

**STUDFORTH FARM, ALDBOROUGH
BOROUGHBRIDGE, NORTH YORKSHIRE**

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| SNY | 15925 |
| ENY | 5376 |
| CNY | 8523 |
| Parish | 6064 |
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Scheduled Monument Number 436

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF



JB Archaeological Services

On behalf of

Mr & Mrs Freathy

January 2010

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Summary

As the site lay within the Scheduled Monument area for Aldborough Roman Town (Monument Number 436), an Archaeological Watching Brief was required by the Scheduled Monument Consent on the various ground works for the conversion of the existing barn into a residential dwelling. The building in question was a barn at Studforth Farm on Back Lane, Aldborough, North Yorkshire (SE 4061 6609).

The watching brief was carried out on an 'as and when basis' as the conversion works progressed and was undertaken on a number of occasions between October 2009 and January 2010.

The results of the watching brief were negative due to the extensive disturbance caused by the original barn construction and the activities of the farm during its lifetime. The original form of the building generally had shallow footings and where they did cut into the underlying deposits they were of clean natural material.

The underlying natural sand/sandy gravel lies at c.0.40m below current ground level (c.36.60mOD) above which a humic topsoil, probably derived from earlier agricultural use and material generated from the adjacent barns, had developed.

A small assemblage of re-deposited Roman pottery was recovered from within the threshing barn. This material dates to no later than the second century AD. In addition to this late 18th, 19th and 20th century pottery was encountered in the topsoil from most parts of the site.

No direct evidence for Roman features was recorded and what Roman material survived had been re-deposited.

No other archaeological finds or features were recorded during the ground works.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report presents the results of an archaeological watching brief on the various stages of ground works on the conversion of a barn at Studforth Farm on Back Lane, Aldborough, North Yorkshire (SE 4061 6609) (Figure 1). The watching brief was a requirement of the Scheduled Monument Consent which accompanied the planning permission as the site lay within the Scheduled Monument area for Aldborough Roman Town (Monument Number 436).
- 1.2 The watching brief was conducted by JB Archaeological Services (JBAS) on behalf of Mr & Mrs Freathy, and was carried out on October 2009 and January 2010.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Historic Background

- 2.1 Much has been written about Aldborough and its Roman origins and it is not intended to repeat this here, only to provide a very brief setting for the recent archaeological work. The modern settlement of Aldborough lies largely within the boundaries of the Roman town of Isurium Brigantum and contains a range of well preserved archaeological monuments. The Roman town is recognised as being a civilian administrative centre for the area of the Brigantes tribe. The post-Roman development of the settlement was as a small rural settlement based around an economy of agriculture with various domestic residences and small farms in and around the former Roman town.
- 2.2 The place name for Aldborough is first recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Burg* and then as *Aldeburg* in 1145. The name derives from the Old English (*e*)*ald* and *burh* meaning 'old or disused stronghold' (Mills, 1998, 4).
- 2.3 The Studforth Farmstead is formed by an east facing farmhouse and an 'L' shaped range of agricultural buildings – all marked on the Ordnance Survey map of 1855. These buildings consist of a large threshing barn, with cruciform ventilators, and a later abutting two storey Mistal with hayloft above. The threshing barn is aligned roughly north-south and features a projecting canopy with cheeks (Brunskill, 1999).

Geology and Soils

- 2.4 The underlying solid geology of the site is of Permian and Triassic sandstones (British Geological Survey, 2001) which are overlain by a quaternary geology of alluvium (British Geological Survey 1977). The soils that have weathered from this are the Bishampton 1 association which are deep, fine loamy soils which are occasionally seasonally waterlogged (Soil Survey of England and Wales, 1983).

Topography and Land-use

- 2.5 Studforth Farm is situated on the southern side of Back Lane which in turn is on the southern edge of the Roman Town. The property stands on a gently sloping area of ground at a height of c.37mOD. To the south and east lie the

remains of the earth banks which once formed part of the earlier Roman defences. The building under investigation is an L-shaped barn which generally runs east-west and north-south with the east-west portion fronting onto Back Lane (Figure 2).

- 2.6 The building itself is no longer in agricultural use and the area around Studforth Farm is residential.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The objective of the watching brief was to identify and record any features of archaeological interest revealed or damaged during the various ground works for the redevelopment of the barn. The specific aims were to:

- archaeologically record (graphically and photographically) any archaeological features revealed by the ground works
- recover any archaeological artefacts and environmental material exposed by the test pits

- 3.2 All archaeological works were carried out in accordance with the Institute of Field Archaeologists Code of Conduct for an Archaeological Watching Brief (1999).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

- 4.1 A number of areas in and around the standing building required various amounts of ground reduction and the relaying of services. These different areas of disturbance are shown on Figure 2.

