
LEEMING BAR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE

REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OSA REPORT No OSA04WB17

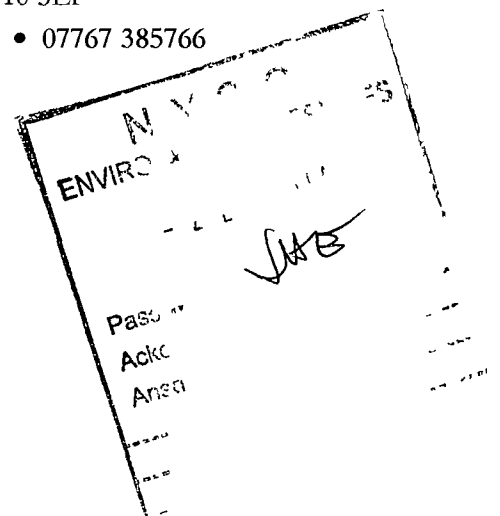
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 Report Summary

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2'02 01-10306

REPORT NO: OSA04WB17

SITE NAME: Leemmg Bar Industrial Estate

COUNTY: North Yorkshire

PARISH: Aiskew

NATIONAL GRID REFERENCE: SE 282 905

ON BEHALF OF: Hambleton District Council
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TIMING Fieldwork
13th - 16th July 2004
Post excavation & report preparation
19th July - 1st August 2004

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PERIODS REPRESENTED: Medieval

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1 0 Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was carried out by On-Site Archaeology Ltd on Leeming Bar Industrial Estate, Leases Road, Leeming Bar, North Yorkshire on behalf of Hambleton District Council. The main archaeological interest in the site was that its eastern boundary was formed by a stretch of the main Roman road between Aldborough (Isurium) and Catterick (Cataractonium). This work was required in order to fulfil an archaeological condition attached to the planning permission for groundworks associated with the construction of a new industrial estate. The archaeological watching brief consisted of site visits during July 2004.

The watching brief comprised the observation of mechanical stripping of topsoil across a large part of the site, followed by deeper localised excavations for landscaping. None of these areas contained any archaeological features. An archaeological section was hand excavated through the modern roadside ditch to ascertain whether an originally Roman roadside ditch survived. There was no evidence for such a Roman ditch, or any other activity of this date. Following consultation between On-Site Archaeology Ltd and the North Yorkshire County Council Heritage Unit the watching brief was curtailed.

