

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND
ADJACENT TO PRIORY ROAD,
RUSKINGTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(RPR 99)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND
ADJACENT TO PRIORY ROAD,
RUSKINGTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(RPR 99)**

Work Undertaken For
Mr J.B. Miles

April 1999

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons) AIFA

Planning Application No: N/52/783/98 ^{NORTH WEST}
National Grid Reference: TF 0921 5008
City and County Museum Accession No: 20.99

A.P.S. Report No. 41/99

*Archaeological Project Services is an IFA Registered Archaeological
Organisation (Number 21)*

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during development at Priory Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the stripping of topsoil and the excavation of foundation trenches.

The development is located in an area of Romano-British (AD 50 - 410) remains, including a sizeable settlement to the north of the site. Cropmarks indicate more enclosures also of this period to the south.

Trenches did not exceed 0.95m depth and a sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil deposits were encountered. No archaeological remains nor artefactual material was found during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a 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 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Mr J.B. Miles to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the excavation of footings for a new bungalow at Priory Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application N/ 52/783/98. Permission was granted subject to a standard condition for archaeological recording. The

watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a specification designed by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1).

2.3 Topography and Geology

Ruskington is situated 6km north of Sleaford, in North Kesteven District, Lincolnshire (Fig.1).

The development site is located 145m southeast of Ruskington village centre as defined by the parish church of All Saints (Fig. 2). The site is on generally level ground at a height of c. 8m OD and is located at National Grid Reference TF 0921 5008.

Local soils are of the Newsleaford Series, typically brown calcareous sand (George and Robson 1978, 86). These overlie a drift geology of Fen sand and gravel sealing a solid geology of Jurassic Oxford Clay (GSGB 1972).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The development area is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period and later. Several flint artefacts have been retrieved from 500m north of the site.

Romano-British coins and pottery have been retrieved from 300m north of the development. Furthermore, cropmarks of this area depict a number of sizeable enclosures indicating the position of a settlement of this period (Winton 1998, 67). Other Romano-British finds include a Hadrianic (AD 117-138) coin found 500m to the northwest. Further cropmarks located 300m to the south may also be of this period.

Ruskington is first mentioned in the

Domesday Survey of 1086. Referred to as *Riscintone* and *Reschintone* the name is derived from the Old English *riscen* meaning 'rushy' with the suffix indicating a homestead or village (Ekwall 1974, 397). At the time of the Domesday Survey, Ruskington was held principally by Geoffrey Alselin and contained 60 acres of meadow, 240 acres of wood for pannage, a church, a priest and 3 mills (Foster and Longley 1976).

Remains of the medieval period are restricted to the vicinity of the village.

3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief, as detailed in the specification (Appendix 1), were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Topsoil was stripped from the development area to a depth of 0.37m by a mechanical excavator. Foundation trenches were then excavated to a further depth of 0.45m. Following excavation, the sides of selected portions of the trench were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were partially or fully excavated by hand to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual material. The depths and thickness of each deposit were measured from the ground surface. Each archaeological deposit revealed within the trench was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services

practice.

Records of the deposits were examined and a stratigraphic matrix compiled. A list of all contexts and descriptions appears as Appendix 1. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

The earliest deposit encountered was a brownish yellow sand and gravel (003) identified as the underlying drift geology.

Sealing the sand and gravel was a yellowish brown sandy silt (002) measuring 70mm thick. Identified as a subsoil, this layer represents the interchange between the underlying natural and the topsoil.

Sealing the subsoil was a topsoil of brown sandy silt (001) which was 0.3m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

A sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil layers were encountered during this investigation. No deposits of archaeological interest were found and indicate that the Romano-British settlement to the north existed as a fairly compact unit. No artefacts were retrieved during the investigation. Often occasional artefacts may be found in the topsoil where they would indicate a manuring scatter, designed to improve the fertility of arable land. However, the lack of this type of material may indicate that this area was pasture or woodland until recently.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations during development at Priory Road, Ruskington,

were carried out due to the vicinity of Romano-British settlement. However, no archaeological remains were revealed and only a sequence of natural deposits, subsoil and topsoil were encountered. No artefacts were recovered and the local site conditions would suggest that few environmental indicators (seeds, wood, shells, *etc.*) would survive other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mr J.B. Miles for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Denise Drury coordinated this project and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Kate Orr, the North Kesteven District Heritage Officer, provided information from the relevant parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Denise Drury
Supervisor: Fiona Walker
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ekwall, E., 1974 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* (4th ed)

