CONTENTS

SUMMARY

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned by Mr Geoff Nowell, of Weavers Properties Ltd, to undertake a watching brief at the rear of Weavers Cottage, Kirkgate, Settle, North Yorkshire (SD 81800 63598) in advance of a proposed redevelopment of the site. The development entails the demolition of an existing garage and the construction of a commercial building. The programme of investigation was carried out over two days during November 2007.

Following demolition of the existing buildings, an archaeological watching brief was conducted on the excavation of the foundation trenches for the new construction, in the hope of identifying any previous unrecorded activity on the site. The stratigraphy of the trench sections confirmed that the ground of the development area has been made up to level the surface for gardens and construction of the former garage. The natural slopes down slightly from east to west, and layers of redeposited subsoil and topsoil have been laid down to level the ground. Other than the undated collapsed drain in Trench 2, the limited area of the groundwork excavations revealed no further evidence to show that the site has had any other use prior to the construction of Weaver's Cottage and the other surrounding buildings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) would like to thank Geoff Nowell of Weavers Properties Ltd for commissioning the project and also to Keith Syers for his assistance and liaison on site.

The watching brief was carried out by Steve Clarke, who also compiled the report. The drawings were produced by Anne Stewardson, and the project was managed by Alan Lupton, who also edited the report.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

1.1.1 Following a proposal by Mr Geoff Nowell, of Weavers Properties Ltd, to demolish a garage on the land to the rear of Weavers Cottage, Kirkgate, North Yorkshire (SD 818 63598) and replace them with a commercial development, the Heritage Section of North Yorkshire County Council Environmental Services (NYCCES) stipulated that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the excavation of the foundation trenches associated with the development. The proposed development lies within the historic core of the town and there is potential for the application site to preserve remains of the medieval and earlier periods.

1.1.2 A standard written scheme of investigation (WSI) for a watching brief was sent by the Heritage Section of NYCCES to Mr Nowell (*Appendix 1*), who contacted Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) to undertake the work. The watching brief took place over two days, the 12th and 13th November 2007.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

2.1.1 The WSI (*Appendix 1*) was adhered to in full, and the work was consistent with the relevant standards and procedures of the Institute of Field Archaeologists, and generally accepted best practice.

2.2 WATCHING BRIEF

2.2.1 A watching brief was conducted of the excavation of foundation trenches for the new construction. The work aimed to record any surviving archaeological features or deposits by means of detailed observation and recording in the course of the groundworks for the development.

2.2.2 Any significant features were sample-excavated (i.e. selected pits and postholes were only half-sectioned and linear features were subject to no more than a 10% sample). Recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of all features and horizons on OA North *pro-forma* sheets as recommended by English Heritage Centre for Archaeology and a photographic record, using colour slide and monochrome formats, was compiled. A plan of the areas of groundworks was produced, showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and the structures or features located and, where appropriate, scaled sections were drawn of the stratigraphic sequence revealed.

2.3 ARCHIVE

2.3.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the WSI (*Appendix 1*), and in accordance with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). On completion of the project the field archive and a copy of the report will be deposited with the North Yorkshire County Record Office.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

3.1.1 Settle is located in Craven district on the south-western fringe of the Yorkshire Dales area. The Dales form part of the chain of Pennine uplands running up the centre of northern England and are separated from the North Pennines by the Stainmore Trough faults and from the Southern Pennines by the Craven faults. They differ from the adjacent Pennine areas in that the influence of limestone is here much greater (Countryside Commission 1998, 13).

3.1.2 Whilst the unique character of the upland area around Settle stems from the underlying relatively high altitude Carboniferous limestone and Millstone grit geology, the town sits astride the upper reaches of the river Ribble and lies on a natural route, the 'Aire Gap' through the Pennines from the low lying plains of Lancashire in the west and south-west to the Aire valley in the east. The availability of agricultural land and good quality pasture enhanced the natural advantages of the location for settlement, supplementing the largely pastoral economy of the surrounding limestone uplands, and leading to the development of the thriving market town evident today.

3.2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.2.1 The following brief details are taken from a letter sent to Mr Nowell from the assistant archaeologist, Ms Lucie Hawkins, at NYCCES accompanying the WSI. The proposed development lies within the historic core of the town. A Roman road is recorded as running through the area of the later medieval town and finds of an Anglo-Saxon disc brooch and several coins beneath the later market cross provide evidence for early medieval activity in the area.

3.2.2 The settlement is not mentioned in Domesday but by the thirteenth century Settle was held by the Percy family. In 1228 two mills were recorded in the town and a fair and a market were granted in 1249. Whilst the current nineteenth century church lies at the northern end of the town, the name 'Kirkgate' implies that an earlier church may have been located in this area

4. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

4.1.1 The watching brief monitored the excavation of a series of foundation trenches by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a 0.5m ditching bucket. The area of the work was within the back half of the garden to Weavers Cottage. The pre-existing garage, constructed of brick and abutting the building on its south side, had already been demolished and the concrete floor removed when the OA North archaeologist visited the site on 12th November 2007. A 10m section of the 2m high stone wall along the south boundary of the property had also been demolished. The excavation covered an area of approximately 28m by 13m. Each section of work was given a separate trench number and the overall layout can be seen in Figure 2. A description of each trench is given, and a list of context descriptions is provided in *Appendix 2*.

4.2 RESULTS

4.2.1 ***Trench 1:*** was 18m in length, 1m wide with a maximum depth of 0.7m, orientated east to west (Plate 1). The section revealed an uneven topsoil, ***100***, between 0.1m and 0.3m in depth over a compact sandy clay subsoil, ***101***, beneath which was a natural clay, ***102***, revealed towards the east end of the trench. No archaeological features were revealed.

