

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording
at
Dunnington 11KV Overhead Line Rebuild
City of York

Site Code: WB2012.020
National Grid Reference: SE 6784 5069
Event Record: EYO4612
Northern Powergrid Project No: D109123

for

Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) PLC

Watching Brief Report Number: 1317
August 2012

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D. P. Rawson, August 2012

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology during groundwork associated with the Dunnington 11 KV overhead line rebuild to the south-east of Dunnington in the City of York.

No archaeological features were observed. A very small assemblage of pottery sherds was collected containing one much worn medieval sherd. None of this assemblage was deemed to be worthy of retention.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording (watching brief) undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology (HFA), on behalf of Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) PLC during groundwork associated with the Dunnington 11 KV overhead line rebuild to the south-east of Dunnington in the City of York (*Figure 1*).

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2. Archaeological Background

The village of Dunnington was an Anglian foundation situated between the Roman road running from York to Stamford Bridge and beyond, and the Roman road running from York to Brough (now the A1070). In 1066 Slettan and Edwin held two manors totalling four carucates at Dunnington, which in 1086 were held as one estate by the chapter of York. In 1377 there were 127 poll-tax payers in Dunnington and in 1672 74 households there were included in the hearth-tax return.

The site extends to the south-east from the A1079, along the line of former Derwent Light Railway. To the west of Common Lane extensive traces of Romano-British settlement have shown as crop-marks on aerial photographs. One complex (MYO3541) is centred on SE 674 513 and comprises a length of ditched trackway 270m long, with part of another of sinuous plan and about 70m long to the south-west. Adjacent to these are fragments of possible enclosures. Another crop-mark complex (MYO3539) is centred in SE 670 507 and covers an area of about 500m by 600m, and comprises a scatter of dispersed small enclosures, included a section of double ditched trackway. There would appear to further Romano-British complexes to the east, straddling the A1079 (MYO3537 and MYO2739).

As well as within the aforementioned areas, undated ridge and furrow has also been recorded within MYO2735, 2661, 2662, 2736, 2738 and 2737.

The dismantled Derwent Light Railway opened in 1913 and was closed in sections from 1965 to 1981.

3. Methodology

The work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology (HFA), in accordance with the recommendation made by John Oxley, City Archaeologist, City of York to Steven Gray of Northern Powergrid that an archaeological watching brief be commissioned to monitor, 'all excavations and

ground disturbances that might arise through your Overhead line rebuild' (Date: 22nd March 2012).

The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of pole replacement in the vicinity of the route of the former railway, with the opportunity being taken to walk the edges of adjacent fields, and the inspection of an open electricity cable trench. Three visits were made to the site between the 14th May and the 30th June 2012.

Any exposed areas of subsoil and lower stratigraphic units were examined for archaeological deposits. The excavated dimensions of the foundation trenches were recorded, as were the depth sequences of any exposed stratigraphy. Where archaeological deposits/features were identified, context numbers were assigned and detailed descriptions were made, plans and sections were drawn and a photographic record was maintained.

Archaeological artefacts found during the fieldwork were bagged according to their context, and returned to Humber Field Archaeology for further specialist analysis.

4. Results

A number of the poles had been erected prior to HFA being informed that site works had started (*Plates 4 and 6*). However excavation for pole erection is rarely very informative in archaeological terms and it is often more informative to field-work the route that the intended pole replacements will cover (see below).

Field-walking

This was undertaken along those field edges that were closest to the pole alignment. Unless noted otherwise, crop growth in the fields was sufficiently low and disturbance at the edge of the fields was great enough, to allow exposed soil to be viewed.

Field 1

Along the west side of the field there was a good deal of cinder and clinker, this presumably having been laid down as part of the former Derwent Light Railway. Apart from this and the narrow spur to the north-west part of the field (*Plate 1*), there was no evidence of the former railway in the landscape. Mixed in with the cinder and clinker were small sherds of what was obviously late 19th and early 20th century pottery. None of the aforementioned was collected.

Field 2

Again, along the west side of the field there was a good deal of cinder and clinker. No evidence was seen for the ridge in furrow (MYO2737) previously recorded in this field (*Figure 1, Plate 2*). A single sherd of pottery was collected (see **5. The Finds**).

Field 3

Evidence of the former railway's existence was absent here, save for the fact that the recent planted crop appeared to grow a little less well along the former railway's alignment (*Plate 3*). Two sherds of pottery were collected (see **5. The Finds**).

Field 4

From here and continuing to the south-east, the line of the former railway was represented by a vehicular trackway (*Figure 1, Plate 4*).

Field 5

No observations worthy of note (*Plate 5*).

