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**Newbridge Quarry  
 Pickering  
 North Yorkshire**

**Archive and Assessment Report**

July 2000  
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Pickering  
North Yorkshire**

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**Newbridge Quarry  
Pickering  
North Yorkshire**

**Archive and Assessment Report**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, on behalf of RMC Aggregates (Northern) Ltd. as part of the archaeological scheme of works associated with the extension of Newbridge Quarry, Pickering, North Yorkshire (NGR SE 8000 8600: Fig 1).
- 1.2 A 'live' planning permission (North Yorkshire County Council C3/102/276) dating from June 1979 existed with a simple Condition which required only '7 clear days notice..... and access..... for archaeological investigations by officers of North Yorkshire County Council'. However the parent Company, RMC Aggregates (UK) Ltd and their subsidiary, RMC Aggregates (Northern) Ltd, recognised that the requirements of this Condition have been superseded by both Best Practice and Central Government advice.
- 1.3 An evaluation carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd in August 1999 illustrated that this area of the site had considerably greater archaeological potential than had been shown by aerial photography (Guildhouse Consultancy 1999a) or the Geophysical Survey (Guildhouse Consultancy 1999b). The nine evaluation trenches opened by MAP indicated the presence of a considerable number of archaeological features, which were earlier in date than the known Late Iron Age / Roman complex identified immediately to the north. The programme of field work discussed in this report followed on rapidly from the evaluation, and took place during September and October 1999.
- 1.4 All work has been funded by RMC Aggregates (Northern) Ltd.

- 1.5 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with permission of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. Licence No. AL 50453A.

## **2. Site Description**

- 2.1 Newbridge Quarry lies c 1 km to the north and west of Pickering on the southern edge of the North Yorkshire Moors and on the edge of the Tabular Hills overlooking the Vale of Pickering (NGR SE 8000 8600 : Fig. 1).

- 2.2 The quarry is a long established facility producing hard rock products. Excavation took place in the Permitted Extraction Area (PEA), a block of land lying immediately adjacent to, and on the west side of the existing quarry (Fig. 2). The PEA covers an area of c. 2.6 ha. of stripped and reduced ground and an undisturbed area of c. 5.6 ha. The southern boundary of the PEA lies close to the 75m contour, and its northern boundary on the 89m contour. The autumn 1999 excavation took place in the southern part of the PEA in an area 244m x 59m, an area of just over 1 ha.

## **3. Geology**

- 3.1 The PEA lies on the southern tip of the Jurassic uplands which form the North York Moors. The solid geology is the Upper Calcareous Grit (Upper Oxfordian Stage), consisting of two main horizons consisting of the Spaunton Sandstone (c. 4.5m thick) 'a brown non-calcareous fine-medium grained sandstone', which overlies the Newbridge Beds (c. 1.5m thick).

- 3.2 Soils are of the Elmton 2 Soil Association (343b - brown rendzinas : SSEW 1983) and are described as shallow and stony (Jarvis 1984, 182). The presence of bedrock at shallow depths is also noted in relation to these soils.

## **4. Archaeological Background**

### **4.1 Previous work**

- 4.1.1 The previous work had indicated that features dating from the later Iron Age were likely to exist on the site. An air photograph (NMR Ref. ALP SF2842; SE7985/5/6

22.07.1976) showed the presence of an assumed track way with associated rectilinear enclosures running to the west of the excavated area on a north-east to south-west alignment. The geophysical survey suggested that at least one boundary ditch associated with this trackway lay within the PEA. The evaluation trenches confirmed this.

4.1.2 'Ladder' or 'droveway' settlements of this form are well known from aerial photography on the Yorkshire Wolds, and the Howardian Hills to the south, as well as further afield in the Trent Valley and Lincolnshire (Stoertz 1997, 51). Settlements of this type are commonly dated to the late Iron Age and are thought to represent either individual farms or villages (Dark and Dark 1997, 53).

