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**Whitewall Quarry  
Norton  
North Yorkshire  
SE 7918 6940**

**Archaeological Watching Brief**

**Authorised by .....**

**Date:.....**

**Whitewall Quarry  
Norton  
North Yorkshire  
SE 7918 6940**

**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

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**Archaeological Watching Brief Report**

***Non-technical Summary***

*An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd at Whitewall Quarry, Norton, during February 2007. The work involved monitoring the removal of topsoil and overburden in the southern extension area of the quarry prior to the commencement of deep quarrying operations.*

*Three archaeological features were encountered during the Watching Brief. In the western part of the extension area, two parallel ditches were identified. Whilst the western ditch was clearly the southern continuation of one of a pair of parallel linear features that were encountered and recorded during previous Watching Briefs (MAP 1995, 2002), the eastern ditch appeared to represent a new feature. In the eastern part of the extension area, a substantial rock-cut ditch was identified as the continuation of a feature recorded during 1995 and 2004 (MAP 1995, 2004). All three features have previously been identified as crop-marks (Robinson 1978) and the results of the MAP Watching Briefs have confirmed them as being of Romano-British date.*

*No finds were recovered from the western features during the current Watching Brief, but several sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the upper fill of the eastern ditch.*

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd at Whitewall Quarry, Norton, North Yorkshire (SE 7918 6940, Fig. 1). The work took place from the 5<sup>th</sup> to the 12<sup>th</sup> February 2007 and involved monitoring the removal of topsoil and overburden in the southern extension area of the quarry prior to the commencement of deep quarrying operations.
- 1.2 The project was assigned the MAP site code 05.02.07.
- 1.3 All work was funded by Clifford Watts Ltd.
- 1.4 All maps within this report have been produced from Ordnance Survey with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. License no. AL 50453A.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 The quarry lies immediately to the to the east of Welham Road, approximately 1km to the south of the town of Norton, at SE 7918 6940. It is bounded to the west by Welham Road, to the east and south by agricultural land and to the north by grounds associated with properties situated on Whitewall Road.
- 2.2 The Watching Brief took place in the southern extension area of the quarry. This was situated immediately to the south of the existing quarry boundary and covered an area of 297m x 36m (Fig. 2). The extension area consisted of open agricultural land that was under a cover of young crops at the time of the Watching Brief (Pls. 1 and 2).
- 2.3 The extension area lay on a north-facing slope, with a perceptible rise in ground level also evident from west to east.

### **3. Geology**

- 3.1 The site lies on soils of the Ellerbeck 2 Association, which are characterised by stony, coarse, loamy soils over a geology of oolitic limestone (Mackney 1984, 179).

### **4. Historical and Archaeological Background**

- 4.1 A Roman fort was established to the north of the River Derwent at Norton in circa AD 79 and an extensive civilian settlement or *Vicus*, serving the garrison, grew up to the south-west of the fort, spreading across the river to cover large areas of what is now the modern town of Norton (Robinson 1978, 6-7). The fort was part of a system of forts and roads established by Agricola in order to exercise control over northern England (ibid. 6).
- 4.2 Of particular relevance to quarry operations at Whitewall is the Roman road that ran south from the fort at Malton, through the Vicus at Norton, and on to Brough-on-Humber, site of the Roman port of *Petuaria* (Wenham 1974, 43). The crop-mark of the Roman road is visible to the west of the modern road at Welham Wold, and is also visible to the east of the modern road in the field immediately to the south of the quarry (Robinson 1978 no 237, RCHME AP Plot, Sheet SE 76 NE). A second crop-mark feature, running from south-east to north-west, also lies in the field to the south of the quarry, approximately 200m to the west of the presumed Roman road (Fig. 2).
- 4.3 A Watching Brief conducted in 1995 during extensions to the quarry examined both features. The line of the Roman road appeared to be defined by two parallel linear ditches, whilst the eastern crop-mark proved to be a substantial boundary ditch of Romano-British date (MAP 1995).
- 4.4 A further Watching Brief in 2002 again examined the Roman road, which was found to consist of two parallel ditches. All traces of road surfacing between the two ditches had been removed by later deep ploughing (MAP 2002).

