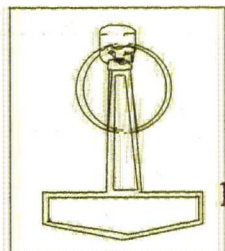


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**SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK**

**AT**

**OLD HALL FARM,**

**THORNTON - LE - STREET,**

**THIRSK**

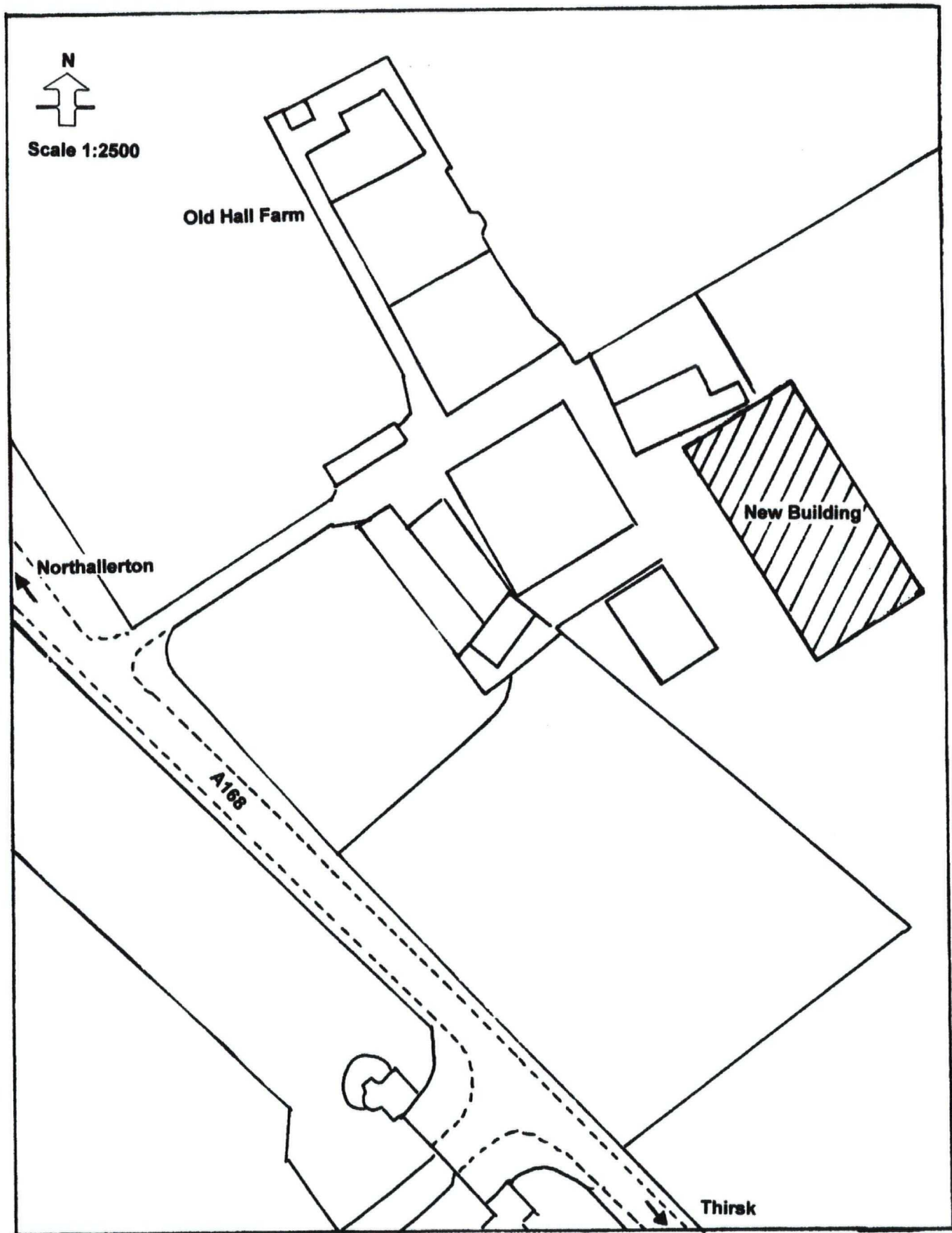
**S.A.M. 31348**

**FOR MR & MRS BARKER**

**ALISON CLARKE**

**OCTOBER 1999**

Fig 1 Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street – Location



## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK AT OLD HALL FARM, THORNTON-LE-STREET, NORTH YORKSHIRE, S.A.M. 31348

### Summary

*Prior to the construction of an agricultural building at Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street, a programme of archaeological work was carried out in September 1999. This consisted of a topographical survey of earthworks at the site associated with a former medieval settlement (Scheduled Ancient Monument No. 31348), and a watching brief on ground disturbance work associated with the construction of the building.*

*The survey showed what appeared to be the very degraded remains of medieval rigg and furrow ploughing, showing most clearly to the south and east of the site. The central and western parts of the site were relatively flat.*

*The watching brief revealed that scatters of cobbles and other large stones had been laid in some areas, notably the north-east and south-west corners. This was interpreted as infill in lowlying portions of the site, possibly to act as a soakaway or as a firm footing. A further area of infill was identified on the western side of the site, where silty material containing medieval and modern pottery had been dumped.*

### INTRODUCTION

Mr and Mrs Barker, of Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street (fig 1), applied for planning permission and Scheduled Monument Consent for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building at the farm. Part of the proposed site was within the Scheduled Ancient Monument National No. 31348, which consists of the earthwork remains of a medieval settlement. As a result, Consent and planning permission were granted subject to the implementation of a programme of archaeological work, which was carried out in September 1999.

