ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT THREEKINGHAM DRAIN, MAREHAM LANE, THREEKINGHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE (TML99)

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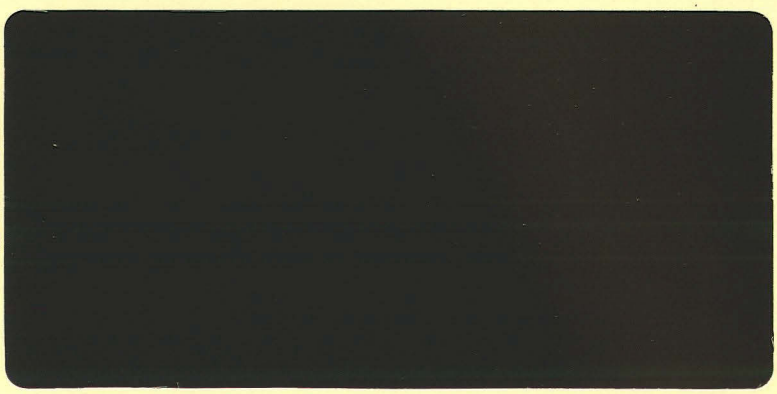

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF AT THREEKINGHAM DRAIN, MAREHAM LANE, THREEKINGHAM, LINCOLNSHIRE (TML99)

Work Undertaken For
Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board

February 1999

Report Compiled by
Mark Dymond HND

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was completed during improvements to Threekingham Drain, alongside Mareham Lane, Threekingham, Lincolnshire. Mareham Lane marks the line of a Roman road, as does the A52 which crosses Mareham Lane immediately north of the site.

However, no archaeological remains were revealed. Only natural silts, apparently infilling a former stream course, and recent subsoil and topsoil deposits were identified.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

On the 15th January 1998, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during improvements to Threekingham Drain, a roadside watercourse at Mareham Lane, Threekingham, Lincolnshire

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board to undertake the watching brief.

An archaeological watching brief is defined as '*a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area ..., where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed*' (IFA 1997).

2.2 Topography, Geology and Soils

Threekingham is situated approximately 18km east of Grantham and 10km south of Sleaford in the civil parish of Threekingham, North Kesteven district, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

Mareham Lane, the site location, passes immediately east of Threekingham village. The site is located on the east side of Mareham Lane, just south of the junction with the A52, at National Grid Reference TF 093 363 (Fig. 2). The new drain is located alongside, and replaces, another drain immediately to the west.

The site lies at approximately 27m OD on fairly flat and level land. Local soils are the Aswarby Association fine loamy gleyic brown calcareous earths (Hodge, *et al.* 1984, 99). These are developed on a natural geology of cornbrash.

2.3 Archaeological Background

The routes of two Roman roads, Mareham Lane, aligned north-south, and the east-west Salter's Way, pass through Threekingham parish. Mareham Lane lies immediately adjacent to the new drain cutting and the crossing point of the Roman roads is only 100m north of the investigation area.

The crossing of the two Roman roads might be expected to provide a focus for Romano-British settlement. However, although Roman coins, pottery and a burial urn have previously been found in the general area (Whitwell 1970, 76), no evidence for a settlement at the crossroads as yet been found.

An Anglo-Saxon presence in the area is attested by the discovery of a spearhead of the period (*ibid.*, 141). Moreover, the place-name, first recorded as *Trichingeham*, is of Old English origin and probably meaning 'the village of (*sic*) Threek's people', with the personal name perhaps of Old English or Old Norse derivation (Ekwall 1974, 470).

Historical reference to the village first occurs in the Domesday Book, written 1086, which records various landowners

including the Bishop of Durham, Gilbert de Gand and Odo the Arblaster (Foster & Longley 1976, 37; 114; 170).

Earthworks of ridge and furrow of possible medieval date survive at the south end of the new drain (Plates 1 and 3).

3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief was to record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during ground disturbance. The objectives were to determine the form, function, spatial arrangement, date and sequence of any archaeological remains present.

4. METHODS

Recutting of Threekingham Drain, to a depth of approximately 3m, was completed by mechanical digger.

Deposits exposed in the drain sides were recorded at a scale of 1:20. A sketch plan of the groundworks was also made. Photographs were taken during groundworks, depicting the setting of the site and deposits exposed by the improvement scheme.