- 4.5 A Watching Brief in 2004 examined the eastern boundary ditch, which was found to be 2.40m wide and 0.70m deep. Sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from the upper fill of the feature (MAP 2004).

## **5. Methodology**

- 5.1 Topsoil was stripped over an area of 297 x 36m by a mechanical excavator operating under full archaeological supervision.
- 5.2 All archaeological features were hand-cleaned in order to define their limits, and were subsequently sample excavated by hand. A minimum sample of 10<sup>0</sup>% of each linear feature was excavated.
- 5.3 All archaeological deposits and features were recorded on MAP's *pro forma* recording sheets. Plans (at a scale of 1:20) and sections (at a scale of 1:10) were made on drawing film of all archaeological features.
- 5.4 All finds were retained for specialist analysis.
- 5.5 A full photographic record was made, comprising colour print film and digital images.

## **6. Results**

### **6.1 General**

- 6.1.1 Excavations revealed a 0.30m to 0.40m deep deposit of modern ploughsoil (context 1000) that extended over the entire area. The removal of this deposit revealed natural fractured limestone bedrock, with occasional deposits of natural stony subsoil (context 1001) occupying shallow hollows and depressions in the underlying bedrock.
- 6.1.2 Three linear features were identified during the Watching Brief (Ditches A, B and C, Fig. 3), all of which were cut into the underlying natural limestone

bedrock. Ditches A and B were situated in the western part of the site, whilst Ditch C was located to the east. Sample excavations were undertaken on all three features.

## **6.2 Ditch A (Figs. 4 and 6)**

6.2.1 Ditch A was situated in the western part of the site, and entered the site from the south at a point 47m to the east of the western limit of the quarry. The feature ran on a south-west to north-east alignment, a 35m length of the feature being exposed (Pl. 3).

6.2.2 Three 1.30m long segments were excavated across Ditch A. The most northerly segment (context 1002) showed the ditch to have a gently-sloping concave profile (Pl. 4), with a width of 1.70m and a maximum depth of 0.30m (70.03m AOD). The ditch was parallel-sided in plan, but exhibited a curious dog-leg on its eastern edge. Previous excavations of this feature to the north in 2002 showed clear evidence of the re-cutting of the ditch (MAP 2002) and it may be that this dog-leg also represents the re-cutting or periodic cleaning of the ditch.

6.2.3 Ditch Segment Cut 1002 was filled by a deposit of sandy silt (context 1003).

6.2.4 A second segment was excavated 13.2m to the south of Cut 1002 (context 1005). Ditch Segment Cut 1005 was 1.58m wide and 0.24m deep (70.38m AOD). It had a moderately-sloping concave profile and also exhibited a dog-leg in plan on its eastern side (Pl. 5). Cut 1005 was filled by a deposit of sandy silt (context 1004).

6.2.5 The final segment (context 1007) was excavated at the southern end of Ditch A, close to the southern limit of the extension area. Ditch Segment Cut 1007 was 0.92m wide and 0.15m deep, with a gently-sloping concave profile (Pl. 6). The shallow depth and narrow width of Cut 1007 as compared to Segment Cuts 1002 and 1005 is liable to be due to greater truncation by modern ploughing, rather than reflect the true width of the feature.



6.2.6 Cut 1007 was filled by sandy silt (context 1008).

### **6.3 Ditch B (Figs. 4 and 6)**

6.3.1 Ditch B was situated 13m to the east of Ditch A and ran on a parallel alignment (Pl. 7). Ditch B was thought to be the southern continuation of the ditch that was identified running parallel to Ditch A to the north in 2002 (MAP 2002). However, it is clear that Ditch B is in fact located 5m to the east of the projected alignment of the 2002 feature, which was not identified during the current Watching Brief (Fig. 3). Nevertheless, the fact that Ditch B runs parallel to Ditch A seems to indicate that the two features are associated with each other.