A written scheme of investigation for archaeological recording was prepared by the Heritage Unit at North Yorkshire County Council (attached), outlining the background of the site and the objectives of the archaeological recording to be undertaken.

### TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY (fig 2, 3 & 4)

A survey was carried out using hand tapes and a Dumpy Level. The area surveyed was tied in to the nearest agricultural building, and to the nearest Ordnance Datum Bench Mark which was on the wall of the western Lodge building of Thornton Stud.

The whole site sloped gradually down from north to south and very slightly from west to east, with a range of heights between 51.33m and 50.235m OD. The north-western corner, which was outside the Scheduled area, was covered in a layer of rubble that had been spread relatively recently (within the last ten years), and with coarse weeds. Beyond a temporary fence defining the edge of the Scheduled area, the whole western and central portion of the site was a relatively level area. This had suffered from a high degree of trample from animals. Beyond this, in the north-east and south, was a smaller area of fairly well defined earthworks consisting of more or less parallel ridges divided by ditches or furrows, running approximately east to west.

The results of the survey suggested very degraded medieval rigg and furrow remains, with slight traces in the central area and more well defined remains to the north-east and south. In the south-east corner the 'rigg' and its attendant 'furrow' curved away to the south, which could mark a change in the nature of the earthworks, such as the beginning of a toft platform. However, the overall impression was of a series of slight ridges and furrows, and irregularities in these can be explained by the degree of degradation that this part of the monument has undergone in the past.

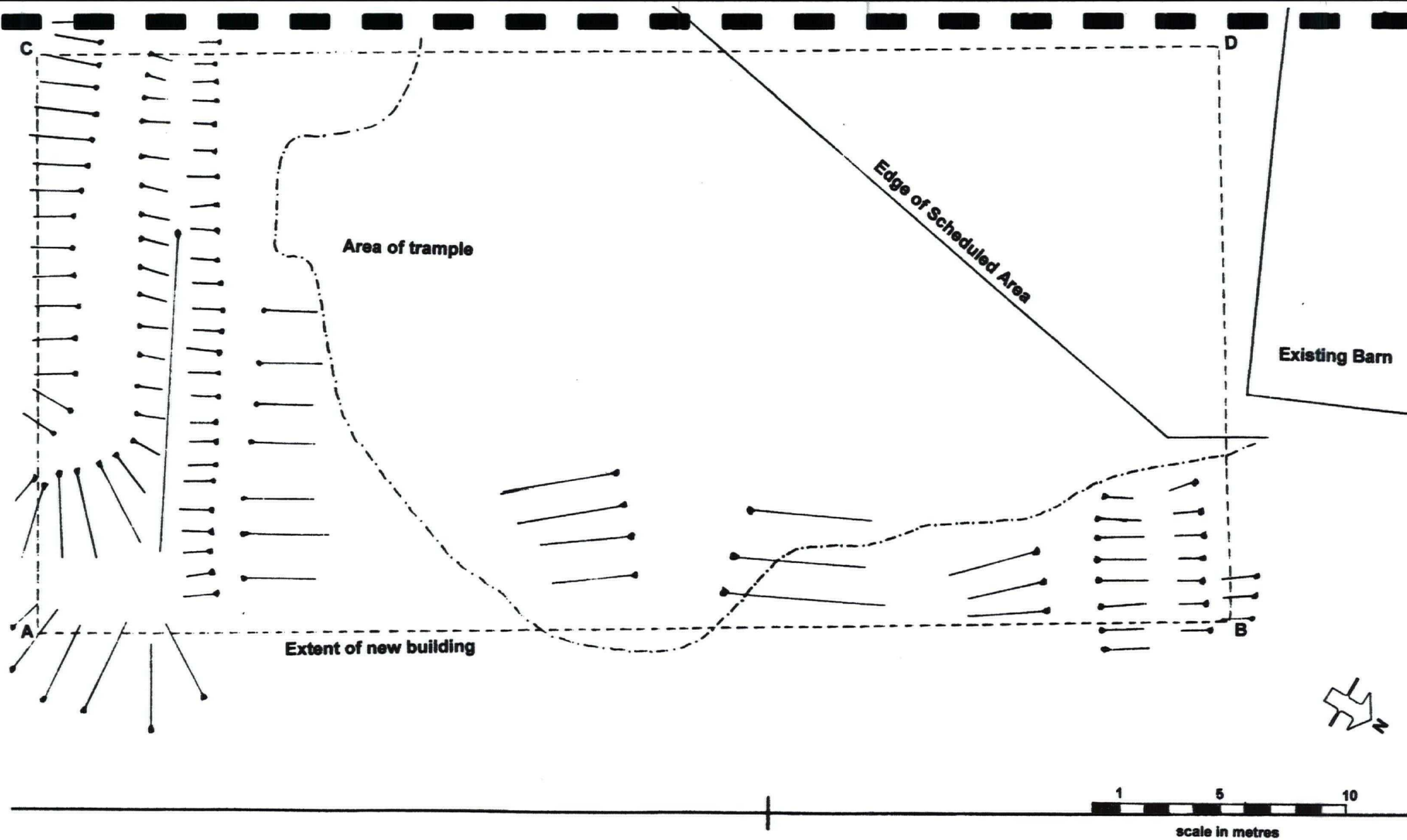


Fig 2 Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street – Topographic Survey

