FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME, CROSTON,
Lancashire

Watching Brief Report

Oxford Archaeology North

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Volker Stevin Ltd

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Oxford Archaeology North would like to thank Richard Birchall of Volker Stevin Ltd for commissioning the work. Thanks are also expressed to Peter McCrone and Peter Iles of Lancashire County Archaeology Service for their support and advice throughout the course of the project.

The watching brief was undertaken by Paul Clark, who also compiled the report. The illustrations were produced by Adam Parsons. The project was managed by Ian Miller, who also edited the report.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) was requested by Mr Richard Birchall, of Volker Stevin Ltd, to undertake an archaeological watching brief on land at Croston, near Chorley, Lancashire (Fig 1). This work was to be undertaken in advance of a flood alleviation scheme, and specifically during the topsoil strip for the compound area associated with the works. This request followed on from Lancashire County Council's Archaeology Service's (LCAS) recommendation to the Environment Agency that a programme of archaeological works be undertaken during the construction work as there are several putative medieval remains in the immediate vicinity.

The site lies on the south-western edge of Croston (centred SD 487 186), at the end of Yarrow Close, and on the north bank of the river Yarrow (Fig 2). The solid geology of the area comprises Permo-Triassic red mudstones, siltstones and sandstones, which is buried beneath a thick covering of glacial and post-glacial deposits.

The presence of the fifteenth century parish church on the north bank of the river Yarrow in Croston raises the possibility of medieval remains within the study area. In particular, the Lancashire Sites and Monuments Record lists a possible medieval fortified site (centred on SD 4872 1854), although there is very little substantiating evidence.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the 1st and 2nd September 2003, and consisted of the observation of a partial topsoil strip over an area measuring a maximum of 60m east/west by 30m north/south (Fig 2), located immediately to the north of the flood defence bund on the northern bank of the River Yarrow. The topsoil strip was undertaken by a tracked 360° machine using a toothless bucket under close archaeological supervision, which resulted in a flat, clean, surface, ideal for observing potential archaeological remains. A maximum of 0.2m of light brownish-grey silty sand topsoil (containing large amounts of modern rubble and refuse) was removed across the whole of the site. Due to the shallow nature of the strip, however, a depth of topsoil remained undisturbed across most of the site. Any sub-surface archaeological features within the area will thus have remained buried and unaffected by the topsoil strip.

No evidence for the putative medieval fortified site was observed during the course of the watching brief; the only archaeological feature noted was an east/west aligned land drain (*c*8m north of the flood defence bund), which was almost certainly of recent date. No artefacts were recovered during the works.

Oxford Archaeology North

August 2003

CROSTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION SCHEME, LANCASHIRE

WATCHING BRIEF

PROJECT DESIGN

Proposals

The following project design is offered in response to a request by Mr RA Birchal, of Volker Stevin, for an archaeological watching brief in advance of construction work at Croston, Lancashire.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

1.1.1 Mr Richard Birchall, of Volker Stevin (hereafter the client), has requested that Oxford Archaeology North (OA North) undertake a watching brief of land at Croston, near Chorley, Lancashire (centred SD 487 186) in advance of a flood alleviation scheme. Lancashire County Council's Archaeology Service (LCAS) has recommended that a programme of archaeological works to be undertaken during the construction work as there are several putative medieval remains in the immediate vicinity, including a possible fortified site and a moated site.

1.1.2 The site is positioned on the south-western edge of Croston, on the north bank of the river Yarrow. The solid geology of the area comprises Permo-Triassic red mudstones, siltstones and sandstones, which is buried beneath a thick covering of glacial and post-glacial deposits.

1.2 OXFORD ARCHAEOLOGY NORTH

1.2.1 OA North has considerable experience of the assessment of sites of all periods, having undertaken a great number of small and large-scale projects during the past 20 years. Such evaluations have taken place within the planning process, to fulfil the requirements of clients and planning authorities, to very rigorous timetables. In recent years, OA North has undertaken similar types of work in many parts of Lancashire, but more specifically in the immediate environs to the site at Rufford, Tarleton, Eccleston, and Euxton.

1.2.2 OA North has the professional expertise and resources to undertake the project detailed below to a high level of quality and efficiency. OA North 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.

