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Archaeological Investigations at Riplingham Roundabout, West Ella, East Yorkshire

By Arran Johnson

YAT Assessment Report 2019/63 May 2019



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST



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Abbreviations

AOD – Above Ordnance Datum

BGL – Below Ground Level

YAT – York Archaeological Trust

YW – Yorkshire Water

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Between April 1st and May 15th 2019, York Archaeological Trust carried out an archaeological watching brief at Riplingham Roundabout, West Ella, East Yorkshire (TA 00475 30223).

The work was undertaken for Atkins Ltd. and was based on a Written Scheme of Investigation produced by YAT. The works involved the monitoring of the removal of topsoil in advance of the construction of a new double roundabout. No archaeological features or deposits were observed during the watching brief.

KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Name	Riplingham Roundabout, West Ella, East Yorkshire
YAT Project No.	6131
Document Number	2019/63
Type of Project	Watching Brief
Client	Atkins Ltd.
Planning Application No.	Pending
NGR	TA 00475 30223
Museum Accession No.	Pending
OASIS Identifier	yorkarch1-347849

REPORT INFORMATION

Version	Produced by		Edited by		Approved by	
	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	AJ	16/05/19	IDM	21/05/19	IDM	21/05/19

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1 INTRODUCTION

Between April 1st and May 15th 2019, YAT carried out a watching brief at the site of the proposed Riplingham Roundabout, West Ella, East Yorkshire (TA 00475 30223) (Figure 1). The work was undertaken for Atkins Ltd.

The removal of topsoil in advance of construction of the roundabout scheme and some intrusive works associated with the installation of new water pipes were observed under watching brief conditions.

In accordance with the Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI), the watching brief was scheduled to step up to a strip, map and sample excavation upon the discovery of archaeological features or deposits. As no such deposits were found to be present, this change in approach was not required.

2 METHODOLOGY

The methodology followed the WSI (Appendix 3) and principally involved archaeological monitoring of the removal of topsoil, which was stripped by a 21 ton 360° tracked excavator equipped with a 1.80m wide toothless bucket. Alongside the ground reduction in advance of the construction of the new double roundabout, a series of trenches were also excavated by Yorkshire Water (YW) for the installation of new water pipes. The excavation of the pipe trenches was monitored where possible, although some works were carried out without the notification of YAT (Figure 3).

The area to the east of the A164 was extensively damaged prior to the commencement of the watching brief by the removal of mature vegetation and 20th century drainage ditches. As any archaeological features in this area would already have been destroyed, works in this area were not observed. Excavated areas were located on the scale base map provided by the client (Figure 3). Plough scars and variations in geology were recorded photographically.

3 LOCATION, GEOLOGY & TOPOGRAPHY

The site is situated on the eastern slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds to the west of Hull at the proposed A164 Great Gutter Lane Roundabout, West Ella (Figure 1) and is presently occupied by the junctions of the A164 (Great Gutter lane), Riplingham Road, and Swanland Dale and a series of arable and pasture fields. The site slopes gently east to west from 58m to 51m AOD and is bisected by a 180m long pathway that was formerly part of Riplingham Road.

The bedrock geology is of Burnham chalk formed in the Cretaceous Period. Superficial deposits are a mix of Devensian till and Head clays, silts, sands and gravel colluvium (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed 28/3/19).

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The area to the north-west of West Ella is believed to have been inhabited for around 10,000 years, largely due to prominent earthworks which were visible in the area up to the mid-19th century. Land use is believed to have been sporadic until the first permanent settlements began in the Iron Age (ERYC 2007, 6). There is extensive evidence of Roman activity in the

wider area and a Roman road is thought to be located in fields to the south of the proposed development connecting Brough to Swanland (ibid.).

Three separate settlements named Ella are referred to in the Domesday Book, including West Ella, Kirk Ella and the now lost South Ella. Of the 99 settlements of the Harthill Wapentake that paid towards the Lay Subsidy of 1334, Ella paid the ninth highest amount and was clearly a prosperous settlement at this point (ibid.). West Ella was held as a single manor under one landholder in the post-medieval period, a trend that continued through to the 19th century when the village was re-modelled as planned estate by the Sykes family (ibid.).

Between 1776 and 1799 the open fields of Kirk Ella, West Ella and Willerby were enclosed, creating much of the pattern of holdings and farms that still constitute the modern landscape (ibid.).

Late 19th and early 20th century OS mapping shows the presence of chalk quarry pits within the area of investigation, particularly along the redundant section of Riplingham Road (Plate 1).