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

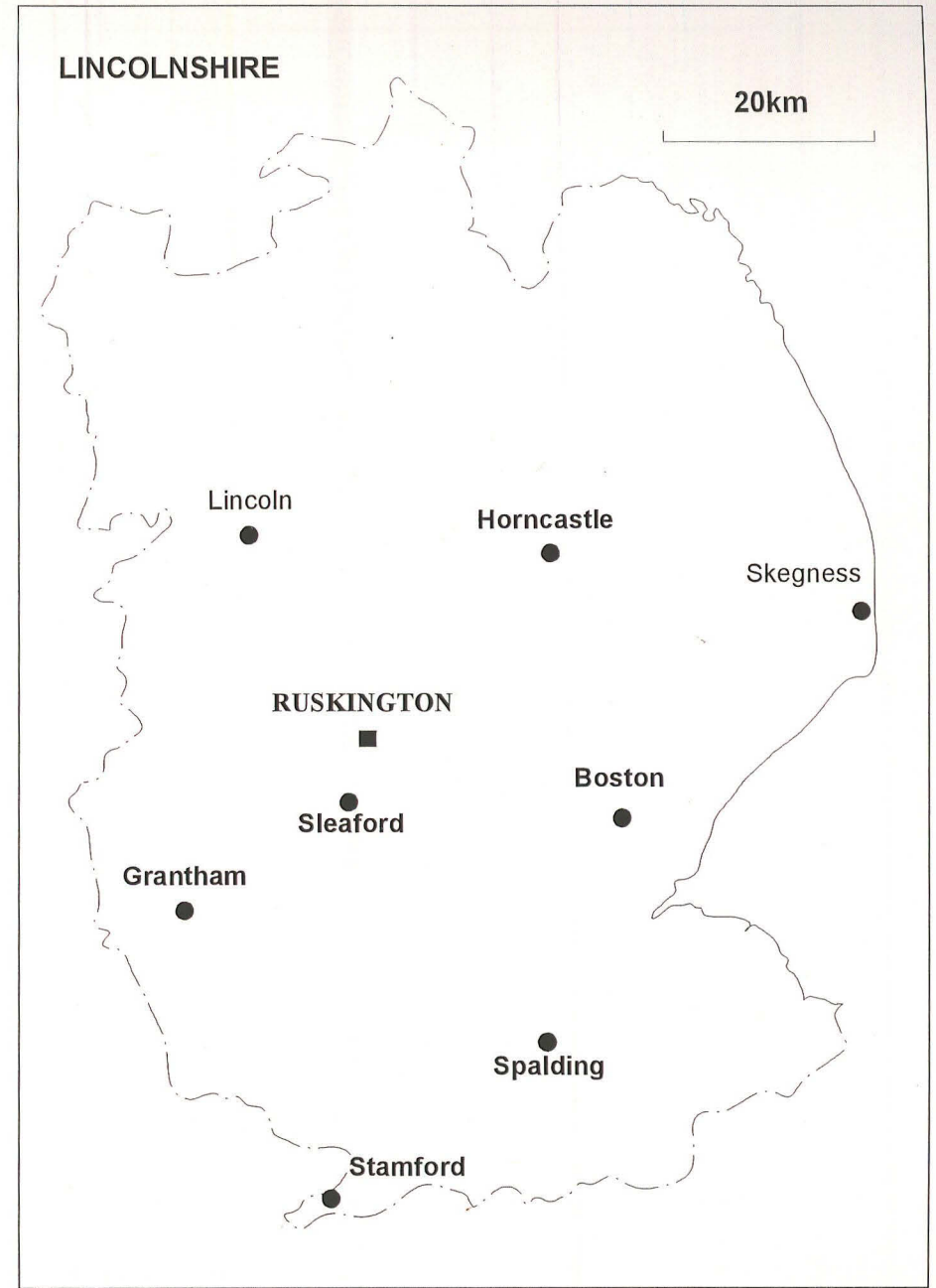
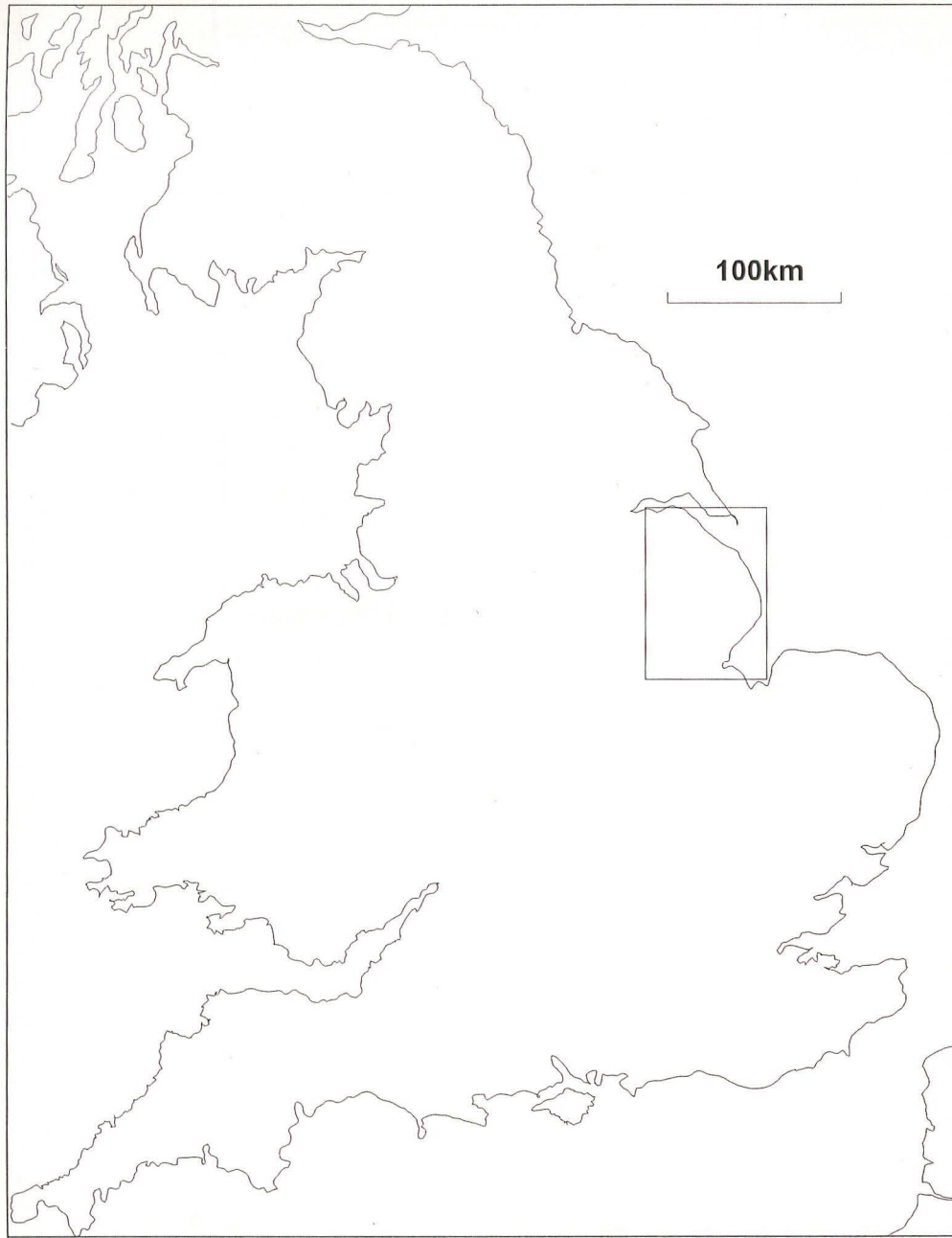