Field 6

Field-walking was not possible here due to there being a hedge along the west edge of the field and the field itself having been given over to pasture (*Plate 6*).

Field 7

This field was quite waterlogged in places with species such as sedge in abundance (*Plate 7*). Evidence of past occupation would be less likely here.

Field 8

Field walking was not possible here since the field contained a mature crop of oilseed rape (*Plate 8*).

The cable trench

The trench was around 95m long, 0.50m wide and 1m deep, having been excavated to the immediate east of the former railway alignment and along the west edge of field 4 (*Figure 1, Plate 9*).

No archaeological features were observed in the trench. Throughout its base there was a layer at least 0.70m thick of what was generally bright yellow orange sand that in places was a much paler yellow grey (1002). This sand was very largely free of inclusions. Above this there was a 0.30m thick layer of dark grey brown very friable sandy topsoil (1001) (*Plate 10*).

With the completion of the cable trench excavation the watching brief was concluded.

5. The Finds

Pottery – Peter Didsbury (pers.com)

All the pottery sherds were recovered during field-walking and were therefore from unstratified deposits.

Field 2

One sherd of glazed red earthenware (GREB) of the 18th or 19th century.

Field 3

Two sherds of glazed red earthenware (GREB) of the 18th or 19th century.

One sherd of very worn medieval(?) pottery.

None of the finds were recommended for retention.

6. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of City of York archaeologist, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

The excavation of the cable trench revealed a sandy, free draining subsoil beneath a more than adequate depth of topsoil – land that would long have been highly regarded for settlement and agriculture. Given that there were areas of what are believed to have been quite intense Romano-British land use to the north, east and west of the site, it was a little disappointing not to find any pot sherd of the period during the field-walking, though this field walking was limited to the edges of fields that were at least partly in crop.

7. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to Northern Powergrid (Yorkshire) PLC for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The work was undertaken as per the recommendation received by Northern Powergrid from the City of York archaeologist. On-site monitoring was carried out by Neil Adamson and David Rawson, whilst the report was edited by David Atkinson. Administrative support was provided by Georgina Richardson and June Rooney.

8. References

Guidelines for Finds Work The Institute of Field Archaeologists Finds Group First Draft, 1991.

Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008 Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (October 1994, revised September 2001 and October 2008)

Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2), English Heritage, 1991
Museums and Galleries Commission, 1992 Standards in the museum care of archaeological collections

VCH. 1976. A History of the County of York East Riding: Volume 3: Ouse and Derwent wapentake and part of Harthill Wapentake

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 Context list

- (1001) Dark grey brown very friable sandy topsoil, 0.30m thick
- (1002) Bright yellow orange sand that in places was a much paler yellow grey, at least 0.70m thick

Appendix 2

Archive

Project Details:

Archaeological observation, investigation and recording at the Dunnington 11 KV overhead line rebuild to the south-east of Dunnington in the City of York

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Northern Powergrid Project No: D109123

Author David Rawson **Date of fieldwork** 14.05.12 – 30.06.12

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Report Number: 1317
August 2012

Quantity

The finds were discarded after spot dating
4x A4 plastic sleeves contain the paper archive

