



January 1997

HAYDOCK FARM
BLACKSNAPE
Lancashire

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

Commissioned and funded by:

Ms U McGuinness

Haydock Farm
Blacksnape
Lancashire

Archaeological Watching Brief
AUA 7647

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

Acknowledgements.....	2
Summary.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
1.1 Project Background.....	4
1.2 Historical Background.....	4
2. Methodology.....	5
2.1 Project Design.....	5
2.2 Watching brief.....	5
2.3 Project Monitoring.....	5
2.4 Health and Safety.....	5
3. The Watching Brief.....	6
3.1. Groundworks.....	6
3. Conclusions.....	7
Illustrations.....	8
Appendix 1 Project Design.....	9

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Thanks go to the machine operator for his help during the watching brief.

The watching brief was undertaken by Peter Redmayne who also compiled the report. The report was edited by Mark Fletcher who acted as project manager.

SUMMARY

A Permanent Presence archaeological watching brief was carried out by Lancaster University Archaeological Unit (LUAU) at the site of Haydock Farm, Blacksnape, Lancashire (NGR SD714206).

The aim of the watching brief was to monitor ground disturbance during the erection of a steel framed agricultural building. The work was carried out on behalf of Ms Ursula McGuinness. Two visits were made during the groundworks, the first on 11/11/96, and the second on 9/01/97.

The site lies on a promontory to the west of the line of the Roman road known as Watling Street between Manchester and Blackburn. The site of Haydock Farm is on a natural promontory overlooking the Darwen valley and was considered a possible site for a Roman watchtower or signal station.

No evidence of structural remains was recorded, and the only artefacts recovered were of late nineteenth, and twentieth century date.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Background.

1.1.1 A permanent presence watching brief was undertaken over a period of two days by LUAU at Haydock Farm, Blackburn, Lancashire (Fig 1) during groundworks for a new silage store. The work was carried out on behalf of Ms Ursula McGuinness, the first visit being made on the 11th of November 1996, and the second on the 9th of January 1997. The watching brief was recommended as a mitigation measure by Mr P Iles of Lancashire County Council Archaeological Service, and was carried out according to a project design compiled by LUAU (*Appendix 1*). A full archive has been produced to a professional standard in accordance with current Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA) and English Heritage guidelines (*The Management of Archaeological Projects* 2nd edition 1991).

1.2 Historical Background

1.2.1 The site of Haydock farm lies 120m to the west of the putative line of the Roman road (Watling Street) from Manchester to Ribchester.

1.2.2 Watling Street was one of the most important Roman roads in Britain, it started at Dover on the east coast, through London and crossed the country on a north-west south-east alignment to Chester. The road then continued via Northwich to Manchester, and on through Blackburn to Ribchester, continuing to Hadrian's Wall in the north.

1.2.3 In the area south of Blackburn the line of the road follows the top of a prominent ridge between two valleys. The site of the present farmstead is situated on a natural promontory with commanding views over the valley of the river Darwen to the west.

1.2.4 Aerial photographs show a number of mostly circular features adjacent to the site of the farmstead, although at present the archaeological significance of these features is unknown. Early settlement adjacent to Roman roads, which often continued in use after the Roman period, is not uncommon, and the topographical situation of the present farmstead would be well suited to settlement, being both relatively level, and naturally defensible. Therefore the Lancashire County Archaeological Service imposed a watching brief condition on the development of the site.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Project design

- 2.1.1 A project design (*Appendix 1*) was submitted to Sunderland Peacock (Architects) of Clitheroe for a watching brief during groundworks related to the new development. The design was accepted by the client, and the work carried out in accordance with it.

2.2 Watching Brief

- 2.2.1 Two site visits were made to the site, the first on the 11th of November 1996, and the second on the 9th of January 1997. The first visit involved monitoring the mechanical excavation of eight foundation holes for the steel uprights of the silage store. The second visit monitored the removal of the topsoil in the eastern part of the building to level off the natural slope, to the west.
- 2.2.2 Descriptions were made using *pro-forma* trench and context description sheets, on the depth and nature of the deposits observed during the watching brief. The topsoil contained a number of fragments of nineteenth and twentieth century pottery, but this material was not considered to be of sufficient importance for it to be retained for further study.

2.3 Project monitoring

- 2.3.1 The Lancashire County Archaeological Curator was apprised of the implementation of the watching brief, and informed of the results.

