

PROPOSED CAR-PARK, YORK DESIGNER CENTRE, NABURN

Desk-Based Assessment and Archaeological Statement

Ver 1.02 August 2024



Aerial View of Site

Prepared by John Oxley MBE FSA
(working through Heritage Adventures Ltd)

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report presents the results of a desk-based assessment (DBA) undertaken in August 2024 for the site which is located on land immediately south of the Designer Centre, Naburn, York (SE 5920 4747 ; Figure 1). The work was undertaken on behalf of O'Neill Associates and .
- 1.2 The proposed development area consists of the creation of a temporary overflow car-park to serve the Designer Centre. The proposal will include removal of topsoil and deposition of material to create car-park surface, landscaping works including tree-planting and construction of temporary lighting columns with associated ducts.
- 1.3 A rapid initial assessment of the site carried out for O'Neill Associates demonstrated that the site has the potential for survival of remains dating from the prehistoric period, Roman and medieval periods. Consequently, a full DBA has been commissioned together with an assessment of the impact of the development on any deposits that might be preserved on the site.
- 1.4 This document has been prepared by John Oxley MBE FSA to support the planning application for the proposed temporary car-park.

2 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The site lies in the Vale of York, south of the York moraine on the floodplain of the River Ouse.
- 2.2 Analysis of published sources shows that the site lies in an area where there is an extensive late prehistoric, Romano-British, and medieval landscape. There are two significant relict river/ palaeo-channels to the east and west of the development site.
- 2.3 The proposed development site preserves within it elements of this landscape observed in the walk over survey and evidenced in the LIDAR data for the site.
- 2.4 These features and deposits are of local significance.
- 2.5 Groundworks for the proposed development will have a negative impact on the features and deposits.
- 2.6 This impact can be mitigated through a programme of metal-detecting and archaeological recording, analysis, publication, and archive deposition with significant public participation.

3 Geology, Walk Over Survey, Map Analysis, Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 Geology

3.1.1 The site lies in The Vale of York a relatively flat and open landscape surrounded by higher land to the north (the Howardian Hills), east (the Yorkshire Wolds) and west (the Pennines, here in the form of a Magnesian Limestone ridge). The site lies to the east of the river Ouse, one of the rivers that drain this landscape south towards the Humber basin, helping form the distinctive character of the Vale. The soils of the Vale, largely deep permeable sandy loams of the Blackwood association,¹ are formed from glacial till, sand, and gravel, making them generally fertile and suitable for arable use. These overly solid geology consisting of Bunter Sandstones overlying Carboniferous Middle Coal Measures at depth Today, large fields enclosed by intermittent hedges and occasional trees give the landscape a generally open character.

Two glacial moraines ran across the Vale of York composed of materials deposited by retreating glaciers: the York moraine and, 13km to its south, the Escrick moraine (Figure 2). These moraines probably functioned as significant east/ west prehistoric routeways crossing the Vale; the rivers allowed north south water-borne movements. The river Ouse is located approximately 750m south-west of the site. The nearest floodable area is approximately 500m west of the site.

3.1.2 The proposed development area consists of the eastern portion of a large field bounded by mature hedgerows to the east and south, and a strip of woodland to the north. The western boundary of the site is a not marked on the ground and consists of a north south alignment. The site lies at approximately 10m AOD. The western field slopes gently in a westerly direction.

3.2 Walkover Survey (Figures 3 to 8)

3.2.1 A site walkover survey was carried out by the author on 28th August 2024. The site rises very gently from north to south. Undulations visible in the field indicate the presence of levelled/ ploughed out medieval ridge and furrow. This observation is supported by lidar survey evidence (Figure 3, 1). The south boundary hedgerow doglegs slightly to the north. Aligned north south from this dogleg is a linear break in slope, approximately 500mm high at the south, gradually decreasing in height as it runs north until after approximately 55m it disappears (Figure 3, 2; Figure 4). To the west of this linear earthwork further undulations indicate the presence of levelled/ ploughed out ridge and furrow (Figure 3, 3). A prominent earthwork runs from a gate accessing Acres Farm in the south boundary in a north-easterly direction (Figure 3, 4; Figures 5 and 6). Butting up against this earthwork and running to the west is a further earthwork (Figure 3, 5). A significant depression representing a relict river/ palaeo-channel lies immediately to the west of and outside the proposed development site (Figure 3, 6; Figure 7). A

large bund of redeposited topsoil removed from adjacent stoned-up area occupies the northern part of the site (Figure 3, 7; Figure 8). The main area of the proposed development site, outlined in red, is approximately 500mm to 750mm lower than the fields to the east and south.

3.3 *Map Analysis (Figures 9 to 13)*

- 3.3.1 Online historic Ordnance Survey maps from 1851 onwards have been consulted.
- 3.3.2 The 1851 OS map shows the site occupied by an open field with a western boundary that follows the line of the relict river/ palaeo-channel (Figure 9).
- 3.3.3 The 1891 25" to a mile OS map shows the site in greater detail (Figure 10). A pond and an area of marsh marks the southern part of the relict river/ palaeo-channel. A trackway runs in a north-easterly direction from Acres House. This trackway is represented by the linear earthwork observed in the walk over survey (Figure 3, feature 4; Figures 5 and 6).
- 3.3.4 The construction and development of Naburn Hospital and developments around the site appear on the 1910 and 1953 OS maps (Figures 11 and 12).
- 3.3.5 The 1:2500 OS plan published in 1967 shows the proposed development site occupied by a football pitch (Figure 13). The western edge of the football pitch is shown as a boundary. This boundary coincides with the linear earthwork observed in the walk over survey (Figure 3, feature 2; Figure 4). The creation of the football pitch and the levelling of the ridge and furrow is likely to have occurred between 1953 and 1967.

