

Land off Yarm Road, Middleton St George, Darlington, Durham

Archaeological Evaluation Report



Ref: 117551.01 November 2017



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Document Information

Document title Land off Yarm Road, Middleton St George, Darlington, Durham

Document subtitle Archaeological Evaluation

Document reference 117551.01

Client name Commercial Development Projects Limited

Address Marshall House, Huddersfield Road

Elland, West Yorkshire, HX5 9BW

Site location Middleton St George

County Durham

National grid reference (NGR) 435026, 513552 (NZ 35026 13552)

Statutory designations None

Planning authority Darlington Borough Council

Planning reference 17/00911/FUL

Museum name TBC
Museum accession code TBC

WA project name Land off Yarm Road

WA project codes T23767/117551

Dates of fieldwork 31/10/2017 – 1/11/2017

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Quality Assurance

Issue number & date		Status Author		Approved by	
1	02/11/2017	First Draft	SP		
2	22/11/2017	External Draft	RJO	Rimand O'Nem	



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Summary

Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Commercial Developments Projects Limited, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 0.63 ha parcel of land located in Middleton St George, Darlington, Durham, centred on NGR 435026, 513552.

The proposed development comprises the construction of ten residential dwellings, an area of open public space with connecting roads and a shop with associated parking. A planning application (17/00911/FUL) submitted to Darlington Borough Council was granted subject to planning conditions, including a condition for a programme of archaeological work.

All works were undertaken in accordance with a Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed in order to undertake the evaluation (Wessex Archaeology 2017). The WSI was approved by Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record Officer, Durham County Council Archaeology Section, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.

The only archaeological features recorded were the bases of plough furrows, identified in all three trenches and all aligned northeast to southwest. The spacing between the furrows was seen to be regular and was on average between 3 m and 4 m. A selection of the furrows were hand excavated to confirm their interpretation and characterise them. Most examples survived to a width of c.1 m and a depth of up to 0.1 m and were filled with subsoil. No finds were recovered to assist with dating. These features likely represent the remnants of ridge and furrow, typically of medieval and post-medieval date. One trench to the west of the site contained an additional layer of made ground (containing modern brick and tarmac fragments) below the topsoil.

The programme of trial trenching has been successful in characterising the areas accessible and has found no significant archaeological remains.

The fieldwork archive will be stored at Wessex Archaeology's Sheffield office until a suitable repository is identified. The complete site archive, which will include paper records, photographic records, graphics and digital data, will be prepared following standard guidelines for the acceptance of excavated archaeological material.



Acknowledgements

Wessex Archaeology would like to thank Commercial Developments Projects Limited, for commissioning the archaeological evaluation, particularly James Marshall and Miranda Bell in this regard. Wessex Archaeology is also grateful for the assistance of Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record Officer, Durham County Council Archaeology Section.



Land off Yarm Road Middleton St George Darlington Durham

Archaeological Evaluation

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project and planning background

- 1.1.1 Wessex Archaeology was commissioned by Commercial Developments Projects Limited ('the Client'), to undertake an archaeological evaluation of a 0.63 ha parcel of land located in Middleton St George, Darlington, Durham ('the Site', centred on NGR 435026, 513552 (**Fig. 1**).
- 1.1.2 The proposed development comprises the construction of ten residential dwellings, an area of open public space with connecting roads and a shop with associated parking. A planning application (17/00911/FUL) submitted to Darlington Borough Council, was granted, subject to planning conditions. This included a condition relating to a programme of archaeological works as follows:

No development shall take place until the applicant has secured the implementation of a phased programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, including a timetable for the investigation, which has been approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Scheme shall provide for:

- i), the proper identification and evaluation of the extent, character and significance of archaeological remains within the application area by means of trial trench evaluation to inform the reserved matters application(s);
- ii), an assessment of the impact of the proposed development on any archaeological remains identified in the evaluation phase;
- iii), proposals for a mitigation strategy for the investigation, recording and recovery of archaeological remains and the publishing of the findings, it being understood that there shall be a presumption in favour of their preservation in situ wherever feasible, should features be identified in the trenching phase (i);
- iv), sufficient notification and allowance of time to archaeological contractors nominated by the developer to ensure that archaeological fieldwork as proposed in pursuance of (i) and (iii) above is completed prior to the commencement of permitted development in the area of archaeological interest; and
- 1.1.3 Archaeological evaluation work was undertaken in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (WSI) which detailed the aims, methodologies and standards to be employed (Wessex Archaeology 2017). Nick Boldrini, Historic Environment Record Officer, Durham County Council Archaeology Section, approved the WSI, on behalf of the Local Planning Authority (LPA), prior to fieldwork commencing.



