



ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION REPORT:

Silverwood Scout Camp, Silkstone, Barnsley, South Yorkshire



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Non-Technical Summary

In April 2014 a community archaeology project consisting of an archaeological geophysical survey and a small scale excavation was carried to assess the extent, survival and form of remains of the First World War training camp at Silverwood Scout Camp, Silkstone, Barnsley (hereafter 'the Site'). This area was formally the Newhall training camp of the Barnsley Pals 13/14th (Service) Battalions, Yorkshire and Lancaster Regiment) between 1914 and 1915.

The archaeological excavations revealed the remains of three ablution block bases, with several structural and drainage features identifiable in each. The geophysical survey identified the remains of several other such structures along with the concrete plinths for Armstrong barrack huts. This report details the findings of that excavation.

Acknowledgements

Access to the Site was granted by Silverwood Scout Camp custodian Mr Paul Unsworth and thanks go to him in this regard. The project was completely funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and thanks are due to the staff of this organisation who worked with Elmet to make this project possible. Several people also gave valuable information and insights into the history of the camp including Mr Syd Dyson of the Yorks and Lancs Association, Mr Duncan Simpson (who also helped with work on site), Colonel (Ret.) and Geoffrey Norton. Thanks also go to Major Eric McVey for use of his undergraduate dissertation and access to his archive of photographs of engineer's plans. Thanks are also extended to Mr Andrew Horsfield who allowed access to his unpublished manuscript of the history of Silkstone in the First World War.

The work was carried out with help from volunteers and included Sandra Andrews, Terence Andrews, Sue Ashton, Paul Bain, Anne Brown, Philip Brown, John Camm, Helen Coe, Andrew Edwards, Russell French, Isabelle Heyerdahl-King, Rebecca Hill, Jan Hopwood, Chris Kolonko, Rebecca Newell, Geoffrey Northcliffe, Graham Perkins, Abbie Pettinger, Jo Pettinger, Glenis Ravenscroft, Mark Ravenscroft, Duncan Simpson, Carole Sotheran, David Sotheran, Patrick Sykes, Sue Worthington, Dane Wright and Stephen Walker.

The project was managed by Alex Sotheran and supervised by Christine Rawson and Lauren McIntyre, of Elmet Archaeological Services Ltd. This report was written by Alex Sotheran with additions by Philip Roberts. All illustrations were completed by Alex Sotheran.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background

- 1.1.1 In April 2014 an archaeological geophysical survey and small scale excavation was carried out to assess the extent and form of the archaeological remains of the First World War training camp at Silverwood Scout Camp (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.1 The Newhall Training Camp project was a community archaeology project that intended to record the extent and form of the training area of the Barnsley Pals (13/14th (Service) Battalions, Yorkshire and Lancaster Regiment), alongside the archaeological investigation into several features extent on site and was fully funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of the *Understanding the First World War* funding stream. The project engaged members of the local and wider community in archaeological techniques, allowed them to better understand their local heritage and its place in the First World War.
- 1.2.3 This report details how Elmet Archaeological Services Ltd conducted the archaeological excavation and its results and has been prepared in accordance with industry best practise (CifA 2014a, 2014b and 2014c) and CifA Codes of Conduct (2014d).

1.2 Site Location and Description

- 1.2.1 The Site comprises part of the modern Silverwood Scout Camp and is centred at SE 29480 05431 with a size of approximately 2.4 hectares. The site lies to the south of the A628, and is bounded by woodland to the east and south and pasture land to the west (**Figure 1**).
- 1.2.2 The site is in use as a camping area for the Scout Movement and has been used for such since the 1950s when the site was gifted to the Movement. Given that little extensive earthmoving has been carried out on the Site in the preceding years is a good indication that the state of the underlying archaeological deposits have not been compromised and are anticipated to be in a good state of preservation. However, a large area of the Site to the north-west is comprised of made ground from the construction of the Silkstone by-pass, several meters deep in places.
- 1.2.3 The underlying geology of the site comprises Pennine Lower Coal Measures Formation Sandstone formed approximately 312 – 313 million years ago. No superficial deposits have been recorded (British Geological Survey 2014).

2 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 No archaeological work had been carried out on the site previous to the present project. However the site had been subject to scrutiny from local historians and has been featured in at least one book on the history of the Barnsley Pals (Cooksey, 1986). Information about the area is scant in all these sources however and the following is a summation of information gathered as part of the overall project at Newhall Camp.

2.2 The 20th Century

- 2.2.1 The 13th (Service) Battalion of the York and Lancaster Regiment were raised in Barnsley and the local area on 14 September 1914, with the number rising to 1,100 men by 10 October 1914 (Wylly, 1930, p.246). The 13th (Service) Battalion was renamed 1st Barnsley on the raising of the 14th (Service) Battalion Yorks & Lancs (2nd Barnsley) which had reached 1,117 men by

14 April 1914 (Wylly, 1930, p.266). Initially the 13th (Service) Battalion was similarly housed across Barnsley, but this was far from a perfect solution and civilian tenders for the construction of a camp at Newhall were submitted to the Barnsley Chronicle dated 31 October 1914 (Horsfield, 2014). The land at Silkstone was owned by the Fullertons of Noblethorpe Hall and was known as Newhall, which also gave the new camp its name; Newhall Camp (Horsfield, 2014). The construction tender was won by a company in Bradford, Hall Burke, and the structures at Newhall Camp to house the battalion were built by men from the battalion. These were generally men who had had some form of construction occupation before joining the army (Whyte, 1982, p.38). The work continued beyond the original deadline of 7 December 1914, but was completed shortly before Christmas 1914 with the addition of cook houses, wash houses, boot repair workshops along with haircutting and chiropody facilities (Horsfield, 2014).

2.2.2 At 11 o'clock on 20 December 1914 men from the 13th (Service) Battalion marched from Barnsley up the Dodworth road to Newhall Camp and remained training there until March 1915 (Cooksey, 1986, p.50 & p.57). Colonel Hewitt informed the men upon their arrival that the most important training would be musketry followed by company manoeuvres (Cooksey, 1986, p.50). The regime at Newhall began at 6am with reveille with coffee and biscuits followed by two hours of drill until 8am. Breakfast was served until 9.30 and consisted of tinned tomatoes and bacon (Haig & Turner, 1985, p.5) Training then continued with trench digging, bayonet training, battle formations and wood and village fighting and was followed by dinner at 1pm, with drill covering the afternoon's activities. The soldier's evenings were taken up with lectures on French and German, map reading and military history amongst other subjects (Whyte, 1982, p.38).

