

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
OSSELBY AREA WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT SCHEME

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
USSELBY AREA WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT SCHEME

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Report prepared for Anglian Water Services Ltd
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Summary

- * A selective archaeological watching brief was undertaken for Anglian Water Services Ltd. during water mains replacement within and to the north-east of Middle Rasen
- * Of three areas recommended for close monitoring, only one of these (North Street) was examined to acceptable levels, and sensitive sections centred on Church Road were not monitored
- * Work in the vicinity of St Peter's Church exposed the truncated remains of a possible ditch, within which a single unusual sherd of Potterhanworth-type pottery was recovered: it is suggested that the feature was a medieval roadside ditch

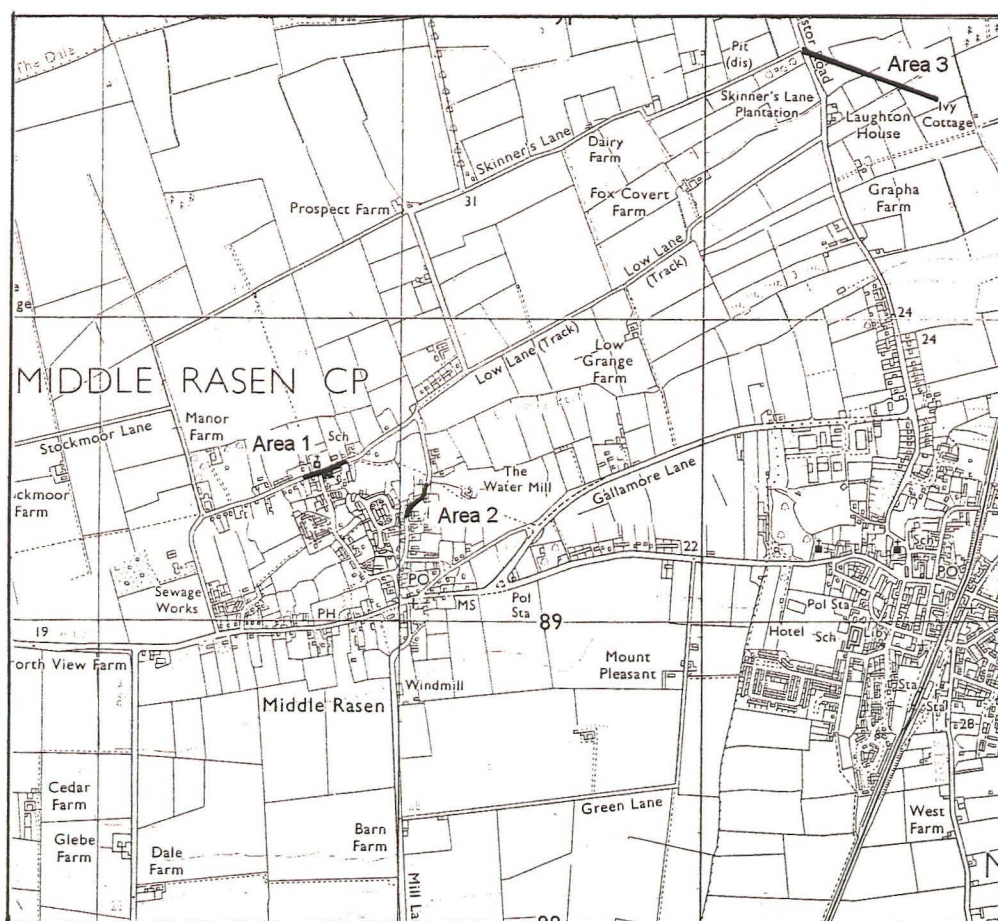


Fig. 1: Site location (1:25,000)

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1.0 Introduction

Between August and November 1999, Anglian Water Services Ltd. undertook mains replacement in the Middle Rasen area of Lincolnshire (Usselby Area Replacement Scheme). Included within this scheme was a provision for an agreed level of archaeological intervention, defined as an archaeological watching brief; the scope of which was determined jointly between Anglian Water Services Ltd. and Lincolnshire County Council (Built Environment Team).

