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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT  
AT ROBERT MANNING SCHOOL, BOURNE, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: RMS99  
LCNCC Acc No. 295.99  
NGR: TF 1011 2072

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Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section

LCNCC 295.99

Event 42102  
Source L17339  
L17340  
Mon L182495  
35542

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Report prepared for Lincolnshire County Council Property Division  
by AM Hardwick

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January 2000

## Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief took place on groundworks for a new classroom block at the Robert Manning Secondary School, Bourne, south Lincolnshire, between 13 December 1999 and 11 January 2000*
- *Several probable linear features, some possibly associated with land drainage, and a probable medieval plough soil, were identified and recorded*
- *Limited artefactual evidence suggested a medieval date for several of the features, in doing so providing a context for unstratified pottery previously recovered on the site*

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## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were asked by Lincolnshire County Council Property Division to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new classroom block at the Robert Manning Secondary School, Bourne, south Lincolnshire.

Work took place in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section publication *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice*, and with the guidelines set out by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

## **2.0 Location and description**

Bourne lies in the administrative district of South Kesteven approximately 15km west of Spalding and 22km south-east of Grantham. The redevelopment site is on the east side of town, north of Harrington Street and west of Edinburgh Crescent, immediately adjacent to Bourne Leisure Centre (NGR TF 1011 2072).

The foundation trenches for the development extend over an area of approximately 34m x 18m.

## **3.0 Planning background**

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of a new classroom block and associated infrastructure ( Planning ref. S12/0920/99). The development comprises five new classrooms and toilet facilities. Permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks.

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The place name Bourne is recorded as meaning 'place at the spring(s) or stream(s).' Evidence of settlement dating back to the prehistoric period has been recovered in the locality.

The site lies in an area of known archaeological significance. The Roman Car Dyke lies approximately 150m south-east of the development, and Romano-British settlement has been identified approximately 400m to the north. Evidence of early Saxon occupation has also been noted in this location.

Prehistoric worked flint dating to the Neolithic and Bronze Age has been found approximately 200m south-east of the development, possibly redeposited as a result of railway construction.

Bourne is known to have been a significant centre for pottery manufacture in the medieval and post-medieval periods. There appear to have been prosperous and less prosperous periods over time and the local industry is believed to have terminated at some time in the C17th.

