Northern Archaeological Associates

TEESSIDE TO SALTEND ETHYLENE PIPELINE

SITE 716

ACASTER HILL, HUSTHWAITE

NORTH YORKSHIRE

EXCAVATION REPORT

prepared for

AC ARCHAEOLOGY

on behalf of

BP TSEP PROJECT

NAA 00/78

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TEESSIDE TO SALTEND ETHYLENE PIPELINE

TSEP SITE 716: ACASTER HILL, HUSTHWAITE, NORTH YORKSHIRE

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT

Summary

This report presents the results of archaeological excavation undertaken at Acaster Hill, near Husthwaite North Yorkshire (SE 517 729) on the route of the BP Teesside to Saltend Ethylene Pipeline (TSEP).

Excavation identified the remains of previously unknown late Iron Age occupation comprising a single large roundhouse, measuring approximately 16m in diameter, together with associated postholes and pits. A range of finds were recovered from excavated features, including handmade pottery, animal bone, charred cereal grain and burnt stone.

Despite the excavation of a number of late Iron Age sites within the Vale of York in recent years, including Sike Spa, Crayke (TSEP Site 718), Skeugh Farm, Stillington (TSEP Sites 719/720), Naburn near York and Crankley Lane, Easingwold, there remains a low number of comparative sites to Acaster Hill.

There is no direct evidence suggesting the site was occupied into the Romano-British period. This situation is paralleled by the excavations at Stillington, Naburn and Easingwold, where either lack of imported pottery or deliberate destruction of roundhouses suggests settlement abandonment by the late 1st century AD, when the appearance of imported, wheel-thrown pottery from the nearby Roman fortress of York could be expected. However, the possibility exists that despite being within the hinterland of York, the site at Acaster Hill remained too isolated or poor to adopt Roman imported pottery in the late 1st century AD and so continued to be occupied - although archaeologically invisible - for some time into the Romano-British period.

Examples of isolated roundhouses have been excavated at Stillington and at Naburn. While these may form parallels with the structure at Acaster Hill, the proximity of cropmark enclosures to the building may indicate that it was part of a larger settlement which lies outside the pipeline corridor.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

A programme of excavation, covering approximately 400m^2, was carried out on the site of previously unknown Iron Age occupation (Site 716) at Acaster Hill, 2km south of the village of Husthwaite, North Yorkshire (SE 517 729) on the route of the BP Teesside to Saltend Ethylene Pipeline (TSEP) (Figure 1). The excavations were carried out during April and May 2000. This excavation report has been prepared by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) at the request of AC Archaeology on behalf of BP.

The presence of possible archaeological remains was identified during routine archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping along the pipeline corridor by BP's archaeological inspectors, AC Archaeology. As a result, a more extensive programme of excavation was proposed in order to mitigate the impact of the development (NAA 2000a).

The archaeological features show clear evidence of truncation with no survival of contemporary surfaces. Artefact preservation of ceramics is of a high quality, though animal bone is in only moderate condition. The remains were observed generally 0.3m below existing ground level and were visible cut into subsurface deposits.

2.0 LOCATION

The site is located at SE 517 729, approximately 500m south of Acaster Hill Farm and 2km south of the village of Husthwaite, which lies in the northern Vale of York approximately 5km north-west of Easingwold, North Yorkshire (Figures 1 and 2).

The area of investigation lay at a height of 45m OD on a gentle south-facing slope near the base of Acaster Hill and approximately 150m north of Raper Lane. In this area the pipeline route ran through arable fields. The drift deposits of lacustrine clays, silts and sands are overlain by soils of the Dunkeswick series (Jarvis *et al* 1984, 165-8).

3.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Previously recorded archaeological remains in the vicinity of the site include the discovery of two querns of unknown date at Acaster Hill Farm (NYCC Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)). Aerial photographic information held by North Yorkshire County Council record undated enclosures immediately north of the excavated area at SE 519 730 (PVA79:04:05/08) and west of Acaster Hill Farm at SE 5172 7324 (SMR map reference SE57SW). The name Acaster derives from Old English *cæster*, 'city' or 'old fortifications' (Smith 1956, 85) and it is likely that it refers to one or both of these enclosures, presuming they were still visible in the early medieval period.

There have been relatively few excavations of lowland Iron Age sites using modern archaeological techniques in the Vale of York. However, sites of predominantly Iron Age date have in recent years been excavated on Sites 719 and 720 at Skeugh Farm, Stillington (SE 599 678) during construction of the TSEP pipeline and at Crankley Lane to the south of Easingwold (SE 523 682) during construction of A19 Easingwold bypass. A late Iron Age phase has also been identified on TSEP Site 718 at Sike Spa, Crayke (SE 556 702). At a greater distance, late Iron Age sites have been found on TSEP Site 713 at Manor Cottage, East Rounton (NZ 436 043) and at Naburn to the south of York (SE 613 472)

At Skeugh Farm, Stillington, which is situated about 11km south-east of Acaster Hill, two sites were excavated (NAA 2000d). The main site comprised five roundhouses measuring 7m to 8.5m in diameter with associated ditches and postholes (Site 720) as well as a single roundhouse 8.2m in diameter (Site 719) recorded approximately 85m to the north-west of the main site. Excavation in the early 1990s at Crankley Lane, Easingwold some 5km south of Acaster Hill revealed an extensive settlement, including more than five roundhouses of varying sizes (Whyman *et al* 1994, 30). At Manor Cottage, East Rounton, which lies at the very northern end of the Vale of York roughly 32km north-west of Acaster Hill, five roundhouses of 8m to 15m diameter with associated ditches and postholes were excavated (NAA 2000b). The settlement at Naburn, which lies 29km south of the present investigation and which was excavated in the 1980s, comprised a number of isolated roundhouses 5m to 15m in diameter within an extensive field system (Jones 1988, 164-88). Occupation at each of these sites was dated to the end of the Iron Age, roughly the 4th or 3rd centuries BC to the 1st century AD, although agricultural activity continued at East Rounton and Naburn for some time into the Romano-British period. At Sike Spa, Crayke, about 6km south-east of Acaster Hill, five possible roundhouses, of 6m to 14m diameter and of at least two phases were replaced by a large (8m wide by more than 13m long) rectangular, cobble-founded building of Roman style in the 2nd century AD (NAA 2000c). Occupation at Sike Spa continued until the late 4th century.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Excavation

A methods statement for the archaeological excavation of Acaster Hill, Husthwaite (Site 716) was produced by NAA in April 2000 (NAA 2000) and approved by North Yorkshire County Council. The works were carried out by NAA at the request of AC Archaeology on behalf of BP. Excavation took place between 18 April and 5 May 2000, although due to adverse weather conditions fieldwork was suspended from 25 April until 2 May.

