

Historic Building Recording

Interpretation, Design & Display

Land at OS Field **West Grange Farm Dishforth North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Evaluation

Report No. Y217/16







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SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was carried out by CFA Archaeology on land at OS Field 003, Dishforth, North Yorkshire during February 2016. Five trenches were excavated across the site targeting anomalies identified by geophysical survey. Trenches contained surviving archaeology in the form of ditches and gullies with pottery recovered from these features dated between the 2nd and 4th centuries AD.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report presents the results of an archaeological evaluation undertaken by CFA Archaeology Ltd (CFA) during February 2016 at OS field 003, Dishforth, North Yorkshire (Fig. 1, NGR SE 378 732). The work was commissioned by Prospect Archaeology and was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation produced by Prospect Archaeology (2016).

1.1 Site Location and Description

The site comprised 2.2ha of arable land off Leeming Lane and adjacent to Grange Farm to the north-west of the village of Dishforth, North Yorkshire. It consisted of two fields, one of recently planted wheat fields, the second of grass pasture.

The site was bounded by Leeming Lane to the north, residential properties to the east and south-east, and open fields to the south and west.

The underlying solid geology of the site is Sherwood Sandstone Group-Sandstone, with superficial deposits of Vale of York Formation-Clay, Sandy, Gravelly (BGS 2016). The overlying soil is described as 'freely draining slightly acid loamy soils' (Landis 2016).

1.2 Historical and Archaeological Background

To the east of the site, and within the existing village of Dishforth a number of monuments have been recorded; medieval ridge and furrow earthworks have been noted from aerial photography of the area, along with finds of a prehistoric stone battle axe and a Saxon cross.

Between the site and the existing A1(M) Road to the west, a possible enclosure of Neolithic or Bronze Age date is visible as very vague cropmarks on aerial photographs. To the south-east of the site, between the southern end of the village and the northern boundary of RAF Dishforth, a medieval 'double-island' moated site has been recorded along with ridge and furrow and other slight earthworks, within an area of permanent pasture.

The wider area around RAF Dishforth features monuments relating to the Second World War, with the site of a bomb store visible as a series of structures and earthworks on historic aerial photos of the northern side of the airfield. The feature comprised the stores, blast wall, military buildings and trackways that linked to the airfield's perimeter track. Also in this area are a number of Second World War concrete pillboxes and two concrete and steel Allan Williams turrets.

1.3 Previous Archaeological Work

A geophysical survey of the proposed development area has been undertaken (GSB 2016). Anomalies were identified across the site in the form of ditches and gullies forming enclosures typical of the late Iron-Age to Romano-British period along with a number of trends of uncertain origin. No previous evaluation/excavation work has been undertaken on the site.

1.4 Project Aims

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation, the aims of the archaeological works were to;

- Establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of archaeological remains and their location within the development area.
- Gather sufficient information to enable an assessment of the potential significance of any archaeological remains to be made and the impact development will have upon them.
- Enable an informed decision to be made regarding the future treatment of any archaeological remains and consider any appropriate mitigatory measures to be undertaken either in advance of and/or during development.

2. WORKING METHODS

CFA Archaeology Ltd is a registered organisation (RO) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA). CFA Archaeology follows all relevant CIfA and Historic England standards and guidance (CIfA 2014a-c and EH 2008 and 2011).

Linear features (ditches and gullies) were sample excavated at a minimum of 10% of their length and a minimum of 1m per section at regular intervals. Intersections were investigated to establish relationships between features. Pits and post holes were sampled at a minimum of 50%.

Archaeological remains were recorded by means of photographs, drawings and written records conforming to CIfA standards (2014b) and CFA's quality manuals. All features were planned and drawn in section appropriate scales. The trenches, section lines and drawing points were surveyed using an industry standard Trimble GPS. The same equipment was used to establish levels above Ordnance Datum for the trenches and archaeological features.

All finds were treated in accordance with relevant guidance (CIFA 2014c). Modern finds were recorded and then discarded.

A summary of the results of archaeological works will be submitted for inclusion in OASIS. The OASIS reference is cfaarcha1-245900.

2.1 Trial Trenching

Five trial trenches, three measuring 25 x 3.6m and two measuring 50 x 1.8m in size were excavated (Fig.1). Deposits were removed in even, shallow spits by a 360° excavator

equipped with a 1.8m wide smooth-bladed ditching bucket, with one trench (Trench 5) excavated with a JCB 3CX. All mechanical excavation work was carried out under constant archaeological supervision. Any further excavation required to fulfil the objectives of the evaluation was carried out by hand.

3. RESULTS

A summary of all contexts from the evaluation forms Appendix 1 whilst the complete site archive is listed in Appendix 2. The following results should be read in conjunction with figures 1-5.

Descriptions of the five trenches appear in the summary table below, whilst detailed results from those trenches with excavated features follow. Trenches overlain upon the earlier geophysical survey can be seen in Figure 3.

Topsoil on the site consisted of dark brown silty clay (100) and varied in depth across the site from 0.30-0.35m. Subsoil consisted of light brown silty sandy clay with some stone inclusions (101) and varied in thickness from 0.1-0.35m across the site. The natural substrate for the area consisted of firm red clay (102).

