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**A64/TOP LANE JUNCTION,
COPMANTHORPE
ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME**

DESK TOP AND WALKOVER STUDY

**1997 FIELD REPORT
NUMBER 14**

YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

A64 / TOP LANE JUNCTION, COPMANTHORPE
ROAD IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL DESK-TOP STUDY
AND WALKOVER SURVEY**

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Non Technical Summary

Archaeological desk-top study of the preferred route of improvements to the junctions of the A64 and Top Lane, Copmanthorpe has identified evidence of archaeological sites in the vicinity of the proposals. A Roman road and possible prehistoric and Roman settlement may be disturbed by the road works. A preliminary walkover survey has suggested that deposits may remain undisturbed in the ground. A scheme of archaeological evaluation to determine the precise extent and nature of any surviving archaeological deposits is recommended.

1. Introduction

In July 1997 an archaeological desk-top study was undertaken by York Archaeological Trust for Horsman and Wooley on behalf of the Highways Agency, on land at York Field and north of the Bond Hill Ash Interchange at Copmanthorpe, York. The study was undertaken in conjunction with a stage 3 landscape assessment by Horsman and Wooley, prior to the construction of a road junction improvement scheme for the Copmanthorpe access onto the A64. The historical and archaeological significance of the study area was assessed using a variety of sources including aerial photographic evidence, the sites and monuments record and previous archaeological and historical publications.

2. Methodology

The first source of evidence to be assessed was the aerial photographs held at the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), York City Conservation and Planning Department. Both the oblique and the vertical archives were checked for cropmarks, surface features and earthworks in the area. The SMR record cards and the SMR computer database were also checked for any references to the land in question, or for sites in the vicinity, and previous historical and archaeological publications were also consulted.

Site research notes are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust under the York Archaeological Trust Accession code YORAT:1997.7

3. Geology and Topography

The development area lies on Bunter Sandstone solid geology (Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Sheet 71 1973) in the centre of the Vale of York. The drift geology of the land to be developed, which lies to the north-east of the village of Copmanthorpe, consists of a bank of morainic drift that forms a high ridge between Copmanthorpe and Dringhouses. South of the A64 and to the east of

Copmanthorpe, within the area known as York Field, the ground slopes moderately down from this ridge to the flat lands of the Vale and forms what appears to be a dry valley that runs from the north-west corner of the field east towards the railway. At the bottom of this valley, close to the railway line, the drift geology changes to glacial silts and clays similar to those on which Askham Bog formed to the north of the A64. In the Bond Hill Ash Interchange area, as the land slopes down from the morainic Ridge on which the A1036 was constructed, beds of glacial sand and gravel divide the ridge from the silts and clays in the Vale to the south-east. To the north of the A1036 a similar geological pattern can be seen with the morainic drift giving way to beds of sand and gravel and then the silts and clays beneath Askham Bog.

4. Archaeological and Historical Background

Archaeological and historical research in the Copmanthorpe area of North Yorkshire has been extremely limited to date, and little has been done in terms of excavation, or academic historical analysis. The Copmanthorpe local history group has been instrumental in the collection of historical data and in conjunction with the Copmanthorpe Village Trust has produced a pamphlet describing the village history which, although limited in scope, has enabled a certain level of historical research into the development of the village to be carried out.

Small scale excavation in advance of the construction of the Tesco store at the junction of Moor Lane and Tadcaster Road in 1989 by York Archaeological Trust revealed only natural deposits beneath plough soil. (YAT site code 1989.12).

Evidence for occupation in the Copmanthorpe area is extremely limited. The only find to date is a Neolithic polished stone axe (SMR 12990000) made from bluestone, found just to the west of Copmanthorpe (NGR SE 55804705) in c. 1928. This does not constitute evidence for early settlement, as it may have been deposited here at a later date. It has been suggested that the morainic ridge became the focus for a cross Vale route, particularly in the Bronze age, for Irish metal being transported to East Yorkshire and beyond (Radley, 1974). This route may have been used for a considerable length of time, perhaps dating back to the Neolithic or even earlier. Little field walking has been carried out in this part of the vale to collect artefactual evidence which would enable definition of early settlement along or close to the ridge in these periods. Aerial photographs to the south-west of Copmanthorpe do show a series of field boundaries and trackways unrelated to the present field systems which may relate to prehistoric land division in the area.