The area of investigation extended for a distance of approximately 20m along the route of the pipeline corridor. The full extent of the area was re-cleaned manually. All features were hand excavated and then individually drawn, recorded and photographed using the NAA recording system (a derivation of the MoLAS system).

The site code was AHH00. The ring gully was 50% excavated, and a 50% sample was excavated of all discrete features. Each excavated portion of the ring gully was assigned its own cut and fill numbers to spatially differentiate artefacts and environmental material. The site grid and the extent of the excavation were accurately surveyed using an EDM total station and tied into the Ordnance Survey grid. Levels were tied into Ordnance Datum. Bulk palaeoenvironmental samples were taken from all features which appeared suitable for sampling upon excavation.

4.2 Post-excavation

On completion of the excavation, an assessment of the site records and finds was undertaken in accordance with English Heritage (1991) guidelines. This included collation of all site records and production of context and finds catalogues onto a computerised database (Appendix A). Catalogues of slide and print photographs, and of illustration records, have also been produced in computerised database form.

All artefactual remains have been cleaned, identified, marked and forwarded to the relevant specialists. Of the nine palaeoenvironmental soil samples recovered from the excavation, three were sent for specialist assessment. The specialist assessment reports of the material recovered are included as appendices. Where further analysis was recommended this was subsequently undertaken and included in the report. This further work was limited to the pottery assemblage (Appendix B).

5.0 EXCAVATION RESULTS

Excavations at Acaster Hill have identified an occupation site of late Iron Age date. The site comprised a single roundhouse with associated postholes and pits, with no survival of contemporary surfaces (Figure 2). This is due to the truncation of the site by later agricultural practices. Truncation of features was notably worse towards the south-west portion of the excavation (see below). Two field drains also ran across the site area on an approximately east to west alignment, and cut across both terminals of the roundhouse gully.

5.1 Structural

The principal site component was the ring gully (50) of the roundhouse, which measured 15.7m in diameter internally (Figure 3, Plates 1 and 2). The gully itself was found to have been heavily truncated in its south-east quadrant. While the gully survived approximately 0.5m in width and 0.3m in depth at the northern terminus of the ring gully (segment 24), part of the south-western portion had been completely truncated and could not be identified. Elsewhere within the south-east portion the gully survived to a depth of only 0.04m. The gully displayed a slightly variable profile, having straight or slightly concave sides, with a generally flat base (Figure 4). The entrance through the ring-gully was clearly visible, 3.6m wide and facing east. Finds of handmade pottery and animal bone were distributed throughout the gully, but were concentrated at the gully terminals (Appendix A). Two small fragments of tile recovered from the northern gully terminal (24) are probably

intrusive as the gully is cut by a field drain (55) (Appendix C). Analysis of palaeoenvironmental soil samples revealed the charred remains of cereal grains, hazelnut and sloe fragments representative of domestic food waste, and a small amount of spelt chaff indicating cereal processing nearby (Appendix E).

A total of six postholes or possible post pits (2, 3, 6, 17, 21 and 52) and two possible rubbish pits (12 and 33) were identified within the area of the ring gully. The postholes do not however form a recognisable pattern which might indicate the internal arrangement of the building. The postholes and the pits themselves displayed a considerable variety of sizes and forms (Figures 3 and 4). Posthole 2, which measured 0.55m by 0.35m and survived to a depth of 0.15m, contained a single packing stone and the postpipe of a rectangular post (10) set against its north-eastern edge (Figure 4, Section E). A potential post pit (17), sub-rectangular in shape and measuring 0.85m by 0.8m and 0.25m deep showed signs of the removal of a plank or rectangular post (15) from its western side (Figure 4, Section F). The upper fill (13) of a probable non-structural pit (12) contained a substantial number of heat-shattered stones, suggesting the heating of water (Figure 4, Section G).

5.2 Artefactual

The pottery types are paralleled with those found in the Vale of York and Tees Valley (Appendix B). Three distinct vessel fabrics were represented. Two have similarities with fabric types noted from excavated pre-Roman Iron Age sites in the Tees Valley area. The third and most common, with quartz grits, may be more usually found in and around the Vale of York. The assemblage belongs to the pre-Roman Iron Age, extending perhaps through the 4th and 3rd centuries BC onwards. It was not possible to identify the two fragments of ceramic building material recovered, their fabric suggesting a date range from the Romano-British to the late medieval period (Appendix C). Two samples of slaggy material were recovered from the excavations (Appendix D).

The small assemblage of animal bone contains common domesticated species in notably low numbers (Appendix E). Nine contexts contained bone, with cattle bones present in five contexts, sheep in three, pig in one and horse in one. Four contexts produced only unidentifiable fragments and burnt bone was present in four contexts.

Analysis of palaeoenvironmental samples produced a range of charred material, although overall preservation is not good and identification of cereal species was limited (Appendix F). All of the contexts contained large proportions of charcoal, while two, contexts 23 and 39, also contained a small number of charred cereal grain, chaff and species used for domestic consumption including sloe and hazelnut.

6.0 DISCUSSION

Excavation at Acaster Hill, Husthwaite has identified a single, large roundhouse associated with a small assemblage of pottery of late Iron Age type.