- 4.2 The ground works were generally undertaken using a tracked mechanical mini-digger with a toothless bucket under direct archaeological supervision with some areas of hand digging where access was more difficult. After the removal of any overburden, the mini-digger gradually reduced the ground level in 0.1-0.3m spits down into the subsoil, often in a series of short sections of up to c.4m long. The various excavations extended up to c.2m below the existing ground level depending upon the angle of slope being cut into. During the ground works the exposed ground surfaces were inspected for archaeological features and the resulting topsoil stockpiles were monitored for archaeological artefacts.

- 4.3 As no archaeological features were encountered a basic digital photographic record was made of the stages of the works. A small assemblage of re-deposited Roman pottery was recovered from within the main body of the barn (see comments below).

5.0 RESULTS

- 5.1 The watching brief was negative due to the extensive disturbance caused by the functioning of the former farm across the area as a whole and by its initial construction. The disturbance appears to have removed, or very heavily modified, any deposits lying above the natural geology and replaced it with a deposit of 18th century onwards soil mixed with general refuse and building debris.
- 5.2 The made ground across most of the site was of a loamy/humic soil probably derived from earlier agricultural use and material generated from the adjacent barns with numerous fragments of ceramic building material along with occasional sherds of mainly 19th and early 20th century ceramics. The area immediately to the east of the barn contained a much higher proportion of ceramic building material, particularly pantiles, and would appear to represent the remains of waste material associated with the re-roofing of the threshing barn.
- 5.3 Also to the east of the main barn and towards the northern end of the site there was a significant concentration of ceramic building material, ceramics and animal bone fragments which had formed a midden. The vast majority of the material was of 19th and early 20th century date but there were a number of fragments of late 18th century pottery mixed in with it.
- 5.4 During the ground reduction within the barn it was thought that a circular feature of probably Roman date had been uncovered. However, further investigation revealed that the feature was of modern origin as it contained large lumps of broken up modern concrete at its base. The Roman pottery initially thought to have been associated with it proved to have been re-deposited in the doorway of a former opening in the eastern side of the building. A large amount of soil and refuse material had been dumped in the hollow caused by farm traffic through the former entrance. The Roman pottery was within this dumped material which had been collected from elsewhere.
- 5.5 Below the recent deposits the underlying natural sand/sandy gravels are at c.36.60mOD and appear to be derived from a glacial lake.
- 5.6 No other archaeological finds or features were encountered during the excavation of the new driveway.

6.0 FINDS

Identification and spot dating by Peter Didsbury MPhil FSA

- 6.1 As already mentioned above, a number of sherds of re-deposited Roman pottery were recovered from within the threshing barn. The small assemblage was submitted to a specialist for comment:

Unstratified Romano-British pottery was submitted in the following types and amounts:

| <i>Type</i> | <i>No. of sherds</i> | <i>Wt of sherds (grams)</i> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Black-burnished ware (BB1) | 1 | 17 |
| Greyware | 3 | 21 |
| Oxidised ware | 6 | 71 |
| Rusticated ware | 2 | 21 |
| Samian | 3 | 34 |
| Whitewares | 2 | 77 |
| <i>TOTALS</i> | <i>17</i> | <i>241</i> |

Not all the components in this small unstratified assemblage are closely datable. Having said this, the most diagnostic components have a decidedly 'early' emphasis. Two sherds of Rusticated Ware, from the same vessel, fall within the period *c.*AD 70-130/50. The Black-Burnished Ware sherd is from a jar with acute-angled lattice, of probable second-century date. The samian, which is crisp and unworn, like much of this assemblage, includes a rim sherd with decoration *en barbotine*, of form 36, 42 or Curle 11. A Flavian or later date is indicated. The whiteware and redware flagons are not datable without further work. In summary, this is a good quality assemblage, nothing in which need post-date the second century AD.

- 6.2 During a previous watching brief on the excavation of a test pit adjacent to the area of the most recent finds, a single large sherd of the base of a burnished Roman greyware jar of similar date had been recovered from a post-barn construction deposit. As the topsoil containing the Roman pottery had been deposited against the building after its construction, this topsoil layer is not Roman in origin. However the large size and un-abraded nature of the piece suggests that it is close to its original place of deposition.