6.3.2 Two segments were excavated through Ditch B. The southern segment (context 1009) showed the ditch to be 1.10m wide and 0.13m deep (70.68m AOD). Ditch Segment Cut 1009 had a gently-sloping, concave profile (Pl. 8) and was filled by a deposit of sandy silt (context 1008).

6.3.3 A second segment (context 1011) was excavated at the northern end of Ditch B, where the feature ended in an apparent rounded terminal. Ditch Segment Cut 1011 had a concave profile and was 0.72m wide and 0.07m deep (70.57m AOD). The apparent terminal was irregular in plan, suggesting severe truncation by modern ploughing, rather than a deliberately cut end to the feature (Pl. 9). Cut 1011 was filled by sandy silt (context 1010).

### **6.4 Ditch C (Figs. 5 and 6)**

6.4.1 Ditch C was located at the eastern end of the extension area (Pl. 10) and was clearly the southern continuation of the large Romano-British boundary ditch that was identified and recorded in 1995 and 2004 (MAP 1995, 2004, Fig 3.). Two 1.50m wide segments were excavated through Ditch C.

6.4.2 The northernmost section (context 1019, Pl. 11) showed the ditch to be 2.54m wide, with a depth of 1.02m (72.04m AOD). Ditch Segment Cut 1019 had a steeply-sloping V-shaped profile and was filled by three deposits. The 0.60m deep basal fill (context 1018) consisted of silty limestone rubble, and was

sealed by a 0.10m deposit of sandy gravel (context 1017). The upper fill deposit (context 1016) consisted of sandy silt.

- 6.4.3 The southern ditch segment (context 1015, Pl. 12) was 2.85m wide and 0.75m deep (72.77m AOD). Ditch Segment Cut 1015 had steeply-sloping sides, a concave base and was filled by a sequence of three deposits, similar to the seen in Ditch Segment Cut 1019; a 0.25m deep basal fill of silty limestone rubble, (context 1013), a 0.20m deep middle fill of sandy gravel (context 1014), and an upper fill of sandy silt (context 1015). Deposit 1015 contained two sherds of Romano-British pottery (Appendix 2).

## 7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The current Watching Brief at Whitewall Quarry again provided an opportunity to observe and record a series of features related to the Romano-British occupation of Norton and its environs.
- 7.2 Ditch A was the southern continuation of a feature examined in 1995 and 2002. The feature survived to a maximum depth of 0.30m, which accords well with a maximum depth of 0.35m recorded in 2002. The profile of the ditch was similar to that recorded in 2002 and, whilst there was no clear, unambiguous evidence of a re-cut, as seen in 2002, the anomalies seen in the plan of the ditch were suggestive of either localised re-cuts or the periodic cleaning of the ditch. No finds were recovered from Ditch A during the current Watching Brief, but finds recovered during the 2002 excavation have confirmed the feature to be of Romano-British date.
- 7.3 Ditch B was a shallow, narrow feature that was initially thought to be a continuation of the eastern feature identified in 2002 (MAP 2002, Feature 2). However, whilst the two features were of similar profile, width and depth, Ditch B was located some 5m to the east of the projected line of the 2002 feature. The picture is further confused by the fact that the 2002 feature itself was not identified during the current Watching Brief, all trace presumably

having been removed by ploughing. Thus, whilst Ditch B followed a similar alignment to Ditch A and was probably of similar date, its relationship to 2002 Feature 2 remains unclear. However, it is possible that Ditch B represents a widening or localised re-alignment of the Roman road at this point.

- 7.4 Ditch C was the southern continuation of the Romano-British boundary ditch that was examined in 1995 and 2004. The feature survived to a maximum depth of 1.02m and a maximum width of 2.85m. This accords with a maximum depth of 0.70m and width of 2.80m recorded in 2004. The V-shaped profiles of the ditch, as recorded in 2004 and in the present Watching Brief, were remarkably consistent, with localised variations in the depth and width of the feature being largely the product of varying degrees of truncation by modern ploughing. However, despite the modern ploughing regime, Ditch C survives as a substantial rock-cut feature and must have been an impressive and highly visible landscape feature when it was first constructed.