Summary of work

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2.1 Site notes

2.2 Staff site visit log

2.3 Site plans

3 The Photographic Record:

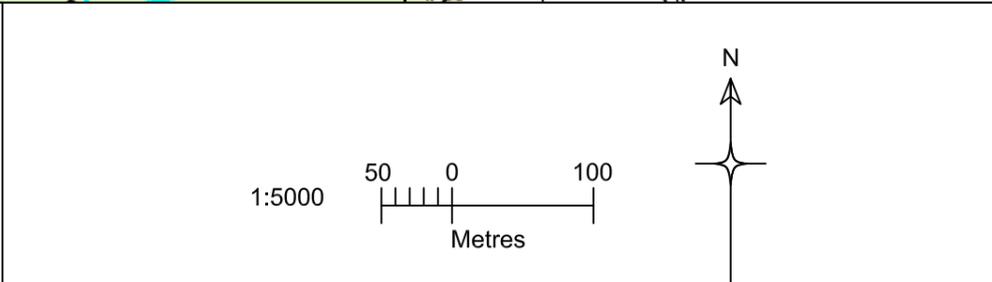
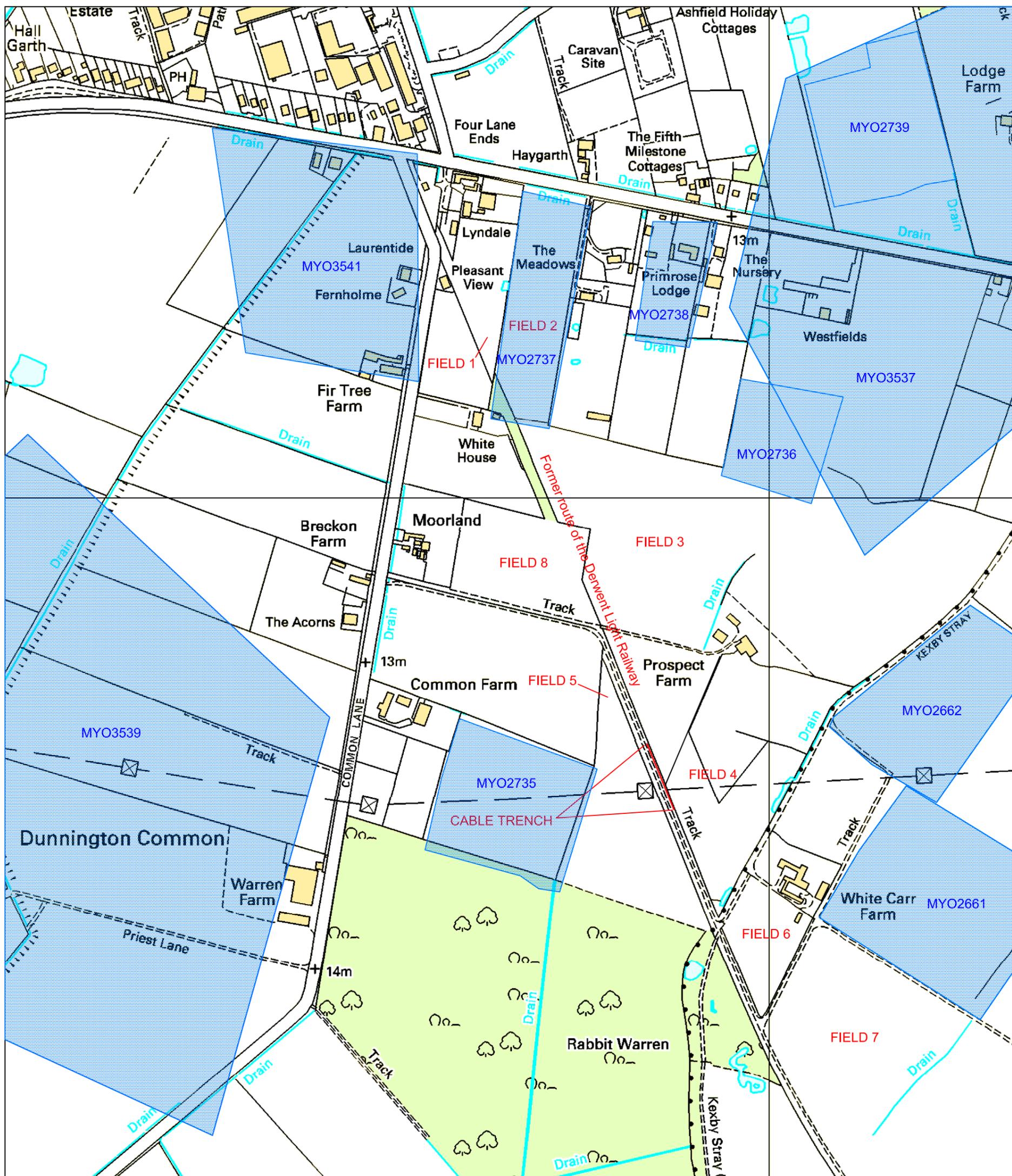
3.1 Photographic Catalogue

3.2 Contact Sheets

3.3 Reference Prints

4. Final Report:

Archaeological Observation, Investigation and Recording at Dunnington 11 KV overhead line rebuild, City of York, Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 1317, August 2012



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Figure 1 Plan showing the location of known areas of archaeological interest, fields walked and the cable trench excavated



Plate 1 Field 1 looking south-east along the line of the former Derwent Light Railway



Plate 2 Field 2 looking south-east along the line of the former Derwent Light Railway



Plate 3 Field 3 looking south-east along the line of the former railway



Plate 4 Field 4 looking south-east with the line of the former railway on the right hand side of the photograph



Plate 5 Field 5 looking south



Plate 6 Field 6 looking north



Plate 7 Field 7 looking south-east with the line of the former railway on the right hand side of the photograph



Plate 8 Field 8 looking east



Plate 9 The cable trench looking north-west



Plate 10 Contexts (1001) and (1002) in the cable trench

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Project Management • Desk-based Assessment • Field Survey • Excavation Watching Briefs
• Finds Research • Post-excavation Analysis • Inter-tidal Work

Humber Field Archaeology is an independently-funded part of the Humber Archaeology Partnership, a partnership serving The East Riding of Yorkshire Council and Kingston upon Hull City Council