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NORTH YORKSHIRE**



**REPORT ON AN
ARCHAEOLOGICAL
TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY AND
CARTOGRAPHIC STUDY**

**2003 FIELD REPORT
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ABSTRACT

In March 2003 York Archaeological Trust undertook a topographical survey and cartographic research of open area within the grounds of Richmond School, Richmond. Earthworks representing ridge and furrow dating from the medieval or post-medieval period were recorded, together with a possible bank denoting a field boundary. The area may have once been part of the open field system of agriculture at Richmond, but appears, from cartographic evidence, to have been enclosed prior to 1801. After enclosure the land may have continued to be cultivated but was more probably under pasture until the early 20th century when the main part of the area appears to have been designated as playing fields. It is understood to have remained open ground until the development of the school in the second half of the 20th century. The ridge and furrow appears to have been encroached on by the creation of building platforms for the modern buildings on the site and the ridges of the earthworks were found to have been degraded over time. Consequently this remnant of ridge and furrow ploughing, although surviving as evidence of the open field system of agriculture, was judged not to be of primary archaeological importance.



Plate 1, Surviving ridge and furrow at Richmond School (facing north)

1 INTRODUCTION

During March 2003, York Archaeological Trust undertook a topographical survey and historical cartographic research for a site within the grounds of Richmond School, Darlington Road, Richmond (NGR NZ 17900136) (Fig. 1). The site, totalling an area of c.4292 square metres, lies on the eastern side of Richmond to the south of Darlington Road and is within the grounds of Richmond School. The work was undertaken on behalf of Wm Saunders Partnership, Newark on Trent commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit. The area is proposed as the site of a coach park.