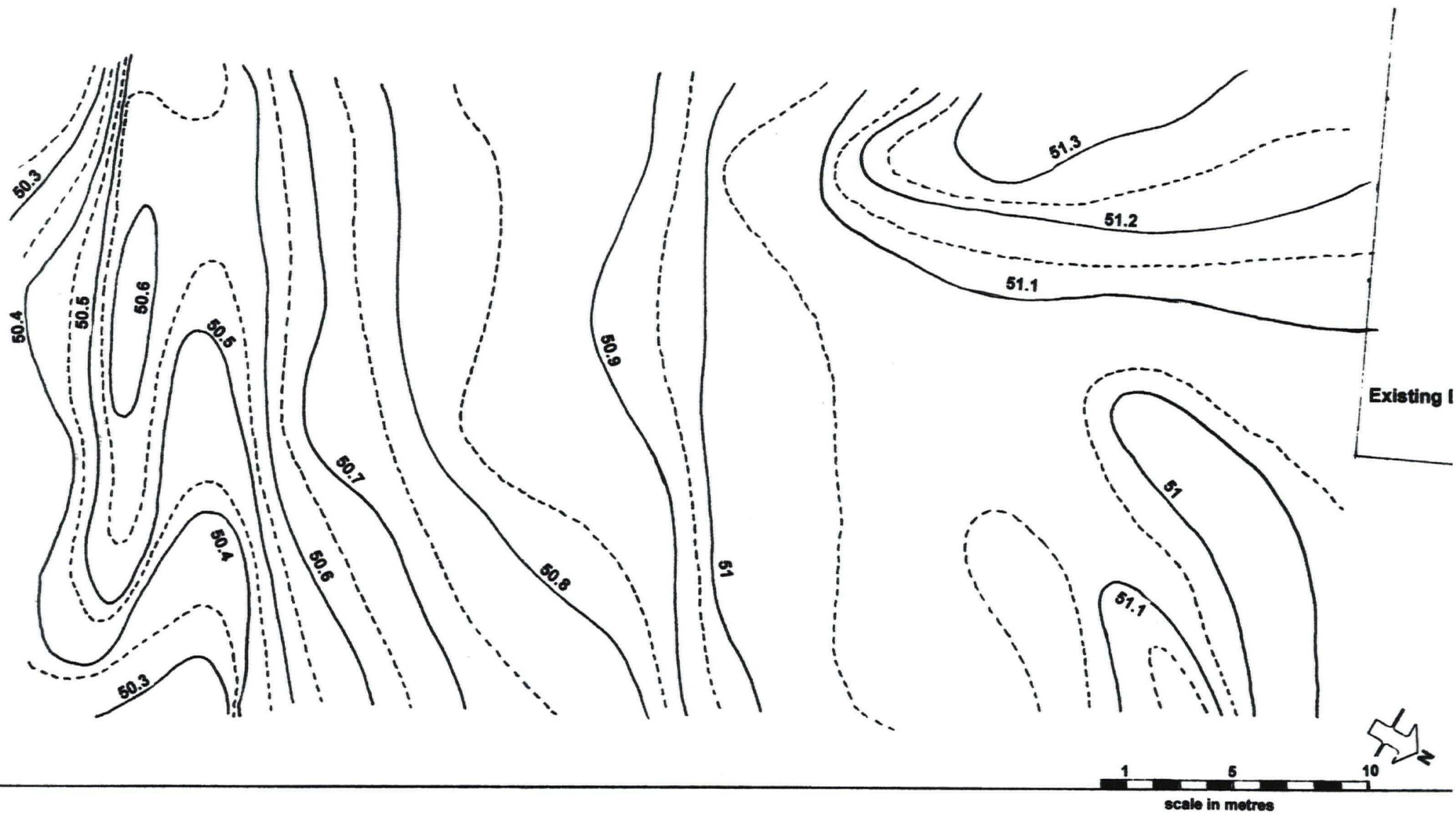


Fig 3 Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street – Contour Survey

## WATCHING BRIEF

The building construction involved the partial levelling of the site and the machine excavation of twenty eight column supports around a rectangular area approximately 22m by 47m, aligned roughly north-south (fig 5).

The rubble that had been recently spread in the north-western portion of the site was removed to provide a smooth surface, and the topsoil over the northern and central parts, which were the highest, was removed and spread over lower parts of the site. The topsoil and turf remained over the southern and southeastern parts of the site.

The dimensions of the trenches for the column supports were between 120cm x 120cm and 180cm x 150cm along the sides of the building, and between 90cm x 110cm and 100cm x 170cm along the gable ends. The depths were approximately 80cm to 90cm. They were evenly spaced with eleven down each side and three at each end.

Most of the trenches contained a loamy brown clay subsoil to depths between 30 and 60cm below the surface (Plate 1 & 2) . The depth of the subsoil was greatest in H7 and H10 on the

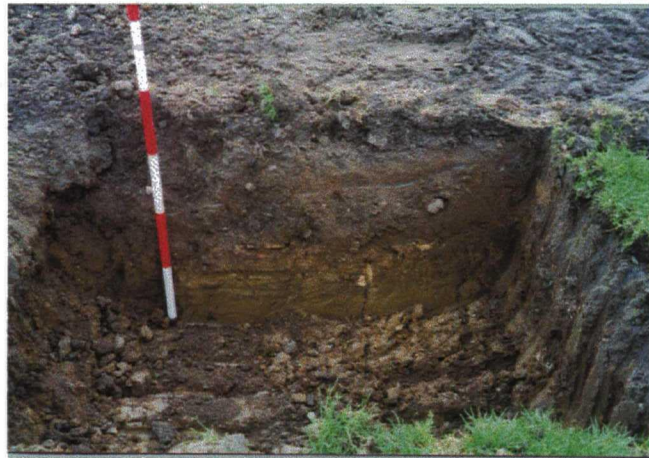


Plate 1 East facing section, H5

eastern side of the building. These correspond to dips in the ground surface, and reinforce the interpretation of degraded rigg and furrow. The shallowest subsoil was along the southern end of the building, where the ground was falling away to the south from a north-south ridge within the footprint of the building. On the western side of the building, where the ground surface showed little variation, the depth of subsoil varied more widely. Deeper soil underlaid H17, 19 and 20, with a ridge of natural nearer to the surface in H18.



