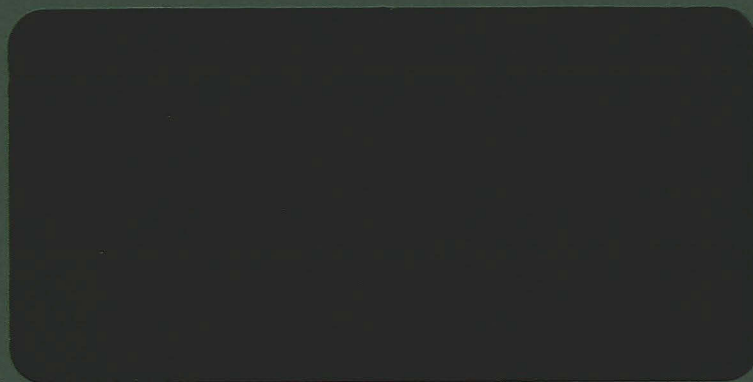


**LAND OFF POST OFFICE LANE, SPILSBY:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT**



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Archaeology Unit

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Event LI 2111
SOURCES LI 6826 LI 6827
PRN 44020 LI 81817
44021 LI 81818

LAND OFF POST OFFICE LANE, SPILSBY:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site Code: PLSOO
NGR: TF 4005 6616
Acc. No.: 2000.130

Report prepared for Mr P Presswell
by Andrew Hardwick

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Summary

- A programme of archaeological observation and recording took place during the groundworks for a residential development off Post Office Lane, Spilsby, Lincolnshire
- For the most part, post-medieval and early modern archaeological remains were exposed, and these appeared to be associated with industrial activity and ground raising.
- Post Office Lane was formerly Leather Lane, and it is possible that some of the industrial activity was directly associated with the working of leather, although this was not proved.
- Some 1.8m of post-medieval stratigraphy was recorded at the site, and it is possible that this sealed earlier remains: the recovery of a single Saxon or Saxo-Norman pottery sherd would appear to support this possibility.

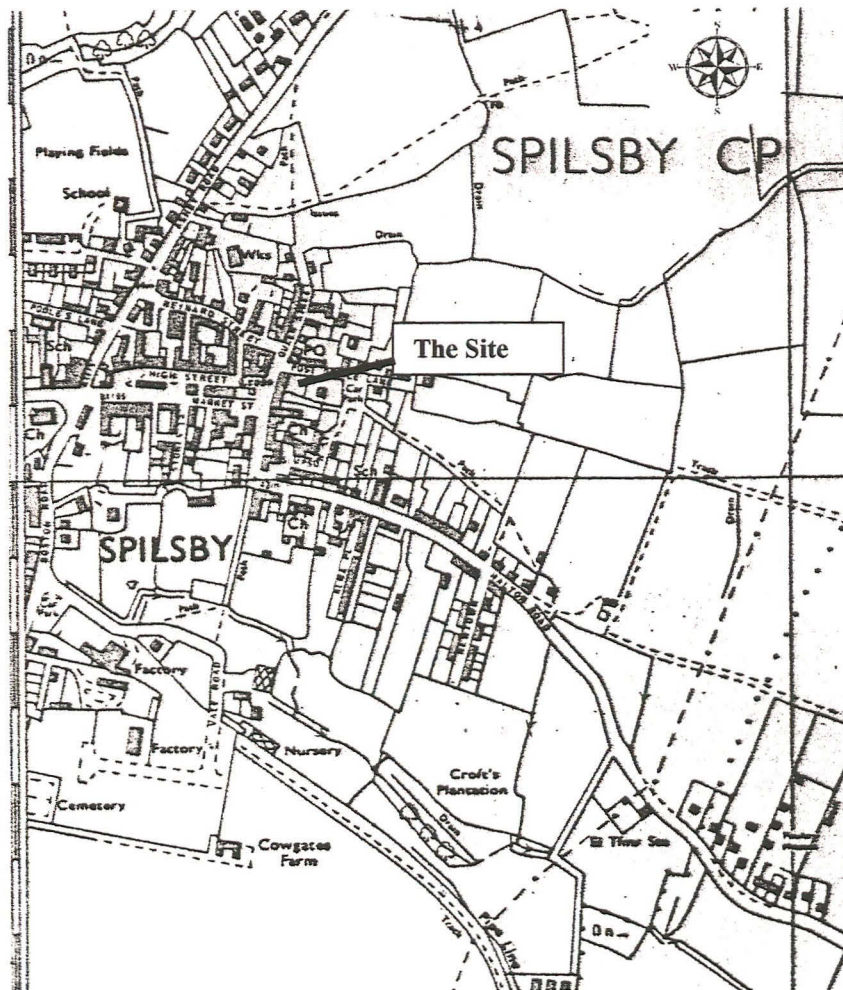


Fig. 1 Location of the development site. Scale 1:10 000

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1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken for Mr P. Presswell during the groundworks for two semi-detached bungalows on land off Post Office Lane, Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

This report documents the results of the archaeological recording brief, which took place between 19th and 25th April, and later on 17 July 2000. The project archive, including this report, the site records and artefacts, will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, under the accession number 2000.130.

All work was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document: *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, 1998, and in line with current national practice (IFA, 1994).

