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*A1 Dishforth to Barton Improvement
Healam North, Fields 63 and 64*

October 2010



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*A1 Dishforth to Barton Improvement
Healam North, Fields 63 and 64
Summary Archaeology Report*

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document provides a summary report on the archaeological remains examined immediately to the north of Healam Beck within fields 63 and 64. The works were undertaken in advance of construction work on the A1 Dishforth to Barton road improvement scheme. The fields were located to the east of the current A1 carriageway in the vicinity of the former New Inn Farm (Figure 1).
- 1.3 The majority of archaeological remains encountered fell within the Scheduled Monument at Healam Bridge, Pickhill with Roxby, North Yorkshire (SM Number 34736/2: Figure 2) and the work was undertaken in accordance with SMC Consent Ref: HSD 9/2/7461. The reporting on other works within the scheduled area at Healam (to the south of Healam Beck and for the High Pressure Gas Main diversion to the west of the A1) is contained in other separate reports.
- 1.4 The archaeological features encountered were significant and widespread across both fields. Those exposed throughout the southern area of field 63 comprised a series of re-cut enclosure ditches delimiting areas of occupation, a series of six stone and timber buildings, two large midden deposits, bank-side revetment formed by wooden stakes and stone dumps, numerous kilns/ovens and pits and three inhumations.
- 1.5 The northern area of field 63 and field 64 contained evidence of an extensive roadside enclosure complex which extended for over 200m. The ditched enclosures lay to the east of a series of metalled road surfaces which appeared to relate to the former Dere Street. The enclosures contained the remains of at least five timber buildings, together with six inhumations and one cremation, a series of pits, hearths postholes and a possible corn dryer. Preliminary examination of the finds, prior to detailed specialist assessment, suggests the occupation dated from the 2nd to late 4th centuries AD.

2.0 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 Fields 63 and 64 were situated immediately to the north of Healam Beck in numerical order from south to north (Figure 1). They were located on the eastern

side of the current A1 carriageway and are to be overlain by the upgraded A1(M) (between SE 3232 8375 and SE 3230 8405).

- 2.2 The solid geology comprises Permian and Triassic sandstones overlain by sands, gravels and seams of clay. The soils were designated as Wick 1 Association, incorporating deep well-drained coarse loamy brown earths.
- 2.3 Within Field 63, the land gradually rose from a height of *c.*29m immediately to the north of Healam Beck to a height of *c.*33m over a distance of approximately 80m. Thereafter, the ground was relatively level across the northern part of Field 63 and throughout Field 64.

3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1 Soil stripping in Fields 63 and 64 revealed significant archaeological remains, which extended for a distance of 280m along the road corridor which measured between 30 - 50m in width (Figure 2). Geophysical survey within the northern section of field 63 had identified a series of sub-rectangular enclosures extending east from edge of the route of the Great North Road and some evidence for ridge and furrow cultivation (Figure 3). A number of linear anomalies were also identified in field 64 which were also thought to be part of the system of enclosures. As a result of subsequent evaluations it had been suggested that this area contained an industrial area, paddocks, gardens and fields outwith the core area of the Roman settlement.
- 3.2 A summary plan of the archaeological features which were investigated has been used to illustrate the initial interpretation presented in this report (Figure 2). In addition, the relevant context numbers have been allocated to features referred to specifically in the text (Figures 4-11).
- 3.3 The site has been divided into two distinct areas, based on the form of the land and the nature of the archaeological remains. The southern part of field 63 immediately to the north of Healam Beck was situated on a gradual south-facing slope which had been both terraced and built up during the Roman period to facilitate its use. The archaeological features in this area appeared to represent at least six separate phases of occupation, which comprised up to 1.5m of archaeological remains overlying peat and alluvial deposits associated with the

earlier course of the beck. The northern area of field 63 and field 64 contained the remains of a metalled Roman road surface (Dere Street) situated at the western side of the stripped corridor and flanked to the east by a complex of enclosures which represented at least four phases of construction. The enclosures were overlain by medieval ridge and furrow which resulted in some differential preservation, while parts of Dere Street were sealed beneath the later turnpike road.

Slope to the north of Healam Beck (field 63 south) (Figures 4 - 9)

- 3.4 Pre-Roman deposits were confined to the area immediately to the north of the present beck. These comprised peat layers 5201 and 7066, extending from the present beck northwards for up to 13.1m and surviving to a maximum depth of 1.15m.
- 3.5 The peat was overlain by laminated bands of sands and gravels, interleaved with further lenses of peat. In places this banded sequence was seen to have cut in to the earlier peat in curving channels or scours, running roughly from south-west to north-east. The channels varied greatly in size from 1.35m in width by 0.15m in depth to 3.6m in width by 0.8m in depth. It seems likely that these channels represent the course or courses of Healam Beck during the prehistoric and Roman periods. A significant number of Roman finds were recovered from these layers suggesting that there had been deliberate dumping on the beck edge although some finds may have washed downstream from the south-west. The finds included abraded Romano-British pottery, a range of ferrous and non-ferrous metalwork, a quern, copper alloy coins, and a lead object. The deposits sequence suggested that the area had been subject to periodic flooding and that the stream channel had changed its position on numerous occasions. Taken together, the evidence suggested that during the Roman period Healam Beck was much wider than today and was flanked by a considerable zone of marshy ground.
- 3.6 A series of over 100 wooden stakes (7915) were identified driven into the edge of the alluvial deposits. In plan, the stakes formed sinuous lines but were not found to be associated with any plank, wattle or hurdle walls. The stakes were orientated at various angles and may have represented an informal revetment protecting the southern edge of the settlement area from flooding or encroachment by the beck.

