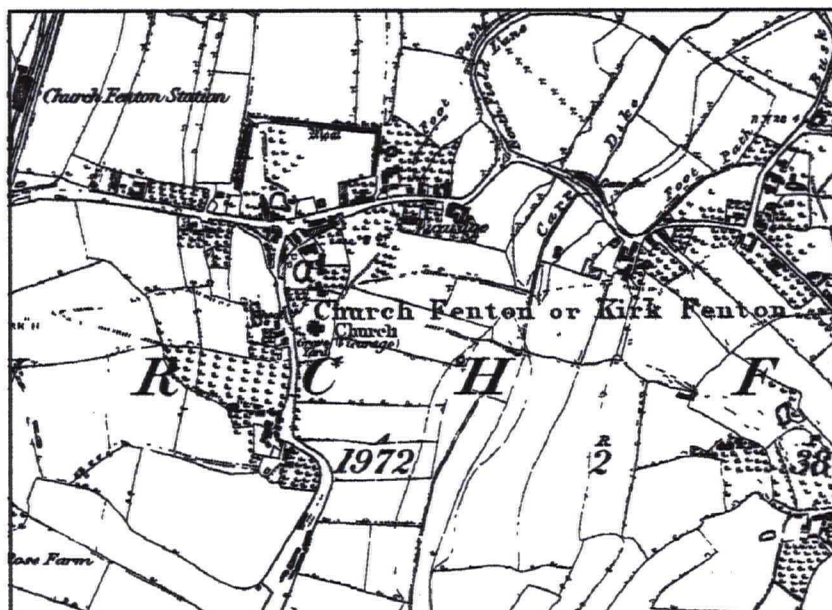




YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

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KIRK FENTON PRIMARY SCHOOL MAIN STREET CHURCH FENTON

A report on an
Archaeological Watching Brief

by Gareth Dean

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**KIRK FENTON PRIMARY SCHOOL,
MAIN STREET,
CHURCH FENTON,
NORTH YORKSHIRE**

**A Report on an
Archaeological Watching Brief**

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*Cover illustration:
1852 Ordnance Survey*

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BGL	Below Ground Level
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ABSTRACT

The York Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological watching brief at Kirk Fenton Primary School to monitor the excavation of a service trench for a Temporary Classroom Unit relocated from the north side to the east side of the building prior to the start of construction of an extension to the school. The excavation of the trench exposed a redundant service pipe and below the modern topsoil a layer of crushed limestone and brick rubble related to the construction of the present school building.

1. INTRODUCTION

On the 17th February 2004, the York Archaeological Trust undertook an archaeological watching brief at Kirk Fenton Primary School, Church Fenton, York (NGR SE 514370; fig 1).

The work was commissioned by North Yorkshire County Council.

2. METHOD STATEMENT

The watching brief involved the monitoring the excavation of a trench excavated for services to a relocated Temporary Classroom Unit. Excavation of a trench for services was carried out using a small 360° mechanical excavator. The trench was 0.7m wide and up to 0.8m deep. A record of all deposits encountered in the watching brief was made in a watching brief note book. Deposits and location of observed works were recorded on sketch sections and plans or annotations on copies of developer's plans.

3. LOCATION, TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY

Church Fenton is a village located 12 miles from York and 7 miles from Selby within a flat landscape. The solid geology of the site is lower red sandstone overlain by glacial silts and sands (Geological Survey 1967).

