



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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LAND NORTH OF HAVELOCK HOUSE LEPPINGTON NORTH YORKSHIRE

A Report on an Archaeological Watching Brief

by Kurt Hunter-Mann

db/00418/FUL

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A REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

by

Kurt Hunter-Mann

November 2006

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

• Address	Land north of Havelock House, Leppington Lane, Leppington, North Yorkshire
• NGR	SE 7635 6108
• Parish	Scrayingham
• District	Ryedale
• Planning application	06/00418/FUL
• Client	JM Butler Builders Ltd
• Nature of development	Two-bedroom dwelling with integral garage and formation of vehicular access
• Dates of archaeological work	9 th and 29 th August 2006
• YAT accession code	YORAT:2006.30

ABSTRACT

During September 2006 a watching brief was carried out during ground works on land immediately north of Havelock House, Leppington, North Yorkshire. This work encountered ditches of medieval date, which are assumed to be field boundaries. There was little evidence of occupation, indicating that the site lay beyond the south limit of the medieval village.

1. INTRODUCTION

York Archaeological Trust carried out a watching brief on 9th and 29th August 2006 on land immediately north of Havelock House, Leppington Lane, Leppington, North Yorkshire (SE 7635 6108; Fig. 1). The ground works involved ground level reduction, the excavation of foundation trenches for the house, the construction of an access road, excavations to accommodate septic and gas tanks, and the excavation of service trenches.

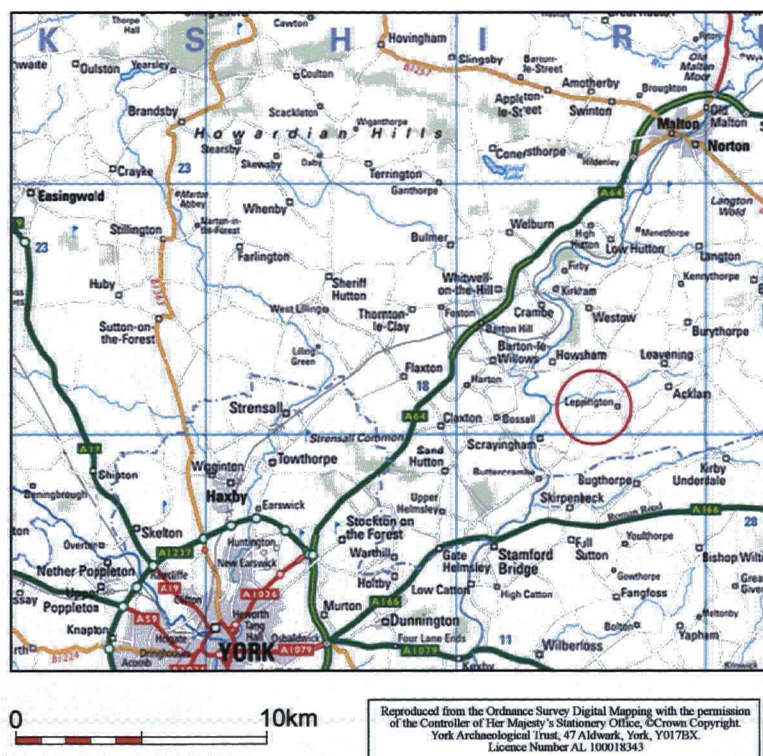


Figure 1 Site location

The watching brief was undertaken on behalf of the developer, JM Butler Builders Ltd, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation devised by North Yorkshire County Council.



Figure 2 Location of observations

2. METHOD STATEMENT

The site measured about 75m long (east-west) by 12m wide. Only the western half was subject to ground works, as the eastern half was to form a garden and so was left undisturbed. By the time the watching brief commenced, the ground reduction and construction of the access

road had already taken place, although examination of the site, particularly the spoil from the road-strip, indicated that subsoil had not been reached along the access road. The ground works were mostly undertaken by a JCB. As the site sloped steadily down to the west, the area of the dwelling was reduced in two terraces about 0.3m high, to form level building surfaces. The underlying subsoil was found to slope down to the south-west; as the topsoil was about 0.3m thick, the subsoil was only encountered in the north-east corner of each terrace (Plate 1). Furthermore, the thickness of the topsoil increased towards the west end of the site, so that even the road strip did not reach the subsoil. Consequently, the extent to which any archaeological features on the site would be exposed, not to mention disturbed, during these ground works was limited. However, the excavation of the house foundation trenches did provide an opportunity to investigate beneath the topsoil (Fig. 2, B). The foundation trenches were 0.8m wide and 0.6m deep. The other ground works of any significant depth was the excavation of the trench for the gas tank, in the north-west corner of the site (Fig. 2, A). This excavation measured 4m long (east-west) by 2m wide and 1.6m deep. As no archaeological features were observed here and the service trench alongside the road was not sufficiently deep to reach the subsoil, it was decided not to monitor the excavation of the service trench or the septic tank trench.