3.4 *Lidar data (Figures 14 and 15)*

- 3.4.1 Data derived from the 0.5m to 1m Environment Agency LIDAR data sets is available on a number of online sites. Figure 14 shows the LIDAR DTM for the area south of the Designer Centre. Most notable are two relict river/ palaeo-channels that run north-south parallel to the modern course of the river Ouse (Figure 15, A and B). The proposed development site lies between these two features. The western palaeo-channel, A, is the feature observed in the walk over survey (Figure 3, feature 6).
- 3.4.2 A later set of LIDAR data shows the impact of the removal of topsoil and creation of the bund on the northern part of the proposed development site.
- 3.4.3 The features identified in the walk over survey are clearly identifiable on both sets of LIDAR data.

3.5 *Historical Background (synopsis extracted from <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol3/pp74-82>)*

- 3.5.1 The site lies within Naburn Parish and township in the former Ouse and Derwent Wapentake. Ouse and Derwent wapentake, first mentioned in 1200, was made up of parts of Cave, Howden, Pocklington, Sneculfros, and Warter hundreds. Warter hundred included the townships of Water Fulford, Heslington, Langwith, and Naburn.
- 3.5.2 The open fields which lay around the village of Naburn and a large common moor further east were not inclosed until 1768, but much of the township was occupied by early-inclosed assarts and woodland.
- 3.5.3 Several religious houses had small estates in Naburn. Warter priory had land there in 1292-3, and in 1535 it had a reeve at Lingcroft and Wheldrake. The property was granted by the Crown in 1541 to Thomas Manners, earl of Rutland, who sold it soon after to William Babthorpe. In 1597 Sir Ralph Babthorpe sold it to John and Sir George Palmes. Lingcroft farm was among the lands sold under the Palmes Estates Act of 1774, but it was recovered by the Palmeses in 1918. The present Lingcroft Farm was built in the early 18th century and existed in 1739. Nearby is a prominent moated site which may well have its origins in the 13th century Warter Priory (City of York HER MYO4280).
- 3.5.6 The survival of woodland and moor, as well as the existence of inclosed assarts, is clearly shown by an exchange arranged in 1486 between Brian Palmes and Richard Acklam. Palmes was to receive houses and unidentified arable and meadow land. In return he conveyed to Acklam 44 a. lying in seven closes adjoining Naburn wood; 18 a. adjoining a close of Acklam's and a moor called Birker Bushes; common for 12 cattle, 6 horses, 60 sheep, and 6 pigs in two moors adjoining certain riddings and closes and next to Birker and South wood; and meadow land in the ings. He was also to arrange for 10 a. in Gilridding to be conveyed by its owner to Acklam. Gilridding had been mentioned as early as 1408. Other grounds which were referred to in the 15th century include Owthen, Akkers, and the Marsh, and by 1476 Mill and South fields were in existence: along with Busk field these were presumably the open fields of the township.
- 3.5.7 It is possible that the reference to Akkers may indicate an enclosure or perhaps a house on the site that became Acres House. Acres House was built in 1774. Naburn Lodge has a wheelhouse. Both Acres and Lodge farms belong to Naburn Hospital, the former York City Lunatic Asylum, for which they were acquired in 1899 and 1914 respectively, but the hospital itself stands just within Fulford parish.

3.6 *Archaeological Background: Intrusive Events*

3.6.1 The proposed development site lies in an area that has produced significant evidence for an extensive late prehistoric, Romano-British, and medieval landscape (Figure 16). This section presents a selection of the evidence contained in the City of York HER which is most relevant to assessing the archaeological potential of the proposed development site.

3.6.2 There have been eight relevant intrusive archaeological events within 2km of the development site (excavations, evaluations and watching briefs); these are shown on Figure 17. Outside this assessment area, major excavations were carried out at the site of University of York Heslington East Campus which are relevant to an assessment of this proposed development site.

3.6.3 Excavations at Germany Beck: EYO71, EYO273.

3.6.3.1 Evaluation and Excavations by MAP Archaeology at the housing development site at Germany Beck have taken place between 1996 and 2019. In 1996, an evaluation consisting of a total sixty-four trenches were excavated at the site which covers approximately 16ha. After planning permission was granted in 2006, large-scale excavations took place in advance of development. An extensive metal detecting survey of the site was also carried out in order to identify any metalwork of 11th century date that might have been associated with the Battle of Fulford, supposedly fought in these fields on 20th September 1066. These exercises defined an extensive field system which originated in the late prehistoric and continued into the 4th century AD. Ring ditches were recorded but no other potential structural features were identified. Evidence for late Iron Age/ Romano-British iron smithing was found. No evidence for the Battle of Fulford was discovered.

3.6.4 Excavations at St Oswald's School Fulford: EYO 347

3.6.4.1 An Archaeological Excavation was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd at St. Oswald's School, York, from January to March 2005. The excavation was undertaken in advance of re-development of the school and the erection of new school buildings.

Five broad phases of archaeological activity were identified:

Phase 1 (Prehistoric) activity was characterised by a small residual assemblage of flint artefacts. No associated features were identified.

Phase 2 (Romano -British) activity took the form of a series of field boundaries, ditches associated features and finds. Excavation showed that the ditch evolved in complexity over time, and the pottery assemblage suggested that the system was in use from the mid 2nd century onwards. A large number of Romano-British coins, coin fragments and coin-moulds were recovered from one of the field ditches. These finds are thought to relate to coin-forging and are of national significance.

Phase 3 (Medieval) activity was characterised by a complex of plough-scars and furrows that ran from east to west. These features indicate that the site formed part of the medieval open field system of the village of Fulford.

Phase 4 (Post-medieval) activity consisted of a number of pits and other features. The Postmedieval finds assemblage was unusual in that it contained a number of pistol and musket balls. These may relate to Civil War activity in the vicinity of the site.