With an internal diameter of nearly 16m, the roundhouse gully at Acaster Hill was large in comparison with most other recently excavated examples, which were mainly 6m to 10m in size, although parallels do exist. Three buildings excavated at Naburn near York were 15m in diameter. One of the structures comprised two concentric ring gullies, while the other two each consisted of a single gully (Jones 1988). Of the five roundhouses identified at East Rounton, one measured 14.7m diameter and comprised a single gully, while a second measured 12.4m in size, with two concentric gullies (NAA 2000b). In the Iron Age phase at Sike Spa, Crayke a possible ring gully of 12m-14m diameter was identified (NAA 2000c). With the truncation of features and loss of any contemporary surfaces at Acaster Hill, it is not possible to discern any special function for the roundhouse here. The lack of any coherent pattern to internal post settings makes reconstruction of the building difficult. Structures where two concentric gullies have been found are generally interpreted as comprising an outer eaves-drip channel for drainage with an inner wall foundation trench. The presence of only a single ring gully at Acaster Hill would imply that it represents an external drainage feature. The relatively low degree of truncation in the northern part of excavation makes the complete loss of a second, shallow ring gully unlikely and it may suggest the at least partial use of sill beams which would leave little or no subsoil disturbance (Megaw and Simpson 1984, 379-81).

Examples of relatively isolated roundhouses have been excavated at Skeugh Farm, Stillington (TSEP Sites 719 and 720) and at Naburn. At Stillington, the isolated roundhouse (Site 719) lay about 85m away from a larger (and possibly contemporary) enclosed settlement (Site 720). Excavation at Naburn revealed several possibly contemporary roundhouses, each within its separate enclosure. These may provide parallels for the apparently isolated roundhouse at Acaster Hill. The presence of possible enclosures seen as cropmarks immediately north of the site may indicate, however, that this roundhouse was part of a larger settlement lying mainly outside the excavated area.

The roundhouse at Acaster Hill is dated by pottery to the late Iron Age, roughly between the 4th or 3rd centuries BC and the 1st century AD. There is no direct evidence that the site was occupied beyond the late 1st century AD, when the appearance of imported, wheel-thrown pottery from the nearby Roman fortress of York could be expected. This lack of Roman pottery is directly paralleled at the larger sites at Stillington and Easingwold, and also paralleled at Naburn where roundhouses are demolished at the beginning of the Roman period while the surrounding field system is adapted and continues (Jones 1988, 168). The lack of evidence for Romano-British occupation contrasts with Crayke, where not only does occupation continue until the late Roman period, but the site adopts high status stone buildings of overtly Roman type. Handmade pottery of the Iron Age tradition did however continue to be made and used in quantity well into the 2nd century AD in the Vale of York (NAA 2000c). While Acaster Hill lies within the hinterland of York, the relative chronology of Iron Age pottery types and the notable paucity of the animal bone assemblage in comparison with other sites raises the possibility that Acaster Hill remained too isolated or poor to adopt imported pottery in the late 1st

century AD, and so could have remained occupied - although archaeologically invisible - for some time into the Romano-British period.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

Excavation at Acaster Hill has revealed the remains of previously unknown late Iron Age occupation, comprising a single large roundhouse measuring approximately 16m in diameter, together with associated postholes and pits. A range of finds were recovered from excavated features, including handmade pottery, animal bone and burnt stone.

The excavated structure shows some variation to other known examples. At 16m in diameter, it is large compared with roundhouses elsewhere. Its use of a single ring gully is paralleled on other sites and implies a drainage gully, although a more detailed reconstruction of the building remains uncertain.

Due to the constraints of the pipeline corridor on the limits of the area of excavation the question of the roundhouse's isolation remains unresolved. While single structures have been found elsewhere within the Vale of York, cropmark evidence around Acaster Hill suggests that the building may have been part of a more extensive settlement which extended beyond the area of investigation.

All pottery recovered from the structure was of the late Iron Age tradition. While a lack of Roman imports may imply abandonment of the structure before the late 1st century AD, it may equally suggest an isolated or low status settlement of early Romano-British date.

Despite the excavation of a number of late Iron Age and Romano-British settlements in recent years, there remain few comparable sites to Acaster Hill. The rarity of sites of this type makes this excavation of particular value in understanding the potential nature and range of occupation within the York hinterland at the Iron Age to Romano-British transition.

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Appendix A

CONTEXTS AND FINDS CATALOGUE

Context	Description	Animal bone	CBM	Pottery	Sample	Slag	Stone
1	layer (ploughsoil)						
2	posthole cut						
3	posthole cut						
4	fill of pit 17	8			1		
5	fill of posthole 6						
6	posthole cut						
7	fill of post pipe 8				1		
8	post pipe cut						
9	fill of post pipe 10						
10	post pipe cut						
11	posthole cut						
12	pit cut						
13	fill of pit 12				1		
14	fill of pit 12						
15	fill of pit 12						
16	fill of pit 12						
17	pit cut						
18	fill of posthole 2				1		
19	fill of posthole 11						
20	fill of post pipe 11						
21	pit cut						
22	fill of pit 21						
23	fill of roundhouse gully 24	53	2	11	3	1	1
24	roundhouse gully cut						
25	fill of posthole 3						
26	fill of roundhouse gully 27	11			1		
27	roundhouse gully cut						
28	fill of roundhouse gully 29	20				1	
29	roundhouse gully cut						
30	fill of roundhouse gully 31	4		2			
31	roundhouse gully cut						
32	fill of posthole 33			1			
33	posthole cut						
34	fill of roundhouse gully 35			3			
35	roundhouse gully cut						
36	fill of roundhouse gully 37	3					
37	roundhouse gully cut						
38	fill of roundhouse gully 39	8		1	1		
39	roundhouse gully cut						
40	fill of roundhouse gully 41						
41	roundhouse gully cut						
42	fill of roundhouse gully 43						
43	roundhouse gully cut						
44	fill of roundhouse gully 45	3					2

Context	Description	Animal bone	CBM	Pottery	Sample	Slag	Stone
45	roundhouse gully cut						
46	fill of roundhouse gully 47	7		9	1		
47	roundhouse gully cut						
48	fill of pit 49						
49	pit cut						
50	roundhouse gully						
51	fill of posthole 52						
52	posthole cut						
53	fill of pit 33						
54	field drain 55						
55	field drain cut						
56	field drain 57						
57	field drain cut						

Appendix B

POTTERY

Blaise Vyner

1.0 Introduction

This small assemblage comprises three distinct ceramic fabric types which appear to be of mid to pre-Roman Iron Age date. The material appears to represent evidence for domestic occupation, with the suggestion of ritual use for one vessel, but no indication of industrial activity.