In the Roman period the study area appears to have been an important one. It is highly likely that the area was already intensively farmed and occupied from the Iron Age onwards (if not earlier). The morainic ridge that runs between Dringhouses and Copmanthorpe carried on the function of transport and communication route as the east-west road from Eboracum (York) to Calcaria (Tadcaster) ran along its spine (SMR 12995000, NGR SE 57904820) This linked up to the main north-south road

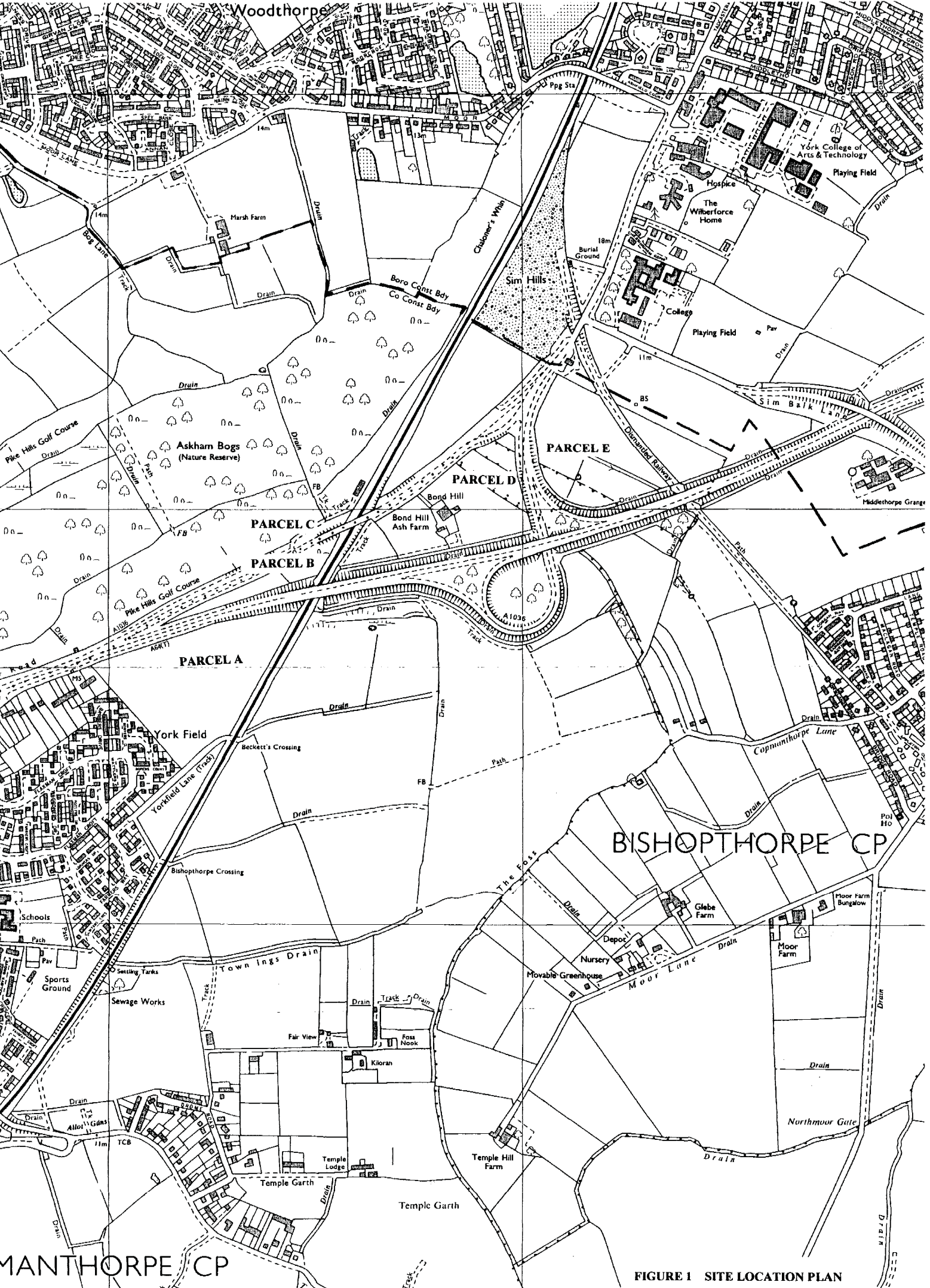


FIGURE 1 SITE LOCATION PLAN

known as Ermine Street, which came up from Lindum (Lincoln) to Calcaria (Tadcaster), and which carried on north to Isurium (Aldborough) (Johnson, 1984).