Following the submission of an approved archaeological specification, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was appointed to monitor selective groundworks during the replacement programme.

This report documents the results of the watching brief. It has been prepared to fulfil the requirements of Lincolnshire County Council (1998), and it broadly follows current national guidelines (IFA 1994).

Copies of this report have been forwarded to all interested parties, and a full site archive is in preparation. This archive will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln for long term storage and curation, where it will be available upon request (accession number 226.99).

2.0 Location and description

The scheme centred on the replacement of water mains in the Usselby area of Lincolnshire. For the most part, the works were not affected by archaeology (based on information forming part of the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR)), although short sections of the route in the Middle Rasen area were identified as areas of archaeological significance and/or potential. These areas are defined as follows:-

- 1. North Street/junction with Church Street, Middle Rasen:** a c.200m east-west section at the junction of North Street and Church Street, close to the church of St Peter, and adjacent to a site that produced late Saxon remains in 1995 (Palmer-Brown 1995).
- 2. Church Road, Middle Rasen:** a section of route measuring 200m on Church Road, to the east of the site of St Paul's Church.
- 3. Land situated between Skinners Lane and Ivy Cottage:** a section approximately 550m in length over fields between Skinners Lane and Ivy Cottage to the north-east of Middle Rasen: to be monitored only if the scale of the operation was substantial enough to warrant archaeological recording.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

In the Middle Ages, Middle Rasen was shared between Topholme Abbey and Drax Priory (North Yorkshire). The River Rase separated Middle Rasen Topholme to the north from Middle Rasen Drax to the south. The date of the parish amalgamation is not known, though many planned additions occurred during the C12th (Everson 1991, 17). Each of the parishes possessed its own church, and the surviving church, St Peter's, belonged to Middle Rasen Topholme; St Paul's to Middle Rasen Drax. The Domesday survey of 1086 records only one church.

By the middle of the C19th, St Peter's church was ruinous: St Paul's was apparently in good repair. Curiously, St Peter's was restored, whereas St Paul's was demolished in 1860 (Pevsner & Harris 1988, 563).

There are relatively few entries for Middle Rasen in the County SMR.

A watching brief took place in 1995 during the construction of a church hall within the angle of Church Street and North Street (Palmer-Brown 1995). This exposed several features of Saxo-Norman date; none of which featured on earlier gradiometer and resistivity surveys (GeoQuest Associates 1995). The features included substantial ditches (one respecting the line of North Street) and a series of pit-like features associated with C10th/11th pottery, charcoal, slag and iron fragments. Unstratified/residual medieval sherds were recovered from the same general area.

4.0 Methodology

As noted above, monitoring was limited to one zone: in the area of St Peter's Church, close to the junction of North Street/Church Street. The Church Road section was inspected, but work in this area took place without prior notification. Trenching scheduled to take place to the north-east of Middle Rasen (between Ivy Cottage and Skinners Lane) did not occur due to the proximity of newly planted trees (B Cutts, pers. com). The pipeline route in this area was diverted: PCA was not informed of this amendment, and no monitoring took place.

Most of the fieldwork was undertaken by C Palmer-Brown, with negative visits by J Albone and L Newton.

The area monitored centred on the use of pipe bursting techniques (access pits). This involved the excavation of small pits (typically 2m x 0.8m) at 25 - 50m intervals. Open cut trenching was limited to discrete areas where, for example, shape was determined by the need to engage certain types of equipment.

