Summary

- A programme of archaeological trial trenching was undertaken in advance of a proposed industrial development on land off Victory Way in Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire.

- The site is situated close to known areas of Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon settlement activity. The earthwork remains of a possible double-ditched trackway cross the site on a north-east to south-west alignment.

- Four trenches were excavated in order to assess the archaeological potential of the development area, exposing a largely natural sequence of modern topsoil overlying natural alluvial clay. No archaeological features were identified during the evaluation. There was no evidence in the evaluation trenches for the possible trackway, although it was visible as a landscape feature within the field, and has been interpreted as a medieval or later hollow way.

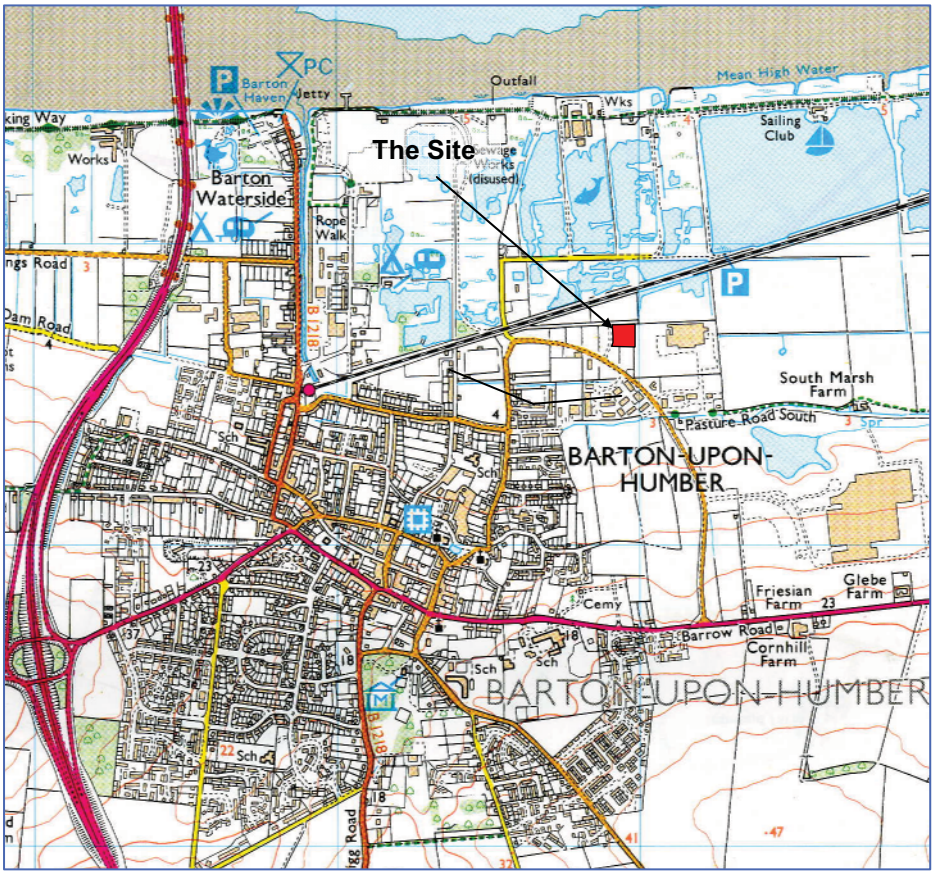

Figure 1: Location of site in red, at scale 1:25,000

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Zash Property Development Limited to carry out a programme of archaeological trial trenching in advance of a proposed industrial development on land off Victory Way in Barton upon Humber, North Lincolnshire.

1.2 The fieldwork, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Field Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IFA 1999), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2008).

1.3 The archive will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within six months of the completion of the project, under the museum site code BNDG.

2.0 Site location and description

2.1 Barton upon Humber is located on the southern Humber shore, approximately 18km north-east of Scunthorpe. The site is to the north-east of the town centre, to the east of Victory Way, and to the west of an existing industrial development.

2.2 The proposed development area comprises a broadly T-shaped block of land of c.1.1 hectares, which is currently open waste ground. It is bounded to the north by a trackway with flanking hedge and ditch, an existing industrial development to the east, Victory Way to the west and open waste ground to the south. The site centres on NGR TA 0393 2269, and lies at a height of approximately 3m above Ordnance Datum.

2.3 The local geology comprises drift deposits of Estuarine Alluvium, overlying a solid geology of Welton Chalk (British Geological Survey 1983).

