

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT , CORNER FARM, ROLLESTON, NOTTS.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

REPORT

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Report prepared for

Birches Building Company Ltd

by

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RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT , CORNER FARM, ROLLESTON, NOTTS.: ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING REPORT

Summary

- An archaeological recording brief was undertaken during the excavation of house foundation and drainage trenches for a residential development on the site of Corner Farm, Rolleston, Nottinghamshire.
- These works identified a brick well, an undated ditch, and two undated groups of post-holes or small pits. These features are believed to have been associated with the working life of the farm, although the ditch could also mark a medieval property boundary.
- No artefactual remains were recovered other than 19th century bricks and pottery dating to the 1930's



Fig. 1: Site location map (based on the 2000 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map, Sheet 271; © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278).

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (formerly Pre-Construct Archaeology [Lincoln]) (PCA) was commissioned by Birches Building Company Ltd. to undertake an archaeological recording brief during groundworks associated with the construction of eleven residential dwellings on land at Corner Farm, Fiskerton Road, Rolleston, Notts. The scheme was designed to reflect the requirements of Newark & Sherwood District Council (Condition 3), Planning Application No. 07/01459/FULM.

Site monitoring commenced on 22/9/2008 and was completed on 12/5/2009; 22 visits were made by Neil Jefferson, Simon Savage, Emily Rowe and Mike Rowe.

The archaeological programme was undertaken to meet the objectives of a project specification prepared by PCA, dated 14/7/08, and in accordance with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990); *Code of Conduct* (Institute for Archaeologists, 2008) and *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (Institute of Field Archaeologists, 2008 as revised).

2.0 Site Location and Description (Figs. 1 -3; Pl. 1)

The village of Rolleston is situated five miles south-west of Newark and two and a half miles south-east of Southwell. The development site is in the centre of the village, at the junction of Staythorpe Road and Fiskerton Road, north-east of the parish church and south of the Crown Inn. It is a roughly square parcel of land measuring 0.834 hectares and previously contained a farm house and associated outbuildings known as Corner Farm. The site is centred on NGR SK 743 525.

The British Geological Survey records that the area lies on Quaternary deposits of the Holme Pierrepont Sand and Gravels, overlying Triassic deposits of the Gunthorpe Formation (BGS, 1996).

3.0 Planning Background

Planning permission 07/01459/FULM was granted by Newark & Sherwood District Council for the construction of 11 residential dwellings, subject to Condition 03 requiring an archaeological recording brief to be undertaken during the groundworks associated with development.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

An entry for Rolleston in the 1086 Domesday Survey records the existence of three manors, a priest and a church, indicating that the settlement originated in the Anglo-Saxon period. The development site is located immediately south-west of the parish church, where fragments of a Saxon cross shaft were discovered during renovations in 1895.

Three moats and eight fishponds are all that remain of the medieval manorial complex, approximately 1.0km from the north-western boundary of the site.

There are various cropmark sites of prehistoric and later date about the periphery of the present village. To the north is a large double ditched enclosure of possibly Iron Age date, and to the south are rectilinear enclosures where 3rd - 4th century pottery and roof tile fragments have been recovered (Hamilton 2008).

5.0 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the recording brief were to identify and record the presence/absence nature, extent and date of any archaeological deposits or features exposed by the contractors' groundworks.

6.0 Methodology

The site was attended by a qualified and experienced archaeologist intermittently between 22/9/08 and 14/1/09. Visits were made to monitor the excavation by contractors of the footing trenches for house plots and also drainage trenches.

During the contractors' groundworks, each area of excavation was inspected to assess the presence/absence and nature of any features and/or deposits of archaeological interest and to recover datable artefacts. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions on standard context recording sheets. Colour and monochrome photographs were taken, and drawings were prepared at scale 1:20. The house foundations were not excavated in plot number order.

In November 2008, PCA appraised the Nottinghamshire County Council SMR Assistant Archaeologist on progress and results, where it was agreed that a length of foul drain trench (west of Manhole 2) and parts of Plots 7 and 8 did not require monitoring.

7.0 Results (Figs. 4-7)

7.1 Overview

The overlying topsoil varied in depth as a result of some soil stripping during site clearance. It sealed a subsoil deposit, which overlay natural sands and gravels. Some obviously recent pits had been excavated through the subsoil, but most of the identified features were sealed by it. These included an east-west aligned ditch and two clusters of post-holes or small pits. A late 19th/early 20th century brick well was also exposed. The undated features are suspected to have been contemporary with Corner Farm, although the ditch may represent a medieval boundary.

