
*A1 Dishforth to Barton Improvement
Section 1, Summary Archaeology Report*

October 2010





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A1 Dishforth to Barton Site Offices
Leases Farm Quarry
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Minor archaeological remains were identified within six fields (Fields 1, 4, 19, 20, 21, and 22) within Section 1 of the A1 Dishforth to Barton road improvement scheme between the Dishforth Interchange and the Melmerby and Baldersby St James access road (Fig. 1). Further archaeological remains were encountered in Fields 23 and 25, the results of which are set out in a separate report due to the concentration of features encountered therein.
- 1.2 Archaeological investigation in Field 1 (Fig. 2) identified part of a sub-rectangular Romano-British enclosure, which appeared to be related to settlement. The enclosure was sub-divided by a series of ditches/gullies and contained an oven, several pits and postholes, but no evidence of any roundhouse structures. The majority of the remains were located within the area of the balancing pond with occasional features identified along the route of the associated access road (Fig. 3). Two small pits were encountered at the northern end of the balancing pond which were unrelated to the enclosure and appeared to be early prehistoric in date.
- 1.3 The remains exposed within Fields 4, 19, 20, 21 and 22 comprised a number of ditches, gullies and pits. Of these remains, the most significant features appear to have been a dispersed group of pits located around the A61 junction with the A1 in Fields 19, 20 and 21 (Figs. 5, 6, 7, and 8). It is thought likely that the group are early prehistoric in date, although only one pit identified within Field 19 contained diagnostic artefactual material.

2.0 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 2.1 Fields 1, 4, 19, 20, 21 and 22 were situated between SE 435308 476611 and SE 436771 472830. The land within this area of the scheme was relatively flat and varied in elevation between 40 and 47m AOD. The fields are numbered from south to north and west to east.
- 2.2 The solid geology throughout this area comprises Permian and Triassic sandstones overlain by sands and gravels. The soils are mapped as being of the Wick 1 Association, comprising deep well-drained coarse loamy brown earths.

3.0 RESULTS

- 3.1 Archaeological remains were encountered over a distance of 3.94 km within Section 1, from the southern extent of features within Field 1 to the northern extent of features within Field 22.

- 3.2 A series of summary plans of archaeological features is presented in Figures 2 to 9. In addition, the relevant context numbers have been allocated to features referred to specifically in the text.

Field 1 (Figures 2 and 3)

- 3.3 Field 1 lay immediately to the north of the intersection of the A1 and the A168 (the Dishforth Interchange) in North Yorkshire (Fig. 1). It was situated to the west of the present line of the A1, centred on SE 3670 7300 and occupied a gentle north-east-facing slope.
- 3.4 The main area of archaeological activity was located at the southern end of the balancing pond (Fig. 2). The remains comprised the north-western corner of a substantial enclosure (3215) measuring c.30m by 25m. Sherds of Roman pottery were recovered from the upper ditch fill. In the north-western corner, the enclosure ditch cut a small pit (3226) and a shallow gully (3265), neither of which produced any artefacts. A further ditch (3242) was identified within the area of the access road to the south of the balancing pond. It was similar in size and profile to enclosure ditch 3215 and ran parallel to it. It is possible that it may represent the southern side of the enclosure.
- 3.5 Within the enclosure a number of small ditches were encountered which may represent internal divisions (Fig. 3). Ditch 3273 was oriented east to west and was traced for approximately 20m at the southern end of the balancing pond. The ditch had no direct relationship with enclosure ditch 3215 as this lay beyond the limit of excavation. The fill of ditch 3273 produced no finds.
- 3.6 A sequence of hook-shaped ditches (3227 and 3240/3255/3246) appeared to be contemporary and defined two conjoined rectangular areas within the enclosure. Ditch 3240 was aligned approximately north to south and its northern terminus respected enclosure ditch 3215. Ditch 3255 appeared to be a re-cut of ditch 3240 as it followed the same alignment to the south and ditch 3246 represented a continuation of ditch 3255. One sherd of Romano-British pottery was recovered from the fill of this ditch and a fragment of a rotary quern of Romano-British type was recovered from the fill of ditch 3227.
- 3.7 Ditch 3240 was overlain by a silty sand spread (3247) which appeared to have gathered within a depression in the natural clay. No finds were recovered from this layer, but it was cut by refuse pit 3250, which contained a large quantity of late Roman pottery and an iron object.
- 3.8 A sinuous ditch (3219) and a shorter ditch segment (3297) appeared to define the southern edge of an irregular area in the north-west corner of the enclosure. Within this area a potential

oven (3292), measuring 2.70m by 2.45m with a maximum depth of 0.96m was encountered in the north-western corner of the enclosure. This feature comprised a large pit lined with clay, which contained evidence of *in situ* burning. Two postholes, (3284 and 3286), were cut into the base of the pit and a further two postholes (3260 and 3263) were identified to the southwest of pit 3292, which may have also been associated with it. The fill of the pit comprised a sequence of cobble layers overlain by charcoal-rich deposits. No artefacts were recovered from the fills.

- 3.9 A further ditch (3238) was identified towards the southern end of the access road. Like the western enclosure ditch 3215, it was oriented north-west to south-east but no finds were recovered from its fill to confirm its likely date. A linear feature (3236) located immediately to the north-east of ditch 3238 appeared to be a former hedge-line.
- 3.10 Two small burnt pits (3291 and 3294) were identified within the area of the access road to the north of the balancing pond (Fig. 2). Pit 3291 was filled with black silty sand with a high charcoal content and yielded a number of fragments of early prehistoric pottery and two worked flints. Pit 3294 was located 0.50m to the south of pit 3291, and was also filled with black silty sand with a high charcoal content, but contained no finds.

Field 4 (Figure 4)

- 3.11 A sequence of minor ditch boundaries were recorded in Field 4, to the east of the A1. Two of the features had an east-west alignment and appeared to be related to extant boundaries whilst a third was potentially earlier. Ditch 1529 was located adjacent to the southern field boundary and appeared to represent a continuation of this feature. A second ditch (1523) was identified c.37m to the north of ditch 1529 and appeared to have contained a hedge line as there was significant root disturbance within its fill. Ditch 1525 lay to the north of ditch 1523 and was aligned approximately north - south. This feature contained three distinct fills which suggested that it had gradually infilled.