- 3.7 A sequence of Romano-British occupation deposits up to 1.5m deep and including several buildings was encountered on the slope above the beck for a distance of up to 80m. Five main phases of occupation have been identified at this stage but this will be subject to revision as further assessment and analysis are carried out. The presence of deeply stratified Romano-British occupation was unforeseeable given the existing information from the earlier evaluations carried out during the mid-1990s.
- 3.8 A series of soil dumps containing large quantities of animal bone, pottery, coins and a range of other artefacts had been deliberately laid down on the slope and the southern part of this material overlay the northern edge of the peat and alluvial deposits. The dumped material was derived from midden material generated within the area and possibly from deposits brought from elsewhere within the settlement. The purpose of this soil deposition, which appears to have occurred over a considerable time, was to raise and level the sloping ground for the expansion of settlement towards the beck.
- 3.9 Among the earliest features identified in Field 63 were a series of six ovens (7115, 7342, 7344, 7346, 7498 and 7511) which cut into the natural clay. Three of the ovens were pear-shaped in plan with concave bases and measured on average 1.7m in length by 1m in width. The other three ovens were sub-circular and inter-cutting. The surrounding clay in each case was scorched and the ovens were filled with charcoal-rich material, suggesting *in situ* burning.
- 3.10 Within the sequence of deposits, there was evidence of a series of buildings, large ditches and a large rectangular enclosure. Three of the buildings had cobbled floor surfaces (5009, 5977 and 7951) and three were post-built structures (5129, 5695 and 6949).

Phase 1 (Figure 4)

- 3.11 The earliest building (7951) was stone built and rectangular, measuring 7.50m from north to south by 4.00m (Plate 1). It comprised facing stones along the eastern and southern edges with an interior foundation of large cobbles (7152). This was overlain by a crushed daub surface (5289) with a maximum depth of 0.05m. The crushed daub extended to the south of the limits of the building possibly representing a phase of floor clearance. The skeleton of a horse (7614) was encountered beneath the north-eastern corner of the foundation of building

7951. The horse was oriented from north to south and lay on its left side. The back legs were splayed out and it was missing the scapulae and one of the front legs. It may have been a ritual deposit beneath the building. Building 7951 had an associated yard surface lying to the south and east, which measured 7.7m from north to south by 7.6m. It comprised a foundation layer of large stones (7404) in the southern area, which was overlain by a metalled surface (6762) which extended to the east and west.

- 3.12 Two pits were investigated as part of this phase which were of particular interest. Pit 6893 was sub-circular, measured 2.15m in diameter, had a maximum depth of 0.95m and was clay-lined suggesting that it may have been a refuse pit. A further pit (7732) was identified approximately 10m to the south of pit 6893. Pit 7732 was circular in plan with a diameter of 1.15m and a maximum depth of 1.30m. It was vertically-sided and filled with organic material, suggesting that it may have been either a storage pit or a cesspit.

Phase 2 (Figure 5)

- 3.13 Building 7951 was overlain by a large sandy deposit (5652), which was truncated by later building 6949. This structure was rectangular, measured 12.80m from east to west by 6.95m, was timber-built and comprised of 35 postholes along the northern, western and southern sides. The high number of postholes forming this structure indicated that it had been rebuilt, potentially twice. The eastern side of the building constituted a single post-pad (7003), suggesting that this side may have been open-fronted. A further L-shape of nine smaller postholes (7952) around the north-western corner of structure 6949 may have been related or represented part of a separate structure. A circular hearth (6953) measuring 0.94m in diameter was identified within the structure 6949. It was truncated by a posthole suggesting that it was from an early phase of the building. A charcoal-rich deposit (5596) respected the outline of building 6949, which may have resulted from industrial activity within the building. Three large, shallow pits (5900, 7464 and 7827) were identified in the vicinity of structure 6949 and may have been associated with this building. Finds recovered from pit 7464 included Roman pottery and animal bone and pits 5900 and 7827 yielded a number of pieces of slag indicative of metal-working in this area. An adult inhumation burial (7303) was identified approximately 1m to the north of structure 6949. The remains were oriented from east to west and were supine with the right arm flexed

over the chest and the left arm resting on the lower ribs. The front of the skull had been displaced to the left, probably post-deposition and six iron nails were found around the remains suggesting it had been interred within a coffin.

Phase 3 (Figure 6)

- 3.14 The remains of a possible building (5977) were identified to the south of structure 6949 and comprised a rectangular metalled surface measuring 3.8m by 3.1m. There was no clear evidence for the positions and form of any walls and it is possible that the walls may have rested on sill beams or pad-stones.
- 3.15 Structure 5695 was located towards the top of the slope, measured 17.5m from east to west by 5m and comprised 20 postholes. Packing stones were observed in the majority of the postholes, post-pads were noted in the base of five postholes and a further post-pad was evident at surface level. A possible hearth (5604) was identified within the area of building 5695, which comprised a deposit of charcoal-rich material measuring 1.05m by 0.98m. The hearth was not central to the long axis of the building but was clearly located within it. An elongated pit (5388) was also located within building 5695, adjacent to the northern wall. It measured 3.5m in length, was filled with charcoal-rich material and showed signs of *in situ* burning.

