



February 2001

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**DUTTON HALL**  
**RIBCHESTER**  
**LANCASHIRE**

**Watching Brief Report**

Dutton Hall, Ribchester  
Lancashire

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report

Report no 2000-2001/055/AUA8087

Checked by Project Manager. ..... Date
Passed for submission to client. ..... Date

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February 2001

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## SUMMARY

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A watching brief was undertaken by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) in December 2000, at Dutton Hall, Dutton, near Ribchester, Lancashire (NGR SD 6617 3683). The work was commissioned by Mr and Mrs Andrew Penny and was intended to monitor the impact of a new drive being excavated on the site. Elements of the hall date to the early seventeenth century, and the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Records shows the possible presence of a Deserted Medieval Village on the site. In consideration of the archaeological potential a planning recommendation was made for a watching brief to be undertaken on a proposed drainage channel associated with the drive. However, following further negotiations with the County Archaeological Officer, it was agreed that monitoring of the topsoil strip for the drive would be more productive, particularly adjacent to the hall; this was duly carried out.

Despite the recorded presence of a village on the site, no evidence was recovered to suggest that a medieval settlement had existed in the area. The only definite archaeology visible was a ditch and lynchet, thought to be associated with a field boundary; a piece of eighteenth century ceramic was recovered from the top of the ditch. All other underlying soils appeared to be of natural derivation.

By virtue of the limited recovery of archaeological features it was considered that the excavation of the drive-way, beyond the hall environs, did not warrant archaeological supervision.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Thanks are due to Mr and Mrs Andrew Penny, for commissioning and supporting the work, and to W and M Hayhurst and Sons Ltd for supplying and operating the mechanical excavator.

The watching brief was undertaken by Matt Town. The final drawings were produced by Jamie Quartermaine and Matt Town; the report was written by Matt Town, and edited by Jamie Quartermaine and Rachel Newman. The project was managed by Jamie Quartermaine.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE PROJECT

- 1.1.1 The development involved the excavation of a new drive and turning circle to the rear of Dutton Hall, near Ribchester (NGR SD 6617 3683). The new road runs from a new turning circle, immediately north of the hall, to a point on the west side of Gallows Lane approximately 150m from the hall and adjacent to Pan Stones Farm. The initial proposed works involved improvement of the drainage, followed by the construction of the roadway.
- 1.1.2 An archaeological watching brief was required by the County Archaeological Officer as a planning condition and the requirements were specified within a project brief (*Appendix 1*). The project brief detailed that the drainage works should be monitored, with the results informing any further works on the site. Following discussion with the archaeological officer (P McCrone *pers comm*), it was agreed to vary this brief to monitor the topsoil strip for the turning circle, with any further monitoring of the rest of the drive and the drainage works to be dependent on the results. In accordance with this revised specification Lancaster University Archaeological Unit was commissioned to undertake the work.

### 1.2 LOCATION AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 1.2.1 The study area lies in the parish of Dutton on the west side of Gallows Lane, a road which runs north from Little Town to the north-east of Ribchester. The site is to the rear of Dutton Hall, which is built on the side of a gradual south-facing slope overlooking the Ribble valley; it lies at c90m AOD.
- 1.2.2 The underlying solid geological deposits consist of Carboniferous Namurian Millstone Grit (OS Geological Map 1979).

### 1.3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.3.1 The Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record records the possible presence of a Deserted Medieval Village (DMV) at Dutton Hall, although no field evidence has been identified for this (PRN 1706).
- 1.3.2 The present Dutton Hall originated in the early seventeenth century, and today consists of a central hall with two cross-wings. It is illuminated with mullioned windows throughout, and the lower parlour has nine lights (Pevsner 1991, 115). The central hall has a large later seventeenth century bay window incorporating seven lighted transomed openings on the ground floor and upper level, and the top of the central section consists of a balustrade rather than a gable (Robinson 1991). The hall has later seventeenth to nineteenth century out-buildings attached. All the buildings on the site are Grade II listed.

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## 2. METHODOLOGY

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### 2.1 WATCHING BRIEF

- 2.1.1 The work undertaken by LUAU 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). Due regard was given to the requirements of the client and his representatives in respect of such matters as site access. Close liaison was maintained between LUAU and the site contractors at all times. A permanent presence watching brief was maintained for the duration of the groundworks associated with the excavation of the turning circle.
- 2.1.2 A programme of field observation accurately recorded the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features within the groundworks. This work comprised observation during the groundworks, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation. The machines used consisted of a JCB wheeled excavator, fitted with a ditching bucket to facilitate the trenching.
- 2.1.3 The recording comprised a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, on LUAU *pro-forma* sheets, and their accurate location, either on plan and/or section. Records were kept of all the sections of the watching brief even if the results were negative. A plan was produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance (Fig 2). All areas of archaeological interest were fully photographed both in general terms and in specific details.

### 2.2 ARCHIVE

- 2.2.1 The results of all archaeological work carried out during fieldwork forms the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edition, 1991). 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.
- 2.2.2 LUAU conforms to best practice in the preparation of project archives for long-term storage. The archive will be provided in the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology format. LUAU practice is to deposit the original record archive of projects (paper, magnetic and plastic media) with the appropriate County Record Office, and, where appropriate, a full copy of the record archive (microform or microfiche) together with the material archive (artefacts, ecofacts, and samples) with a designated museum approved by the Museums and Galleries Commission. The archive, which will be deposited with the Lancashire Record Office, consists of field recording sheets, a photographic archive and this report.

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### 3. WATCHING BRIEF RESULTS

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#### 3.1 THE TURNING CIRCLE

- 3.1.1 Though a large section of the survey area was due to be machined as part of the proposed drive-way development, it was agreed (P McCrone *pers comm*) that only the area of the turning circle, immediately adjacent to the hall, would require monitoring; this would inform the need for further monitoring away from the hall. The watching brief was duly undertaken, and, given the earlier negative results, only the machining of the topsoil for the turning circle was subject to archaeological supervision.
- 3.1.2 The trench, which will subsequently become the turning circle and two parking bays, was machine excavated, with the topsoil stripped to expose the underlying deposits. The trench itself measured c4.5m in width. The topsoil was c0.3m in depth and consisted of a dark brown clay silt, containing occasional sherds of modern pottery. The western half of the turning circle revealed mostly natural deposits in the form of slightly mottled sandy clay loams, with some subsoil overlying the south-western corner, which may be a relict plough soil. The eastern side, adjacent to the hall and out-buildings, revealed deposits of gritty ash and modern pottery overlying outcropping sandstone, which appear to be related to late dumps. To the north of the turning circle, a ditch ran across the mid-point on both sides, aligned east/west. This was associated with a lynchet, and appeared to mark the site of a grubbed-out field boundary, which was probably a hedge and ditch, as there was a similar parallel boundary to the north of it. A single sherd of pottery was recovered from the top of the ditch, which was dated to the late eighteenth century (C Howard-Davis *pers comm*). To the north of this boundary the soil was very sterile, with no visible features or finds.



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## 4. CONCLUSIONS

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### 4.1 IMPACT

- 4.1.1 The proposed drive-way will be excavated only slightly deeper than the topsoil strip, and although a section of boundary ditch was encountered, this is of only local importance. Overall there was little evident from the watching brief to suggest the presence of a significant archaeological resource within the area. The contractors have indicated that the laying of the drainage pipe will only require the excavation of a depth of 0.5m, and, on the evidence of the present study, this is unlikely to encounter any significant archaeological deposits or structures.

### 4.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1 On the basis of the negative results from the southernmost section of the trackway, which was closest to the hall, it is recommended that no further monitoring be undertaken in the course of the groundworks for the remainder of the trackway and the drainage pipe trench, which both extend north to the corner of the field opposite Pan Stones Farm.

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## 5. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- OS, 1979 1:625,000, *Geological Map of Great Britain: Solid Geology, South Sheet*, Southampton
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- Robinson, JM, 1991 *A guide to the country houses of the North-West*, London

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## APPENDIX 1 PROJECT BRIEF

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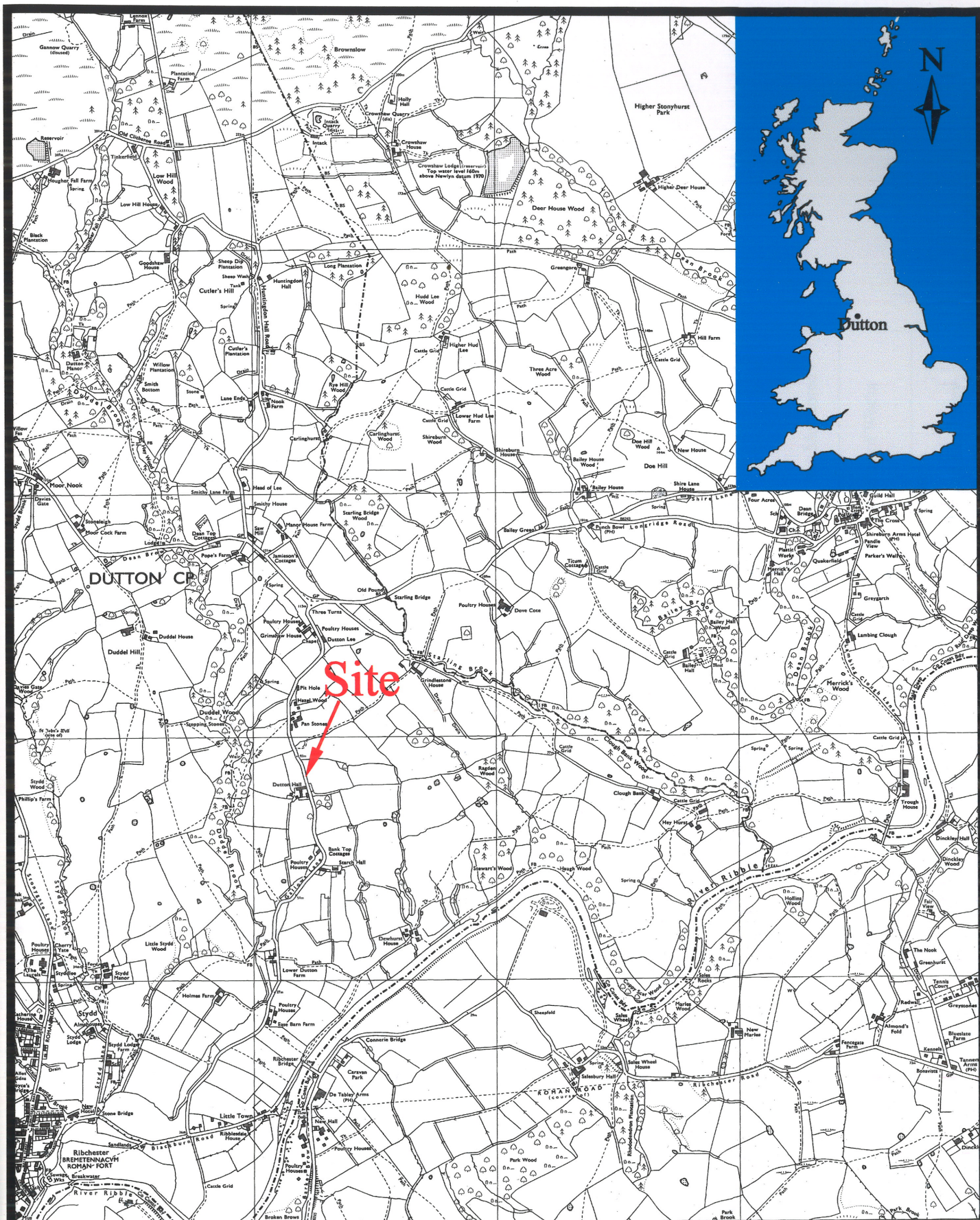
## ILLUSTRATIONS

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Fig 1 Dutton Hall Location Map