No.	Description
1	Trench 1 was on a north-west to south-east orientation and was fairly flat. Topsoil was 0.30m in depth with subsoil 0.20m thick. The natural substrate consisted of red clay.
	Three east to west orientated ditches were recorded within the trench (108, 130 and 132).
	Both anomalies identified on the geophysical survey were recorded within the trench.
2	Trench 2 was on a north-east to south-west orientation and sloped slightly from south-west to north-east. Topsoil was 0.30-0.35m in depth with subsoil 0.30-0.35m thick. The natural substrate consisted of red clay.
	Two ditches were recorded (104 and 106). Ditch 104 was identified as an anomaly on the geophysical survey of the area.
3	Trench 3 was on an east to west orientation and sloped slightly from east to west. Topsoil was 0.35m in depth with subsoil 0.25-0.30m thick. The natural substrate consisted of red clay.
	Three ditches were recorded within the trench (110, 120 and 122).
	All three ditches were identified as anomalies by the geophysical survey.
4	Trench 4 was on a north to south orientation and was fairly flat. Topsoil within the trench was 0.30m in depth and subsoil was 0.35m thick. The natural substrate consisted of red clay.
	Six ditches were identified (112, 114, 116, 118, 134 and 136).
	Ditches 116, 118 and 136 were identified as anomalies by the geophysical survey.
5	Trench 5 was on a north-east to south-west orientation and was fairly flat. Topsoil was 0.35m in depth and subsoil 0.10-0.20m thick. The natural substrate consisted of red clay.
	Two ditches were recorded within the trench (125 and 128).
	Both ditches were identified as anomalies on the geophysical survey of the area.

Table 3.1: Trench Summaries

3.1 Trench **1**

Trench 1 was excavated to a depth of 33.93m AOD at the north-western end and trench and to 34.59m AOD at the south-eastern end.

Cutting the natural substrate within the trench were three evenly spaced, north-east to south-west orientated ditches. Towards the southern end of the trench was Ditch 108 (Figs. 4.1 and 5.1); a steep-sided feature with a u-shaped profile measuring 1.7m in width and 0.7m in depth, and which contained a light brown silty clay fill (107) with fragments of 2nd-4th century Roman pottery.

Towards the centre of the trench was a shallow ditch (132) 1.1m in width and 0.2m in depth which appeared to be the likely remnants of a plough furrow or shallow field system ditch. At the northern end of the trench a second steep-sided ditch with a u-shaped profile (Fig. 4.2, 130) was recorded. Shown as terminating in the geophysics plan, this ditch actually continued beyond the trench. It measured 1.9m in width and 0.5m in depth.

3.2 Trench 2

Trench 2 was excavated to a depth of 32.02m AOD at the north-eastern end of the trench and to 32.20m AOD at the south-western end of the trench (Fig. 5.2).

Two linear ditches were recorded within the trench, Ditch 104 towards the south-western end of the trench, and Ditch 106 at the north-eastern end of the trench. Ditch 104 (Fig. 4.3) was on a north-west to south-east alignment and had shallow sides with a rounded profile measuring 0.61m in width and 0.22m in depth and matched the line of an anomaly recorded by the geophysics survey.

Ditch 106 (Fig. 4.4) was on a roughly north-south orientation, had steep sides and a flat base and measured 0.68m in width and 0.38m in depth. No finds were recovered from either of the features and as such their date is undetermined.

Trench 3

Trench 3 was excavated to a depth of 33.75m AOD at the western end of the trench and to 32.76m AOD at the eastern end (Fig. 5.3).

Three north-west to south-east orientated ditches were recorded within the trench, ditches 110, 120 and 122, all of which were noted as anomalies in the geophysics plan of the area.

The largest of these, Ditch 120, was located towards the eastern end of the trench and measured 2.95m in width by 0.95m in depth (Figs. 4.5 and 5.4). The ditch was steep sided and contained two fills (119 and 123), the uppermost of which (119) contained pottery dating to the 2nd-4th century AD. The ditch was partially sectioned due to the excessive depth of the adjacent trench edge; although it was apparent the ditch was u-shaped in profile with a narrow base.

Ditch 110 was recorded towards the western end of the trench, and featured steep sides with a u-shaped profile measuring 1.42m in width by 0.72m in depth with a possible 'ankle-breaker' step on the western edge of the base (Figs. 4.6 and 5.5). The fill of the ditch (109) contained fragments of pottery including a large rim sherd of a handled Roman jar dated to from the 2nd to 4th century AD.

Towards the centre of the trench was Ditch 122, a shallow, u-shaped feature measuring 1.1m in width by 0.25m in depth, and which is the likely remnant of a plough furrow or former field system. No finds were recovered from this ditch.

Trench 4

Trench 4 was excavated to a depth of 34.08m AOD at the northern end of the trench and to 34.33m AOD at the southern end of the trench.

Trench 4 contained a number of archaeological features, the majority of which were noted as anomalies in the geophysical survey.

