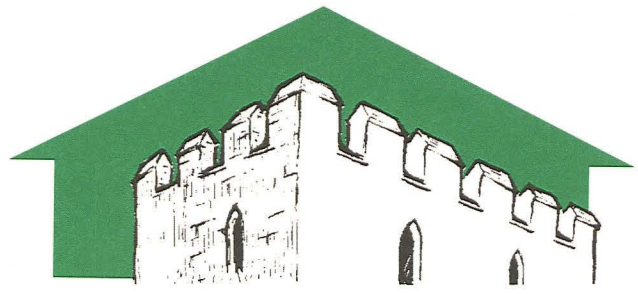


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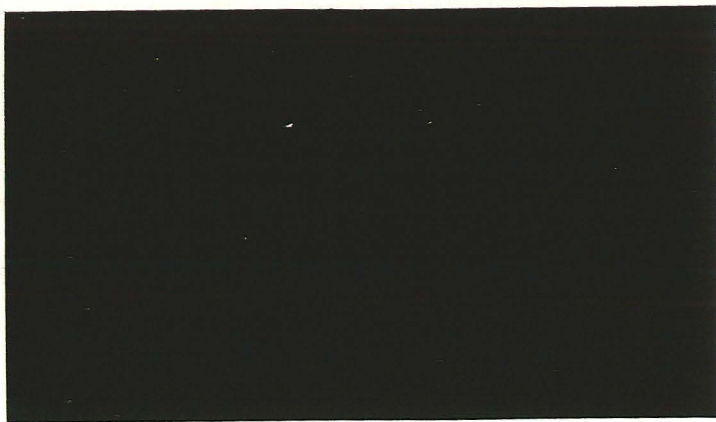
PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

LAND OFF WITHAM ROAD, WOODHALL SPA:
ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT

Site Code: WWS99
NGR: TF 185 628
LCCM Acc. No. 130.99

*apple # ?
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Fig. 1: 1:25,000 site location

Fig. 2: Development plan at 1:1500, incorporating location of areas monitored

Summary

- * *An intermittent archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for a relatively large residential development on land off Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire*
- * *These works were recommended as a condition of planning due to the proximity of cropmarks and artefacts that have been recorded in the vicinity of the site*
- * *During the course of the brief, the scale and intensity of archaeological monitoring was progressively reduced to reflect a continued negative trend, and the overall result of this investigation was unambiguously negative.*

