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Project Report 752.1

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Archaeological Desk-Based  
Assessment of Land at Byram Park,  
Brotherton, North Yorkshire

May 2003

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By Rowan May

Prepared For:

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## NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In May 2003, ARCUS were commissioned by Barton Willmore Partnership on behalf of Darrington Quarries Ltd to undertake an archaeological desk-based assessment on land at Byram Park, Brotherton (SE 495 267). The assessment was required to inform an Environmental Statement and planning application for proposed development at Brotherton Quarry, Knottingley. The development would involve mineral extraction.

The proposal area is within the former Byram Hall estate, and appears to have been part of the deer park from the medieval period to the early twentieth century. Since the 1920s the fields have been under arable cultivation, which has removed any visible features relating to the deer park. Cropmark evidence indicates that several sub-surface ditched features survive within and immediately adjacent to the proposal area. Some of these may relate to the deer park, but several appear to be consistent with the pattern of Iron Age/Romano-British field systems, of which many examples are known from aerial photographs within the vicinity of the site.

The cropmarks within the proposal area are fragmentary, and are masked in places by geological features. Rectification of the aerial photographs and geophysical survey to ascertain the extent and exact location of sub-surface features would help to gain a greater understanding of the nature of the archaeological remains at the site.

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## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

### Illustrations

- 1 Location map
- 2 Location of sites of historic interest within 1km of the proposal area
- 3 1852 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map
- 4 1907 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map
- 5 1950 OS 1:10,560 map
- 6 Sketch plan of cropmarks in the vicinity of the proposal area

### Plates

- 1 Proposal area from western edge of field, facing northeast
- 2 Ditch and bank with stone revetment, probably the deer park boundary.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

This document presents the results of an archaeological desk-based assessment on land at Byram Park, Brotherton, North Yorkshire. The assessment was required to inform an Environmental Statement and Planning Application for proposed mineral extraction at Brotherton Quarry. ARCUS were commissioned by Barton Willmore Partnership on behalf of Darrington Quarries Ltd to carry out the work. Research and fieldwork were carried out by Rowan May and Phil Jefferson.

## 2 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Aims

The aims of the desk-based assessment were to establish the historic significance of the site, and the potential for the survival of archaeological features and deposits.

### 2.2 Data Collection

Data was collected from the following sources:

- North Yorkshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record,
- Leeds City Archives,
- Leeds Local Study Library,
- North Yorkshire County Council Aerial Photograph Collection.

### 2.3 Site Visit

A site visit was made on the 28th May 2003 by Rowan May and Phil Jefferson. This involved a walk-over survey of the site to identify any surviving archaeological features and areas where archaeological deposits might survive. Land use was also noted.

### 2.4 Aerial Photographic Survey

Aerial photographs covering the proposal area were examined. The photographs were held by the North Yorkshire County Council SMR. A sketch map of the visible cropmark features was made for the proposal area and immediate surroundings (**illustration 6**). This is discussed in section 5.

## 3 SITE LOCATION AND LAND USE

The site (centred on SE 495 267) is located to the northeast of Brotherton and south of Burton Salmon, near Knottingley, North Yorkshire (**illustration 1**). It is within Byram Park, formerly the grounds associated with Byram Hall. The estate was sold piecemeal in the 1920s, and most of the grounds were converted to arable agriculture. Previous quarrying has been carried out in the vicinity of the proposal area.

The geology of the area is Brotherton formation Dolomitic Limestone and Glaciolacustrine sand deposits on the western edge of the Sherwood Sandstone group, also known as the Bunter Sandstones.

## 4 HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY

This section presents a summary of the historical and archaeological background of the area, concentrating in particular on the proposal area. Historic maps from the nineteenth century to the present day were consulted, along with relevant documents relating to the area. A gazetteer of sites and find-spots within 1km of the site was compiled from the North Yorkshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). This is presented in **Appendix 1**, with the location of the sites shown on **illustration 2**.

### 4.1 Prehistoric – Roman

There is little recorded information on the prehistoric and Roman period within this region. However, the site is within an area known for its characteristic 'brickwork fields' cropmarks, which have been identified by aerial photography. The cropmarks reveal a series of ditches laid out in a pattern of narrow fields, with smaller enclosures and trackways. Pottery found during excavation of this type of ditch generally dates to the Iron Age and Romano-British periods.