Plate 1. 1888-1913 OS map excerpt (National Library of Scotland)

The field to the immediate north of the site has been extensively quarried and was recently investigated as part of the Willerby to Derringham Flood Alleviation Scheme. No report for this work is presently available on the HER, although Bronze Age ring ditches and round barrows (HER no. 6597) and Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure ditches (HER no. 6491) have been observed.

5 RESULTS

The topsoil strip along the northern sides of the A164 and Swanland Dale revealed no significant archaeological features or deposits. The topsoil comprised a dark grey brown sandy clay silt which ranged from 0.30m to 0.60m in thickness. In the centre of the site, the former tarmac over concrete surface of Riplingham Road was exposed and 20th century drainage ditches were observed on both sides (Plate 2). The surface of the road itself was left in-situ.



Plate 2. East facing view showing an infilled 20th century ditch running parallel to the tarmac surface of Riplingham Road.

No subsoils were observed beneath the topsoil at any point during the watching brief; instead, the topsoil directly overlaid natural geological deposits. These deposits varied somewhat across the site, with firm glacial till observed in the elevated area adjacent to the A164 and softer, orange brown clayey sand colluvium in lower lying areas closer to Swanland Dale; both areas demonstrated deep intrusions from modern ploughing (Plates 3 and 4).



Plate 3. South-west facing view of plough damaged glacial till on the northern side of the A164.

The area immediately adjacent to the A164 was noted to have been heavily disturbed by the insertion of the road in the 20th century. As a result, it remains uncertain whether any archaeological remains were present in this area prior to the road's construction.



Plate 4. North facing view of plough scars cutting into natural geological deposits north of Swanland Dale.

Two pits were observed close to the northern side of Swanland Dale. The northernmost of the pits was half-sectioned and was found to contain 19th century ceramics and a large fragment of modern concrete (Context 102; Plate 5; Figure 3). After insulated copper wire was found in the second pit, excavation ceased and the feature was recorded photographically due to its modern date. These pits likely relate to sporadic activity associated with modern agriculture.



Plate 5. South-west facing view of modern pit cut C102 (0.50m scale).

Following the observation of approximately 75% of the topsoil strip, it was agreed between YAT, Atkins and the Principal Archaeologist for the Humber Archaeological Partnership Lucie McCarthy, to discontinue the watching brief.

DISCUSSION

No archaeological features or deposits of any significance were discovered during the watching brief. The deep plough scars observed in the upper surface of the natural geological deposits may suggest that any features may have been destroyed by modern ploughing, although the lack of any residual medieval or earlier finds within the topsoil may suggest that the area has been used solely for agriculture.

As the majority of the development area was situated adjacent to established roads and field boundaries, it remains possible that more significant remains or earlier field systems may be present elsewhere in the area.

LIST OF SOURCES

British Geological Survey <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> (accessed 28/3/19)

REFERENCES

ERYC, 2007. *Conservation Area Appraisal, West Ella* East Riding of Yorkshire Council

APPENDIX 1 – INDEX TO ARCHIVE

Item	Number of items
Context sheets	N/A
Levels register	N/A
Photographic register	N/A
Sample register	N/A
Drawing register	N/A
Original drawings	N/A
B/W photographs (films/contact sheets)	N/A
Colour slides (films)	N/A
Digital photographs	168
Written Scheme of Investigation	1
Report	1

Table 1 Index to archive

APPENDIX 2 – CONTEXT LIST

Context Number	Description
100	Topsoil
101	Backfill of pit 102
102	Cut of pit 102
103	Natural geological deposits

Table 2 Context list

APPENDIX 3 – WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL STRIP, MAP AND RECORD

Site Location: A164 Great Gutter Lane Roundabout, West Ella
NGR: TA 00475 30223
Proposal: Road improvements and construction of 2 x roundabouts
Planning ref: Pending
Prepared for: Atkins Ltd.
Document Number: 2019/45

Version	Produced by		Edited by		Approved by	
	Initials	Date	Initials	Date	Initials	Date
1	AJ	28/03/19	IDM	29/03/19	IDM	29/03/19

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Atkins Ltd. have received planning consent for a scheme of road improvements at A164 Gutter Lane Roundabout, West Ella (TA 00475 30223; Figure 1). The scheme will include the construction of two roundabouts, a new stretch of roadway and associated embankments, drainage and equestrian access routes.
- 1.2 The following archaeological provision is required: Watching brief in areas likely to be disturbed and Strip, Map and Sample in the rest of the works area.
- 1.3 This Written Scheme of Investigation (WSI) has been prepared in response to a Brief supplied by Atkins Ltd. The work will be carried out in accordance with the Brief and this WSI.

