

REPORT ON A WATCHING BRIEF AT  
ABBAY FARM, KIRKSTEAD.

V. PRIEST  
T&PAT  
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### **Introduction**

In January 1994, a letter was forwarded to Trent and Peak Archaeological Trust concerning Planning Consent for a new farm building at Abbey Farm, Kirkstead in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire. East Lindsey District Council inserted a condition into the consent that a watching brief should be undertaken during the excavation of the footings, and Lincolnshire County Council sent a specification outlining their requirements for a watching brief to be done by the trust during these excavations.

### **Location and History**

Abbey Farm is situated to the east of the site of Kirkstead Abbey (fig. 1). The land was given to Eudo by William in 1066 and a cistercian house was founded by Hugh (Eudo's son) in 1139 and moved to this site in 1187, largely populated by monks from Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire. Since its dissolution in 1537 the remains have been systematically dismantled and the only two surviving fragments are the angle of the south transept and the St. Leonard's chapel. Also to the west and north-west of the farm are the remains of fish ponds connected to the Abbey (fig. 1) .

The geology map of the area was not available but the local geology has been described as Pleistocene river gravels and alluvium.

### **Aims of the watching brief**

The aim of the watching brief was to ensure that any archaeological material exposed by the groundworks was recorded fully and interpreted.



### Excavation

The excavations were for the footings of a portal framed cattle building adjacent and to the south of the existing farm buildings (fig. 2) and took place on 26th February 1994. There were twelve holes in total each measuring approximately 1m x 1m and between 1 - 2m in depth. The trenches were located by the contractors and subsequently excavated by JCB. Unfortunately due to the nature of the land (sandy and very wet), the trenches were extremely unstable. Photographs were taken of each trench as it was excavated but it was possible to draw sections of only three of the holes at the south end. A TBM was transferred from a bench mark located on the corner of a pub to the west of the farm and OD levels were taken on the top surface of each of the trenches. Unfortunately the holes infilled themselves too quickly for there to be sufficient time to record the levels on the base of each of the trenches.

### Results

The trenches were all fairly similar with approximately 40cm of dark brown topsoil overlying yellow-orange sand occasionally mottled with white and green-grey sand. The sand became increasingly more orange and gravelly and less mottled with depth and an orange clay was observed towards the base of some of the trenches. Iron staining could also be seen in several of the trenches. One trench (no. 12) revealed a darkish layer at its base which could possibly have been either organic or staining of some kind, but it was not possible to investigate. No archaeological features were seen either during the excavations or upon the examination of the sections and no artefacts were recorded from the spoil heaps or the excavations.

### Conclusions

All of the layers revealed in the sections of the trenches appeared to be natural deposits. No archaeological features were noted within any of the trenches.





