

NYCC HER	
SNY	19214
ED	442
CNY	
Parish	8019
Rec'd	15/06/1994

THE VIVARS
SELBY - NORTH YORKSHIRE
EARTHWORK SURVEY

—————MAP—————

Archaeological Consultants Ltd

THE VIVARS - SELBY

EARTHWORK SURVEY

Contents	Page
Figure list	2
1 Introduction	3
2 Historical Summary	4
3 Earthwork survey	5
4 Conclusions	8
5 Recommendations	9
6 Bibliography	10

Figure List

Page

1	Site location plan Scale 1 10000	3
2	First Edition OS map extract 1851	11
3	Extract from Hodgeson 1893	12
4	Site Plan Scale 1 2500	13
5	Site Plan Drawing No N171/101/1 reduced to A4 Overlaid	14
6	Earthwork survey - contour plot	15
7	Earthwork survey - interpretation	16

Plate List

1	General view of site Facing east	17
2	View of ridge and furrow (Feature C) Facing south	17
3	View of northern portion of Feature E Facing south-west	18
4	View of Feature F Facing north-east	18
5	View of Area G and railway embankment Facing north-east	19
6	View of culvert to the east of the Vivars site Facing north	19

THE VIVARS - SELBY

EARTHWORK SURVEY

1 Introduction

MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd was approached by Selby District Council to undertake an earthwork survey of the site known as The Vivars

The Vivars covers an area of approximately 6.2 acres and is situated immediately to the south of Station Road and to the north of Canal Road (SE 6185 3205) in the market town of Selby North Yorkshire

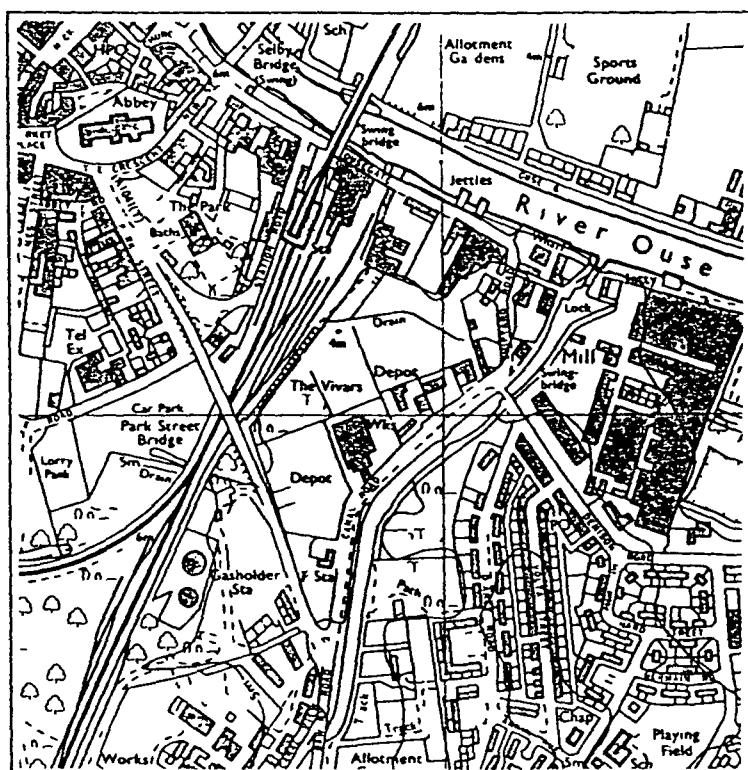


Figure 1

The site name would appear to derive from the Latin word 'vivarium' which means an artificial enclosure i.e. pond for the keeping or raising of fish

The geology of the site indicates (Geological Survey Map 1:50,000 Series Sheet 71) Bunter sandstone covered by silt and clay of the 25-Foot Drift of the Vale of York with local developments of alluvium

Previous assessment of the site included a desktop evaluation of the site by MAP Archaeological Consultancy in 1991 and investigations by Soil Mechanics Ltd in 1983. Both reports were commissioned by Selby District Council

2 Historical Summary

It can be argued that the official history of Selby started with the establishment of the Abbey in 1069AD although there are tentative suggestions that Seletun (Anglo-Saxon for willow copse) may be identified with Selby. The 'tun' element denotes a Saxon settlement but with the advent of Viking settlement this was replaced with 'by' – the Scandinavian term for a town. Evidence for these period relies exclusively on place-name and documentary references. The advent of more extensive archaeological investigations into the urban development of Selby has provided additional information.

In 1993 a borehole survey of the development site on land to the rear Gowthorpe and Finkle Street by York Archaeological Trust and followed by excavations by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd located features of possible Anglian date with associated pottery. The borehole survey and excavations also located a background scatter of Roman pottery.

In 1069AD a Benedictine Abbey was established in Selby. The present day Abbey church represents numerous phases of development and aggrandisement. Even so what is known of the Abbey's history indicates the importance of this religious centre and serves to illustrate the thriving nature of the town during the height of the Abbey's power.

The 12th century saw an increase in agricultural activity at the Abbey. Documents suggest that land was drained for agricultural use and the additional bias on the economy resulted in the increase of pressure on the efficiency of the fishery. Fishing rights were issued by Henry II so that in 1159–60 the monks of Selby were allowed to hold their stew (a pond where fish were kept until needed for the table) 'in peace and that none shall fish there without licence'. In 1319 a license was given for 'the Abbot and Convent of Selby to make a weir across the River Ouse in their fee of Selby at a place called Impegarth'.

Cartographic evidence shows that in 1800 the site of the Vivars was open land with no signs of development. In 1808 the Enclosure map again shows the site as open land. The 1851 First Edition OS map states that the area of land to the south-east of the railway line was called the Vivars (Fig 2) indeed a compilation map produced in Hodgeson's History of Selby (Hodgeson 1893 Fig 3) provides additional information by citing that the Vivars were the site of the Abbey fishponds. Later Ordnance Survey maps continue to depict this area of Selby as The Vivars but there is no further mention of a specific area. It is clear from later editions of the Ordnance Survey maps that the area labelled as The Vivars proceeds to migrate further to the east (Fig 4).