The excavations of the house foundation trenches and for the gas tank were monitored by an archaeologist from YAT. Written and drawn (measured sketch) records were made of any possible archaeological deposits and features.



Plate 1 View of house plot looking west showing subsoil exposed in western half of the house footprint (centre right)

3. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Leppington is situated towards the east side of the Vale of York, about 15km north-east of York. The site lies towards the south end of the village, on the east side of the main street, Leppington Lane.

Leppington effectively lies in the foothills of the Yorkshire Wolds, and the landscape of the area is uneven. The general trend of the terrain is a slope down to the west. A kilometre to the west is the low-lying Vale of York proper, barely 20m AOD; a kilometre to the east is the scarp slope of the Yorkshire Wolds, which rises to over 200m AOD. Furthermore the landscape is interrupted by a series of deeply incised east-west valleys formed by streams running from the Wolds scarp into the Vale of York. Leppington is situated on a low promontory overlooking the Vale of York, with the valley of Leppington Beck to the south and another valley to the north. The site lies at around 71m AOD.

The drift geology is Devensian boulder clay (till) at the north-east end of the York Moraine. It overlies a solid geology of Triassic Mercia Mudstone (Kent 1980, 124).

4. BRIEF ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The place-name Leppington is probably derived from the Old Norse for 'Leppa's farmstead' (Smith 1970, 146). It is not certain that Leppington developed into a nucleated village before the Norman Conquest, as Domesday Book refers only to the Count of Mortain holding 8 carucates of land; the place may still have been a farmstead. It was in the Anglo-Scandinavian administrative division of Acklam Hundred, which was incorporated into Buckrose Wapentake after the Norman Conquest.

Leppington seems to have increased a little in significance after the Norman Conquest. A manor was located there, held by the Meaux and then the Carey families. There was also a parish church of St Helen. The manor house can be identified with Leppington Castle, a moated site (or less likely, a motte and bailey castle) constructed on the eastern side of the village. The castle has been described as 'a flattened hillock with some appearance of outworks and traditions of a former castle' (VCH Yorkshire II, 45). The Careys are thought to have occupied a 'castellated mansion' there (Cholmley 1981, 123). In 1622 Robert Carey (1560-1639), fourth son of Baron Carey of Hunsdon, was created Baron Leppington, perhaps having acquired the Leppington estate by marriage to Elizabeth Trevanion. He was made Earl of Monmouth in 1626. Of his grandsons, Lionel Carey, Earl of Monmouth was killed at the battle of Marston Moor in 1644. The second son, Henry (died 1649), was Lord Leppington, indicating that Leppington was held by a junior line of the family. His son, Henry apparently died without issue, and it is probably at this point that Leppington Castle ceased to be a family seat (Ord 1846, 475). Another indication of the decline of the township was the redundancy of the church; Leppington was absorbed into the parish of Scrayingham.

A Chapel of Ease, subordinate to the church at Scrayingham, was built in 1803. It was plain, with pointed windows and a bell-turret (Pevsner 1972, 303). It is now demolished (Neave 1996, 110). According to the first detailed map of the village, the 1854 Ordnance Survey map, settlement concentrated along the east side of the main road, with a manor house south of the castle. A house plot is shown towards the west end of the site currently under investigation, although the house itself would appear to lie immediately north of the site. The population of the village declined from 118 in 1801 to 73 in 1901 (VCH Yorkshire III, 487).

The land immediately north of this site was the subject of an archaeological evaluation earlier in 2006. This work unearthed ditches, a possible palisade trench and much 12th-14th century pottery. This evidence points to medieval occupation nearby, presumably associated with the village and manor to the north (Fern 2006).