2.4 Health and safety

- 2.4.1 Both Lancaster University and LUAU maintain Safety Policies, the latter based on the Standing Conference of Unit Managers Health and Safety Manual (1991). All site procedures were in accordance with current Health and Safety at work regulations and a risk assessment was compiled prior to commencing on-site work.

3. THE WATCHING BRIEF

3.1 Groundworks

- 3.1.1 The eight holes for the steel uprights all showed similar stratigraphy with a layer of very dark brown sandy loam overlying orangey/brown boulder clay. The thickness of the topsoil decreased to the south, and bedrock was exposed in the bases of the two southernmost holes on both sides of the structure.
- 3.1.2 Topsoil stripping in the eastern part of the building revealed a very dark brown loamy topsoil averaging 0.23m in depth, overlying natural boulder clay. A number of ceramic fragments were recovered from the topsoil which ranged in date between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. No intrusive features were recorded.

4. CONCLUSIONS

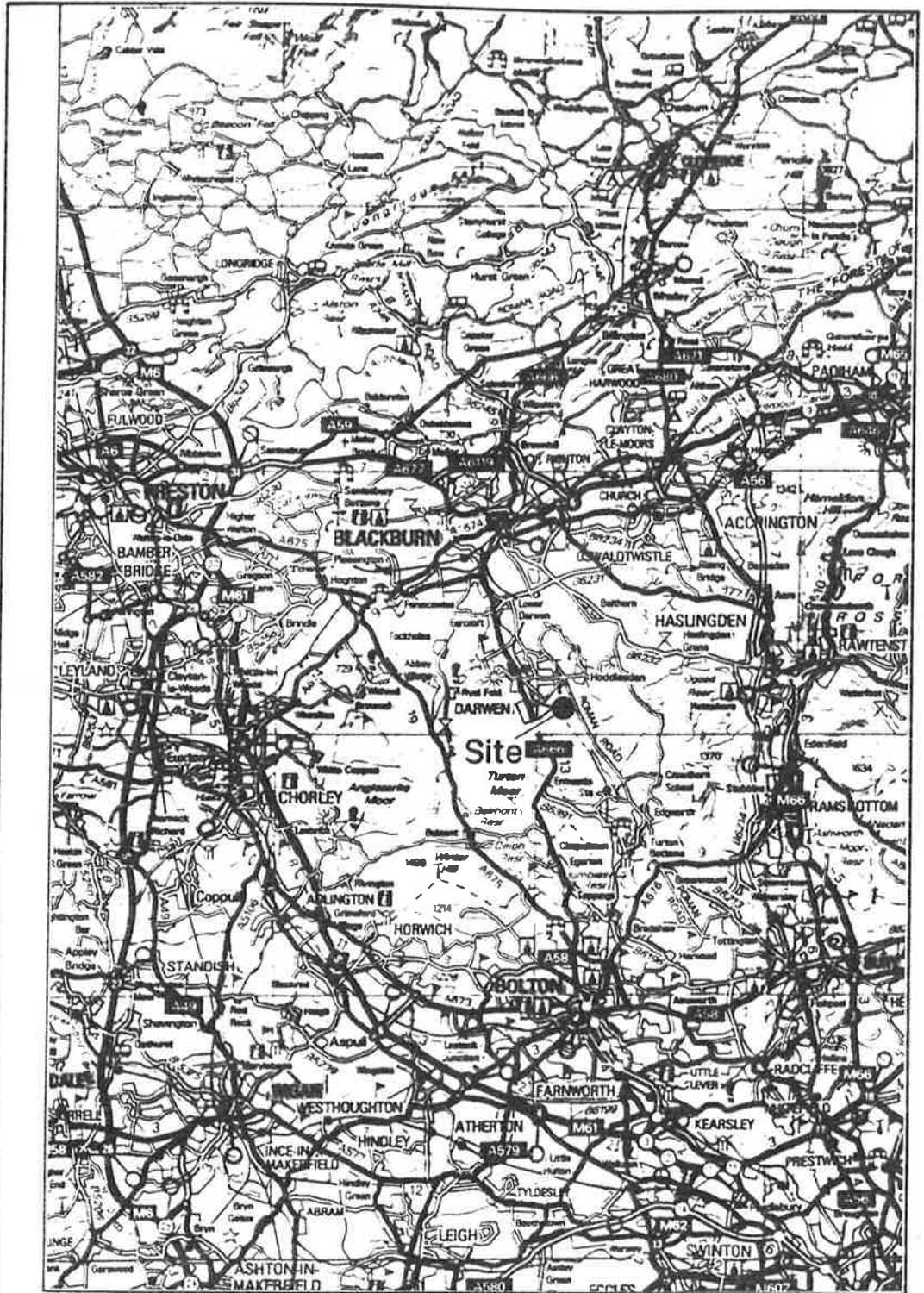
- 4.1 No deposits of any archaeological significance were recorded during the watching brief, a simple stratigraphy of dark topsoil overlying the undisturbed boulder clay subsoil being recorded across the whole area. No artefacts of Roman date were recovered.
- 4.2 The work carried out by LUAU fulfilled the planning conditions imposed by the Local Planning Authority, and were carried out to a professional archaeological standard.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Location Plan