2 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

- 2.1 The site is situated on the eastern slopes of the Yorkshire Wolds to the west of Hull at the proposed A164 Great Gutter Lane Roundabout, West Ella (Figure 1) and is presently occupied by the junctions of the A164 (Great Gutter Lane), Riplingham Road, and Swanland Dale and a series of fields. The site slopes gently east to west from 58m to 51m AOD and is bisected by a 180m long pathway that was formerly part of Riplingham Road. The site covers approximately 10 hectares (Figure 2).
- 2.2 The bedrock geology is of Burnham chalk formed in the Cretaceous Period. Superficial deposits are a mix of Devensian till and Head clays, silts, sands and gravel colluvium (<http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html> accessed 28/3/19).

3 DESIGNATIONS & CONSTRAINTS

- 3.1 The site is not in a conservation area and contains no Scheduled Ancient Monuments. Overhead cables are present across the centre of the site.

4 ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

- 4.1 The area to the north-west of West Ella is believed to have been inhabited for around 10,000 years, largely due to prominent earthworks which were visible in the area up to the mid-19th century. Land use is believed to have been sporadic until the first permanent settlements began in the Iron Age (ERYC 2007, 6). There is extensive evidence of Roman activity in the wider area and a Roman Road is thought to be located in fields to the south of the proposed development connecting Brough to Swanland (ibid.).
- 4.2 Three separate settlements named Ella are referred to in the Domesday Book, including West Ella, Kirk Ella and the now lost South Ella. Of the 99 settlements of the Harthill Wapentake that paid towards the Lay Subsidy of 1334, Ella paid the ninth highest amount and was clearly a prosperous settlement at this point (ibid.). West Ella was held as a single manor under one landholder in the post-medieval period, a trend that continued through to the 19th century when the village was re-modelled as planned estate by the Sykes family (ibid.).

- 4.3 Between 1776 and 1799 the open fields of Kirk Ella, West Ella and Willerby were enclosed, creating much of the pattern of holdings and farms that still constitute the modern landscape (ibid.).
- 4.4 Late 19th and early 20th century OS mapping shows the presence of chalk quarry pits within the area of investigation, particularly along the redundant section of Riplingham Road (Plate 1).



4.5

Plate 1. 1888-1913 OS map excerpt (National Library of Scotland)

- 4.6 The field to the immediate north of the site has been extensively quarried and was recently investigated as part of the Willerby to Derrington Flood Alleviation Scheme. No report for this work is presently available on the HER, although Bronze Age ring ditches and round barrows (HER no. 6597) and Iron Age/Romano-British enclosure ditches (HER no. 6491) have been observed.

5 GROUNDWORKS TO BE MONITORED

- 5.1 Intrusive works in the southern part of the scheme will be monitored under watching brief conditions by a single member of YAT staff in the first instance. If significant or more substantial archaeological remains are exposed, additional staff will be deployed to carry out a full strip, map and sample excavation.
- 5.2 In the northern part of the scheme, a full strip, map and sample excavation is required.
- 5.3 Any changes to the schedule will be agreed following consultation with the Client and the Curator.
- 5.4 The area for investigation will be stripped of topsoil or overburden. The area must be

stripped using a machine fitted with a suitable toothless bucket (e.g. ditching bucket) to produce a clean, flat surface for archaeological inspection. The stripping activity will be monitored at all times by an archaeologist. Areas will be cleaned by the archaeologist(s) as necessary to allow any archaeological features to be identified.

6 DELAYS TO THE DEVELOPMENT SCHEDULE

- 6.1 All earth-moving machinery must be operated at an appropriate speed to allow the archaeologist to recognise, record and retrieve any archaeological deposits and material.
- 6.2 It is not intended that the archaeological monitoring should unduly delay site works. However, the archaeologist on site should be given the opportunity to observe, clean, assess and, where appropriate hand excavate, sample and record any exposed features and finds. In order to fulfil the requirements of this WSI, it may be necessary to halt the earth-moving activity to enable the archaeology to be recorded properly.
- 6.3 Plant or excavators shall not be operated in the immediate vicinity of archaeological remains until the remains have been recorded and the archaeologist on site has given explicit permission for operations to recommence at that location.

