



# **PRIORY FARM, PRIORY LANE, HORNBY Lancashire**

## **Evaluation Report**



**Oxford Archaeology North**

July 2002

**Mr Peter Norris**

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## **SUMMARY**

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Peter Norris prior to the proposed development of land at Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Hornby (SD 5785 6905); the site lies at the end of Priory Lane and to the north-west of the village of Hornby. The work was undertaken on 30th May and 31st May 2002, and consisted of the excavation of three 15m long trenches. The trenches were positioned in order to trace any occupation across the area affected by the groundworks.

No archaeological features were detected in any of the trenches, but a small assemblage of worked flint and chert, of tentative Late Mesolithic/Early Neolithic date, together with two joining heavily abraded sherds of Roman pottery, was recovered from the subsoil in the northern part of Trench 1.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks are due to the client, Mr Peter Norris, for providing access to the site and for assistance during the project, and to the client's agent, Mr Graham Salisbury of Graham Anthony Associates. In addition, OA North would like to thank Peter McCrone of Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) for providing information from the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR).

The excavation was undertaken by Mark Bagwell and Gunnar Hellstrom, with illustrations by Emma Carter. Comments on the finds were provided by Christine Howard-Davis and Dan Elsworth. The report was compiled by Mark Bagwell and the project managed by Alan Lupton, who also edited this report.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 An application for planning permission has been submitted to Lancaster City Council to erect a new stock building on land at Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Hornby (SD 5785 6905). Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) recommended that an archaeological evaluation be carried out on the site prior to the determination of the planning application. A brief for the evaluation was produced by the Development Control Officer (DCO) of LCAS (*Appendix 1*).
- 1.1.2 Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was contacted by Graham Salisbury of Graham Anthony Associates, acting on behalf of the owner of Priory Farm, Mr Peter Norris, to undertake the evaluation. Following submission of a project design for the task (*Appendix 2*) to LCAS, OA North was commissioned to undertake the work. The evaluation took place on 30th and 31st May 2002.

### 1.2 SITE LOCATION

- 1.2.1 The site lies at the end of Priory Lane and to the north-west of the village of Hornby (Fig 1). It is situated on a natural bluff overlooking the River Lune.

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## 2. ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

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### 2.1 PREHISTORIC

- 2.1.1 Little is known of early prehistoric activity in the immediate vicinity of Hornby. It has been suggested by Haselgrove that some of the settlement and associated field system sites at Eller Beck, near Tunstall, may date to the Iron Age period, as may the enigmatic curvilinear site on Castle Hill, Leck (Haselgrove 1996, 64-5). In addition, Forde-Johnston (1962) has suggested that Castlestede overlooking a crossing point over the River Lune was originally a small 'hillfort' which was reused to construct a medieval motte and bailey castle.

### 2.2 ROMAN

- 2.2.1 A road between the Roman forts at Lancaster and Burrow ran along the east side of the River Lune, passing through Caton, Hornby and Tunstall (Shotter and White 1995, 59-60). No Romano-British rural sites are known from the Hornby area but sites of probable Romano-British date have been identified at nearby Claughton, Whittington and Eller Beck (*op cit*, 71-4).

### 2.3 MEDIEVAL

- 2.3.1 Priory Farm occupies the site, or part of the site, of a medieval priory, a dependent cell of the Premonstratensian abbey of Croxton Kerrial in Leicestershire. The priory, which was dedicated to St Wilfrid, appears to have been founded in the later twelfth century by Roger de Montbegon, who held the manor of Hornby at this time; it was closed in 1538 at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. No remains are to be seen today and the extent of the priory buildings or the curtilage of the priory is not known, the site having never been adequately investigated. Dr Whittaker in the early nineteenth century described a church some 120ft long having a nave with one aisle and possibly a transept (Whittaker 1817, 255). Though the monastic population was never more than five persons, the church probably served as a burial place for the successive lords of Hornby. Canons from the priory officiated as priests at Tunstall and Melling churches, while the prior was chaplain to the Hornby castle chapel (White 1985-6, 2). Grave slabs from the priory are now seen in St Margaret's Church, Hornby, along with two fragments of early medieval crosses, which also originally came from the priory site (*ibid*); these, and the dedication to St Wilfrid, suggest that the priory was a refoundation of an unrecorded Anglian monastery, as Premonstratensian dedications were usually, but not universally, to St Mary.

