

**LAND OFF HECK AND POLLINGTON LANE, GREAT HECK, NORTH YORKSHIRE  
DN14 0BB:  
WRITTEN SCHEME OF INVESTIGATION FOR AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION**

<b>ISSUE 1:</b>	<b>ISSUED FOR APPROVAL</b>
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**Local Planning Authority:** North Yorkshire Council

**Central NGR:** SE 5959 2063

**Planning Reference** NY/2023/0117/FUL

**Museum Archive Number** tba

**Site Code** HGHY24

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On behalf of Great Heck Green Energy Ltd

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## **SUMMARY**

*Proposed development of an anaerobic digestion plant on land off Heck and Pollington Lane, Great Heck, North Yorkshire, is the subject of a planning application (NY/2023/0117/FUL). The proposed development site is located within an area of known archaeological evidence. In the general area prehistoric flints and Iron Age barrows have been recognised. Settlement of Iron Age to Roman date has been identified with a trackway and ditched enclosures including at nearby former RAF Snaith airfield and cropmarks further to the east. Roman burials were also discovered. During the medieval and post-medieval periods the site was probably agricultural land between the two settlements of Great Heck and Pollington. RAF Snaith was established just to the east in World War 2 and several bombers crashed in the area during that period. A train crash occurred immediately to the northwest of the site in 2001. Geophysical survey was also undertaken at the site and recorded anomalies related to a former field boundary as well as of undetermined origin which may be of an archaeological origin.*

*The Planning Authority's archaeological advisor was consulted about potential archaeological requirements and advised that an archaeological trial trench evaluation of the site is required to provide greater understanding of the nature of the archaeological resource at the site and assess potential development impacts to it. Should the evaluation identify archaeological remains that would be impacted by the development, and if these cannot be preserved in situ, then further archaeological mitigation works may be required.*

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Pre-Construct Archaeology Ltd (PCA) has been appointed by Robert Doughty Consultancy Ltd, on behalf of Great Heck Green Energy Ltd, to undertake an archaeological evaluation on land off Heck and Pollington Lane, Great Heck, North Yorkshire (Figure 1). This document forms the Written Scheme of Investigation for archaeological evaluation works.

1.2 Great Heck is located approximately 14km east of Pontefract and 11km south of Selby in North Yorkshire. The investigation site is at the southeastern corner of Great Heck village, on the south side of Heck and Pollington Lane, and is centred on National Grid Reference SE 5959 2063 (**Figure 1**). An outline planning application (NY/2023/0117/FUL) for development of an anaerobic digestion plant has been submitted to North Yorkshire Council.

1.3 The Principal Archaeologist, as archaeological advisor to North Yorkshire Council, was consulted and advised an archaeological evaluation of the site was required. A scheme of trial trenching will be undertaken. This trial trenching will be informed by the results of geophysical survey previously undertaken on the site.

1.4 All works will be undertaken in accordance with the following documents:

- This Written Scheme of Investigation;

- Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage, 1990);
- Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (Historic England, 2015);
- Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, 2023).
- Yorkshire, the Humber & The North East: Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process (SYAS 2019).

Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited is a Registered Organisation (number 23) with the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists and will operate within the Institute's 'Code of Conduct' (2022).

## **2 GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY**

### **2.1 Geology**

2.1.1 The solid geology at the site is Sherwood Sandstone Group - Sandstone. This sedimentary bedrock was formed between 272.3 and 237 million years ago during the Permian and Triassic periods. Overlying the natural bedrock geology across the majority of the study site, a superficial deposit of Hemingbrough Glaciolacustrine Formation – clay and silty is recorded. Across the northeast corner of the study site, a superficial deposit of Brighton Sand Formation – sand is recorded. Both of these sedimentary superficial deposits were formed between 116 and 11.8 thousand years ago during the Quaternary period.