3 Earthwork Survey

The earthwork survey was undertaken in May 1994 using a Wild TC1600 an electronic theodolite with a position data recorder. Survey results were downloaded into MAT 400 and from there transferred to DGM (Digital Ground Modelling software) and Drafix (CAD software). The site was surveyed as a isolated unit and grid references shown on Figure 6 are not keyed into Ordnance Survey data. The contour plan of the site is shown at 0.10m intervals (Fig 6). All plans within the report were reproduced at A4 size but Selby District Council hold a copy of the archive plans at a scale of 1:500.

At the time of the survey there was a lush growth of grass, nettle and some thistles over much of the south of the site where the ridge and furrow is present and towards the northern boundary of the site large areas were covered with brambles which for the main part were transversable.

Some of the furrows contained small deposits of modern rubbish none of which obscured the underlying features. To the north larger dumps of building rubble were located.

Disturbance to the site is shown on Figure 5. This consists of principally a drain running east to west in the southern portion of the site and a larger drain again on a east-west alignment in the north of the site. For the purpose of the earthwork survey these drains have been discounted. The southern drain appears to have only marginally effected the ridge and furrow and the northern drain runs through a relatively featureless area (see below).

Topographically the site falls gently from the south to the north by an average of 0.9m approximately over a distance of 50m. These measurements do not take into account the dramatic rise in height at the northern end of the site where the railway embankment is located.

Feature A

Feature A measures approximately 0.5m square and has in the past been covered by wooden planks which have now rotted leaving the excavation open. The function of this feature is not known. It does not appear to correspond to an engineering test pit and due to the rotted cover may indicate a more central drain on the site or perhaps the location of a well. These interpretations are purely speculative.

Feature B

This feature represents what is believed to be a portion of the fishpond as shown on Hodgeson map of 1893 (Fig 3). The feature gently slopes to the west (Figs 6 & 7) and is not affected by the ridge and furrow to the east. In fact the ridge and furrow appear to respect the pond (Figs 6 & 7) suggesting the evidence for cultivation is older than the pond.

It is interesting to note that the size of the pond, now visible is much smaller than that suggested by the Ordnance survey map and Hodgeson's (Figs 2 & 3) and therefore calls into question the accuracy of these maps/plans.

Presently the pond is completely silted up and quite solid under foot. At other times of the year standing water has been noted (Soil Mechanics 1983). Vegetation over the pond area (dried stems of rose bay willow herb) is in total contrast to the lush grass of the ridge and furrow.

Feature C

Feature C – the ridge and furrow covers most of the southern area of the site for approximately 9500 square meters (Figs 6–7 PI 1 & 2). Although well defined the best preserved portion is in the south-east portion of the site, as shown most effectively on the central part of the survey (Fig 7).

The ridge and furrow is aligned approximately north-south and measures c 2.5–3m across the top of the ridge with a furrow base of c 2.5m. The general size of the feature tends to suggest a pre-enclosure date.

Disturbance to the feature has occurred through the construction of a drain just to the north of the southern boundary of the site (Fig 2). However, apart from the location of the manhole covers (Fig 5) the line of the drain is not currently visible in the ridge and furrow although if the vegetation was cut back this feature may be more visible.

Further disturbance appears to have occurred in the north of the site as the ridge and furrow stop abruptly along a fairly uniform line (Figs 6 & 7 Feature G).

Feature D

It is interesting to note that furrow D is wider and deeper than the furrows immediately to the east and west. In addition at the time of the survey there was standing water in the furrow. This feature terminates at a manhole cover on the southern boundary (Fig 5) possibly suggesting that it is acting or had in the past acted as a drain.

However Feature D also appears to represent a division of the land unit. Fence posts survive for a small portion of its length and where posts are missing there are established hawthorn bushes. It is also interesting to note that this apparent division of land is mirrored in the position and alignment of the property boundary directly to the south of the survey site between Record Playground Equipment on the east and the Highways depot on the west.

Feature E

Approximately 75m to the east of Feature D is a second fenceline which also corresponds with a deeper and wider furrow (Feature E PI 3). This alignment also corresponds with the eastern boundary of Record Playground Equipment and the western boundary of the amenity site. This boundary is also shown on the First Edition O.S. maps of the site indicating its antiquity (Fig 2).

Feature F

In the extreme south-eastern portion of the site the ridge and furrow stops abruptly (Figs 6 & 7). This area is characterised by a shallow depression measuring approximately 55m by 45m (PI 4). Again there is a distinctive change in the vegetation from lush grass to a pale yellow-brown grass. The vegetation is poor and flattened to ground level. Water was seen to be standing in the feature.

Recourse to the engineering data from the site shows that a test pit (Testhole E) in this area of the site located a 3m deposit of tipped debris capped by a further 3m deposit of clays (internal memo – Chief Technical Officer Engineers) This suggests that there was once quite a substantial sized feature in this area of the site This feature may represent a borrow pit/quarry for the construction of the railway

The fact that Feature F has removed the ridge and furrow and the presence of the rubbish suggests a modern date for its backfilling

Feature G

This feature represents the area to the north of the ridge and furrow (Pls 1 & 5) Survey indicated little change in the contours of the land in this area and apart from rabbit burrows and the line of the culvert no archaeological features were observed other than Features H and I

Immediately to the north of G and outside the survey area is a railway embankment (Pls 1 & 5) The loss of ridge and furrow in this area may be due to

A the removal of soil from the site to provide additional material for the construction of the railway embankment (the Vivars site once belonged to British Rail P Day – pers comm)

Or

B the construction of the culvert resulted in the removal of the ridge and furrow in this part of the site Plate 6 shows the size of the drain to the east of the site