## **2.4 POST-MEDIEVAL**

- 2.4.1 In the late sixteenth century, a comprehensive survey was undertaken by the Hornby Castle Estates, which documented the landholdings within the estate (Chippendale 1939). The pattern of settlement has remained relatively unchanged until the present day.

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### 3. METHODOLOGY

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#### 3.1 THE EVALUATION

- 3.1.1 The work undertaken followed the method statement detailed in the project design (*Appendix 2*) and complied with current legislation and accepted best practice, including the Code of Conduct and the relevant professional standards of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).
- 3.1.2 The programme of evaluation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features. The work consisted of the excavation of three trenches of varying dimensions, the examination of any horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features, horizons and any artefacts found during the excavation. The trenches were excavated initially by machine, but thereafter all excavation was by hand. All spoil was scanned for finds during the excavation.
- 3.1.3 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or structures revealed, on *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location in plan. A plan was produced of the area excavated (Fig 2) and a photographic record in colour slide and monochrome formats was also compiled.

#### 3.2 ARCHIVE

- 3.2.1 A full professional archive has been compiled in accordance with the project design (*Appendix 2*) and with current IFA and English Heritage guidelines (English Heritage 1991). The archive will be deposited in the Lancashire Record Office.

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## 4. RESULTS

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### 4.1 TRENCH 1

- 4.1.1 Trench 1, 15m long by 1.6m wide, and oriented north/south, was the central of the three trenches excavated within the area of the proposed new stock building (Fig 2). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.75m. No significant features were encountered.
- 4.1.2 A 0.3m thick band of dark brown silty clay topsoil, **1**, was excavated to reveal an underlying layer of orangey brown sandy clay subsoil. This deposit, **2**, was 0.45m thick and contained *c* 30% small-medium subrounded-subangular stones and very occasional charcoal flecking. Though no archaeological features were revealed, two abraded sherds of Roman pottery and a small assemblage of worked flint and chert was recovered from subsoil **2** in the northern part of the trench. The underlying natural subsoil consisted of a sandy clay.

### 4.2 TRENCH 2

- 4.2.1 Trench 2, 15m long by 1.6m wide, and oriented east/west, was the northernmost of the three trenches excavated within the area of the proposed new stock building (Fig 2). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.7m. No significant features were encountered.
- 4.2.2 A 0.3m thick band of dark brown silty clay topsoil, **3**, was excavated to reveal an underlying layer of orangey brown sandy clay natural subsoil. This deposit, **4**, was 0.4m thick and was similar in composition to layer **2** in Trench 1, though no evidence of occasional charcoal flecking was observed. The underlying natural subsoil consisted of a sandy clay.

### 4.3 TRENCH 3

- 4.3.1 Trench 3, 15m long by 1.6m wide, and oriented east/west, was the southernmost of the three trenches excavated within the area of the proposed new stock building (Fig 2). The trench was excavated to a maximum depth of 0.5m. No significant features were encountered.
- 4.3.2 A 0.3m thick band of dark brown silty clay topsoil, **5**, was excavated to reveal an underlying layer of orangey brown sandy clay natural subsoil. This deposit, **6**, was at least 0.2m thick and contained *c* 30% small-medium subrounded-subangular stones and was similar in composition to layer **2** in Trench 1, though no evidence of occasional charcoal flecking was observed.

#### 4.4 THE FINDS

- 4.4.1 Two joining heavily abraded fragments of Roman pottery were recovered from the subsoil, 2, in Trench 1. The pieces could be part of the base of a flagon.
- 4.4.2 A small assemblage of struck flint and chert (30 fragments in total) was recovered during the evaluation. The majority consists of waste flakes, blade fragments and other amorphous waste material. No complete artefacts were recovered and only a small number were noticeably worked (Table 1). The assemblage was recovered from the subsoil, 2, in Trench 1, and was located in the northern part of the trench.
- 4.4.3 In total, 23 pieces of flint were recovered, which can be broken into four types: two pieces of dark grey flint; two white patinated pieces; 12 pieces of a light greyish brown translucent flint, some with a pale brown cortex; and seven pale beige pieces, some with a fine pale orange-brown cortex. In addition, seven pieces of chert were recovered, of two types: four pieces of a black grainy material, with speckled brown inclusions; and three of a fine-grained dark grey-black. Most of the material could have been acquired relatively locally from beach or river sources, although the fine-grained black chert is from Pendleside.