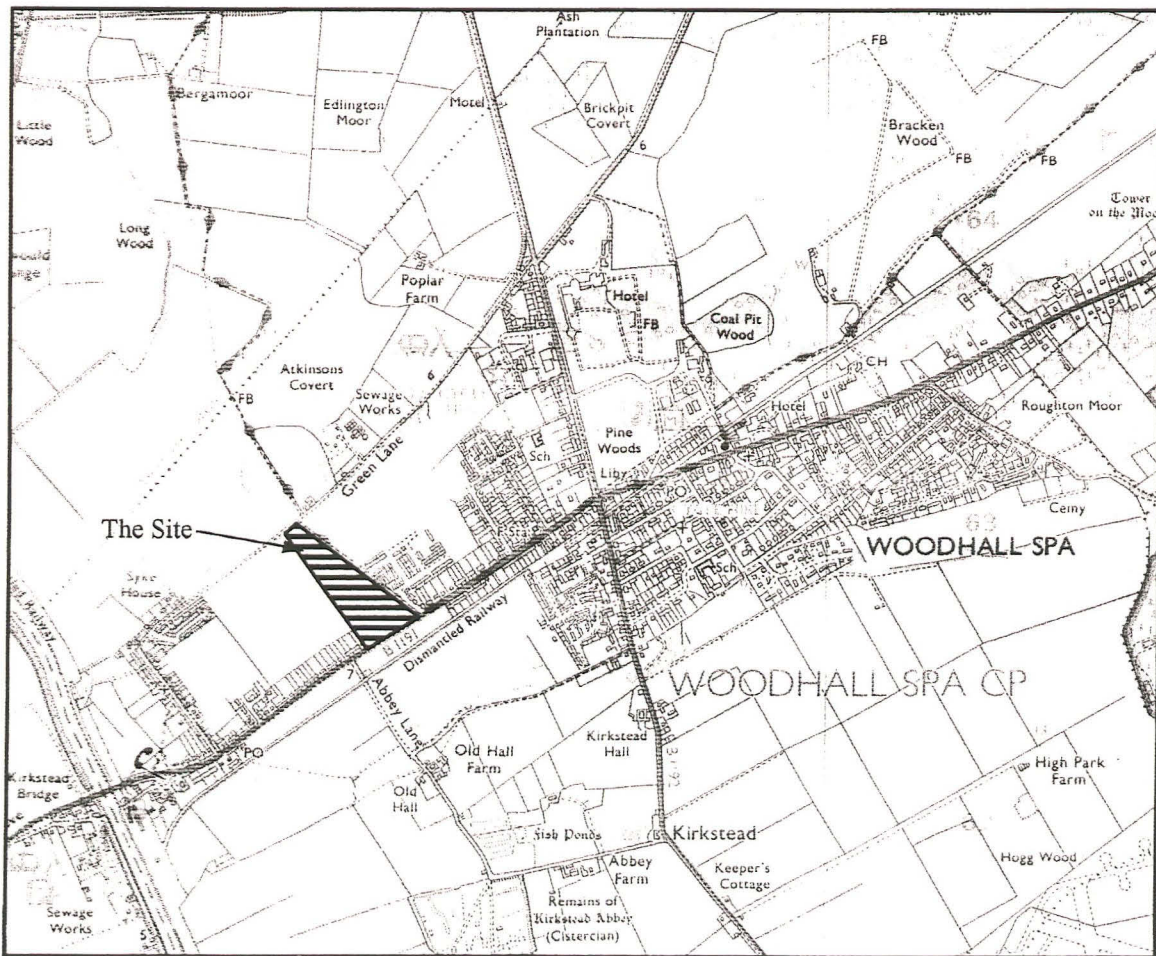


Fig.1: Site location (Scale 1:25000)
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1.0 Introduction

The archaeological watching brief was commissioned by Hugh Bourn Developments (Wragby) Ltd; who appointed Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) to ensure fulfilment of a planning requirement that was issued by East Lindsey District Council, following the recommendations of the former Assistant County Archaeologist for Lincolnshire.

This report documents the results of a programme of archaeological observation and recording that took place during preliminary construction works at the site. It has been prepared to meet current local guidelines (*Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, 1998), and to reflect the objectives and methods that were set out in an accepted project specification that was prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

Copies of this report have been deposited with Hugh Bourn Developments (Wragby) Ltd.; with East Lindsey District Council and also the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire. A summary will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*; and this will be presented as a short note in due course. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, along with an ordered project archive for long term storage and curation.

2.0 Location and Description

Woodhall Spa is 25km south-east of Lincoln, 5km south-west of Horncastle. The site is a unit of former agricultural land that is approximately 2.5 hectares in area (Fig. 1). It lies north-west of Witham Road on the western periphery of the town, and it centres on NGR TF 185 628.

The geology of the area is characterised by Upper River Terrace sand and gravel deposits (up to 5m deep) overlying a Kimmeridge Clay formation of grey, shelly, limestone and shale (BGS, 1995). The result of perpetual cultivation, the modern ploughsoil is a dark (almost black) silty sand, mixed with frequent natural cobbles and pebbles. This is 40cm thick in places, and it breaks sharply with the underlying natural sandy deposits (plough truncation).

Following an evaluation of the site in 1998, consisting of a fluxgate gradiometer survey (Butler 1998), Hugh Bourn Developments Ltd. were granted full planning consent to construct 54 dwellings and associated infrastructure (roads, sewers etc). The planning consent was granted subject to the undertaking of an intermittent watching brief on all groundworks.

