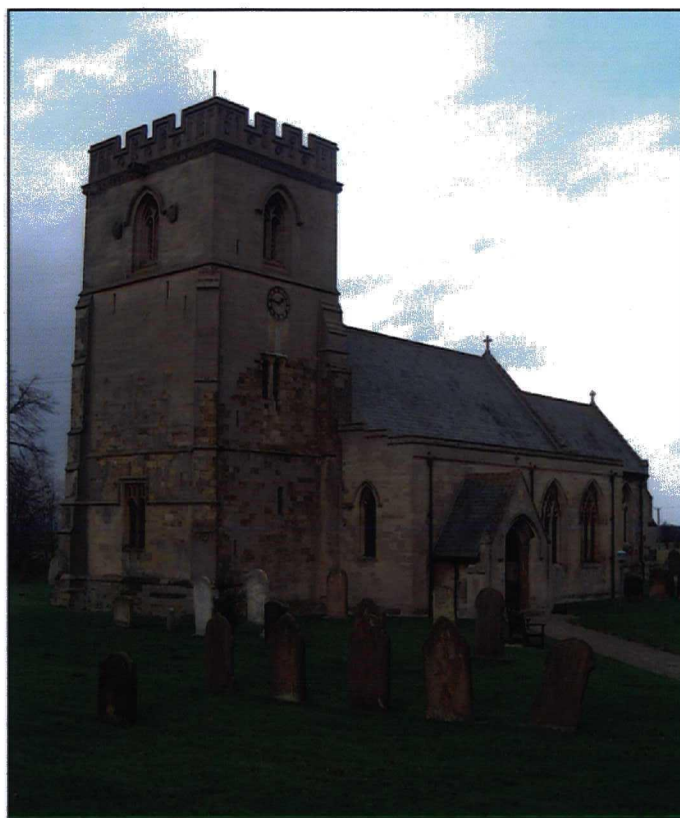

LAND ADJACENT TO 52 ST HILDA'S STREET
SHERBURN, NORTH YORKSHIRE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION
OSA REPORT No. 99EV08

Planning Application No. 99/815/73A
National Grid Reference: SE 9603 7722

January 2000

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SNY	466
ENY	5
CNY	
Parish	318
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OSA

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Report Summary

REPORT No: OSA99EV08

SITE NAME: Land adjacent to 52 St Hilda's Street, Sherburn

COUNTY: North Yorkshire

PARISH: Sherburn CP

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 9603 7722

PLANNING APPLICATION No: 99/815/73A

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TIMING: Excavation
23rd November – 1st December 1999

Post excavation & report preparation
December 1999 – January 2000

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PERIODS REPRESENTED: Modern, medieval

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1.0 Abstract

Prior to proposed development on the site of a small holding at Sherburn, in North Yorkshire, an archaeological evaluation of the site was undertaken. Seven trenches were opened, two of which contained extensive archaeological deposits datable to the medieval period. This report details the procedures undertaken during the evaluation including a full discussion of the findings and the implications for the future development of the site.