Or

C as result of both developments outlined above

Feature H

In the area of G the contour plot of the site (Fig 6) indicates a shallow depression measuring approximately 70m Comparison of the map evidence suggests the presence of a pond in this area (Fig 4) The pond is not shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey map of Selby (Fig 2) nor does it appear on Hodgeson plan of the site (Fig 3) A relatively recent date for this feature seems likely as ridge and furrow is absent from this area of the site and the feature is depicted as a pond on relatively recent maps (Fig 4) Evidence suggests that the pond post dates the ridge and furrow and should not be considered as part of the vivarium complex

Feature H is completely silted up and at the time of the survey no standing water or wet area was noted

Feature I

In Area G, a very shallow depression measuring approximately 30m by 20m, is visible west of Feature H (Figs 6 & 7) The purpose of this feature is unknown

4 Conclusions

The earthwork survey showed that ridge and furrow predominates on the site over 50% of its total area and prior to the construction of the northern culvert and the railway embankment probably covered the whole site. In the extreme south-western corner, a small portion of the medieval fishpond (Feature B) which gives the site its name survives although in a silted up form.

To the south-east the area of Feature F would appear to represent land fill which is probably of relatively recent date.

To the north the only recognisable features were H which may represent a pond but again is probably of more recent date and I a shallow depression.

In conclusion, the only medieval features on the site would appear to be the ridge and furrow which due to its size indicates pre-enclosure date and the silted up fishpond. Both features will be affected by the development and therefore should be accorded importance when considering areas and specific types of development on the site. The ridge and furrow is significant not for what it is but because of it may conceal earlier features.

5 Recommendations

It is recommended that prior to development of the site a mitigation strategy is formulated to consider the archaeology of the site further. This should be based on the development programme and take into consideration the archaeological potential of the site by means of a staged evaluation.

6 Bibliography

- Farrar H SELBY - The First Three Hundred Million Years 1987
- Faul M L & Moorhouse S A (eds) West Yorkshire An Archaeological Survey to AD1500
(Wakefield 1981) pp 743-51
- Haslop G S The Abbot of Selby's Financial Statement for the Year ending Michaelmas
1338 YAJ vol 44, 1972 159-169
A Selby Kitcheners Roll of the Early 15th Century YAJ vol 48 1976
119-133
- Hodgeson ++ , A History of Selby 1893
- McDonnell J Inland Fisheries in Medieval Yorkshire 1066-1300 Borthwick papers No
60 1981
- McDonnell K G T The Archive of Selby Abbey YAJ vol 44 1972 170-172
- Morrell W W The History and Antiquities of Selby 1867
- Soil Mechanics Site investigations The Vivars - Selby 1983
- Tillotson, J H Monastery and Society in the late Middle Ages - Selected Accounts Rolls
from Selby Abbey 1398-1537 1988

