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NYS 8586

Hopper Hill Road
Crossgates
Seamer
North Yorkshire
TA 0330 8310

Archaeological Watching Brief

MAP

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Contents	Page
Figure List	2
Plate List	2
Non Technical Summary	
1. Introduction	3
2. Site Description	3
3. Geology	4
4. Archaeological Background	4
5. Method	5
6. Results	6
7. Conclusion	6
8. References	6

Figure List

1. Location Map 1:50000
2. Site Location Map 1:5000
3. Development plan 1:2500

Plate List

1. Topsoil stripping of the access road. Facing southwest

Hopper Hill
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Archaeological Watching Brief

Non Technical Summary

As part of an ongoing programme of works during the development of the business park at Hopper Hill, Crossgates, an Archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken during the stripping of the an access road and compound in October 2003. No archaeological features other than modern plough scars were observed and the only find consisted of a flint core found on the surface of the natural.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Archaeological Watching Brief on the stripping of the access road for the development and compound was undertaken by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd. on behalf of Caddick Construction Ltd.
- 1.2 The Archaeological Watching Brief was carried out in accordance with an archaeological condition attached to the development of the site for light industrial purposes. All work was carried out by MAP Archaeological Consultancy Ltd over the course of four days Wednesday October 1st and Monday 6th to Wednesday 8th of October 2003.
- 1.3 All maps within this report have been produced from the Ordnance Survey with the kind permission of the controller of her Majesty's Stationery Office, Crown Copyright. License No AL 50453A.

2. Site Description

- 2.1 The site comprises a large former arable field of c. 8 hectares, bounded by hedges and fencing on the south, west and eastern boundaries, immediately to the north is a series of modern industrial units situated along Hopper Hill (Figs. 2 and 3). The field is distinguished by a series of low undulating hillocks, which is a common topographic feature of the area caused by the deposition of glacial material.

- 2.2 To the west lies the former Burton Riggs gravel quarry, now a wetland area of special scientific interest.

3. Geology

- 3.1 The geology of the site consists of glaciofluvial deposits, of mainly sands and gravels, underlying coarse loamy, non-calcareous soils of the Wick 1 Soil Association

4. Historical and Archaeological Background

- 4.1 The area lies within a rich landscape of multi-period of archaeological remains, the vale of Pickering having formed a focus for human occupation since the end of the last glaciation approximately 12,000 years bc.
- 4.2 This post glacial period has been the focus of extensive research by the Vale of Pickering Research Trust who along with several other projects, have identified a series of Nationally important sites in the area from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Bronze Age period. The Internationally famous early Mesolithic site of Star Carr lies just 1 kilometre to the south and is indicative of Mesolithic settlement sited on the edges of the former lake occupying the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering. These Mesolithic sites are concentrated around the 25m contours at the margins of low gravel hills – such as Hopper Hill, No name Hill and Rabbit Hill.
- 4.3 There is considerable evidence for the later Prehistoric period both in the form of crop marks and excavated sites. Occurring at the 27m contours, Neolithic occupation has been identified at Manham Hill, while at Hopper Hill flints and pottery has been dated to the late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age. To the north west, excavations in advance of housing development adjacent to Crab Lane, identified enclosures, and structures dating to the Iron Age and Roman periods. Beneath Crab Lane a large square Iron Age enclosure was superseded by a Roman Stone building dating to the First and second centuries A.D. (MAP 1999).

4.4 In the post war years gravel extraction from Burton Riggs Quarry revealed a wealth of sites ranging in date from the late Iron Age to the Anglian periods (Pye 1976 and 1983, Rutter and Duke 1958). Particularly significant was a large rectangular enclosure sited 200m north of the site, originally interpreted as a Roman Fortlet. This was the subject of additional excavation by the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit in advance of industrial development (Leach 89). This excavation was accompanied by extensive Geophysical survey of the site and previously unexcavated areas earmarked for development. Complimentary Resistivity work carried out over a sample area, revealed the existence of several anomalous features (Jones and Pearson 1989).

4.5 Further evaluation of the entire site in 2000 included a Gradiometry survey from which more detailed survey was carried out. This work revealed a number of linear anomalies some of which were seen as having archaeological potential, and provided the basis for evaluation work in August 2000. This work comprised two trenches one of which produced Neolithic pottery and flint tools, while the other revealed a broad shallow gully, most probably a furrow (MAP 2000).

