

**Final Report for an Archaeological Watching Brief at Gedney Hill
General Store and Post Office**

OS NGR TF 326 115

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MUSEUM ACCESSION NUMBER: 2002.167
PLANNING APPLICATION NUMBER: H07/1023/01
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May 2002

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CONTENTS

1.0	SUMMARY	1
2.0	INTRODUCTION	
2.1	PLANNING BACKGROUND	1
2.2	DEFINITION OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF	1
2.3	TOPOGRAPHY, GEOLOGY AND SOILS	2
2.4	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING	2
3.0	PROJECT AIMS	2
4.0	METHODOLOGY	
4.1	SCHEDULE OF WORKS	3
4.2	TRENCH DETAILS	3
5.0	RESULTS	3
6.0	CONCLUSIONS	4
7.0	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	4
8.0	PERSONNEL	4
9.0	REFERENCES	5
10.0	APPENDICES	
10.1	Appendix A – Illustrations	
10.2	Appendix B – Plates	
10.3	Appendix C – Project Specification	
10.4	Appendix D – Levels Register	

1.0 Summary

An archaeological Watching Brief was undertaken, on behalf of the client Marshall Brothers Ltd, at the site of the proposed development of a single-storey extension to the existing General Store and Post Office in Gedney Hill village, Lincolnshire. Existing archaeological information suggests the Gedney Hill area was inhabited during the Romano-British Period, continuing into and through the Medieval with the foundation of Gedney Hill settlement and the Holy Trinity Church.

Due to the archaeological potential of the area, the local planning authority, South Holland District Council (SHDC) awarded planning permission for the construction of the extension on the stipulation that an archaeologist be present to monitor any ground penetrating works.

Following this brief, Soke Archaeological Services Limited prepared a Project Specification, detailing the proposed archaeological strategy (included as Appendix C). An archaeologist was on site to monitor the excavation of the extension foundations on Wednesday 24th April 2002.

Results of the watching brief show that the development has not made any impact upon archaeological remains, as the majority of deposits encountered had been significantly affected by modern disturbance.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Planning Background

Planning permission for the development of a single-storey extension to the existing General Store and Post Office at Gedney Hill was granted by the local planning authority, South Holland District Council (SHDC). In accordance with *Planning and Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG16)*, a condition was specified upon development that all works necessitating penetration of the ground surface should be monitored by an archaeologist. Following this brief, the developer, Marshall Brothers Ltd, commissioned Soke Archaeological Services Limited to produce a Project Specification, outlining the proposed archaeological strategy, which is included in this report as Appendix C.

2.2 Definition of an Archaeological Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is a non-intrusive form of investigation, with the ultimate aim of assessing the presence, nature, and meaning of archaeological remains. The IFA define a watching brief as being:

"...a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is the possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed. The programme will result in the preparation of a report and ordered archive." (IFA, 1999:2)

2.3 Topography, Geology and Soils

The General Store and Post Office is located on Station Road in Gedney Hill, opposite the 14th century Holy Trinity Church. Centred at OS NGR TF 362 115, the site is situated in a network of silt-filled creeks, laid in marine alluvium during the Flandrian (Wyatt, 1992). This extensive roddon network covers most of the Fenland, with riverine Terrace Gravels found along its edge.

Prior to development, the site served as a rear yard for the existing buildings, and was covered in areas of concrete hard-standing and large areas of gravel.

2.4 Archaeological Setting

A summary of the archaeological background was prepared in advance of development, and is included in this report as Appendix C. As previously noted, while no intrusive archaeological investigations have been carried out in the village, evidence from both surface finds and crop marks, included in the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR), suggests there was substantial economic activity during the Romano-British Period. Furthermore, such activity appears to continue into the Medieval Period, with the growth of settlement at Gedney Hill associated with the foundation of the Holy Trinity church (SMR 22297).

Bearing in mind the site's proximity to the church, and hence the centre of the medieval settlement, it would seem probable that some archaeological indicator of human activity at Gedney Hill village exists. However, it is also likely that landscape developments preceding the necessity for archaeological investigation (pre-PPG16) may have destroyed any such information. Certainly, the property in question was developed in the 17th Century as a residential property, and for the last three generations has been used as the village bakery (M.Taylor, *pers comm.*).

3.0 Project Aims

The archaeological strategy and its associated aims and objectives are outlined in section 3.0 of the project specification, and adhere to the brief set by Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section (LCCAS). The primary aim of this watching brief is to establish whether any archaeological remains have been preserved within the application area, and if so to determine their character and date. This information will be used to supplement existing knowledge of the nature of past human activity in and around Gedney Hill village.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Schedule of Works

Excavation of the foundations took place on Wednesday 24th April, and lasted for one day.

4.2 Trench Details

One trench was excavated under constant archaeological supervision in the event of exposure of any archaeological features. This was carried out by a mechanical digger fitted with a 900mm toothed bucket. A photographic record was compiled during these proceedings, in regulation with standard practice. While some spoil was examined, the larger portion was placed directly into a dumper truck by the mechanical excavator, and thus examination was not possible. The archaeologist on site was confident, however, that no significant archaeological remains were lost through these actions.

Four profiles were recorded along the footings, although due to the depth and instability of certain sections, it was not possible to take further profiles. One profile was recorded at 1:20, and the remaining three at 1:10. Plan drawings of the site were carried out at 1:50.

