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Partridge Hill Farm

Austerfield, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

September 2010

Report No. 2117

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Misson Sand and Gravel Company Ltd

Partridge Hill Farm Austerfield, South Yorkshire

Archaeological Desk-based Assessment

Summary

An archaeological desk-based assessment was undertaken of a former quarry site to the south-east of Partridge Hill Farm, Austerfield, South Yorkshire. There is extensive cropmark evidence for probable Iron Age and Roman period activity in the area adjacent to and surrounding the site, but quarrying during the 1950s is likely to have destroyed any potential archaeological sub-surface remains within the site.



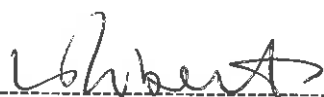
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Report Information

Client: Misson Sand and Gravel Company Ltd
Address: 32 Lower Pastures, Blaxton, Doncaster, DN9 3RF
Report Type: Desk-based Assessment
Location: Partridge Hill Farm, Austerfield
County: South Yorkshire
Grid Reference: SK 6572 9606
Period(s) of activity represented: Roman/medieval/modern
Report Number: 2117
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Site Code: PAR
Date of report: 20th September 2010
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Misson Sand and Gravel Company Limited to undertake a desk-based assessment and rapid walkover survey of land at Partridge Hill Farm, Austerfield, South Yorkshire.

Site location and topography

The proposed development site covers an area of approximately 16 hectares situated about 1km to the north-west of Austerfield, centred at SK 6572 9606 (see Figs 1 and 2). Partridge Hill Farm is situated 300m to the north-west of the site, and the site is bounded on its northern side by High Common Lane, which joins the A614 to the north-east. The southern end of the runway of Robin Hood Airport lies immediately to the north of the site, on the northern side of High Common Lane.

The proposed development site comprises an area of former sand and gravel extraction which has largely been re-landscaped for agricultural use and is bounded by mature tree-lines and hedgerows. The quarrying has removed between 2m and 3m of material from across the whole of the proposed development site, apart from along narrow baulks left around the site's boundary (see Plates 1 to 4).

The study area comprises all land within 1km of the boundary of the proposed development site.

Geology and soils

The underlying solid geology of the proposed development site comprises Bunter Sandstone (IGS 1969), overlain by well drained reddish coarse loamy soils (Soil Survey of England and Wales 1980).

2 Methodology and Sources

Where sites listed in the catalogue (Section 4) are mentioned in the text, the relevant catalogue number is given in bold type.

The following sources of information have been consulted in order to meet the requirements of the desk-based assessment, and are in line with the guidelines laid down by the Institute for Archaeologists for such work (IfA 2008).

Archaeological records and archives

Information on previous archaeological finds and investigations within the study area was obtained from the South Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the English Heritage National Monuments Record (NMR).

Doncaster Archives were consulted for historic maps and plans, antiquarian histories, census records, photographs and other relevant documentary sources, which are listed in the bibliography.

Designated sites or areas

Information on designated sites of archaeological or historical significance, including Scheduled Monuments and Listed Buildings, was obtained from the English Heritage NMR.

Published and unpublished documentary sources

A range of published and unpublished material has been researched and consulted. This includes academic articles, together with general sources on the area and its wider archaeological and historical background. These are listed in the bibliography.

Geological and soil surveys

Information on the underlying geology and soils within the study area was taken from data collected by the Institute of Geological Sciences (now the British Geological Survey) (IGS 1969) and the Soil Survey of England and Wales (1980).

Walkover survey

A rapid walkover survey was undertaken on the 26th of August 2010 in order to assess the survival of previously recorded and documented features, to identify any further archaeological sites visible on the ground and to determine the potential for any future archaeological investigations.

3 The Study Area

Identified archaeological sites, buildings and features

There is one record of an archaeological site held on the South Yorkshire SMR located within the proposed development site (9), with a further 13 archaeological sites or historic buildings recorded in the study area within 1km of the boundary of the site. These are discussed below and have been catalogued in Section 4.

Designated sites or areas

The study area contains no designated Scheduled Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens, Registered Battlefields or Conservation Areas. The study area contains one Listed Building, The Manor House, Austerfield (A), situated 900m to the south-east of the proposed development site.

Previous archaeological investigations

A watching brief was undertaken by the South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) in 1997 prior to the extraction of sand and gravel at a site to the north-west of Austerfield (10;

Sykes 1997). This identified 13 pits and associated pottery, bone and metalwork, which were presumably of an Iron Age or Romano-British date, but no further details were found on the SMR.

In 2000 a watching brief and excavations were undertaken in advance of quarrying at Austerfield Sand Pit, to the west of Austerfield, although only two possible ditch features were identified, together with a single sherd of Roman period grey ware (12; NAA 2000).

Archaeological background, sites and features

Early prehistoric period

There is no recorded evidence for early prehistoric activity in the study area, and generally evidence for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods is limited in South Yorkshire. Neolithic and early Bronze Age sites are also scarce, although long barrows have been identified at Edlington Wood to the south-west of Doncaster, and at Sprotbrough to the west (Manby *et al.* 2003, 97). Excavation at a number of sites has also produced finds of Neolithic and early Bronze Age dates (e.g. Atkinson and Chadwick 1994; Chadwick 1995), and numerous flint implements, including axes from Langdale in Cumbria as well as scrapers and blades, have been found in the Rossington area (Brown 2005).