Towards the southern end of the trench, and denoted as one large ditch on the geophysics plan, were three parallel ditches on a north-east to south-west orientation (Figs 4.7 and 5.6; ditches 112, 114 and 116,). Ditches 112 and 114 were both u-shaped with steep sides and measured 1.30m and 0.71m in width respectively with a depth of 0.32-0.42m. Ditch 112 possibly cut Ditch 114 on its southern edge, although the fills of the two ditches (111 and 113) were very similar and it is possible they are contemporary in date. Pottery dating to the late 3rd century AD was recovered from Ditch 112.

To the immediate north of Ditch 114 was Ditch 116; a steep sided feature with a u-shaped profile measuring 1.10m in width by 0.52m in depth. No finds were recovered from this ditch although its similar orientation and proximity to the two ditches to the south suggest a contemporary date.

To the north of Ditch 118, and again denoted by a large anomaly on the geophysical survey, was Ditch 118, a steep sided ditch with an almost v-shaped profile measuring 1.50m in width by 0.72m in depth, and which was on a north-east to south-west orientation (Figs 4.8 and 5.7).

At the northern end of the trench the terminus for a shallow ditch (134) was recorded, although this feature was not depicted in the geophysical survey. Ditch 134 (Fig. 4.9) measured 0.80m in width by 0.08m in depth and was the likely remains of a plough furrow. To the south of this, and on a north-west to south-east alignment, was a shallow linear feature (136) that was filled by a sterile yellow-grey sand (135), and which was most likely geological in nature.

Trench 5

Trench 5 was excavated to a depth of 32.32m AOD at the north-eastern end of the trench and to 33.50m at the south-western end of the trench.

Two north-west to south-east orientated ditches (125 and 128) were recorded, both of which were noted as geophysical anomalies.

The largest of the ditches (128), measured 4.65m in width by 1.00m in depth and featured steep sides with a u-shaped profile and was located at the south-western end of the trench (Figs. 4.10 and 5.8). The ditch contained two fills (126 and 127) from which pottery dating to the late 3rd century AD was recovered. The ditch appeared to be the continuation of Ditch 120 recorded in Trench 3, it was partially excavated due to the size of the feature and the depth of the trench edges.

Ditch 125 was located towards the north-eastern end of the trench and featured moderately sloping sides with a u-shaped profile measuring 1.00m in width by 0.48m in depth (Figs 4.11 and 5.9). The fill of the ditch; mid-dark brown silty clay (124), contained pottery dating to the 2nd century AD.

4. SPECIALIST REPORTS

4.1 Romano-British Pottery

By Blaise Vyner

Treatment

The pottery was examined and identified by eye, no detailed fabric analysis was undertaken.

Nature of the Assemblage

The pottery was in a somewhat battered state and had probably arrived in the fields through manuring processes, having been removed from nearby settlement.

Range of Vessel Types

A small number of sherds represent a wide range of vessels ranging from native-type vessels of probable Romano-British date to imported Roman samian.

Sources of the Pottery

The native-type sherds may well be locally manufactured, but the wheel-turned pottery is likely to have been mass produced at some distance from the site.

Chronology of the Assemblage

The native-type material could have been current in pre-Roman phases, but since this pottery continued in use during the Roman period it is likely that it is somewhat later and probably contemporary with some elements of the Roman wheel-turned pottery. The samian dish is likely to belong to the early 2nd century, but other pottery could be as late as the later 3rd century.

Catalogue

107

- Rim sherds from a Black Burnished Ware jar
- Fragment of a probable tankard, Roman, orange fabric

109

• Rim sherds (2) from a handled Roman jar, voids from where grits have leached

115

 Abraded coarse ware sherd, native type fabric, quartz gritted, orange surfaces over grey fabric

119

- Group of thin-walled sherds (5+) from grey ware jars, no diagnostic features
- Group of thick-walled sherds (4), native-type fabric, quartz gritted, dark grey surfaces and buff-dark grey fabric

124

• Abraded sherd from a samian bowl

126

 Abraded sherd from the lower part of a jar, quartz gritted, dark grey surfaces and fabric similar to sherds from context 119

127

• Body sherd from an amphora, Roman

Recommendations

The ceramics are all robust and do not require conservation. No illustration is recommended at this stage. Should further excavation be undertaken on the site then the assemblage should be re-examined.

5. DISCUSSION

The evaluation at Dishforth largely confirmed the findings from the geophysical survey, with all the geophysical anomalies identified as potential archaeology proving to be so once excavated (Fig. 3). There were also some features recorded which did not register as anomalies in the geophysical survey, in particular; a north-east to south-west orientated ditch recorded in Trench 2 in an area that appeared blank on the geophysical survey. It may be that other similar features may survive in this area.

The features excavated varied in size and the majority appear to represent the remains of a field system which most likely dated to between the 2nd and 4th century.

The large ditch recorded in trenches 3 and 5 is a significant feature, the size and depth of the ditch suggesting it marked something more significant than the boundary to a simple field system. It is possible that the ditch represented an outer boundary of an enclosed settlement, though no evidence for structures or domestic activity was recorded within any of the trenches.

6. CONCLUSION

The trenching successfully addressed the aims of the evaluation with the geophysical anomalies targeted by the trenches proving to be surviving archaeological features. These features are likely to be the remains of a series of 2nd-4th century Romano-British field systems although the size and depth of some of the features suggests that areas of settlement are likely to be in the vicinity.