Field 19 (Figure 5)

- 3.12 Archaeological remains were identified within the slip road corridor and within the area of a balancing pond to the west. The balancing pond contained seven pits and two short segments of gully, while two further pits and a ditch were recorded within the slip road. A number of the pits appeared to contain fire waste and are thought to form part of a dispersed group of pits in the vicinity of the A61 junction with the A1.

- 3.13 Pit 834 was located within the southern area of the slip-road corridor. It measured 1.9m long and 1.1m wide and was an irregular shape. The pit was filled by a thin silty deposit, overlain by a charcoal rich upper fill that contained large amounts of heat fractured cobbles and fragments of early prehistoric pottery. Three further pits (837, 839 and 861) displayed similar properties to pit 834 and were located within the area of the balancing pond. Pits 837 and 839 were located close together within the north-west area of the balancing pond while pit 861 was situated c.30m to the east. The pits were all broadly sub-circular in plan and contained charcoal and heat fractured cobbles but no evidence for *in situ* burning.
- 3.14 Two short segments of gully (845 and 847) were identified within the north-eastern area of the balancing pond and four further pits (841, 853, 857 and 855) were identified within the southern area of the balancing pond. These features were all small and shallow with loosely compacted fills and differed markedly from the pits containing fire waste. None of these features contained any artefacts.
- 3.15 Pit 859 and ditch 849 were located within the northern end of the slip-road corridor. Pit 859 had an irregular shape and appeared to have been disturbed. The fill contained no artefacts and also had a markedly different character to the pits containing fire waste. Ditch 849 was located 15m to the north of pit 859 and was traced for 5.5m on a southwest to north-east alignment. It contained a rounded terminal to the southwest.

Field 20 (Figures 6 and 7)

- 3.16 Archaeological remains were identified in Field 20 within an access road corridor and within the area of a balancing pond. The majority of the archaeological features were located along the access road with occasional features identified within the area of the balancing pond.
- 3.17 The archaeological features identified within the road corridor included a series of three ditches which cut through a cobbled surface (Fig. 6). A small assemblage of Roman artefactual material was recovered from the fills of the ditches including pottery and coins. A charcoal-rich pit was also identified within the area of the road corridor, which appeared to be part of the dispersed group of prehistoric pits identified in Field 19. Two further similar pits were also encountered within the area of the balancing pond (Fig. 7).
- 3.18 The cobbled surface 803/1000 measured 9.20m by 5.10m but extended beyond the road corridor to the east. There was evidence that the cobble surface had been patched or repaired as a small layer of cobbles (1013) was located overlying surface 803, and set in a layer of red

- clay. A second, smaller area of cobbles (1001), was identified approximately 10m to the southwest and was also set into red clay.
- 3.19 The cobble surfaces were cut by a ditch aligned north-east to south-west which had been re-cut on at least two subsequent occasions. The earliest ditch (948) was roughly V-shaped in profile and was wider and deeper than the later re-cuts (it had a maximum width of 1.49m and a depth of 0.81m). The second phase ditch (1017) was U-shaped in profile with a width of 0.40m and a maximum depth of 0.23m. No finds were recovered from the fill of this ditch. Ditch 1017 was cut by ditch 1019, which was also U-shaped in profile with a width of 0.96m and a maximum depth 0.36m. The fill of this ditch (1010) produced a small assemblage of animal bone, Roman pottery and a copper alloy coin.
- 3.20 Three small pits containing fire waste were identified to the north of the cobble surfaces and the ditch. Pit 800 was located 35m to the north within the road corridor, while the remaining two pits (1003 and 1005), were identified in the balancing pond area over 200m to the north. The pits were all sub-circular in plan and contained an ashy charcoal-rich layer overlain by a layer of fire-cracked pebbles.

Field 21 (Figure 8)