The road has been investigated on a number of occasions in the past although none of these have occurred within the study area. At Streethouses, c. 4 km south-west of Copmanthorpe, the road was excavated in 1955 during the construction of extensions to two cottages. Here the metalled surface of the road, consisting of rammed gravel, was exposed to a total width of 6.60 m (Wenham, 1957), but no evidence for a kerb or adjacent ditches was located. At Hob Moor Lane, Dringhouses, c. 4 km north-east of Copmanthorpe, excavations were carried out in 1954 and 1956, where they found the road to be 20.57 m wide. Since all previous road sections excavated only measured up to 7.6 m in width, it was suggested that the road forked at this point towards the Roman cemetery in Holgate (Wenham, 1957). The metalling consisted of rammed brown clay with water-worn gravel, between 0.15 m and 0.20 m thick, again with no evidence of a kerb or road side ditches (Wenham 1957). Within the study area, the Roman road is thought to run along the line of the old A64 (now the A1036) from Dringhouses. This forms a slip road from the A64, just to the east of Copmanthorpe to the Bond Hill Ash Interchange. The Roman road continues west, following the line of the A64 before turning south-west into Copmanthorpe along Top Lane. Emphasis must be placed however on the fact that this route has not yet been proven and the road may lie either on the ridge to the north or south of the present alignment.

A sherd of Roman mortarium (SMR12991000, NGR SE 55754695) was found just to the north of the Roman road in 1936, south-west of Copmanthorpe. This was associated with an area of paving uncovered close to where the sherd was found (SMR No. 12991010). This structure may be the floor for a Romano-British building possibly part of a villa. A plain Roman altar, 46 cm high (SMR No. 12986, NGR SE 57 46) was also found at Temple Hill in 1865 and finds of Roman coins are known from the village (Johnson, 1984). Although these find spots are not within the study area they do indicate that Romano-British occupation and settlement does occur locally. It is highly probable that the road attracted Romano-British settlement. The study area may include occupation sites either relating to this important Roman transport route or to rural settlement close by.

Romano-British cemeteries are also known to be located alongside Roman roads leading into urban centres, the closest in location to the development is at Dringhouses where a number of Roman tombs (NGR SE 5870 4981), and a small Roman cemetery (NGR SE 58704970) were discovered in the 18th and 19th centuries (RCHM, 1962). It is possible that Roman burials may appear at this distance from York. A recent example was found recently at Fulford (Macnab, unpub) 4.5 km from the centre of York.

At present there is no evidence for Anglo-Saxon or Scandinavian settlement in the study area. However, the Roman road may have retained its function as overland transport and trade route throughout this period. Indeed Copmanthorpe may have gained its name from being situated close to this east-west trade route. In the

Domesday book of 1086, the village is known as *Copeman Torp*; *Copeman* derives from the Anglo-Scandinavian word for a merchant; *Torp* from the word *Thorp*, which means a smaller village colonised from a larger one. The village may initially have been settled to facilitate the overland trade route along the ridge from Jorvik (York).

By 1066 a small settlement existed, probably in the area where the core of the medieval village (SMR 12987000, 12987010, NGR SE 5650 4700) stands today. In Domesday Book the value of the village increased from 20 shillings in 1066, to 40 shillings in 1086. Little is known of its subsequent development as few documentary sources for the history of the village have been found. A tax role for 1389 indicates that 65 people were eligible for taxation, and the population has been estimated at c. 100 (Johnson, 1984). The church of St. Giles (SMR 12987020, NGR SE 5652 4687) at the centre of the village contains fabric which is dated to the 12th-century and is listed as a Grade II building. The village lies outside the study area which, during the medieval period, probably contained its strip fields. Little of the medieval agricultural landscape has survived subsequent development, due to the construction of the railway, the outer ring road (A64), the Bond Hill Ash interchange, modern housing and agricultural improvements. Within the study area several hedge lines, close to but bisected by the interchange, probably relate to the enclosure of these strip fields in the 18th-century. Some remnants of ridge and furrow, indicative of medieval agriculture, can be seen in aerial photographs of Pike Hills Golf Course just to the south-west of Askham Bog.

