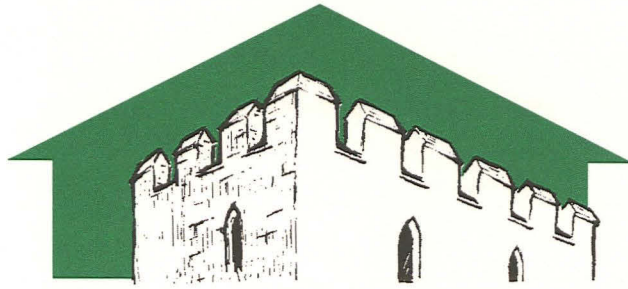


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# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;  
SIBSEY FREE SCHOOL  
SIBSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 3525 5098  
SITE CODE: SFS01  
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2001.447



7220

ACC. NO. 2001.447

Event L12799

Source LM462

L17463

Mon L180549

43805

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
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Report prepared for  
Hyder Business Services  
by Chris Clay  
February 2002

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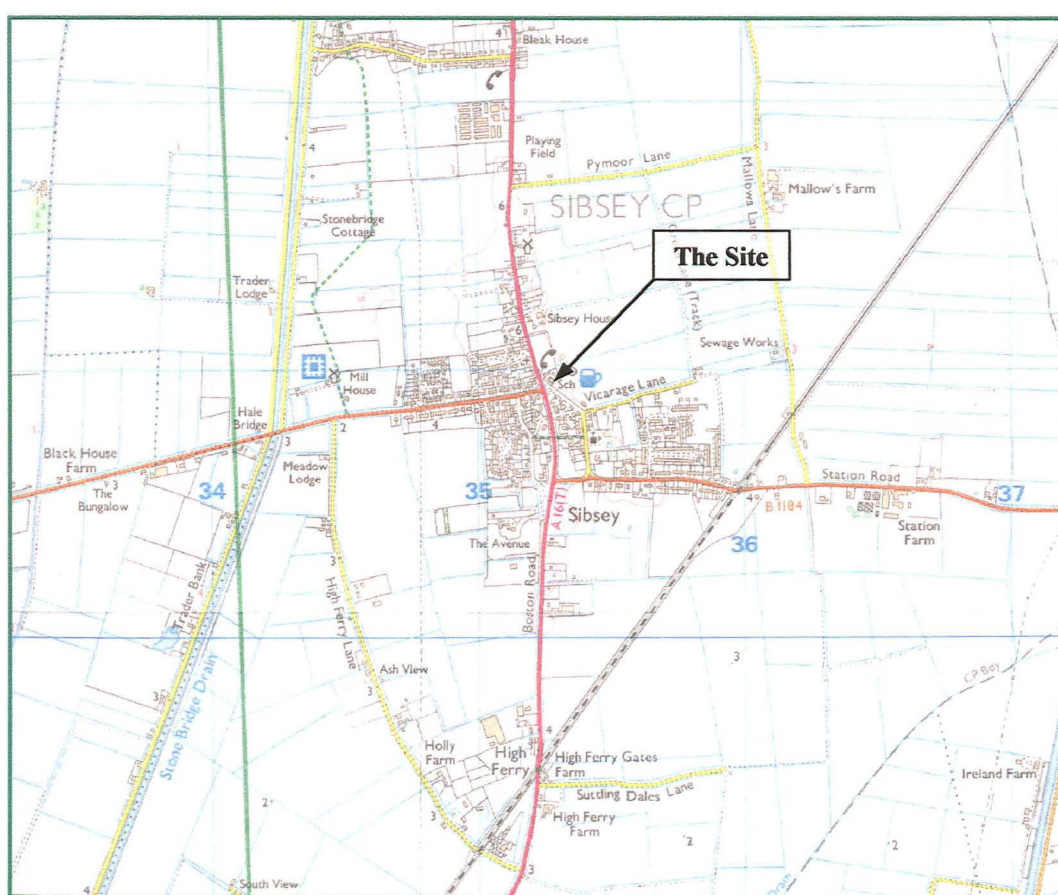
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### Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during groundworks for an extension at Sibsey Free School, Sibsey, Lincolnshire.*
- *Low densities of prehistoric and Romano-British artefacts have been recovered from the parish.*
- *A geophysical survey, watching brief and trial trenching on an adjacent housing development revealed extensive evidence of medieval, post-medieval and early modern settlement activity.*
- *Much of the current site was disturbed during the construction of the original school buildings. However, the south-east part of the site revealed a buried soil horizon, dated to the 13/14th century by two pottery sherds.*