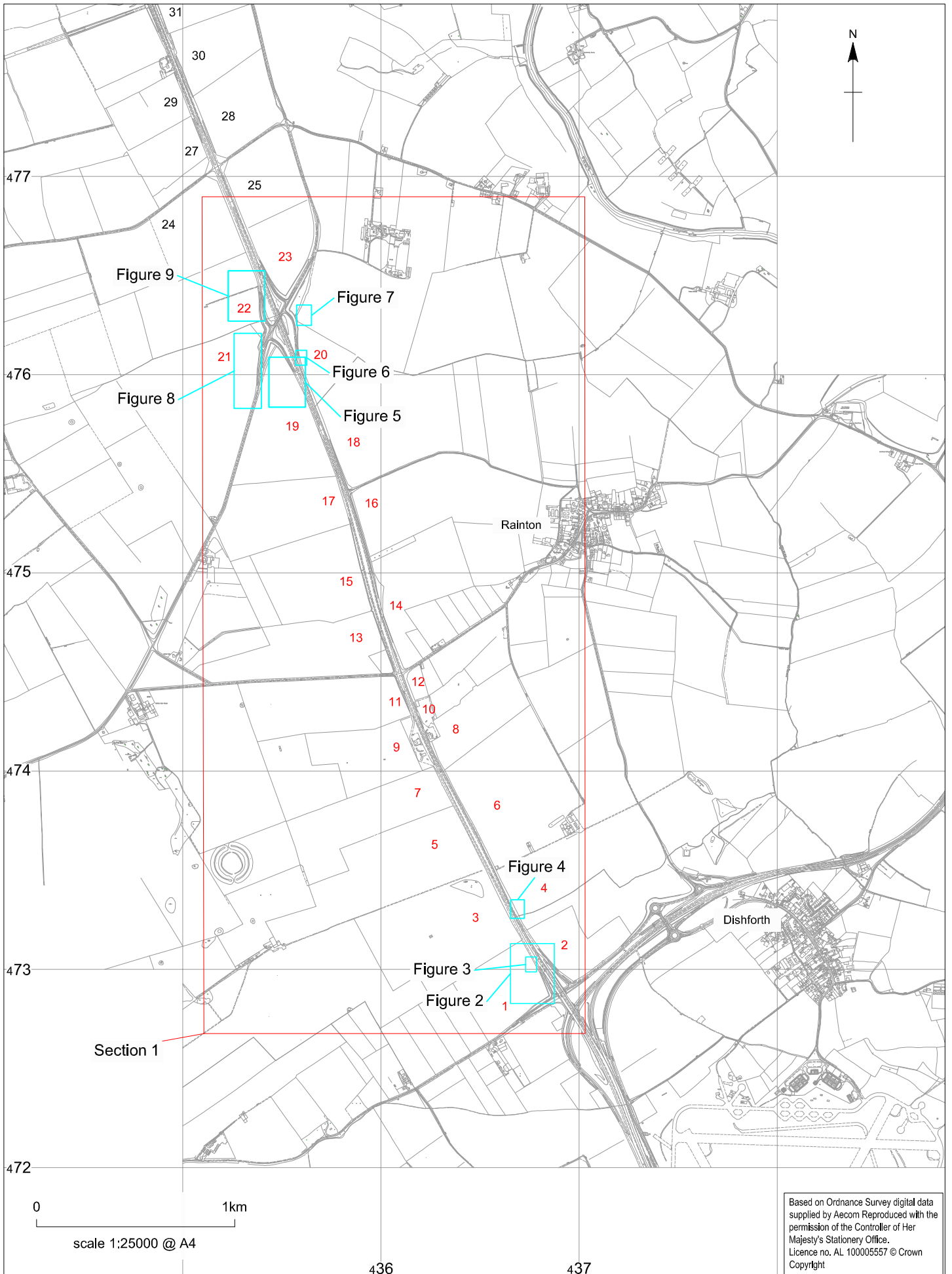
- 3.21 A small number of dispersed features were located within a 5m wide strip to the north of the A61 within Field 21. They comprised a short section of a linear gully and five pits, four of which appeared to contain fire waste.
- 3.22 Gully 821 was the southernmost feature identified within this field. It was 11m long and was aligned parallel to the adjacent A61 road. The fill was disturbed by roots and may have been the remains of a former hedge line. An isolated pit (819) was located c.150m to the north of gully 821. It was sub-circular in plan and was filled by a clean silt containing no finds.
- 3.23 Four further pits (823, 825, 829 and 827) were identified towards the northern end of the field. Pits 823, 825 and 827 contained single charcoal-rich fills including quantities of heated cobbles, but no artefacts. Pit 829 was a larger feature and contained two distinct fills that both contained quantities of charcoal and heated cobbles. The upper fill also contained five fragments of flint debitage and a flint blade.

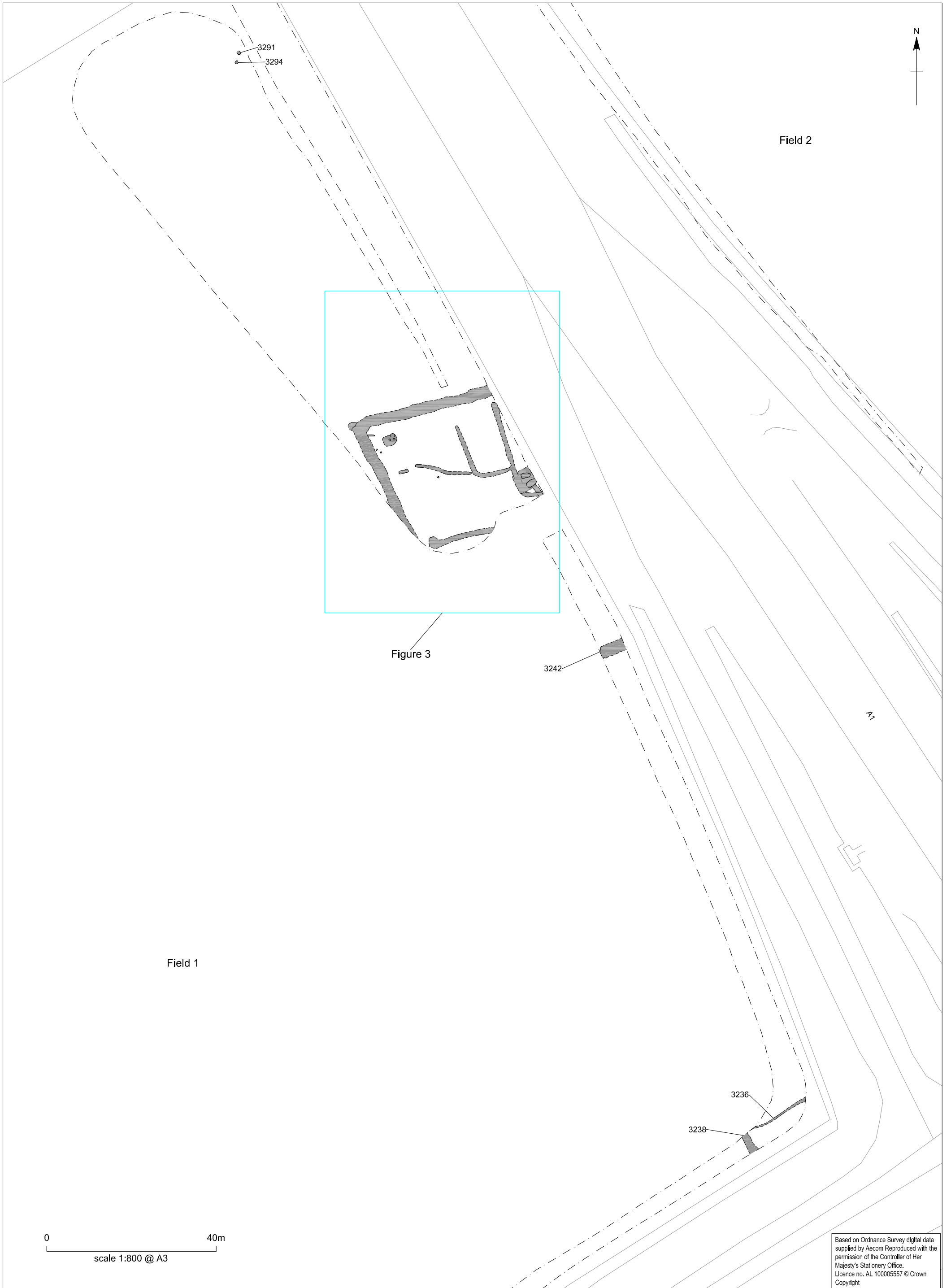
Field 22 (Figure 9)