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Figure 1. Site Location

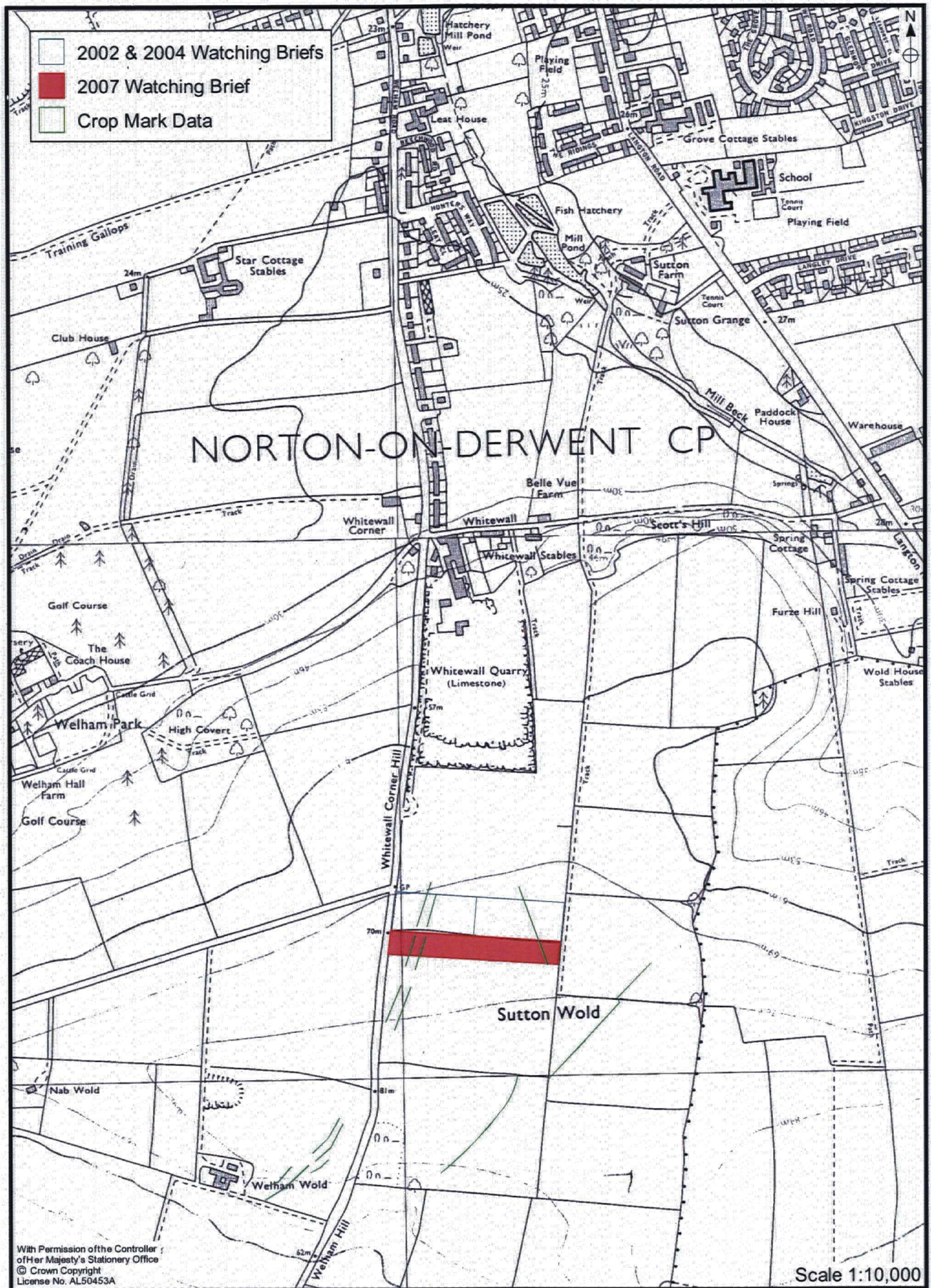


