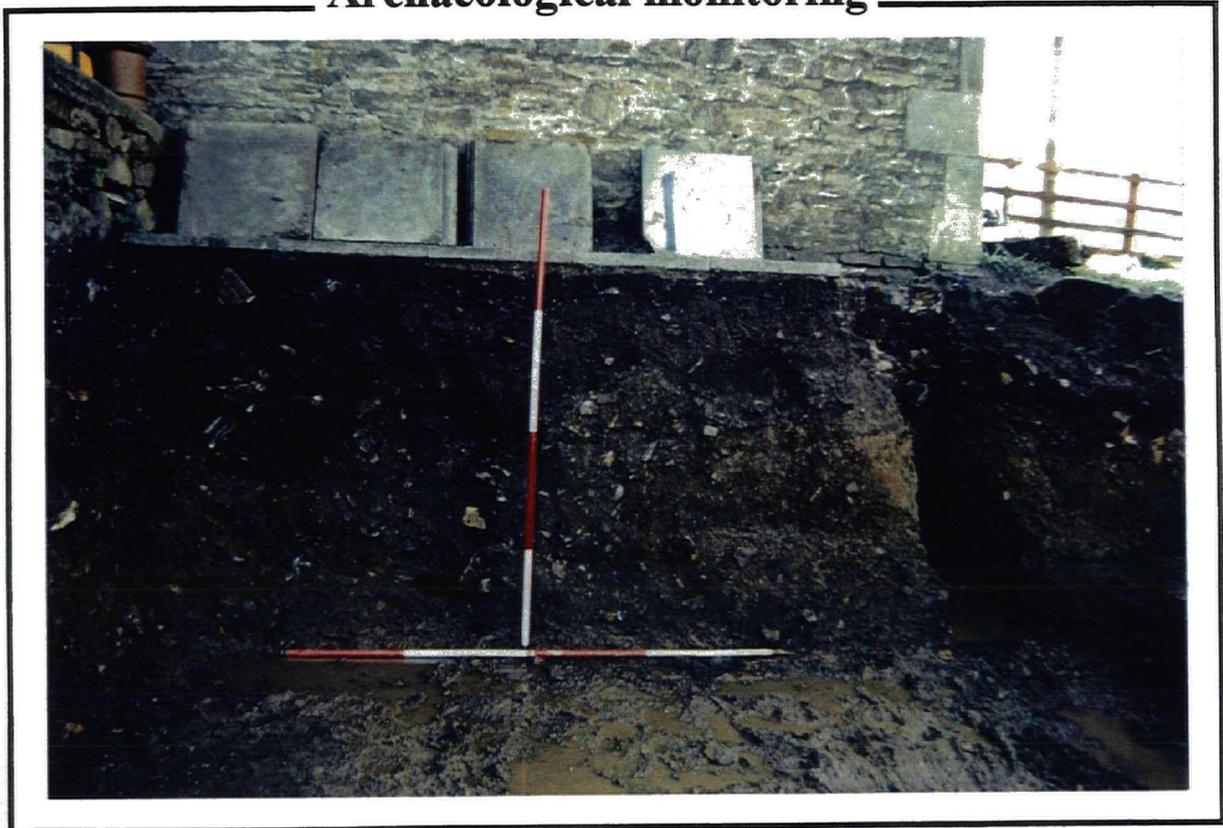


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NYCC HER	
SNY	15913
ENY	5372
CNY	
Parish	1043
Rec'd	7/1998

**Church Lodge, Stanwick St John,  
Richmondshire,  
North Yorkshire:**

**Archaeological monitoring**



*Archaeological Services  
University of Durham  
May 1998*

**Church Lodge, Stanwick St John,  
Richmondshire, North Yorkshire:**

**Archaeological monitoring**

NZ 1860 1160  
Stanwick St John CP  
North Yorkshire

by: *Archaeological Services  
University of Durham*

**on behalf of:**  
*Mr J. R. Johnson  
Peter Fall Cowie*

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## **1. Summary**

### **1.1 Client**

Mr J. R. Johnson  
c/o Peter Fall Cowie  
Chartered Building Surveyors  
67, Duke Street  
Darlington  
Co. Durham  
DL3 7SD

### **1.2 Location (Figure 1)**

Church Lodge is a stone built house, lying c.1 km west of the village of Aldborough St John, and 10km south-west of Darlington. The Lodge fronts on to the minor road running between Stanwick St John Church and Kirkbridge Farm (to the north-west). It is situated at NZ 1860 1160, within the County Parish of Stanwick St John, Richmondshire, North Yorkshire. It lies within the Stanwick Earthworks, an extensive complex dating principally to the later Iron Age and Roman conquest period. The area is a Scheduled Ancient Monument (NY 43) and is regarded as the most important Iron Age site in the north of England. The vicinity of the site comprises gently undulating land in the middle Tees Valley, on the south side of the river. The immediate subsoil is cover deposits, mainly Boulder Clay, consisting of clay with some gravel; Carboniferous Limestone bedrock underlies this glacial spread.