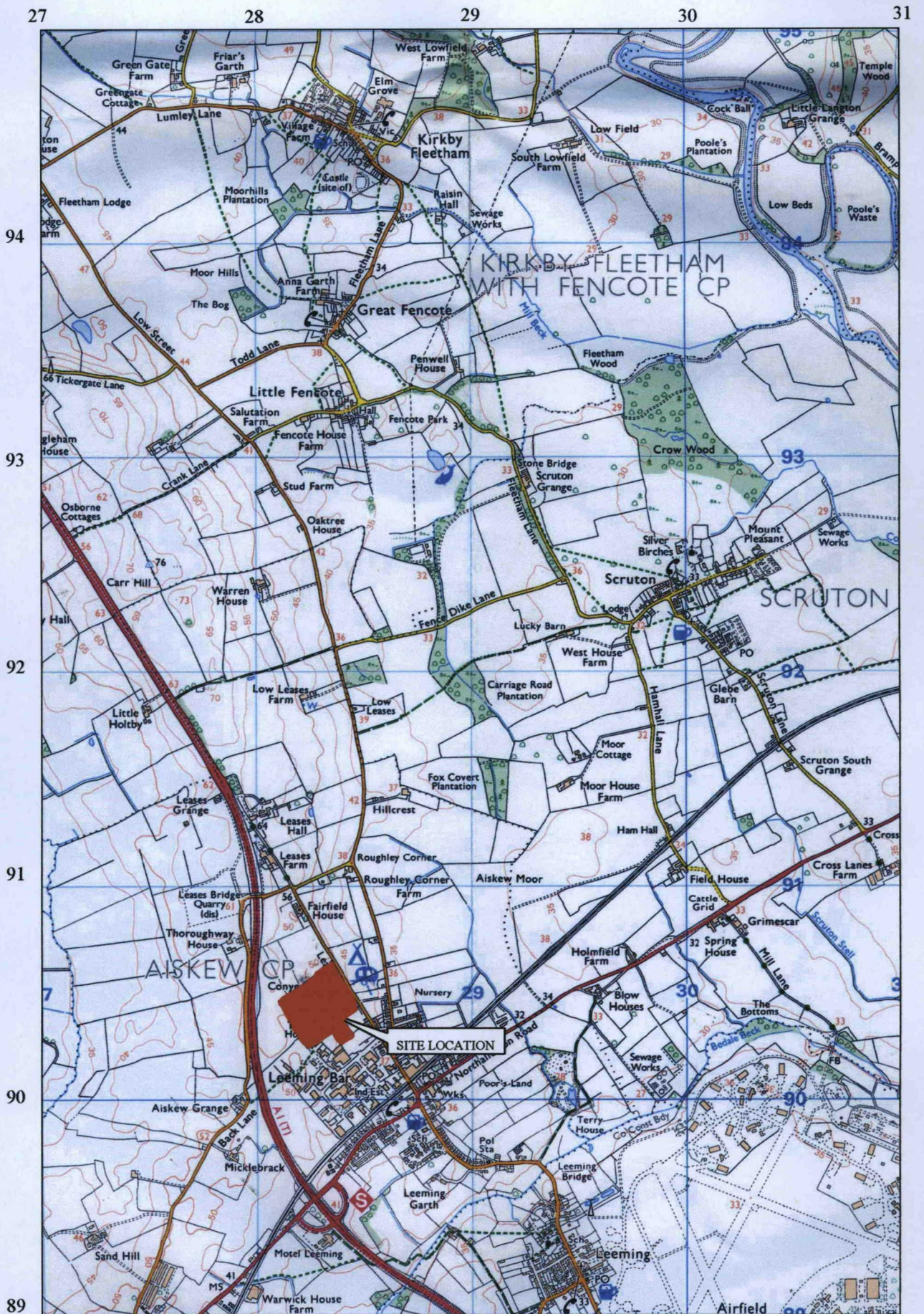


Figure 1. Site Location (NGR SE 282 905)

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2.0 Site Location, Geology, Topography and Land Use.

Leeming Bar lies 3 miles northeast of Bedale immediately east of the A1 (Figure 1). The landscape is gently undulating at between 44m and 50mAOD. The soils of the vale are formed from glacial deposits, mainly from the last glaciation period. Thick glacial till blankets the area where well-developed ridges of sand dominate the natural deposits at Leeming Bar.

The site is situated on the west side of Leases Road, on the northwest side of the village of Leeming Bar, centred at NGR SE 282 905. The proposed development is for the construction of an industrial estate, within a series of areas totalling approximately 6.7 hectares (see Figure 2). Immediately prior to the commencement of the watching brief the site was predominantly occupied by agricultural land and is bounded by open fields to the north and west, an industrial estate to the south and Leases Road to the east.