4.1.3 The possibility of contemporary burials was also highlighted at the pre-excavation stage. A large square barrow, lying to the north of the evaluation area, was detected by the geophysical survey.

4.1.4 The evaluation had shown that other features, not visible on the air photograph or detected by geophysical survey, were also present. The limited nature of the work, nine 1.8m wide trenches totalling c. 370m<sup>2</sup>, did not permit the full interpretation of these features, but indicated a concentration of activity around the 80m contour. This activity was characterised by the presence of postholes, pits and poorly understood linear features. Ceramic material recovered from this phase of work indicated an early Iron Age date (c. 800-600 BC).

4.1.5 The presence of medieval ridge and furrow ploughing and a later stock pond were confirmed by the evaluation. The ridge and furrow had been levelled, but where it cut into the subsoil it could be observed to run north to south.

## **5. Historical Background**

5.1 Medieval and Post-medieval activity within the PEA related to agricultural practices, with the ridge and furrow to some extent truncating and masking earlier activity.

- 5.2 The Desk-Based Assessment had shown that the PEA lay within the Common fields of Pickering within two blocks of land identifiable as 'Skillingate' and 'Swainsea'; the former being long north-south strip fields, the latter having shorter east-west fields lying to the east and similar north-south fields lying to the south and west. The Skillingate block was separated from the Swainsea block on the west by the existing Swainsea Lane and on the east by Greengate Lane, the latter feature now lost to quarrying.
- 5.3 'Greengate' i.e. 'Green road' is recorded in the Fourteenth century. Skillingate may derive from the Scandinavian for boundary, thus 'boundary road' is suggested as an interpretation. It is also clear from other immediately adjacent field names that these blocks of land lay close to the moorland which it could be argued endorses the 'boundary' interpretation. The location of the blocks suggests that they may be additions to the original main Common fields.
- 5.4 In simple terms Skillingate consisted of three parallel strips, marked by hedgerows with some east-west divisions. All of these fields are identified in the Tithe Award (1838) as 'Skillingate Close'. Area B forms the southern two thirds of the central strip. In the south-east corner of the block, adjacent to the eastern boundary of Area B, is a small area (Area C) identified as 'Stack Garth' in 1838, and now known as 'Swainsea Barn'. This contains the remains of the stone walls of field barns.

## 6. Methods

- 6.1 Based on the wide distribution of postholes and linear features encountered during the evaluation stage of the project and the proposed total destruction of the Permitted Extraction Area a policy of area stripping of the top and subsoil by 360 degree excavator was adopted. The spoil was removed by dump trucks. This stage of the project was monitored by Rod Mackey for the Guildhouse Consultancy (Guildhouse Consultancy 1999C : Appendix 10). Most traces of ridge and furrow ploughing, save the discontinuous furrow bases, were removed and the stock pond noted as a ring ditch in the SMR was recorded before its destruction.

- 6.2 The amount of top and subsoil cover varied across the site, but in general the depth increased towards the southern part of the site, from 0.3m to 0.6m. With this covering removed individual features were easily identified cutting into the lower subsoil, and were assigned a deposit number during this phase of work.
- 6.3 During the mechanical stripping of the site it was clear that collections of sub-rectangular to circular features formed distinct clusters. Initial recording of these features using an EDM, and the creation of a site plan, permitted a logical and rapid campaign of excavation focusing on sample excavation of all structural features (Figs. 3 & 4).
- 6.4 Identified features were half-sectioned, where possible the southern portion being excavated by context, and the section drawn and photographed, and a written record made. Ditch segments were excavated employing a similar procedure. Areas containing suspected structures were drawn at a scale of 1:20.
- 6.5 Towards the end of the excavation a series of photographs were taken from a photographic tower to illustrate discrete groups of features, and possible post-built structures.
- 6.6 The sinuous ditch, D3, and square barrow ditch, D2, were fully excavated, as were several of the large pits in order to recover the maximum amount of dating evidence.
- 6.7 Ditch features and discrete groups of postholes were given a Master or Feature Number during post-excavation analysis in order to ease their discussion as separate units or structures.

