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WYAS

**Hillcrest Mount  
Castleford  
West Yorkshire**

*Archaeological Watching Brief*

*April 2003*

*Report No. 1101*

C L I E N T

**Cowell Construction Ltd**

# Hillcrest Mount

## Castleford

### West Yorkshire

#### *Archaeological Watching Brief*

##### **Contents**

List of figures and appendices

1. Introduction
  2. Archaeological Background
  3. Method
  4. Results
  5. Artefact Record
  6. Conclusion
- Bibliography  
Acknowledgements  
Figures  
Appendices

##### *Summary*

*An archaeological watching brief, during the excavation of footings for new houses, identified modern garden features and a series of post-holes. One post-hole contained pottery of either a later prehistoric or post Roman date.*

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### ***List of Figures***

- Fig. 1. Site location
- Fig. 2. Location of housing plots
- Fig. 3. Plan of Plot 2
- Fig. 4. Plan of Plot 3
- Fig. 5. Sections, Plot 2

### ***List of Appendices***

- Appendix I. Inventory of primary archive
- Appendix II. Inventory of contexts
- Appendix III. Inventory of artefacts
- Appendix IV. Specification for watching brief

## ***Introduction***

- 1.1 Archaeological Services WYAS were commissioned by Mr I. Cowell of Cowell Construction Ltd. to undertake a watching brief on land at Hillcrest Mount, Castleford prior to the construction of five residential buildings. The site is centred at NGR SE460 248 (Figs 1 and 2)
- 1.2 The geology of the site has been mapped as Lower Magnesian Limestone (British Geological Survey 1978). The fieldwork was carried out between 27 August and 18 September 2002, in order to identify, record and investigate any archaeological features and deposits revealed during the stripping of topsoil prior to the excavation of the building footings.

## ***2. Archaeological Background***

- 2.1 Aerial photographs have identified the presence of a large sub rectangular enclosure (PRN977), located 200m south east of the development area. This appears to have internal divisions, while the presence of ditches may represent an associated field system. The crop marks appear to indicate that some of these ditches extend towards the development area.

## ***3. Method***

- 3.1 The work has been carried out in accordance with the agreed specification for the watching brief issued by WYAS Advisory Service.
- 3.2 The area of the housing plots 2, 3, 4 and 5 was stripped to the natural using a 360 mechanical excavator with a 2.00m ditching bucket under the direct supervision of a qualified archaeologist. Following consultation with WYAS Advisory Service, the area of plot 1 was not monitored because it was located within the footprint of a previous building.
- 3.3 All exposed surfaces were hand inspected for archaeological remains. All features encountered were excavated and the resultant sections were cleaned, drawn and photographed. Recording followed the Archaeological Services WYAS standard method (Boucher 1995).

## ***4. Results***

- 4.1 The stratigraphy uncovered comprised 0.20-0.30m of dark grey brown clay-silt topsoil above 0.10-0.20m of loose mid reddish brown silt-sand subsoil overlying a solid light grey limestone natural.
- 4.2 Plot 2 (Fig. 3) produced two garden features and a series of features that may be post-holes. The post-holes consisted of eight circular or sub circular post-holes and may form a fence line aligned north-south. These post-holes were between 0.35-0.60m in width and 0.15-0.42m in depth. The profile varied from either a broad to narrow U shape (Fig. 5). The fills varied between mid-dark solid orangey brown clay and mid reddish-brown solid sandy silt. The fill of post-holes 002, 014, 016 and 022 contained occasional burnt stones. Seven sherds of pottery were recovered from post-hole 016, but their fabric and date were not clearly determined and may be of later prehistoric or post-Roman in date (Section 5). A ninth post-hole, 026, that was only partially exposed may

also be associated with this fence line as it contained a similar fill and was of similar form, and may indicate a continuation of the fence line to the east. The garden features in this plot (004 and 006) were similar to those identified in Plot 3 (Section 4.4).

