



ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE

ASKHAM BRYAN

YORK

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

REPORT
DECEMBER 2007

SURVEY AND EXCAVATION SECTION



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
ASKHAM BRYAN COLLEGE
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Summary

A watching brief was undertaken by Field Archaeology Specialists (FAS) Ltd at Askham Bryan College, Askham Bryan, York (NGR SE 5526 4764). The watching brief was carried out on behalf of Askham Bryan College and involved monitoring the excavation of foundation trenches prior to the construction of three new blocks of student accommodation near the centre of the main college campus.

The development required the excavation of foundation trenches for three accommodation blocks. The development area was aligned approximately WSW-ENE and overlay the footprints of five recently demolished blocks. Most of the development area had therefore been disturbed previously by the construction of the old accommodation, possibly including some reduction of ground level. The watching brief encountered recent rubble levelling, topsoil and subsoil. Features identified were limited to foundations and services for the previous buildings; no archaeological remains were encountered.

Acknowledgements

Field Archaeology Specialists would like to thank John Mawson, Estates Manager, Askham Bryan College, for his assistance and cooperation during fieldwork, and John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist, City of York Council for his guidance and support.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document reports on the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Field Archaeology Specialists (FAS) Ltd on behalf of Askham Bryan College, at their main campus in Askham Bryan, York. The watching brief involved monitoring the excavation of foundation pits and trenches prior to the construction of three new accommodation blocks near the centre of the campus. Fieldwork took place intermittently between the 10th May 2006 and the 6th March 2007.

1.1 LOCATION AND LAND USE

The area of investigation lies near the centre of the main campus of Askham Bryan College, approximately 6.5km to the southwest of York city centre, adjacent to the junction of the A64 and the A1237 (Figure 1; NGR SE 5526 4764). The site is bound to the north by college sports facilities (tennis courts and sports hall); to the south by access roads and private accommodation; to the east by teaching blocks; and to the west by existing student accommodation.

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

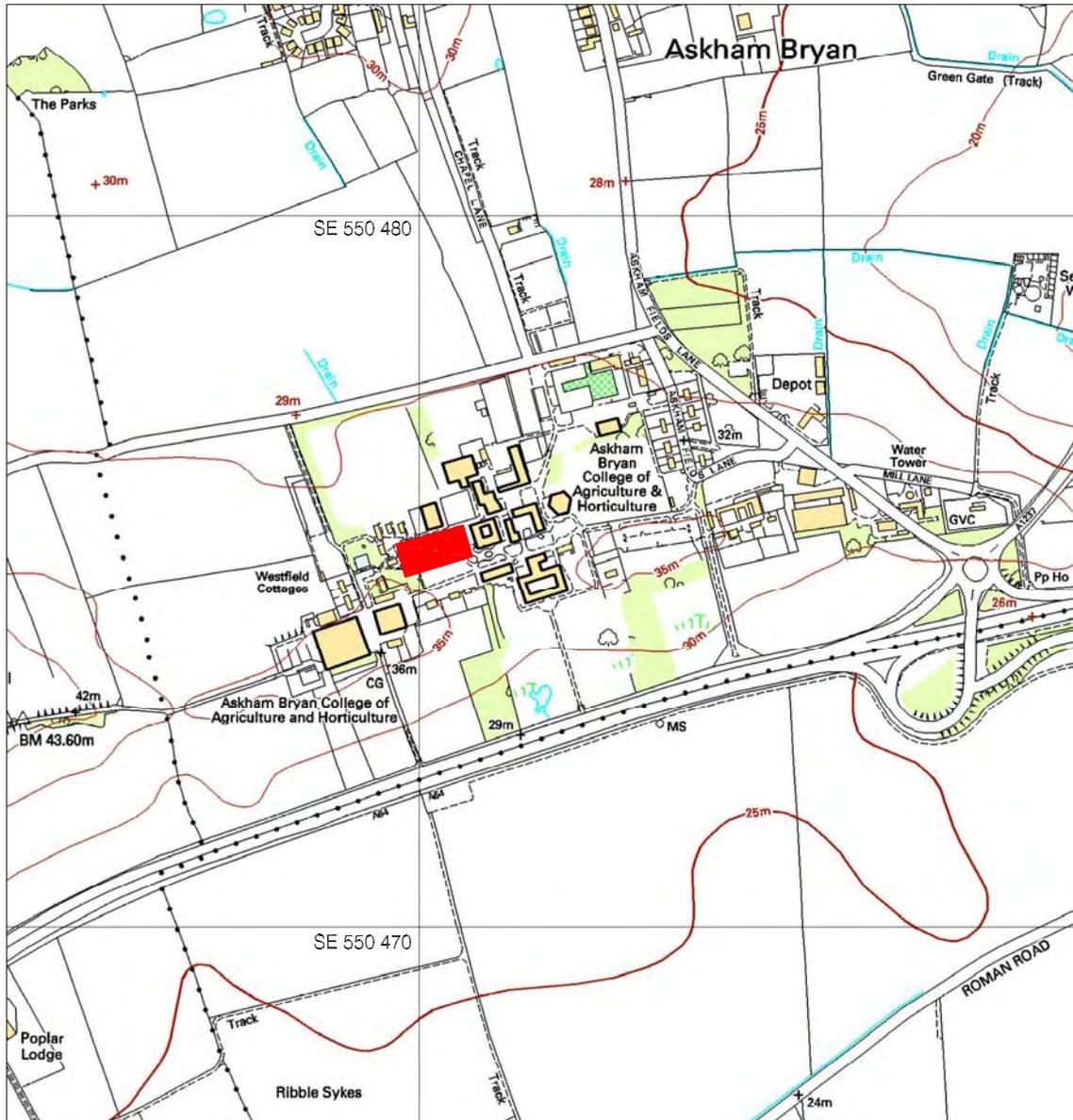
The watching brief aimed to date and characterise any archaeological deposits disturbed by the excavation of the foundation trenches of the new development, given the lack of recent archaeological work in the vicinity. The possibility of archaeological remains being encountered was considered possible due to nearby cropmarks, recorded by aerial photography, and likely to relate to an extensive late prehistoric/Romano-British landscape.