## 7. Results

- 7.1 In total four hundred and sixty-four context numbers were assigned to deposits and cuts. Of these two hundred and three were cuts, the vast majority of which, one hundred and seventy-one, were small postholes. Nineteen ditch segments were excavated. Pits were the least represented type of feature, thirteen in total were



identified. The remaining cut numbers were made up of natural or indeterminate features.

## **7.2 Pre-Iron Age Features**

7.2.1 There were a number of features located which were likely to pre date the Iron Age activity on the site.

7.2.2 A shallow irregular feature, context 1448, lay towards the centre of the square barrow, and presumably would have been sealed under any possible mound. It was aligned roughly east to west and was 1.75m long, 0.56m wide and 0.06 deep. There were no finds from the fill, context 1153, a fine sandy silt, although it did contain charcoal. On balance, the feature's shallowness and amorphous shape suggested a natural feature

7.2.3 A north-south aligned feature, context 1241, was located c. 50m to the south-west of the main area of activity. This feature was irregular in plan and measured 2.5m x 1.3m and was 0.19m deep. A flint flake was recovered from its fill, context 1235.

7.2.4 Two shallow pits and a putative posthole located in the north-western area of the site, contexts 1225, 1226 and 1227 provided no datable finds (Fig. 3).

## **7.3 Early Iron Age Structures**

7.3.1 A total of fifteen groups of post and stake holes were identified. The majority lay in an area 60m by 50m towards the centre of the site (Figs. 3 & 4). The sinuous Ditch 3, may have formed a southern boundary. No northern boundary was located.

7.3.2 Of these postulated structures seven are long rectilinear structures (Structures 1, 3, 5, 6, 8 and 9, Figs. 3 & 4). Four conform to the descriptive term "four post structures", (Structures 7, 12, 14 & 15) although two have more than four postholes (Structures 12 and 15). Two groups may form circular structures, Structures 2 and 13, of which Structure 2 is the largest and most "domestic" in form. There was also a fence line

(Structure 10), and one area of very intense activity, that revealed no clear form (Structure 11).

#### **7.4 Rectilinear Structures**

- 7.4.1 Structure 1 a sub-rectangular group of postholes which measured 8.5m x 5m was located away from the main concentration of postholes (Figs. 3-5 and Appendix 2). A line of deeper postholes some of which (contexts 1208, 1219 and 1219) contained limestone packing marked the western edge of the structure, but the postholes to the east were generally much shallower. While the western edge of this structure was convincing it was difficult to see that this represented a substantial building.
- 7.4.2 Structure 3 measuring 5.4m x 3.2m in size and orientated north-east south-west was comprised of six postholes (Appendix 2). Only one of the postholes exceeded 0.3m in depth.
- 7.4.3 Structure 5 consisted of twenty postholes (Fig. 6, Appendix 2), aligned from the south-east to the north-west, which formed a trapezoid shape, 7.8m x 4.1m, which was wider to the south-east (Fig. 4 : Pl. 2). The north-west end of Structure 5 was truncated by Ditch 2 (posthole 1453 had been cut by ditch segment 1451, Fig. 6). A cluster of postholes at the south-east corner suggested an external structure on the southern wall.
- 7.4.4 Structure 6 (Appendix 2) was on a north-south alignment and comprised of six postholes forming two sides of a possible building 6.5 x 2.5m in size. No postholes were located to confirm Structure 6's south-west corner, and the line of three postholes making up the northern end of the structure were relatively slight (Fig. 7 : Pl. 1).
- 7.4.5 Structure 8 (Appendix 2) had a north-west to south-east alignment which was similar to the nearby Structures 4 and 5 (Fig. 3). The putative building comprised sixteen post settings, although others may have been destroyed by Ditch 1 (east to west ditch) which ran past the southern end of the structure (Fig. 3). Structure 8 was 6.5m long

and 3.1m wide, most of the postholes were shallow, but contexts 1387 and 1400, at the south-east end were slightly deeper and larger.