1.1.4 The evaluation comprising three trial trenches was undertaken between 31/10/2017 and 1/11/2017.

1.2 Scope of the report

- 1.2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a detailed description of the results of the evaluation, to interpret the results within a local, regional or wider archaeological context and assess whether the aims of the evaluation have been met.
- 1.2.2 The presented results will provide further information on the archaeological resource that may be impacted by the proposed development and facilitate an informed decision with regard to the requirement for, and methods of, any further archaeological mitigation.

1.3 Location, topography and geology

- 1.3.1 The proposed evaluation area is located between Yarm Road to the north and the Tees Valley Railway line to the south, approximately 400 m from the centre of the village of Middleton St George.
- 1.3.2 The Site is currently covered by long grass and lies on relatively flat ground at an elevation of approximately 40 m above Ordnance Datum (aOD).
- 1.3.3 The underlying geology is mapped as the Sherwood Sandstone Group overlain by superficial deposits of Till (British Geological Survey online viewer).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 The Site has not been subject to an archaeological desk-based assessment due to its proximity to previous archaeological work carried out adjacent to its western boundary.
- 2.1.2 The archaeological and historical background presented below represents summary of that within the evaluation report for the adjacent land parcel (Archaeological Services Durham University 2017), with relevant entry numbers from the Durham Historic Environment Record (HER) and the National Heritage List for England (NHLE) included.

2.2 Previous investigations

Geophysical Survey (Whittingham 2017)

- 2.2.1 Within the land parcel immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, a geophysical survey was carried out which identified a number of weak anomalies that were considered to be of potential archaeological origins or the result of agricultural practices, drainage or a variation in the natural subsoil.
 - Archaeological Evaluation (Archaeological Services Durham University 2017)
- 2.2.2 Within the land parcel immediately adjacent to the western boundary of the Site, an archaeological evaluation was carried out which comprised nine trenches to target anomalies identified on the previous geophysical survey.
- 2.2.3 The evaluation identified no archaeological features within the nine excavated trenches with land drains recorded in six and a plough furrow in one. The natural horizon was reached in all trenches at a depth of between 0.3 and 0.4 m below ground level (bgl). The natural horizon was overlain by a layer of yellow-grey silty clay subsoil, sealed by a dark grey-brown silty clay topsoil.



2.3 Archaeological and historical context

Prehistoric to Romano-British (8,500 BC – AD 410)

- 2.3.1 The earliest evidence for human occupation within the environs of the Site is a cropmark visible on aerial photographs interpreted to represent a late Neolithic pit alignment (HER 643) to the north-west of the village of Middleton St George.
- 2.3.2 A more substantial record of occupation dating to the Bronze Age is located within the wider landscape with evidence for settlement and funerary remains having been excavated at Ingleby Barwick to the east of the Site.
- 2.3.3 Later prehistoric settlement sites are recorded across the Tees lowlands with stray finds indicating widespread occupation of the landscape. Within the environs of the Site, a number of enclosures (HER 637, 641, 645, 648) and a settlement (HER 635) are recorded to be of probable Iron Age or Romano-British origin.
- 2.3.4 The wider landscape of the Site contains a number of significant Roman sites including two villas at Quarry Farm, Ingleby Barwick and Faverdate, Darlington in addition to Dere Street, a Roman Road.
- 2.3.5 The projected route of another Roman Road, Cade's Road (HER 6716) which ran from the forts at Bough on the Humber and Newcastle Upon Tyne is located to the west of the Site.
- 2.3.6 A bridge of possible Roman origins, *Ponse Teyse*, (H3506) was recorded during diving operations within the River Tees. A number of isolated finds of Roman material were found in the vicinity of the river, although the bridge may in fact be an Anglo-Saxon successor to the original Roman bridge.
 - Anglo-Saxon to Modern (AD 410 present day)
- 2.3.7 The HER records no finds or features dating to the Anglo-Saxon period within the immediate surroundings of the Site, although the name Middleton is a Saxon name and indicates the likely establishment of the settlement prior to the Norman Conquest in 1066 while an Anglo-Saxon sculpture in the village's church suggests it too may have been constructed prior to the medieval period.
- 2.3.8 The medieval settlement was centred around the church in the Low Middleton Hall area, where the settlement's manor was located. The area surrounding the settlement core was used for agricultural practice as evidenced by the remains of such activity within he environs of the Site (HER 5860, 5861, 60610).
- 2.3.9 The Site and the surrounding area remained relatively similar in character throughout the post-medieval period, defined by the small settlement core and the agricultural hinterland around it.
- 2.3.10 By the 19th century, the Stockton and Darlington Railway, the first public railway to use steam locomotives, had opened in 1825 and ran to the north of the Site. The construction of a station in the village led to its increased development during this time while the latter half of the 19th century saw larger houses constructed to accommodate wealthier members of the population. In addition to the railway, two iron works were founded in Middleton in the 19th century (HER 45985, 8066).



