MONK FRYSTON PRIMARY SCHOOL
REPORT ON AN EARTHWORKS SURVEY

(on behalf of NYCC Building Design and Management)

OSA Report: 98ES02

National Grid Reference: SE 5060 2950

May 1998

8/56/136/PA

ON SITE
ARCHAEOLOGY

25A Milton Street • York • North Yorkshire • YO1 3EP
telephone/fax • 01904 411673 • mobile • 0467 385766
e-mail • 101360.2357@compuserve.com

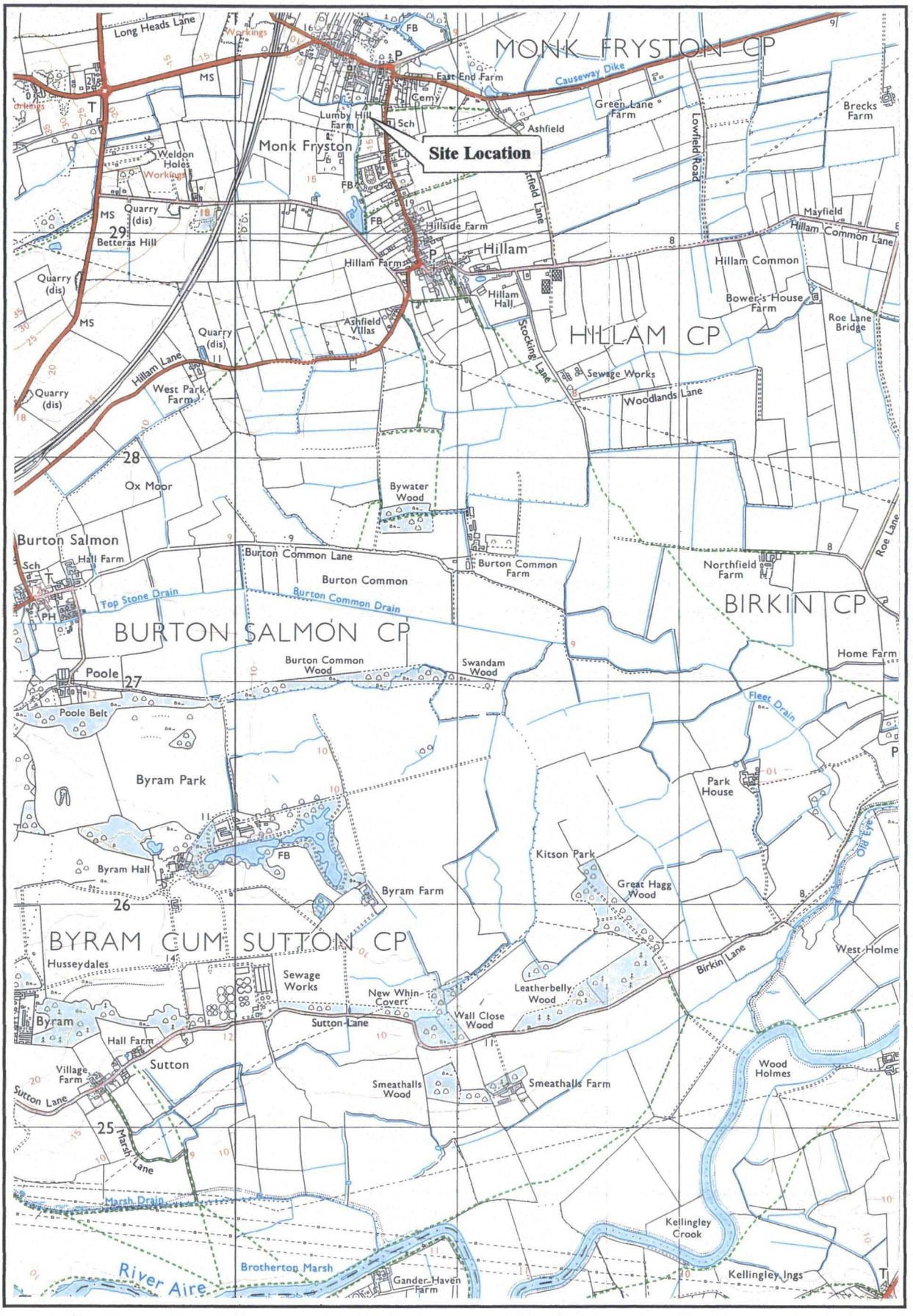

Figure 1. Site Location (SE 5060 2950)

Base of furrows denoted by blue line
Top of ridges denoted by red line
▌ indicates location of evaluation trench

Contours at 10cm intervals, labelled at 1m intervals AOD.

Scale 1:1000

Figure 2. Contour survey of extant ridge and furrow

1.0 Summary

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken of the area of proposed development on the playing fields of Monk Fryston Primary school. This evaluation was carried out on behalf of NYCC Building Design and Management, following the North Yorkshire County Council guidelines for recording lynchets and ridge and furrow. An earthwork survey was carried out on the 23rd March and this was followed by an evaluation trench measuring 4.50m by 0.80m which was excavated on the 9th of April.

This report was prepared by Marie-Claire Ferguson, Guy Hopkinson & Nick Pearson of On-Site Archaeology.

2.0 Site Location and Archaeological Background

The area of proposed development is situated opposite the existing school building in the open green space which is currently used as the school playing field. Part of this area is to be used as the site for the new school building and was the subject of this survey.

The National Grid Reference for the site is SE 5060 2950.

3.0 Methodology

An earthwork survey of the ridge and furrow present on the site was carried out using a Leica TC 500 Electronic Distance Measurer (EDM). Points were taken on the tops of the ridges and on the base of the furrows at regular intervals, in order to produce a detailed contour survey of the site. This data was then entered into the *Model Maker*™ software package in order to create a contour drawing of the extant earthworks. The results of the earthwork survey are illustrated in Fig 2.