FIGURES 2-7

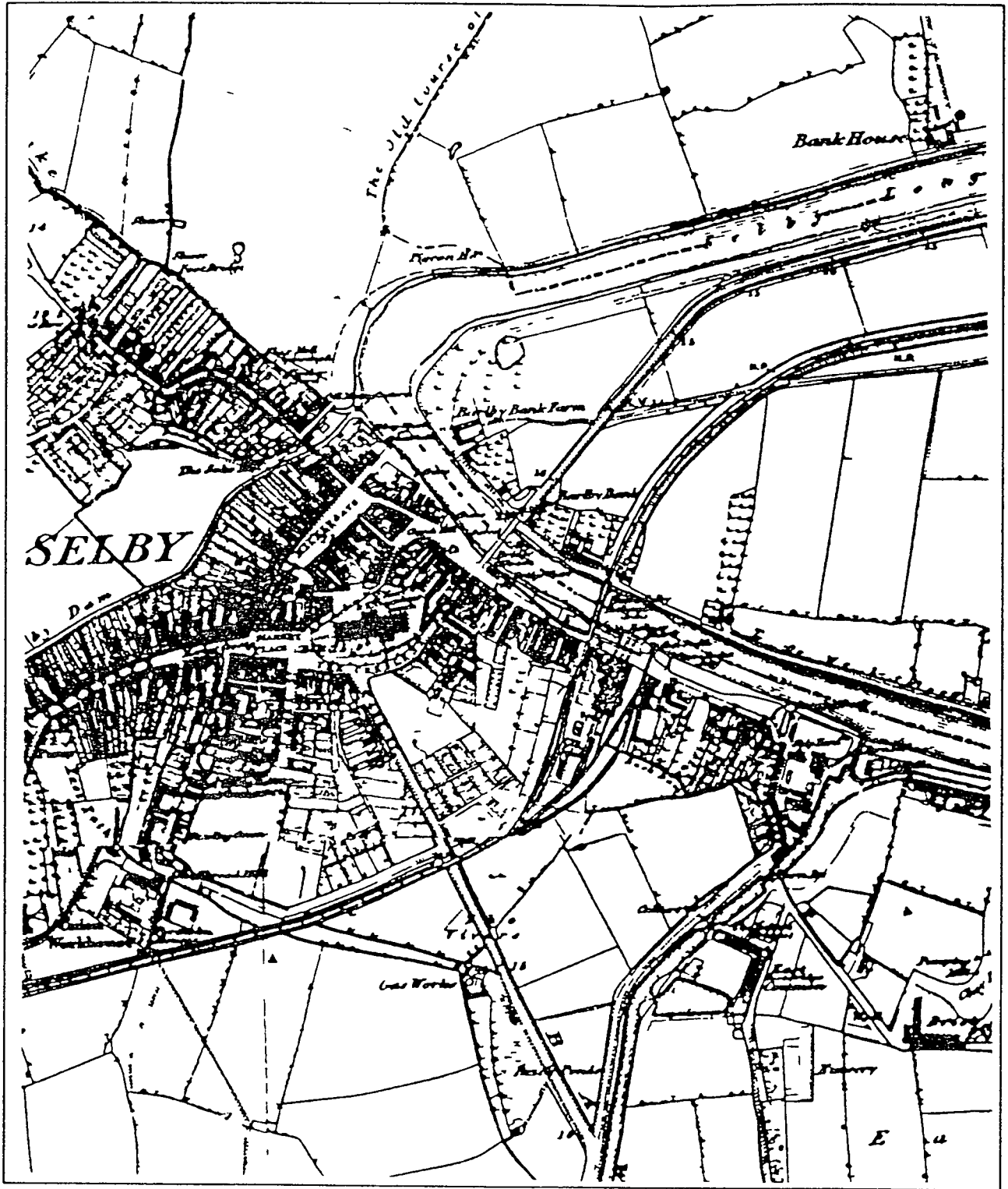


Figure 2
First Edition O S Map 1851

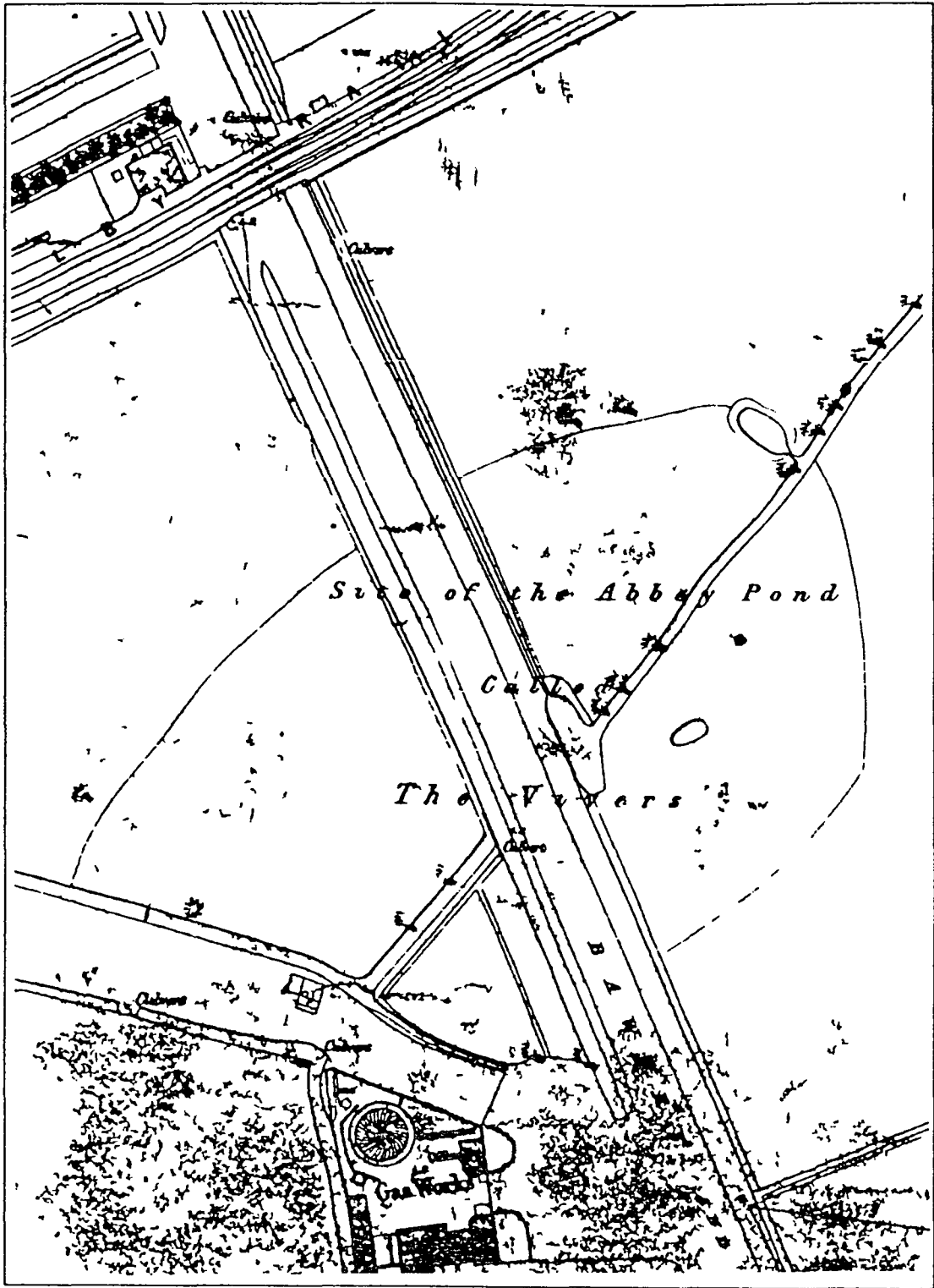


Figure 3

Extract from Hodgeson 1893