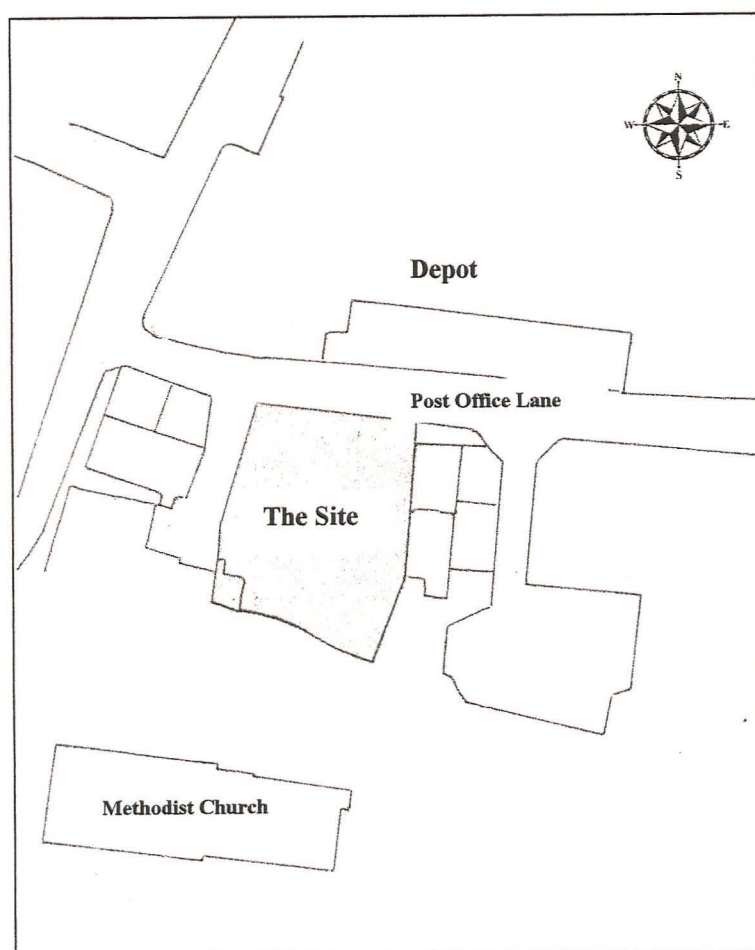


Fig. 2 Location of development site. Scale 1:1000

2.0 Location and description

Spilsby is approximately 14km west of Skegness, 14km north of Boston. It lies at the southern end of the Lincolnshire Wolds within the administrative district of East Lindsey, at NGR TF 4005 6616.

The development site is close to the town centre, west of the Market Place, immediately off Post Office Lane, which runs east to west. To its north is the Post Office Depot and, to the south, Spilsby Methodist Church. The site occupies relatively high ground, which slopes gradually but significantly down to the east and west (ground level falls away an estimated 0.5m). It is contained by a high brick wall to the south and by fence lines to the east and west. To the east are a series of modern residential dwellings and, to the west, the rear of a 19th century building which fronts Queens Street.

3.0 Planning background

Full planning consent was granted for the construction of two semi-detached bungalows and two double garages with vehicular and pedestrian access (Planning reference S/165/1406/98). In view of the potential archaeological sensitivity of the site (see below), the permission was granted by Lincolnshire County Council subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all ground disturbance. This required an archaeological presence to monitor the groundworks and to record any relevant deposits exposed or destroyed by foundation trenching.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Spilsby probably had its origins in the Anglo-Saxon period. The place name is believed to mean 'Farmstead or village of a man called Spillir' (Mills, 1993) which derives from Old Scandinavian. Later, the settlement is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086 as *Spilesbi*.

The market dates back to the medieval period. Sir William de Willoughby obtained the charter for the market in 1302. His marriage to Alice, heiress of Baron Bec of Eresby, founded the great family of Willoughby d' Eresby. Successive generations of the family resided at Eresby Hall, nearly 1.6km south of the town. The hall was burned down in 1769, although the family continued to own much of the land in and around Spilsby well into the 19th century (White, 1856).

John Leland, the Tudor scholar, records that in the 16th century Spilsby was a modest town made up of mainly thatched buildings, others roofed with reeds (Chandler 1993). However in 1706 a great fire apparently destroyed much of the town – almost one hundred houses and cottages (Gurnham 1989). Much of the present architecture dates from the subsequent rebuilding in brick.

The parish church is dedicated to St. James. It underwent considerable restoration in 1851, but retains elements dating back to the 14th century. The Methodist Church

dates to 1877-78 and lies adjacent to dwellings of 18th and 19th century date (Pevsner et al 1989).

The site was considered to have at least some archaeological potential because of its location: it is likely that Post Office Lane was part of the original street plan associated with the medieval market. Therefore the site is likely to lie close to, if not immediately off, a medieval frontage.

In recent times, the site appears to have been essentially a garden. The Ordnance Survey Map of 1890 indicates that the area was occupied by trees or shrubs (Appendix I.) A more recent aerial photograph shows the site to be devoid of buildings (Start, 1993).

5.0 Methodology.

The author was present during all groundworks. Trenching initially took three days, after which there was a break of two months before a final visit took place, when the garage foundation trenches were excavated.

All trenches were excavated by JCB using a 0.5m toothed bucket. For the most part they were 0.6m wide and 0.8m deep. A number of deeper excavations proved necessary because of 'soft', unstable soils encountered at the south and east ends of the footprint (see below).

All plan and section surfaces were examined manually. Where necessary, significant deposits were rapidly excavated, which enabled the recovery of dating evidence and clarified the shape and orientation of features.

Scale section drawings (at 1:20 and 1:50) were made of archaeological features, and their locations were plotted on a 1: 50 scale development plan provided by the client.

A colour photographic record of the excavations, including general and specific shots, was maintained throughout the project. This involved the use of an identification number board, appropriate scales and a direction arrow.

Context information (i.e. deposit descriptions) was recorded on standard watching brief record sheets.

Artefactual material recovered from the site was washed and processed before being submitted for specialist written appraisal by J. Young (City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit). Her report is presented independently as Appendix III and its major points are incorporated into this report.

6.0 Results

The groundworks exposed a number of deposits and archaeological features dating to the post-medieval and early modern periods (one leached sherd of pottery has been dated to either the middle Saxon or Saxo-Norman period).