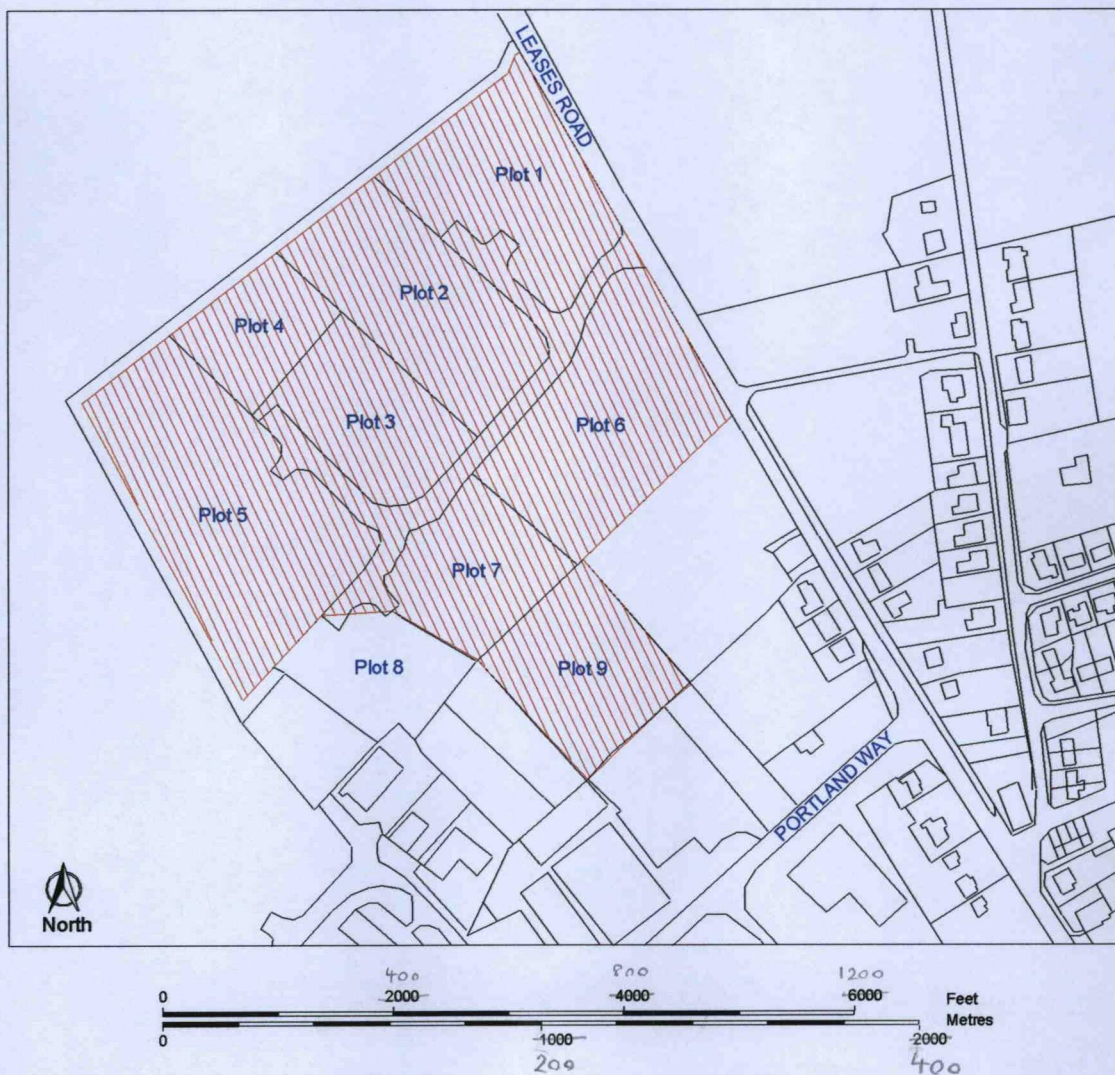


Figure 2. Site location plan showing areas of topsoil strip monitored. (Scale 1:2000).

1:4000?

3 0 Archaeological Background.

3.1 *Iron Age & Romano-British (c. 600 BC - AD 410).*

Leemmg Lane forms part of a major Roman road, *Dere Street*, which, along this particular stretch links the Roman towns of *Isurium* (Aldborough) with *Cataractomum* (Catterick)

3.2 *Anglo-Saxon to Medieval (AD 410 – AD 1540).*

The name Leemmg is believed to date back to the time of the Norman Conquest. Its probable origin is *heme*, which in the Old Frisian dialect of Yorkshire is *leahme*. A chapel was erected in Leemmg itself in 1424 but had become so dilapidated it was rebuilt in 1839.