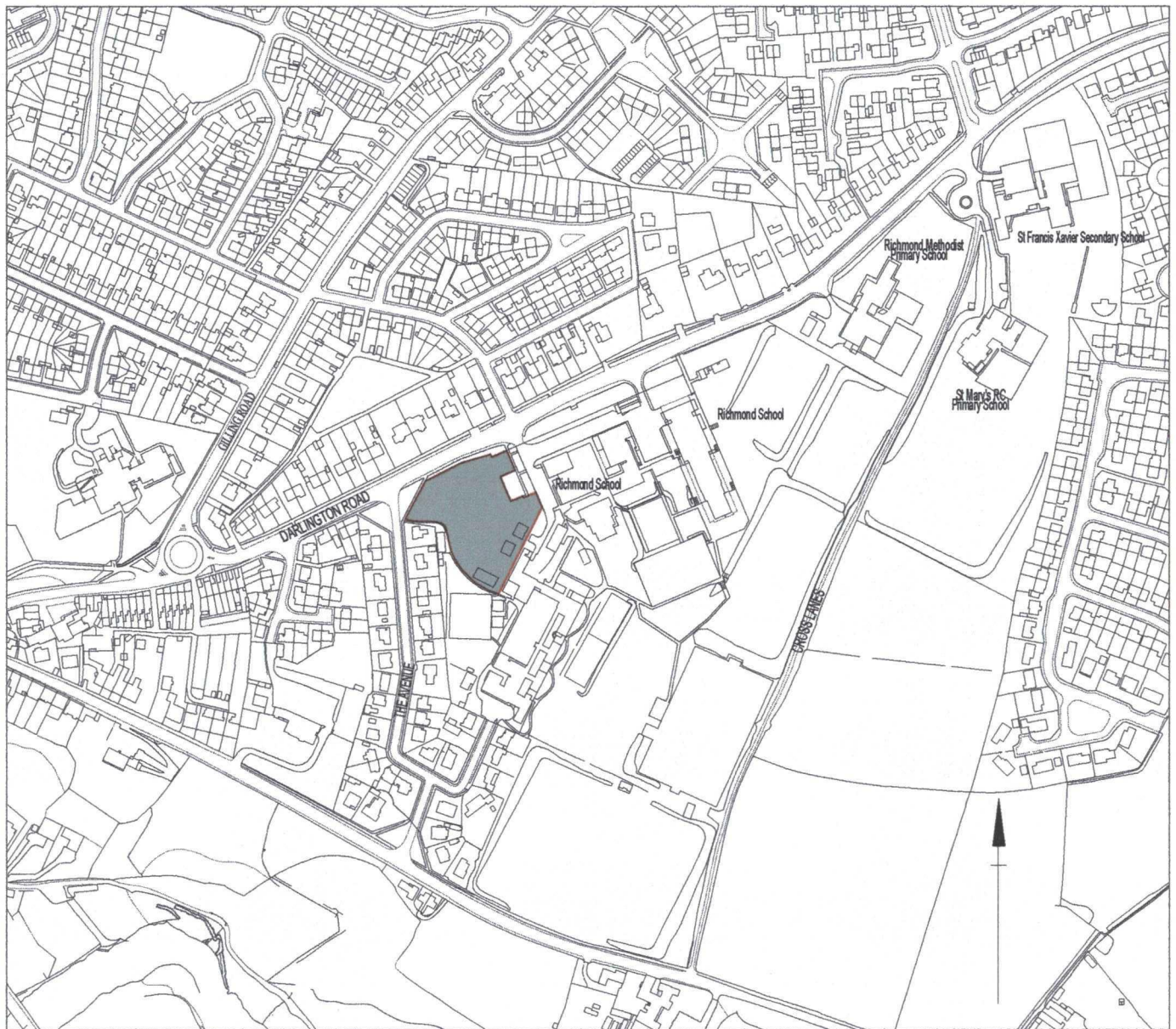
2 METHODOLOGY

The survey work was carried out using a Leica TC805 EDM with the field data being processed using Liscad surveying software and the results subsequently transferred to a digital map of the area using AutoCad for plotting.

The historical maps of the area were consulted at the North Yorkshire Public Records Office and from this source the development of the use of area was interpreted. The records for the work are currently stored with York Archaeological Trust (YAT) under YAT Accession Code YORAT 2003.3.

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

The site of the proposed coach park lies on the east side of Richmond, on the south side of Darlington Road within the grounds of Richmond School. The general topography of the site slopes down from c.155.40m Above Ordnance Datum on the northern edge to c.154m at the southern edge. The site is bounded to the north and west by a stone wall adjacent to Darlington Road; otherwise, the site is open, with a rough unmade road forming the southern boundary and path ways to the east. The underlying geology of the site is carboniferous limestone (Geology Sheet 1, 1957)



100 metres

Figure 1, Site Location

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4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the medieval period, a village or town settlement cultivated land close to the settlement and divided this into large open fields. The open fields were divided into unfenced strips, with an individual holding strips in different parts of the landscape giving each a mixture of fertile and less fertile ground. These strips were typically cultivated in a three year crop rotation with cereal crops in one year followed by legumes and left fallow for the third year.

Evidence of the open field system of farming survives as ridge and furrow earthworks. These are formed as a result of ploughing, with the upturned soil gradually building up in the centre of the strip and forming a ridge and the furrow allowing the land to drain more freely. The plough would follow a clockwise direction creating an elongated curved reverse S at the end of each strip. At the end of each strip, the accumulating soil would form a "headland". Particularly long strips (1000m) survive in parts of Yorkshire in the Wolds and Holderness but a more "average" strip might measure 11 yards or 8m wide and 220 yards, 200m long (Hall 1998). This length became known as a furlong although the term was originally used to describe a bundle of ridges. Not all surviving ridges indicate pre-enclosure farming. In the 19th century wide ridges (c.20m) were often ploughed within enclosed fields to aid drainage, but these are generally found to run along a straight axis, parallel with at least one field boundary. Another 19th century method was to plough very narrow ridges, 2-3m wide, and they too will conform to existing field boundaries (Hall 1998).

5 CARTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

The earliest maps of Richmond do not extend far enough east to show the study area, both Speed's map of 1610 (Fig 2) and Harman's map dated 1724 end immediately east of where the road divides to go to Gilling and Skeeby, that is, west of the study area. Harman's map is beautifully detailed and shows the hedgerow divisions in the area immediately to the west of the study area. Jackson's plan of the borough of Richmond later in the 18th century (1773) also does not extend to include the study area.