Context	Material	Category	No	Description	Date
2	Flint	Flake, utilised	1	Dark grey waste flake with possible retouch forming a rough point at distal end.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic
2	Flint	Flake, utilised	1	Creamy white patinated piece, possibly the distal end of a larger blade snapped in half, some poor quality retouch along both sides.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic
2	Flint	Flake, utilised	1	Waste flake in light greyish-brown translucent flint with some fine retouch along most sides.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic
2	Flint	Retouched fragment	1	Heavily worked piece in greyish-brown translucent flint. Worked to form a broad blade, perhaps part of the face of an axe or similar large cutting tool.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic
2	Flint	Waste	19	Waste flakes, small blade fragments and other amorphous flint waste.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic
2	Chert	Waste	7	Waste flakes and small blade fragments.	Late Mesolithic/Neolithic

Table 1

- 4.4.4 The lack of diagnostic artefact types makes these flint fragments difficult to date accurately. They are evidently all discarded material rather than lost artefacts, and may represent actual working on site or an area in which rubbish was deposited. Apparent irregular retouch on a number of the fragments appears to imply their *ad hoc* use as tools, again implying tool production and/or refurbishment. Despite the lack of a number of recognisable characteristics, the generally small character of the remains and scale of the retouch, the style of blade production and the use of a wide range of materials do suggest a Late Mesolithic/Neolithic date (Middleton *et al* 1995, 18). Similar assemblages are not uncommon in North Lancashire, at Out Rawcliffe (*op cit*, 227) for example, and a large assemblage was found in nearby Halton (Penney 1978, 43).
- 4.4.5 The majority of the lithic assemblage cannot be directly dated, and establishing a function for the utilised pieces is also extremely difficult. The heavily retouched fragment, possibly from an axe, is of some interest but as it is such a small piece even its complete form cannot be established with any great certainty. A flint axe, if that is what it is, in a Mesolithic context is unusual but not impossible, and there are several other types of large tools that it could have been part of (Palmer 1977). The discovery of such a small assemblage without any associated features makes further interpretation difficult.

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## 5. DISCUSSION

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### 5.1 THE EVALUATION

- 5.1.1 The archaeological investigation in the area of the proposed development has revealed no archaeological features of significance in any of the trenches and no evidence of any activity relating to the former priory was recovered. A small assemblage of worked flint and chert, of tentative Mesolithic/Neolithic date, was recovered from the subsoil, 2, in the northern part of Trench 1, but this was not associated with any evidence for hearths or structural features. Unfortunately, the assemblage was limited in size and did not contain sufficient diagnostic pieces with which to confirm dating or function; no other flints were recovered from excavation of Trenches 2 and 3, suggesting that the surface scatter was limited to the general area of Trench 1. The two joining Roman sherds from the same area as the flints were heavily abraded and presumably relate to traffic in the general vicinity passing between the forts and associated extramural settlements at Lancaster and Burrow.

### 5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.2.1 Given that no archaeological features of significance were detected in any of the trenches, no further archaeological work is recommended for the site. In addition, further analysis of the recovered flint assemblage is unlikely to confirm either dating of the material or shed light on any putative function.

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## APPENDIX 1: PROJECT BRIEF

