2 Trench 1

- 5.2.1 Trench 1 (**Plate 1**) was located to the south-eastern corner of the Site, laid in a northwest to southeast orientation. The trench measured 30m x 2m. Topsoil **1001** overlaid compacted sterile natural mid-orange sandy silt with limestone flecks **1002**, interpreted as glacial till. Below this at 1.4m was bedrock. No archaeological features were observed.

5.3 Trench 2

- 5.3.1 Trench 2 measured 30m x 2m, was positioned to the north-west of Trench 1, and was aligned north-south (**Plate 2**). Topsoil **2001** up to 0.20m overlaid compacted sterile natural mid-orange sandy silt **2002**, the same as **1002**. This in turn overlaid bedrock observed at 1.8m bgl. No archaeological deposits or features were observed. One animal burrow which contained 30 pieces of bone from the posterior of an adult fox and a single post-medieval/early modern sherd of pottery was located at the northern end of the trench within deposit **2002** (not retained).

5.4 Trench 3

- 5.4.1 Trench 3 was the most easterly positioned trench on land which drops down to the south-east. The trench was laid in a north-east to south-west alignment and measured 30m x 2m (**Plate 3**). The topsoil 3001 was up to 0.50m deep with a large amount of modern demolition rubble including bricks, metal and asbestos sheeting, all relating to previous land use as allotment gardens. Underlying this topsoil was compacted sterile natural mid-orange sandy silt **3002**, the same as **1002** and **2002**. A single square brick structure truncated the natural (**Plate 4**), constructed from modern red bricks, laid in a cement mortar and appeared 20th century in date, presumably a drain or similar feature associated with the former allotments. The natural till **3002** overlaid bedrock at 1m bgl.

5.5 Trench 4

- 5.5.1 Trench 4 was aligned north-east to south-west and measured 32m x 2m. (**Plate 5**). The topsoil was 0.50m in depth and overlaid compacted sterile

natural mid-orange sandy silt **4002** (the same as **1002**, **2002** and **3002**). Below the bedrock was observed at 1m bgl. Plough scars were visible running north-west to south-east throughout the trench. No other archaeological features of deposits were observed.

5.6 Trench 5

- 5.6.1 Trench 5 (**Plate 6**) was located to the north of trench 4, excavated in a north-west to south-east alignment, and measured 26m x 2m. Topsoil up to 0.51m in depth overlaid compacted sterile natural mid-orange sandy silt **4002** (the same as **1002**, **2002**, **3002** and **4002**) and limestone bedrock. No archaeological deposits or features were observed.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1.1 The evaluation identified a dark brown, silty clay topsoil, which overlay a natural compacted mid-orange sandy silt. This was likely a natural glacial till and lay directly over the limestone bedrock, which depth varied across the Site. This same sequence was present in each trench. No likely archaeological deposits or features were observed other than those associated with former allotment gardens and plough scars.
- 6.1.2 The five trenches confirmed the previous geophysical survey results (Wessex Archaeology, 2011c) which showed no archaeological features present in the south-east corner of the Site, the current area of proposed development.

7 ARCHIVE AND COPYRIGHT

7.1 Archive

- 7.1.1 The project archive, consisting of all primary written documents, photographs, and electronic data, will be prepared by Wessex Archaeology staff in accordance with United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (2001), Museums and Galleries Commission (1992), English Heritage (2006) guidelines and the requirements of Doncaster Museum. The archive is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology, Sheffield. The full list of the contents of this archive is detailed in **Table 1** below. The archive will be deposited with Doncaster Museum, and an accession number will be assigned once deposited.

7.2 Dissemination

- 7.2.1 Hard copies of this report will be distributed in accordance with the requirements of the Local Planning Authority. This will include one bound copy of this report for submission to the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and one bound copy for the inclusion on the Site archive. PDF copies of the report will also be provided on CDs. A digital copy will be submitted to the English Heritage Regional Science Advisor.

7.2.2 An OASIS form will be completed at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/> for inclusion in the ADS database. This will include an electronic copy of the report in PDF format.

7.3 Copyright

7.3.1 This report, and the archive generally, may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (e.g. Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which we are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferrable by Wessex Archaeology. Users remain bound by the conditions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with regard to multiple copying and electronic dissemination of the report.

Table 1: Archive Index

Paper archive			
Folder no.	Folder type	Item(s)	No.
		Day Register	1
1	A4 ring binder	Risk Assessment	1
		Written Scheme of Investigation	1
		Trench Record Sheets	5
		Photographic Record	9
		Bound copy of final report	1

8 REFERENCES

8.1 Bibliography

English Heritage, 2005. A Strategy for the Care and Investigation of Finds.

English Heritage, 2006. Management of Research Projects in the Historic environment: a Managers Guide ('MoRPHE') London; English Heritage.

Faber Maunsell, 2008. Northcliffe School Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.

Institute for Archaeologists, 2007. Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in Creation, Compilation, Transfer and Curation.

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2008a. Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation.

Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), 2008b. Standard and Guidance for the Collection, Documentation, Conservation and Research of Archaeological Materials.

Museum and Galleries Commission, 1992. Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections.

United Kingdom Institute of Conservation (UKIC), 2001. Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage.