- 4.3 One square (008) and one rectangular feature (024), located to the north east of the possible fence line, were also observed in Plot 2 (Fig. 3). Their function is unclear, although they may represent additional garden features. They were between 0.50-0.60m in width and 0.18-0.22m in depth with a broad U shaped profile and were filled with soft light-dark reddish brown sandy silt.
- 4.4 Plot 3 (Fig. 4) consisted of a number of features thought to be associated with the garden of the original bungalow. The garden features were typically elongated rectangles, squares or were irregular shaped in plan. All of the fills of these features consisted of a mid brown clay fill and were heavily root disturbed.
- 4.5 The stripping of plots 4 and 5 revealed no archaeological features.

## **5. *Artefact Record***

### **Later prehistoric or post Roman pot by C.G. Cumberpatch**

- 5.1 Seven sherds of pottery weighing ninety-five grams were examined. Four of the sherds joined to form the rim of a jar-like vessel and the fabric of all was so similar that it is probable that they were all from the same vessel.

#### **5.2 The fabric**

The vessel or vessels were made of an extremely distinctive fabric characterised by the presence of large white inclusions in a dull orange fabric with a grey, reduced, core. On examination the larger inclusions proved to be of two types. The first, which appeared to be the commoner, were large grains (up to 2.5mm in length) of a sandstone-like rock composed of smaller grains of quartz. The second (up to 7mm in length) appeared to be a soft, non-crystalline rock, probably chalk or soft limestone. These grains could be easily scratched with a scalpel blade. In addition the fabric contained abundant grains of rounded to sub-rounded quartz grit up to 1mm in length. Thin linear voids gave the fabric a somewhat laminated appearance and contributed to a tendency to crack and flake. The combination gave the fabric a rather coarse appearance and a crumbly texture.

#### **5.3 The Vessel**

The vessel appeared to be an everted rim jar with a pronounced shoulder and a wide body.

#### **5.4 Dating and identification**

The fabric is an unfamiliar one and further work is required before it can be satisfactorily dated and ascribed to an appropriate regional tradition. At present it appears unlikely to be of medieval (post-Conquest) date, but may be later prehistoric or post-Roman.

## **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 Archaeological investigations located a series of garden features associated with the former property that stood on the site. A possible fence line was identified, with one post-hole (016) containing pottery of either prehistoric or post-Roman date. None of the ditches identified by the aerial photographs and thought to extend towards the development area were identified.

## ***Bibliography***

Boucher, A. (ed.), 1995, 'West Yorkshire Archaeology Service site recording manual',  
West Yorkshire Archaeology Service, unpubl.

British Geological Survey, 1978, Wakefield. England and Wales Sheet 78. Solid and  
Drift Edition. 1 Inch Series

