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TAY HOMES DEVELOPMENT,  
OSGODBY LANE, OSGODBY, SCARBOROUGH

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DESK TOP REPORT, EARTHWORKS SURVEY  
& GEOMAGNETIC SURVEY

OSA Report: 98DTES01

National Grid Reference: TA 0577 8457

March 1998

**ON SITE**  
**ARCHAEOLOGY**

25A Milton Street • York • North Yorkshire • YO1 3EP  
telephone/fax • 01904 411673 • mobile • 0467 385766  
e-mail • 101360.2357@compuserve.com





**Figure 1. Location of the study area**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 Summary

*This report provides an assessment of the archaeological implications of the proposed housing development at Osgodby, near Scarborough, together with the results of a geophysical survey on the site, and a survey of the surviving earthworks.*

*This report was compiled by Guy Hopkinson of On-Site Archaeology on behalf of the developers, Tay Housing, during February and March of 1998.*

### 1.2 Brief & Methodology

The site consists of a block of land lying to the south of Osgodby Lane, and covering an area of approximately 3.83 hectares. Osgodby is located some 4 ½ kilometres south-south-east of Scarborough, and the national grid reference for the site is TA 0577 8457 (see Figure 1 for location).

The desk top study was based on enquiries made at archives, collections, and archaeological institutions likely to hold information pertaining to the area; the review of relevant maps, aerial photographs and publications; and discussions with people who had personal knowledge of the study area. For the purposes of examining the potential of surviving archaeology on the site, a study area was chosen centred on the development site itself, and extending two kilometres in all directions.

### 1.3 Geology, Topography and Land Use

Osgodby is situated on a broad swathe of boulder clay which runs along the east coast. The site itself is located on a gentle south-westerly facing slope, at between 69 and 80m AOD. At present the area is under pasture.

### 2.1 Documentary Evidence

#### 2.1.1 "*Osgodby*"

The name Osgodby is thought to derive from the Old Norse meaning Asgaut's Farm, and has seen a progression of various spellings over time. In the Domesday book of 1086 the village is recorded as 'Asgozbi', and in the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries as 'Angotby'. Records from Rievaulx and Byland Abbeys (dating from AD1160 - 1170) both record alternative spellings - 'Angotby' and 'Osgotby' - in the same documents. From the mid 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards the form 'Osgodebi' appears to have been in general use, and it is from this that the current name derives (Smith, 1928).

Given the initial Old Norse name, however, it can be assumed that a settlement existed on the site at least as far back as the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> century, which would give the village a Viking origin.

#### 2.1.2 *Demographics*

Osgodby is typical of a deserted/shrunk medieval village, which are a widespread phenomenon throughout England, and particularly in the east of the country. There are a number of reasons for the occurrence of rural depopulation around this time. The dispersal of monastic land by the Crown, enclosure of land, and a continuing demand for wool from the west riding to provide the thriving mill industry would all have contributed to depopulation. The latter cause had a considerable effect on land use and tenure during this period; as fields were changed from arable to pasture, there was an inevitable decline in the required number of laborers to work the land, while the landlords saw a proportional increase in their profits. All the above were compounded by a general reduction in the population of the nation as a whole.

In many cases this resulted in complete abandonment of a village, while in other cases the villages merely shrank. It would appear that Osgodby was never entirely abandoned, but shrank quite considerably. After flourishing in the 12<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, with an estimated 40 - 50 cottages at its height (this figure is based on Poll Tax returns) the village population gradually declined until it virtually disappeared (Rimington, 1961).

### 2.1.3 *The Manor*

Before the Norman Conquest, Osgodby was part of Tosti's manor of Falsgrave. Domesday records that it was still part of that manor in 1086, then in the King's hands, and also records that it lay waste. It later became part of the estate of the Earl of Albemarle, and by the 13<sup>th</sup> century was incorporated into the Duchy of Lancaster as a separate manor of the Forest of Pickering (Rimington, 1961). The manor house is historically connected with only two families - the Bards and the Wyvills, and was once known as Wyvill Hall. This fell into dereliction during the 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Wyvill family died out. Fragments of the old masonry were incorporated into the structure of a farmhouse, and vestiges of the manorial fishponds are extant nearby (Rimington, 1961).

### 2.1.4 *The Village*

The nucleus of the village would have been the manor and its demesne, the chapel and associated cottages. These would have been surrounded by two or three great open-fields which were cultivated in strips by the villagers, and also by large areas of common grazing on the carrs and uplands. The earthworks recorded on the site indicate that the cottages stood on both sides of the road, and on Park Hill (Rimington, 1961). These seem to have stood back from the bank that bounded the street, and the majority were probably crudely built structures, each situated within its own paddock or 'toft'.

