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MAP Archaeological Practice

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St John University Playing Fields  
Hull Road  
York

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Archaeological Trial Trenching

05-27-18

16/02358/OUTM

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Archaeological Trial Trenching

at

St. John University Playing Fields

Hull Road

York

SE 62672 51225

MAP 05-27-18

Report Prepared By Catherine Whitehouse	Report Authorised By Paula Ware
Date: 24/01/20	Date: 24/01/20

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Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching

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*Summary*

*A scheme of Archaeological Evaluation by Trial Trenching was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Practice Ltd at St. John University Playing Fields on Hull Road, York, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020. Commissioned by Yorkshire Housing, the scheme was proposed to examine the potential for archaeological remains on the site. The results of this work would then allow the City of York Council to make a reasoned decision on the impact of the proposed development on archaeological deposits and provide an appropriate mitigation strategy, if required (16/02358/OUTM).*

*A total of seven trenches were excavated which revealed no archaeological features, finds or deposits. Given the result of this work and in consultation with the City of York Council, no further archaeological work is required on this site.*

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the results of the archaeological evaluation of two 40m x 2m trenches and 5 20m x 2m trenches spread appropriately across the development area.
- 1.2 All work was commissioned and funded by Yorkshire Housing.
- 1.3 All maps within this report have been produced with permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office (© Crown copyright. License AL50453A) with additional mapping data derived from OpenStreetMap (<https://www.openstreetmap.org/copyright>).

## 2. Site Description (Fig. 1, Pl. 1-2)

- 2.1 The Proposed Development Area is located on St. John's University Playing Fields, which is 2km east of York City Centre (Grid Ref. SE 62672 51225), on the south side of Hull Road and west of Windmill Lane.
- 2.2 The site is bounded by the University of York Science Park to the south and the Woodlands Neurological Rehabilitation Centre to the west. The site bounds, but excludes, the David Lloyd tennis facility.
- 2.3 The Proposed Development Area lies on a bedrock of sandstone from the Sherwood Sandstone Group, overlaid by deposits of gravelly sand from the York Moraine Member (BGS 2019).