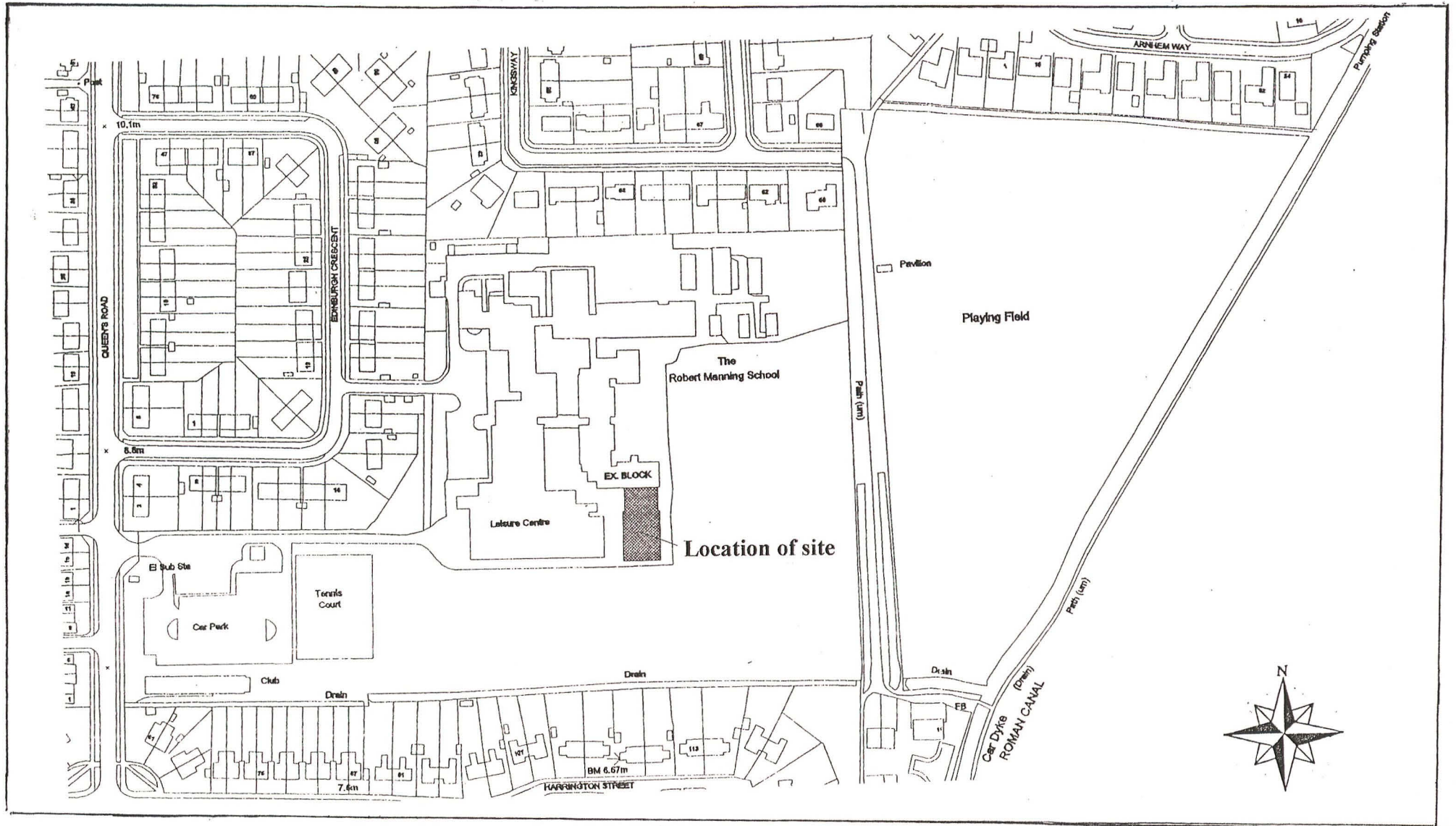


Fig. 1 Location plan 1: 2500

It is in the medieval period that the principal potential of the development site falls. Pottery of this date has been found on site, although no context for the material had been established prior to the current watching brief.

It was possible that the groundworks for the development might expose artefacts and deposits that would confirm, and indicate the nature of, any occupation at the site during the medieval and other periods.

## **5.0 Methodology**

The watching brief was carried out by the writer and Mr Rene Mouraille between 13 December 1999 and 11 January 2000. Monitoring was intermittent over this period because of frequent suspension of groundworks due to technical problems.

Foundation trenches were typically 0.6m wide and 1m deep. Where excavation was deeper, for approximately 2m extending out from the school building at the northern boundary of site, flooding occurred.

The programme of archaeological monitoring was required to take place during all groundworks associated with the development. In accordance with the aforementioned guidelines the fieldwork consisted of: -

- The cleaning and inspection for archaeological evidence of all exposed plan and section surfaces.
- Limited rapid excavation for dating evidence and clarification of the nature of deposits.
- Scale section drawings of archaeological features at 1:20, where appropriate.
- Location of groundworks monitored on a 1:500 development plan.
- The recording of deposits on standard watching brief record sheets.
- A colour photographic record.

Recovered artefacts were washed and sent for specialist examination.