Much of the evidence for Bronze Age activity in the Doncaster area is derived from cremations, with the discovery of collared urns around the centre of Doncaster during the 19th century (Buckland and Magilton 1986; Manby 1973). There is a lack of late Bronze Age material recorded in South Yorkshire, and none within the study area, and this appears to reflect a similar absence of evidence seen across the Humberhead Levels to the east (Van de Noort *et al.* 1997, 456).

Iron Age and Roman periods

In contrast to the earlier periods, there is extensive evidence for Iron Age activity in South Yorkshire. Much of this comes from cropmark evidence identified through aerial photographic analysis, which has recorded the remains of field systems, settlements and trackways dating to the late Iron Age and Roman period (e.g. Riley 1980; Roberts *et al.* 2010).

Large areas of probable Iron Age field systems have been recorded within the study area, especially concentrated in fields to the immediate west of the proposed development site and to its north-west, on the south-western end of the runway of Robin Hood Airport (4, 5, 6, 7 and 8). Further cropmark features have been recorded to the south-west (1) south (11) and south-east (13) of the proposed development site (see Fig. 2). The cropmark evidence is supported by the, albeit limited, archaeological excavation that has been carried out within the study area to the north-west of Austerfield. This has revealed thirteen pits containing (Iron Age/Roman?) material (11; Sykes 1997) and ditches with associated Roman pottery (12; NAA 2000).

The proposed development site is also situated only 700m to the east of the route of the Roman road which connected the forts at Rossington and Doncaster with the legionary fortress at Lincoln (2; (Margary 1973, 411; road no. 28a). The only known archaeological material recovered from within the proposed development site itself were a number of sherds of Roman pottery, which were reportedly discovered within a gravel pit on the site in 1963 (9; Magilton 1977, 8).

Medieval period

There is little archaeological evidence for post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon activity within South Yorkshire, and none from within the study area. Documentary sources and place-names, however, provide evidence for activity from the early Anglo-Saxon period onwards in Austerfield.

The settlement is first mentioned in the early 8th century, as *Oustræfelda* or *Eostrefeld*, 'Easter Field', following a synod which was held in the area in about 703 (Smith 1961, 46; Page 1913, 4). The village is listed as *Oustrefeld* in the Domesday book of 1086 (Page 1912, 228 and 299), with the name beginning to take its modern form in the mid-14th century when it is recorded as *Austerfeld* (Smith 1961, 46).

Archaeological evidence for the later medieval period is also slight within the study area. The only possible identified medieval features are two blocks of ridge and furrow recorded through aerial photographic analysis as earthworks (3; see Fig. 2), although following ploughing these are no longer extant.

Post-medieval and modern periods

The medieval open field systems in Austerfield were enclosed by Act of Parliament in 1765, creating the pattern of regularly surveyed straight field boundaries that largely survives today (Austerfield Enclosure Award 1765). During this period new farms were also established, such as Partridge Hill Farm, to the north-west of the study area.

The proposed development site, and much of the study area, remained in agricultural use throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries (Ordnance Survey 1854; 1893; 1903; 1931; see Figs 3 to 6). Small scale sand and gravel extraction was being undertaken close to the proposed development site by the first half of the 19th century (Ordnance Survey 1854; see Fig. 3), and was carried out in the surrounding area on a larger scale during the first half of the 20th century.

In the 1950s sand and gravel quarrying was undertaken across the whole of the proposed development site, extracting all material from the site for a depth of between 2m to 3m. This appears to have ceased by the early 1960s, after which the site lay disused until the recent re-landscaping work across the site.

4 Catalogue of Archaeological Sites and Buildings

Archaeological sites and features

Catalogue entries for archaeological sites and features have been ordered geographically from west to east and given a numerical identifier, and include a National Grid Reference (NGR) number. Where an entry has an associated MSY number the information has been obtained from the South Yorkshire SMR and where the entry has an NMR number the information has been obtained from the English Heritage NMR. All further information is referenced in the bibliography.

1. Cropmarks, rectilinear field system NMR no. SK 69 NW 74 SK 646 952

A possible late prehistoric rectilinear field system has been recorded as cropmarks to the west of the Great North Road, on the western side of the study area. This comprises a parallel arrangement of field boundaries visible over an area of approximately 5 hectares, on a north-east south-west alignment, and may be part of a brickwork field system.

2. Roman road SK 6469 9557 (centre point)

The route of the Roman road connecting Doncaster with Lincoln, now followed by the A638 (Great North Road) (Margary 1973, 411; road no. 28a).

3. Ridge and furrow SK 6486 9672

An area of ridge and furrow situated about 500m to the north-west of Partridge Hill Farm recorded as part of the *Magnesian Limestone in South and West Yorkshire Archaeological Assessment Project* (NMR UID EHC01/009).

4. Cropmarks NMR no. SK 69 NE 26 SK 6500 9630

Faint cropmarks identified to the south of Partridge Hill Farm through aerial photograph analysis may represent the fragmentary remains of a field system (Riley 1980).

5. Cropmarks MSY 5505 SK 6500 9600

Possible Iron Age or Romano-British field systems recorded as cropmarks 400m to the south-west of Partridge Hill Farm.

6. Cropmarks MSY 5507 SK 6530 9630

Possible Iron Age or Romano-British field systems recorded as cropmarks 200m to the south-west of Partridge Hill Farm.

7. Cropmarks MSY 5510 SK 6550 9640

Possible Iron Age or Romano-British unclassified cropmarks recorded in fields to the immediate east and south-east of Partridge Hill Farm.

