

Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land at

INNER MARSH FARM BURTON

For RSPB

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Archaeological Watching Brief Report for Land at

INNER MARSH FARM BURTON

Client: RSPB

Local Authority: Ellesmere Port & Neston Borough Council

NGR: 330884,373744

Planning App: P/2006/101/BN/591

Author(s): C Statter

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Abstract

This report contains the results of an Archaeological Watching Brief carried out at Inner Marsh Farm, Burton.

The Watching Brief was undertaken at the site intermittently between 13th and 28th August 2007. Fieldwork was carried out by Blair Poole and Claire Statter of L – P : Archaeology.

The investigation involved the monitoring of the excavation of new reed beds. A metal detecting survey was also carried on on the site.

The watching brief revealed no archaeological features.

1. Introduction and Scope of Study

- 1.1. Between the 13th and 28th August 2007 an archaeological watching brief was carried out at Inner Marsh Farm, Burton. The fieldwork was commissioned by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).
- 1.2. The site is located at OS grid reference 330884,373744 (FIGURE 1). The local authority is Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council. The site covers 5 hectares.
- 1.3. The works comprised the excavation of a series of reed beds for the creation of a new habitat for marsh and wading birds (FIGURE 3).
- 1.4. L – P : Archaeology have issued the site code BRT/IMF 07.
- 1.5. The archaeological site recording was carried out by Blair Poole and Claire Statter of L – P : Archaeology.
- 1.6. The watching brief involved the monitoring of the excavation of the new reed beds. A metal detecting survey was also carried out on the site by the Crewe and Nantwich Metal Detecting Society.
- 1.7. The methodology was set out by L – P : Archaeology and agreed by Mark Leah, Cheshire County Archaeologist, Cheshire County Council (POOLE 2007).
- 1.8. The aims of the archaeological watching brief were:
 - ◆ To make a record of any occurring archaeological deposits or features and to establish their date, character and importance.

2. Planning Background

- 2.1. In November 1990 the Department of the Environment issued PPG 16, “Archaeology and Planning”. This document provides guidance for planning authorities, property owners, developers and others on the preservation and investigation of archaeological remains.
- 2.2. In considering any planning application for development the local planning authority, Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council, is bound by the policy frameworks provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 (PPG 16), and the policies within the Local Plan.
- 2.3. The Local Authority, Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council, Local Plan, adopted in 2002, states that:

ENV17 SITES OF SPECIAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INTEREST

Proposals for development which would adversely affect the site or setting of a Scheduled Ancient Monument or other monument of national importance will be refused.

The Borough Council will seek to protect non-scheduled sites of Archaeological Importance and their settings. Proposals affecting these and other sites of suspected archaeological interest must be accompanied with an archaeological assessment. This will determine the nature, extent and significance of the remains and the effect that the proposed development would have on them.

Where planning permission is granted for development affecting a site of Archaeological Importance, the permission will, depending on the importance of the site and opportunities for preservation, be subject to conditions or a legal agreement to ensure the in-situ preservation of the remains. If in-situ preservation is not justified, then a programme of excavation and recording of remains must be agreed.

- 2.4. Full planning permission, reference number P/2006/101/BN/591, has been granted by Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council with the following condition:

No development hereby permitted shall take place until the applicant, or his agent or successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation which has been submitted to and approved by the local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved programme. The programme shall include the provision of seven days written notice of the commencement of work to the Natural & Historic Environment Team (Development Control) at Cheshire County Council; and

shall allow reasonable access to the archaeological officer, or any nominated representative, to the site for the purposes of observing and recording the work.

2.5. Mark Leah of Cheshire County Council agreed that a Watching Brief was required during the groundworks. This report details the results of the Archaeological Watching Brief carried out.