Plate 2 east facing section, H11

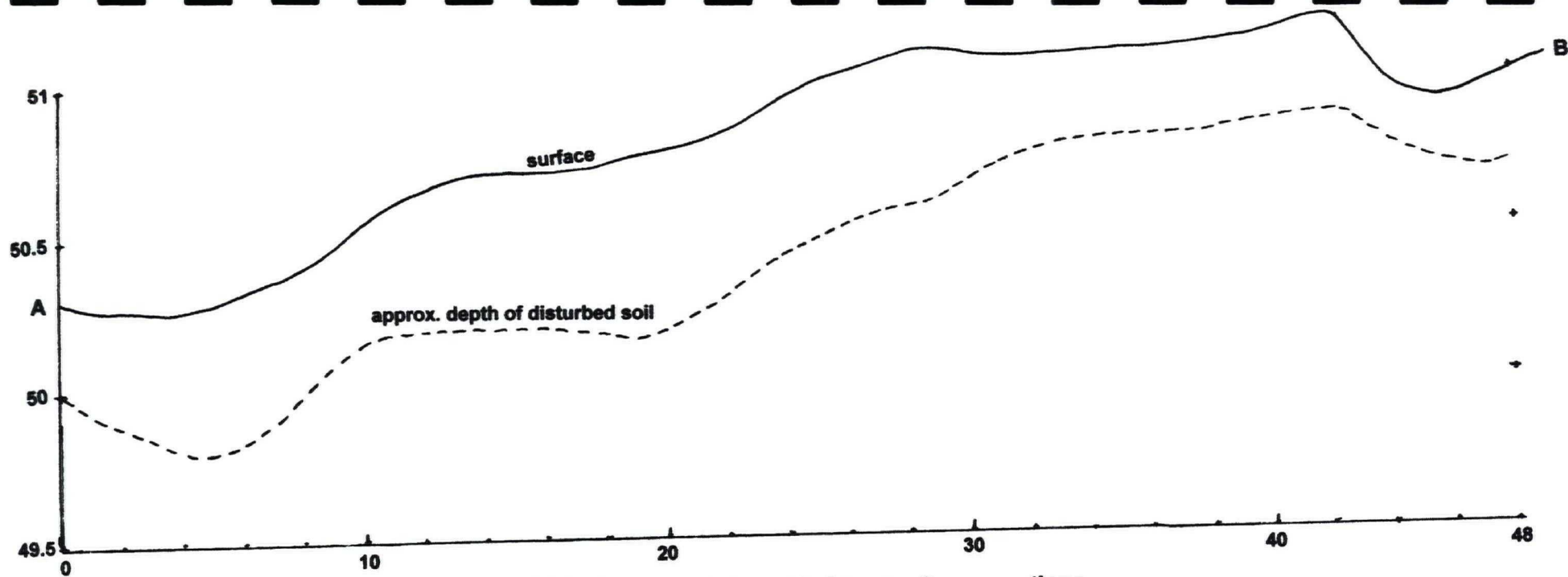
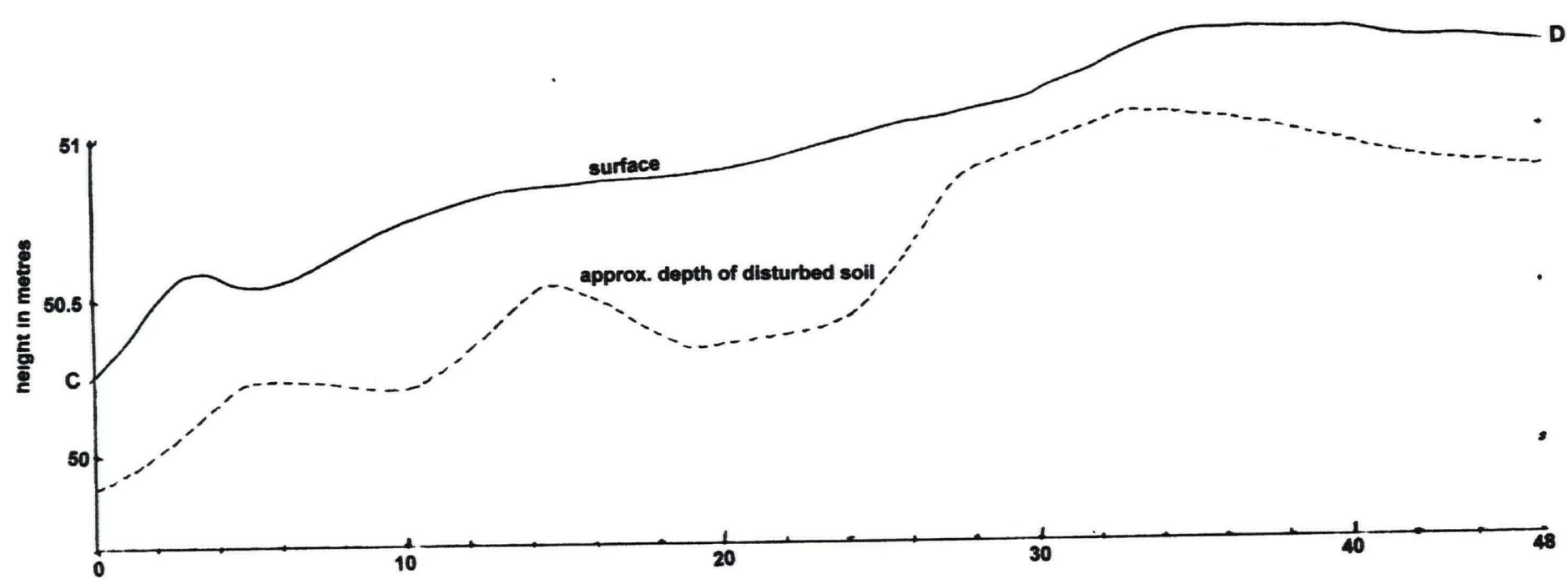