## ***Acknowledgements***

### **Project management**

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### **Report**

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### **Specialists**

Chris Cumberpatch PhD



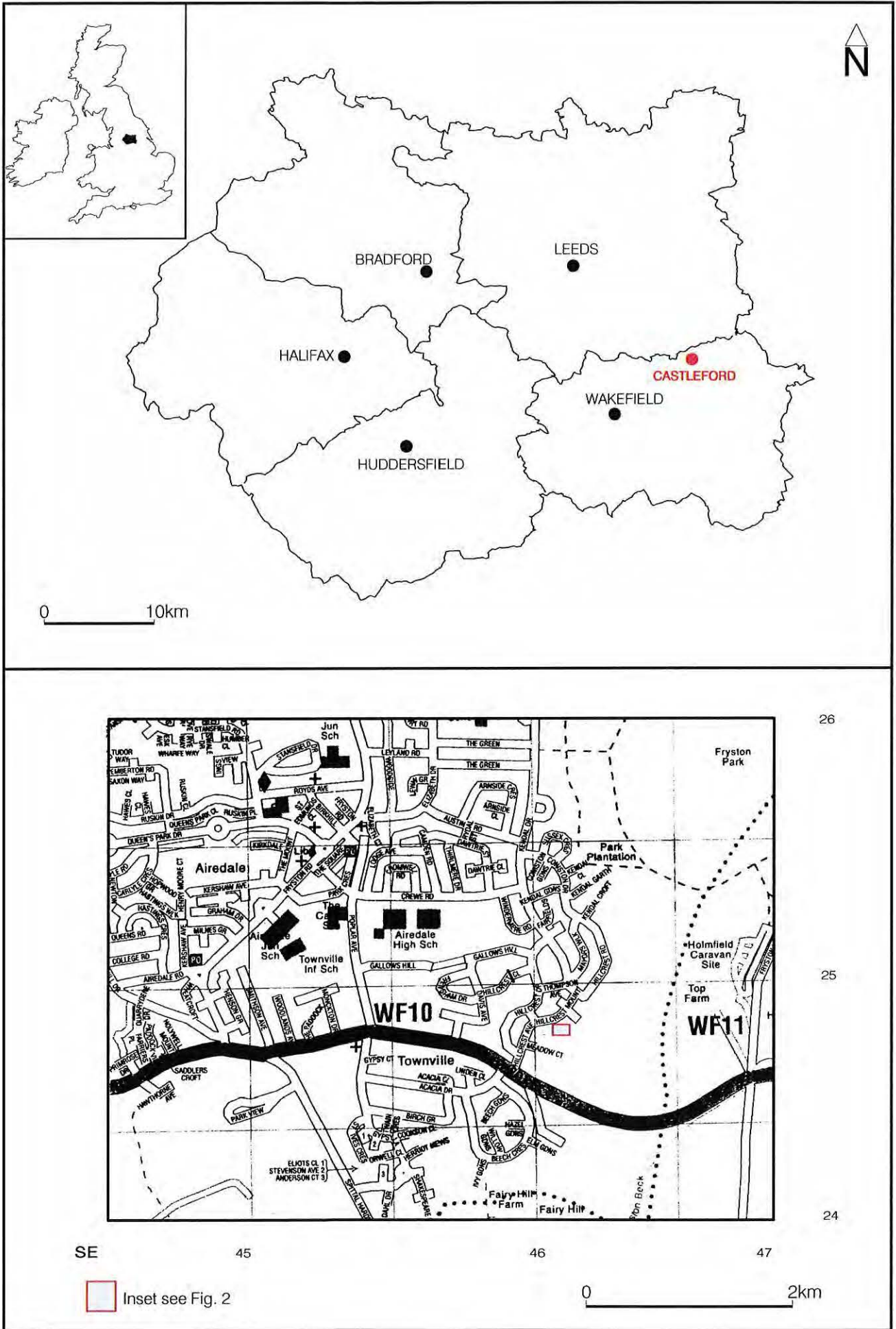


Fig. 1. Site location

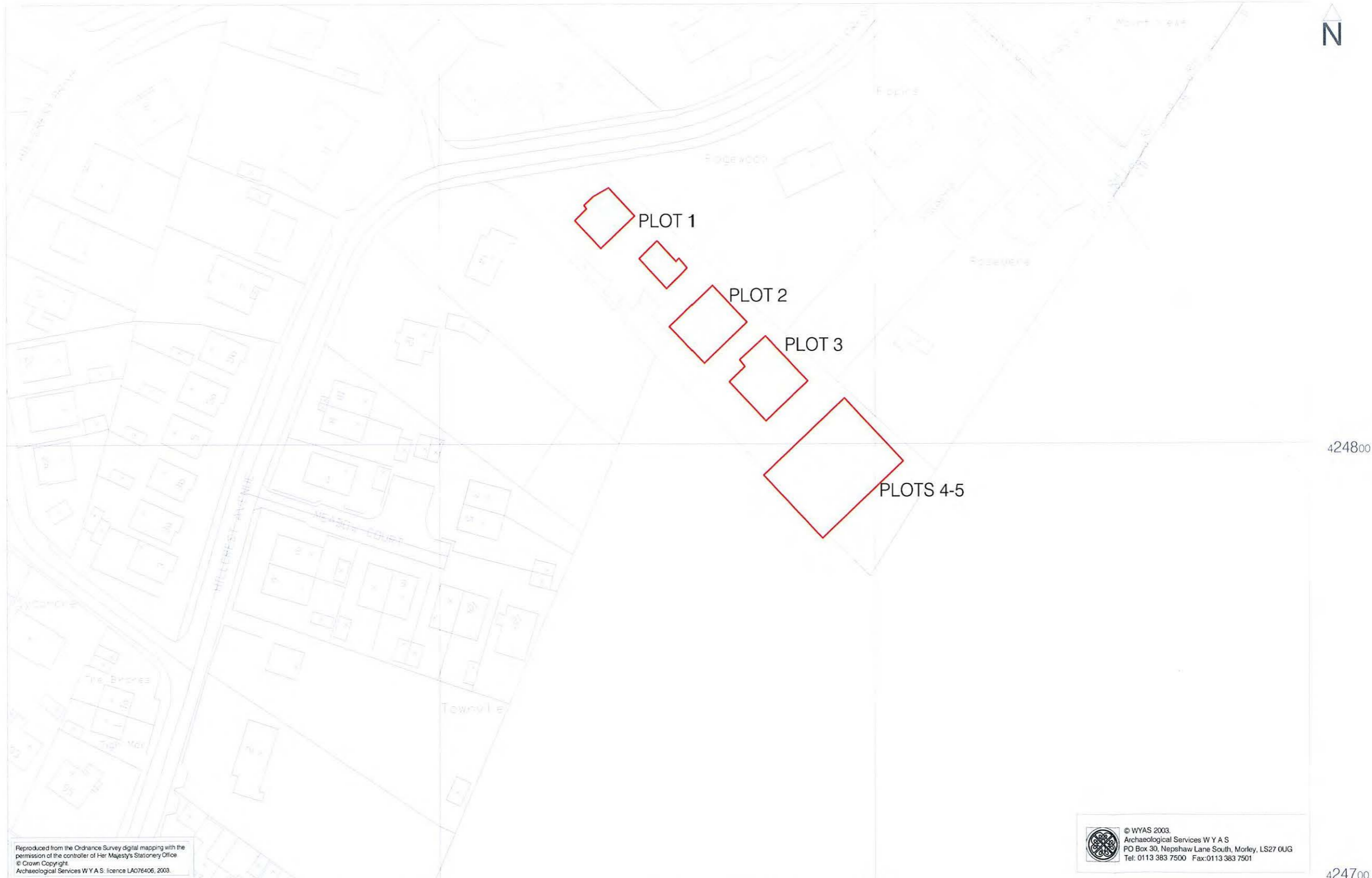


Fig. 2. Location of housing plots

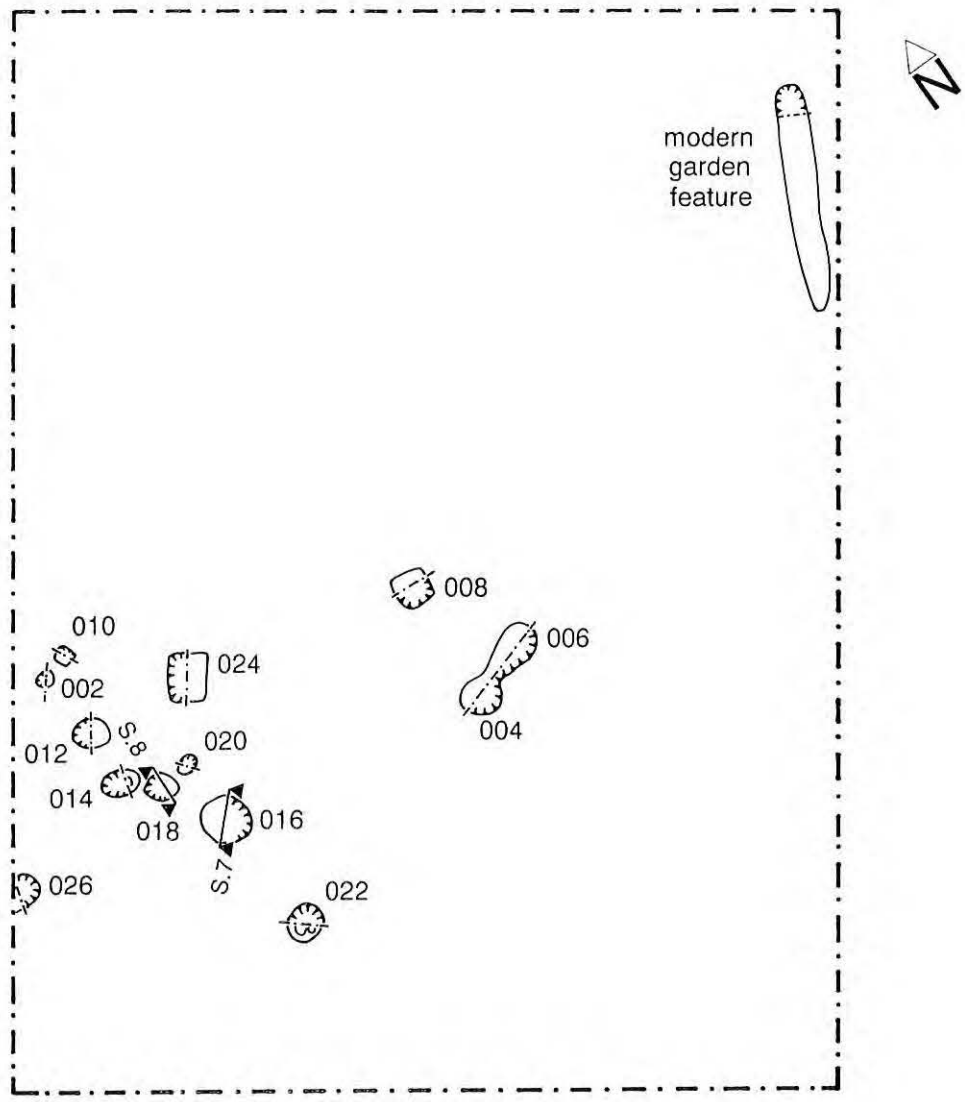


Fig. 3. Plan of Plot 2