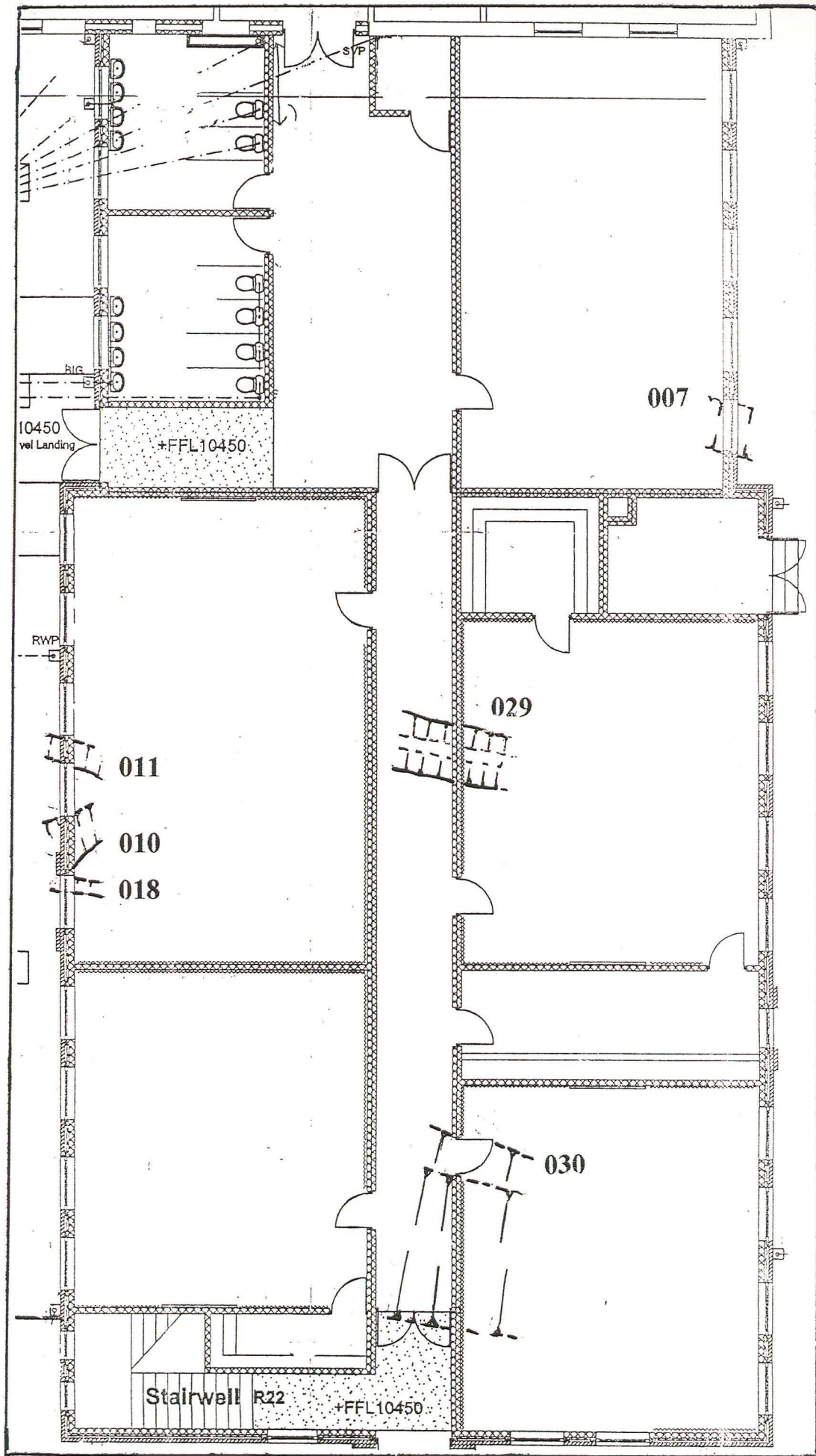
## **6.0 Results**

A distribution of deposits identified is illustrated in Fig. 4. Generally trenching in the northern part of the development exposed a series of deep natural alluvial deposits and some modern disturbance. The area to the southwest revealed further natural layers and modern levelling material.

Several linear archaeological features were however identified across the centre and in the southeast of the development area.

The development area is on comparatively high ground that slopes down sharply to the south and more gradually to the north. The sharp drop of approximately 0.6m to



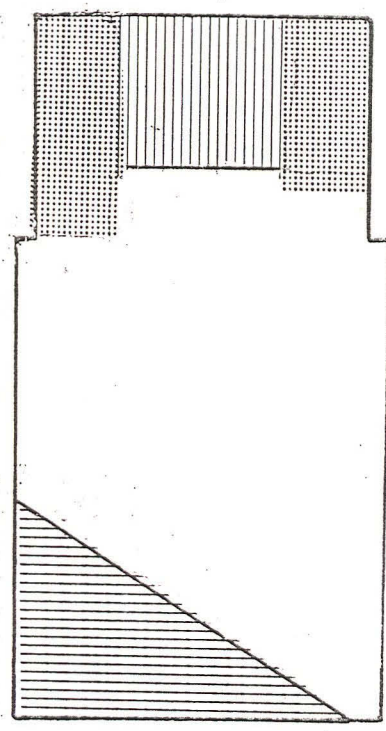


0 10m

Fig. 2 Development plan with feature locations and projected orientation.



Fig. 3 Section drawings at scale 1:20



Construction cut for existing building and services

Alluvial deposits

East-west ditches and probable ploughsoil

Modern levelling over alluvial clays

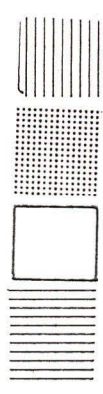


Fig. 4 Deposits identified

the south probably reflects modern build-up and levelling, but the basic topography is likely to be geological. Coinciding with the lower ground, water borne deposits of grey/blue/green clay, sand and silt were noted during the watching brief. These are over a metre deep to the north and suggest either a water course or flood deposits from a nearby watercourse. The high ground continues well beyond the site boundary to the east in a broad band.