### 4.2 Medieval

Byram was not mentioned in the Domesday Book, although neighbouring townships such as Birkin, Fairburn and Ferrybridge were. The name 'Byram' comes from the Old English, and means 'cowsheds' or 'byres' (Smith 1961, 46). The neighbouring settlement of Burton Salmon means 'Bretta-tun', or farmstead of the Britons. This could refer to a surviving settlement of Britons during the Anglo-Scandinavian period, but is often used to denote Britons from the Lake District who came into the region with the Vikings (*ibid.*, 40).

During the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the area was associated with St John's Priory at Pontefract, with the monks renting land at Byram. The village name was also used as a personal surname at the time, with several deeds and charters referring to various de Byrams. Brotherton was a house of ease for the Archbishops of York during the medieval period, and a deer park was established at Byram. The SMR has a record of the Dean of York stocking the park with deer from Galtres forest in 1284.

Also during 1284, a survey of military tenants of the crown mentioned that Thomas St Paul held the manor of Byram (Yorkshire Archaeological Journal 1881, 146). The manor appears to have remained in the hands of the St Paul family for at least a century (Pickersgill 1996, 3).

Medieval ridge and furrow remains survive in the Byram area, although many have been ploughed out in the twentieth century following the break-up of the Byram estate and the increase in arable cultivation. These remains represent medieval ploughing patterns, from the open field system prevalent at the time. Aerial photographs reveal ridge and furrow cropmarks within the vicinity of the deer park, suggesting that the land surrounding the park was part of the medieval common fields.

### 4.3 Post Medieval

In 1607, the manor of Byram was held by Anthony Besson. By 1612 it had been sold to the Ramsden family of Huddersfield, who continued to own the estate up to the early twentieth century. John Ramsden was made High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1636, and was a Royalist during the Civil War of 1642-49. He was captured by the Parliamentarians in 1644, who then used Byram as their headquarters during the siege of Pontefract Castle (Pickersgill 1996, 4). A report dated 4<sup>th</sup> November 1648 stated that "Lieutenant General Cromwell is at Byron House near Pomfret, and there continues, till he hath so settled the various posts that the enemy may not, as they have done, break forth".

There was clearly a hall at Byram at this date, although the current building is of the late eighteenth century. The 1672 Hearth Tax recorded 26 hearths at Byram House, in contrast to the other buildings in the village which contained only one or occasionally two. Part of the grounds, around 200 acres, remained a deer park until the early twentieth century, and contained approximately 300 fallow deer at the turn of the twentieth century (Page 1907). The new hall was built in the Georgian style, designed by the noted architect John Carr of York. A sketch of the previous building from 1720 by Samuel Buck revealed it to be similar in layout to the new Hall, but built in the Jacobean style. The Ramsden's had accumulated considerable wealth during the boom in the textile industry in the late eighteenth century. The family also owned property in Britain and abroad, including large rubber plantations in Malaya (Pickersgill 1996, 10).

The park was landscaped in the 1780s by Capability Brown, one of his last projects before his death in 1783. No record remains of the previous layout, although Ralph Thoresby of Leeds, a visitor to the park in 1712 mentioned the "very curious gardens". Brown's layout included the deer park, fish ponds, an orangery (also designed by Carr), an icehouse, gardens, farms, lodges and tree-lined avenues. The villages of Brotherton and Burton Salmon also belonged to the estate, along with various farms. Some industry took place within the estate, as shown on the first edition OS map (**illustration 3**). Quarries, limekilns and coppering kilns are all depicted on the map, most to the west of the proposal area. Most of the industrial sites were removed through more recent quarrying. The 1852 map indicates that the deer park contained a lightly wooded landscape with several footpaths and a tree-lined avenue leading to the northeast entrance to the grounds. This landscape had not changed greatly by the early twentieth century (**illustration 4**).

In the 1920s, the estate was sold. The owner, Sir John Frecheville Ramsden, no longer lived at the hall, and the property was sold in two parts: the hall and surrounding parkland as one section, and the farms, buildings and village property which made up the rest of the estate as the other. The latter part, consisting of 2600 acres of farmland, many cottages and "virtually the whole of the villages of Brotherton, Burton Salmon, Sutton and Byram-cum-Poole", was divided into 97 lots, and sold by auction in 1922 to a variety of different people, some buying single properties. The other part consisted of 1461 acres, comprising the mansion, associated buildings, the formal gardens and the deer park. It also included mineral rights on the supposed coal reserves underlying the parkland. It was sold to John Todd and Thomas Place of Northallerton in 1922, who sold it on for £30,500 to Airedale Collieries Ltd of Castleford, the owners of Fryston, Wheldale and Allerton Bywater pits (Pickersgill 1996, 20).