2.6. This report will now be submitted to Cheshire County Council in order for the Planning condition to be satisfied.

3. Geology and Topography

3.1. Geology

- 3.1.1. The British Geological Survey indicates that the solid geology of Burton is Permian and Triassic sandstones.
- 3.1.2. Excavations did not extend to a depth sufficient to encounter bedrock, however, superficial deposits were identified as a dark grey sandy silt located at approximately 0.04m below ground level.

3.2. Topography

- 3.2.1. The site area is relatively flat, laying at approximately 6m OD with a site area of 5 hectares.
- 3.2.2. The site area lies 800m to the south west of the village of Burton.
- 3.2.3. The site lies on an area of marshland approximately 3km to the east of the River Dee estuary.

4. Methodology

- 4.1. The watching brief consisted of archaeological monitoring of the excavation of new reed beds by machine.
- 4.2. A suitably qualified archaeologist was present on site to monitor all groundworks.
- 4.3. The metal detectorists were monitored at all times by the archaeologist present.

5. Results

5.1. In this report context numbers are indicated by brackets, with round brackets indicating fills and deposits (1) and square brackets indicating cut features [2], levels are indicated in metres Below Ground Level (BGL).

5.2. The first context excavated was a dark humic topsoil (100). This deposit was seen across the whole site and measured an average of 0.04m below ground surface.



Plate 1 - Context (100) facing South West

5.3. Underlying (100) lay (101) a loose dark grey alluvial sandy silt. This deposit had some iron staining and root matter inclusions. (101) lay across the site with a maximum depth of 0.25m below ground level. Within this deposit laminations within the silt could be seen, showing that it was an alluvial deposit, and that this area has been repeatedly flooded in the past.

5.4. Below (101) lay (102) a loose light grey silt alluvium with no inclusions. This deposit is seen across site and extended beyond the base of the trench at a depth of 1.2m. Again this deposit was seen as an alluvial deposit due to laminations in the silt.



Plate 2 - Laminations within silt deposit (102)

5.5.No archaeological features were recorded during the monitoring of ground works.

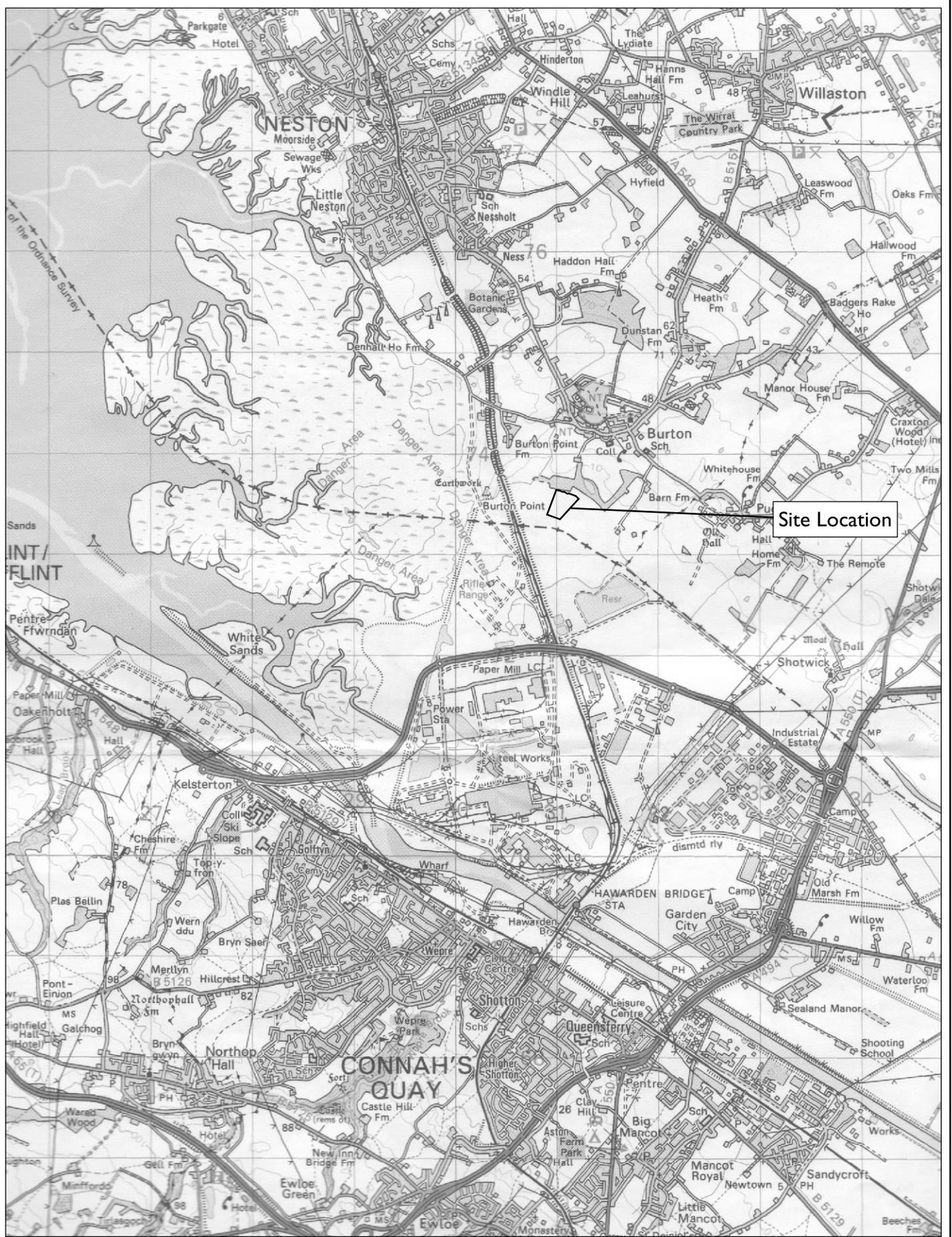
5.6.The metal detecting survey carried out by the Crewe and Nantwich Metal Detecting Society, revealed only modern finds such as thick iron wire and buttons.