5. RESULTS OF THE WATCHING BRIEF

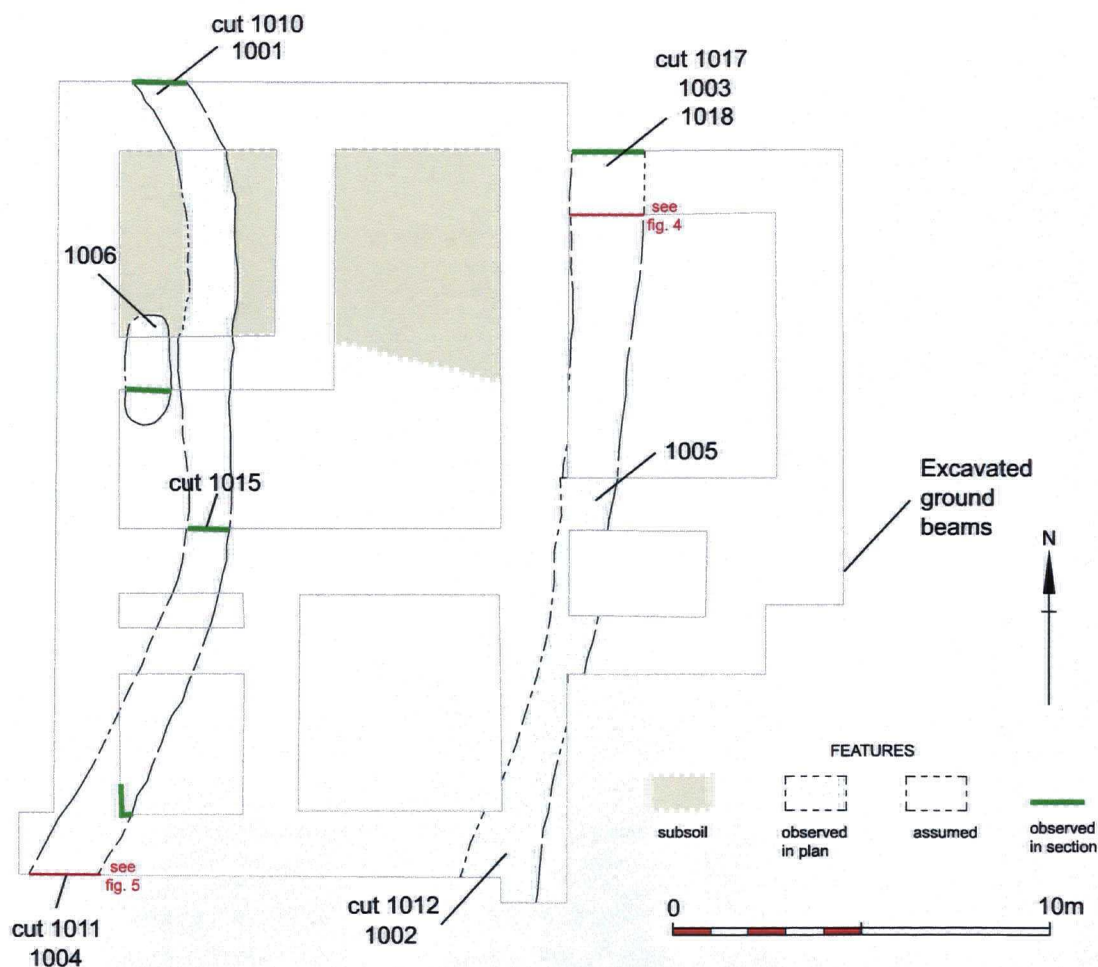


Figure 3 Plan of archaeological features

5.1 Undisturbed natural deposits

The earliest deposit encountered, in the gas tank trench, was compact light brown/grey clay, which was at least 0.8m thick (1007). This is regarded as glacial till. Overlying this deposit was compact light grey/yellow clay with occasional medium erratic stone, which was up to 0.45m thick (1008). This deposit could be part of the glacial till, or could be fluvio-glacial, as it appeared to fill a depression in the surface of 1007.

The natural clay in the gas tank trench was overlain by a layer of friable-compact light green/brown clay loam some 0.4m thick, with occasional small limestone fragments (1009), which is interpreted as natural subsoil. This deposit was also widely encountered in the house footprint.