2 OBJECTIVES

2.1 The following programme has been designed to provide for accurate recording of any archaeological deposits that are disturbed by ground works for the proposed flood alleviation scheme.

2.2 ***Watching brief:*** a watching brief, during associated ground disturbance, will determine the presence, quality, extent and importance of any archaeological remains on the site.

2.3 ***Report and Archive:*** a report will be produced for the client within eight weeks of completion of the fieldwork. The report will assess the significance of the data generated by the watching brief within a local and regional context. 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 METHOD STATEMENT

3.1 WATCHING BRIEF

3.1.1 ***Methodology:*** a programme of field observation will accurately record the location, extent, and character of any surviving archaeological features and/or deposits within the proposed ground disturbance for the quarry. This work will comprise observation during the excavation for these works, the systematic examination of any subsoil horizons exposed during the course of the groundworks, and the accurate recording of all archaeological features and horizons, and any artefacts, identified during observation.

3.1.2 The watching brief will cover the whole of the area to be disturbed by the development including any other earthmoving activities.

3.1.3 Putative archaeological features and/or deposits identified by the machining process, together with the immediate vicinity of any such features, will be cleaned by hand, using either hoes, shovel scraping, and/or trowels depending on the subsoil conditions, and where appropriate sections will be studied and drawn. Any such features will be sample excavated (ie. 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).

3.1.4 During this phase of work, recording will comprise a full description and preliminary classification of features or materials revealed, and their accurate location (either on plan and/or section, and as grid co-ordinates where appropriate). Features will be planned accurately at appropriate scales and annotated on to a large-scale plan. A photographic record will be undertaken simultaneously.

3.1.5 A plan will be produced of the areas of groundworks showing the location and extent of the ground disturbance and one or more dimensioned sections will be produced.

3.1.6 It is assumed that OA North will have the authority to stop the works for a sufficient time period to enable the recording of important deposits. It may also be necessary to call in additional archaeological support if a find of particular importance is identified or a high density of archaeology is discovered, but this would only be called into effect in agreement with the Client and the County Archaeology Service and will require a variation to costing. Also, should evidence of burials be identified, the 1857 Burial Act would apply and a Home Office Licence would be sought. This would involve all work ceasing until the proper authorities were happy for burials to be removed. In normal circumstances, field recording will also include a continual process of analysis, evaluation, and interpretation of the data, in order to establish the necessity for any further more detailed recording that may prove essential.

3.1.7 ***Contingency plan:*** in the event of significant archaeological features being encountered during the watching brief, discussions will take place with the Client as to the extent of further works to be carried out. All further works

would be subject to a variation to this project design. In the event of environmental/organic deposits being present on site, it would be necessary to discuss and agree a programme of palaeoenvironmental sampling and or dating with the Planning Archaeologist.

3.1.7 ***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 **Archive/Report**

3.2.1 ***Archive:*** the results of all archaeological work carried out will form the basis for a full archive to professional standards, in accordance with current English Heritage guidelines (*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.

3.2.2 ***Report:*** one bound and one unbound copy of a written synthetic report will be submitted to the client, and a copy submitted to the County Archaeological Officer and to the Lancashire SMR as a paper copy and digital copy on CD within eight weeks of completion of fieldwork. The 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

3.2.3 ***Confidentiality:*** all internal reports to the client are designed as documents for the specific use of the Client, for the particular purpose as defined in the project brief and project design, and should be treated as such. They are not suitable for publication as academic documents or otherwise without amendment or revision.

4 PROJECT MONITORING

4.1 Monitoring of this project will be undertaken through the auspices of LCAS Archaeologist, who will be informed of the start and end dates of the work.

5 WORK TIMETABLE

5.1 OA North will commence the watching brief on Monday 1st September, 2003.

5.2 The duration of the archaeological presence for the watching brief is likely to be 3 days, being dictated by the schedule of works and weather permitting.

5.3 The client report will be completed within eight weeks following completion of the fieldwork, although a short summary could be made available earlier.

6 STAFFING

6.1 The project will be under the direct management of **Ian Miller BA (Hons)** (OA North Senior Project Manager) to whom all correspondence should be addressed.

6.2 The watching brief will be supervised in the field initially by **Paul Clark BA (Hons)** (OA North Supervisor). Depending on OA North's timetabling of works and weather this may be subject to change through the duration of the archaeological works to another OA North project officer or supervisor experienced in this type of project. All OA North project officers and supervisors are experienced field archaeologists capable of carrying out projects of all sizes.