8. Cropmarks **MSY 5509** **SK 6560 9700**
Possible Iron Age or Romano-British field systems recorded as cropmarks in fields on the northern side of High Common Lane.

9. Find spot, Roman pottery **MSY 4491** **SK 6568 9611**
Sherds of Roman pottery are recorded as having been found in a gravel pit within the proposed development site (Magilton 1977, 8), in October 1963.

10. Watching brief **MSY 4544** **SK 6604 9521**
In 1997 a watching brief was undertaken by SYAS prior to the extraction of sand and gravel to the north-west of Austerfield. Thirteen pits were identified and excavated, and finds of pottery, quern fragments, animal bone and metalwork were recovered (Sykes 1997), of an unrecorded date.

11. Cropmarks **SK 6606 9508**
Possible Iron Age or Romano-British field systems recorded as cropmarks in fields to the north-west of Austerfield (NMR UID EHC01/009).

12. Watching brief **MSY 2480** **SK 6610 9500**
A watching brief, followed by limited excavation, was carried out by Northern Archaeology Associates during October 2000 in advance of quarrying at Austerfield Sand Pit, Highfield Lane, Austerfield (NAA 2000). The area monitored covered 0.5 hectares, although a large number of possible archaeological features were identified across the area during the course of stripping the top soil. Two ditches were identified which could be equated with Iron Age or Romano-British cropmarks recorded in the area. With the exception of one sherd of Roman period grey ware, no dating evidence or significant environmental evidence was recovered from the features.

13. Cropmarks **NMR no. SK 69 NE 28** **SK 6650 9570**
The cropmarks of a trackway and associated field system recorded to the north-east of Austerfield, probably of an Iron Age or Roman date.

Listed Buildings

Catalogue entries for Listed Buildings have been ordered geographically from west to east and given an alphabetical identifier, and include a National Grid Reference (NGR) number and a Listed Building number (LBS).