The site has most recently been spread with layer 016, limestone rubble, which is particularly deep where the ground slopes off to the south and is probably levelling material. Below this are compact clayey layers 015 and 019, which most probably represent modern ground consolidation. Layer 017 is a dark brown silty clay, possibly an early topsoil. To the northern end of the site, where it is not truncated by modern services, 017 was seen to overlay a sequence of deep alluvial deposits (Section 1).

Towards the centre of the development area, over an area of approximately 20m north-south, layer 017 overlies a much thicker dark brown silty clay 0.20 – 0.28m in depth. This was observed, in an east-west trench section, to undulate in a manner characteristic of medieval ridge and furrow. This probable ploughsoil layer overlay occasionally disturbed natural gravels.

Six linear features were recorded during fieldwork. 018 is a linear feature orientated approximately east-west. It lies immediately below modern layer 015 and is possibly post-medieval. The sterile, reddish brown fill is indicative of water-borne material.

Feature 007 is a linear probable ditch orientated approximately northwest-southeast. No dating evidence was recovered from its fills, which again appear sterile and water-borne.

Feature 010 is a probable linear ditch orientated northeast-southwest, below layer 012

Feature 011 is a probable linear ditch on a northwest-southeast orientation, again below 012.

Features 029 and 030 appear to be linear ditches on a northwest-southeast orientation below layer 001, which is probably the same layer as 012.

## 7.0 Conclusions

Several linear archaeological features were identified as a result of the watching brief. Dating evidence was very limited but that which was recovered, together with an horizon characteristic of medieval ploughsoil, broadly suggests site land usage dating back to the medieval period.

Occupational activity appears, perhaps unsurprisingly, to have focused on the higher ground rather than the lower areas to the north and the south where heavy flooding appears to have occurred.

Evidence of the nature and extent of, as well as the relationships between, the archaeological features is limited and interpretation is therefore speculative. It is possible that in some sections the ditches were more heavily truncated than in others,

making them difficult to detect. It is also possible that some of the features do not seem to be present in parallel sections simply because they are curvilinear rather than linear, or possibly pits rather than ditches. A limited number of sections actually revealed archaeology as opposed to flood deposits and modern materials, restricting the number of surfaces in which features could be traced

Features 007, 010 and 018 have relatively sterile red/brown clayey fills suggesting alluvial deposition. They may be associated with land drainage or flood management, perhaps with respect to an enclosed portion of land. For example ditch 029 might curve and continue as ditch 010. The features could be two segments of the same curvilinear ditch, perhaps an animal enclosure.

Alternatively ditch 029 could be the same feature as 011, the latter cut being more heavily truncated. However 011 is noted to be different in character, both in terms of profile and fill, to the other features identified.

The watching brief has uncovered evidence strongly indicating land use on the site from at least the medieval period. It is possible that flooding to the north and south has over time eroded a larger area of land into what is now a relatively narrow band of higher ground.

As noted, little dating evidence was recovered from the fieldwork and the majority of feature fills were relatively sterile. This suggests that the site was not a focus for domestic occupation, but some form of ditch system, possibly involving enclosed areas, may have been present. The site appears subsequently to have been used for cultivation.

### **Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Lincolnshire County Council Property Division for this commission.

### **8.0 Bibliography**

Palmer-Brown, 1999 *Specification for an archaeological watching brief – the Robert Manning School, Bourne, Lincolnshire.*

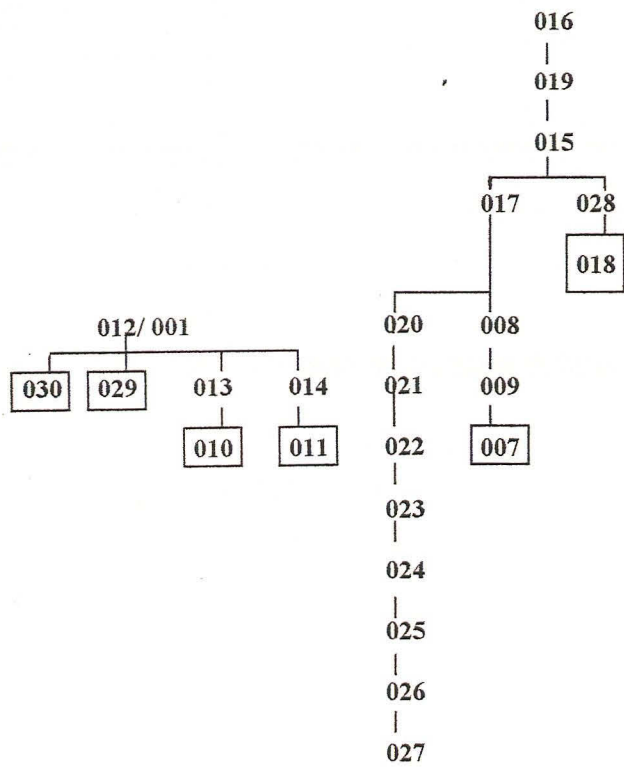
Mills, A.D, 1991 *Oxford Dictionary of English Place Names* Oxford University Press