7.2 Plot 1

The foundation trenches for this large single plot were excavated through a grey/brown silty sand topsoil (100) which varied in depth from 0.2m to 0.48m. This sealed a 0.3m thick darker deposit of subsoil (101), which overlay orange sandy gravel natural deposits (102). No archaeological features or finds were identified during the excavation of this plot.

7.3 Plot 2

This house plot was not constructed during the monitoring programme.

7.4 Plots 3-4 (Pl. 2; Fig. 4)

Plots 3-4 consisted of paired foundations for semi-detached houses. The topsoil (300) had been partially removed during site clearance, leaving about 0.05m *in situ*. The deposit sequence was similar to that in Plot 1. A 1.2m diameter, c.5m deep brick well (303) was observed in the southern foundation trench of Plot 4, but then filled with concrete. It had been constructed with 3 inch curved bricks. The well is thought to have been associated with the demolished farm buildings.

7.5 Plots 5-6 (Fig. 4)

Plots 5-6 also consisted of paired foundations. The topsoil again sealed a subsoil deposit (601), 0.4m- 0.45m thick. A 3.7m wide and 1.9m deep pit [604] had been cut through the subsoil down to the present water-table (Pl. 3). It contained dark grey/brown silty sand with occasional brick fragments (603), but was devoid of dateable artefacts, although its stratigraphic position immediately below the topsoil suggested a recent date. The monitoring archaeologist noted that it did not appear to have been machine-dug, but it was recorded as a possible test pit – perhaps associated with the farm building which previously occupied the site.

7.6 Plot 7 (Fig. 5)

This plot was in the north-west part of the site, closest to Staythorpe Road. The subsoil (701) was stonier than in Plots 1-6 and 0.25m – 0.3m thick. A west-east aligned ditch [704] crossed the northern part of the plot, sealed beneath the subsoil (Pl. 4). At the eastern edge of the plot, this ditch was approximately 2.5m wide and 1m deep, containing a single fill of very dark silty sand with fragments of brick and charcoal flecks, but no dateable artefacts (703).

Further west, the southern side of ditch [704] was identified, but in this location the fill had been removed by a 2.05m wide, 1m deep pit [707]. The secondary fill of this feature, (705) was very dark, with a lighter soil (706) towards its base (Pl. 5). Neither produced any artefactual remains. A possibly smaller pit [709] was observed in the northern foundation trench (Pl. 6). This 1m deep feature was at least 1.8m long, with a steeply sloping eastern face and a rounded base. Its fill (708) was a green/grey clayey sand with some stone rubble and charcoal flecks. The soil colour suggested that the pit may have contained cess.

7.7 Plot 8 (Fig. 6)

This plot was immediately to the east of Plot 7 and contained a greater density of cut archaeological features than were present in any other of the house plots. The ditch recorded as [704] in the adjacent foundation was identified as [811], crossing the complete width of the plot (Pl. 7). Although no terminal was observed, this feature was not apparent in Plots 9 or 10 to the east.

A group of three post-holes or small pits was identified towards the northwest of the plot, 1.5m northwest of ditch [811]. Each was sealed by the subsoil (802), though the fills were very similar to this layer (Pl. 8). The largest, [805], was 1.1m in diameter and 0.5m deep. Its fill (804) was very dark grey/brown silty sand, slightly greyer towards the base. As with each of these features, the subsoil had removed any relationship that may have existed with the adjacent post-holes/pits. The central feature [807] was similar, although slightly shallower and narrower. Its fill (806) incorporated frequented rounded stones. To its south was a smaller feature [809], 0.18m in diameter and 0.35m deep.

A second group of three post-holes / small pits was identified 2.8m south of ditch [811] (Pl. 9). The central post-hole [815] was 0.9m in diameter and 0.34m deep, with the most northerly feature [813] being considerably larger at over 1.6m diameter and 0.45m deep.

All of the post-holes/pits were observed only in a single foundation trench face, so it is unclear whether they had any association with ditch [811] or whether they represent a north-east/ south-west aligned linear fence line.

At the south-eastern side of the plot, two further pits were sealed by the subsoil (802) (Pl. 10). The largest, [821] was 3.5m x 2m, and 0.85m deep. Its dark grey/brown silty sand fill (820) contained small brick fragments and appeared slightly greenish in hue towards the base – sometimes an indication that it contained cess. This pit had cut [819], which was 1.7m wide and 0.5m deep. Its fill (818) was even darker, and also incorporated brick fragments.

A large pit at the north-east corner of the plot, [823] contained much c.1930s pottery and a brick from the Cafferata brickworks (active in Newark in the second half of the 19th century).