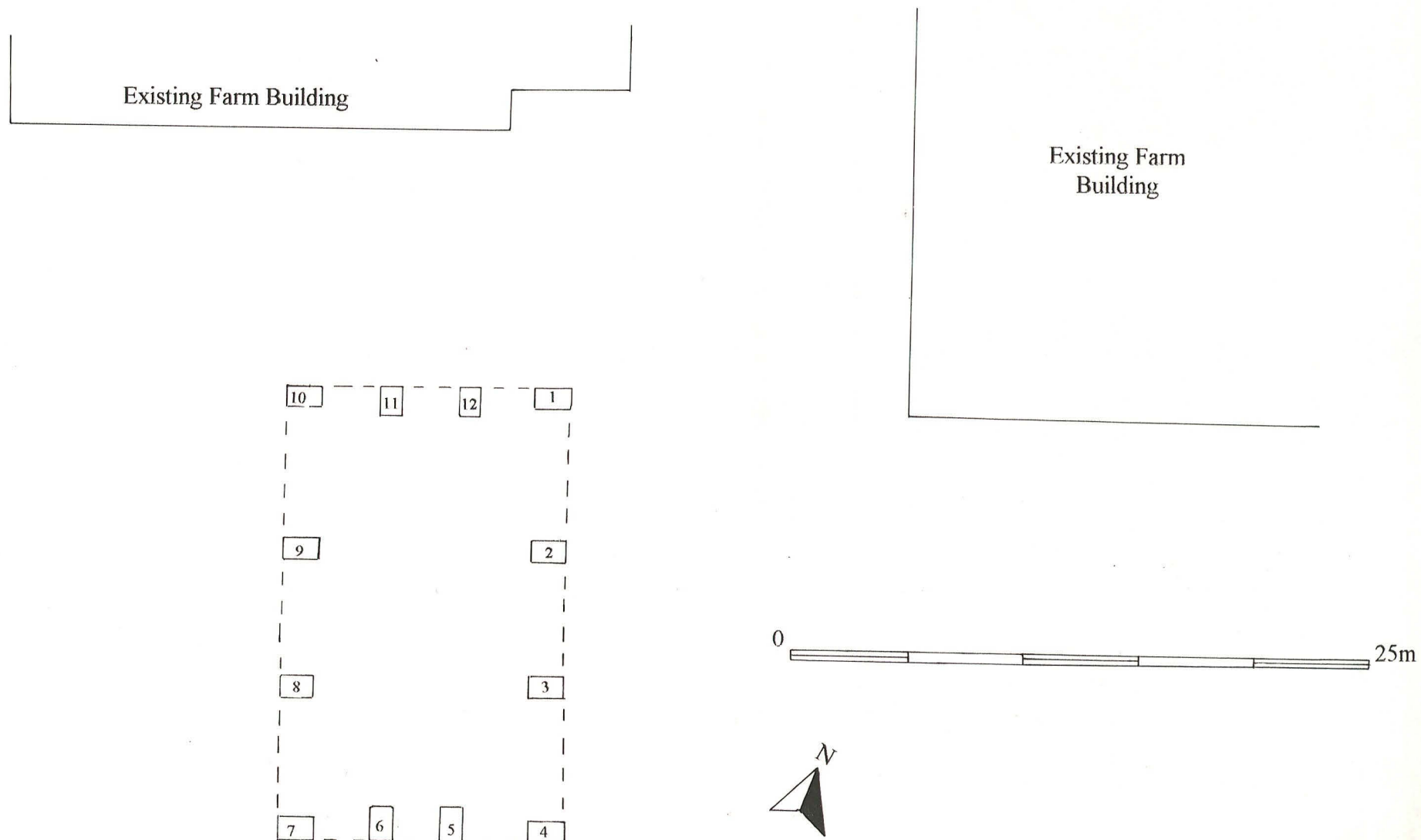


Fig. 2 Position of the new farm building (the numbered squares indicate the holes excavated during the watching brief).

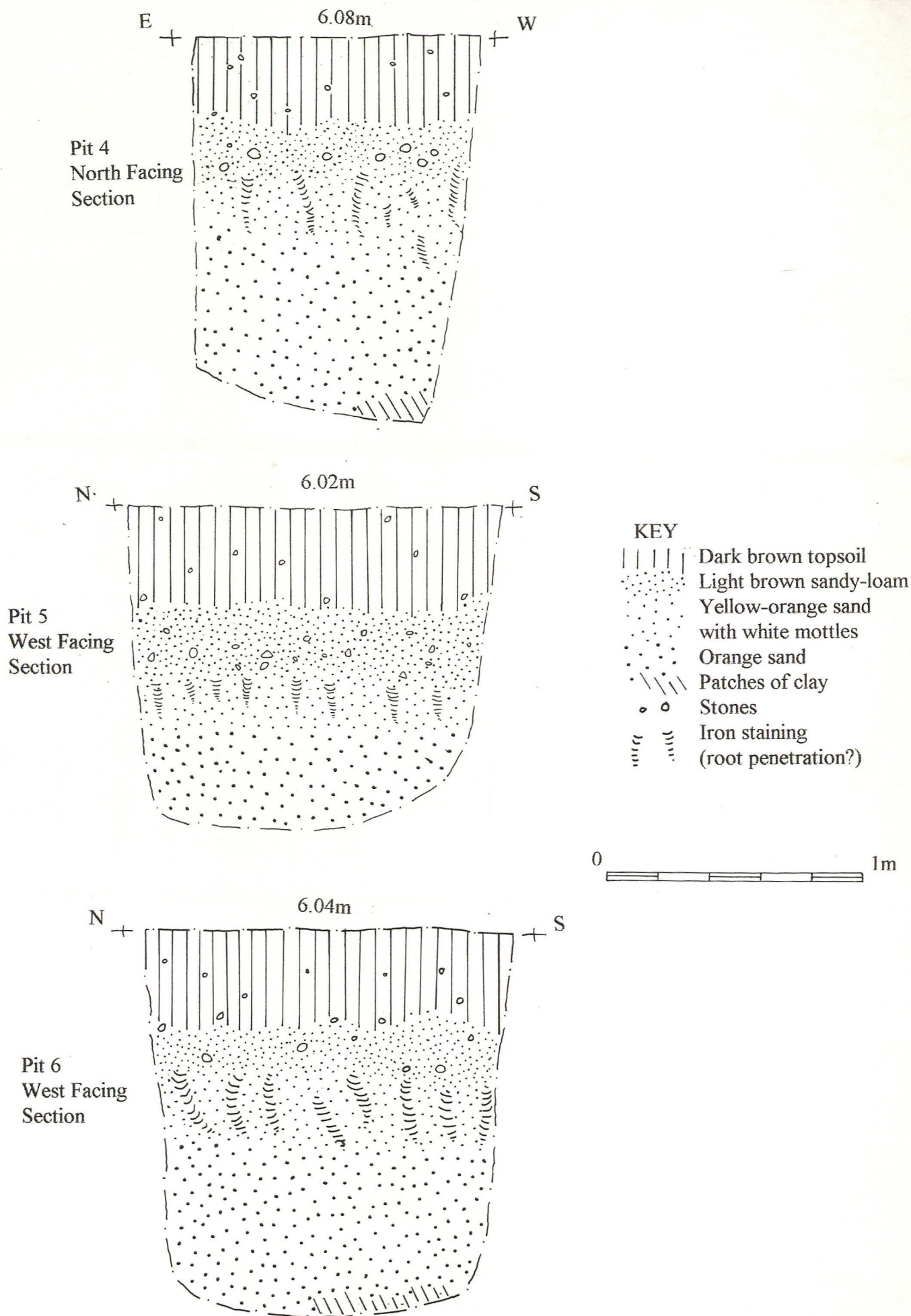


Fig. 3 Sections of pits 4, 5, and 6.