Fig 4 Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street - Cross sections



The loamy soil contained a scatter of animal bone, mostly in very poor condition, and very abraded pottery fragments, some of which were medieval. Below the loamy subsoil were boulder clays and silty sands with stones, varying in colour from bright orange to pale yellowish brown. In H11, in the south-east corner of the site, there was a layer of small angular stones beneath the loam and above the orange sandy clay (Plate 2).



Plate 3 cobble spread in H1

In H1, in the north-eastern corner of the site, a spread of cobbles set into brown loamy clay was encountered at a depth of 20cm, extending to 45cm, immediately above the natural clay (Plate 3). H28, to the west, also contained cobbles. These cobbles were unevenly spread across the trenches, and in H21 modern debris (nylon string and a fragment of rubber) was found in the matrix. Both trenches were in a 'furrow', and a land drain ran through them from west to east. The opposite, south-western, corner trench of the site, H15, also contained large cobbles in a single layer at a depth of 20 to 40 cm, lying directly on the natural clay (Plate 4). H15 was in the lowest part of the site.



Plate 4 cobble spread in H15

H19 and H20 contained a grey silty soil below 10 to 15 cm of topsoil. This was hand excavated and found to contain frequent abraded pottery fragments, mainly medieval but with one modern sherd. The soil was increasingly wet with depth, and a water pipe was revealed at a depth of 60cm in the corner of H19. Natural clay lay beneath the silt at 55 to 60 cm below the surface.