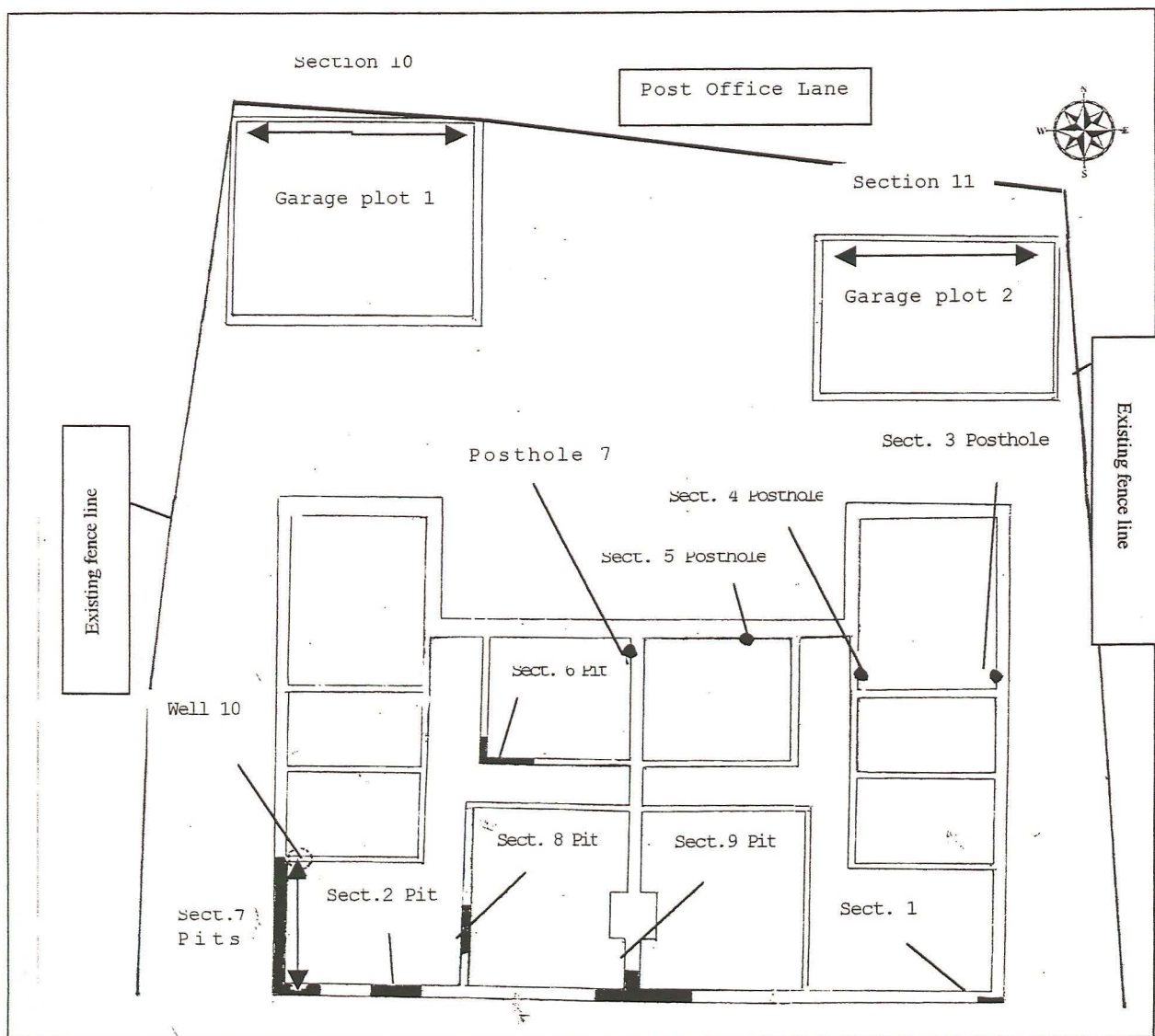


Fig. 3 Plan showing the location of features and section drawings



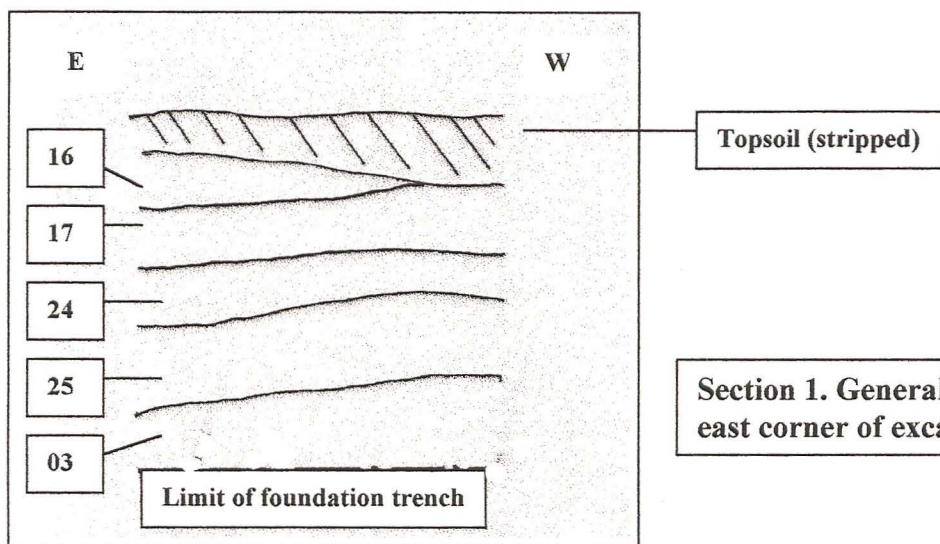
The majority of the site appears to contain a sequence of post-medieval layers. They were identified by brick fragments, clay pipe fragments and pottery sherds. Over the greater part of the site these layers comprised i) a yellow-brown sand 0.2m deep (layer 16) over ii) dark brown silty sand or loam approximately 0.3m deep (layer 17) over iii) dark brown silty sand approximately 0.3-0.4m deep (layer 03; dated between the 17th to 19th century) - see sections 1-11. Additional elements appeared in this sequence, reflecting differential dumping. These are recorded in individual section drawings and are described in Appendix II.

Below layers 16 and 17, but cut into 03, were a number of archaeological features. These were:-