5.0 Results

The excavation of the foundations proved to be archaeologically sterile. Several pits and ditches were identified, although they were clearly of modern origin. The fills of these features were identical to each other, being composed of a dark grey to black, very loose, clay sand, with occasional to moderate inclusions of Ceramic Building Material (CBM). The depth of such disturbance proved to be very deep, reaching to over three metres below ground level in places. The area of greatest disturbance was situated at the north-eastern end of the foundations, where several 'marble neck' bottles were encountered, as well as large quantities of domestic refuse dating to the early-middle Modern period. Additionally, a brick-lined soak-away well, with associated ceramic drainage piping, was discovered at the northeastern corner (see Appendix A and B). The bricks were produced at Whittlesey brick works, and have a very modern appearance. While the owner informed Soke Archaeological Services that the well had not been constructed within the last forty years, the form of brick manufacture 'PHORPRES' indicates it must have been built after the 1930's.

The deposits examined in the four profiles were recorded as follows:

Context Number	Description
100	Light orange yellow, very loose, fine sandy silt with no inclusions. Large mottles of darker matrix.
101	Grey moist plastic silty clay with occasional CBM inclusions. Mixed with (100).
102	Black, well developed peat. Moderate frequency of reed roots. No inclusions
103	Blue grey loose clay silt mixed with patches of green yellow silt clay. Occasional shell fragments
104	Dark yellow orange loose silty clay sand with patches of grey matrix. Occasional CBM.

105	Dark grey plastic saturated silty clay. Clay fraction higher than (101). Occasional CBM.
106	Dark grey - black loose clay sand. Moderate CBM.
107	Brick red loose silty sand. Very frequent brick fragments.
108	Compacted ceramic building material composed of brown dark red broken up hardcore.
109	Indurated black clay with frequent CBM inclusions
110	Dark yellow fine silty sand. Frequent CBM inclusions
111	Indurated black modern hardcore underlying concrete

As can be seen, the majority of layers encountered were disturbed, the finds and inclusions indicating late Post-Medieval to Modern activity associated with construction and the dumping of domestic waste. However, several layers found at the southern and northeastern extents of the foundations reveal the presence of a waterway traversing the site in a north to south orientation. A thin band of well developed peat (102) overlying blue-grey clay silt is clearly of alluvial origin, and probably represents a small stream flowing across the site, cutting into the marine alluvial roddon silts.

6.0 Conclusions

Results of the watching brief show that the development area has been highly disturbed, to deep levels, by fairly recent activity. These observations reveal that current works have not made any impact upon archaeological remains. The nature of what was found does imply, however, that any deposits of archaeological value may have been destroyed by works on the site during the last century.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Soke Archaeological Services would like to thank Michael Taylor for commissioning the project. David Britchfield, of Soke Archaeological Services, co-ordinated the project. Maisie Taylor, of Soke Archaeological Services, edited this report.

8.0 Personnel

Project Director: Francis Pryor MBE PhD MA FSA MIFA

Project Manager: David Britchfield BA (Hons)

Fieldstaff: Lavinia Ferrante di Ruffano BSc (Hons)

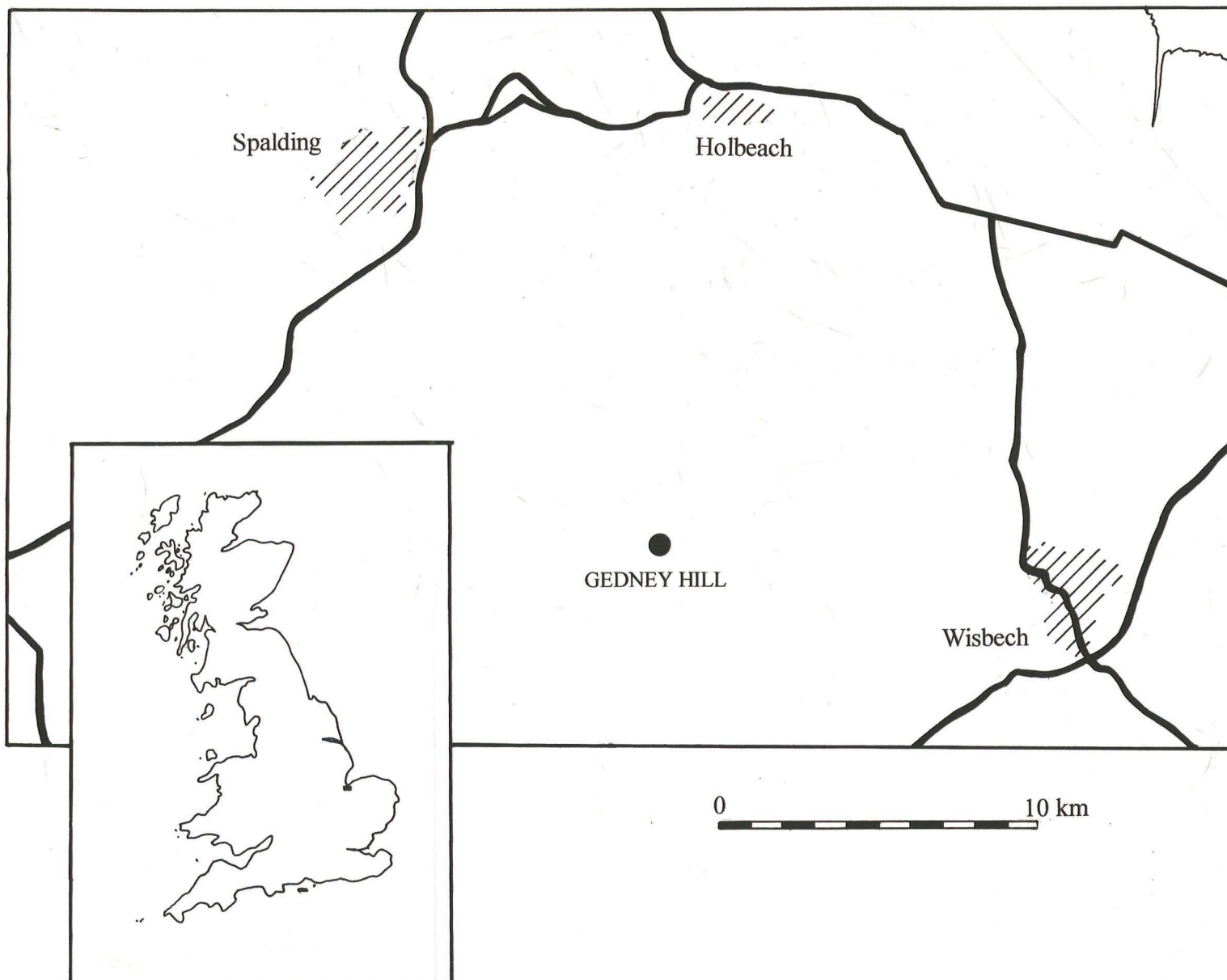
Illustrations: Lavinia Ferrante di Ruffano
Louisa New MA