An examination of 18th and 19th century maps indicates that cultivated land around Richmond was divided into three main open fields, the West field, Gallow field, and East field. The Gallow field later became known as Gingerfield on 19th century maps. The East field was sub-divided, by Gilling Road, into High East field to the west and Low East field to the east. These fields are mapped as cultivated in long strips and the West field and the Gallow fields have the owners names marked on maps dating to 1766. The map of the Upper and Lower East field (1766) does not show any detail for the area to the south of the main field where the study area is located. The three main fields are shown on a map of the township of Richmond, surveyed for the commissioner of enclosure, dated 1801 (Fig 3) and on an 1804 copy of this map. Significantly, this map marks areas adjacent to these named fields as "ancient enclosures" suggesting that originally the three open fields may have covered larger areas, but that parts had been enclosed some time before the date of the map (1801). The study area lies to the south of Low East field, within one of the areas marked as an ancient enclosure on the 1801 map. This area, to the south of the road to Skeeby (now Darlington Road) together with other areas marked on the 1801 map may have once formed the east field when it was part of the open field system, and had been enclosed at a date prior to 1801.

The 1801 map (Fig 3) shows the West field and the Gallow field divided into strips but the High and Low east fields have only a few strips marked. The strips in the West and Gallow fields follow a north-west/south-east axis and some of the strips shown in the High East field follow the same axis. Contrary to the main trend, a few strips in the High East field follow an east-west axis.

The 1801 map does not show the detail of any field divisions in the area to the south of the road to Skeeby (now Darlington Road), but this may have been a result of the purpose of the map (to show the more recently enclosed fields) rather than a true indication of an absence of field division at this date. The hedges on Harman's 1724 in the area to the west of the study area would hint at hedge divisions within the vicinity, including the study area, at least from the early 18th century.

Some detailed information of the study area is shown on 19th century maps. The surveyed area has been approximately located and approximately scaled in Figures 3-6. An 1813 estate map describes the ownership of land here and marks some fields or "closes". Land immediately south of study area is shown as in the ownership of Robert Jaques Esq. (Fig 4). The 1857 1st edition OS map shows that the fields to the east of Cross Lane retained the same divisions as those shown on the 1813 estate map, but those to the west had been altered. The 1st edition map additionally shows a large house (Terrace House) and gardens and the remainder of the area as fields, the majority of which are divided by hedges. The study area mainly falls within a wedge shaped field, narrowing towards the south, but overlaps into the adjacent field to the west (Fig 6). Almost identical field divisions are shown in this area on the 1840 tithe map, which also shows a number of barns in the fields (Fig 5). By the time of the 1911 survey for the Ordnance Survey a row of terraced houses had been built along the south side of Skeeby Road close to Richmond town, but this is the only part of the area which has been encroached on, the remainder is shown as fields with very similar divisions retained from the previous century. The 25" to a mile map, 1911, shows the "wedge" shaped field of which the study area formed a part as "playing fields", suggesting that it may have been used for recreational purposes rather than agriculture at this time. This label remains on the 1930 Ordnance Survey edition. The area is believed to have remained as open land until the development of the school in the second part of the 20th century.

