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WYAS

Bridge Farm, Catterick, North Yorkshire

Conveyor Corridor and Aggregate Crushing Site

Archaeological Watching Brief

August 1997

CLIENT

Northern Aggregates Ltd.

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WYAS R506, 1 September 1997

**Bridge Farm, Catterick
North Yorkshire**

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Summary

A watching brief undertaken in advance of gravel extraction at Bridge Farm, Catterick Bridge identified a number of field boundary ditches of varying dates, some of which correspond to land divisions marked on the 1857 OS maps of the area. Two pits containing burnt material were identified towards the southern extent of the area under observation. A further small pit was also identified, beyond the area of immediate ground disturbance. It was not possible to establish the date or function of these features.

1. Introduction

1.1 Aims and Objectives

1.1.1 To identify any archaeological features and deposits within the development area and determine the location, extent, date, condition and significance of any remains subsequently identified.

1.1.2 To determine the environmental and ecofactual potential of any archaeological features or deposits.

1.2 Site Location and Geology

1.2.1 The site (centred on NGR SE 232 992) is located on the flood plain of the River Swale, close to the junction of the Magnesian and Carboniferous limestone outcrops. The local drift geology is of gravel with occasional pockets of alluvial silt overlying the limestone bedrock.

1.2.2 The site lies to the south east of Catterick Racecourse, on the opposite side of Leeming Lane (Fig. 1), and comprises an area of 0.37 hectares which has been affected by the construction of a conveyor and aggregate crushing plant associated with the planned mineral extraction. This is some 700m south of Phases 1 and 2 of the consented gravel extraction programme.

1.2.3 The site topography shows a slight fall in slope to the west, away from Leeming Lane, and towards the nearby River Swale, which forms a wide meander loop around the land to the north and east of the Application area. The site has been in agricultural use, most recently under arable cultivation, since at least 1739. Although some stone clearance must have taken place during that time, the existing ploughsoil has a high proportion of water-worn cobbles of varying size throughout, derived from the underlying gravel.

1.3 Archaeological Background

1.3.1 The area is best known for the Roman town of *Cataractonium*, which is situated c. 1km to the north-west of the area under investigation. Immediately to the west of the Application area, a further Roman fort and its associated civilian settlement, or *vicus*, have been identified from aerial photographs and geophysical survey (Bartlett & Boucher 1991). A Romano-British settlement has also been identified to the south of the modern village of Catterick, where a

roadside settlement straddling Dere Street (now part of the A1) was identified at the site known as Baines Farm (Busby *et al* 1996).

1.3.2 Some 500m west of the site, excavations within the grounds of Catterick Racecourse identified an area of multi-phase activity spanning 4000 years. A Mesolithic flint scatter provided the earliest indications of human activity in the area. A late Neolithic/early Bronze Age burial cairn and associated pits comprised evidence for later activity on the site. Subsequent to this, a large enclosed settlement dated to the late Iron Age or early Roman period indicated the earliest Roman activity on the site. This Roman presence later took the form of a large circular earthwork, incorporating the cairn in its construction. The final phase of activity consisted of a 6th century Anglian inhumation cemetery (Moloney *et al* forthcoming).

1.3.3 Evidence of ridge and furrow ploughing is present in many of the surrounding fields, most clearly seen in the fields between Leeming Lane to the east and the marsh lands lying along the western bank of the River Swale. This ridge and furrow is aligned roughly at right angles to the line taken by Leeming Lane.

2. Method

2.1 Archaeological Services WYAS were commissioned by Northern Aggregates Ltd to conduct a watching brief on land adjacent to Leeming Lane at the southern extent of the area of permitted mineral extraction, during the removal of topsoil and subsoil prior to further groundworks.

2.2 The watching brief was carried out on a day-to-day basis, as deemed necessary by the Archaeological Field Officer (AFO), during April and May 1997. This complied with planning conditions imposed by North Yorkshire County Council.

2.3 All areas were excavated to the ploughsoil base using a 360° mechanical excavator with a toothless ditching bucket, and inspected by the AFO before further stripping of the underlying subsoil commenced. Any archaeological features revealed subsequent to the stripping were recorded in accordance with the WYAS site recording manual (Boucher 1995). Where possible, the observed extents of archaeological features were recorded by electronic instrument survey. Due to the on-going nature of the engineering works on the site, this was not possible for some of the features, which were recorded in note form and with tape measures.