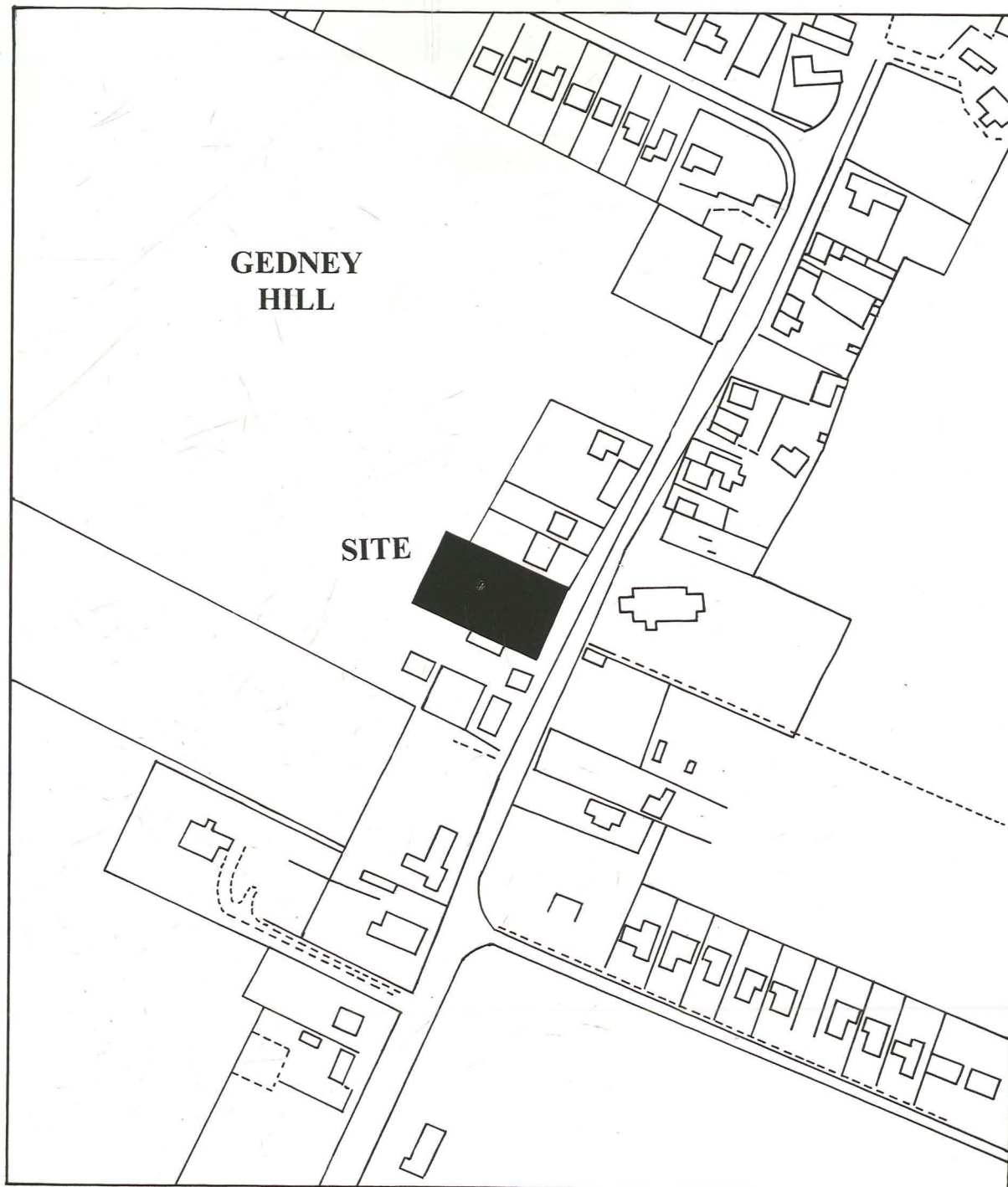
9.0 References

Institute of Field Archaeologists (1999) *Standard and Guidance for an Archaeological Watching Brief* IFA

Wyatt, R J (1992) *British Geological Survey: Peterborough Sheet 158 Solid and Drift Edition*, 1:50k Series. NERC

10.1 APPENDIX A - ILLUSTRATIONS





0 100m

A horizontal scale bar with a white left half and a black right half, representing a distance of 100 meters.