### **1.3 Dates**

Fieldwork was conducted over three days, from 14th to 16th April 1998. This report was prepared between 17th April and 14th May 1998.

### **1.4 Personnel**

The Watching Brief was undertaken by Dr Steven H. Willis, Project Officer with Archaeological Services, University of Durham. The earthwork survey and section drawings were completed by Dr Willis and P. Carne (Field Officer). This report was prepared by Dr Willis, with illustrations by L. Bosveld.

### **1.5 Summary of results**

The archaeological evidence recorded in the course of these works adds some significant new information to our understanding of the Stanwick complex. It comes from a particularly complicated (and enigmatic) area which has not previously been examined archaeologically.

The northern area of development works removed a section of an ancient well-preserved rampart, being the westward continuation of a substantial bank visible to the immediate east of Church Lodge. These archaeological deposits were recorded, with the rampart observed to be of at least three phases. In its final phase it was fronted by a sizeable palisade. It is likely that these elaborations to the earthwork relate to an entrance point close-by. The character of the rampart is similar to that of others examined at Stanwick through archaeological excavation. Overlying the rampart was

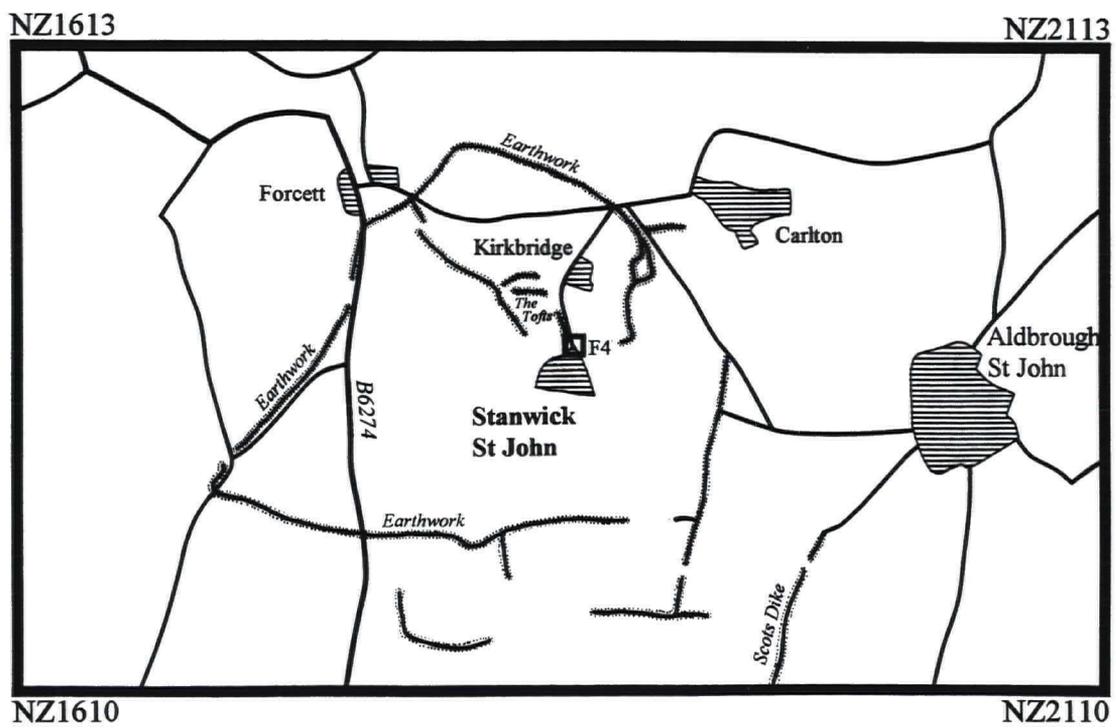
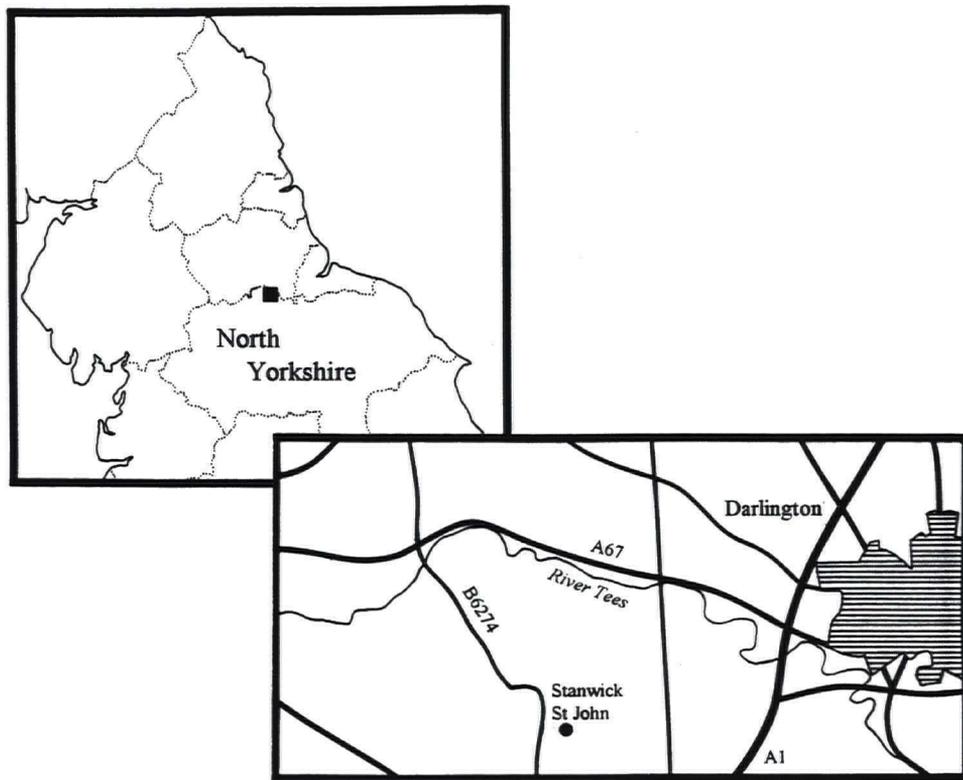


