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**Eller Beck, Waller Hill Beck
and Skipton Town Centre
North Yorkshire**

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report no. DRAFT

December 2013

Client: Environment Agency



Eller Beck, Waller Hill Beck and Skipton Town Centre North Yorkshire

Archaeological Watching Brief

Summary

An archaeological watching brief has undertaken during the excavation of geotechnical test pits on a number of sites in and around Skipton. Borehole data were also made available, although the boreholes themselves were not monitored. No archaeological features or finds were identified during the investigations.



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Report Information

Client: Environment Agency
Address: NEAS, Lateral, 8 City Walk, Leeds, LS11 9AT
Report Type: Archaeological watching brief
Location: Eller Beck, Waller Hill Beck and Skipton town centre
County: North Yorkshire
Grid Reference: SD 995 521 (Eller Beck), SE 007 524 (Waller Hill Beck), SD 989 516 (centred on Skipton town centre)
Period(s) of activity: N/A
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1 Introduction

Archaeological Services WYAS (ASWYAS) was commissioned by Emma Morrish of the Environment Agency to undertake an archaeological watching brief during ground investigation work as part of the Skipton Flood Alleviation Scheme. The excavation of test pits were monitored at a number of sites, two to the north-east of Skipton, Eller Beck and Waller Hill Beck, and various locations within Skipton town centre (Fig. 1). The work was undertaken in accordance with current best practice, between 9th July and 1st August 2013, and between 7th and 10th October 2013.

Site location, topography and land-use

The Eller Beck site is located immediately to the north of the A65 and to the east of Skipton Golf Club's club house, and lies partially within the golf course. It is centred on SD 995 521 (Fig. 1). The Waller Hill Beck site is situated to the south of the A65 and immediately to the north of Otley Road (A6069), and is centred on SE 007 524. Both sites are currently grassland, at about 137m above Ordnance Datum (aOD) for the former, and 160m aOD for the latter.

Test pits within Skipton town centre were monitored at three locations; north-west of Morrisons' supermarket off Belmont Street, the Ginnel Mews site to the south of Newmarket Street and the Spindle Mill site to the south of Water Street and to the north-west of the canal. Interventions within the town centre were on rough ground, grassed areas or cobbles. The sites ranged in height from *c.* 101m aOD at Morrisons, *c.* 104m aOD at Spindle Mill and *c.* 106m aOD at Ginnel Mews.

Geology and soils

The underlying bedrock at Eller Beck comprises Chatburn Limestone Formation near to the Beck and elsewhere, Clitheroe Limestone Formation (BGS 2013), both overlain by soils classified in the Brickfield 2 association. These are characterised as slowly permeable seasonally waterlogged fine loamy soils (SSEW 1983).

The underlying bedrock at Waller Hill Beck comprises Hodder Mudstone Formation (BGS 2013), also overlain by soils classified in the Brickfield 2 association.

The underlying bedrock at the Spindle Mill and Morrisons' sites comprises Clitheroe Limestone Formation, while at Ginnel Mews the bedrock is Embsay Limestone Member (BGS 2013). All three sites are overlain by soils classified in the Brickfield 2 association (SSEW 1983).

2 Archaeological Background

No archaeological remains or find spots of earlier prehistoric date have been found in the immediate vicinity of the sites, although a late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age flint scatter was recovered from Canal Yard, to the west of the High Street, and small Bronze Age cup was

recovered from underneath the pavement in Keighley Road, to the south of the town centre (Wrathmell and Blackburn 2008).

No evidence for Iron Age activity has been identified in Skipton itself, although the earthwork remains of a settlement surrounded by a wall, measuring up to 1m in height and enclosing an area approximately 50m in diameter, lies at Horse Close Farm, approximately 1.5km to the south of Skipton (Scheduled Monument No. 29151). Further evidence for activity in the area is provided by an Iron Age torc found in the 19th century at the edge of the moor behind Embsay (Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Ref. MYD4343).

Activity in Skipton during the Roman period is suggested by the recovery of Roman coins (NMR Nos SD 95SE5, SD95SE3 and SD95SE13), while a road is thought to have run from Skipton north-west through Settle towards Ingleton (NMR Linear No. 692). It has been suggested that the banked remains of an enclosure on Park Hill, to the north-west of the town centre proposed development site, represent the remains of a Roman 'look-out' post, although the remains are officially recorded as being from the Civil War period (Wrathmell and Blackburn 2008).