- 7.4.6 Structure 9 was a rather loose collection of similar pits and postholes (Figs. 3 & 4), which formed a linear feature or fence up to 11.4m long. The central pit/posthole, context 1319, cut Ditch 3 (segment 1318 : Pl. 2). The occurrence of fragments of soft grey limestone (post packing?) in several of these features, contexts 1444, 1319 and 1438, may suggest a structural origin.
- 7.4.7 It was not possible to clearly define the form of Structure 11 (Appendix 2), but the concentration of postholes and pits in this area strongly suggested that a structure was present (Figs. 3 & 4, Pl. 3). Further evidence suggesting a structure comes from the deliberate termination of Ditch 3 to the south of Structure 11.
- 7.4.8 Structure 12 (Appendix 2) was a rectangular group of six postholes, with two postholes to the north, one in the centre, and three postholes forming the southern end (Figs. 3, 4, & 8, Pl. 4). Structure 12 measured 4.8m north-south and 2.5m east-west. Its location towards the north of the main concentration of post built structures, made the rectangular form easy to recognise, but its size, larger than Structures 7 and 15, and smaller than the other rectilinear structures, may suggest that it had a different function. The lack of associated finds suggested that this structure related to temporary rather than "domestic" use. As only one posthole (context 1305) was more than 0.08m deep, others may have been destroyed; the central posthole may therefore indicate central support for a larger circular building.
- 7.4.9 Structure 10 (Appendix 2) appeared to be a right angled stretch of fence. Beginning at its north eastern end it ran to the south-west for c. 7.8m before abruptly turning to the west, and continuing 6.7m before stopping (Figs. 3 & 4). All ten postholes associated with Structure 10 were shallow, less than 0.15m deep, and all were of similar dimensions. The alignment of this structure is strikingly similar to that of Ditch 3, which lies 28m to the west, suggesting that they were laid out with reference to each other.

## **7.5 Circular Structures**

- 7.5.1 Structure 2 was the most convincing circular structure encountered. A pair of large postholes with limestone packing (contexts 1267 and 1268) were interpreted as forming an entrance. An arc of shallow postholes or stakeholes to the north-west of this made up the body of the structure with an outside diameter of 7.5m (Fig. 9 and Appendix 2). Internally a pit (context 1270) may have had a domestic function such as storage, and a cluster of postholes (contexts 1253, 1255-56 and 1258-59) which lay inside this structure, may have been internal supports.
- 7.5.2 While the majority of postholes comprising Structure 4 were shallow, less than 0.2m deep, they did form two adjoining circular features with a rectangular extension to the south-east (Figs. 3, 4 & 10: Pl. 5). This may hint at two phases of construction, or the presence of both an entrance and house body. Structure 4 was aligned from the south-east to the north-west.
- 7.5.3 The six postholes of Structure 13 (Appendix 2), formed a circular or sub-square pattern, 3m in diameter. Structure 13 was located c .5m south-east of the large rectilinear Structure 3, and 7m north of Structure 8 (Fig. 11). A large pit, context 1335, lay to the east of this group and a posthole, context 1333, cut its upper fill. At only 3m in diameter Structure 13 is probably too small to be a round house. A shallow linear feature (context 1349) may have been of natural origin, judging by its shallowness and lack of associated finds.

## **7.6. Four-post Structures**

- 7.6.1 Structure 7 (Appendix 2) was a clearly defined four post structure, measuring 3m x 2.8m and located 2m to the south-west of Structure 2, (Fig. 9 : Pl. 4).
- 7.6.2 Structure 14 located towards the north-eastern corner of the excavated area consisted of a small group of four shallow postholes (Appendix 2) which measured 2.6m by 2.1m along its north-east to south-west axis. Structure 14 was similar to Structure 7 in both form and size.