7.0 DISCUSSION and CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 As can be seen from above, the result of the watching brief was negative due to the disturbance caused by the original barn construction and the activities of the farm during its lifetime. No direct evidence for Roman features was recorded and what Roman material survived has been dated to no later than the second century AD. This material had also been re-deposited and its crisp, un-abraded nature suggests that it had not been moved far before re-deposition.
- 7.2 The underlying natural sand/sandy gravel lies at around 0.40m below current ground level (*c.*36.60mOD) above which is a humic/loamy topsoil. This seems to be derived from earlier agricultural use and material generated from the adjacent barns.

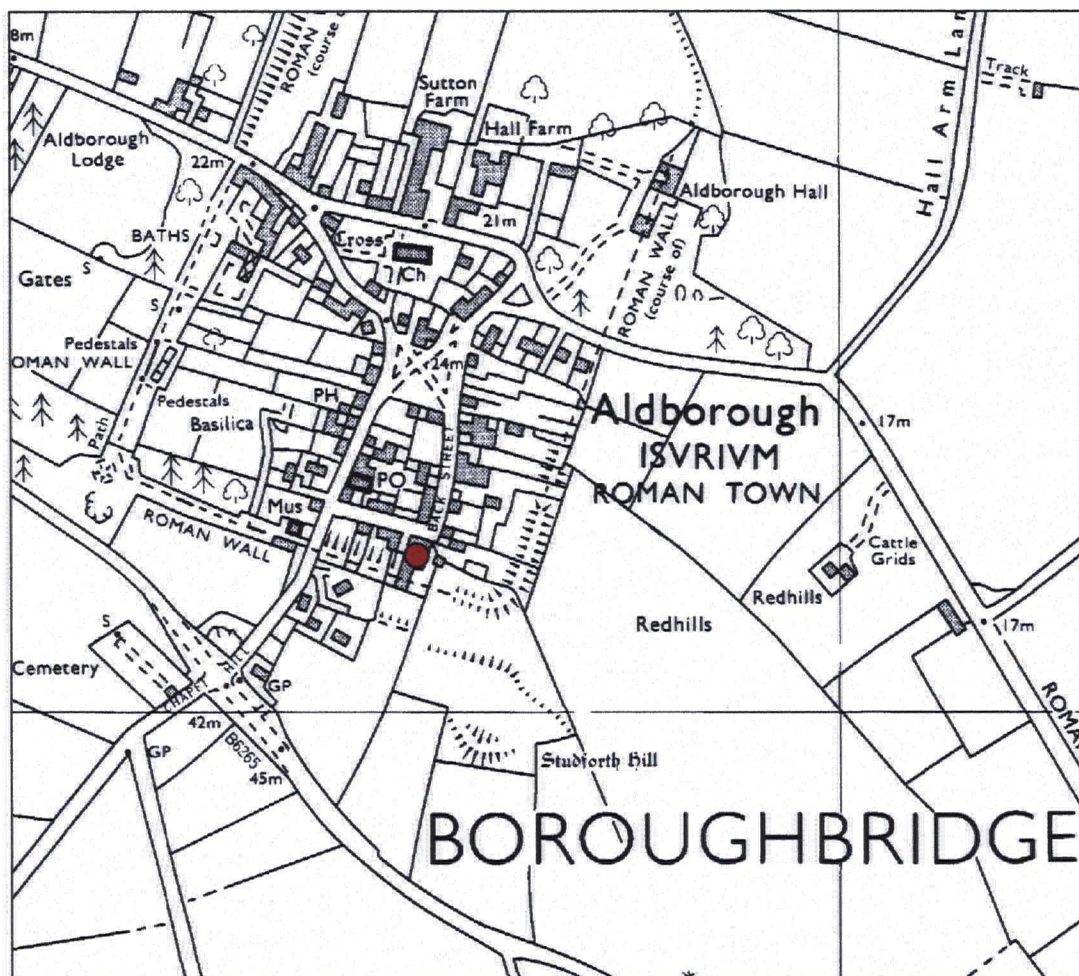
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- 1977 Geological Survey Ten Mile Map South Sheet Quaternary. British Geological Survey
- 1983 Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1 Northern England. Soil Survey of England and Wales. Lawes Agricultural Trust, Harpenden
- 2001 Geological Survey 1:625,000 Map South Sheet Solid Geology. British Geological Survey

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Mr Jez Freathy for inviting me to undertake the project and Chris Scurfield for undertaking some of the site work. I would also like to thank Pete Wright and Sean for their time and effort on site which made the project so much easier to undertake.

Figure 1. Site Location.