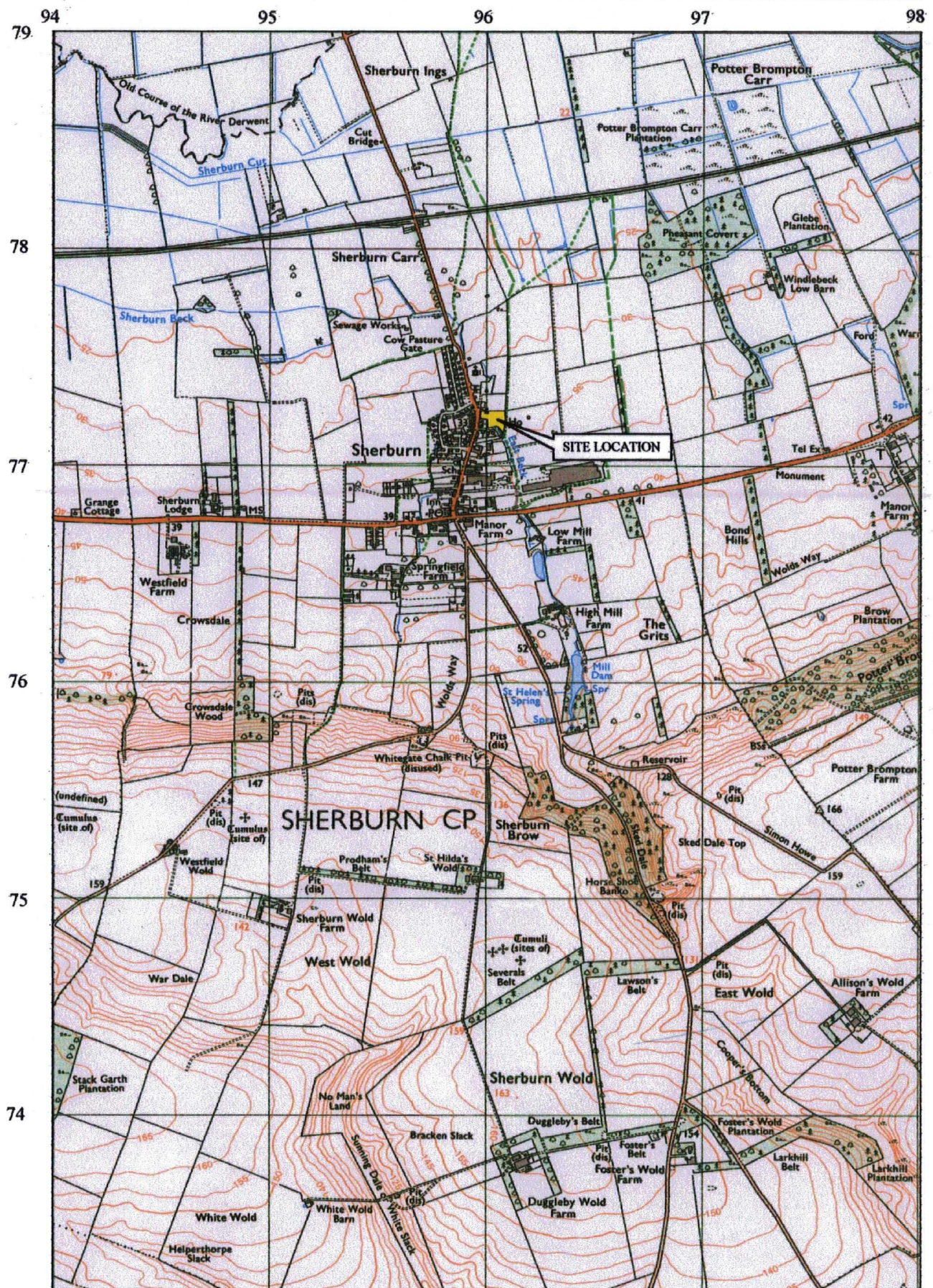


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 9603 7722)

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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use

In light of recent plans to develop ten residential dwellings on an area of land off St Hilda's Street in the village of Sherburn (NGR SE 9603 7722), it was arranged in accordance with planning guidelines to undertake a preliminary scheme of archaeological evaluation comprising the instigation of several trial trenches. The site is located within a field, a former small holding, on the east side of St Hilda's Street, Sherburn, North Yorkshire adjacent to number 52 St Hilda's Street, c.500 m north of the junction with High Street: the A 64 (see fig. 1). St Hilda's Street runs northwards from the A 64 to St Hilda's church which stands at the northern extremities of the village. The site covers an area of 0.7 hectares and has a frontage of c.25 m on the southern side of number 52 St Hilda's Street and widens out behind the existing frontage property.

Sherburn village is located between the escarpment edge of the Wolds to the south, and marshy carr lands to the north which are closely associated with the now canalised course of the River Derwent. The carrs lie in the bottom of the Vale of Pickering and represent the now drained areas of former open water.