Phase 4 (Figure 7)

- 3.16 A series of re-cut enclosure ditches were identified in field 63 which appeared to enclose linear plots of land running from east to west, perpendicular to the course of the Roman road. The southern-most enclosure (5007) was cut through a midden deposit (5042) and appeared to truncate building 5695. The enclosure measured approximately 20m by 10m and had an entrance in the north-eastern corner.

Phase 5 (Figure 8)

- 3.17 A further structure (5009) was identified towards the southern end of field 63. It comprised a primary floor surface (5224), which was rectangular and composed of cobbles. This surface had slumped in some places and had been repaired by further patches of cobbles and metalling (5222, 5223, 5225 and 5268). It measured 9.20m from east to west by 5m and was bounded by a series of post-pads, one of which (5343) had a pivot-hole suggesting that there had been an entrance at the south-eastern corner of the building. Cobbled surface 5179 formed an L-shape around the southern and western edges of the building and may

represent an associated external yard. A stone-built revetment (5189) was identified at the same stratigraphic level as building 5009. It ran parallel to the northern edge of the alluvial and peat deposits and appeared to have had a similar function to the earlier wooden revetment. It ran for a distance of approximately 20m, had a maximum width of 4.1m and survived as a single course of large boulders. A line of large facing-stones was traced for approximately 7m along the south-eastern edge, which appeared to have been robbed-out from the rest of the revetment. One of the stones had a chevron carved into it, which may have been a mason's mark. A later timber building (5129) truncated the south-western corner of yard surface (5179). It was rectangular, measuring 5m from east to west by 4.50m, and comprised 23 postholes with one further posthole outlying to the south-east. The postholes along the southern edge of the building were cut into a trench (5124).

- 3.18 A further series of ditches was identified immediately to the west of enclosure 5007 described in Phase 4 above. Ditch 5054 ran for a distance of approximately 60m from south to north and formed part of a large enclosure ditch which terminated at a likely entrance just beyond the brow of the slope (discussed further below). This was the earliest of a sequence of three boundary features on the same alignment, which may have followed the course of the Roman road near to the beck.

Phase 6 (Figure 9)

- 3.19 Two adult inhumation burials (5016 and 5026) were identified in the southern part of Field 63. Both burials were cut into midden deposits (5002 and 5027), making them relatively late in the sequence. Skeleton 5016 (Plate 2) was oriented from north to south and was supine with both hands clasped over the chest. Part of the skull, the front of the ribs, the left humerus and the toes of the right foot were absent. A number of iron hobnails were recovered from around the feet. A large animal bone was identified lying diagonally across the pelvis. The bone displayed butchery marks and therefore was unlikely to be an offering and may have been incidental within the fill of the grave. The second burial (5026) was oriented from west to east and lay on its left side with the legs flexed. The right side of the body was missing, probably due to later agricultural activity. Fragments of pottery were retrieved from the fill of the grave and an iron object was found alongside the left femur.

- 3.20 Two cobble spreads (5036 and 5066), a kiln (5330) and a pit (5296) overlay midden deposits 5002 and 5027. The cobble spread (5036) covered an area measuring 4m by 4.4m and incorporated a number of large flat stones which may have been post-pads for a heavily truncated building. Cobble spread 5066 covered an area measuring 6.80m by 8.75m, but did not form a coherent floor surface. It may have simply been laid down as hard-standing. Kiln 5330 comprised a semi-circular bowl, which was lined with three layers of amphora sherds. A linear flue extended from the west of this, which was constructed of clay and had become hardened and blackened on the inside. This had subsequently been filled with large stones after the kiln had fallen out of use. Two post pads were identified immediately to the east of the kiln, which may have formed part of its structure. Pit 5296 (Plate 3) was also identified approximately 3m to the south-east of kiln 5330. The pit was circular with a diameter of 1.18m and a maximum depth of 0.31m. It was lined with cobbles and had an intact quern in the base. There was no evidence to suggest a function for the pit.
- 3.21 No medieval features were noted in the southern part of field 63. An average of 0.50m of post-Roman subsoil and topsoil sealed the earlier deposits from which post-medieval pottery and modern earthenware pottery were recovered.

Fields 63 north and 64 (Figures 10 and 11)

- 3.22 Archaeological features were identified throughout the entire road corridor within the northern part of field 63 and field 64. At the western edge of the site two north-west to south-east aligned ditches were identified which were overlain by the truncated remains of a metalled Roman road surface. The central and eastern area of the road corridor was occupied by a series of enclosures that represented at least four phases of activity. The enclosures contained the remains of five timber structures that were orientated south-west to north-east and were aligned on the flanking enclosure ditches. In some areas the structural remains represented multiple phases of construction on the same land plot. One of the buildings was associated with a possible corn dryer and a series of burnt pits indicating agricultural and/or industrial activity within this enclosure. Seven burials were identified within this area comprising six inhumations and one cremation. The area of the enclosure complex also contained numerous pits, postholes and ditches. Some of the ditches appeared to form internal divisions of the wider enclosed areas.