A settlement may have been established in Skipton in the 7th or 8th century, as attested by a 7th-century gold coin from France found during construction work in the church-yard of Holy Trinity in 1979 (Rowley 1983, 13). An early foundation date for this church is also suggested by the oval form of the graveyard (Wrathmell and Blackburn 2008). The place-name *Skipton*, is reputed to derive from the Anglo-Saxon words for sheep town (Dawson 1882; Rowley 1983).

By the time of the Norman Conquest, Skipton formed part of the estate, controlled by Earl Edwin, which was centred on Bolton. After Edwin was killed in battle in 1071, the king conveyed the estate to Robert de Romille. Skipton Castle appears to have been constructed soon after, and was strategically positioned overlooking the Aire Gap at the point where several major routeways converged (Mitchell 2006).

A market had been established in the town by the 12th century and from 1204 a three-day fair was held during the summer (Wrathmell and Blackburn 2008). The main settlement was focused along High Street, which runs southwards from the castle, by the 13th century. A weekly market was established in 1311, after the Cliffords obtained the estate, and from 1350 sheep and wool trading formed an important part of the local economy (Wrathmell and Blackburn 2008; Hopkinson 2003). A fulling or finishing mill was positioned alongside Eller Beck at the southern end of the town (Hopkinson 2003).

Skipton continued to flourish as a market town into the early post-medieval period, and by the end of the 16th century the Cliffords, who had now obtained the title of Earl of Cumberland, had obtained a charter for a fair each alternate Tuesday. Textile manufacture also continued to grow (Mitchell 2006, 24-25). After the outbreak of the Civil War in 1642 there followed a three-year siege, and the earthwork remains of a Civil War battery lie to the north-west of the castle. The castle was finally surrendered to Parliamentary forces in

December 1645. The Cliffords were allowed to continue occupy the castle, although Cromwell ordered that the rebuilt defences be 'slighted' so that it would not be able to withstand any future attack (Mitchell 2006; Hopkinson 2003).

The 17th and 18th century saw a continuous growth in trade in the town, with the settlement spreading to the southern end of High Street and east to west along Swadford Street and Newmarket Street, avoiding the more marshy ground at the northern end of the town. The need for improved transport links to other industrialised areas in the north of England were soon recognised and work began on connecting Skipton to the Leeds and Liverpool canal in 1770. The entire canal system was finally completed in 1816 (Mitchell 2006; Johnson 2002), and was used to bring coal into Skipton and to move limestone out. Three limestone quarries were in operation by the mid-18th century, owned by the Rt. Hon. Sackville, 8th Earl of Thanet, and owner of the Skipton Castle Estate. These comprised Skipton (or Castle) woods, Massa Flatts and Haw Bank (Binns 2004). Haw Bank (a long, narrow outcrop which extended to the north and north-east of the town), provided one of the main sources of limestone in the Skipton area. Extraction had probably been undertaken here for many centuries, although the demand for limestone and the improved transport afforded by the canal resulted in a number of new quarries being opened by Lord Thanet's estate.

3 Aims and Objectives

The aims of the watching brief were to identify, investigate, record, and report the extent, nature and significance of any surviving archaeological remains encountered; and to provide sufficient information to allow the heritage significance of the area to be assessed.

The objectives were to monitor excavations and record any archaeological features present, retain any non-modern artefacts and to identify areas devoid of archaeological features. Dissemination of the investigations would outline the areas monitored and any discoveries made.

4 Methodology

All excavation was undertaken in accordance with IfA guidelines *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* (2008), and in compliance with English Heritage MoRPHE PPN3: Archaeological Excavation (2008).

The excavation of 38 test pits was monitored by a qualified and experienced archaeologist, and was carried out using a mechanical excavator equipped with a toothed ditching bucket. Excavations reached depths of up to 4.2m (Table 1).

A full written, drawn and photographic record was made. The excavation limits were surveyed using electronic survey equipment. Tie-in information was undertaken during the

course of the evaluation and was fixed in relation to nearby permanent structures and roads and to the National Grid.

