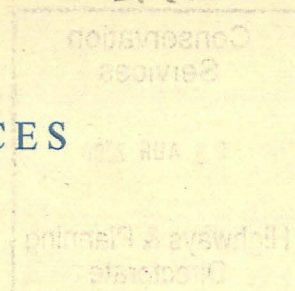




LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES



Tattershall Thorpe Quarry Extension, Phase 6
Archaeological Monitoring of Topsoil Stripping

Site Code: TQE 01

NGR: TF 213 608

LCNCC Museum Accession No: 2001.177

Planning Application No. (E)S.176/2058/94

Report

for

Oxford Archaeological Associates

on behalf of

RMC Aggregates (Eastern) Ltd

LAS Report No. 544

July 2001

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Summary

Intensive monitoring of topsoil stripping in selected parts of the Phase 6 area of the quarry extension found no archaeological features. Following recording of these trenches consultation with the County Council Archaeological Officer resulted in the abandonment of archaeological monitoring during the remainder of topsoil stripping in Phase 6.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned to undertake an archaeological evaluation by Oxford Archaeological Associates on behalf of RMC Aggregates (Eastern) Ltd on the Phase 6 Area of their quarry at Tattershall Thorpe in July 2001. Phase 6 (c.6.5ha) was originally designated as an area for a watching brief but, given its close proximity to the only flint scatter recorded during the 1996 fieldwalking (Taylor 1996), investigation of a series of trenches proposed prior to work commencing in Phase 6 to assess the potential for survival of archaeological remains.

Planning and Archaeological Background

The area lies within the site of the former RAF Woodhall wartime airfield (Griffiths and Collcutt 1994; Taylor 1996).

Sand and gravel has been extracted from a large area in the NE of the former airfield 1km NE of the B1192 Tattershall - Woodhall Spa road. The present Tattershall Thorpe Quarry is operated by RMC Aggregates (Eastern) Ltd (RMC). An application (No. (E)S.176/2058/94) to extend extraction across land in the southern half of the airfield was approved by Lincolnshire County Council in August 1996.

In support of this application, RMC had commissioned OAA (acting as archaeological consultants to RMC (UK) Ltd) to prepare a documentary assessment of the archaeological implications of the proposal (Griffiths and Collcutt 1994). Air photographs indicated a possible Iron Age enclosure within the Phase 1 area. The assessment report noted a possible Roman site, reported in 1929, close to the New Park Farm buildings (later developed as barrack buildings) and within the areas of extraction phases 2-4 (Fig. 2). Numerous casual finds of prehistoric flint artefacts and Roman coins have been found at quarries elsewhere in Tattershall Thorpe and archaeological excavations of important Neolithic and Iron Age sites have been carried out nearby.

A fieldwalking survey was commissioned by OAA on behalf of RMC, and conducted by Lindsey Archaeological Services in early February 1996 (Taylor 1996). An area of 49ha was examined within the area of the planning application and archaeological finds from the exposed field surfaces were plotted. Only Neolithic/Bronze Age flint artefacts were recovered, mostly in Areas 8, 5 and 1 to the west and SW of the New Park Farm buildings (Fig. 2). Area 2 produced no archaeologically significant material and Area 3 produced a very low density of flints (1.29 per hectare) but no other finds.

Lincolnshire County Council placed an archaeological condition (Condition 11) on the Planning Consent requiring the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, in order to ensure adequate opportunities are afforded for the investigation and protection of the archaeological interests of the site. The condition resulted in provision for an intensive watching brief. Phase 1, in 1996, produced a single unstratified worked flint and a possible enclosure of either medieval or later date (Tann 1996). During Phases 2 and 3 in 1996 and 1997, several drainage features were excavated which were related to the former airfield, and a series of earlier agricultural drainage ditches were found (Williams 1997). No monitoring was undertaken during 1998. Monitoring of Phases 4, 5 and 7 in 1999 and 2000 did not reveal any archaeology.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation was to

- see if prehistoric archaeological features survived close to area which produced a scatter of worked flints during fieldwalking in 1996.
- determine the quality and extent of any remains.
- determine the level of any further archaeological recording required prior to development.

Given the lack of archaeological remains found elsewhere on the quarry during previous watching briefs it was proposed that trenching of the Phase 6 area prior to the full topsoil stripping programme would establish its archaeological potential more certainly.