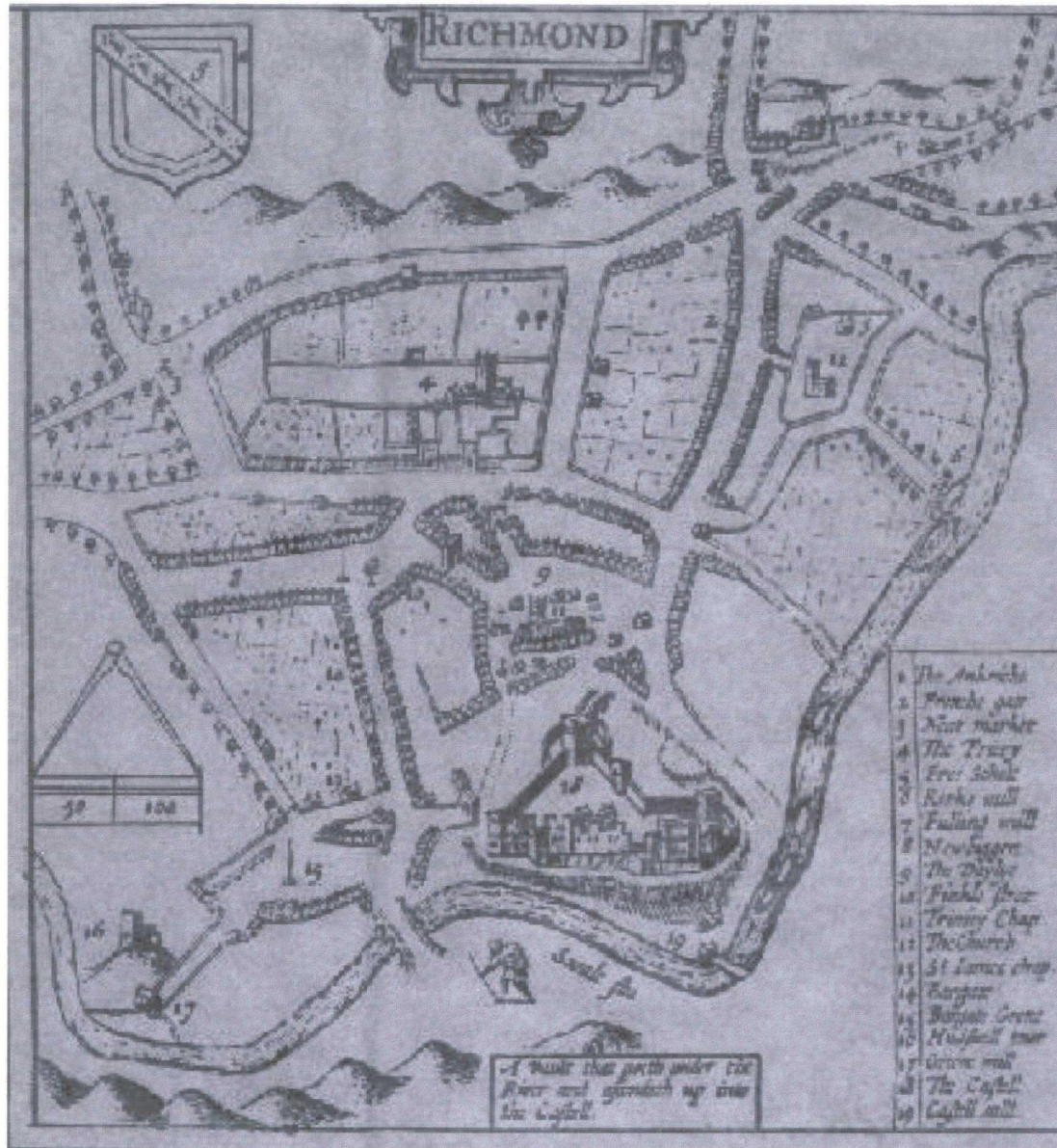


Fig 2, Map of Richmond, Speed, 1610

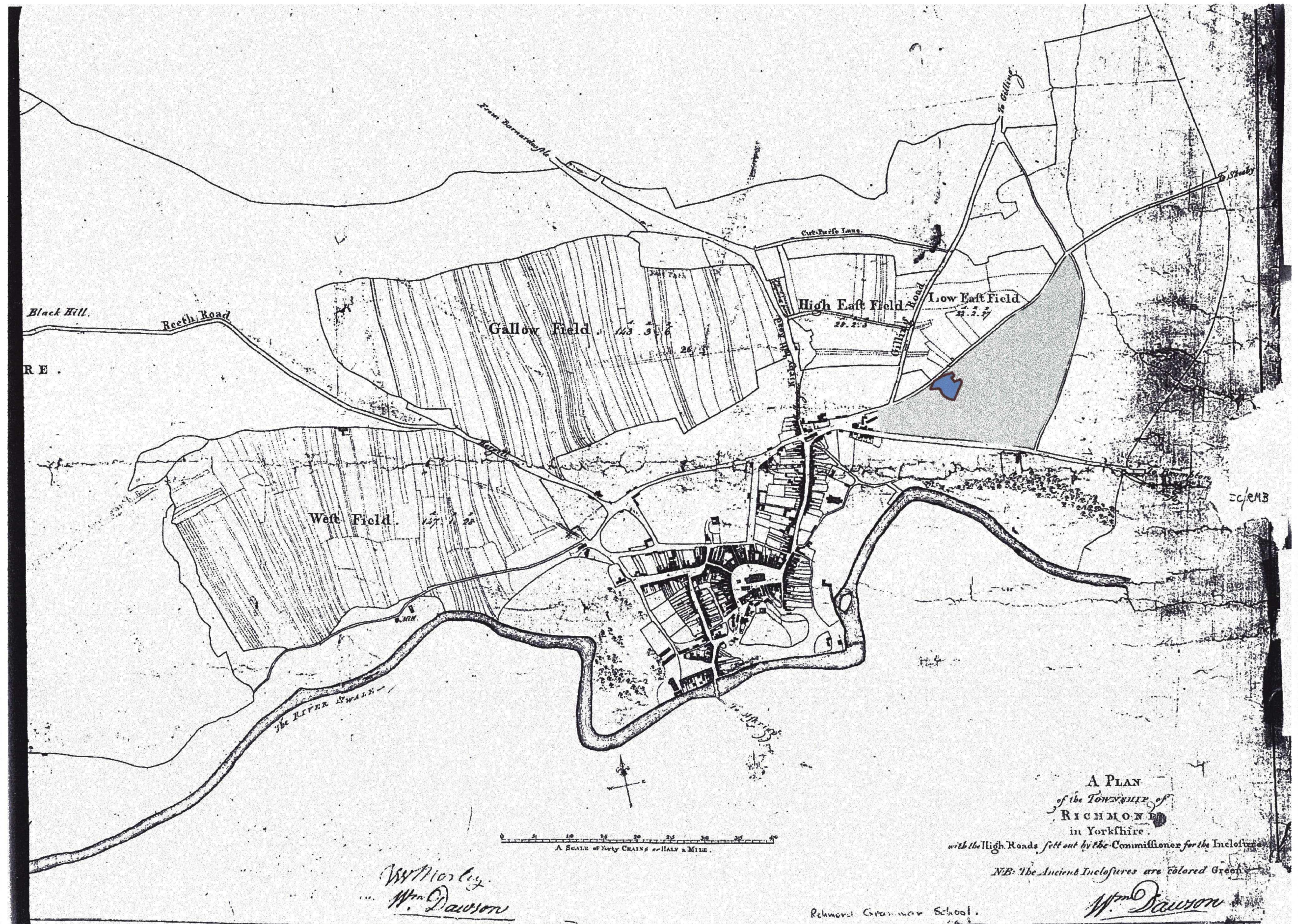


Fig 3, Plan of the township of Richmond, 1801 showing approximate location of survey area
One of the areas marked as "ancient enclosures"