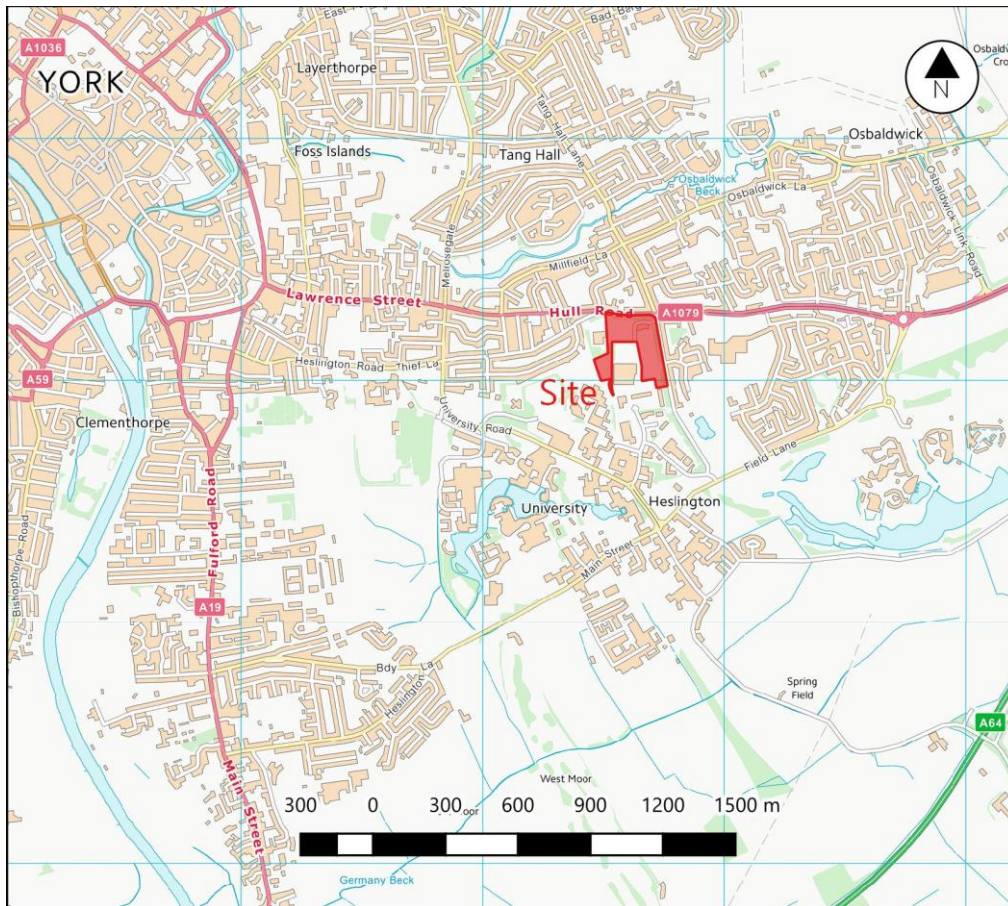


Figure 1. Site Location

### 3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 Prehistoric activity has been identified to the East of the site where excavations at Heslington East (EYO6015) indicated Mesolithic and Neolithic activity, Bronze Age and Iron Age enclosures and waterholes and Iron Age roundhouses. Additionally, 1km South-East of the development area, a prehistoric cremation was found. The cremated remains were covered by an inverted, decorated, collared urn, the first to be found in the immediate locale of York. This has been loosely dated to the early centuries of the 2nd millennium BC (MYO3670).

- 
- 3.2 The site lies South of Hull Road, a well-documented Roman route (RCHM Road 2). A significant amount of Roman activity was observed during excavations at Heslington East (EYO6015), including enclosures and a structure with a hypocaust. Roman ditches were also observed to the North-East of the site at Metcalf Lane, Osbaldwick (EY0591).
- 3.3 A Crambeck jar containing 2880 Roman bronze coins was discovered in 1966 during construction at Heslington Hill, South-West of the development site. The coins dated from after 350AD and were of Magnetius, Decentius and Constantinius II (MY0255).
- 3.4 Gravel extraction South-East of the site revealed two high status Roman burials in stone coffins (MY0244/MY0243). One of these inhumations was covered in plaster, with various ornaments and the fragments of a Roman amphora and two glass vessels (MY0243/NRHE 58221).
- 3.5 The excavations on Heslington Hill (MY02022) identified traces of an Anglo-Saxon settlement dating from AD 550 to AD 650. A designated heritage asset, Siwards How, is located 600m South-West of the development area; this is believed to be an Anglo-Saxon burial mound (MY0104).
- 3.6 Evidence of Medieval occupation has been observed in the vicinity, despite the main settlement lying South of the development area. Scatters of Medieval pottery have been found in various locations including Heslington Hill (MYO2022) and Heslington East (EYO319), while ridge and furrow has been observed at Heslington Hill (MYO2022), Osbaldwick (EYO4837, EYO4096), Derwent Roads Playing Fields, and Lord Deramore's School (EYO5880, EYO6061).
- 3.7 A desk-based assessment was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust in August 2016. The report concluded that "there is a low probability of scattered earlier prehistoric material
-



being present in the development site. There is a reasonable probability of later prehistoric and Romano- British features being present within the development site and a reasonable probability of post Roman Anglian features being present within the development area. There is a high probability of medieval and later cultivation traces being present within the development area, and in pitch 3, of structures/services associated with the early 20th century allotments and nursery. While some of this may be preserved below ground in areas where the land surface has been raised for the playing fields, it is equally possible that some or all archaeology has been truncated or entirely removed as part of the same levelling activity”.

3.8 Phase Site Investigations undertook a Geophysical Survey in August 2018. The majority of the anomalies identified by this survey related to modern material or objects, and geological or pedological variations. There were several linear and curvilinear anomalies of uncertain origin, but they were considered more likely to be associated with natural features or relatively modern activity. The strength of the magnetic disturbance in Area 1 indicated the presence of made ground.

#### **4. Aims and Objectives**

4.1 The aim of this archaeological evaluation was to gather sufficient information to establish the presence/absence, date, sequence, nature, depth, quality of survival and importance of any archaeological deposits. This would then enable an assessment of the potential and significance of any archaeology of the site to be made and inform any mitigation that may be required ahead of the development.

## 5. Methodology

5.1 The trenches were located using a Trimble R8s GPS rover. The trenches were stripped of topsoil and subsoil with a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket, under archaeological supervision. Machining ceased at the top of either archaeological or naturally formed deposits, depending upon which was located soonest, with the exception of Area 1 trenches 1 and 2, which were excavated to the depth of 1.2m.