### 2.1.5 *The Open-fields*

Surrounding the village would have been the open-fields, on which was practiced a fairly basic form of crop rotation. Beyond the open-fields would be the land over which the villagers held commoners rights, entitling them to graze animals, collect fire wood, cut peat and rushes etc. Such rights were very important to the villagers, and upheld vigorously - often with the assistance of the magistrates of the Forest of Pickering.

The arable fields were compact geographical units, each with a name, and each comprising up to one quarter of the area of the parish (Rimington, 1961). They would have been divided into a number of 'acre strips' (although most were much less than an acre) which would have been shared throughout the villagers by means of a ballot. The rigg and furrow clearly evident on the current development site represents the last vestige of the open-field form of agriculture practiced here.



The tithe map of 1846 shows a field to the south of the village called 'Mill Field', and this is probably the site of the manorial mill.

## 2.2 Previous Archaeological & Geophysical Work

### 2.2.1 Excavations

Osgodby has seen repeated small scale archaeological investigation since 1956, brought about through housing development and road widening schemes, and they have produced a number of finds relating to the medieval village of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century date. The enclosures along the north side of Osgodby Lane are illustrated in Figure 2, and a synopsis of the discoveries from those excavated is given below:

#### *Enclosure A*

The medieval remains in this enclosure had been disturbed by the construction of a late 17<sup>th</sup> century barn of which the foundations (boulders and limestone blocks bedded in mortar) and brick floor were found. Immediately to the north of this building was found a large pit, some 20'4" in diameter and almost 3' deep. This had been capped with clay, and contained animal bones, fish remains, limpet and oyster shells, and a few sherds of late 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. There was, however, evidence of two fragmentary 14<sup>th</sup> century buildings with a cobbled passageway running between them (Farmer, 1965 & 1968).

#### *Enclosure B*

A dwelling discovered in this enclosure proved to be of 14<sup>th</sup> century date, and given the width of the foundations was most probably stone built. The interior floor was of cobbles. The only evidence of earlier occupation found during excavation was a pit measuring 3' by 2'6", and cut to a depth of 2'. This contained the remains of fish, oyster and limpet shells and 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery and had been capped with clay (Farmer, 1968).

#### *Enclosure D*

This enclosure contained the remains of a building of 14<sup>th</sup> century date, measuring 18' by 11', with an inglenook type hearth and doorway at the western end and floored with cobbles. Post pads and post holes discovered during excavation would indicate that the walls of the building would have been timber. This may well have been a four bay cruck cottage (Farmer, 1968).

*Enclosure E*

Substantial foundations of at least two structures were found but no front wall remained due to truncation by road widening (Farmer, 1965). The pottery recovered was all dated to the mid 14<sup>th</sup> century - 81% of this was of an unglazed type associated with the Staxton kilns, while the remainder was green glazed and probably made in Scarborough (Farmer, 1965).

*Enclosure F*

Pottery but no foundations were discovered (Farmer, 1965). Excavations in 1964 at the front of the enclosure, however, revealed 21 fragments of green glazed roofing tiles, some with holes and some with lugs. This would suggest that the enclosure had contained a superior dwelling of 14<sup>th</sup> century date. The remains of such a building, however, were probably destroyed by road widening during the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Farmer, 1968).

*Stubb's Field*

Excavation also took place on the south side of the road in 1956, i.e. immediately adjacent to the land proposed for this development. This produced evidence of mid 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> century occupation.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century evidence is in the form of clay capped pits containing shell fish remains, severely robbed out wall foundations, and also a stone built cistern. The pits and cistern have been interpreted as vessels for keeping shell fish fresh (Farmer, 1968). Other evidence included a 14<sup>th</sup> century occupation layer, and a 16<sup>th</sup> century cobbled path. The site, however, had been leveled prior to excavation, and this may have truncated some of the archaeology (Farmer, 1968).

**2.2.2 Field Walking**

A series of transects were field walked in 1990 in two areas to the north and west of Manor Farm, which produced a collection primarily of pottery, bone, ironwork and flint (Pearson, 1991). The finds of medieval and post medieval pottery clearly support the conclusions drawn from the previous excavation work, but it is interesting to note that flint artefacts were recovered, thereby suggesting some form of prehistoric activity in the area.