The site archive contains all the information gathered during the archaeological watching brief and it is listed in Appendix 1. A concordance of contexts is given in Appendix 2. The archive is currently held at ASWYAS headquarters but archive deposition will be arranged with Craven Craven Museum and Gallery shortly (accession number SKIPM: 2013.77).

5 Results

Test pits excavated at Eller Beck were given the prefix TP1, those at Waller Hill Beck were given the prefix TP2, while those within Skipton town centre were prefixed with HHWS, HDP or WS. The location of all monitored interventions are given in Figs 2-4 using mapping provided by the client. A summary of the results from each test pit, including dimensions and the observed stratigraphy, is presented in Table 1.

Eller Beck and Waller Hill Beck

A topsoil (101) of orange-brown clay silt was observed in all test pits at Eller Beck and Waller Hill Beck, but an orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) was not always present. Subsequent deposits in all test pits consisted of natural deposits of colluvium, gravels and clays. Within test pits TP1-1-01 and TP2-1-14 a band of dark organic peaty layer (108), up to 0.2m in depth, was sealed by colluvium (Plate 1). Samples of the peat were not taken due to the depth of the test pits and the unstable nature of the sides.

All test pits were photographed but, given the shadow caused by their small area compared to their depth, these were not always informative (Plate 2).

Skipton town centre

A dark brown sandy silt topsoil (200/206) was observed in the majority of test pits monitored within the town centre, but no subsoil was noted. Subsequent deposits tended to be modern hardcore (208) or made ground (201 or 205) over alluvium (203, 204 and 207). Paving slabs representing an early modern surface were noted in some of the test pits at the Spindle Mill and Ginnel Mews sites, and were also present at the Morrisons' site (Plates 3-5).

Table 1. Summary of test pits

Location	Test pit	Dimensions	Depth	Topsoil	Subsoil	Stratigraphy
Eller Beck	TP1-1-01	2m by 0.6m	3.2m	0.70m	-	Topsoil (100) over grey-brown silty colluvium (101) over dark organic layer (108)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-02	2m by 0.6m	4.1m	0.25m	-	Topsoil (100) over clay mudstone (103) over blue-grey clay (102)

Location	Test pit	Dimensions	Depth	Topsoil	Subsoil	Stratigraphy
Eller Beck	TP1-1-03	2m by 0.6m	3.5m	0.40m	-	Topsoil (100) over grey-brown silty colluvium (101) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-04	2m by 0.6m	4.1m	0.30m	-	Topsoil (100) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-05	2m by 0.6m	3.5m	1.00m	-	Topsoil (100) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-06	2m by 0.6m	3.3m	1.00m	-	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown clay (104) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-07	3.2m by 0.6m	3.9m	0.25m	0.25m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over orange-brown clay (104) over grey-brown sandy gravel (107)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-08	3.2m by 0.6m	3.5m	0.25m	0.30m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over orange-brown clay (104) over grey-brown sandy gravel (107) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-09	3.0m by 0.6m	3.8m	0.25m	0.25m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over orange-brown clay (104) over grey-brown sandy gravel (107) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-10	2.9m by 0.6m	4.1m	0.40m	-	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown clay (104) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-11	3m by 0.6m	3.9m	0.30m	0.50m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-12	2.7m by 0.6m	4.0m	0.25m	0.55m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-13	2.7m by 0.6m	2.5m	0.25m	0.10m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over orange-brown clay (104) over blue-grey clay (102)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-15	3.2m by 0.6m	4.2m	0.20m	0.20m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105) over blue-grey clay (102)