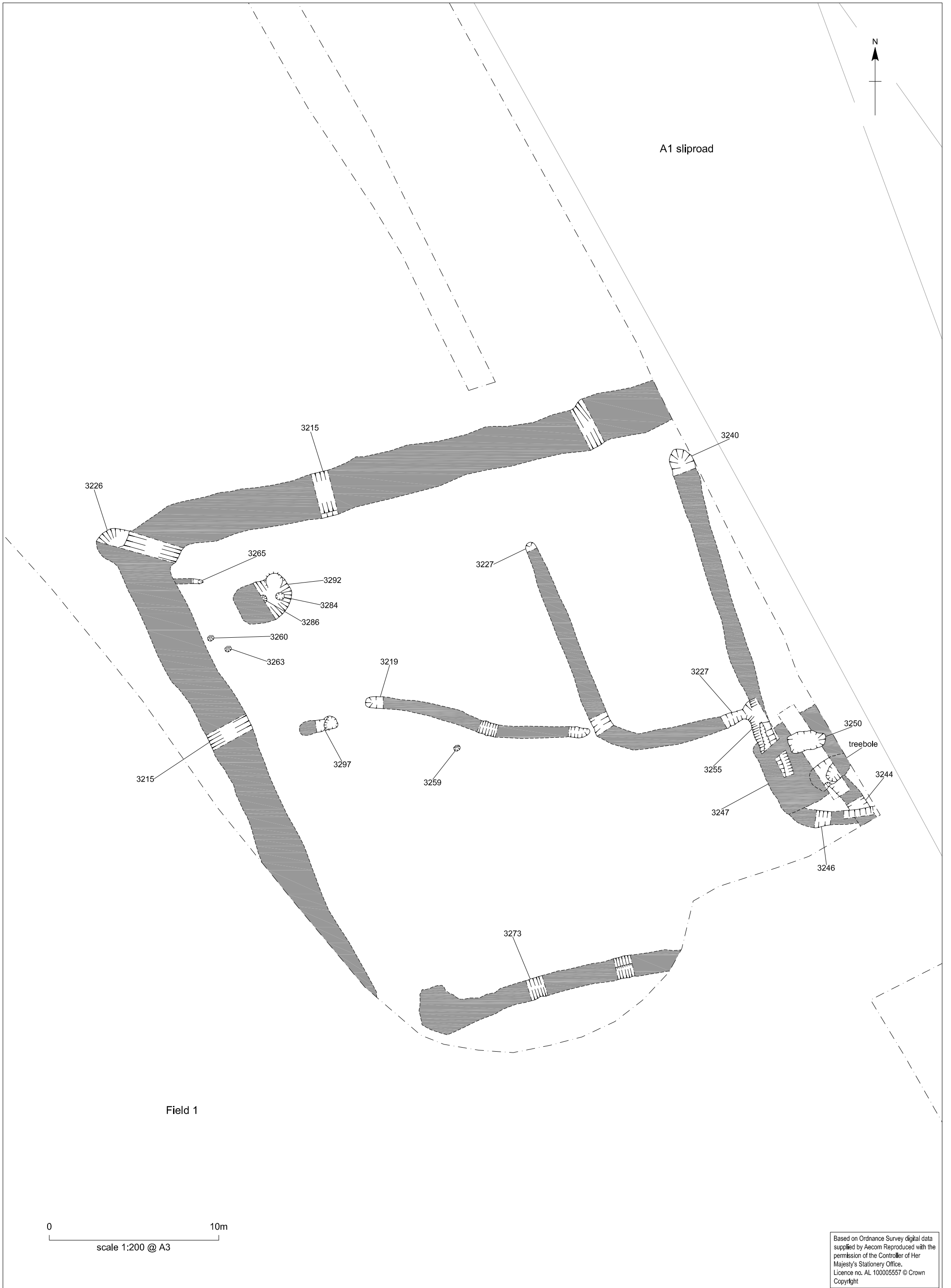
- 3.24 Field 22 contained a single ditch and a pit some 360m apart. The ditch was located within the southern area of the corridor and the pit was located to the north of a farm track that subdivided this field southwest to north-east. Ditch 872 was traced for 7.5m on a south-west to north-east alignment which was perpendicular to the A1. It contained no artefactual material and it seems likely it represents a former field boundary. Pit 866 was sub-circular in plan and contained two light silty fills, but no burnt or artefactual material.

