

**Marfield Quarry  
Masham  
North Yorkshire**

**Quarry Extension - Phase 2  
Archaeological Watching Brief**

**November 2000  
MAP 06-09-00**

**Marfield Quarry  
Masham  
North Yorkshire  
Quarry Extension  
Phase 2  
Archaeological Watching Brief Report  
SE 8277 2110**

<b>Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Figure List	2
Plate List	2
1. Introduction	3
2. Geology	4
3. Archaeological Background	4
4. Methodology	8
5. Results	9
6. Conclusion	9
7. Bibliography	9

## **Figure List**

	<b>Page</b>
1. Site Location. Scale 1:25000.	10
2. Location of Fieldwalking Areas.	11
3. Location of 1996 Area 9 Evaluation Trenches	12
4. Phase 2 Topsoil Stripped Area.	13

## **Plate List**

1. General view of Stripped Area. Facing southwest.	14
2. General view of Stripped Area. Facing northwest.	14

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**1. Introduction**

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. at Marfield Quarry, Masham, North Yorkshire during September 2000. The work involved monitoring the removal of topsoil within the Phase 2 (Area 9) quarry extension prior to the commencement of mineral extraction.

Phase 2 of the quarry extension is located north of existing quarry workings, 0.9km south-east of Low Ellington village (SE 8277 2110 : Fig. 1).

All work has been funded by Lafarge Redland Aggregates Ltd.

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## **2. Geology**

The Phase 2 extension area is located on soils of the East Keswick Association, comprising deep fine loamy brown earths (541x). The soils are naturally well drained and are well suited to grass land. (Mackney et al 1983).

## **3. Archaeological Background**

Several spot finds have been discovered in the locality of Masham. In 1815 a gold ornament was discovered during the erection of a fence opposite the Porters Lodge, or the entrance into Swinton Park. In 1835 and 1836 workmen quarrying for gravel located two stone coffins in an area of land known as the "Nunneries" or "Nunners' fields". The coffins were probably either Roman or Saxon in date, although no datable finds were found in association with them. A "Roman battle-axe" is also reported to have been found in the parish of Masham (Fisher 1865, 430).

Marfield quarry has been the subject of an extensive programme of archaeological work, which is outlined below.

The Desktop Study considered an area of land to the north of the existing quarry of approximately 85 hectares. The report evaluated the known archaeological and historical resource, describing and illustrating land use, previous archaeological information, earthwork analysis, a walkover survey and historical summaries of the village of Low Ellington and the lost village of Swarthorpe.

Earthwork sites included the village earthworks of Low Ellington, lynchets and ridge and furrow, hedge banks with and without associated stone walls, ponds, trackways and clearance cairns. In addition, two elongated mounds were discovered in Areas 6 and 9, which may represent pillow mounds.

Recent Watching Briefs at Marfield Quarry have provided poor artefact assemblages with finds ranging in date from the Roman period through to modern times (MAP 1994 & 1995). In addition features interpreted as storage pits of Iron Age date have been recorded during the working of the present quarry (WYAS 1988). Even so the well drained soils, reliable supplies of water from both the River Ure and becks such as Broad Beck, and the local topography suggests that this area would be an ideal location for Prehistoric and possibly later settlement.

#### *Geophysical Survey*

As part of the pre-planning evaluation Areas 6, 8, 9, 12, 13 and 14 were assessed by geophysical survey (a total area scan, followed up with a 50% magnetometer survey).

In Area 9, now the Phase 2 extraction area, the survey located a number of pit type anomalies along with linear features, which may have represented ploughing of field divisions. The presence of strong anomalies suggested the presence of fired remains.

#### *Fieldwalking Results*

A programme of fieldwalking in Areas 6, 9 and 12 was introduced to complement the geophysical survey.

Area 9 was initially line walked in three sections due to its large size (Areas 9A, 9B and 9C : Fig. 2) and the results were variable. Areas B and C were generally poor, pottery was predominantly of Post medieval and modern date, although two sherds of medieval pottery were observed in Area C. The quantity of flint observed was high, but was mostly natural with only one worked flint artefact recovered. In contrast the occurrence of pottery, worked flint, and stone was much higher in Area A despite the fact that it was the second smallest area and approximately half the size of Area C.

Distributions of pottery, brick and tile in Area A showed no defined concentrations, but the distribution of flint and burnt stone showed a marked concentration in the north of Area 9 which also appears to correspond with geophysical anomalies in this area. Flint recorded in Area 9A showed a marked increase in the occurrence of worked pieces, mostly flakes.