The Vale of Pickering extends for 50 km from the East Yorkshire coastline at Filey to the village of Helmsley in the west. The geology of the floor of the valley consists of deposits contingent with glacio-fluvial processes and subsequent peri-glacial activity associated with the last glaciation (Devensian). It is known that the ice sheet of the last glaciation only reached as far south as this area of North Yorkshire, at c. 18000 - 16000 BP (before present), effectively damming the western end of the vale where the full-glacial Lake Pickering formed (Mellars and Dark 1998). The ensuing melting of the ice sheet led to the deposition of glacio-fluvial sands and gravels and finally in the late-glacial the formation of a post-glacial lake at the eastern end of the vale, Lake Flixton (*ibid.*). Thus, associated with the area of the eastern end of the vale are numerous glacial and post-glacial features such as kettle holes, eskers, kames and glacial moraines. An example of the latter, the Flamborough end moraine, blocks the vale at its eastern extremity, which has produced a ridge of high ground constituting a watershed between the coast and the eastern end of the post-glacial Lake Flixton (*ibid.*).

Due to the nature of the depositional history of the underlying geology the topographical qualities of the surrounding area comprises a low lying plain, constituting the bottom of the Vale of Pickering, which in turn is bounded by areas of higher ground: the Wolds to the south and the North York moors to the north. The underlying geology of the site itself is comprised of glaciofluvial drift deposits consisting of sands and gravels and coarse loamy soils (Newport 1 Association, SSEW). Locally the topography follows the general outline introduced above in that most of the village is contained between the 45 to 30 m contour lines which constitutes the firmer, drier ground before the wetter carrs. The field where the proposed development is to take place is flat, open and under grass. East Beck runs through the centre of the site, effectively dividing the field in half, and to the west of St Hilda's Street flows West Beck. Interestingly, the course of East Beck follows a curious route in that it appears to have been diverted at some point in the past at the northern boundary of the site of the proposed

development, which may have significant implications regarding the presence of certain types of archaeological remains (see fig. 1).

The main type of land use in the area is given over to arable farming, with some turf growing and animal rearing taking place. Also quarrying of nearby chalk and sand deposits plays a significant role in the local economy.

3.0 Archaeological Background

The development site lies within an area of potential archaeological significance. Archaeological excavation undertaken within the local area indicates that the modern day settlement pattern, specifically relating to the area below the Wolds escarpment, has origins in the later prehistoric period. The presence and availability of water was one factor which influenced the choice of location for settlement and in this respect early communities have taken advantage of the numerous springs emanating from the Wolds escarpment spring line. It would appear that Sherburn is not without exception in this case and archaeological remains dating back to the later prehistoric period have been discovered within the boundaries of the existing village.

3.1 Late Upper Palaeolithic (c. 10 000 - 7600 BC)

The nearest flint scatters containing worked flint with typological characteristics relating to this period were discovered at Flixton (NGR TA 035 805) and Seamer Carrs (NGR TA 030 820) (Spratt 1993) in the Vale of Pickering, near Scarborough. The site at Seamer Carr has been dated to c.8350 bc and consisted of 500 worked flints supposedly implying the existence of a seasonal exploitation or reconnaissance camp set on the fringes of wider seasonal occupation zone (*ibid.* p 52).

3.2 Mesolithic (c. 7600 - 3500 BC)

Evidence for early mesolithic occupation within the region is centred on the former post-glacial Lake Flixton where a number of sites have been discovered: most notably those at Star Carr (NGR TA 029 809), Seamer Carr (NGR TA 030 820) and Flixton Carr (NGR TA 035 805). Here the remains of occupation sites incorporating preserved wooden platforms and artefacts, worked bone and antler tools, stone tools, possible beads and pendants and evidence of human manipulation of the environment have been discovered, which indicate a predominantly early mesolithic occupation of the area (Mellars and Dark 1998). Star Carr was first occupied as early 10700 BP to 10400 BP on an, inferred, year round basis, where tasks such as antler working and the butchering and skinning of animals were undertaken (*ibid.*).

Furthermore, sporadic finds of worked flint showing diagnostic affinities with knapping methods known from the mesolithic and tentatively ascribed to the later part of the period have also been discovered in the area of the former lake, and therefore other sites may still exist as yet undetected.

3.3 Neolithic (c. 3500 - 1700 BC)

The regional area is fairly rich in neolithic archaeology which mainly constitutes earthwork monuments such as long barrows, for example at Heslerton (NGR SE 753 938). In the local area residual finds of struck flint flakes and a polished flint chisel were discovered at 18-22 St

Hilda's Street (Stephens 1995, unpublished evaluation report), inferring an archaeological presence during the later neolithic and earlier bronze age.