Location	Test pit	Dimensions	Depth	Topsoil	Subsoil	Stratigraphy
Eller Beck	TP1-1-17	3.0m by 0.6m	4.0m	0.30m	-	Topsoil (100) over clay mudstone (103) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105)
Eller Beck	TP1-1-18	2.5m by 0.6m	2.6m	0.20m	0.60m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over blue-grey clay (102)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-02	1.5m by 0.6m	3.6m	0.10m	0.50m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over blue-grey clay (102)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-03	5.0m by 0.6m	3.3m	0.10m	0.30m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over blue-grey clay (102)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-12	3.0m by 0.6m	3.8m	0.10m	0.30m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105) over blue-grey clay (102)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-13	3.20m by 0.6m	4.0m	0.20m	0.40m	Topsoil (100) over orange-brown sandy silt subsoil (106) over brown-grey sandy silt and gravel (105) over clay mudstone (103)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-14	5.0m by 0.6m	2.5m	0.05m	0.40m	Topsoil (100) over grey-brown silty colluvium (101) over dark organic layer (108) over blue-grey clay (102)
Waller Hill	TP2-1-15	3.0m by 0.6m	3.5m	0.05m	0.80m	Topsoil (100) over grey-brown silty colluvium (101) over blue-grey clay (102)
Morrisons	HDP3-1-5	0.5m by 0.50m	1.0m	0.40m	-	Topsoil (206) over paving slabs (202) over alluvium (207)
Morrisons	HDP3-1-7	0.7m x 0.5m	0.7m	-	-	Not completed due to void
Morrisons	HDP3-1-6	0.5m by 1.6m	0.4m	0.2m	-	Topsoil (200) over modern hardcore (208) over paving slabs (202)
Morrisons	WS3-1-3	0.5m by 0.5m	0.50m	0.20m	-	Topsoil (200) over modern hardcore (208) potentially over paving slabs (202)
Morrisons	WS3-1-4	0.5m by 0.5m	0.50m	0.20m	-	Topsoil (200) over modern hardcore (208) potentially over paving slabs (202)
Morrisons	WS3-1-8	0.4m by 0.4m	1.20m	0.10m	-	Topsoil (200) over made ground (201)

Location	Test pit	Dimensions	Depth	Topsoil	Subsoil	Stratigraphy
Spindle Mill	HDP3-1-4	0.7m by 0.7m	1.20m	0.40m	-	Topsoil (206) over paving slabs (202) over alluvium (207)
Spindle Mill	HHWS3-1-1	0.4m by 0.4m	1.00m	0.35m	-	Topsoil (200) over alluvium (207)
Spindle Mill	HHWS3-1-2	0.4m by 0.4m	0.85m	0.30m	-	Topsoil (200) over modern hardcore (208) over alluvium (207)
Spindle Mill	HHWS3-1-3	0.4m by 0.4m	1.00m	0.30m	-	Topsoil (200) over modern hardcore (208)
Spindle Mill	HHWS3-1-4	0.5m by 0.5m	0.80m	N/A	-	Modern hardcore (208)
Ginnel Mews	HDP3-1-8	0.5m by 0.5m	0.50m	0.20m	-	Topsoil (200) over made ground (205)
Ginnel Mews	HDP3-1-9	0.4m by 0.5m	1.00m	0.30m	-	Topsoil (200) over made ground (201) over made ground (205)
Ginnel Mews	HDP3-1-10	0.7m by 0.50m	1.0m	0.05m	-	Topsoil (200) over paving slabs (202), over made ground (201) over alluvium (204)
Ginnel Mews	HDP3-1-11	0.5m by 0.5m	1.20m	0.20m	-	Topsoil (200) over made ground (201)
Ginnel Mews	HDP3-1-12	0.7m by 0.50m	1.0m	N/A	-	Existing cobbled surface over made ground (201) over alluvium (203)

6 Conclusions

An archaeological presence was maintained during the excavation of 38 test pits in and around Skipton, but no archaeological features or deposits were encountered. This is not surprising given the small areas of disturbance, and the relatively shallow depths of some of the interventions. Should larger areas of excavation be undertaken in these areas in the future, archaeological remains could still be encountered.

