

Humber Field Archaeology

Archaeological Consultants and Contractors



Archaeological Observation
Investigation and Recording
at
Land to the north of Centurion Way
Brough

Planning Reference: DC/03/08032/REG3/WESTES
National Grid Reference: SE 9454 2680
SMR Reference: PA/CONS/10288
Site Code: WB2005.084
Museum Reference: ERYMS2006/9

For

Infrastructure and Facilities Department
East Riding of Yorkshire Council

Watching Brief Report Number: 833
March 2006

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D.J. Jobling (*BA Hons*) March 2006

Summary

A programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology during groundwork associated with the construction of a building for use as library and customer service centre on land to the north of Centurion Way, Brough.

Monitoring of the groundworks did not reveal any archaeological deposits associated with Romano-British Brough and its environs. However, recent post-medieval ceramic drains found during the excavations suggested that the site was part of a cultivated field system up until urban expansion during the 20th century. After this time a number of minor, ephemeral changes were made, in the main, to the northern area, the remainder appearing to be undeveloped up until this current programme of works. No artefacts were recovered during this programme of work.

1. Introduction

This report presents the results of a programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording undertaken by Humber Field Archaeology, on behalf of the Infrastructure and Facilities Department, East Riding of Yorkshire Council during groundwork associated with the construction of a building for use as library and customer service centre on land to the north of Centurion Way, Brough (*Figure 1, Plate 1*).

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The development site is located in the eastern part of the Roman town of Brough. It is situated on the southern side of Welton Road, bounded to the south by Centurion Way, to the west by residential housing, to the east by a surgery and further housing and to the north by an ambulance station and Welton Road.

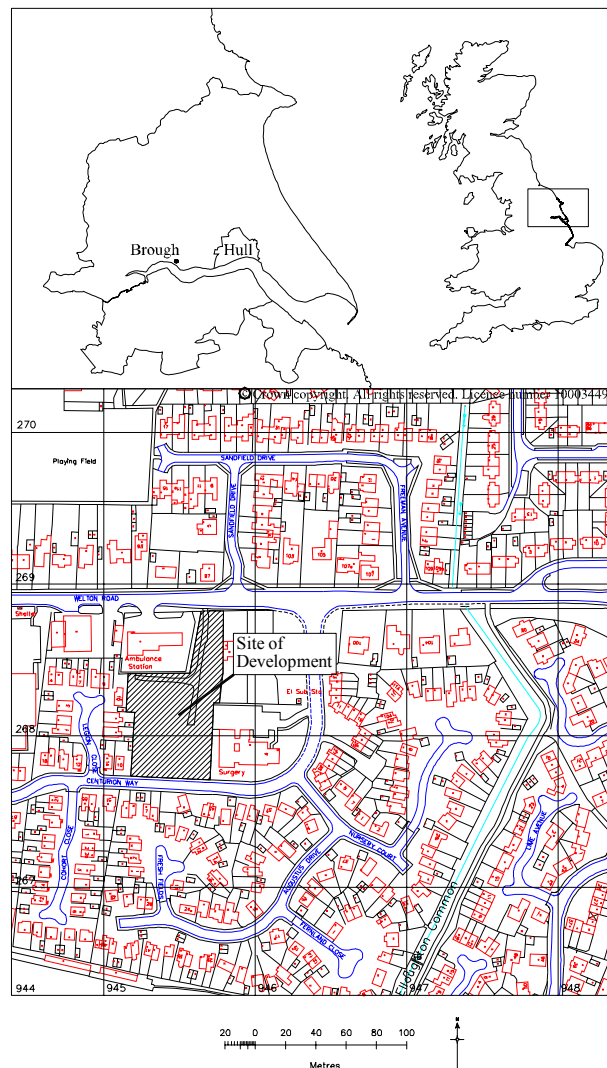


Figure 1 Site location plan.