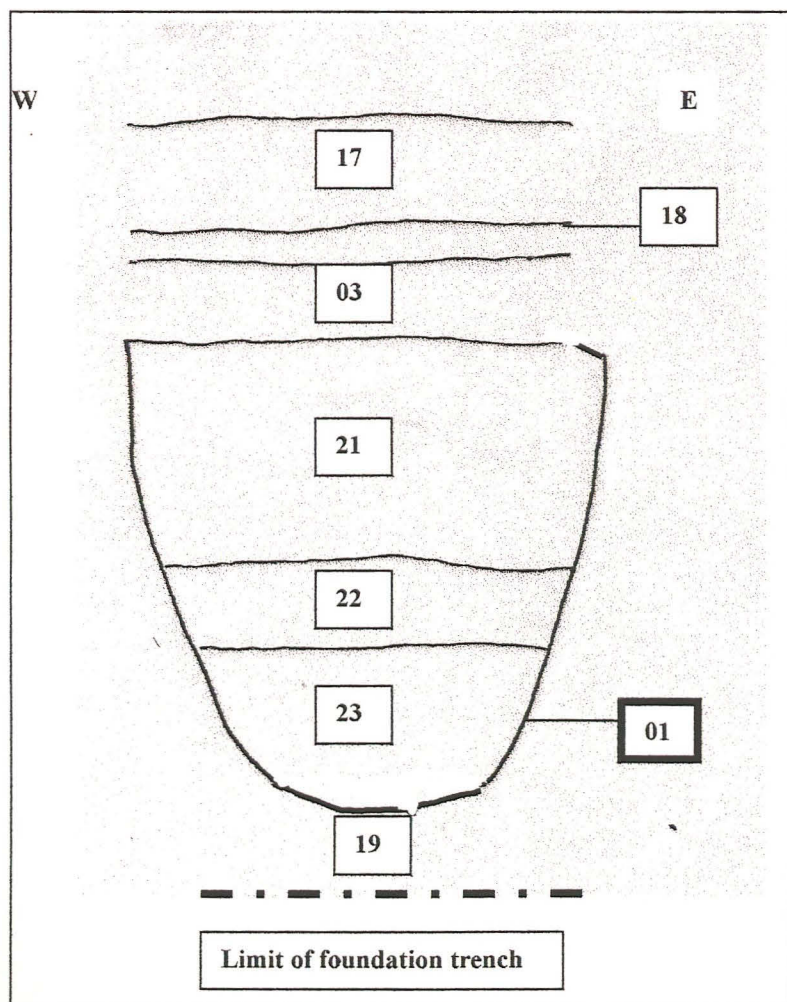
- a posthole alignment orientated east-west across the middle of the development footprint. The postholes contained a large amount of industrial coke. To the north of the alignment the overlying dump deposits became significantly cleaner (i.e deposit 30 in the garage plots).
- a brick-built well, probably of 19th century construction, 0.5m in diameter and approximately 4m deep.
- two pits, 05 and 08, containing demolition material and industrial residue.

Sealed below layer 03 were a number of rubbish pits, concentrated in the south-west corner of the site. These contained animal bone, clay pipe fragments and post-medieval pottery. Where machine excavation encountered these pits, the soil was machined out to locate more stable ground, resulting in sections up to 1.8m deep (Sections 2, 7 and 9).

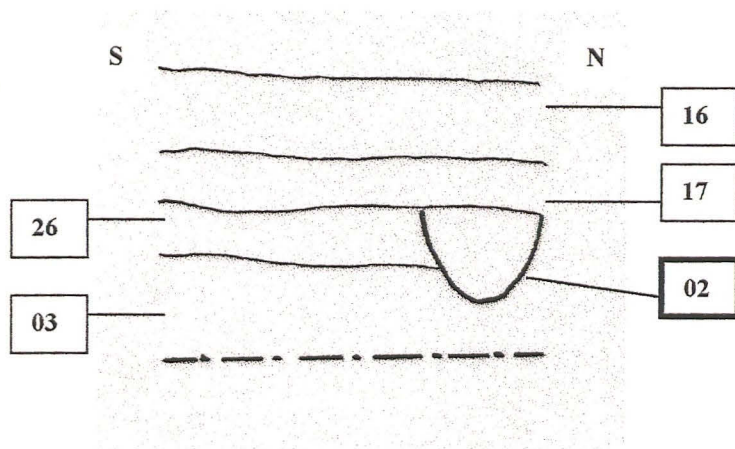
The earliest (but undated) deposits exposed were layers 19 and 20. The former was a compact greenish sand approximately 1.8m below the modern ground surface, underlying the rubbish pits (Sections 2 and 7). It is possible that organic material from the overlying pits had contaminated the deposit, which appeared to have been disturbed, either by plant roots or human intervention. Layer 20 was a light grey/brown silty sand at similar depth, but further to the west (Section 9). No dating evidence was recovered from either layer.



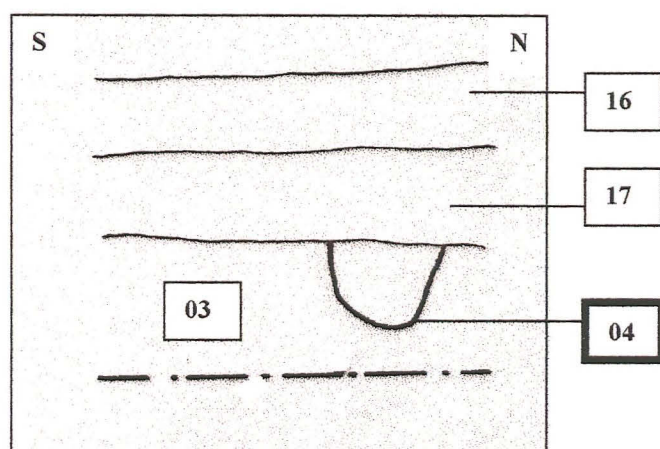
Section 1. General stratigraphy in the south-east corner of excavations. Scale 1:20