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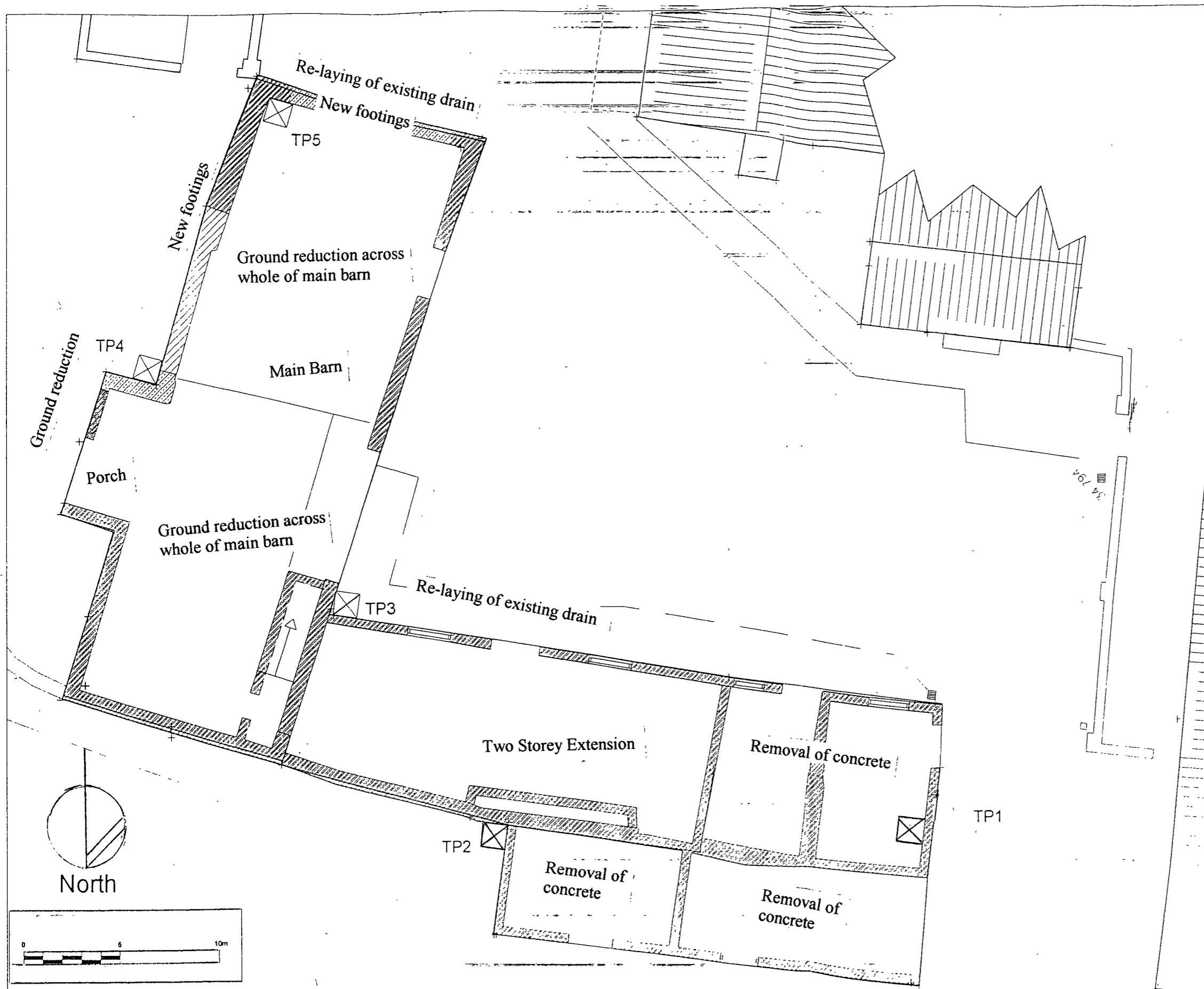
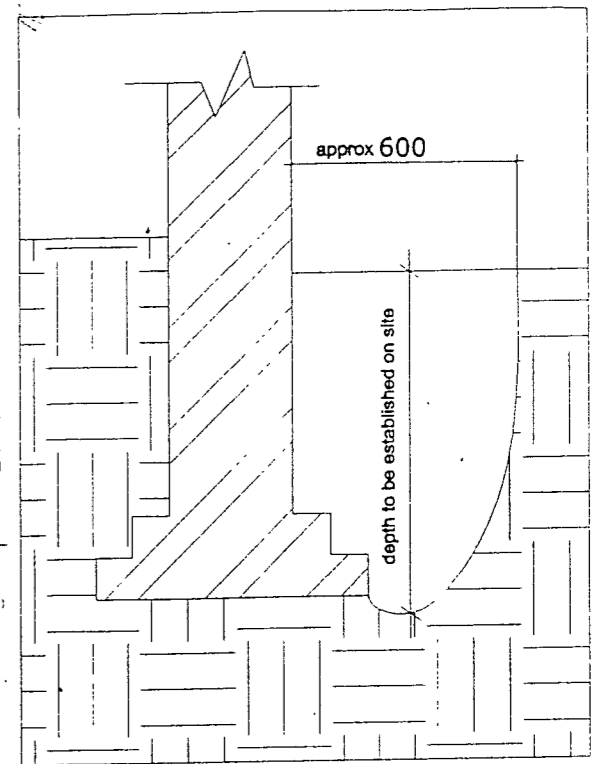
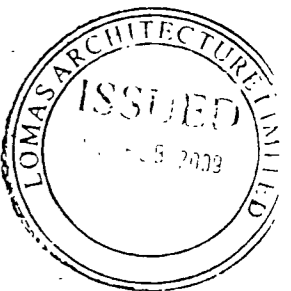