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APPENDIX 2: PROJECT DESIGN

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May 2002

Oxford  
Archaeology  
North

**PRIORY FARM, PRIORY LANE, HORNBY,  
LANCASHIRE**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

***Proposals***

*The following project design is offered in response to a request from Mr Graham Salisbury, of Graham Anthony Associates, for an archaeological evaluation in advance of the proposed development of land at Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Hornby, Lancashire.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 An application for planning permission has been submitted to Lancaster City Council to erect a new stock building on land at Priory Farm, Priory Lane, Hornby. Lancashire County Archaeology Service (LCAS) have recommended that an archaeological evaluation be carried out on the site prior to the determination of the planning application. Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) has been contacted by Graham Anthony Associates to undertake the work. The following document represents a project design to carry out the evaluation of the site.
- 1.2 Priory Farm occupies the site, or part of the site, of a medieval priory, a dependent cell of the Premonstratensian abbey of Croxton in Leicestershire. The priory, which was dedicated to St Wilfrid, appears to have been founded in the later 12th century by Roger de Montbegon, who held the manor of Hornby at this time; it was closed in 1538 during the Dissolution of the Monasteries. The extent of the priory buildings or the curtilage of the priory is not known, the site having never been adequately investigated. The find of a stone coffin lid in the area indicates that, as would be normal for monastic establishments, there was an associated burial ground. A range of buildings including a church and accommodation for the canons, with outbuildings, gardens, orchards etc would be expected on a priory site.
- 1.3 OA North has considerable experience of excavation of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large scale projects throughout Northern England during the past 20 years, including work in most towns and rural areas of Lancashire and Cumbria. Evaluations, assessments, watching briefs and excavations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency; it is an Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) registered organisation, registration number 17, and all its members of staff operate subject to the IFA Code of Conduct.
- 1.4 OA North has particular experience of the archaeology of the Hornby area having undertaken work at Hornby Castle, and in most of the towns, villages and surrounding areas in this part of Lancashire, including *inter alia* Lancaster, Arkholme, Claughton, Melling and Tunstall. In addition, OA North is currently about to undertake an evaluation at nearby Castlestede, the site of a probable late eleventh/early twelfth century motte and bailey castle defending a crossing point over the River Lune.

## 2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 The following programme has been designed to evaluate the archaeological deposits affected by the proposed development of the site. The required stages to achieve these ends are as follows:

### 2.2 *Archaeological Evaluation*

To undertake evaluation trenching of the area to be affected by the groundworks for the proposed residential development to determine the quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.

### 2.3 ***Post-Excavation and Report Production***

An evaluation report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. A site archive will be produced to English Heritage guidelines (MAP 2) and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage (UKIC 1990).

## 3. METHODS STATEMENT

3.1 The following work programme is submitted in line with the stages and objectives of the archaeological work summarised above.

### 3.2 **ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

3.2.1 Three 15m x 1.6m evaluation trenches will be excavated across the area of the proposed development. The uppermost modern surface will be removed by machine fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision to the surface of the first significant archaeological deposit. Thereafter, the trenches will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions.

3.2.2 Any investigation of intact archaeological deposits will be exclusively manual. Selected pits and postholes will normally only be half-sectioned, linear features will be subject to no more than a 10% sample, and extensive layers will, where possible, be sampled by partial rather than complete removal. It is hoped that in terms of the vertical stratigraphy, maximum information retrieval will be achieved through the examination of sections of cut features. All excavation, whether by machine or by hand, will be undertaken with a view to avoiding damage to any archaeological features which appear worthy of preservation *in situ*.

3.2.3 All information identified in the course of the site works will be recorded stratigraphically, using a system, adapted from that used by Centre for Archaeology of English Heritage, with sufficient pictorial record (plans, sections and both black and white and colour photographs) to identify and illustrate individual features. Primary records will be available for inspection at all times.

3.2.4 Results of all field investigations will be recorded on *pro forma* context sheets. The site archive will include both a photographic record and accurate large scale plans and sections at an appropriate scale (1:50, 1:20 and 1:10). All artefacts and ecofacts will be recorded using the same system, and will be handled and stored according to standard practice (following current Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines) in order to minimise deterioration.

- 3.2.5 The deposition and disposal of any artefacts recovered in the evaluation will be agreed with the legal owner prior to the work taking place. Except for items subject to the Treasure Act, all artefacts found during the course of the project will be donated to an appropriate receiving museum.
- 3.2.6 Environmental samples (bulk samples of 30 litres volume, to be sub-sampled at a later stage) will be collected from suitable deposits (i.e. the deposits are reasonably well dated and are from contexts the derivation of which can be understood with a degree of confidence). Where such deposits are encountered, an appropriate sampling strategy will be agreed with the DCO.
- 3.2.7 Samples will also be collected for technological, pedological and chronological analysis as appropriate. If necessary, access to conservation advice and facilities can be made available. OA North maintains close relationships with Ancient Monuments Laboratory staff at the Universities of Durham and York and, in addition, employs artefact and palaeoecology specialists with considerable expertise in the investigation, excavation and finds management of sites of all periods and types, who are readily available for consultation.
- 3.2.8 **Health and Safety:** OA North provides a Health and Safety Statement for all projects and maintains a Unit Safety policy. All site procedures are in accordance with the guidance set out in the Health and Safety Manual compiled by the Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers (1997). A written risk assessment will be undertaken in advance of project commencement and copies will be made available on request to all interested parties.
- 3.2.9 The client is requested to provide information relating to services in the vicinity of the trenches, though OA North will undertake a Cat scan in advance of site commencement.
- 3.2.10 If necessary the trenches will be excavated to a maximum depth of 1.2m. Following completion of the evaluation, the trenches will be backfilled with the material removed in their excavation. Any other form of land reinstatement will be the responsibility of the client.
- 3.2.11 OA North has professional indemnity to a value of £2,000,000, employer's liability cover to a value of £10,000,000 and public liability to a value of £15,000,000. Written details of insurance cover can be provided if required.
- 3.2.12 Normal OA North working hours are between 9.00 am and 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday, though adjustments to hours may be made to maximise daylight working time in winter and to meet travel requirements. It is not normal practice for OA North staff to be asked to work weekends or bank holidays and should the client require such time to be worked during the course of a project a contract variation to cover additional costs will be necessary.
- 3.3 **POST-EXCAVATION AND REPORT PRODUCTION**

