



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



**TRENCH 1, AREA B4
HESLINGTON EAST, YORK**

INTERIM EVALUATION REPORT

by Mark Johnson

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YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

On 14th January 2008 York Archaeological Trust excavated an archaeological trench in a zone of the Heslington East site known as Area B4. This trench, known as Trench 1, formed part of a multi-trench archaeological evaluation of the Heslington 'B' areas. Trench 1 was located immediately west of overhead electrical powerlines on an area that slopes very gently down to the west.

The trench was mechanically excavated by a 360° excavator equipped with a toothless bucket and operated under direct archaeological supervision. The trench was stripped of topsoil and a thin subsoil down to natural deposits. A small area in the central part of the trench was machined to a greater depth in order to examine the characteristics of the glacial drift. A second small area was also machined to a greater depth at the west end of the trench in order to confirm the profile of an archaeological feature (probably a medieval ploughing furrow).

Figure 1 shows the proposed position of trench 1. This was shifted only fractionally during excavation. The revised location has been surveyed but has yet to be plotted.

2. RESULTS

Natural deposits of the glacial drift, context 11004, were encountered at depths of between 0.30m – 0.35m below ground level. These were seen to be composed of dark yellow – reddish brown, sands (with some clay) containing an amount of pebbles and cobbles. This was overlain by a fairly thin layer (generally around 0.1m – 0.2m) of light reddish brown silty sand containing quantities of pebbles and cobbles, context 11003. Context 11003 is interpreted as a natural sub-soil. At the extreme western end of the trench a linear feature aligned approximately north – south, context 11002, was seen to cut through the subsoil. 11002 was in excess of 2.9m wide, up to 0.4m deep, had gently sloping sides and a concave base. Its fill, context 11001, was a mid greyish brown silty sand containing frequent small stones and occasional flecks of charcoal. Sealing this fill was the extant topsoil of dark greyish brown, slightly clayey sandy silt, context 11000, that was in the region of 0.3m thick – though somewhat thinner than this in the eastern parts of the trench.

The only feature of archaeological interest in Trench 1 was the north – south aligned 11002. Given the size, broad relatively shallow profile, and orientation of this feature, it is entirely possible that it represents a plough furrow of a medieval ridge and furrow ploughing system.

The absence of similar features to the east of 11002 may relate to later plough truncation on the up-slope, thinner soiled eastern parts of the trench.



Plate 1 Overall view of trench, looking W



Plate 2 Section through furrow, looking S

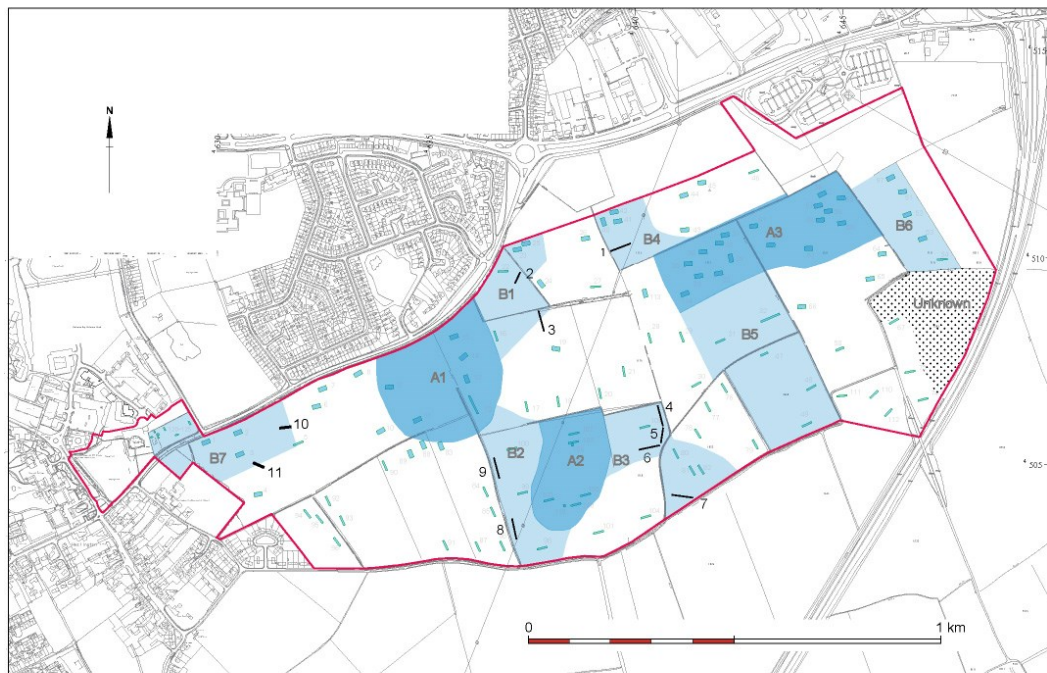


Figure 1 Plan showing proposed location of 2008 evaluation trenches (black),
Trench 1 is northernmost