10.1.2 Site location plan

SHED

4

5

6

7

PROFILE 2

PROFILE 3

3

11

12

8

ARAGE

PROFILE 1

2

9

PROFILE 4

1

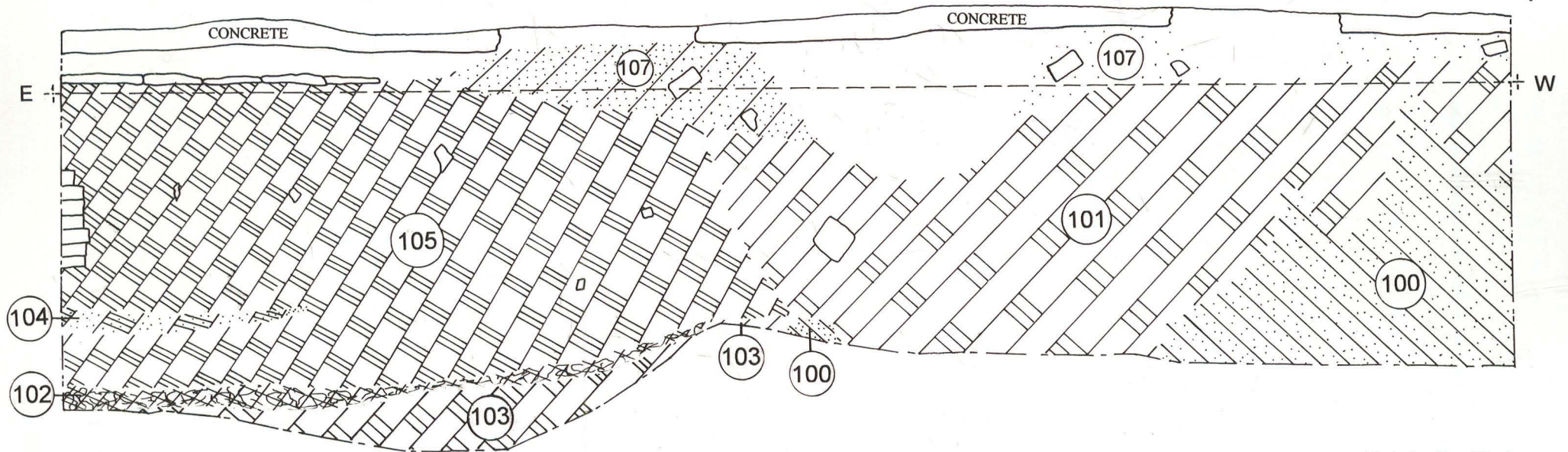
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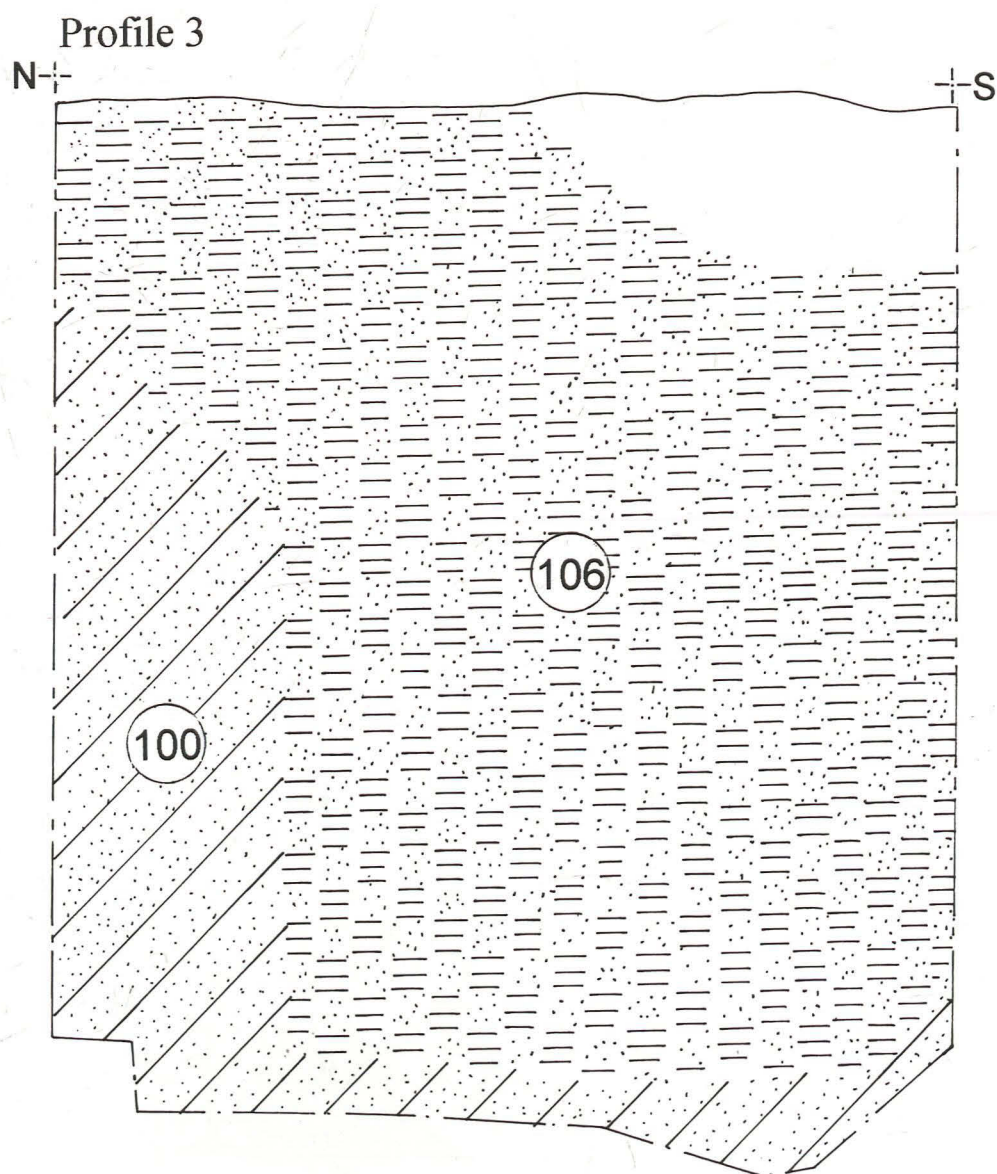
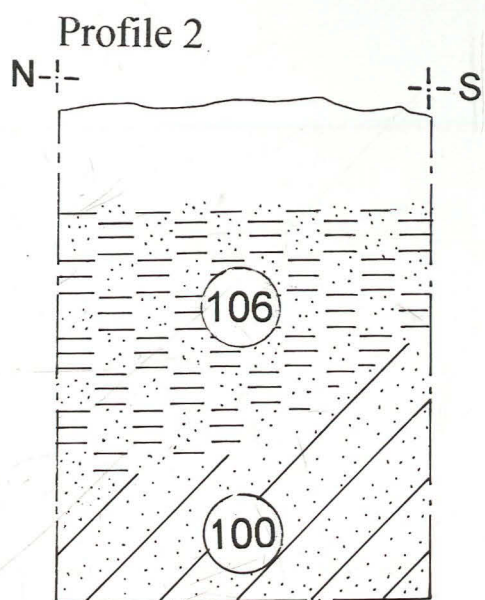