- 3.23 The western edge of the stripped area contained the remains of a long north-west to south-east aligned ditch (7074) that may have represented a roadside drainage ditch. It is possible that this feature was associated with one of a series of Roman road surfaces identified to the west during removal of the former Great North Road. The ditch (7074) was exposed for a distance of *c.*79m and had been disturbed by a modern hedge line. A second ditch (5430) was aligned parallel to ditch 7074 between 3-6m to the east and was overlain in places by the remains of the metalled road surface. Ditch 5430 was identified for *c.*163m and formed a continuous boundary along the western side of the enclosure complex located to the east. This feature appeared to be one of the earlier ditches within the enclosure complex. The metalled road surface was aligned north-west to south-east and was identified for a distance of *c.*155m. It was constructed from a single layer of course rounded to sub-rounded cobbles with occasional patches of finer gravel that had been heavily truncated by medieval ploughing.
- 3.24 Enclosure 1 was the southernmost roadside enclosure within the northern area of Field 63. It was located on the upper part of a moderate south-facing slope. The enclosure comprised a plot of land *c.*28m x 16m in size and was defined to the south by enclosure ditch 5007, which formed part of the Phase 4 activity within that area, to the west by ditch 5054, which formed part of the Phase 5 activity within that area and to the north by ditch 5323. Internally, the enclosure contained three ditches (5587, 5589 and 7799) and seven pits (including 5852 and 5861).
- 3.25 The ditches may represent internal sub-division of the area although one of them, ditch 5589, pre-dated the southern enclosure ditch 5007. The pits were all located within the eastern part of the enclosure and varied in both their size and shape. One of the pits (5852) appeared to represent a small hearth comprising a series of heat affected flat stones. A further pit (5861) contained a concentration of hobnails suggesting it may have been a grave (although no identifiable human bone was recovered) or a waste pit, into which a complete boot or shoe had been deposited.
- 3.26 Enclosure 2 measured *c.*24m x 24m and was divided from Enclosure 3 to the north by ditch 5639. (Based on the geophysical survey evidence the complete enclosure measured *c.* 49m x 24m). The western edge of the enclosure was

- defined by ditch 5430, which continued to the north for the full length of the enclosure complex and formed the western boundary ditch of all subsequent enclosures. The internal area of this enclosure contained Structure 1, three postholes and four pits.
- 3.27 The structural remains were located within the northern half of the enclosure and are likely to represent a single building supported by 12 posts with overall dimensions of *c.*12m x 6m. Only nine of the postholes survived. Three further postholes were identified in the vicinity of Structure 1, which may have formed part of the building. The pits were identified within the north-western corner of the enclosure and appeared to represent waste pits. The southern part of the enclosure contained no archaeological features. It seemed likely that this, and the poor survival of the postholes to the north, was the result of later ploughing of the area. Truncation of the features may have been more severe as it was located at the upper break of the south-facing slope above the beck.
- 3.28 The area of Enclosures 1 and 2 contained the remains of a later enclosure, comprising ditches 5696 and 5054. Ditch 5696 post-dated the in-filling of ditch 5430 but was cut by ditch 5639. This larger enclosed area defined a plot of land which included the southern part of Field 63 adjacent to the beck along with both Enclosures 1 and 2 within the northern area. It contained an entrance within the north-west circuit that was associated with two substantial postholes which may have formed part of a gateway.
- 3.29 This area also contained the remains of four inhumation burials (5305, 5301, 5023 and 5022) located between enclosure ditches 5430 and 5054. All the inhumation burials identified within this area survived in very poor condition. Skeleton 5305 was aligned north-west to south-east and only the lower legs and occasional rib fragments survived. Skeleton 5301 was aligned east to west. The individual was laid on its right side. The arms were straight and the hands rested in the vicinity of the pelvis. Skeletons 5022 and 5023 were located adjacent to each other and were aligned west to east, although little of either burial survived.
- 3.30 Enclosure 3 measured *c.*22m x 20m in size and was divided from Enclosure 4 to the north by ditch 7477. The enclosure contained Structure 2 and a series of pits/postholes. Structure 2 was situated in the northern part of the enclosure and overlay the fill of ditch 5430 to the west. It comprised a complex sequence of

postholes which appeared to represent at least two phases of building. It appeared that one of the phases was constructed with 12 postholes and had overall dimensions of *c.*12m x 6m. A detailed understanding of the structures and their phasing will only be possible following thorough assessment of the stratigraphic records and artefactual material.