The watching brief was undertaken as part of the planning permission granted for the development by the City of York Council (Planning reference number: 05/01743/FULM). All archaeological work was carried out in accordance with the specification prepared by the City of York Council (Appendix A).

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The site occupies a rural location five miles from the centre of York, and as a relatively undeveloped area has been subject to little archaeological investigation. However, its situation on slightly elevated land would make it a candidate for settlement from prehistory onwards. Activity of an early date is supported by the find of a Neolithic polished stone axe from the vicinity, in *c.*1928. Cropmarks recorded from aerial photographs also suggest the presence of extensive late prehistoric/Romano-British landscape (CYC Specification), and the field name of 'Barrow Fields' on which the college was constructed (Ordnance Survey 1909; 1953), may also allude to prehistoric monuments, although none are currently known.

The inclusion of Askham Bryan in the Domesday book suggests the presence of a settlement by the end of the early medieval period. The village itself is orientated west-east, and lies a short distance to the north of the current site of interest, which might therefore have been expected to have formed the agricultural fields worked by the rural population.



Location map

Scale 1:10000



Figure 1



The village remained small throughout the medieval period; a church was constructed in the 12th century, and by 1600, the village comprised twelve farms on Main Street (www.askhambryan.org.uk). By the 19th century, the village had expanded somewhat, with additional buildings constructed within the open fields; the site of the college however, remained as regular open fields, with a single farmstead, West Farm, depicted on the Ordnance Survey map of 1849.

The Ordnance Survey maps of the area show little change until the 20th century. West Farm remains in isolation, with windmills to the east clearly exploiting the elevated location, but becoming disused by 1909. The college itself was established in 1948; the Ordnance Survey edition of 1953 marks the 'Yorkshire Institute of Agriculture', which had already extended around West Farm. Development has continued at the site throughout the latter part of the 20th century. The village itself retains a rural character, and has been designated as a Conservation Area.

2.0 FIELDWORK PROCEDURE

Fieldwork took place during three phases of construction between May 2006 and March 2007, monitoring groundworks for each block of accommodation. Groundworks were undertaken using a wheeled mechanical excavator, with occasional work by tracked mini-digger, fitted with a toothless bucket under archaeological supervision (Plate 1).