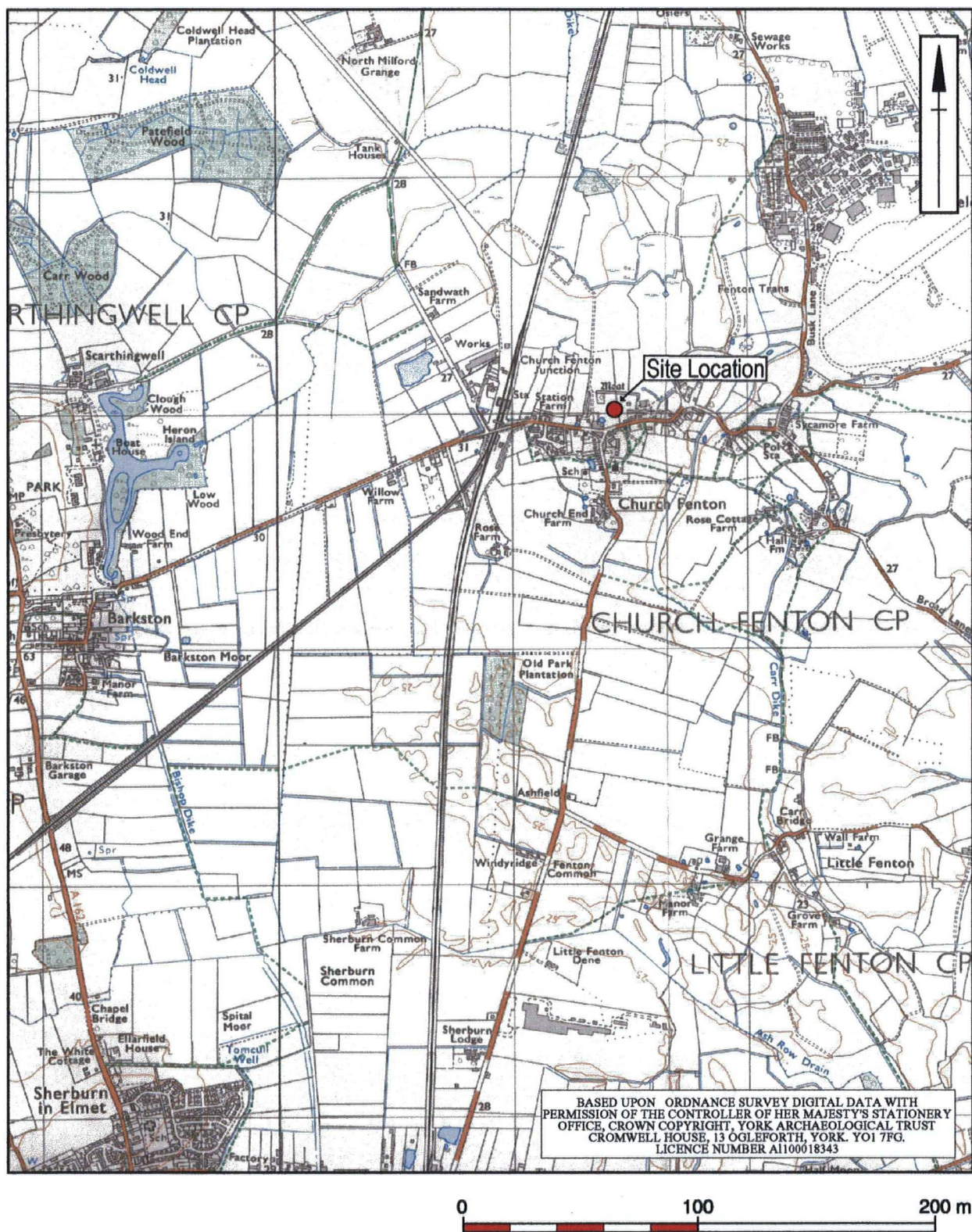


Figure 1 Site location

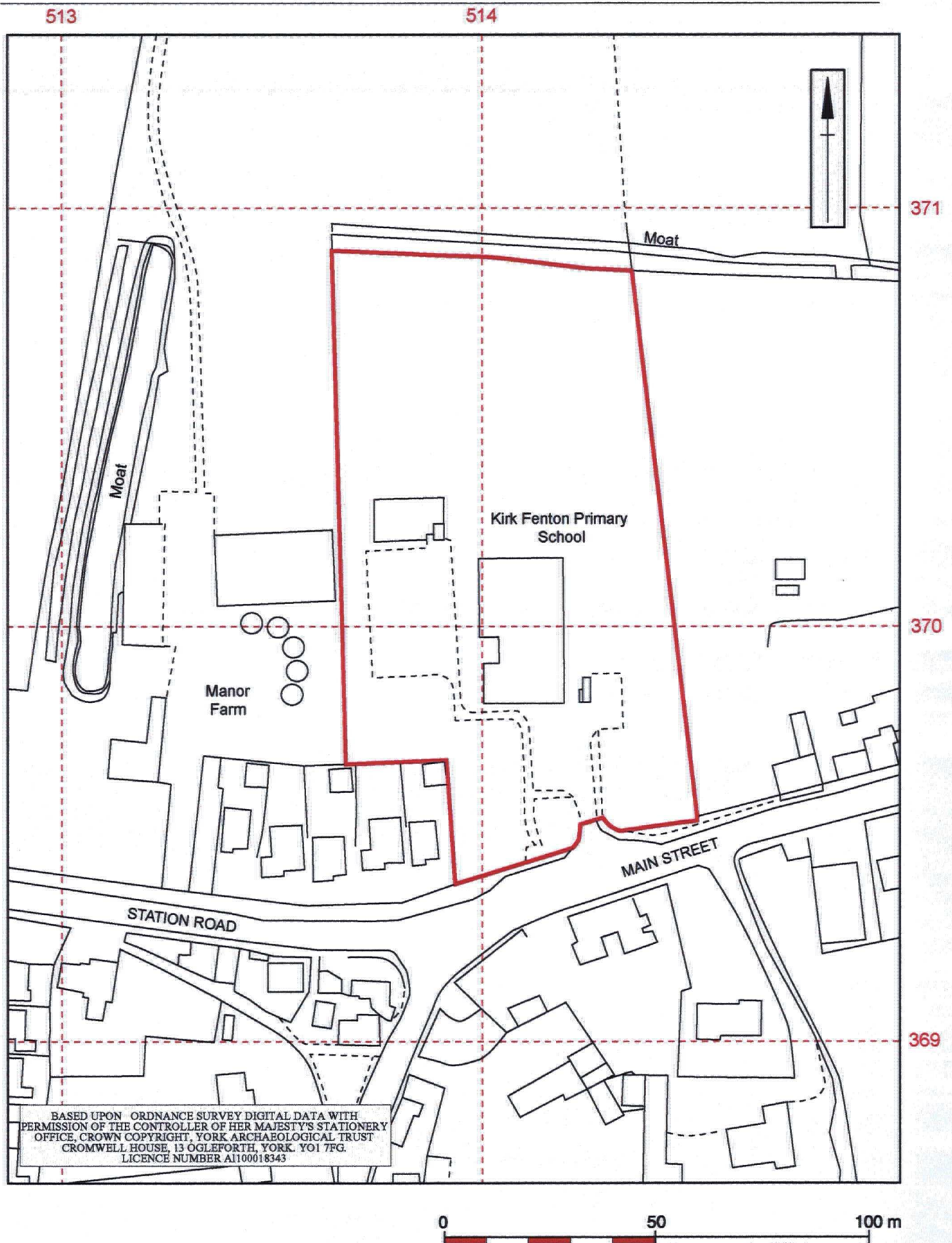


Figure 2 Extent of site

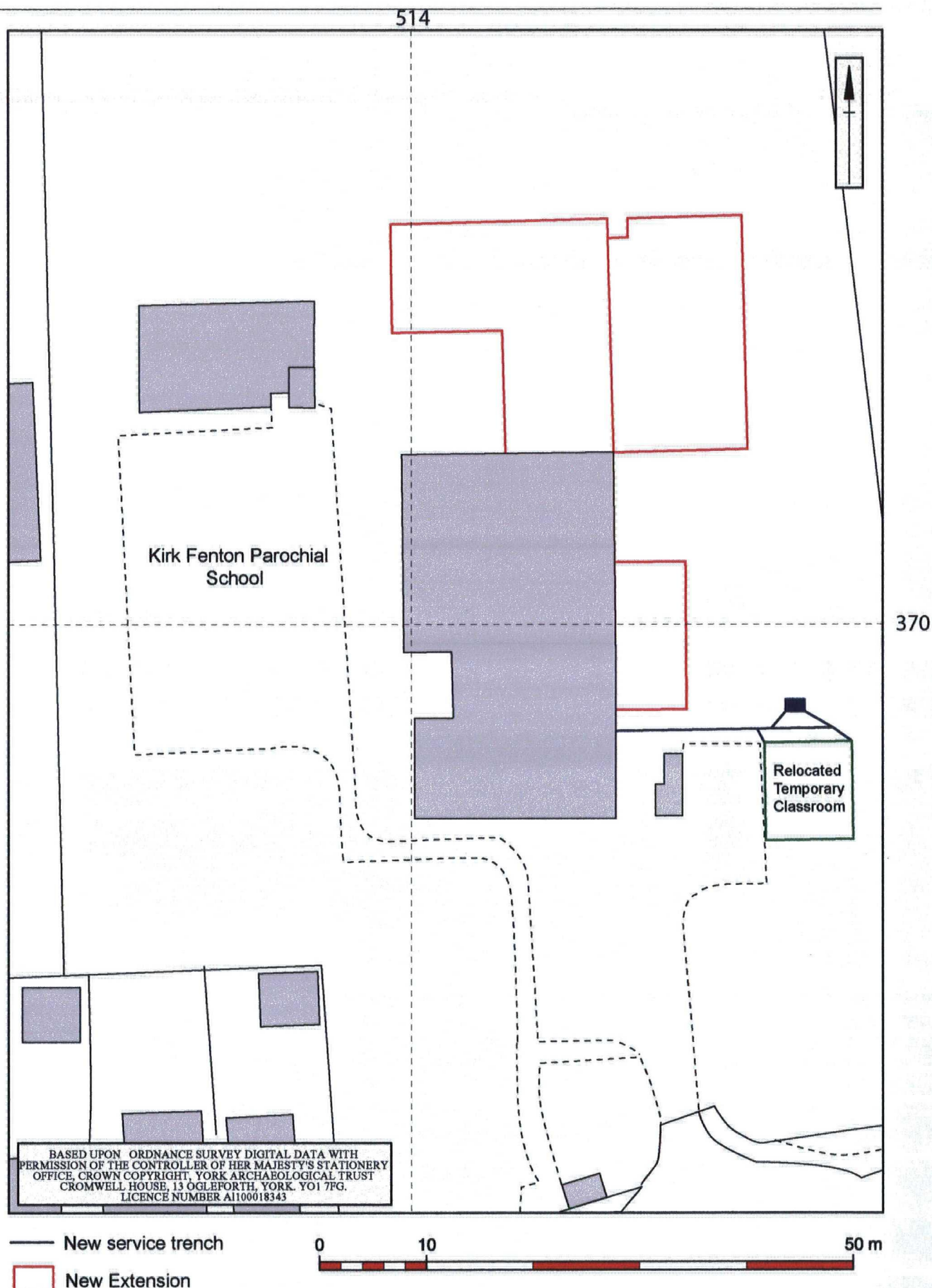


Figure 3 Location of works

4. ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The watching brief was carried out because the school is located within the area of the moated medieval manor and within the historic core of the village. The following account is based on the information on the website www.church-fenton.net. Church Fenton is a small village located within the wapentake of Barkston Ash. The first documentary evidence of Fenton is in 963AD when King Edgar made a grant of twenty Hides to Aeslac of Sherburn-in-Elmet. The land was low lying, often below sea level. Tracks that existed were limited to ridges of high ground. We can perhaps assume that the village main street reflects one such ancient path. The name Church Fenton has evolved over the years, starting as Fentune in 963 to Fentun in the Domesday book of 1086. Kirk Fenton is first mentioned 1338 signifying the establishment of a church in the village. 'Ton' or 'tun' suggests a community within an enclosure, reclaimed from the 'fen' which is an old English word for a marsh. It is likely that the origins of the village were agricultural, although in 1400 records show that many villagers were employed at the Huddleston stone quarry at a time when the stone was being used to build York Cathedral.

