

1/43/7F/PA

NYCC HER	
SNY	15912
ENY	5371
CNY	
Parish	1043
Rec'd	? 1996

**Archaeological Monitoring for a
Potato Shed Extension at Park House Farm
Aldborough St John, Richmond.**

*Archaeological Services
University of Durham
June 1996*

ENVIR
Recd 25 JUN 1996
SAU USF LES
Ackd. ✓ 27 96
report recorded 27 96.

**Park House Farm:
Potato Shed Extension**

Archaeological Monitoring

NZ 1888 1055
Stanwick St John CP
North Yorkshire

by Archaeological Services
on behalf of
P L Westgarth

Planning Decision 1/43/7F/PA/F

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1. Summary

Client

P L Westgarth
Pond Dale
Gilling West
Richmond
North Yorkshire
DL10 5LB

Location (Figure 1)

Park House Farm is a large farming unit specialising in pigs and potatoes, situated on gently undulating land in the middle Tees Valley, south of the river. The farm lies 1km south-west of the village of Aldborough St John, and 10km south-west of Darlington. The potato shed extension lies on the south-western side of the farm complex, being constructed over land then in use as a hard standing and roadway for farm traffic.

Dates

Fieldwork was conducted from May 20th-22nd 1996. This report was written between May 24th and June 6th 1996.

Personnel

Fieldwork was conducted by Dr S H Willis, Field Archaeologist with Archaeological Services, University of Durham, who also prepared this report. Illustrations are by L Bosveld.

Summary of results

No features, deposits or finds of special interest were revealed in the developer's stanchion holes. Some data, of archaeological significance given the context of this site, was recovered, however.

Summary of recommendations

Park House Farm lies in an area of national archaeological importance and although nothing warranting special attention was encountered during the current work, any further ground disturbance in this area should be monitored by an archaeologist since the likelihood of unique archaeological deposits being disturbed is considerable.