5. RESULTS

5.1 The Stratigraphic Sequence

Records of deposits exposed by groundworks were examined. A summary list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A stratigraphic matrix of all identified deposits was produced. Two phases were identified:

Phase 1: Natural deposits
Phase 2: Undated/Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

5.2 Phase 1: Natural deposits

The earliest recorded deposit within the drain comprised light brownish yellow silty clay (003). This was exposed at a depth of *c.* 2.3m below ground surface, and continued beyond the limit of excavation.

5.3 Phase 2: Undated/Recent deposits

Overlying the Phase 1 deposits was an approximately 2m deep layer of yellowish brown clayey silt (002), identified as a probable subsoil. This was sealed by a dark blackish brown clayey silt (001) topsoil up to 0.7m thick. No artefacts or other finds were recovered during the investigation.

6. DISCUSSION

Archaeological investigations at Threekingham Drain, Mareham Lane, Threekingham, have recorded a sequence of natural and recent deposits.

The earliest recorded deposit comprised silty clay (Phase 1) which is probably natural alluvium, though may be redeposited. Geological maps of the area depict a strip of alluvium in this vicinity, against a much more extensive geology of cornbrash (GSGB 1972). Moreover, this strip of alluvium aligns with a stream to the west of Mareham Lane and another length of this watercourse a little to the east of the investigation site. Further, a slight depression is evident in the roadway (Plate 2) where the thoroughfare crosses the alignment of the watercourses. Additionally,

Ordnance Survey maps from at least as early as 1903 record sharp angles and straight lengths in this water course, indicating that it was, at some undetermined date in the past, re-directed and canalised. The channel alongside Mareham Lane that existed prior to these present improvements appears to be part of this canalization.

Cumulatively, the evidence suggests that the present recutting has transected the line of the original natural watercourse that passed through this area and that the silty clay encountered at depth during the investigation is the alluvium filling this stream.

Above the alluvium was a probable subsoil (Phase 2) that perhaps originated as an agricultural layer. Ridge and furrow earthworks (Plates 1 and 3), perhaps of medieval date, occur at the southern end of the investigation site and indicate that the area had a long-established agricultural function. However, the depth of deposit may indicate that some dumping was involved in the formation of the deposit, probably as part of a process of infilling the former stream channel that passed through the area.

Sealing the subsoil was a thick layer of topsoil that formed the present ground surface. The depth of this deposit is probably due to adjacent hedge banking.

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Threekingham Drain, Threekingham because the groundworks were likely to disturb remains associated with the Roman road, Mareham Lane.

However, no archaeological remains were identified during the work. This may, however, be due to the investigation area being located in a former stream course. As a result, the absence of archaeological remains here does not preclude their presence or survival elsewhere in the vicinity away from the defunct steam.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr S. Hemming of the Black Sluice Internal Drainage Board who commissioned the watching brief. The work was coordinated, and this report edited, by Tom Lane MIFA. Background information was obtained from the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-Excavation Analysis: Mark Dymond