3.6.5 Excavations at Naburn Hospital: EYO112

3.6.5.1 In 1998 Oxford Archaeological Unit carried out an extensive watching brief on the groundworks for the construction of the Designer Centre. The site was divided into two zones. Zone 1 took in most of the site, and Zone 2 consisted of the line of the perimeter road. The earliest feature on the site was an Iron-Age or Romano-British ditch. This may be related to an extensive area of enclosures and fields to the south-east, known from cropmarks. A post-medieval ditch and a short length of undated gully were also located. Regularly spaced ridge and furrow extended over the south of the site. In the north of the site there was evidence of ground disturbance resulting from the construction and demolition of the former hospital.

3.6.6 Excavations at Lingcroft Farm: EYO6616

3.6.6.1 Excavations by the University of Bradford in 1982 targeted elements of the extensive field system evidenced in the Lingcroft Farm area on aerial photographs. The excavations produced significant evidence for exploitation of the area in the Bronze Age and the development in the late Iron Age and Romano-British periods of an increasingly complex enclosed landscape with fields and roundhouses.

3.6.7 Evaluations at Naburn Waste Water Treatment Works EYO5817 and Naburn Sewage Treatment Works: EYO79

3.6.7.1 In 1998 Northern Archaeological Associates excavated ten trenches at Naburn Waste Water Treatment Works but no archaeological deposits were recorded.

3.6.7.2 In 1997, an archaeological investigation, using geophysical surveying and trial trenching, was undertaken by On-Site Archaeology on the site of the proposed development at Naburn Sewage Treatment Works. The majority of features encountered were remnant furrows (relicts of the medieval ridge and furrow ploughing system). Two ditches of either late Iron Age or early Roman date were found towards the eastern boundary of the site, and a number of modern deposits, probably of dumped material, were also revealed. The modern dumped material extended to a depth of 1.70m below the present ground level.

3.6.8 Watching Brief at A19/ A64 Interchange: EYO635

3.6.8.1 An archaeological watching brief on groundworks at the revised interchange by York Archaeological Trust in 1997 recorded a Roman stone sarcophagus containing a skeleton. This high-status burial probably relates to an as yet unidentified Roman occupation site.

3.6.9 Excavations at University of York Heslington East: EYO7779

3.6.9.1 Archaeological excavations between 2003-2013 by York Archaeological Trust, On-Site Archaeology and University of York Department of Archaeology interrogated almost 80ha of land designated for development by University of York. The excavations constitute the largest exposure of prehistoric and Roman activity investigated archaeologically in York's immediate hinterland. Evidence from the site included Neolithic and Bronze Age activity leading to the development of field systems and settlements by the end of the Iron Age. The latter households, involved with both the rural economy and prestigious artefact production, continued vibrantly into the formal Roman period, although now able to access ceramic imports via York. Later, however, settlement shifted eastwards to the centre of this landscape and agricultural production intensified. This may have included supplying demands from beyond the immediate landscape, though did not seem to involve expanding the productive base of that economy, whilst ceramic consumption now increasingly by-passed York. Before the end of the fourth century AD, a 'ritual enclosure' with associated monumental buildings was inserted here. In later decades, a timber-framed building, masonry well, and evidence for manufacturing on the northern margins of the site suggest vibrant activity in this zone into the fifth century AD, yet evidence for social tensions beyond. These activities were eventually covered by naturally formed hillside deposits, before ploughing of medieval and modern date occurred.

3.7 *Archaeological Background: Monuments (Figure 18 and 19)*

3.7.1 The evidence from intrusive events and non-intrusive events such as aerial photography has been processed by the City of York HER into a series of interpretive monument descriptions. Paras 3.7.2 to 3.7.8 summarise the prehistoric and Romano-British monuments (Figure 18); para 3.7.9 summarises the medieval monuments (Figure 19).

3.7.2 MYO 3524 and MYO 3525. Naburn. Iron Age or Roman rectilinear ditched enclosures, which are probably part of a field system, are visible as cropmarks on air photographs. One enclosure contains a roundhouse and two other incomplete curvilinear enclosures are possibly also round houses.

3.7.3 MYO3519. Naburn, Lingcroft Farm. An extensive Iron Age or Roman field system is visible as cropmarks on air photographs, extending north-south for 1.2km and west-east for 1.3km. It comprises parallel boundary ditches and rectilinear enclosures. Some enclosures are double-ditched and a few

contain roundhouses. Where substantial lengths of boundary are double-ditched it is uncertain if they are also functioning as trackways. This area around Lingcroft Farm formed part of a programme of study of fieldwalking and excavation, undertaken by Bradford University Archaeological Sciences Department, from 1980. Dating evidence has confirmed a late Iron Age and Roman date for the field system and roundhouses.

- 3.7.4 MYO2616. Fulford. Cropmarks of a possible Iron Age/Roman field system of rectilinear type are visible on air photographs. The cropmarks of a possible field system of rectilinear nature are visible at SE 6196 4879 (centred). Additional cropmarks to the west, centred at SE 6169 4871, may represent an extension of this system. Possible Iron Age/Roman date.
- 3.7.5 MYO4968. Fulford, Germany Beck. 1st-2nd century brickwork style field system with enclosures. Excavated ahead of residential development 2016. MYO4466. Fulford, Germany Beck. A circular, ditched enclosure, excavated in 1996. It is possibly a round barrow of Bronze Age date, although the excavation proved inconclusive.
- 3.7.6 MYO2011. Fulford. St Oswald's School. A series of field boundaries, ditches associated features and finds. Excavation showed that the ditch system evolved in complexity over time, and the pottery assemblage suggested that the system was in use from the mid 2nd century onwards. A large number of Romano-British coins, coin fragments and coin-moulds were recovered from one of the field ditches. These finds are thought to relate to coin-forging and are of national significance.
- 3.7.8 MYO3619. Fulford. Roman stone sarcophagus containing a skeleton.
- 3.7.9 A series of monument descriptions (MYO 2100. 2335, 2552, 2553, 3634) relating to medieval ridge and furrow in Naburn and Fulford parishes. Most of the ridge and furrow has been levelled by ploughing or other activities. The development site is part of MYO2100.