4.6 In June 2003 a Watching Brief was conducted by MAP Archaeological Consultancy in the north-west of the development site (Fig. 3 – Phase 1). The only features observed were deep multiple (modern) plough scars running adjacent to the present field boundaries. However four flint artefacts were recovered from the topsoil: a scraper, a core and two flakes. These are dateable to the early Neolithic period (Makey, pers. comm.)

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5. Method

5.1 The initial stripping of the topsoil/subsoil overburden, was carried out by a mechanical digger using a smooth back acting bucket. The overburden was removed down to the natural deposits of sand and gravel over the entire area and was observed at all times by an archaeologist.

Schadla-Hall, R.T 1988. 'The Early Post Glacial in East Yorkshire', in T.Manby (ed). Archaeology in East Yorkshire, Essays in Honour of T.C.M. Brewster, pp 25-34.

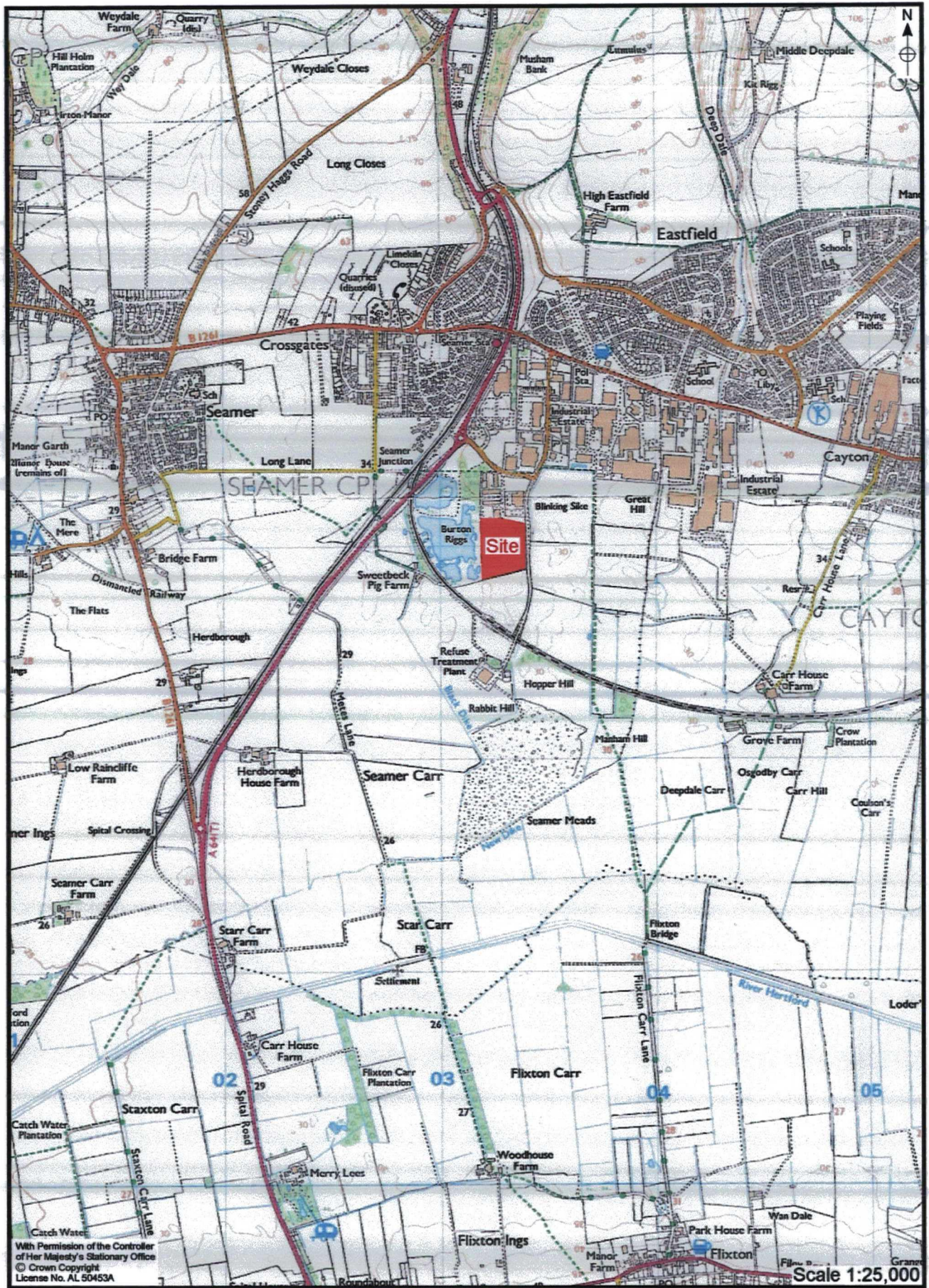


Figure 1. Site Location

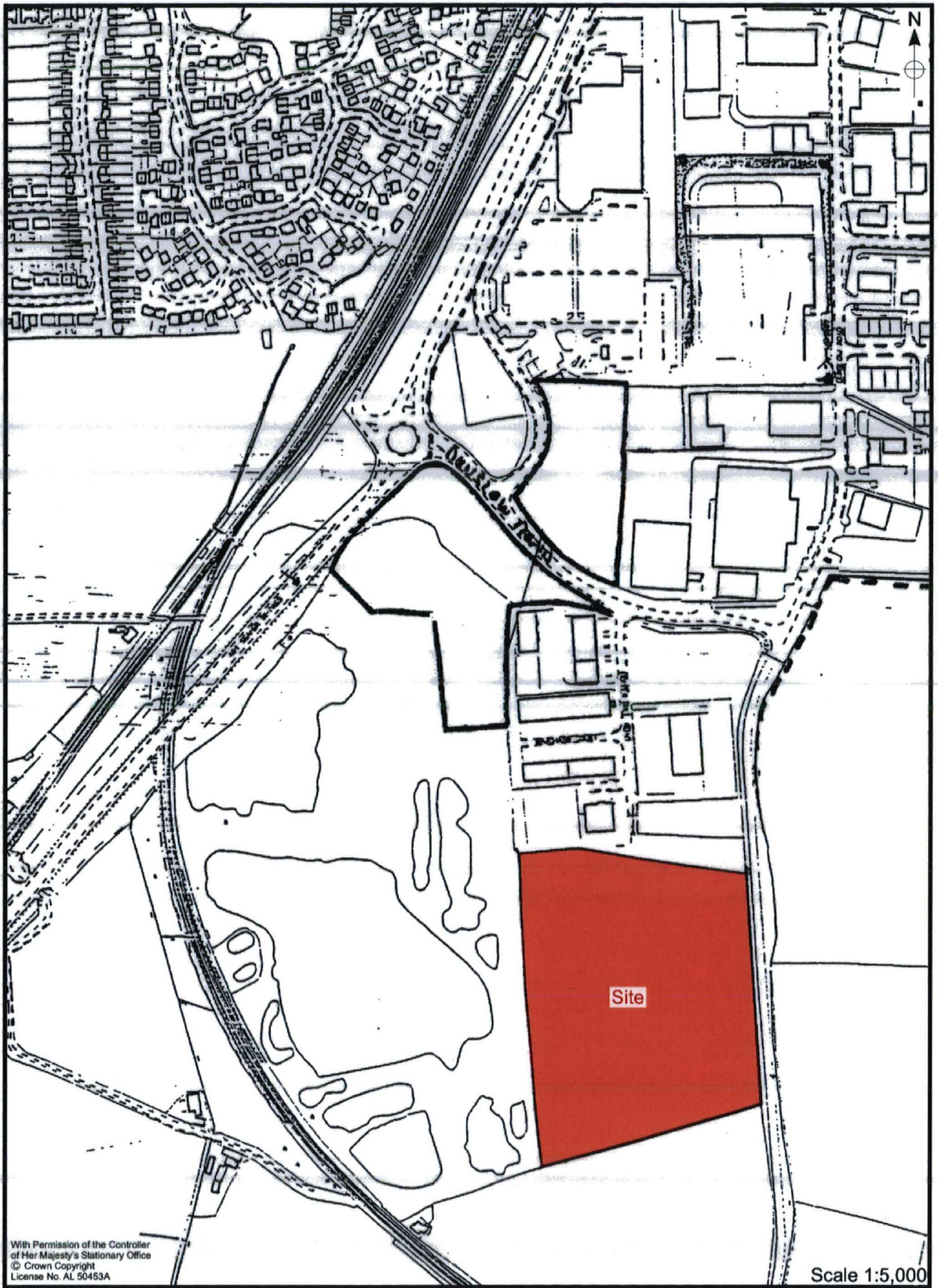


Figure 2. Site Location



Figure 3. Area of Development



Plate 1. Topsoil stripping of the access road. Facing south west.