Figure 2: Site Location

Figure 3: Site Plan.



0 10km



Based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:250 000 map
with the permission of the Controller of HMSO ©

Fig.1 Location plan

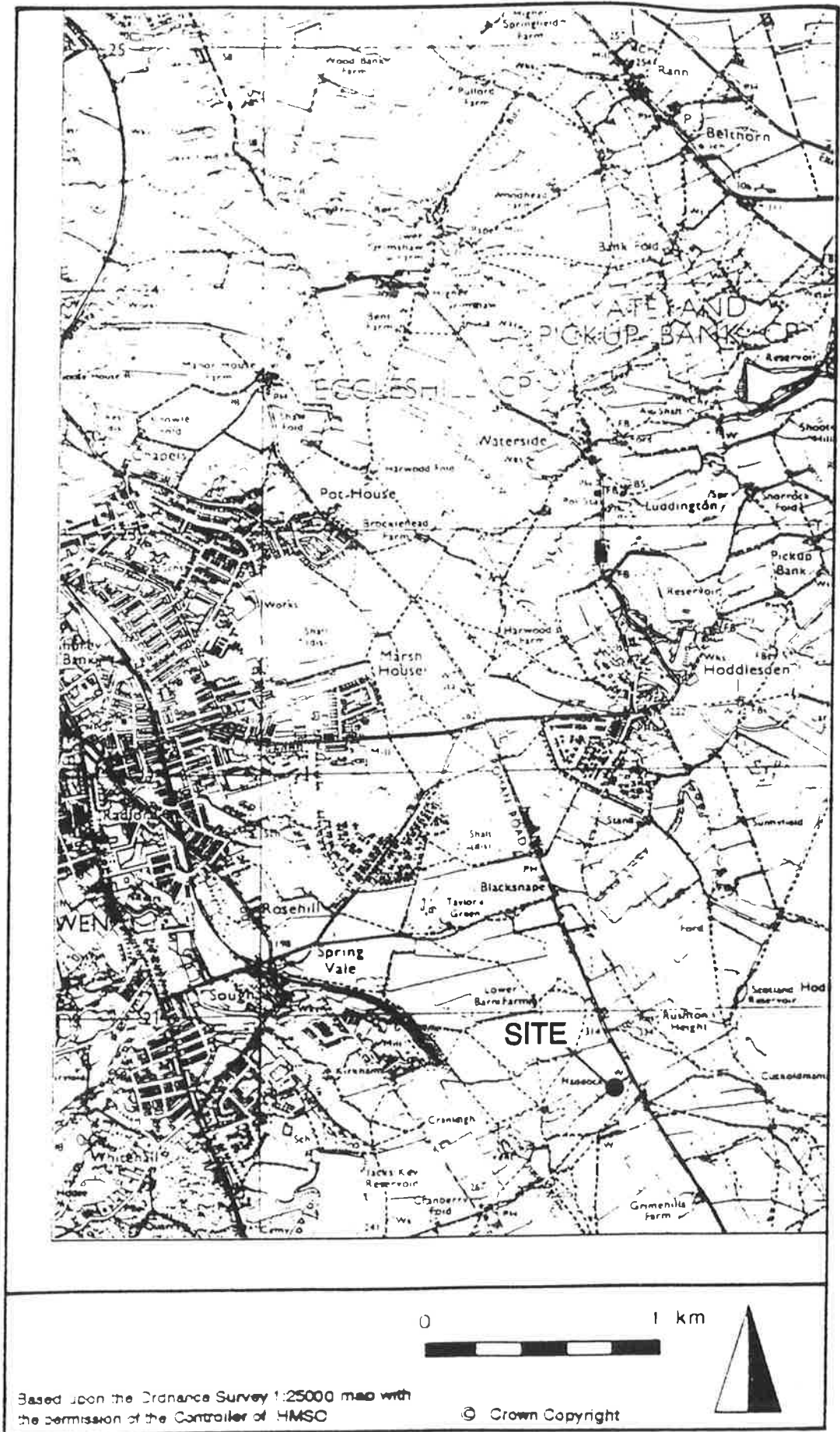


Fig.2 Site location

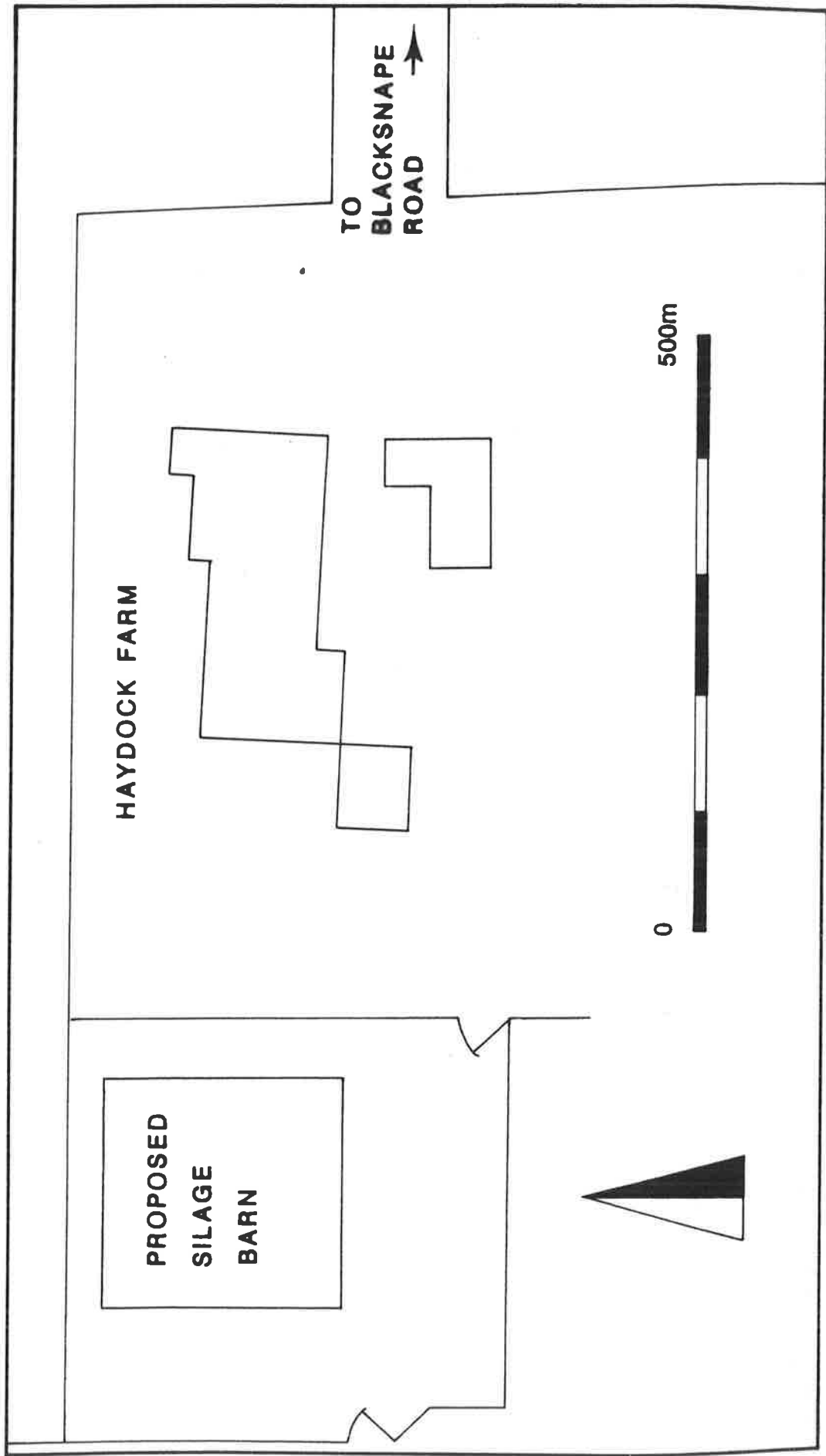


Fig.3 Site plan

APPENDIX 1 PROJECT DESIGN