EXISTING BUILDING

Profile 1



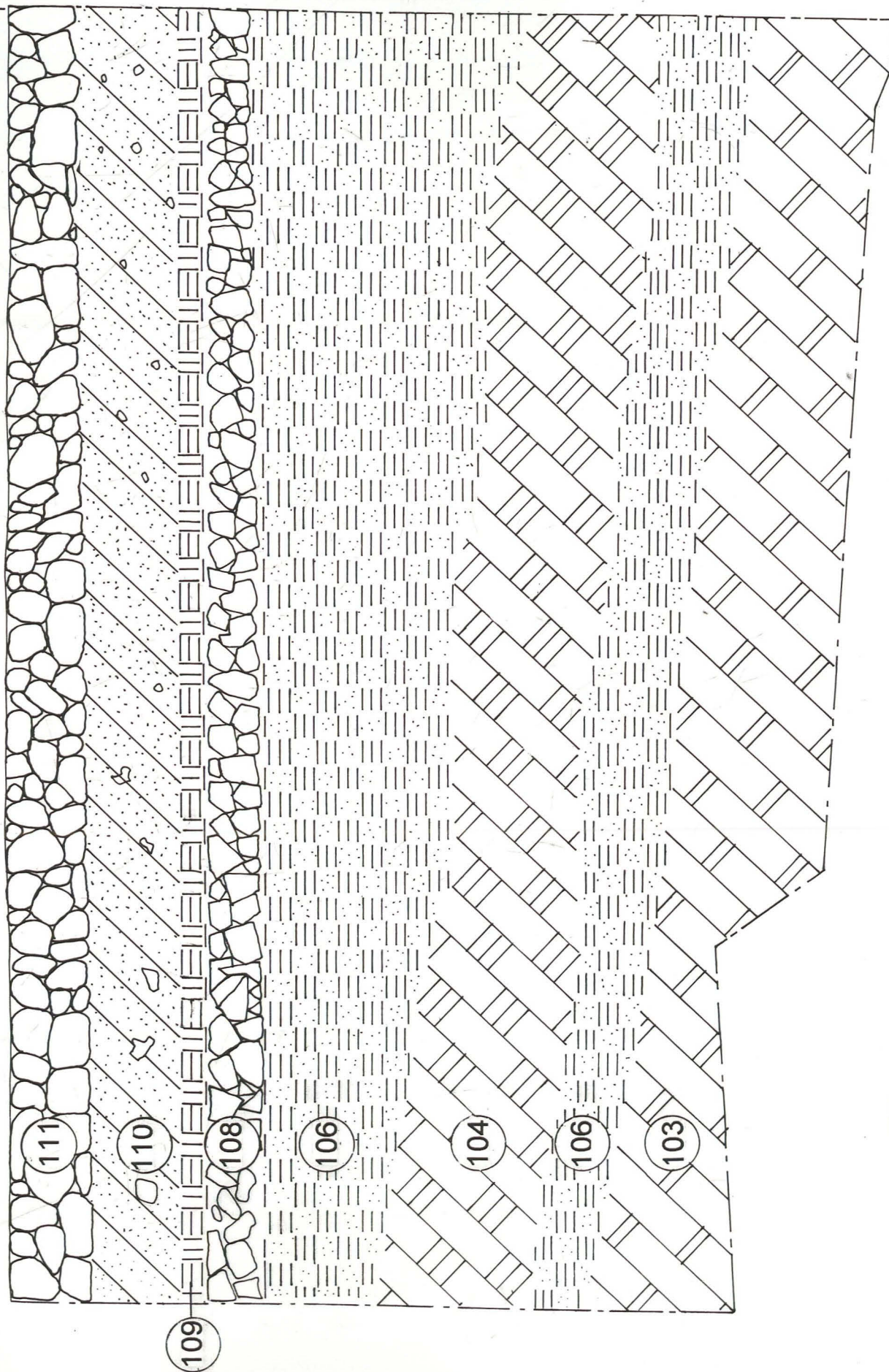
10.1.4 Profile 1



W-1

Profile 4

E



10.2 APPENDIX B - PLATES



10.2.1 The site, facing south, prior to excavation



10.2.2 The modern well encountered during excavation of the footings.



10.2.3 Eastern section of Profile 1, facing south.



10.2.4 Western section of Profile 1, facing south, showing the depth of disturbance.



10.2.5 Modern feature within footings, facing north



10.2.6 Profile 4, facing northeast.

10.3 APPENDIX C - PROJECT SPECIFICATION

Project Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief at
Gedney Hill General Stores and Post Office

(Planning Permission Number: H07/1023/01)

Accession Number: 2002.167

NGR: TF 326115

Site code: GHL02

By:

David Britchfield BA (Hons)

and

Michael Bamforth

For:

South Holland District Council
Housing & Planning Services Department
Council Offices
Priory Road
Spalding
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Prepared by:

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April 2002

For: Marshall Bros .Ltd.
Gedney Hill

CONTENTS

SITE DETAILS.....	2
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	3
2.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND.....	3
3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES.....	3
4.0 METHODS.....	4
4.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS	4
4.2 METHODOLOGY	4
4.3 METAL DETECTING	4
4.4 PALAEOENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING	5
4.5 RECORDING	5
5.0 POST EXCAVATION.....	5
6.0 CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY	6
7.0 VARIATIONS TO THE PROPOSED SCHEME OF WORKS	6
8.0 STAFF	6
9.0 REPORT AND ARCHIVE	6
10.0 RISK ASSESMENT	6
11.0 REFERENCES.....	7
12.0 SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD - DATA	8
13.0 SITE LOCATION PLAN.....	9

Site Details

Site: Gedney Hill General Store and Post Office

Parish: Gedney Hill

National Grid

Reference: TF 326115

Planning Authority: South Holland District Council

Planning

Application

Number: H07/1023/01

Nature of

Development: Extension of existing shop unit

Client:

Marshall Brothers Ltd
General Store & Post Office
Hillgate
Gedney Hill
Spalding
Lincs

Archaeological

Monitoring Level: Intensive

1.0 Introduction