4 Archaeological Significances and Impact of Development

- 4.1 The evidence summarised in Section 3 above clearly demonstrates that the development site has the potential to preserve archaeological features and deposits. These features and deposits relate to late prehistoric and Romano-British and medieval exploitation and occupation of the landscape.
- 4.2 This late-prehistoric and Romano-British landscape is represented on aerial photographs, survey and excavation by ditches defining fields and trackways and domestic enclosures. The find of a stone sarcophagus at the A19/ A64 interchange hints at a high-status Roman-British domestic site somewhere in this area though there is no evidence that it will lie within the development site.

- 4.3 The evidence for medieval ridge and furrow points to an extensive open field agricultural landscape associated with the village of Naburn and the lands held by monastic houses in the wider parish of Naburn.
- 4.4 The LIDAR data and evidence from the walk over survey point to the survival of a locally significant sequence of features and deposits. Immediately outside and to the west of the development site are the substantial remains of a relict river/ palaeo-channel (Figure 20, A). The LIDAR data also points to another relict river/ palaeo-channel immediately to the east of the development site. This eastern channel is hardly visible in the landscape today. These channels appear to have merged immediately north of the development site. The development site therefore occupies an area bounded east and west by what would have been seasonally wet, marshy land. Significantly, the prehistoric/ Romano-British field system MYO3524 and MYO3525 occupies the higher ground between these two relict channels (Figure 18). The medieval ridge and furrow respects the extents of the palaeo-channel (Figure 20, B). Parts of the ridge and furrow and the trackway (which clearly post-dates the ridge and furrow) lie within the development site (Figure 20, C). The trackway may be associated with the construction of Acres House in 1774. Acres House and possibly earlier structures lie on the slightly higher ground immediately to the south of the development site (Figure 20, F). Most of the ridge and furrow within the area of the development site was levelled to create a football pitch for Naburn Hospital between 1953 and 1961 (Figure 20, D). Recent topsoil removal to create a working area has created a large bund on the north boundary of the site (Figure 20, E).
- 4.5 Figure 21 shows the proposed development. The groundworks for the development will require the removal of topsoil and creation of a firm surface for the car park. In addition, there will be localised excavations for cable ducts, lighting columns, and planting pits. These interventions will have a significant impact on the ridge and furrow, trackway and will also impact on any prehistoric or Romano-British features that survive as features cut into the underlying subsoil.

5.0 Archaeological Assessment and Recommendations

- 5.1 There will be significant negative impacts on features and deposits that lie within the development site. These features and deposits are considered to be of local significance, as they are already well-represented in the archaeological record. However, the features and deposits merit recording prior to development taking place. Any features cut into the underlying subsoil should therefore be cleaned and sampled through archaeological excavation. There is great public interest in the archaeological work in York. It is therefore suggested that the archaeological recording should be carried out with a significant public participation.

- 5.2 It is recommended therefore:
- 5.2.1 prior to the topsoil strip, the development site is subject to a metal detecting survey so that any finds in the topsoil can be identified and recovered. This survey should be carried out by experienced metal-detectorists working under professional archaeological supervision;
 - 5.2.2 the site is subject to an archaeological strip and map exercise with provision made to include public participation in cleaning and recording exposed surfaces and excavating samples of features and deposits;
 - 5.2.3 that the post-excavation finds processing work includes public participation;
 - 5.2.4 that a non-academic account of the site and its setting is published alongside the production of a standard site narrative and the site archive is deposited with an appropriate registered museum.
- 5.3 It is recommended that this programme of archaeological work is the subject of an archaeological condition on any planning consent that is granted for this development.

6.0 Summary

- 5.1 This DBA and Archaeological Assessment sets out the archaeological potential and significances of the deposits and assesses the impact of development on the deposits.
- 5.2 The DBA identifies the geological, historical, and archaeological background to the site. It identifies the presence of archaeological features and deposits on this site. It identifies that groundworks for the proposed development will have a negative impact on deposits on the site.
- 5.3 It sets out a programme of metal-detecting, archaeological strip and map recording and public involvement and proposes that this be covered by a standard planning condition for an archaeological excavation and a standard planning condition for an archaeological watching brief.
- 5.4 It is considered that this programme of archaeological recording could be implemented by the applicant prior to consent being granted and that it represents a reasonable and achievable methodology that will record any archaeological deposits on the site prior to development commencing.

7.0 Online References and Sources

British Geological Survey <https://www.bgs.ac.uk/map-viewers/bgs-geology-viewer/>

CIFA Standards and Guidance <https://www.archaeologists.net/codes/cifa>

City of York HER data <https://her.york.gov.uk/map>

Historic Maps <https://maps.nls.uk/>

Lidar DTM <https://maps.nls.uk/> <https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map>
<https://her.york.gov.uk/map>

Portable Antiquities Scheme <https://finds.org.uk/>

Victoria County History <https://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/east/vol3/pp74-82>

