

Market Place
Askern
South Yorkshire

Archaeological Evaluation

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An archaeological evaluation at Market Place, Askern did not reveal any archaeological remains. The areas investigated showed either minimal modern deposits overlying bedrock or disturbance resulting from the recent demolition of the Swan Hotel.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Martin Newman of Britannia Developments Ltd to carry out an archaeological evaluation on land at Market Place, Askern. The site is centred at SE 5610 1361 (see Fig. 1) and is located at the junction of High Street and Station Road, Askern (see Fig. 2). The development site is bounded to the north and west by Chapel Hill, to the east by Market Place/High Street and to the south by existing properties. The site is situated on land that slopes steeply from west to east from 24m Above Ordnance Datum (AOD) on Chapel Hill down to approximately 6.4m AOD on the Market Place frontage.
- 1.2 The underlying geology for the site is mapped as upper Magnesian limestone (British Geological Survey 1972) overlain with shallow, well-drained, calcareous fine loamy soils of the Aberford association (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1983).

2. Archaeological Background

- 2.1 The area surrounding Askern is known to contain Iron Age, Romano-British and medieval remains but there have not been any previous archaeological investigations within the village prior to this evaluation. However, the site is close to the parish church and is likely to have been near to the centre of any medieval/post-medieval settlement.
- 2.2 The site was formerly occupied by the Swan Hotel, which covered the majority of the Market Place frontage. All buildings were demolished prior to commencement of the evaluation.

3. Method

- 3.1 Following consultation with Roy Sykes, Assistant Archaeologist at the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service, the evaluation strategy and positioning of the trenches was agreed. Three trial trenches and an area to be stripped under archaeological supervision were identified to test the archaeological potential of the site adjacent to the Market Place/High Street frontage.
- 3.2 The trenches and monitored strip and record area were excavated using a 360° tracked machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket. The area of each trench was excavated in level spits under direct archaeological supervision until the first archaeological horizon or undisturbed natural was reached. Each trench was then inspected for archaeological remains with further cleaning being conducted by hand. Each excavation area was then recorded and photographed in accordance with ASWYAS standard method (ASWYAS 2006). The evaluation took place on January 16th 2006.
- 3.3 The site archive contains all the information gathered during the investigations and is indexed in Appendix I.

4. Results

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 The evaluation trenches and stripped area were located in the eastern part of the site at the base of the natural slope. Trenches 1, 2 and 3 were positioned to evaluate house plots 1-20 and the stripped area was designed to cover the main access road against the southern boundary of the site (see Fig. 2). With the exception of a small area of buried top and sub-soil in Trench 2 no undisturbed soil horizons were encountered. In all areas a varying depth of modern demolition material directly overlay the limestone bedrock. No archaeological remains were identified in any of the evaluation areas.

4.2 Trench 1 (see Plates 1 and 2)

4.2.1 Trench 1 was aligned from east to west and measured 10m by 2m. It was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.8m on to clean natural limestone bedrock. At the western end of this trench bedrock was already exposed and showed the steepness of the natural slope. Approximately 2.4m from the western end the depth of the trench increased to 0.8m due to the location of a vertical foundation cut (Plate 2), 0.7m in depth, that formed the western limit of a platform, cut into the slope, belonging to the recently demolished buildings. The material overlying the bedrock was entirely made up of a single deposit of demolition material including stone, bricks, wood and plastic debris.

4.3 Trench 2 (see Plates 3 and 4)

4.3.1 Trench 2 measured 10m by 2m, was aligned from north to south and was positioned to the north of the evaluation area. This trench was excavated through demolition rubble and tarmac for a depth of 0.4m onto clean natural limestone bedrock. The northern end of this trench showed a buried dark brown silty topsoil and a buried mid orangey brown subsoil beneath 0.25m of tarmac and hardcore. The majority of the trench exhibited 0.4m of demolition deposit consisting of redeposited natural and brick debris straight on to bedrock.

4.4 Trench 3 (see Plates 5 and 6)

4.4.1 Trench 3 measured 8m by 2m, was aligned from north to south and was excavated to a maximum depth of 1.14m. The southern end of the trench was shallow with 0.07m of tarmac above 0.1m of hardcore straight on to the bedrock. Approximately 4m from the southern end a large modern cut was observed measuring 0.97m in depth. This feature was filled with layers of clean redeposited natural, measuring between 0.15m and 0.56m in depth, which contained no finds. Only part of the southern limit of this cut was within the excavated trench.

4.5 Strip and record area (see Plates 7 and 8)

4.5.1 The size of this area was reduced from that originally proposed due to logistical reasons; the site cabins had been positioned along the southern boundary and the remaining area allowed public access to a bank and parking spaces for bank employees. Consequently the monitored area measured 30m in length and 5m in width.

- 4.5.2 At the eastern end of the monitored area there was only 0.1m of demolition material directly above the natural bedrock. This depth of this material increased to 1.35m at the western end of the stripped area. No topsoil or subsoil was identified.
- 4.5.3 Following consultation it was determined by the SYAS that, given the negative results from both the trial trenches and the initial strip and record, there was no longer a requirement for further archaeological works on the site.

5. *Discussion and Conclusions*

- 5.1 The results of the evaluation indicate that there has been extensive landscaping of the site in order to create level platforms for previous development. The limited area in which undisturbed deposits were identified suggests that the majority of the site has been disturbed by modern activity. It is therefore concluded that the potential for archaeological features to survive on this site is extremely low.

Bibliography

ASWYAS, 2006, 'West Yorkshire Archaeology Service site recording manual',
ASWYAS, unpubl.

British Geological Survey, 1972, Goole, Sheet79, Solid edition, One inch series

Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983, Soils of Northern England Sheet 1
1:250,000

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Project Management

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Report

Marina Rose BSc

Graphics/illustrations

Marina Rose

Fieldwork

Marina Rose

Appendix I

Inventory of primary archive

File no.	Description	Quantity
1	Trench record sheets	4
1	Daily site recording sheet	1
1	Photograph record sheet (Film nos 7551, 7552 and Digital)	3
1	Black and white contact sheet (Film no. 7552)	1
1	Black and White negatives (Film no. 7552)	1
1	Colour transparencies (Film no. 7551)	1
1	CD of digital images	1
1	Trench location plan	2
1	Site location map	1