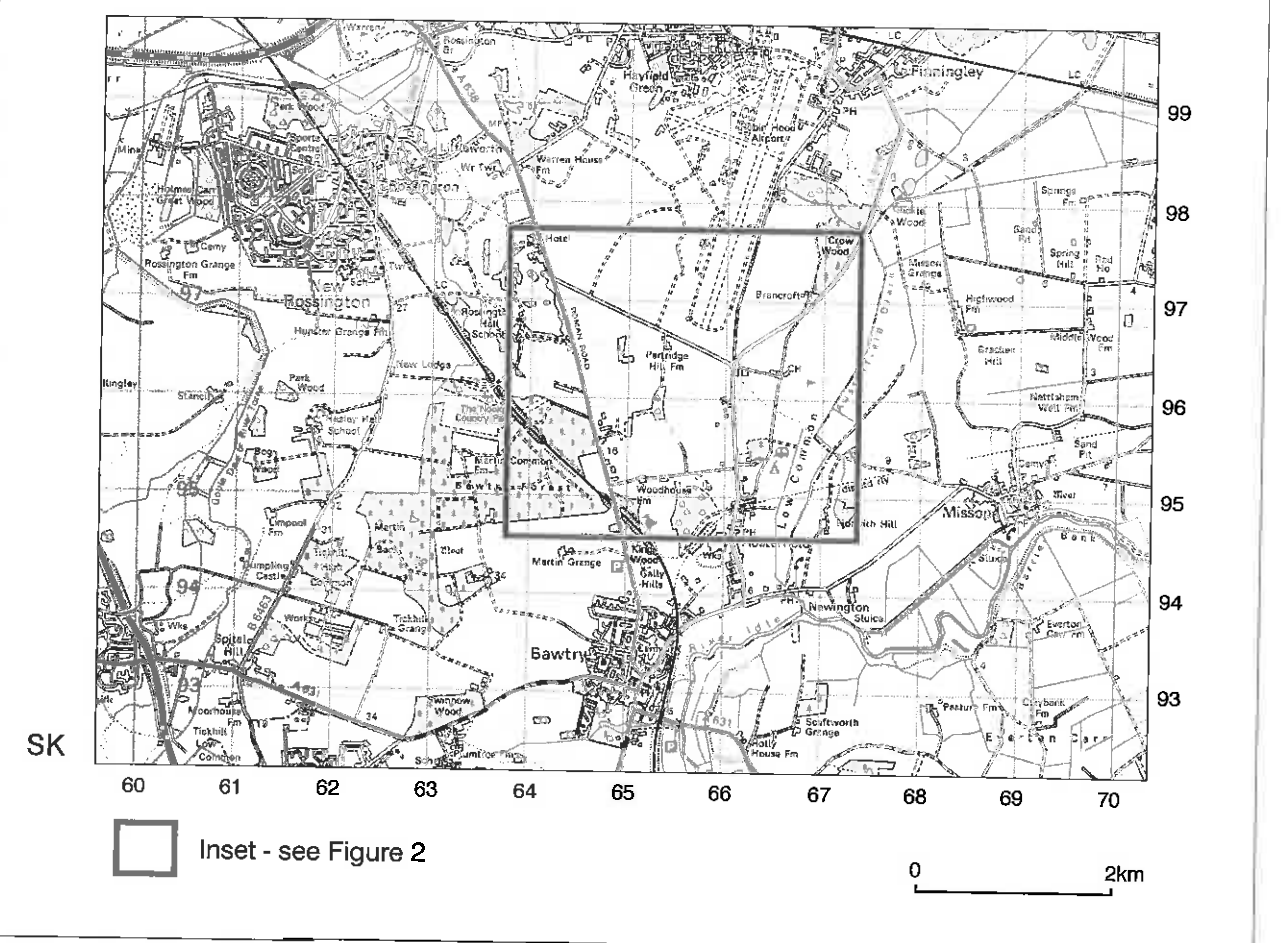
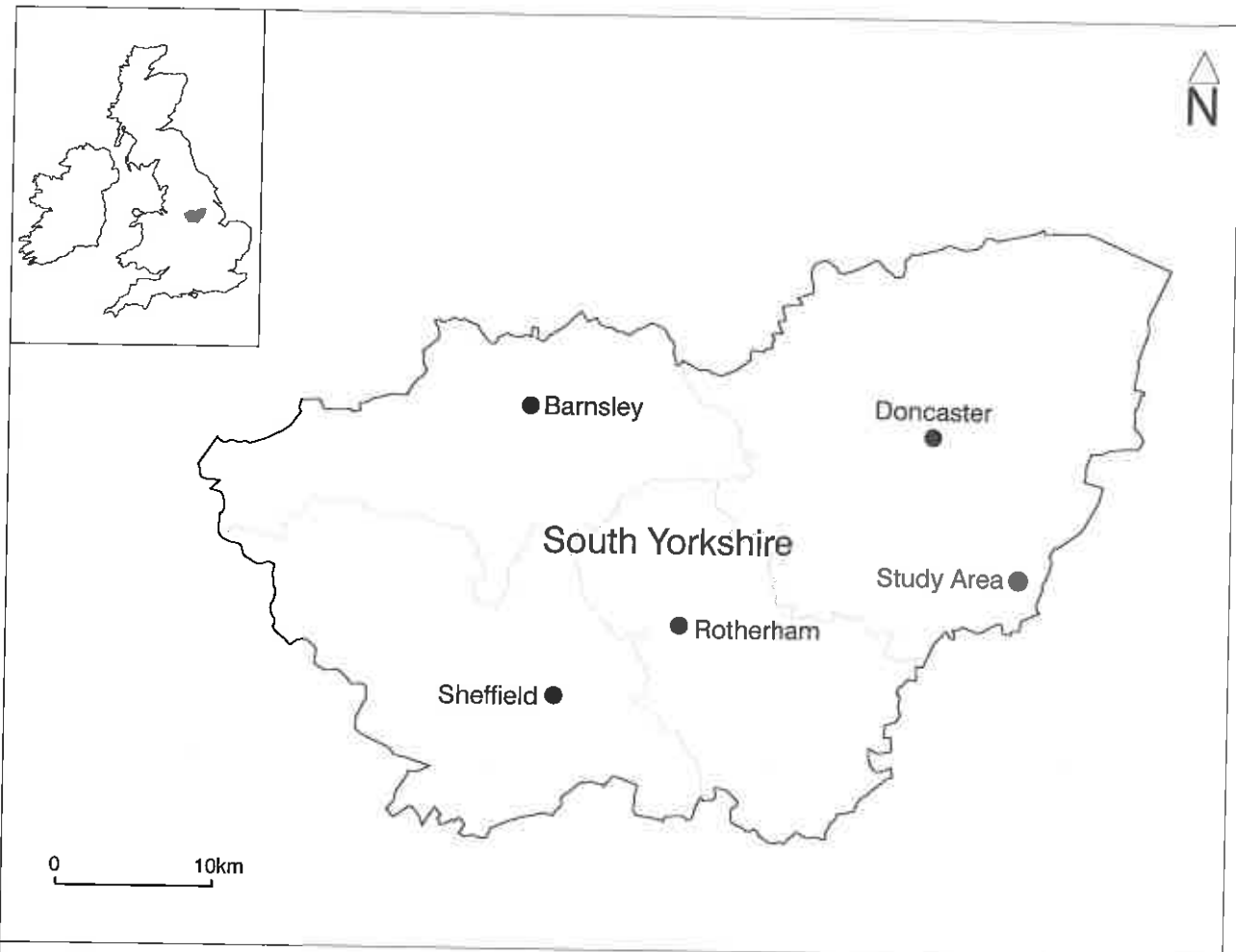
A. The Manor House, Austerfield **LBS 334702** **SK 66174 94974**
A late 16th and early 17th century timber framed house with later brick infill, and alterations dating to the 19th century. It was once the home of William Bradford who sailed on the Mayflower in 1620 and was made governor of the Plymouth Colony in 1621. This building is Grade II Listed.

5 Conclusion

The proposed development site is likely to have remained primarily in agricultural use since at least the early medieval period until the commencement of large-scale quarrying activity across the site in the 1950s.

Although there is extensive evidence within the study area for late Iron Age and Roman period activity, through both cropmark evidence and excavation, the quarrying within the proposed development site is likely to have destroyed any potential archaeological deposits, of these, or any other period. There may be limited potential for the survival of fragmentary archaeological features or deposits within the intact baulks along the edge of the site, and Roman pottery was found within one of the sand and gravel pits during the 1960s. However, even these areas have been disturbed by quarrying operations, and the possibility of well preserved or significant sub-surface archaeological remains surviving within the site are assessed to be low.

Therefore, it is unlikely that any archaeological features or deposits survive within the proposed development site, and further archaeological assessment is unlikely to produce evidence for any activity pre-dating the modern quarrying.