2.1.2 An archaeological strip, map and record investigation at the former Pollington Airfield (RAF Snaith), approximately 610m to the northeast of the study site, encountered natural deposits of yellow-orange sand with clay and glacial erratic stones at a depth of between approximately 0.7m and 1.5m below ground level (Adams 2011).

### **2.2 Topography**

2.2.1 Currently an agricultural field, the site is on a relatively flat surface at c. 7m aOD.

## **3 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND**

3.1 The site is the subject of a desk-based archaeological assessment (PCA 2023) from which the following is extracted:

3.2 In the general area around the site concentration of prehistoric flints have been found near the River Aire and Iron Age barrows have been identified at Skipwith Common. Evidence for settlement of Iron Age to Roman date has been discovered both to the

north of the study site, in the Hensall area, and much nearer to the study site, where a trackway and several ditched enclosures believed to be of Iron Age to Roman date were discovered at the former Pollington Airfield (RAF Snaith). Additional cropmarks further to the east suggest additional features of Iron Age to Roman date. There is also further evidence of Roman settlement from Pollington, where two Roman burials were discovered.

- 3.3 No evidence of Anglo-Saxon date has been identified in proximity to the site. In the medieval period the site was located between the two settlements of Great Heck and Pollington and the investigation area is likely to have been utilised as agricultural land. Great Heck remained a small, agricultural settlement throughout the post-medieval period, while new transportation links, including a canal and railway lines were constructed across the area.
- 3.4 RAF Snaith was established during the Second World War and several bombers crashed in the area during this period. Cartographic sources indicate that the study site remained located across undeveloped, agricultural land throughout the modern period. In 2001, a train crash occurred immediately to the northwest of the site (Pre-Construct Archaeology 2023).
- 3.5 Geophysical survey of the site identified a linear anomaly, which is most likely to be related to a former 19th century field boundary, which is depicted on historic mapping. Magnetic disturbance was observed within the survey area, particularly in the southwest, west and northwest, where a modern bridge, trainline and scrapyard are located. Anomalies of undetermined origin have also been identified and while these are considered more likely to relate to agricultural, natural and/or modern features, an archaeological origin cannot be excluded (Magnitude Surveys 2023).

## **4 PLANNING BACKGROUND AND RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

4.1 The site is the subject of a Planning Application (NY/2023/0117/FUL) submitted to North Yorkshire Council for development of an anaerobic digestion plant. The Principal Archaeologist, archaeological advisor to North Yorkshire Council, has advised that trial trenching is required, and the results may necessitate further archaeological mitigation.

4.2 National Planning Policy on archaeology and built heritage is set out in National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). Revised in December 2023, National Planning Framework: Planning for the Historic Environment (NPPF) provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the investigation and preservation of archaeological remains.

4.3 In considering any planning application for development, the local planning authority will be guided by the policy framework set by government guidance, in this instance NPPF, by Local policy and by other material considerations.

4.4 Research Objectives

4.4.1 The archaeological evaluation will address the following objectives:

- To record the nature, extent, date, character, quality, significance and state of preservation any archaeological remains affected by the investigation.
- To assess where appropriate any ecofactual and palaeo-environmental potential of archaeological deposits and features from within the site.

## **5 SCOPE OF INVESTIGATION**

5.1 A desk-based assessment and geophysical survey results have informed a scheme of trenching at the site; this will comprise of 14 trenches, each measuring 50m x 2m, located to provide sample coverage and examine the geophysical anomalies across the proposed development area. The attached plan shows the proposed positions for these trenches (solid thick black lines), as previously agreed with the Principal Archaeologist of NYC.

## **6 MACHINE AND HAND EXCAVATIONS**

6.1 All machine excavation of trial trenches will be carried out under constant archaeological direction by a suitably experienced archaeologist familiar with the ground conditions anticipated on the site.

6.2 Machine excavation of the trial trenches will be undertaken by a mechanical excavator using a flat-bladed bucket. No mechanical excavators, earthmoving or other vehicles will travel within any excavated trench until it has been signed off by the Planning Archaeologist or specific agreement has been reached to enable re-stripping.