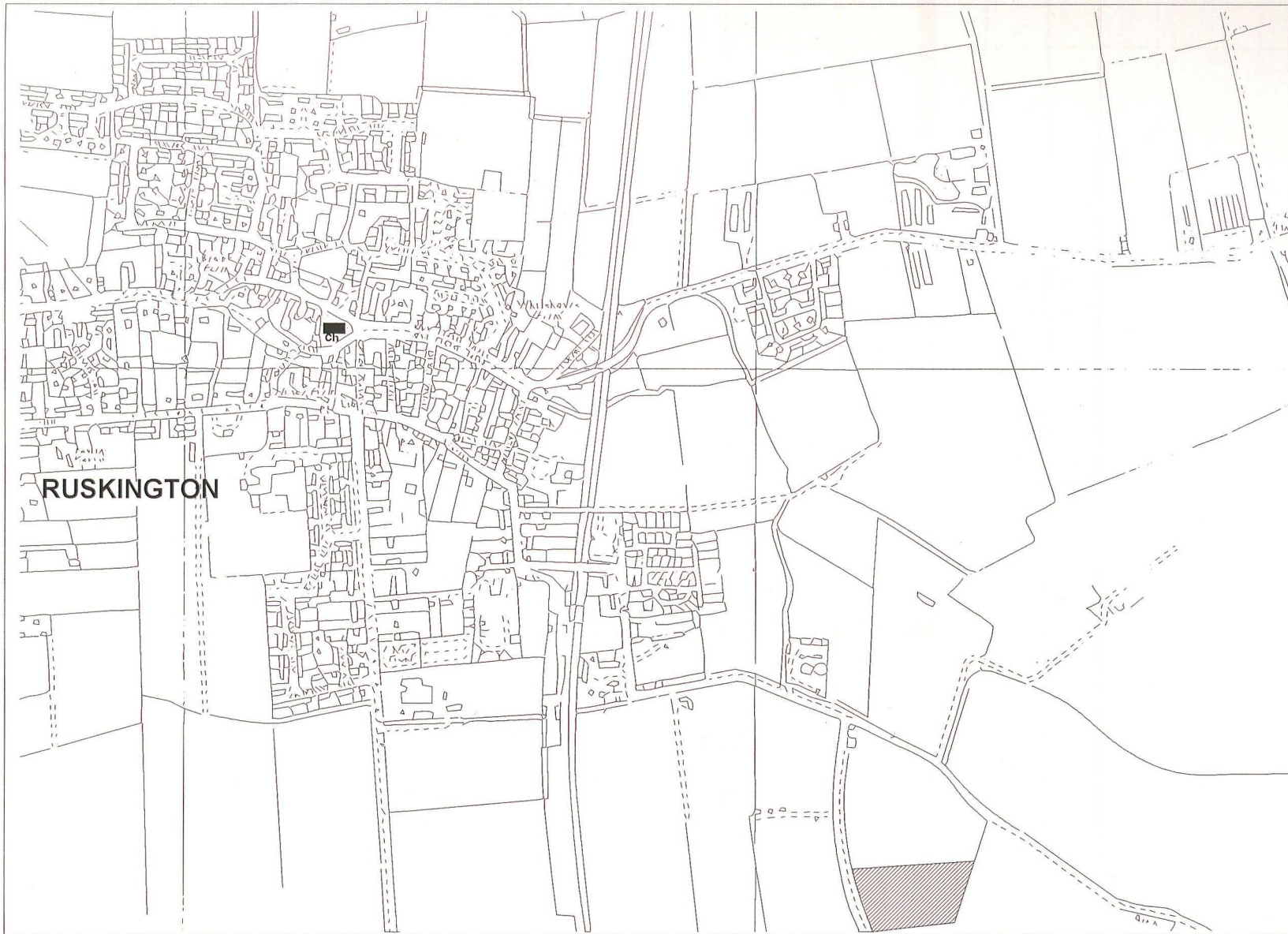