4 0 Methodology

The topsoil was removed by a bull-dozer (Plate 1). This operation was monitored across the majority of the site (with the exception of Plot 8), but was clearly not the ideal methodology for the recognition of small archaeological features. The topsoil strip varied in depth from 0.10m to 0.30m, which in some places exposed the underlying subsoil, but in others left the remains of the topsoil in place. Where the topsoil had been completely removed the underlying surface was examined for archaeological features. In places where topsoil remained observation was initially limited to the collection of artefacts in an attempt to locate any potential concentrations of activity.

Following the topsoil strip further landscaping, again by bull-dozer, was undertaken. This process fully removed any remaining topsoil from these areas, and partially truncated the top of the underlying subsoil. Once again this method was far from ideal for the recognition of small, shallow, features, but would have provided good conditions for observation of larger, deeper, features, such as ditches.

Limited grading of the eastern boundary of the site was undertaken, which revealed modern, and presumably earlier, roadside ditch. An archaeological section was excavated through this ditch by hand in an attempt to ascertain its date and stratigraphic sequence (see Figure 2 for the location of this section).

Standard *On-Site Archaeology* techniques were followed throughout the investigation. This involved the completion of written descriptions for each deposit or cut encountered within the archaeologically excavated section, along with a section, drawn to scale. A height above Ordnance Datum (AOD) was calculated for the ditch section, by taking levels from a spot height marked on site plans provided by the main contractor. A photographic record of the methodology employed, and the deposits and features was also maintained.

5 0 Results.

Natural deposits were observed across much of the site, even where this was not exposed continuously over substantial open areas. These comprised firm orange sands, containing occasional pebbles, together with bands of gravel. In a number of places the surface of the natural had been cut by regular parallel, linear, bands, a maximum of 0.20m wide, which upon investigation, proved to be less than 0.05m thick (see Plate 2). These contained mid grey brown sandy silty, which was identical to the overlying topsoil, and clearly represent the base of a ploughsoil. Several sherds of abraded medieval and post-medieval pottery were recovered from the ploughsoil, although it should be noted that more recent artefacts, such as glazed drampipe and modern window glass were also present.

With the exception of the plough scars already discussed the only archaeological feature encountered during the watching brief was the roadside ditch, recorded within a section adjacent to Leases Road (see Figures 2 and 3 and Plate 3). At this point the natural (604) had been cut by a broad, shallow "ditch" [603], 6.80m wide, and a maximum of 0.70m deep, which ran along the side of the modern road. The primary fill (601) was a mid yellow brown, silty sand, which contained occasional small pebbles, together with flecks of charcoal and Ceramic Building Material, but unfortunately no datable artefacts. Towards the southwest edge of the feature this primary fill was sealed by a thin layer of loose, orange sand (602), which was clearly redeposited natural material. On its northeastern side the feature contained a loose, mid yellow brown, silty sand (600), containing frequent roots, and including fragments of modern plastic. This latest deposit clearly represented the base of the modern hedge which remained in place further to the southeast and northwest, and was probably simply a disturbed version of fill (601).

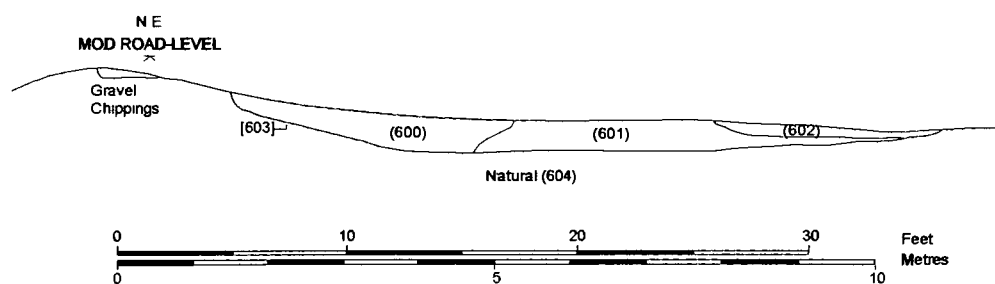


Figure 3 Northwest facing section of roadside ditch (Scale 1:100)

6 0 Discussion and Conclusions

Across the vast majority of the site the only evidence for human activity comprised plough scars into the surface of the natural beneath a shallow layer of ploughsoil. This ploughsoil contained artefactual material ranging in date from medieval to modern, but this is likely to represent manuring of the fields rather than evidence for occupation of the site. The 1857 Ordnance Survey map of the area shows the site to be entirely covered by fields and there is little reason to suggest that the site had been otherwise used.

