

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

FOTHERBY TOP 22kv REBUILD

NORTH ELKINGTON

LINCOLNSHIRE

National Grid Reference (NGR) SK 9470 8580

TF295 910

AOC Archaeology

on behalf of:

Yorkshire Electricity

January 1998

Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF PLATES

	Page
1) SUMMARY	1
2) INTRODUCTION	
2.1 Site location	1
2.2 Planning background	1
2.3 Archaeological background	4
2.4 Aims of the Investigation	6
3) STRATEGY	
3.1 Research Design	6
3.2 Methodology	7
4) CONDITIONS	7
5) RESULTS	9
7) CONCLUSION .	13
8) BIBLIOGRAPHY	13

LIST OF FIGURES

		Page
Figure 1	Site Location	2
Figure 2	Development Site with Trench and Pit Locations	3
Figure 3	Extracts from the Domesday Book (Morris, 1986)	5
Figure 4	Sample Sections in Fields 1 and 2	10
Figure 5	Sample Sections in Trenches 1 and 2	11

LIST OF PLATES

Plate 1	Topography of Site beyond Trench 1	8
Plate 2	Excavation for Pole 1	8
Plate 3	West-facing Section, Stay6	12
Plate4	Western End of Trench 1	12

1 SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by AOC Archaeology during cable-laying work by Yorkshire Electricity at Fotherby Top Farm and along field boundaries to the south of the farm. Two trenches were dug within the farm complex and the excavation of sixteen pits for electricity poles and their stays in the fields was observed. Despite the proximity of the site to a deserted medieval village, no archaeological features or deposits were observed during the work although the natural and recent stratigraphy was recorded.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Site Location

The site considered by this report lies within the parish of North Elkington which is situated in the Wolds to the north-west of Louth in Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Two trenches and two pits were located within the farm complex at Fotherby Top. The sixteen other pits investigated lay along the north-south boundary of the fields between the roads to Fotherby Top and North Elkington from the A16 (Fig. 2). The site is centred on national grid reference (NGR) TF 2950 9100.

Geologically North Elkington lies on the western edge of the Till (boulder clay) which overlies the Chalk. The land is fertile and well-drained due to the steep slope but is in an exposed position and not necessarily ideal for early settlement.

The north-west corner of the site is covered by the buildings and yard of the farm at Fotherby Top. Fields 1 and 3 to the north and south are under plough and slope down towards the central field (2) which is pasture with an open drainage ditch along the northern edge (Plate 1).

2.2 Planning Background

Yorkshire Electricity intended to replace the power supply at Fotherby Top. The work was to entail the replacement of several poles involving the removal of existing poles and the excavation of pits for new poles and stays. Part of the supply was to be laid underground near the farm at Fotherby Top.

This is an area of archaeological interest with earthworks of the deserted medieval village of North Elkington (Scheduled Ancient Monument County No. 289) located to the west and, according to aerial photographs, possibly extending across the line of works. The groundworks could have potentially disturbed archaeological remains and therefore, in line with PPG 16, the Archaeological Officer for Lincolnshire County Council recommended that an archaeologist should be employed to watch the groundworks and to record any features or items of interest.