**Fig.1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)**  
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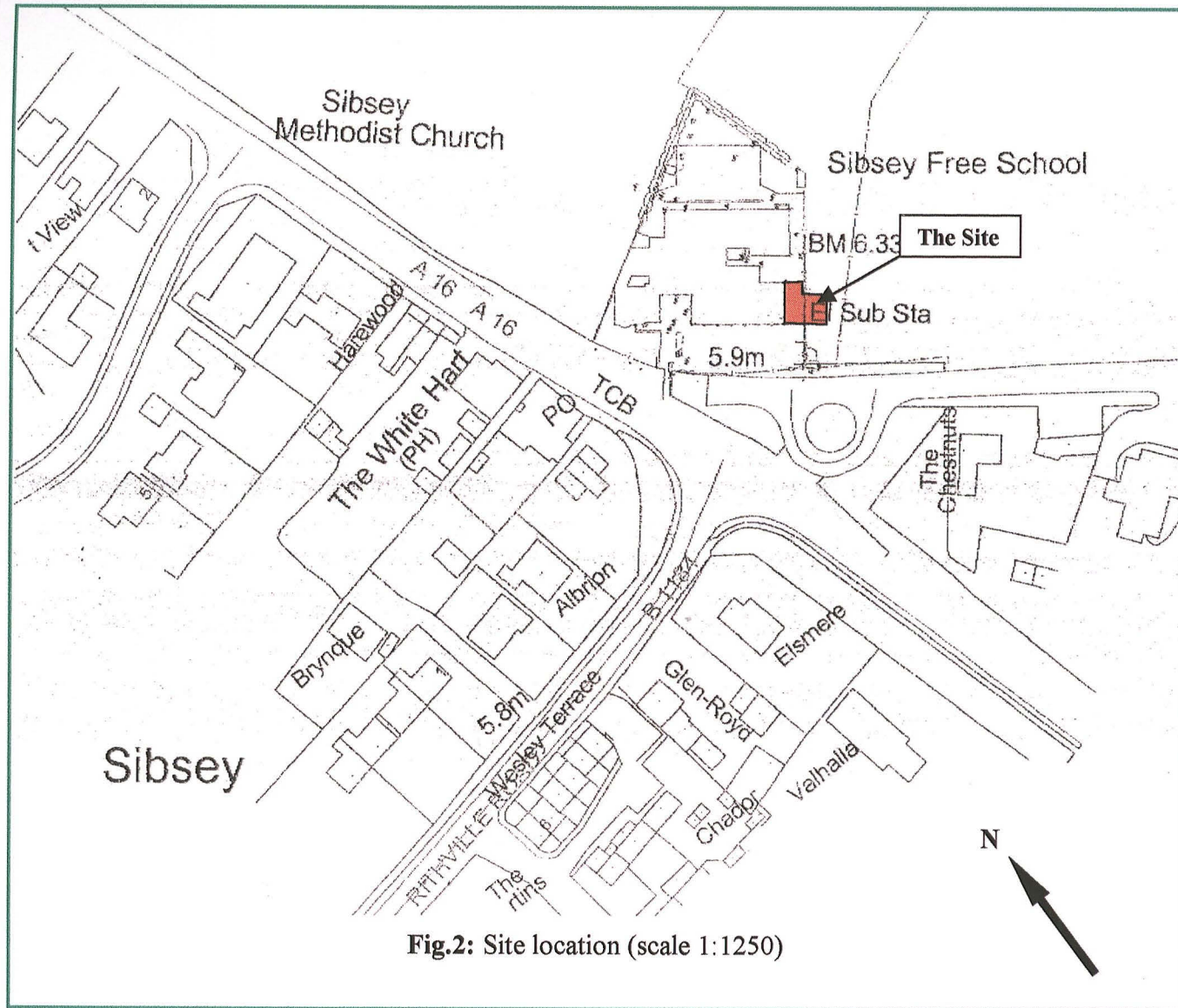


Fig.2: Site location (scale 1:1250)