The Lords of the Manor of Copmanthorpe never seem to have been resident in the village. Many of them were great barons or important landowners, this estate only being a small part of their assets (Johnson, 1984). The first recorded owner was an Anglo-Saxon lord named *Gospatric* who owned large areas of Yorkshire. He joined forces with Sweyn, King of Denmark, when he attacked the North of England in 1069, and was probably killed in the subsequent harrying of the North. By 1086 *Erneis de Burun*, one of William the Conquerors Lords, had become the owner, one amongst 22 other manors in his possession. The manor appears to have changed hands several times after this. It was owned by *Geoffrey Fitz-Payne* between 1115 and 1118, before passing to the *Trussbutts* who held it until the early 13th-century when it was inherited by marriage by the *De Ros* family. In 1258 the latter gave the manor to the *Knights Templar* who built a Preceptory south-west of the village, now known as Temple Garth (SMR No. 12985000, NGR SE 5790 4620). At its suppression in 1312 it is said to have consisted of a kitchen, hall, chapel, and a small preceptory. Demolition work carried out in the centre of Copmanthorpe at the turn of the century brought to light a number of moulded stones thought to have been taken from here. Whether this monastic settlement was situated upon or close to the original manorial buildings is unclear.

There is some confusion within the local history as to who took over the land after the suppression. One suggestion is that the land was given to the *Knights Hospitallers*, who kept the manor until the dissolution of the monasteries in 1536. It is also stated that the property came into the hands of the Malbis family and later, through marriage, to the Fairfax family, a sequence that occurred in the mid 14th century with the second manor of Copmanthorpe, after the suppression of the *Knights Templar*.

A second manor is first recorded at the end of the 12th-century as belonging to the *Malbis* family. This passed to the *Fairfax's* in 1366, who held it until 1521 when it was sold to the *Vavasours*. It was subsequently sold to the *Barnard* family (Merchants of Hull) in c. 1650 eventually passing by inheritance to the *Wood's* in 1709 who were Lords of the Manor until 1921 when the estate was again sold, this time to the West Riding County Council.

Thus either the two manors merged after the suppression of the *Knights Templar* in 1312, their estates passing to the *Malbis* family who owned the second manor or the *Knights Templars'* estates eventually passed to a different branch of the *Malbis* family at the Dissolution. Unfortunately the sources for the local history study were not listed in the pamphlet and so clarification from the primary sources was not possible.

5. Aerial Photographic Evidence

The SMR and the York Archaeological Trust archive of oblique and vertical aerial photographs were consulted to evaluate the evidence for cropmarks, surface features and earthworks within or adjacent to the study area. Unfortunately no cropmarks were discovered associated with the development area and all aerial photographs outside are thought not to trend into it. Evidence for ridge and furrow, that could partially preserve archaeological deposits beneath them was not observed in the fields within which work will take place. All fields are thought to have been subject to agricultural improvement prior to the construction of the outer ring road in 1973-4.