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York

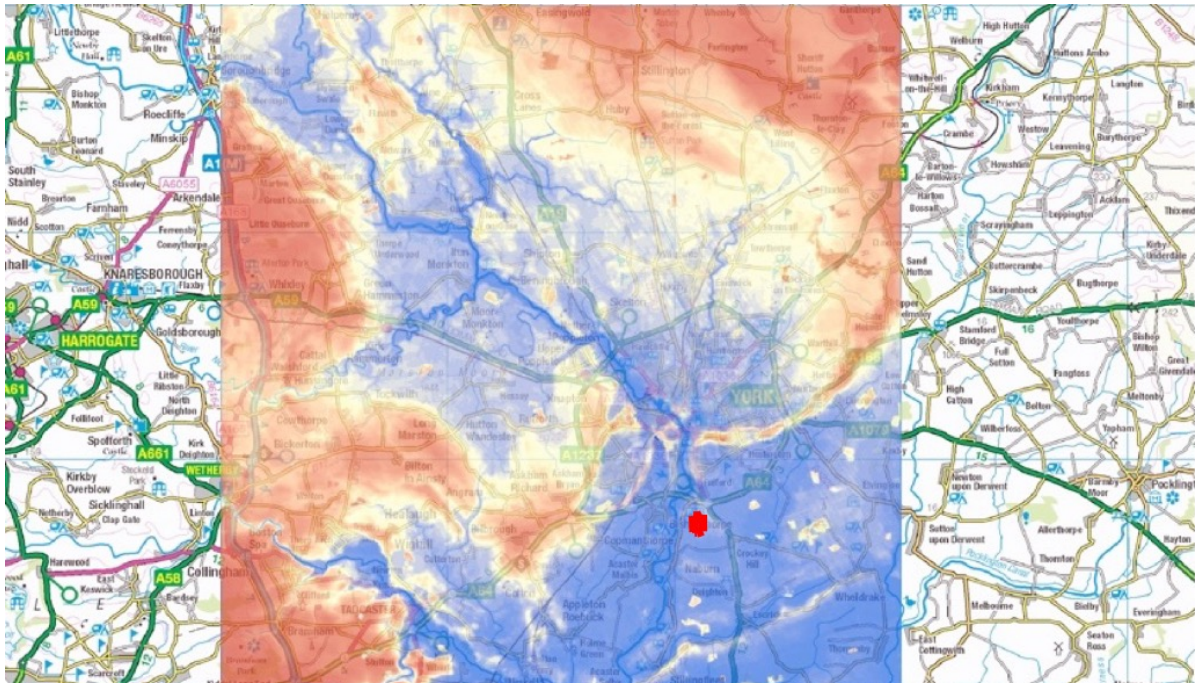


Figure 2: DTM Model Vale of York showing site in relation to York and Escrick glacial moraines (elevation: red, high; blue, low)



Figure 3: Features 1 to 7 observed during walkover survey; development site extent in red, lidar DTM background.



Figure 4: North-South earthwork (Figure 3, 2), looking south



Figure 5: North-east/ South-west earthwork (Figure 3, 4) looking south



Figure 6: North-east/ South-west earthwork (Figure 3, 4) looking south



Figure 7: Linear feature (Figure 3, 6) looking west; fence line dips into relict paleochannel and rises up side of channel to west.



Figure 8: Topsoil bund and stoned-up area (Figure 3, 7) looking east.

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York



Figure 9. 1851 OS 6" series.



Figure 10. 1891 OS 25" series.

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York

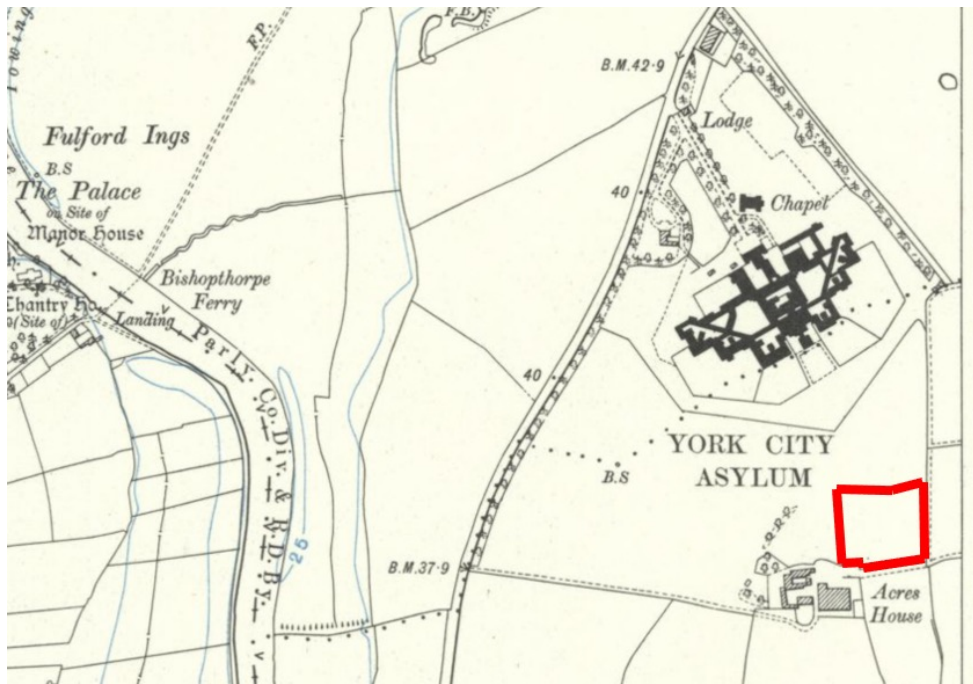


Figure 11. 1910 OS 6" series.