- 3.3.1 **Archive:** The results of Stage 3.2.1-3.2.12 will form the basis of a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects, 2nd edition, 1991*) and the *Guidelines for the Preparation of Excavation Archives for Long Term Storage* (UKIC 1990). The project archive represents the collation and indexing of all the data and material gathered during the course of the project. The deposition of a properly ordered and indexed project archive in an appropriate repository is considered an essential and integral element of all archaeological projects by the IFA in that organisation's code of conduct.
- 3.3.2 This archive can be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format, both as a printed document and on computer disks as ASCII files (as appropriate). The paper archive will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office within six months of the completion of the fieldwork. The material archive (artefacts and ecofacts) will be deposited with an appropriate museum following agreement with the client.
- 3.3.3 **Report:** one copy of a bound and collated final report will be submitted to the Client and one copy to the County SMR within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork. The final report will include a copy of this project design, and indications of any agreed departure from that design. It will present, summarise, and interpret the results of the programme detailed above, and will include recommendations for any further mitigation works and details of the final deposition of the project archive.
- 3.3.4 **Confidentiality:** The final report is designed as a document for the specific use of the client, and should be treated as such; it is not suitable for publication as an academic report, or otherwise, without amendment or revision. Any requirement to revise or reorder the material for submission or presentation to third parties beyond the project brief and project design, or for any other explicit purpose, can be fulfilled, but will require separate discussion and funding.

## 4. WORK TIMETABLE

### 4.1 *Archaeological Evaluation*

A three day period is required to excavate three evaluation trenches.

### 4.2 *Post-Excavation and Report Production*

An evaluation report will be submitted within eight weeks of the completion of the fieldwork.

- 4.3 OA North can execute projects at very short notice once an agreement has been signed with the client. One weeks notice should be sufficient to allow the necessary arrangements to be made to commence the task.

## 5. STAFFING PROPOSALS

- 5.1 Present timetabling constraints preclude detailing exactly who will be supervising the evaluation trenching, but all OA North project officers and supervisors are suitably experienced field archaeologists who have undertaken numerous evaluation and excavation work throughout northern England.
- 5.2 Assessment of the finds from the evaluation will be undertaken by **Christine Howard-Davis BA MIFA** (OA North project officer). Christine acts as OA North's in-house finds specialist and has extensive knowledge of all finds of all periods from archaeological sites in northern England. However, she has specialist knowledge regarding Roman glass, metalwork, and leather, the recording and management of waterlogged wood, and most aspects of wetland and environmental archaeology.
- 5.3 Assessment of any palaeoenvironmental samples which may be taken will be undertaken by **Elizabeth Huckerby MSc** (OA North project officer). Elizabeth has extensive knowledge of the palaeoecology of the North West through her work on the English Heritage-funded North West Wetlands Survey.
- 5.4 The project will be managed by **Alan Lupton, PhD** (OA North Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

## 6. MONITORING

- 6.1 Monitoring of the project will be undertaken by the DCO.
- 6.2 Access to the site for monitoring purposes will be afforded to the DCO at all times.

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APPENDIX 3: CONTEXT LIST

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<b>Context Number</b>	<b>Trench</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	1	Topsoil
<b>2</b>	1	Subsoil
<b>3</b>	2	Topsoil
<b>4</b>	2	Subsoil
<b>5</b>	3	Topsoil
<b>6</b>	3	Subsoil

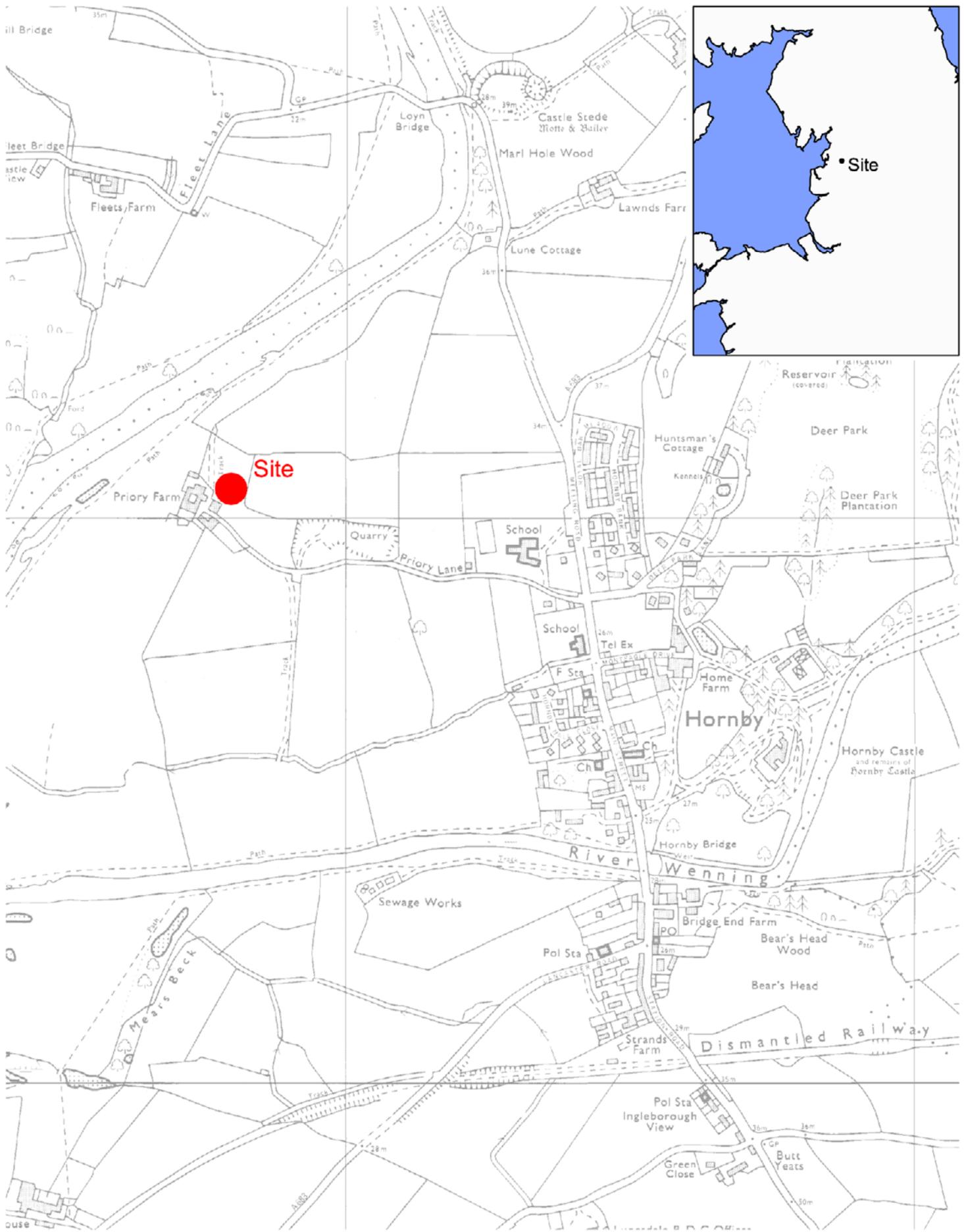
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## ILLUSTRATIONS