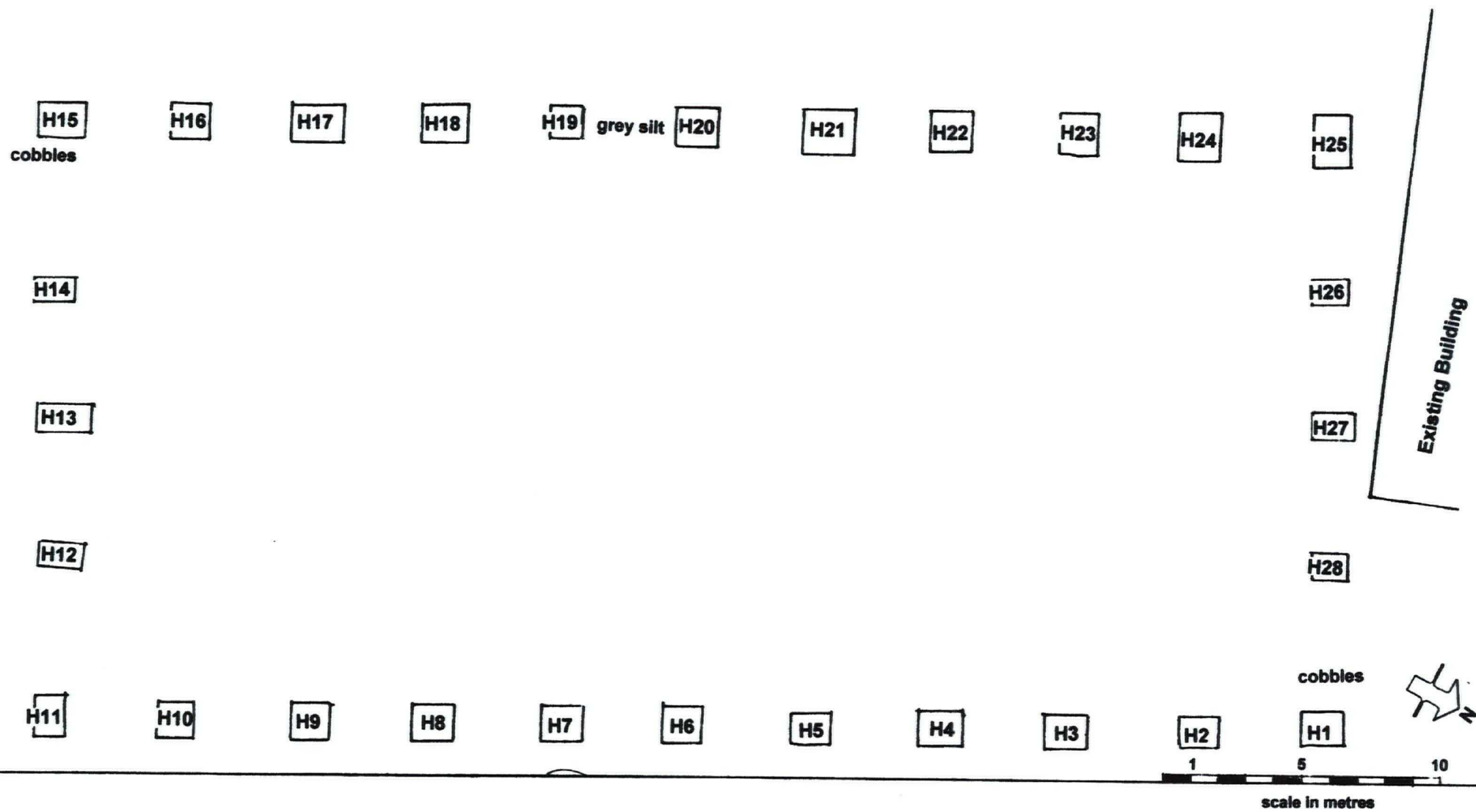


Fig 5 Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street – Column Supports

## INTERPRETATION

The evidence of the foundation trenches serves to reinforce the interpretation of the visible earthworks as degraded rigg and furrow. There were greater differences in the depth of disturbed soils, most of which had the appearance of ploughsoil, than those visible on the surface (fig 4). These differences largely reflected the same pattern as that visible on the surface, from which can be inferred that the existing ground surface has been worn down since the earthworks were established. The level, type and condition of finds are consistent with ploughsoil, as are the results from the analysis of a soil sample (see environmental report).

The two areas of rough cobbles did not have the appearance of a regular surface, and their positions in low-lying parts of the site suggests that they are the remains of infill, introduced to provide a firmer footing and perhaps to improve drainage. The larger area of grey silty soil is not in a low-lying area, as it is in part of the site greatly affected by degradation and alteration. The slight traces of rigg and furrow visible to the east do not seem to relate directly to a furrow here either, but the remains are so slight that it is impossible to be certain. The mixed and weathered nature of the pottery from the silt suggests the possibility of a redeposited dump of material. This may originate from a part of the site where occupation was more intense, which would account for the increased amounts of pottery and the darker soil. The reason for the deposition is most likely to have been to raise ground levels, as this part of the site was wetter than most other areas. Redeposited midden material is also a possibility, although higher levels of recovered material might have been expected. The analysis of a soil sample (see environmental report) suggests that a midden deposit should not be ruled out.

It seems likely that the various efforts to create a more level and better drained surface date to the post medieval period, when the open field system was redundant. It may be associated with the development of Old Hall Farm on its present site, when this part of the medieval village would have become close to the yard of the farm.

## CONCLUSIONS

The topographic survey revealed the nature of the remnant earthworks in this part of the scheduled monument. The interpretation of rigg and furrow is consistent with the location of the area, and furthers understanding of the monument. The watching brief revealed ploughsoil and several areas where material had been spread, possibly to level the ground. This is most likely to have been undertaken in the post-medieval period.

*Alison Clarke*

## ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

Evaluation of sample (H19) from foundation trench for modern agricultural building. Site itself is a shrunken Medieval village with the surviving earthworks suggesting largely degraded rigg and furrow. Abraded Medieval pottery within it and described as ?infill of furrow.

5 litres were wet sieved to 500µ and examined for artefactual and ecofactual remains. One small fragment of abraded glazed pottery was recovered. Small amounts each of tiny fragments of charcoal and coal survived along with modern vegetation and seeds. No charred plant remains survived. Given the nature of the soil, which was not waterlogged, the only material contemporary with deposition would have been either charred or mineralised. Organic material in general would have decayed away over the years.

The abraded nature of the single potsherd suggests movement prior to burial and the small size of the charcoal and coal could re-enforce this. Lack of plant remains is not unusual in such hypothesised features. Even if midden, and burnt midden, material had been incorporated during the medieval period the action of ploughing and working the soil plus its inherent biological activity would have long since destroyed large remains.

Jacqui Huntley, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham

## FINDS CATALOGUE

### H2 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

Animal bone fragments including cattle lower jaw with teeth, weathered

### H6 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

3 small sherds pottery – 1) pale grey-pink fabric, continuous mid-green glaze on exterior face – body sherd - ?Brandsby/York Glazed ware  
2) pale pink fabric, splashes of pale green glaze on exterior face  
– base sherd - ?Brandsby/York Glazed ware  
3) pink-orange fabric, no glaze – body sherd

All appear medieval.

1 ferrous nail 3.5cm long

### H7 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

1 ferrous nail 4cm long

### H9 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

6 sherds pottery – 1) pale yellow-pink fabric, no glaze – flat everted rim sherd – ?Brandsby type ware  
2) bright salmon pink fabric, no glaze – rounded everted rim sherd – ?Red Sandy ware  
3) orange-pink fabric, intermittent green glaze on exterior – very worn  
– body sherd - ?Brandsby/York Glazed ware  
4) pale pink fabric, no glaze, body sherd  
5) orange-pink fabric, partial brown/green glaze on exterior, very worn – body sherd - ?Brandsby ware  
6) off-white fabric, crazed white glaze, body sherd – 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century

All appear medieval apart from last sherd.

### H10 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

1 fragment animal bone

3 sherds pottery – 1) orange fabric, small splash brown glaze, blackened in places - ?burnt, worn, everted double rim – large sherd - ?Brandsby ware

2) pale orange-pink fabric, small spots of ?brown glaze on exterior – body sherd - ?Brandsby ware

3) orange fabric, no glaze – body sherd

All probably medieval.