Figure 2. Area of Watching Brief

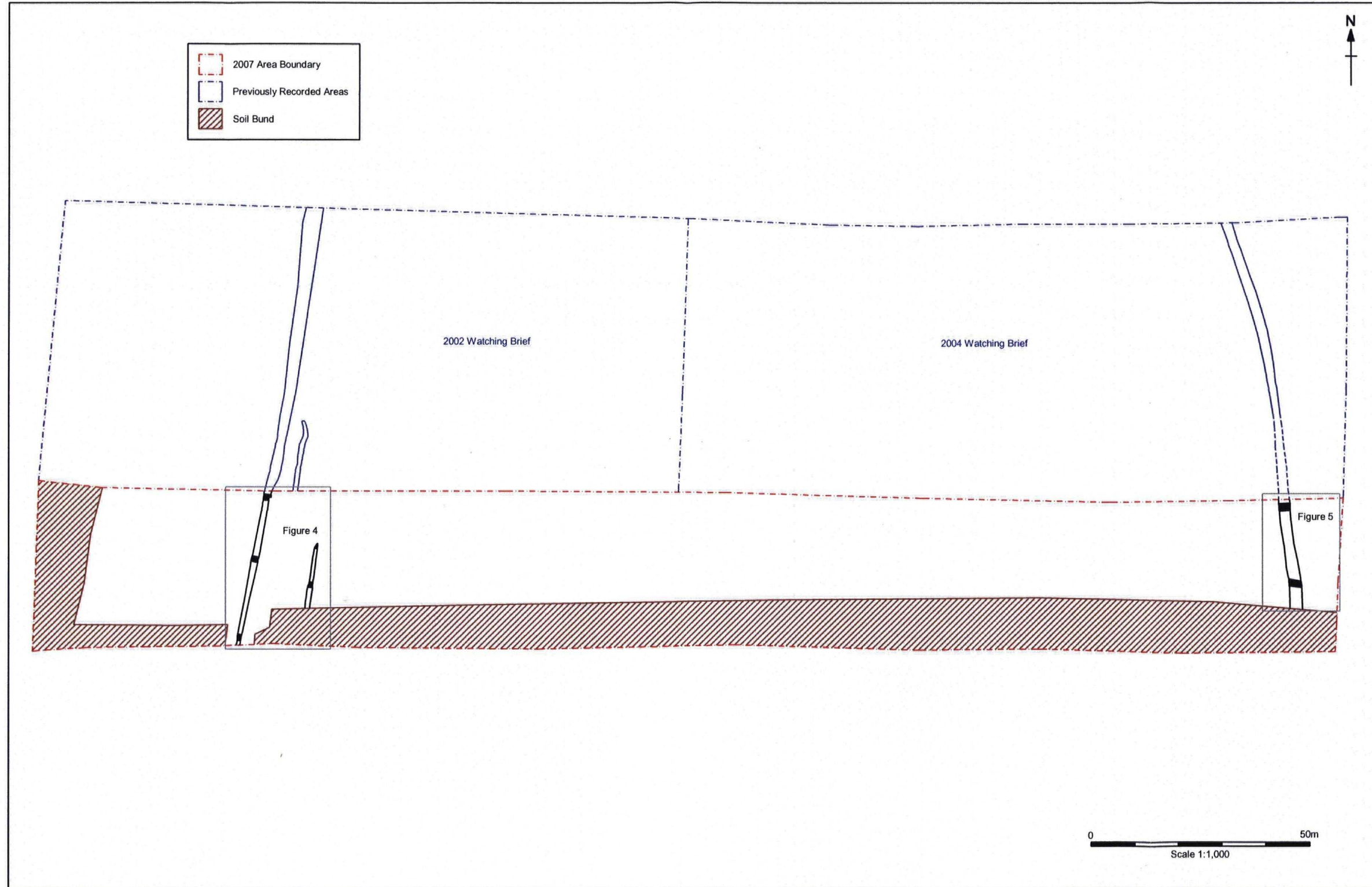