- 3.31 Enclosure 4 measured *c.*22m x 10m and was divided from Enclosure 5 to the north by ditch 7205. This ditch was overlain by the remains of the modern hedge line which caused significant disturbance to the area and marked the boundary between fields 63 and 64. The inner area of the enclosure contained Structure 3, a possible corn dryer (7405), a series of burnt pits (7366) and two phases of a small inner enclosure (6670). The features located in this area provided the best evidence for agricultural and/or industrial processing within the northern area of Field 63.
- 3.32 Structure 3 (Plate 4) was located almost centrally within the enclosure and respected the location of both the corn dryer and the pit group to the north, and the small internal enclosure to the east. These features all appeared to be part of the same phase of activity. The western end of the building overlay the fill of ditch 5430 to the west. Structure 3 represented a single building comprising 12 postholes with dimensions of *c.*11m x 4m. It was associated with two further postholes located to the east which may have represented an entrance.
- 3.33 The possible corn dryer (7405) consisted of a linear pit, lined with irregularly coursed sub-angular stone, some of which had been crudely napped. The feature was orientated approximately north to south. The feature had been fired at some point as both the masonry and surrounding soil matrix were heat-affected.
- 3.34 A linear series of inter-cutting burnt pits (7366) was identified 1.6m to the east of the corn dryer. The feature complex measured 2.6m x 1.2m and comprised at least three pits, all of which were heat-affected at the base and contained large quantities of charcoal within their fills.
- 3.35 The internal enclosure (6670) within Enclosure 4 measured *c.*6m x 6m in size and represented two phases of activity. It continued beyond the excavated area to the east.

- 3.36 Enclosure 5 was *c.*16m x 30m and was divided from Enclosure 6 to the north by ditches 6820 and 6861. The enclosure contained the remains of Structure 4 and a series of pits/postholes. The structural remains were situated within the southern area of the enclosure and appeared to represent at least two phases of building. The southernmost of the two structures was constructed with 12 postholes and was slightly smaller than those recorded to the south measuring *c.*10m x 4m. Fewer of the postholes from the second phase of building survived, however it seemed likely that it had similar dimensions to the previous structure. The series of pit/posthole type features (7436) was identified predominantly to the south of the structural remains within the ground between the building and the southern enclosure ditch (7205). The majority of the features within this area appeared to represent postholes containing compacted packing stones, unfortunately they had no discernable overall form.
- 3.37 Enclosure 6 was narrow measuring only *c.*6m in width and was divided from Enclosure 7 to the north by ditch 6810. The internal area contained cremated human remains 6838 and ditch 7355.
- 3.38 The cremation 6838 was located within the northern area of the enclosure and had originally been contained within a ceramic vessel. The remains of a further ceramic vessel, which had presumably been complete upon deposition, were located immediately to the southeast, suggesting both vessels had been deposited within a single pit. The cremation had been cut by the enclosure ditch 6810 to the north, and both ceramic vessels had been disturbed by ploughing.
- 3.39 The ditch 7355 was aligned north-west to south-east and appeared to curve from the west to the south. It pre-dated the adjacent enclosure ditches 6861 and 6810 and may have continued to the north as ditch 7220. It is possible that Enclosure 6 represented a ditched trackway or driveway providing access from the metalled road surfaces to the west through the enclosure complex. The geophysical survey did not identify any continuation of this feature beyond the stripped area to the east.
- 3.40 Enclosure 7 was *c.*22m x 20m in size and differed from the other enclosures within this area by being fully enclosed within the stripped area. The eastern and northern circuit of the enclosure was formed by a single ditch (7220) which was

cut by both the western ditch (5430) and the southern ditch (6810) indicating that it was an earlier feature. The enclosed area contained two inhumation burials (5243 and 7275), eight pits including a group of five within the south-west corner and a short irregular length of gully to the north-west.

- 3.41 The inhumation burials identified within this area were located within the eastern area of the enclosure. Skeleton 5243 was oriented east to west and was supine. The arms were flexed over the body and indicated the individual faced slightly to the north. The legs were bent back on themselves and had twisted slightly suggesting the remains had been forced into a grave cut that was too small. Skeleton 7265 was oriented north-west to south-east and lay in a flexed position on the left side. The right arm was laid to the side of the body and the left arm was bent at the elbow, allowing the fore arm to rest upon the chest. The skull had collapsed and the face bones were largely missing. The skeleton survived in very poor condition and had obviously been disturbed by ploughing.
- 3.42 Eight further pits were identified within this area, two of these had the shape and dimensions of grave cuts although no human bone was identified within the fill. The remaining features appeared to represent irregularly-shaped waste pits.
- 3.43 Enclosure 8 was c.10m x 30m and was divided from the area to the north by ditch 7094. The area of the western ditch (5430) was badly truncated by modern disturbance. The enclosure contained the remains of Structure 5. This building was situated centrally within the enclosure and was oriented at a slightly different angle to the southern four buildings, however it was aligned to the flanking enclosure ditches. The building comprised 12 postholes with overall dimensions of c.12m x 6m and was associated with a pit located within the eastern end (6785). The pit contained large quantities of charcoal and is likely to have functioned as a hearth. The structure was overlain centrally by a large irregular feature which appeared to represent quite recent disturbance.
- 3.44 The area to the north of Enclosure 8 contained a continuation of the two possible road-side ditches (5430 and 7074) although these were completely removed to the north by modern disturbance. Some further areas of possible metalled road surface were identified indicating a continuation of the metalled Roman road from the south into this area.

3.45 The only activity which post-dated the Roman period within the northern area of Field 63 and 64 comprised the remains of medieval ridge and furrow. The furrows were aligned south-west to north-east and truncated many of the Roman features. Some extensive areas of modern disturbance were also identified within field 64 which had completely removed areas of archaeology.

4.0 DISCUSSION

4.1 Excavation within the new road corridor to the north of Healam Beck exposed an extensive area of Roman roadside settlement contained within a sequence of ditched rectangular enclosures. Evidence of a series of metalled surfaces and possible roadside ditches suggested that the enclosures abutted the east side of a Roman road (possibly Dere Street), the remains of which lay partially beneath the later Great North Road. The recovered pottery assemblage dated provisionally from the 2nd century to late 4th century AD and this is broadly supported by the coin evidence.