2. Archaeological Background

The site of the proposed development lies on the east side of the Roman fort and town of Petruaria. Evidence from archaeological evaluations in the vicinity suggests intermittent occupation emanating outwards from the Roman town as ribbon development along the Roman roads leading to the east and north. Buildings were constructed adjacent to the road frontage and separated from the arable fields beyond by an enclosure or back yard. It is likely, therefore, that any groundworks in this area will encounter archaeological deposits of the Roman and later periods.

3. Methodology

The work associated with this project was carried out by staff from Humber Field Archaeology, in accordance with the archaeological specification produced by The Humber Sites & Monuments Record Office, Date: 17th October 2005, SMR Reference: PA/CONS/10288 in response to a condition placed upon the planning application. The condition stated:

‘No development shall take place on the site until the application, or their agents or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted by the applicant and approved in writing by the local Planning Authority. Development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details. (PPG 16, para. 30; Circular 11/95, Model Clause 55)’

The scheme of works comprised the monitoring of the stripped topsoil and the excavation of the foundations for the building. A series of six visits were made to the site between the 2nd November 2005 and the 23rd January 2006 during which time it was possible to monitor the excavation of the groundworks specified. 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.

4. Results

The initial visits to the site oversaw the stripping of the topsoil (1001) from the entirety of the area. Towards the northern spur of the development, where the remains of more recent development on the site (such as an *in-situ* tarmac path and a probable garage base) were evident, but it was clear that these were fairly ephemeral intrusions within the framework of previous works on the site (*Figure 2, Plates 2-4*). No archaeological features were noted as being present at the level of the stripped area.

A small test pit was located within the central area of the location of the proposed building. The test pit measured 1.8m wide by 1.5m long and demonstrated the typical stratigraphy encountered throughout the monitored programme of works. The basal layer exposed was (1003) natural sands, orange yellow in hue viewed up to 0.20m thick (what was exposed only, the thickness of the sands is much greater). This was sealed by generally uniform light brown sand (1002) up to 0.30m thick, possibly also naturally occurring in origin, perhaps windblown – this layer appeared throughout the site without interruption (*Figure 2, Figure 3 – S.1, Plate 5*). Overlying this was the remains of the topsoil (1001) which was almost entirely removed by the previous stripping leaving only pressed in areas. The topsoil consisted mainly of slightly ashy dark silts with frequent rootlets and modern material inclusions. There was evidence for the use of ceramic land drains on the site (as can be seen in the test pit plate), suggesting that prior to the urbanisation of the town during the 20th century, it was likely that this site was part of an arable or cultivated field system to the east of the smaller, core centre of Brough.

The area of the proposed building appears in plan as an inverted ‘L’ shape covering an area measuring 44m by 17m along the north-south axis and 20m by 14m on the west-east axis. It was excavated in two stages, raft formation; the north-south alignment being the first to be opened by a machine equipped with a bladed bucket, followed by the west-east area. The depth did not exceed 0.50m on average, occasionally slightly deeper or higher dependant on the level of the previously stripped ground.

No Romano-British archaeological features or deposits were identified within the footprint excavation of the proposed building. The deposits identified and recorded consisted of the basal layer of natural sands (1003) overlain by the sands (1002) in profile (*Figure 2, Plate 6*). This was consistent throughout the buildings foundation method, other than noting the presence of occasional ceramic land drains, disused modern services and waste intrusions within the walked-over excavated area, no archaeological features were identified.

Due to the nature of the foundations for the proposed building (raft) and the fact that the whole of the site had been stripped, it was thought that any monitoring of the road excavation would probably be unnecessary as a very large percentage of the application site was systematically walked over during the stages of stripping and large, open-area raft excavation totalling 4635.1m² (3647.86m² for the stripped area and 987.24m² for the foundations).

With the completion of the stripping and raft foundation excavation, the programme of archaeological observation, investigation and recording was concluded.