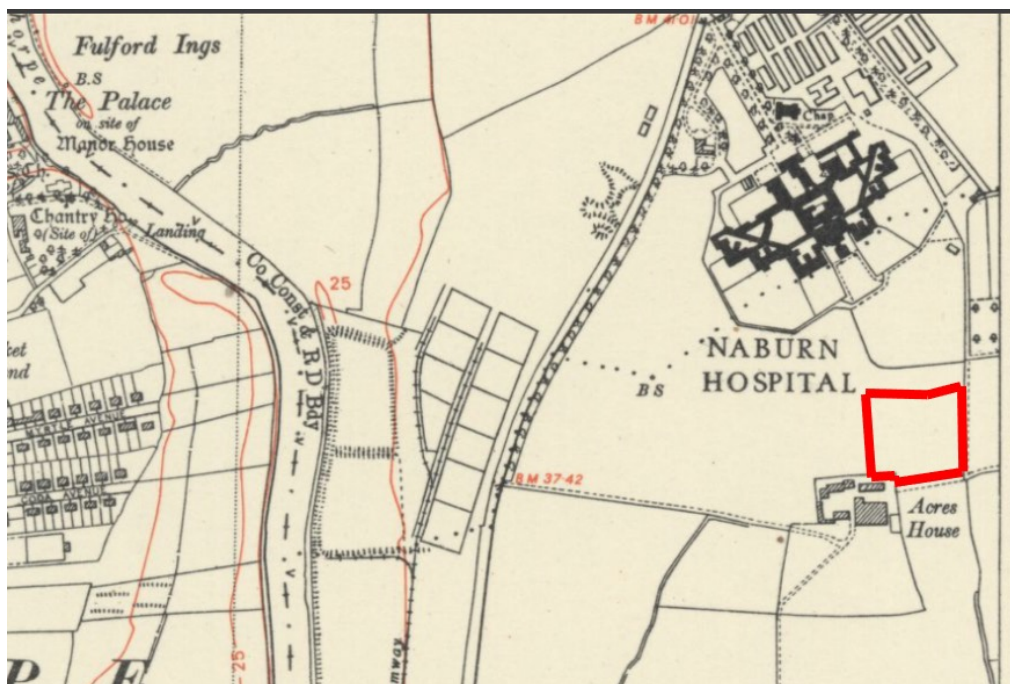


Figure 12. 1953 OS 6" series.

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York

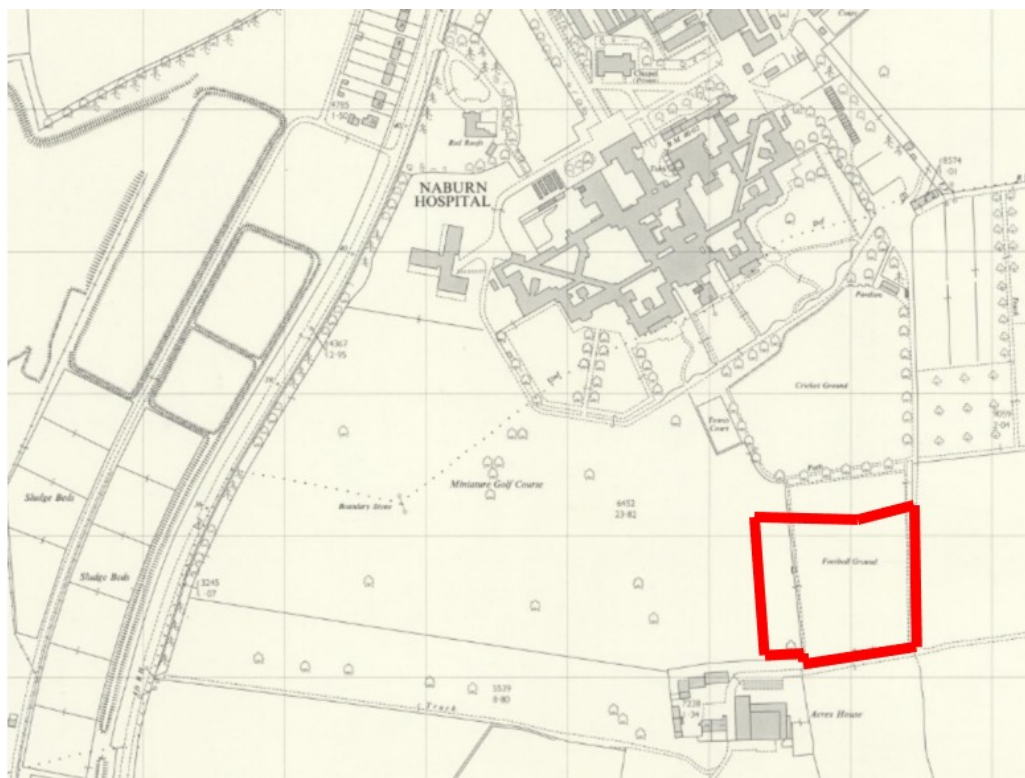


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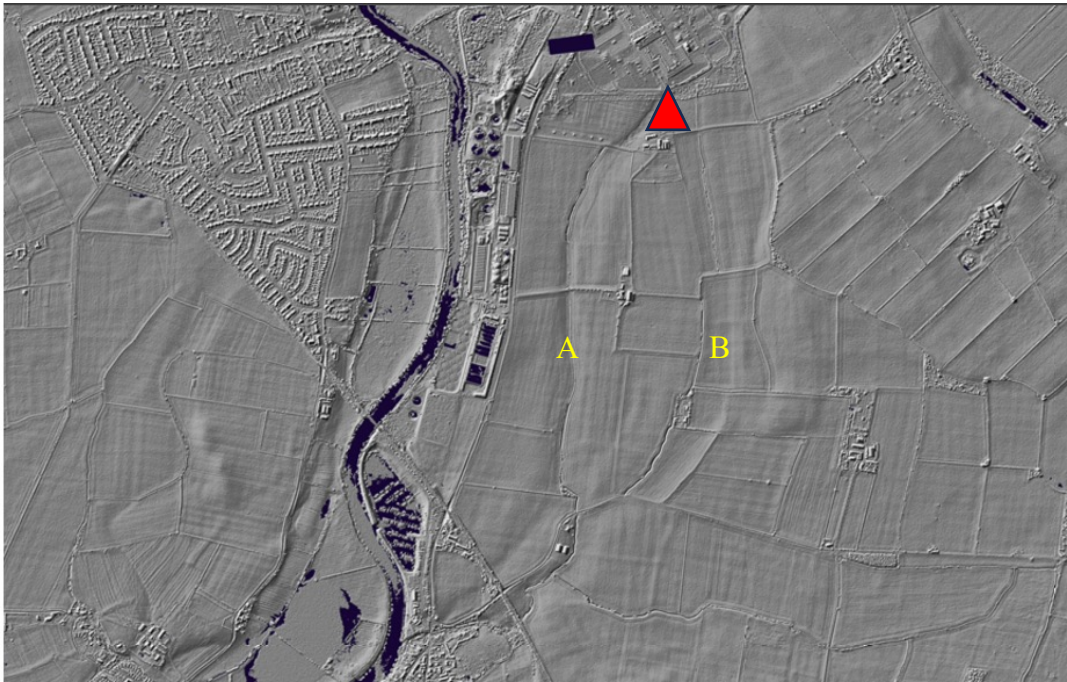


Figure 14. LIDAR DTM for area south of Designer Centre (red triangle marks site location).