7.6.3 A group of seven postholes, Structure 15 (Appendix 2), formed a rectangular pattern 3.6m x 3.2m and was aligned north-west to south-east. Although similar to the nearby Structure 7 it appeared more substantial as its postholes were large and deep. Two smaller postholes placed at the north-western and south-eastern corners (contexts 1260 and 1289 respectively) may indicate more than one phase of activity (Fig. 9). Structure 15, along with Structures 2 and 7 appear to form a small group of structures.

## 7.7 Ditches

7.7.1 Two ditches, Ditches 1 and 3, and the square barrow ditch, Ditch 2, were excavated.

7.7.2 The earliest of the two ditches, Ditch 3 (Appendix 3), followed a sinuous path, entering the site from the west on a north-west to south-east alignment which continued for c. 30m before turning sharply to run north-south for c. 20m (Fig. 3, Pl. 3). Segments excavated in Ditch 3 showed it to vary in width and depth. To the west it was 1.35m wide and 0.4m deep (context 1322) and had a shallow sided, flat based profile. In the centre of the south-east aligned arm it was only 0.8m wide and 0.2m deep. These dimensions were retained until near its northern terminal, where Ditch 3 measured only 0.5m wide and 0.18m deep (context 1322). Its profile remained fairly consistent (Fig. 13, Pl. 2, Appendix 4). To the west and in the area where Ditch 3 turned towards the north-east, two fills were recorded, suggesting a recut (contexts 1313, 1316 and 1322).

7.7.3 Ditch 3 was clearly cut by the east-west ditch, Ditch 1, and by a large posthole, context 1319, which was part of Structure 9. Two further relationships can be inferred. Ditch 3 ends immediately to the south of Structure 11. This strongly suggested the ditch was contemporary with the structure, although it is difficult to precisely define this structure. Two large postholes, contexts 1243 and 1356, may account for the ditch's termination at this point.

7.7.4 The relationship to Ditch 3 of a short length of fence, Structure 10, lying 28m to the south-east, has been discussed above.

- 7.7.5 Full excavation of Ditch 3 recovered pottery and a very small amount of animal bone. None of the pottery recovered can be precisely dated, but the absence of later Iron Age ceramics may indicate this ditch was redundant by the mid First millennium BC (Appendices 4 and 5).
- 7.7.6 Ditch 1, aligned east-west, was excavated in four segments (contexts 1304, 1365, 1371 and 1456, Appendix 3). Excavation established that this ditch was later than Ditch 3, and the square barrow (Appendix 3, Figs. 4, 12 & 13, Pl. 3).
- 7.7.7 Ditch 1 reduced in both width and depth as it crossed the interior of the square barrow, indicating that the barrow mound was present when the ditch was dug, as it showed a reduction in width and depth due to the level it was cut from, presumably having risen up over the barrow mound (Figs. 12 & 13).
- 7.7.8 The possibility remains that this ditch was part of the later Iron Age Romano-British 'ladder' settlement located to the west.
- 7.7.9 Geophysical survey detected this ditch, but failed to reveal either the square barrow or Ditch 3. The reason for this is unclear but may point to a different and considerably later origin for Ditch 1 compared to other ditches. It is possible that Ditch 1 is medieval or Post-medieval in date as it appears to be on a similar alignment to boundaries shown on recent Ordnance Survey maps (Fig. 2). However, no medieval or later pottery was recovered from Ditch 1, and whilst the relationship was not explored, it did appear to be earlier than the ridge and furrow.
- 7.7.10 Ditch 2 (Appendix 3), formed a sub-rectangular enclosure with outside dimensions of 10.3m north to south, and 10.75m east to west, and measured 8.9m by 8.5m internally (Figure 8). The ditch varied from c. 1.4m to 0.8m wide and 0.19m to 0.4m deep, with a shallow U or bowl like profile (Figs. 12 and 13, Pls. 7 & 8). The deeper segments were located to the north and west. Generally two fills were present in the segments excavated, a silty sandy upper deposit and a more plastic, clayey primary fill (contexts 1371 and 1373).