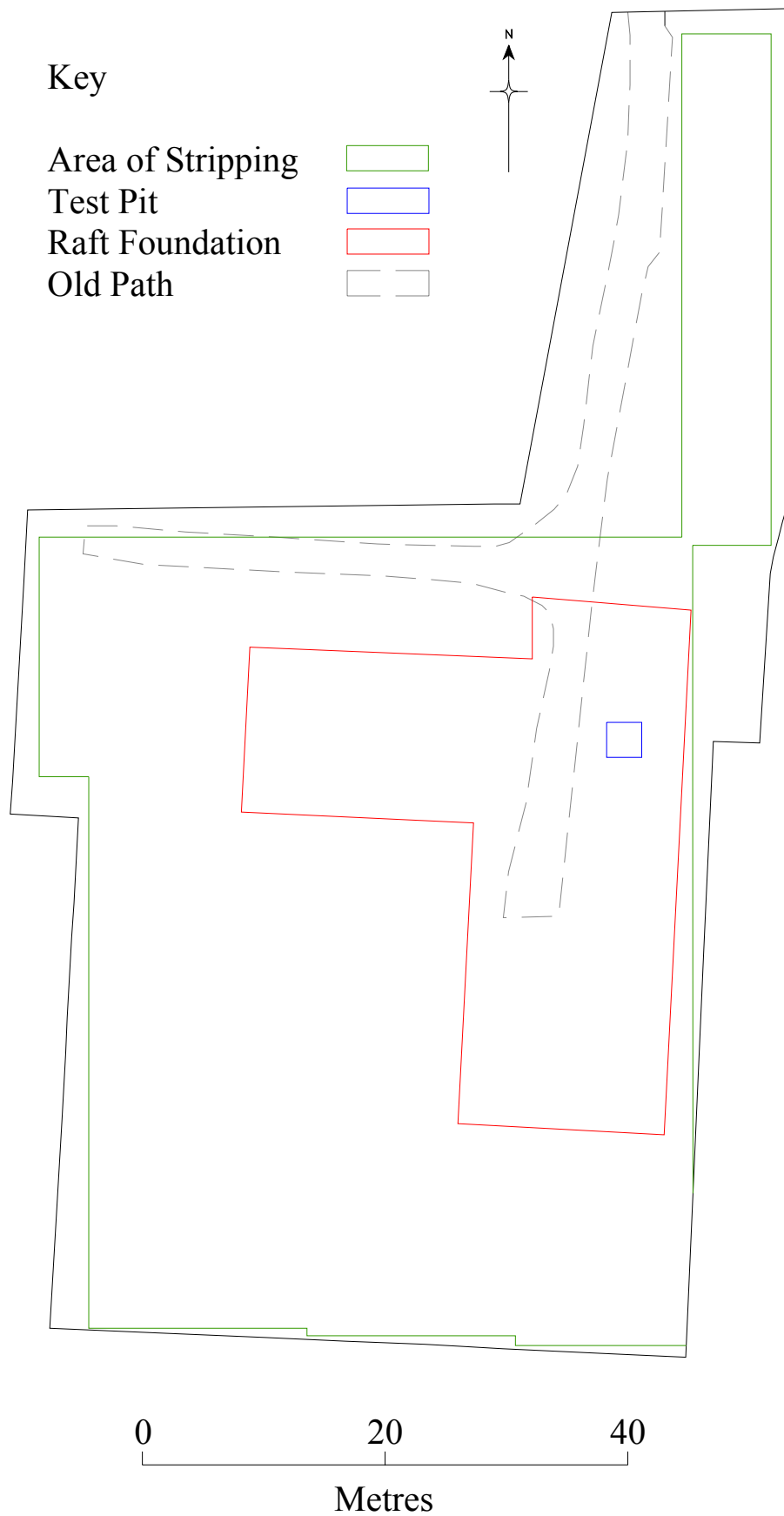


Figure 2 Plan showing the location of the encountered deposits in relation to the foundation trenches on the application site.