7.8 Plots 9 and 10

No archaeological features were identified in the foundation trenches for plots 9 and 10 in the north-eastern part of the development site. Across Plot 9, the topsoil (900) contained numerous 20th century bricks. In Plot 10, the topsoil contained less brick but brick and concrete was present within subsoil (1001).

7.9 Plots 11 and 12 (Fig. 7)

The detached plots were towards the east side of the development. No significant archaeological features were exposed in either, though the northern foundation trench for the garage to plot 12 traversed a modern soak-away pit.

7.10 Drainage Trench 1

The east-west aligned trench connected Manhole 1 with Manhole 2 (Pl. 11). It exposed 0.3m of modern rubble, overlying 0.15m of topsoil and 0.25m of stony subsoil. There were no archaeological features.

7.11 Drainage Trench 2

The new sewer trench was excavated to a width of 1.4m and a depth of 2.3m from an existing manhole on Staythorpe Road eastwards into the development. The trench was not sufficiently stable to enter before the faces were obscured by a shoring box, but no archaeological features were evident (Pl. 12).

8.0 Discussion and Conclusion

No significant artefactual remains were recovered during comprehensive archaeological monitoring of the groundworks for this development. Topsoil and subsoil layers contained brick rubble deriving from the demolition of former farm buildings, and a brick well in Plot 4 is thought to have been associated with that phase of land use.

The green hue to some pit fills identified in new foundation trenches on the site indicates the disposal of organic matter. As this was a farmyard, it is more likely that this 'cess' derived from seepage of slurry into the sandy soil during the farm's existence, rather than reflecting human occupation at an earlier period.

The two clusters of post-holes were possibly contemporary with the ditch observed in Plots 7 and 8, but not necessarily directly associated. All may represent features associated with post-medieval farmyard activities at Corner Farm. Insufficient information was available to provide any supported indication as to the date or function of the ditch seen in Plots 7 and 8. It does not lie in the position of any boundary depicted on Ordnance Survey maps or available air photographic cover. There are indications of narrow property divisions along the street frontage elsewhere in Rolleston village centre, presumably marking the medieval layout, and this ditch may therefore pre-date the farm.

9.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed was sufficient to allow the investigation and recording of most deposits and features affected by the groundworks, but recording was constrained to some degree by safety considerations associated with unstable trenches.

10.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd would like to thank Birches Building Company Ltd. for this commission.

11.0 Archive

The documentary archive for this scheme is currently in the possession of PCA. This will be deposited at an approved Nottinghamshire archive store as soon as arranged.

12.0 Bibliography

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Appendix 2:

Context Descriptions (CFRN 08)

Context No.	Area	Type	Relationships	Description
100	Plot 1	Layer	same as 700	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with charcoal flecks and occasional small brick fragments; 0.25m thick
101	Plot 1	Layer	same as 701	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with rare charcoal flecks; 0.3m thick
102	Plot 1	Layer	same as 702	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
300	Plots 3-4		Above 301	Topsoil; dark grey/brown silty sand, with brick rubble. 0.05m thick
301	Plots 3-4	Layer	Below 300, cut by 303, above 302	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silty sand, with charcoal flecks. 0.35m thick
302	Plots 3-4	Layer	Below 301	Natural; sandy gravel
303	Plots 3-4	Structure	Cuts 301, below 300	Brick well; 3" curved bricks. 1.2m diam, ?5m deep.
600	Plots 5/6	Layer	Above 603	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with charcoal flecks and occasional small brick fragments; 0.1m thick
601	Plots 5/6	Layer	Cut by 604, above 602	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with rare charcoal flecks; 0.45m thick
602	Plots 5/6	Layer	Below 601, above 603	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
603	Plots 5/6	Fill	Fill of 604, below 600	Dark brown/grey silty sand with occasional brick fragments
604	Plots 5/6	Cut	Filled by 603, cuts 601	Pit, 3.7m wide, 1.9m deep; possibly a trial pit.
700	Plot 7	Layer	Above 701	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with charcoal flecks and occasional small brick fragments; 0.25m thick