4.0 DISCUSSION

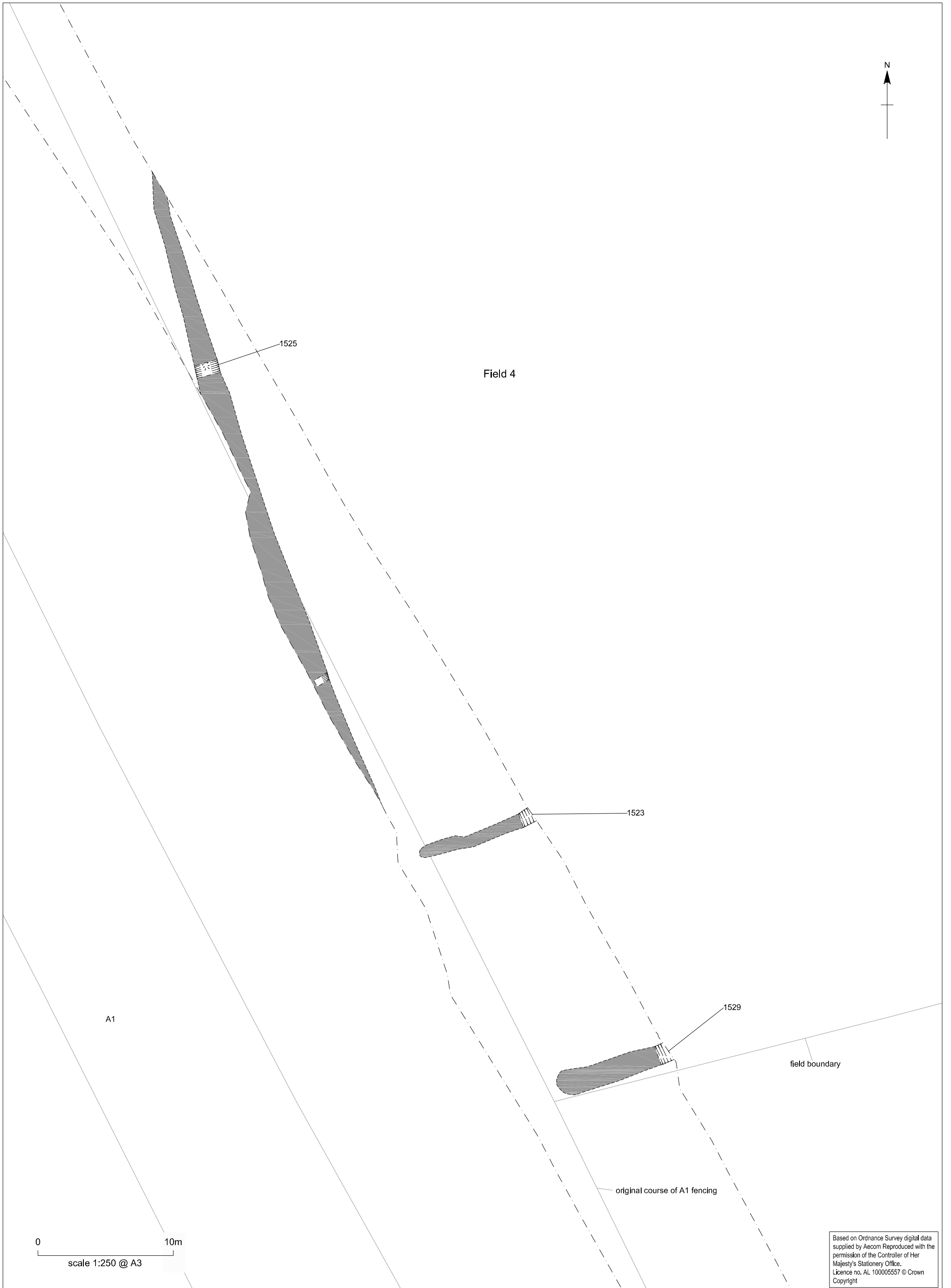
- 4.1 A range of minor archaeological features was encountered in Section 1 between the Dishforth Interchange and the A61 junction. With the exception of two balancing ponds at either end of the section, the majority of the areas that were monitored were relatively narrow (c. 5m or less) and consequently the wider context of the remains could not be established. Within this zone, a small number of dispersed pits were encountered which were consistently filled with fire waste comprising a layer of charcoal and ash and heat-affected cobbles. In a small number of instances the pit fills also contained small quantities of early prehistoric pottery and flint. These pits were encountered in Fields 1, 19, 20 and 21.
- 4.2 Evidence of possible Roman settlement was encountered in two fields (Fields 1 and 20) at either end of the Section. The remains in Field 1 suggested occupation activity within a sub-rectangular enclosure. Although no evidence of a round-house was identified, it is possible that one of the sub-divisions may have defined a rectangular building, as two possible post-holes were identified within the excavated segments. In addition, the enclosure contained evidence of a range of minor features including a possible oven, a refuse pit and post-holes. It was unclear whether this enclosure was an isolated feature or part of a wider roadside settlement. The remains within Field 20 were more limited, but may have been associated with the roadside settlement activity identified in Fields 23 and 25, immediately north of the A61 Junction. The majority of the former field ditch boundaries that were identified were thought to be post-medieval, however, one extensive ditch identified in Field 4 may have been Roman or earlier in date.