5.2 Medieval

The subsoil was cut by several features in the house footprint. Towards the south-east corner of this area was a probable ditch aligned north-south and at least 6m long (1012). It measured around 1m wide by 0.3m deep, and contained compact mixed orange and mid brown clay and mid grey silty clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks and small stones (1002, 1005); the mixed nature of the fills and the absence of silting suggested that the ditch had been kept clean or re-cut, then backfilled. Pottery of late 12th century date was recovered from fill 1002. Towards the north-east corner of the house footprint was another cut, up to 1m wide and 0.5m deep (1017) (Fig. 4), which was probably the northwards continuation of Ditch 1012. It contained mixed dark brown silty clay loam and light brown clay loam (1018), and an upper fill of compact mid grey silty clay loam with occasional charcoal flecks (1003); it is possible that Fill 1003 represents a re-cut of the ditch.

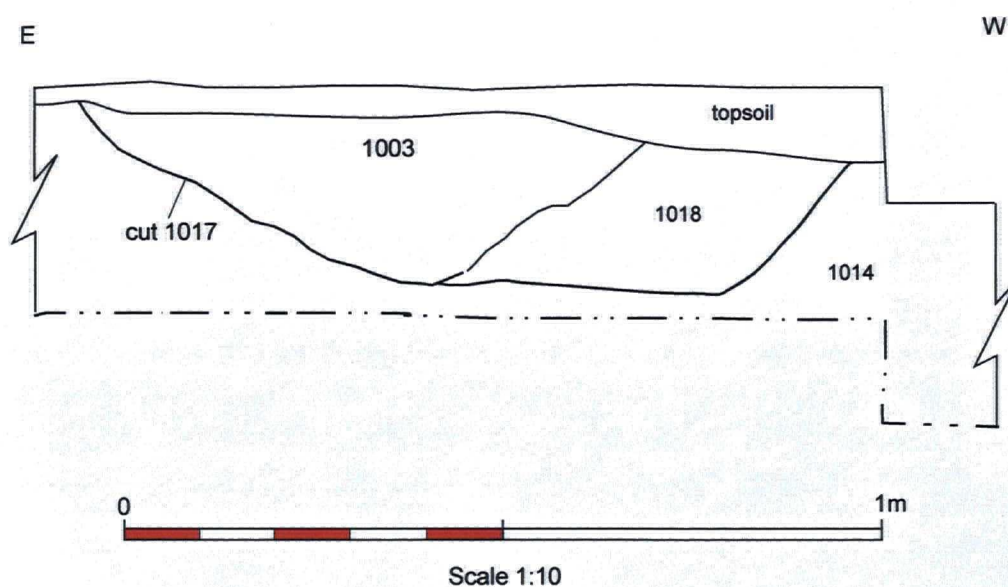


Figure 4 Ditch 1017, north facing section

In the north-west corner of the house footprint was a curvilinear feature aligned roughly north-south (1010), which is also thought to have been a ditch. It was observed in the sides of the foundation trenches and in the reduced ground surface, which had reached the subsoil in this part of the house footprint. This ditch was 0.9m wide at the north end but around 0.6m wide further south and around 0.3m deep (Plate 2). It contained compact, mixed mid grey silty clay loam and light brown clay loam (1001), from which 13th pottery was recovered. To the south, the probable continuation of this ditch was observed in the sides of a foundation trench in the middle of the house (1015, fill 1016), but here it was only 0.5m wide by 0.15m deep, and the ditch was not observed in adjacent foundation trenches; this suggests that the ditch was shallower towards the middle of the trench, and/or had been largely truncated there.



Plate 2 Ditch 1010, south facing section

Immediately to the west of Ditch 1010 was a pit or linear feature at least 2m long, with a rounded north terminus (1014). It was 0.55m wide by 0.35m deep close to the north terminus, but was 0.4m wide by 0.4m deep a little further south. The fill was mixed mid brown silty clay loam and light brown clay loam (1006). Pottery of 13th century date was recovered from the fill.

In the south-west corner of the house footprint was another probable ditch, aligned north-south (1011), 0.8m wide by 0.5m deep. It contained a mixed dark brown silty clay loam and mid brown clay loam, with moderate medium-large limestone fragments (1004); this is regarded as a backfill. This feature contained late 12th century pottery, and is probably the southwards continuation of Ditch 1010 and 1015, or perhaps of Cut 1014.