Figure 3. Watching Brief Features

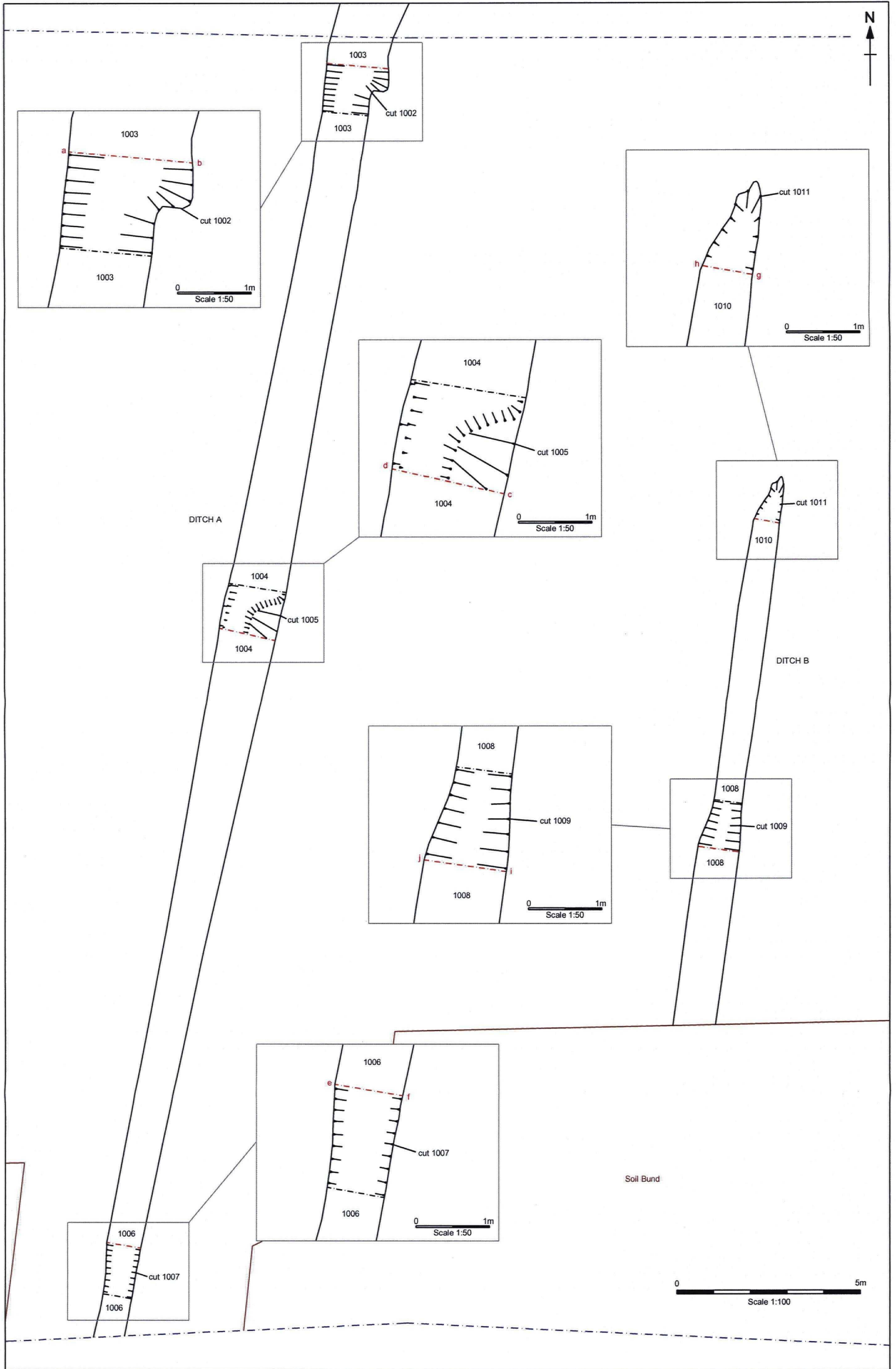


Figure 4. Plan of Ditches A and B