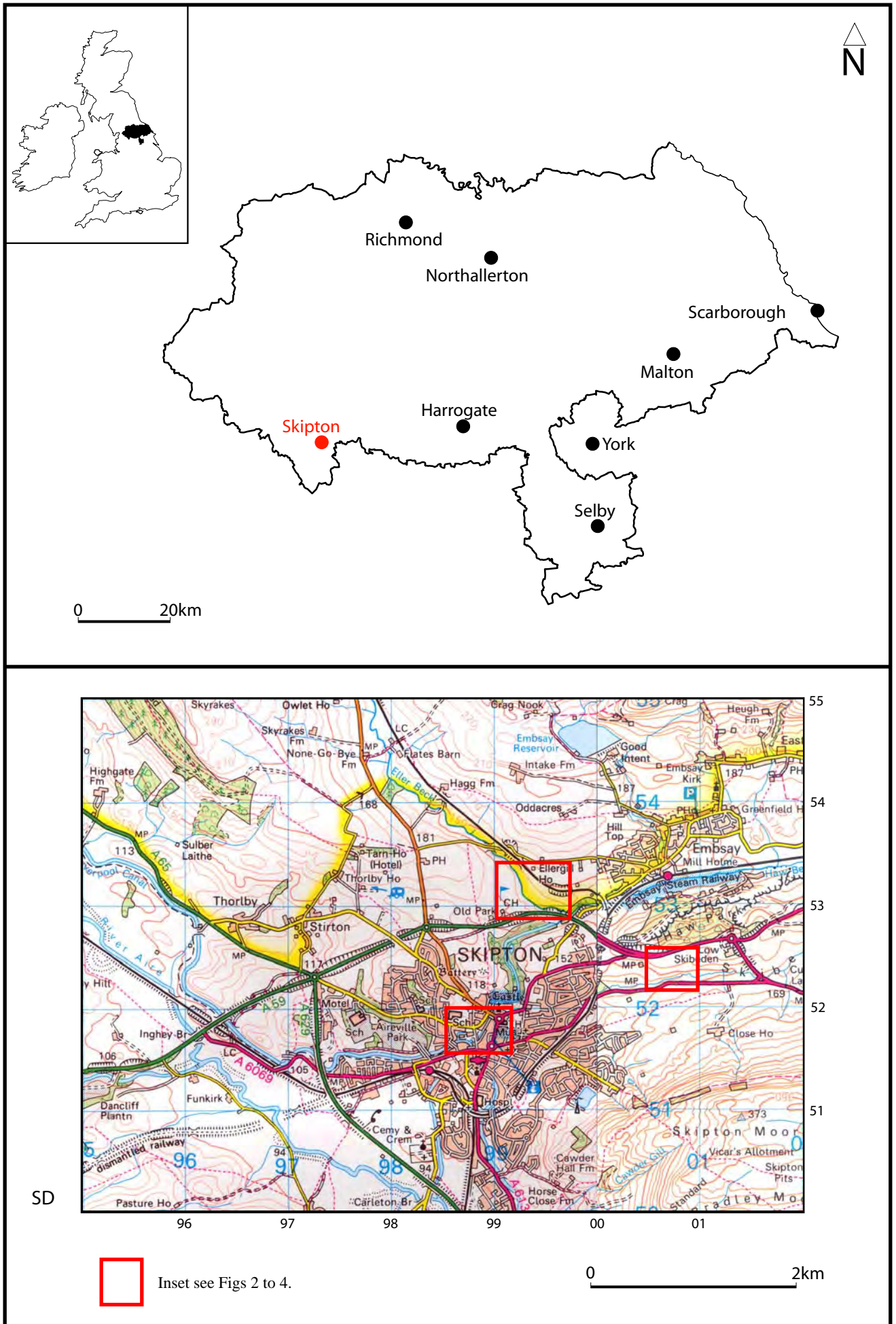


Fig. 1. Site location