7 RECORDING METHODOLOGY

- 7.1 Survey of any archaeological remains will be carried out with a suitable GPS unit. All measurements will be accurate to +/-10cm, and the trenches locatable on a 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map. This is to ensure that these areas can be independently relocated in the event of future work.
- 7.2 A sufficient sample of any archaeological features or deposits will be excavated. Stakeholes will be 100% excavated. An initial 50% sample should be taken of all post-holes; but, where part of a building, these should then be 100% excavated. A 50% sample should be taken of pits with a diameter of up to 1.5m, but a minimum 25% sample should be taken of pits with a diameter of over 1.5m. This should include a complete section across the pit to recover its full profile. A minimum 20% sample should be taken of all enclosure ditches, but, where justified, these should then be 100% emptied. A minimum 20% sample should be taken of all field boundary ditches up to 5m in length; for features greater than this, a 10% sample would suffice.
- 7.3 All junctions / intersections and corners of linear features will be investigated, and their stratigraphic relationships determined – if necessary, using box-sections – and all ditch terminals will be examined. All funerary contexts, all buildings and all industrial features will be subject to 100% excavation. As noted above, post-holes and the enclosing ditches around barrows and round-houses would first be subject to sample excavation, sectioning and recording, but should then be fully emptied.
- 7.4 Unique context numbers will only be assigned if artefacts are retrieved, or stratigraphic relationships between archaeological deposits are discernible. In archaeologically 'sterile' areas, soil layers will be described, but no context numbers will be assigned. Where assigned, each context will be described in full on a pro forma context record sheet in

accordance with the accepted context record conventions.

- 7.5 Archaeological deposits will be planned at a basic scale of 1:50, with individual features requiring greater detail being planned at a scale of 1:20. Larger scales will be utilised as appropriate. Cross-section of features will be drawn to a basic scale of 1:10 or 1:20 depending on the size of the feature. All drawings will be related to Ordnance Datum. Where it aids interpretation, structural remains will also be recorded in elevation. All drawings will be drawn on inert materials. All drawings will adhere to accepted drawing conventions
- 7.6 Digital photographs of archaeological deposits and features will be taken using a suitable camera. This will include general views of entire features and of details such as sections as considered necessary. All site photography will adhere to accepted photographic record guidelines.
- 7.7 Areas which are inaccessible (e.g. for health and safety reasons) will be recorded as thoroughly as possible within the site constraints. In these instances, recording may be entirely photographic, with sketch drawings only.
- 7.8 All finds will be collected and handled following the guidance set out in the ClfA guidance for archaeological materials. Unstratified material will not be kept unless it is of exceptional intrinsic interest. Material discarded as a consequence of this policy will be described and quantified in the field. Finds of particular interest or fragility will be retrieved as Small Finds, and located on plans as appropriate. Other finds, finds within the topsoil, and dense/discrete deposits of finds will be collected as Bulk Finds, from discrete contexts, bagged by material type. Any dense/discrete deposits will have their limits defined on the appropriate plan.
- 7.9 All artefacts and ecofacts will be appropriately packaged and stored under optimum conditions, as detailed in the RESCUE/UKIC publication First Aid for Finds, and recording systems must be compatible with the recipient museum. All finds that fall within the purview of the Treasure Act (1996) will be reported to HM Coroner according to the procedures outlined in the Act, after discussion with the client and the local authority.
- 7.10 A soil sampling programme will be undertaken for the recovery and identification of charred and waterlogged remains where suitable deposits are identified. The collection and processing of environmental samples will be undertaken in accordance with Historic England guidelines (Campbell, Moffatt and Straker 2011). Environmental and soil specialists will be consulted during the course of the evaluation with regard to the implementation of this sampling programme. Soil samples of approximately 30 litres for flotation (or 100% of the features if less than this volume) will be removed from selected contexts, using an appropriate combination of the judgement and systematic methodologies.
- 7.11 Judgement sampling will involve the removal of samples from secure contexts which appear to present either good conditions for preservation (e.g. burning or waterlogging) or which are significant in terms of archaeological interpretation or stratigraphy.
- 7.12 Systematic sampling will involve the sampling of all cut features and buried ground surfaces. The spatial distribution of systematic samples cannot be predetermined, given the relatively small nature of the areas available in an evaluation.
- 7.13 It is unlikely that industrial activity will be encountered. If, however, industrial activity of

any scale is detected, industrial samples and process residues will also be collected. Separate samples (c. 10ml) will be collected for micro-slugs (hammer-scale and spherical droplets) (Historic England 2015).

