



VIOLA GARDENS

CLIFFE

NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

REPORT
OCTOBER 2010

SURVEY AND EXCAVATION SECTION



ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
VIOLA GARDENS
CLIFFE
NORTH YORKSHIRE

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REPORT
October 2010



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Summary

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at Plot 2, Viola Gardens, Cliffe (NGR: SE 6638 3267) during the excavation of strip foundations for a single dwelling and detached garage. The watching brief was carried out on 7th October 2010. No features of archaeological significance were encountered, and an homogenous garden soil was observed across the site, directly overlying natural subsoil at a depth of *c.*0.75m below ground level.

Acknowledgements

FAS would like to thank Mrs Nikki Williamson, and Louise Milnes, Selby District Council, for advice and assistance during the watching brief.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document presents the results of an archaeological watching brief, carried out at Plot 2, Viola Gardens, Cliffe on 7th October 2010. The watching brief was undertaken by Field Archaeology Specialists (FAS) Ltd, on behalf of Mrs Nikki Williamson.

1.1 LOCATION AND LAND USE

Viola Gardens lies to the east of York Road, which forms the main north-south road along which the settlement of Cliffe is located (NGR: SE 6638 3267; Figure 1). Prior to the excavation of foundation trenches, the site was under rough turf, forming part of a larger property with the main dwelling to the north (Plate 1).



Plate 1 Plot 2 Viola Gardens, prior to groundworks, looking east

1.2 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the watching brief was to identify, characterise and record any archaeological deposits encountered during groundworks which would be destroyed or disturbed by the excavation of strip foundations. The work was undertaken in accordance with an archaeological planning condition specified by Selby District Council.

1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Archaeological remains situated within 500m of Viola Gardens suggest that the area was occupied from at least the Iron Age; cropmark evidence suggests extensive field systems and associated settlements (NMR 1074943).

The manor of Cliffe is mentioned in the Domesday Book, at which time it was held by the Count of Mortain, and held of him by Nigel Fossard. The manor formed part of the soke of the Bishop of Durham's Manor of Howden, and the overlordship of the bishop continued throughout the medieval period (Allison 1976, 55-60).

Part of the manor descended with the Fossard family, and then through marriage to the Turnham family. The remaining half of the manor was held in demesne by the bishops of Durham, from whom it passed to the Bishop of Ripon in 1836.

The settlement at Cliffe is strung out for a mile along the main north-south street, which caused the village to be known at times as 'Long Cliffe'. To the south, an east-west street follows a ridge in the topography, that originally overlooked a now relict course of the River Ouse. Surrounding the village were commons and open land that were not enclosed until 1863. In 1840, the Selby to Hull Railway line was constructed through the parish, and Cliffe was served by its own station, now closed.

Plot 2 Viola Gardens originally formed part of a larger property that had been established by the mid-19th



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Location map

Scale 1:1000



Figure 1



century, with a dwelling situated in the northwestern corner (Ordnance Survey 1851-3). The surrounding ground is shown as covered with trees. The same layout is shown on historic maps to 1958 (Ordnance Survey 1892; 1909; 1958). In 1964-7, three large greenhouses are shown in the centre of the property (to the north of the watching brief location); a structure shown centrally within the larger plot on the map of 1970s and 1990s may represent the same.

2.0 FIELDWORK PROCEDURE

The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with the Institute for Archaeologists *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (2008).

Groundworks consisted of the excavation of a series of strip foundations for a single dwelling and associated detached garage (Figure 2; Plate 2). The foundations were excavated to a maximum depth of 0.80m. The foundations were excavated by machine under strict archaeological supervision. Measured sketch and photographic records were made of the position of the foundation trenches and the strata encountered.



Plate 2 Groundworks in progress, looking east

3.0 FIELDWORK RESULTS

Natural subsoil was encountered at a depth of *c.*0.75m below ground level, where it consisted of a very dark yellowish-brown clay (Plate 3). This was overlain directly by a clean, homogenous clayey silt, which contained few inclusions and no finds.