As a result of the initial fieldwalking, a programme of intensive fieldwalking was conducted in Area 9A. The aims of this phase of work were to define distribution patterns seen in the initial fieldwalking and to determine the presence of specific artefact clusters. The intensive survey in Area 9A produced a varied collection of artefacts consisting of a small flint assemblage, pottery of medieval, post-medieval and modern date, brick and tile, post-medieval and modern glass, modern ironwork, animal bone and a quantity of burnt stone.

The results of the survey showed that artefacts and materials of recent date displayed a fairly even distribution across the area with no specific grouping or clustering. This applied to the distribution of pottery, glass, iron and brick and tile. The distribution of flint and more

especially burnt stone showed a marked preference for the western and to a lesser degree the central areas of Area 9A. The occurrence of burnt sandstone along the western section of the survey area was very marked and may suggest activity.

Apart from a random background incidence of flint, there was little evidence for any major prehistoric activity within the areas considered. Later Roman material is non-existent and only a small medieval assemblage was recovered suggesting that Area 9 was only brought into cultivation within the post-medieval period.

#### *Evaluation Excavations*

A total of ten trenches were excavated in Area 9 in September 1996 (Figure 3). The excavation of seven of the trenches (Trenches 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 9 and 10) showed that the geophysical anomalies were the result of differences within the drift geology. In Trenches 7 and 8 the geophysical anomalies had been created by modern disturbance; only in Trench 4 were archaeological deposits revealed.

The burnt pit excavated in Trench 4 was unlike the limekilns found in Areas 6 and 12 as it lacked the flue and stoke/raking-out hole, present in the previously excavated kilns. It was also sub-rectangular rather than circular or oval, and had a different west to east alignment. In addition, to judge from the thinness and generally discontinuous nature of the baked material forming its edges it had not been subjected to the same degree of burning.



Archaeomagnetic dating of the feature produced a date of 1585-1650 AD, much earlier than the limekilns excavated in Areas 6 and 12 which dated to the late Seventeenth to the mid Eighteenth centuries.

An Archaeological Watching Brief conducted in June 1999 by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. located a further Eighteenth century limekiln within the Phase 1 extension area (MAP 1999).

An archaeological Watching Brief conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. during the digging of a series of eight geological test pits in September 1999 did not reveal any further archaeological deposits or features within the Phase 2 area.

#### **4. Methodology**

The aim of the brief was to enable the recording and recovery of archaeological remains which may be have been affected by the proposed development.

Overburden was removed under archaeological supervision using a mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket.

#### **5. Results**

The monitored area consisted of the southern portion of the Phase 2 extraction area, situated immediately to the east of the eastern boundary of the Phase 1 area (Fig. 4). The stripped area was approximately 380m x 250m.

The groundworks revealed a sandy silt subsoil overlying silty sand subsoil containing natural boulders and cobbles (Pls. 1 and 2).

No archaeological features or deposits were seen during the Watching Brief and no finds were recovered.

## **6. Conclusion**

The Watching Brief confirmed the absence of archaeological features within the stripped area.

## **7. Bibliography**

- |                 |   |
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| MAP 1999        | Marfield Quarry, Masham, North Yorkshire. Phase 1 Quarry Extension Archaeological Watching Brief. |
| WYAS 1988       | Watching Brief at Marfield Quarry.  |