Following the sale, the hall buildings remained empty, with the value of the land was probably seen as being in the coal reserves. However, no serious mining took place on the estate, as the coal was apparently judged as not worth exploiting. This was

probably due to Byram being too far from the nearest colliery at Fryston to be effectively mined from there in the 1920s, and the coal quality not justifying the sinking of a new shaft within the park confines. The mansion and park were sold again in 1924, divided into 17 lots, all of which, apart from lot 17 (later a building estate near the eastern Lodge), were purchased by William Walker JP of Fenlands Gomersal, for £12,500, less than half the price paid the previous year by Airedale Collieries Ltd.

The Walker Consortium made many changes to the estate, felling the woodland for timber and clearing the land, ploughing up the parkland for arable crops. The buildings were left empty and in a state of decay, and the ornamental gardens became neglected and overgrown. The icehouse, immediately to the southeast of the proposal area, was demolished. During the second world war the estate was requisitioned for army vehicle storage. In 1945 the McCloy family bought the property, which became part of a large farmland estate, also including Park House Farm and Sutton Hall Farm, both parts of the previous Ramsden estate. The 1950 OS map indicates the changes to the proposal area (**illustration 5**), with most of the trees and the ice house having been removed since 1908. After 1953 the remaining buildings on the estate were made safe, with the orangery being converted into a house. The wings of the Hall were preserved, although the main section had been demolished. In 1968 the majority of the remaining buildings, including many of the walls and ornamental gateways, were Grade II listed.

## 5 CURRENT CONDITION OF THE SITE AND EXISTING FEATURES

### 5.1 Aerial Photographs

Aerial photographs of the area were examined for cropmark and soilmark features. Cropmarks are caused by differential growth of cereal crops in response to patterns of greater or lesser soil depth and water availability. They are most visible during the hot summer months, and vary from year to year depending on the type of crops sown in particular fields and the weather patterns of the year. The marks can reflect variations in the natural geology, but are commonly the result of human activities, including the digging of ditches and the construction of banks and walls (Chadwick 1995, 41). The Bunter Sandstone area, covering a long strip between Nottingham and Doncaster, is well known for its cropmarks, which frequently occur on a very large scale (Riley 1980, 1).

The 'brickwork pattern' field systems are a well-documented but still poorly understood feature of the Bunter Sandstone area. It is likely that the suitability of the soils for the formation of cropmarks is a major factor in the known distribution of the fields. Such cropmarks do not often appear on the adjacent Keuper Marl clays to the west, or the Magnesian Limestone to the east. The fields have been dated to the late Iron Age, continuing in use into the Romano-British period.

Several areas of brickwork fields have been recorded close to the proposal area. Many of these are shown on **illustration 2**. A sketch plan has been made of features recorded from aerial photographs within the proposal area and its immediate vicinity (**illustration 6**). The plan is not to scale, and the cropmarks have not been rectified, thus their location should not be taken as accurate. The plan indicates that several boundary ditches were visible within the proposal area, possibly fragments of a field system. The cropmarks were indistinct, and complex geological features obscured

the archaeological features. Several ditches were distinct, some of which, particularly the east-west oriented features, show some of the characteristics of the brickwork field pattern. It is possible that the northwest-southeast oriented feature visible within the proposal area relates to an earlier footpath across the deer park shown on the 1852 OS map (**illustration 3**).

Adjacent fields, to the east and west, showed very irregular field systems, with ridge and furrow very visible within the fields. This indicates medieval cultivation, probably on the open field system. Most of the field boundaries shown were visible on the 1902 map, and may be later divisions, not related to the medieval cultivation. However, it is possible that the boundaries were fossilised from early enclosure of the open field. There was no indication of medieval cultivation within the proposal area.