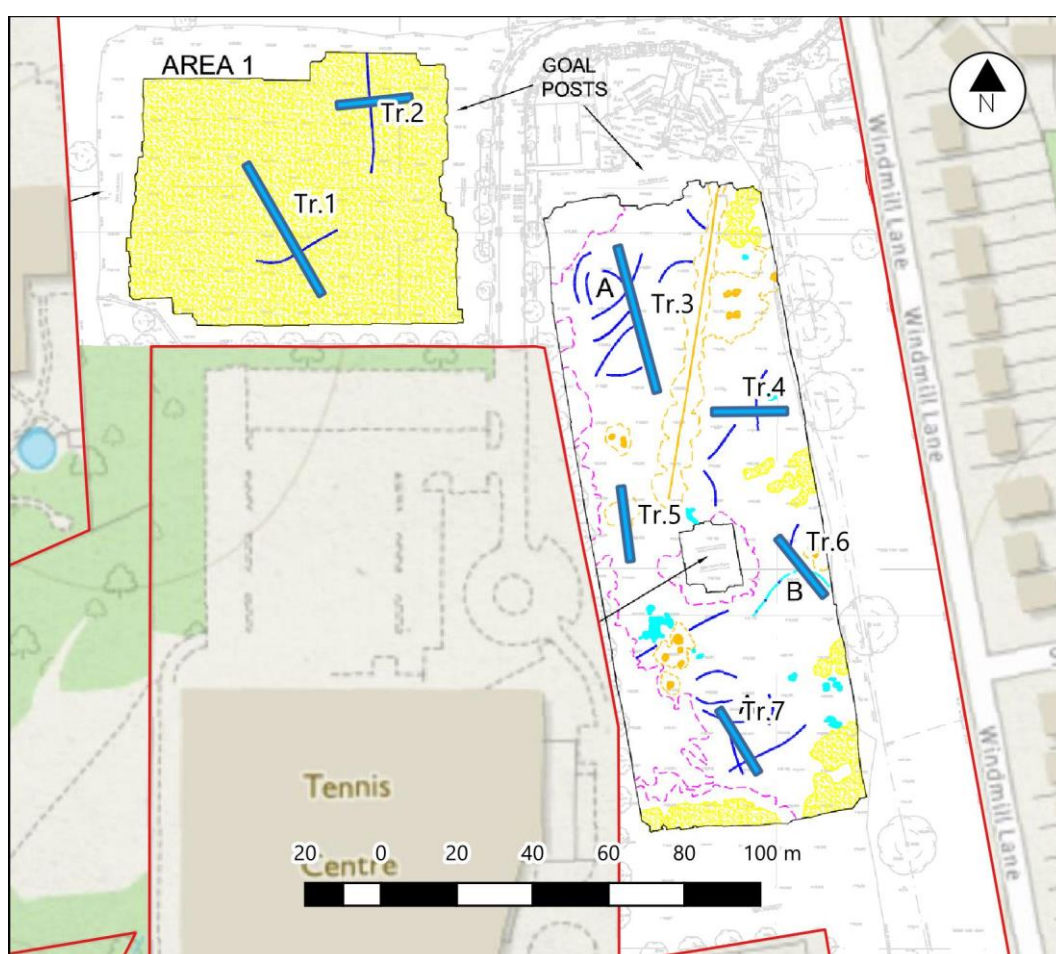


Figure 2. Trench Location

5.2 MAP adhered to the general principles of the ClfA Code of Conduct (ClfA 2019) throughout the project and to the ClfA "Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluations" (ClfA 2014).

5.3 Paper and digital records were maintained using MAP Proforma sheets, draft paper and a high-resolution digital camera.

## 6. Results (Pls. 3-11)

6.1 Excavation of all seven trenches revealed topsoil that consisted of a dark brown, soft, sandy silt. This overlaid subsoil, a mid yellow-brown, soft, sandy silt. The natural geology was a pale to mid yellow-brown sandy clay with moderate pebble inclusions. Trenches 1 and 2 were excavated through built-up ground consisting of concrete, rubble, brick and dark black-brown silt to a depth of 1.2m. This levelling layer was found beneath topsoil and subsoil and continued below the excavated depth. Set out below are the heights and depths of topsoil and subsoil in each trench.