2.0 Treatment

In the fabric descriptions provided hyphenated colours indicate the variation in colour expected from poorly controlled firing conditions, the first colour being that most in evidence. Grit sizes are expressed as small (<3mm), medium (3-6mm) and large (6-9mm). Distinctive particles smaller than 0.02mm are described as dust. As a general guide, grit quantities have been described in relation to the estimated average number of pieces visible per 100mm square: occasional (1), few (2), many (3 to 4) and numerous (5 or more). Sherd weights have been rounded to the nearest 5g. No thin section analysis has been done and identification was undertaken using a 100x microscope. Quantification excludes fragments with a total surface area of less than around 100^2 mm.

3.0 Ceramic range and chronology

The assemblage appears to belong to the pre-Roman Iron Age, perhaps from the 4th century BC onwards. Although the absence of associated Romano-British material suggests that the site may have gone out of use by the time that Romano-British ceramics became available, the well known ceramic conservatism of the Brigantes is enough to prompt caution in accepting this chronology on ceramic grounds alone.

The assemblage comprises a small quantity of sherds which all derive from medium sized jars, that is, vessels probably no more than 250mm high. The two rims present are in the short everted style which is widely distributed across North Yorkshire (Evans 1995, fig. 5.6 and 5.7). The minimum number of vessels present is five.

Three vessel fabrics are represented, two of which have similarities with fabric types noted in the Tees Valley area, while the third may be more usually found in the Vale of York.

Fabric 1

Represented by two sherds. Sandy fabric, brown-orange surfaces and fabric, with frequent medium to large sedimentary quartzitic grits, occasional feldspar sands are present, together with quartz dust in the clay matrix. Wall thickness over 10 mm. Minimum number of vessels present: 1.

This fabric is similar to Fabric 1 from Stillington (Vyner 2000b); quartz appears to have been a favoured tempering grit in the mid-Vale of York area.

Fabric 2
Represented by five sherds. Smooth finished vessels, surfaces and fabric dark grey - one sherd has oxidised buff interior surface - with numerous mixed angular quartz grits, and numerous small to medium sized cavities from which calcitic grits have leached. Typical wall thickness 9mm. Fragments of two rims are present, both from jars with short everted rims. Minimum number of vessels present: 2.

Calcite gritted pottery is much less commonly found in the relatively well investigated area of the lower Tees Valley, with only just over 1% of the Thorpe Thewles assemblage with grits of this nature (Swain 1987, 63). Nor is this tempering present in the relatively large assemblage from Rounton, in the Vale of Mowbray (Vyner 2000a). Pottery with leached calcitic grits is present, however, in the assemblage excavated from an Iron Age settlement at Easingwold (Vyner 1993), while it is also a feature of Iron Age pottery assemblages from sites around the Vale of Pickering (Evans 1995, 49).

Fabric 3
Represented by 11 sherds, this is the dominant fabric in the assemblage. Interior surface: brownish-grey; exterior surface: greyish-brown. Sandy dark grey fabric with numerous small milky quartz sands, feldspar grits, occasional medium sized angular quartz and sedimentary quartz grits, quartz dust in the clay matrix. Wall thickness varying between 8 and 13mm. Minimum number of vessels present: 2. This fabric is not common in the Tees Valley. A similar fabric, Fabric 4, is present at Stillington (Vyner 2000b).

Table B1

Context	Fabric 1	Fabric 2	Fabric 3	indeterminate
23	10	30	20	
30		5		
32		5		
34			<5	
38				<5
46			100	
Total	*10 g*	*40 g*	*125 g*	*5 g*

4.0 Accretions

Carbonised accretions have been noted on one body sherd, with a piece of bone adhering to another. Both sherds were recovered from context 23, small finds numbers have not been given to the specific sherds. Given the apparent intermixing of human bone with domestic debris seen on some Iron Age settlement sites, the bone may be worth analysis.

Jar sherd, Fabric 3, with carbonised accretions on exterior
Jar sherd, Fabric 3, with bone adhering to the interior

5.0 Illustration

Two rim sherds have been illustrated (Figure 5). One sherd from context 23 and the other sherd from context 30.

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Appendix C

CERAMIC BUILDING MATERIALS

John Tibbles

1.0 Introduction

A total of two fragments of ceramic building material weighing 11g was retrieved from a single context and was visibly examined using a 10x-magnification lens. Information regarding the dimensions, shape and fabric of the material was recorded and catalogued accordingly. It should be noted that the diversity of size and colour within brick and tile caused during the manufacturing process must be taken into consideration when comparing examples within collected assemblages and local typologies. The varying sizes and colours can be attributed to the variation in the clays used, shrinkage during drying, firing within the kiln or clamp and the location of the brick/tile within the kiln. The dating of brick and tile can be highly contentious due to its re-usable nature and therefore any date range given is that of known dates where such material has been recorded.

2.0 Catalogue

The catalogue has been compiled from the examined ceramic building material assemblage. A Munsell colour code has been incorporated where appropriate to help define the fabrics.

Context 23 *2 fragments* *11g*

Two fragments of unidentifiable non-diagnostic ceramic building material manufactured in a hard red (10R/5/6) oxidised fabric and a softer reddish yellow (5YR/6/8) fabric with occasional red inclusions < 4mm. The fragments are slightly abraded.

3.0 Discussion

The exceptionally small assemblage and fragment size has created difficulties in accurate identification and therefore it has not been possible to compare with other typologies for classification.

The individual fabrics identified are consistent with Romano-British material yet is also consistent with medieval building material. Therefore the date range suggested of Romano-British to the late medieval period for the assemblage has been based upon fabrics alone. Its presence within its context may be the result of intrusion from subsequent ploughing.

4.0 Recommendations

The retention of all the assemblage would contribute little towards further understanding and interpretation of the site and therefore should be discarded.

Appendix D

SLAG MATERIAL

Phil Clogg

(Archaeo-Analytic, Dept of Archaeology, University of Durham)

1.0 Introduction

Two samples of slaggy material were recovered from excavations at Acaster Hill, Husthwaite.