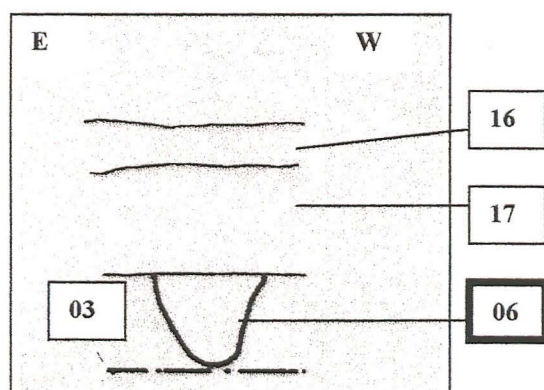
Section 2. Pit 01. Scale 1: 20



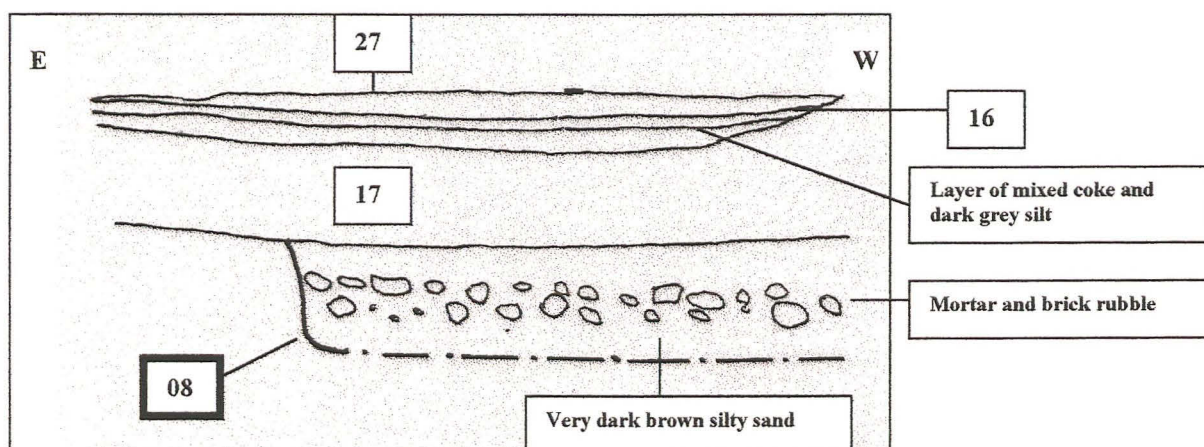
Section 3. Posthole. Scale 1:20



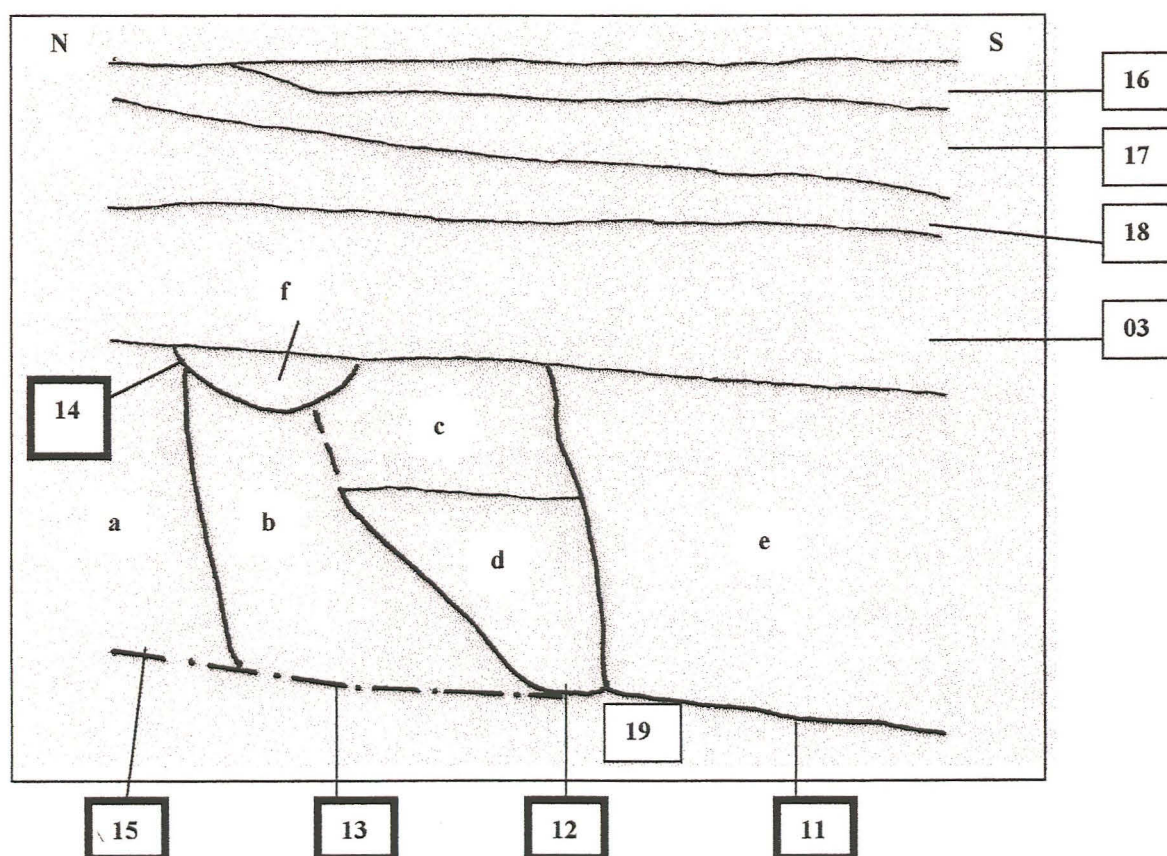
Section 4. Posthole. Scale 1:20



Section 5. Posthole. Scale 1:20



Section 6. Pit 08 containing demolition rubble.