## 5.2 Landscape Features

The proposal area was under a crop of oilseed rape at the time of the site visit, making the identification of features within the field impossible (**plate 1**). A flint flake, apparently worked but of indeterminate date, was found on the southern edge of the field (approximately SE 4984 2637). The ice house site was not visible, being within the crop. This was reported in 1995 as a remnant earthwork, but has clearly been further levelled since that date. Within the trees of the Poole Belt to the north of the proposal area was a ditch with a low earthen bank to the north, with stone revetment (**plate 2**). This probably marked the boundary of the deer park, possibly in the post-medieval period. The ditch would be designed to keep cattle out, but would allow deer to move outside the park boundary. The trackway along the northern edge of the field contained a high proportion of pottery wasters and kiln furniture. This track appears to be modern, and is probably made of imported material including waste from a pottery. No mention of a nearby pottery kiln has been found during the desk-based assessment.

## 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL PRESERVATION AND POTENTIAL

Aerial photography has revealed characteristic 'brickwork pattern' field systems in the vicinity of the proposal area. The features within the site itself are indistinct and fragmentary, and obscured by geological features in places. However, it seems likely that archaeological features relating to the cropmarks survive below the plough soil. Geophysical survey has been carried out over such cropmark features, and often produces a more detailed plan of sub-surface archaeological deposits.

Earlier excavations have revealed that the brickwork fields had their origins in the later Iron Age, and many continued in use into the Romano-British period. The ditches often have a series of re-cuts, indicating a periodic redefinition of the boundaries (Chadwick 1995, 43). The complexity and use of the field systems are still not fully understood, and any addition to the body of information relating to them would be important.

The aerial photographs for adjacent areas include a set of medieval fields with visible ridge and furrow in land to the east of the proposal area. This is also significant, as it could indicate the limits of the deer park in the medieval period, or areas within the park which were cultivated. Some of these boundaries were shown on the 1907 6 inch to 1 mile OS map (**illustration 4**). The photos do not reveal any ridge and furrow within the proposal area, possibly indicating that this was part of the park from the early medieval period, and was not subject to cultivation prior to the twentieth century.

Landscape features within the proposal area were not visible due to the oilseed rape crop being grown at the time of the site visit. One undiagnostic flint flake was found in the ploughsoil at the southern edge of the field, outside the proposal area. Visible features relating to the deer park included a ditch and bank with stone revetment within the trees to the north of the proposal area, and two trees remaining within the field, which were clearly part of the deer park landscape.

## 7 CONCLUSIONS

The desk-based research and site visit have revealed that the proposal area was part of a deer park from the medieval period to the early twentieth century. The park was landscaped in the 1780s by Capability Brown, but few features associated with the park have survived above the ground due to twentieth-century arable agriculture. Study of the available evidence has suggested that there is the potential for the sub-surface survival of archaeological features of unknown date within the proposal area. The cropmark evidence indicated several ditched features, some possibly of the Iron Age or Romano British period. Geophysical survey and rectification of the aerial photographs within the proposal area might clarify the extent of survival and layout of the features, and could reveal buried features relating to the former deer park which are not visible on the surface.

## 8 COPYRIGHT

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## 9 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank Nick Boldrini of the North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit, and the staff of the Leeds Archives and Leeds Local Studies Library.

## 10 BIBLIOGRAPHY AND SOURCES

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### **Historic Maps**

1852 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map sheet 235.

1894 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map sheet 235.

1908 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map sheet 235 NW.

1950 OS 6 inch: 1 mile map sheet 235 NW.

1967 OS 1:10,560 map sheet SE 42 NE.

British Geological Survey 1998 1:50,000 series, England and Wales sheet 78.

15	Cropmarks showing an extensive but very fragmentary brickwork pattern field system. A single long curved ditch terminates the system. The layout and orientation is determined by a number of trackways running ENE-WSW, the spaces between being subdivided to create fields.	Romano-British?	NYM 9922
16	Cropmark showing a ring ditch, possibly prehistoric in origin.	Unknown	NYM 9927
17	Cropmarks showing boundary ditches, shown on the 1907 25 inch OS map as field boundaries or boundaries within Annet Royd Wood.	Post-medieval?	NYM 9925
18	Burton Salmon village. Site with early medieval origins, and some remaining features.	Early medieval to modern	NYM 9932
19	Methodist chapel, Burton Salmon.	Post-medieval	NYM 9934
20	Moat, associated with previous manor site. Destroyed through cultivation, no traces remaining on the surface.	Medieval	NYM 9933
21	Cropmarks showing a small area of enclosures, probably fairly recent.	Unknown	NYM 9921
22	Cropmark showing a trackway, narrowing from c.150m at the southeast end to c.30m at the northwest end. It curves around the corner of the field system at the northeast corner, appearing to channel directly into the centre of the field system.	Romano-British?	NYM 9928