2.0 Discussion

The iron rich stone/soil concretion recovered from deposit 23 appears to be natural in origin. In addition a sample of cinder was recovered from deposit 28. The cinder is undiagnostic and may have been formed by any burning episode.

Appendix E

FAUNAL ASSESSMENT

L Gidney

(Archaeological Services, University of Durham)

1.0 Summary

Part of an Iron Age or early Romano-British settlement site has been revealed by excavations undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates, at Acaster Hill, Husthwaite, North Yorkshire. The site exhibited a single roundhouse gully, within the vicinity of which were several pit or post hole features. The chronology of the site is significant in that it represents a period of socio-economic and agricultural transition (Huntley and Stallibrass 1995). Environmental assessment of samples from Acaster Hill may therefore help to place the site within the context of this transitional period.

A small group of animal bones was also recovered from a variety of contexts, on which further analysis is not recommended.

2.0 Methods statement

A basic suite of information on the presence of identifiable fragments of the three common domesticates, together with the potential for information on the age structure of the cull population from tooth wear and epiphysial fusion was recorded. The presence of other species was noted and comments made on any aspect of interest.

3.0 Results

The results are presented in Table E1. The excavations produced small numbers of animal bones in moderate condition. Nine contexts contained bone with cattle bones present in five contexts, sheep in three, pig in one and horse in one. Four contexts produced only unidentifiable fragments and burnt bone was present in four contexts.

4.0 Conclusions

While this assemblage cannot provide much further information, and further analysis is not recommended, the excavator may wish to consider whether the poverty of this group is purely a result of smaller scale excavation and adverse burial conditions or whether it is a reflection of the status of the occupants in comparison with the sites of comparable type along the pipeline.

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Table E1: Faunal data

F = Fused bone present U = Unfused bone present Z = Bones with zones present J = Lower jaw present T = Teeth present M = Measurable bone present LAR = Large ungulate SAR = Small ungulate Preservation: E = Excellent G = Good A = Average P = Poor M = Mixed

Context	Cattle & LAR	Sheep/Goat SAR	Pig	Other species	Pres	Comments
4	ZF	ZF		horse	A	& burnt
23	ZFT	ZT			P	& burnt
26	ZFT				P	
28	T	ZF	T		A	
30				indet	P	
36				indet	P	& burnt
38				indet	P	
44				indet	P	
46	ZU				A	& burnt

Appendix F

MACROFOSSIL ANALYSIS

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1.0 Summary

Part of an Iron Age or early Romano-British settlement site has been revealed by excavations undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates, at Acaster Hill, Husthwaite, North Yorkshire. The site exhibited a single roundhouse gully, within the vicinity of which were several pit or post hole features. The chronology of the site is significant in that it represents a period of socio-economic and agricultural transition (Huntley and Stallibrass 1995). Environmental assessment of samples from Acaster Hill may therefore help to place the site within the context of this transitional period.

Three samples from the site were taken for environmental evaluation, the assessment of which will determine the quality of plant macrofossil preservation, while identification of remains will indicate the potential environmental and socio-economic data that each context can produce.

Context 13 was extracted from a secondary ditch fill, which produced a small charcoal dominated flot with no charred remains, indicating that the context was not the site of waste dumping or crop storage or processing.

The roundhouse gully fills, contexts 23 and 39, contained charred remains, including wheat and barley grains, chaff, hazel nut and sloe fragments, all of which reflect the waste of domestic food stuffs. The chaff, although in low quantities, may be the result of cereal processing. The quantities of both chaff and grain are too low to infer crop husbandry or agricultural practices. The crop species found are common to both Iron Age and Romano-British settlements and cannot help to place the site within a more specific chronological context.

The absence of significant numbers of charred remains reduces the potential of the contexts to produce environmental or agricultural data. Full analysis or further evaluation is not recommended for any contexts.

2.0 Methods statement

Three samples from the site were taken from pit fills and gully fills for environmental evaluation.

The samples were manually floated and sieved through a 500μ mesh. The residue was retained and the contents described. The flots were dried slowly, then scanned at x40 magnification for waterlogged and charred botanical remains. The remains were identified via comparison with modern reference material held by Archaeological Services, University of Durham. The abundance of each waterlogged species was noted and total counts of charred species were logged.

3.0 Results

The context samples produced moderate sized flots containing large proportions of charcoal. Two of the flots, from contexts 23 and 39, contained charred cereal grain as well as nut and seed fragments while only context 39 had mammal bone remains in the residue. All of the results are detailed within Table F1.

4.0 Discussion

Context 13 was extracted from a secondary ditch fill which produced a relatively small sized flot which was dominated by charcoal, although no charred remains were present and only a low number of small bone fragments. The flot contents indicate that the context was not the site of waste dumping or proximal to crop storage or processing. The flot also suggests that conditions over time were not suitable for the preservation of botanical remains, as only a single seed was present.

The roundhouse gully fill, context 23, had a charcoal dominated flot, and also contained charred remains, including wheat grains, chaff, hazel nut and sloe fragments, all of which reflect the waste of domestic food stuffs. The spelt chaff indicates cereal processing, although the quantities of chaff are far lower than found at other Iron Age and Romano-British sites in North Yorkshire (eg Van der Veen 1992; Huntley 1994). The quantities of chaff therefore are too low to infer the flot contents as waste from a producer site. Furthermore, the large proportion of degraded cereal grain in the context imply either poor preservation conditions or grain degradation prior to burial.

Context 39, the fill of a roundhouse gully cut, contained a moderate amount of charcoal, with mammal bone fragments present in the residue. Of the charred botanical remains in the flots, most were too degraded to identify indicating, as with context 23, that the remains had been subjected to poor preservation conditions or degradation prior to burial. The presence of hulled barley is common in both Iron Age and Romano-British settings.

5.0 Conclusions

All of the contexts contained large proportions of charcoal, while two, contexts 23 and 39, also contained a small number of charred cereal grain, chaff and species used for domestic consumption including sloe and hazelnut. Although the presence of cereal grain and chaff infer crop drying, storage and processing, the quantities found are too insignificant to enable secure interpretation. Moreover, the crop species found are common to both Iron Age and Romano-British settlements, and hence cannot help to place the site within a more specific chronological context.