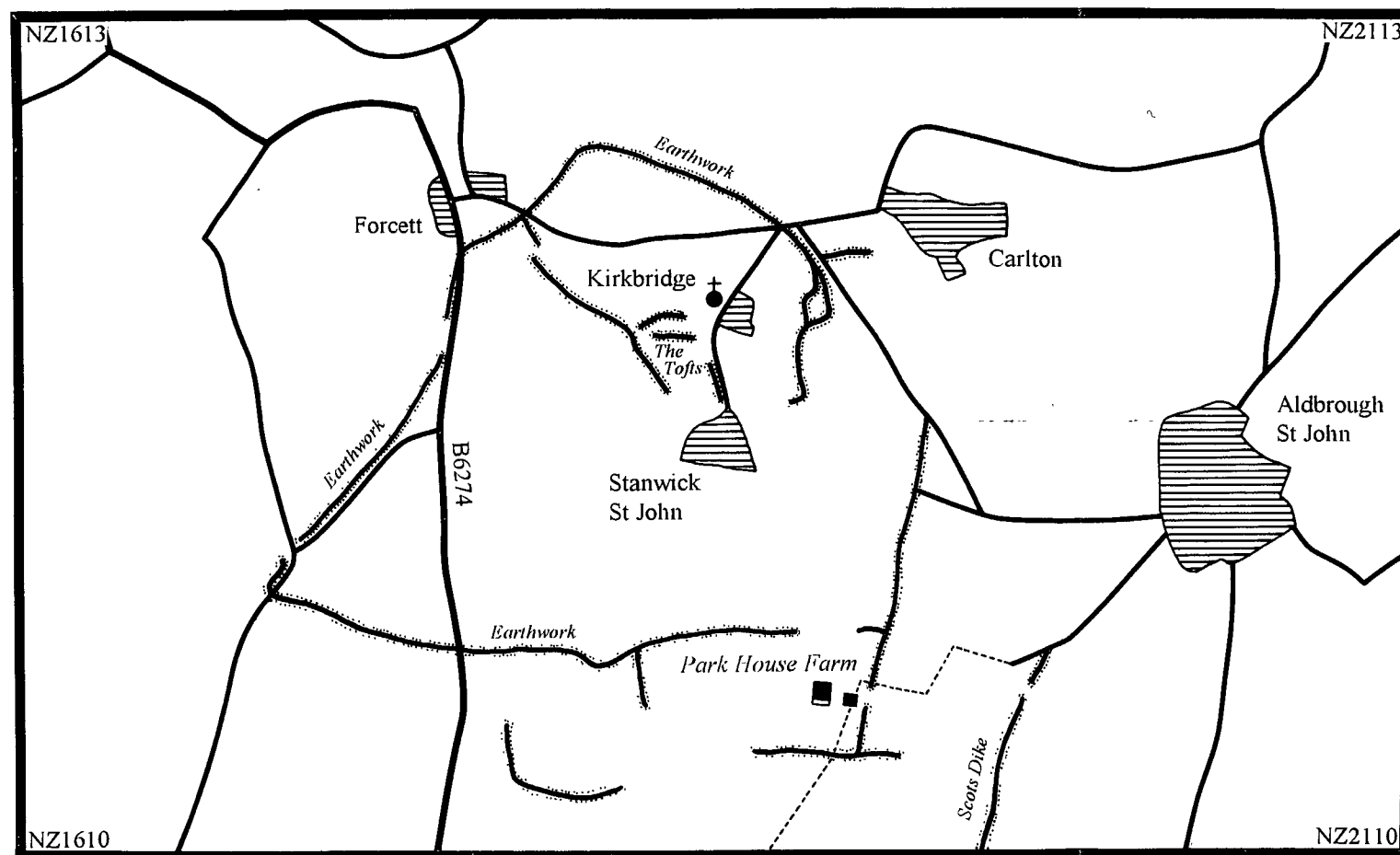
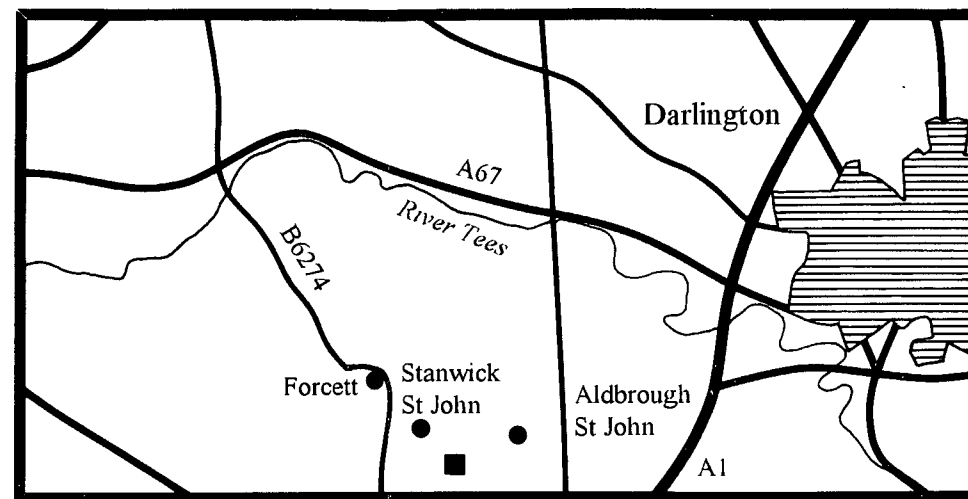
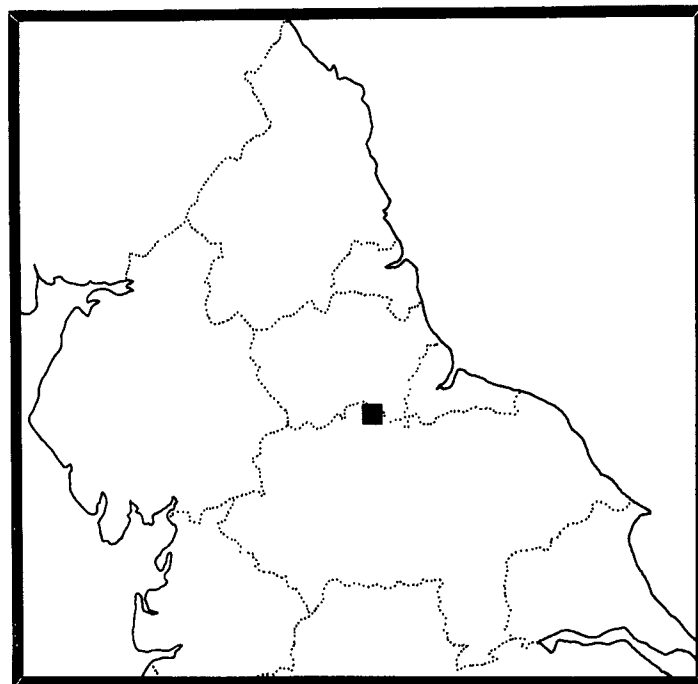