The General Stores and Post Office of Gedney Hill lies approximately 15km south-east of Spalding, in the fens of South Holland District Council. The site for development is centred at NGR TF 326115, to the north of the 14th century Holy Trinity Church and is currently being used as a yard area. Proposals have been made for the extension of the existing shop unit.

Due to the archaeological potential of this site, South Holland District Council has requested that an Archaeological Watching Brief be carried out during any ground penetrating works. The aim of this watching brief will be to provide 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area or site on land or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed' (IFA 1994).

2.0 Archaeological background

Although there has not been any systematical archaeological excavations carried out in Gedney Hill, it is evident from sources such as Phillips (1970) that the possibility of archaeological deposits within the development area may exist. Phillips not only records the presence of cropmarks, but also the discovery of various Roman coins (1970: 303, SMR 22289, 22291). Similarly, a Roman bronze coin, attributed to the 2nd century, is recorded within the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR No. 22289), located at Mole Drove, approximately 300 yards to the east of the development area. As far as the recorded cropmarks are concerned, the frequency and distribution of sites to the SW and NW of Gedney Hill is incredibly dense. Although no cropmarks are recorded within the development area, there is evidence to suggest that the possibility of Roman field systems may exist. A Sites and Monuments Record describes 'ditched droves running NE and SE from Gedney Hill, apparently orientated onto the church. This suggests the church may be built on RB site' (SMR 22295).

The site in question lies approximately 100 yards to the north of Holy Trinity Church (SMR 22297), and thus within the medieval core of the village (SMR 20527). Although there are no other medieval listings within the Sites and Monuments Records, with the exception of the base plinth and shaft of a cross (SMR 22290), the possibility of medieval deposits should not be ruled out.

A watching brief recently carried out by Soke Archaeological Services at the nearby (200m to the east) village hall (Ferrante di Ruffano, 2001), did not encounter any significant archaeological remains. The only evidence recorded was a rubbish pit, believed to date to the 1960's.