The absence of significant numbers of charred remains may be the result of the context location, the processes of deposition prior to burial, or post burial preservation conditions, however, the quantities also reduce the potential of the contexts to produce environmental or agricultural data. Full analysis or further evaluation therefore is not recommended for the three contexts.

Table F1: Plant macrofossil results

Context	13AA	23AA	39AA
Volume processed (ml)	10,000	10,000	11,600
Volume of flot (ml)	50	100	75
Volume of flot assessed	50	100	75
Residue contents			
Mammal bone			✓
Mammal bone (burnt)			✓
Flot matrix (relative abundance)			
Charcoal	4	4	3
Coarse sand			1
Mammal bone	1		
Modern roots			1
Silt	2	2	3
Charred remains (total counts)			
Wheat (*Triticum spp*)		2	
Hulled barley			3
Spelt glume base		2	
Sloe		2	
Hazel nut fragments		2	1
Cerealia indeterminate		16	27
Waterlogged remains (relative abundance)			
(a) Orache	1		
(a) Knotgrass		1	

[a-arable] Relative abundance is based on a scale from 1 (lowest) to 5 (highest)

References

Huntley J P (1994) *Bayram Hill, North Yorkshire: BH93. The environmental samples* Durham Environmental Archaeology Report **01/94: 4**

Huntley J P and S M Stallibrass (1995) *Plant and vertebrate remains from archaeological sites in northern England: data reviews and future directions* Durham: Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland

van der Veen M (1992) *Crop husbandry regimes: an archaeobotanical study of farming in northern England 1000 BC - AD 500* Sheffield: J R Collis publications

