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CATTERICK RACECOURSE, NORTH YORKSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

INTRODUCTION

In May 1995 a new building was to be erected at Catterick Racecourse in the course of alterations to the buildings and layout of the Course Compound in the centre of the course (see plan 1). The site is adjacent to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Cataractonium, the Roman fort and settlement, and within a wider area in which archaeological remains from prehistoric periods onwards have been recorded. For this reason an archaeological watching brief was required on ground disturbance work at the site.

THE WATCHING BRIEF

The work was undertaken in the week commencing 22 May 1995. The building to be erected consisted of a canopy against an existing brick building (see plan 2) in the central compound, and ground disturbance was limited to twelve holes, each 90 cm square and 100 cm deep, in two lines beside the existing building, one immediately adjacent and the other approximately six metres away. The holes were excavated by machine and finished by hand, apart from Hole 6, at the southern end of the building, which was hand dug throughout.

Of the outer row, the northernmost four contained sandy mid brown loam below either grass, concrete or gravel. The southernmost hole contained modern rubble throughout. Hole 5 contained modern rubble above a pale sandy brown loam with stones, with some large cobbles at c 90 cm below the surface.

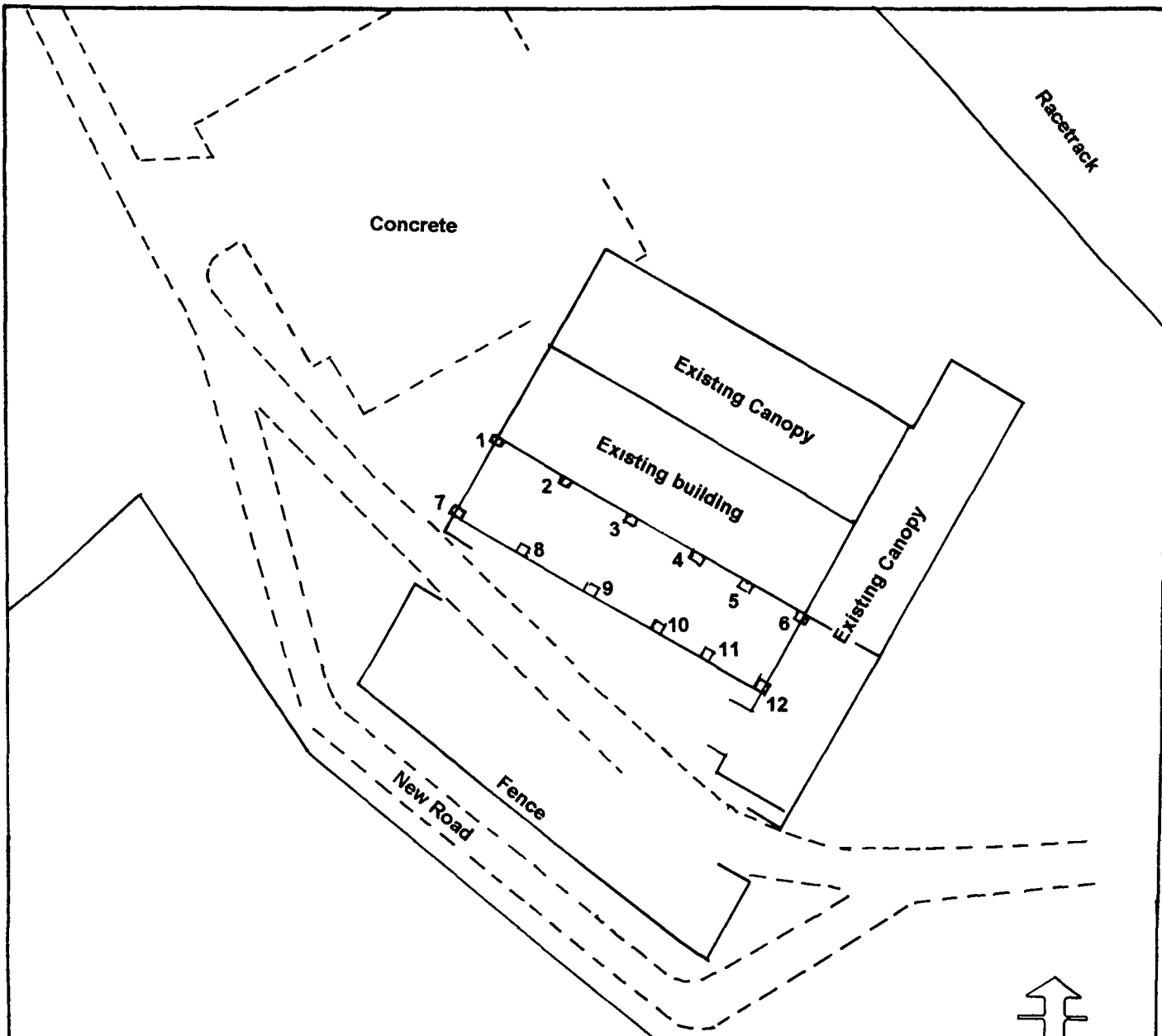
The inner row of holes were all broken through concrete and abutted the foundations of the existing building. The northernmost five contained some modern debris in the upper fill, but brown sandy loam below. Hole 12, which was hand dug because of its position among existing buildings, lay across a drop in ground level of 25 cm from north to south. The hole contained modern drains and brick rubble to 60 cm below the surface to the north, below which was a brown sandy, stony loam. At 95 cm below the surface to the north was a scatter of large cobbles, among which was a single fragment of Roman Samian ware pottery. No other archaeological finds were recovered.