2.2.3 It appears that the 14th (Service) Battalion remained in Barnsley, and they were housed in public buildings and schools throughout the town (Wylly, 1930, p.266), until they were joined with the 13th Battalion on 13 May 1915 who left Newhall Camp for Cannock Chase (Barnsley Chronicle, May 15 1915). After this date, Newhall Camp remained in use by the depot units of the 12th, 13th and 14th (Service) Battalions, Yorks & Lancs, who trained further recruits for these formations, probably until the 'Pals' system of Battalions was no longer used in 1917 due to the casualties across the entire army. Several 1917 dated postcards have been sourced which demonstrate that men of the Northumberland RE used the site for further training purposes and possible convalescence. The latter is evidenced by the following statement written on a postcard dated March 14 1917, which indicates that the man who wrote the message was recovering from a Mustard gas attack (**Plate 7**):

"Took the plaster off last night my leg is all blistered where it has been but have got to keep them open to run the poison off for a few days..."

However, evidence for the camp's use at this time is scant and further work in the archives is required before more information is brought to light. No further archaeological entries are present for Silverwood Scout Camp in the Heritage Environmental Records.

3 AIMS AND SCOPE OF THE WORKS

3.1 Aims

3.1.2 The work carried out on the Site intended to assess the form and function of the underlying archaeological remains at Silverwood Scout Camp, Silkstone, Barnsley. The general aims of the project were:

- clean several concrete bases associated with the military use of the camp in the First World War using archaeological techniques;
- record any archaeological remains encountered during the examination to usual industry standards;
- conduct a geophysical survey of the site at Silverwood Scout camp in order to assess the extent of any underlying archaeological deposits;
- assist volunteers in the above archaeological examination of the military camp at Silverwood;
- produce a site archive for deposition with an appropriate museum and to provide information for accession to the local SMR.

4 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Archaeological Techniques

4.1.1 The remains of several extant ablution hut bases were identifiable on the site; each of these features was excavated and cleaned in order to expose their full extent. Any associated finds were collected and assigned to individual contexts from a sequential list which was created on site. The hut bases were then recorded by photograph using a digital camera of no less than 20 MP and with appropriate scales. All illustrations were drawn by hand to an appropriate scale of 1:10/1:20 as necessary on permatrace.

5 ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 The following section is a summary of the information held in the Site archive. The hut base locations are shown in **Figure 2**. The deposits encountered during the archaeological ground works are summarised in **Appendix 1** and are referred to in the text in bold.

5.1.2 The overburden on each hut base was removed by hand down to the upper concrete surfaces which were then hand cleaned to clarify the extent of the archaeological remains and any structural features within.

5.1.3 All recording took place in accordance with standard industry practises and methodology. All trenches were recorded on Elmet *pro forma* to a standard in accordance with the relevant Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) Standards and Guidance (2014a, 2014b and 2014c) and Code of Conduct (2014d).

5.1.4 Three concrete bases were investigated during the project, it is thought that these features formed several ablutions blocks that would serve the barracks blocks which formed the camp. Each of these bases will be examined in detail below. The measurements are given in both metres and feet as the original buildings would have been laid out using the Imperial measurement system.

5.2 Base 1

5.2.1 **Base 1** was identified as a latrine block (**Figure 3 & Plate 1**), as evidenced from the features that were extent in the concrete. The bedding layer of **Base 1** was **1003** which was mixed stone and red brick rubble. This layer was only exposed in patches through the broken concrete **1002**, the largest being 3.10m long and 2.20m wide. It was not excavated below the exposed surface.

- 5.2.2 The layer **1003** underlay the concrete base **1002**, which was rectangular in shape measuring 7.94m (26') long, 3.50m (11' 5") wide and 0.05m in depth. The base was constructed of well mixed concrete with very few inclusions of pebbles and the remaining undamaged surfaces were relatively level, with only a 0.06m difference across the entire surface. The central area was cracked and fragmentary, due to high heating from camp fires after the structure had gone out of use in the training camp. This was more apparent in the central area which was bound by three gullies.
- 5.2.3 The three gullies formed a 'U' shape around the interior edge of the base, the two which ran in a north-west to south-east direction measured approximately 6.80m long (approximately 22'). The shorter north-east to south-west gully had a length of approximately 2.90m (9' 6"). The gullies all had a width of 0.12m (approximately 4"). The two longer gullies joined the shorter gully which in turn emptied over the edge of the base on the southern corner. A slope within the long gullies was identifiable through the levels of these features. The north-eastern gully had a drop off of approximately 0.02m from 142.15mOD at the north-western end to 142.13mOD at the south-eastern end. The opposite north-western gully had a steeper slope of 0.06m, starting at 142.19mOD on its north-western end, culminating at 142.13mOD at the south-eastern end. The shorter gully had a depth of 142.10mOD to allow the water to run away from the base in a south-westerly direction. These gullies would have been utilised to facilitate the cleaning of the latrines, by allowing water to collect and run over the edge of the base into a possible soak-away which wasn't investigated.
- 5.2.4 Several post holes were also identified within the fabric of the concrete base. The edge of the base was bounded by no less than fourteen post holes. The north-west edge displayed evidence for two rectangular posts measuring approximately 0.12m x 0.08m (5" x 3"), the north-eastern edge retained four further rectangular post holes, measuring 0.12m x 0.09m (5" x 3.5") and the south-western edge retained a line of no less than eight of these features. This last alignment of posts consisted of alternate rectangular and square posts of four square and four rectangular features. The measurements of the square post holes were 0.08m x 0.08m (3" x 3") and the rectangular posts measured 0.12m x 0.08m (5" x 3"), which demonstrated regularity to the size of the wooden posts used in the construction of the structure.
- 5.2.5 The alignment of posts on the south-western edge was mirrored by a row of similar posts running along the near centre of the structure, approximately 1.50m (5") from the south-west edge of the concrete. These two rows of posts formed the individual stalls within the latrine block (**Plate 3**). The centre of each post was approximately 0.81m (32") from its neighbour giving an idea of the width of each individual stall.
- 5.2.6 Further evidence for construction was noted in impressions of corrugated iron sheeting extant in the concrete on the north-east edge of the base. It was impossible to ascertain if these impressions were created by the sheeting being placed with the concrete as a base or if they were placed on the wet concrete before being lifted into position for the structure's walls. Photographic evidence (**Plate 10**) appears to point to the iron sheeting being fixed to the wooden posts a few inches above the top of the base.