3 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

3.1 General aims

- 3.1.1 The general aims of the evaluation, as stated in the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017) were:
 - To provide information about the archaeological potential of the Site; and
 - To inform either the scope and nature of any further archaeological work that may be required; or the formation of a mitigation strategy (to offset the impact of the development on the archaeological resource); or a management strategy.

3.2 General objectives

- 3.2.1 In order to achieve the above aims, the general objectives of the evaluation were:
 - To determine the presence or absence of archaeological features, deposits, structures, artefacts or ecofacts within the specified area;
 - To establish, within the constraints of the evaluation, the extent, character, date, condition and quality of any surviving archaeological remains;
 - To place any identified archaeological remains within a wider historical and archaeological context in order to assess their significance; and
 - To make available information about the archaeological resource within the Site by reporting on the results of the evaluation.

3.3 Regional Objectives

- 3.3.1 In order to address the regional archaeological research agenda, set out within the North-East Regional Research Framework for the Historic Environment (Petts and Gerrard 2006), the following regional objectives were considered to be relevant:
 - Lii: Late Bronze Age and Iron Age Settlement;
 - Riv: Roman native and civilian life;
 - MDi: Later medieval settlement; and
 - MDii: Later medieval landscape

4 METHODS

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 All works were undertaken in accordance with the detailed methods set out within the WSI (Wessex Archaeology 2017) and in general compliance with national (CIfA 2014a and b) and regional standards (Durham County Council 2017). The methods employed are summarised below.

4.2 Fieldwork methods

General

4.2.1 The trench locations were set out using GPS, in the approximate positions as those proposed in the WSI (**Figure. 1**).



- 4.2.2 Three trial trenches, each measuring 30 m in length and 2 m wide, were excavated in level spits using a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket, under the constant supervision and instruction of the monitoring archaeologist. Machine excavation proceeded until either the archaeological horizon or the natural geology was exposed.
- 4.2.3 Where necessary, the base of the trench/ surface of archaeological deposits were cleaned by hand. A sample of archaeological features and deposits identified was hand-excavated, sufficient to address the aims of the evaluation.
- 4.2.4 Spoil derived from both machine stripping and hand-excavated archaeological deposits was visually scanned for the purposes of finds retrieval. Artefacts of modern date (e.g. tarmac and modern brick) were recorded on site and not retained.
- 4.2.5 Trenches were backfilled on completion of recording using excavated materials in the order in which they were excavated and left level on completion.

Recording

4.2.6 All exposed archaeological deposits and features were recorded using Wessex Archaeology's pro forma recording system. A full written, drawn and photographic record was made.

4.3 Artefactual and environmental strategies

4.3.1 No artefacts or environmental samples were recovered.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 All three excavated trial trenches contained plough furrows; no other archaeological features or deposits were present (**Figure. 1**). Detailed descriptions of individual contexts are provided in the trench summary tables (**Appendix 1**).