701	Plot 7	Layer	Below 700, above 702	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with rare charcoal flecks; 0.3m thick
702	Plot 7	Layer	Below 701	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
703	Plot 7	Fill	Fill of 704, cut by 707	Very dark grey silty sand with charcoal flecks
704	Plot 7	Cut	Filled by 703, cuts 702; same as 811	Ditch, WNW-ESE, U shaped profile; 1.6m wide, 1.03m deep
705	Plot 7	Fill	Fill of 707, above 706	Very dark brown/grey silty sand with charcoal flecks, 0.36m thick
706	Plot 7	Fill	Fill of 707, below 705	Grey silty sand with charcoal flecks, 0.47m thick
707	Plot 7	Cut	Filled by 705, 706; below 706; cuts 703	Pit, 2.05m wide, 0.97m deep, U shaped
708	Plot 7	Fill	Fill of 709, below 700	Greenish/grey clayey sand with charcoal flecks, 1.32m thick
709	Plot 7	Cut	Filled by 708, cuts 701	Pit extending beyond house plot; 1.8m+ long, 1.32m deep, U shaped.
800	Plot 8	Layer	Above 801	Modern brick and roof tile rubble, 0.27m thick
801	Plot 8	Layer	Below 800, above 802	Topsoil; very dark brown/grey silty sand, with rare charcoal flecks and brick rubble; 0.15m thick
802	Plot 8	Layer	Below 801, above 803; ?above 804-816 and 820-822	Stoney subsoil; very dark brown/grey silty sand, with rare charcoal flecks; 0.25m thick
803	Plot 8	Layer	Cut by 805-819, 823; below 802	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
804	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 805; below 802	Very dark brown/grey silty sand with charcoal flecks, 0.48m thick

805	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 804, cuts 803	Pit, 1.14m diam, 0.48m deep; U shaped
806	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 807, below 802	Very dark brown/grey silty sand with charcoal flecks, 0.45m thick
807	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 806, cuts 803	Pit, 0.98m diam, 0.45m deep; U shaped
808	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 809, below 802	Dark brown/grey silty sand with occasional charcoal fragments; 0.35m thick
809	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 808, cuts 803	Post-hole, 0.18m diam, 0.35m deep
810	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 811	Very dark grey silty sand with charcoal flecks; 0.35m thick
811	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 810, cuts 803; same as 704	Shallow and narrow intermittent continuation of Ditch 704; 1.55m wide, 0.4m deep
812	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 813, below 802	Dark grey/brown silty sand with charcoal flecks; 0.45m thick
813	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 812, cuts 803	Large shallow pit, 1.6m diam, 0.45m deep
814	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 815, below 802	Very dark grey/brown silty sand with charcoal flecks; 0.34m thick
815	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 814, cuts 803	Pit, 0.9m diam x 0.34m deep
816	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 817; below 802	Dark grey silty sand with charcoal flecks, 0.28m thick
817	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 816, cuts 803	Post-hole, 0.3m diam, 0.28m deep
818	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 819, cut by 821	Very dark grey/brown silty sand with charcoal flecks and brick fragments; 0.55m thick
819	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 818, cuts 803	Large pit; 1.7m+ x 0.55m deep

820	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 821, below 802	0.85m thick
821	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 820, cuts 818	Pit, 3.5m x 2m x 0.85m deep
822	Plot 8	Fill	Fill of 823; below 802	Dark brown/grey silty sand with charcoal and cafferata bricks; 1.5m thick
823	Plot 8	Cut	Filled by 822, cuts 802	Rubbish pit, 4m diam, 1.5m deep
900	Plot 9	Layer	Above 901	Dark brown/grey silt sand with rare charcoal flecks and brick rubble; 0.4m thick
901	Plot 9	Layer	Below 900	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
1000	Plot 10	Layer	Above 1001	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with occasional small brick fragments; 0.4m thick
1001	Plot 10	Layer	Below 1000, above 1002	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with rare charcoal flecks and brick/concrete inclusions; 0.25m thick
1002	Plot 10	Layer	Below 1001	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
1100	Plot 11	Layer	Above 1101	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with charcoal flecks and occasional small brick fragments; 0.20m thick
1101	Plot 11	Layer	Below 1100, above 1102	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand; 0.3m thick
1102	Plot 11	Layer	Below 1101	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
1200	Plot 12	Layer	Above 1201	Topsoil; dark brown/grey silt sand with charcoal flecks; 0.3m thick
1201	Plot 12	Layer	Below 1200, above 1202	Subsoil; dark brown/grey silty sand, with charcoal flecks. 0.4m thick; thinner towards the eastern side of Plot 12
1202	Plot 12	Layer	Below 1201	Natural; orange/yellow sands and gravel
T200	Drainage Trench 2	Layer	Above T201	Topsoil; dark brown sandy silt
T201	Drainage Trench 2	Layer	Below T200, above T202	Subsoil; dark yellow/brown silty sand with gravel
T202	Drainage Trench 2	Layer	Below T201	Natural; yellow-orange/brown sand and gravel