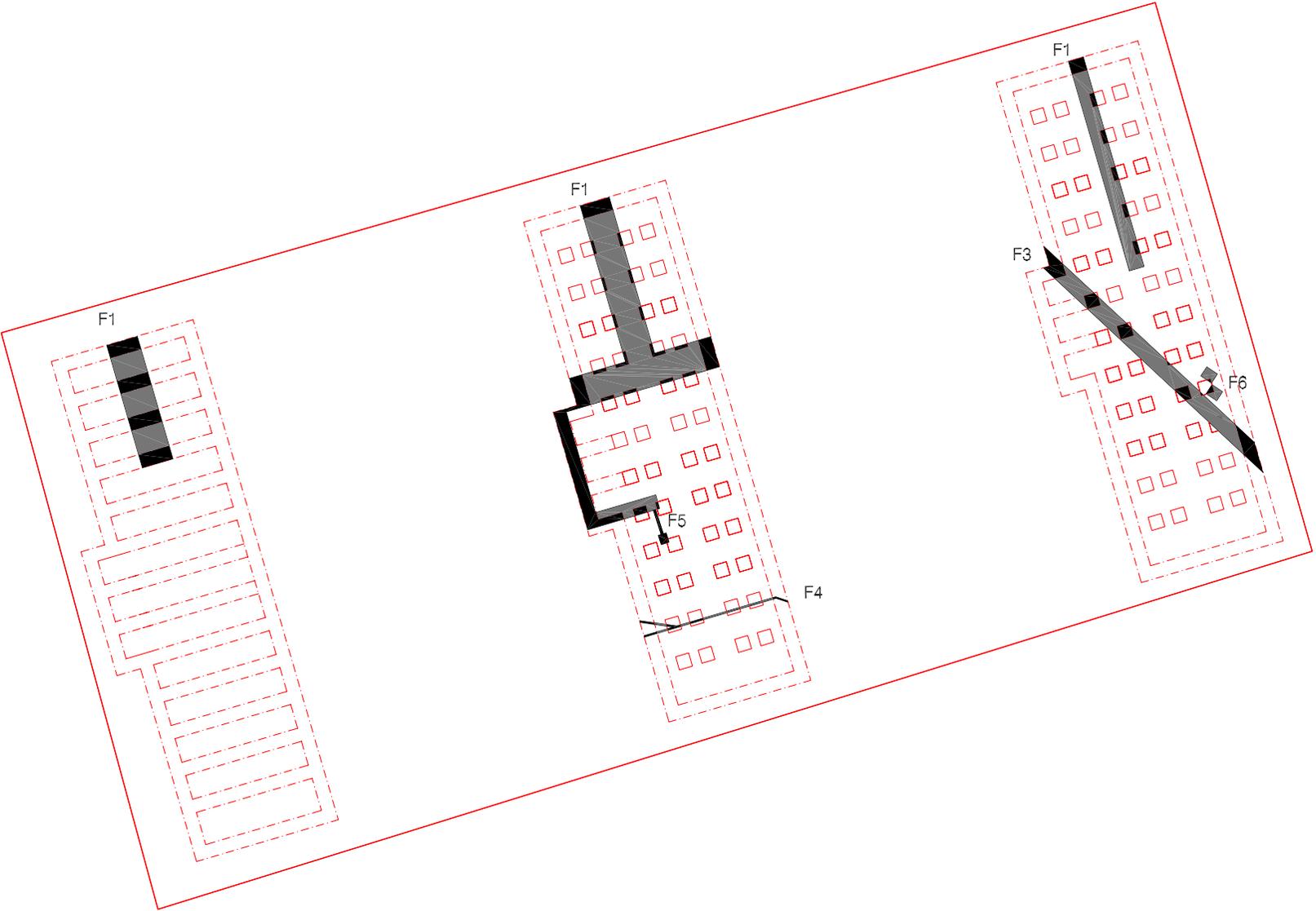
Plate 1 Foundations under excavation

Groundworks commenced at the western end of the site, adjacent to the retained accommodation blocks of Farndale and Eskdale, and progressed east across the site in three phases. The local site topography rose slightly toward the southwestern corner of the development area, and consequently excavation began with ground reduction of up to 1.5m. Further north and east, topsoil was stripped by up to 0.3m. Once completed, these groundworks levelled the site prior to excavation of the foundation trenches.

