ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES WYAS

Cat Babbleton Farm
Ganton
Scarborough
North Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

December 2009

Report No. 2004

CLIENT

David Bradley

Cat Babbleton Farm, Ganton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An archaeological watching brief maintained during groundworks ahead of the construction of a free range laying unit at Cat Babbleton Farm, North Yorkshire, identified a pit of 18th to 19th century date. Unstratified Romano-British pottery and prehistoric flint work was also recovered indicating low level human activity in the vicinity of the site from the prehistoric period onwards.

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Report Information

Client:	David Bradley
Address:	Cat Babbleton Farm, Ganton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO12 3PQ
Report Type	Watching Brief
Location:	Cat Babbleton Farm, Ganton, Scarborough
County:	North Yorkshire
Grid Reference:	TA 0002 7452
Period(s) of activity represented:	Modern
Report Number:	2004
Project Number:	3490
Site Code:	CBF09
Planning Application No.:	09/00595/MFULE
Museum Accession No.:	
Date of fieldwork:	October 2009
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Project Management:	Alistair Webb BA, MIfA
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Report:	Phil Weston
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Ian Pick Associates acting on behalf of his client David Bradley to undertake an archaeological watching brief during foundation excavations prior to the construction of a free range egg unit on land at Cat Babbleton Farm, Ganton, Scarborough, North Yorkshire. The watching brief follows on from a desk based assessment of the site (Grassam 2009) and a geophysical survey (Harrison 2009), both of which were carried out by ASWYAS.

Site location and topography

Cat Babbleton Farm is located approximately 3.5km to the south of the village of Ganton, in the Yorkshire Wolds (see Fig. 1), to the west of Ganton Hill which runs north/south between Ganton and Foxholes. The proposed development site lies approximately 130m to the north of Cat Babbleton Farm, (centered at NGR TA 0002 7452). The rectangular footprint of the free range egg unit covered an area of 2720m^2 (see Fig. 2).

The site lies at a height of approximately 135m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) in an undulating landscape with the land rising steeply to the north and falling away to the south (see Plate 1 and Plate 2).

Soils, geology and land-use

The geology consists predominately of chalk with flint and thin marl beds, though a narrow band of mudstone (Lias Group) runs north-east of Cat Babbleton Farm in a south-westerly direction, where it meets a second narrow band which runs north-west to south-west through Ganton Dale (British Geological Survey 1998). The overlying soils of the area are classified in the Panholes association being characterised as well-drained, calcareous, fine silts over chalk (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1980). The site was formerly under arable cultivation.

2 Archaeological and Historical Background

Palaeolithic to Bronze Age period

The earliest human activity within the North Yorkshire area probably followed the retreat of the ice sheets around 10,000 BC, as small Nomadic groups moved north with the improving climate. Such activity is likely to have been limited by the climatic conditions, but small assemblages of flint tools dating to the Upper Palaeolithic period (*c.* 11500 BC – *c.* 8000 BC) and the Mesolithic (*c.* 8000 BC – *c.* 4000 BC) have been found on the east coast of North Yorkshire at Flixton Carr and at Seamer Carr, approximately 7km to the north-east and 10km to the north of the site respectively (Vyner 2003, 30; Manby 2003, 31). The site of Star Carr, located some 7.5km to the north-east, has produced wood and bone objects of Mesolithic date, preserved by the waterlogging of the area (Clark 1954), which may represent the

remains of seasonal hunting camps, making use of the marine resources of the area during the winter and spring.

The Neolithic period is traditionally seen as marking the introduction of farming, as nomadic hunter-gatherer subsistence gave way to agriculture and the domestication of animals. The archaeological evidence is increasingly showing that this was more a feature of the later Neolithic and Bronze Age periods however, and that in the main the population continued to be predominately nomadic during the earlier part of the Neolithic period, with sites typically represented by scatters of flint, pottery and burnt stone.