- 7.7.11 The continuous form of the ditch and the size of the area it enclosed indicates that it was the quarry ditch of a square barrow, the lack of an 'entrance' along with its sub-rectangular shape ruling out the possibility of it being the eaves-drip trench of a round house.
- 7.7.12 The absence of a central grave does not hinder such an interpretation, as this feature is often absent from the earliest Yorkshire square barrows, burial taking place on the ground surface before the construction of the mound (Stoertz 1997, 36). Early square barrows often occur in isolation and this also identifies Ditch 2 as a barrow ditch (ibid, 39).
- 7.7.13 Only one feature was cut by Ditch 2, Posthole 1453, which represented the south-west corner of Structure 5.
- 7.7.14 A possible pre Iron Age, feature, context 1448 (Para. 7.3.3), lay inside the ditch and could have either been sealed by any mound, or have been cut through it. This feature was similar to context 1416 described above.
- 7.7.15 A posthole, context 1447, lay close to the centre of the enclosed area, and may also have been sealed by a mound. It is tempting to see this posthole as relating to the setting out of the square barrow. Its dimensions, 0.44m by 0.22m and 0.21m deep, would have accommodated a substantial post.
- 7.7.16 Very little material was recovered from the fill of the square barrow ditch. Finds from the upper fill of the ditch consisted of the rim of a small jar with finger tip impressions below the lip (deposit 1412) and two sherds of pottery, one with carbonised residue from deposit 1462. A broken perforated sandstone disc was found in the primary fill of the ditch (deposit 1458). These finds seem likely to be residual, originating from the early Iron Age settlement.
- 7.7.17 A sub-rectangular feature, context 1416, cut the inside of the western arm of the square barrow (segment cut 1414). This feature was 1.87m x 0.46m and 0.27m deep.

Although context 1416 contained a small quantity of early Iron Age pottery it was not clear when this pit was dug.

## 7.8 Pits

- 7.8.1 The distinction between pits and large postholes is rather arbitrary, however nine of the excavated features can be classified as pits with some certainty. Three large sub-rectangular features, contexts 1205, 1302 and 1335 are possible rubbish pits, and their locations may point towards the development of settlement on the site bearing in mind that 1205 and 1302 are not immediately associated with recognised structures (Figs. 3 & 11, Pls. 9 & 10).
- 7.8.2 The largest of these sub-rectangular pits, context 1302 was 2.6m x 2.6m and 0.65m deep. It was located just to the north of the main concentration of postholes and had a steep sided flat based profile. Contexts 1047 and 1301 filled this pit, both were silty, 1301, the lower one contained some clay. Iron Age pottery was found in both fills, and two flint implements, a flake and a scraper, were recovered from 1301. Charcoal and burnt stones in these deposits suggests a domestic origin. A medieval furrow cut the upper fill (context 1292).
- 7.8.3 An isolated sub-rectangular pit, context 1205 measuring 1.9m by 1.75m and 0.66m deep located close to the northern edge of the excavated area. The U or bowl shaped profile (Pl. 9) was reflected by the profiles of the three fills (contexts 1002, 1203 and 1204). This may suggest gradual filling. However, large fragments of ceramics found in 1002, 1202 and 1204, and the charcoal present in this pit suggested it was more likely to have been used as a domestic refuse pit. A tiny fragment of copper alloy was found in the lowest fill (context 1204).
- 7.8.4 Pit 1335's upper fill, context 1090, was cut by a shallow posthole (context 1333, part of Structure 13), at its north-western corner (Figs 7, Pl. 10). The pit was slightly irregular and longer on its north-east to south-west axis, measuring 2.7m x 1.5m and was 0.46m deep. All three fills were silty clays (Contexts 1090, 1342 and 1334), but ceramic material was confined to the upper fill and animal bone to context 1342.