3. Results

3.1.1 A number of linear features were observed oriented east-west across the conveyor corridor, at right angles to the field head boundary that runs alongside Leeming Lane (Fig. 2). On investigation, two of these (features 003 and 007) proved to be ditches, surviving to depths of between 0.3m and 0.4m, with an average width of 1m. The remaining linear features were largely interpreted as the result of earth-moving agricultural activity. Ploughmarks were evident across much of the exposed area as dark, loam-filled linear features, and appeared to respect extant trackways; broad, shallow swaths of silt clay subsoil following much the same alignment as the ditches were interpreted as the remains of ridge and furrow. A number of small pits were identified at the southern extent of the conveyor corridor and in an area to the north-east of the aggregate crushing site.

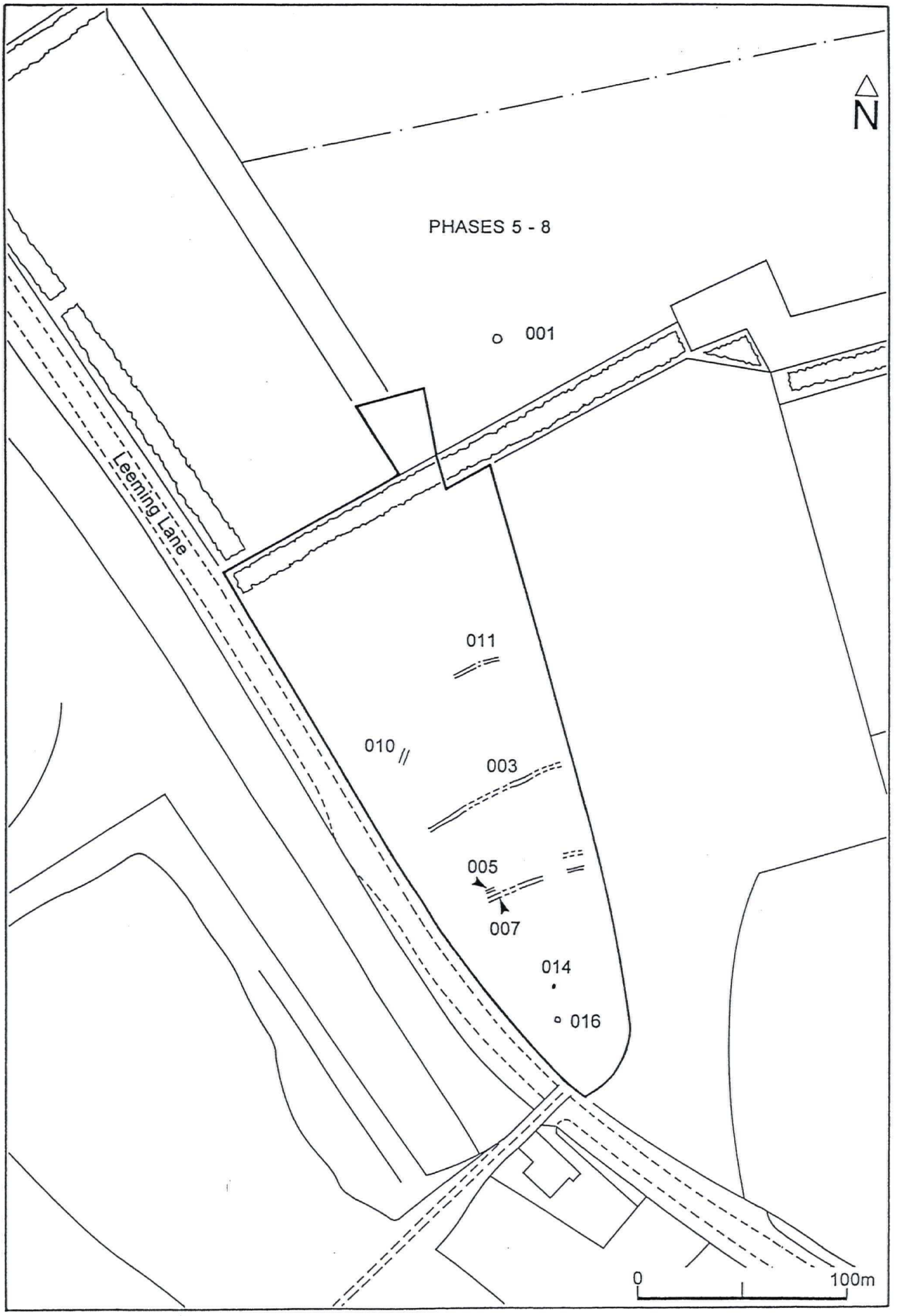


Fig. 2. Area plan

3.1.2 A background presence of Roman pot was noted in the ploughsoil, as were fragments of medieval green glazed ware, and post-medieval material.