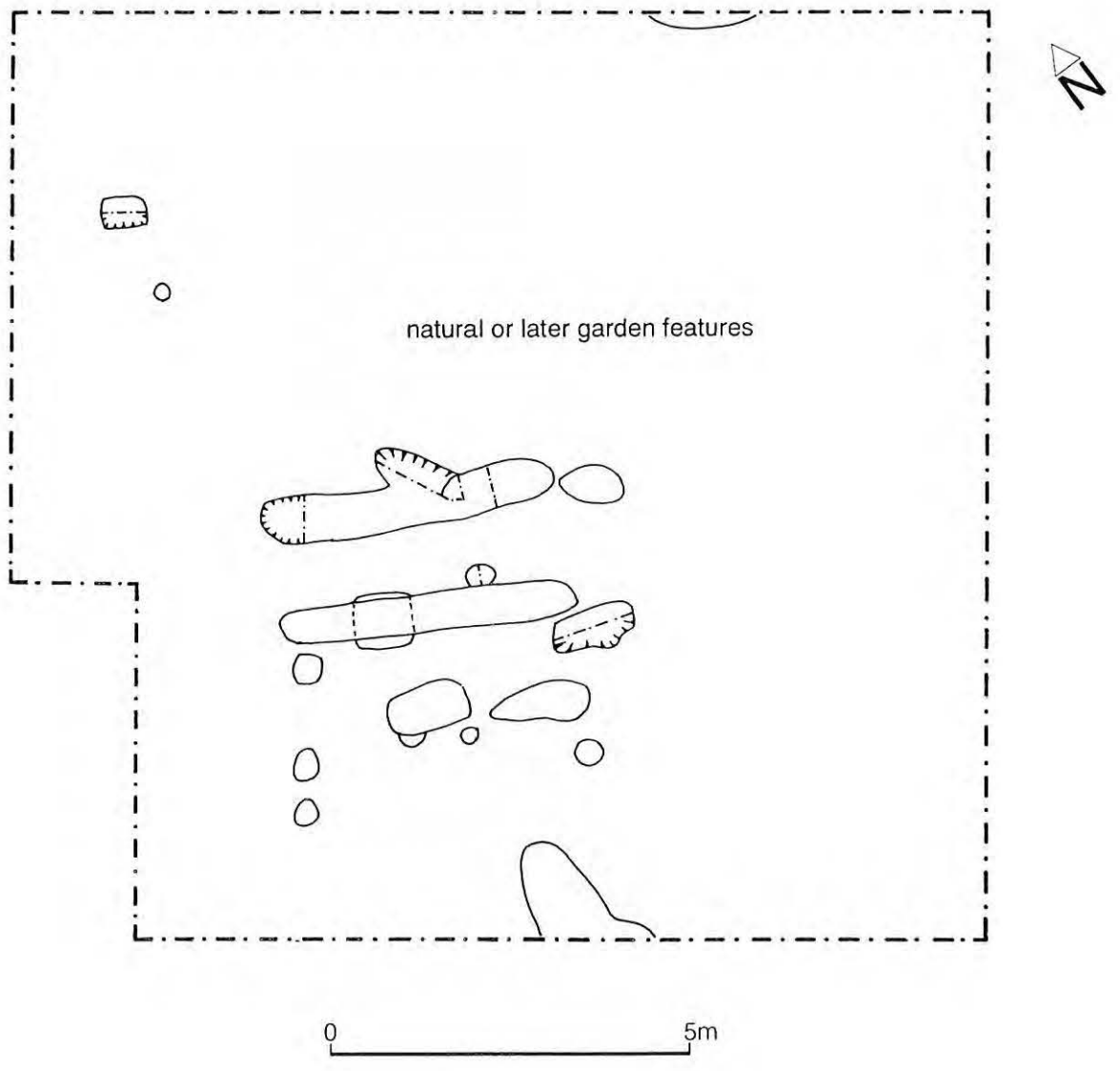
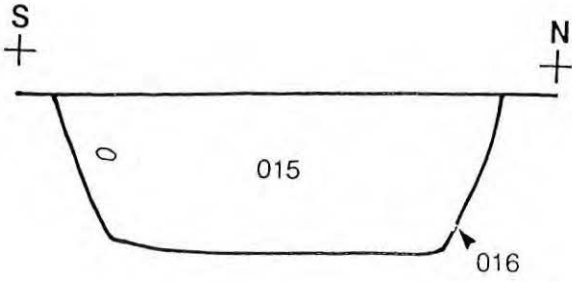


Fig. 4. Plan of Plot 3

S.7



S.8

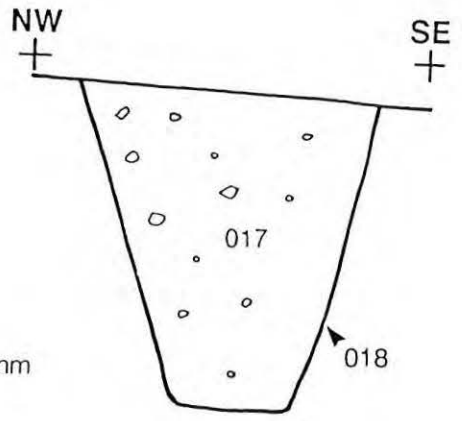


Fig. 5. Sections, Plot 2

**Appendix I*****Inventory of primary archive***

File no.	Description	Quantity
1	Context register	1 x A4
1	Context cards	26 x A4
1	Photographic record sheet	2 x A4
1	Colour slide film	1
2	Drawing register	1 x A4
2	Drawings	5