12 ILLUSTRATIONS AND PLATES

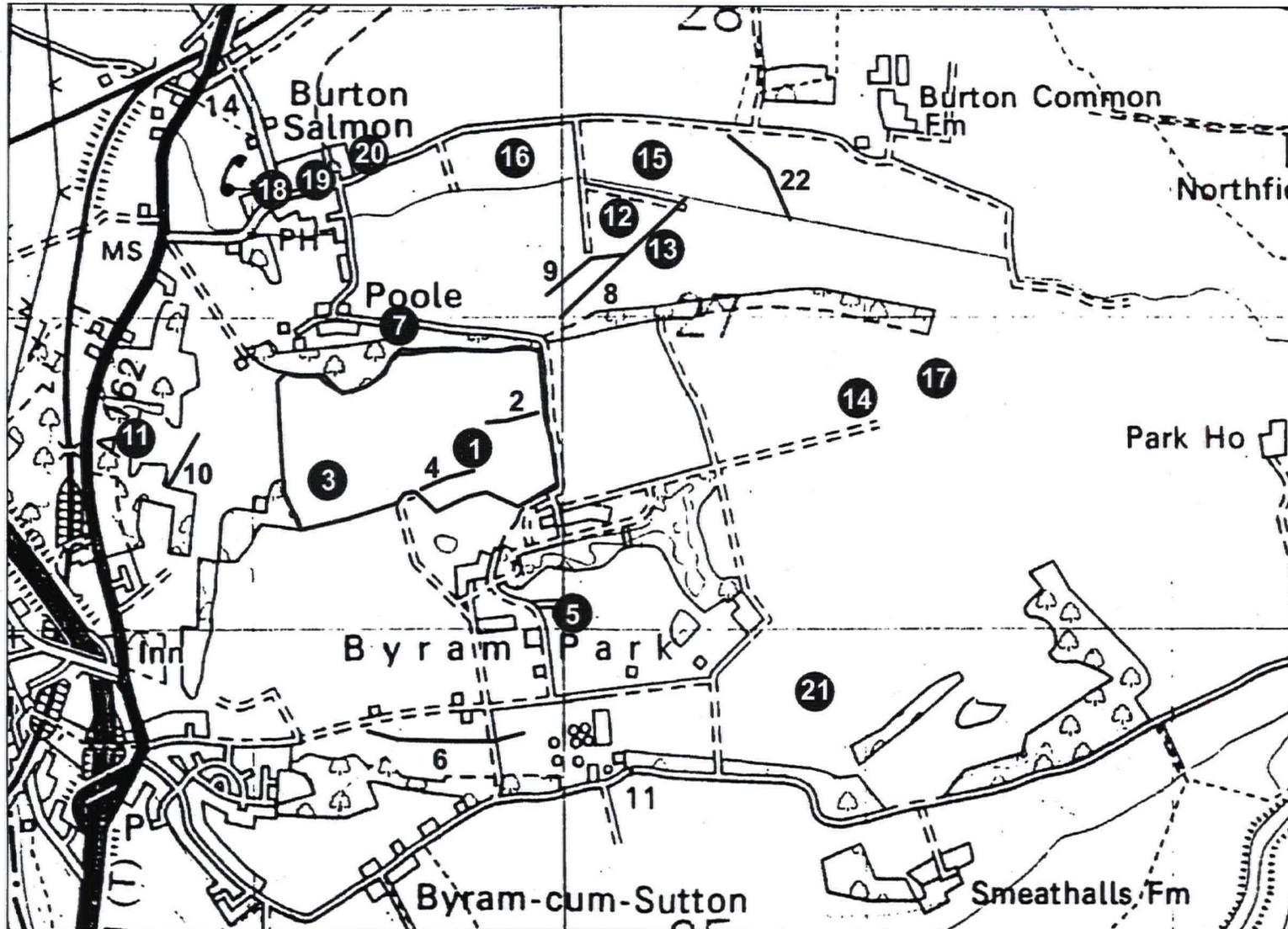


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Project: <b>Byram Park, Brotherton</b>	
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Scale: Not to scale	Date: 23.05.03
NGR: SE 495 266	Drawn: R May
Project No.: <b>752.1</b>	Illustration No.: <b>1</b>