Figure 1: The location of Stanwick St John and surrounding earthworks. F4 marks the location of the survey area shown on Figure 4

an extensive deposit identifiable as a lower part of a subsequent earthwork. The latter appears on early 19th-Century maps but was levelled in 1875 if not before.

The southern area of the works revealed a deep sequence of recent deposits filling a dip in the local topography. This dip appears to be a western continuation of the broad 'ditch' visible to the east of Church Lodge. No significant deposits were disturbed and a pre-1875 field drain was located near the base of the sequence.

### *1.6 Summary of recommendations*

The vicinity of Church Lodge is an area of particular archaeological sensitivity within the Scheduled Ancient Monument. Earthmoving in the area is likely to damage archaeological deposits and should be subject to a scheme of archaeological works in agreement with the appropriate authorities. The deposits may also be damaged by tree planting schemes. However, these works have demonstrated that at least part of the area of the garden to the south and south-east of the Lodge (ie. the area nearest the building, and at the higher terraced level) is relatively modern made ground, the disturbance of which is not likely to damage older deposits, which would lie some way below the present ground surface. Similarly the area to the east, where the broad 'ditch' approaches the house, has been subject to some recent in-filling.

### *1.7 Acknowledgements*

Archaeological Services is grateful to Mr J. R. Johnson for facilitating the archaeological work, and to Mr J. Pearson, the groundwork contractor, for his sensitive approach to the archaeological aspects of the scheme. Archaeological Services also wishes to thank Prof. C. C. Haselgrove for discussing several points relating to the Stanwick site and for access to copies of the 19th-Century survey maps of the area.

## 2. Introduction

### 2.1 Project background

Mr J. R. Johnson, owner of Church Lodge, was intending to construct an extension to the back of Church Lodge, converting the existing house plan from an L-shape to an approximate square. Despite evidence of some landscaping in modern times the development works seemed likely to impact upon archaeological deposits in an area where several earthworks cluster. This area has not been subject to previous archaeological examination and considerable uncertainty has existed as to the sequence and character of the remains below Church Lodge and in the immediate vicinity. Examination of the recent survey of the earthworks by the Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments of England (Welfare *et al.* 1990) suggests that Church Lodge lies at a nodal point in the earthwork system. Accordingly the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport granted Ancient Monument Consent on the condition that the works be subject to monitoring via an Archaeological Watching Brief and that a survey of the earthworks in the area of the scheme be conducted.

### 2.2 Archaeological and historical background

#### 2.2.1 The Iron Age period

Church Lodge lies towards the eastern side of the Stanwick earthworks complex, which dates to the later Iron Age and Roman conquest period (Haselgrove, Turnbull & Fitts 1990). The complex is very large, with its well-preserved defences enclosing an area of almost 300 hectares. Both the scale of the earthworks and the finds from the site suggest that it was a key regional centre.

Previous archaeological work at the complex has been limited. Sir Mortimer Wheeler's excavations of 1951-2, undertaken as part of the Festival of Britain, were the first reported examination (Wheeler 1954). The excavation scheme concentrated on the cutting of sections across the earthworks at various locations, and the results confirmed both their date and the scale of the effort expended on their construction. One area excavation, in the field known as The Tofts, which lies just west of Church Lodge, was completed. The Tofts sits at the heart of the complex and Wheeler's investigation here yielded evidence of a sequence of settlement dating to the later Iron Age and Roman conquest period.