Following recording of these trenches consultation with the County Council Archaeological Officer resulted in the abandonment of archaeological monitoring during the remainder of topsoil stripping in Phase 6.

METHOD

Nine machine excavated trenches, ranging from 16m to 60m in length and 1.8m wide, were dug using a toothless ditching bucket. The trenches were positioned to investigate areas where possible archaeological features would occur and to sample the general site area. Topsoil removal was supervised by an archaeologist (Pl.1).

Archaeological recording was carried out by a team of two experienced archaeologists. Each trench was machine-excavated to the top of the first recognisable archaeological horizon. The trenches were hand-cleaned to reveal features in plan. A full written (single context) and photographic record was made of the site, including site plans. A full photographic record (colour print) was made during the progress of the evaluation to cover each trench, together with general site shots. LAS operates a standard context recording system, developed by its staff over the past 20 years based on MOLAS and CAS models.

Evaluation in the north-east corner of the Phase 6 area could not take place due to the presence of standing buildings and mounds of airfield demolition debris. Roadways and airfield structures were still present when the evaluation was undertaken. Trenches were placed to avoid such disturbance.

Results

Trench 1 (Fig. 3, Pl. 2)

A trench 60m in length, was excavated along the southern boundary of the Phase 6 Area and roughly parallel with the bund c.60m from its south-east corner. This trench was positioned in order to examine any features which might be associated with the flint scatter lying mainly south of the quarry area and found in 1996. Its eastern 40m length was 2m wide and the western third of the trench was widened to 4m. Beneath the 0.30m deep topsoil, were yellow and light brown sands and gravels. Three worked flints were recovered from the spoil heap.

Trench 2 (Fig. 3, Pls. 3 and 4)

Trench 2 was located some 24m from the south-west corner of the site and was c.26m long. It was roughly parallel with the bund, and also positioned to investigate any potential archaeological remains that might be associated with the flint scatter found to the south. Topsoil was approximately 0.30m deep.. A north – south drainage, ditch was noted crossing the western end of the trench. It was filled with a dark brown-black gritty silt, typical of the post-World War II features recorded elsewhere on the quarry site. This drain coincides with a drain marked on the 1996 fieldwalking plan.

Trench 3 (Fig. 3, Pl. 5)

Trench 3 was located between Trenches 1 and 2, c.80m north-east of Trench 2. Topsoil was the same depth as Trench 2. There were no archaeological features in the trench.

Trench 4 (Fig. 3)

Trench 4 was placed centrally within the Phase 6 area. Topsoil depth was 0.30m deep. A land drain was seen in the north-east end of the trench but no archaeological features were recorded.

Trench 5 (Fig. 3, Pl. 6)

Trench 5 was located c.116m north-east of the south-west corner of the Phase 6 area along the western boundary. A north-east/south-west aligned ditch crossed the south-west end of the trench. A similarly aligned linear feature was also seen to the north. A c.2m wide pit was recorded close to the north-east end of the trench. All the features observed in Trench 5 had dark grey-brown silt-sand fills.

Trench 6 (Fig. 3, Pl. 7)

Trench 6 was positioned at the northernmost trench. It exposed an electricity cable trench, aligned north-east/ south-west. Another trench on the same alignment, 0.30m wide and 1.10m to the east was recorded. No other features were seen in this trench.

Trench 7 (Fig. 3, Pl. 8)

Trench 7 was located c.70m south-west of Trench 6, perpendicular to the western boundary. It was 17m long. A modern ditch associated with use of the site as an airfield, containing wire, was observed in the north-west corner of the trench. An amorphous feature with a similar dark grey/black humic fill was noted c.10m to the south-east. It seems probable, given the shape of the feature, that it was formed by root disturbance.

Trench 8 (Fig. 3, Pl. 9)

Trench 8 was positioned along the eastern boundary of the Phase 6 area, c.70m from the south-east corner. It was 19m long and contained darker sand and gravel than seen in Trench 1. Topsoil was again 0.30m deep and no archaeological features were present. One possible worked flint was retrieved from the topsoil/natural interface.

Trench 9 (Fig. 3, Pl. 10)

Trench 9 was c.15m in length and positioned north of trench 8, parallel to the eastern site boundary. It too contained dark sand and gravels similar to those in Trench 8. There were no archaeological features present.