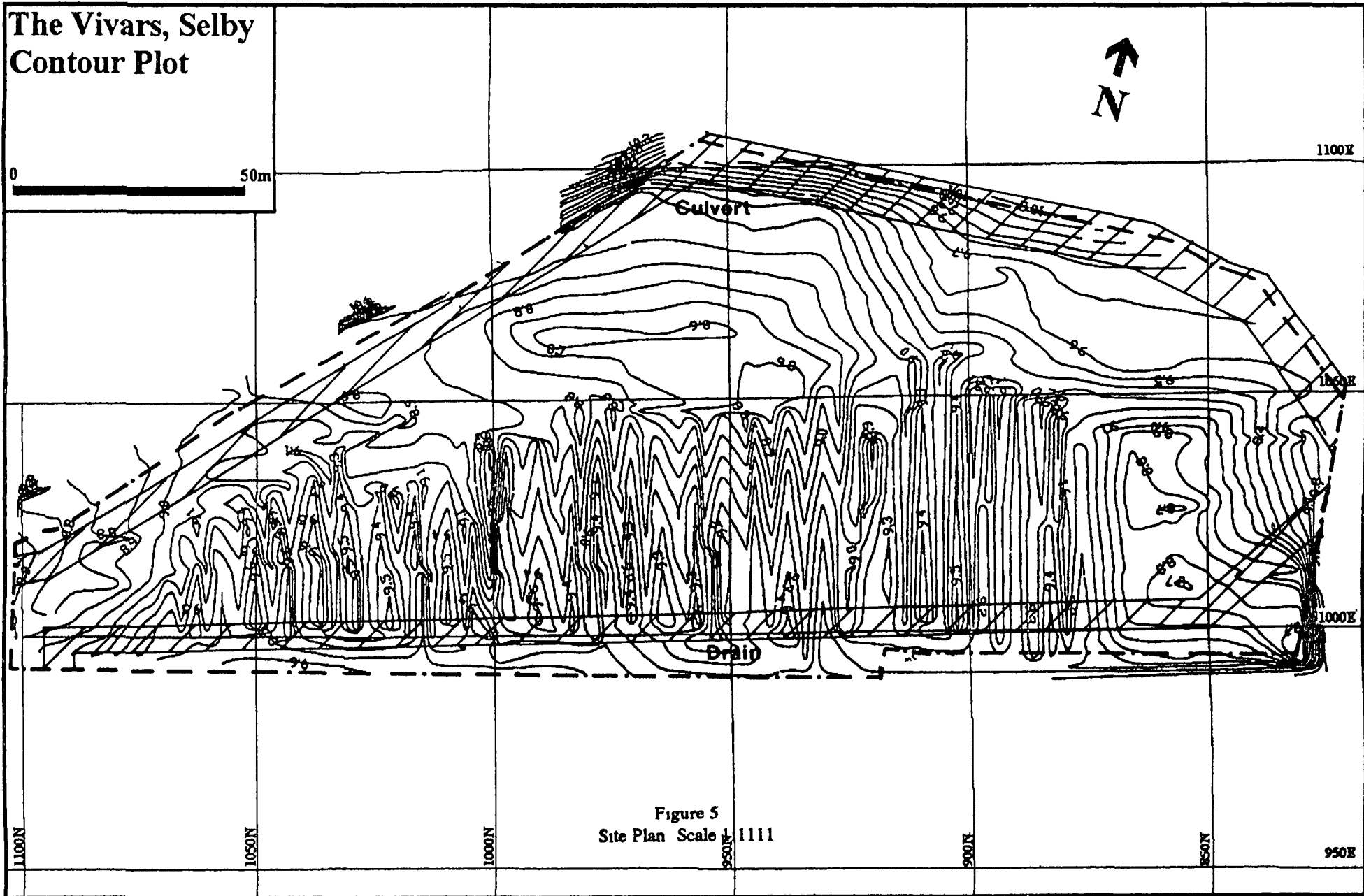


Figure 6
Earthwork Survey - contour plot

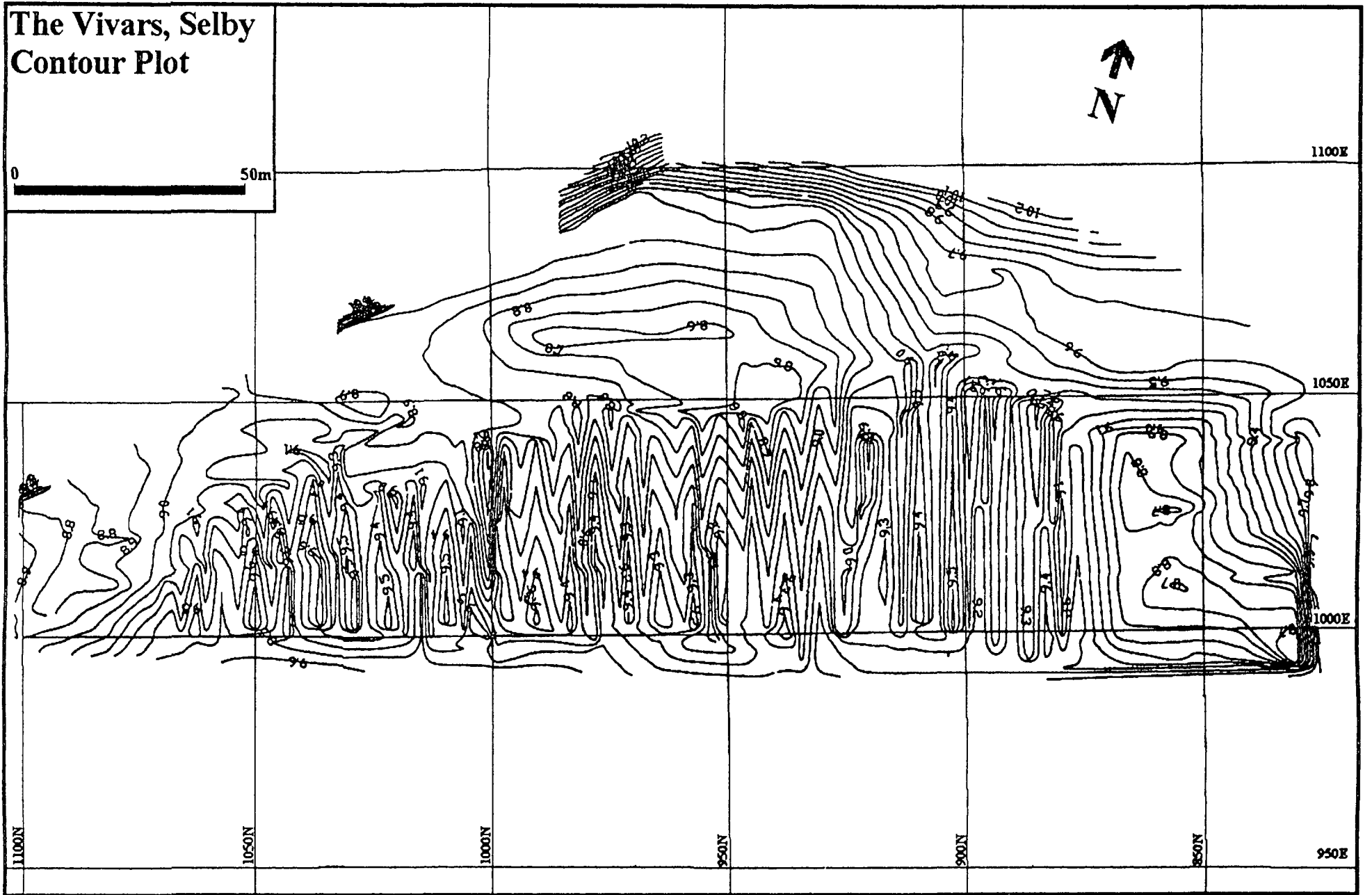


Figure 6
Earthwork Survey - contour plot

The Vivars, Selby
Interpretation