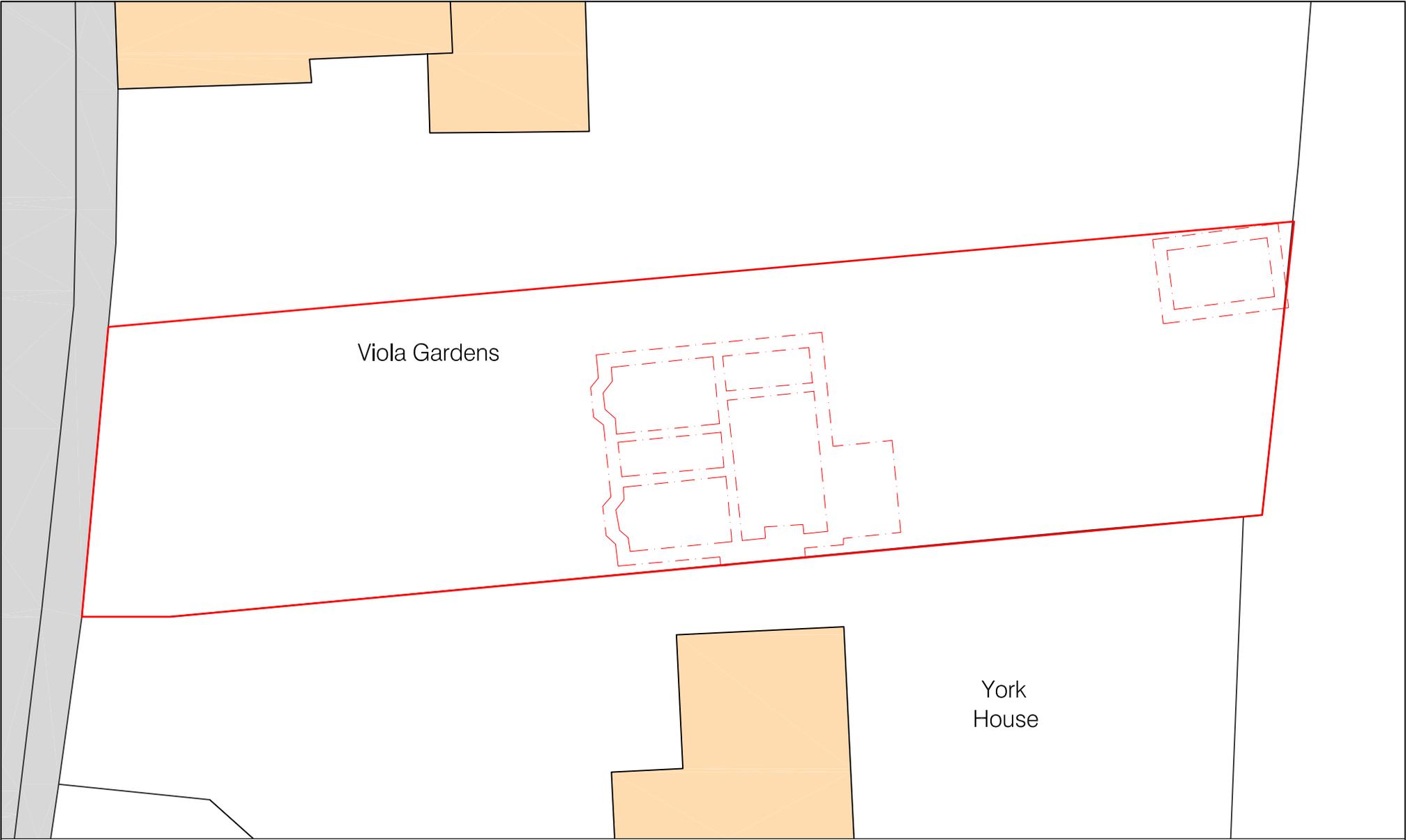
No remains of archaeological significance were encountered during the watching brief.

4.0 ARCHIVE

A paper and electronic version of this report will be deposited with Selby District Council, and with the North Yorkshire Historic Environment Record (NYCC Northallerton). The report will also be made available *via* the OASIS website (fieldarc1-85053).



Plate 3 Natural subsoil within foundation trench, looking east (scale 2.0m)



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Location of watching brief

Scale 1:250



Figure 2

References

Cartographic sources

Ordnance Survey 1851-3

Ordnance Survey 1892

Ordnance Survey 1909

Ordnance Survey 1958

Ordnance Survey 1964-72

Secondary sources

Allison, K.J. 1976. *A History of the County of York: East Riding: Volume 3* (London)



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