Structures Within the Phase 6 Area (Pls.11 – 15)

A series of brick outbuildings and walls, presumed to have been associated with the use of the site as an airfield were situated in the north-east corner of the Phase 6 area. There was no requirement for archaeological recording but a photographic record of these buildings was

made.

Discussion

Topsoil stripping within the nine trenches, in advance of more general topsoil stripping revealed features associate with use of the site as an airfield during World War II and more recent features but no remains of any archaeological interest. It also showed that there was no subsoil present below the topsoil. Neolithic remains encountered at sites in nearby Kirkby on Bain and Tumby were preserved by a subsoil layer. It seems likely that therefore that any archaeological remains at Tattershall Thorpe within the quarry are unlikely to have survived modern ploughing without the protection of a subsoil layer. It is not clear whether the absence of a subsoil is the result of clearance of the land associated with construction of the airfield (a phenomenon noted on other airfields eg at Lichfield, Staffs. and Ludford, Lincs.) or more recent deep ploughing.

Conclusion

Intensive monitoring of the topsoil stripping in selected parts of the Phase 6 area of the quarry found no archaeological features and further demonstrated the low archaeological potential of the area. This avoided the need for an extensive watching brief over the remainder of Phase 6 of the site.

Acknowledgements

LAS would like to thank Andrew Wright, manager at the quarry for his co-operation. All fieldwork was carried out by the author and Geoff Tann. This report was edited by Naomi Field and produced and collated by Jane Frost.

Mick McDaid
July 30th 2001

Site Archive

Plans

Correspondence

Photographs:

LAS Film No 01/53/0 – 30

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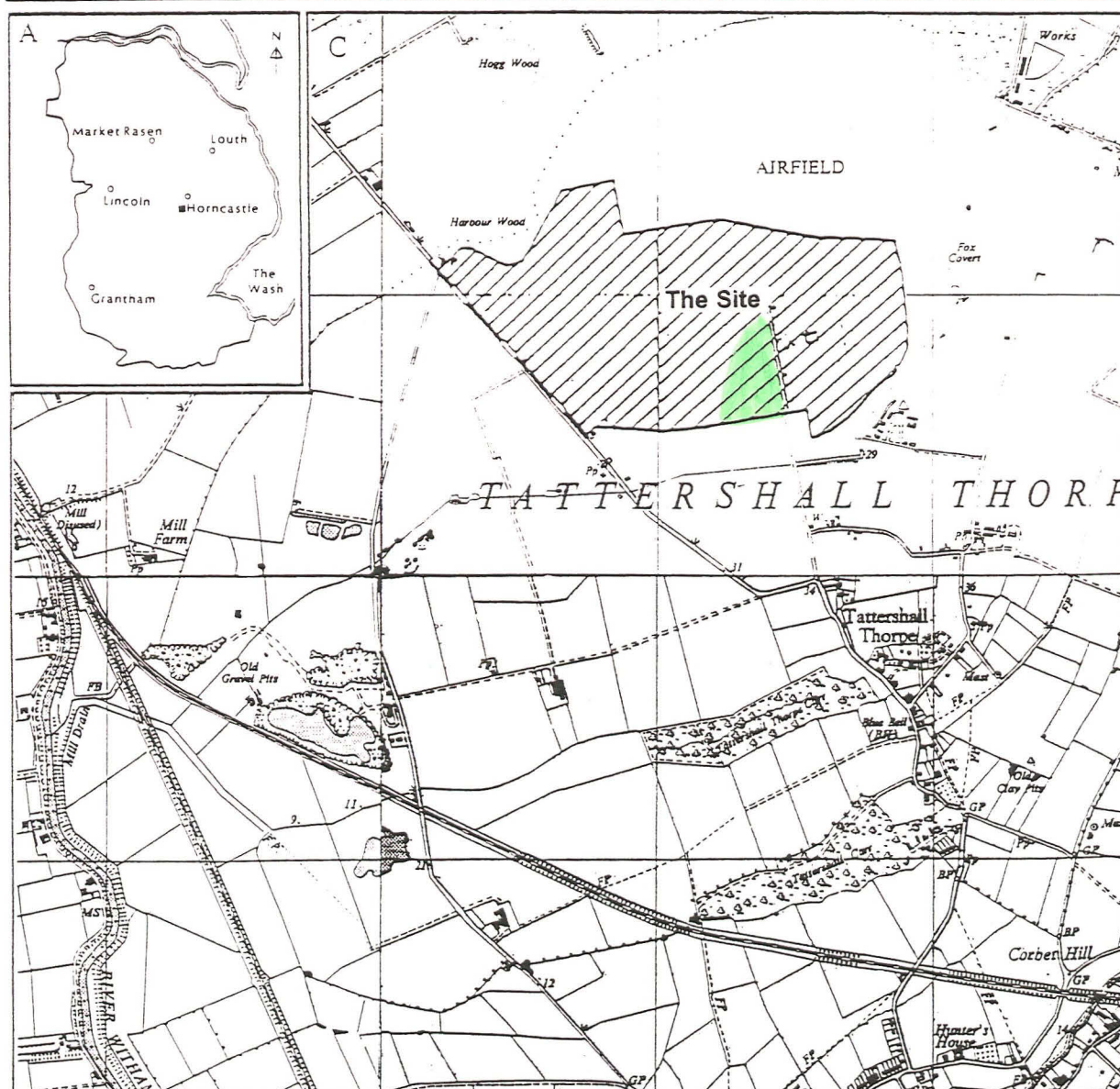
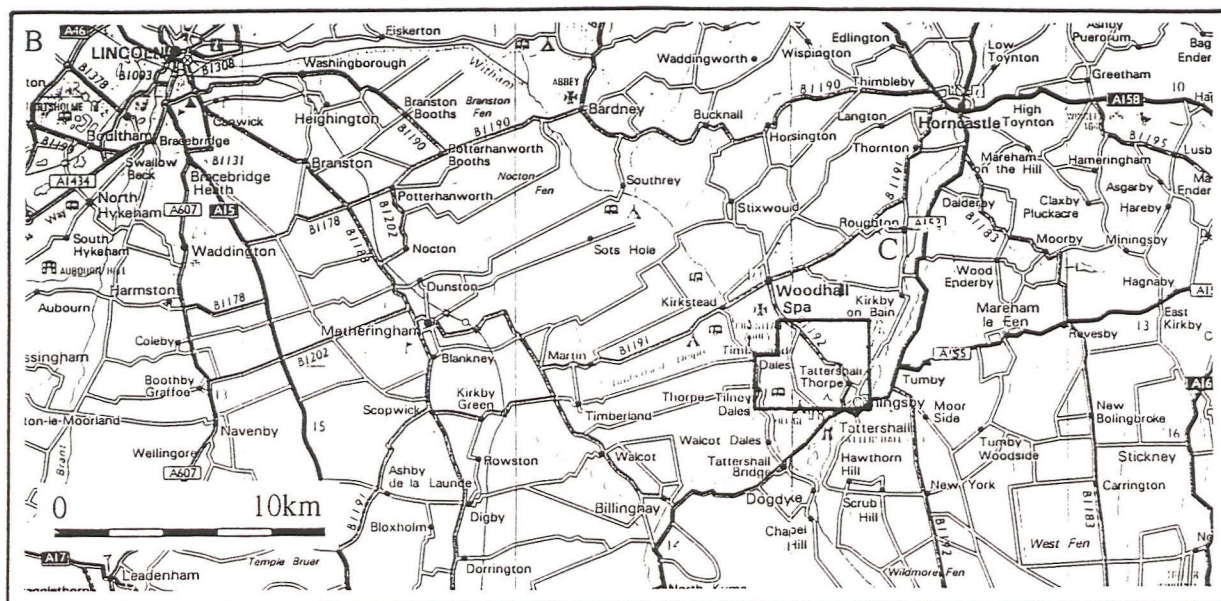


Fig. 1 Tattershall Thorpe site location. (Insert C based on the 1955 Ordnance Survey 1:25 000 map, Sheets TF 15, TF 16, TF 25 and TF26. © Crown Copyright. Reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO, LAS licence number AL 100002165.