5.3 Base 2

- 5.3.1 The concrete of **Base 2** (**Figure 4** & **Plate 3**) in the centre of the structure was very fragmentary and a large section of bedding material **1005** was visible in this area. The largest patch of this material was 1.80m long with a width of 1.10m and consisted of broken brick fragments and small stones mixed to make a bedding layer for the concrete **1004**. This layer was not excavated below the exposed upper surface.

- 5.3.2 A separate area of bedding material was noted as **1008** and was located on the north-west end of the remains of **Base 2**. This consisted of medium sized sandstone slabs laid horizontally. The slabs average size was 0.20m x 0.15m x 0.04m and it was thought that their purpose was to support a substantial feature located in the L shaped cut at the end of the base.
- 5.3.3 The remains of the **Base 2, 1004**, were constructed with well mixed concrete with very little aggregate inclusions. In a similar construction method as **Base 1** and **Base 3**, the concrete appears to have been smoothed but not tamped in the same style that modern concrete would be. The shape of the base was rectangular, with a length of 11.67m (38' 3"), a width of 3.36m (11') and a depth of 0.05m. However, the full length of the structure was not evident as a section of the north-west end had been broken off at some point since going out of use. **Base 2** was much longer than both **Base 1** and **Base 3**, indicating that it was for a different purpose than the latrines and was in fact an ablution block.
- 5.3.4 The base was bound on the long sides by two drainage gullies, both of which ran almost the entire length of the concrete. The longest measured 11.20m (36' 9") long with a width of 0.12m (4") and an average depth of 0.07m (2 ¾"). There was no evidence that these drains joined at any point or where the run-off would have been located, but it is probable that it was located towards the north-west end of the structure. This was evidenced by the level of the drains having a difference in height of 0.16m from south-east to north-west on the south-west drain and 0.13m difference in height from the south-east to north-west on the north-east drain.
- 5.3.5 Several markings and other features were noted in the concrete, including several faint impressions of corrugated iron sheeting on the extreme north-west corner. On the southern corner a pair of marks, probably created by wooden slats, were noticeable running directly between two post holes that were also noted in this area. The post holes were two of a series of no less than seven which ran around the exterior edge of the base. One was noted in the northern corner, four ran along the line of the south-east edge and two further post holes were evident on the south-west edge. Only one had survived enough to be measured and was a rectangle of 0.12m x 0.08m (5" x 3"). It may be supposed that the remains of the other post holes had a similar dimension originally; however, due to the fragmentary state of the concrete **1004**, they were only identifiable through the remains of corners and edges.
- 5.3.6 At the north-west end of the concrete **1004** was unexplained L shaped feature, measuring 1.70m (6' 6") along its widest edge and 2.40m (7' 10") long (**Plate 4**). The reason for the cut was unknown but it was postulated that it may have been a placement for a water tank or a similar feature. However, this feature is not present on the Winchester plans (**Plate 8** & see below) so it may have been a local variation. Also a small metal pipe was visible situated 4.10m from the north-west end of the base, located on the north-east edge of the fractured concrete. The pipe was assumed to have been used as a water flow system for the ablutions block.
- 5.3.7 A set of four modern steps were located at the southern corner of the base, created by the Scouts and probably used for safe access to the exposed concrete surface. Being modern these steps were not included in the archaeological context record but were cleaned and drawn to give a complete view of the features.

5.4 Base 3

- 5.4.1 Only a small amount of bedding material for **Base 3 (Figure 5 & Plate 5)** was noted as **1007**, which was similar to **1003**, mixed brick fragment and stone rubble. The bedding was only noticeable on the north-west of the concrete base **1006**, where a large section of the concrete

was missing, presumably sheared off by later demolition work. The exposed area measured 3.70m length by 1.90m wide.

- 5.4.2 Comparable to the other two bases, the concrete of **Base 3** was more complete except on the edges which had cracked and were fragmentary. The remains of the base measured 6.98m long by 3.65m wide with a maximum depth of 0.23m. The concrete **1006** was well mixed concrete with few inclusions of pebble and had not been stamped, similar to the other bases. Along the south-east edge of the base a line of cracked concrete was visible, which had possibly been displaced or was the result of the construction, it was difficult to ascertain.
- 5.4.3 Various features were noted in the base, including at least nine postholes on the south-west edge, which were mirrored by a row running along the off centre line. Of these, four appeared to be square and had dimensions of 0.08m x 0.08m (3" x 3"), the remaining five post holes were rectangular and measured 0.12m x 0.08m (5" x 3"), similar to the post holes in **Base 1**. The layout was again similar to **Base 1**, with alternate rectangle and square shapes. On the north-east edge of **Base 3** were four postholes, each rectangle in shape and measuring 0.12m x 0.09m (5" x 3.5"), with a further two rectangular postholes on the south-east edge, making a row of four in total.
- 5.4.4 Other internal fittings were apparent which were not noted in **Base 1**. Three rectangular post holes appeared to be pressed into the concrete surface at the south-east end of the base (**Plate 6**). Two of these post-holes were laid in a T shape, with the longest one measuring 0.20m (8") long by 0.04m (1½") wide and had a depth of 0.02m (1") whilst the shorter feature was 0.13m (5") long, by 0.05m (2") wide and 0.02m (1") deep. These two post holes were on the south-west corner of the base and quite close to the outer row of four post holes on the south-eastern edge. Another single post hole was found to be 0.14m (5½") in length, 0.08m (3¼") wide and 0.03m (1¼") in depth. None of these post holes penetrated through the skin of the concrete and it appeared that they had been created after the concrete had been laid and was still in a wet state. It was also impossible to ascertain what the purpose of these of these post holes may have had, but it was surmised that they could have formed the legs of a set of wooden stairs leading into the structure from the higher level of the ablutions block, **Base 2**.