3.4 Bronze Age (c. 1700 - 600 BC)

There is evidence of a series of trackways and enclosures following the thirty meter contour line stretching along the bottom of the Wolds escarpment. This ladder settlement probably has its origins in the bronze age, and may have continued in use into the following period. Additionally, bronze age artefacts, including a carefully worked flint arrowhead, were retrieved during excavations in the village during the late 1950s (Brewster and Hayfield 1994).

3.5 Iron Age & Romano-British (c. 600 BC - AD 410)

It is known from chance finds and recent archaeological excavations that there was considerable activity in and around Sherburn during this time. Calcite gritted ware and a bronze fibula were discovered c. 300 m west of the village church (Stephens 1995). Also calcite gritted ware of a probable first to second BC date were found during Brewster's excavation (Brewster and Hayfield 1994), in the fill of a ditch, together with a coin of Carausius from another site within the village (Stephens 1995). Other evidence pertinent to the discussion here includes the route of the A64 which is reputed to follow the line of a Roman Road, while another similar feature supposedly runs through the village on a south-west to north-east alignment. Furthermore, over a hundred sherds of Roman pottery, all residual, of 2nd, 3rd and 4th century forms were discovered during the excavation of the medieval manor (Brewster and Hayfield 1994).

3.6 Anglo-Saxon to Medieval (AD 410 - AD 1540)

Previous archaeological excavation in Sherburn has revealed medieval occupation relating to 12th to 15th centuries. However, Brewster's (Brewster and Hayfield 1994) excavations during the late 1950s and 1960s revealed a number of pottery sherds of early and late Saxon wares. The sherds of Saxon date were all residual, but the excavators infer from this that there had been some form of occupation in the vicinity during the Saxon period. Additionally, two sherds of Torksey-type cooking pot ware were identified from the fill of a ditch, suggesting that the feature was late Saxon, but as the trench from which the sherds came from had been excavated to a greater depth than any of the others, the excavators suggested that there may well have been other features pertaining to the Anglo-Saxon period buried beneath the later medieval deposits (*ibid.*).

It appears that the core of the medieval village of Sherburn was centred on the Norman parish church which was renovated during the late Victorian period, and subsequent development spread southwards towards the A 64. In fact, a field directly to the east of the church contains a series of earthwork features which probably relate to part of the medieval settlement pattern. It has been suggested that the presence of house plots in the southern area of the village represent deliberate expansion (Stephens 1995), with the distribution of those to the southeast representing the advantage of East Beck as a ready supply of water.

It is clear that the main source of knowledge on the medieval settlement of Sherburn has come from Brewster's excavations of the Sherburn manorial complex during the late 1950s and 1960s, which were subsequently published by Colin Hayfield (Brewster and Hayfield 1994). His excavations took place prior to development on land to the north and south of West Garth road, approximately 200 m to the southwest of the proposed development site. Here several phases of occupation were discovered in trenches excavated in 1957/8 to the south of West Garth and in 1968/9 to the north of the same road. The 1957/8 excavations identified three major phases of occupation: the initial phases were dated to the latter part of the twelfth century and consisted of two buildings and their associated floor deposits. The later deposits again consisted of buildings and their associated floors and out-buildings dating to the 14th and 15th centuries. Similarly, the 1968/9 excavations revealed a complex of buildings which were constructed, occupied and abandoned between the 13th and the beginning of the 15th centuries. It is evident from these results that, certainly in the area of West Garth, the development of the occupation sequence during the later medieval period in Sherburn was complex, spanning three centuries and representing several phases of construction and rebuilding.

Brewster also identified three 13th century kilns in a property fronting onto the west of St Hilda's Street, but it is impossible to elucidate whether these kilns were associated with the production of pottery or were utilised for some other purpose (Stephens 1995).

Additionally, evaluation work carried out at 18-22 St Hilda's Street (Stephens 1995) identified medieval archaeology c. 240 m to the south of the proposed development, including boundary ditches to the east of St Hilda's Street frontage indicative of agricultural practices. Further to the west property boundaries were also revealed and on the street frontage features indicative of the back-yard disposal of rubbish and waste and the construction of temporary structures were identified (*ibid.*). Despite the low value attributed to the archaeological features by the excavators undertaking the evaluation work their importance lies in the fact that they indicate the extensive area covered by the medieval settlement and the progression southwards from the village church.