To satisfy the requirements of the district planning authority, Pre-Construct archaeology (Lincoln) were appointed to undertake the recording brief, in accordance with a written scheme of investigation (project specification dated 4th June, 1999).

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Entries within the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire indicate that this general area was of some significance in prehistory. Two stone axes of Neolithic date were recovered during ditch digging in the vicinity of the present development, and prehistoric, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon finds have been recovered in the vicinity of the River Witham, approximately 0.9km to the west of the watching brief.

Despite the proximity of finds and cropmarks, several development-led investigations on this side of the town have failed to identify significant archaeological remains. A topsoil magnetic susceptibility survey and gradiometer survey carried out to the east of the site did not identify remains of archaeological significance (Johnson 1994), and this site has now been developed by Broadgate Builders Ltd. Similarly, a gradiometer survey of land to the north-east of the current site identified only sparse anomalies of limited potential (Bunn & Hardwick 2000), and a succeeding trial excavation to assess the significance of these anomalies identified a series of post-medieval/modern land drains (Clay 2000). The site that is the basis of this report was surveyed by gradiometry in 1998 (Butler 1998). This showed the area to be magnetically quiet: anomalies that were detected were believed to reflect ferrous litter in the topsoil, electricity poles and brick debris associated with nearby demolished farm buildings (Willow Farm).

Despite the above, the district planning authority required the undertaking of a relatively low-level intrusive investigation: defined as an archaeological watching or recording brief.

4.0 Methodology

The site was monitored between 4th June 1999 and 7th July, 2000. Inspections took place on eleven separate occasions, and the staff involved were the writer, J Albone, J Snee, and J Rylatt.

Following close monitoring over the southern part of the development (south side of Phase I), the site was inspected by the Assistant County Archaeologist on 20th July, 1999. This inspection was at the request of PCA, with a view to obtaining a permission to diminish the intensity of archaeological intervention. The request was approved, and subsequent monitoring was to centre on the excavations of access roads within the Phase II area, followed by selective monitoring of house plots, if appropriate (see Fig. 2).

Recording was undertaken using standard watching brief record sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations, and stratigraphic relationships). These records were supplemented with basic profile drawings and photography. This paper record will form the basis of a long-term project archive that will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within three months of the date on this report..