5.5 Artefacts

- 5.5.1 During the excavation 561 individual artefacts were recovered. However, none of these were found in secure archaeological contexts and were classified as unstratified and as such it was deemed unnecessary to keep them. The largest amount of material, consisting of 462 pieces, were metal objects of various types, mostly screws, nails and bolts and had probably come from wooden pallets or similar items, burnt by the users of the Scout camp as camp fires. Other items relating directly to the camp were tent pegs, and eyelets from tents or groundsheets. 59 pieces of glass were recovered, but all were modern and post 1950s, along with all 17 pieces of pottery.
- 5.5.2 Other remains include 10 frogged red bricks, some of which were stamped with local manufacturer's names and 10 other items of building material. One interesting item stood out; a blank firing bullet cartridge stamped with 7.62 x 5.1 MEN 85. However, this cartridge was not of First World War date, being a NATO round manufactured in 1985. How it arrived on the Site is a mystery although it may have possibly originated from one of several re-enactment displays that have been held at the camp.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 The archaeological excavation revealed the remains of three concrete based structures belonging to the training area of the Barnsley Pals 13th (Service) Battalion, Yorks & Lancs) which was in use between 1914 and 1917 at least as evidenced by photographic records. Two of the concrete bases (**Base 1 & Base 3**) were the remains of latrine huts with a set of latrine stalls in each. The larger and centrally located **Base 2** formed the ablution block which was probably used to serve both latrine huts.

6.2 Discussion

6.2.1 Wartime plans of the training area have not been located in the archives. As a civilian contractor (Hall Burkes) tendered for the construction of the camp the original plans may have been destroyed for various reasons after the camp was completed or may not have been deposited in the archives. This lack of information potentially makes understanding the remains problematic. For example, the absolute layout of the camp is not known at present; however, plans from a contemporary camp at Winchester (**Plate 8**) exist in The National Archives which show scale drawings of the latrines and ablution blocks which were created specifically for construction purposes.

6.2.2 As military camps were built to particular standards it can be extrapolated that the remains at Silverwood Camp were built to the same specifications as the one at Winchester. The south-western post holes in **Bases 1 & 2** are equivalent the layout of the latrine bucket stalls, with the north-eastern gully in place for the urinal run off. This layout is further evidenced by a photograph from Winchester camp showing the interior of the latrine block (**Plate 9**) with the metal sheeting for the urinal in place. However, the contemporary photographs and plans do not help understand the large L shaped void in **Base 2**, nor the small sets of post holes located at the south-east end of **Base 3**.

6.3 Conclusion

6.3.1 The remains examined at Silverwood Scout Camp demonstrate that there was good provision for the men's general health whilst they were training for the 'New Armies'. Cleanliness and hygiene were both recognised as important during the Crimean War and this idea was carried through into the twentieth century, with the provision of structures for washing and latrines in training camps.

7 ARCHIVE

7.1 Copies of the report will be held at Elmet Archaeological Services Ltd offices, deposited at the Sites and Monuments Record maintained by South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) and with Mr Pauls Unsworth of Silverwood Scout Camp. An OASIS form has been completed under the reference number elmetarc1-195728.

8 COPYRIGHT

8.1 Elmet Archaeological Services give permission for the report to be used by the Archives in perpetuity, although Elmet reserve the right to be identified as the author of all project related documents and report material as specified in the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* (Chapter IV, Section 7). The permission will allow Archives to reproduce material, including for use by third parties, with the copyright owner suitably acknowledged.

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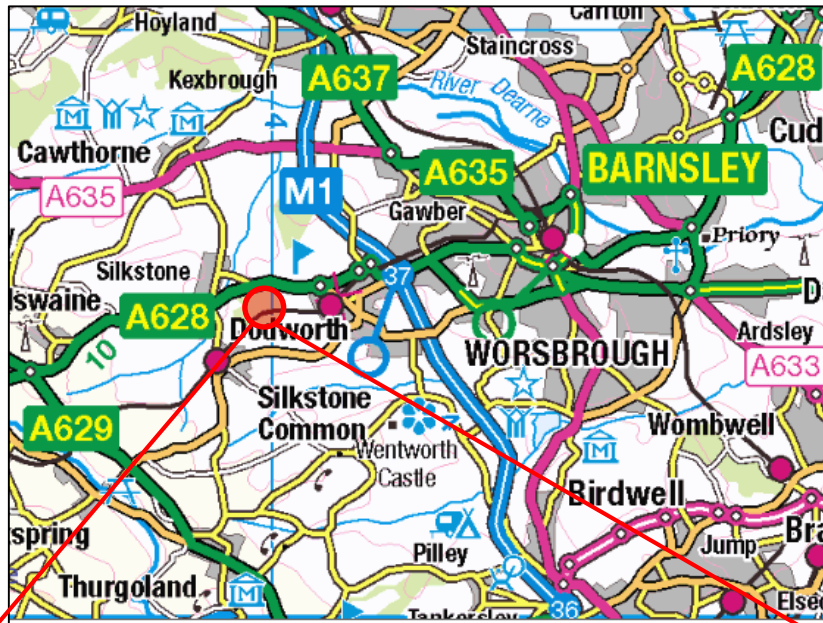
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Appendix 1: List of Contexts

Context	Description	Depth
1001	Topsoil: Friable dark blackish-brown silty clay, turf layer.	0.12m
1002	Concrete Base 1: Well mixed concrete, occasional pebble inclusions, badly fragmented	0.05m
1003	Bedding Layer for Base 1: Mixed stone and brick fragment	-
1004	Concrete Base 2: Well mixed concrete, occasional pebble inclusions, badly fragmented	0.05m
1005	Bedding Layer for Base 2: Mixed stone and brick fragment	-
1006	Concrete Base 3: Well mixed concrete, occasional pebble inclusions, badly fragmented	0.23m
1007	Bedding Layer for Base 3: Mixed stone and brick fragment	-
1008	Bedding Layer for Base 2: Moderate sized sandstone blocks, laid flat	-