<i>Trench</i>	<i>Elevation</i>	<i>Depth of Excavation</i>	<i>Depth of Topsoil</i>	<i>Depth of Subsoil</i>
<i>Tr.1</i>	North-West 20.76mAOD	1.2m	0.27 -	0.13 -
	South-East 20.13mAOD		0.35m	0.18m
<i>Tr.2</i>	West 20.60mAOD	1.2m	0.28 -	0.17 -
	East 20.41mAOD		0.31m	0.22m
<i>Tr.3</i>	North 19.32mAOD	0.45 -	0.2 -	0.2 -
	South 19.38mAOD	0.6m	0.3m	0.3m
<i>Tr.4</i>	West 19.33mAOD	0.4 -	0.25 -	0.08 -
	East 19.28mAOD	0.45m	0.3m	0.17m
<i>Tr.5</i>	North 19.29mAOD	0.42 -	0.31 -	0.09 -
	South 19.31mAOD	0.46m	0.37m	0.14m
<i>Tr.6</i>	North-West 19.25mAOD	0.51 -	0.46 -	0.04 -
	South-East 19.28mAOD	0.59m	0.54m	0.09m
<i>Tr.7</i>	North-West 19.30mAOD	0.39 -	0.30 -	0.07 -
	South-East 19.35mAOD	0.45m	0.34m	0.14m

## 7. Conclusions

7.1 The excavation of seven evaluation trenches revealed no archaeological finds, features or deposits.

7.2 No further archaeological work is necessary in respect of this site.

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## 9. Project Team Details

Fieldwork: Catherine Whitehouse, Paul Squires

Report: Catherine Whitehouse

Figures: Max Stubbings

Plates: Catherine Whitehouse

Environmental Processing: Max Greeves

Administration: Sophie Coy



Plate 1: General view of Area 1. Facing West.



Plate 2: General view of Area 2. Facing North.



Plate 3: Trench 1. Facing South-East. 1m Scale.



Plate 4: Trench 1 Section. Facing South-West. 1m Scale.





Plate 5: Trench 2. Facing West. 1m Scale.



Plate 6: Trench 2 Section. Facing South. 1m Scale.



Plate 7: Trench 3. Facing North. 1m Scale.



Plate 8: Trench 4. Facing East. 1m Scale.



Plate 9: Trench 5. Facing North. 1m Scale.



Plate 10: Trench 6. Facing North-West. 1m Scale.



Plate 11: Trench 7. Facing North-West. 1m Scale.

## APPENDIX 1

### Context Listing

Context	Context Type	Fill of	Description
101	Deposit	-	Trench 1 Topsoil
102	Deposit	-	Trench 1 Subsoil
103	Deposit	-	Trench 1 Built up layer
201	Deposit	-	Trench 2 Topsoil
202	Deposit	-	Trench 2 Subsoil
203	Deposit	-	Trench 2 Built up layer
301	Deposit	-	Trench 3 Topsoil
302	Deposit	-	Trench 3 Subsoil
401	Deposit	-	Trench 4 Topsoil
402	Deposit	-	Trench 4 Subsoil
501	Deposit	-	Trench 5 Topsoil
502	Deposit	-	Trench 5 Subsoil
601	Deposit	-	Trench 6 Topsoil
602	Deposit	-	Trench 6 Subsoil
701	Deposit	-	Trench 7 Topsoil
702	Deposit	-	Trench 7 Subsoil

## APPENDIX 2

### Photographic Archive Listing

#### Digital

Frame	Context	Scale	Facing	Description
2968	-	-	W	General View of Area 1
2969	-	-	S	General View of Area 2
2970	-	-	N	General View of Area 2
2971	301, 302	1m	S	Trench 3
2972	301, 302	1m	N	Trench 3
2973	401, 402	1m	E	Trench 4
2974	401, 402	1m	W	Trench 4
2975	501, 502	1m	S	Trench 5
2976	501, 502	1m	N	Trench 5
2977	601, 602	1m	SE	Trench 6
2978	601, 602	1m	NW	Trench 6
2979	701, 702	1m	SE	Trench 7
2980	701, 702	1m	NW	Trench 7
2981	201, 202, 203	1m	W	Trench 2
2982	201, 202, 203	1m	S	Trench 2 Section
2983	201, 202, 203	1m	S	Trench 2 Section
2984	201, 202, 203	1m	E	Trench 2
2985	201, 202, 203	1m	N	Trench 2 Section
2986	101, 102, 103	1m	SE	Trench 1
2987	101, 102, 103	1m	NE	Trench 1 Section
2988	101, 102, 103	1m	NW	Trench 1