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### LIST OF FIGURES

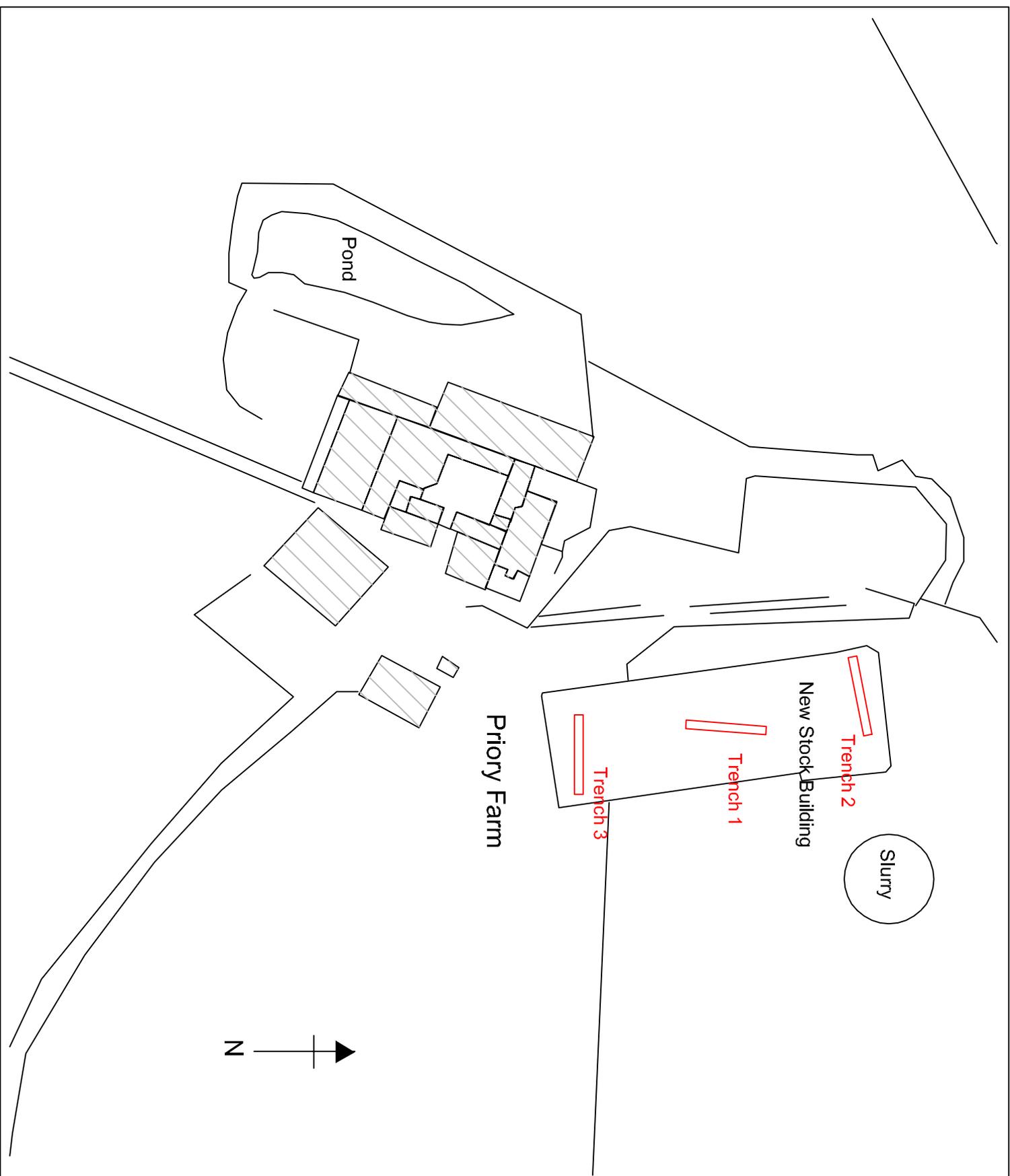
- Figure 1      Location Map
- Figure 2      Trench Location Plan



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000  
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Figure 1: Location Map



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PROJECT:  
**Hornby**

DRAWING No.:  
 02

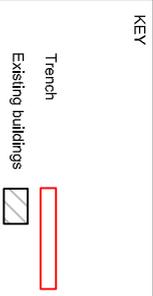


Scale  
 1:1000

DRAWN BY: Kai

DATE: June 2002

LOCATION:



TITLE:  
**Trench Location Plan**

COMMISSIONED BY:  
**Mr. Peter Norris**

Figure 2 : Trench Location Plan