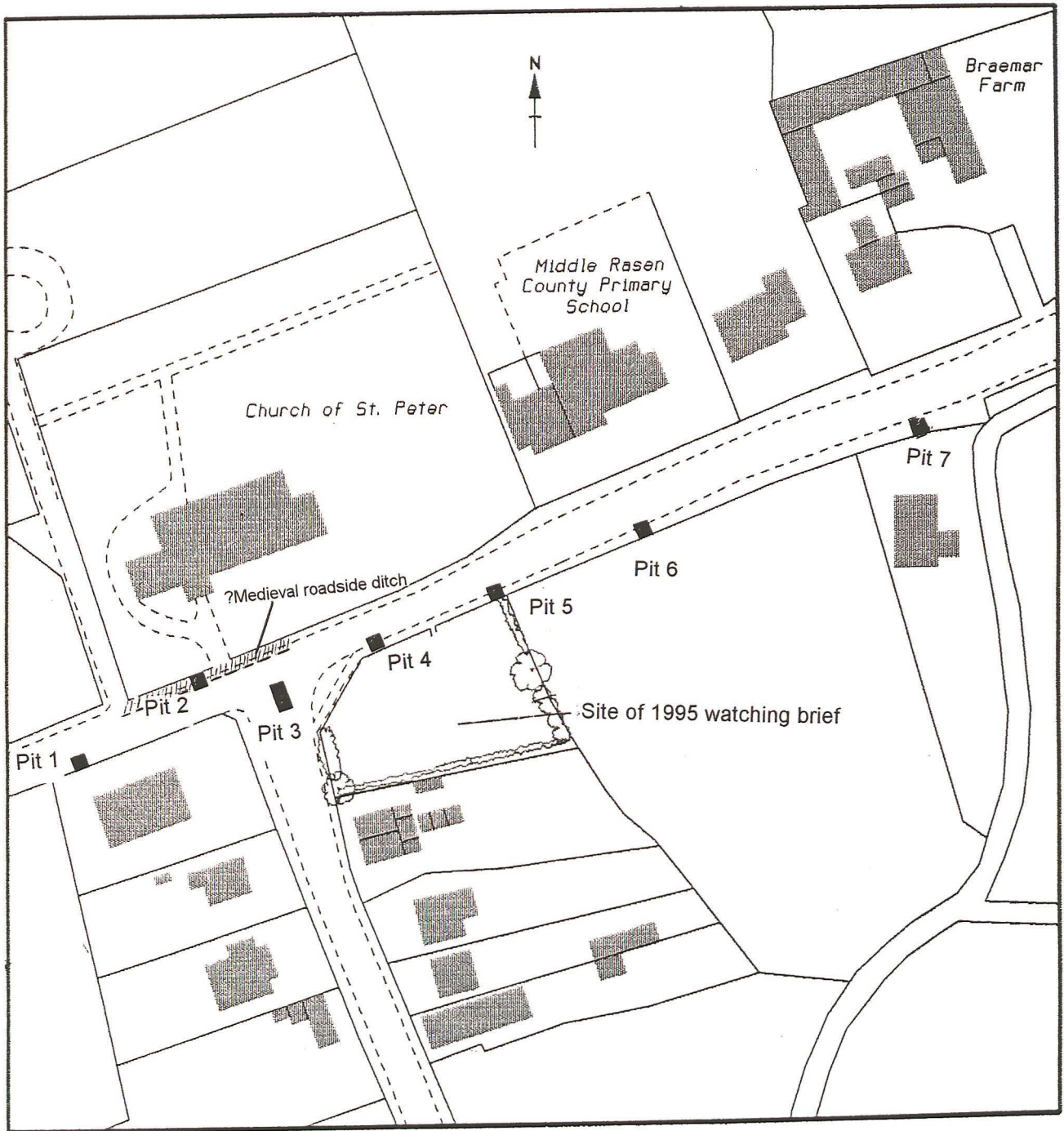


Fig. 2 Location of access pits monitored on North Street
(scale = 1:1000)

Recording was based on the use of standard watching brief record sheets (for documenting physical descriptions, interpretations, and stratigraphic relationships). The basic recording methodology centred on:-

selective or total cleaning by trowel (plan and section)

limited rapid excavation for finds retrieval and to establish the orientation/interpretation of archaeological remains

scale drawing of archaeological features at 1:20 or 1:50 as appropriate

the location of remains to 1:2500 base plans provided by the client company.