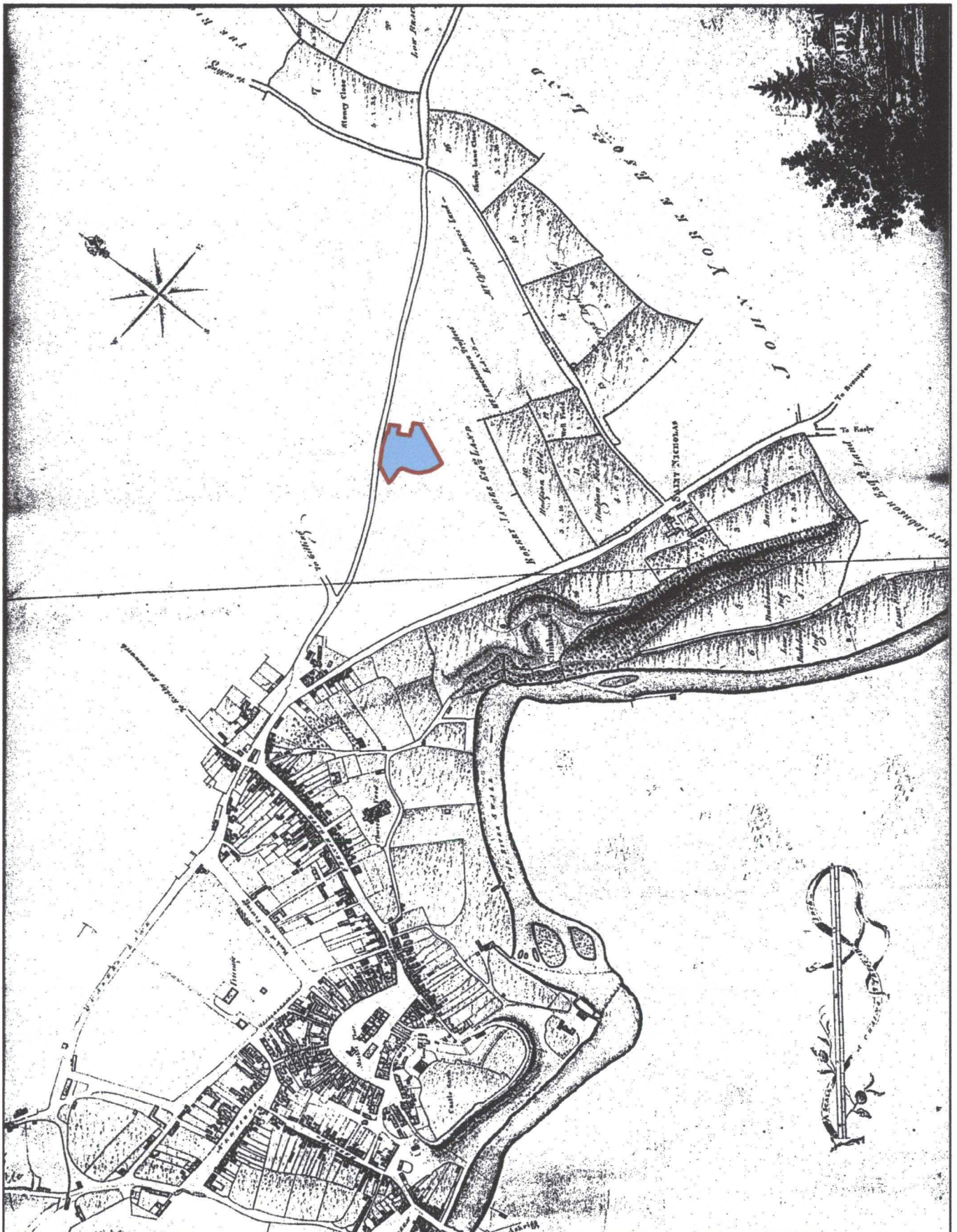



Fig 4, Map of the Richmond Estates, the property of Lord Dundas by Calvert and Bradley, 1813 showing approximate location of survey area



Fig 5, part of Richmond Tithe map 1840
showing approximate location of survey area