CONCLUSIONS

The watching brief did not reveal any structures or firm evidence of Roman or any other period occupation. The cobbles observed in Holes 5 and 12 may represent the remains of a feature, but were too slight to be certain. They also occurred in holes with much modern disturbance. The single sherd of Roman pottery is not particularly significant in this context, as on parts of the racecourse where quarrying is being carried out, pottery and other archaeological material can be picked up from the surface, mainly from redeposition from earlier disturbances.

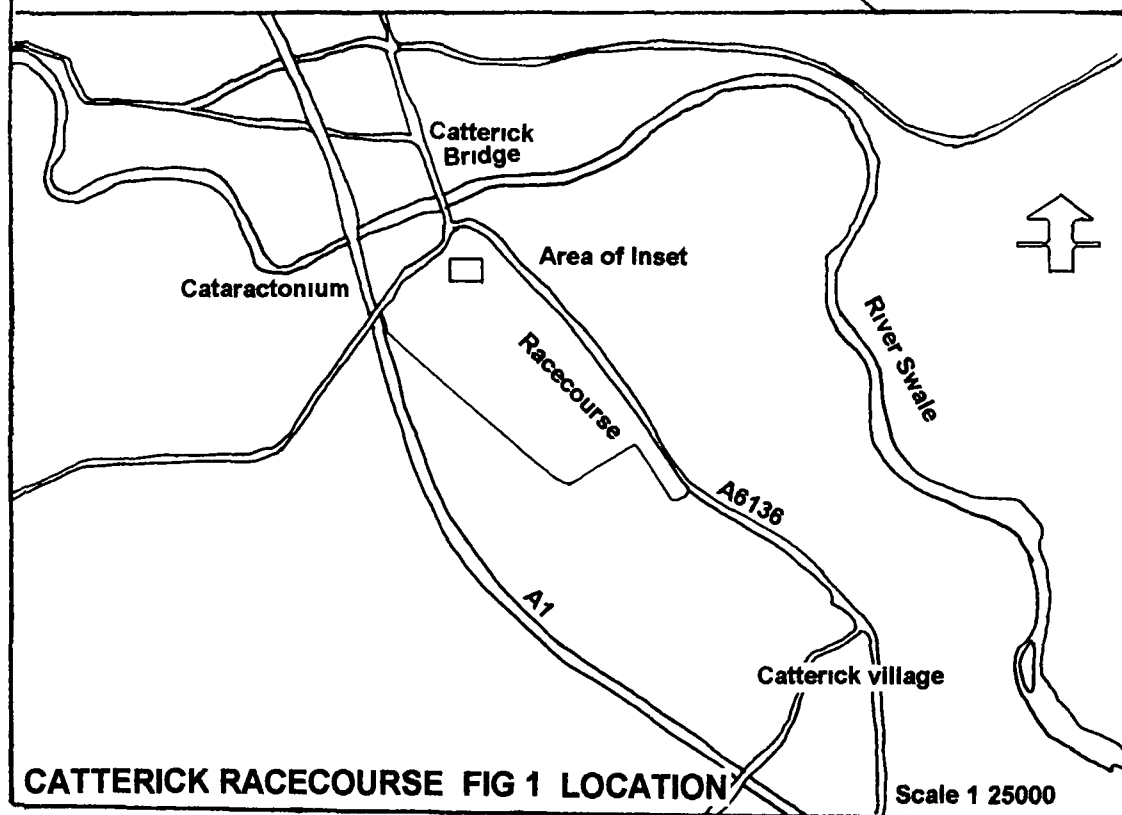
Alison Clarke

June 1995



CATTERICK RACECOURSE FIG 2 NEW BUILDING

Scale 1 500



CATTERICK RACECOURSE FIG 1 LOCATION

Scale 1 25000