0 50m

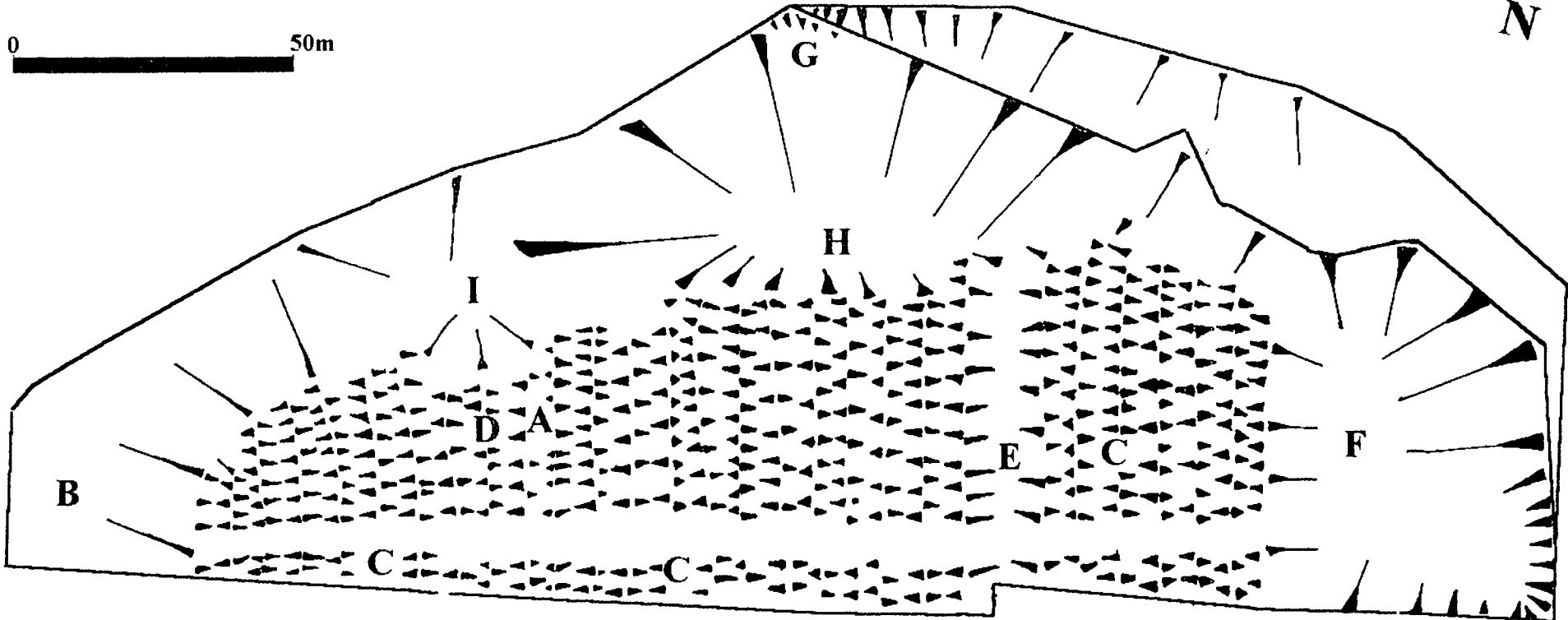


Figure 7
Earthwork Survey - interpretation

PLATES 1-6

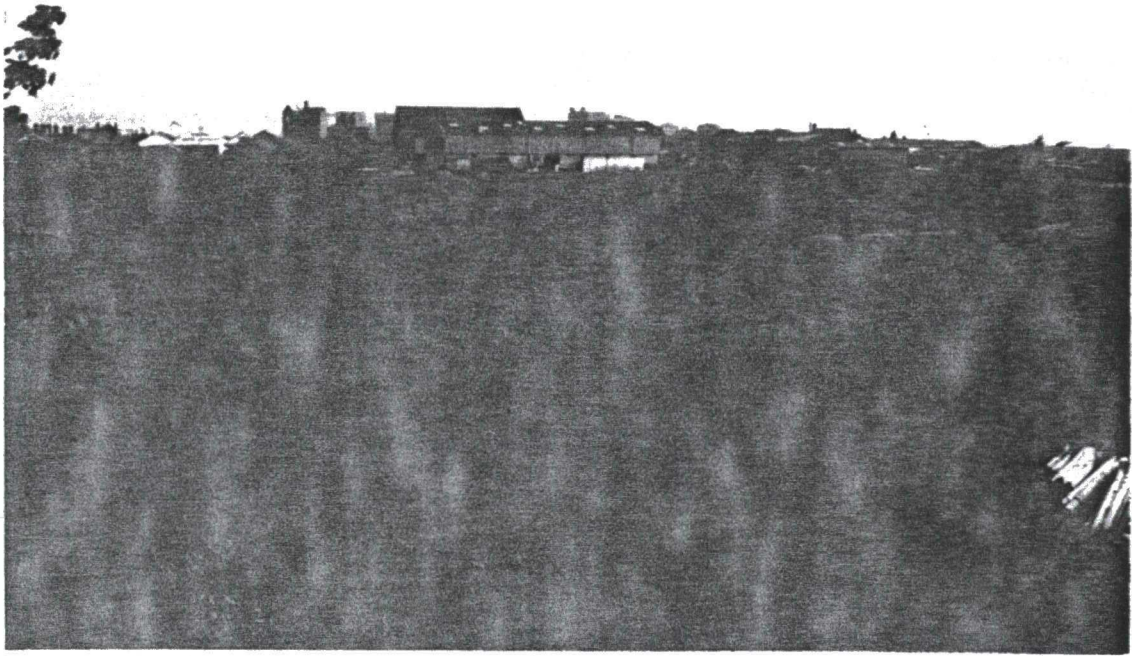


Plate 1.
General view of site, facing east.