3.0 Planning background

3.1 A planning application for the industrial development was submitted to the North Lincolnshire Council in December 2007 (Planning Application Reference PA/2007/2009). Prior to the determination of the application, North Lincolnshire Council requested the undertaking of a programme of archaeological evaluation by trial excavation. This was initiated to identify and accurately characterise the nature and extent of the archaeological resource within the proposed development area.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

4.1 There is limited evidence of prehistoric activity in Barton upon Humber, which is restricted to a small number of isolated findspots, for example a Neolithic stone axe which was recovered from the east of the town (Archaeology Data Service (hereafter ADS) Reference: NMR_NATINV-79040).

4.2 Numerous scatters of pottery and coins of Roman date have been found in Barton upon Humber, and a Romano-British settlement has been excavated at the nearby Kimberley Clark development site, approximately 900m to the south-east of the current application area. The settlement produced tentative evidence of Later Iron Age activity, with the main focus of activity being dated to the 2nd to 4th century AD. The excavators interpreted the site as a small farmstead, which was probably reliant on the grazing of cattle on the floodplain pasture along the Humber shore (Bryant 1994).

4.3 A linear earthwork crosses the application area on a north-east to south-west alignment, running beyond the north-east corner of the site. It has been interpreted as a double ditched trackway that follows the same alignment as the features excavated on the Kimberley Clark site, and is therefore considered to be of Romano-British date (North Lincolnshire SMR Reference 20115). A further cropmark runs across the site on a parallel alignment to this feature, and may be of a similar date.

4.4 Excavations in advance of the construction of the Willows residential home in the 1960's identified a substantial Romano-British site comprising roof tile and pottery scatters of 2nd to 4th century date, and a metalled trackway, located approximately 800m to the south-west of the site. Further pottery scatters have been recorded in the town (ADS Reference: NMR_NATINV-79040), and a coin of the Emperor Constans (AD333-350) was found in the south of the town (ADS Reference: NMR_NATINV-79045). Further artefactual material of 2nd to 4th century date has been recovered around St. Peter's Church and East Acridge, suggesting a focus of settlement activity for the Roman period in this area of the town (Bryant 1994).

4.5 Barton upon Humber developed as a major urban centre in the Anglo-Saxon period. Numerous archaeological interventions carried out in the town have identified a substantial settlement that was enclosed by a defensive ditch and palisade. A 6th to 7th century inhumation cemetery of some 209 individuals was excavated on Castledyke South (Sawyer 1998), and a further cemetery, of 9th century date, was located underneath St. Peter's Church, with approximately thirty graves emptied prior to the construction of the church in the 10th century (*ibid.*). The remains of 5th/6th century buildings have also been identified beneath the nave of the church, possibly representing the core of the earliest phase of the Saxon settlement of Barton (Lyman 2004). The church occupies a slightly elevated position, away from lower lying areas such as that occupied by the current site, which is likely to have been subject to seasonal flooding from the Humber during this period.

4.6 By the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, Barton upon Humber was a prosperous town with a weekly market and a ferry across the Humber. The principal landowners at the time were Earl Hugh and Gilbert of Ghent. Gilbert's estate was clearly the larger, as it included the ferry and the market, as well as two mills and a church with a priest (Morgan and Thorne 1986).

4.7 Despite the development of Hull as a rival port in the early 14th century, the prosperity of the town and urban expansion continued into the medieval and post-medieval periods, with a gradual westward shift of the settled area. This coincided with the development of a planned grid of streets, much of which survives to this day, centred around Fleetgate and High Street (Pevsner and Harris 2002).

4.8 Cartographic evidence suggests that since at least the 18th century the site has been unoccupied, and that prior to Enclosure of the parish in 1793, the site lay within a large open field called 'Cow Pasture' (Russell & Russell 1982). After enclosure of the parish, the site was divided into fields by a series of north to south aligned field boundaries, which currently exist on the site as mature hedges adjacent to water-filled ditches.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 The programme of trial trenching entailed the excavation of four trenches, each measuring 30m long by 1.6m wide. The locations of the trenches were determined by the North Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record Officer in advance of the works, and are shown on Figure 3. The trenches were located using a Thales MobileMapper CE GPS with sub-metre accuracy (using EGNOS – European Geostationary Navigation Overlay System).