## Appendix I List of contexts

No.	Type	Description
001	layer	dark brown clay
002	layer	reddish brown clay
003	layer	gravels and yellow/ grey clay
004	layer	mid brown sandy silt
006	layer	red sandy clay
007	cut	probable ditch
008	fill	fill of 007 mid reddish brown sandy clay
009	fill	fill of 007 mid reddish brown/ grey mottling, silty clay
010	cut	probable ditch
011	cut	probable ditch
012	layer	probable ploughsoil
013	fill	fill of 010 dark reddish brown sandy clay
014	fill	fill of 011 dark brown silty clay
015	layer	compact dark grey clay, modern layer
016	layer	yellow limestone rubble
017	layer	dark brown silty clay
018	cut	probable ditch or gully
019	layer	white/brown modern hardcore
020	layer	mid yellowish brown sandy clay
021	layer	dark red/brown sandy loam
022	layer	mid/brown clay/sand with 50 % grit
023	layer	reddish brown sand/gravel
024	layer	clean red/brown sand
025	layer	mottled blue/brown sandy clay
026	layer	red/brown sandy gravel
027	layer	blue/brown clay
028	fill	fill of 018 dark reddish brown sandy clay
029	cut	probable ditch
030	cut	probable ditch
031	layer	natural gravels

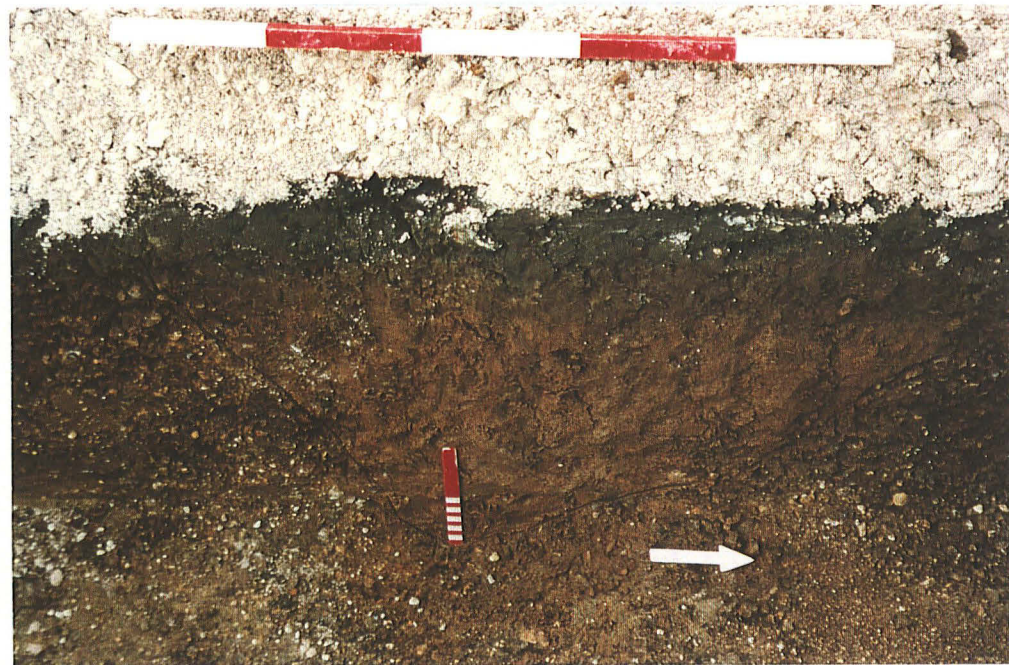
# Appendix II

## Site matrix





P1. General view of groundworks looking south



P3. Feature 007 in north-east footing, looking west



P2. Features 018, 010 and 011 in west footing, looking north-east





P4. Feature 010 in west footing, looking east



P5. Feature 011 on west footing, looking east

Appendix IV

Medieval / post-medieval pottery from RMS99

J Young, January 2000

Only four sherds were submitted for identification, from contexts 001 and 002.

**001**

x1 late earthenware (BOU): C17/18

x1 possible BOU: ?C15 - C17

**002**

x2 PM earthenware