3.2 *Linear features*

3.2.1 Ditch 003 was aligned east-west, and was visible across most of the exposed area (some 50m), albeit interrupted by machinery trackways and spoil heaps. It survived to a depth of 0.39m and was visible immediately below the ploughsoil. A series of large cobbles had been deliberately arranged along the southern edge of the ditch, within the upper fill (Fig. 3). The cobbles directly the lower clay fill, sealing a number of sherds of post-medieval green glazed pottery. It is possible that these stones performed some stabilising function along the southern edge of the ditch, which was cut through the subsoil and into the soft underlying clay silt.

3.2.2 Ditch 007, also aligned east-west, was located some 38m to the south of Ditch 003. It was first observed immediately below the ploughsoil towards the western edge of the stripped area, and latterly farther to the east (following further stages of stripping). An excavated revealed a regular, concave profile of 0.35m depth, that had been truncated by modern ploughing activity (Fig. 4). No dating evidence was recovered from this feature. Some 3m to the north of Ditch 007, a shallow linear feature (005) was identified. This proved, on investigation, to possess an irregular profile, filled with a deposit very similar to the surrounding natural alluvial silt.

3.2.3 Feature 011 was identified to the immediate west of the conveyor centre line, approximately 90m south-east of the aggregate crushing site. This feature was initially observed as a linear spread of cobbles oriented approximately east-west. On investigation, the cobbles were observed to occupy a shallow, fairly regular cut, through the subsoil to the surface of the gravel below (Fig. 5). The feature was interpreted as a possible furrow, the stones possibly having been placed there following a period of field clearance.

3.2.4 Feature 010 comprised an apparently linear spread of cobbles some 40m southwest of Feature 011. An excavated section revealed a similar character to Feature 011, with medium to large stones lying in a silt clay matrix within a shallow furrow. Although this feature did not exhibit quite the same alignment as 011 and the ditches, it was aligned along the same axis as recorded ridge and furrow further to the south.

3.3 *Other Features*

3.3.1 Towards the southern end of the conveyor corridor, two features containing burnt material were identified. Neither could be phased stratigraphically, as they had been obscured by machine trample prior to the final subsoil spit being removed. Feature 014 survived only as a shallow scoop in the top of the gravel, containing a charcoal-bearing silt clay fill (Fig. 6). Small grit inclusions in the fill (015) appeared to be heat-reddened, but as the surrounding gravel was unaffected in any way, it was concluded that the burning had not occurred *in situ*.

3.3.2 Feature 016, although heavily truncated, survived as a shallow sub-rectangular depression 0.84m by 0.68m in plan, which had been cut through the natural silty clay onto the underlying gravel (Fig. 7). Within the cut, several deposits (017 to 019) were observed, bearing varying quantities of charcoal. Due to their high charcoal content, these deposits were sampled. The thin band of heat-scorched natural describing the outer extent of the feature and the scorched gravel

