

Rec 24/09/03

3130 parish

NYE 860
NYC 1250
NYS 8560

**Stonegrave House
Stonegrave
North Yorkshire
SE 6560 7770**

Archaeological Watching Brief

NYCC HER	
SNY	8560
ENY	860
CNY	1250
Parish	3130
Rec'd	24/9/03

**MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd.
December 2002**

**Stonegrave House
Stonegrave
North Yorkshire
SE 6560 7770**

Archaeological Watching Brief

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Archaeological Watching Brief

Non Technical Summary

An Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken in August, 2002 during the topsoil strip of an area for a ménage. Observations recorded a section of sandstone walling dated by associated pottery to the 12th century and ridge and furrow. Finds also included pottery of medieval, Post-medieval and modern date.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd, on behalf of Mr & Mrs Hull to fulfil a condition attached to the planning consent for the construction of a menage (Ryedale Ref. No. 01/02605/FUL).
- 1.2 Prior to development the site was an area of open pasture, immediately south of the parish church at Stonegrave, Ryedale District, North Yorkshire (SE 6560 7770 : Figs. 1 and 2).
- 1.3 All work has been funded by Mr & Mrs Hull of Stonegrave House, Stonegrave.
- 1.4 The Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken on August 21st, 2002.
- 1.5 All maps within this report have been produced from Ordnance survey with the permission of the controller of her majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. License No AL50453A.

2. Geology

- 2.1 The site stands on soils of the Sessay Association (831 b): fine, stoneless loamy (seasonally waterlogged), over clayey and clayey soils derived from glaciolacustrine and glaciofluvial drift.

3. Archaeological and Historical Background

- 3.1 By 757A.D. a Saxon Minster had been established in the village of Stonegrave on the site of the present Minster, giving a potential early medieval date for archaeological remains in and around the village.
- 3.2 Traces of a moat are believed to exist in the area close to the development site and indeed low relief earthworks were observed in the adjacent fields. This interpretation has been called in to question and reinterpreted as the vestiges of an enclosure bank associated with a precinct linked to the Minster (Hayes unpublished). A medium sized pond close by may also be part of this group of earthworks.
- 3.3 Medieval ridge and furrow survived within the development area on a north south alignment.

4. Methodology

- 4.1 An area approx 20m x 60m was stripped of all topsoil with a toothless bucket. All extant archaeology was cleaned, photographed and a schematic plan (to scale) was drawn giving basic orientation and dimensional details. All surface finds (i.e. from the topsoil) were bagged and archived, as well as those recovered from the wall fill (see below).

5. Results

- M36101
- 5.1 The topsoil strip revealed a wall measuring 1m in width, which ran for a distance of approximately 30m in an east west direction before changing alignment (Fig. 2). This change in direction appeared to coincide with a low earthen bank which ran on a north south alignment before meeting the stream, to the south of the excavated area. Constructed of irregular small sandstone blocks, measuring 0.08m by 0.06m, cleaning of the wall produced two fragments of pottery recovered from the soil infill of the wall. The pottery recovered was Gritty Ware of 12th/13th century date suggesting that the wall was constructed in this period.

5.2 Several lines of ridge and furrow were visible aligned north to south beneath the topsoil, however they had no visible relationship with the length of wall.

5.3 Finds recovered from the topsoil consisted of a varied assemblage of Roman to Post-medieval pottery sherds including 1 Gritty Ware, 4 Ryedale and 3 modern plant pot sherds.

6. Discussion

6.1 Established as an Ecclesiastical centre on behalf the Royal household, Stonegrave would have served to house the community that farmed and tended the royal forests and lands, sited as it is on the edge of a fertile strip between the Hambleton Hills and a spit of land jutting out into the western end of the Vale of Pickering. Close to higher areas for grazing and on good land for crop production while remaining importantly secluded, its location suited both economic and religious functions.

6.2 A common feature of major ecclesiastical centres was a precinct boundary and the wall uncovered was certainly substantial enough to suggest such use. Alternatively its alignment with the low earthen mound may indicate its function as a part defensive wall surrounding the now disappeared medieval manor, which existed in this area. The pottery from the wall fill suggests building activity in the 12th/13th century and supports the view that Stonegrave has functioned as both a religious and domestic settlement centre from at least this period. Evidence from the area around the development site appears to have been a particular focus of landscape use, of which the ridge and furrow remains are an example. No direct evidence of earlier Saxon farming practises contemporary with the occupation of the Minster was found.