## ***Appendix II***

### ***Inventory of contexts***

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Fill of post-hole 002
002	Cut of post-hole
003	Fill of garden feature 004
004	Cut of garden feature
005	Fill of garden feature 006
006	Cut of garden feature
007	Fill of post-hole 008
008	Cut of post-hole
009	Fill of post-hole 010
010	Cut of post-hole
011	Fill of post-hole 012
012	Cut of post-hole
013	Fill of post-hole 014
014	Cut of post-hole
015	Fill of post-hole 015
016	Cut of post-hole
017	Fill of post-hole 018
018	Cut of post-hole
019	Fill of post-hole 019
020	Cut of post-hole
021	Fill of post-hole 022
022	Cut of post-hole
023	Fill of post-hole 024
024	Cut of post-hole
025	Fill of post-hole 026
026	Cut of post-hole

***Appendix III***  
***Inventory of artefacts***

<b>Fabric</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>SF no.</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Details</b>
Pottery	016		7	Sherds of late prehistoric or post Roman
Total			7	



***Appendix IV***

***Specification for archaeological watching brief***

Specification for Watching Brief: Five Detached Houses – grounds of "Cyndor", Hillcrest Mount, Castleford (circa SL 460 248)  
Planning Permission 02/99/57130/B

Prepared on behalf of Wakefield MDC for RJ Design (the applicants' agents)

## Introduction

1.1 Planning permission (ref. no. 02/99/57130/B) has been obtained for the construction of five detached houses in the garden of "Cyndor", Hillcrest Mount, Castleford.

1.2 The WYAS Advisory Service holds aerial photographs (stored at 44.42.64.48) of a large sub-rectangular enclosure with internal divisions (PRN 977) and what may be ditches of an associated field system. The enclosure is less than 200m. from the area of development and the possibly associated cropmark ditches appear to run into the area proposed for development.

## 2. General Considerations

2.1 Prior to the commencement of *any work*, the archaeological contractor should confirm in writing adherence to this specification, or state (with reasons) any proposals to vary the specification. Should the contractor wish to vary the specification, then written confirmation of the agreement of the WYAS Advisory Service to any variations is required prior to work commencing. The archaeologist carrying out the watching brief should be appropriately qualified and experienced. Any technical queries arising from the specification detailed below should be addressed to the WYAS Advisory Service *without delay*.

## 3. Fieldwork Methodology

3.1 An archaeologist should be present on site during the excavation of any area below a depth of 0.15m. (approximately six inches), whether this excavation is for foundations, service trenches, areas stripped for driveways or soft landscaping. The archaeologist should view the area as it is being dug and any trench sections after excavation has been completed. Where archaeology is judged to be present, the excavated area should be rapidly cleaned and the need for further work assessed. Where appropriate, any features and finds should then be quickly hand excavated, sampled and recorded.

3.2 Excavated soil should be searched as practicable for finds. The presence and nature of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century material should be noted, but finds of this date need not be retained for processing.

3.3 The actual areas of ground disturbance, and any features of possible archaeological concern noted within these areas, should be accurately located on a site plan and recorded by photographs, scale drawings (including height above O.D.) and written description sufficient to permit the preparation of a report on the site.

3.4 The intention of the archaeological watching brief is not to unduly delay the work of other contractors on site. This work should not, therefore prejudice the progress of the main or subsidiary contractor's work, except by prior agreement and on-site co-operation.

3.5 The archaeologist on site will naturally operate with due regard for Health and Safety regulations. In this case, where archaeological work is carried out at the same time as the work of other contractors, regard should also be taken of any reasonable additional constraints that these contractors may impose. This work may require the preparation of a Risk Assessment of the site, in accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Regulations. **The WYAS and its officers cannot be held responsible for any accidents that may occur to outside contractors engaged to undertake this survey while attempting to conform to this specification.**

#### **4. Unexpectedly Significant or Complex Discoveries**

4.1 Should there be, in the professional judgement of the archaeologist on site, unexpectedly significant or complex discoveries made that warrant more detailed recording than possible within the terms of this specification, then the archaeological contractor is to urgently contact the WYAS Advisory Service with the relevant information to enable the matter to be resolved with the developer.