No further excavation was undertaken until 1981 when North Yorkshire County Council commissioned the opening of a number of evaluation trenches to assess the state of preservation and threat to the site. This trial trenching was directed by Percival Turnbull. This exercise was expanded when the Department of Archaeology University of Durham joined the project under Prof. C. C. Haselgrove. In subsequent years a team from Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, under Prof. Leon Fitts, has contributed greatly to the archaeological investigations. The work was divided between a first stage which concentrated upon the earthworks and north-west entrance to the site (Haselgrove, Lowther & Turnbull 1990), and a second stage exploring an area within The Tofts, but at a distance from Wheelers trench, the latter taking place between 1984-9 (Haselgrove 1990). This project revealed that the earthworks have a considerably longer chronology than Wheeler had believed, dating back into the Iron Age; Wheeler (1954) had proposed that the earthworks were a response to the Roman threat to northern England. The work of the 1980s also emphasised the complexity of

the earthworks and demonstrated their elaborate nature. Clearly they would have been a most impressive site, appropriate to a centre of great regional importance. Equally the new excavation in The Tofts recorded a long sequence of settlement and use with a range of finds associated (Haselgrove *et al.* Forthcoming). Accelerator Carbon 14 dates show that the earliest phase revealed by excavation dates to around 100 BC. The various phases in the occupation verify a growth in the importance of the site with time, culminating in a high status settlement with monumental architecture during the period c.AD 40-75. Works and finds elsewhere have indicated the strong likelihood of other settlement foci in addition to that in The Tofts.

The Durham University and Dickinson College teams have also conducted survey and excavation in the hinterland of the Stanwick Earthworks in recent years, notably at the Iron Age and early Roman site near Langdale, Melsonby in 1994-5 (eg. Haselgrove *et al.* 1996).

### 2.2.2 *The Roman, medieval and post-medieval periods*

Stanwick did not develop into a Roman centre, either military or civilian; Piercebridge, on Dere Street, becoming the main focus during the Roman era. Nonetheless a number of finds from the complex attest to some level of use of the site through the Roman period. The character of settlement in the area in the early medieval and medieval periods is more obscure but the medieval village was centred around the Stanwick parish church. The area would have been subject to agricultural use during this period, and rigg and furrow (earthworks relating to medieval cultivation) has been identified in The Tofts and elsewhere. A Carbon 14 date from a sample collected from the vicinity of the Mary Wild Beck north of Church Lodge is early medieval. The possibility that at least some of the minor earthworks in the area between the church and Church Lodge are medieval should therefore be borne in mind. Some considerable topographic changes were instituted in the 18th century with the development of Stanwick Hall and Park (lying within the ancient earthworks), and its contiguous contemporary, Forcett Hall and Park (Welfare *et al.* 1990).

Church Lodge was originally constructed as a gate keeper's cottage in 1875; it was enlarged via a back extension and the addition of a first floor in the inter-war period, resulting in a substantial house of L-shaped plan.

### 2.2.3 *The 19th-Century surveys of the Stanwick entrenchments*

A series of survey maps dating to the 19th century provide useful, if not always clear, information on the state of the complex some 150 to 200 years ago (see Haselgrove, Turnbull and Fitts 1990). The first survey is that of Bradley, dated 1816, which shows the main features around Church Lodge (Haselgrove, Turnbull and Fitts 1990, Plate 1). Details are not unequivocal but appear to show the bank identified here as Bank 2 (Figure 4), continuing towards Bank 3, across the area now occupied by Church Lodge. Further light is shed by Lax's plan of 1841 (Haselgrove, Turnbull and Fitts 1990, Plate 2) which shows more detail and is implicitly more reliable. Bank 2 is shown but appears in very similar form to its present day morphology. The Lax survey has a separate short bank occupying the location of Church Lodge, opposite and across from Bank 3; (the possibility that the feature indicated is a depression rather than a bank seems highly unlikely, although Lax did not show direction of slope for the earthworks). No trace of this bank is visible today. Seemingly Bradley, producing a

more schematic plan, had run this short bank and Bank 2 together (for elsewhere he had likewise not indicated gaps in the earthworks). Independent of whichever plan is the more correct it seems certain that an earthwork existed at the site of the Lodge in the earlier 19th century, and that it was removed. The most likely occasion for this event was the building of the Lodge in 1875. MacLauchlan's plan of 1849 (Wheeler 1954, Plate II), based upon that of Lax, mirrors the information of the 1841 plan in the case of Church Lodge.

### **3. Archaeological monitoring**

#### **3.1 Surface indications**

Surface indications prior to the development scheme were equivocal regarding the nature of the deposits that would be disturbed, especially as a certain amount of landscaping appeared to have taken place around and below Church Lodge in modern times. As noted above the short earthwork on the location of the original cottage had evidently been levelled. Since the back of the Lodge lies at the western end of a broad ditch it seemed a reasonable deduction that bank material had been used as in-filling in this area in order to make a level surface. (In fact it was discovered that the extension built in the 1920s was constructed over recent infill; see below). A sewage tank located just east of the present property boundary, lying within the ditch, is a recent addition and probably dates to this time.