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



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1km

N



Development Area

Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

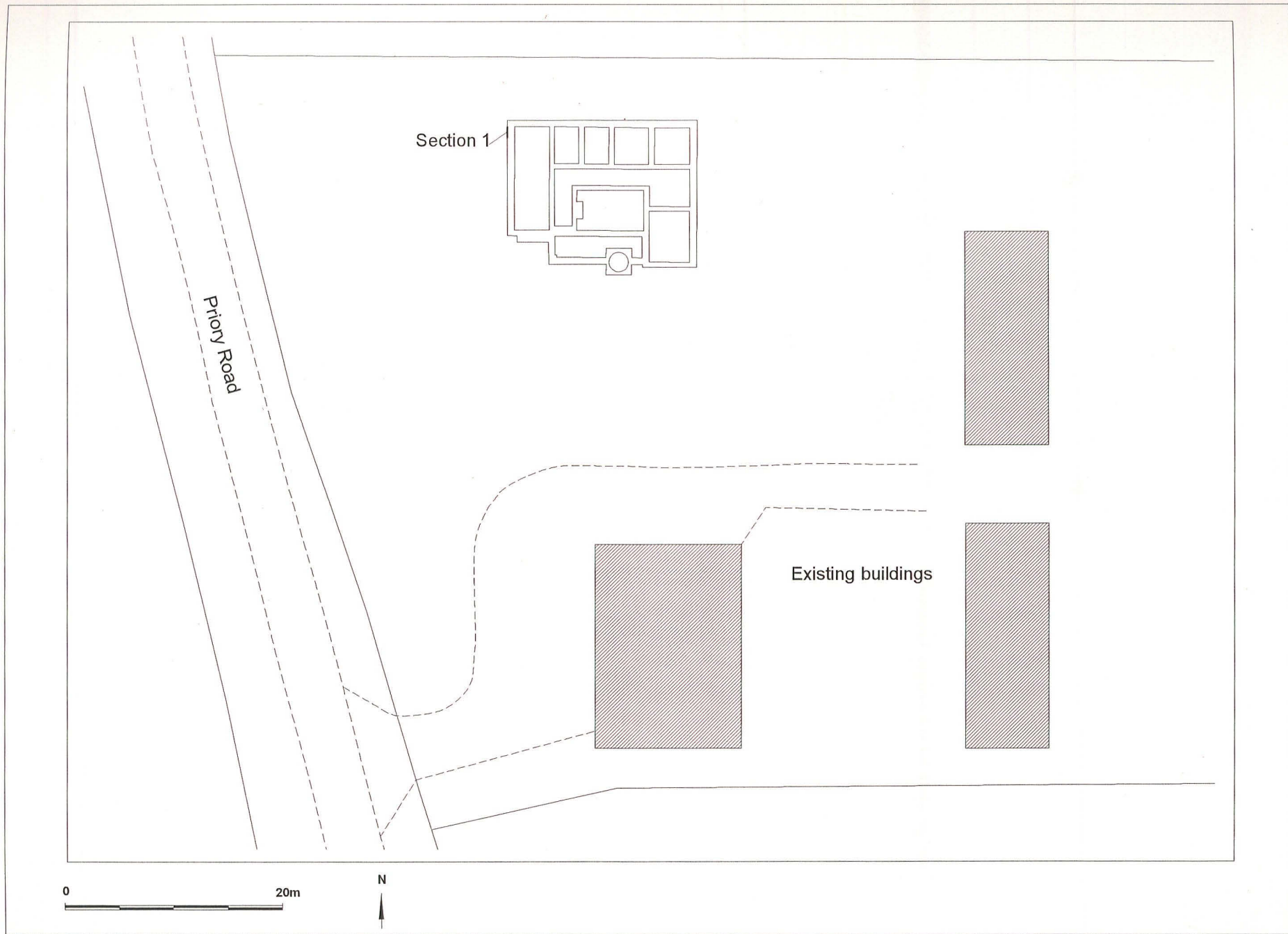


Figure 3 - Plan of development showing section location

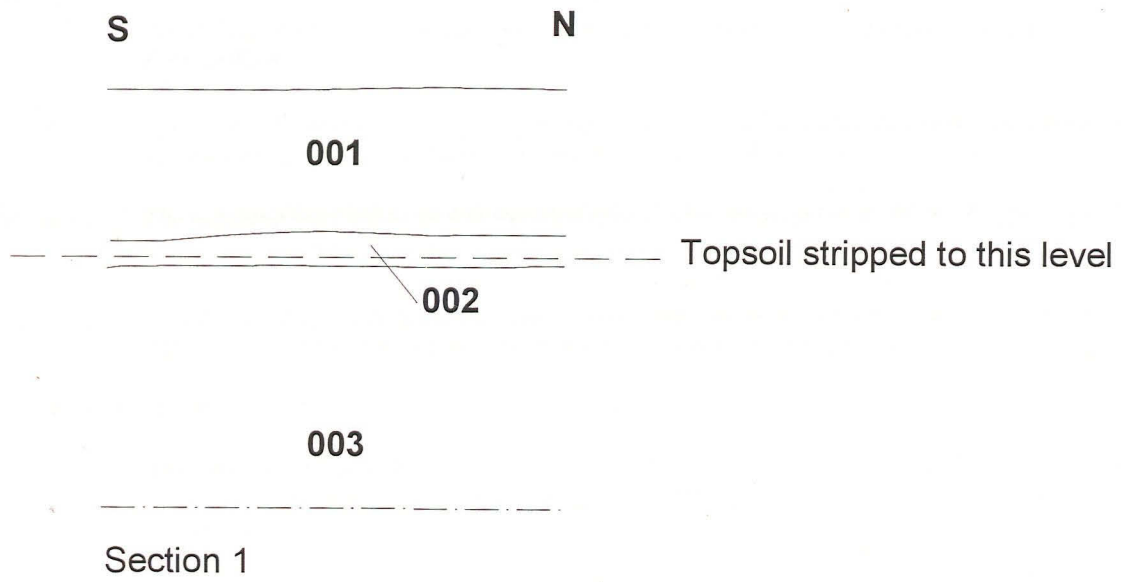


Figure 4 - Section 1

Appendix 1

LAND AT PRIORY ROAD, RUSKINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE - SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1. SUMMARY

- a. *A watching brief is required during residential development on land at Priory Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire.*
- b. *The site lies in an area where finds of Romano-British date have been recovered. Evidence from aerial photographs suggest that remains of Iron Age or Roman enclosures lie nearby.*
- c. *The watching brief will be undertaken during groundworks associated with the development. The archaeological features exposed will be recorded in writing, graphically and photographically.*
- d. *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the findings of the work. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

2. INTRODUCTION

- a. This document comprises a specification for an archaeological watching brief during development on land at Priory Road, Ruskington. The site is located at national grid reference TF 093 500.
- b. This document contains the following parts:
 - i. Overview.
 - ii. Stages of work and methodologies.
 - iii. List of specialists.
 - iv. Programme of works and staffing structure of the project.

3. SITE LOCATION

- a. Ruskington is located approximately 6km north of Sleaford in the administrative district of North Kesteven. The site is located approximately 1km southeast of Ruskington village centre at national grid reference TF 093 500.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- a. Planning permission (application number N/52/783/98) for the construction of a bungalow has been granted by North Kesteven District Council, subject to a standard condition for an archaeological watching brief to be undertaken during groundworks associated with the development.

5. SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- a. The site lies on fairly level ground at approximately 8m OD. Soils at the site are Ruskington Association gleyic brown calcareous earths developed on glaciofluvial sand and gravel (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 304).

6. THE ARCHAEOLOGY

- a. The site lies in an area where archaeological remains have been discovered. Romano-British coins and a brooch were found 300m to the north of the application area in 1995. Aerial photographs of the area depict three cropmarks immediately to the south of the site which have been interpreted as Iron Age or Roman enclosures and further, undefined, cropmarks have been recorded to the northwest of the site, just south of the sewage works.
- b. Archaeological finds and features surround the application area and therefore groundworks may disturb buried archaeological remains.

7. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- a. The aims of the watching brief will be:
 - i. To record and interpret any archaeological remains exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.
- b. The objectives of the watching brief will be to:
 - i. Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
 - ii. Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
 - iii. As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and
 - iv. Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

8. SITE OPERATIONS

- a. General considerations
 - i. All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.
 - ii. The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA). Archaeological Project Services is an IFA registered archaeological organisation (no. 21).
 - iii. Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1997, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.
- b. Methodology
 - i. The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and includes the archaeological monitoring of all phases of soil movement.
 - ii. The section of the trench will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The section drawings of the trenches will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Should features be recorded in plan these will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.
 - iii. Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.
 - iv. Throughout the watching brief a photographic record consisting of colour prints will be

compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

- (1) The site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
 - (2) groups of features where their relationship is important
- v. Should human remains be located the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained before their removal. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department and the police will be informed.

9. POST-EXCAVATION

a. Stage 1

- i. On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the watching brief will be checked and ordered to ensure that they form a uniform sequence forming a level II archive. A stratigraphic matrix of the archaeological deposits and features present on the site will be prepared. All photographic material will be catalogued: the colour prints will be labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.
- ii. All finds recovered during the field work will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which they were recovered. Any finds requiring specialist treatment and conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at the City and County Museum, Lincoln.

b. Stage 2

- i. Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.
- ii. Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

c. Stage 3

- i. On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.
- ii. This will consist of:
 - (1) A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
 - (2) A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
 - (3) Description of the topography of the site.
 - (4) Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
 - (5) A text describing the findings of the watching brief.
 - (6) A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
 - (7) Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
 - (8) Sections of the archaeological features.

- (9) Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- (10) Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- (11) Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

10. **REPORT DEPOSITION**

- a. Copies of the report will be sent to the client; the North Kesteven Heritage Officer; North Kesteven District Council; and to the County Sites and Monuments Record.

11. **ARCHIVE**

- a. The documentation and records generated during the watching brief will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to the City and County Museum, Lincoln. This will be undertaken following the requirements of the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives* for long term storage and curation.

12. **PUBLICATION**

- a. A report of the findings of the watching brief will be published in Heritage Lincolnshire's Annual Report and a note presented to the editor of the journal of the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology. If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date, and *Medieval Archaeology* and the journal of the *Medieval Settlement Research Group* for findings of medieval or later date.

13. **CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- a. Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Heritage Officer, North Kesteven District Council. They will be given seven days notice in writing before the commencement of the project.

14. **VARIATIONS**

- a. Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from Heritage Officer, North Kesteven District Council.

15. **PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS**

- a. The watching brief will be integrated with the programme of construction and is dependent on the developers' work programme. It is therefore not possible to specify the person-hours for the archaeological site work.
- b. An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- c. Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists. It is expected that each fieldwork day (equal to one man-day) will require a post-excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half man-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about six days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

16. **SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT**

- a. The following organisations/persons will, in principal and if necessary, be used as subcontractors to provide the relevant specialist work and reports in respect of any objects or material recovered

during the investigation that require their expert knowledge and input. Engagement of any particular specialist subcontractor is also dependent on their availability and ability to meet programming requirements.

<u>Task</u>	<u>Body to be undertaking the work</u>
Conservation	Conservation Laboratory, City and County Museum, Lincoln
Pottery Analysis	Prehistoric Pottery - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust Roman - B Precious, independent specialist Saxon - City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit Medieval and later - Hilary Healey, independent archaeologist
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, independent specialist
Animal Bones	Environmental Archaeology Consultancy
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, independent specialist

17. **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Hodge, CAH, Burton, RGO, Corbett, WM, Evans, R, and Seale, RS, 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales 13

Appendix 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Firm mid to dark brown sandy silt with moderate small to medium rounded stone, moderate organic inclusions, occasional chalk fragments, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
002	Firm light yellowish brown sandy silt with frequent small sub-angular stones, 70mm thick	Subsoil
003	Firm light brownish yellow sand and gravel, 0.48m minimum thickness	Natural drift deposit

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

3	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: 20.99

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: RPR99

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.

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Appendix 4

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, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
Cropmark	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
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.
Pannage	Right given to the owners of pigs to go into a wood and to allow the pigs to eat the acorns or beech mast which <i>fall to the ground</i> .
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.