

Rec'd 17-2-00

3076

See correspondence in General Expenses file

**Road Improvement Scheme  
Leavening, North Yorkshire  
Archaeological Watching Brief  
SE 79700 62800**

NYCC HER	
SNY	446
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**November 1999**  
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## **1. Introduction**

An Archaeological Watching Brief was conducted on 17th-18th November 1999 at Leavening, North Yorkshire, on behalf of North Yorkshire County Council. The brief was undertaken in association with the widening and stabilisation of a 30m stretch of road crossing Leavening Wold to the east of Leavening village centred on national grid reference SE 79700 62800 (Fig. 1).

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to 479740 462670

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## **2. Geology**

The geology over the length of the road is soils of the Andover 1 and Panholes Associations (Mackney et al 1983).

## **3. Historical and Archaeological Background**

The stretch of road to be repaired runs south east over Leavening Wold from a junction with the east-west road to Leavening (Fig. 1). In two places the road crosses parts of a rectilinear entrenched enclosure (Stoertz 1997). These rectilinear features fall within the area of the improvement works that were the subject of the watching brief (Fig. 2)

The road is presumed to be of Roman origin and it is possible that a track that continues northwards from the junction with the Leavening road was originally an extension of the route toward Burythorpe.

It appears that the original straight route to Burythorpe was disrupted in the medieval period by falling within the immediate territory of a Motte and Bailey castle on Mount Ferrant north east of Leavening. Leavening itself has the classic topography of a planned village with a central axis road and rows of properties with a back lane on the north and south. This intrusion of medieval development was the mechanism for the development of a more complex series of roads in the area.

#### **4. Methodology**

The Watching Brief focussed upon two stretches of the excavations in the approximate locations where the road crossed two sides of the conjectured enclosure (Fig. 1).

Groundworks for the scheme consisted of the excavation of a 1.40m wide trench along the western side of the road on the downslope. This trench extended an estimated 0.30m into the grass verge and was at a mean depth of 0.50m from the surface of the existing carriageway.

In an effort to locate the exact position of the entrenchment, the fields either side of the road were walked and examined. No evidence of the entrenchment could be seen on the ground, all surface traces being obscured by modern ploughing.

## 5. Results

Below a modern bedding of hard-core for the existing road surface, the excavations revealed a layer of natural frost fractured chalky flint within a silty matrix. This deposit was homogenous over the entire length of trench examined and no evidence of the linear features was seen in plan. Ploughsoil visible in the fields either side of the road showed a high proportion of similar natural chalky flint.

The road appeared to have been constructed on an embankment along its western side, raising the road level to an estimated 0.4m above existing ground level. The embankment precluded any evidence of an earthwork being seen in section. The eastern side the road been cut into or had sunk into the hill slope as no excavation occurred on this side the survival of archaeological evidence in section could not be ascertained.

No earlier road surfacing was discerned within the area observed that might demonstrate the road's origin in the Roman period. No finds of any period were recovered from the excavations.

## 6. Conclusion

The observation of the repairs to the stretch of road passing over the enclosure demonstrated that modern road construction would have removed entirely any surviving structure or metalling from earlier road surfaces.

No trace of the linear features was found in plan or recorded in section, equally if there had been any surface manifestation of the features it is likely that these have obliterated most recently by modern ploughing.

## 7. Bibliography

- Mackney D. et al (1983) Soils of England and Wales. Sheet 1 Northern England. Harpenden
- Stoertz C. (1997) Ancient Landscapes of the Yorkshire Wolds. RCHME





Figure 1. Site Location.



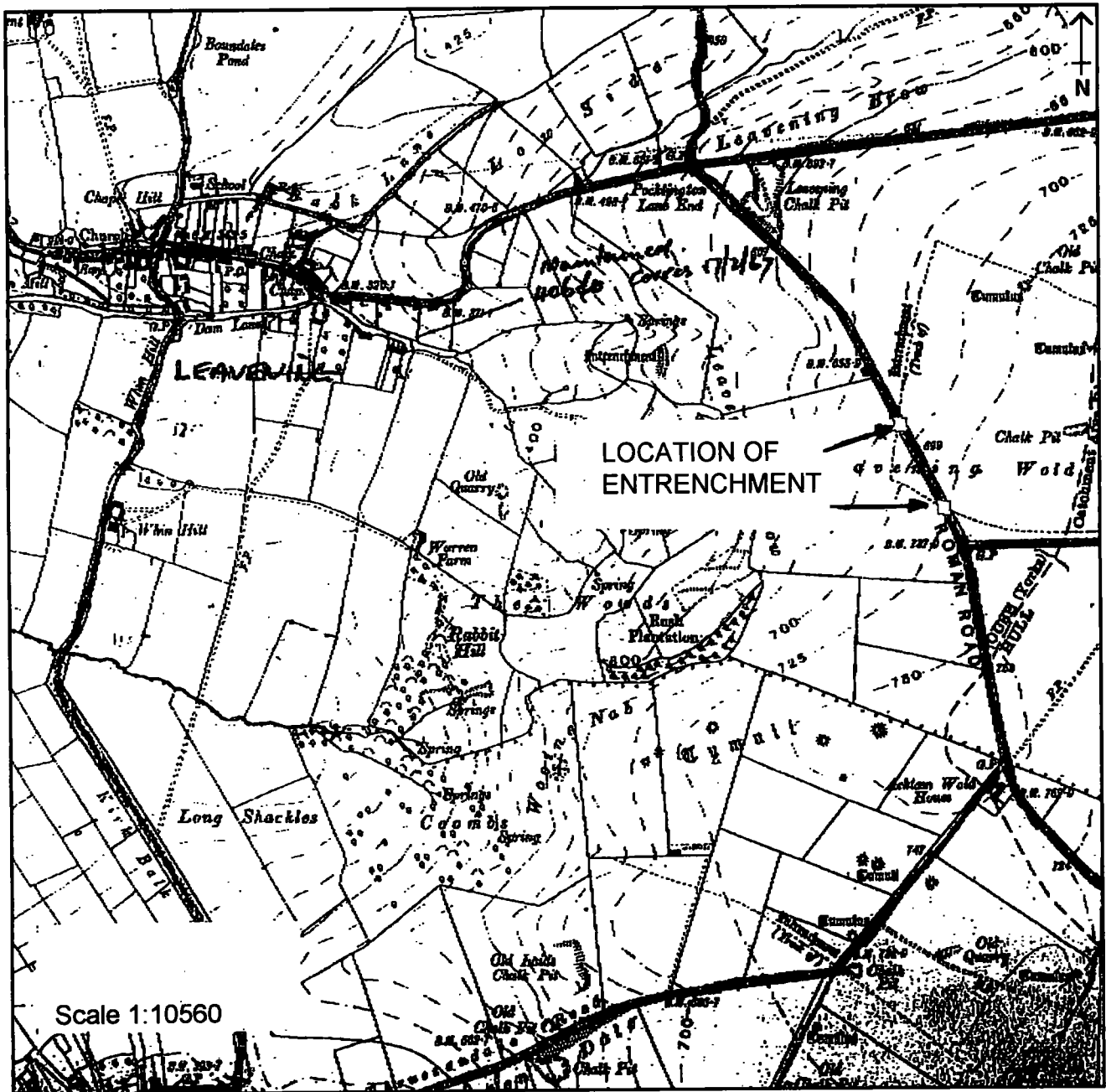


Figure 2. Location of Entrenchment.