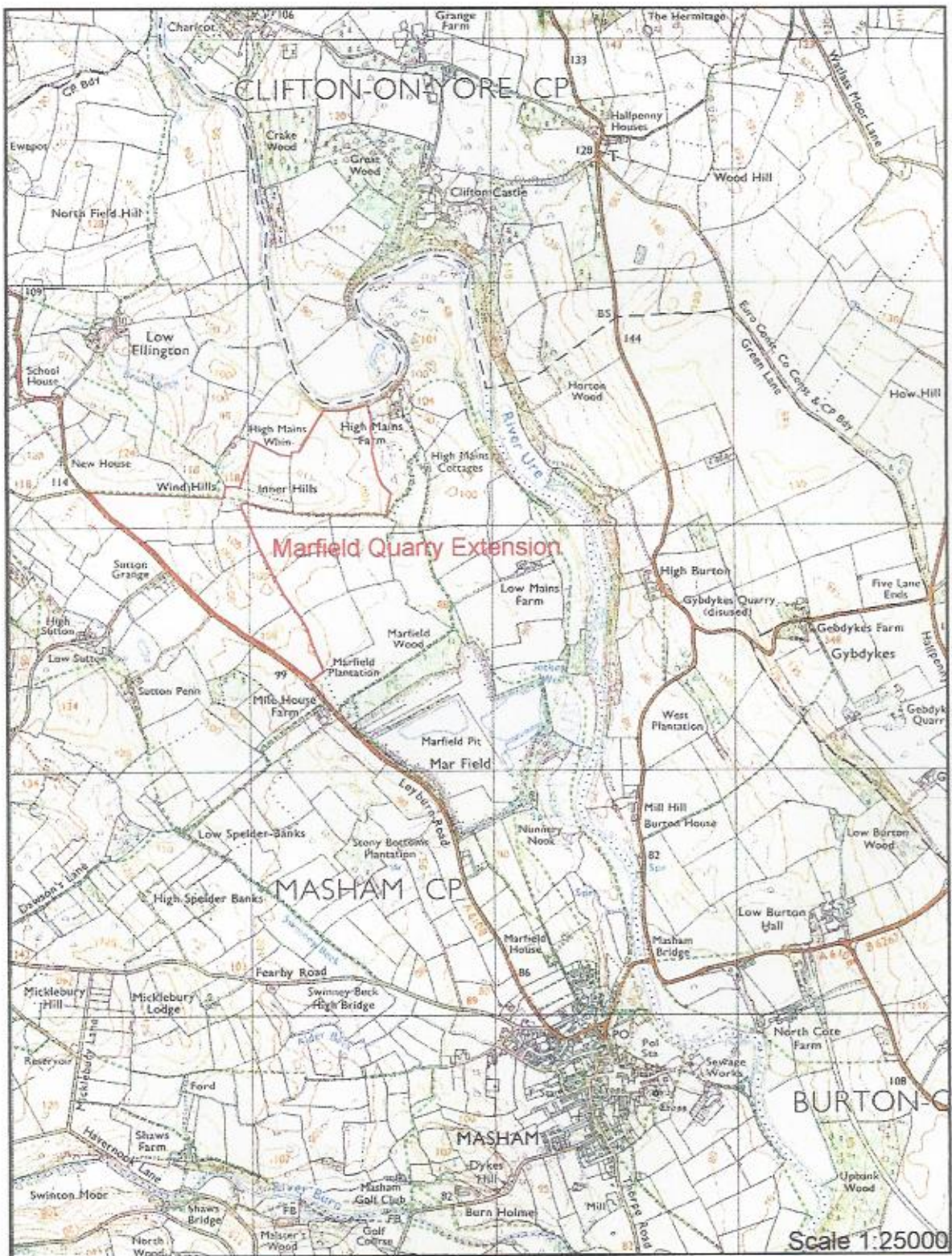


Figure 1. Site Location.