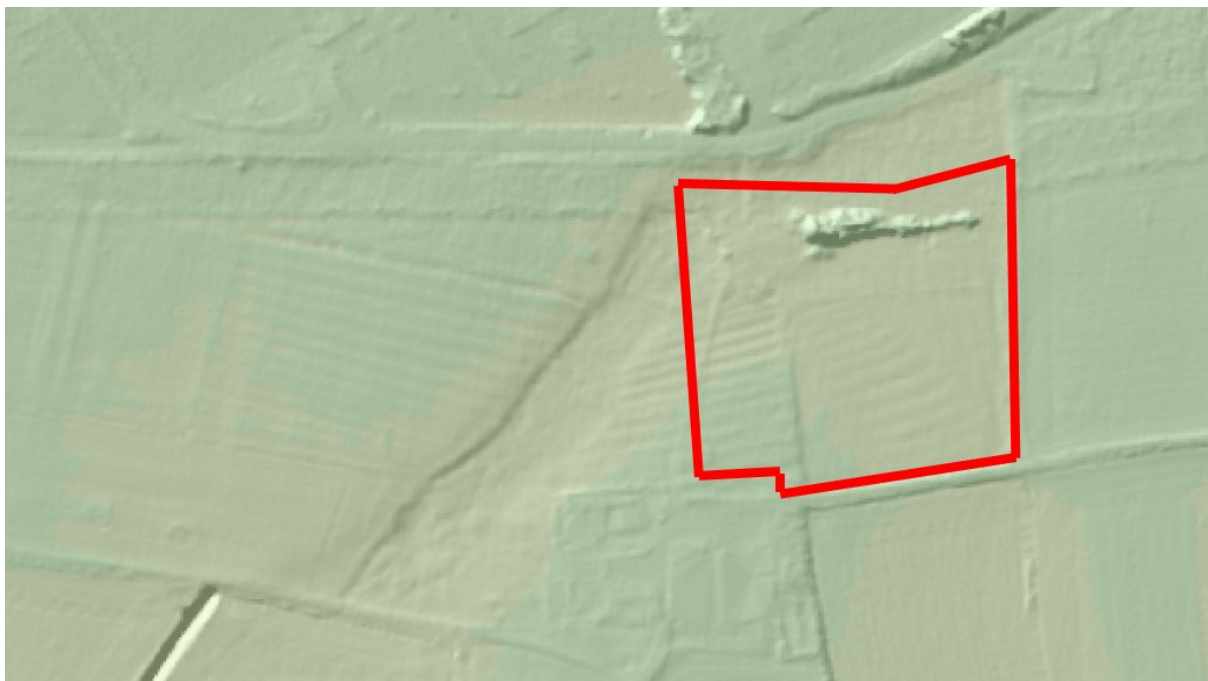


Figure 15. LIDAR DTM showing bund and area of topsoil removal (development site outlined in red).

Proposed Car Park, Designer Centre, Naburn, York

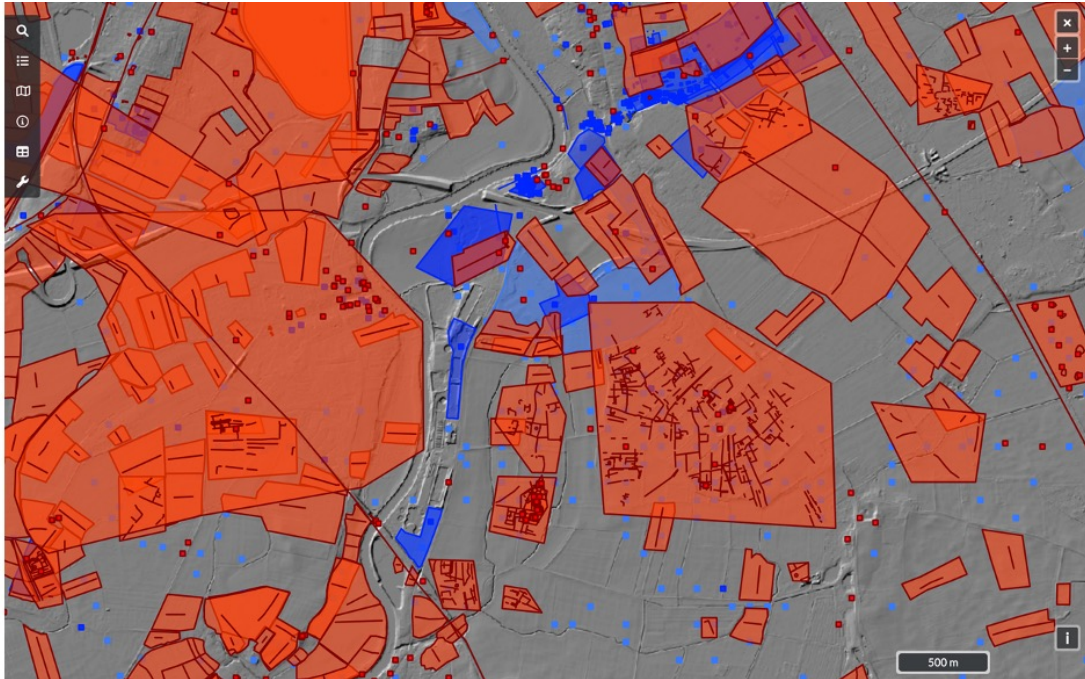


Figure 16. City of York HER: Non-Intrusive Events (blue); Intrusive Events (dark blue); and Monuments (red)