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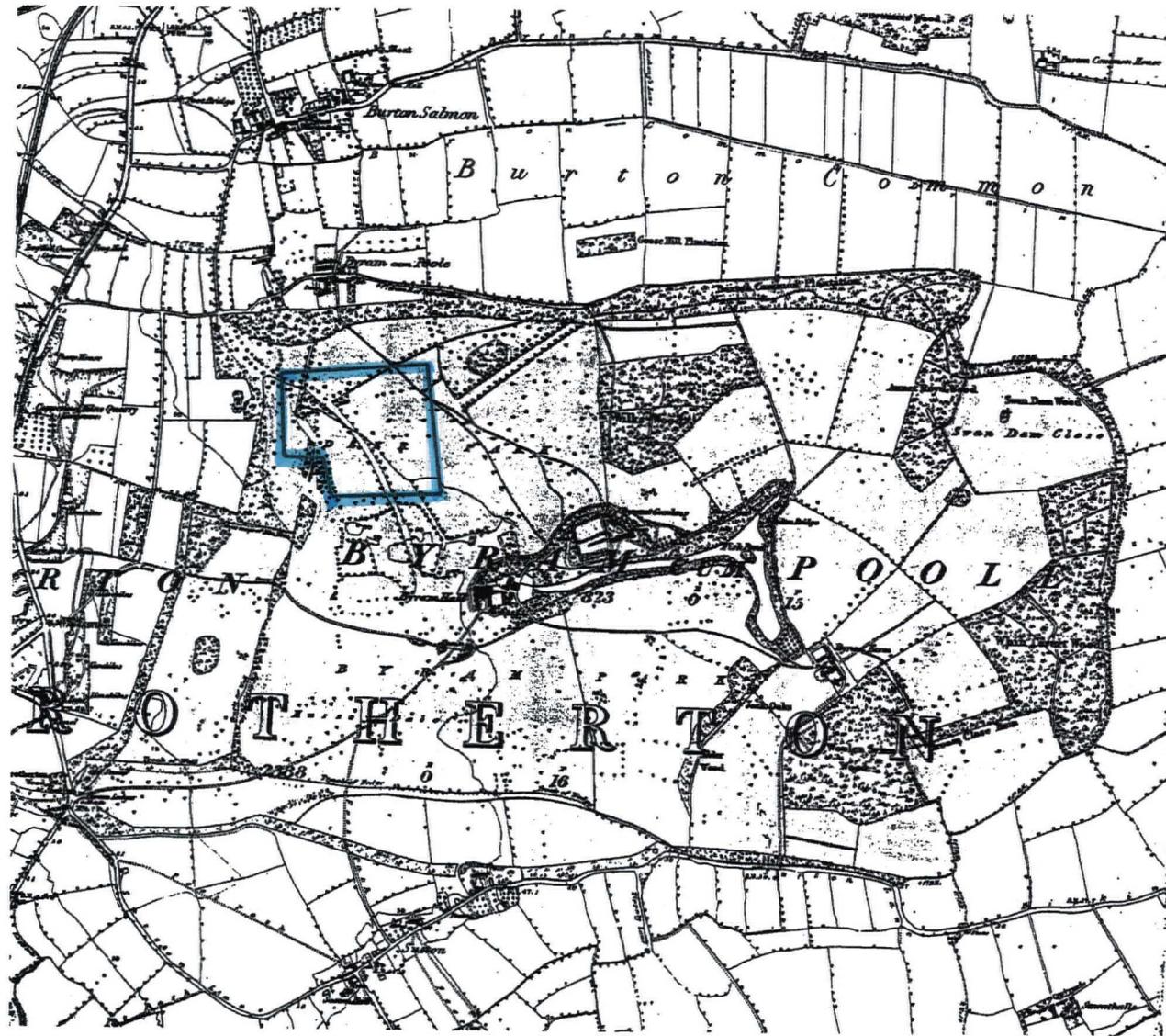
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**Plan of historic sites  
 within 1km of the  
 proposal area**

