



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST REPORT

SITE	1-9 Beckfield Lane		
CLIENT NAME	Moorside Developments		
YAT PROJECT #	5931	YAT REPORT #	2016/66
MUSEUM ACCESSION #	n/a	GRID REFERENCE	SE 5690 5159
PLANNING REFERENCE #	15/01301/FUL	AAI OPS NOTICE #	n/a

Introduction

On the 25th to the 31st October 2016 and the 3 to the 6th November 2017 a watching brief was carried out to monitor the excavation for the foundations of seven dwellings on land behind 1-9 Beckfield Lane, Acomb, York, YO26 5PN SE 5690 5159 (Figure 1). The works were completed in two phases due to alterations in the planning application. This resulted in the foundations of three dwellings being completed in 2016 and the remaining four in 2017.



Figure 1 Site Location

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FINDS	n/a	SAMPLES	n/a	PHOTOS	42
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Background

The decision to observe and record under a watching brief was due to the potential for significant prehistoric, Roman, Anglian and medieval archaeology in Acomb. The site is located just c.130m outside of the Acomb Area of Archaeological Importance. Isolated spots of prehistoric and Roman activity have been identified in the area, while Acomb itself has Anglian origins as recorded in the Domesday Book.

A desk-based assessment was carried out by On-Site Archaeology for 42a The Green, Acomb which concluded that there was evidence for medieval deposits in the area (OSA, 2011). Watching briefs at 9 The Green (YAT 1985.1060) and 29 The Green (OSA 09WB32), however, did not identify deposits or features of archaeological interest.

Methodology

The ground works were to excavate the foundations for seven dwellings and were carried out by Moorside Developments. This was in the form of trench fill foundations that were 500mm wide and between 0.5m and 1m deep. Before excavation in 2016 the land was stripped of vegetation to expose topsoil with an archaeologist present. This area was cleared again in 2017 to remove spoil deposition on the area. No archaeologist was present for the second clearance.

The trenches were excavated by a combination of machine and hand dug elements. The main excavation was carried out using a 360 tracked excavator with a 300mm wide toothless bucket. Shovels were used to clear the bases of the trenches of loose spoil to prepare the foundations for concrete. The excavations were completed in five days in 2016 and three days in 2017.

Deposits encountered were recorded in a notebook alongside sketch plans, including location, and a representative section. Digital photographs were taken at intervals during the watching brief.

Results

The trenches across the two phases contained a similar sequence of deposits, although the 2016 trenches, at a depth of 600mm deep, were not excavated to the extent of the 2017 foundation trenches, which varied from 0.8m to 1m deep (Plate 1).

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Plate 1 Overview of site

The earliest deposit encountered in the 2016 trenches was up to 200mm of orange sand natural though this deposit was not clearly defined in all the trenches (Plate 2). A silty sand subsoil was visible in all trenches above the natural and was generally 300mm thick. This was sealed by a dark brown silty topsoil that varied in thickness from 200mm to 400mm (Plate 3).

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Plate 2 Section showing natural in 2016



Plate 3 Section showing large depth of topsoil in 2016

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The composition of the deposits was largely the same in the trenches excavated in 2017. As the trenches were deeper in the second phase of work a greater amount of natural was exposed. Natural was between 350 and 500mm depending on the depth of the trench. Natural started to occur at approximately 500mm BGL (Below Ground Level) in both the 2016 and 2017 excavations. The silty sand subsoil was present at 300mm thick, similar to the 2017 foundation trenches. This was sealed by a thinner layer of topsoil, between 100 and 200mm thick, across the area (Plate 3).



Plate 4 Section exposed in 2017 phase

No finds were recovered from either phase of excavation.

Conclusion

No archaeology of significance was identified during both the 2016 or 2017 phase of works on the land behind 1-9 Beckfield Lane. The deposits of natural and subsoil were sterile of both features and finds.

Many thanks to Moorside Developments, the building contractors, for their co-operation and assistance during these works.

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