### 2.2.3 Geophysical Survey

Also in 1990, an area of 20 by 40 metres, situated on Park Hill, was surveyed using a resistivity meter. While no distinct archaeological features were evident from the survey, an area of high resistance was located, which broadly corresponds to an area of the fieldwalking transects which produced a high concentration of medieval pottery and other artefacts (Pearson, 1991). Pearson suggests this area of high resistance might well indicate the site of part of the manorial complex.

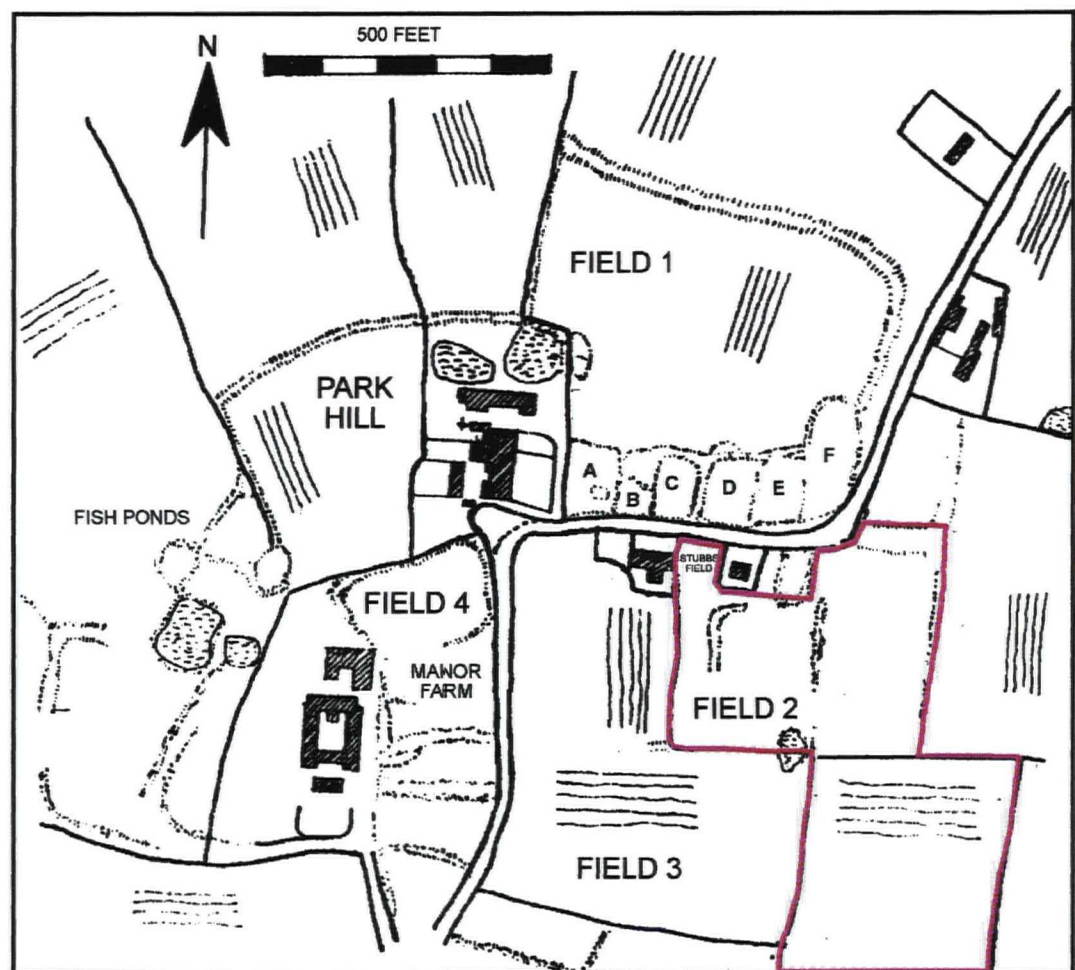


Figure 2. Earthworks of the medieval village. From Palmer, 1968. The area outlined in red indicates approximate extent of the earthworks survey.



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## 3.0 EARTHWORKS SURVEY

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### 3.1 Introduction

An earthworks survey was carried out using a Leica TC500 EDM. Points were measured to record the pattern of extant rig and furrow, headlands and hollow-ways. A number of spot heights were also taken to enable the production of measured contours across the site. The results of this survey are illustrated in Figure 3, and an annotated interpretative drawing is illustrated in Figure 4.