3.7 Post-Medieval (ad 1540-c.ad 1900)

It is known from cartographic and photographic evidence that many areas of the St Hilda's Street frontage consisted of Chalk built structures, which have been subsequently demolished and replaced with modern brick built buildings. In this respect it is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey (OS) map that buildings stood on the frontage of the proposed development site, which by the time the 1912 OS map had been produced were no longer surviving (see figs. 12 and 13).

4.0 Methodology.

The written scheme of investigation for the archaeological evaluation prepared by North Yorkshire County Council, Heritage Unit advised that "a nominal area of 200 m squared, [is] to be investigated to determine the nature, depth, extent and state of preservation of any archaeological deposits". In this respect it was decided to open a total of seven trenches, taking in the area of St Hilda's Street frontage, the course of the proposed access road and services and selected areas proposed for housing (see fig. 2 for location of trenches). In consultation with the developer, it was agreed to place the trenches in the gardens or garages of the house plots to minimise the effect of disturbance to areas where house foundations were to be laid.

Trench 1 was aligned east - west and covered an area of the street frontage and the proposed route of the access road and services and was positioned to intercept any former street frontage. The trench was excavated to a width of c.4 m to a length of c.10 m, then extended along the southern edge to 20 m in total length at 2 m in width.

Trench 2 was L shaped, aligned north - south to east - west, and covered an area of the garden of plot 1 to the east and to the north. It was positioned to intercept possible plot boundaries and or associated structures. The trench was excavated to 10 m in length by c.2 m in width on a north - south axis, then extended a further 10 m to the east.

Trench 3 was aligned east - west, covering an area of the southern part of the garden of plot 9, and was positioned to intercept possible boundary ditches. The trench was excavated to 10m in length by c.2 m in width and was later extended a further c.2 m to the south along its length.

Trench 4 was aligned east - west and covered an area of the southern part of the garden of plot 8. It was positioned to intercept possible boundary ditches, and was excavated to 10 m in length by 1m in width.

Trench 5 was T shaped, aligned north - south and east - west, covering an area of the gardens of plot 4 and 5, and was positioned to explore the possibility of archaeological activity on a spur of higher ground. The trench was excavated to 10 m by c.2 m on a north - south axis, then extended at its mid point for 10m in length by 2m in width, to the west between plots 5 and 6. The trench was positioned on a spur of higher ground which traversed the eastern field boundary.

Trench 6 was aligned east - west and covered part of the garden and proposed garage area between plots 4 and 5. It was positioned to elucidate the extent of possible archaeological features on a spur of high ground. The trench was excavated to a length of 10 m by c.2 m in width and was positioned on the northern edge of the spur of higher ground.

Trench 7 was aligned north - south and covered part of the garden of plot 3. It was positioned to intercept the extent of possible archaeology related to the spur of high ground to the south. The trench was excavated to 10 m in length by c.2 m in width.

The overburden was removed by a back acting excavator fitted with a 1.80 m wide toothless bucket, apart from trench 4, where a 1 m wide bucket was used. The trenches were excavated down to the level of the first visible archaeological horizon, or the natural ground surface, apart from trenches 1 and 2 where the overburden was of an undetected depth. In these cases the trenches were excavated to a depth of 1.20 m and 0.90 m respectively: the depth at which services and foundations are to be laid. The exposed surfaces were then cleaned by hand in order to detect any archaeological features revealed through textural or colour changes in the deposits. Once this had been completed, sections were hand excavated through the archaeological features that had been identified.

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the excavation. This involved the completion of a context sheet for each deposit or cut encountered, along with plans and/or sections drawn to scale. Heights above Ordnance Datum (AOD) were calculated by taking levels from a Temporary Benchmark (TBM) which was then tied in with an existing Ordnance Survey benchmark located on the village church. A photographic record of the deposits and features was also maintained.