#### **3.2 The excavated area**

The development work entailed the excavation by JCB of deep foundation trenches to support the stone walls, and the levelling of the ground surface as the area of the extension lay on a slope descending gently eastward. In all, the disturbed area covered c.10m<sup>2</sup> (Figure 4). Within this area almost all deposits were removed to natural Boulder Clay. There was no ground disturbance beyond the area of the proposed extension. The area of the extension incorporated the site of some former outbuildings of the Lodge demolished prior to 1998. Their construction had itself involved some terracing work and their foundations (Features 6 and 36), which had been cut virtually to natural subsoil, effectively divided the archaeological stratification into two parts, north and south.

#### **3.3 The area south of the former outbuildings (Figure 2)**

A straight-forward sequence of deposits was observed and recorded at the southern end of the development where the machining cut to natural Boulder Clay. At its greatest depth the excavation cut to 2.4m below the existing ground surface. Above natural the two lowest layers (Contexts 14 and 15) appear to be related. The lowest (15) was a layer of sorted stones and pebbles in a grey clay matrix. Above this (14) was a reddish brown clay loam, an agricultural soil. These deposits were cut by a ceramic field-drain (F16; 17) which ran east-west across the area. Sections of the ceramic drain pipe recovered were of an unusual type with a flat, splayed base (0.32m in length, 0.18m in diameter). Both layer 14 and the field-drain evidently extended underneath the 1920s' extension to Church Lodge (in the case of the drain, around 1m in from the south-east corner of the pre-1998 extension).