4.2 Any human remains that are discovered must initially be left in-situ, covered and protected. If removal is necessary, this must comply with the relevant Home Office and any local environmental health regulations.

4.3 The terms of the Treasure Act, 1996 must be followed with regard to any finds, which might fall within its purview. Any such finds must be removed to a safe place and reported to the local coroner as required by the procedures laid down in the "Code of Practice". Where removal cannot be effected on the same working day as the discovery, suitable security measures must be taken to protect the finds from theft.

#### **5. Monitoring**

5.1 The recording exercise will be monitored as necessary and practicable by the WYAS Advisory Service in its role as 'curator' of the county's archaeology. The Advisory Service should receive as much notice as possible in writing (and certainly not less than one week) of the intention to start the watching brief. A copy of the archaeological contractor's risk assessment of the site should accompany the notification.

#### **6. Post-Excavation/Post-Recording Work and Report Preparation**

6.1 On completion of the fieldwork, any samples shall be processed and all finds shall be cleaned, identified, assessed, dated (if possible), marked (if appropriate) and properly packed and stored in accordance with the requirements of national guidelines. A fully indexed field archive shall be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and fully labelled photographs. Labelling should be in indelible ink on the *back* of the print and should include film and frame number; date recorded and photographer's name; name and address of site; national grid reference. Photographic prints should be mounted in appropriate archivally stable sleeves. A quantified index to the field archive should form an appendix to the report. The original archive is to accompany the deposition of any finds, providing the landowner agrees to the deposition of finds in a publicly accessible archive (see Section 7.1 below). In the absence of this agreement the field archive (less finds) is to be deposited in the West Yorkshire SMR.

6.2 A report should be produced to provide background information, a summary of the works carried out, a description and separate interpretation of any features and finds identified. Details of the report's style and format are to be determined by the archaeological contractor, but it should include a full bibliography, a quantified index to the site archive and as an appendix, a copy of this specification. The report illustrations should include, as a minimum, a location map at a reasonable scale plus any drawings and photographs.

6.3 If nothing of archaeological interest is identified during the course of the watching brief, then a summary report will be adequate, as long as sufficient details are supplied for SMR purposes. Illustrations would not be required, although it would be anticipated that black and white prints would form part of the archival record. A summary record should include details of the commissioning body, the nature of the development and resultant ground disturbance, the approximate position of any ground disturbance viewed with relation to adjacent existing fixed points, the date(s) of fieldwork, name(s) of fieldworker(s), and written observations on the nature and depth of deposits observed (this may include annotated sketch sections).

6.4 The report should be produced within three weeks of completion of the fieldwork, unless otherwise agreed with the WYAS Advisory Service. Copies of the report should be supplied to the client, to the relevant District Planning Department, and the West Yorkshire SMR. The report will become publicly accessible once deposited with the West Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

6.5 The attached summary sheet should be completed and submitted to the WYAS Advisory Service for inclusion in the summary of archaeological work in West Yorkshire published biannually by that office within *"Archaeology and Archives in West Yorkshire"*.

## **7. Deposition of Archive**

7.1 Before commencing any fieldwork, the archaeological contractor must contact the relevant District museum archaeological curator in writing (copied to the WYAS Advisory Service) to determine the museum's requirements for the deposition of an excavation archive. In this case the contact is Wakefield Metropolitan District Council Museum and Arts, Wakefield Museum, Wood Street, Wakefield WF1 2EW; telephone 01924 305351; Keeper of Archaeology Pam Judkins.

7.2 It is the policy of Wakefield MDC Museums and Arts to accept complete excavation archives, including primary site records and research archives and finds, from all excavations carried out in the District, which it serves.

7.3 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to endeavour to obtain consent of the landowner, in writing, to the deposition of finds with Wakefield MDC Museums and Arts.

7.4 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to meet Wakefield Museums' requirements with regard to the preparation of fieldwork archives for deposition.

7.5 The museums officer named in 7.1 above should be notified in writing of the commencement of fieldwork at the same time as the West Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record.

## **West Yorkshire Archaeology Service – Advisory Service**

15 July 2002

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