APPENDIX 1

Finds Catalogue

Context	Type	Description
Wall fill	pottery	2 sherds of Gritty Ware, 12 th -13 th century.
Topsoil	pottery	1 fragment of Roman amphora.
Topsoil	pottery	1 rim sherd of Gritty Ware, 12 th century.
Topsoil	pottery	4 sherds of Ryedale Ware
Topsoil	pottery	3 sherds of modern plant pot

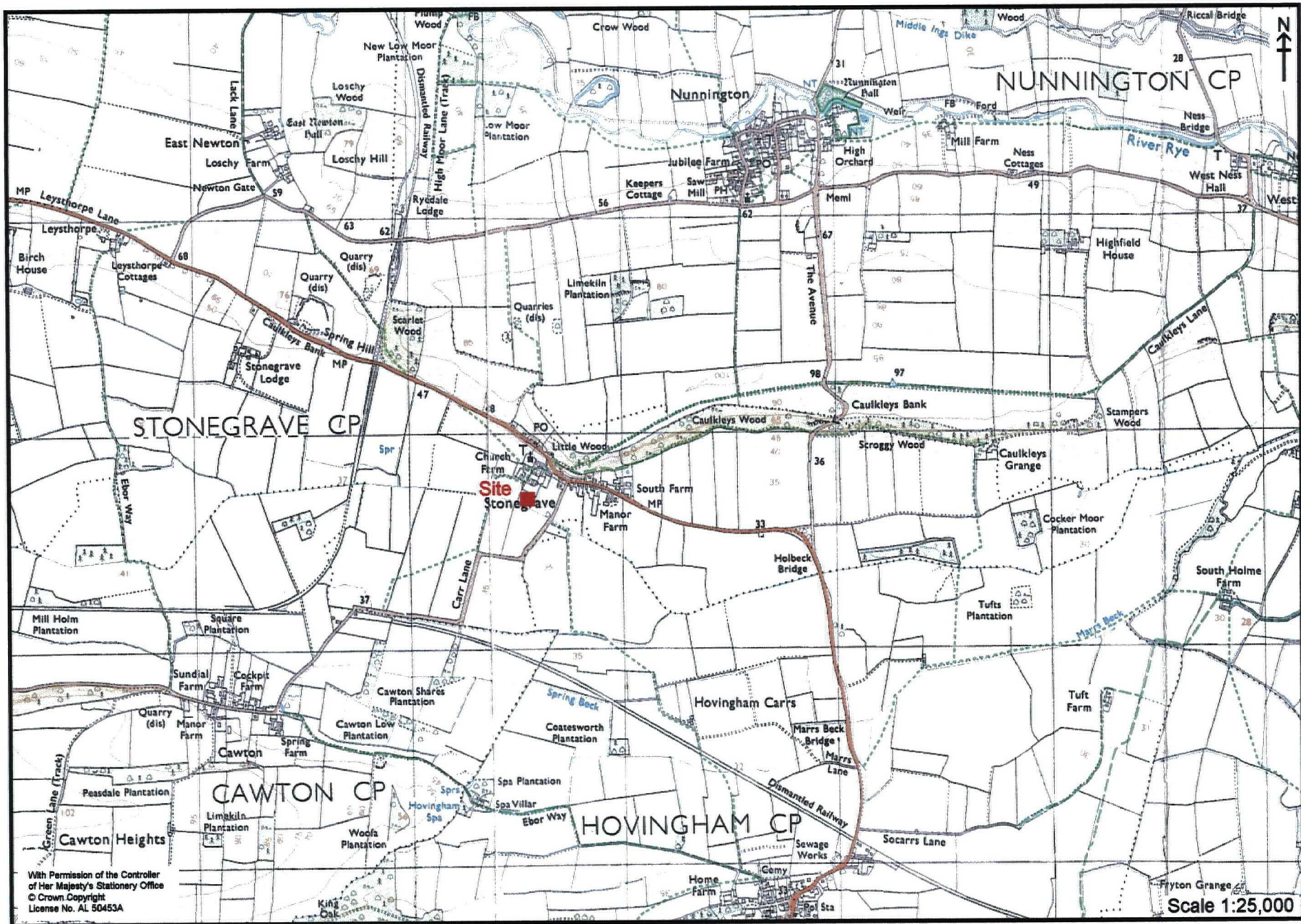


Figure 1. Site Location

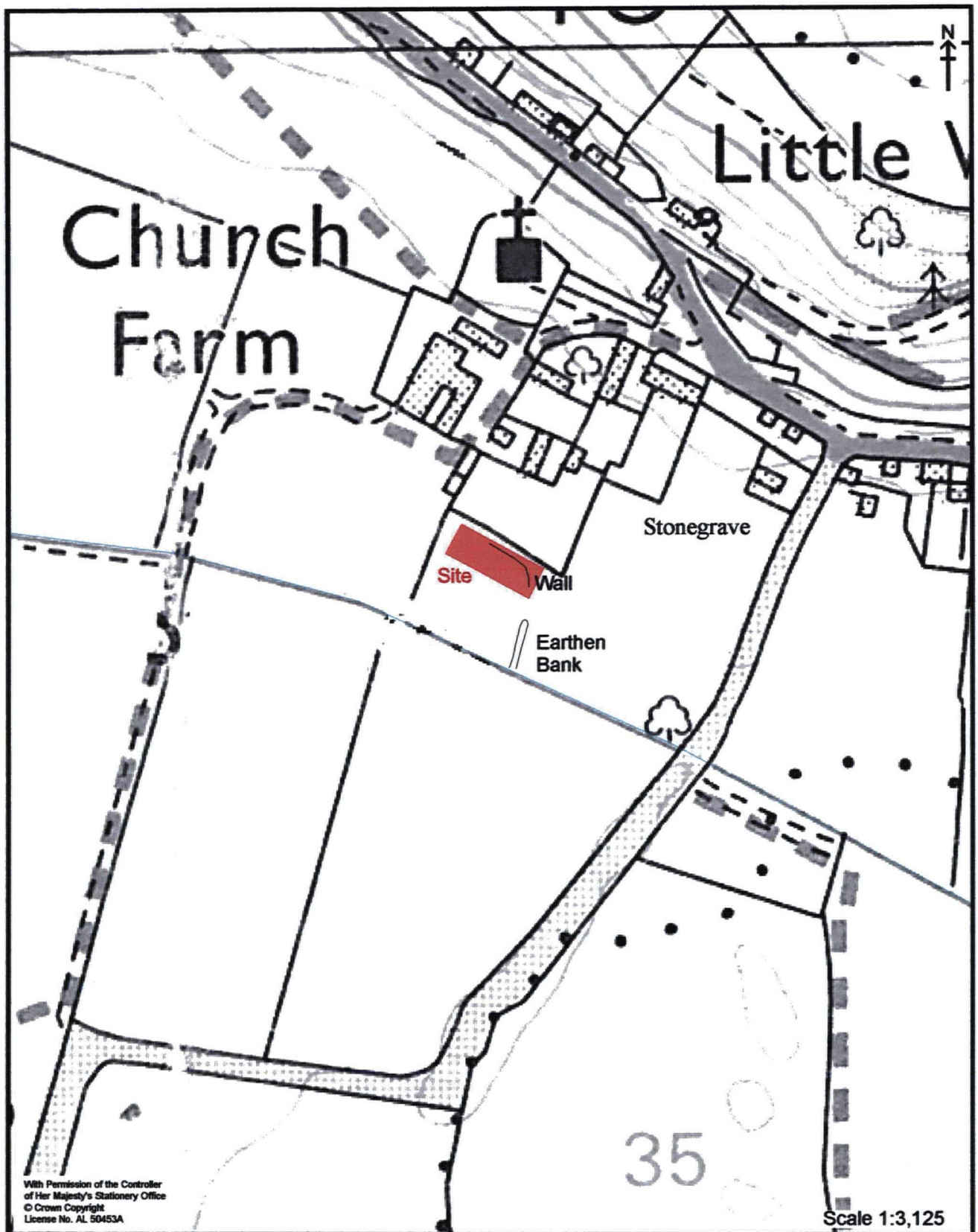


Figure 2. Site Location