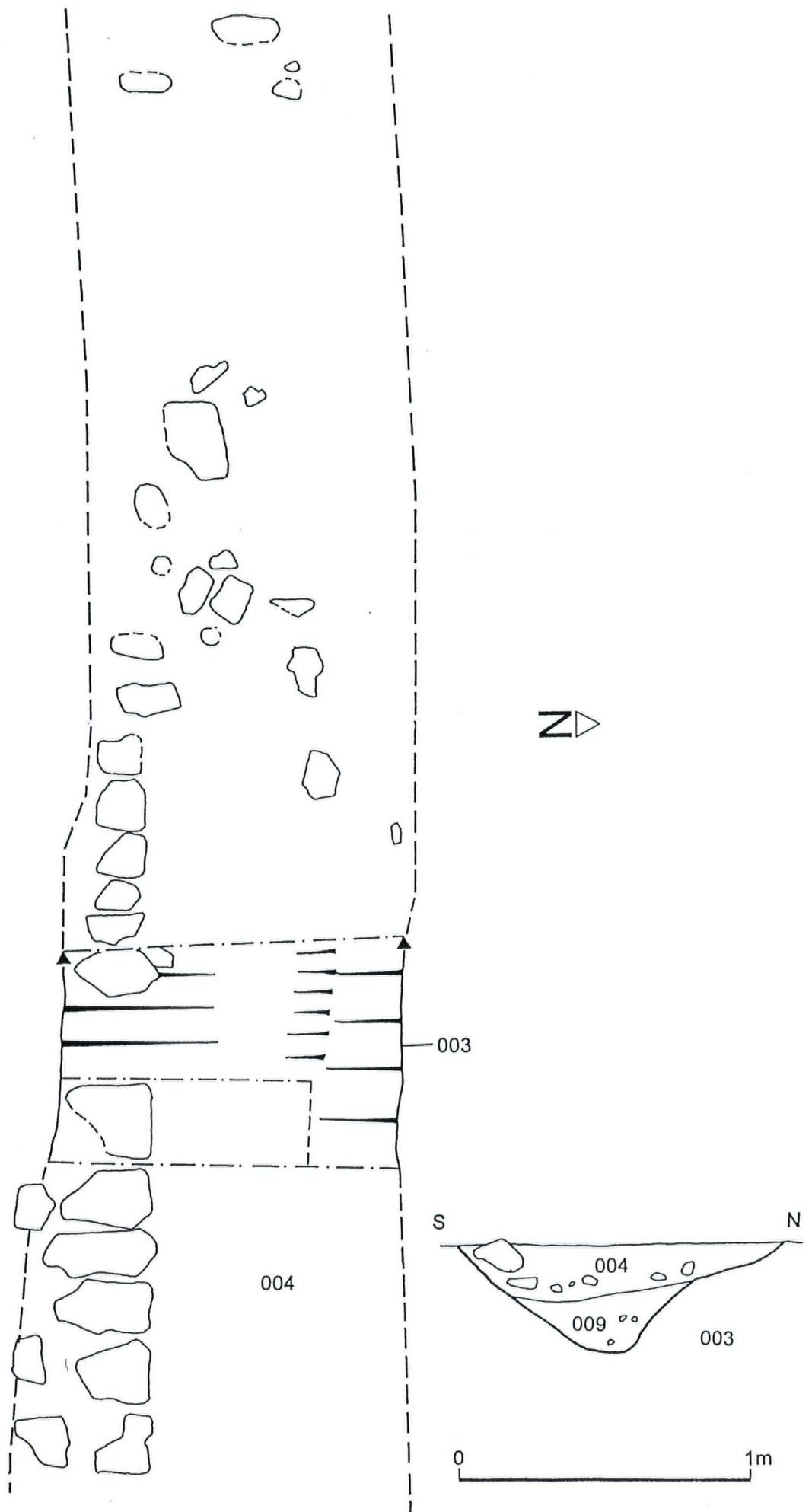


Fig. 3. Plan and section of ditch 003

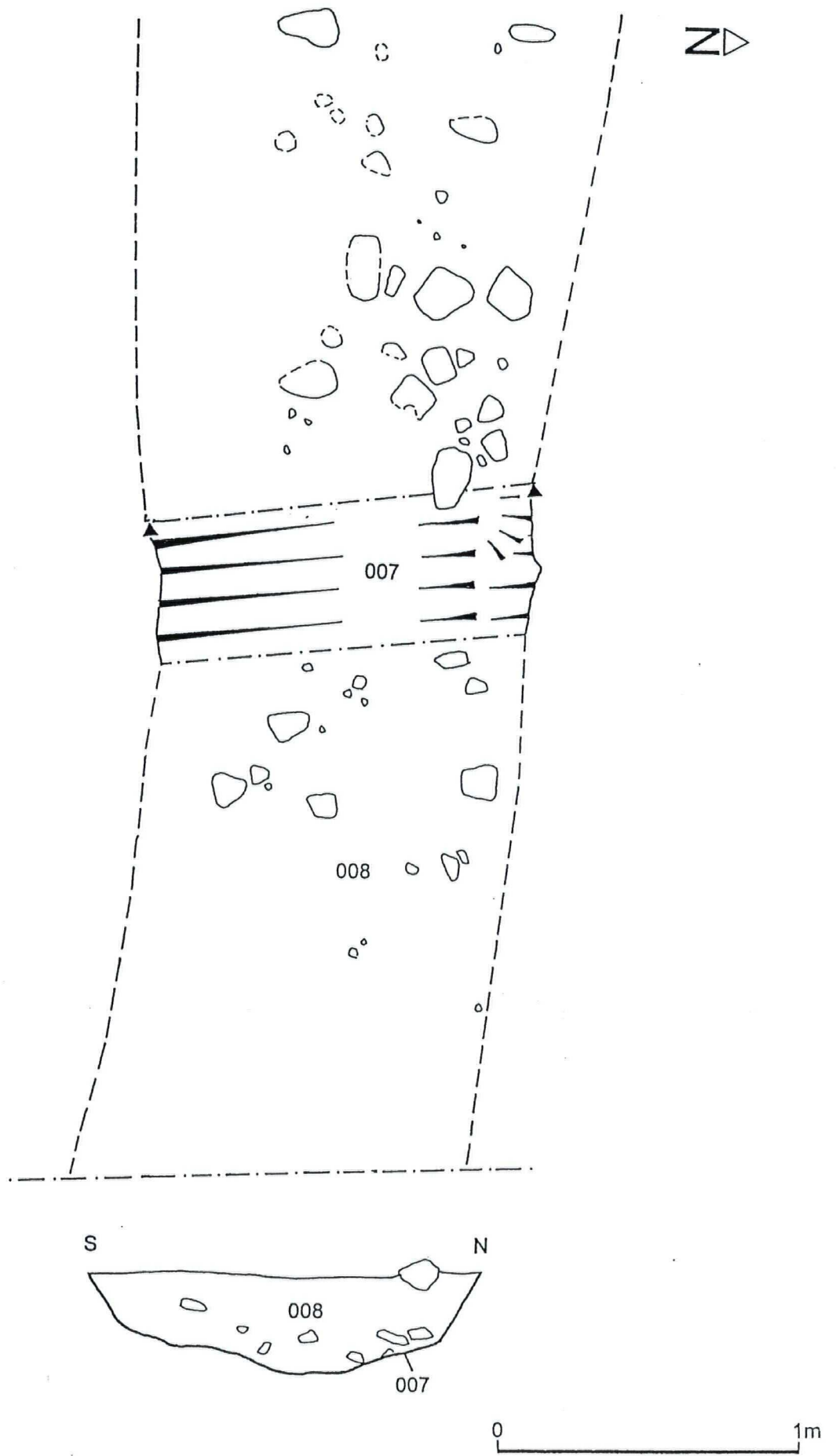


Fig. 4. Plan and section of ditch 007

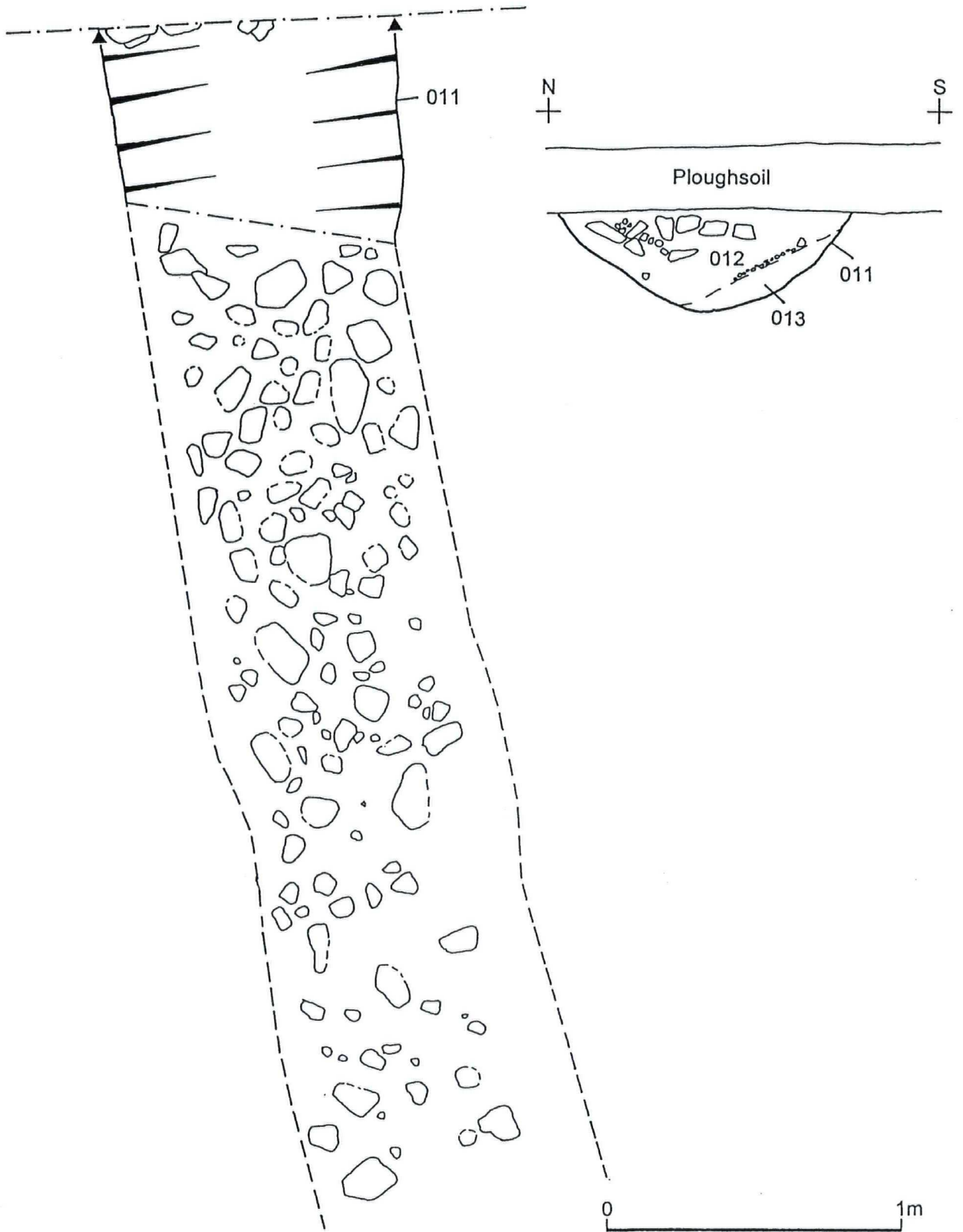


Fig. 5. Plan and section of feature 001



Fig. 6. Plan and section of feature 014

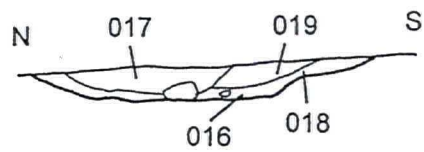
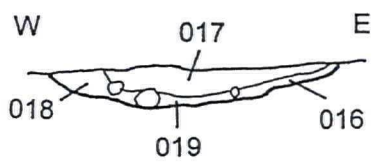
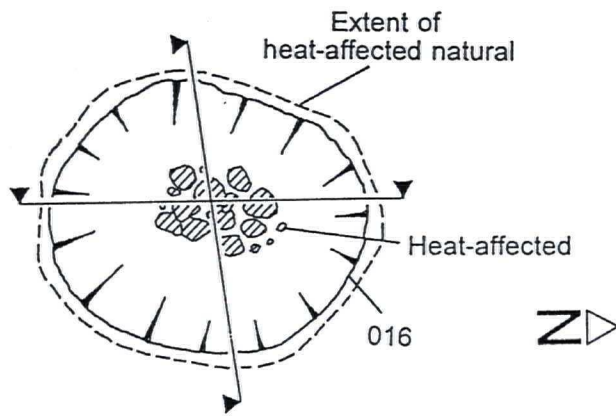


Fig. 7. Post-excavation plan and sections of feature 016

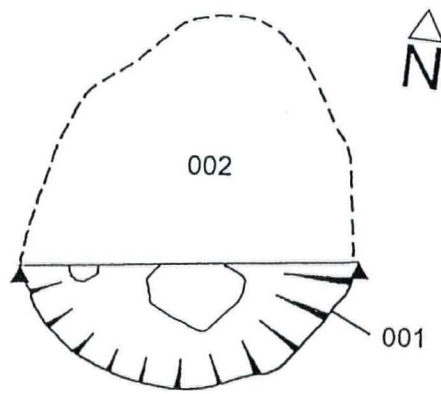
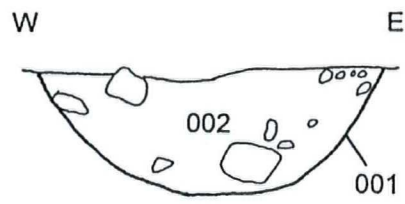


Fig. 8. Plan and section of pit 001

at its base indicate that burning occurred *in situ*, and not elsewhere, as supposed for Feature 014. The precise function of the feature could not be established.

3.3.3 An isolated pit (001) was revealed following the stripping of the ploughsoil and subsoil in preparation of a soil holding area to the north-east of the aggregate crushing site. The feature was sub-circular in shape, with a regular concave profile 0.88m wide by 0.30m deep, and was cut into the natural gravel (Fig.8). The single fill (002) was a homogenous sand silt loam, which yielded fragments of bone and brick/tile along with a small quantity of charcoal.

4. Finds

4.1 *A Note on the Pottery* by Dr C. G. Cumberpatch

The pottery assemblage from this site consisted of thirty four sherds of pottery dating to the Roman and post-medieval periods (see Appendix II). With the exception of the three small chips of Roman pottery, the material from this site is of post-medieval date, the majority of the sherds indicating activity on or around the site in the sixteenth century. The green-glazed pancheon sherds from context 004 seem likely to be parts of the same vessel, although the lack of joins implies that they were deposited after the vessel was broken.