A photographic record was maintained on each occasion the site was inspected, and some prints are included at the end of this report. A site archive has been prepared, and this will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln for long-term curation and storage. Access to the archive may be gained by reference to the global accession number (226.99).

5.0 Results

5.1 North Street/junction with Church Street

Seven access pits were inspected, extending between Brearer Farm on the east side and the grounds of the Vicarage on the west side. Most were small; the exception being an open cut section inside the active road area at the junction of Church Street/North Road. The location of each pit is indicated on Fig. 2.

Pits 1 and 3 - 7 were archaeologically sterile, excluding layers of relatively recent origin: tarmac and associated foundation deposits. These road and/or path deposits overlay natural, relatively clean, soft sand, truncated only by recent drains and service trenches (eg see photo. 4). No artefacts were recovered from access pit upcast, excluding post-medieval brick fragments, tile and pottery sherds of very recent origin.

The sequence exposed in pit 2 was very different (Fig. 3). Beneath c. 22cm of path deposits, the west side of the access pit was dominated by a north-south service trench (presumably extending to the church). This cut straight through c. 75cm of interleaving sandy deposits, [001]; comprising thin lenses of clean sand, merging with thin lenses of soft brown silty clay. These deposits had almost certainly developed as a result of periodic flooding, and as they did not feature in a cutting c.7m to the south, they must have been contained in some way.

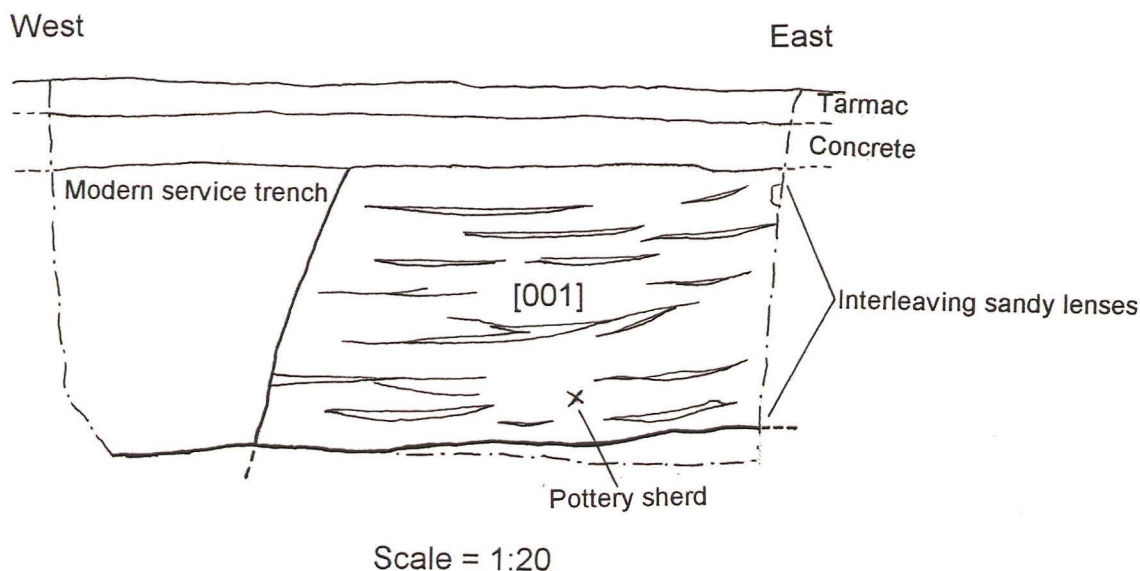


Fig. 3 South-facing section, access pit 2

The access pit was too small to identify any sides to the feature within which [101] was contained. However, it is suggested that this was probably a ditch that, prior to the construction of the modern pavement, must have ran east-west on the south side of the cemetery. This ditch would not have been of any practical benefit to the church, as this stands on a prominent elevation. It is suggested therefore that the feature may have been a road ditch, even though a counterpart was not observed in any of the access pits on the south side of North Street.