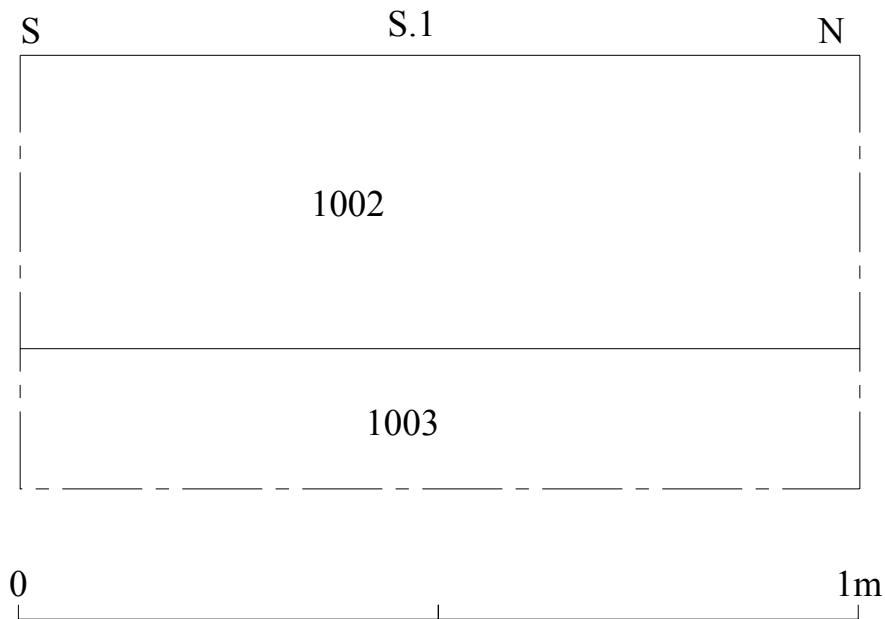


Figure 3 Recorded features in section.

5. Discussion

The following is solely the opinion of Humber Field Archaeology, and may not reflect that of Humber Sites and Monuments Record Office, archaeological advisor to the Local Planning Authority (LPA).

The nature of the groundworks within the early stages of the development on the site meant that an accurate appraisal of deposits within the site could be ascertained with relative swiftness. From the stripping, test pits and open-area raft foundation, it was possible to determine that very little, if no archaeological remains exist on the site. It is apparent that the site has been in use as part of a cultivated field system prior to the large scale development of the area. Apart from the land drainage there was no evidence of activity dating from the Romano-British or later periods on this site.

6. Acknowledgements

Thanks are accorded to East Riding of Yorkshire Council and their contractors for help and co-operation during the course of this project.

The work was carried out in accordance with a specification prepared by the Humber Sites and Monuments Record Office. The report text and illustrations were edited by D. Atkinson.

7. References

Humber SMR. Brief for a programme of archaeological observation investigation and recording. Humber Sites and Monuments Record Office October 2005.

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

Management of Archaeological Projects (MAP2), English Heritage, 1991.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1

Context list

- (1000) U/S, Unstratified.
- (1001) Topsoil.
- (1002) Light brown sands, likely windblown.
- (1003) Natural orange yellow sands.

Appendix 2

Archive

Project Details: Archaeological Observation Investigation and Recording at Land to the north of Centurion Way, Brough.

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SMR Casework Reference: PA/CONS/10288

Planning Reference Number: PA/CONS/10288

Museum Reference or Accession Number: ERYMS2006/9

Author DJ Jobling **Date of fieldwork** November 2005 to January 2006

Report Number. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 833, March 2006.

Quantity

4 x clear plastic A4 wallets contain the paper archive.

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1.2 Correspondence

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2.2 Site Plans

3 The Photographic Record:

3.1 Photographic Catalogues

3.2 Contact Sheets

3.3 Reference Prints etc.

4 Final Report: Archaeological Observation Investigation and Recording at Land to the north of Centurion Way, Brough. Humber Field Archaeology Watching Brief Report Number 833, March 2006.



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Plate 6 The building raft foundations nearing completion, viewed from the north.

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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