Settlement evidence for the Bronze Age period is relatively limited in East Yorkshire, although two Late Bronze Age defended sites have been identified at Castle Hill, approximately 10km to the east of the site, and at Paddock Hill, Thwing, 7.5km to the south-east (Manby 2003, 40). Areas of possible Bronze Age field systems have also been identified across the Yorkshire Wolds with substantial areas defined by linear earthworks, boundary ditches and trackways (Stoertz 1997, 62).

Evidence for human activity close to the site during the early prehistoric period is limited to a flint axe of Neolithic date, found approximately 400m to the east of the development site, however over 40 pieces of worked flint were recovered during an archaeological excavation undertaken in 1986 at the site of Barrow Farm, approximately 700m to the north of Cat Babbleton Farm (Cardwell 1989).

The Neolithic and early Bronze Age periods are also characterised by the introduction of large ceremonial and funerary monuments and many examples have been recorded throughout the Yorkshire Wolds (Storez 1997). A group of ring ditches, which probably represent the remains of round barrows, have been identified as cropmarks approximately 500m to the south of the site, whilst a second group of possible round barrows is located to the north-east, although these may form part of an Iron Age square barrow cemetery.

Iron Age and Roman periods

There is extensive evidence for Iron Age activity throughout East Yorkshire. The earliest settlements may have been in continuous use from the Bronze Age, such as the defended site at Castle Hill, Scarborough (Spratt 1990). The later Iron Age saw the development of settlements consisting of small fields and plots, defined by ditches and banks. Larger areas of linear field systems were also laid out, often aligned along a trackway or ditch (Stoertz 1997). These are known as 'ladder settlements', and comprise smaller rectilinear enclosures, probably connected with stock rearing (Dent 1983, 39).

One of the most characteristic Iron Age monuments in East Yorkshire is the square barrow. The earliest of these appeared in the mid-5th century BC but this form of burial appears to have continued in practice into the 1st century BC (Dent 1983, 36). Cropmarks representing a

possible cemetery containing sixteen square barrows lie approximately 650m to the east of the site, along with the remains of round barrows of possible Bronze Age date.

By the late Iron Age, much of eastern Yorkshire, from the River Humber in the south, the Yorkshire Moors in the north and the River Derwent and Howardian Hills in the west fell within the tribal territory of the Parisi. The tribal territory of the Parisi fell under Roman control about AD 71, as the Roman army moved northwards through the area to outflank the Brigantes to the west, and it has been suggested that there was little resistance by the Parisi (Cunliffe 2005, 215). It is likely that the Iron Age settlement pattern across eastern Yorkshire continued through into the Roman period, although there is evidence of more elaborate villas being constructed from the mid-3rd century onwards (Spratt 1990, 156).

Cropmarks of enclosures representing the remains of a possible late Iron Age or Roman settlement lie approximately 430m to the north of the site, alongside a double-ditched north-west to south-west aligned trackway. The outline of the enclosures in the settlement appear to show periodic remodelling and the site may therefore have been occupied for some time.

Cropmarks representing a second possible trackway, represented in part by a linear pit alignment, runs through the settlement in a south westerly direction, terminating some 300m to the west of the site. A second pit alignment runs from the main trackway away to the north-east. The latter was the subject of an archaeological investigation in 1986, prior to the construction of Barrow Farm, which exposed part of this linear boundary and it was seen to be initially composed from a series of pits which was later replaced by a shallow linear ditch (Cardwell 1986). The pottery recovered from the backfill of the boundary feature suggests that while it could have been established in the later Iron Age period, it continued to be utilised throughout the Roman period until the 5th century (Cardwell 1986).

Cropmarks of further enclosures and field systems of possible later prehistoric or Roman date have been identified in close proximity to the site, including a series of enclosures containing possible structures approximately 200m to the north. A single enclosure has also been recorded approximately 200m to the south of the site.

Anglo-Saxon, medieval and post-medieval periods

Following the end of Roman rule in AD 410, the former province fragmented into a number of small kingdoms, and the site probably fell within the area of the kingdom of Deira, which was established by the 6th century, although by the 7th century it formed part of the Northumbrian kingdom. Remains of Anglo-Saxon settlements are rare in Yorkshire, however investigations undertaken at West Heslerton, approximately 10km to the north-west, have revealed evidence for occupation throughout much of this period (Powlesland 1998). No evidence for activity during this period has been identified within the site, although the settlement of Ganton is recorded in the Domesday Book (Williams and Martin 1992), which suggests some occupation here by the late Anglo-Saxon period.