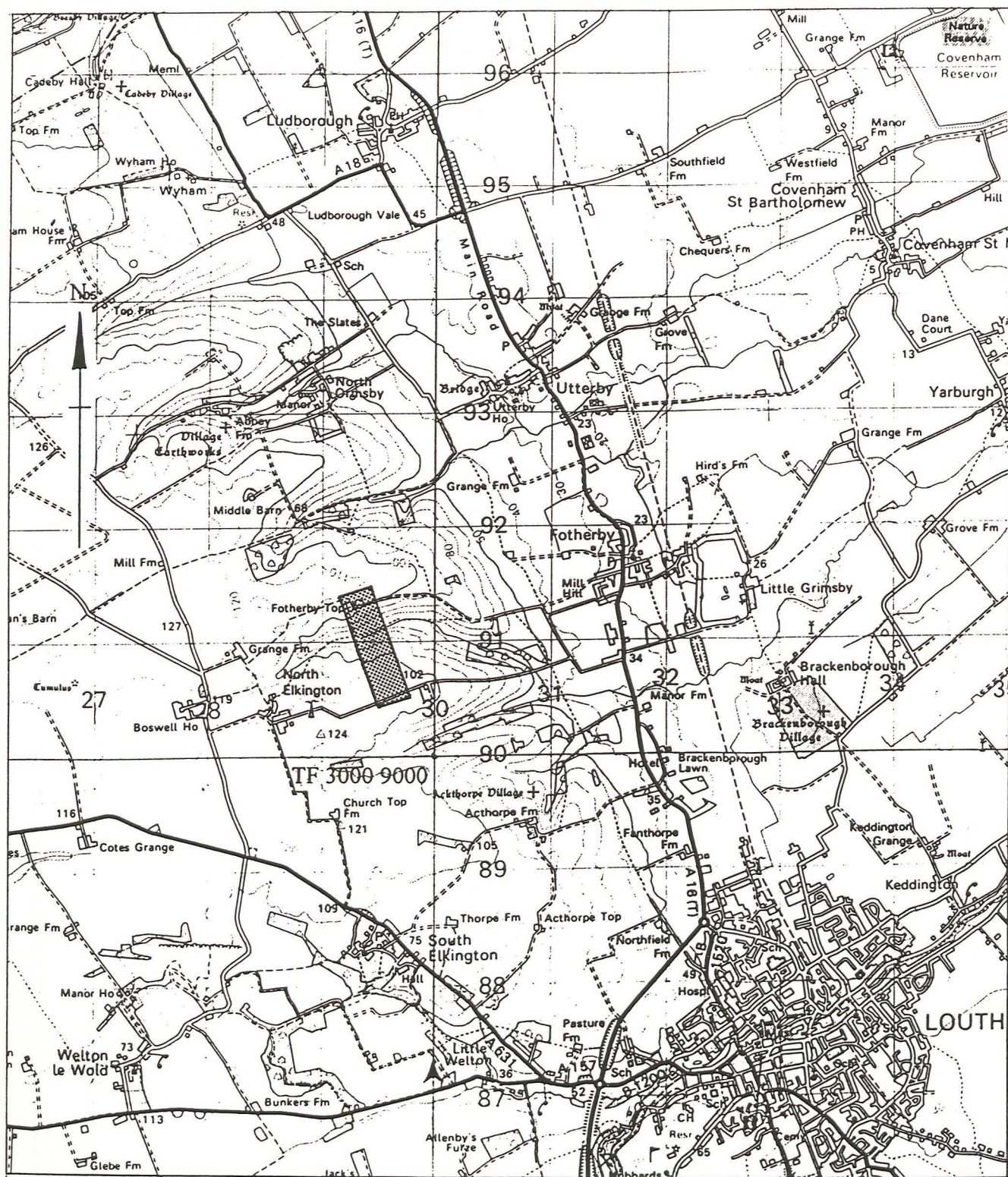


Figure 1 Site Location

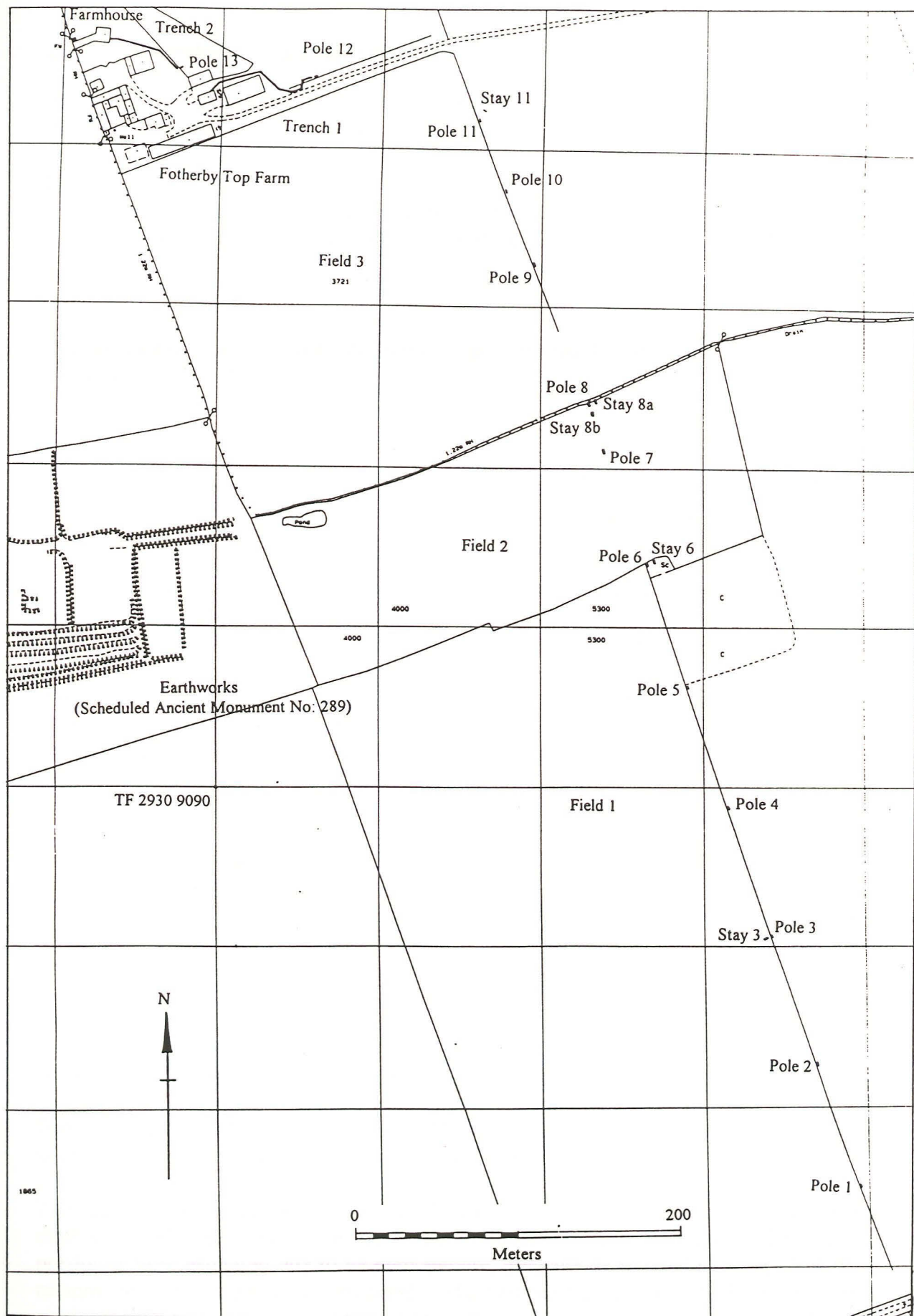


Figure 2 Development Site with Trench and Pit Locations

2.3 Archaeological Background

The following information has been prepared after consultation of the Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

Prehistoric

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the parish of North Elkington consists of a Bronze Age round barrow south of the village and a polished stone axe found in a field to the northwest of Fotherby Top Farm.

Roman

Despite the proximity of North Elkington to a possible junction of Roman roads mapped in *An Historical Atlas of Roman Lincolnshire* (Bennett, 1993), no Roman remains have been recorded in the vicinity of the site.

Medieval

A useful source for this period is the *Domesday Book* which is organised by landholders within Counties and usually further subdivided into administrative units (Morris 1986). The County of Lincolnshire was primarily divided into the three districts of Lindsey, Kesteven and Holland, of which Lindsey was further divided into three Ridings. These districts were subdivided into Wapentakes, hundreds and parishes. North Elkington played a subordinate part within this administrative system being a parish in the Wapentake of Louthesk in the South Riding of the District of Lindsey. There are two entries for Elkington in the *Domesday Book* under the spellings *Archintone* and *Alchinton* (Fig. 3). These entries indicate that land in Elkington was held by two main landlords, Esbjorn and Alsige, and several unnamed Freemen. The fact that two churches and two landlords are mentioned suggests that North and South Elkington were already separate at that time although they are not distinguished in the *Domesday Book* (Bennet, 1993).

Aerial photographs provide another source of evidence for extensive medieval farming and possible settlement in North Elkington. These show earthworks which have been plotted by Lincolnshire SMR and the Ordnance Survey including Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM) 289 situated on the north-facing slope to the south of Fotherby Top at TF 2910 9100. The earthworks of SAM 289 are linear or rectilinear in nature and those running east - west can be interpreted as terracing of the slope, or even 'ridge and furrow' produced by medieval ploughing, with possible north - south field boundaries at either end. The substantial depression between the two north - south lines of hachures at the eastern end of the main earthworks near the modern field boundary may either be a trackway or glacial in origin. It is possible that some of the non-linear features in the valley are the remains of house platforms. Less distinct features are discernible further east in the field directly opposite Fotherby Top which have not been mapped by the Ordnance survey but were interpreted as fields with north-south ridge and furrow for the SMR.

The population expansion in the 11th and 12th centuries, due to a number of factors which shall not be discussed here, resulted in the cultivation of marginal land which had not previously been exploited due to its poor fertility, drainage or isolated location. For these reasons, when the population contracted in the 14th century and this land was no longer needed, it may never have been subsequently cultivated thus preserving medieval earthworks (Platts, 1985). This is a particularly common phenomenon on high ground such as the

¶ In ARCHINTONE . h̄b Esbern . iiii . car̄ tr̄e ad gl̄d . Tra . viii . car̄ . De hac tra . ii . car̄ 7 dim̄ in Soca . Ibi Goisfrid h̄o Iuon h̄t . ii . car̄ . 7 xix . foc̄h 7 v . uilf cū . iii . car̄ . Ibi dimid̄ æccl̄a . 7 dim̄ sed̄ molini . 7 lx . ac̄ p̄ti . T.R.E . uat̄ lx . sol̄ . m̄ . vi . li b̄ . Tailla . xl . sol̄ .

- 84 M. In ELKINGTON Esbjorn had 4 carucates of land taxable. Land for 8 ploughs. Of this land 2½ carucates in a jurisdiction. Geoffrey, Ivo's man, has 2 ploughs.
19 Freemen and 5 villagers with 3 ploughs.
½ church; ½ mill site; meadow, 60 acres.
Value before 1066, 60s; now £6. Exactions 40s.

¶ In ALCHINTON . h̄b Ælf̄ . viii . car̄ tre ad gl̄d . Tra . xvi . car̄ . Ibi Fulco h̄o Wilfi h̄t . ii . car̄ . 7 xxx . viii . foc̄h cū vii . car̄ . 7 dim̄ . Ibi æccl̄a . 7 molin̄ . iii . solid̄ . 7 sedes alteri mol̄ . 7 xx . ac̄ p̄ti . T.R.E . uat̄ . iii . li b̄ . m̄ . iiii . Tailla . xl . sol̄ . Sex car̄ 7 dim̄ de hac tra sunt foc̄h .

- 28 M. In ELKINGTON Alsige had 8 carucates of land taxable. Land for 16 ploughs. Fulco, William's man, has 2 ploughs.
38 Freemen with 7½ ploughs.
A church; a mill, 3s; the site of another mill; meadow, 20 acres.
Value before 1066 £3; now [£] 4. Exactions 40s.
6½ carucates of this land are the Freemen's.

Figure 3 Extracts from the *Domesday Book* (Morris, 1986)

Wolds and the deserted village at North Elkington can be seen as part of a more extensive pattern. There are many similar earthworks of a medieval date in the area such as those adjacent to the village of North Elkington which show that the village was originally more extensive.

2.4 Aims of the Investigation

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To make a record of significant remains revealed during the course of the groundworks associated with the cable laying.

To see if remains associated with the medieval village are present. Are remains of field systems/paddocks present? Is there evidence for roads/tracks? What date are the remains? Is it possible to determine the date for the establishment and decline of the medieval village?

To make public the results of the investigations subject to any confidentiality restrictions.

3 STRATEGY

3.1 Research Design

A scheme of investigation for the site was designed by AOC Archaeology and approved by the County Archaeological Officer, with the agreement of the applicant. This included the provision for an archaeologist to be present on site during the course of the groundworks.

Any archaeological features or other remains such as concentrations of artefacts, would be recorded by written, drawn and photographic record and excavated as appropriate with finds retrieval. In event of significant remains existing that could not be recorded by the archaeologist, the County Archaeological Officer and Yorkshire Electricity would be informed of the situation. Similarly should remains of such importance exist that preservation *in situ* should be considered then the above two would be informed immediately.

Any remains recorded would be linked to those visible on aerial photographs in the vicinity.

Provision was made for post-excavation analysis and reports to Level 3 as outlined in English Heritage's *Management of Archaeological Projects (1991)* and the Archaeology Section, Lincs. C.C. Brief.

3.2 Methodology

Prior to the arrival of an archaeologist two trenches had been excavated at Fotherby Top Farm using a JCB-type excavator equipped with a 0.30m toothed bucket. Trench 1 was 72.70m long and Trench 2 was 44.20m long and both were up to 1.10m deep. An archaeologist was present during the excavation of all the pits which was undertaken by a JCB Sitemaster using a 0.60m toothed bucket (Plate 2). Each pit measured approximately 1.50m by 0.60m with an average depth of 1.70m. As the pits were dug in sequence an archaeologist was present throughout the works. Therefore every pit dug in a new location was fully recorded rather than just those in the three positions specified in the letter from the County Archaeological Officer (2nd June 1997). The positions of the poles within the area investigated were numbered from south to north and the pits dug for the poles and stays were labelled according to their function and position (Fig. 2). For ease of reference the fields were also given numbers specific to this investigation.

The work was carried out in accordance with the standard specified by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (1994). Standard AOC Archaeology techniques were used throughout, involving the completion of written trench sheets for each deposit encountered with scale plans and/or section drawings where appropriate. The Ordnance Survey benchmark to the south of the site was no longer visible and there were no others known in the vicinity so approximate levels were obtained from contours on the 1:50 000 scale Ordnance Survey map *Landranger 113*. A full photographic record was made, using black and white print and colour slide film. The trenches were backfilled by Yorkshire Electricity following completion of the appropriate records.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the minimum requirements of Appendix 7.1 of MAP 2 (English Heritage 1991). A copy of the report will be supplied to the County SMR.

The archive is currently being prepared in accordance with the guidelines published in *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long-term Storage* (United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, 1990) and *Standards in the Museum Care of Archaeological Collections* (Museums and Galleries Commission, 1994). The site archive, including the finds (subject to the owners consent), will be deposited with the appropriate museum when complete.

4 CONDITIONS

During the four days on site the weather was initially wet and overcast becoming dry, sunny and cold on the final day. Upon exposure the deposits were slightly damp although well drained, providing good conditions for definition of deposits.



Plate 1 Topography of Site beyond Trench 1 View Southeast



Plate 2 Excavation for Pole 1

5 RESULTS

The pits for Poles 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8 were dug in exactly the same positions as their predecessors with the original backfill visible in section and were therefore not recorded.

Field 1

The surface of the field sloped down southwards from 100mAOD to 85mAOD and was under plough.

The pits for Poles 2 and 6 and Stays 3 and 6 revealed identical deposits which varied in depth according to the slope of the surface of the field (Fig. 4 and Plate 3)). The basal deposit was the natural chalk bedrock. This was overlain by a mid yellowish brown clay silt subsoil with a depth of between 0.45m and 0.70m. This was sealed by ploughsoil up to 0.35m deep comprising mid brown clay silt with moderate small stones.

Field 2

This field had been left as pasture and sloped steeply northwards from 85mAOD towards a drainage ditch at 70mAOD.

The pits for Stays 8a and 8b revealed similar deposits (Fig. 4). A light brownish clay natural was only seen in the pit for Stay 8a. Presumably this was boulder clay or till and the chalk was present beneath it at a greater depth. The natural clay was overlain by a layer of dark brown silty clay with frequent flecks of chalk between 0.60m and 0.80m deep which was interpreted as subsoil. Above this was a deposit of mid yellowish brown clay silt up to 0.50m thick which may have been colluvium. This layer was sealed by mid brown clay silt topsoil maximum 0.20m thick.

Field 3

The field sloped down from the access road to Fotherby Top at 100mAOD towards Field 2 at 70mAOD. Field 3 had been ploughed.

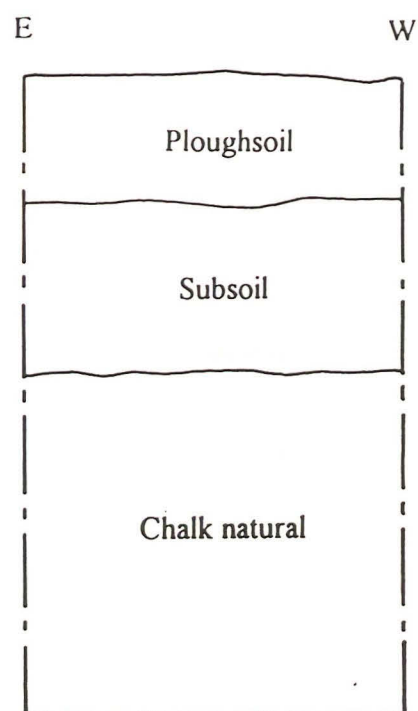
The pits for Poles 9, 10 and 11 and Stay 11 all contained the same deposits. The primary deposit was natural chalk. This was covered by mid brown clay silt ploughsoil with a moderate quantity of chalk and flint inclusions and maximum depth of 0.40m.

On the surface of the field fragments of post-medieval china, bottle glass and drain pipe were observed but not collected.

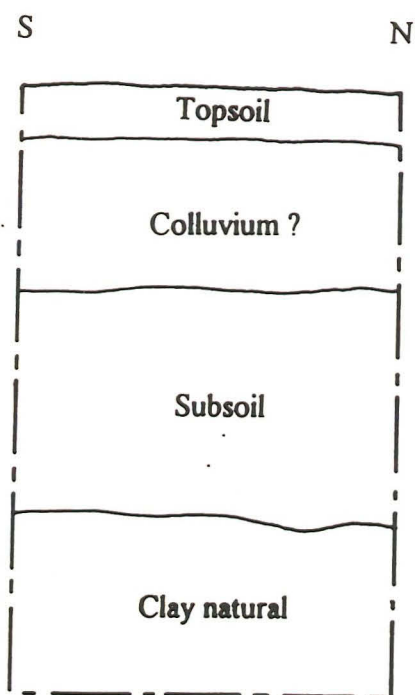
Fotherby Top

The farm is located on high land between 100mAOD and 110mAOD. Trench 1 and Poles 12 and 13 were mainly excavated through a ploughed field and the bank on its southern edge (Plate 4). Trench 2 was located in rough ground beside buildings and at its west end in the garden of the farmhouse. Similar deposits were encountered in all the excavated areas (Fig. 5).

The primary deposit was natural chalk. This was overlain by a 0.35m thick mid yellowish brown silt subsoil with frequent inclusions of chalk. The ploughsoil and overburden sealing the subsoil was a mid brownish grey silt with frequent inclusions of chalk and fragments of post-medieval transfer-printed china, glass and brick which were not collected. In 3m of the

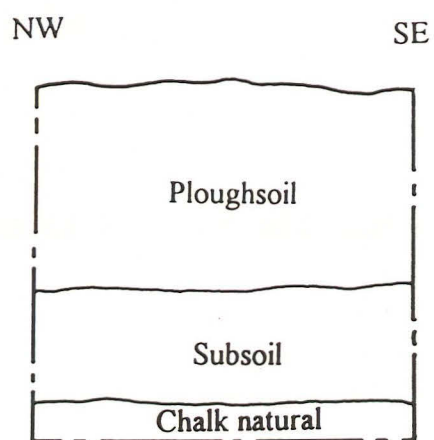


North-facing Section, Stay 3
Scale 1:20

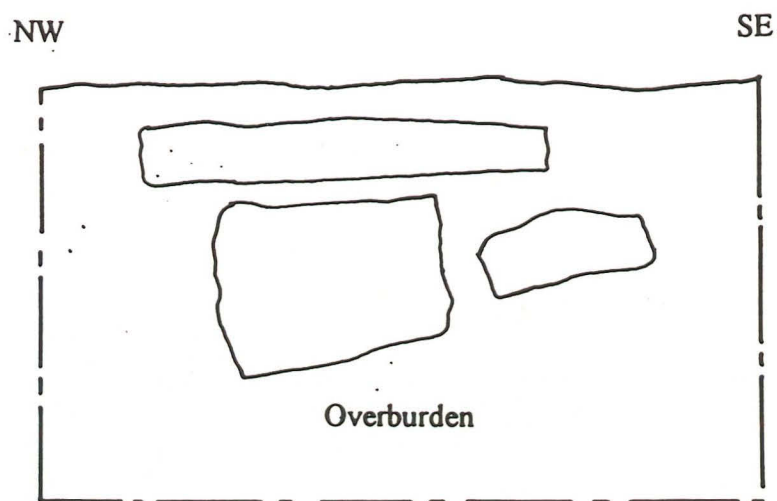


East-facing Section, Stay 8b
Scale 1:20

Figure 4 Sample Sections in Fields 1 and 2



Southwest-facing Section, Trench 1
Scale 1:20



Southwest-facing Section, East end of Trench 2
Scale 1:20

Figure 5 Sample Sections in Trenches 1 and 2



Plate 3 West-facing Section, Stay 6 View East



Plate 4 Western End of Trench 1 View East

eastern end of Trench 2 the overburden was 1.10m thick with neither subsoil nor natural chalk visible in section (Fig. 5). Several large blocks of squared limestone (0.50 x 0.45 x 0.12m) were excavated along with slate, brick and pieces of wood. None of the stone blocks appeared to be in situ and it seems likely that this was an area of dumping perhaps originating from a demolished building.

7 CONCLUSION

The completed field evaluation effectively met the original aims of the investigation.

During the watching brief no archaeological features associated with the medieval village were identified. It is likely that the pits were located in open areas that had always been paddocks or fields. Ploughing of the upper slopes may have destroyed some earthworks such as ridge and furrow but no evidence of negative features was present although this may have been due to the size and distribution of pits.

The building material seen in Trench 2 near farm buildings seems to have been dumped in the post-medieval period and artefacts seen on the surface of Field 3 were also post-medieval in date.

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