5.2 Overburden

5.2.1 Topsoil consisted of a dark brownish grey silty clay varying in thickness between 0.33 m and 0.4 m thick (**Plate 1**). Beneath this layer was a thin subsoil strata consisting of a light brown yellow silty clay varying in thickness between 0.05 m and 0.09 m thick. The natural strata consisting of a mid brown yellow silty clay and was reached at a depth of between 0.38 and 0.69 m. Made ground was identified in Trench 1 (**Plate 3**) consisting of a compact dark greyish brown silty clay containing modern red brick waste.

5.3 Ridge and furrow

- 5.3.1 The only features recorded were the bases of plough furrows, which were identified in all trenches (**Figure 1**; **Plate 2**). The furrows were all aligned northeast to southwest
- 5.3.2 A selection of the furrows were hand excavated to confirm their interpretation and characterise them (**Plate 2**). Most of the furrows survived to a width of c.1 m and a depth of up to 0.1 m (**Figure 1**). Where two or more furrows were located in a single trench the spacing between was seen to be regular and was on average between 3 m and 4 m. The furrows were filled with a thin layer of subsoil; no finds were recovered.
- 5.3.3 These features likely represent the remnants of ridge and furrow, typically of medieval and post-medieval date.



6 ARTEFACTUAL EVIDENCE

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 No artefacts were recovered.

7 ENVIRONMENTAL EVIDENCE

7.1 Introduction

7.1.1 No environmental samples were taken.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Summary

- 8.1.1 The only features recorded were the bases of plough furrows which were located in all three of the excavated trenches. The furrows were all aligned northeast to southwest with a spacing of 3 to 4 m between them. These features likely represent the remnants of ridge and furrow, typically of medieval and post-medieval date.
- 8.1.2 The programme of trial trenching has been successful in characterising the Site and has found no significant archaeological remains.
- 8.1.3 The results correlate with the negative results from previous trenching work on the adjacent parcel of land (Archaeological Services Durham University 2017).

9 ARCHIVE STORAGE AND CURATION

9.1 Museum

9.1.1 The archive resulting from the evaluation is currently held at the offices of Wessex Archaeology in Sheffield. The Bowes Museum has stopped accepting archaeological archives. Every effort will be made to identify a suitable repository for the archive resulting from the fieldwork, and if this is not possible, Wessex Archaeology will initiate discussions with the local planning authority in an attempt to resolve the issue. If no suitable repository is identified, Wessex Archaeology will continue to store the archive, but may institute a charge to the client for ongoing storage beyond a set period

9.2 Preparation of the archive

- 9.2.1 The archive, which includes paper records, graphics, and digital data, will be prepared following nationally recommended guidelines (SMA 1993, 1995; ClfA 2014c; Brown 2011; ADS 2013).
- 9.2.2 All archive elements are marked with the site code, and a full index will be prepared. The physical archive currently comprises the following:
 - 1 files/document cases of paper records and A3/A4 graphics;

9.3 Security copy

9.3.1 In line with current best practice (eg, Brown 2011), on completion of the project a security copy of the written records will be prepared, in the form of a digital PDF/A file. PDF/A is an ISO-standardised version of the Portable Document Format (PDF) designed for the digital preservation of electronic documents through omission of features ill-suited to long-term archiving.



9.4 OASIS

9.4.1 An OASIS online record (http://oasis.ac.uk/pages/wiki/Main) has been initiated, with key fields and a .pdf version of the final report submitted. Subject to any contractual requirements on confidentiality, copies of the OASIS record will be integrated into the relevant local and national records and published through the Archaeology Data Service ArchSearch catalogue.

10 COPYRIGHT

10.1 Archive and report copyright

- 10.1.1 The full copyright of the written/illustrative/digital archive relating to the project will be retained by Wessex Archaeology under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved. The client will be licenced to use each report for the purposes that it was produced in relation to the project as described in the specification. The museum, however, will be granted an exclusive licence for the use of the archive for educational purposes, including academic research, providing that such use conforms to the Copyright and Related Rights Regulations 2003. In some instances, certain regional museums may require absolute transfer of copyright, rather than a licence; this should be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.
- 10.1.2 Information relating to the project will be deposited with the Historic Environment Record (HER) where it can be freely copied without reference to Wessex Archaeology for the purposes of archaeological research or development control within the planning process.