6. Summary and Conclusions

- 6.1. This report contains the results of an archaeological watching brief on the site of Inner Marsh Farm, Burton.
- 6.2. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features.
- 6.3. The watching brief showed the sequence of deposits on site to be topsoil, overlying a natural dark grey alluvial sandy silt, the result of flooding and river activity. This overlay a lighter grey alluvial silt.

FIGURES

FIGURE I // Site location general



Scale 1:50,000 @ A4

0 2,500m



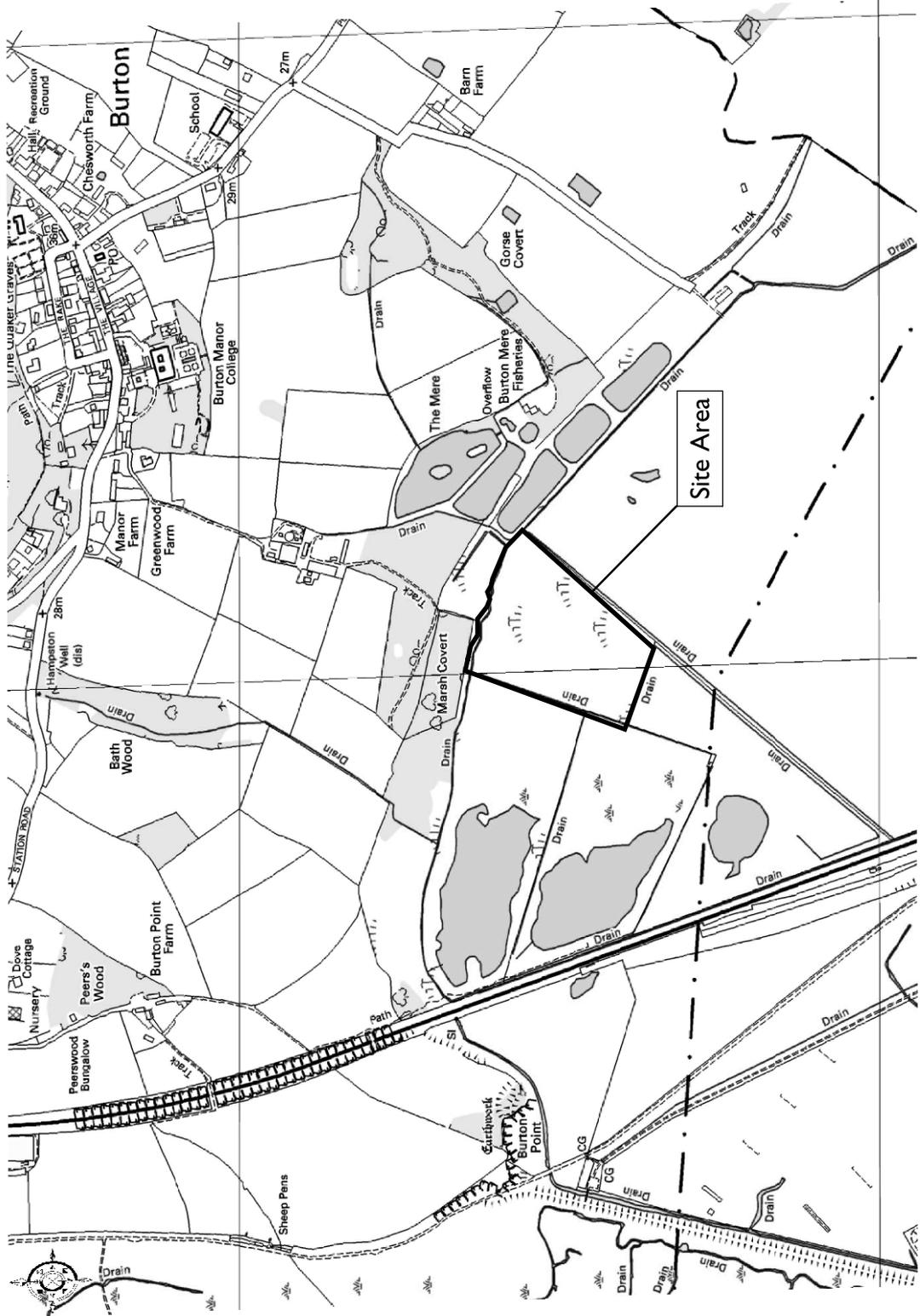
PROJECT // 0521C - Inner Marsh Farm, Burton

DESCRIPTION // Site location general

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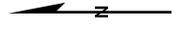
DOC REF: LP0521C-AWB-v1 L-P:ARCHAEOLOGY