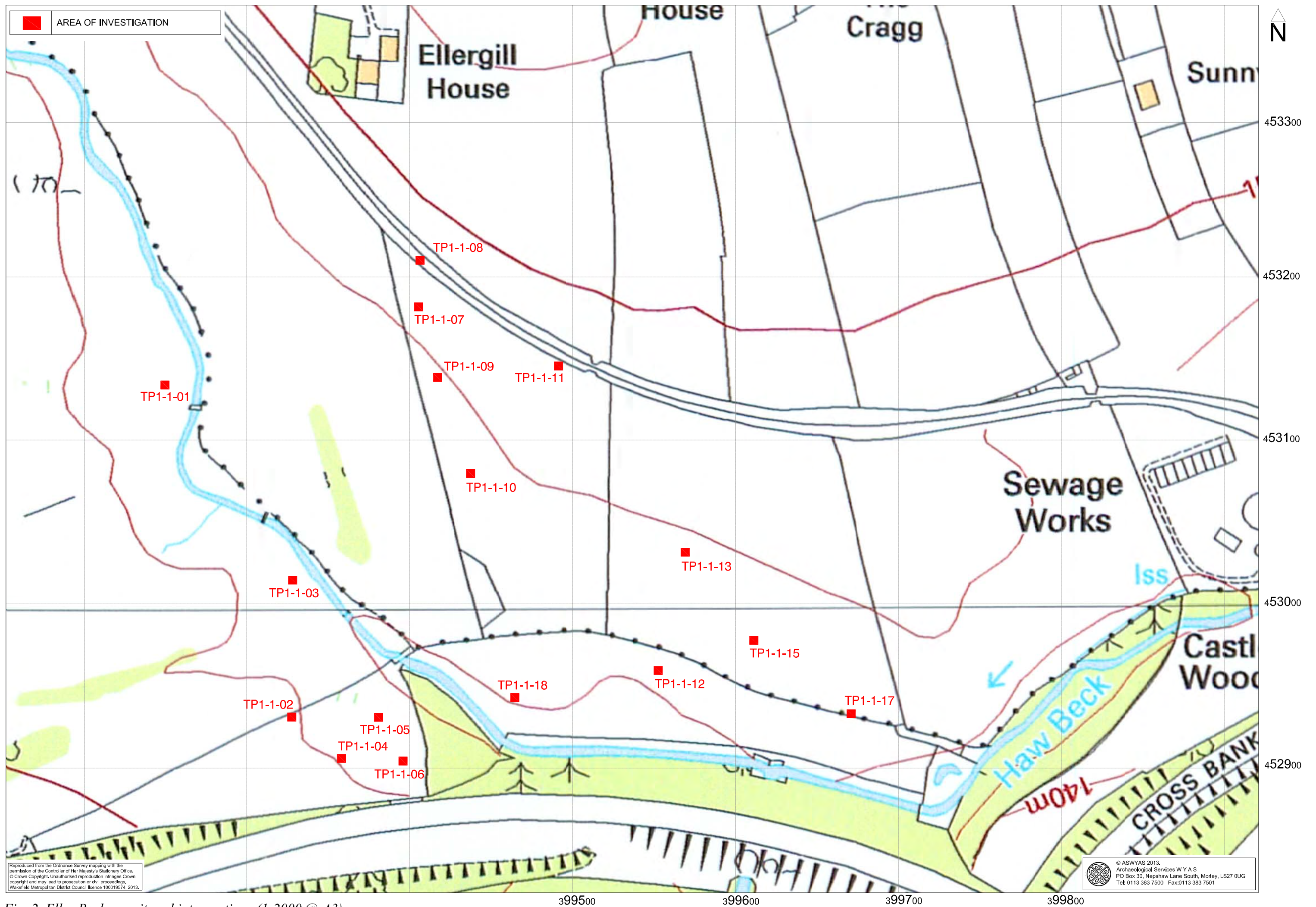


Fig. 2. Eller Beck: monitored interventions (1:2000 @ A3)