5.2 Machine excavation of the trenches was carried out using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless dykeing bucket. Topsoil and subsoil deposits were removed under close archaeological supervision in spits not exceeding 0.1m in depth, until the first archaeologically significant horizon was exposed. Sondages were excavated by machine at each end of the trenches in order to observe the natural stratigraphic sequence, and to aid drainage of surface water.

5.3 A full written record of all archaeological deposits was made on standard Allen Archaeological Associates context sheets, accompanied by plan and section drawings at scales 1:50 and 1:20. A photographic record was also maintained, in colour slide and monochrome formats, and selected prints have been included as an appendix to this report (Appendix 1).

5.4 The fieldwork was carried out by a team of three experienced field archaeologists, supervised by Chris Clay. It was undertaken over a period of three days, Friday 31st March, Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd April 2008.

6.0 Results (Figure 3)

6.1 Trench 1

6.1.1 Trench 1 was originally positioned to intersect a cropmark running parallel to the possible trackway. Extensive flooding around a pond in this location resulted in the trench being moved westwards to intersect the south-west end of this possible feature.

6.1.2 Machine excavation of the trench removed the topsoil layer 100 which was up to 0.45m deep. This was a dark brownish-grey rooty clay silt which incorporated a moderate amount of modern demolition material and household waste that had been dumped onto the site. The topsoil directly overlay a sterile deposit of alluvial clay, 101.

6.1.3 Alluvial layer 101 comprised a compact light blueish-grey silty clay deposit. The machine excavated sondages into the alluvium showed it to be consistent up to a depth of 1.35m below the modern ground surface.

6.1.4 No archaeological features were apparent cutting into the alluvium 101, and no dating evidence was recovered.

6.2 Trench 2

6.2.1 This trench had been positioned to traverse the possible trackway cropmark running across the site. The uppermost deposit encountered was a 0.35m deep topsoil layer, 200, comprising a dark brownish-grey rooty clay silt that was identical to the topsoil layers in Trenches 1, 3 and 4. There was a slight but noticeable dip in the topsoil in the area of the trackway cropmark, which was also reflected in the profile of the underlying subsoil horizon.

6.2.2 The removal of topsoil layer 200 revealed subsoil layer 201, a mid orange/brown clay silt that contained rare small sub-rounded chalk fragments, which dipped slightly in the area of the postulated trackway feature. It was otherwise identical in composition to subsoil deposits 301 and 401 in Trenches 3 and 4 respectively. Up to 0.60m of subsoil 201 was removed by machine. No artefacts were recovered from the subsoil, which overlay the sterile alluvial clay deposit 202 that formed the base of the trench.

6.2.3 Alluvial clay deposit 202 was a compact light blueish-grey silty clay, identical to deposits 102, 302 and 402 that were encountered in Trenches 1, 3 and 4 respectively. The machine excavated sondages showed this deposit to be consistent to a depth of 1.7m below the existing ground surface.

6.2.4 No finds or features were identified in this trench.

6.3 Trench 3

6.3.1 The topsoil layer removed by machine in Trench 3, 300, was a dark brown clay silt deposit which was identical to that in Trenches 1, 2 and 4. It was up to 0.25m deep and overlay a layer of subsoil 301.

6.3.2 The subsoil layer was a compact mid orange/brown clay silt that contained very rare small sub-rounded chalk fragments. Up to 0.4m of the subsoil 301 was removed by machine to reveal the alluvial clay deposit 302 at a depth of c.2.49m above OD. The alluvial deposit 302 was a compact light blueish-grey clay silt, reflecting alluvial deposition in an oxygen-reduced environment. It was identical to 101 in Trench 1, 202 in Trench 2 and 402 in Trench 4. The machine excavated sondages at each end of the trench showed it to continue to at least 1.65m below the existing ground surface.

6.3.3 This trench had been positioned to intersect the possible trackway running across the site, at the east end of the trench. Flooding of this area of the site, from the north – south aligned field boundary that was adjacent to the east end of the trench, prevented machine excavation within c.10m of the field boundary however. To compensate, the trench was extended at its west end, and a further southwards extension of c.14m was excavated to intersect the trackway. Nevertheless, the linear feature was not encountered.

6.4 Trench 4

6.4.1 The Trench was located immediately to the east of and parallel to a north – south aligned drainage dyke defining a former field boundary. Flooding from the dyke required the trench to be moved eastwards slightly.

6.4.2 The topsoil in Trench 4 was a 0.2m to 0.3m deep dark brown silty clay identical to that in Trenches 1, 2 and 3. It sealed an alluvial deposit, 401, comprising orange/brown clay, which was up to 0.55m deep.