FIGURE 2 // Site location detailed



Scale 1:10,000 @ A4

0 500m



PROJECT // 0521C - Inner Marsh Farm, Burton

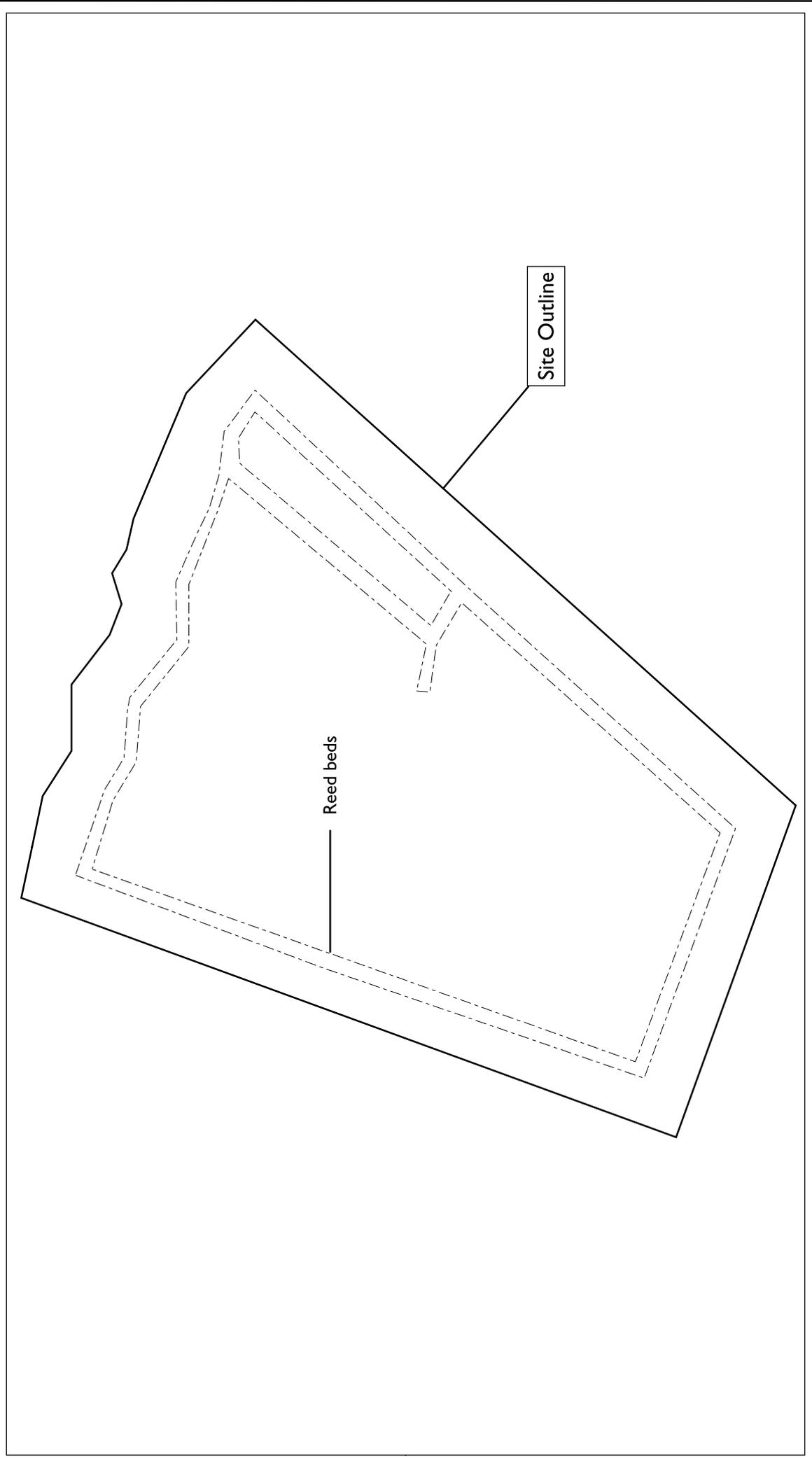
DESCRIPTION // Site location detailed

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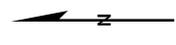
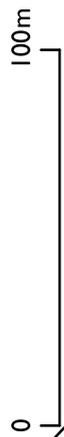
DOC REF: LP0521C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 3 // Reed bed locations