Figure 1: Site Location



ELMET ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES LTD  : Site Location

Figure 1

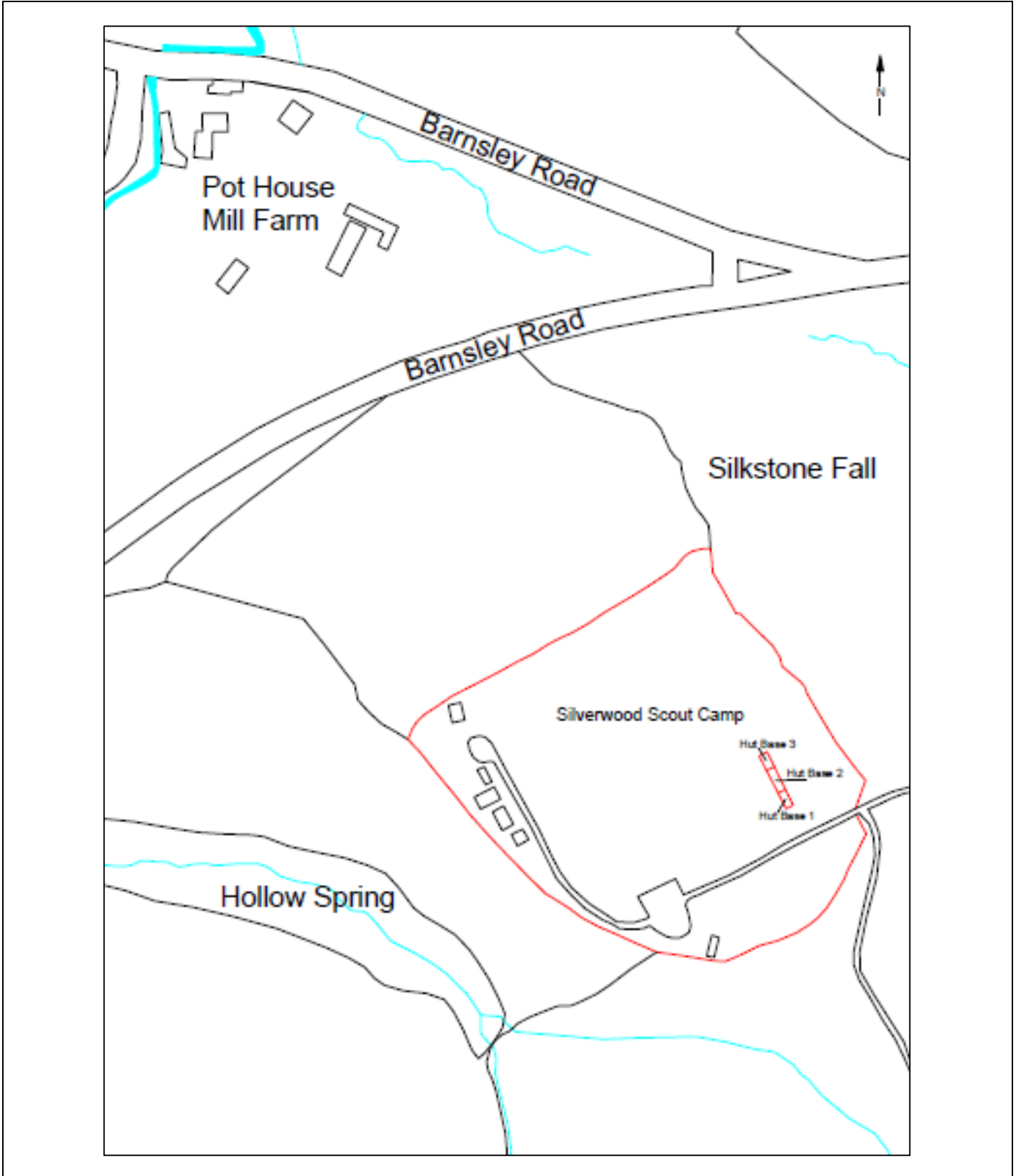
Drawn By: AS/PR

Checked by: CR

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Figure 2: Location of Hut Bases