The basic footprint of each block consisted of a rectangular perimeter trench measuring *c.*1.2m wide x 1.1m deep and extending *c.*42.0m north-south x *c.*12.0m east-west (Figure 2; Plate 2). The method for excavating the internal foundations differed slightly between the new buildings. The western set of internal foundations was excavated as a series of twelve parallel trenches *c.*1.1m wide, connecting the east and west sides of the outline trench, whereas the subsequent two sets of foundations were excavated as a series of 48 internal



Plate 2 Footprint of eastern building, with the rubble foundations of earlier buildings



Location of groundworks and features

Scale 1:500



Figure 2

pits, each *c.* 1.1m square.

The recording system followed Field Research Procedure (Carver 1999), the standard operating system used by FAS. A single index of contexts starting at C1000 and for features starting at F1 was created during fieldwork. A checklist of records created during fieldwork, which form the content of the archive, is given below (Appendix B). A full photographic and written record was made of deposits encountered, supplemented by measured sketches.

3.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

Subsoil was identified securely across the site as a sterile reddish-brown clay with inclusions of rounded pebbles (C1001) first encountered *c.* 0.40m below ground level (BGL). During excavation of the second block foundations, excavation was deeper, subsoil was seen to change to a yellowish-brown clayey sand with inclusions of rounded pebbles at *c.* 1.0m BGL. The variable nature of the subsoil reflected the glacial geology of the area.

Overlying subsoil was a very dark greyish-brown topsoil (C1000), encountered across the site except where the demolished buildings had stood. Topsoil was stripped prior to excavation of the new foundation trenches. It varied from *c.* 0.20m to 0.45m in depth and was found to be generally devoid of inclusions. The definition between topsoil and subsoil in the vicinity of the trees along the southern edge of the development area became poorly defined due to massive root disturbance.

Cut through C1000 and encountered at all stages of excavation were foundations from the five demolished accommodation blocks (allocated F1). These consisted primarily of north-south aligned foundation trenches which varied in width from *c.* 1.0m to 1.6m. At the base of each trench (*c.* 0.60m BGL) were surviving concrete rafts (C1002), overlain by rubble backfill deriving from the demolished buildings (C1003). Further, perpendicular elements of F1 were observed in the western half of the central set of foundations.

Associated with F1 was a defunct service infrastructure. Notably, a pair of concrete and brick-built ducts *c.* 1.5m wide x 1.2m deep, were allocated F2 (C1004) and F3 (C1005). Their bases were of poured concrete, and the sides of brick and mortar capped with large stone slabs.

F4 was identified during excavation as an electricity cable trench aligned east-west in the central area of the site. F5 lay just to the north of F4 and consisted of a manhole and associated drainage. Adjacent to F5 was a small manhole allocated F6.

Table 1 Summary of context records

C No.	Identity	F No.	Munsell	Description
1000	topsoil	-	10YR 3/2	very dark greyish-brown topsoil <i>c.</i> 0.4m deep

C No.	Identity	F No.	Munsell	Description
1001	subsoil	-	5YR 4/4 10YR 5/8	sterile reddish-brown sandy clay subsoil with rounded pebbles, changing to yellowish brown clayey sand
1002	concrete	1	variable	concrete foundation with occasional fragment of brick and mortar wall
1003	backfill	1	variable	rubble backfill
1004	make-up	2	variable	brick, mortar and concrete make-up of service culvert
1005	make-up	3	variable	brick, mortar and concrete make-up of service culvert
1006	backfill	4	10YR 3/2	very dark greyish-brown backfill of cable trench with 15mm cable under protective tiles
1007	make-up	5	variable	the make-up of a suite of drains, including associated manhole
1008	make-up	6	variable	allocated to the make-up of two manholes at eastern end of site

Table 2 Summary of features records

F No.	Identity	C No.	Description	Profile
1	wall foundation	1002 1003	concrete foundations of demolished buildings <i>c.</i> 1.75m wide x 0.3m deep	u-shaped
2	services culvert	1004	concrete slab base with brick and mortar sides and concrete slab cap, containing water and data cables and heating pipes for demolished accommodation, <i>c.</i> 1.5m wide x 1.2m deep	rectangular
3	services culvert	1005	concrete slab base with brick and mortar sides and concrete slab cap, containing electricity and data cables and heating pipes for demolished accommodation, <i>c.</i> 1.5m wide x 1.2m deep	rectangular
4	electricity cable	1006	narrow trench <i>c.</i> 0.4m wide containing 15mm electricity cable covered with protective tiles	u-shaped
5	drains	1007	assortment of drains and manholes servicing the demolished buildings	various
6	manholes	1008	pair of adjacent manholes at eastern end of site	rectangular

4.0 ASSESSMENT

The archaeological watching brief encountered no remains of archaeological significance, and the recorded features related solely to the pre-existing accommodation blocks at the site, the construction of which would have removed any earlier archaeological deposits.