Figure 1: Map showing the location of Park House Farm and the outlines of the new extension in relation to the Stanwick earthworks

2. Introduction

2.1 Project background

S & A Fabrications were intending to construct a substantial steel frame storage shed on behalf of Mr P Westgarth, the farmer and owner of Park House Farm. This structure effectively extends three existing and adjoining large storage sheds, being contiguous with them. Its alignment (long axis) is approximately east-west. The erection of this structure entailed the excavation of 27 large stanchion holes for the insertion of tie-plates for the shed frame. These holes were likely to disturb any extant archaeological deposits in this archaeologically sensitive locality. On the advice of the County Archaeologist for North Yorkshire planning consent was granted by Richmondshire District Council on the condition that any excavations be observed and recorded by an archaeologist.

2.2 Historical and archaeological background

Park House Farm, a 19th-Century stone built house, lies just 230m south of the Stanwick earthworks (NY43), an Iron Age and Roman settlement complex which is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and one of the most important archaeological sites in Britain. Excavations undertaken at Stanwick by Sir Mortimer Wheeler in the 1950s (Wheeler 1954) and more recently by North Yorkshire County Council, Durham University and Dickinson College, Pennsylvania (Haselgrove *et al* 1991, forthcoming) have dated and helped to characterize the site, revealing a long and complex history of occupation. Contemporary Iron Age and Roman occupation is known outside the earthworks, Durham University have recently excavated one such occupation site 0.5km to the east of Park House. Similarly occupation immediately outside the earthworks is suspected in the near vicinity of Wheeler's excavation on the north-west circuit, his Site A (Wheeler 1954). Park House itself lies within an enclosure of further earthworks to the west, south and east. The nearest, to the east, runs just in front of Park House, while to the south their alignment is 120m beyond the site of the shed extension. These survive as upstanding monuments, which had been interpreted by Wheeler as forming an annex to the main Stanwick earthworks circuit, perhaps of Anglo-Saxon origin (Wheeler 1954). However, these earthworks are not well dated or understood (Haselgrove *et al* 1991) and seem unlikely to be contemporary with the main Stanwick earthworks. Their understanding is, nonetheless, important. Another major earthwork, Scots Dike (NAR·LIN42), is located 400m east of Park House, this feature is believed to be of early medieval date.

No archaeological investigations had previously taken place in the Park House area thus making the observation of the stanchion holes a valuable exercise. Some possibility exists that deposits associated with the Stanwick complex, including graves, occupation, ritual deposits, etc. may be located in this area, as well as unanticipated features of other dates.

3. The excavated stanchion holes (Figure 2)

3.1 Methods statement

In order to insert tie-plates for the superstructure of the shed extension 5 rows of stanchion holes were cut, with four rows following the alignment of the walls of the existing bams (north-south) while the other was perpendicular to these, forming the gable end. Twenty-seven rectangular stanchion holes were cut by the contractors using the back-hoe actor, with bucket, of a JCB under the supervision of the archaeologist. The holes averaged 1.4m by 1.2m in plan, except for 8 along the gable end which were of smaller dimension, c 1.2m by 0.8m, they all averaged 1.2m in depth. The sections of these cuts were cleaned by the archaeologist by hand to ascertain the nature of the deposits revealed. The holes were recorded using the same labelling system as employed by the contractors.

3.2 General summary of the stratification

No features, deposits or finds of special interest were revealed in the stanchion holes. Data of archaeological significance was however recovered.