a. Alternate green and brown layers of silty sand

b. Dark brown silty sand with frequent coarse charcoal

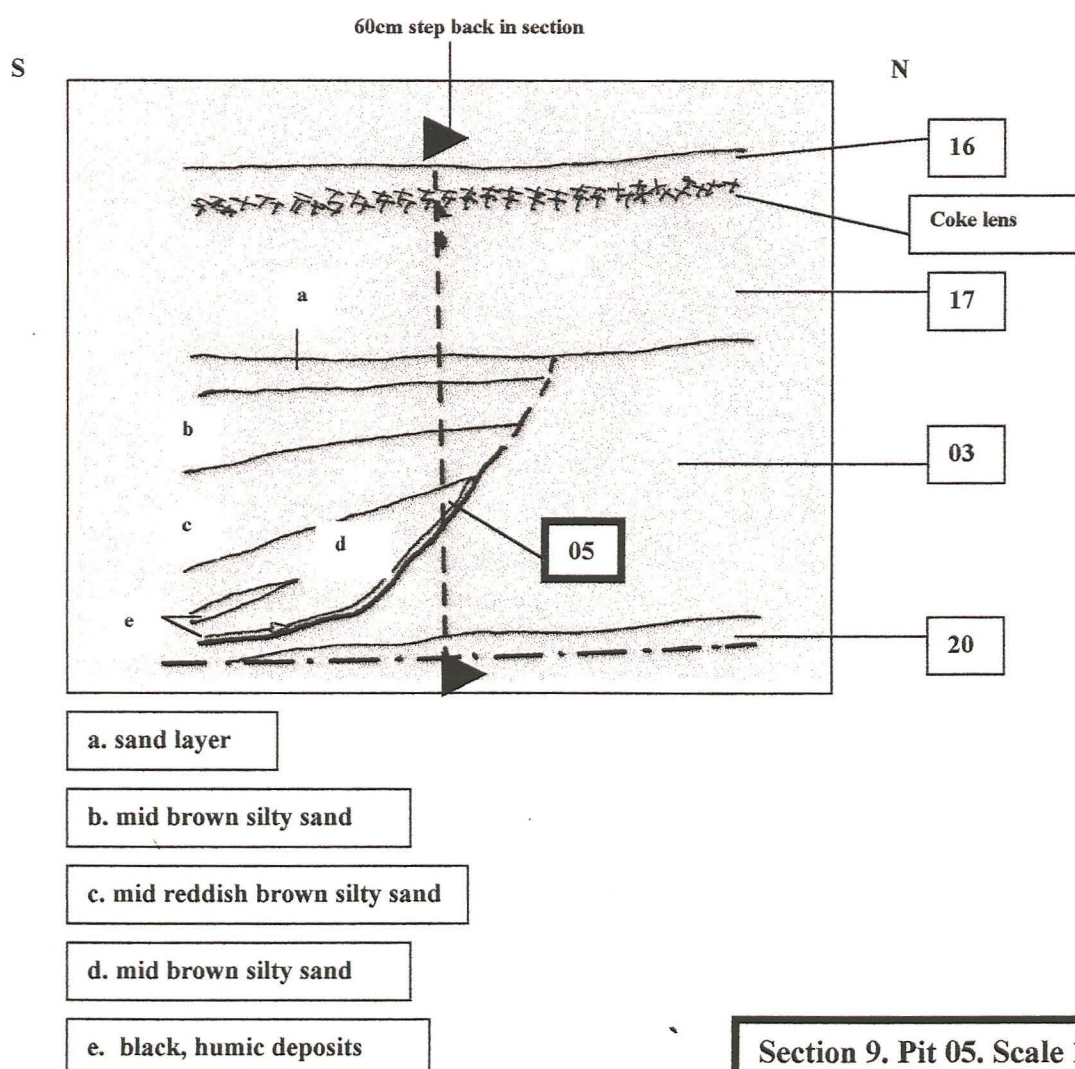
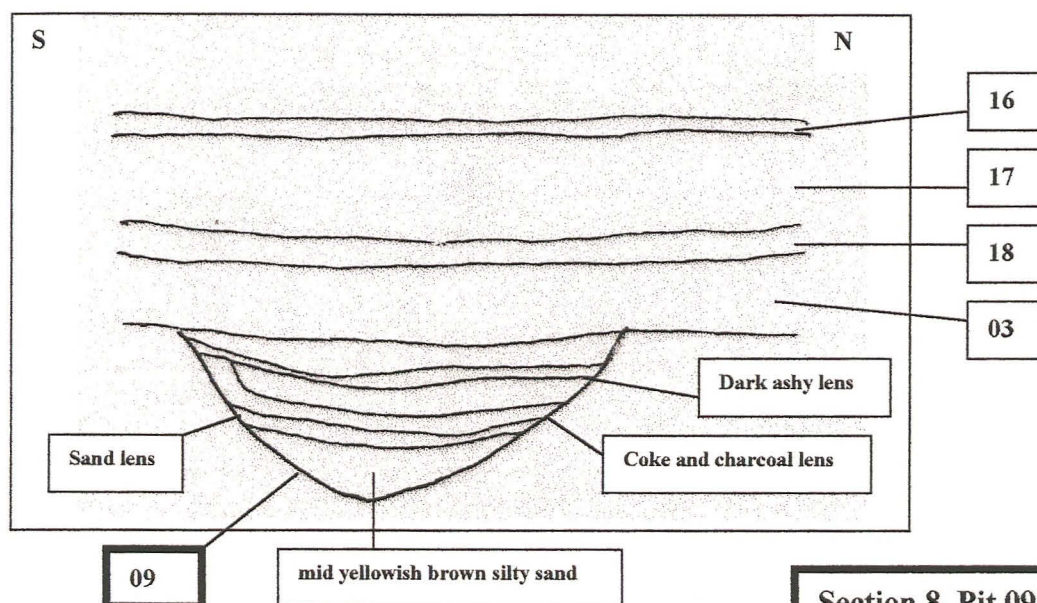
c. Greenish brown silty sand

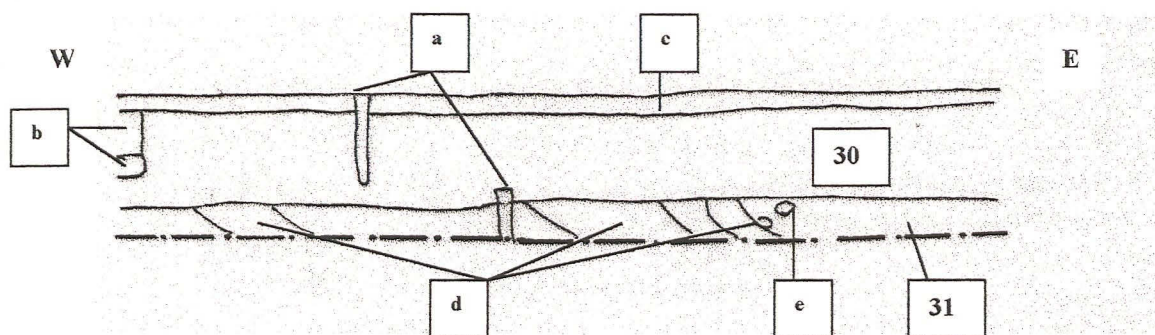
d. Reddish brown silty sand

e. Dark brown silty sand with greenish mottling

f. Dark brown silt with a large quantity of coke

Section 7. Pits 11 – 15. Scale 1:20





a. wooden posts

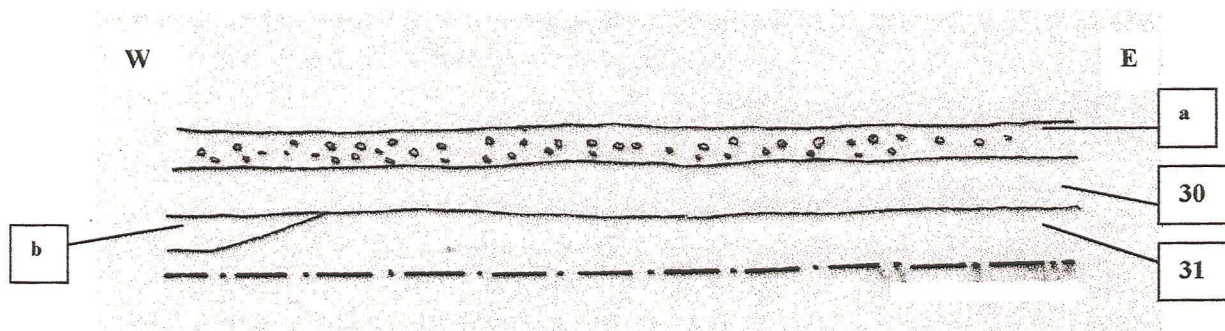
b. foundations for modern brick wall

c. turf at road level

d. mixed sand and clay tip deposits

e. brick fragments

Section 10. Section of garage plot 1, fronting on to Post Office Lane. Scale 1:50



a. modern hardcore

b. loose, very dark brown silty sand

Section 11. Section of garage plot 2, fronting on to Post Office Lane. Scale 1:50

7.0 Discussion

Several phases of activity were defined as a result of the watching brief. The most recent sequence of deposits (16, 17, 18, 24, 25, 30, 31) derived from imported soils. These soils were relatively 'clean' (eg 30) or contained fragments of brick, mortar and broken pottery. The majority were humic, and deposit 30 in particular appeared to be a garden soil. This interpretation is consistent with our knowledge of the use of the site in the previous century.