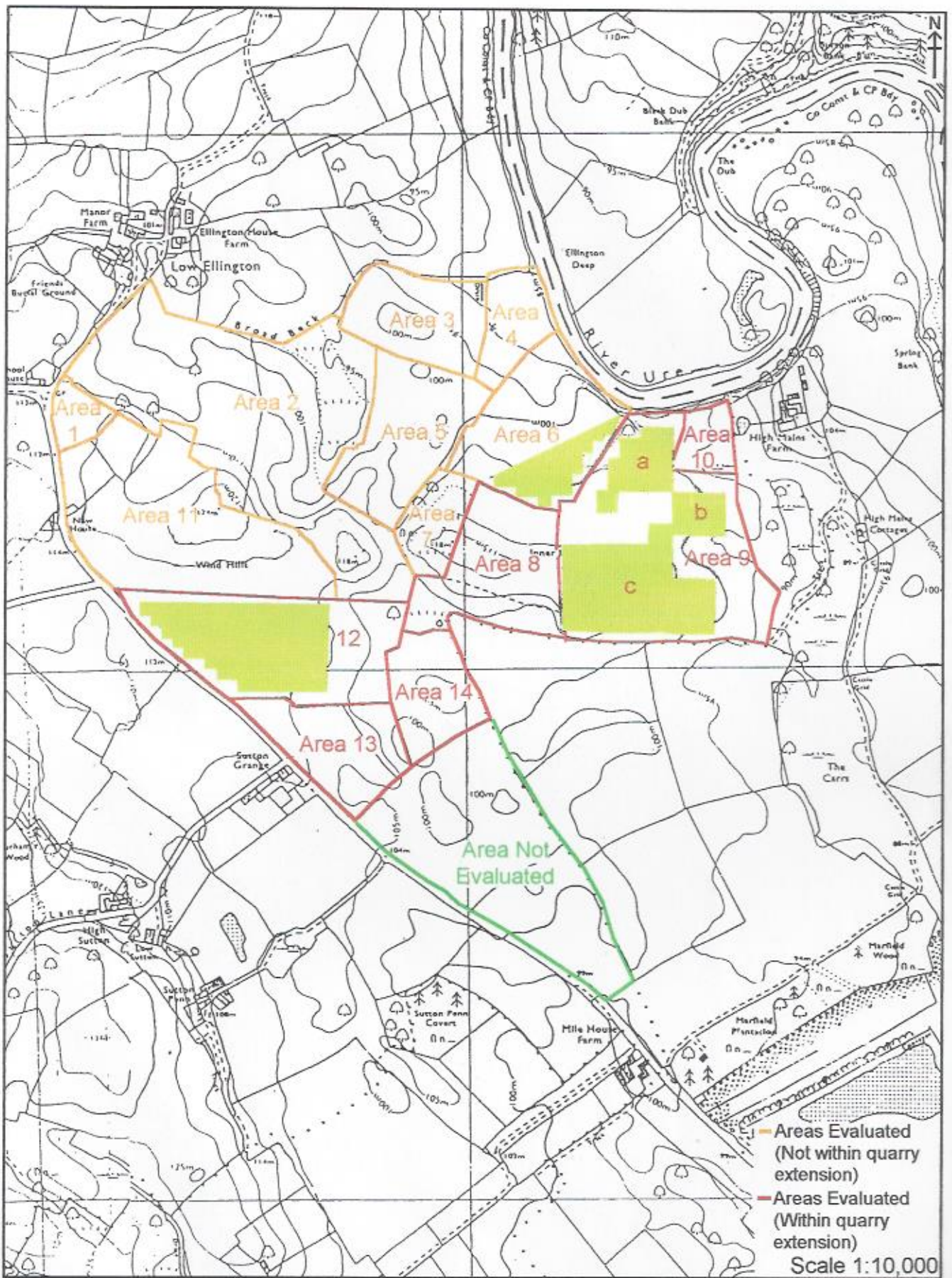


Figure 2. Location of Fieldwalking Areas.

MARFIELD QUARRY 1996  
 AREA 9 EVALUATION TRENCHES



Figure 3.