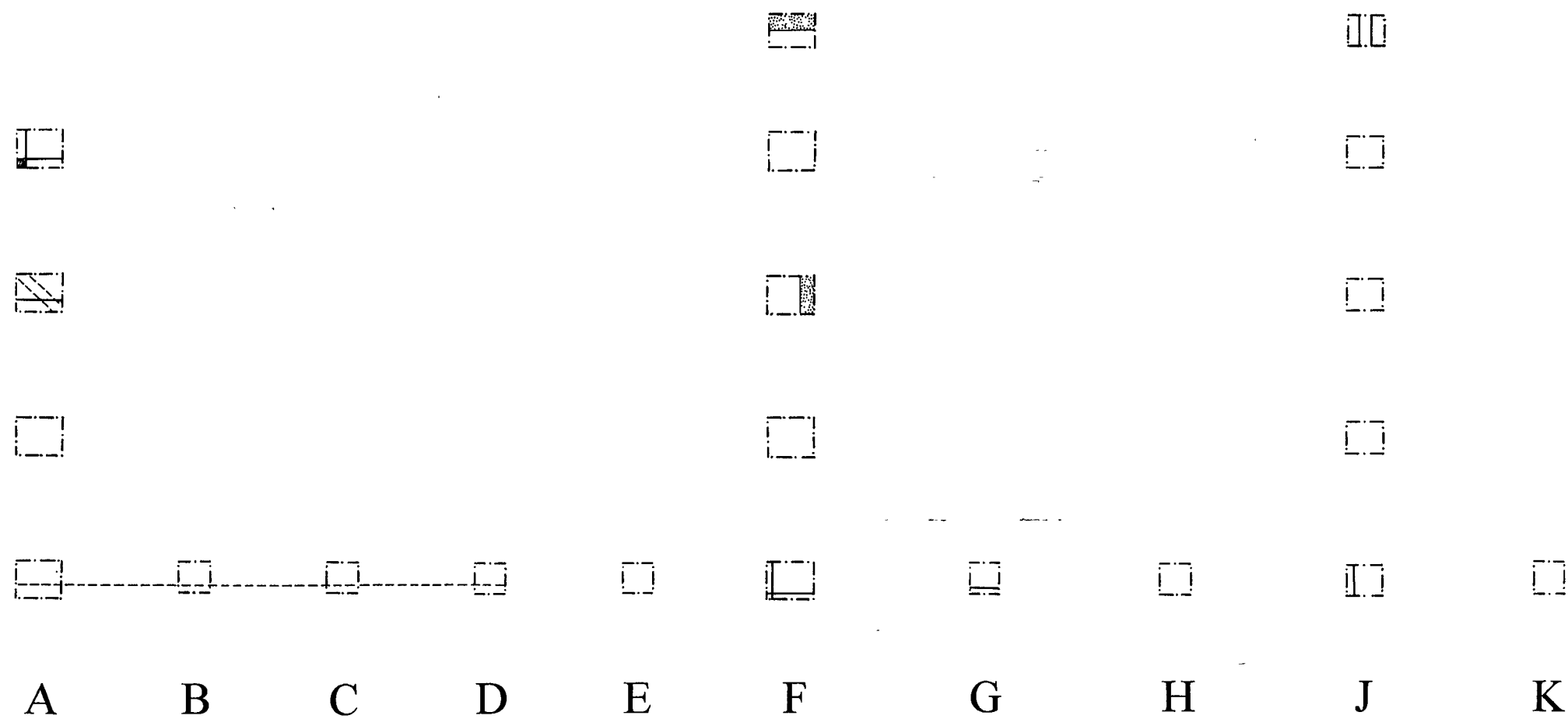
Holes F5, F6, J6 and M4 in the northern and eastern areas of the development cut thick grey-green clay deposits which could represent a single horizon (with associated substantial stake hole), although they may be autonomous. This material resembles a deposit excavated in recent years in the Tofts field, Stanwick St John, 0.5km to the north-east of Park House, though it may well be of relatively modern origin. No finds or dating evidence were recovered from this horizon and so its date, as well as its origin, are not established. In F6 it appears to overlie a deposit taken to be a remnant of a ploughsoil.

The general sequence across the area was as follows.




(i) The top horizon across the area effected by the shed extension comprised various materials forming a hard standing and roadway for farm vehicles, including concrete immediately south of existing sheds, plus sundry metalling materials, hard core, etc, beyond this further to the south.