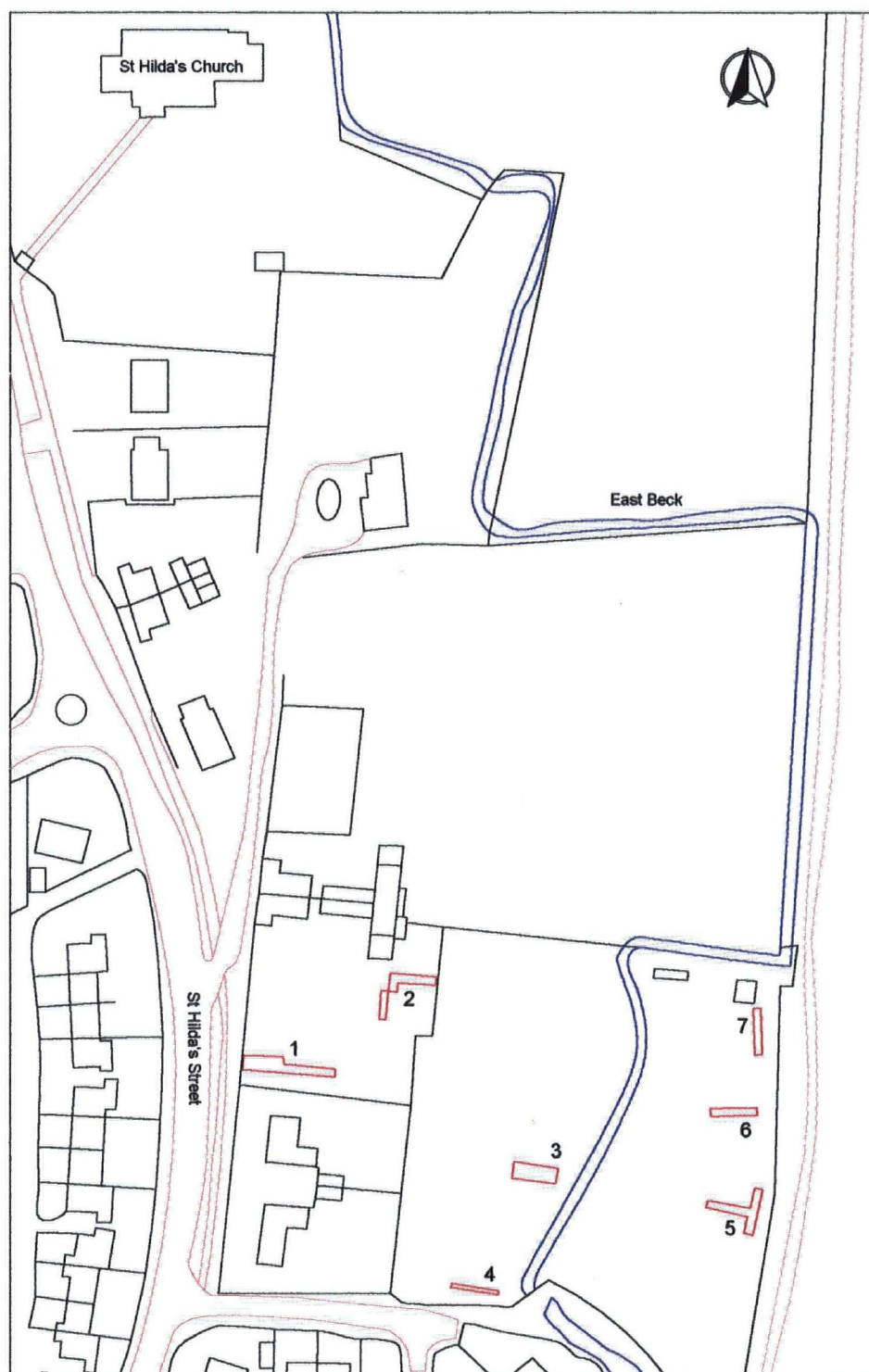


Figure 2. Trench Locations. Scale 1:1,500.

5.0 Results

The trenches were cleaned and any features and deposits identified were then hand excavated:

5.1 Trench 1

After the removal of the topsoil and subsoil, contexts [1007] and [1008], a loose mid-yellowish-brown sandy-silt containing collapsed building material of chalk rubble and frequent fragments and flecks of charcoal was revealed: context [1000]. This was in turn overlain by context [1001] beginning at *c.* 10 m east of the western most edge of the trench. Context [1001] was a dark-brownish-red clayey-sandy-silt with moderate inclusions of chalk fragments and flint (see fig. 3). Additionally, a small sondage was cut into the base of the trench to identify the depth of context [1000] and the location of the natural ground surface: context [1000] was 0.20 m in depth and was directly above the natural ground surface.