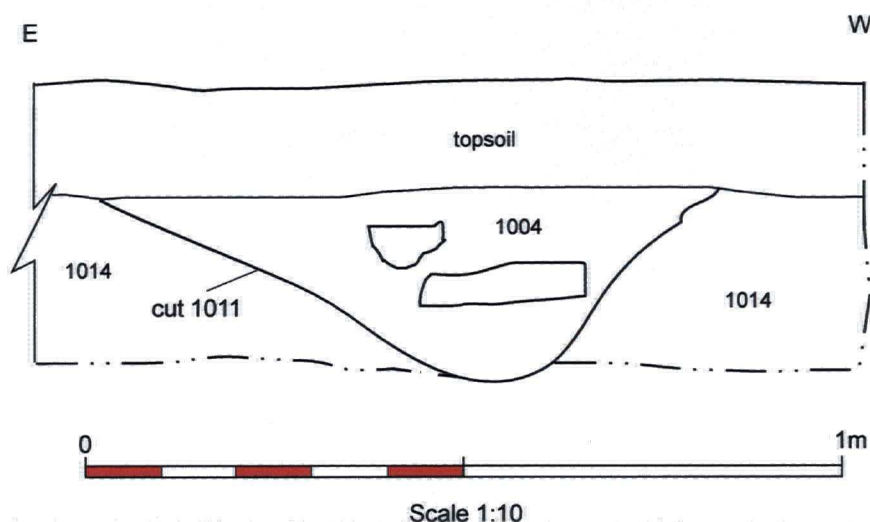


Figure 5 Ditch 1011, north facing section

5.3 Post-medieval to Modern

Subsoil 1009 was overlain in the gas tank trench by a 0.25m-thick layer of brown silt loam with moderate small limestone fragments (1013). This is interpreted as ploughsoil, or colluvium resulting from ploughing further upslope. A late post-medieval date for this layer is indicated on the evidence of brick/tile inclusions.

The medieval features, and the post-medieval layer in the gas tank trench, were all overlain by mid grey/brown silt loam topsoil, which was very humic in its upper part and was about 0.3m thick (1000).

6. FINDS ASSESSMENT

6.1 Pottery by Anne Jenner

Fifty seven medieval sherds, dated from the late 12th to the early 14th centuries, were retrieved from five contexts (see Table 1). The majority are from Gritty ware jars which were probably used for cooking or warming food as they are frequently sooted externally.

Jug sherds [1001] and [1006] with light green, pitted, splash glaze, have a fabric reminiscent of Brandsby-type ware but grittier, with a reduced core and thick white margins. Typologically these wares might be considered to be of an early 13th century date. Humber ware jug sherds of a pre-late 13th century date, with a fine fabric and patchy glaze, with white slip, only appear as unstratified sherds [1000]. This context also contains sherds from a Brandsby-type jug with a rilled neck and shiny mid green glaze, similar to those found in the late 13th/early 14th century assemblage from a well in the North aisle of the Minster (Mainman and Jenner forthcoming).

Although the Splash wares are of interest because they bridge the gap between the Early Glazed wares and Brandsby-type wares and the Gritty wares might have a potential contribution to our understanding of the number and type of variations in fabric over space and time, the limited number found here would be insufficient to make any further work meaningful.

Context	Quantity	Spotdate	Details
1000	37	late 13th/ early 14th century	5 Humber ware jug 23 Gritty ware 3 Gritty ware sooted jar 3 Gritty medieval Grey ware ?pitcher 1 York glazed ware 2 Brandsby jug
1001	8	13th century	6 gritty ware scrap 1 ?pre/early Brandsby ?Splash glazed ware with light green glaze and reduced core 1 Humber ware gritty fabric
1002	8	late 12th century	2 unidentified fine medieval scraps 6 Gritty ware
1004	1	late 12th century	1 Gritty ware sooted externally
1006	3	13th century	1 Gritty ware 1 ?pre/early Brandsby ?Splash ware with light green pitted glaze and reduced core 1 Splashed glazed ware

Table 1 Pottery by context

6.2 Ceramic Building Material by Jane McComish

A total of 25g of Ceramic Building Material (CBM) was examined from the site. This consisted of 3 small fragments of pan tile, dating to 1750 or later. The material was from context 1013. There were no dimensions surviving as the fragments were too small and too badly broken. As so little material was present it is only of use in dating context 1013. No further work is recommended.