6.3 PCA will maintain a constant watch and closely inspect on an on-going basis surfaces exposed during the course of machining. Surfaces will be maintained clear of loose spoil.

6.4 Machine-excavated deposits and the exposed surface will be regularly scanned for the presence and collection of artefacts. Exposed surfaces and excavated spoil will be scanned by metal detector.

6.5 The excavation by machine is to be taken down to the top of any significant archaeological level or to the top of 'natural' subsoil where no archaeological deposits have been found at a higher level. In the event of significant archaeological deposits being encountered the Planning Archaeologist is to be informed immediately. Some further limited

excavation may be required to clarify the nature, character and date of the archaeological deposits but the primary objective is to establish the presence/absence of archaeological deposits, their depth and extent.

6.6 If archaeological remains of limited significance are found to be present cutting through or overlying soils (e.g. colluvium) which conceal lower archaeological horizons then these will need to be recorded and investigated prior to removal of the underlying soil with the agreement of the Planning Archaeologist.

6.7 Machine excavation from the surface must be taken down in spits of no more than 100mm thickness to ensure that deposits and features are not over-excavated and that any artefacts/biological evidence in the soil are recorded.

6.8 Test sondages may need to be excavated through 'natural' subsoil in trial trenches to confirm that the appropriate geological horizons have been reached. Such sondages will be positioned to avoid damage to archaeological remains.

## **7 INVESTIGATION AND SAMPLING STRATEGY**

7.1 Archaeological features or structures will be sampled sufficiently to characterise and date them. Full excavation of features/structures/burials will be undertaken at this stage as necessary to meet the objectives laid out in paragraph 4.4 and in agreement with the Planning Archaeologist. Care will be taken not to damage archaeological deposits, features, structures or burials through excessive use of mechanical excavation

7.2 Where necessary the surface and sections of trenches will be hand cleaned to define archaeological deposits and features clearly.

7.3 Measures will be taken to protect particularly significant, valuable or sensitive archaeological remains from exposure, accidental damage and / or theft.

7.4 No trenches will be backfilled until agreed with the Planning Archaeologist.

### **Burial Remains**

7.5 Inhumation and cremation burials will normally be left in-situ for the purposes of evaluation. Subject to agreement with the Planning Archaeologist, graves may be partially excavated to confirm the presence of human remains and their state of preservation but skeletal remains will be left *in situ*. Graves will be scanned by metal detector to assess whether any grave objects are likely to be present.

7.6 Inhumation and cremation burials which are in a fragile state and are likely to be damaged by the reinstatement of evaluation trenches will be excavated and lifted subject to agreement with the Planning Archaeologist.

7.7 PCA will put in place arrangements to ensure the security, protection from deterioration and damage, and the respectful treatment of human remains and burial goods.

7.8 PCA will have available within the team or on call an appropriately qualified and experienced osteo-archaeologist to supervise the excavation and removal of any human remains (where this is necessary) from the site.

7.9 In the event that human burials are discovered, a Ministry of Justice Licence will be required (in accordance with Section 25 of the Burial Act 1857) before the remains can be lifted. The need for a Ministry of Justice Licence applies to both inhumation and cremated remains. Application for a Licence will be made by PCA. PCA will comply with the conditions of the Licence and discuss any requirements of that Licence which conflict with the agreed method of investigation with the Principal Archaeologist.

## 8 FINDS RECOVERY PROCESSING AND TREATMENT

8.1 All artefacts (excluding any human remains) recovered during the excavations on the site are the property of the Landowner. They are to be suitably bagged, boxed and marked in accordance with the United Kingdom Institute for Conservation, *Conservation Guidelines no.2* and on completion of the archaeological post-excavation programme the landowner will arrange for them to be deposited in a museum or similar repository agreed with the Planning Archaeologist and the Local Planning Authority.

8.2 Artefacts will be excavated carefully by hand. PCA will use an appropriately qualified and experienced archaeological conservator to assist in the lifting of fragile finds of significance and / or value.