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Fig. 1. Site location

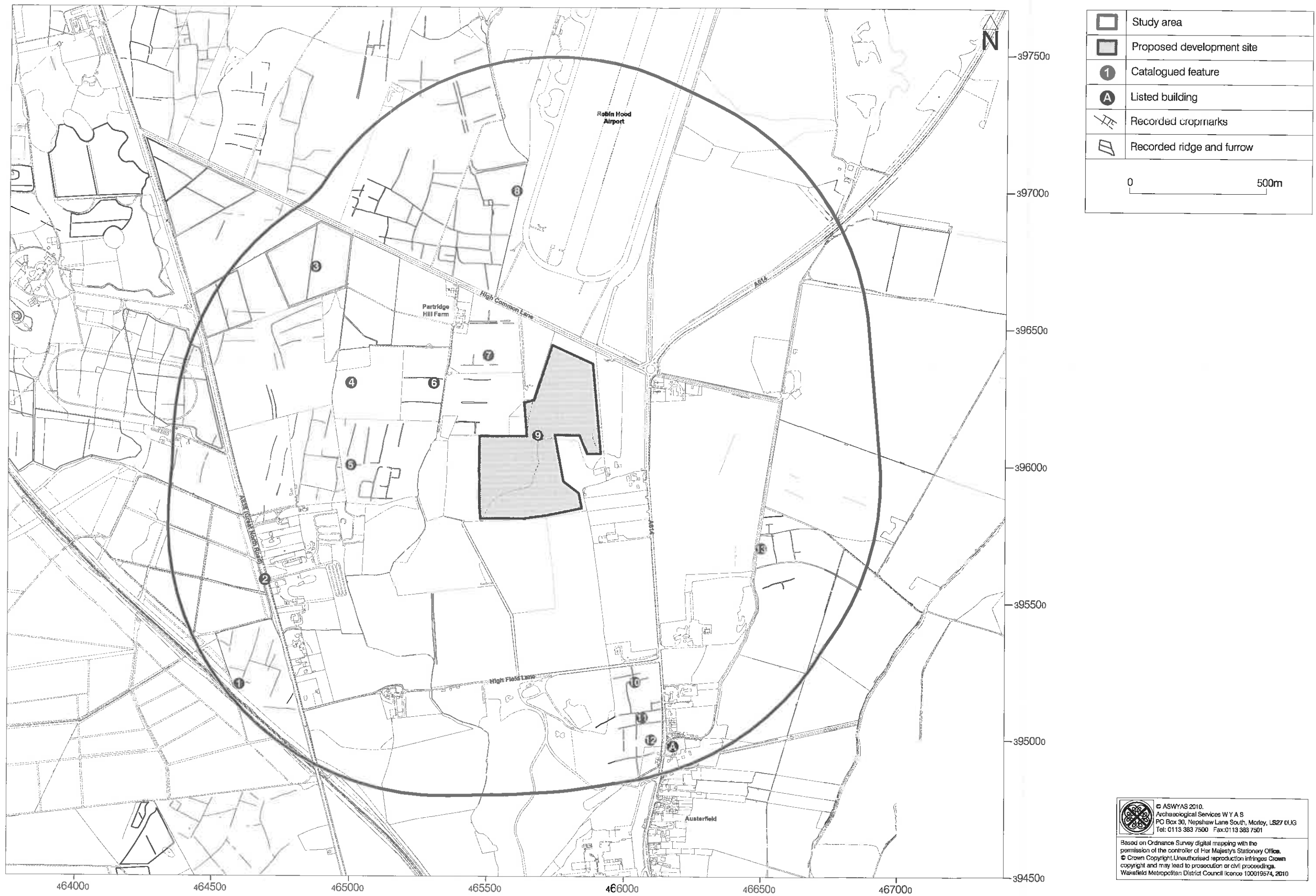



Fig. 2. Plan of the proposed development site showing the boundary of the study area and catalogued archaeological features (1:12 500 scale)