Major drainage works opened up the majority of the land for agriculture between 1600 and 1800 and the Moated House of the Lord of the Manor used to stand on the site of Manor Farm. Railways first appeared in the area with the Leeds & Selby line which opened in 1834. The York & North Midland was formed in York in 1835 and began planning a link to London. The first plan showed the railway passing through Kirkby Wharfe and North Milford. However, objections from the Grimston Estate led to a revised plan on the current route through Ulleskelf to Altofts near Normanton to connect with the Leeds to Derby railway. Originally the railway crossed Common Road on a level crossing, with a station on the site now occupied by the present railway bridge. In 1847 a new line was built to Harrogate for which a new station was built with workshops and an engine shed. In 1854 the York and North Midland was bought by the NER. The line from Leeds arrived in 1869 and in 1904 additional tracks were built to York which required the building of a new (third) station. On the northern side of the village is the RAF station established in 1937 as a fighter base to protect the northern industrial towns. In the later twentieth century the base developed its present role of a training station.

5. THE WATCHING BRIEF

5.1 Service Trench 17/02/04

5.1.2 Natural

The natural consisted of a firm, orange brown sandy clay (1003) located between 0.3 and 0.4m BGL.

5.1.3 Modern

Overlying the natural (1003) was a loose layer of crushed stone and brick rubble (1006) between 0.1 and 0.4m thick. It was thickest against the external wall of the school buildings and thinned towards the eastern end of the trench. This deposit may represent

an area of hard standing laid down when the school was constructed or a spread of building material associated with the construction of the school.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The excavation of the new service trench exposed deposits associated with the construction of the present school sealed by a layer of modern topsoil. No deposits, features or structures of significance were observed. The location of the site within the moated manor strongly indicates that the site is of archaeological and historical interest and that any future work within the development area would require further monitoring.

7. LIST OF SOURCES

7.1 Internet Sources

www.church-fenton.net viewed 23/02/04

7.2 Other Sources

Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales) Drift and Solid Sheet 70 1967

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Report Production	Russell Marwood
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