6.3 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.

7 INSURANCE

7.1 OA North has a professional indemnity cover to a value of £2,000,000; proof of which can be supplied as required.

REFERENCES

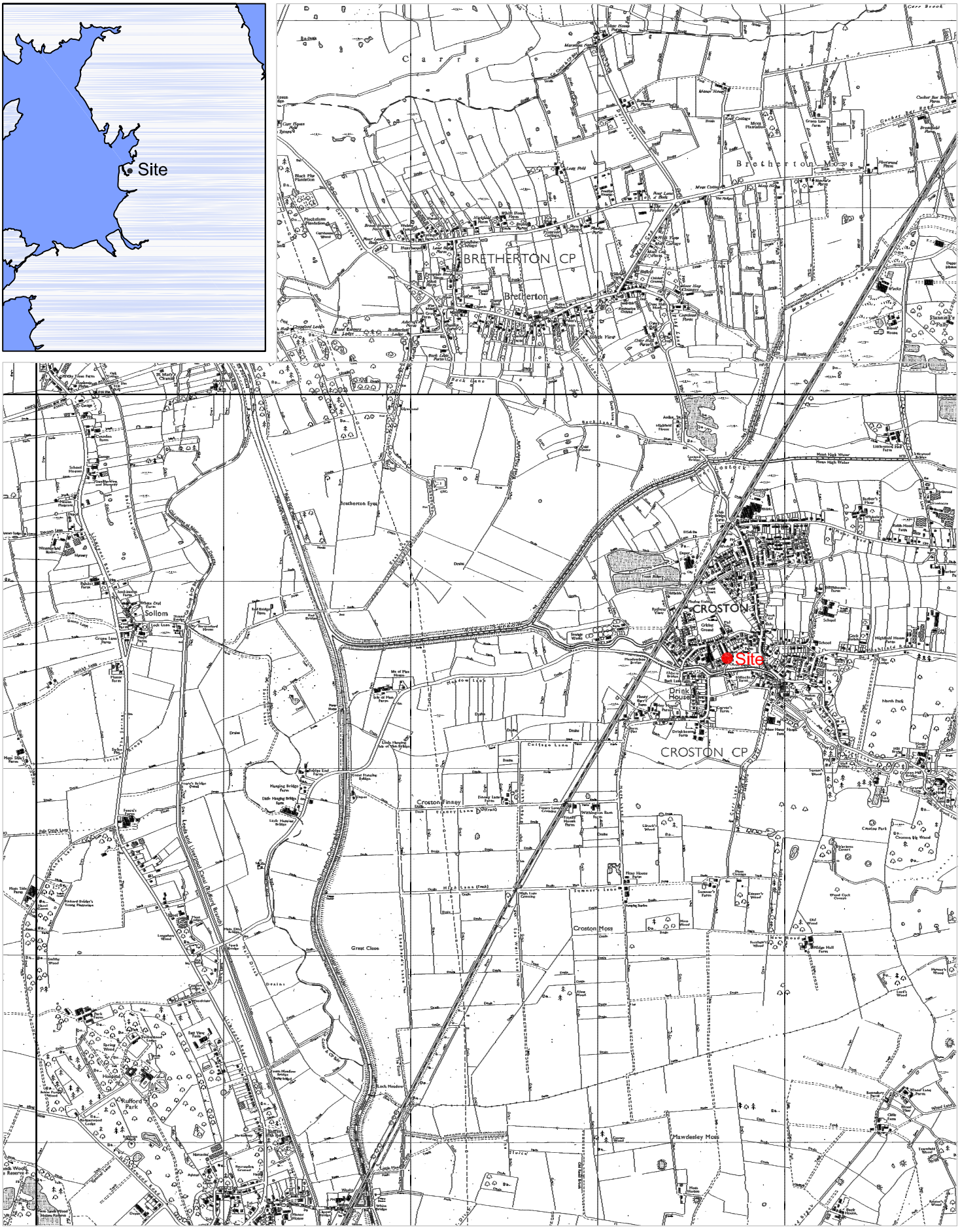
English Heritage, 1991 *Management of Archaeological Projects*, 2nd edn, London

Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), 1992 *Guidelines for data collection and compilation*

United Kingdom Institute for Conservation (UKIC), 1990 *Guidelines for the preparation of archives for long-term storage*

ILLUSTRATIONS

LIST OF FIGURES



based upon the Ordnance Survey 1:10000
with the permission of the controller of HMSO

Figure 1: Location Map

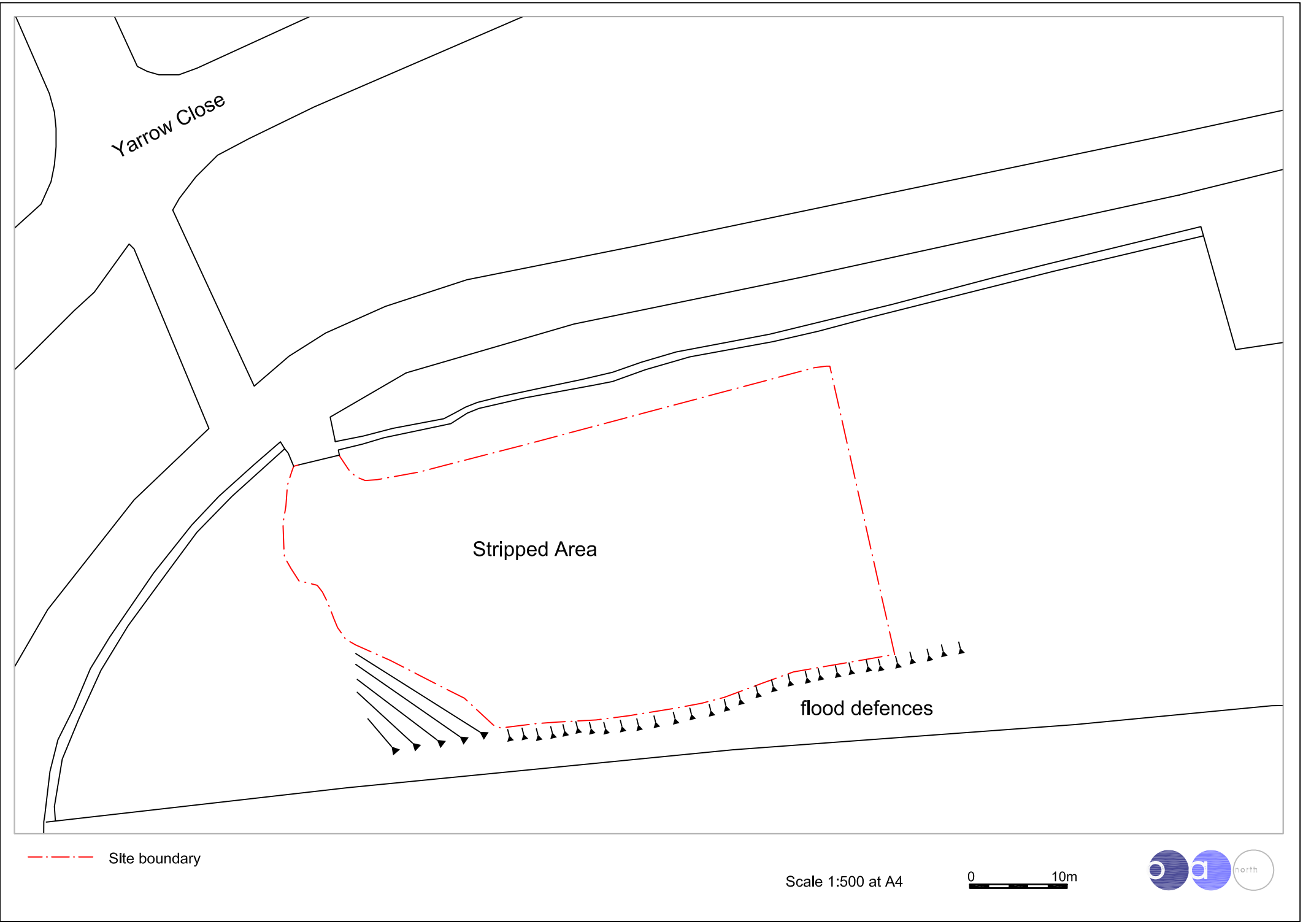


Figure 2 : Plan of area of Stripping