Features not identified by the geophysical survey were recorded within the north-eastern end of the site and may indicate survival of other similar features across the site as a whole.

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APPENDICES 1 – 2

APPENDIX 1: Context Summary

Context	Type	Fill of	Width (m)	Max Depth (m)	Description
100	Layer			0.35	Topsoil for site area, consisted of a dark brown silty
					clay.
					Subsoil for area, consisted of mid-light brown silty
101	Layer			0.35	sandy clay with some stone inclusions in places.
					Natural substrate for area. Consisted of red-pink
102	Layer				clay.
					Fill of a shallow ditch 104. Consisted of mid-dark
					greyish brown silt with some small stone
103	Fill	104	0.61	0.22	inclusions. No finds.
					Cut for a shallow on a north-west to south-east
					orientation. Featured shallow sides with a rounded
104	Cut		0.61	0.22	base. No finds.
					Fill of a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.
					Consisted of mid grey-brown silt with some
					charcoal flecking and small stone inclusions in
105	Fill	106	0.68	0.38	places.
					Cut for a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.
					Featured steep sloping sides with a flat base. No
106	Cut		0.68	0.38	finds.
					Fill of a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.
					Consisted of light brown-grey sandy silt with small
107	Fill	108	1.70	0.70	stone inclusions. Contained fragments of pottery.
					Cut for a north-east to south-west orientated ditch.
					Featured steep sides with a u-shaped profile.
108	Cut		1.70	0.70	Contained fragments of pottery.
					Fill of a north-west to south-east aligned ditch.
					Consisted of dark brown silty clay with some
					charcoal flecking and small stone inclusions.
					Contained fragments of probable 2nd-4th century
					AD pottery including one large, decorated rim
109	Fill	110	1.42	0.75	sherd.
	Cut				Cut for a north-west to south-east orientated ditch.
					Featured steep sloping sides with a stepped, u-
					shaped profile. Possible ankle-breaker ditch
					feature? Contained fragments of likely 2nd-4th
110			1.42	0.75	century AD pottery.
					Fill of a ditch on a slight north-east to south-west
					orientation located at southern end of Trench 4.
111	Fill	112	1.30	0.42	y y y
					Cut for a ditch on a slight north-east to south-west
					orientation. One of three parallel ditches located
					towards the southern end of Trench 4. Featured
					moderately sloping sides with a u-shaped profile.
					Possibly cut Ditch 114, although fills are very
112	Cut		1.30	0.42	similar.
					Fill of a ditch located towards the southern end of
					Trench 4. Consisted of mid brown silty sandy clay
112	E.11	111	0.71	0.22	with some small stone inclusions in places. No
113	Fill	114	0.71	0.32	finds.
	Cut	1			Cut for a ditch on a slight north-east to south-west
					orientation. One of three parallel ditches located
					towards the southern end of Trench 4. Featured
					moderately sloping sides with a u-shaped profile.
114		1	0.71	0.22	Possibly cut by Ditch 112, although fills are very
114	1		0.71	0.32	similar.