One fragment of pottery was recovered from deposits close to the base of [101]: a shell-tempered rim sherd of unusual form. This has been identified as part of a large jar of Potterhanworth-type, giving it a date range of C13th - C15th.

5.2. Church Road

No monitoring took place in this area due to the fact that PCA was not informed of when the groundworks were taking place. The site was inspected by J Albone on 6/10/99 en route to a different project, when he noted that access pits had been excavated and backfilled.

5.3. Land situated between Skinners Lane and Ivy Cottage

It was a requirement of the brief that this area, planned to traverse four individual field units, should be monitored only if substantial groundworks were to take place. In the event, an alternative route was used. PCA was not informed in advance, so, as far as the writer is aware, no discussions relating to the archaeological implications of this alteration took place.

6.0 Conclusions and discussion

Inevitably, only one area of archaeological interest was identified, consisting of a probable ditch to the south of the cemetery attached to St Peter's Church. It is difficult to find any alternative interpretation of the deposits making up [101]. On the one side, there is the church itself, and on the other side the medieval road (the evidence for which was presumably removed/truncated when the modern road was established).

In the other access pits monitored, only modern road deposits were exposed, sealing natural sands. One assumes this relationship is a reflection of the presence of the medieval road, and that any building/domestic remains are likely to occur further to the south. The watching brief carried out in 1995 in the angle of North Street/Church Street identified sherds of unstratified medieval pottery and other finds, as well as stratified Saxo-Norman ditches, and it is likely that all of these features may be viewed in a domestic context; and that they were probably related to structures that lined the south side of North Street in the heart of the medieval settlement.

7.0 Effectiveness of methodology

It is regrettable that the Church Road section was not monitored (emphasising the need for close liaison between archaeological contractors and site agents). Such situations cannot reasonably be blamed on the client company, which informs its sub-contractors of archaeological interests and relies on such contractors to integrate archaeology within the primary schemes. It is almost inevitable during protracted pipeline construction that some casualties will occur, given that schedules are often shifted and schemes are sometimes modified to take account of the prevailing conditions. Nevertheless, it may be reasonably concluded that the methodology was only partially effective and that sensitive areas were missed.

Access pits are often of limited archaeological value, as they only provide a very narrow window, rendering interpretation difficult and increasing the possibility that subtle archaeological features may be missed or mis-interpreted. It is the practice of this company to monitor such schemes on a low-level basis, and this appears to be a methodology that works; both for the archaeology and the client company. It only fails if agents do not notify archaeologists in advance of excavations.

8.0 Acknowledgements

Grateful thanks are expressed to the commissioning body, Anglian Water Services Ltd.

9.0 References

- Everson, P 1991 *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire* (RCHME)
- GeoQuest Associates 1995 *Geophysical Surveys at Middle Rasen, Lincolnshire* (unpublished; in Palmer-Brown 1995)
- Morris, J (ed) 1986 *Domesday Book: Lincolnshire* (Phillimore)
- IFA 1994 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*
- Lincs. County Council 1998 *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*
- Palmer-Brown 1995 *Land off Church Street/North Street, Middle Rasen, Lincolnshire* (unpublished watching brief report)

10.0 Site archive

Primary records are currently with PCA (Lincoln). An ordered archive is in preparation and will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln within six months

APPENDIX 1 COLOUR PHOTOGRAPHS

Colour Photographs



P1. Access pits on Church Street, looking west



P2. Access pit in pavement on immediate south side of churchyard showing ?longitudinally sectioned ditch [001] (trowel in section = location of medieval pottery sherd)



P3. Access pits to south of St Peter's Church, looking north from North Street



P4. Access trench at junction of North Street/Church Street

**APPENDIX 2 POST-ROMAN POTTERY ARCHIVE
(J YOUNG, LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES)**

pottery archive uars99

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	part	description	date
001	POTT	Potterhanworth-type Ware	large jar	1	rim	unusual collared rim	13 to 15th