Figure 2.
1:100 scale



Typical section through trial pit
1:20 scale

Trial pits to be hand dug approx 600 x 600mm in plan and to depth to expose foundations and bearing strata



Rev. date index
drawing Proposed trial pits
project Studforth Barn
Studforth Farm, Aldborough
North Yorkshire YO51 9EX
job no. 0809 drawing no. sk110 revision

Lomas Architecture
4 Queen Lane Sheffield S11 9ER Tel: 0114 294 0900

scale 1/100 1/20 RPL date 11/02/09
(A3)

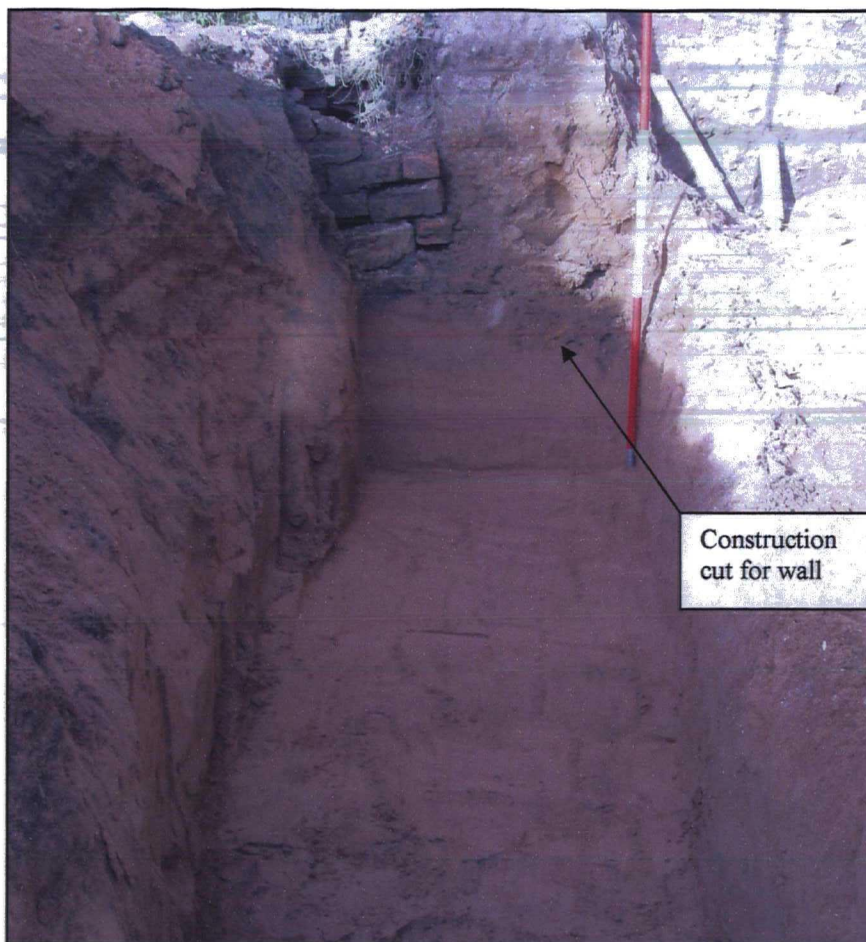


Plate 1. The excavated foundation trench, looking west, scale 2m pole.



Plate 2. Looking north-east showing ground reduction to east of barn.



Plate 3. Roman Pottery from Within Barn Doorway. Scale 0.1m.