Field 63 south

4.2 A deep and complex sequence of occupation deposits were encountered in the southern section of Field 63. This included multiple phases of building and land reclamation, which was associated with at least two phases of bank-side revetment. The archaeology in this area has been broadly divided into six phases but this will be reviewed following more detailed analysis of the stratigraphic relationships and the finds assemblage.

4.3 The buildings encountered showed a variety of construction types and it was noted that the post-built structures were located higher up the slope whereas those with cobble foundations were situated closer to the beck. These heavier foundations may have been necessitated by the underlying peat in the area of the beck which would have provided an unstable building platform.

4.4 The excavation confirmed that the course of the beck has moved several times and that it was originally wider, marshier and more of an obstacle than the current beck appears to be. No evidence was found for a bridge over the beck or for the Roman road in this area but it is possible that the series of north-south aligned ditches along the western edge of the excavated area represent roadside ditches.

This would indicate that the course of Dere Street ran to the west of the stripped area and that the Roman river crossing may have been on, or close to, the site of the 18th century Healam Bridge.

Fields 63 north and 64

- 4.5 Excavations within the northern area of Field 63 and Field 64 identified a complex of Roman enclosures located adjacent and to the east of the course of Dere Street. The remains of a metalled road surface were identified within the western area of the road corridor that may have represented Dere Street itself or a branch road running parallel to it, possibly providing access to the enclosure complex. The surface of the road survived in poor condition and had been severely truncated by ploughing. Further phases of metalled road surface were also identified during removal of The Great North Road to the west of the main road corridor.
- 4.6 The enclosures complex appeared to display at least four phases of construction. The earlier phase comprised ditch 7220 (Enclosure 7), which was followed by the excavation of the main north-west to south-east ditch 5430. Some of the north-east to south-west enclosure dividing ditches (7477 and 6820) appeared to have been excavated at this time. The third phase was represented by the excavation of ditches 5054 and 5696 producing a larger enclosure which contained the southern area of Field 63 and Enclosures 1 and 2. The final phase appeared to be the re-cutting of the north-east to south-west ditches. All of the enclosures, other than Enclosure 7, continued beyond the stripped road corridor to the east. The geophysical survey of this area clearly indicates that Enclosure 2 measured approximately 50m in width although not all of the enclosures were of this size.
- 4.7 A total of five timber structures were identified. All the buildings were located between the north-east to south-west orientated enclosure dividing ditches and were consistently aligned. They appeared to be part of the latest phase of activity as two of the structures (2 and 3) overlay the main north-west to south-east ditch 5430. Two of the structures (2 and 4) also appeared to represent two phases of construction. The structures were typically constructed with two rows of six posts, which appeared to be of similar sizes. Three of the buildings measured c.12m x 6m, while the other two buildings were slightly smaller at 10m-11m x 4m. The only evidence for domestic occupation within the structures was from a hearth identified internally within the northernmost structure and quantities of Roman

pottery recovered from the excavated sections of the surrounding enclosure ditches.

- 4.8 The remains of a possible corn dryer and a series of burnt pits were identified within Enclosure 4 and were situated adjacent to Structure 3. The features respected both the location of each other and the adjacent structure therefore it seems likely they are contemporary. The corn dryer and burnt pits have the potential to provide the best evidence for agricultural or industrial processing within this area of the site.