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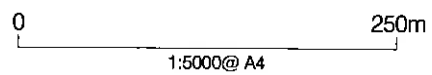
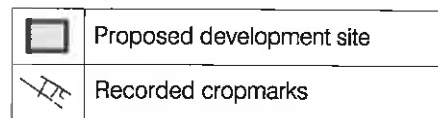
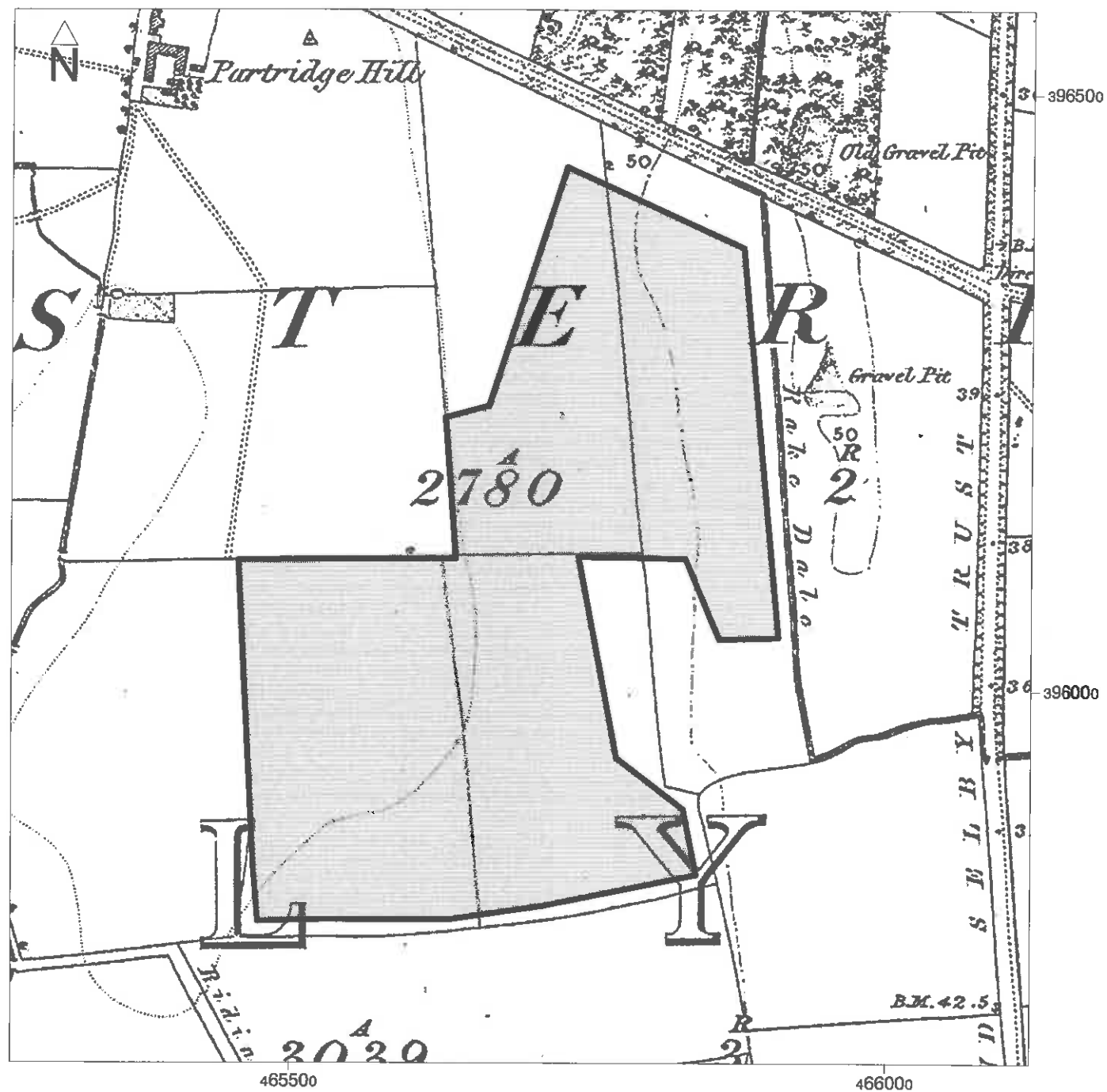
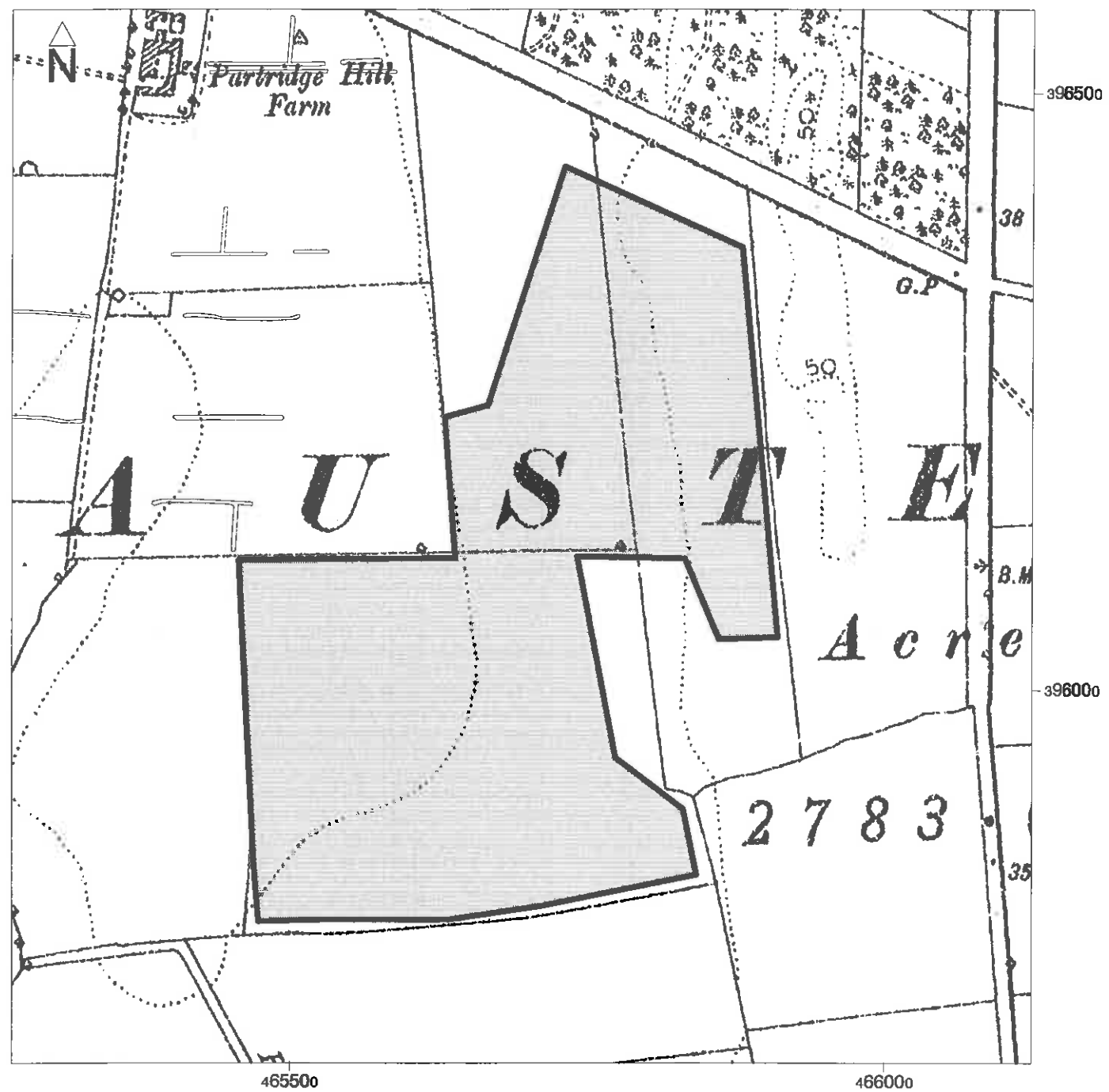