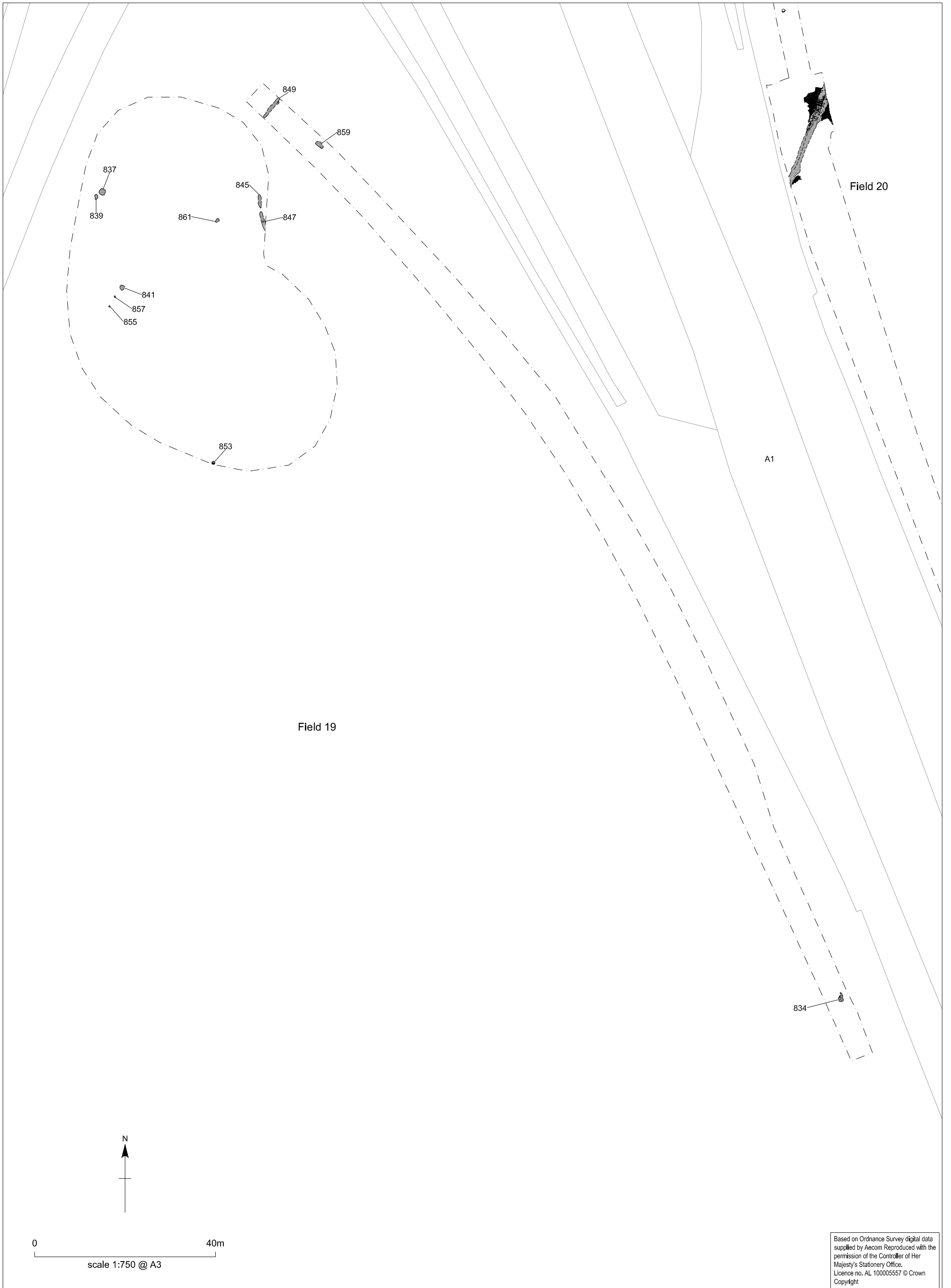




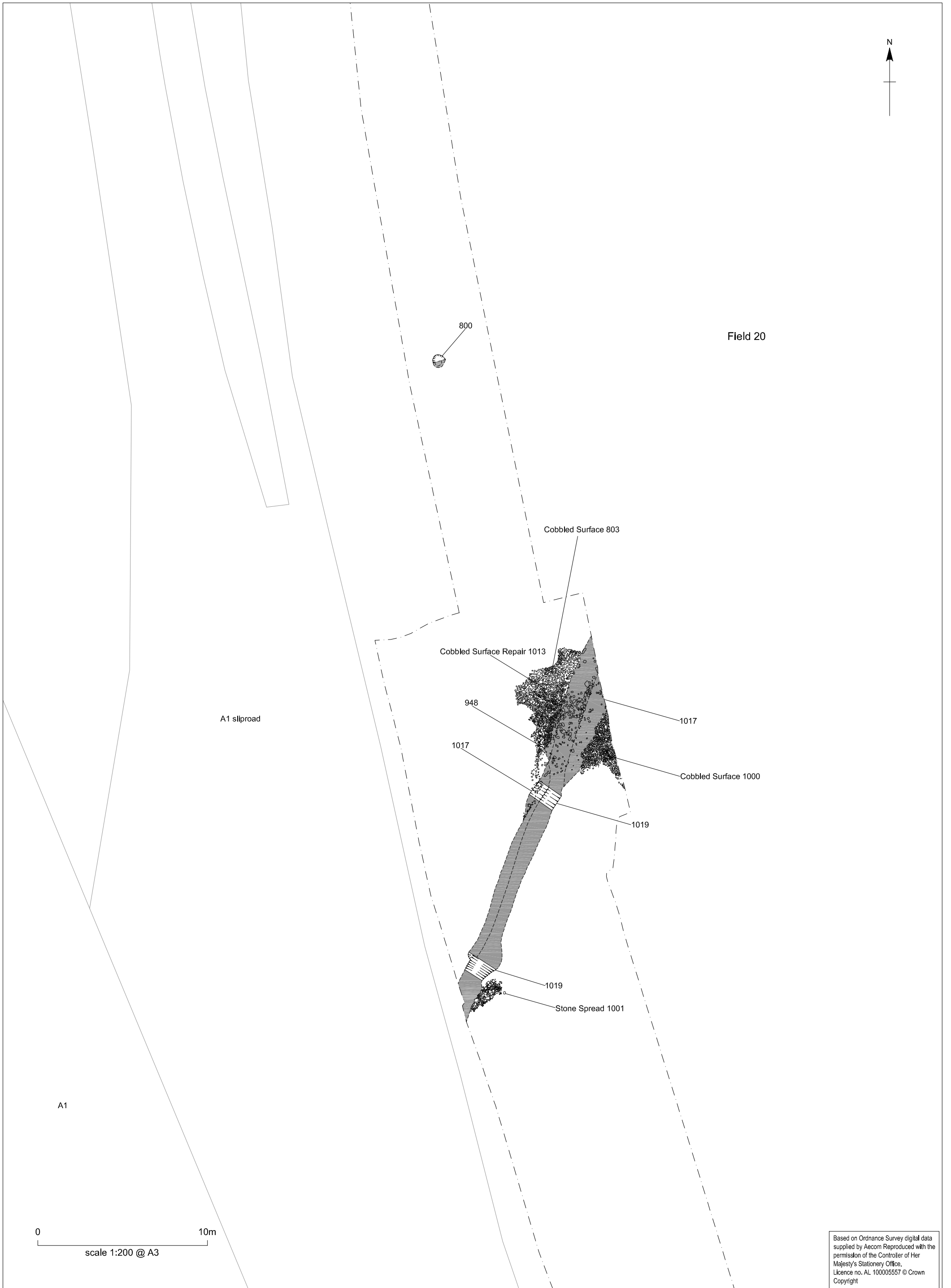