Occupation in the Yorkshire Wolds was probably much more extensive in the earlier medieval period than it appears today, with agriculture forming an important part of the economy. During the later medieval period, there was a dramatic decrease in the population in the Wolds, due in part to a shift to large scale sheep rearing and natural disasters such as the plague, and many settlements either decreased in size or were completely deserted (Goldberg 2003).

Cat Babbleton Farm is thought to have been built in the early 17th century and the surrounding land has therefore been in agricultural use from at least the early post-medieval period. The area has also seen subjected to some quarrying activity as well, and several chalk pits have been identified in the study area, including one approximately 150m to the south of the proposed development site.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aim of the watching brief was to identify and record the presence/absence, extent, condition, character and date of any archaeological features and deposits that may be disturbed or revealed during the groundworks. This would mitigate the destruction of any buried archaeological remains through 'preservation by record'.

4 Methodology

The archaeological watching brief and resulting excavation was carried out in accordance with recognised professional standards, specifically *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008), *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Excavation* (Institute for Archaeologists 2008) and *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991). ASWYAS's own methodologies (ASWYAS 2009) were also adhered to.

Topsoil and subsoil from the entire footprint of the building was excavated by a 360° mechanical excavator fitted with a 2.00m toothless ditching bucket under the direct supervision of a qualified archaeologist and stockpiled (see Plate 1). Natural deposits from the higher, northern end of the footprint were then machined out and the resulting material re-deposited over the southern half of the footprint in order to construct a solid, level, base for the egg laying unit. The northern half of the building footprint required a reduction in height of up to 4m.

Overburden was removed in successive spits until the archaeological horizon or natural deposits were encountered. Thereafter, all investigations were undertaken by hand. Artefactual evidence was collected whenever encountered and environmental samples were taken from significant and primary archaeological deposits. All archaeological features and

deposits were photographed and drawn to scale as appropriate and recorded using a standardised *pro-forma* system. Feature sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10.

5 Results

The first phase of machine excavation consisted of a topsoil strip. The topsoil (100) comprised mid to dark brown, sandy, silt-rich earth with frequent limestone fragments up to 0.40m in depth (Plate 1). The topsoil directly overlaid the chalk bedrock at the top of the slope, along the north-western edge of the building footprint. Further down-slope a colluvial subsoil (101) was encountered, which consisted of mid reddish brown clayey silt (Plate 2). A borehole that was excavated prior to works commencing indicated that, at the centre of the footprint, 101 was deeper than 6m.

A single pit feature (103) was identified during the monitoring. The pit measured 3.40m+ by 2.80m and was 0.72m in depth (see Fig. 3; Plate 3). It contained three fills; the basal (106) which consisted of a friable deposit of small fragments of chalk in a grey-brown silty matrix; the middle (105) which consisted almost entirely of fragmentary chalk up to 200mm in size; and the upper fill (104) which was a gradually formed mid brown silt deposit.

The composition of the middle fill (105) suggests it was rapidly re-deposited into the pit, probably shortly after its excavation. Some animal bone and a few pieces of ceramic building material was incorporated in to the deposit but not enough to suggest the pit was entirely concerned with rubbish disposal.

The animal bone consisted of cattle remains that were found throughout context 105 and also six horse phalanges that were found in a single deposit (see Plate 4). The remains represent a minimum of two individuals. Cut marks on some of the phalanges suggest they were flayed.

The five pieces of ceramic building material (CBM) consisted of one brick fragment and four fragments of pantile. The form and composition of the CBM indicate an 18th to 19th century date for the pit.

6 Artefact Record

The pottery by Phil Weston

Ten sherds of pottery were recovered from subsoil 101 during the excavation at Cat Babbleton Farm. All were well rolled and rounded indicating they had been within the plough zone for some considerable time. The assemblage requires no further work due to its un-stratified nature but it is worth noting that Romano-British fabrics were predominant.