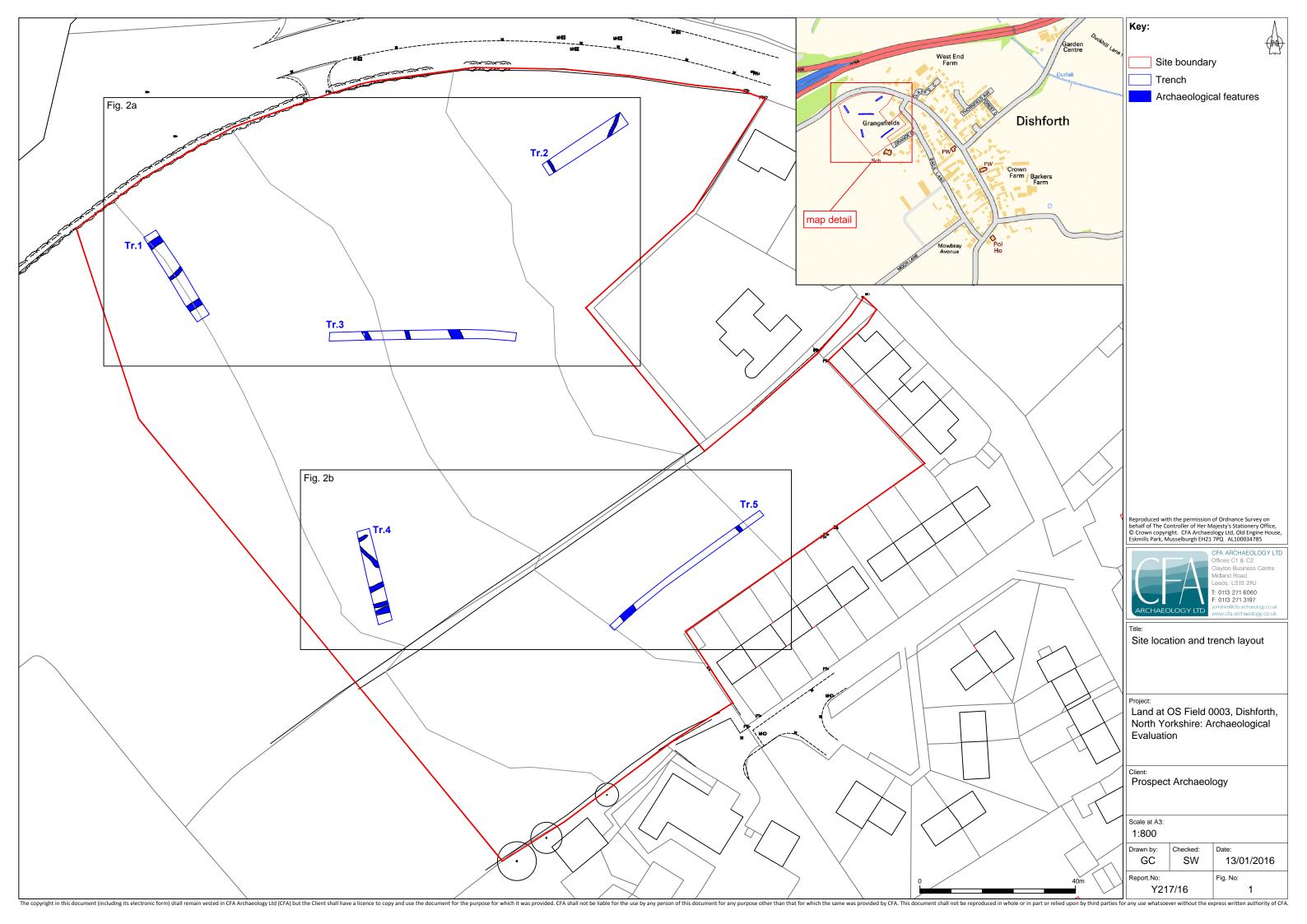
Context	Type	Fill of	Width (m)	Max Depth (m)	Description
				<u> </u>	Fill of a ditch on a slight north-east to south-west
					orientation located at southern end of Trench 4.
					Consisted of mid-light brown silty sandy clay with
					some small stone inclusions. Contained pottery
115	Fill	116	1.10	0.52	fragments.
					Cut for a ditch on a slight north-east to south-west
					orientation. One of three parallel ditches located
					towards the southern end of Trench 4. Featured
					moderately sloping sides with a u-shaped profile.
116	Cut		1.10	0.52	Pottery recovered.
					Fill of a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.
					Consisted of dark brown-black silty clay with some
117	Fill	118	1.50	0.72	small stone inclusions in places.
	Cut				Cut for a north-east to south-west aligned ditch.
					Featured moderately sloping sides with a u-shaped
118			1.50	0.72	base. No finds.
					Upper fill of a large north-south orientated ditch
					within Trench 3. Consisted of mid greyish brown
					silty clay with frequent charcoal flecks and frequent
119	Fill	120	2.95	0.95	firecracked cobbles.
	1				Cut for a large north-south orientated ditch located
					towards the centre of Trench 3. Featured steep
					sloping sides with a u-shaped profile. Contained
					fragments of likely 2nd-4th century Ad pottery.
					Partially sectioned in profile due to depth of
120	Cut		2.95	0.95	overhanging trench edges towards base of feature.
					Fill of a shallow north-south orientated ditch within
					Trench 3. Consisted of mid grey-brown silty clay
					with occasional charcoal flecks and frequent
121	Fill	122	1.10	0.25	firecracked stone cobbles.
	Cut				Cut for a shallow north-south orientated ditch
					within Trench 3. Featured shallow sloping sides
					with a u-shaped profile. Probable former plough
122			1.10	0.25	furrow/field system remnant.
					Primary fill of large ditch 120, within Trench 3.
					Consisted of light brown silty clay with occasional
					charcoal flecks and frequent firecracked stone
123	Fill	120	2.25	0.35	cobbles.
					Fill of a north-west to south-east aligned ditch
					within Trench 5. Consisted of mid-dark brown silty
	1				clay with stone and charcoal flecking inclusions.
124	Fill	125	1.00	0.48	Pottery recovered.
					Cut for a north-west to south-east aligned ditch
					within Trench 5. Featured moderately sloping sides
125	Cut		1.00	0.48	with a u-shaped profile. Pottery recovered.
					Secondary fill of a large north-west to south-east
					aligned ditch within the southern end of Trench 5.
					Consisted of mid grey-brown silty clay with
					frequent charcoal flecks and firecracked stone
126	Fill	128	3.75	0.25-0.5	cobbles throughout. Pottery recovered.
					Primary fill of large ditch 128 within the southern
					end of Trench 5. Consisted of dark grey-brown silty
					clay with frequent stone and charcoal inclusions.
127	Fill	128	4.65	0.45	Pottery recovered.
					Cut for a large north-west to south-east aligned
					ditch located towards the southern end of Trench 5.
128	Cut		4.65	1.00	Featured steep sloping sides with a concave profile.
					-