5.2 Trench 2

After the removal of the topsoil, context [1007], the same deposit identified in trench 1, context [1001], was revealed. This deposit was the only material revealed in the depth excavated (0.90 m).

5.3 Trench 3

The topsoil, context [1007], was removed to reveal a deep deposit which as far as could be deduced was the subsoil, context [1008] and extended in depth to 0.55 m. This deposit overlaid context [1003]. Context [1003] was a dry stone wall, composed of large blocks of chalk forming the outer faces and a core of smaller chalk material. This wall, which had collapsed slightly to the south, extended out of the western edge of the trench on a direct east - west alignment and was set on to the old ground surface, [1009] (see fig. 4 and plate 1). Context [1009] was a soft, mid-yellowish-brown sandy-silt with rare inclusions of charcoal flecks. Context [1009] was in turn overlying context [1010]: a soft, mid-yellowish-brown sand, which contained lenses of cleaner yellowier sand and small sub-angular chalk fragments, which formed a low bank running along the eastern edge of the trench.

5.4 Trench 4

After the topsoil and subsoil, contexts [1007] and [1008], had been removed, a heterogeneous deposit composed of light/mid grey and fine greyish white sands plus brown to dark brown sandy silts, was revealed. Contained within this deposit was chalk rubble and occasional flecks of charcoal. Furthermore, context [1017] was contained in the eastern end of the trench and had a very obvious straight edge running across the trench on a northeast to southwest alignment. Thus the deposit extended 0.78 m from the eastern end of the trench on the northern edge and similarly 1.58 m along the southern edge of the trench (see fig. 5). Context [1017] overlaid natural, context [1027].

5.5 Trench 5

The removal of the topsoil and subsoil by the machine revealed a linear deposit of sand aligned east - west in the northern end of the trench. This deposit, context [1004], was a fine light-brownish-yellow wind blown sand, which was also visible in the western end of the east - west aligned extension of the trench (see fig 6; plate 2). Thus context [1004] extended as a linear feature for at least 13 m on a east to southwest alignment and was c.0.20 m in depth by 1.40m at its widest point, and presumably continues further in both directions. Interestingly this deposit was severely disturbed by root action, the marks of which were visible in context [1006], lying below [1004] (plate 2). Butting up against context [1004] was context [1002]: a loose, dark reddish-brown silty-sand, which was contained to the south of context [1004] and was c. 0.30 m in depth (see plate 5). This deposit contained frequent inclusions of chalk fragments, the distribution of which became more dense towards the southern end of the trench. In fact it was at that end of the trench that large blocks of roughly hewn chalk and sandstone were discovered. Furthermore context [1002] contained a large quantity of pot sherds and a full pot which had been broken *in situ*. There were also further finds of bone, residual lithics and an iron nail.

The removal of deposit [1002] revealed the further extent of [1006] and deposit [1005]. Deposit [1005] was stratigraphically below [1002] and consisted of a loose, dark-red silty-sand with occasional patches of lighter red clay like inclusions, which gave the appearance of being affected by heat, so a sample of this deposit was taken (sample No. 1). Context [1005] also contained frequent inclusions of chalk fragments, with larger fragments seemingly aligned linearly on a east - west orientation, and a few sherds of pottery. Additionally, in section, context [1005] appeared to form a low bank contained in a natural shallow depression (see fig. 7, West facing section of the trench). Context [1005] was stratigraphically above layer [1006] (see figs. 7 and 8): a loose, dark greenish-brown silt-clay containing small fragments of chalk, flint and gravel in some areas, and occasional sherds of pottery.