6.4.3 401 sealed a brown/grey natural alluvial clay, 402, which in the machine excavated sondages extended to approximately 1.9m below the modern ground surface. This deposit was identical to that exposed in Trenches 1, 2 and 3.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

7.1 The four trenches excavated on the site revealed a largely identical natural sequence across the site, comprising modern topsoil overlying natural alluvial deposits that were consistent to a depth of at least 1.9m below the modern ground surface, and are likely to represent a continuous sequence of natural alluvial deposition which was only ended by large-scale land reclamation and drainage during the 18th and 19th centuries. Until that time the site is likely to have been marshland, used perhaps as summer grazing for livestock.

7.2 Two of the four trenches (Trenches 2 and 4) were positioned to intersect a possible Romano-British double-ditched trackway running across the site. In the area of Trench 2, the feature was visible as a slight hollow in the field, also characterised by different vegetation growth along its line. Excavation of the two trenches however failed to identify the presence of any flanking ditches or associated features. It seems likely therefore that the feature represents a trackway formed by the repeated movement of people and animals along the same line, creating a hollow way that has only impacted on the uppermost horizons of the stratigraphic sequence.

7.3 There was no dating evidence associated with this feature; it had previously been suggested it may be of Roman date, due to its shared alignment with Roman features excavated on the site of the nearby Kimberley Clark factory. As it survives as a feature in the topsoil only, it seems unlikely to be Roman in date however. The shared alignment may merely be a result of a similar function within the landscape, i.e. both the trackway on this site and the features on the Kimberley Clark site relate to the movement of livestock to and from areas of seasonal grazing on the Humber floodplain to settlements on higher, drier land to the south. The postulated trackway, or perhaps more correctly, droveway, is apparently cut by post-medieval ploughing, but does not appear in areas of medieval ridge and furrow (SMR Reference 20115). This may suggest a medieval date for its use, although without supporting artefactual evidence the dating remains tentative.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

8.1 The trial trenching methodology employed was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has shown that the proposed development will have a negligible impact upon the archaeological resource in this area.

9.0 Acknowledgements

9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Zash Property Developments Ltd. for this commission.

10.0 References

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11.0 Site archive

11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to North Lincolnshire Museum within six months, and can be accessed using the site code BNDG.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates

Plate 1: General view of the development area, looking south-east from the north-west corner of the site. Trench 1 is in the foreground, with Trench 3 in the middle distance

Plate 2: Trench 1 after machine excavation, looking south from north end of trench.

Plate 3: View along the possible trackway cropmark, looking south-west from Trench 2. The trackway is defined by the pale green vegetation in the centre of the shot, also marked out with metre scales.

Plate 4: Trench 3 after machine excavation, looking east from west end of trench.

Plate 5: Sondage section at the east end of Trench 3, looking south.

Plate 6: Trench 4, looking north from the south end of the trench, showing the impact of the high water table on the site.

Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts

Trench 1

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
100	Layer	Loose, dark brownish grey, silt clay with moderate inclusions of building debris (CBM, plastic, rubble). Max depth ≈ 0.40m	Topsoil
101	Layer	Fairly firm, mid orangey brown, sterile silt clay. Max depth > 0.20m	Natural alluvial layer. Same as 202, 302, 402

Trench 2

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
200	Layer	Loose, dark brownish grey, sterile silt clay	Topsoil
201	Layer	Fairly firm, mid orangey brown, sterile silt clay.	Natural subsoil. Same as (301) and (401)
202	Layer	Firm, mid bluish grey, sterile silt clay	Natural alluvial layer. Same as 102, 302, 402

Trench 3

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
300	Layer	Loose, dark brownish grey, fairly sterile silt clay. Rare inclusions of CBM and rubble	Topsoil
301	Layer	Fairly firm, mid orangey brown, sterile silt clay.	Natural subsoil. Same as (201) and (401)
302	Layer	Firm, mid bluish grey, sterile silt clay	Natural alluvial layer. Same as 102, 202, 402

Trench 4

Context	Type	Description	Interpretation
400	Layer	Loose, dark brownish grey, sterile, silt clay	Topsoil
401	Layer	Fairly firm, mid orangey brown, clay silt with very rare inclusions of fragmented charcoal.	Natural subsoil. Same as (201) and (301)
402	Layer	Firm, mid bluish grey, sterile silt clay	Natural alluvial layer. Same as 102, 202, 302