Wessex Archaeology, 2011a. Written Scheme of Investigation for Archaeological Evaluation. Report ref. 78441.01

Wessex Archaeology, 2011b. Archaeological Watching Brief: Statement of Results. Report ref. 78440.03

Wessex Archaeology, 2011c. Geophysical Survey. Report ref. 78440.01

Wessex Archaeology, 2011d. Archaeological Evaluation: Statement of Results. Report ref. 78441.02

8.2 Cartographic Sources

1854 Ordnance Survey

1892 Ordnance Survey

1902 Ordnance Survey

1903 Ordnance Survey

1930 Ordnance Survey

1956 Ordnance Survey

1958 Ordnance Survey

1962 Ordnance Survey

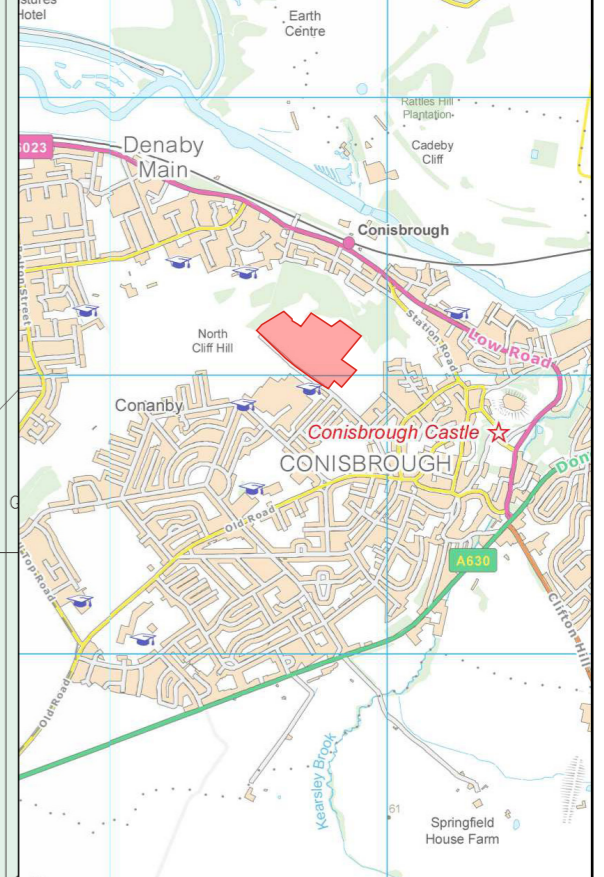
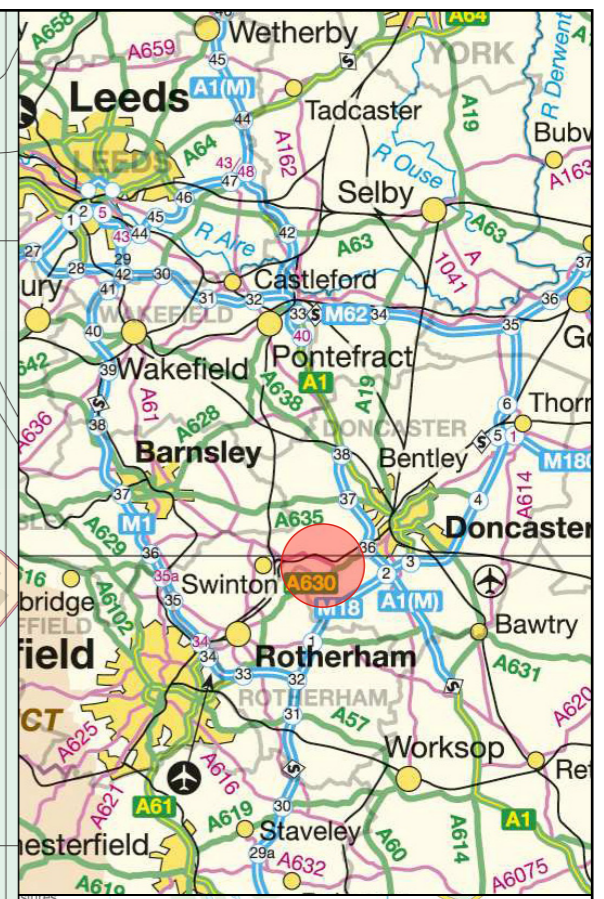
1987 Ordnance Survey

8.3 Other Sources

<http://www.bgs.ac.uk/>

APPENDIX 1: CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench No. 1			
Context	Context Type	Context Description	Depth below ground level (m)
1001	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with irregular stone inclusions and root disturbance	0 – 0.52m
1002	Deposit	Compacted mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions	0.52m+
Trench No. 2			
2001	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with irregular stone inclusions and root disturbance	0 – 0.20m
2002	Deposit	Compacted mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions	0.20m+
Trench No. 3			
3001	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with irregular stone inclusions and root disturbance, and mixed with high quantity of modern demolition and made ground.	0 – 0.50m
3002	Deposit	Compacted mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions	0.50m+
Trench No. 4			
4001	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with irregular stone inclusions and root disturbance	0 – 0.50m
4002	Deposit	Compacted mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions	0.50m+
Trench No. 5			
5001	Deposit	Dark brown silty clay with irregular stone inclusions and root disturbance	0 – 0.51m
5002	Deposit	Compacted mid-orange sandy silt with limestone inclusions	0.51m+



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Survey extents	Probable archaeology	Possible archaeology	Trend	Building footprint	Proposed pond
Evaluation trench	Increased magnetic response	Ferrous	Modern service	Area of Sports Pitches - no impact	

Date:	November 2011	Revision Number:	1.1 CB
Scale:	Main graphic - 1:1250 @ A3	Illustrator:	CS
Path:	Y:\Projects\78440_De Warrenne Academy\Drawing Office\Report Figs\WSI_trenchingly-m-d\AutoCAD		

Trench locations

Figure 1



Plate 1: General view of Trench 1 looking north-west



Plate 2: General view of Trench 2 looking south



Plate 3: General view of Trench 3 looking south-west



Plate 4: Detail of brick structure, Trench 3



Plate 5: General view of Trench 4 looking east



Plate 6: General view of Trench 5 looking north-west



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