Underlying layer [1006] were a number of cut features and their respective fills (see plates 3 and 4). First, context [1011], a loose, mid-greenish-brown, silt sand containing small fragments (c.0.02 m diameter) of chalk and flint, and occasional charcoal flecks. A length of this fill, c. 1.20 m, was excavated leaving northwest and southeast facing sections (see figs. 9 and 10). This fill was c.0.50 m in depth and 1.60 m wide, and continued under the southeast end of the trench and then continued towards the north (see fig. 11). Context [1011] was contained within a curvilinear concave cut with moderately steep sides: context [1012]. This context cut a number of earlier features: in the northwest facing section (see fig. 9) - context [1012] cut deposit [1018]. Context [1018] was the secondary fill of a cut feature: a soft, dark greyish-brown sandy silt containing small pieces of chalk and flint and rare lenses of cleaner yellowier sand. The deposit was 0.60 m wide by 0.50 m in depth. Below context [1018] was the primary fill of the feature, context [1019]. This was a soft, light yellowish-green sand containing small (diameter >0.01 m) particles of chalk and was 0.60 m in width by 0.30 m in depth. Context [1019] was lying above the cut of the feature: context [1020]. Context [1020] was a steeply sided U-shaped linear cut of a butt end for either a ditch or gully, with a north -

south orientation. The cut was 0.55 m wide and 0.80 m in depth and continued to the south under the edge of the trench (see fig. 11). In the southeast facing section (fig. 10), cut [1012] truncates two features although there is no evidence to indicate which is the earlier or later in this sequence. Thus, context [1023] is cut by the westerly edge of context [1012]. Context [1023] was a soft, dark brown sandy silt containing small pieces of chalk and flint with rare charcoal flecks, and one sherd of pottery was present. The fill was 0.46 m wide and 0.87 m deep and was contained in cut [1024]. Cut [1024] may have a stepped profile (see fig. 10) or conversely the deeper part of the cut may have cut an already existing shallow feature, although there is no evidence to confirm such. Nevertheless, the cut follows a profile of a straight edged step c.0.25 m in depth onto a very steep sided U-shaped cut, 0.47 m wide and 0.87 m in depth. The cut may have been for a post hole or a pit, or conversely may be the butt end to a ditch or gully similar to context [1020].

To the northeast of context [1024] was located the fill, context [1025], and cut, context [1026], of a post hole. Context [1025], a loose, dark yellowish-brown silty-sand containing rare charcoal lumps and flecks was truncated horizontally by cut [1012]. The fill was 0.18 m in length, 0.22 m in width and 0.35 m in depth and was contained in cut [1026]. Context [1026] was a steep sided U-shaped cut with a width of 0.22 m and a depth of 0.25 m. Lying between cut [1024] and cut [1020] (fig. 11) was the fill, context [1021], and cut, context [1022] of another posthole. Again this feature was truncated horizontally by cut [1012]. Deposit [1021] was a loose, dark yellowish-brown silt-sand containing rare, small chalk pieces and charcoal flecks. The fill was 0.25 m in length, 0.15 m in width and 0.35 m deep and was contained in cut [1022]. Context [1022] was a vertical sided, U-shaped cut, 0.35 m deep.

Two remaining features were detected in the eastern edge of the trench: two postholes (fig. 7 and 11). The first, a single fill and cut, contexts [1013] and [1014] respectively, was observed partly in section. The fill, context [1013], was a loose, dark yellowish-brown silt-sand and contained infrequent amounts of small fragments of chalk and flint. The fill was cut by context [1016] to the south and was contained in cut [1014]. Context [1014] was a vertical sided, flat bottomed cut, 0.24 m in length, 0.17 m wide and 0.37 m deep. Directly to the south was located the cut and fill of another posthole: contexts [1015] and [1016]. It has already been mentioned that context [1016] cut feature [1014]. Context [1016] was a steep sided, U-shaped cut 0.17 m in length, 0.30 m in width and 0.60 m in depth. The cut contained context [1015]: a loose, mid yellowish-brown silty-sand containing moderate amounts of small fragments of chalk and flint. The fill was in turn truncated at its southern edge by cut [1012].

5.6 Trench 6

The topsoil and subsoil, contexts [1007] and [1008] respectively, were removed by machine down to natural without any archaeological features being encountered. There were a number of finds of pottery retrieved from the subsoil.

5.7 Trench 7

The topsoil and subsoil, contexts [1007] and [1008] respectively, were removed by machine down to natural without any archaeological features being encountered. There were a number of finds of pottery retrieved from the subsoil.