7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main archaeological features found of note were two irregular north-south ditches and a pit or third ditch, in the area of the house. The western features (1010-11, 1015 and pit/ditch 1014) are dated by pottery to the 13th century, and the eastern ditch (1012, 1017) is dated by pottery to the late 12th century, although it is quite possible that the ditches were contemporary. The presence of late 13th/early 14th century pottery in the topsoil suggests that the upper part of the medieval activity had been truncated, probably by ploughing. The ditches could have formed a droveway, to allow the movement of cattle to and from the village.

There was no evidence of medieval occupation on the site. Furthermore, the ditches did not continue further north (Fern 2006); this dichotomy could reflect a change in medieval land use at the south end of the village, with occupation to the north and fields to the south.

No features of late medieval date were found. This could indicate that the village shrank towards its core further north due to a decrease in population resulting from the Black Death and subsequent plague outbreaks, followed by the declining manorial status of the township. The site was apparently part of a field until a house was built there late in the 18th/19th centuries.

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9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Watching Brief Kurt Hunter-Mann and Mark Johnson

Illustrations and report production Russell Marwood

Editing Christine Kyriacou

APPENDIX 1 List of contexts

Context	Type	Description	Strat below	strat. above	Comments
1000	other	friable-compact mid grey/brown clay loam, very humic in upper part		1001-6 1013 1016	Topsoil and unstratified finds
1001	use/backfill	Compact mixed mid grey silt loam and light brown clay loam	1000	1010	fill of ditch 1010
1002	use/backfill	Compact mixed orange and mid brown clay and mid grey silty clay loam. Occasional charcoal flecks and small stones	1000	1012	same as 1005, fill of ditch 1012
1003	use/backfill	Compact mid grey silty clay loam. Occasional charcoal flecks	1000	1018	fill of ditch 1017
1004	use/backfill	Compact mixed dark brown silty clay loam and mid brown clay loam. Moderate medium to large limestone fragments	1000	1011	fill of ditch 1011
1005	use/backfill	Compact mixed orange and mid brown clay and mid grey silty clay loam. Occasional charcoal fleck and small stones	1000	1012	same as 1002, fill of ditch 1012
1006	use/backfill	Compact mixed mid brown silty clay loam and light brown clay loam.	1000	1014	fill of pit 1014
1007	undisturbed natural	Compact light grey/brown clay	1008		glacial till
1008	undisturbed natural	Compact grey/yellow clay. Occasional medium-large erratic stone fragments	1009	1007	glacial till
1009	undisturbed natural	Compact light brown/grey silty clay	1010-15 1017	1008	subsoil

1010	ditch	North-south cut with irregular steep sides	1001	1009	contains 1001
1011	ditch	North-south cut with irregular steep sides	1004	1009	contains 1004
1012	ditch	North-south cut with moderately steep sides	1002 1005	1009	contains 1002, 1005
1013	ploughsoil	Compact light yellow/brown silty clay. Moderate small angular limestone fragments	1000	1009	possible colluvium
1014	pit or ditch	Linear or ovoid cut with rounded north end and rounded profile	1006	1009	contains 1016
1015	ditch	Shallow north-south cut with rounded profile	1016	1009	contains 1016
1016	use/backfill	Compact mixed mid grey silt loam with light brown clay loam	1000	1015	fill of ditch 1015
1017	ditch	North-south cut with steep sides and a rounded base. Probably re-cut slightly to the east	1018	1009	contains 1003, 1018
1018	use/backfill	Compact mixed dark brown silty clay loam and light brown clay loam	1003	1017	fill of ditch 1017

APPENDIX 2

STANDARD WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION (WSI) FOR LIMITED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING ("WATCHING BRIEF")

- 1 The purpose of the work is to record and recover archaeological remains which are:
- a) affected by proposed development only to a limited and clearly defined extent,
 - b) not available or susceptible to standard area excavation techniques, or
 - c) of limited importance or potential

The work should not require the construction programme or development to be held up while archaeological investigation takes place, although some developers may give such a facility.

2 The WSI represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements needed to comply with an archaeological planning condition or obligation. The scheme does not comprise a full specification or Bill of Quantities, and the County Council makes no warranty that the works are fully or exactly described. No work on site should commence until the implementation of the scheme is the subject of a standard ICE Conditions of Contract for Archaeological Investigation or similar agreement between the Developer and the Archaeologist.