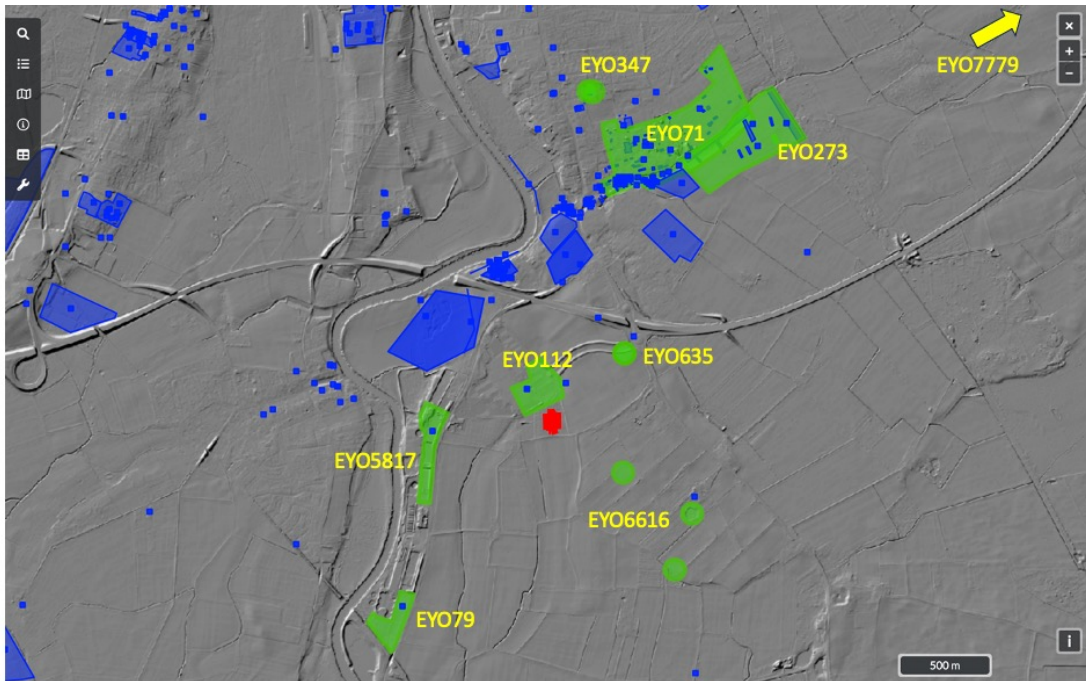


Figure 17. City of York HER: Relevant Intrusive Events; site location (red)

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Figure 18. City of York HER: Relevant Prehistoric and Romano-British Monuments



Figure 19. City of York HER: Relevant Medieval Monuments

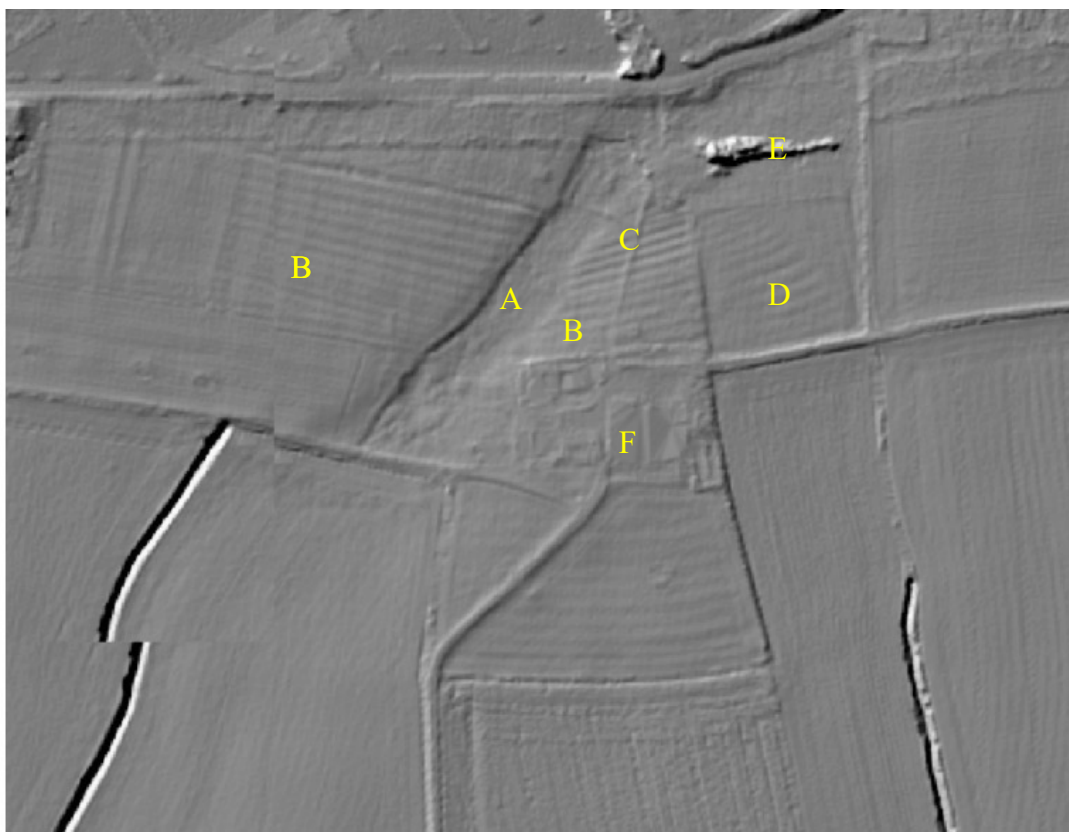


Figure 20. LIDAR Detail showing: A, palaeo-channel; B, ridge and furrow respecting palaeo-channel; C, trackway across ridge and furrow; D, levelled area for 20th century football pitch; E, topsoil bund; F, medieval and modern farm on higher ground.

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Figure 21. Proposed Site Layout.