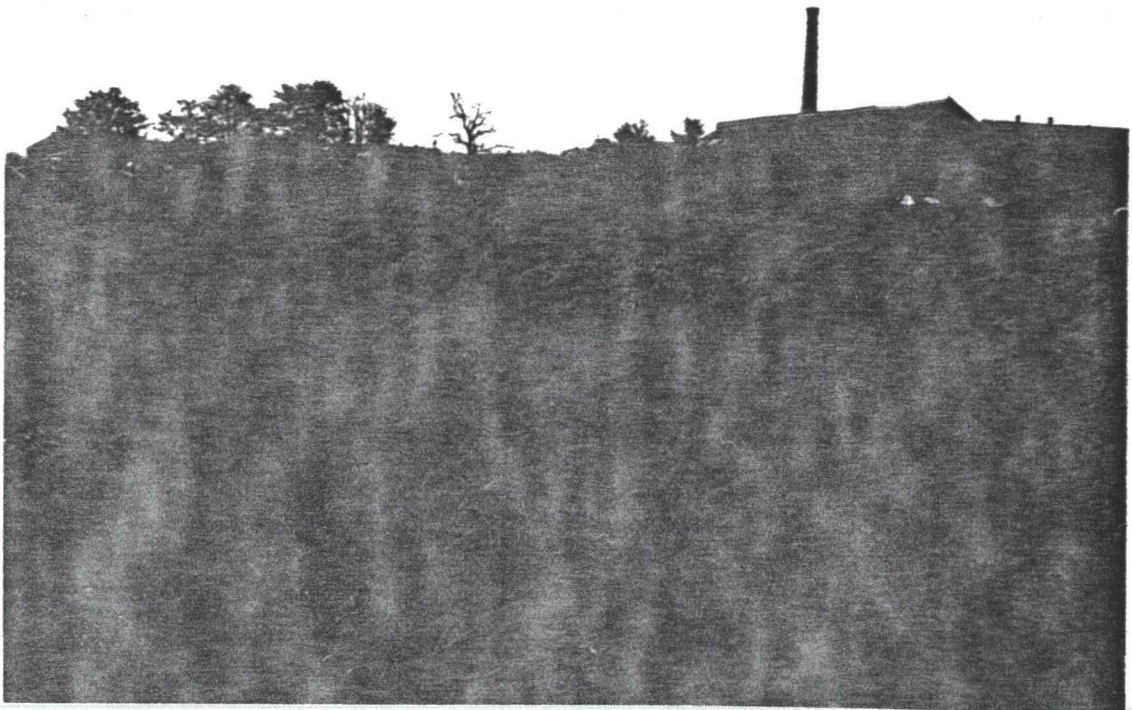


Plate 2.
View of ridge and furrow (Feature C), facing south.

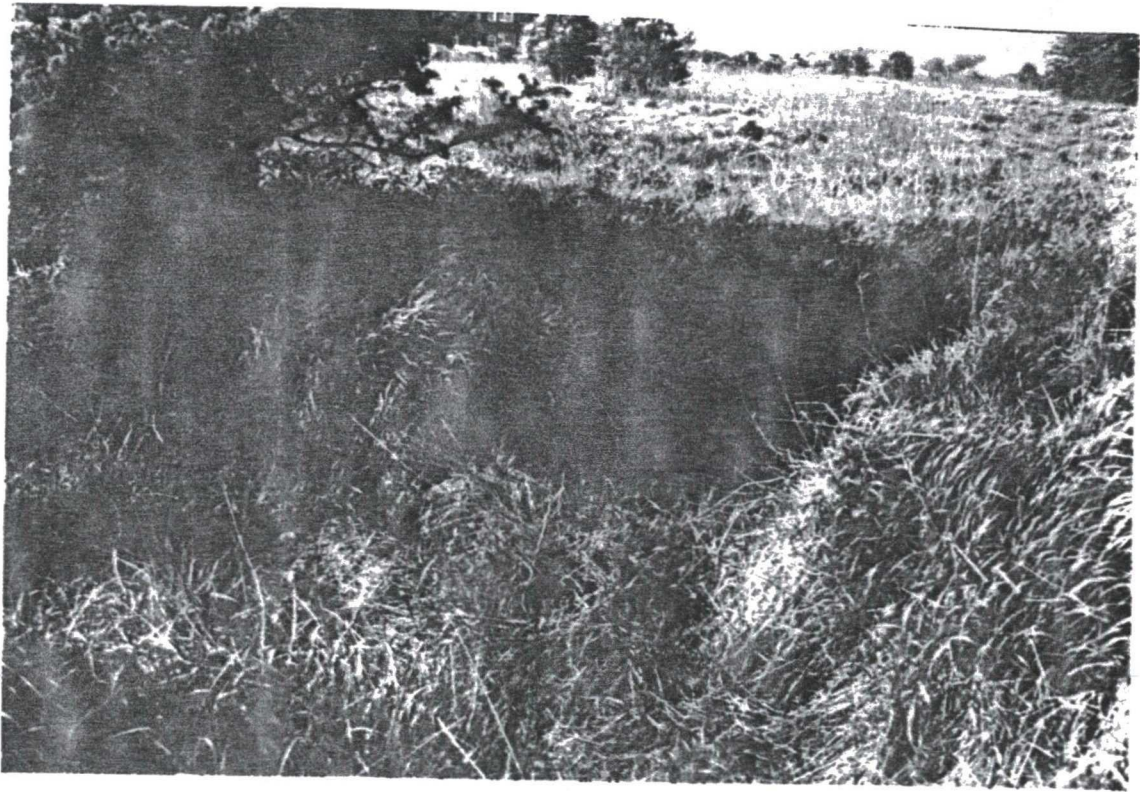


Plate 3.
View of northern portion of Feature E. Facing south-west.