5.0 ARCHIVE

Paper and electronic copies of this report will be deposited with the City of York Council and made accessible on-line *via* OASIS.

References

Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey 1849

Ordnance Survey 1909

Ordnance Survey 1953

Secondary sources

Anon. 'Askham Bryan Village', online at www.askhambryan.org.uk, consulted 18th June 2007

Carver, M.O.H. 1999, 'Field Archaeology', pp: 128-181, in G. Barker (ed) *Companion Encyclopaedia of Archaeology* (London)

APPENDIX A ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION: WATCHING BRIEF

John Oxley, Principal Archaeologist, City of York Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An application to erect 3x three storey student accommodation blocks after demolition of 5x existing two storey accommodation has been approved by the City of York Council (O5/O1743/FULM). An archaeological watching brief on all groundworks has been made the subject of a condition on the planning consent (condition 4). This document sets out the details of the archaeological watching brief that the City of York Council considers will be necessary in conjunction with the proposed extension.

2.0 SITE DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is located at NGR SE 55264764. Ground level is at about 33mAOD.
- 2.2 The site lies in an area where there has been little recent archaeological work. The approximate find spot of a Neolithic polished stone axe was indicated at SE 55804705 by the finder Mr M Atkinson. The axe was found circa 1928 and was subsequently kept at Easingwold Grammar School.
- 2.5 Cropmarks recorded on aerial photographs have indicated that there are features relating to an extensive late prehistoric/Romano-British landscape preserved in this area.

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROGRAMME

- 3.1 It will be necessary for a watching brief to be kept on all ground disturbances for this development. A professional archaeologist or archaeological unit (the archaeologist) which must be approved in writing by the Assistant Director (Planning and Sustainable Development) must undertake this watching brief.
- 3.1.1 The watching brief will consist of the archaeologist observing all groundworks across the pits as described in 3.1 above. Where it becomes clear during the watching brief that there is no likelihood of archaeological deposits surviving on the site the watching brief may be curtailed with the agreement in writing of the Assistant Director (Planning and Sustainable Development). Where it becomes clear that the extent of surviving archaeology is greater than the archaeologist had allowed for in their costing of the watching brief, the archaeologist must inform their client that this is the case. In this situation the client should consult with the City of York Archaeologist in order to determine what, if any, further archaeological work must be undertaken in order to meet the terms of the planning condition.
- 3.1.2 The watching brief must be carried out by the archaeologist in a manner that allows the contractor to proceed with their construction programme without unreasonable interference or delay. The contractor must allow the archaeologist reasonable access and resources to implement this archaeological scheme of investigation.

- 3.1.3 Where archaeological deposits of national importance are revealed during the watching brief, the archaeological contractor must notify the City of York Council's Archaeologist at once. Consultations can then take place to determine what additional steps, if any, are appropriate in the circumstances relating to the deposits.
- 3.2 The objective of the watching brief is to establish the following details:
- 3.2.1 the date and character of any archaeological deposits disturbed by the development
- 3.3 During the watching brief the following methodologies must be followed:
- 3.3.1 the archaeologist will be in attendance at such times during the excavation for the groundworks as he or she considers appropriate and necessary; the archaeologist will record the presence or absence of archaeological features and deposits and make all appropriate written, drawn and photographic records of any archaeological deposits which are revealed; all burials must be recorded and removed by the archaeologist; a Home Office burial licence must be obtained for this procedure;
- 3.3.2 all records must be indexed, ordered, quantified and checked for consistency;
- 3.3.3 all artefacts and ecofacts recovered and retained from the watching brief must be fully documented and packed and stored in the appropriate materials and conditions to ensure that minimal deterioration takes place and that all their associated records are complete;
- 3.3.4 all artefacts and ecofacts recovered from the watching brief must be assessed, and where appropriate processed analysed drawn and published, by a person or organisation with skills and expertise relating to the artefacts and ecofacts;
- 3.4 The details and processes outlined in 3.3.1 - 3.3.4 will produce the following output as a concise report:
- 3.4.1 plan of site showing position of trench;
- 3.4.2 portfolio of drawn sections, trench plans, and, where appropriate, drawings of artefacts;
- 3.4.3 all assessment of the artefacts and ecofacts and where produced reports on any further analyses;
- 3.4.4 a full description of and an interpretation of the archaeological sequence, setting the site into the context of the known archaeology of the area;
- 3.4.5 an index to and details of the location of the archive. The long term care of the watching brief archive must be provided for. All the original material and paper archive must be prepared for deposition with an approved archaeological depository such as the Yorkshire Museum. These Institutions will normally make a charge to cover the long-term curation of the archaeological archive. The requirements of the receiving Institution must be