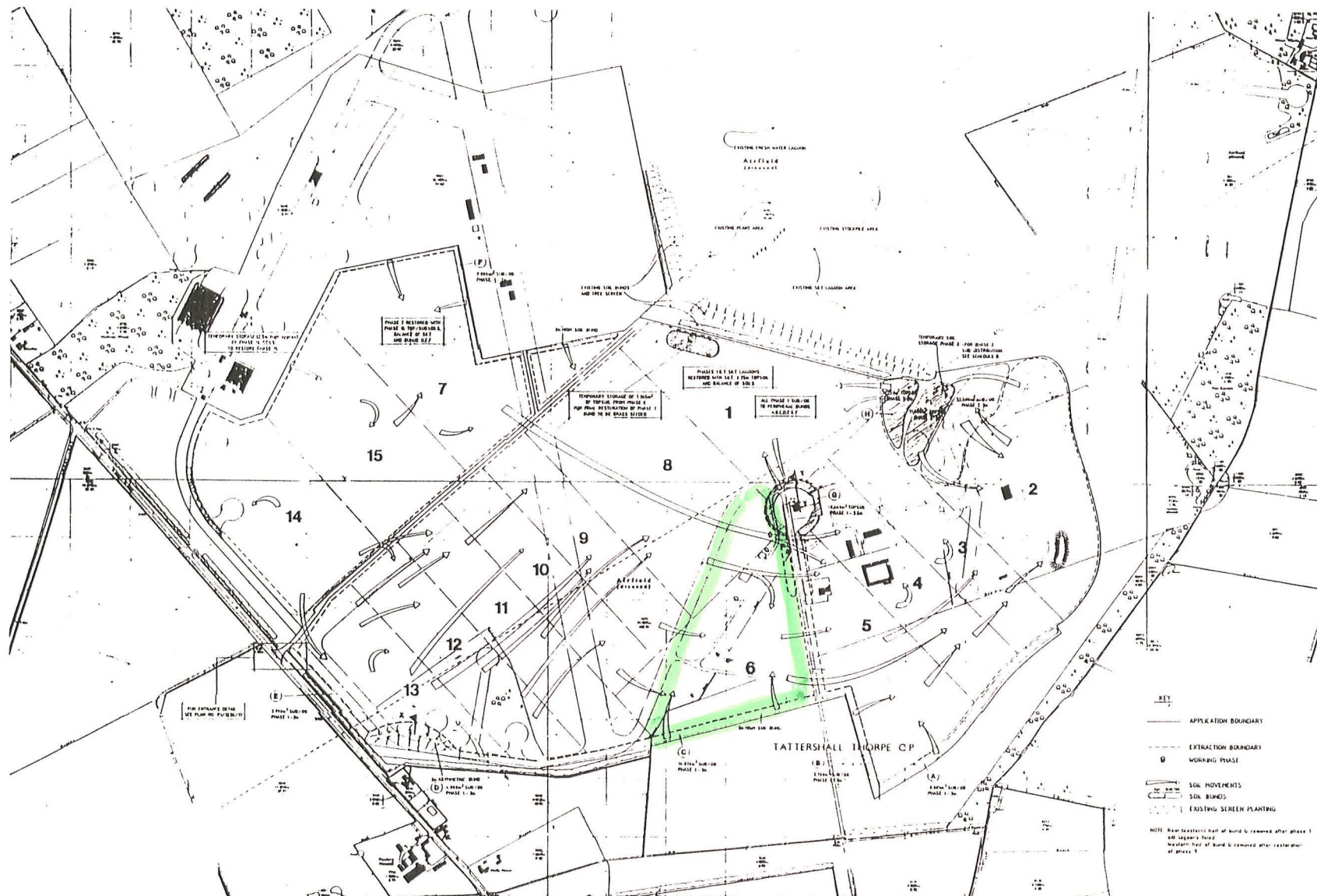


Fig. 2 Tattershall Thorpe Quarry, showing the area worked in Phase 6 (based on a reduced scale copy of Dwg. No. P1/1236/19/3 supplied by RMC Aggregates).



Pl. 1 Archaeological monitoring of topsoil stripping.

Pl. 2 Trench 1. Looking east-north-east.





Pl. 3 Location of Trenches 2. Looking south-west.

Pl. 4 Trench 2. Looking east-north-east.





Pl. 5 Trench 3. Looking west.



Pl. 6 Trench 5. Looking north-east.



Pl. 7 Trench 6. Looking south-west.



Pl. 8 Trench 7. Looking south-west. Scale 1m.



Pl. 9 Trench 8. Looking north-north-west. Scale 1m.



Pl. 10 Trench 9. Looking north-north-west. Scale 1m.



Pl. 11 Airfield structure (1) within Phase 6 quarry area.

Pl. 12 Airfield building (2) within Phase 6 quarry area.





Pl. 13 Airfield building (3) within Phase 6 quarry area.

Pl. 14 Airfield structures (4) within Phase 6 quarry area.





Pl. 15 Airfield structures (5) within Phase 6 quarry area.