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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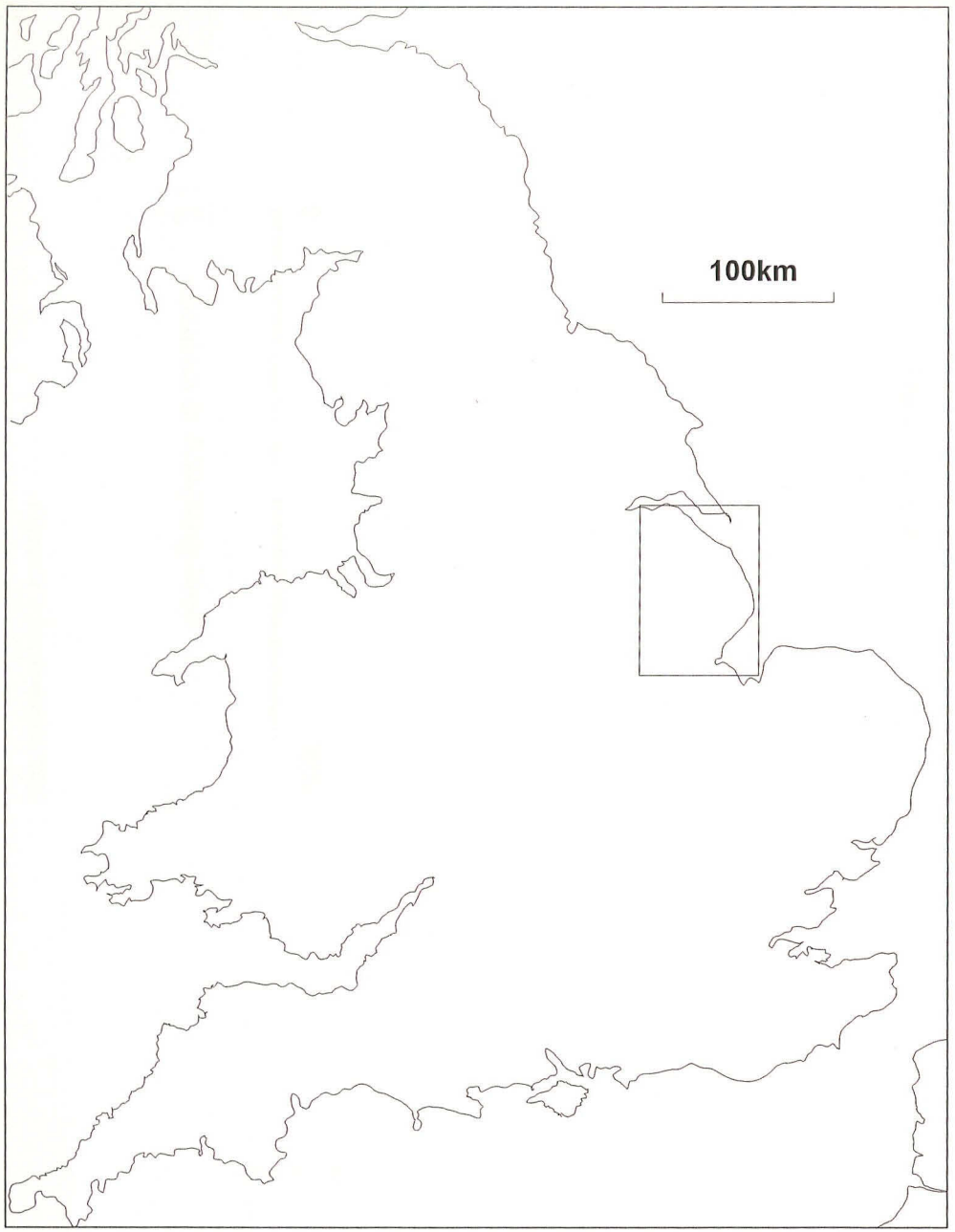
11. ABBREVIATIONS