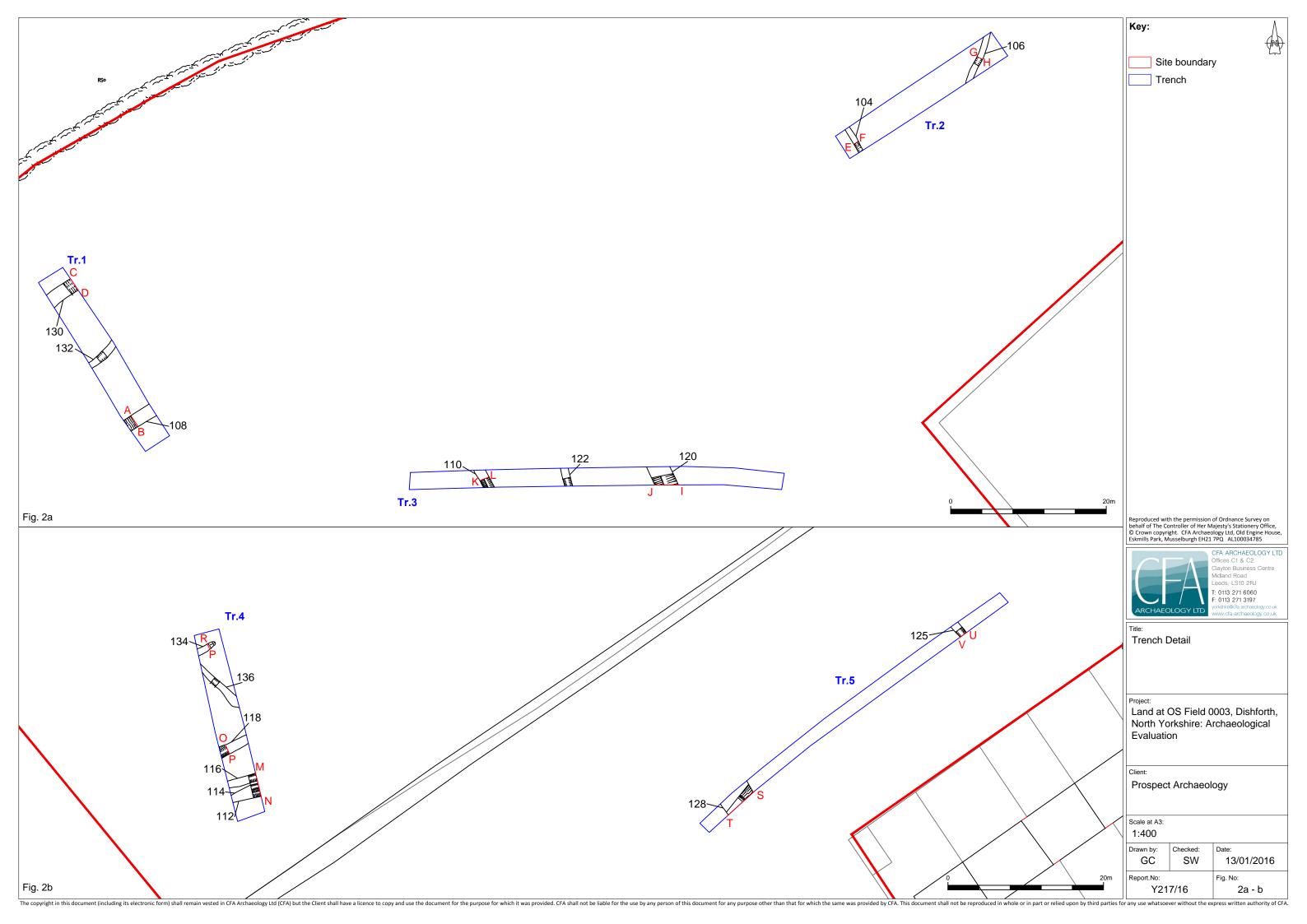
Context	Type	Fill of	Width (m)	Max Depth (m)	Description
					Contained pottery fragments. Partially sectioned
					due to depth.
					Fill of a ditch within Trench 1. Consisted of mid-
					dark brown grey sandy silt with frequent stone
129	Fill	130	1.90	0.50	inclusions throughout. No finds.
					Cut for a ditch located towards the northern end of
					Trench 1. Featured steep sloping sides w3ith a
130	Cut		1.90	0.50	rounded base.
					Fill of a shallow north-east to south-west aligned
					ditch within Trench 1. Consisted of light reddish
131	Fill	132	1.10	0.20	brown sand with small stone inclusions. No finds.
					Cut for a shallow ditch located towards the centre
					of Trench 1. Featured shallow sides with a rounded
132	Cut		1.10	0.20	base. No finds.
					Fill of the butt end of a shallow ditch located
133	Fill	134	0.80	0.08	towards the northern end of Trench 4. No finds.
					Cut for the butt-end of a shallow north-east to
					south-west aligned ditch located towards the
					northern end of Trench 4. Featured shallow sides
134	Cut		0.80	0.08	with rounded-flat base. No finds.
					Fill of a shallow ditch within Trench 4. Consisted
135	Fill	136	0.58	0.12	of yellow-grey silty sand. No finds.
					Cut for a shallow ditch within Trench 4. Featured
136	Cut		0.58	0.12	shallow sides with a u-shaped profile. No finds.