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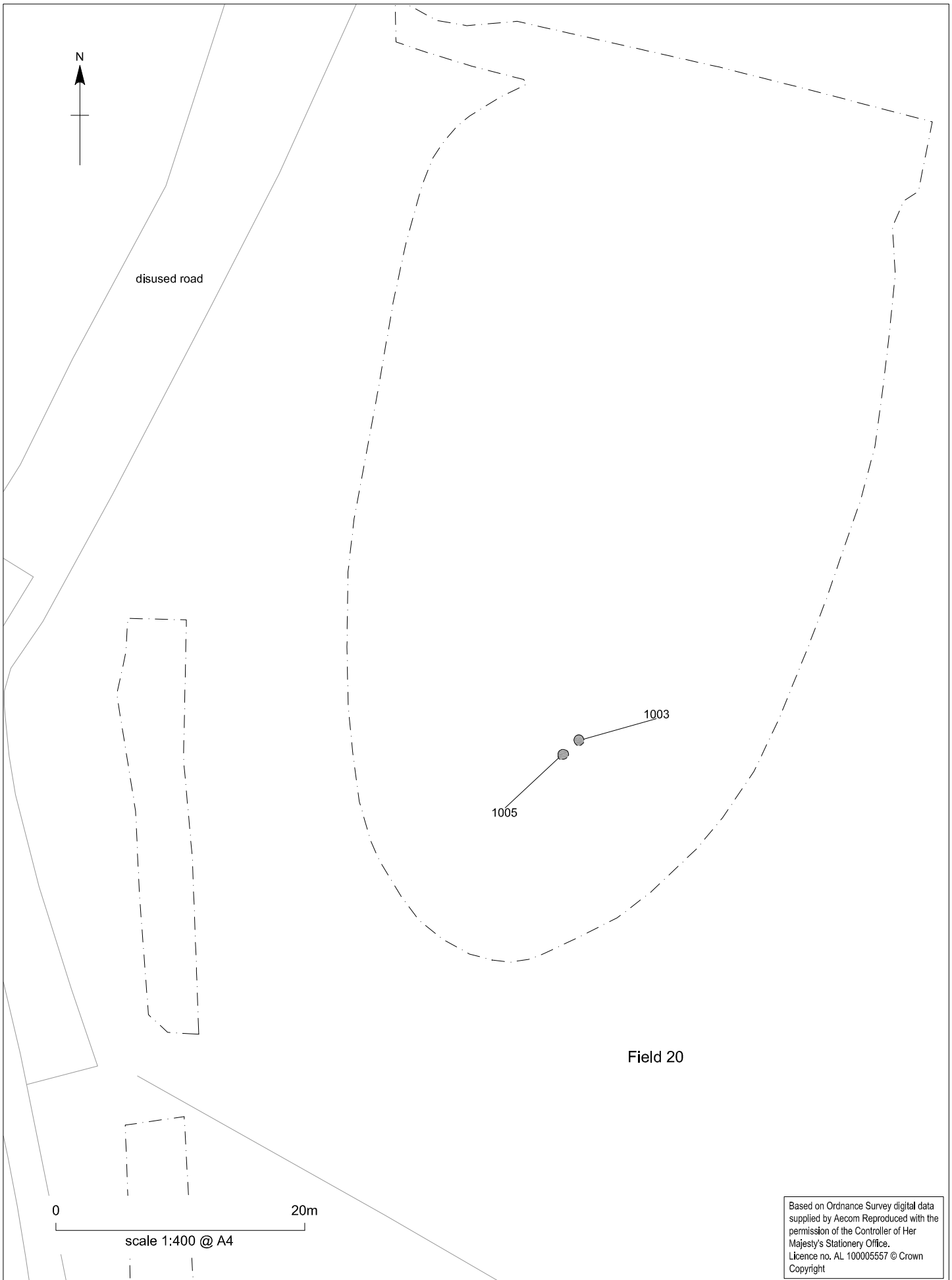