4.2 *All other finds*

The majority of the other finds provide little evidence for activity on the site prior to the dates provided by the pottery. A summary is given in Appendix II.

5. Discussion

5.1 With few exceptions, the archaeology encountered during this watching brief was of agricultural origin. The most prominent features were the field boundary ditches 003 and 007, and linear feature 011, all of which showed a similar orientation and character.

5.2 Ditches 003 and 007 corresponded to field boundaries marked on the OS 1st Edition map, dated 1857 (Fig. 9). This map indicated a Draw Well situated halfway between Leeming Lane and the now redundant Lover Lane, along the line of Ditch 003, which would suggest a watering point for horses and draught animals.

5.3 It should be noted, however, that the documentary evidence only provides a *terminus ante quem* for this field boundary, and there is every reason to suppose that the ditch had been in existence for some time prior to the Ordnance Survey mapping of the area. It is likely that the ditches fossilised the boundaries of older field systems in use prior to the enclosures of the late sixteenth century, and more extensively during the eighteenth century. The pottery retrieved from within the fill of 003 supports the suggestion that this ditch was in use during the late sixteenth century.

5.4 Medieval land use was indicated by the presence of ridge and furrow (Fig. 9), which respected the same orientation as the ditches identified above. The creation of ridge and furrow was deliberate: the mouldboard fitted to one side of the plough-share turned the soil over to achieve maximum aeration and drainage (Evans 1975). Feature 011 appears to lie along the line