Scale: Not to scale	Date: 23.05.03
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NGR: SE 495 266	Drawn: R May
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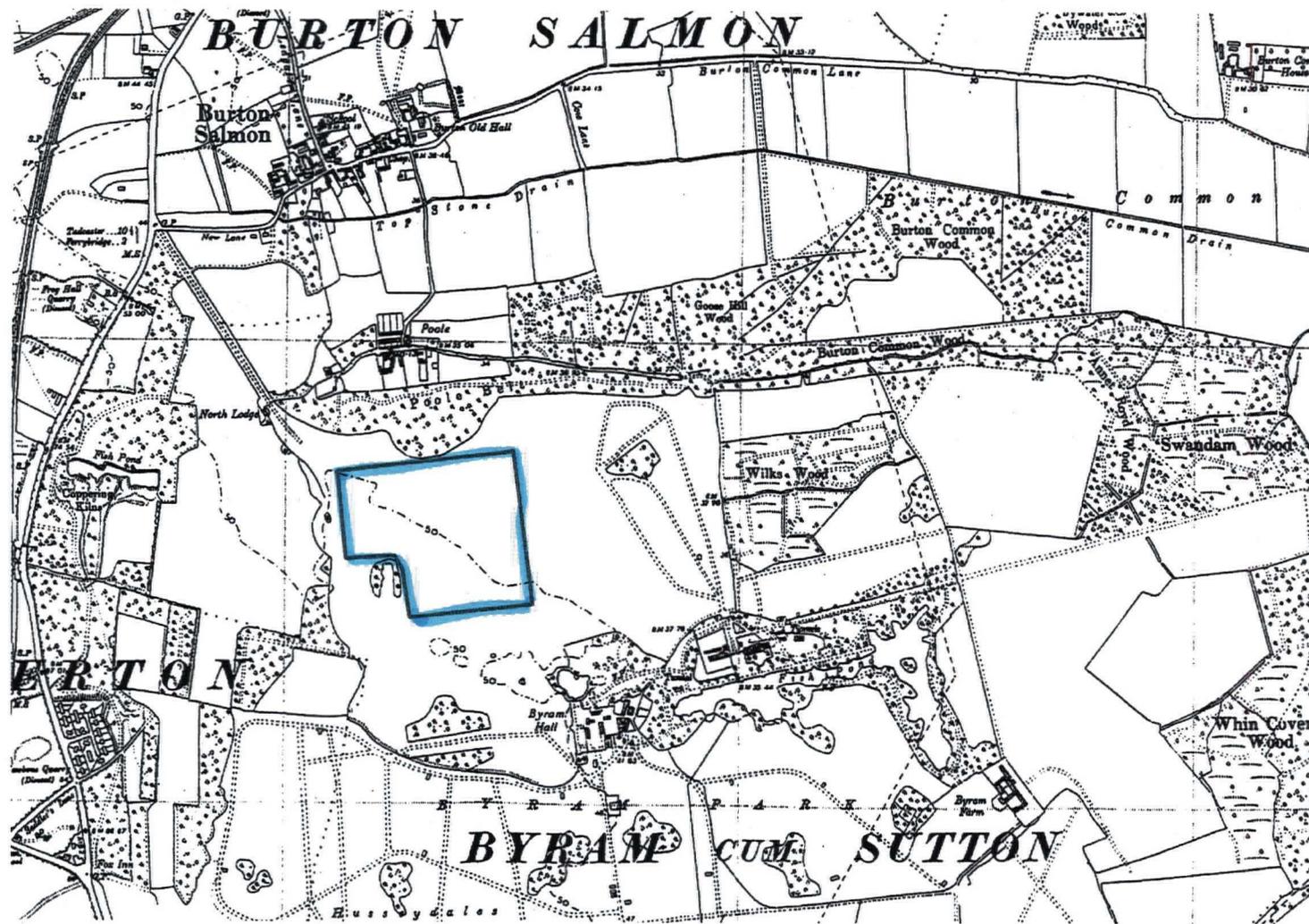
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**1852 OS map**