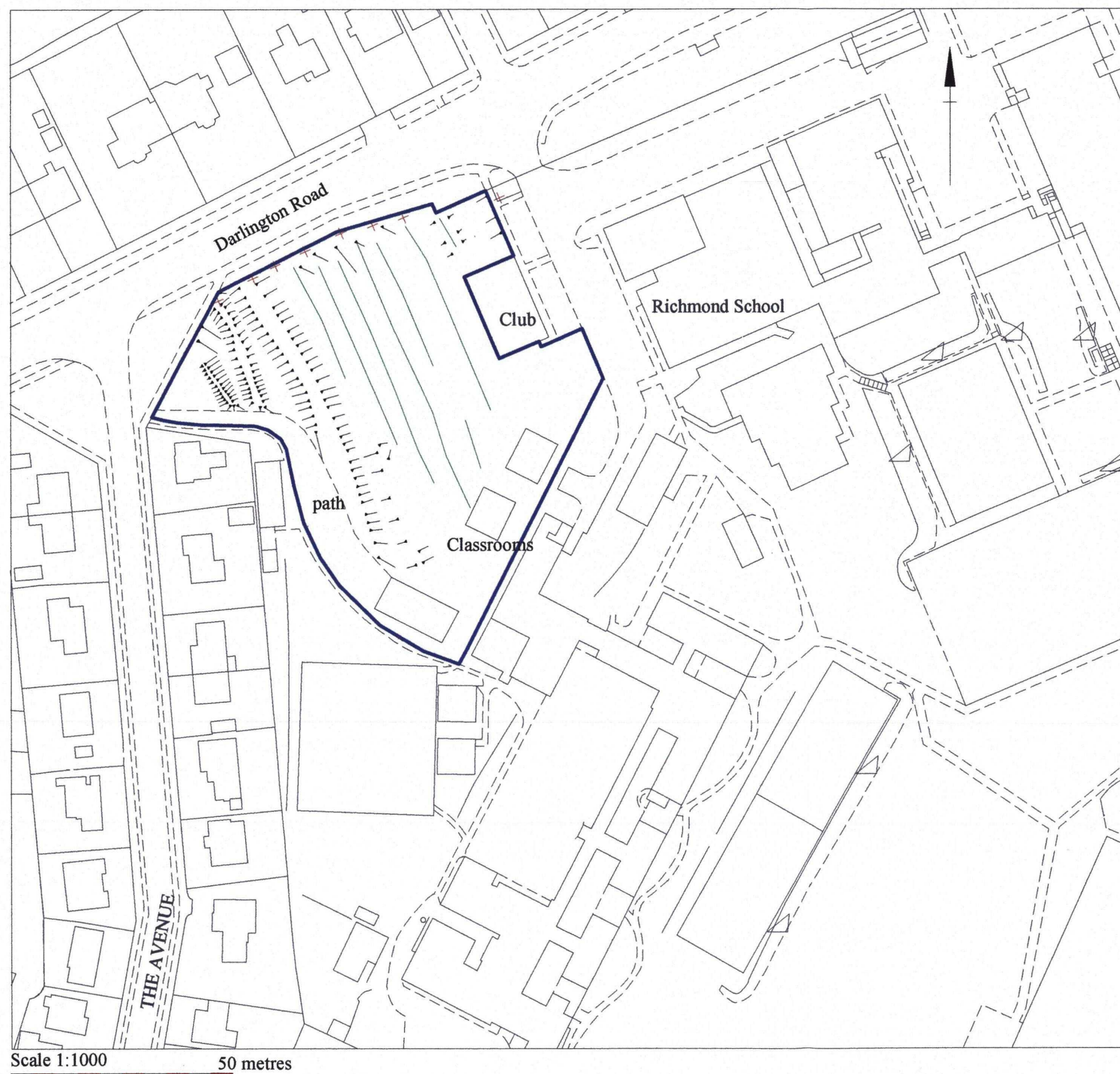
Fig 6, extract from the 1st edition Ordnance Survey map , 1857, scale 6" to the mile showing approximate location of survey area 

6 SURVEY RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The survey area, within the grounds of Richmond School, is bounded to the north by a stone wall along which seven trees have been planted; a modern stone faced building and three modern prefabricated classrooms have been erected on the south and eastern boundaries and the area is open to the west, where a curving unsurfaced roadway leads from the school to the road. The general topography of the ground surface of the area slopes downwards from north-east to south-west. Surviving ridge and furrow from ploughing was seen to follow a north-west/south-east axis and this survival is described in more detail below.

It is apparent that there has been some encroachment on the ridge and furrow when level building platforms were made for the stone faced building and the prefabricated classrooms sited within the plot. Tree planting along the northern edge of the site has also caused some disturbance to the ground and the ridges have been flattened out here so that, on the whole, they are barely visible along this edge of the site (plate 2). The most prominently surviving ridge, the second from the west, appears to curve slightly in an anticlockwise direction at the northern edge, and this may represent its original form. However, this shape could have been caused by ground disturbance in planting the first tree in the row. The most prominent ridge was c.0.25m high, but generally, the difference in height between the ridges and the furrows was significantly less, at c.0.10m. The distance between ridges was approximately 5m and the maximum surviving length was c.65m. Some of the ridges have been interrupted by levelling of the ground and do not survive along the full length of the area. No headlands were identified within the plot. The third earth bank from the western edge of the site measured c.10.5m across, wider than the other ridges and furrows, had clearly defined sloping banks and measured c 4.5m across a flat top.