Plate 4.
View of Feature F. Facing north-east.

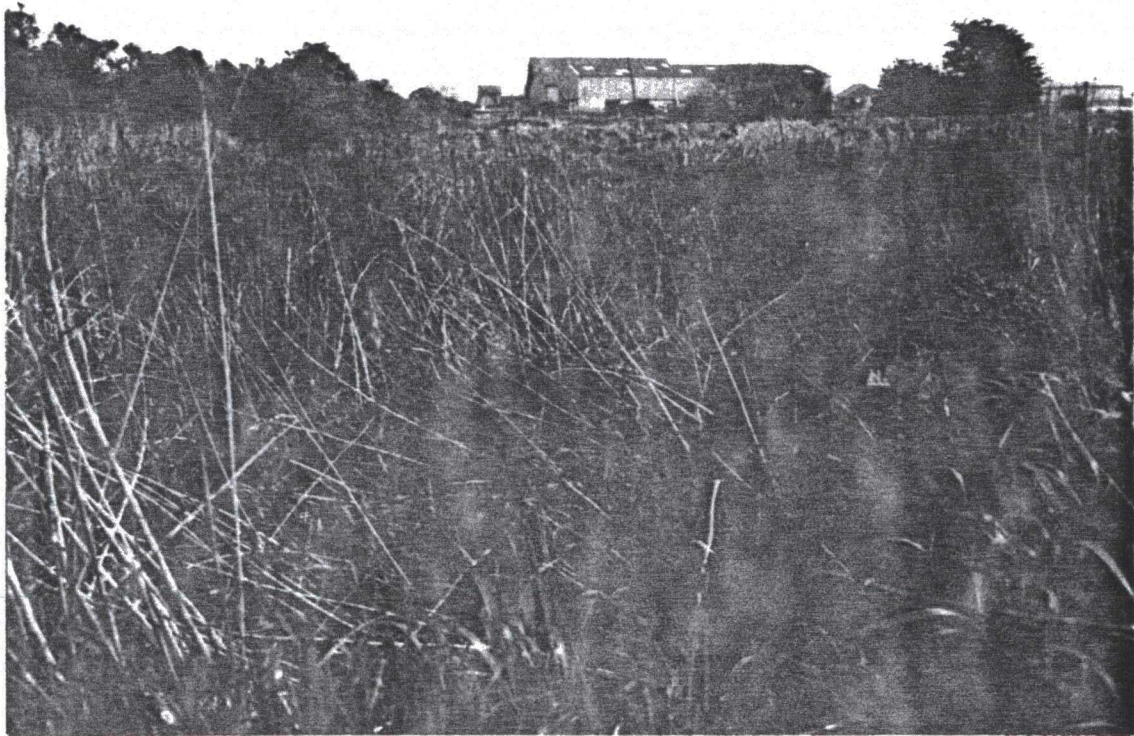


Plate 5.
View of Area G and railway embankment. Facing north-east.

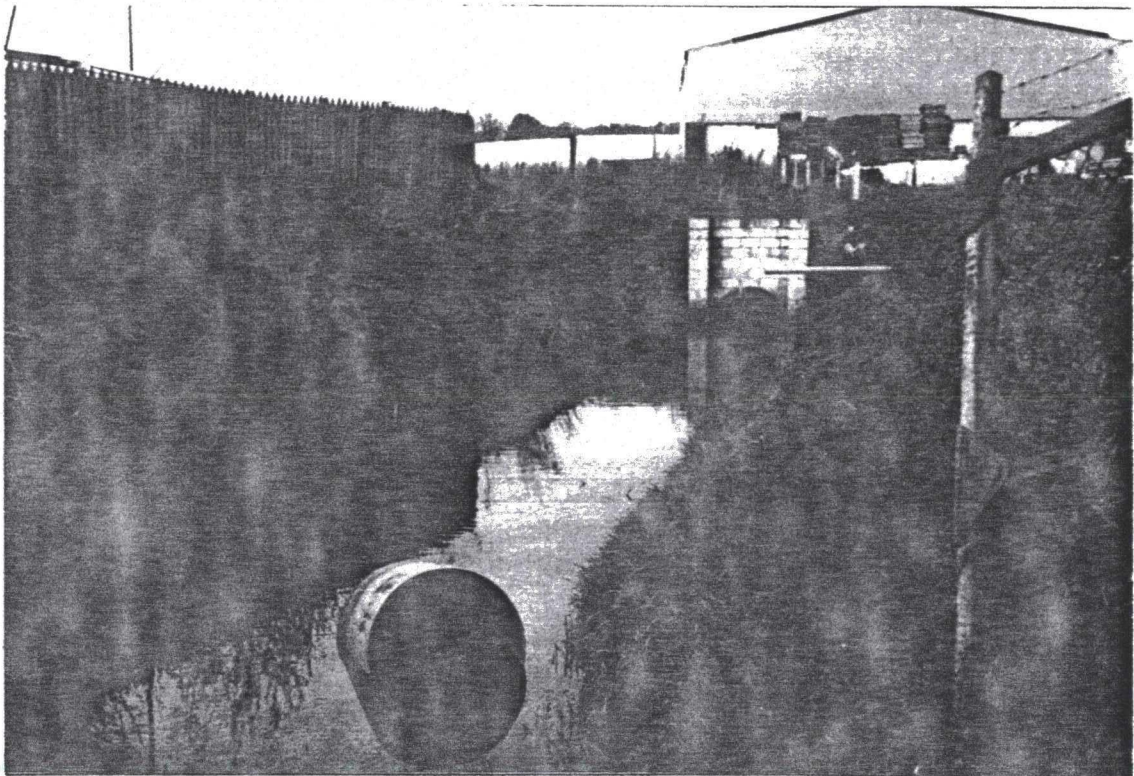


Plate 6.
View of culvert to the east of the Vivars site. Facing north.