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Figure 2

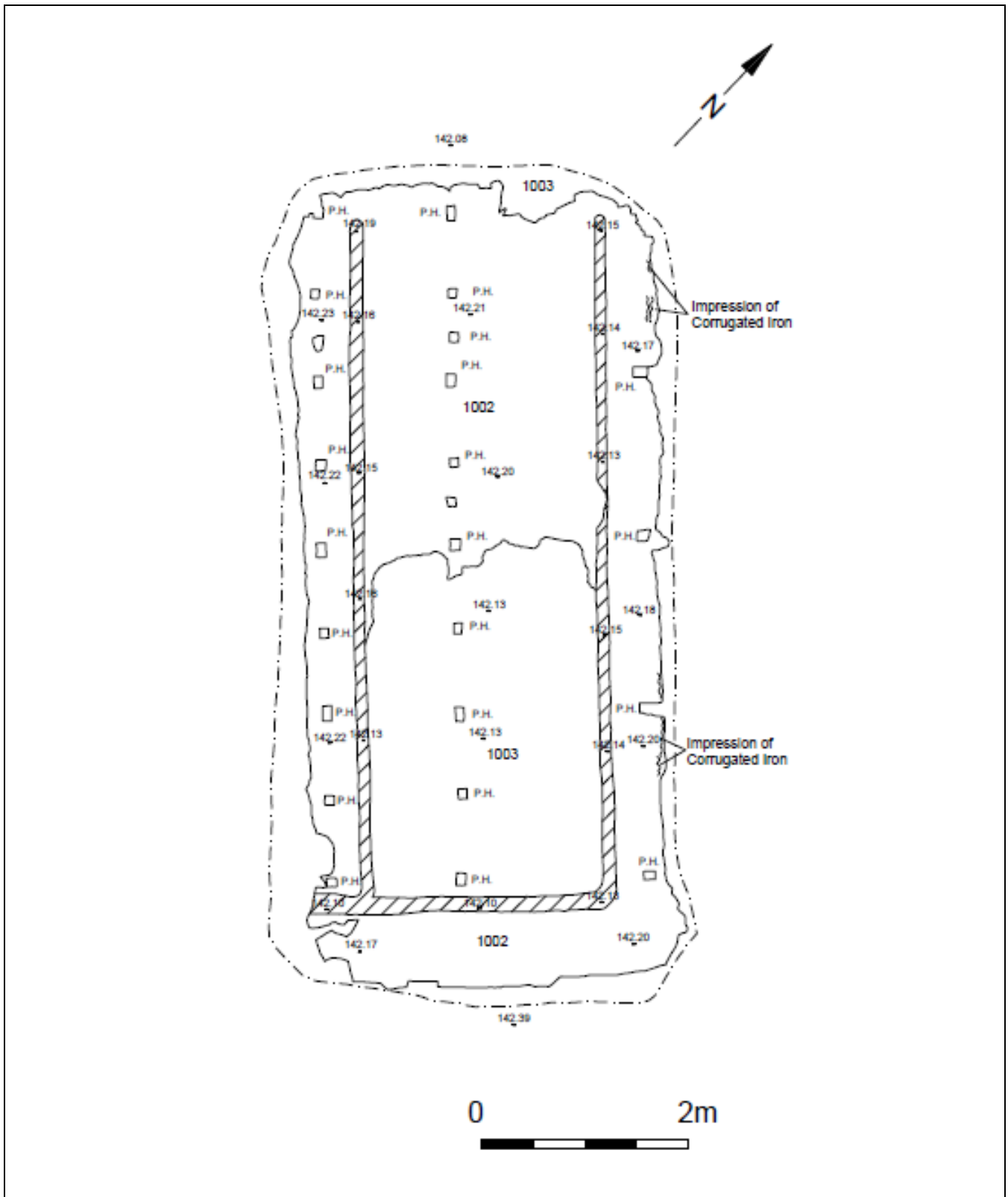
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Checked by: CR