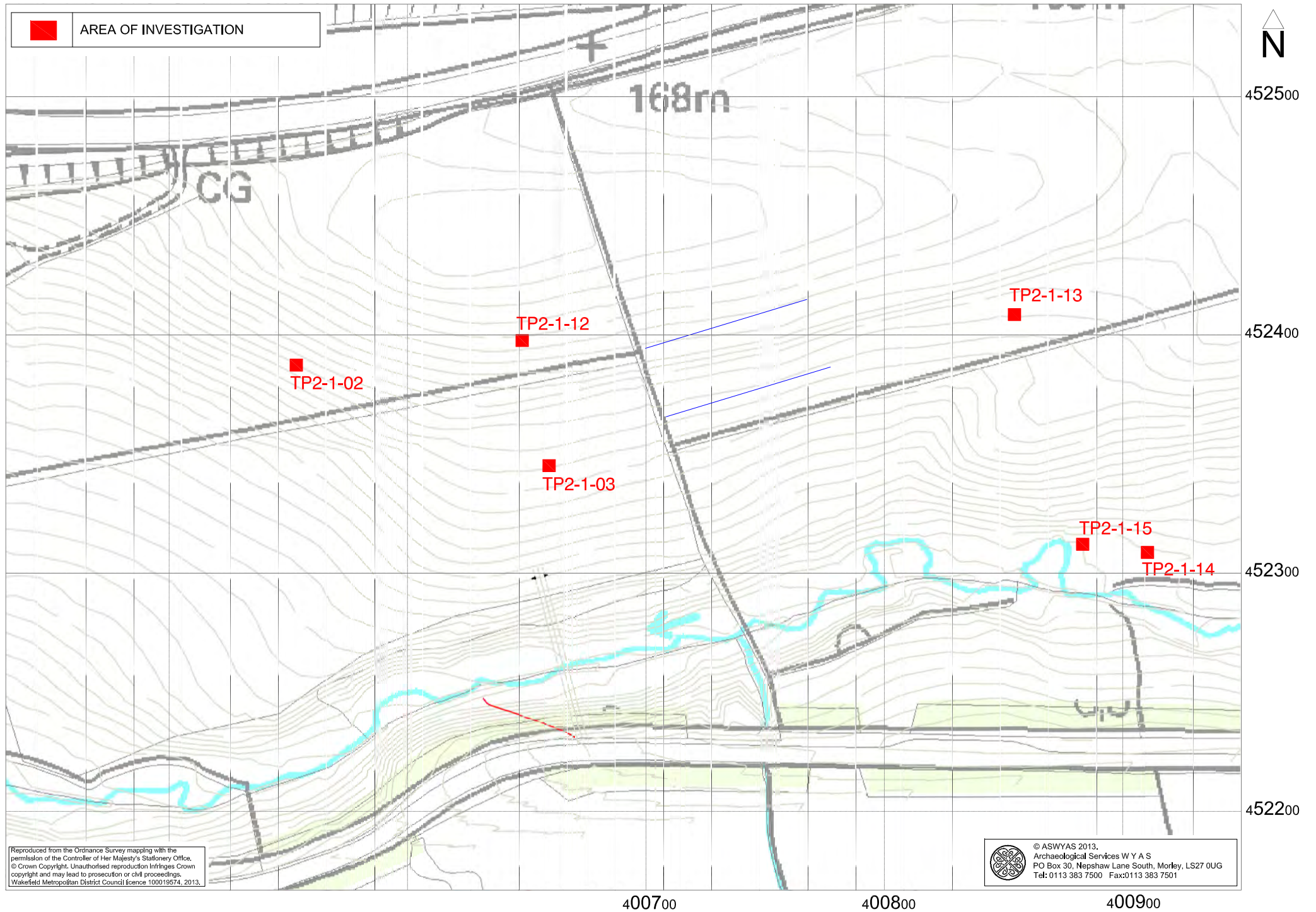


Fig. 3. Waller Hill Beck: monitored interventions (1:2000 @ A4)