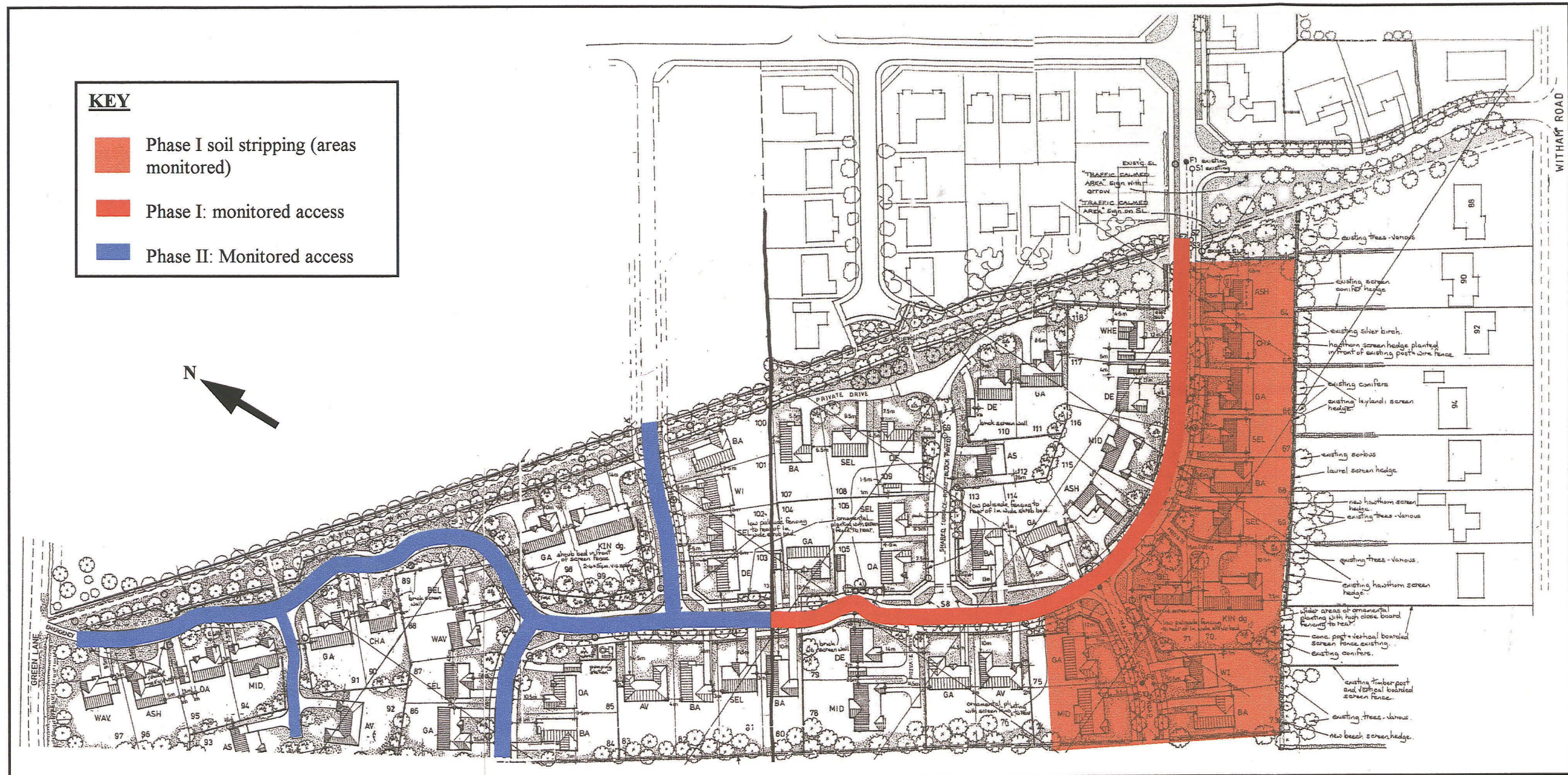


Fig.2: Development outline incorporating location of areas monitored (Scale 1:1500)

5.0 Results

In summary, no significant archaeological remains of any period were exposed during the watching brief.

The modern ploughsoil, context 100, has been described above. Substantial areas of this were stripped across the development area, and the soil was subsequently stored for reinstatement following house construction.

A substantial area of topsoil stripping was monitored towards the south side of the development (area indicated on Fig. 2). This exposed extensive natural deposits consisting of yellow, orange and white sand lenses mixed with substantial quantities of natural pebbles and cobbles. Against this could be seen intermittent dark areas of sand. Superficially, these darker areas appeared to be of archaeological significance, although selective investigation suggested they were in fact natural features: probably the voids from tree holes of uncertain date.

No surface or sub-surface artefacts were recovered during the brief (excluding very occasional modern finds such as pottery and glass).

The access roads were monitored, and this involved soil stripping to c. 50cm below the modern ground surface. In each of the stripped areas, the sequence was similar: a thick topsoil overlying natural sand and gravel deposits.

In the base of one manhole trench at the extreme north end of the access road (ie adjacent to Green Lane), thick blue/grey clay was exposed at 1.8m below modern ground surface. This was sealed beneath the glacial sands and gravels that were common to the whole of the development area, and is interpreted as the Kimmeridge Clay that is described in geological sources (BGS, 1995).

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

There can be only one conclusion: this particular site contains no remains of archaeological significance and, coupled with the results of investigations in adjacent areas, it is suggested that there is a substantial block of land on this western side of the town that has not been directly settled until relatively recent times. A reasonably substantial programme of gradiometry, trial excavations and watching briefs have not even identified ephemeral remains such as field ditches, and surface artefactual remains are conspicuously absent.