10.2 Third party data copyright

10.2.1 This document and the project archive may contain material that is non-Wessex Archaeology copyright (eg, Ordnance Survey, British Geological Survey, Crown Copyright), or the intellectual property of third parties, which Wessex Archaeology are able to provide for limited reproduction under the terms of our own copyright licences, but for which copyright itself is non-transferable 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 such material.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Trench summaries

Trench 1	30 m x 2 m		NGR	m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
101	Layer	-	Topsoil: Compact dark brownish grey silty clay with frequent rooting.	0.00-0.4
102	Layer	-	Made ground: High compaction dark greyish brown clay silt with frequent small stone flecks and occasional red brick fragments.	0.4–0.6
103	Layer	-	Subsoil: Compact light brown yellow silty clay.	0.6–0.69
104	Layer	-	Natural: Compact brownish yellow silty clay.	0.69+

Trench 2			NGR	m OD
Context			Description	Depth bgl (m)
201	Layer	-	Topsoil: Moderately compact dark brownish grey silty clay with sparse sub angular stones and dense rooting.	0.00-0.35
202	Layer	-	Subsoil: Compact light brown yellow silty clay.	0.35-0.41
203	Layer	-	Natural: Compact mid brownish yellow silty clay.	0.41+

Trench 3	30 m x 2 m		NGR	m OD
Context	Interpretation	Fill of	Description	Depth bgl (m)
301	Layer	-	Topsoil: Moderately compact dark brownish grey silty clay with dense rooting.	0.00-0.33
302	Layer	-	Subsoil: Compact light brown yellow silty clay.	0.33-0.38
303	Layer	-	Natural: Compact mid brownish yellow silty clay.	0.38+

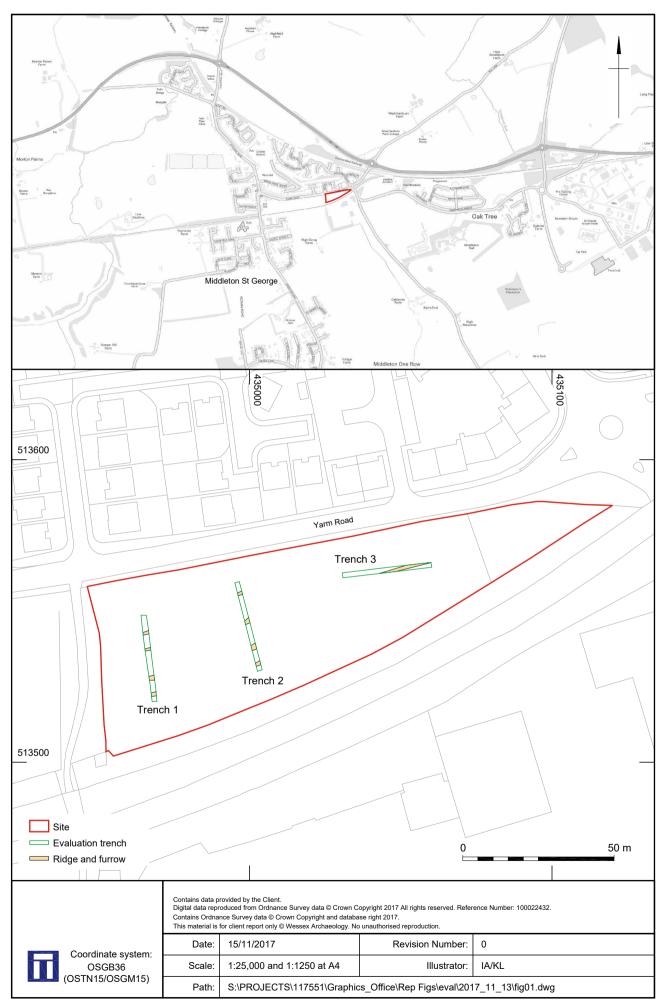




Plate 1: Shot of Trench 2 from the south



Plate 2: Shot of a furrow excavated in Trench 2 from the west



Plate 3: Representative section of strata in Trench 1 from the west

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Plate 1: Shot of Trench 2 from the south



Plate 2: Shot of a furrow excavated in Trench 2 from the west



Plate 3: Representative section of strata in Trench 1 from the west

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