Fig. 3. Extract from the First Edition 6 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1854 showing the proposed development site and recorded cropmarks (sheet 291; 1:5000 scale)



	Proposed development site
	Recorded cropmarks

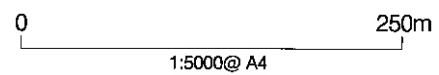
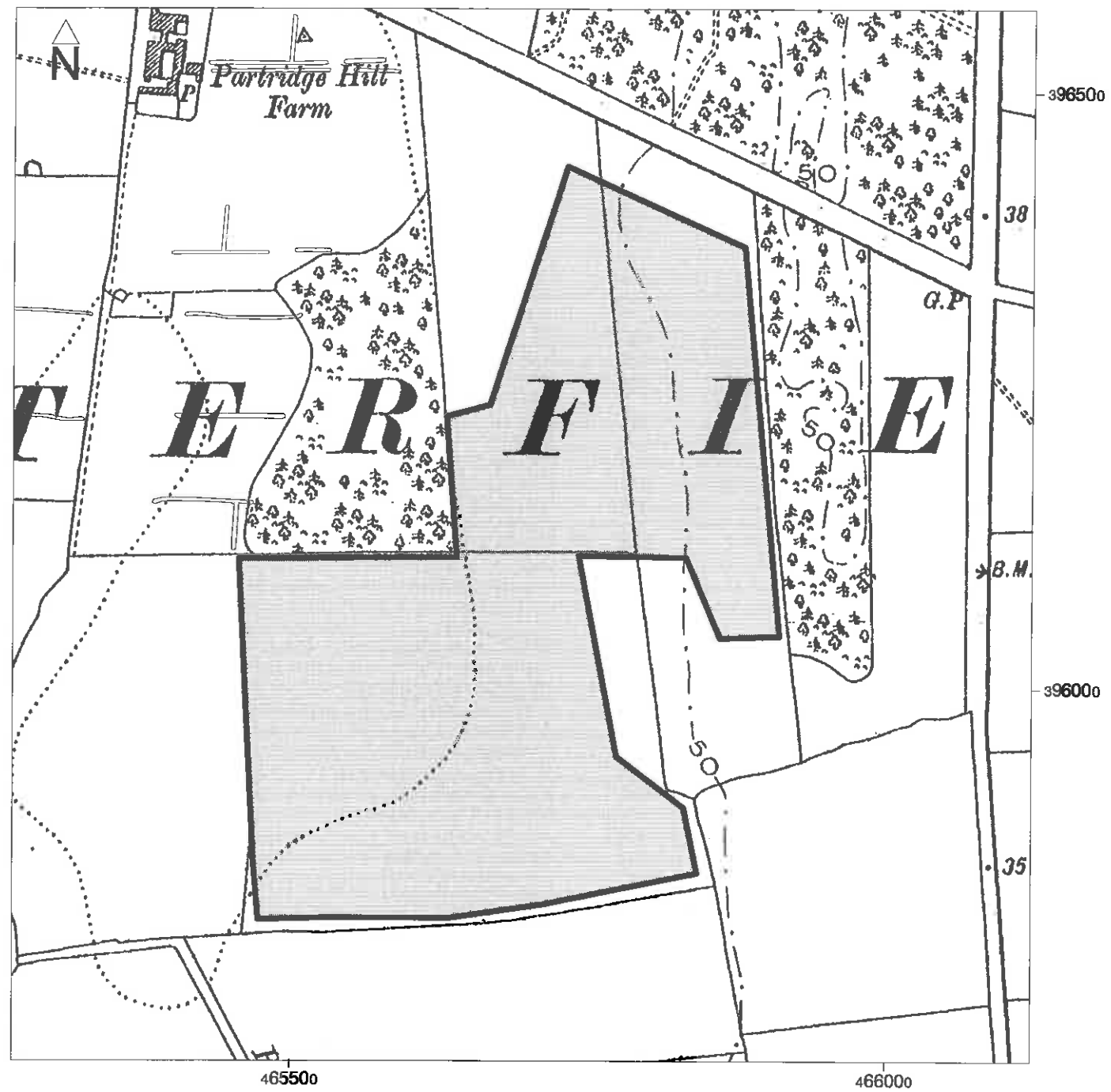