The flint by Phil Weston

Three flint artefacts were recovered from topsoil 100 during the stripping of the unit footprint. They consist of three flakes, one of which has been abruptly retouched along its right lateral side and distal edge forming a side scrapper. All three pieces are derived from the relatively poor local Yorkshire Wolds flint. None of the pieces are indicative of a particular date other than being pre-Iron Age.

The ceramic building material by John Tibbles

Five fragments of ceramic building material were recovered from pit 103. Four of the fragments were pantile of the very late 18th-mid 19th centuries, whilst a brick fragment (based on thickness and fabric) dated to the 18th century.

7 Environmental Record

The animal bone by Jane Richardson

In total, 32 fragments of animal bone were recovered from pit 103, but these may represent as few as twelve discrete elements. Cattle bones from fill 105 include the right radius and ulna from one animal, but most curious was the deposit of six horse first phalanges. Two pairs were noted (perhaps representing the fore and hind limbs of a single animal), but clearly at least one other horse is also represented by two further (broken) first phalanges. Both of the broken examples display cut marks running across the width of the bone. Given their position, the cuts are likely to have occurred during skinning. Why only first phalanges are represented here, however, is unclear.

Table 1. Animal bones by context

Context	Taxa	Element	Quantity
104	Large mammal	Vertebrae fragments	14
	Large mammal	Skull fragment	1
105	Horse	First phalange (complete)	4
	Horse	First phalange (incomplete, butchered)	2
	Horse	Maxillary tooth	1
	Cattle	Scapula fragments	8
	Cattle	Proximal radius (fused)	1
	Cattle	Proximal ulna (fused)	1
Total			32

8 Conclusions

The watching brief carried out at Cat Babbleton Farm identified a single archaeological feature, a pit dating to the 18th or 19th century, indicating human activity on, or close to, the site during this period; the farm is thought to have been founded in the early 17th century. The recovery of Romano-British pottery from the subsoil and flint artefacts from the topsoil indicate utilisation of the landscape from the prehistoric onwards but no contemporary archaeological remains were identified. No further work is required on the site in respect to the current building works.