SIL14 Drawing no: 2

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Figure 3: Hut Base 1



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Figure 3

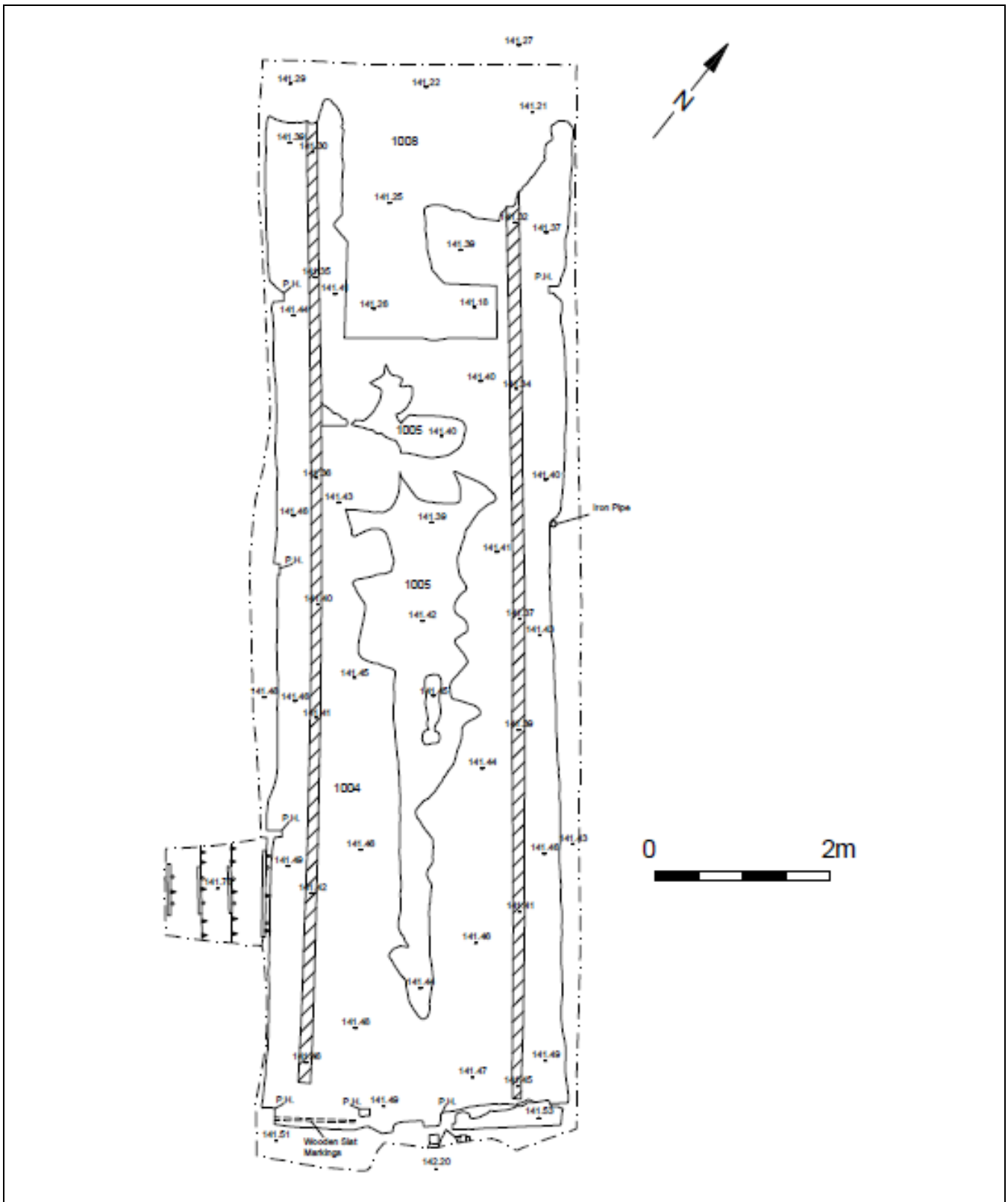
Drawn By: AS

Checked by: CR

SIL14 Drawing no: 3

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Figure 4: Hut Base 2



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Figure 4

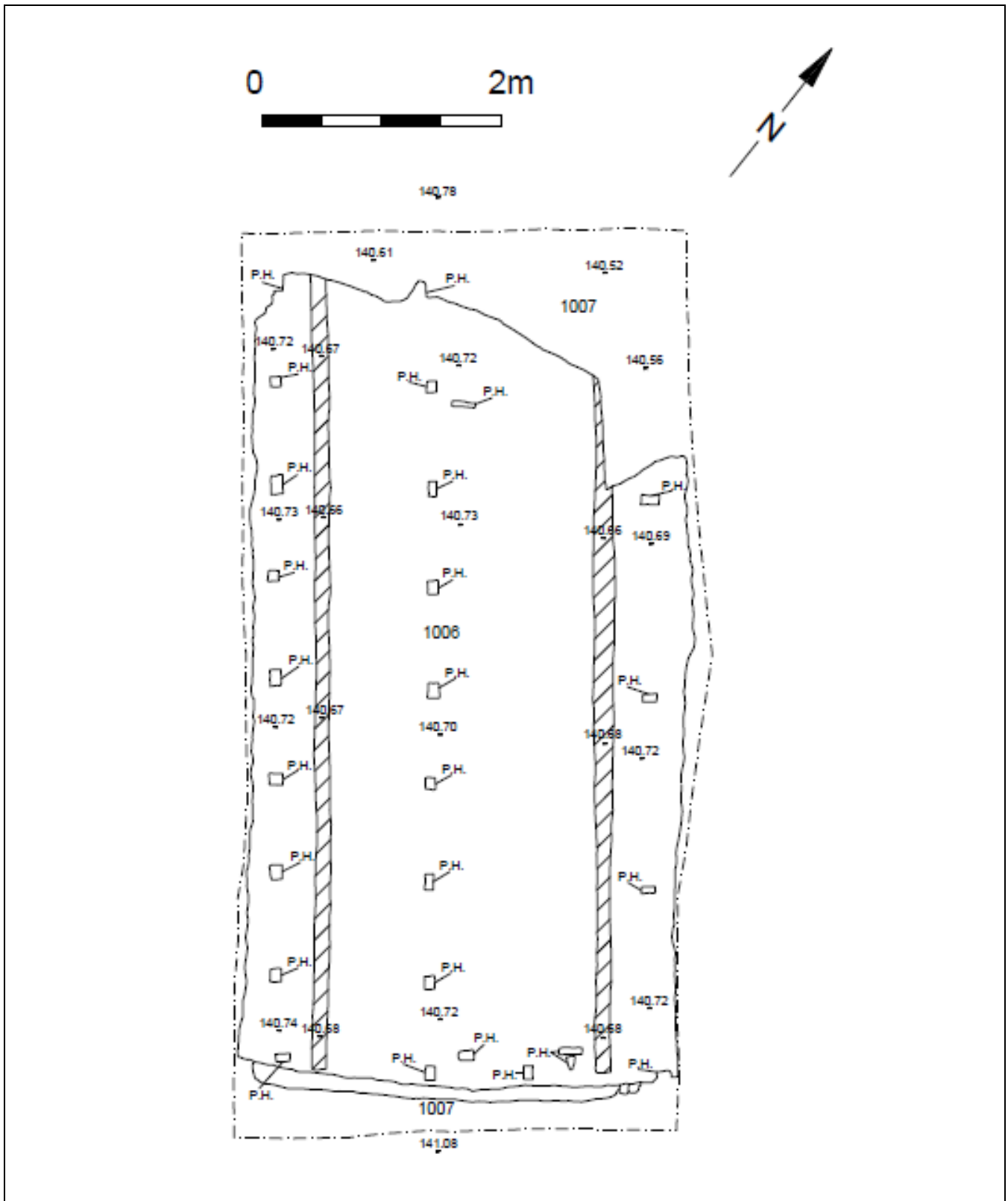
Drawn By: AS

Checked by: CR

SIL14 Drawing no: 4

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Figure 5: Hut Base 3



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Plate 1: Base 1, post ex, facing south-west. Scales 2 x 1m.



Plate 2: Base 1, post-ex detail of interior frame work post holes, facing north-west. Scale 1 x 1m.



Plate 3: Base 2, Post-ex, facing north-west. Scales 2 x 1m.



Plate 4: Base 2, detail of north-west end, showing void in concrete, facing north-east. Scales 2 x 1m.



Plate 5: Base 3, Post-ex, facing north-west. Scales 2 x 1m.



Plate 6: Base 3, detail of north-west end, showing remains of possible steps. Scale 1 x 1m.



Plate 7: Postcard dated 25 March 1917 of Newhall Camp.

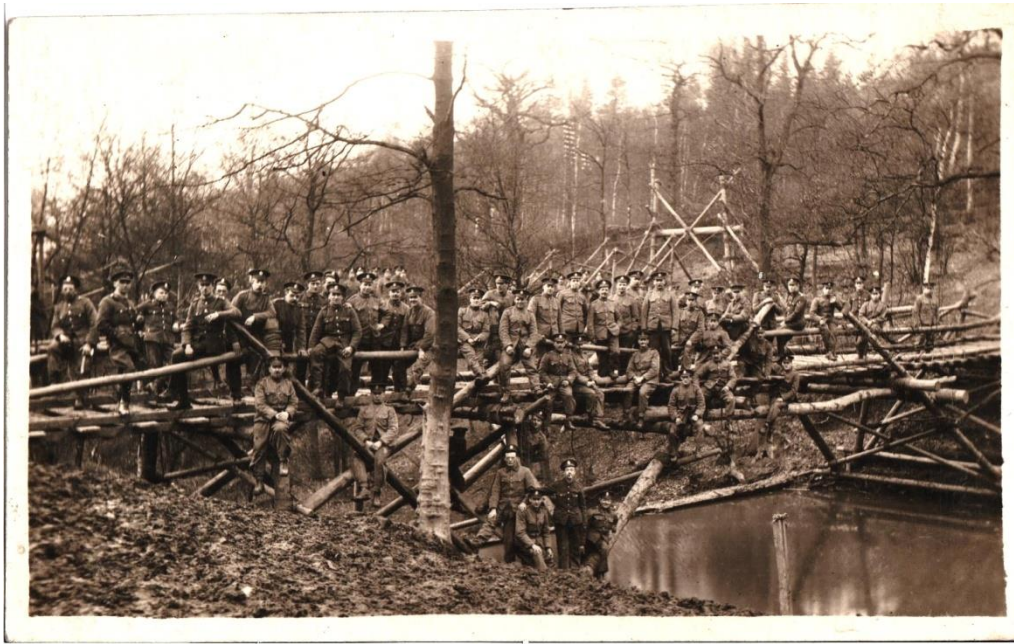


Plate 8: War Department – Standing Camp – Latrines, Urinals and Ablution Shed – Sheet no. 15 (from WO 161/117).