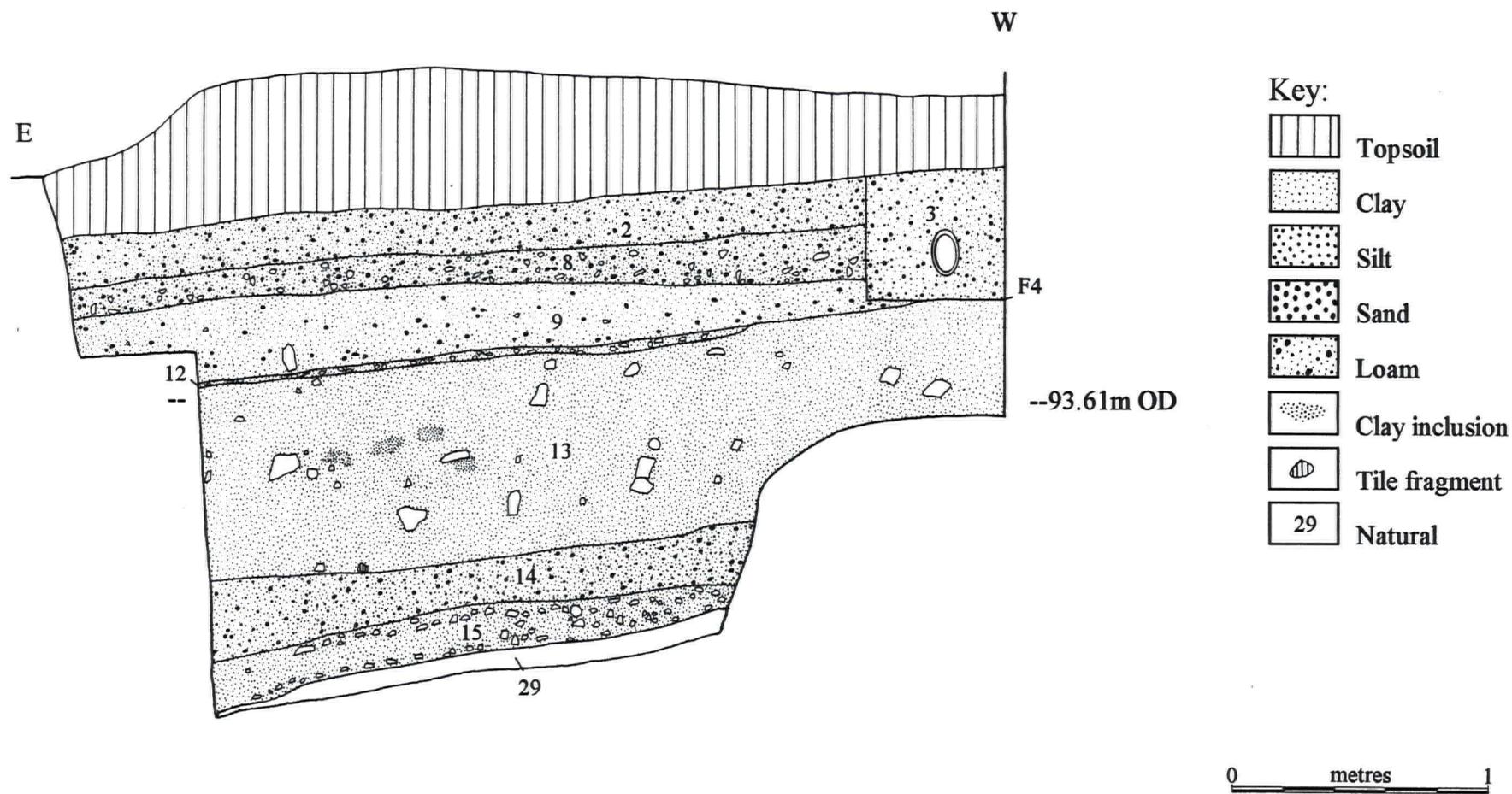


Figure 2: Section through deposits at southern end of development area (see Figure 4: S1)

Layer 14 was overlain by redeposited Boulder Clay, a brownish grey clay 0.7m thick. Above this lay a very thin horizon of mixed sand and clay (12) which in turn was overlain by a thicker layer of sandy clay (9). Both these layers had compacted surfaces. They presumably date to the period between the construction of the cottage in 1875 and its extension in the 1920s; they predate the service pipe (F4, 3) associated with the 1920s' extension. At the top of the sequence were two dark clay loam deposits, a ground make-up layer (8), and the modern garden soil (2).

### *3.4 The area north of the former outbuildings (Figure 3)*

Machining began in the centre of the development area. It was soon apparent that layers relating to the continuation of Rampart 1 (Figure 4) were being disturbed; below the modern topsoil and a loam rich layer (37) were rampart deposits 7, 10 and 11. (Note that this feature is referred to here as a rampart rather than as a bank. The term 'rampart' is used because it reflects the evident substantial scale of this feature, its elaboration and its function as a divisive earthwork. In contrast the character of the features identified as Banks 1-3 is less clear). An area measuring c.2m by 1.3m was cleaned by hand. The lowest deposit cleaned (11) consisted of a yellowish brown sandy clay with a compacted and perhaps metallised surface. This formed part of the rampart core during its first identified phase. Overlying this was a qualitatively similar layer (10), and above that a dark greyish brown sandy clay loam (7). Contexts 7 and 10 appear to belong to a second phase of rampart, with Context 7 representing an old turf line over the rampart. A fragment of a corroded copper alloy pin (probably from a brooch of Iron Age or Roman date) was retrieved from this deposit (length 11mm; diameter c.2.5mm).

To the south of 7, 10 and 11 a linear feature filled with cobbles and stone fragments within an uncompacted dark clay matrix was observed. Following further machining and cleaning it became evident that this was a substantial slot, which extended along the southern side of the rampart deposits within the north-west of the development area. It was recorded in section (where it was closely examined) as a palisade (F39; Figure 3). Further detailed examination in the north-east area of the development was hindered by its necessary disturbance as a machine run. As a result archaeological attention was directed towards the recording of the section through deposits below the paving in front of the north-east wall of Church Lodge (Figure 3; Front Cover).

This section shows a sequence of deposits relating to Rampart 1. The sequence is phased and clarified in the Matrix (Appendix 1) and aspects are considered below under the Discussion. The section does not traverse the rampart but sufficient is revealed to establish the stages of its development. The bank was constructed directly on top of natural Boulder Clay (29); no soil horizon over the natural was observed. The lowest deposits at this point (26-28 & 33) comprised of varieties of gritty and sandy clay, with 26 containing some loam element. All appear to be derived natural Boulder Clay deposits. It is conceivable that Context 26 represents the remnant of a refashioned early phase of the rampart. Towards the top of Layer 33, a concentration of large stone fragments occurred, a feature noted elsewhere along the Stanwick earthworks. A shallow feature, U-shaped in profile, had been cut into the top of the rampart (F40; 32) during this first phase. It is not known whether this was a discrete or linear feature. Above these deposits was a thin turf line (23), a greenish brown friable clay loam.