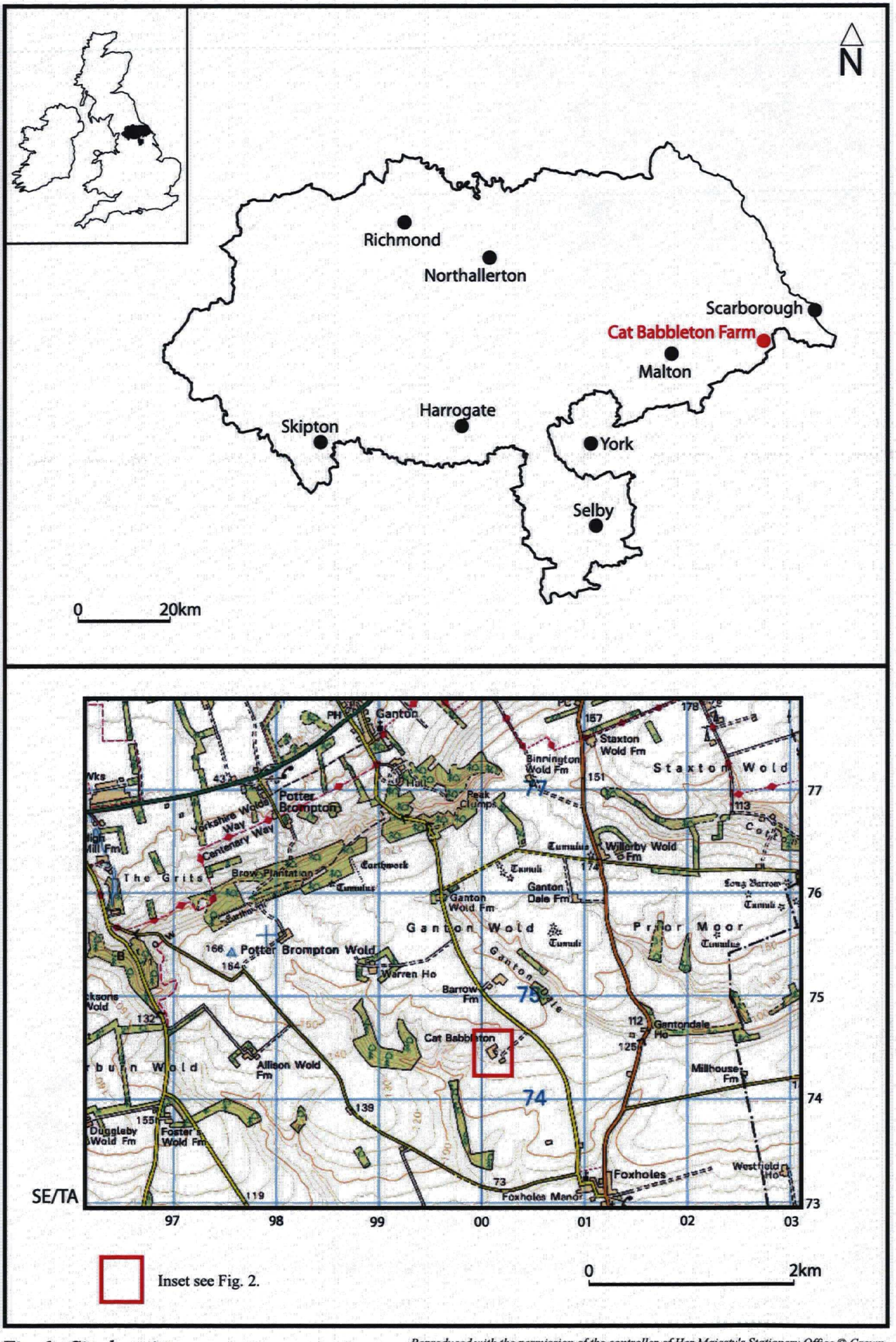


Fig. 1. Site location