8.3 Artefacts will be collected and bagged by archaeological context. The location of special finds will be recorded in three dimensions. Three-dimensional recording of in-situ flint working deposits (if encountered) will be carried out.

8.4 Records of artefact assemblages will clearly state how they have been recovered, sub-sampled and processed.

8.5 Excavated artefacts will be bagged upon recovery or placed in finds trays. They must not be left loose on site.

8.6 **Treatment of treasure** - Finds, discovered by PCA, falling under the statutory definition of Treasure (as defined by the Treasure Act of 1996 and its revision of 2002) will be reported immediately to the relevant Coroner's Office, the Lincolnshire Finds Liaison Officer (FLO) who is the designated treasure co-ordinator for Lincolnshire, the landowner and the Planning Archaeologist. A Treasure Receipt (obtainable from either the FLO or the DCMS website) must be completed and a report submitted to the Coroner's Office and the FLO within 14 days of understanding the find is Treasure. Failure to report within 14 days is a criminal offence. The Treasure Receipt and Report must include the date and circumstances of the discovery, the identity of the finder (put as unit/contractor) and (as exactly as possible) the location of the find.



## 9 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING

9.1 Where appropriate, programs of archaeological science and environmental sampling will be commissioned, sufficient to provide an appropriate record of the palaeo-environmental significance of the affected heritage assets. The results of this work will be presented in the final report.

9.2 Where necessary the advice of the English Heritage Regional Scientific Advisor will be sought regarding specialist sampling requirements and any scientific applications relevant to the archaeological evaluation of this site.

9.3 If appropriate, environmental samples will be taken from features to enable their date, nature, extent and condition to be described and analysed. Samples will be taken from the fills of features where organic materials may be preserved, such as pits, ditches and other deposits, especially if waterlogged. English Heritage Environmental Guidelines (2011) *Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation* will be adhered to.

9.4 Where appropriate the guidance in the following English Heritage/Historic England papers (latest editions) available through the HELM website ([www.helm.org.uk](http://www.helm.org.uk)) will be followed:

- “Guidelines on the recording, sampling, conservation, and curation of waterlogged wood”
- “Dendrochronology – guidelines on producing and interpreting dendrochronological dates”
- “Archaeometallurgy”
- “Environmental Archaeology: A guide to the theory and practice of methods, from sampling and recovery to post-excavation”
- “Human bones from Archaeological Sites: Guidelines for Producing Assessment Documents and Analytical Reports”
- “Geoarchaeology”
- “Wet Wood and Leather”
- “Archaeomagnetic Dating: Guidelines on producing and interpreting archaeomagnetic dates”
- “Guidelines on the X-radiography of archaeological metalwork”

## 10 RECORDING

10.1 All trenches, structures, deposits, burials and finds will be recorded according to accepted professional standards. Sufficient data will be recorded to allow the required level of assessment and reporting (see section 12).

10.2      Recording must be carried out to a sufficiently high standard to provide a full record of the deposits evaluated, including in trenches where no archaeology is identified.

10.3      All features, deposits and finds are to be recorded according to accepted professional standards.

10.4      All archaeological contexts are to be recorded individually on context record sheets. A further, more general record of the work, comprising a description and discussion of the archaeology, is to be maintained as appropriate. Context sheets are to be primarily filled in by the archaeologist excavating the feature or deposit.

10.5      A plan to indicate the location of the boundaries of the evaluated area and the site grid is to be drawn at a scale of 1:1250 (or a similar appropriate scale). Plans indicating the location of the excavated trenches and the location of all archaeological features encountered are to be drawn at an appropriate scale. An overall site plan is to be maintained at a scale of 1:100 or larger scale where appropriate. Sections will be drawn at a scale of 1:10. Significant archaeological features will normally be drawn in plan at a scale of 1:20 or 1:10 if appropriate. All detailed plans and sections are to be related to the 1:100 or 1:1250 plans. The 1:1250 and 1:100 plans are to be accurately related to the National Grid.