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



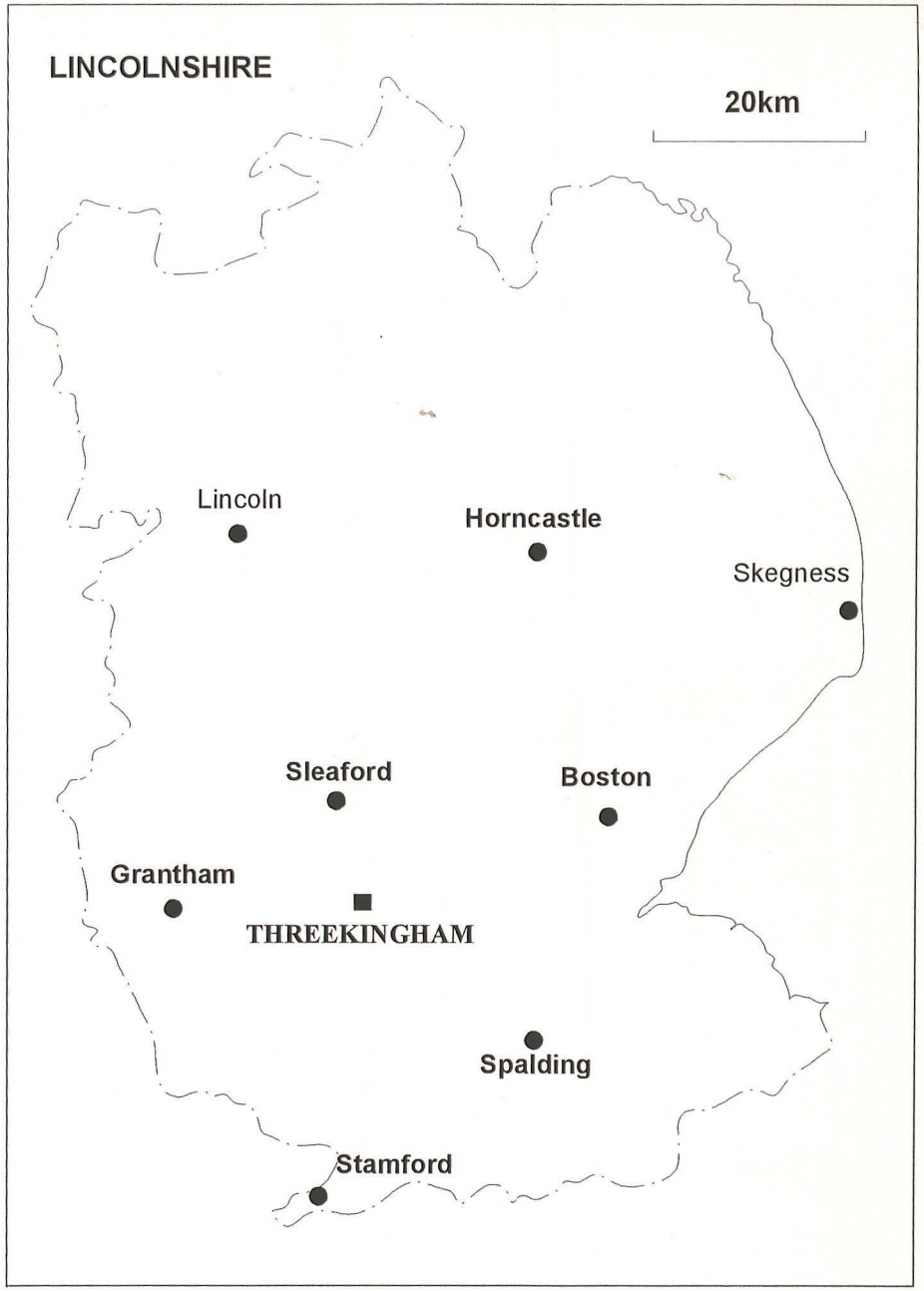


Figure 1 - General Location Plan

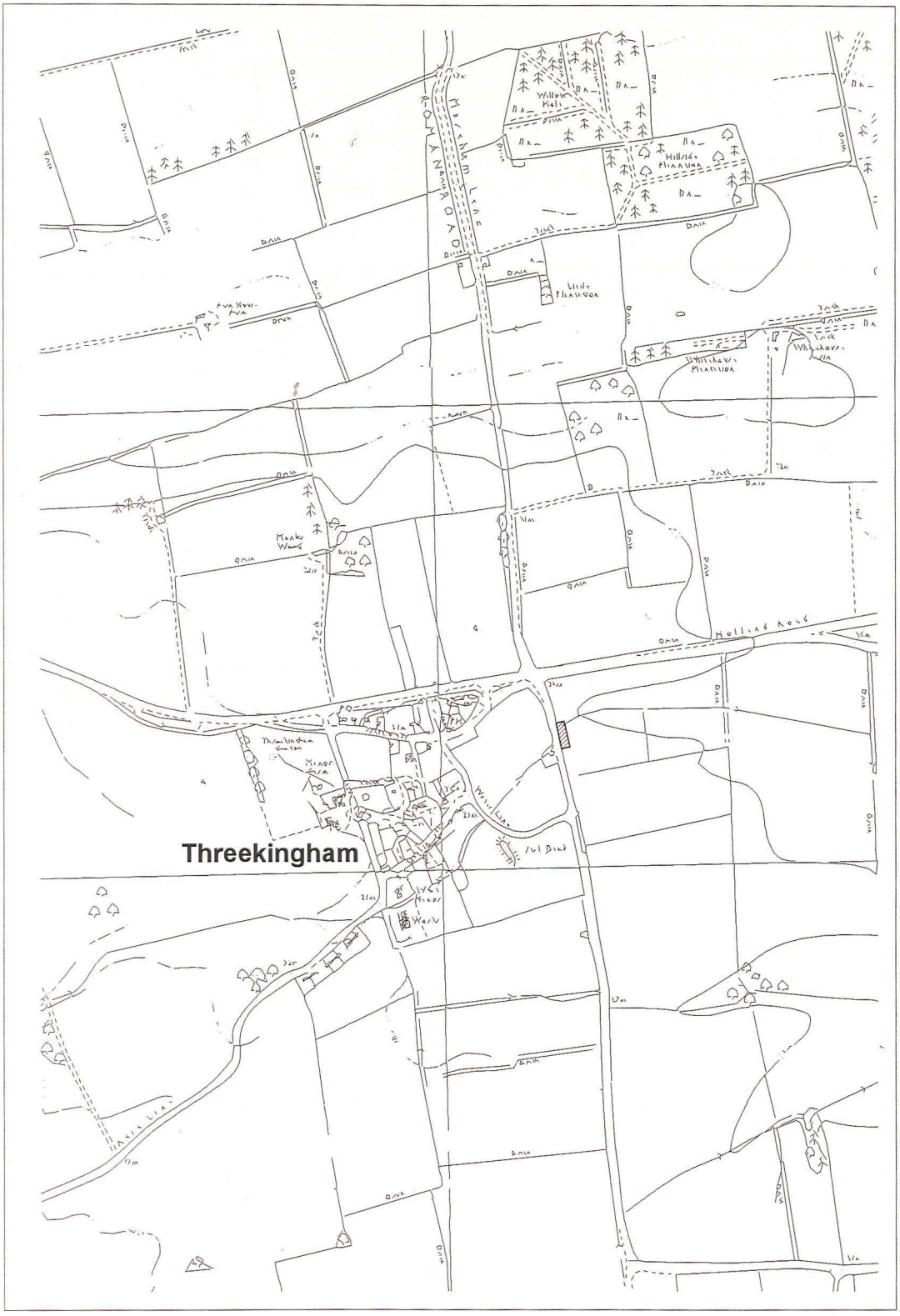


Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

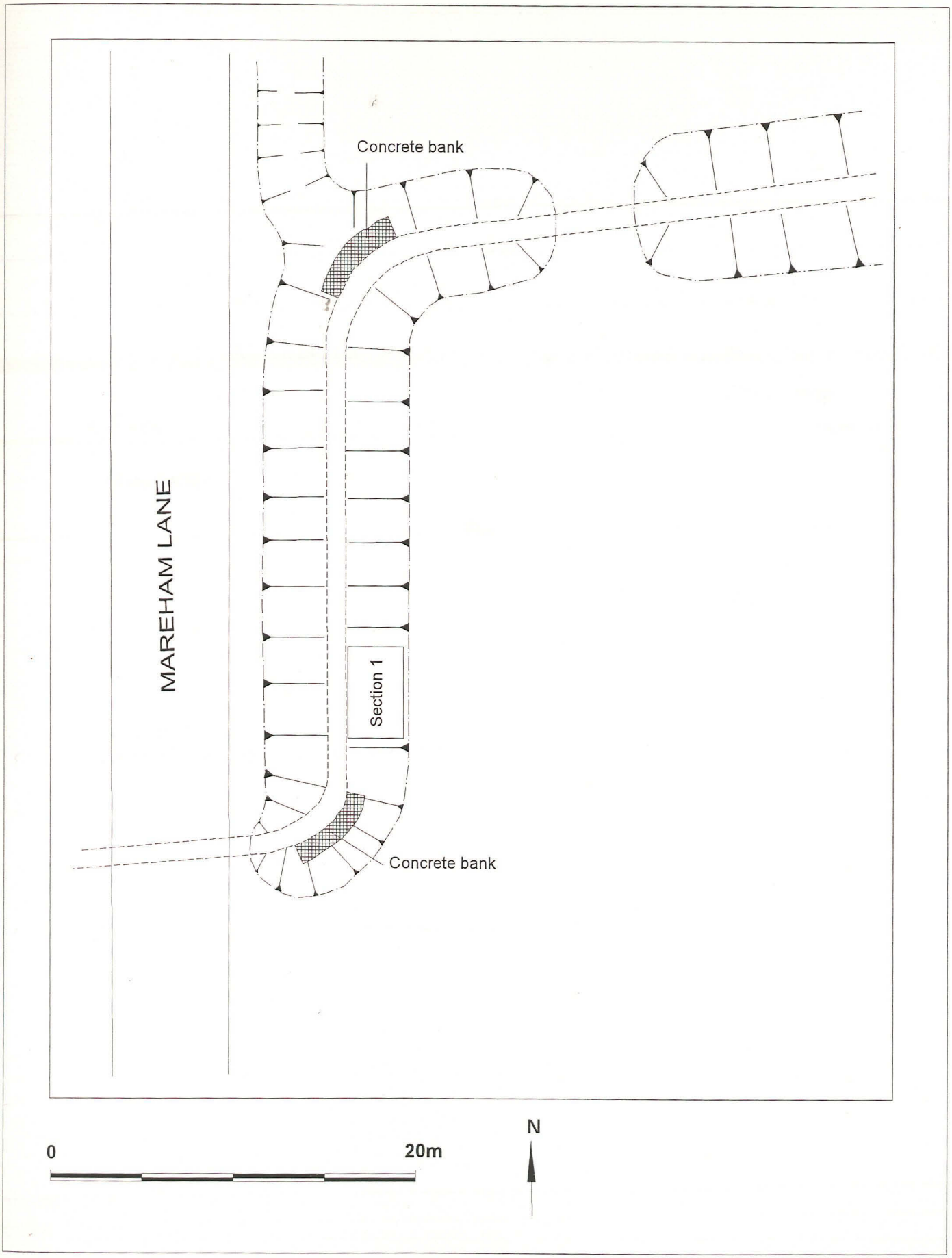
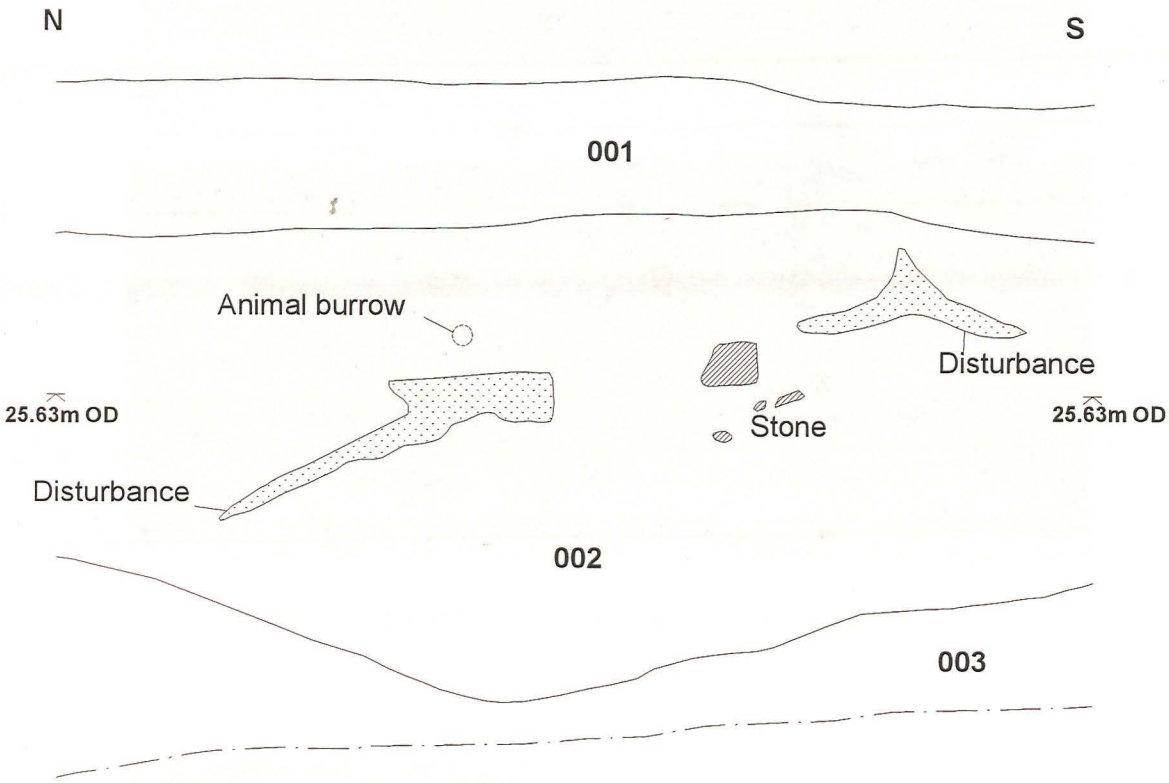


Figure 3 - Plan of the drainage works, showing location of Section 1



Section 1
Section drawn on an angled slope of 38°

Figure 4 - Section 1

Plate 1 : General Site View, looking towards earthworks

Plate 2 : Mareham Lane, looking towards site.
Note depression of ?former stream course

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No	Description	Interpretation
001	Dark blackish brown clayey silt, 0.74m thick	Topsoil
002	Light yellowish bown clayey silt, 2.3m thick	Subsoil
003	Light brownish yellow gritty silty clay, 1.06m thick	Natural

Appendix 2

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

12	Context records
1	Scale drawings
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Stratigraphic matrix

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 21.99

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: TML99

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, *e.g.*(004).
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
Fill	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany