

WATTSCLIFFE QUARRY
ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Report for Block Stone Ltd.

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WATTSCLIFFE QUARRY

ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

SUMMARY

- In anticipation of an application to extend Wattscliffe Quarry, Block Stone Ltd. commissioned Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust to undertake an archaeological appraisal of an area approximately 40m x 150m adjacent to Wattscliffe Quarry, in the parish of Harthill, Derbyshire.
- Harthill Moor is an archaeologically rich area with upstanding monuments (many of them Scheduled Ancient Monuments) and numerous records of past discoveries of artefacts and sites in the Sites and Monuments Record. These are mainly of prehistoric, Roman and Medieval date.
- Field evidence was found in the study area for early agriculture (Group 1 sites) of prehistoric or Romano-British origin, and for probable Post-Medieval stone-getting and working (Group 2 sites). Both these types of features are considered to be of **Local importance** and further archaeological investigation is recommended.
- It is also recommended, given the density of archaeological discoveries in the vicinity, that further archaeological investigation is needed to test the potential for the discovery of other archaeological remains in the study area which may be masked by the dense vegetation cover or have left no visible surface traces.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Wattscliffe Quarry is located on the north side of a ridge on the southern edge of Harthill Moor, Harthill parish Derbyshire (Fig 1). The proposed quarry extension comprises an area approximately 40m x 150m, on the western side of the present quarry lease area (Fig 2: Area A), and centred on SK 22236212.

Harthill Moor geologically forms part of the millstone grit series and the quarry is located on an outcrop of the Ashover Grit which rises to over 900 feet OD. Close by to the east, lies the famous, impressive, natural rock outcrop of Robin Hood's Stride. To the north, west and south lie the limestone regions of Alport, Youlgreave, Middleton and Smerrill, Gratton, Elton, and Winster, and across the Ivy Bar Brook, to the east, the gritstone outlier of Stanton Moor.

Block Stone Ltd. commissioned Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust to undertake an archaeological appraisal and walkover survey in April 1998, in anticipation of a planning application.

Section one outlines the approach taken in the compilation of the report and the sources of information used.

Section two summarises the archaeological background.

Section three describes the results of the walkover survey to assess the survival of landscape features of historical and archaeological significance.

Section four assesses the features found and appraises the potential for other archaeological remains within the area.

Section five lists the principal sources consulted in the preparation of this report.

Sources of information

Information has been collated from the following sources:

Sites and Monuments Records (SMR)

The Peak Park Sites and Monuments Record was consulted for information on archaeological sites and finds within and immediately around the study area. In addition records in Sheffield Museum were studied with reference to sites and finds immediately around the study area. This information has been incorporated in Sections 2, 3 and 4.

Air Photographs

A number of air photographs of the study area held in the archives at Peak Park were consulted and relevant information is incorporated in Section 2.

Documentary and Cartographic Sources

Basic published and cartographic sources for the study area were consulted in the limited time available, but the search was not exhaustive. These are listed in Section 5 and the results are incorporated in Sections 2, 3 and 4.

Fieldwork

The study area was inspected in the field after clearance of the overlying bracken by rolling. Features of potential archaeological significance were photographed and noted on to a 1:5000 base map. These are described in Section 3 and assessed in Section 4.

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND (Fig. 3)

Harthill Moor is an area rich in archaeological remains of many periods, some of which survive as upstanding monuments. Bateman (1848, 126-7) recalls the interest of local antiquaries Rooke and Pegge in the antiquities of the moor in the late 18th century, and he himself records the continued discovery of sites and artefacts during agricultural activities, particularly in 1845 during 'some extensive farming operations'. Clearly many sites and finds will have been lost during this period but from the surviving remains and artefacts it is possible to gain an insight into the moor's archaeology

Prehistoric

There is no record yet of Mesolithic flints having been found but the elevated southern edge and the moor's rock outcrops would have been suitable for hunting parties to use as lookout points and temporary shelters, and there is undoubted potential for future discoveries

The Neolithic is represented chiefly by the remains of the Late Neolithic stone circle at Nine Stones Close (SMR 6712; Barnatt 1990, 82-3). To-day only four upright stones survive in the circle but the earlier antiquaries noted a possible seven. Barnatt comments on the unusual tallness of the stones for a gritstone area (between 1.95m and 2.20m). Robin Hood's Stride may have played a role in rituals associated with the circle because around midsummer when the moon is low in the sky it would have passed between the two natural pillars (Barnatt and Smith 1997, 36). A number of stone axes from this period have been recorded from the moor (Bateman 1848, 127) and a mace head, probably of Late Neolithic date (SMR 6713). Numerous flint scatters have been located which could date from the Neolithic or the succeeding Bronze Age (SMRs 5310, 6715, 6713, 6729, 6730). These suggest the likelihood of Neolithic settlement as well as ritual activity. The limestone areas to the west and south are core areas for Neolithic settlement in the Peak and have produced extensive evidence (Hart 1981, 42-6, fig. 4:5), so it is not surprising to find that the adjacent gritstones of Harthill moor were also exploited, certainly by the late Neolithic, and there is potential here for further discoveries for the whole of this period.

Early Bronze Age barrows and burials have been recorded from around Anthony Hill (SMRs 5311, 5323, 5325) and Cliff Farm (SMR 5322), and on Harthill Moor Farm (SMRs 6705, 6706). Bateman (1848, 71-3) describes the accidental discovery, during clearance for agricultural improvements, of a barrow 'the elevation of (which)...above the surrounding land was so slight as to be scarcely perceptible'. Nearby, at the same time, a stone cist containing cremated bones was also located. These burials and associated Bronze Age pottery (Howarth 1899, 120, 124; J. 93-818 and 827) were found at the foot of Robin Hood's Stride (SMR 6704). A contemporary bronze flat axe (SMR 6711; Howarth 1899, 80; J. 93-472) was recorded by Bateman from near to Nine Stones Circle. The possible Bronze Age flint scatters have been noted above. Clearly Harthill Moor was well settled during the Bronze Age and the potential for further evidence is considerable.

A number of enclosures on Harthill Moor probably date from the Later Bronze Age/Early Iron Age (Hart 1981, 75, 77, figs. 7:2, 7:5). Castle Ring (SMR 6717) is called a hillfort, because of evidence for an enclosing rampart ditch and counterscarp bank. However, the enclosed area is only three quarters of an acre and the south-east side and interior have been levelled by ploughing. Graham Makepeace collected a sherd from the vicinity of the fort which is from a vessel with a carinated shoulder decorated with finger-tip impressions, comparable with pottery of the Later Bronze Age/Early Iron Age from sites such as Mam Tor (pers. comm. P. Beswick; Sheffield Museum collections). To the north-east of Robin Hood's Stride is an oval enclosure (SMR 6718) protected by a wide shallow ditch and low bank and possibly with circular and rectangular buildings inside. Other smaller possible enclosures lie on adjacent unimproved land to the north and east (Hart 1981, fig. 7:5; Aerial photograph 72 009 258, Peak Park archive, copyright Ordnance Survey). On the summit of Cratcliffe Rocks, nearby, a 3m wide stone wall incorporating large orthostats blocks a natural gap between large earthfast boulders, forming a strong defensive circuit (SMR 6701). The date of this feature is not known and it may be as early as the Neolithic by analogy with sites elsewhere, e.g. Gardom's Edge enclosure (Ainsworth and Barnatt 1998). There is potential for further surviving prehistoric settlement evidence from the moor, particularly from the unimproved areas.

Romano-British

Thomas Bateman drew attention to 'circular level pavements of sandstone' some with traces of fire and strewn with pottery and broken querns, believed to be the floors of huts, which could be found in places on the moor (Bateman 1848, 127-8). He also described a coin of Tetricus (AD 270-273) and Romano-British pottery from Robin Hood's Stride (Bateman 1848, 130) and saved a pair of disc shaped quernstones from 'opposite to Hartle Moor' (Howarth 1899, 172, J. 93-977). However, it was John and Percy Heathcote in the 1930s who carried out extensive excavations at and around the vicinity of Robin Hood's Stride, recovering thousands of sherds of Romano-British pottery, querns, occasional metalwork and some prehistoric pottery and flints (Sheffield Museum collections; SMR 6716). Unfortunately records of the work have not survived although labels with some of the finds suggest that around 5 rock shelters and 6 huts were cleared at the time and the pottery, though mainly Derbyshire ware, includes also grey ware, Black Burnished ware, Huntcliffe ware, colour-coated ware and mortaria. Coins finds mentioned include examples of Trajan and Gordian (AD 238-48). Occupation therefore appears to span at least the second and third centuries AD. Part of the complex appears to have extended to the south, to the east of Watscliffe Plantation (SMR 5329). In the early 1980s the farmer made an attempt to clear the land and some of the features were destroyed but one hut (probably Heathcote's Hut 3) was rescued, fully excavated and restored by members of the Hunter Archaeological Society (report and finds in Sheffield Museum collections). The pottery finds were similar to those recovered by the Heathcotes, however the most interesting object was nearly half of a polychrome mosaic glass bowl in 19 fragments but in an excellent state of preservation. The ground colour is deep green-blue (peacock blue) and the millefiore rods are yellow. One fragment was associated with a rim sherd of Black Burnished category 1 cooking pot, dated c. AD 120-80. Such glass bowls are extremely rare but colourless cast bowls of the same form are

fairly common and are found in late first and second century contexts (Price 1985, 468-700). What such a rare and precious object was doing in what otherwise appears to be an ordinary native Romano-British settlement is not known but one possibility, though unproven, is that it was intended for making glass ornaments for jewellery decoration (Makepeace 1998, 119). Fortunately Makepeace sketch-plotted the visible features shortly before their partial destruction and his survey shows at least 3 round houses with two small field terraces to the north (Fig. 4; Sheffield Museum collections).

Other sites in the vicinity where the Heathcotes also found evidence for Romano-British occupation include Cratcliffe Rocks (SMR 6702), Carrs Wood (SMR 6731) and Thieves Den (SMR 6703; Makepeace 1998, 118-9). The only other recorded evidence for early fields, in addition to those near Watscliffe Plantation mentioned above, are to the west of Castle Ring fort (SMR 6719). Such so-called 'celtic fields' could be of prehistoric or Romano-British origin. Although a large number of querns have been found on the moor, there is no evidence as yet for quern manufacture.

Medieval

Records are scant for this period but it appears that the ancient Portway, the traditional route north to Bakewell and beyond, lay just to the east of Robin Hood's Stride (SMR 6747), which presumably served as a convenient landmark for travellers. Whether coincidental or not, the area was also topographically attractive to hermits. There are three locations associated with religious practices; Hermits Cave (SMR 6728) below Cratcliffe Rocks, and another in Bury Cliff to the west (SMR 5309), and Calvary Chapel in Bury Wood (SMR 6220).

Post-Medieval

The old roads across the moor were closed after the new turnpike road in the valley was made around 1811 (Heathcote 1934). Mention has been made of the drastic effects of enclosure and agricultural improvements particularly in the 1840s and this would have been accompanied by small scale stone-getting for wall building. There is surface evidence for stone working along the natural edge, south of Watscliffe Quarry, using iron chisels (photograph 20, Watscliffe archive (WTQ)), which presumably dates from prior to the opening of the quarry. Also on the edge of Watscliffe Plantation, c. SK 2376216 near to Robin Hood's Stride, a large stone has been propped up on the hillside and bears weathered pock marks (photograph 13, WTQ archive), suggesting that one surface was partially worked, perhaps to make a large millstone of the type found on other gritstone edge areas in the Peak District, e.g. Gardom's Edge.

3 WALKOVER (Fig. 5)

The area comprises a strip of land approximately 40m wide by 150m long, lying to the east of Wattscliffe Quarry (Fig. 2). Prior to the walkover the dense covering of dead bracken had been rolled and flattened. The opportunity was taken to carry out the walkover while the ground was under a light covering of snow and a later visit, after the snow had melted, proved this to have been worthwhile because the features noted were less clearly visible. However, it was also clear after the snow had melted that not only was most of the area covered in dead bracken but also in a thick mat of long grass tussocks which effectively masks underlying stone and hinders definitive interpretation of some features.

The area rises gradually from around 850' OD at the north to over 900' OD at the south, and forms a northern dip-slope to the natural gritstone edge, presumably the original Wattscliffe. The area divides into three units from north to south. At the north end, for approximately the first 50m, the ground is irregular with around a dozen pits averaging 1m to 2m by 1.5m and over 0.35m deep. The bottoms are covered in deep vegetation litter and soil (one even had evidence of a burrow) and the sides are masked by grass and bracken. Occasionally loose weathered stones had been disturbed by the bracken rolling. From their size they would appear to be pits for stone-getting and are probably Post-Medieval in date, and perhaps relate to 18th-19th century wall building.

For approximately the next 55m the site is undisturbed by pits and has a generally stone free and level appearance. Along the west side, between about 50-55m from the north end, there is a flat area, around 4m wide and defined on both the north and the south by low banks with protruding boulders. The banks start under the quarry spoil heap and continue east for about 2m. This would appear to be part of a 'celtic field' which is likely to be of prehistoric or Romano-British origin. To the east is a small pile of stones which could be a field clearance cairn. At about 70m from the north end, a slight terrace runs irregularly east-west across the area and may have resulted from cultivation of the clear, level area to the south. There is less bracken cover on the western side of this area than elsewhere.

At between 105m and 110m from the north end, a rock outcrop is located on the western side of the site and the ground rises more steeply than before. This outcrop is bisected by a track about 0.75m wide, which also crosses the slight terrace feature lower down the slope. To the east of the track there is a pronounced platform, c. 1.2m square, on the downslope side of the rock outcrop and curving banks on the slope above, which appear to enclose an irregular shaped area, c. 1.8m across, with an entrance to the south-west. Possibly these features relate to stone working on the rock outcrop, but the vegetation problem referred to above is obscuring the rock surfaces and any evidence for them having been worked. Rather than for obtaining walling stone this area might have been exploited for larger stone blocks suitable for making items such as troughs, gateposts or millstones, and is likely to be Post-Medieval in date, but prior to the present quarry. At around 5m south of the outcrop, on the western side of the site, there is a rectangular 'pit', c. 1.9m x 1.8m, terraced into the hill slope. This may be another stone working area but again the

vegetation is obscuring any evidence. South and east of the rock outcrop the ground is generally rough and shows no signs of having been improved. At about 120m from the north end of the site a narrow footpath with 'V' shaped profile crosses the site from west to east and a branch path curves off north-eastwards, around the east side of the rock outcrop.

The visible features of potential archaeological interest, therefore, fall into two groups. The first group is evidence for possible prehistoric and/or Romano-British land improvement and cultivation in the middle portion of the site. The second is evidence for probable Post-Medieval stone-getting and working at both the north and south ends of the site.

4 ASSESSMENTS AND APPRAISAL

Criteria for the Assessment of Sites

Within this document the format used to assess each individual site is based on the scheduling criteria laid down in Annexe 4 of *Planning Policy Guidance 16: Archaeology and Planning* (PPG 16) issued by the Department of the Environment. These criteria may be summarised as follows:

Period

All types of monument that characterise a category or period should be considered for preservation, in order that a representative sample be preserved for posterity.

Rarity

There are some monument categories which in certain periods are so scarce that all surviving examples which still retain some archaeological potential should be preserved. In general, however, a selection must be made which portrays the typical and commonplace as well as the rare. This process should take account of all aspects of the distribution of a particular class of a monument, both in a national and a regional context.

Documentation

The significance of a monument may be enhanced by the existence of records of previous investigations or, in the case of more recent monuments, by the supporting evidence of contemporary written records.

Group value

The value of a single monument (such as a field system) may be greatly enhanced by its association with related contemporary monuments (such as a settlement or cemetery) or with monuments of different periods. In some cases, it is preferable to protect the complete group of monuments, including associated and adjacent land, rather than to protect isolated monuments within the group.

Survival/condition

The survival of a monument's archaeological potential both above and below ground is a particularly important consideration, and should be assessed in relation to its present condition and surviving features.

Fragility/vulnerability

Highly important archaeological evidence from some field monuments can be destroyed by a single ploughing or by other unsympathetic treatment, and such monuments would particularly benefit from the protection which scheduling confers. There exist also standing structures of particular form or complexity whose value can again be severely reduced by neglect or careless treatment, and which are similarly well suited for scheduled monument protection (even if these structures are already listed historic buildings).

Diversity

Some monuments may be selected for scheduling because they possess a combination of high quality features, rather than a single important attribute: for example, a Roman town with associated field systems.

Potential

The nature of the evidence cannot always be specified precisely, but it may be possible to demonstrate the potential value of a monument as a result of evaluation work.

Additional criteria

In addition to the Secretary of State's criteria, a general account of the sites and their environs is provided in Sections 2 and 3.

An indication of the **importance** of a site and the **degree of threat** posed by the development is provided in the assessments.

Importance is judged in three categories:

Nationally important sites: Scheduled Ancient Monuments of all types or sites considered to be worthy of scheduling though not as yet scheduled.

Regionally important sites: Sites listed by the County Sites and Monuments Record, or other reliable sources, which contribute in a significant manner to the archaeology of the region.

Locally important sites: Sites listed by the County Sites and Monuments Record, or other reliable sources, which, either through their intrinsic character or their degree or state of preservation are not of greater importance.

Some brief recommendations for further action regarding the archaeology are provided at the end of each assessment.

Group 1 sites (Fig. 5)

Period

Prehistoric and/or Romano-British agricultural features; plot boundary, cleared and level areas, ?clearance cairn and terrace.

Rarity

Exceedingly rare on Harthill Moor because of destruction by later agricultural improvements.

Documentation

None.

Group value

Different types of features in the group enhances the archaeological interest. Possibility for evidence of different functions and of changes through time.

Survival/condition

Protected by quarry site from absorption into modern agricultural land.

Fragility/vulnerability

At risk of destruction from proposed quarry extension.

Diversity

As for group value

Potential

These features are of **Local importance** with potential to contribute to knowledge of prehistoric and Roman farming practices.

Recommendations

Further archaeological investigation of these features is warranted.

Group 2 sites (Fig. 5)

Period

Probable stone-getting and stone working features of Post-Medieval date, but preceding the present quarry.

Rarity

Previously unrecorded on Harthill Moor.

Documentation

None found.

Group value

Different character of features at the north end of the site from those at the south end suggests different functions and possibly different dates.

Survival/condition

Undisturbed and protected by vegetation cover.

Fragility/vulnerability

At risk of destruction by proposed quarry extension.

Diversity

As for group value.

Potential

These features are of **Local importance** with potential to contribute knowledge of an important local industry. Reference has been made in Section 2 to other evidence for Post-Medieval stone working discovered during this survey in the vicinity of the study area.

Recommendations

Further archaeological investigation of these features is warranted.

Appraisal of archaeological potential

In addition to the types of visible features listed above the possibility of other archaeological evidence being present in the study area requires appraisal. The unusually rich density of archaeological features on Harthill Moor was referred to in Section 2 and although the study area is on one of the higher parts of the moor it is also in one of the few remaining agriculturally unimproved areas.

Certainly there is a possibility that slight surface features could be masked by the dense vegetation over the study area and that possibly other types of evidence might have left no visible surface traces. For instance, Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age flint scatters, evidence for activity in the landscape, usually leave no surface trace but flints have been located in ploughed fields locally and on the excavated Romano-British settlements, so there is a strong likelihood of their presence in the study area. Bateman's comments about the chance nature of the discovery of Bronze Age burials near Robin Hood's Stride because of the lack of surface indications was referred to in Section 2, and all the evidence for such sites on the moor is from around the 800 ft. contour or above. There is also some Romano-British settlement evidence, for instance at Robin Hood's Stride and Cratcliffe Rocks, from above the 800ft contour.

In conclusion it is considered likely that there is more archaeological evidence awaiting discovery in the study area and it is recommended that further evaluation is needed to determine whether additional archaeological investigation is required.

5 SOURCES CONSULTED

5.1 Printed Maps

1955 Ordnance Survey 6", Sheet SK 26SW
1957 Ordnance Survey 1:25000, Sheet SK 26

5.2 Published sources

- Ainsworth, S. and Barnatt, J. (1998) A scarp-edge enclosure at Gardom's Edge, Baslow, Derbyshire. *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 118, 5-23.
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- Makepeace, G. A. (1998) Romano-British rural settlements in the Peak District and north-east Staffordshire. *Derbyshire Archaeological Journal* 118, 95-138.
- Price, J. (1985) Two pieces of polychrome mosaic glass table-ware from Roman Britain. *The Antiquaries Journal* 65 part II, 468-471.



Fig. 1 Location of Wattscliffe Quarry

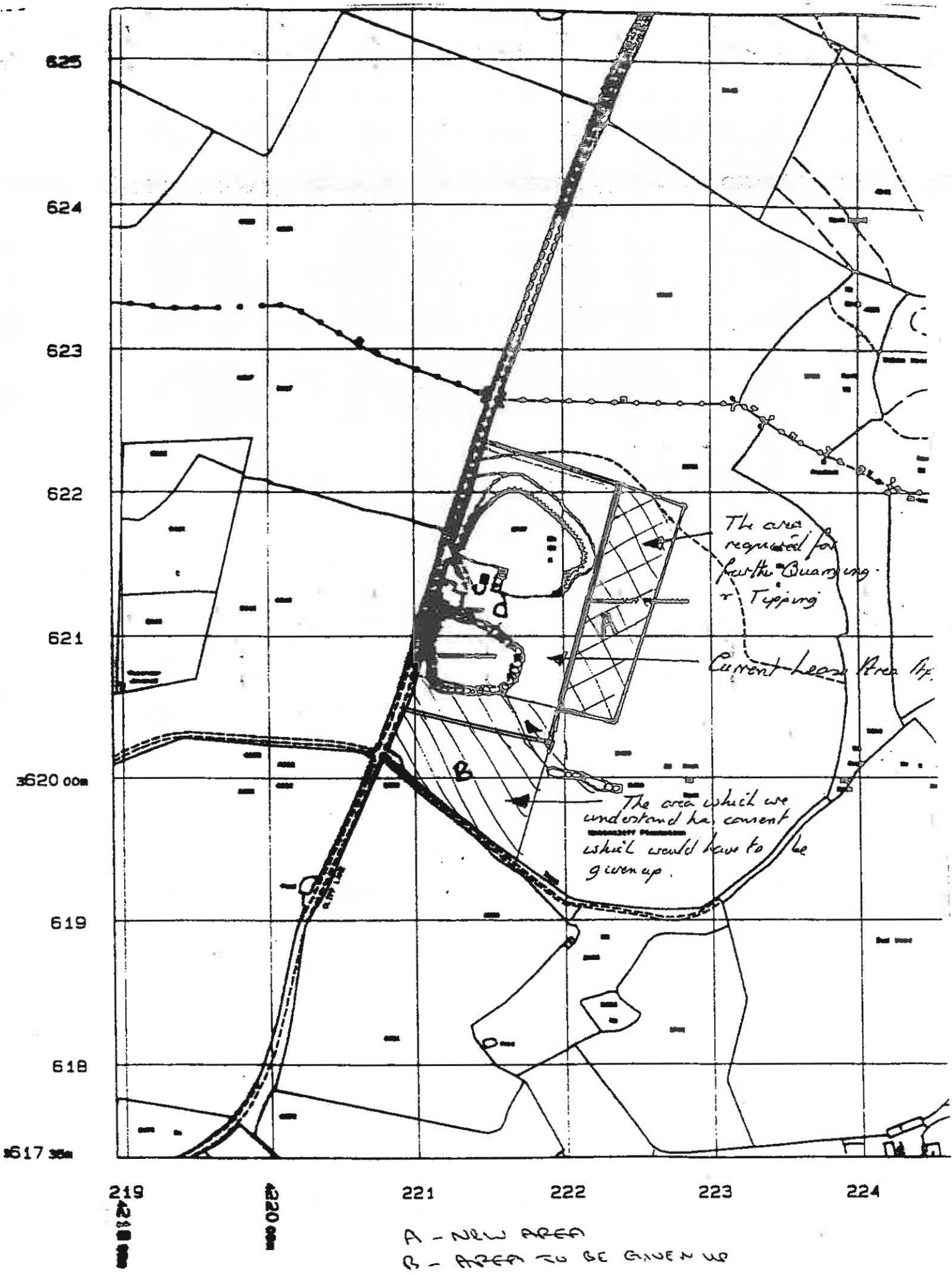
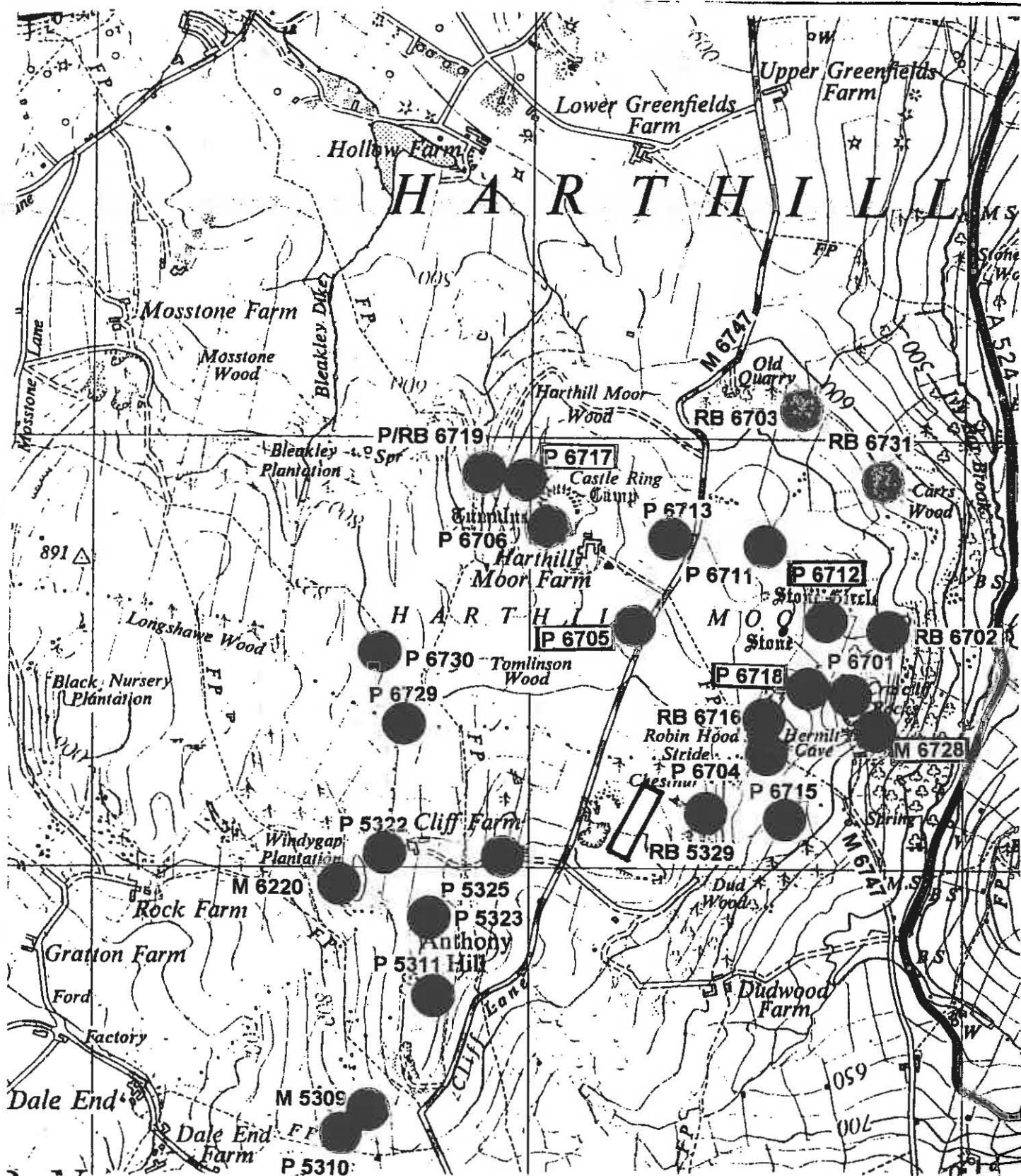


Fig. 2. Location of study area, outlined in bold and marked 'A'



Prehistoric P Romano-British RB Medieval M
 Scheduled Ancient Monument e.g. **P 6712**

Fig. 3 Harthill Moor area around Wattscliffe Quarry showing application site (bold outline), Sites and Monuments Record numbers, as described in Section 2, and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Reproduced from the 1957 Ordnance Survey 1:25000 map enlarged x2, with permission of The Contoller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, (c) Crown Copyright. Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust,

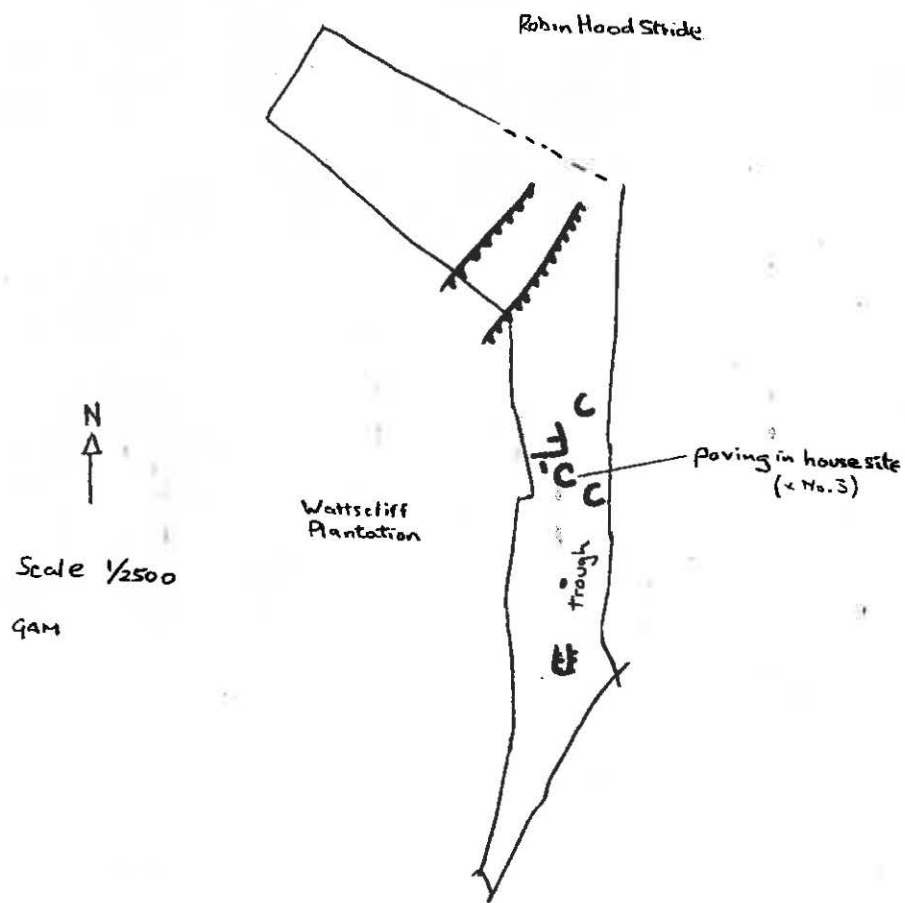


Fig. 4 Sketch plan of Romano-British site adjacent to Wattsclyffe Plantation at SK 224621, scale 1:2500. After G. A. Makepeace.

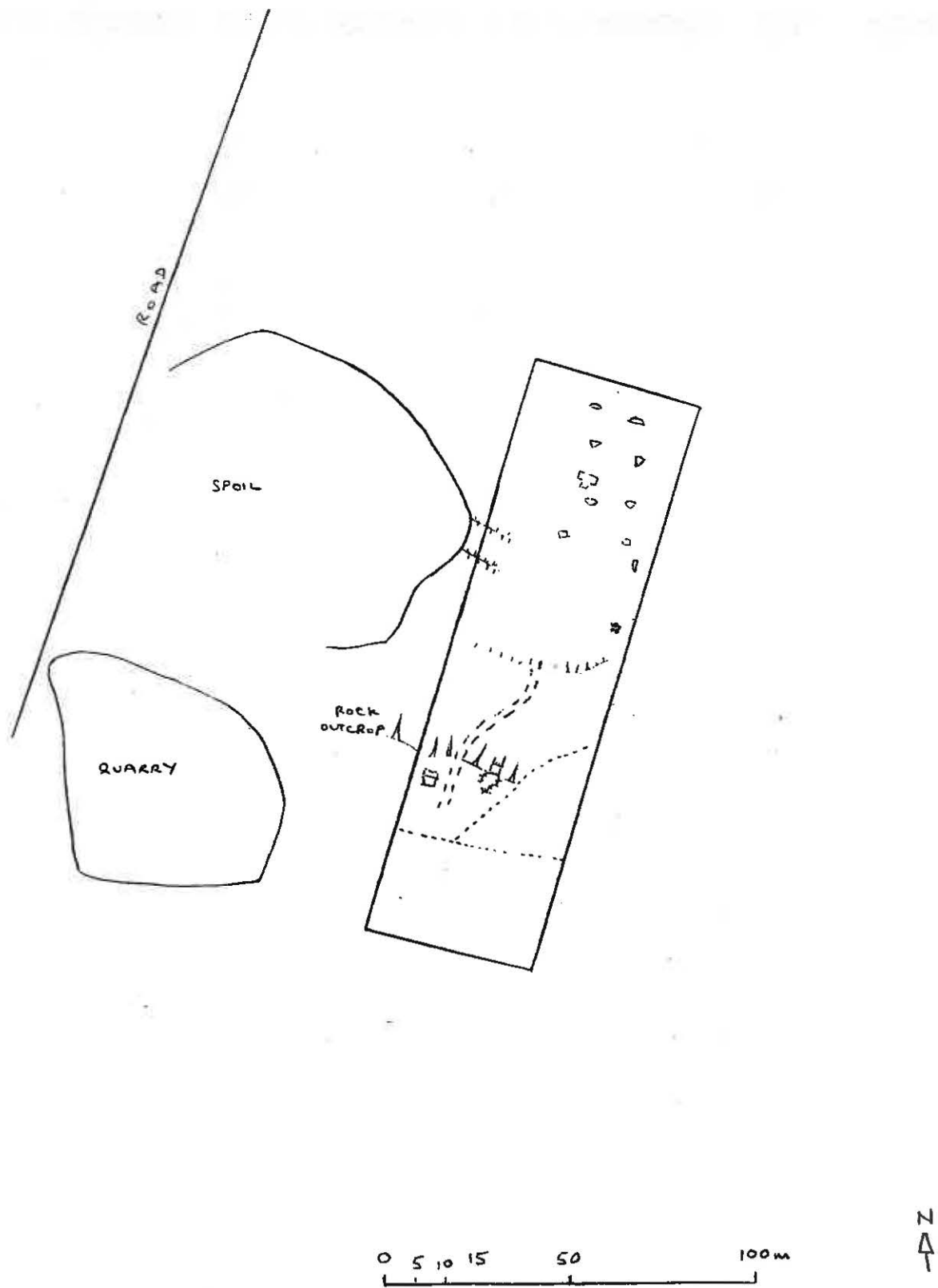


Fig. 5 Sketch plan of features observed in study area during walkover