10.6      Long sections indicating the full stratigraphic sequence will be drawn for all trenches. Where a very simple sequence is revealed representative sections (minimum 1m wide) at each end of the trench will be sufficient, but where more complex stratigraphy is encountered, complete trench sections will be drawn. In the case of complex stratigraphy, all four sections will be drawn.

10.7      All plans and sections are to be levelled with respect to OD.

10.8      All plans and sections are to be drawn on polyester based drafting film and clearly labelled.

10.9      Photography will form an integral part of the recording strategy. All photos will be taken using a digital SLR camera with sensors exceeding 12 mega pixels, using the highest quality setting available on the camera. All photographs will incorporate scales, an identification board (clearly detailing site code & context information) and directional north arrow. All photographs were feasible, will be taken in appropriate light conditions.

10.10     The complete site archive including finds and environmental samples are kept in a secure place throughout the period of evaluation and post excavation works.

## **11 BACKFILLING AND COMPLETION OF FIELDWORK**

11.1 On completion, trenches will be backfilled with arisings – this does not constitute reinstatement.

11.2 Where vulnerable archaeological deposits/structures/burials remain within trial trenches these will be appropriately protected from damage as part of the backfilling.

## **12 REPORTING**

12.1 Within two-four weeks of completion of the evaluation fieldwork PCA will produce a report, copies of which (as a minimum) are to be provided to:

- the Developer/Client
- the Planning Archaeologist
- the Local Planning Authority
- the Historic Environment Record

12.2 The Report will include as a minimum:

- a non-technical summary
- a table of contents
- an introduction including a list of staff members involved in the project
- summary geological, archaeological and historical background details for the site
- a statement for the aims of the project
- a full description of the results of the evaluation
- plans and sections at the appropriate scale cross-referenced with the written description
- appropriate maps, photographs
- a discussion of the location, date, extent, nature, condition, quality and significance of any archaeological deposits identified
- all finds and environmental specialist reports
- an interpretation of the results of the evaluation in relation to the archaeology in the vicinity
- a bibliography of sources consulted
- an index to the project archive
- the OASIS record

12.3 The report will be submitted to the Planning Archaeologist of Lincolnshire County Council in digital format. The digital copy will be supplied in .pdf format and will contain all text, images and plans.

12.4 Notes on the investigation will be submitted to the relevant local and national journals: *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*, and *Britannia* for findings of Roman date and *Medieval Archaeology* or *Post-Medieval Archaeology* for discoveries of medieval or post-medieval date.

12.5 Where wider dissemination is appropriate and the significance of the results warrant, a full copy of the report in an appropriate format shall be submitted for publication in relevant academic journals.

## **13 ARCHIVE PREPARATION & DEPOSITION**

13.1 The site archive, to include all project records and cultural material produced by the project, is to be prepared in accordance with *Guidelines for the preparation of excavation archives for long-term storage (UKIC 1990)*, *‘Yorkshire, The Humber & The North East: A Regional Statement of Good Practice for Archaeology in the Development Process’ (2019)*, and *“Archaeological Archives: A Guide to Best Practice in creation, compilation, transfer and curation” (Archaeological Archives Forum 2011)*. On completion of the project PCA will arrange for the archive to be deposited at the appropriate local repository, in accordance with the provisional arrangements made at the onset of fieldwork. Any alternative arrangements will be agreed with the Principal Archaeologist and the Local Planning Authority.

13.2 Upon completion of the fieldwork, the online OASIS form <http://www.oasis.ac.uk/> will be completed. Once the report has become a public document, following their incorporation into the HER, it will be uploaded to the Archaeological Data Service web site where it may be freely consulted.

## **14 MONITORING AND LIAISON**

14.1 PCA will allow the site records to be inspected and examined at any reasonable time, during or after the evaluation fieldwork, by the client/developer, the Principal Archaeologist or any designated representative of the Local Planning Authority.