### H13 – loamy subsoil – ploughsoil

1 sherd pottery – offwhite, slightly pink fabric, no glaze, rim possibly of plate or shallow bowl - ?Humber ware

### H19 – grey silt

Animal bone – 2 cattle teeth, 1 unidentified tooth fragment, several small fragments

1 small piece of coal

25 unglazed pottery sherds – fabrics white, grey, pale yellow, pale orange-pink, orange-pink, bright orange

1 base sherd, dark orange, one possible glaze spot - ?Red Sandy ware

1 base sherd, off-white, slightly pink fabric, exterior with partial dark green glaze – ?Humber ware

1 rim sherd – round slightly everted, off-white fabric with shiny grit inclusions, possible burning on exterior and top - ?Gritty ware

1 body sherd, orange fabric, patchy brown glaze on exterior

1 body sherd, orange fabric, continuous green glaze on exterior - ?Hambleton ware

1 rim sherd – everted angular double rim, orange fabric, no glaze

1 body sherd, white fabric, white glaze – 19/20<sup>th</sup> C.

All pottery sherds are abraded, mostly small (1-3cm), with no fresh breaks and appear medieval apart from last sherd which is modern.

H20 – grey silt

Animal bone –part of cattle lower jaw and several unidentified fragments

7 small unglazed pottery sherds – fabrics orange, pale pink/grey, off-white

2 small pieces brick/tile, no flat surfaces

1 body sherd, off-white/pale pink fabric, three faint lines ?brown glaze - ?Thirlby ware

1 body sherd, pale grey/pink fabric, partial pale green glaze - ?Humber ware

1 body sherd, off-white fabric, partial pale yellowish green glaze - ?Brandsby ware

All pottery sherds are small and abraded with no fresh breaks, and apparently medieval.

**OLD HALL FARM, THORNTON-LE-STREET, NR THIRSK, NORTH YORKSHIRE  
(SE 4108 8651)**

**WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING**

*This brief has been prepared by the Archaeologist, North Yorkshire County Council (hereafter referred to as the 'Planning Archaeologist') on behalf of Mr & Mrs Barker, Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street (hereafter the 'Client'). It is the copyright of North Yorkshire County Council and is not to be reproduced or amended in any way without the express consent of North Yorkshire County Council.*

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 A full planning application has been submitted for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building at Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street, near Thirsk, North Yorkshire. The farm lies within an area of area of national archaeological importance, being the site of the medieval village of Thornton-le-Street which is designated as a Scheduled Ancient Monument.
- 1.2 As the ground excavations associated with the construction of the foundations for the proposed building may encounter archaeological remains associated with medieval settlement, a scheme of archaeological recording has been advised within the area to be affected by the development. This recording will be secured by the attachment of an archaeological condition to any planning permission granted. Scheduled Monument Consent is also being sought for the development.

**2. Purpose**

- 2.1 This written scheme of investigation represents a summary of the broad archaeological requirements to mitigate the effects of the proposed development in accordance with the archaeological condition which will be attached to any planning permission for the development. This is in accordance with Policy HH20 of the District Local Plan and the guidance of Planning Policy Guidance note 16 on *Archaeology and Planning*, 1990. It does not comprise a full specification, and the County Council makes no warranty that the archaeological works are fully or exactly described. The details of implementation must be specified in a contract between the Client and the selected archaeological contractor.

**3. Location and Archaeological Background**

- 3.1 In April 1999, a full planning application (ref. 2/99/158/0045) was submitted to Hambleton District Council by Mr W Barker of Barkers Northallerton Farms Ltd for the erection of a general purpose agricultural building for use as a hay and machinery store at Old Hall Farm, Thornton-le-Street, North Yorkshire.
- 3.2 The proposed development entails the erection of a steel portal-framed building to the south east of the existing farm complex, adjacent to existing agricultural buildings. The site of the proposed new building lies partly within the Scheduled Ancient Monument, the current boundary of which follows an existing, temporary fence which separates the farmyard from the adjacent pasture fields and which will be removed as a result of the proposed development. The siting of the building has been chosen in an attempt to minimise its impact upon archaeological remains.

- 3.3 The new building will measure 22m by 45.72m and will be aligned north-west to south-east. The structure will be supported by 28 columns, the foundations for which will require limited excavation. There will be eighteen main columns and four corner columns which require excavations 1.2m<sup>2</sup> and 0.6m deep. Six gable columns will be excavated to 0.9m<sup>2</sup> and 0.5m deep. Floor levels should remain as existing, or be raised above existing levels. A soakaway to the western side of the new building may also be dug to connect into existing drainage.
- 3.4 Thornton-le-Street lies to the north of the town of Thirsk Richmond, between the A168 road and Cod Beck, within Hambleton District of the County of North Yorkshire. The Scheduled Ancient Monument of the medieval settlement at Thornton-le-Street, National Monument Number 31348, surrounds Old Hall Farm to the north, east and south and comprises the earthwork and buried remains the former, medieval village. The settlement existed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, when it was mentioned in Domesday Book, and went into decline in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The earthworks consist of a broad causeway extending south-east to north-west through the centre of the field with rectilinear enclosures extending to either side. These represent the main street of the village and associated house platforms, enclosures and yards.
- 3.5 The site of the proposed new building is partly within the existing farmyard, under rough vegetation adjacent to an area of concrete hardstanding, and partly within the boundary of the scheduled monument which is currently under grass pasture. Part of the area is level, where the trample of farm animals has removed the vegetation; a small area at the southern end of the proposed building is under grass and displays traces of earthworks.