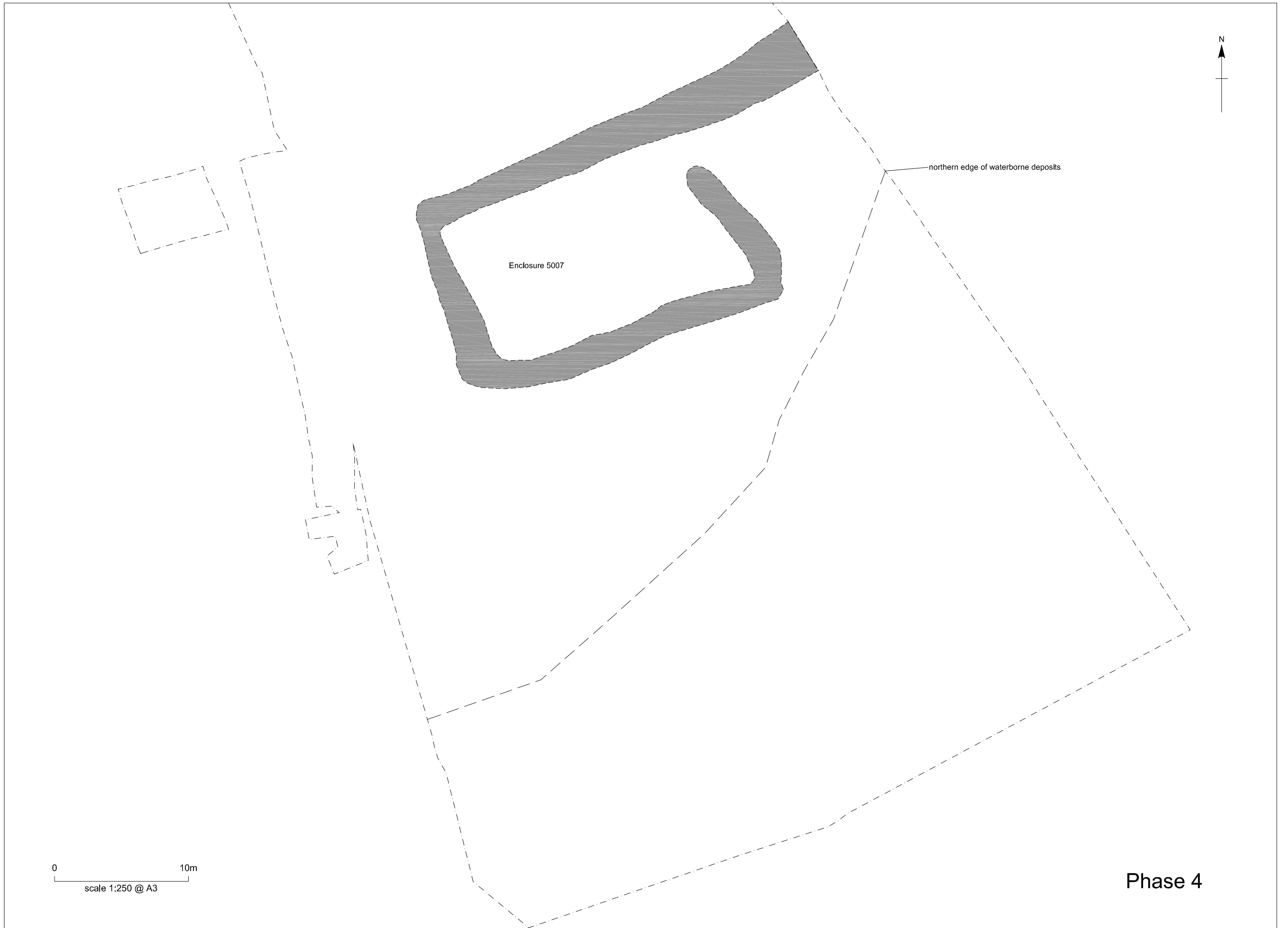


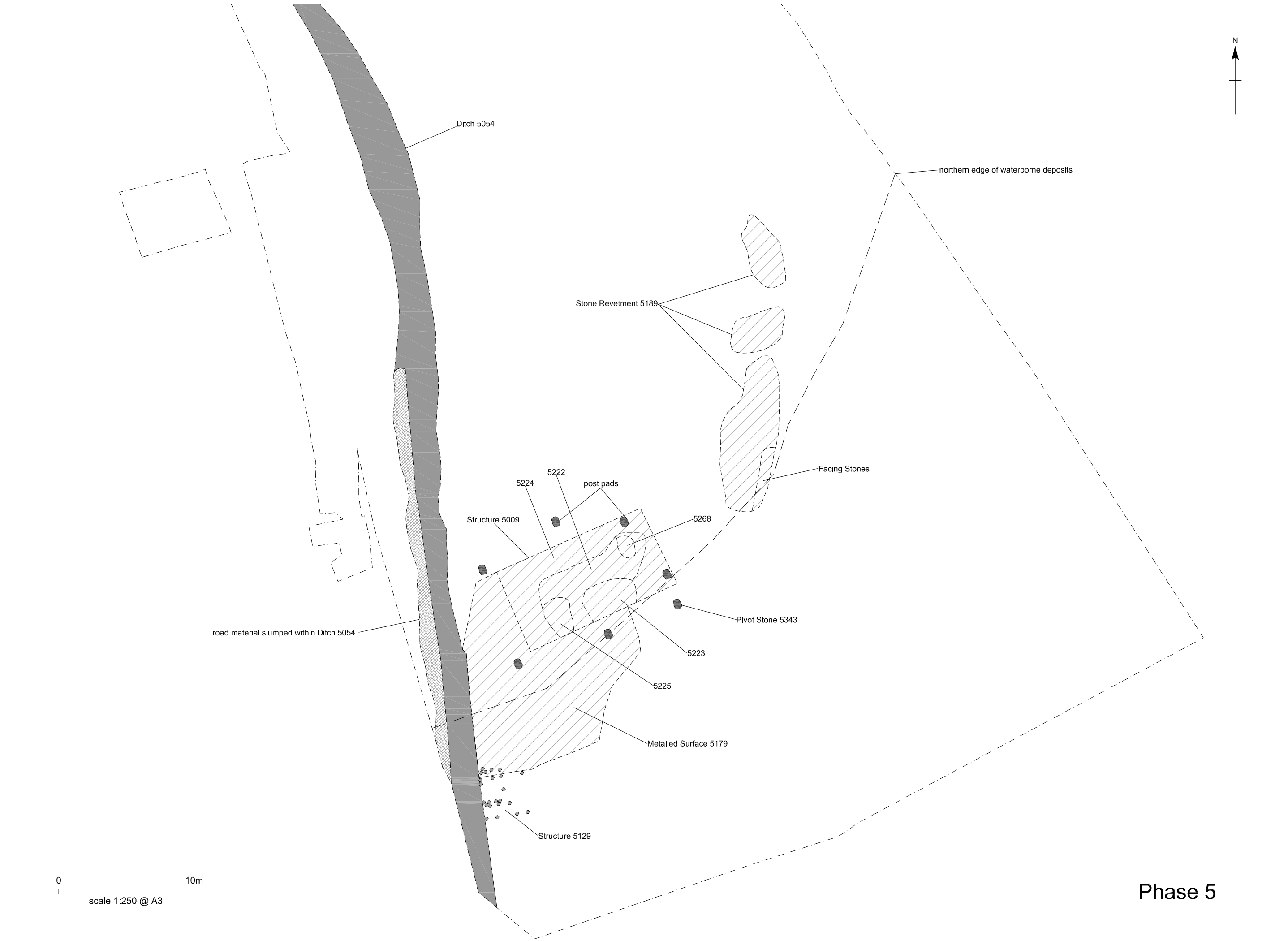
A1D2B: plan of archaeological features overlain on geophysical survey results in Fields 63 and 64