### 3.2 Interpretation

The earthworks survey clearly shows rig and furrow in the northern part of the site, running on a north - south alignment (marked "Ridge & Furrow" on Figure 4). This is well preserved in this area. Also evident in the northern part of the survey are the associated headlands running perpendicular to the line of the rig and furrow ("Headland"). The block of land to the north-west of this area shows a marked drop down to the level of the present road ("Bank"). Immediately to the south of this bank is an area of fairly level ground, which most probably indicates the existence of a house platform ("House Platform"). Also evident in this area were the remaining vestiges of a filled in pond, at the southern end of the ridge and furrow in the western part of the survey ("Pond"). This feature is apparent on Palmer's drawing of the earthworks of the village (see Figure 2 above).

The southern half of the survey also shows rig and furrow, this time on an east - west alignment (again marked "Ridge & Furrow" on Figure 4). Presumably due to plough damage, preservation was much worse in this area and only a few rows of rig and furrow could be easily discerned. These were located close to the boundary between the two fields, with an additional ridge and furrow at the southern boundary of the field.

The area along the boundary between the two fields was not suitable for earthwork surveying due to thick gorse bushes.

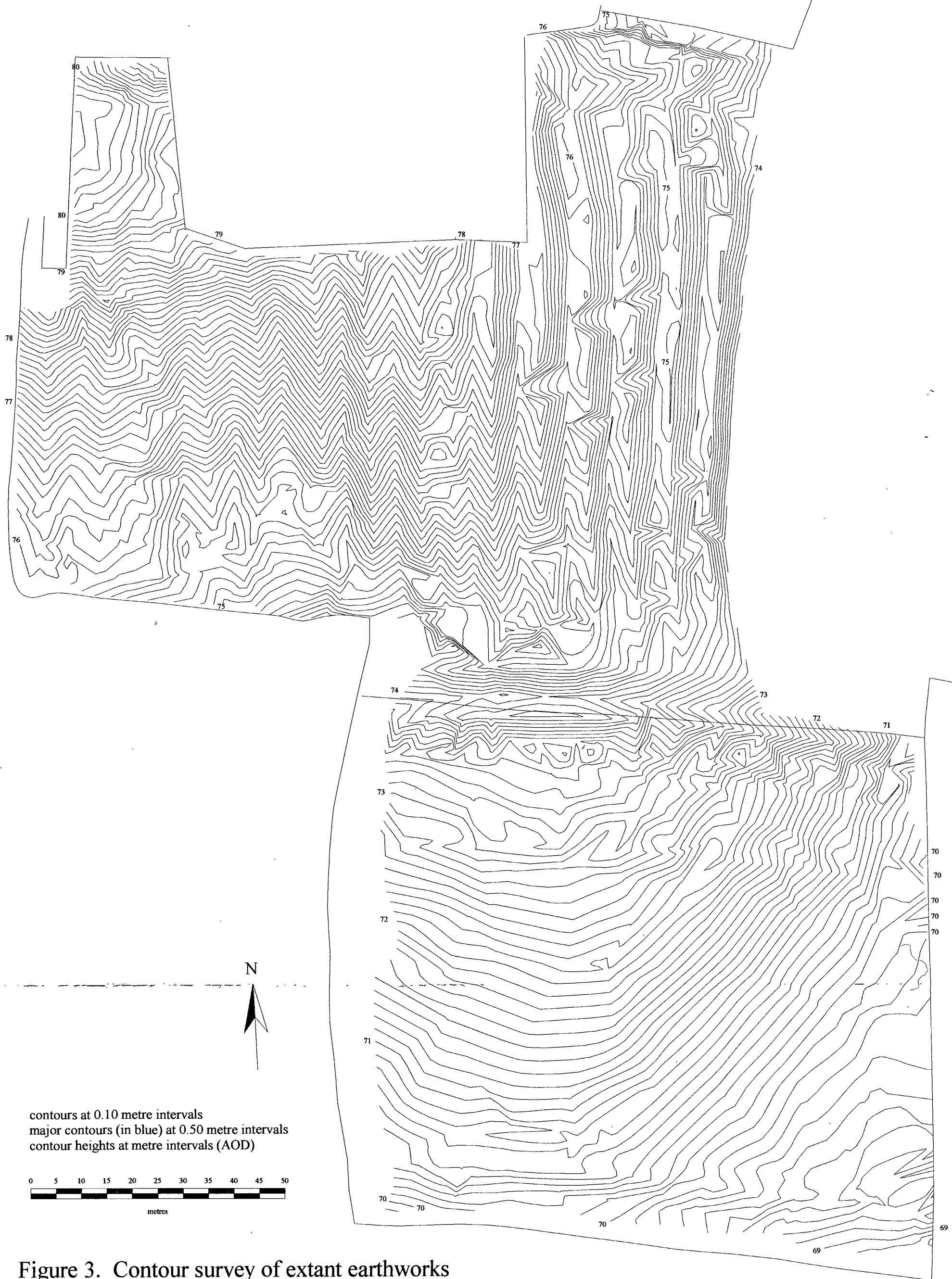
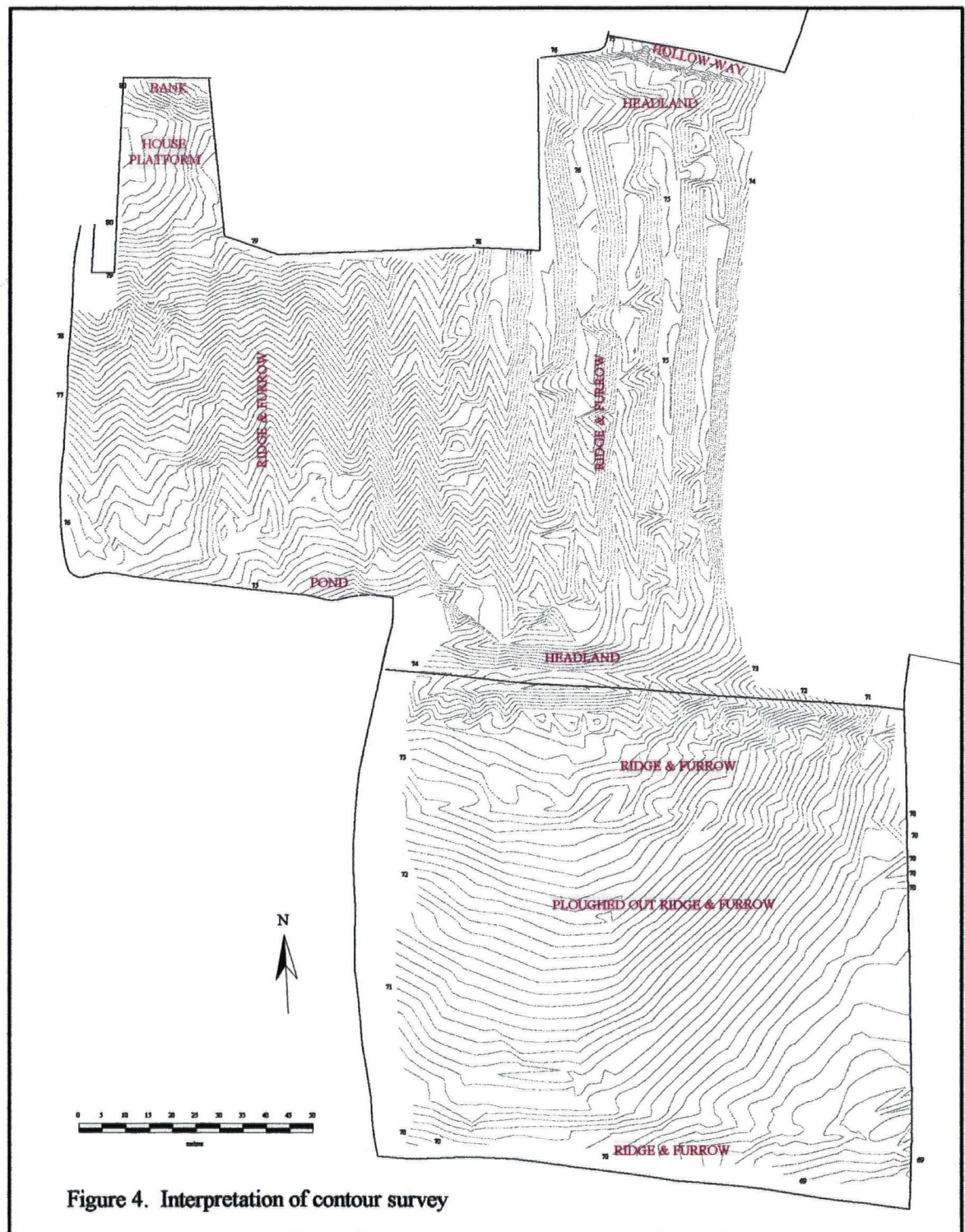


Figure 3. Contour survey of extant earthworks





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## 4.0 GEOPHYSICAL SURVEY

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The geophysical survey, appended to this report, was carried out by *GeoQuest Associates*, using geomagnetic surveying. Apart from highlighting the extant earthworks already surveyed, the geophysical survey produced little new evidence. This was primarily due to large amounts of ferrous material scattered across the site, and the presence of metal fences and sheds which interfered with the readings.