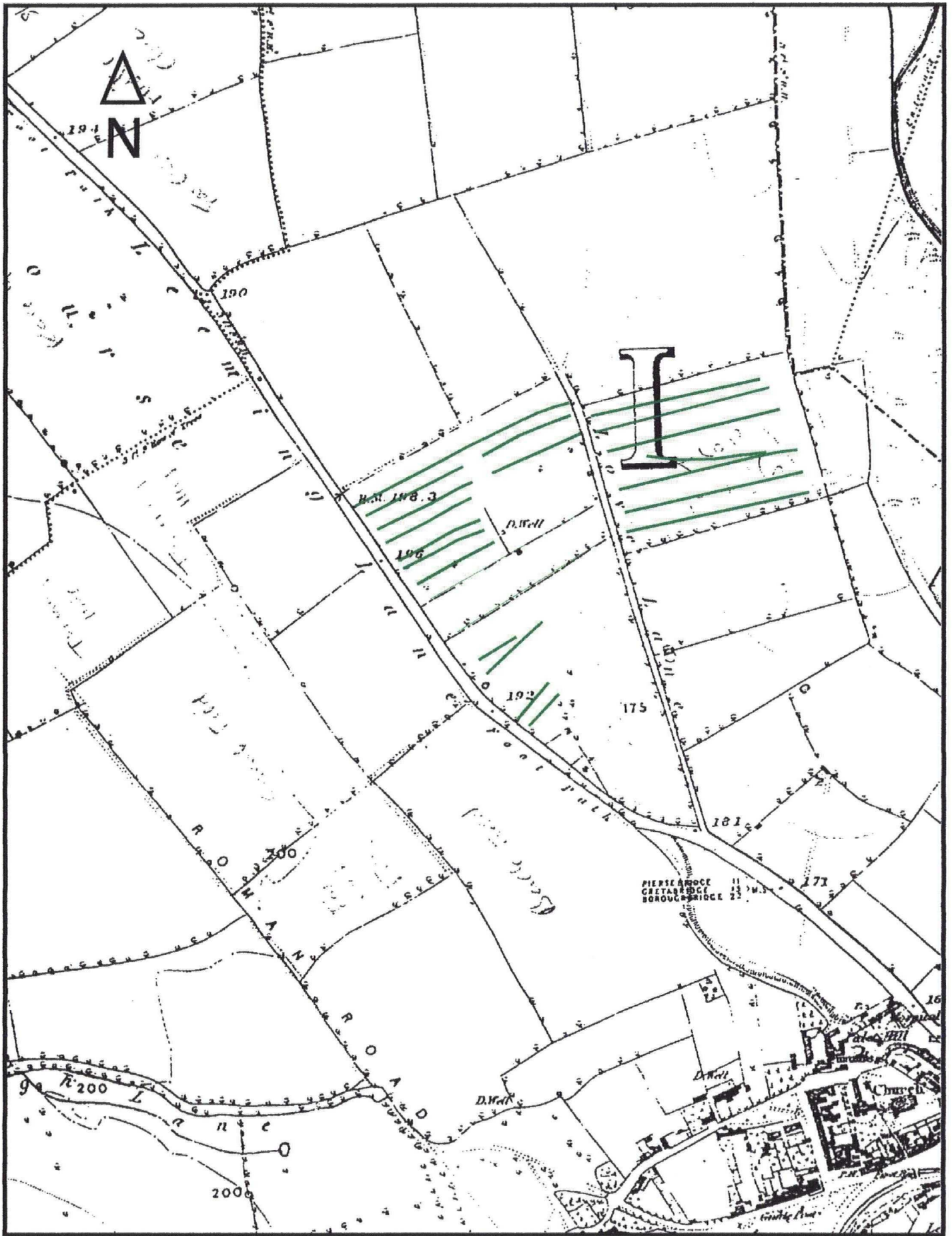


Fig. 9. Extract from OS 1st edition 6" plan (1857) indicating location and orientation of ridge and furrow

of a particularly marked furrow (as noted by the North Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record), and may indicate the use of large cobbles to aid drainage on the clay subsoil of the river flood plain. Furrows were deliberately aligned along the steepest gradient (Hall 1982); here, towards the river to the east. The aggregation of cobbles represented by 010 and 011 may be the result of periods of field clearance, where large stones that would otherwise have impeded the progress of the plough were removed to the edges of the strip.

5.5 None of the three small pits encountered during the watching brief produced evidence for their date or function. Although the isolated pit 001 yielded a small quantity of bone and brick/tile, it is possible that these were present in the pit fill only as a result of bioturbation, rather than having been incorporated into the material at the time of filling. The lack of context and the very fragmentary nature of both bone and brick/tile rules out the possibility of further analysis. Perhaps more light will be shed on the nature of this feature following the stripping of adjacent Phases 5-8.

5.6 The two features 014 and 016, located towards the southern extent of the conveyor corridor, were both associated with episodes of burning, although only one (016) indicated burning *in situ*. Neither 014 nor 016 yielded any artefactual evidence of date or function. Some indication of function may be gained from the results of processing the environmental samples, though the usefulness of any information so gained would be hampered by the lack of relative stratigraphic relationships.

6. Conclusion

6.1 A number of archaeological features were recorded during the present watching brief, the majority of which were probably the consequence of a long and fairly continuous history of agricultural land use from the medieval period up to the present day.

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Acknowledgements

Project Management I. Roberts BSc(Hons) MIFA

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M. Stone BA(Hons)

Report M. Stone BA(Hons)

Illustrations A. Swann MAAIS

Consulting Specialist C. G. Cumberpatch PhD

Appendix I

The resulting archive from this watching brief is currently held by Archaeological Services WYAS, and comprises:

1 Red File containing (number of A4 sheets):

Context Register (1)

Context Sheets (19*)

Environmental Register (1)

Scheme of Archaeological Work (6)

Geodimeter Plan (1)

Geodimeter Data (2)

Copy Area Plan (2#)

Extract 1st Ed. OS 1:10560 (1857) Sheet 54 (1#)

Finds Registration Forms (4)

Copy Pot Assessment for Phases 1-2 (1)

Copy Pot Assessment for BFC 97 (Conveyor Corridor) (1)

1 Green File containing:

Drawing Register (2)

Drawing Sheets (6#)

Note: * denotes double-sided sheet

denotes A3 sheet

Appendix II

Finds:

<i>Pot</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	11	Mixed fabrics, Roman to post-Medieval
	004	17	C16 green-glazed pancheon
	006	1	Unidentified red sandy ware
	008	7	1 Cistercian ware 3 early post-medieval 1 unidentified (poss. C16) open bowl/pancheon
	009	2	2 Brown Glazed Coarseware Heavily abraded, probably Samian
	010	1	Probably Roman colour coated ware
	012	1	Post-medieval green-glazed pancheon

<i>Bone</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	56	Dog
	002	6	Tiny fragments
	004	6	
	008	1	
	010	1	
	012	1	
<i>Clay Pipe</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	6	Stem and bowl fragments
<i>Flint</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	2	?Burnt
<i>Glass</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	008	2	Post-Med? - 1 x vessel, 1 x ?molten scrap
<i>Iron</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	004	1	Very corroded
	008	1	Very corroded - ?nail
<i>Lead</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	1	Pot mend †
<i>Coins</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	1	Elizabeth I penny †
	U/S	2	?Georgian †
<i>CBM</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	002	2	Tiny frags
	004	3	
	008	2	
<i>Shell</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	012	1	Oyster
<i>Unspecified Material</i>	<u>Context</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Notes</u>
	U/S	2	Buckles, metal †
	U/S	1	Spindle whorl †

Note: † denotes metal detectorist find from spoil