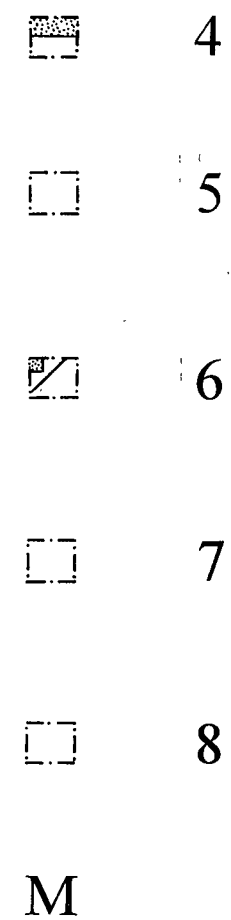
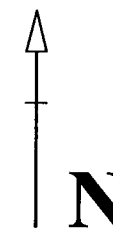
(ii) Below this along the southern side of the development (A8 to L8) a disturbed and truncated 'old' ploughsoil was encountered, comprising a brown clay loam. This horizon evidently relates to the use of the area prior to the piecemeal construction of barns and farm outbuildings here in recent decades, behind Park House, and ties in with the field drain system which was also located in this specific area.

In the north-east area of the development a different deposit was observed underlying the concrete and hard core/mbble, though not systematically evident in every trench (see below). This layer was a thick, compact deposit of grey-green loamy clay, from which dating evidence was absent. In all instances of its occurrence it directly overlay boulder clay. In Hole J6 this deposit evidently filled a horizontal truncation of the natural in this vicinity since within J6 the top of the boulder clay was consistently 0.08m lower by the site datum than in Hole J7 to the South. It is possible that this represents the bottom fill of a medieval plough furrow at this point, although this deposit does not appear to have been a humic soil. More likely this deposit may represent a trackway/farm yard mud, filling a slight hollowing. In this connection it is pertinent to observe that an existing field boundary and track exists to the west,



Key:

	Concrete
	Drainage
	Water pipes



0 metres 15

Figure 2: Plan of stanchion holes and identified features within them

beyond the most western sheds of the farm complex, with which the hollowing may be aligned. Alternatively the deposit could be a much older archaeological deposit, and it is noteworthy that within J6 a substantial stake hole was recorded cutting the layer, though clearly not recent since it was filled with similar material to the layer.

(iii) Below the ploughsoil and grey-green clay deposits natural boulder clay was consistently observed. This was characteristically identical to boulder clay deposits encountered by the author at various sites in the area.

(iv) A number of water pipe and drain trenches, all very recent features, serving the farm buildings, were observed in the process of excavating the stanchion holes. In virtually all cases these cut natural deposits and the water pipes in A6 cut and overlay the field drain system (see below).

(v) The field drain system observed on the southern side of the development was evidenced by ceramic pipes (identified in Holes A6, F8, G8 and H8) laid in a rectilinear pattern. The pipes are of a type not previously seen in the area by the monitoring archaeologist but presumably relate to 19th-Century agricultural improvements, for which there is much evidence from Stanwick, Aldborough and Melsonby parishes. Ploughsoil sealed the cuts of the field drain trenches, so clearly the insertion of this system took place before this part of the field went out of agricultural use. The identification of this system is a useful minor addition to our knowledge of this practice in the region.

3.3 Details of the stanchion holes (Figure 2)

Each area is described in turn, proceeding west to east, by row; with a south-west origin. Each area reference is given and followed by length/width measurements, with east-west measurements recorded first.

A8: 1.5m by 1.15m. Natural at 0.38m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a modern water pipe was observed. There were no other deposits.

B8: 0.75m by 1.1m. Natural at 0.3m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a modern water pipe was observed. There were no other deposits.

C8: 0.8m by 1.15m. Natural at 0.25m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a modern water pipe was observed. There were no other deposits.

D8: 0.8m by 1.2m. Natural at 0.3m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a modern water pipe was observed. There were no other deposits.

E8: 0.8m by 1.35m. Natural at 0.3m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. There were no other deposits.

F8: 1.27m by 1.5m. Natural at 0.35m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench, t-shaped in plan, for a ceramic field drain was observed, with a pipe traversing F8 east-west and being joined by another on a north-south alignment. There were no other deposits.

G8: 0.8m by 1.25m. Natural at 0.28m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a field drain pipe traversing G8 east-west was encountered, evidently relating to that located in F8; the top of the pipe is 1.1m below the current ground surface. There were no other deposits.