- 7.14 Other samples will be taken, as appropriate, in consultation with YAT specialists and the Historic England Regional Science Advisor, as appropriate (e.g. dendrochronology, soil micromorphology, monolith samples, C14, etc.). Samples will be taken for scientific dating where necessary for the development of subsequent mitigation strategies. Material removed from site will be stored in appropriate controlled environments.
- 7.15 In the event of human remains being discovered during the evaluation these will be left in-situ, covered and protected, in the first instance. The removal of human remains will only take place in compliance with environmental health regulations and following discussions with, and with the approval of, the Ministry of Justice. If human remains are identified, the Ministry of Justice and curator will be informed immediately. An osteoarchaeologist will be available to give advice on site.
- If **disarticulated** remains are encountered, these will be identified and quantified on site. If trenches are being immediately backfilled, the remains will be left in the ground. If the excavations will remain open for any length of time, disarticulated remains will be removed and boxed, for immediate reburial by the Church.
 - If **articulated** remains are encountered, these will be excavated in accordance with recognised guidelines and retained for assessment.
 - Any grave goods or coffin furniture will be retained for further assessment.
- 7.16 Where a licence is issued, all human skeletal remains will be properly removed in accordance with the terms of that licence. Where a licence is not issued, the treatment of human remains will be in accordance with the requirements of Civil Law, ClfA Technical Paper 13 (1993) and Historic England guidance (2005).

8 REPORT & ARCHIVE PREPARATION

- 8.1 Upon completion of the groundworks, a report will be prepared to include the following:
- a) A non-technical summary of the results of the work.
 - b) An introduction which will include the planning reference number, grid reference and dates when the fieldwork took place.
 - c) An account of the methodology and results of the operation, describing structural data, associated finds and environmental data.
 - d) A selection of photographs and drawings, including an overall plan of the site accurately identifying the areas monitored.
 - e) Specialist artefact and environmental reports as necessary.
 - f) Details of archive location and destination (with accession number, where known), together with a catalogue of what is contained in that archive.
 - g) A copy of the key OASIS form details
 - h) Copies of the Brief and WSI
 - i) Additional photographic images may be supplied on a CDROM appended to the report

- 8.2 Copies of the report will be submitted to the commissioning body and the HER/SMR (also in PDF format).
- 8.3 The requirements for archive preparation and deposition will be addressed and undertaken in a manner agreed with the recipient museum. In this instance The Treasure House, Beverley is recommended and an agreed allowance should be made for the curation and storage of this material.
- 8.4 Provision for the publication of results, as outlined in the Brief, will be made.
- 8.5 The owner of the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the information and documentation arising from the work, would grant a licence to the County Council and the museum accepting the archive to use such documentation for their statutory functions and provide copies to third parties as an incidental to such functions. Under the Environmental Information Regulations (EIR), such documentation is required to be made available to enquirers if it meets the test of public interest. Any information disclosure issues would be resolved between the client and the archaeological contractor before completion of the work. EIR requirements do not affect IPR.

9 HEALTH AND SAFETY

- 9.1 Health and safety issues will take priority over archaeological matters and all archaeologists will comply with relevant Health and Safety Legislation.
- 9.2 A Risk Assessment will be prepared prior to the start of site works.

10 TIMETABLE & STAFFING

- 10.1 The timetable will be flexible and will follow the schedule of the ground works in the first instance. Works are due to commence on Monday April 1st.
- 10.2 Specialist staff available for this work are as follows:
- Human Remains - Malin Holst (York Osteoarchaeology Ltd)
 - Palaeoenvironmental remains – PRS Ltd.
 - Head of Curatorial Services - Christine McDonnell
 - Finds Researcher - Nicky Rogers
 - Medieval Pottery Researcher - Anne Jenner
 - Finds Officers – Nienke Van Doorn
 - Archaeometallurgy & Industrial Residues – Dr Rod Mackenzie & Dr Roger Doonan
 - Conservation – Ian Panter

11 MONITORING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK

- 11.1 As a minimum requirement, Lucie McCarthy will be given a minimum of one week's notice of work commencing on site, and will be afforded the opportunity to visit the site during and prior to completion of the on-site works so that the general stratigraphy of the site can be assessed. York Archaeological Trust will notify Lucie McCarthy of any discoveries of archaeological significance so that site visits can be made, as necessary. Any changes to this

agreed WSI will only be made in consultation with Lucie McCarthy.