Below the dumped deposits was evidence of an earlier phase; in the form of a posthole alignment, the brick well and pits 05 and 08. The pit and posthole backfills contained a large amount of residue that is generally associated with industrial rather than domestic activity. Sandy layer 16 sealed much of this residue. It seems likely that at least some of the demolition rubble present at this level was not imported, but may be indicative of demolished workshops or similar buildings.

The postholes and pits were cut into a deep dark deposit 03 that has been broadly dated between the 17th and 19th century. This appeared to be a deliberate dump; levelling the site and sealing earlier deposits.

At least seven large pits were located in the south-west corner of the site below layer 03. Again, the material contained in their fills is suggestive of industrial rather than domestic activity. The pits were not contemporary but comprised a sequence of cuts, suggesting longstanding industrial use.

From the information available, it is difficult to determine exactly what the site was used for during the later post-medieval and early modern periods, although Post Office Lane was previously Leather Lane. Various trades associated with leather working were practiced in Spilsby in the 18th and 19th centuries – curing and tanning, shoemaking and saddling (Gurnham, 1984).

Very little information could be recovered about the earliest deposits, 19 and 20, because of their limited exposure. There is a possibility that they represent redeposited sands and could therefore seal earlier archaeological deposits. The recovery of a residual sherd of Saxon or Saxo-Norman pottery from context 03 would appear to support this view.

8.0 Conclusions

The groundworks disturbed a number of deep deposits relating to previous activity on the site. These appear to relate largely to 18th and 19th century industrial workings on the edge of town adjacent to the Market Place. There is a strong possibility, based on street-name evidence, that this activity was associated with leather working. The brief also established that there has been a significant amount of post-medieval and early modern ground build-up on the site; relative to surrounding areas. It is possible that earlier, perhaps medieval, deposits remain sealed at a level exceeding 1.8m below the modern ground surface.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr P. Presswell for this commission.

10.0 Bibliography

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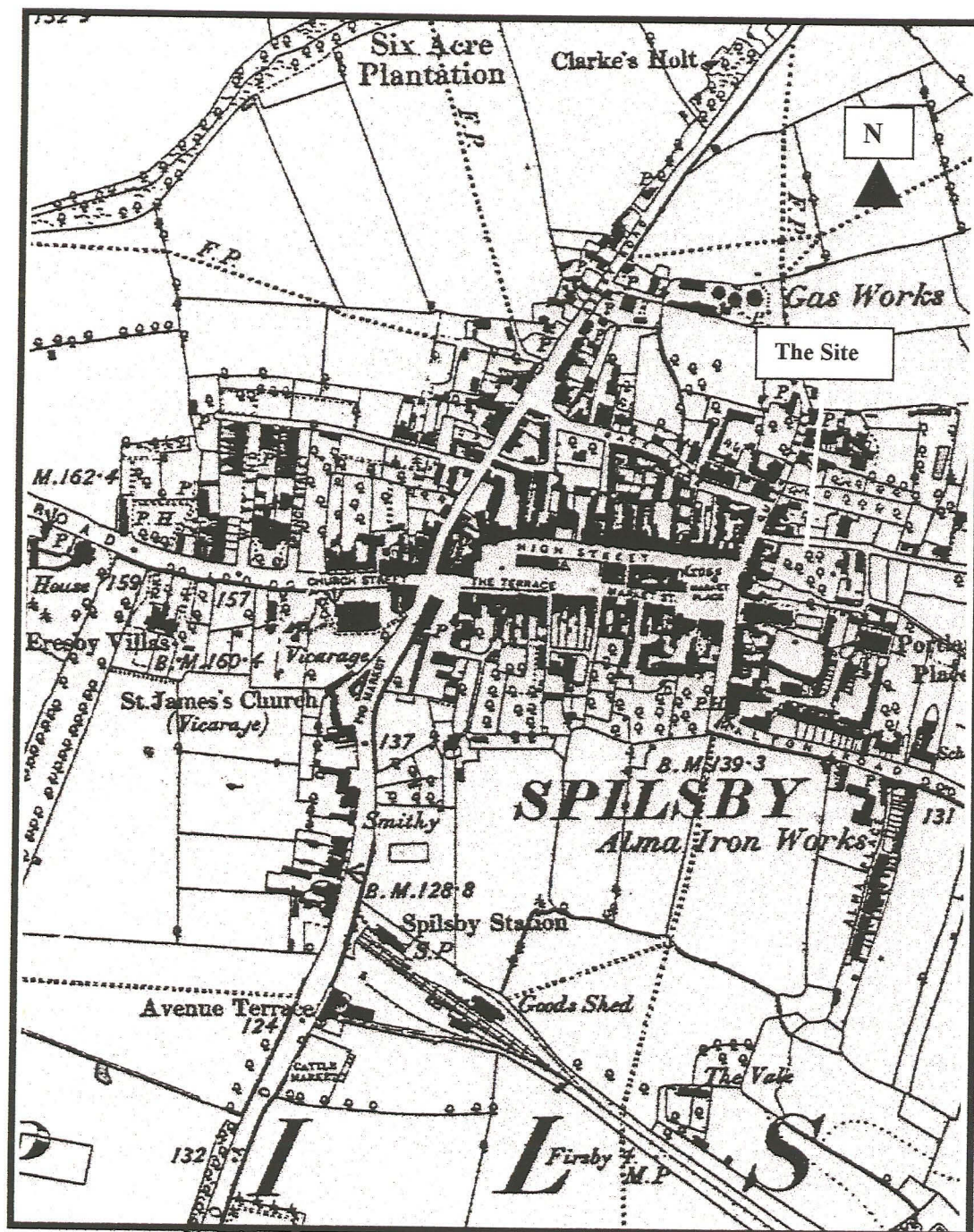
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Appendix I. Blown up extract from the 1890 6" to one mile series Ordnance Survey Map.