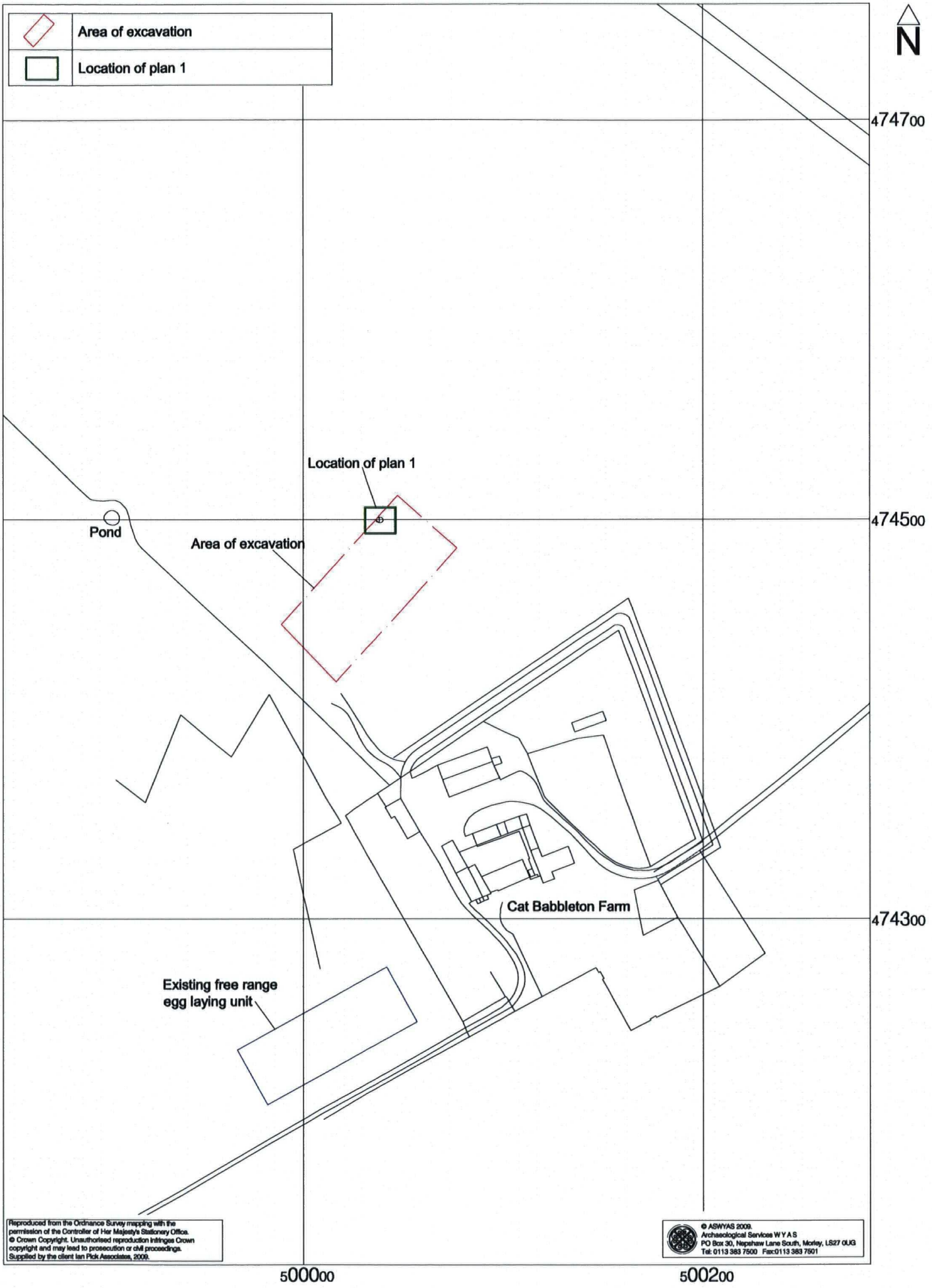
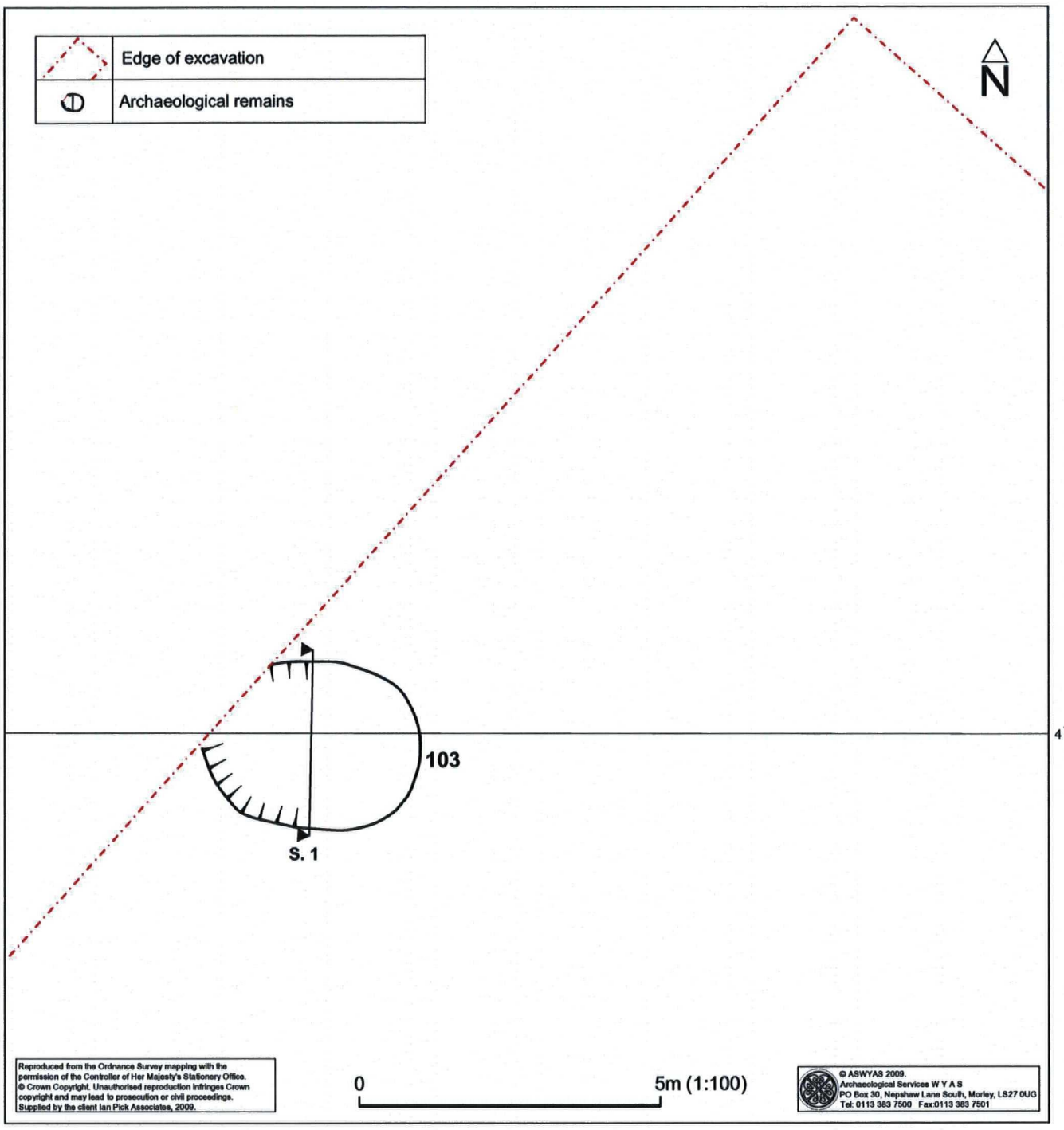