Ferrous objects and scattered rubbish and farm machinery were a particular problem in the north-westerly part of the site, i.e. the area of a possible house platform.

Three possible ditches were located, however, in the north-western part of the development site (see Figure 5 of the geophysical report).



### 5.1 Analysis by period

#### 5.1.1 *Mesolithic, Neolithic & Bronze Age (c. 10,000 - 700 BC)*

There is no direct evidence from the development site itself that any features from these periods may survive. However, the collection of flint artefacts during the field walking exercise of 1990 suggest that the immediate area saw prehistoric activity. The general area has seen fairly widespread activity during this period, and the relative lack of known prehistoric sites may be a result of a bias in archaeological field work rather than a true pattern of site distribution.

The landscape around Seamer Carr (NGR TA 040 830), Flixton (NGR TA 040 813 and TA 034 810) and Star Carr (NGR TA 027 810) is renowned for its mesolithic archaeology, some of which is of international importance. Although most mesolithic evidence has been found further inland, the possibility remains that evidence from this period might be found on the proposed development site, as coastal resources would have been widely utilised.

Neolithic evidence has also been recovered from the general area, the closest being axes of stone and flint from Cayton (Spratt, 1967). Evidence of occupation during the Bronze Age is indicated by the recovery of a food vessel (approx. TA 04 86), a spearhead at Cayton, and a bronze axe at Cayton Carr.

The general landscape also gives a number of indications of prehistoric activity. The Ordnance Survey marks a tumulus  $\frac{3}{4}$  km to the south west of the site (TA 0652 8418), and a scattering of tumuli and linear earthworks to the north west (the nearest being at TA 0399 8533). Cup and ring markings have also been found on stones on Irton Moor and at Scarborough.

#### 5.1.2 *Iron Age & Romano-British (c. 700 BC - AD 400)*

The nearest known sites of this period are the roman settlements at Cayton (TA 055 830) and Seamer (TA 030 834) (Rutter, 1967), and the Iron Age settlement and Roman signal station on the headland at Scarborough. The lack of known sites may, once again, be a result of field work bias rather than a true indication of site distribution.

### **5.1.3 *Anglo-Saxon to Medieval (AD 400 - 1540)***

While there is no evidence for Anglo-Saxon archaeology at the site, the original name of the village suggests a Viking settlement. No remains of such have been encountered in previous excavations. There are two possible explanations for this; it may be that any Viking occupation has been destroyed by later settlement, or evidence of this settlement might still survive on an area which has not been subject to archaeological investigation.

No evidence has been recovered of the manor belonging to Tosti, and again this may have been destroyed by subsequent building. The possibility remains, however, that features relating to this earlier manor may be preserved in the vicinity. Pearson (1991) suggests this might be located on Park Hill.

Although pottery and pits dating to the 12<sup>th</sup> century have been found during excavations, no complete buildings of that period have been identified (Farmer, 1968). In all likelihood, structures of this date would have been built of timber, and would therefore have left little trace. It is possible, however, that post holes and other associated features relating to such buildings may be extant on parts of the site which have not seen development or archaeological investigation.

Material of 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century date is almost certainly likely to be evident on the site, as the previous excavations on the adjacent land have shown.

### **5.1.4 *Post Medieval (AD 1540 onwards)***

Given that a 17<sup>th</sup> century agricultural building was located in enclosure A, there is a possibility that some form of post medieval remains will be encountered. This would be most likely to take the form of agricultural structures.



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## 6.0 CONCLUSIONS

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While much of the material concerning the medieval village discussed above relates to the fields to the west and north of the present development, it seems probable that the development will impact on buried archaeological remains. The enclosures and structures on the north side of Osgodby Lane may well have been mirrored on the southern side, as indicated by the remains found in Stubb's Field (see section 2.2.1). The two areas immediately adjacent to Osgodby Lane are therefore quite likely to contain medieval structures or deposits.

The earthwork and geophysical surveys suggest few other features except for the extant ridge and furrow, and the three short lengths of ditch illustrated in Figure 5 of the geophysical report. It therefore seems unlikely that the remains of any further medieval structures would survive within the remainder of the development area.

Given the evidence for the use of this landscape during the prehistoric and roman periods, it is quite possible that earlier remains might be encountered. The likelihood of this, however, cannot be predicted.

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