14.2 Once the trenches have been evaluated and an initial assessment of the archaeology carried out, there will be an on-site meeting with the Principal Archaeologist to determine if further evaluation work is appropriate in order to meet the objectives.

14.3 PCA will liaise closely with the Principal Archaeologist throughout the course of the evaluation to arrange for on-site meetings at key decision points.

## **15 HEALTH AND SAFETY**

15.1 PCA will conduct the work in compliance with the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The Archaeological Contractor will also follow the guidance set out in “Health and Safety in Field Archaeology” Standing Conference of Archaeological Unit Managers 1997.

15.2 PCA Health and Safety Policy and a procedures manual will be available on site and. Site staff will have an appropriate level of training to enable them to carry out fieldwork safely.

15.3 PCA will maintain the site in a safe condition. All hazards will be appropriately identified and managed. Deep excavations will be appropriately fenced. PCA will carry out a risk assessment and complete a Health and Safety Method Statement prior to commencement of fieldwork and where appropriate a COSHH assessment. Risks and measures to reduce risk will be communicated to all working on and visiting the site.

15.4 PCA will provide site accommodation, welfare and toilet facilities as well as the hire of a machine.

15.5 A 'Site Operating Procedures' document, in respect of the current Covid-19 situation, will form part of the RAMS.

## 16 HER

16.1 PCA will provide the Historic Environment Record with copies of all reports in digital format.

## 17 RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

17.1 The duration of the fieldwork is dependent on the quantity of trenches to be opened, the site and ground conditions, but is expected to take about 5-7 days.

17.2 Subject to approval from the Archaeological Curator it is proposed to commence the evaluation as soon as possible (early May 2024) at the request of the client. The work can only start with approval of this WSI by the Archaeological Curator.

17.3 The archaeological field team will comprise 1 Supervisor and 1-2 further Archaeologists who will deal with the archaeology within each trench.

17.4 In order for the Principal Archaeologist to adequately schedule monitoring they will require at least ten working days' notice prior to the commencement of the work. This may be reduced by written agreement with the Planning Archaeologist.

17.5 The following table lists the personnel who may be involved in both archaeological fieldwork and post-excavation:

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>
<i>Project Management</i>	Gary Taylor (PCA)
<i>Archaeological Supervision</i>	Charlie Crawford (PCA)
<i>Archaeological Assistants</i>	TBA (PCA staff)
<i>Illustrations</i>	PCA CAD dept.

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>
<i>Prehistoric Pottery</i>	James Gerrard / Lawrence Morgan-Shelbourne (PCA)
<i>Roman Pottery</i>	Eniko Hudak (PCA) / James Gerrard
<i>Post-Roman Pottery</i>	Chris Cumberpatch
<i>Ceramic Building Material</i>	Berni Sudds (PCA) / Jane Young
<i>Querns</i>	Dave Heslop / John Cruse
<i>Architectural Stonework</i>	Kevin Hayward
<i>Petrology</i>	Kevin Hayward
<i>Animal Bone</i>	Kevin Rielly (PCA)
<i>Human Remains</i>	James Langthorne (PCA)
<i>Lithics</i>	Barry Bishop / Tom Lane
<i>Timber</i>	Maisie Taylor / Mike Bamforth
<i>Glass</i>	Gary Taylor (PCA) / John Shepherd
<i>Small Finds</i>	James Gerrard / Marit Gaimster / Gary Taylor (PCA)
<i>Roman Coins</i>	James Gerrard / Alex Beeby (PCA) / Dr Malcolm Lyne
<i>Metalwork</i>	Marit Gaimster / Gary Taylor (PCA)
<i>Leather</i>	Gary Taylor (PCA) / Quita Mould
<i>Iron Slag</i>	Gary Taylor (PCA) or Jane Cowgill
<i>Conservation</i>	York Archaeological Trust
<i>Environmental Archaeology</i>	PCA / James Rackham / Val Fryer