Fig. 4. Extract from the 6 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1893 showing the proposed development site and recorded cropmarks (sheet 291 NE; 1:5000 scale)



	Proposed development site
	Recorded cropmarks

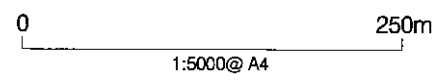


Fig. 5. Extract from the 6 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1903 showing the proposed development site and recorded cropmarks (sheet 291 NE; 1:5000 scale)

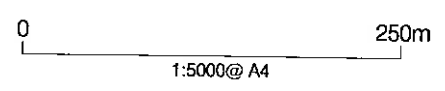
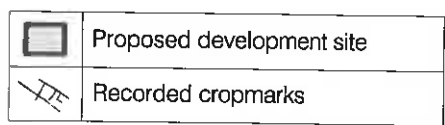
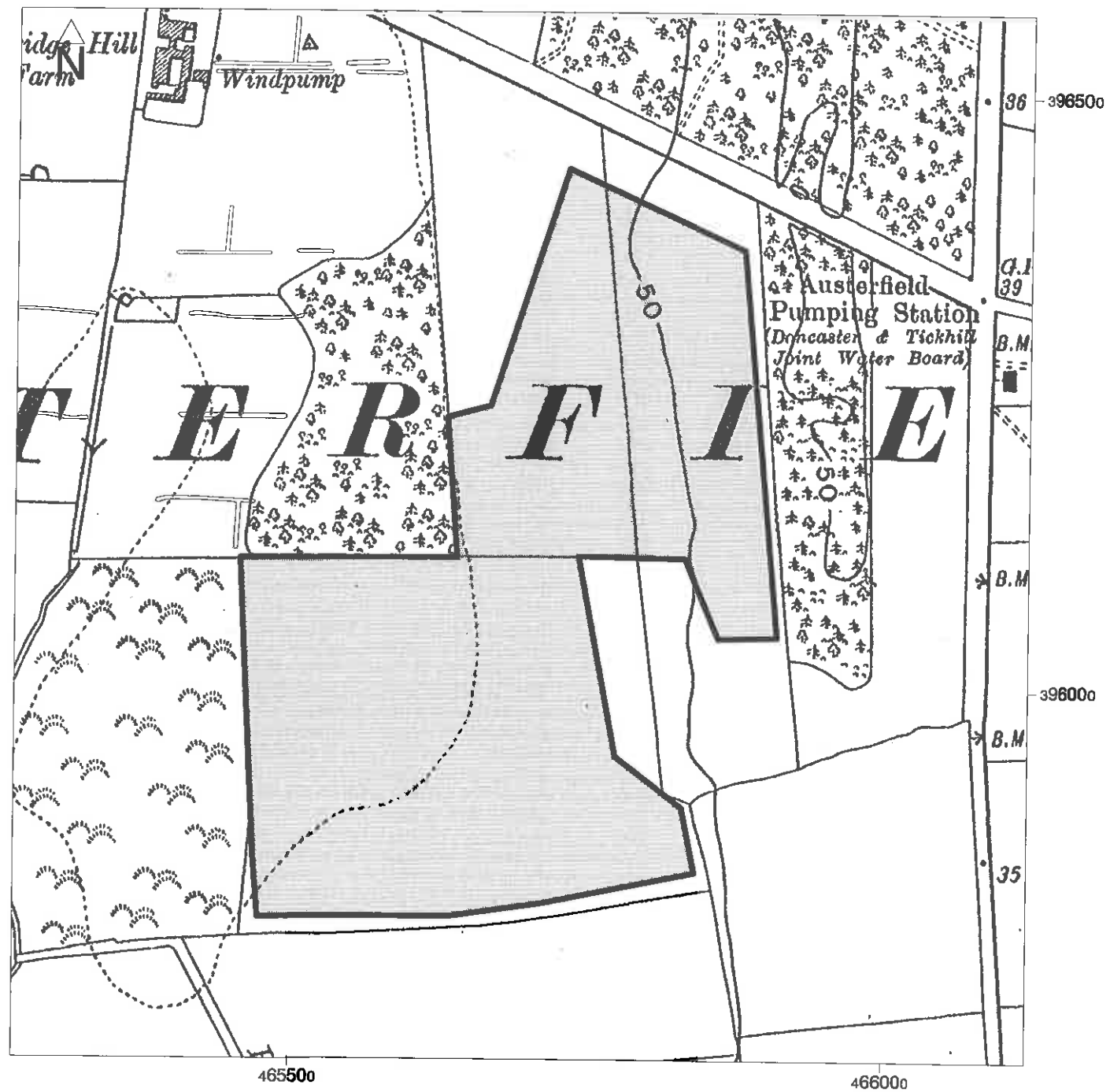


Fig. 6. Extract from the 6 inch Ordnance Survey map of 1931 showing the proposed development site and recorded cropmarks (sheet 291 NE; 1:5000 scale)



Plate 1. Area of disused quarrying on the south-western side of the proposed development site, looking north-west towards Partridge Hill Farm



Plate 2. Area of disused quarrying on the south-western side of the proposed development site, looking north-east



Plate 3. Re-landscaped area of former quarrying on the northern side of the proposed development site, looking south



Plate 4. Re-landscaped area of former quarrying on the northern side of the proposed development site, looking south-east

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