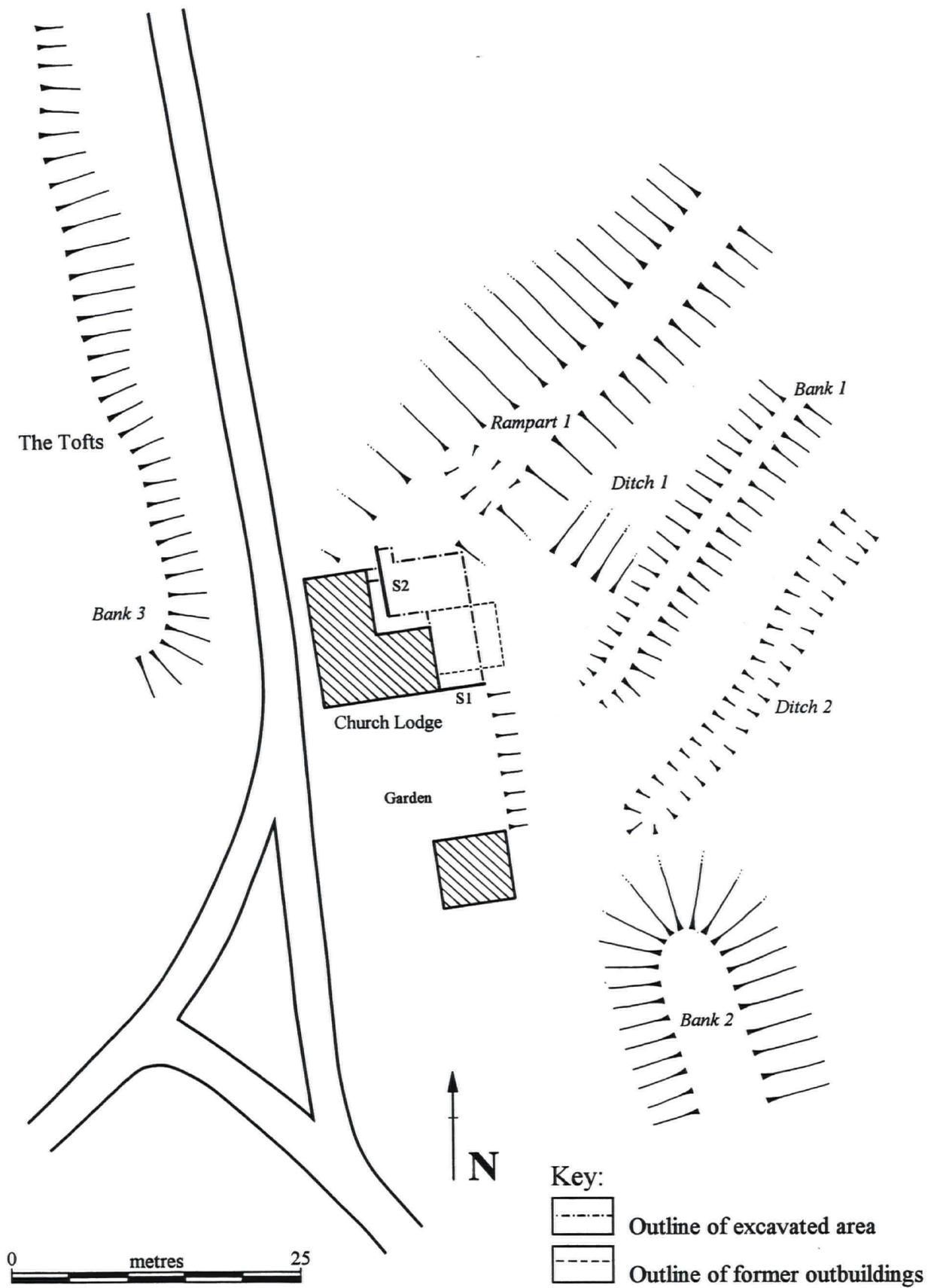


Figure 4: *The earthwork survey*

A second rampart phase is indicated by a dark yellowish brown sandy loamy clay layer (24), which overlies the turf. This will have heightened the rampart. This is overlain in turn by a further turf line (22), characteristically similar to 24. Neither 24 nor 22 were observed north of the contractor's deep foundation cut which bisected the section; they may have been removed by later activities, such as ploughing in the medieval or post-medieval period (31; 37).

In a third phase, the rampart was refashioned with a palisade being added to its southern side. As the section drawing illustrates, the rampart deposits of phases 1 and 2 were cut away (F41) for the insertion of the palisade, the position of which is well preserved as a post-pipe in Section (F39); the post would have formed part of a contiguous series of posts, the pipe trench for which was also identified in plan to the east (see above). A void was visible where the base of the timber had rotted *in situ*. The northern side of the palisade trench was clearly deliberately backfilled (21), as may have the southern side (38). Due to the nature of the development and water seepage it was not possible to ascertain whether the posts of the palisade rested upon pad-stones as the bottom of the palisade trench was not exposed. The pipe was filled with a dark grey clay, Context 19, which spread to the north and south of this feature. Its interpretation is considered in the Discussion below.

#### 4. The earthwork survey

The survey of the earthworks was undertaken using a Wilde T1000 total station theodolite with SDR33 datalogger. The results were plotted using *Mapmaker* software and hand-annotated (Figure 4). The plot illustrates the archaeological earthworks in relation to the development scheme. The results of the survey are consistent with those of the Watching Brief in showing the continuation of Rampart 1 up to the north-east corner of Church Lodge, albeit as a slighter feature than elsewhere along its length.