3 The Archaeologist should notify by letter or e-mail the County Archaeology Service (archaeology@northyorks.gov.uk) at least 10 working days in advance of the start of work on site.

4 The removal of overburden (that is vegetation, turf, loose stones, rubble, made ground, Tarmac, concrete, hardcore, building debris and topsoil) should be supervised by the Archaeologist contracted to carry out the WSI. The Archaeologist should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of overburden removal.

5 Removal of overburden by machine should be undertaken using a back-acting excavator fitted with toothless or ditching bucket only. Where materials are exceptionally difficult to lift, a toothed bucket may be used temporarily. Subsoils (B horizons) or deep, uniform fills of features may also be removed by back-acting excavator but only in areas specified by the Archaeologist on site, and only with archaeological supervision. Bulldozers or wheeled scraper buckets should not be used to remove overburden above archaeological deposits. Where reinstatement is required, topsoil should be kept separate from other soil materials.

6 Metal detecting within the development area, including the scanning of topsoil and spoil heaps, should only be permitted subject to archaeological supervision and recording such that metal finds are properly located, identified, and conserved. All metal detection should be carried out following the Treasure Act 1996 Code of Practice.

7 Where structures, finds, soil features and layers of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by construction works, the Archaeologist should be provided with the opportunity to observe, clean, assess, excavate by hand where appropriate, sample and record these features and finds. If the contractors or plant operators notice archaeological remains, they should immediately tell the Archaeologist. The sampling of deposits for palaeo-environmental evidence should be a standard consideration, and arrangements should be made to ensure that specialist advice and analysis are available if appropriate.

8 Heavy plant should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until they have been recorded, and the Archaeologist on site has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Sterile subsoils (C horizons) and parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision. Where reinstatement is required, subsoils should be backfilled first and topsoil last.

9 Upon completion of fieldwork, samples should be processed and evaluated, and all finds identified, assessed, spot-dated, properly stored, and subject to investigative conservation as needed. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections, and photographs. The Archaeologist should arrange for either the County Archaeologist or an independent post-excavation specialist to inspect the archive before making arrangements for the transfer of the archive to an appropriate museum or records office.

10 A summary report should be produced following NYCC guidelines on reporting. The report should contain planning or administrative details of the project, a summary of works carried out, a description and interpretation of the findings, an assessment of the importance of the archaeology including its historical context where appropriate, and catalogues of finds, features, and primary records. All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings, roads and field boundaries. All significant features should be illustrated with conventionally-scaled plans, sections, and photographs. Where few or no finds are made, it may be acceptable to provide the report in the form of a letter with plans attached.

11 Copies of the summary report should be provided to the client(s), the County Heritage Section (HER), to the museum accepting the archive, and if the works are on or adjacent to a Scheduled Ancient Monument, to English Heritage. A licence should be granted to the accepting museum and the County Council to use the documentation arising from the work for its statutory functions and to give to third parties as an incidental to those functions.

12 Upon completion of the work, the Archaeologist should make their work accessible to the wider research community by submitting digital data and copies of reports online to OASIS (<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/>). Submission of data to OASIS does not discharge the planning requirements for the Archaeologist to notify the County Archaeology Service of the details of the work and to provide the Historic Environment Record (HER) with a summary report on the

work.

13 Under the Environmental Information Regulations 2005 (EIR) information submitted to the HER becomes publicly accessible, except where disclosure might lead to environmental damage, and reports cannot be embargoed as 'confidential' or 'commercially sensitive'. Requests for sensitive information are subject to a public interest test, and if this is met, then the information has to be disclosed. The Archaeologist should inform the client of EIR requirements, and ensure that any information disclosure issues are resolved before completion of the work. Intellectual property rights are not affected by the EIR.

14 The County Archaeologist should be informed as soon as possible of the discovery of any unexpected archaeological remains, or changes in the programme of ground works on site. Any significant changes in the archaeological work should be specified in a variation to the WSI to be approved by the planning authority. If there is a need to remove human remains, an exhumation licence should be obtained from the Department for Constitutional Affairs (coroners@dca.gsi.gov.uk), or a faculty obtained where the remains are buried in land consecrated according to the rites of the Church of England.