Fig. 2. Site location and excavation area (1:2500 @ A4)



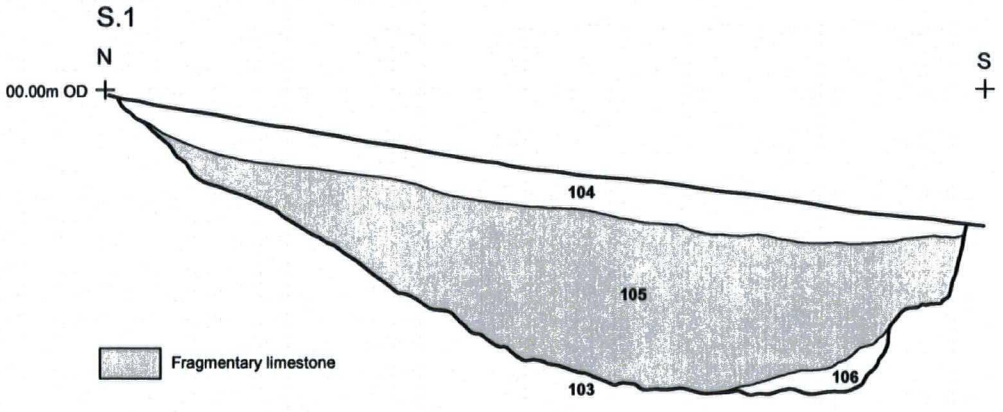


Fig. 3. Plan and section of archaeological remains

Plate 1: The topsoil strip, view north-east

Plate 2: The subsoil strip, chalk bedrock exposed and reduced in foreground, view south-west

Plate 3: Pit 103, view east

Plate 4: Deposit of horse phalanges within pit 103, view from above

Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive

Phase	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no.1	Context register sheets	1
		Drawing register sheets	2
		Sample register sheets	1
		Finds register sheets	1
		Photo register sheets	3
		Colour negative strips	1
		B&W negative strips	1
		Context sheets (nos. 100-106)	7

Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts yielding artefacts or environmental remains

Context	Description	Artefacts and environmental samples
100	Topsoil	Flint (3)
101	Subsoil	Iron Age/Romano-British pottery (10)
102	Natural chalk bedrock	
103	Cut of pit	
104	Upper fill of pit 103	Animal bone
105	Middle fill of pit 103	Animal bone, Fe object (1), GBA 1
106	Lower fill of pit 103	

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