Appendix II

List of Contexts.

Context No.	Description
01	Large post-medieval pit
02	Posthole
03	Dark layer of silty sand sealing several pits
04	Posthole
05	Large post-medieval pit
06	Posthole
07	Posthole
08	Large pit filled with mortar and brick rubble.
09	Post-medieval pit
10	Brick built well
11	Post-medieval pit
12	Post-medieval pit
13	Post-medieval pit
14	Post-medieval pit
15	Post-medieval pit
16	Layer of sand below modern topsoil
17	Varied sequence of dark dump deposits.
18	Mixed horizon of yellow/brown and dark grey silty sand
19	Sand layer – yellow/green
20	Clean grey/brown silty sand
21	Fill of 01
22	Fill of 01
23	Fill of 01
24	Dump layer below 17, localised
25	Dump layer below 24, localised
26	Dump layer below 17, localised
27	Dump layer above 16, localised
28	Number not assigned
29	Number not assigned
30	Deep dump of garden soil present in garage plots.
31	Post-medieval layer below 30

Appendix III

Archive Report on the Pottery and Ceramic Building material from a watching Brief at Post Office Lane, Spilsby, Lincolnshire (PLS00)

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

A small group of mainly post-medieval to early modern pottery and brick was recovered from the site. A leached sherd from context 03 may be of either middle Saxon or Saxo-Norman date. Three sherds from context 03 show signs of mis-firing or post-firing burning. Suggested ceramic dates for contexts are: context 01 18th; context 02 18th to 20th (brick only); context 03 17th to 19th (dated on brick); context 08 17th to 18th and context 11 18th. The suggested date range for ceramic types is given in table 1.

Table 1: Ceramic codenames with suggested date range

codename	full name	earliest date	latest date
BERTH	Brown glazed earthenware	1550	1800
BRK	Brick	1600	1900
BS	Brown stoneware	1680	1850
CRMWARE	Creamware	1770	1850
GRE	Glazed Red Earthenware	1500	1650
LFS/ELFS	Lincolnshire Fine-shelled or Early Fine-shelled	780	1200
LMLOC	Late Medieval local fabrics	1350	1550
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	1150	1450

No further work is needed on the material.

Pottery archive PLS00

context	cname	form type	sherds	vessels	description	date
01	BS	drinking vessel	1	1	? Or late FREC	
01	GRE	bowl	1	1	late	
03	LFS/ELFS	?	1	1	leached	
03	LMLOC	bowl	1	1	internal glaze misfired/burnt;	
03	LMLOC	jar	1	1	internal glaze misfired/burnt;	
03	MEDLOC	jug	1	1	ext glaze misfired/burnt	
08	BERTH	bowl	1	1		
11	CRMWARE	bowl?	1	1		
11	CRMWARE	bowl?	1	1		
11	GRE	bowl	1	1	reeded everted rim;late	18th
13	LMLOC	?	1	1	fine quartz fabric	

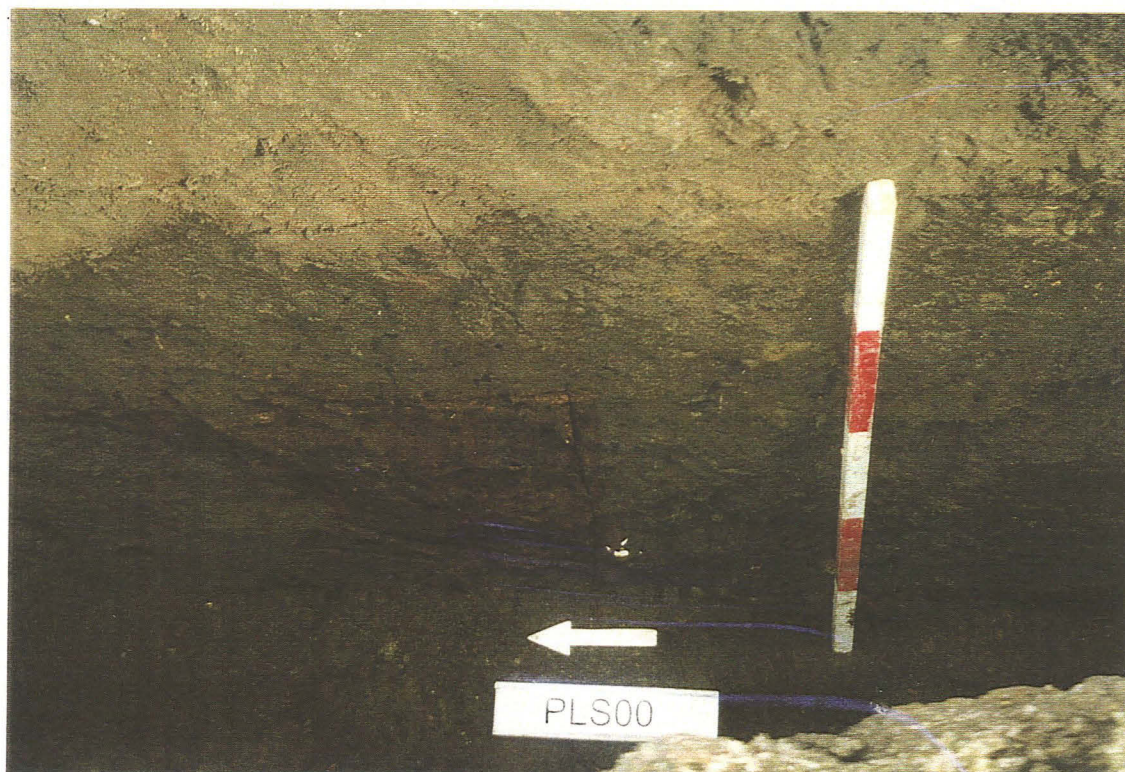
Tile archive PLS00

context	cname	frags	weight	date
02	BRK	1	4	post-med/early modern
03	BRK	1	21	post-med/early modern

Appendix V Colour photographs



P1. General view of the development area, looking south



P2. Inter-cutting pits 11 - 15, looking east



P3. Post hole 02 and ground raising dumps in section, looking west



P4. ?Industrial residue within pit 01, looking north