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## References

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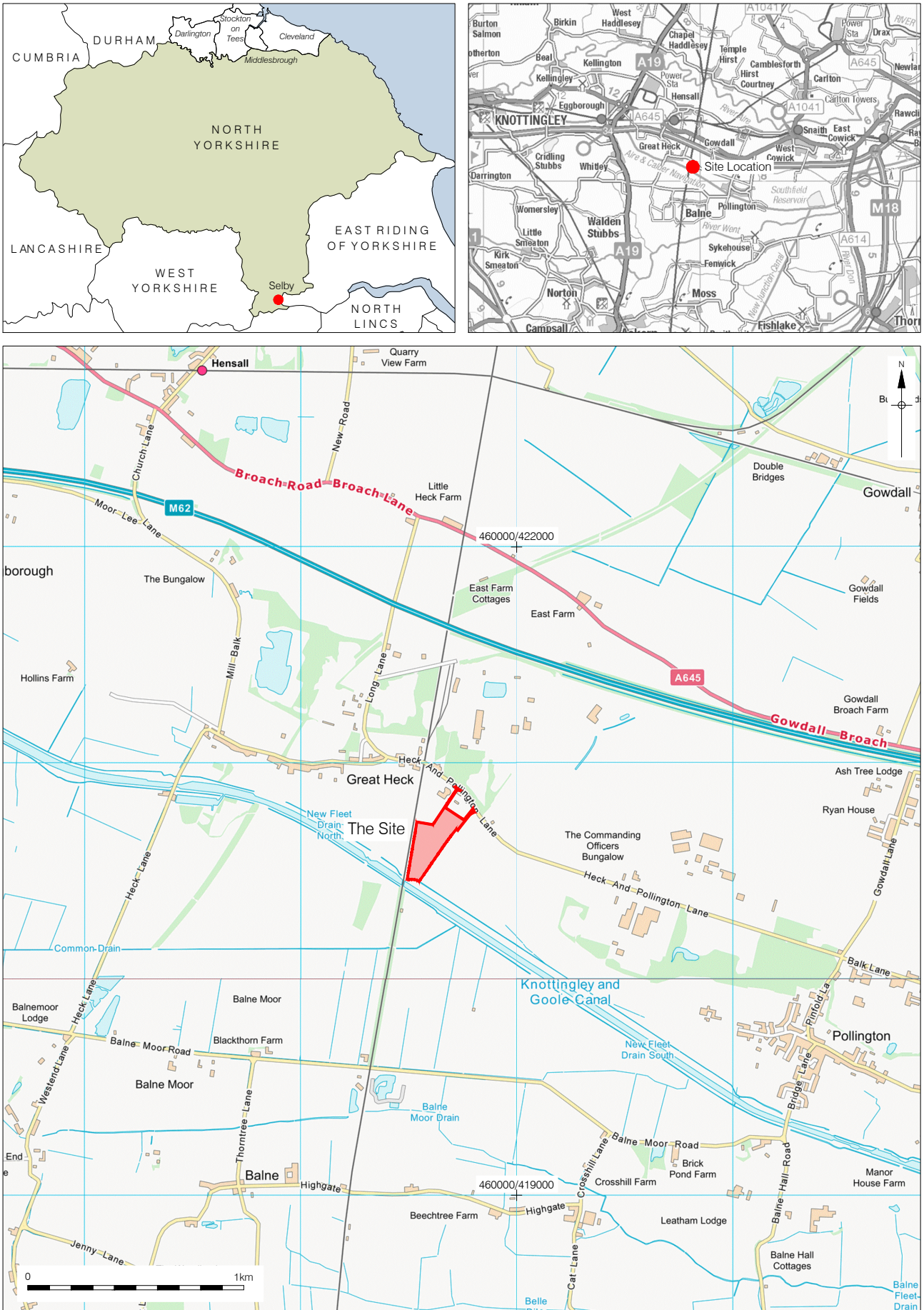
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**FIGURE 2: TRENCH LOCATION PLAN**