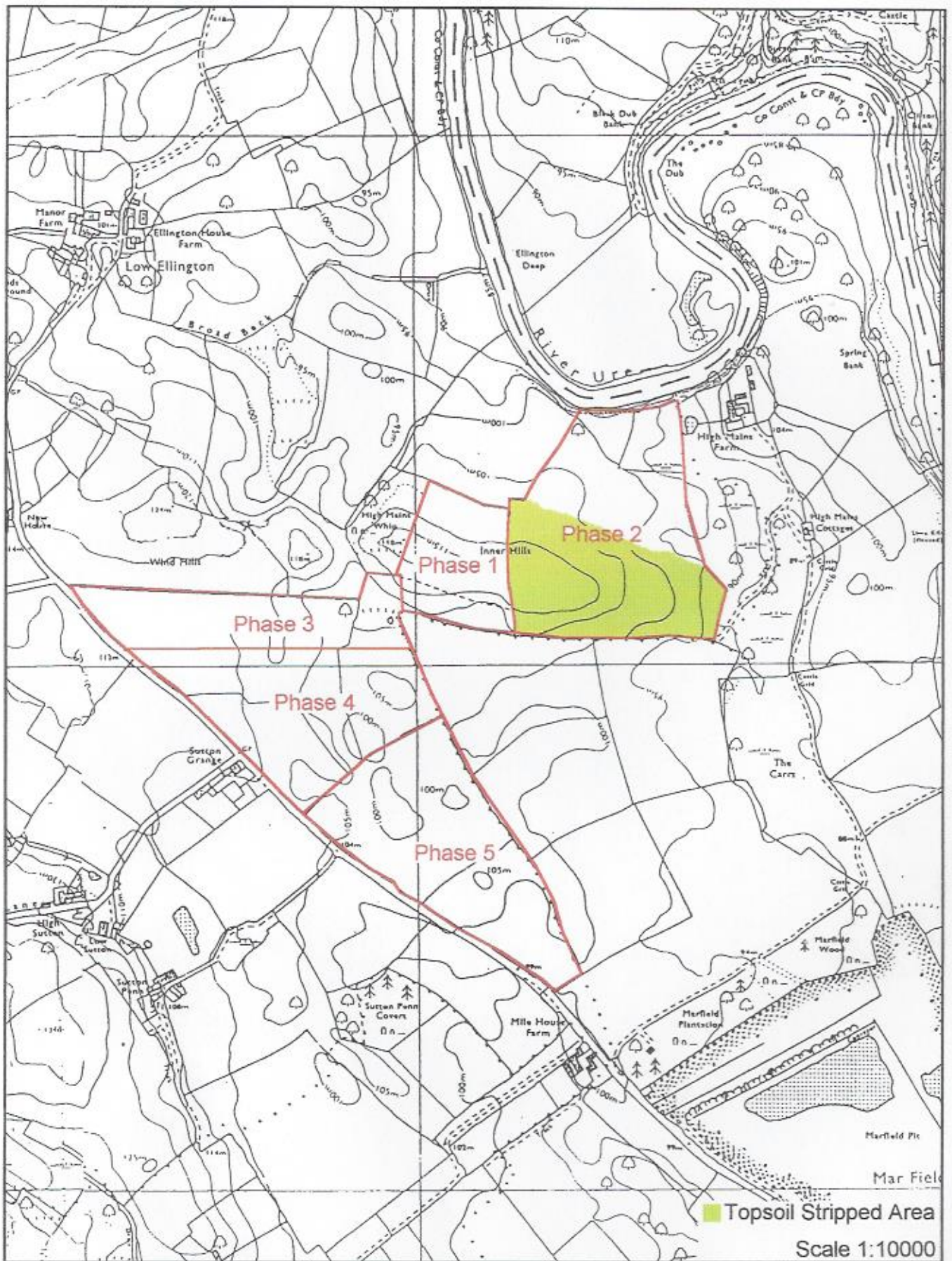


Figure 4. Phase 2 Topsoil Stripped Area.



Plate 1. General View of Stripped Area. Facing Southwest.

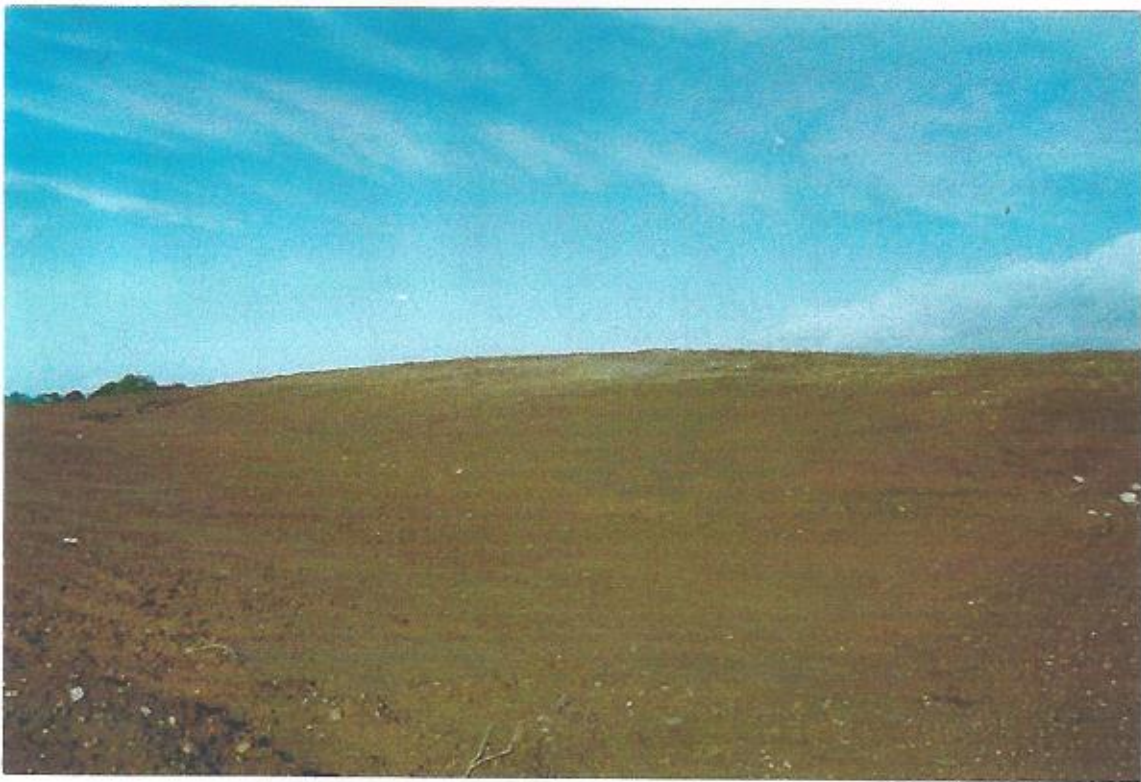


Plate 2. General View of Stripped Area. Facing Northwest.