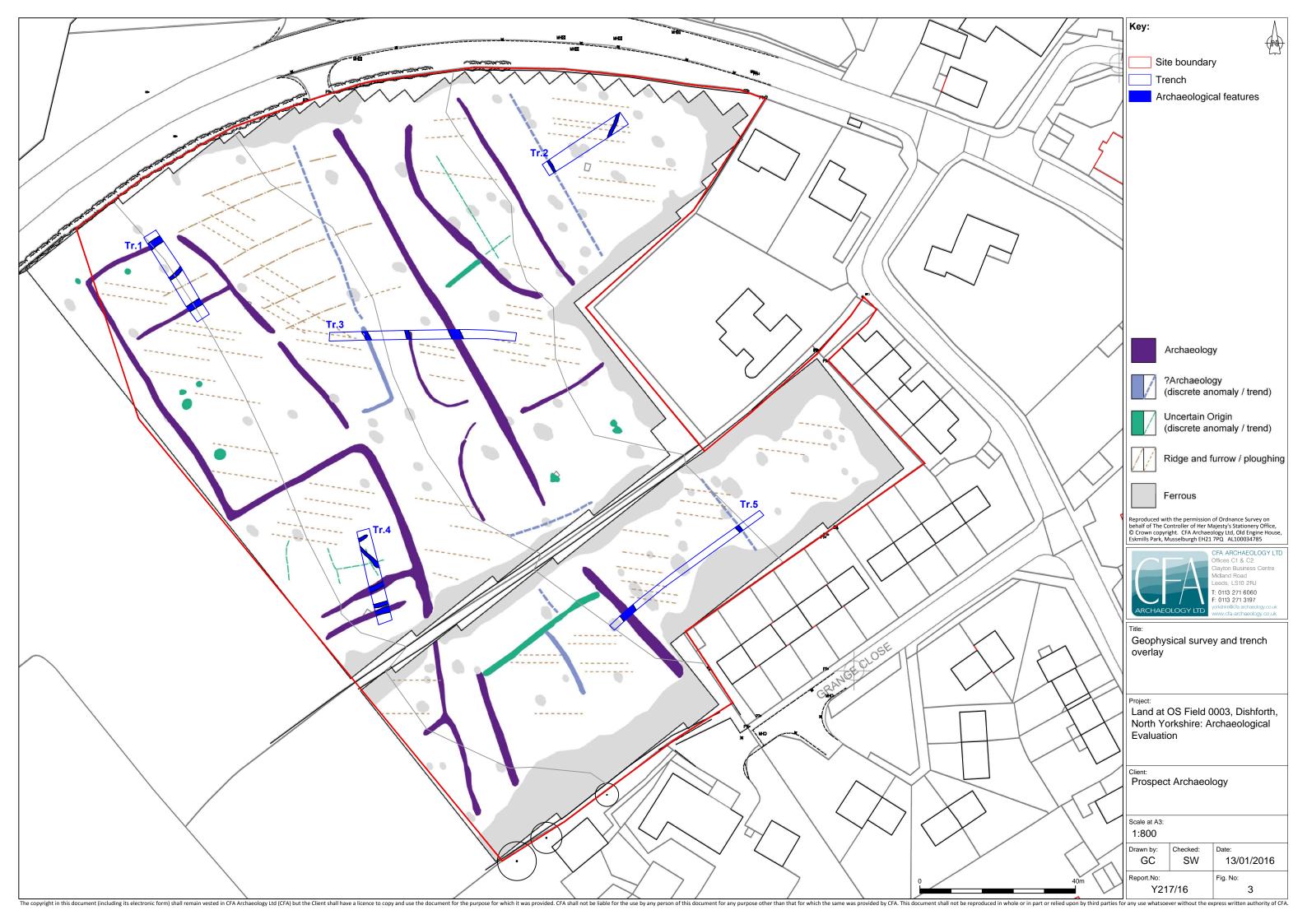
Appendix 2: Inventory of Primary Archive