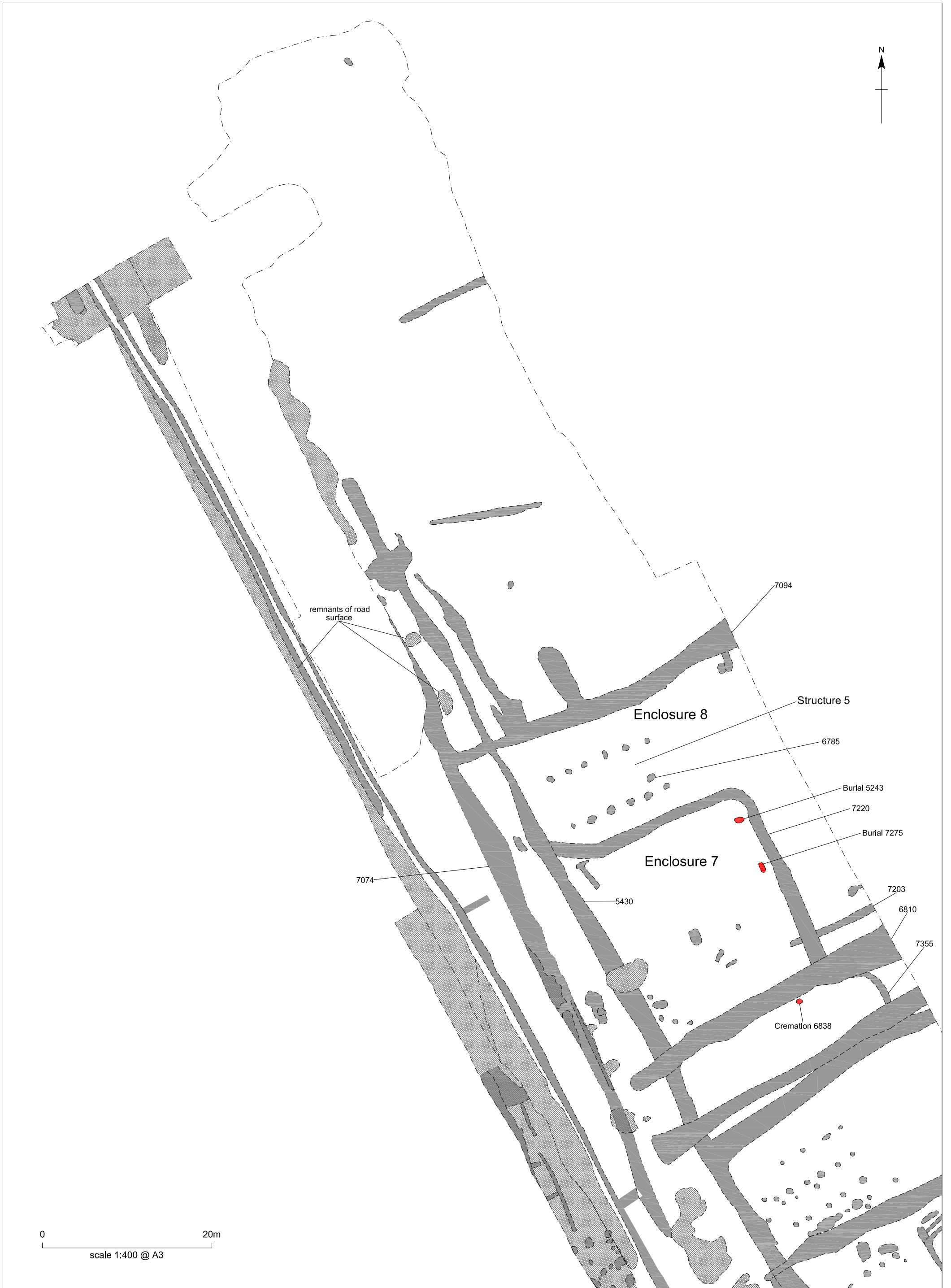














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Fields 63-64: Structure 7951 looking West

Plate 1



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Fields 63-64: Burial 5016

Plate 2



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Fields 63-64: Pit 5296

Plate 3



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Fields 63-64: Structure 3

Plate 4



Carillion/Morgan Sindall JV
A1 Dishforth to Barton
Site Offices
Leases Farm Quarry
Leases Bridge
Leeming Bar
Northallerton
DL8 1DL