identified at the time of producing an estimate for this scheme of investigation.

- 3.4.8 The City of York Council UAD/SMR supports the *Online Access to index of Archaeological investigations* (OASIS) project. The overall aim of the OASIS project is to provide an online index to the mass of archaeological grey literature that has been produced as a result of the advent of large-scale developer funded fieldwork. The archaeological contractor must therefore complete the online OASIS form at <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>. If the archaeological contractor does not have internet access a paper copy of the form can be obtained from the City of York UAD/SMR at 9 St Leonard's Place, York YO1 7ET. Contractors are advised to contact the City of York UAD/SMR prior to completing the form. Four printed copies of the report must be deposited with City of York Council. In addition a copy of the report must be supplied in electronic form. This must be done on a CD-ROM as a PDF file or files. If in doubt about formats please contact John Oxley on 01904 551346 or e-mail to john.oxley@york.gov.uk. Once a report has become a public document by forming part of a planning application, City of York Council will place the Information on its WWW. Please ensure that you and your client agree to this procedure in writing as part of the process of submitting the report to the Principal Archaeologist.
- 3.4.7 The contractor must produce a written synopsis of the results of the watching brief and submit this to the City of York Council no later than two months after the completion of work on site.
- 3.4.8 The Contractor must give at least seven days notice in writing of the start of works on site to Assistant Director (Planning and Sustainable Development),
Planning and Sustainable Development, 9 St Leonard's Place, York, YO1 2ET
- 3.4.9 The Contractor will be subject to regular monitoring visits by the City of York Council. Reasonable access must be given at all times to the Principal Archaeologist, City of York Council or his agent to the site end to premises used for the purposes of post-excavation work to allow this monitoring to proceed. This will ensure that the scheme of investigation is being followed and that high professional standards are being maintained. It can be anticipated that the City of York Council will want to inspect a 10% sample of all archaeological records generated by the project.

4.0 SUMMARY

- 4.1 This document sets out the background to and outlines a programme for the watching brief which the City of York Council considers is reasonable and necessary on this site.

APPENDIX

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This appendix describes a set of procedures which must be implemented by all contractors.

2.0 Procedures

- 2.1.1 All work must be undertaken in a professional manner paying attention to the Institute for Field Archaeologist Standards and Guidance:

Introduction to Standards and Guidance (PDF)

Standards and Guidance for desk-based assessment (PDF)

Standard and Guidance for field evaluation (PDF)

Standard and Guidance for Excavation (PDF)

Standard and Guidance for an archaeological watching brief (PDF)

Standard and Guidance for the archaeological investigation and recording of standing buildings or structures (PDF)

Standard and Guidance for the collection, documentation, conservation and research of archaeological materials (PDF)

Appendices to Standards (PDF)

All documents are available from either the City of York Council or from the IFA website at <http://www.archaeologists.net>

- 2.2 All finds processing conservation work and storage of finds from this site must be carried out in accordance with the standards agreed by the Yorkshire Museum, the Castle Museum, and YAT those set by the UKIC. These standards form the basis of current practice in York and all contractors will be expected to base their estimates on the implementation of those standards (see section 3 below).

- 2.3 Finds specialists must be able to document and demonstrate levels of professional competence and technical expertise and access to comparative material.

- 2.4 Where the conservation of archaeological objects is necessary, this work should be undertaken either by or in consultation with the Conservation Section of the York Archaeological Trust.