#### 4. Objectives

- 4.1 The objectives of the archaeological recording work within the proposed development area are:
- .1 to establish a topographic record of the earthwork evidence at Old Hall Farm, including current ground levels within the area of proposed development,
  - .2 to locate, sample, record and interpret any archaeological deposits exposed during development,
  - .3 to locate, recover, identify and conserve (as appropriate) any archaeological artefacts exposed during development,
  - .4 to prepare a report summarising the results of the work,
  - .5 to prepare and submit a suitable archive to the appropriate museum.

#### 5. Tenders

- 5.1 Archaeological contractors should submit their estimates or quotations to the Client with reference to the County Council's *Guidance for Developers – Archaeological Work*.

#### 6. Access, Safety and Monitoring

- 6.1 Access to the site should be arranged through the Client.
- 6.2 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that Health and Safety requirements are fulfilled.

- 6.3 The project will be monitored by the Planning Archaeologist, to whom not less than seven days' written notice must be given of the commencement of fieldwork.
- 6.4 It is the archaeological contractor's responsibility to ensure that monitoring takes place by arranging a preliminary meeting or discussion at the commencement of the contract and at appropriate points thereafter.
- 6.5 It is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to ensure that any significant results are brought to the attention of the Planning Archaeologist and the Client as soon as is practically possible. This is particularly important where there is any likelihood of contingency funding being required.

## **7. Brief**

- 7.1 The archaeological contractor should be informed of the correct timing and schedule of site preparation and excavation works associated with the construction of the proposed extension.
- 7.2 Archaeological work within the area of proposed development should include:
- A preliminary topographic survey to record the earthwork evidence and changes in ground level within the area of proposed development at Old Hall Farm, to be tied in to Ordnance Datum and the Ordnance Survey.
  - Supervision of the initial removal of overburden such as made ground, rubble or other superficial fill materials down to the top of archaeological deposits, or the natural subsoil (C Horizon or soil parent material), whichever appears first. Mechanical excavation equipment may be used for the excavation of topsoil and demonstrably disturbed or recent deposits.
  - Once overburden has been removed, or when the top of archaeological deposits has been reached, machine excavation should be halted to allow the archaeological contractor to observe, clean and assess the remains on the site.
  - Where appropriate, where complex structures, soil features and finds of archaeological interest are exposed or disturbed by excavation works, the archaeological contractor shall fully excavate and record these features and finds.
  - Where less complex archaeological remains are uncovered, a sufficient sample of features and deposits may be investigated, as opposed to full excavation, in order to understand the full stratigraphic sequence down to natural deposits, or to the depth to be affected by the development, whichever is the higher.
  - Heavy plant or excavators should not be operated in the near vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the archaeological contractor has allowed operations to recommence at that location. Subsoils and sterile parent materials below archaeological deposits may be removed without archaeological supervision using a toothed bucket.
- 7.3 All deposits should be fully recorded on appropriate context sheets, photographs, conventionally scaled plans and sections.
- 7.4 A strategy for palaeoenvironmental sampling and analysis should be devised to deal with any potentially important palaeoenvironmental deposits which may be uncovered. Particular attention should be paid to sampling securely dated deposits and features and specifically any waterlogged and/or burnt deposits.

7.5 Methods of reinstatement, if required, must be agreed with the Client in advance of submission of tenders.

7.6 Upon completion of archaeological field recording work, samples should be processed and all finds cleaned, identified, assessed, spot dated, and properly stored. Should a significant quantity and quality of finds be recovered, a post-excavation assessment of the material should be undertaken in accordance with the guidance of MAP2 (English Heritage, 1991).

7.7 All artefacts or ecofacts should be retained for analysis and subsequent deposition or disposal.

## 8. Archive

8.1 Archive deposition should be undertaken with reference to the County Council's *Guidelines on the Transfer and Deposition of Archaeological Archives*. A field archive should be compiled consisting of all primary written documents, plans, sections and photographs. Catalogues of contexts, finds, soil samples, plans, sections and photographs should be produced and cross-referenced.

8.2 The archaeological contractor should liaise with the appropriate museum to establish the detailed requirements of the museum and discuss archive transfer in advance of fieldwork commencing. The relevant museum curator should be afforded access to visit the site and discuss the project results.

## 9. Report

9.1 A summary report shall be produced following the County Council's guidance on reporting: *Reporting Check-List*. The report should contain:

- a concise, non-technical summary of the project and its results,
- a summary description of the aims and methodology of the work, background planning, or administrative details of the project,
- a description and interpretation of the findings
- an assessment of the importance of the archaeology recorded, including its historical context, where appropriate
- a catalogue of finds, features, samples and primary records
- a location plan at an appropriate, conventional scale, with grid references
- a copy of the brief and agreed project design, and an indication of any variations
- an index to the project archive
- illustrations of significant features using conventionally scaled plans, sections and photographs, as appropriate.

9.2 All excavated areas should be accurately mapped with respect to nearby buildings and roads.

9.3 At least six copies of the report should be produced and submitted to the Client, North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit SMR, the Local Planning Authority, the museum accepting the archive, English Heritage and the National Monuments Record in Swindon.

10. Further Information

10.1 Further information or clarification of any aspects of this brief may be obtained from:

**Gail Falkingham, MIFA**  
**Archaeologist**  
**North Yorkshire County Council**  
**Heritage Unit**  
**County Hall**  
**Northallerton**  
**North Yorkshire**  
**DL7 8AH**

**Tel. 01609 780780 x2839**  
**Fax. 01609 779838**

10.2 References

English Heritage      1991      Management of Archaeological Projects