- 7.8.5 This pit was sampled during the site evaluation, and produced a large assemblage of pottery from both the deposits encountered.
- 7.8.6 Two smaller pits, contexts 1270 and 1272, had a close association with Structure 2, a possible round house, and a four post structure, Structure 7 (Fig. 5). Cut 1270 lay to the north-west of the Structure 2's entrance, and measured 1.46m x 0.91m and was 0.37m deep, with its longer axis aligned to the north. It had a 'U' shaped profile. A complete saddle quern, recorded as context 1018, had been placed in the top of this pit, but no further artefacts were recovered from the other fills (Contexts 1017, 1268, and 1269), although charcoal was present in all three.
- 7.5.7 It is likely that context 1272 was also contemporary with the round house, being located 2m south west of this structure at the northern end of a clearly defined four post structure, Structure 7 (Fig. 5). This pit measured 1.49m x 1.12m x 0.39m deep and had a wide 'U' shaped profile. The fills, 1016 and 1271, contained domestic pottery, charcoal and burnt stones interpreted as pot boilers.
- 7.5.8 Pit 1196 measuring 0.8m in diameter and surviving to a depth of 0.35m was situated approximately 1m to the west of Structure 14. No finds were recovered from its fill (context 1005) and its exact relationship to Structure 14 is unclear.
- 7.5.9 No other comparable pits or pit groups were encountered. To the north-east of Pit 1205 was Pit 1195. This sub-rectangular feature provided no associated finds and the heavily rooted base and the nature of its fills (contexts 1001 and 1201) suggested that it may represent a tree-bowl. Pit 1125 was a large shallow sub-rectangular feature which contained a small amount of hazelnut shells (from context 1070). Flanking Pit 1125 were contexts 1126 and 1127 which were interpreted as natural features. In the area of Structure 11 were shallow features, contexts 1243, 1294, 1334 and 1331, which may have fulfilled a domestic role, but the lack of finds in these features counts against such an interpretation.

## **8. Summary and Discussion**

### **8.1 Summary**

8.1.1 While there are hints of pre-Iron Age activity on the site the majority of activity centres around an unenclosed early Iron Age settlement with indications of both circular and rectangular structures. Only the briefest and most inconclusive account of the settlement's development is attempted here.

### **8.2 Settlement Shift**

8.2.1 It is impossible, given the lack of precise dating evidence, to gauge the duration, development and decline of the early Iron Age settlement. However, hints of settlement shift and changing patterns of habitation, and even zones of activity were present. Two stratigraphic relationships and one assumed relationship point towards this development and change.

8.2.2 The north-eastern posthole in Structure 13, which cuts the upper fill of Pit 1335, provides hard evidence that more than one phase of activity took place. Since the other large pits are located away from the settlement area it may be assumed that expansion occurred from an earlier focus towards the periphery of the settlement. But there is no indication as to where the original focus was located.

8.2.3 Ditch 3 both respected Structure 11 and was cut by a large posthole belonging to Structure 9. This also points to more than one phase of early activity. The close correlation between the alignment of Ditch 3 and fence line, Structure 10, also points to prolonged activity and the development and continuity of a south-eastern boundary.

8.2.4 The preponderance of large rectilinear Structures 3, 4, 5, and 8 to the west of the site stands out as a distinct pattern. That three of these structures share a north-west to south-east alignment confirms that they were part of the same pattern. However it is impossible to compare the date of these structures with the smaller rectangular structures and the possible round house. It is also difficult to interpret these larger,

rectangular groups of postholes. They may be the foundations of dwellings, animal shelters or even small stock enclosures.

8.2.5 Due to the absence of ring ditches or eaves-drip trenches the classification of any structure as a round house is difficult, and it is possible that some of the smaller rectangular structures were in fact the central roof supports for round houses. However, the favoured interpretation of Structures 7, 12, 14 and 15 is that of free standing, rectangular buildings, traditionally identified as granaries.