The section excavated adjacent to Leases Road produced no evidence for a Roman roadside ditch, or any other features of this date. The broad shallow ditch that was present is more likely to be of medieval and later date, and in its latest form held the modern hedge that forms the boundary between the field and the road. Any original Roman ditch may be slightly further to the east, under the present tarmac carriageway, or it may have been entirely superseded by the medieval and later ditch.

The watching brief has afforded the opportunity to investigate a large area with close proximity of the major Roman road and the medieval settlement of Leeming. Whilst the methodology employed was far from ideal for the recognition of small or shallow features the lack of artefacts suggestive of occupation would seem to confirm that such features are truly absent from the site. The roadside area at this point would therefore appear to have always been occupied by open land.

7 0 Bibliography

www.old-maps.co.uk

8 0 Appendix 1 ~ List of Contexts

Context	Description	Extent	Depth
600	Loose, mid yellow brown silty sand with freq roots and occ plastic	3 00m x ?	0 30m
601	Fnable mid yellow brown silty sand with occ pebbles, charcoal and CBM flecks	4 40m x ?	0 30m
602	Loose, orange sand with occ pebbles	2 25m x ?	0 10m
603	Broad shallow linear ditch, parallel with Leases Road	6 80m x ?	0 70m
604	Firm orange sand natural	-	-

9 0 Appendix 2 ~ Archive Index

9.1 Drawing Register.

Dwg No	Description	Scale	Date	Initials
1	NW facing section of roadside ditch	1 20	16-07-04	GB

9.2 Photographic Register.

Frame	Description	Scale	View	Initials/Date
<i>Film Digital 13-07-2004</i>				
1-2	Plot 6, topsoil stnp	-	NE	GB/130704
3	Plot 6, plough scars	1 x 0 5m	NE	GB/130704
4	Plot 9, topsoil stnp	-	S	GB/130704
5	Plot 1, topsoil stnp	-	N	GB/130704
6	Plot 2, topsoil stnp	-	N	GB/130704
7	Plot 5, topsoil stnp	-	N	GB/130704
8	Plot 5, topsoil stnp	-	NW	GB/130704
9	Plot 5, topsoil stnp	-	SE	GB/130704
10-12	Plot 5, topsoil stnp	-	E	GB/130704
<i>Film Digital 16-07-2004</i>				
9	Plots 4 and 5, topsoil stnp		NE	GB/160704
10	Plots 3 and 5, topsoil stnp		E	GB/160704
11	Plot 5, topsoil stnp		8	GB/160704
12	Plots 3 and 5, topsoil stnp		NE	GB/160704
13	Plots 3 and 5, topsoil stnp		SW	GB/160704
14	Plot 1, plough scars		NE	GB/160704
15	Plot 6, modern roadside ditch		SE	GB/160704
16	Plot 6, topsoil strip		SW	GB/160704
17	Ditch section [603]	1 x 1m	SE	GB/160704
18	Ditch section [603]	1 x 1m	E	GB/160704

9.3 Bulk Finds Catalogue.

Context	Description	Date range
Plot 1, U/S	7 sherds abraded splash glaze pottery	medieval
Plot 2, U/S	2 sherds abraded splash glaze pottery	medieval
Plot 5, U/S	1 sherd abraded unglazed gritty pottery	medieval ?

10.0 Appendix 3 ~ The Plates.



Plate 1. Topsoil strip, plot 5.



Plate 2. Plough scars in plot 6. (Scale of 0.5m).



Plate 3. Section through roadside ditch [603], looking southeast. (Scale of 2m).