4.2.2 ***Trench 2:*** was 14m in length and ran parallel to Trench 1 and 3m to the north (Plate 2). The maximum depth of the trench was 0.8m deep with the section showing the topsoil, ***200***, 0.15m in depth over redeposited soils. At the east end of the trench was a small deposit of friable sandy clay and limestone gravel and medium sub-rounded stones, ***202***, 0.25m in depth, which lay above a sequence of other superimposed shallow deposits of soil, ***203***, ***204***, ***205*** which extended 2.8m to the west (Section 1 Fig 3). The earliest deposit in this sequence, ***205***, was cut by another layer of soil, ***201***, seen below the topsoil, which continued to the west. Below these deposits was a layer of firm sandy clay, ***206***, 0.4m in depth. Approximately 2.5m from the east end of the trench at a depth of 0.55m the remains of a partially collapsed stone drain, ***207***, approximately 1.2m wide were recorded. The drain, which ran in a north/south direction, was constructed of gritstone (Plate 3); no dating evidence for its construction was recovered during the groundworks. At the east end of the trench the natural sandy clay, ***208***, was revealed at the base of the trench

4.2.3 ***Trench 3:*** was 3m in length and 0.8m wide running north to south between the eastern ends of Trench 1 and Trench 2. The stratigraphy was similar to that of Trench 1 and did not reveal any features of interest.

4.2.4 ***Trench 4:*** was 1m wide and ran for 9m along the south boundary which necessitated the removal of boundary wall footings, ***400,*** which went to a depth of 0.8m and were constructed of medium to large sub-angular gritstone (Section 2 Fig 3). Beneath the footings was subsoil, ***402***, with natural sandy clay, ***403***, showing at the east end of the trench (Plate 4). The sections revealed

made up ground, ***401***, on both sides of the trench, the north side for the garage floor and the south side for a tarmaced courtyard.

4.2.5 ***Trench 5:*** this 5m long trench ran north to south between the west ends of Trench 4 and Trench 1, and was 1m wide and 0.8m deep (Plate 5). Below the layer of tarmac, ***500***, and levelling layer, ***501***, (the pre-existing driveway between the former garage and gateway in the west boundary wall) was a 0.2m layer of blackish brown stony sandy clay, ***502***, which was probably the original soil horizon. Below this was the subsoil, ***503***, comprising a firm sandy clay (Section 2 Fig 3). The footings for the southern boundary wall, ***400***, were seen to cut through deposits ***501***, ***502*** and ***503***. No features of archaeological significance were revealed.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The stratigraphy of the trench sections confirms that the ground of the development area has been made up to level the surface for gardens and construction of the former garage. The natural slopes down slightly from east to west, and layers of redeposited subsoil and topsoil have been laid down to level the ground. Other than the undated collapsed drain in Trench 2, the limited area of the groundwork excavations revealed no further evidence to show that the site has had any other use prior to the construction of Weaver's Cottage and the other surrounding buildings.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Countryside Commission 1998, *Countryside Character Volume 3: Yorkshire and the Humber*, Cheltenham

English Heritage 1991, *The Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd Edition, London

7. ILLUSTRATIONS

7.1 FIGURES

7.2 PLATES

APPENDIX 1: WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION

APPENDIX 2: CONTEXT INDEX

Context No	Trench No	Depth	Category	Description
100	1	0.3m	Topsoil	Blackish brown friable sandy clay, occasional small sub-rounded stone
101	1	0.5m	Subsoil	Mid brown compact sandy clay, moderate inclusions of small to medium sub-rounded stones
102	1	-	Natural	Light yellowish brown slightly sandy clay
200	2	0.15m	Topsoil	Blackish brown friable sandy clay, occasional small sub-rounded stone
201	2	0.25m	Deposit	Mid brown firm sandy clay, occasional small stone
202	2	0.2m	Deposit	Medium sub-rounded stones and limestone chippings
203	2	0.25m	Deposit	Stony light brown sandy clay, 30% inclusions
204	2	0.15m	Deposit	Light yellowish brown friable coarse sandy clay, 10% small sub-rounded stones
205	2	0.1m	Deposit	Light brown friable sandy clay and 50% mortar fragments
206	2	0.4m	Deposit	Light brown compact sandy clay, occasional small - medium sub-rounded stone
207	2	0.25m	Drain	medium to large sub-angular gritstone, capped.
208	1	-	Natural	Light yellowish brown slightly sandy clay
300	3	0.3m	Topsoil	Blackish brown friable sandy clay, occasional small sub-rounded stone
301	3	0.5m	Subsoil	Mid brown compact sandy clay, moderate inclusions of small to medium sub-rounded stones
302	3	-	Natural	Light yellowish brown slightly sandy clay
400	4	0.8m	Footings	Gritstone and cement wall
401	4	0.8m	Make up layer	Blackish brown firm sandy clay, inclusions of small- medium sub-rounded stone, sub-angular stone, brick
402	4	0.5m	Subsoil	Mid brown compact sandy clay, moderate inclusions of small to medium sub-rounded stones
403	4	-	Natural	Light yellowish brown slightly sandy clay
500	5	0.1m	Surface	Tarmacadam
501	5	0.22m	Layer	Fine light brownish grey sandy gravel

502	5	0.2m	Original topsoil horizon	Blackish brown stony sandy clay, 20% inclusions
503	5	0.3m	Subsoil	Mid brown firm sandy clay
504	5	0.1m	Surface	Concrete paving block