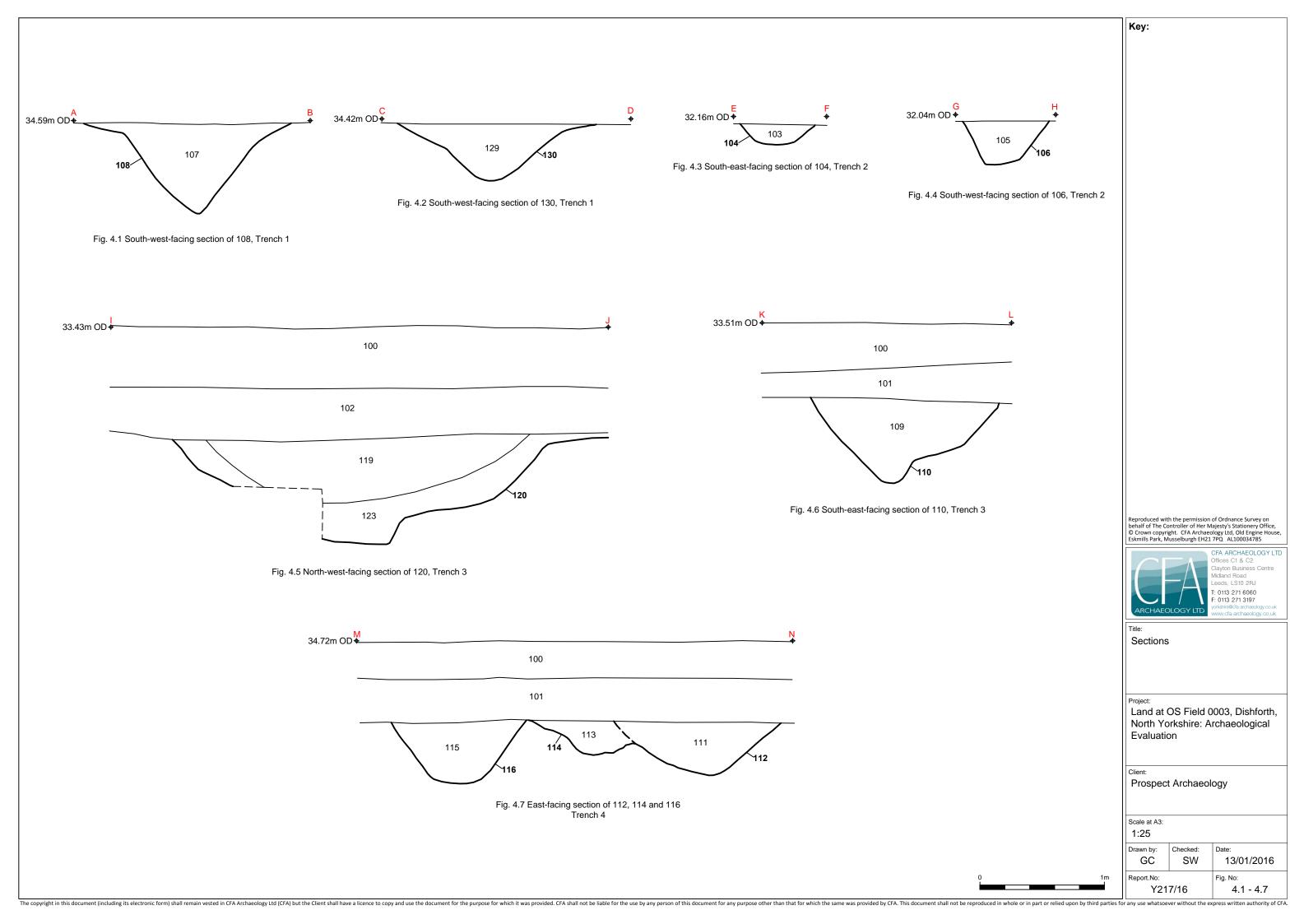
Phase	File/Box No.	Description	Quantity
Evaluation	File no. 1	Context register sheets	2
		Context sheets	33
		Drawing register sheets	2
		Trench record sheets	5
		Digital photographic register sheets	2
		Permatrace sheets (A3)	3

FIGURES 1 – 5









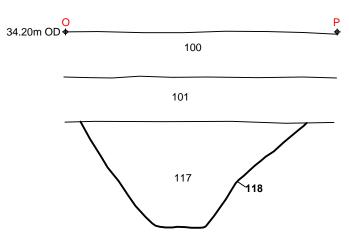


Fig. 4.8 West-facing section of 118, Trench 4

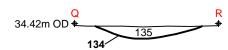


Fig. 4.9 North-east-facing section of 134, Trench 4

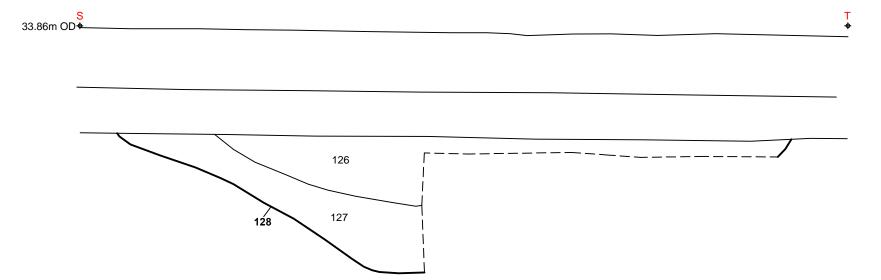


Fig. 4.10 North-west-facing section of 128, Trench 5

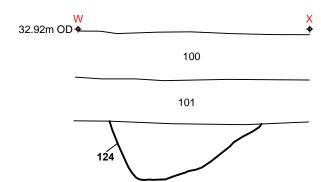


Fig. 4.11 North-west-facing section of 125, Trench 5

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Scale at A3: 1:25

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Fig. 5.1 South-west-facing section of 108, Trench 1



Fig. 5.2 General shot of Trench 2, facing south-west

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Fig. 5.3 General shot of Trench, facing xxxx



Fig. 5.4 North-facing section of 120, Trench 3

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Fig. 5.5 South-east-facing section of 110, Trench 3



Fig. 5.6 West-facing section of 112, 114 and 116, Trench 4

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Fig. 5.7 East-facing section of 118, Trench 4



Fig. 5.8 North-west-facing section of 128, Trench 5

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Fig. 5.9 North-west-facing section of 125, Trench 5

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