#### 5. Discussion

The excavations undertaken at Stanwick by Sir Mortimer Wheeler and more recently by North Yorkshire County Council, Durham University and Dickinson College, Pennsylvania have dated and helped to characterise the site, revealing a long and complex history of ancient occupation. The archaeological work at Church Lodge reported here adds some detail to what is a very large picture.

The earthwork revealed and recorded in the course of the 1998 development works is consistent with the character and morphology of other earthworks at Stanwick where they have been sectioned under controlled conditions (cf. Haselgrove, Lowther and Turnbull 1990). At least three clear phases in the development of the rampart may be discerned, in turn being succeeded by a further bank. Although no firm dating evidence was recovered its association seems certain to be with the Iron Age entrenchments, given its character. Various details can be paralleled with evidence recorded in other sections cut across the earthworks at Stanwick, in particular: the constructional sequence of the bank; its formation via tips of more or less clean

Boulder Clay, with stone rammed into the surface of the core of the rampart; the multi-phase nature of the rampart; and its elaboration in a later refashioning. Indeed, these features seem quite typical of the site generally. No ditch was observed within the development area and it is probable that Ditch 1 (Figure 4) did not extend into the area of the development works as a cut feature. The remodelling implies either a lengthy currency for the rampart (which the presence of two apparent turf lines, during its first and second phases, supports), or a more hectic restatement, commensurate with the developing status of the site through its lifetime. The palisade of the third phase will have employed timbers some 0.4m across and a similar feature (of like dimensions) is known from the 1988 excavation season in The Tofts (although in this case not associated with a rampart). It is possible that the palisade extended along the length of the rampart although its main purpose may have been to emphasise an entrance from the south into the adjacent high status compound within The Tofts. It seems a strong possibility though, that a linear anomaly detected by geophysical survey in the 1980s north-east of the Lodge (Haselgrove, Lowther and Turnbull 1990, Figure 11) identifies the palisade extending along the margin of Rampart 1.

The near absence of artefacts from the area is not surprising as work elsewhere at Stanwick has proven that the banks and ramparts are typically devoid of material culture, with the ditches (and area excavations) being the main source of any recovered finds. The copper alloy pin fragment recovered here is a typical find on a site of this type and date.

The modern road from Kirkbridge and Stanwick Church to the area of the former Hall passes by Church Lodge, following the line of the large bank on the east side of The Tofts (Figure 4, Bank 3). It is possible that the modern road actually overlies an ancient roadway and if so Church Lodge lies by a former accessway or entrance. The arrangement of the extant earthworks also suggests this possibility. It may be that the palisade identified in the 1998 development relates to an elaboration at an important entrance way (cf. Haselgrove, Lowther and Turnbull 1990, 39-53: the north-west entrance).

The concentration of stone within Context 19, immediately to the south of the palisade (Figure 3), could relate to a kerb or entrance elaboration, though a different interpretation is preferred. Where Rampart 1 and Bank 1 are eroding in the field to the north-east of Church Lodge concentrations of stone are suggestive of a continuous stone kerb or front to these features, and appear analogous to the concentration of stones in Context 19. However, the heavy clay matrix of Context 19 is a uniform and extensive deposit filling the post pipe of the Palisade (F39) and sealing the deposits surrounding it (21 and 38). The concentration of stones, moreover, were not structured, but arranged at various angles, seemingly at random. Rather than representing a deposit contemporary with the palisade which has subsequently collapsed across it, there is a strong likelihood that 19 constitutes a lower part of the short earthwork appearing on the survey maps of Bradley, Lax and MacLauchlan (above, Section 2.2.3). If that were the case, the stones would simply represent part of a rubble core. If so, this would mean that this short earthwork represented a fourth phase of earthworks at this location. Given the long sequences recorded elsewhere along the course of the Stanwick earthworks this is entirely plausible.

On the south side of the development the bulk of the deposits encountered represented the product of recent in-filling. These soils may well have been derived from the short bank discussed above. Analysis of these old survey plans, the Royal Commission survey (Welfare *et al.* 1990), and the present survey (Figure 4), indicates that the adjacent earthworks (Banks 1, 2 and 3) are essentially unaltered over this period and hence are probably not the source of this in-fill.

The layers of in-fill overlay an agricultural soil (14) which was in use during the 19th century prior to the building of the house. This agricultural soil overlay a naturally sorted horizon (15) containing a high proportion of pebbles and stones which sealed the Boulder Clay. Layers similar to 15, likewise directly above the natural, were encountered during the 1980s area excavation in The Tofts. Contexts 14 and 15 evidently occupied the bottom of the broad feature Ditch 1, there being no cut ditch at this point.

To summarise, the Watching Brief identified and recorded the continuation of Rampart 1 within the area of the development works and ascertained that this was a multiple phase feature, itself probably overlain by the short bank present on the early 19th century maps. These ancient features were well preserved and evidently continue underneath Church Lodge.

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### Appendix: Stratigraphic Site Matrix