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13 KEY REFERENCES

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For the latest Historic England guidance documents see:

<https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/latest-guidance/>

FIGURES

Fig. 2 Proposed works (Not to scale)

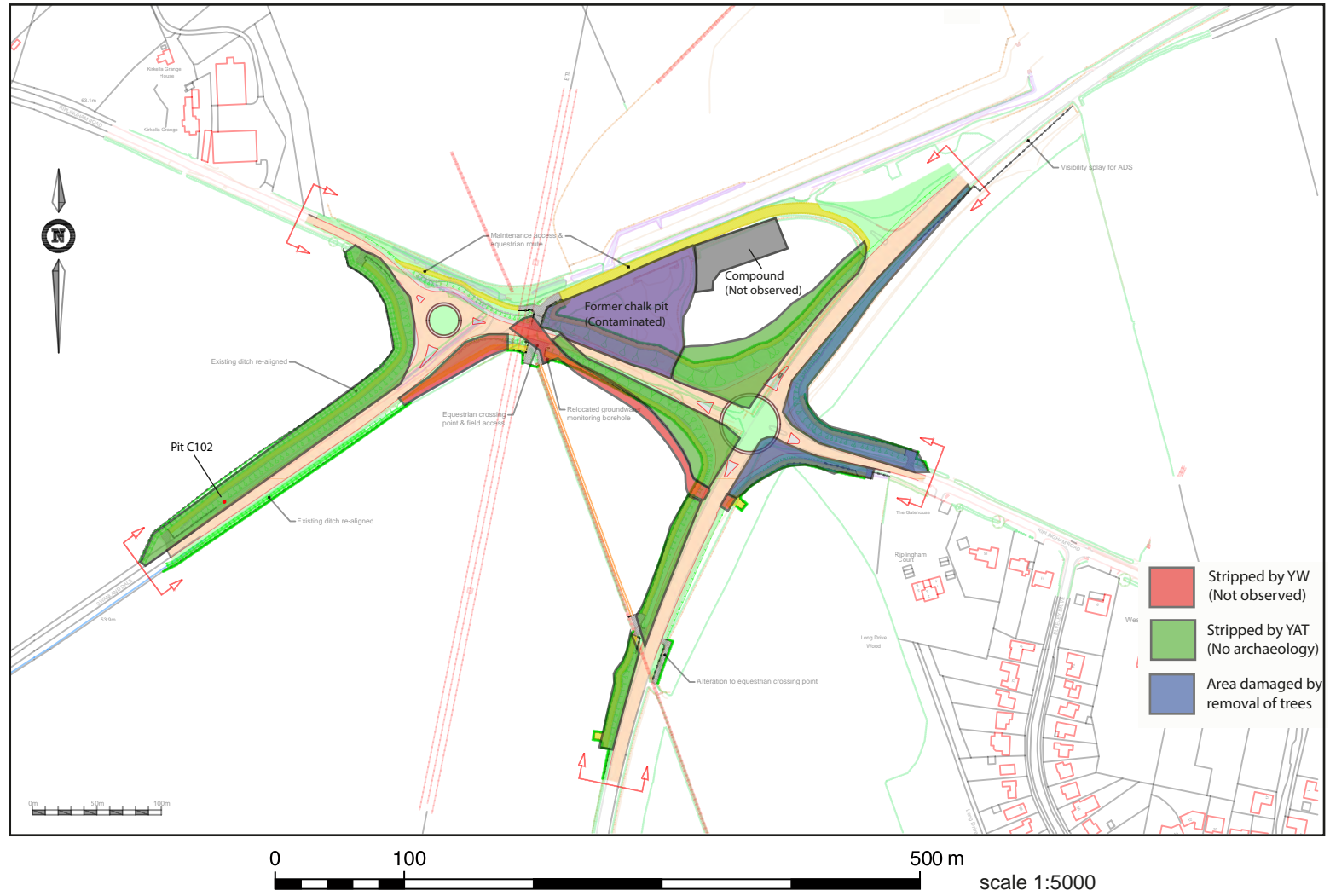


Fig. 3 Areas stripped under watching brief conditions



YORK ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRUST

York Archaeological Trust undertakes a wide range of urban and rural archaeological consultancies, surveys, evaluations, assessments and excavations for commercial, academic and charitable clients. We manage projects, provide professional advice and fieldwork to ensure a high quality, cost effective archaeological and heritage service. Our staff have a considerable depth and variety of professional experience and an international reputation for research, development and maximising the public, educational and commercial benefits of archaeology. Based in York, Sheffield, Nottingham and Glasgow the Trust's services are available throughout Britain and beyond.



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