Fig 2 Watching Brief Site Plan





based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000  
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0 1000m  
metres

Figure1: Location Map



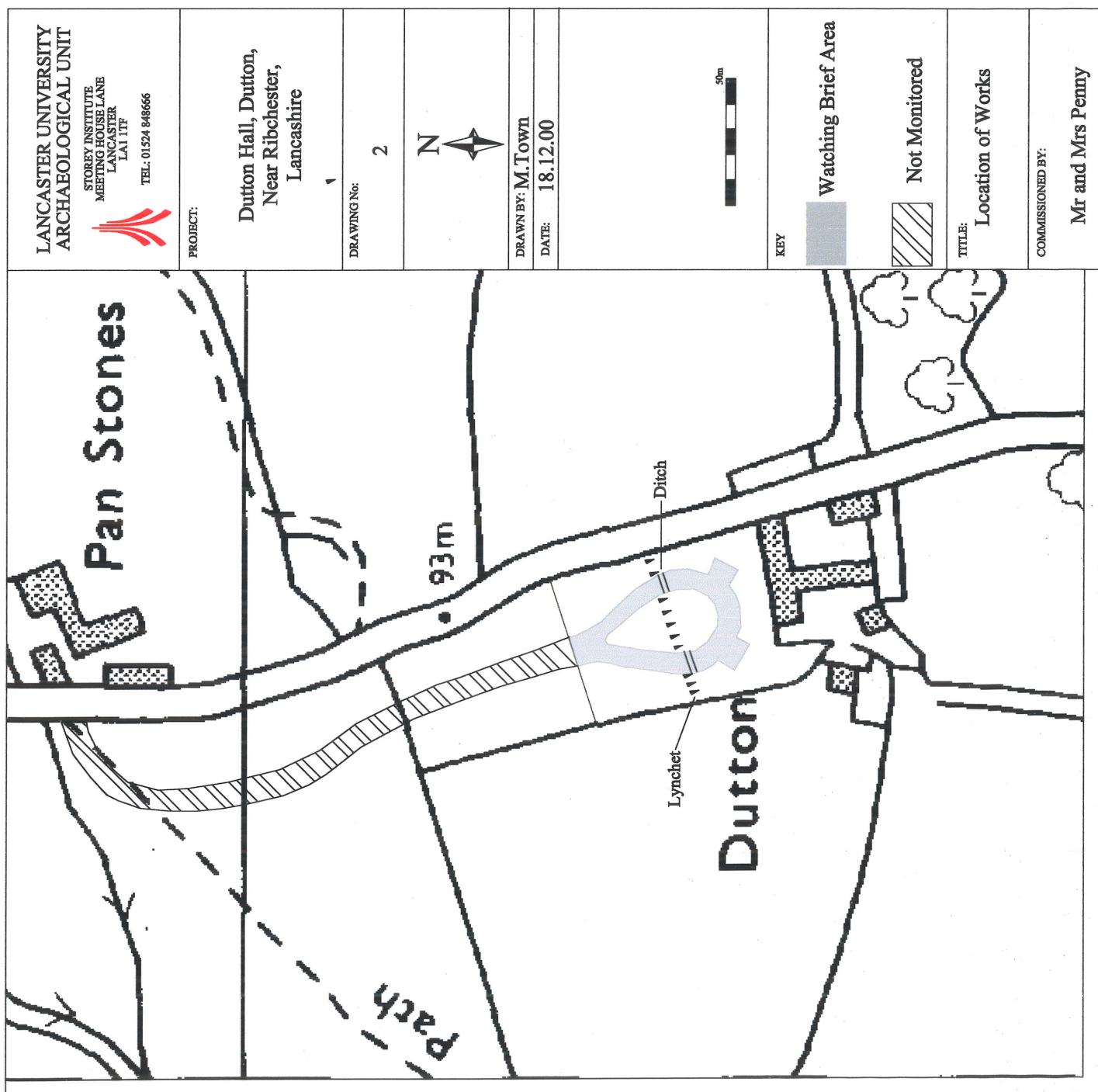


Figure 2: Watching Brief Site Plan