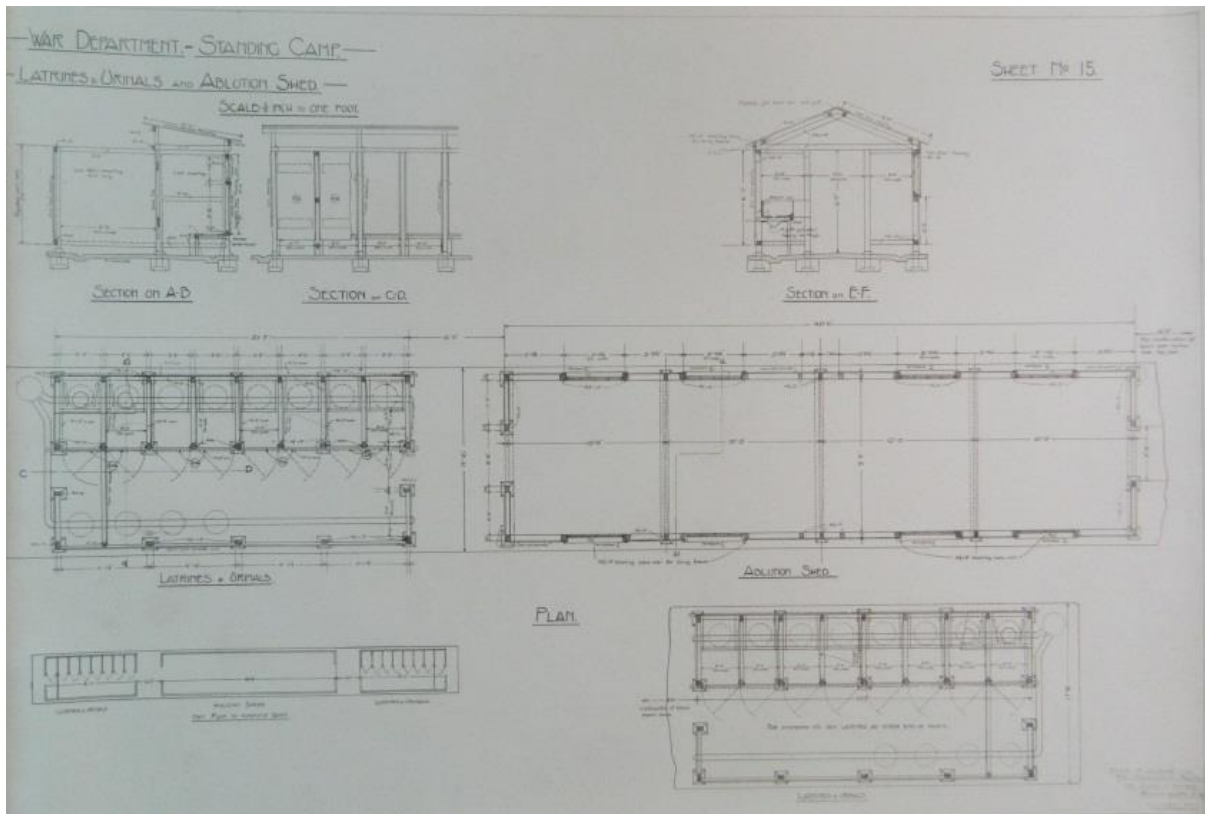


Plate 9: Winchester Camps – Latrines Interior (from WO 161/117).

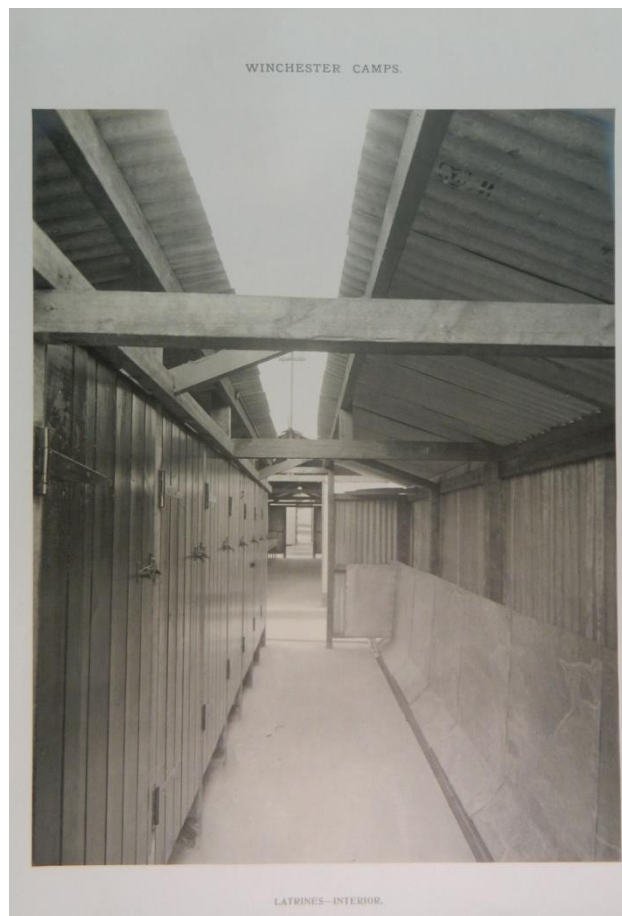


Plate 10: Winchester Camps – Latrines (from WO 161/117).



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