Subsequent to the earthworks survey, an evaluation trench measuring 0.80m by 4.50m was excavated by hand to a depth of 0.48m. to reveal the full extent of the furrow. This trench ran from the top of one ridge to the top of the next, perpendicular to the line of the feature. The location of this trench is illustrated in Fig 2.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology t*echniques were followed throughout the survey and excavation. The profile of the ridge and furrow was fully recorded photographically and by section and plan drawings. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from the Ordnance Survey benchmark located on the corner of the school building.

4.0 Results.

4.1 The earthwork Survey

Introduction

Before the development of modern agricultural practices much of the English countryside was often open and hedgeless, broken only by settlement, woodland and forest. The modern landscape of completely enclosed parishes was created mainly during the period 1600-1850s. Before then agriculture was organised communally. The field systems that surrounded the villages were subdivided into many small, narrow arable strips called lands, that were grouped into blocks called furlongs. The furlongs were grouped into a few large areas called fields. The fields were cultivated in a two or three-year rotation, one year being fallow. The ridge and furrow field systems which formed part of this process and which we see so frequently today were formed by the action of the ploughing, going around in a clockwise motion beginning at the middle, and finishing at the outside leaving a furrow. The purpose of the ridging was for soil drainage; the furrow acted as an open drain and as a clear demarcation between lands. The ends of most lands are curved, so that the whole land took the shape of a very elongated, mirror-image of an 'S'. This seems to have developed over the years, resulting from a tendency to draw out to the left when performing a turning circle to the right.

The most readily identifiable effect of open-field strip ploughing is the ridge and furrow. There are however other features that can survive. As well as moving soil towards the centre of the land the action of the plough moved small quantities in the direction of motion, towards the ends. This soil was left at the ends when the plough was lifted out of the ground to turn. Over the years small heaps formed at each end, lying on the left hand side as viewed from the centre. They were called heads and are first noted in the records in the 13th century.

Where two furlongs have lands meeting at right angles the heads of all the lands in one furlong were piled on the first land of the next. These heads were ploughed over and smoothed out as part of the first land, which was called a headland. Headlands are larger than the adjacent lands because of the extra soil moved on to them. Where two furlongs have lands lying in the same orientation the boundary is marked by a double row of heads, forming an irregular 'knuckle-like' bank. This, too, lies higher than the tops of the nearby ridges because of soil transfer. This feature was called a joint.

Recorded Features

The earthworks survey clearly shows ridge and furrow over the whole of the area and extending into the school football field to the north. The ridges are degraded over the whole of the site. Two furlongs are represented within the survey area, adjacent to one another. The furlong to the south is running on an east - west alignment and that to the north, on a north-

south alignment, (See figure 2). No headland was evident between these two alignments of ridge and furrow.

No other contemporaneous or non contemporaneous features were present within the survey area.

4.2 The Evaluation Trench

The sequence of deposits apparent in the section were as follows; in stratigraphical order

2000 - Topsoil

2001 - Dark grey brown sandy loam. Fill of furrow

2002 - Cut for furrow

2003 - Mid reddish grey brown sandy clay loam. Ridge build-up

2004 - Red brown sandy clay. Natural

All of the archaeological deposits were consistent with the formation of a soil profile under an agricultural regime. No cultural artifacts were present, nor was there any evidence for deposits or features of archaeological significance of an earlier date sealed beneath the ridge and furrow, either above or cutting into the natural ground.

5.0 Bibliography

Dyer, C., Aston, M., Austin, D (eds.) 1989 Rural Settlement in Medieval England (Blackwell).

Hall, D. N.,1981 in Rowley, R. T., The Origins of Open-Field Agriculture (London).

Hall, David, 1998 in British Archaeology No 33., Medieval fields in their many forms.

7.0 Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the team who undertook this survey and evaluation. In addition thanks are due to the children and staff of Monk Fryston Primary School for their interest and co-operation.

Plate 1: Evaluation Trench viewed from the south.

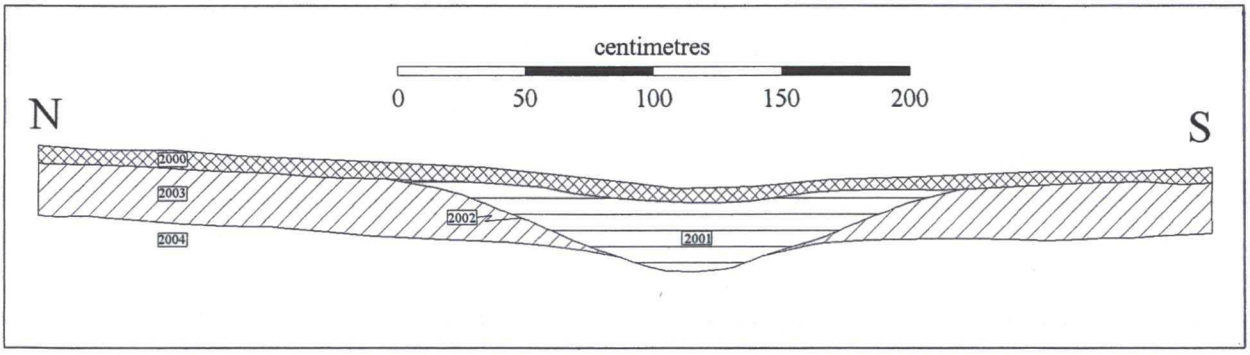

Figure 3: Eastern section of the evaluation trench.

Plate 2: Ridge and furrow viewed from the south west.

Plate 3: Ridge and furrow viewed from the north-west (Existing school in the background)