The topographic plan at a scale of 1:1000 (Fig 7) shows the most clearly defined ridges and furrows as hachured slopes. Where the definition was much less, and the ridges appeared degraded and intermittent, the centre line of the ridges is shown without any hachures (Fig 7). The most clearly defined ridges were located on the western edge of the site that would have been located in the field adjacent to the "wedge" shaped field shown on 19th century maps, and the flattened ridges lie within the wedge shaped field (plate 3). If this area was used as playing fields this may explain the differential degree of degradation in the heights of the ridges. The flat topped wider earth bank may represent the bank of a grubbed out hedgerow, previously dividing the area into two fields.



Key	
	Proposed development area
	Tree
	Centre line along ridge

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Fig 7, Topographic survey



Plate 2, Northern edge of site, planted with trees (facing west)



Plate 3, The most prominent ridge and furrow at the western side of the site (facing north)

7 CONCLUSIONS

The division of land into three main fields at Richmond as represented on post-medieval maps is likely to have pertained since the medieval period. The surviving ridge and furrow earthworks within the survey area represent evidence of past cultivation. Interpretation of the 1801 map (Fig 3) would suggest that the area lay within the East field and was part of the open field system of cultivation in the medieval period through to the post-medieval period. The surveyed ridges follow the same north-west/south-east axis as the majority of the strips mapped on the plans dating from 1766 and 1801. The evidence of the 1801 map suggests that at some point before 1801 the area was enclosed as this map describes the area as an "ancient enclosure" but further documentary research would have to be carried out to establish more exactly when this occurred. The field divisions in the area are represented on 19th century maps and these may have been established from the early 18th century (or before) as suggested by the evidence of hedges near to the study area on the Harman map, dated 1724. It appears that the study area lies mainly within a wedge shaped field that remained open land until the later part of the 20th century. The 1913 and 1930 maps annotation of "playing field" suggests that this field was not cultivated during the early 20th century. Over a period of time the ridges have become flattened and in places reduced completely. The slightly more prominently surviving ridges lying in the adjacent field were presumably not subject to the same process of degradation. The surviving earthworks demonstrate this differential, with those on the west side of the area surviving to a greater degree than those in the central and eastern part of the area. A wider flat topped earth bank may represent the bank of a hedge line previously dividing the area. In modern times, it is apparent that the ridge and furrow within the study area has been impinged on by the creation of building platforms for the prefabricated classrooms and the club building on the site and disturbed by tree planting along the northern edge of the site.

8 RECOMMENDATIONS

Ridge and furrow survival was once fairly widespread but has diminished greatly over the past 50 years. English Heritage has suggested that efforts should be made to preserve surviving areas especially where good historical records survive. However, the survival of the earthworks within the survey area is not particularly good. They may have some importance locally, representing a surviving remnant of the ridge and furrow from the medieval to post-medieval open field system, but cannot be regarded as good examples of such survival since they have been gradually degraded over time and subject to reduction in modern times. Examination of the modern map indicates that there are other open areas remaining in Richmond that would have once been part of the East field. A complete walk-over of these areas could be carried out to assess if there were any other surviving areas of ridge and furrow but of the areas that are visible from public rights of way, it appears that evidence of ridge and furrow does not survive. Locally, nearby, at Skeeby, there are surviving examples and there are certainly much better surviving examples regionally.

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1766, A plan of the gallow field, scale 4 chains to an inch showing strips in an open field	MIC 2001/24-26
1766, A plan of the upper and lower east field, scale 4 chains to an inch showing strips in an open field	MIC 2001/27-29
1766, A plan of the west field, no scale marked showing strips in an open field	MIC 2001/30-32
1766, A plan of the gallow field no scale marked showing strips in an open field	MIC 2001/33
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1610, John Speeds map of Richmond	

10 LIST OF CONTRIBUTORS

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