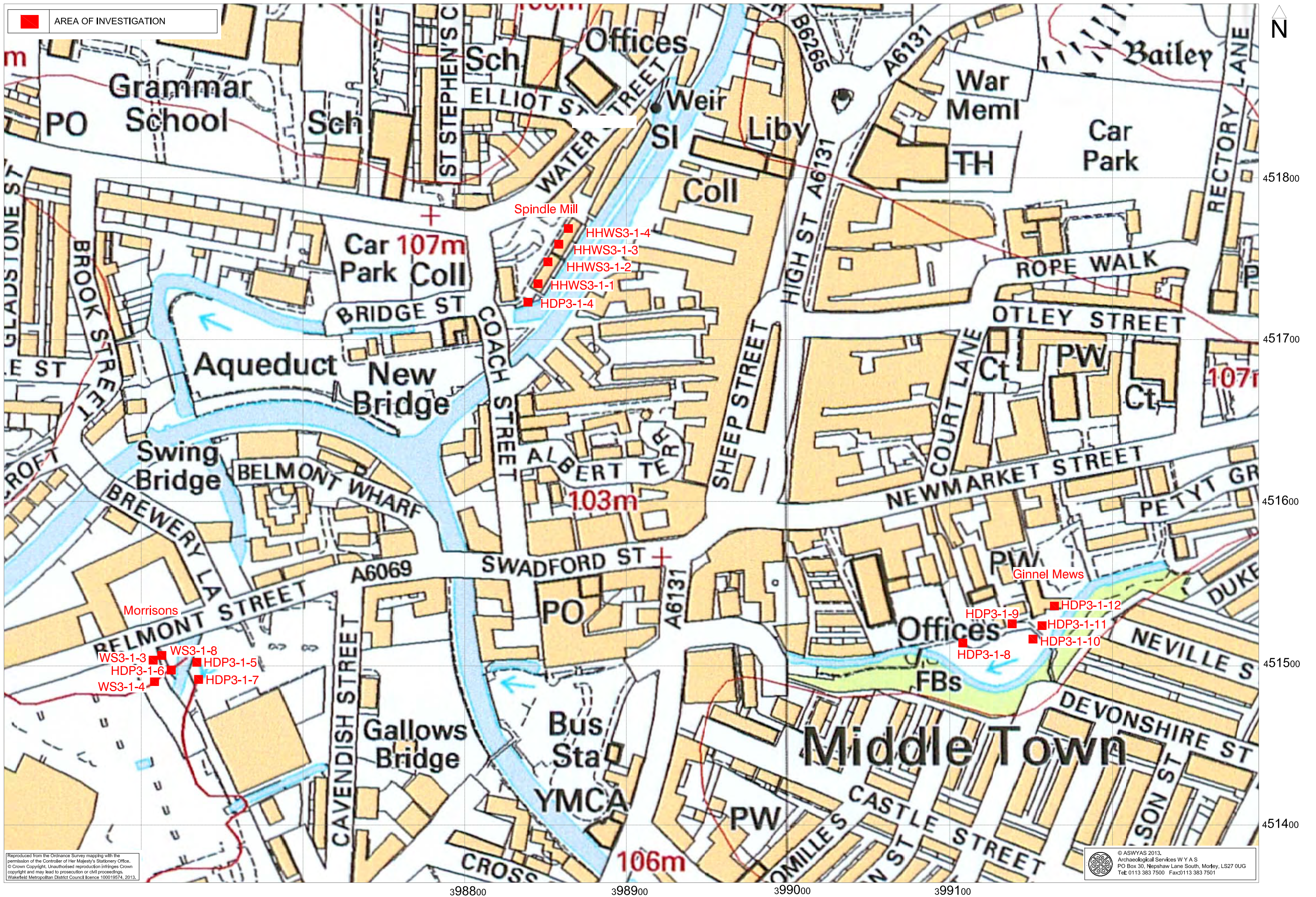


Fig. 4. Skipton defences: monitored interventions (1:2000 @ A3)

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Plate 1. TP2-1-14 showing black organic layer (108), looking north



Plate 2. TP1-1-18 showing natural blue-grey clay (102), looking north-west



Plate 3. HDP3-1-10 at the Ginnel Mews site, looking north



Plate 4. HHWS3-1-4 at the Spindle Mill site, looking east



Plate 5. HDP 3-1-6 at the Morrisons' site excavated down to paving slabs, looking north

Appendix 1: Inventory of primary archive

Site	File/Box No	Description	Quantity
	File no.1	Watching brief daily monitoring form	9
	File no.1	Context register	2
	File no.1	Digital photograph record sheets	4
	File no. 1	Context cards	17
Eller Beck	File no.1	Geotechnical test pit record sheets	16
Waller Hill Beck	File no.1	Geotechnical test pit record sheets	6
Morrisons	File no.1	Geotechnical test pit record sheets	6
Spindle Mill	File no.1	Geotechnical test pit record sheets	5
Ginnel Mews	File no.1	Geotechnical test pit record sheets	5

Appendix 2: Concordance of contexts

Context	Description
101	Orange-brown clay silt topsoil
102	Blue-grey clay
103	Orange-brown clay mudstone
104	Orange -brown clay
105	Brown-grey sandy silt and gravel
106	Orange-brown sandy silt subsoil
107	Grey-brown sandy gravel
108	Dark organic layer
200	Dark brown sandy silt topsoil
201	Made ground of orange-brown clay silt with modern inclusions
202	Paving slabs (sandstone)
203	Orange-brown to grey-black clay silt alluvium
204	Orange-brown clay alluvium
205	Made ground of orange-brown silty sand
206	Dark brown sandy silt topsoil (sandier than 200)
207	Orange-grey silty sand alluvium
208	Modern hardcore

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