3.0 Aims and objectives

3.1 The aims of the watching brief will be to locate, record and interpret any archaeological features exposed during ground disturbance.

3.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be:

3.2.1 To determine the form and function of any archaeological features encountered.

3.2.2 To determine the spatial arrangement of any archaeological features encountered.

3.2.3 To recover dating evidence from any archaeological features.

3.2.4 To establish the sequence of any archaeological remains.

4.0 Methods

4.1 General considerations

4.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.

4.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practice issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA).

4.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1997, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 The initial stage of development is due to commence on the 9th May 2001, involving the excavation of the foundations, which is expected to last 2-3 days. Following the excavation of foundations, the septic tank and service runs will be excavated and are due to last approximately 1 day. Excavation will be carried out using a JCB, fitted with a toothed bucket, with an experienced Archaeological Supervisor monitoring of all phases of soil movement.

4.2.2 The trench sections will be observed regularly, to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed, and to record changes in geology. Plans will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 and sections at 1:10. Larger scale illustrations may be made, if necessary. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Soke Archaeological Services Ltd., pro-forma, context record sheets.

4.2.3 Any finds will be retained for later analysis.

4.2.4 Any deposits encountered that might be environmentally rewarding will be sampled accordingly.

4.2.5 A photographic record will be compiled throughout the watching brief and will consist of colour transparencies and black and white prints. It will also record specific stages of the watching brief, as well as the layout of archaeological features within each trench or area.

4.3 Metal Detecting

4.3.1 A metal detector will be in routine use, with all *in situ* deposits and spoil heaps detected regularly.

4.4 Palaeoenvironmental Sampling

4.4.1 If any palaeoenvironmental sampling is considered necessary, it will be carried out in accordance with Murphy and Wiltshire (1994).

4.5 Recording

4.5.1 All written records will be on Soke Archaeological Services Ltd, pro-forma, MOLAS based context sheets. All archaeological features will be recorded in single context.

4.5.2 Sections will be drawn at 1:10; plans at 1:20; trench location plans at a suitable scale for publication.

4.5.3 All plans will be tied into the Ordnance Survey National Grid.

4.5.4 All surveying levels will be tied into the Ordnance Datum.

4.5.5 Trenches will be surveyed using an EDM or equivalent.

4.5.6 All small finds will be 3D co-ordinated.

4.5.7 Photographs of any relevant sections or profiles will be taken during the watching brief. Working photographs will also be taken, in order to provide visual images of site conditions.

4.5.8 If any changes in recording methodology need to be adopted on site, LCC will be consulted prior to doing so.

5.0 Post Excavation

5.1 Stage 1

5.1.1 On completion of site operations, records produced during the excavation will be checked and ordered, to ensure that they form a uniform sequence constituting a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued.

5.1.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked, bagged and labelled in context. SAS staff will deal with waterlogged finds or deposits. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be processed by specialist consultants attached to SAS (see below).

5.2 Stage 2

5.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix, to determine the various phases of activity on the site (if required).

5.3 Stage 3

5.3.1 Dependent upon the amount of archaeology encountered on site, upon completion of Stage 2, a report detailing the findings may be forwarded to be included in Lincolnshire's Annual Archaeological Report, and a note presented to the editor of the journal of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. If necessary, a summary will be submitted to appropriate national journals: Britannia, Medieval Archaeology, or Medieval Settlement Research Group.

6.0 Curatorial Responsibility

6.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council. They will be given seven days notice in writing, before commencement of the project. Similarly, the Archaeological Officer will be informed upon completion of the project.

7.0 Variations to the proposed scheme of works

7.1 Variations to the scheme of works will only be made following confirmation of acceptance from the Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council.

8.0 Staff

The Project Director is Francis Pryor MBE, MA, PhD, FSA, MIFA; the Project Manager will be David Britchfield BA, HNC, OND. Any waterlogged deposits will be seen by Maisie Taylor BA, Cert Ed, MIFA. Medieval and Post Medieval pottery will be seen by David Hall. Dr. Charly French at Cambridge University will be consulted regarding soils, sediments and macrofossils. Dr. Malcolm Lillie and his team at the University of Hull, Wetland Archaeological and Environments Research Centre will provide environmental support on topics (such as pollen) which are not covered by Dr. French.

9.0 Report and archive

9.1 The report will be in accordance with Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage) guidelines.

9.2 The site archive will be temporarily held by Soke Archaeological Services Ltd. The documentation, finds, photographs and other records and materials generated during the watching brief will then be sorted and distributed to the City and Council Museum, Lincoln, for long term storage and curation.

10.0 Risk Assessment

Prior to any fieldwork, it is necessary to prepare a risk assessment, in order to describe any possible

hazards, along with the effect, severity and likelihood, to provide the degree of risk (see Appendix C). The analysis suggested that the highest risk is caused by the presence of the machine and trenches. However, all involved in the project have experience in such conditions, and are familiar with all the relevant health and safety procedures. The Site Supervisor will reinforce these.