8.2.6 Two circular structures were identified, and the larger (Structure 2) may well have been a dwelling. Both were constructed from relatively small postholes, although a possible entrance, employing larger post settings was identified on the south-east side of Structure 2. This structure with its attendant granaries (Structures 7 and 15) to the south-west and south-east, domestic pits and saddle quern is the best candidate for an early Iron Age dwelling.

### 8.3 Settlement Use

8.3.1 Neolithic-Early Bronze Age activity on the site was illustrated by the small flint assemblage which probably represented a background scatter.

8.3.2 Excavation showed that the settlement covered an area measuring approximately 2700m<sup>2</sup> with well defined limits to the south and north.

8.3.3 The excavated pits took a variety of forms, including a number of 'oven pits' as attested by the presence of potboilers and waste pits illustrated by broken early Iron Age pottery and hazelnut shells. The recovery of saddle querns, along with carbonised grains of barley and weeds associated with cultivation (Appendix 6) indicate a settlement engaged in arable cultivation. The number and variety of structures, particularly the granaries hint at a permanent settlement, along with animal shelters and storage buildings. Excavation of Posthole 1044 - Structure 1 recovered a number of pieces of daub, this was the only feature to provide evidence for construction materials.

8.3.4 The presence of loomweights in the finds assemblage and iron working slag of Late Bronze/Early Iron Age date further indicate the permanent nature of the settlement.

8.3.5 The lack of field boundaries relating to the early Iron Age suggest that cultivation was carried on away from the settlement.

#### **8.4 Settlement and Abandonment**

8.4.1 It is impossible to say with any precision when the settlement went out of use. The square barrow is clearly later than the western end of Structure 5. Square barrows of this form, large and isolated with no central grave pit, date to the late Fifth or Fourth centuries BC, communal cemeteries with clustered barrows and deep central graves appearing from the Third century BC (Stoertz 1997, 39). This broad date is the best available, and points to the abandonment of at least one structure in the mid First millennium BC.

8.4.2 There is no evidence to suggest the square barrow respected any early Iron Age features. While it is possible that occupation continued on the site, there is a growing body of evidence from the Yorkshire Wolds pointing to square barrow construction as an indicator of changes in the organisation of the landscape (Dent 1998, 8; Stoertz 1997, 46).

8.4.3 Ditch 1, does not respect either the settlement site or the square barrow, suggesting it dates from a considerably later period. There is insufficient evidence to date the digging of this boundary.

8.4.4 Comparable evidence for the early part of the Iron Age remains sparse (Spratt 1982, 185). Settlement dated to the Early Iron Age has been recorded on the Castle Hill at Scarborough. Unfortunately the finds assemblage from the forty-two excavated pits is unprovenanced and problems with the site archive prevent a fuller understanding of the site (Challis & Harding 1975, 47). Recent excavations at Crossgates, Seamer (MAP 1999) has located pottery in a small number of pits and an enclosure ditch fill which has close parallels with the Castle Hill and Newbridge assemblages.

8.4.5 At West Heslerton late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age activity extended for over one hectare with structural evidence being almost entirely restricted to postholes, with the two most common structures being round houses and four posterns. As at Newbridge there was a lack of any faunal material and evidence of hearths. This led to the suggestion that the majority of the structures were not built for human habitation, or if they were, it may have been occupation of a transitory nature, such as summer grazing (Powersland 1986, 158). Pottery from West Heslerton was dated from the Ninth to Fifth century BC. The end of the occupation was dated securely to the Fifth century BC.

8.4.6 The Newbridge Quarry site forms an important addition to the emerging pattern of Early Iron Age settlement in the region, considered in isolation the potential excavation of areas to the north and west in the future should contribute greatly to our understanding of this site, especially as the absence of Roman finds may suggest that the latter settlement to the north and west may also be earlier than expected.

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