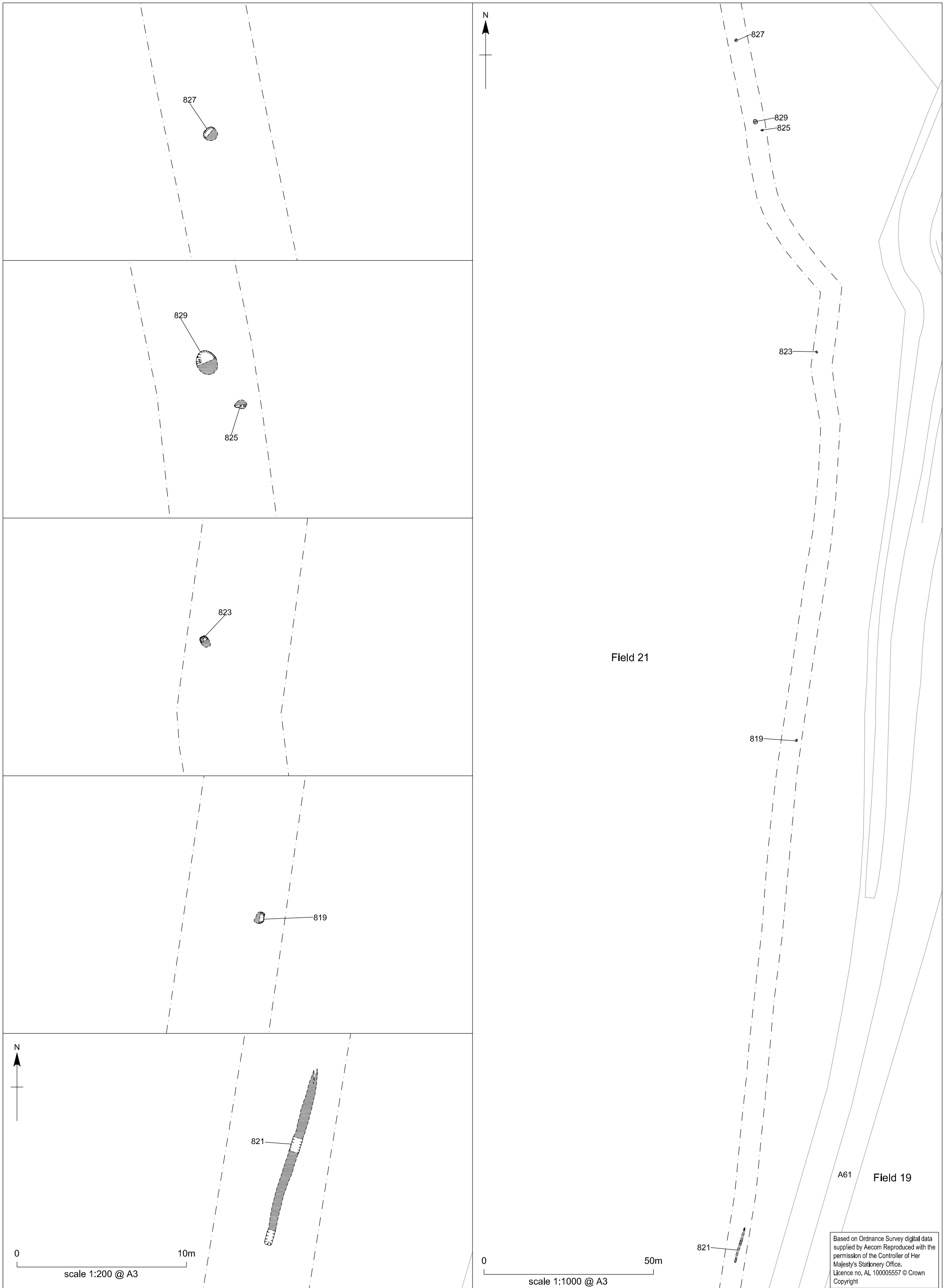


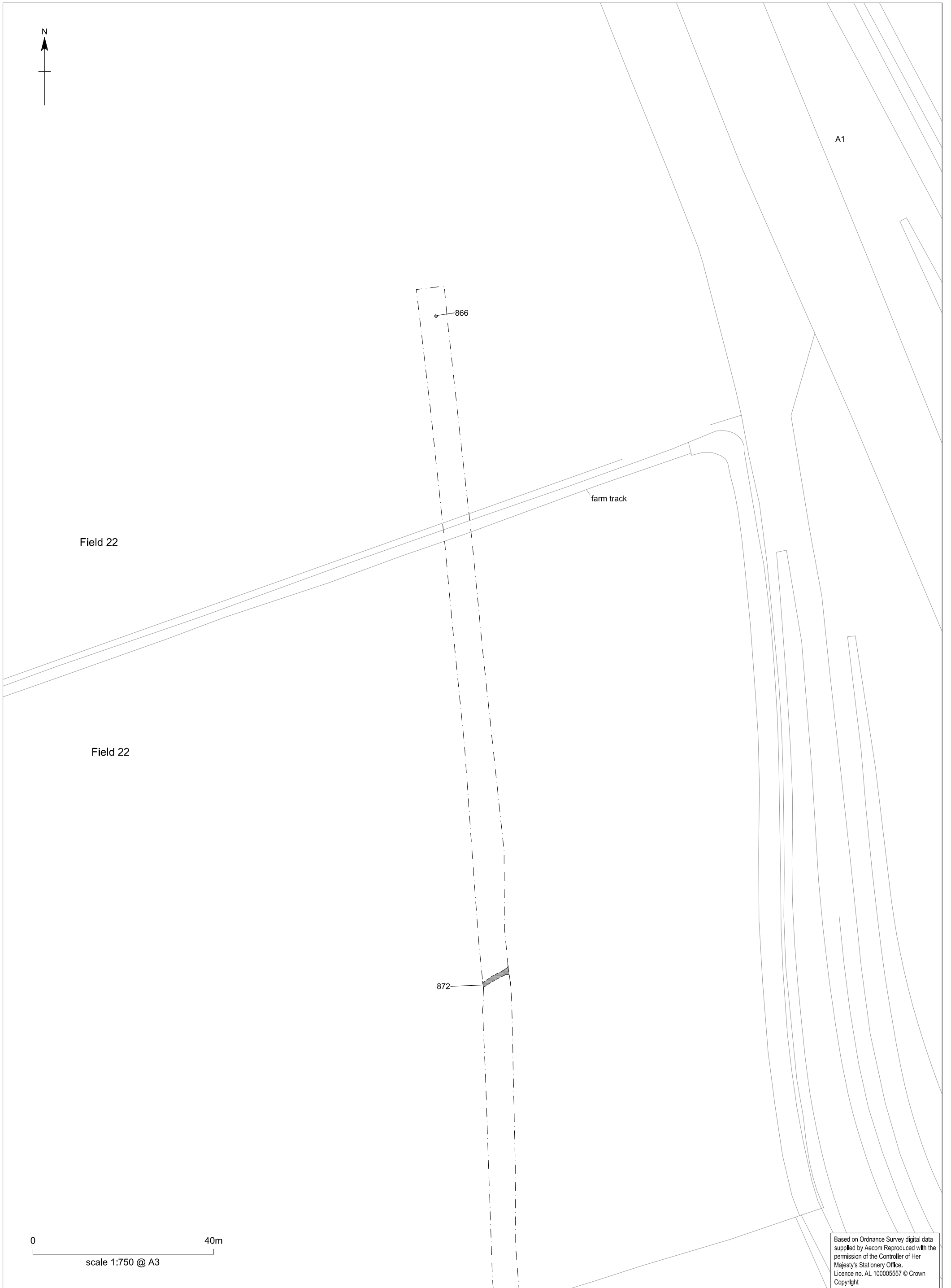
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