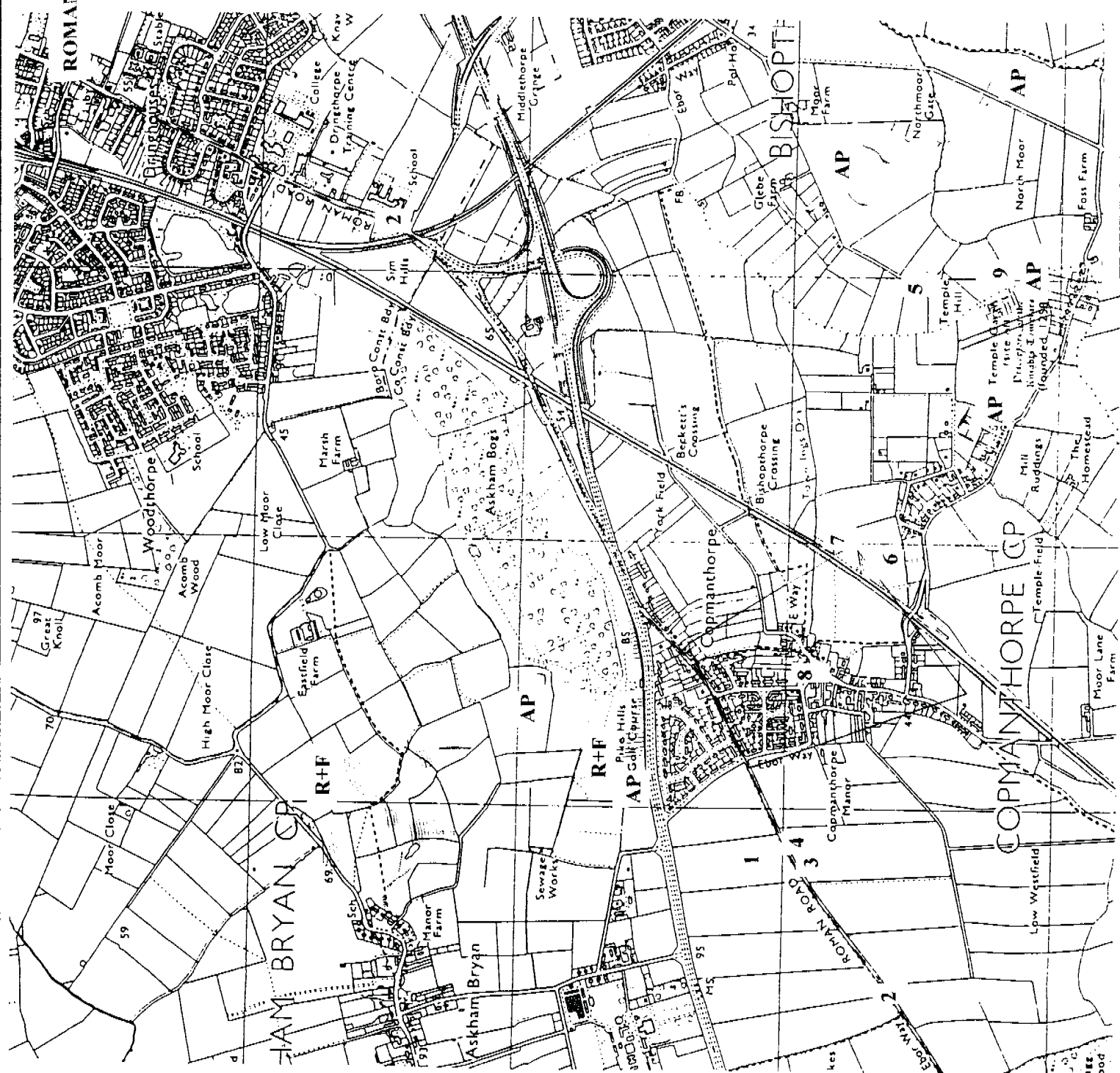
6. Preliminary Walkover Survey

A preliminary walkover survey was also carried out during this stage of the evaluation of the study area. The fields are described according to their appropriate land parcel (Fig. 1). In general all fields seem to have been improved in the modern period, including those which appear to contain hedge lines from the enclosure of the medieval strip field system in the 18th-century. No evidence of ridge and furrow, earthworks or standing buildings of archaeological significance were located during this ground survey.

Land parcel A (0061)

This is situated to the south of the A64, in the area known as York field. The land drops moderately down from the ridge to the flat land in the vale, the existing crop is barley and the land seems to have been cultivated fairly intensively within the modern period. It is suggested that if archaeological deposits do survive they will probably be of the prehistoric period and be negative features cut into the natural subsoil on the south facing slope. Colluvial deposits are also highly likely to have accumulated within the shallow dry valley in the north-west corner of the field and near the base of the south-facing slope. These may seal prehistoric deposits and finds. Close to the

ROMAN BURIALS



KEY

- AP** AIR PHOTO
- R+F** RIDGE AND FURROW
- 3** MONUMENT NUMBER

FIGURE 2 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

railway the land is fairly low lying and may contain deposits with evidence for past environments, possibly sealed by colluvium.