3.0 Finds Processing Standards

- 3.1 The following finds-processing standards must be followed by all contractors

3.2 *On-site finds processing*

- 3.2.1 All bulk material must be washed

- 3.2.2 All bulk material except animal bone marked. Marking and labelling materials indelible and irremovable by abrasion

- 3.2.3 All bulk finds must be appropriately boxed and recorded on computer

- 3.2.4 Identification of stone-typo and tile must be undertaken on site

-
- 3.2.5 All the above to be completed within two months from the end of the excavation
- 3.2.8 All small finds recorded both in the finds register and on computer
- 3.2.7 Small find recording system must be compatible with Yorkshire Museum accessioning system
- 3.2.8 All small finds must be appropriately packaged for optimum survival of data
- 3.2.9 All the above to be completed within two days of the object having been excavated
- 3.3 *Off site Finds Processing*
- 3.3.1 All small find and bulk find data must be made available to finds researchers, conservator and curatorial staff
- 3.3.2 Computer system should be used to monitor location of objects to allow rapid access
- 3.3.3 All material stored in optimum conditions to ensure survival of data.
Includes
- Controlled environment storage where appropriate
 - Correct packaging with inert materials
 - Regular checking of the condition of objects
 - Immediate selection for conservation of vulnerable material
- 3.3.4 All material stored in buildings with appropriate security (see storage below)
- 3.4 *Conservation*
- 3.4.1 All metal objects will be x-rayed, then selected for conservation. Non-conserved material stored in controlled conditions.
- 3.4.2 All organic materials will be appropriately treated, including prior specialist recording for materials where there is possible information loss in the process of conservation
- 3.4.3 Specialist advice must be taken for wood, leather, osseous material and textile conservation and research
- 3.4.4 All other classes of material must be treated where appropriate
- 3.4.5 Special packaging undertaken must be provided for all vulnerable objects. All textiles, coins, and painted glass stored in specially-designed systems.

3.5 *Storage*

- 3.5.1 All objects stored in appropriate materials and storage conditions
 - 3.5.2 All objects stored to allow rapid access on demand
 - 3.5.3 All storage at appropriate security levels. eg:
 - Small finds in storage approved by National Security Adviser or Area Museums Service
 - Bulk finds in storage with lower security rating but still physically secure and alarmed
 - 3.5.4 Safe secure and environmentally controlled storage must be provided for all material between excavation and the deposition of the archive with the receiving body.
- 4.0 All contractors must follow the above guidelines.**

APPENDIX B INDEX TO FIELD FILE

CODE	DESCRIPTION	RECORD	FORMAT
Indices			
YO1	Index of notebooks	-	-
YO2	Index of contexts	1	A4
YO3	Index of features	1	A4
YO4	Index of structures	-	-
YO5	Index of drawings	-	-
YO6	.0 Index of photographs	4	A4
	.1 Index of film processing	1	A4
YO7	.0 Index of finds	-	-
	.1 Index of finds by context	-	-
	.2 Index of finds by grid square	-	-
	.3 Sample Register	-	-
	.4 Artefact Register	-	-
	.5 Finds Storage Register	-	-
YO8	Index of geophysical data files	-	-
YO9	.0 Index of survey stations	-	-
	.1 Index of co-ordinate files	-	-
	.2 Index of topographic files	-	-
YO10	Index of interventions	-	-
Y1	Notebooks	-	-
Contexts			
Y2	.0 Context Record	4	A4
	.1 Skeleton Record	-	-
	.2 Coffin Record	-	-
	.3 Masonry Record	-	-
	.4 Timber Record	-	-
Features			
Y3	.0 Feature Record	1	A4
	.1 Auger Record	-	-
Structures			
Y4	Structure Record	-	-
Site drawing			
Y5	.0 Legend	-	-
	.1 Plans	-	-
	.2 Maps	-	-
	.3 Sections	-	-
Photographs			
Y6	.0 Black and white negatives	2	35mm
	.1 Colour negatives	22	35mm
	.2 Colour slides	-	-
	.3 Colour enprints	22	6" x 4"
	.4 Black and white prints	2	Contact
Finds			
Y7	.0 Finds Location Record	-	-
	.1 Artefact Record	-	-
Survey			
Y8	.0 Record of geophysical data files	-	-
	.1 Record of .RAW data file	-	-
	.2 Record of .FLD data file	-	-
	.3 Surface Reconnaissance Record	-	-



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