It is not suggested that this area was of no significance whatsoever; only that past human activities have left very little in terms of material remains. It could be that these lands were used for summer grazing. This is pure speculation.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are expressed to the commissioning body, Hugh Bourn Developments (Wragby) Ltd. Thanks are also expressed to the (then) Assistant County Archaeologist for Lincolnshire for his maintenance of a review programme during the course of the investigation..

8.0 References

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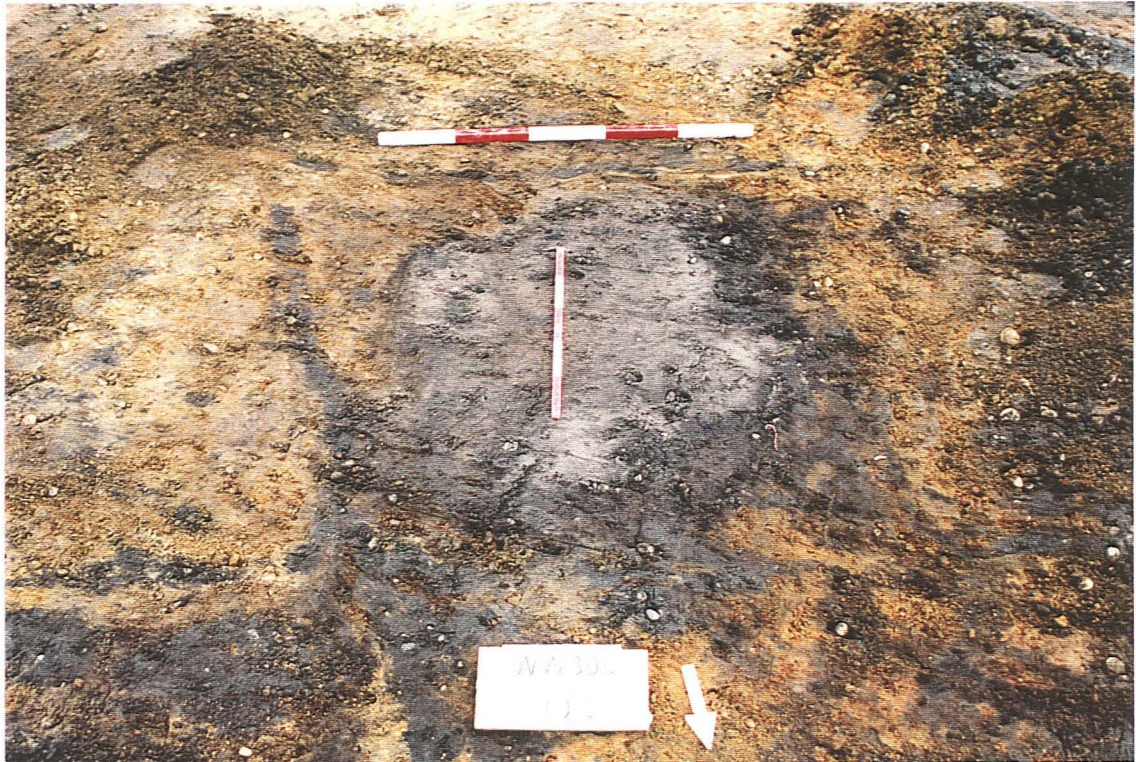
Appendix 1 Colour photographs



P1. General view of Phase I area, looking SSE. The area shaded red on Fig. 2 occupies much of the background to the right of the main access (limestone hardcore)



P2. Soil stripping of the southern access (Phase I), looking NNW



P3. One of the discrete dark soil areas that were exposed intermittently across the site. Several such features were excavated, exposing irregular profiles, and devoid of finds.



P4. Phase I area, central access and sewer construction, looking north-west



P5. Eastern access, Phase II area, following soil stripping, looking east



P6. West access road strip in Phase II area (southernmost), looking east



P7. Looking south from Green Lane along main sewer and access cut