Land Parcel B (4886)

This area is at present used as a compound for a construction company. The ground consists of compacted gravel and earth, topsoil probably having been stripped prior to its present usage. It is thought that all archaeological deposits within this area has been heavily disturbed by this and will either have been completely removed or be heavily distorted by continual compaction from heavy vehicles.

Land Parcel C (north of the A1036, west of the railway)

This area lies directly beside the A1036 and consists of a low grassy verge. It is possible that remains of the Roman road may exist in this area. However, it is also possible that all archaeological deposits may have been disturbed during the construction of the railway bridge or by subsequent upgrading of the road.

Land Parcel D (between Bond Hill Ash Farm and the interchange)

The land here is low scrub, and has probably been like this since the construction of the outer ring road in 1973-4. Hedge lines relating to the enclosure of the medieval strip field system in the 18th-century are preserved in three fields. No evidence of ridge and furrow exists, which leads to the conclusion that prior to the construction of the outer ring road and the interchange the land had been agriculturally improved. The land is currently used for pasture for horses. There is a possibility of prehistoric or Roman features being preserved here relating to the road, and the road itself may have run through these fields.

Land Parcel E (East of the Interchange).

The northern most fields are currently under arable cultivation for barley. The fields closest to the slip-road for the east bound carriageway of the A64 contain low scrub and appear to have been unused since its construction. These fields also contain hedge lines relating to the 18th-century enclosure, but no evidence for ridge and furrow. Therefore the land was probably improved prior to the construction of the outer ring road. Small ponds within these fields may contain good environmental archaeological deposits. It is not thought that the extended batter for the new roundabout and slip-road will damage remains in this field.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

In conclusion it appears that the study area is likely to contain archaeological deposits, probably relating to the prehistoric and Roman routeway on top of the morainic ridge. This may include sections of the Roman road itself from Eboracum to Calcaria and settlement either relating to the transportation of goods along it or to rural settlement close to it. Anglo-Saxon settlement close to the road is also possible, but not thought likely as settlement would probably have focused close to the present village of Copmanthorpe. Medieval and post-medieval deposits are also thought unlikely as this area was part of the villages agricultural land, and domestic and industrial activity would have also been situated closer to the village or in the vale close to a water supply.

It is predicted that archaeological deposits and features will either lie directly on top of natural subsoil or be cut into this, the probability of well stratified deposits within the study area being slight. Land parcels A, C and D are thought most likely to be of archaeological interest. Land parcel A may contain prehistoric and Roman settlement evidence either relating to the ridge-way or to rural settlement close to it. Colluvial deposits may seal evidence of prehistoric activity within the vale and environmental archaeological deposits, if undisturbed, may exist just to the west of the railway. Land parcels C and D are thought most likely to contain evidence for the Roman road itself, providing that deposits have not already been disturbed by the construction of the railway bridge, the A1036 and its subsequent phases of upgrading. It seems likely that all archaeological deposits within land parcel B have been either removed or are heavily disturbed by a construction company's works compound. Finally land parcel E appears to have the possibility of further evidence of settlement close to the route-way in the prehistoric and Roman periods but the construction methods for the new roundabout and slip road involving the extension of the batter, are thought likely to protect any archaeological deposits within this area.

8. Archaeological Implications

This archaeological desktop study has produced evidence to suggest that there is a possibility that the study area contains preserved archaeological features to the north and south of the A64 and A1036. A preliminary walkover survey has confirmed the possibility of preservation. It is advised that archaeological field work should be carried out in land parcels A, C and D, prior to development. This should include geophysical survey in parcels A and D, after clearance of ground vegetation, followed by a targeted archaeological evaluation to follow up the geophysical survey results and determine as far as is reasonably possible, the location, extent, date, character, condition, significance and quality of archaeological deposits and features that are preserved within the study area. The evaluation should consist of a series of trenches opened by machine and cleaned by hand to locate the presence, or otherwise, of the Roman road in land parcels C and D and Roman or earlier settlement in all three areas. This should allow the full archaeological impact of the development to be determined and enable an effective mitigation strategy to be devised.

9. List of Sources

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10. List of Contributors

Research and Report

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