11.0 References

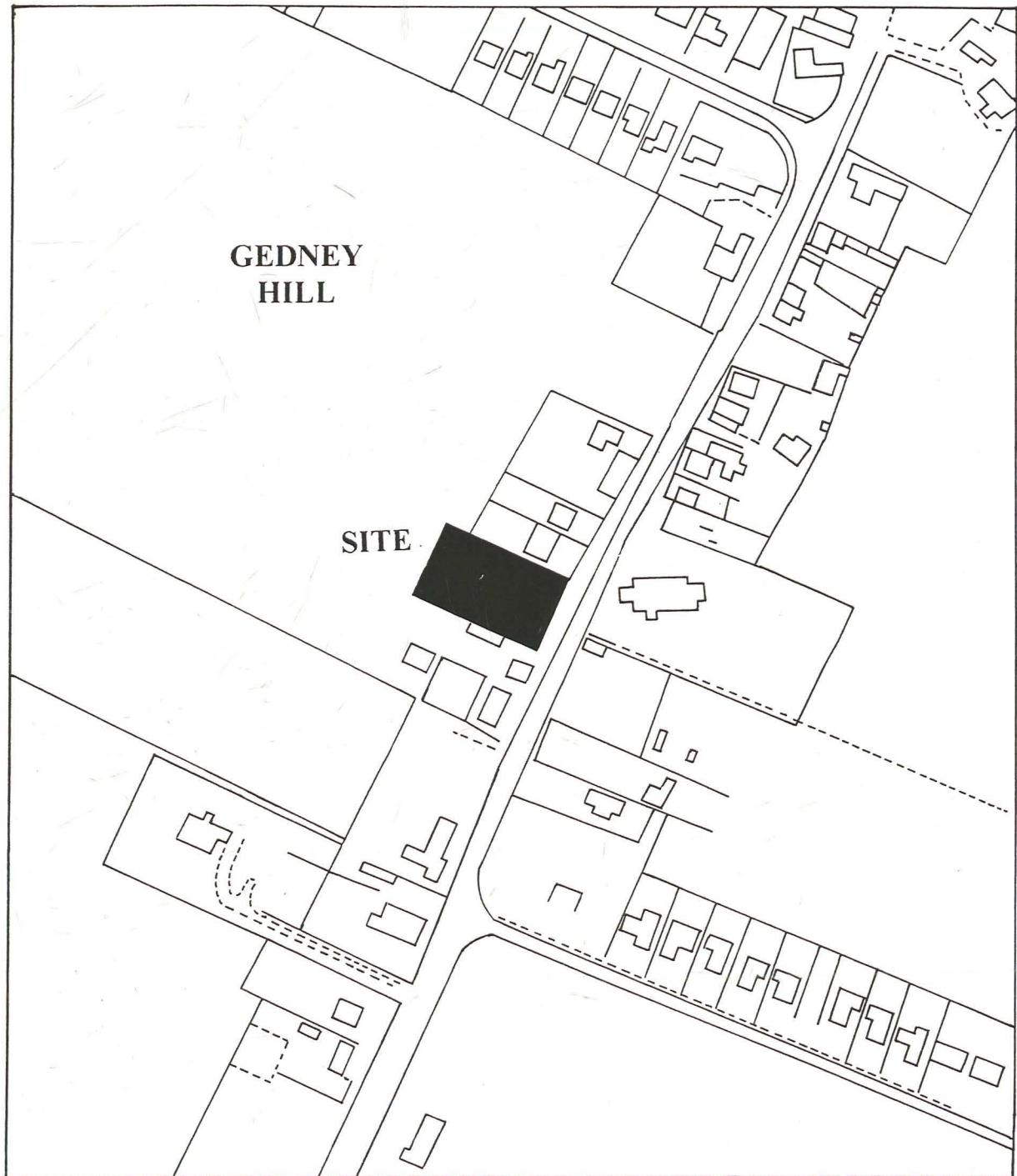
Phillips, C. W, 1970 *The Fenland in Roman Times*. Royal Geographical Society Research Series: No.5

Murphy, P. and Wiltshire, P. (1994) - *A Guide to Sampling Archaeological Deposits for Environmental Analysis*.

Ferrante di Ruffano, L, (2001) - *Final Report on the Archaeological Watching Brief at Gedney Hill Village Hall*.

12.0 Sites and Monuments Record - Data

<i>SMR No.</i>	<i>Description</i>
20524	Undated cropmarks.
20527	Medieval settlement of Gedney Hill.
22289	2nd Century Roman bronze coin, possibly Faustina II.
22290	High base, plinth and shaft of medieval cross.
22291	Bronze sestertius of Marcus Aurelius.
22295	Ditched droves running NE and SE from Gedney Hill, apparently orientated onto the church.
22297	Holy Trinity Church.
22255	Extensive cropmark complex, with possible settlement, droveroads, field systems and enclosures.



0 100m

A horizontal scale bar with a white left half and a black right half, used to indicate distance on the map.

13.0 Site Location Plan

10.4 APPENDIX D – LEVELS REGISTER

Back Sight	Intermediate Sight	Fore Sight	Instrument Height	Reduced Level	Remarks
0.86			10.21	9.35	BM: Holy Trinity Church
		1.01		9.20	TBM
1.01	3.59		10.21	6.62	Spot Heights: 1
	3.27		10.21	6.94	2
	3.29		10.21	6.92	3
	3.51		10.21	6.70	4
	3.12		10.21	7.09	5
	3.03		10.21	7.18	6
	3.84		10.21	6.37	7
	4.05		10.21	6.16	8
	2.89		10.21	7.32	9
	3.23		10.21	6.98	10
	1.84		10.21	8.37	11
	1.84		10.21	8.37	12
	1.86		10.21	8.35	13