Scale 1:2,000 @ A4



PROJECT // 0521C - Inner Marsh Farm, Burton

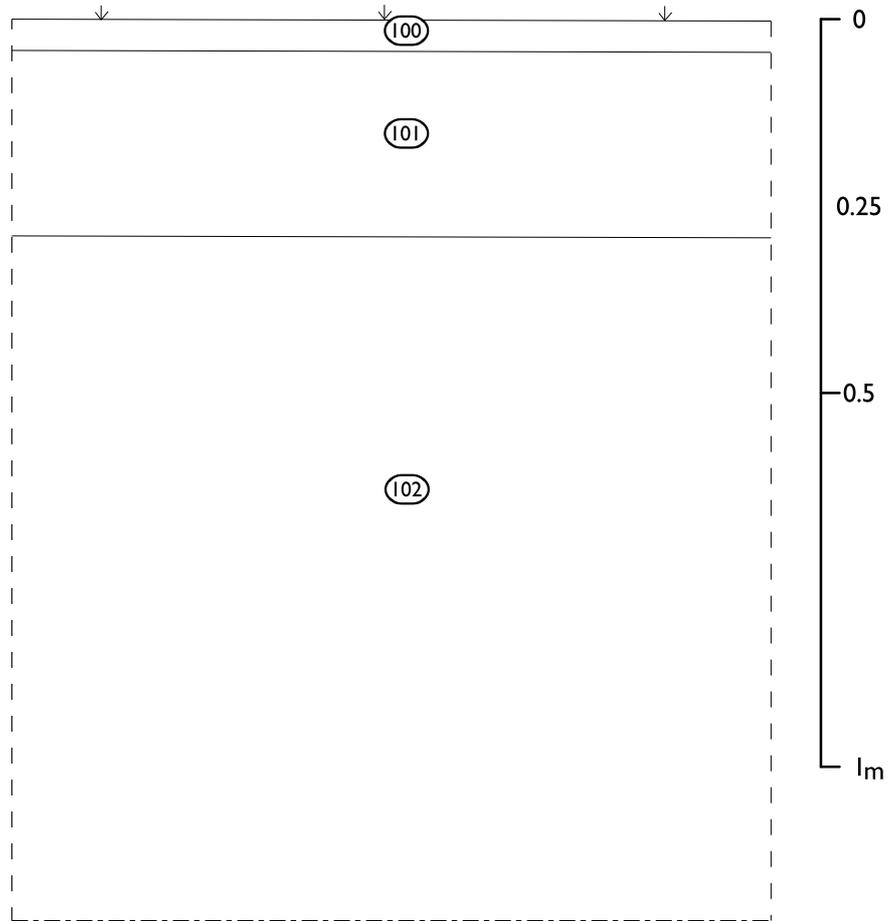
DESCRIPTION // Reed bed locations

Produced from plans supplied by RSPB

DOC REF: LP0521C-AWB-v1

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FIGURE 4 // Sample section



Scale 1:10 @ A4



PROJECT // 0521C - Inner Marsh Farm, Burton

DESCRIPTION // Sample section

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SOURCES CONSULTED

APPENDIX I

BIBLIOGRAPHIC

POOLE B, 2007. *Specification for an Archaeological Watching Brief*. Unpublished report for L – P :
Archaeology.

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Project details

Project name	Inner Marsh Farm, Burton
Short description of the project	Watching brief comprising the monitoring of the excavation of new reed beds. The watching brief revealed no archaeological features.
Project dates	Start: 13-08-2007 End: 28-08-2007
Previous/future work	No / No
Any associated project reference codes	BRT/IMF 07 - Sitecode
Type of project	Recording project
Site status	None
Current Land use	Coastland 4 - Saltmarsh
Investigation type	'Watching Brief'

Project location

Country	England
Site location	CHESHIRE ELLESMERE PORT AND NESTON NESTON Inner Marsh Farm, Burton
Postcode	CH64 5SF
Study area	5.00 Hectares
Site coordinates	SJ 30884 73744 53.2559162988 -3.036137811010 53 15 21 N 003 02 10 W Point
Height OD	Min: 6.00m Max: 6.00m

Project creators

Name of Organisation	L - P : Archaeology
Project brief originator	Local Authority Archaeologist and/or Planning Authority/advisory body
Project design originator	L - P : Archaeology
Project director/manager	Blair Poole
Project supervisor	Blair Poole
Type of sponsor/funding body	Developer
Name of sponsor/funding body	RSPB

Project archives

Physical Archive Exists?	No
Digital Archive Exists?	No
Paper Archive recipient	Cheshire Museum Service
Paper Contents	'Stratigraphic', 'Survey'
Paper Media available	'Context sheet', 'Photograph', 'Report', 'Section'

Project bibliography 1

Publication type	Grey literature (unpublished document/manuscript)
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