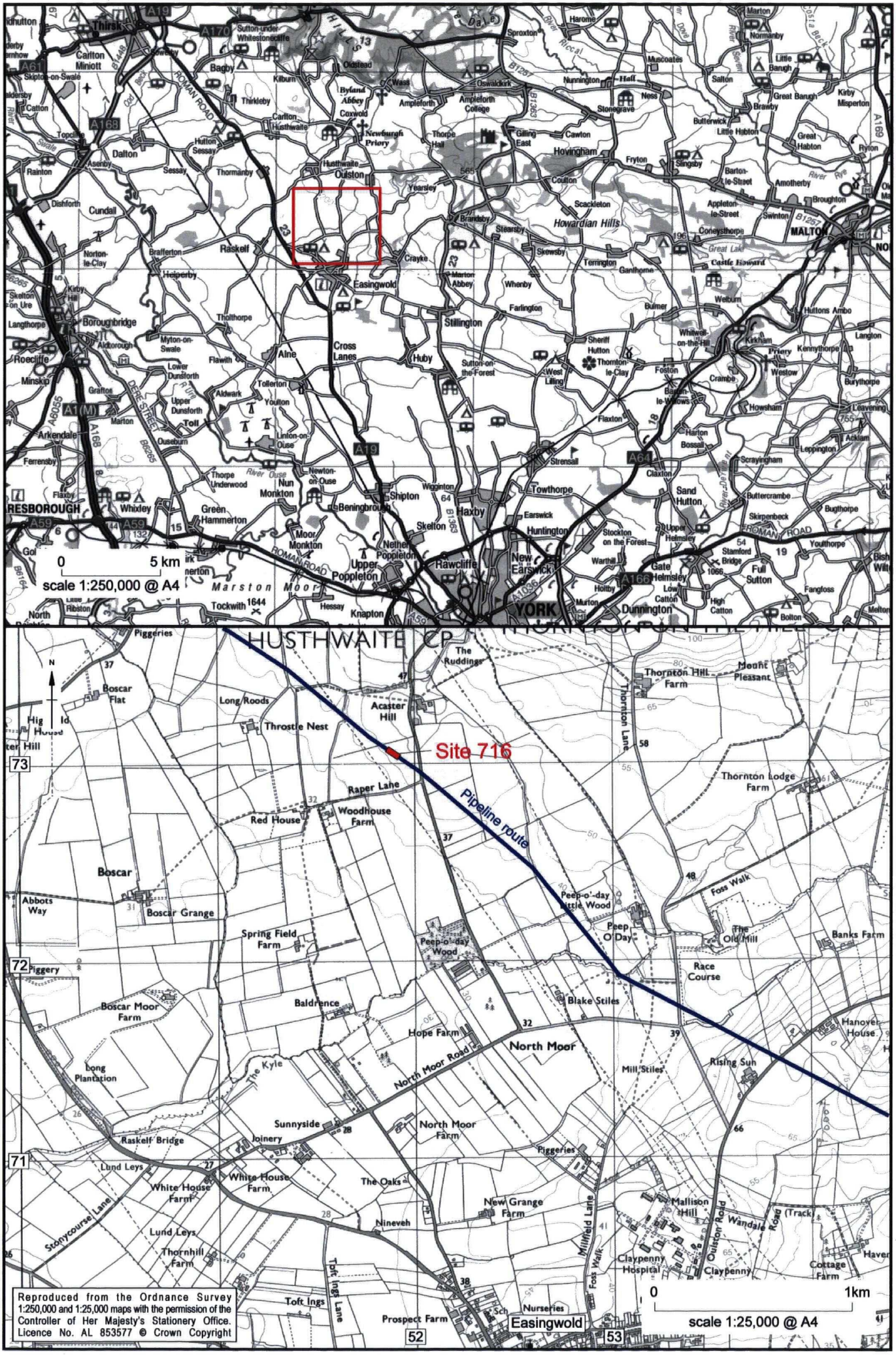


Figure 1 TSEP Site 716 (AHH00): location plan

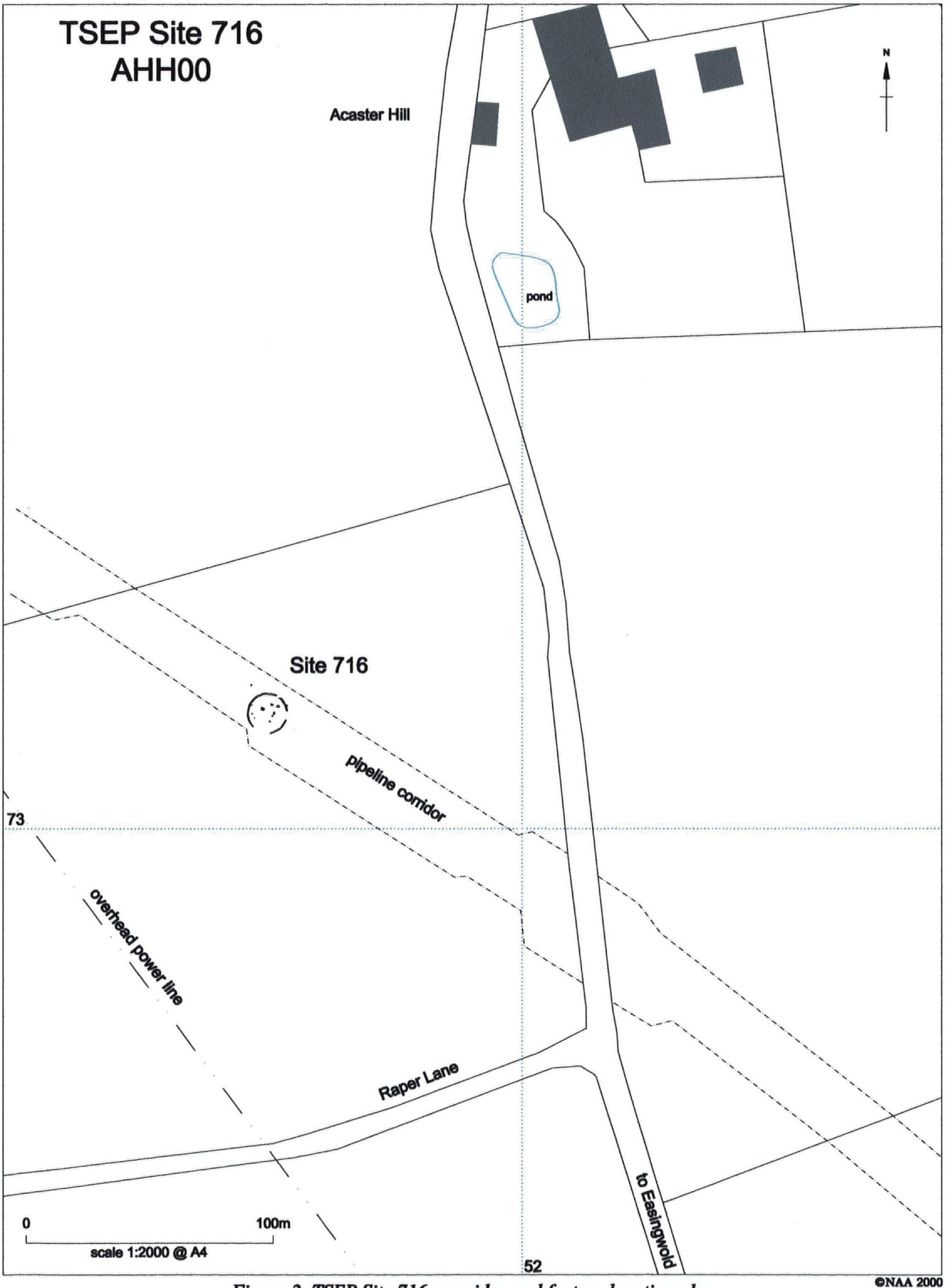


Figure 2 TSEP Site 716: corridor and feature location plan

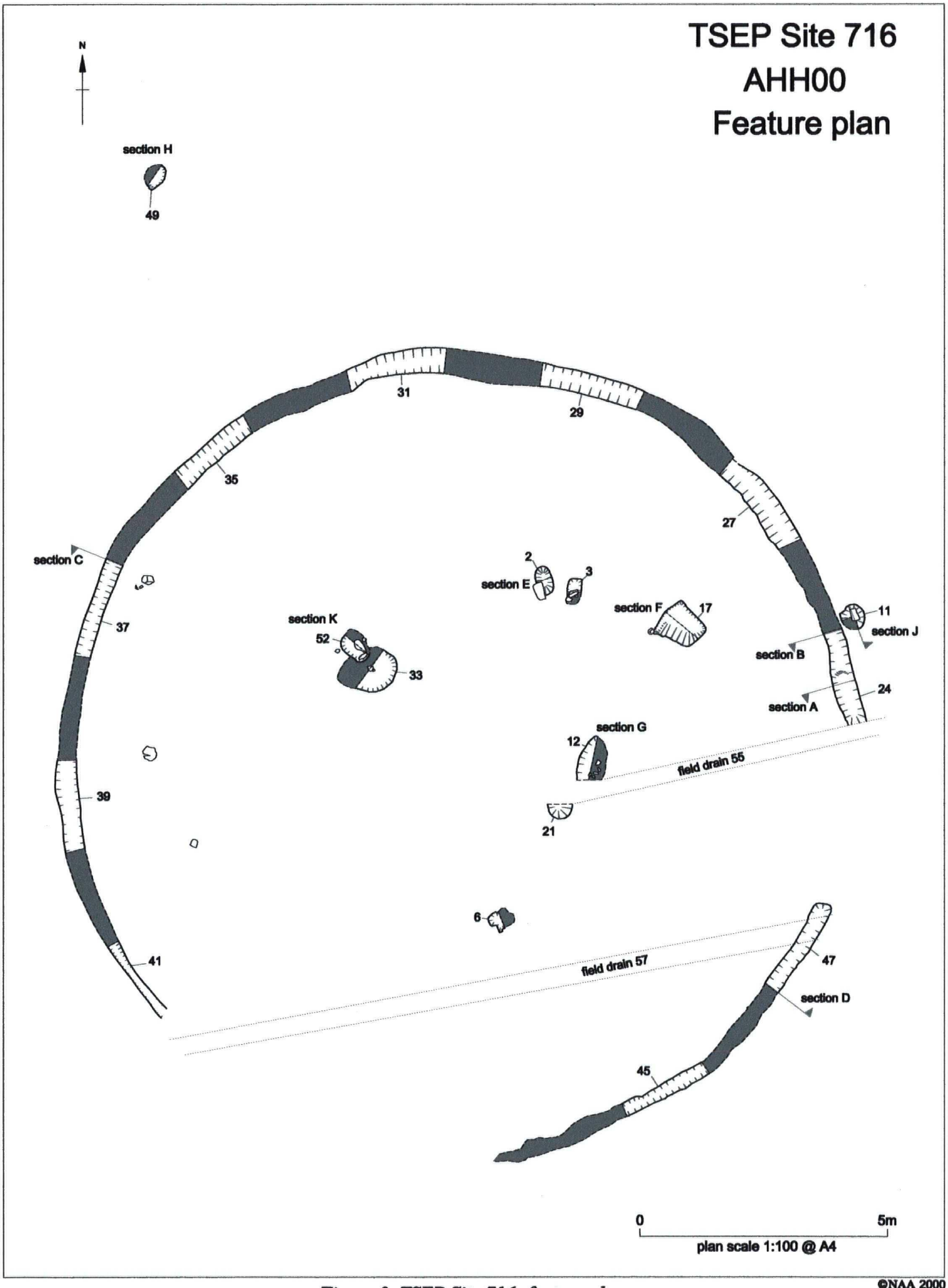


Figure 3 TSEP Site 716: feature plan

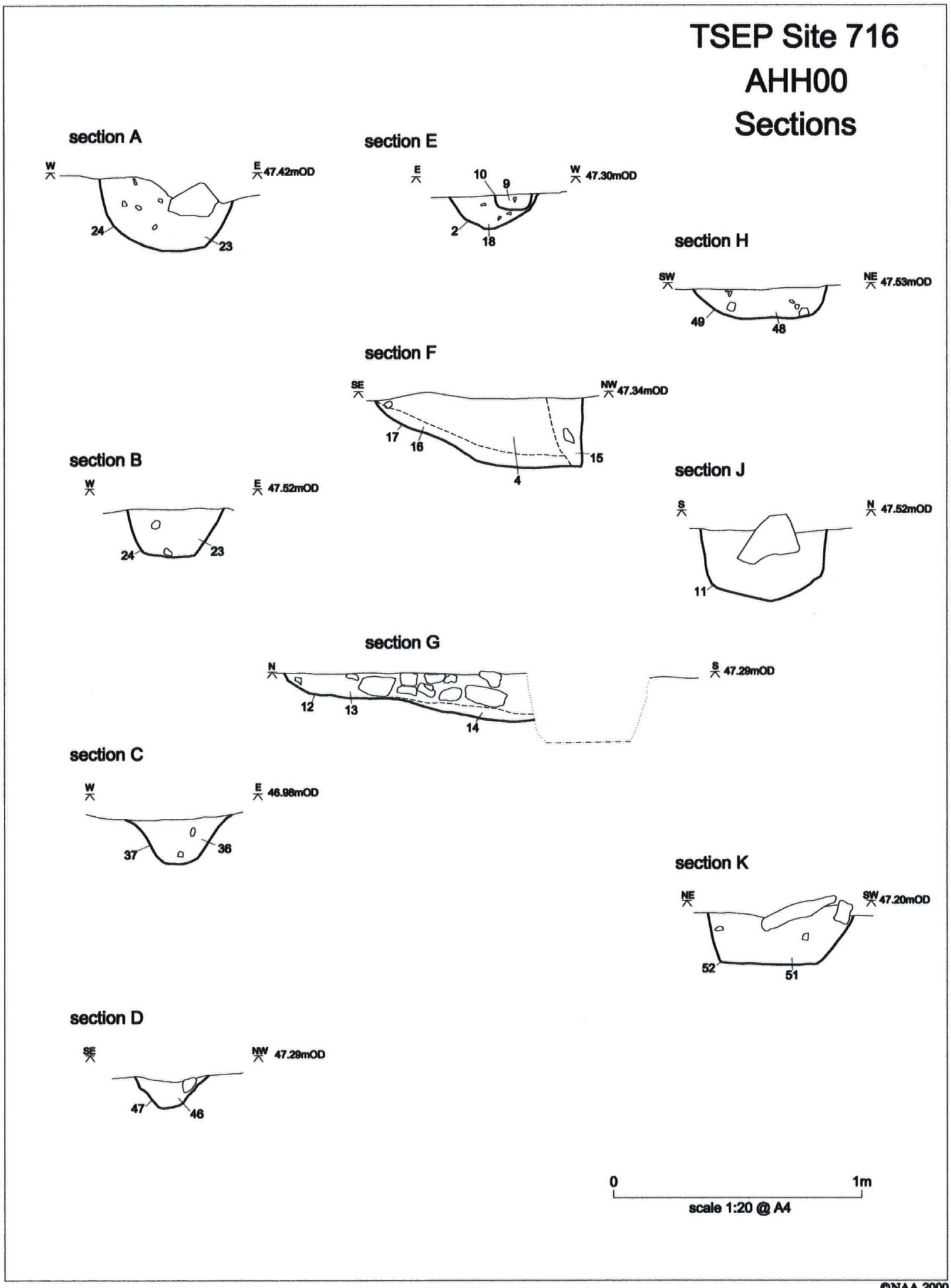
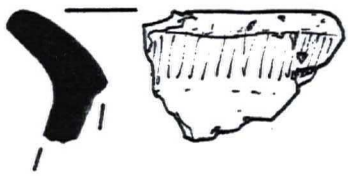


Figure 4 TSEP Site 716: sections

Context 23



Context 30

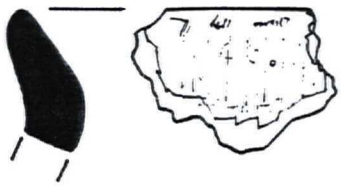


Figure 5 TSEP Site 716 (AHH00): Iron Age jars from Husthwaite, Fabric 2 (scale 1:1)

Plate 1 TSEP Site 716: roundhouse gully facing east

Plate 2 TSEP Site 716: roundhouse gully facing north-west, entrance to right