H8: 0.76m by 1.12m. Natural at 0.3m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. There were no other deposits.

J8: 1.12m by 1.3m. Natural at 0.33m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. A trench for a field drain pipe traversing J8 north-south was encountered, evidently relating to that located in F8; the top of the pipe is 1m below the current ground surface. There were no other deposits.

K8: 0.8m by 1.1m. Natural at 0.35m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below disturbed ploughsoil. There were no other deposits.

L8: 0.8m by 1.2m. Natural at 0.22m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the hard core and disturbed ploughsoil. There were no other deposits.

M8: 1.46m by 1m. Natural at 0.27m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. There were no other deposits.

A7: 1.4m by 1.18m. Natural at 0.37m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core. There were no other deposits.

A6: 1.36m by 1.2m. Natural at 0.29m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. It had been cut by a field drain trench, with the pipe at 0.78m below the current ground surface. In turn this had been cut by a double water pipe trench. There were no other deposits.

A5: 1.45m by 1.17m. Natural at 0.23m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. A modern drain cut was observed on the west and south sides of A5. There were no other deposits.

F7: 1.4m by 1.36m. Natural at 0.37m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core. There were no other deposits.

F6: 1m by 1m. Natural at 0.42m below the current surface. Concrete and rubble were 0.25m thick, below which was a grey-green deposit appearing similar to that in

J6, etc. 0.07m thick. The latter overlay a brown clay loam (remnant of an old ploughsoil) which was 0.1m thick. An existing concrete stanchion on the east side of F6 had removed deposits above natural.

F5: 1.36m by 1.4m. Natural at 0.46m below the current surface. Concrete and rubble were 0.25m thick, below which was a disturbed grey-green deposit appearing similar to that in J6, etc. 0.21m thick. Natural underlay this deposit.

F4: 1.32m by 0.92m. Natural at 0.35m below the current surface. The concrete stanchion to the north would have destroyed any archaeological deposits above natural.

J7: 1.3m by 1.2m. Natural at 0.32m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below hard core. There were no other deposits.

J6: 1.15m by 1.15m. Natural at 0.5m below the current surface. Concrete and rubble were 0.23m thick, below which was the grey-green deposit 0.27m thick. The latter overlay natural. At a mid point in the northern section of J6 a stake-hole was visible, having been effectively half-sectioned by the JCB. It was 0.17m in diameter, extant for a depth of 0.45m and conical in form. It had been cut through the grey-green layer, with which it may have been associated, and had filled with analogous material.

J5: There was no opportunity to view this stanchion cutting.

J4: 1.06m by 1.09m. Below surface concrete a modern drain was encountered to take roof-run off from the existing sheds. This feature would have removed any deposits of archaeological interest. Natural was not observed in this cutting.

M7: 1.35m by 1m. Natural at 0.29m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. There were no other deposits.

M6: 1.2m by 1m. Natural at 0.3m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. There were no deposits of archaeological interest. A trench for a plastic drain pipe traversed M6 south-west to north-east, while a concrete stanchion had been inserted in the north-west corner.

M5: 1.02m by 1m. Natural at 0.4m below the current surface. Natural was observed immediately below the concrete and hard core. There were no other deposits.

M4: 1.2m by 0.9m. Natural at 0.55m below the current surface. Concrete and rubble were 0.27m thick, below which was the grey-green deposit (cf. J6) 0.28m thick. The latter overlay natural. A trench for a plastic drain pipe was clipped by M4 on its eastern side, while a concrete stanchion had been inserted for the existing shed in the north-west corner.

4. Discussion

Park House Farm lies in an area of national archaeological importance and although nothing warranting special attention was encountered during the current work it is important that any future ground disturbance in this area be subject to archaeological monitoring since the likelihood of unique archaeological deposits being disturbed is considerable.

At a specific level, the grey-green clay deposits (with associated stake hole), observed in several of the stanchion holes on the north-east side of the development are of interest. They may either represent a single layer or individual discrete spreads. The material broadly resembles Iron Age stratification excavated in recent years in the Tofts field, Stanwick St John, 0.5km to the north-east of Park House. Although these deposits are undated any further work in this area should ideally involve their examination in order to characterize them and establish their date.

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June 1996

Archaeological Services
University of Durham