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NGR: SE 495 266	Drawn: R May
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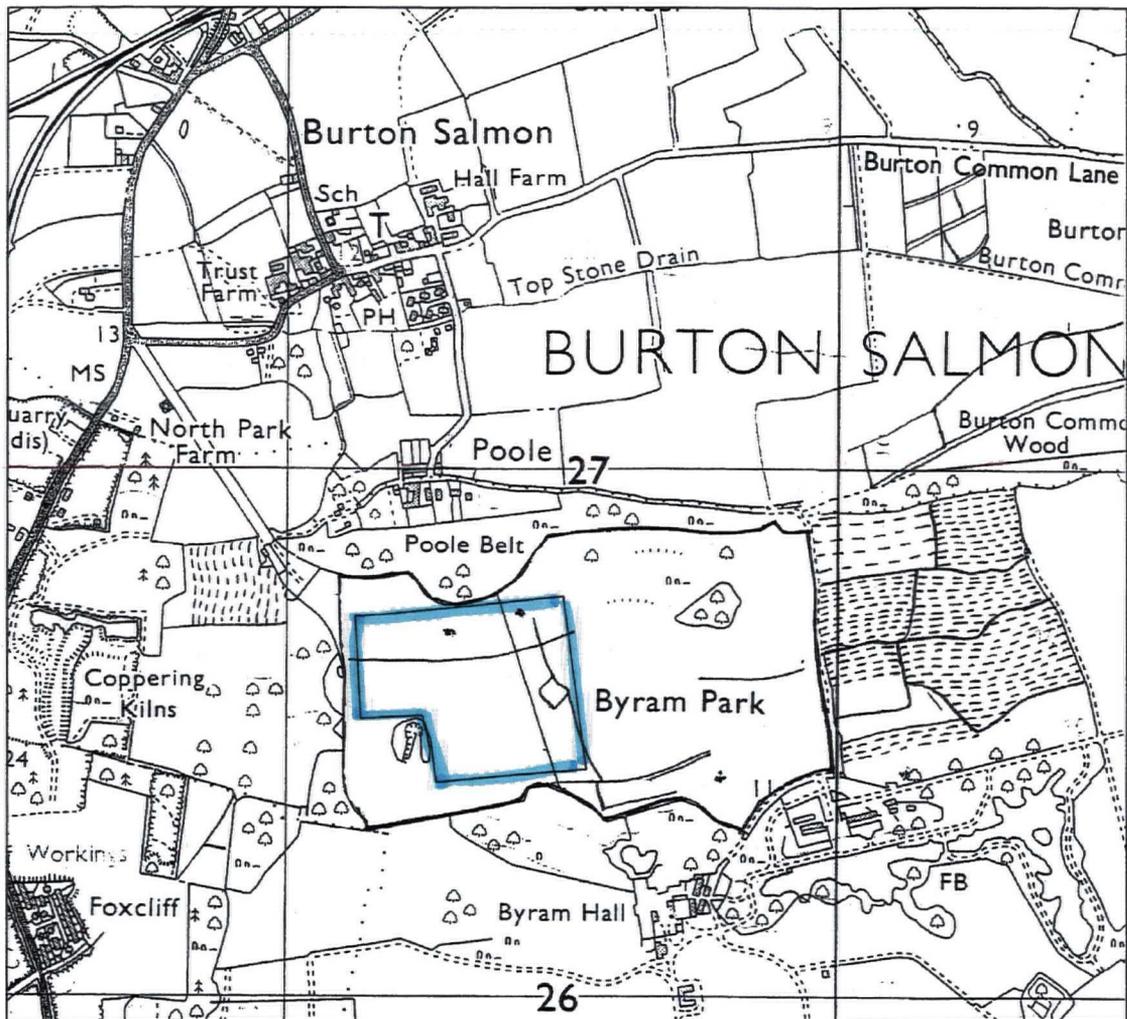
Project:  
**Byram Park,  
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Title:  
 1950 OS map

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		Title: <b>Sketch plan of cropmarks</b>	
Measurements should not be taken from this drawing		Scale: Not to scale	Date: 23.05.03
Key:  Cropmark ditches  Cropmark ridge and furrow	ARCUS Research School of Archaeology Westcourt 2 Mappin St Sheffield UK S14DT Tel 0114 2225106 Fax 0114 2797158	 NGR: SE 495 266	Drawn: R May
			Project No.: <b>752.1</b>

## PLATES



Plate 1: Proposal area from western edge of field, looking northeast.



Plate 2: Ditch and bank with stone revetment, probably the deer park boundary.