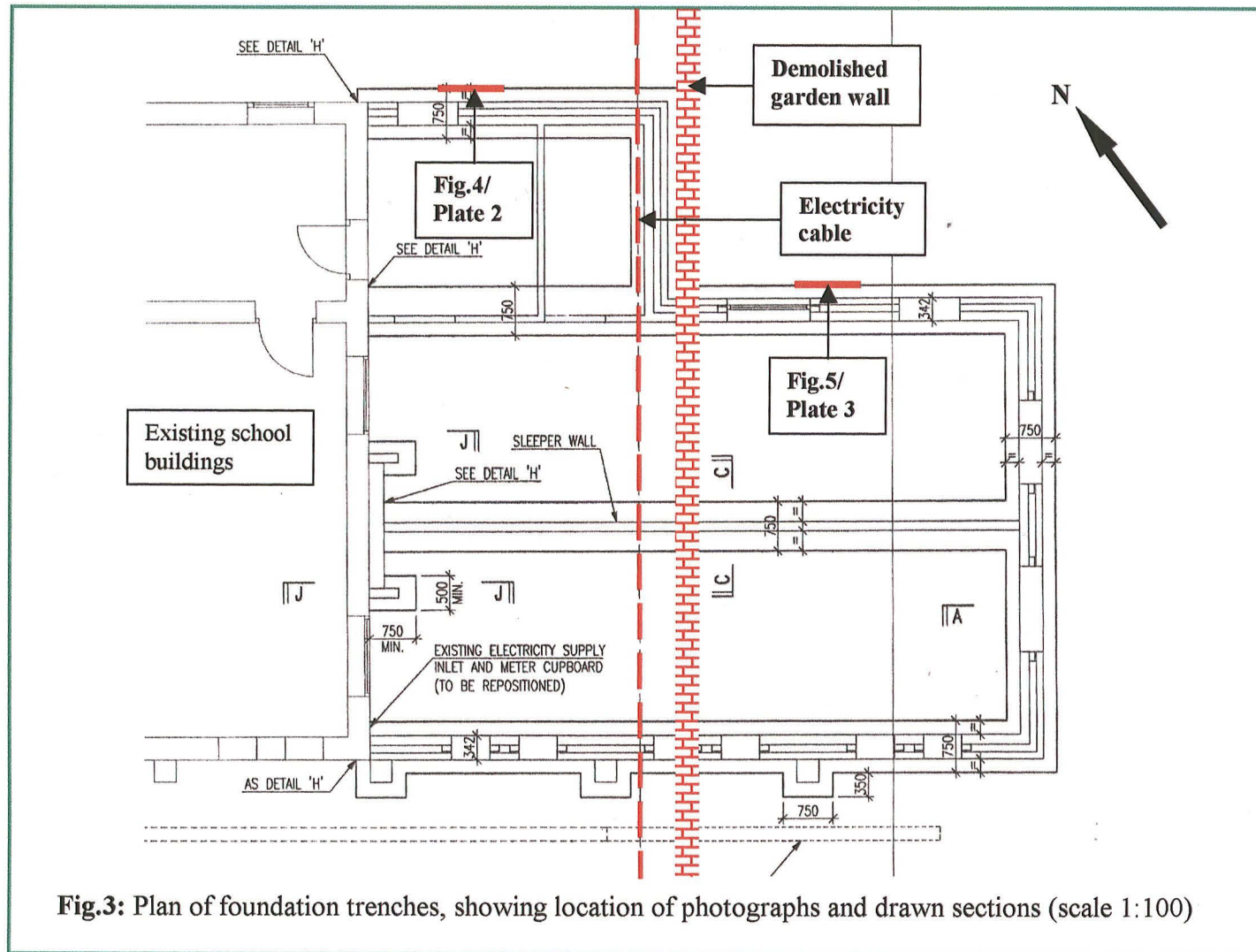


Fig.3: Plan of foundation trenches, showing location of photographs and drawn sections (scale 1:100)

## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Hyder Business Services to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a new classroom at Sibsey Free School, Sibsey, Lincolnshire.

This report details the result of the fieldwork. It is written to conform to both national and local guidelines, as set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998).

## 2.0 Site location and description

Sibsey is approximately 7.5km north of Boston, in the administrative district of East Lindsey. The school lies towards the north-east of the village, on the east side of the A16. The proposed classroom extension adjoins the south-east side of existing school buildings and centres on NGR TF 3525 5098.

Sibsey is located on a raised outcrop of glacial till, just above the 5m contour. This has shrunk over time as repeated marine inundations created the surrounding silt fen (British Geological Survey, 1995).

The site was initially divided into two by a low brick wall, running north-east to south-west, parallel to the school complex. This was demolished prior to the commencement of the groundworks. To the north-west of this wall was a playground area, from which the upper surface of tarmac had been removed. On the south-east side of the wall was a garden area, rutted by machine tracks and covered in broken tarmac and other building rubble.

## 3.0 Planning background

Planning permission was granted for the erection of an extension to an existing complex of school buildings; comprising a classroom on the south-east side of the school. The planning permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks.

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

The evidence for prehistoric settlement around Sibsey is limited: the County Sites and Monuments Record lists a single Neolithic axehead from somewhere within the parish, and a scatter of Iron Age pottery, found approximately 500m east of the school, close to a small scatter of Romano-British pottery and coins.

Sibsey lies over a raised island that is more than 5m OD, that provided relatively dry land, surrounded by open water and saltmarsh.

The name Sibsey is Anglo-Saxon in origin, deriving from the Old English, 'Sigeald's island of land' (Cameron, 1998). In the Domesday Book, the village appears as *Sibolci*, under the ownership of Ivo Tallboys (Morgan & Thorne, 1986).

A geophysical survey was carried out on land immediately to the south-east of the current site (Bunn & Snee, 1999). This revealed numerous magnetic anomalies, interpreted as building remains and field systems. A subsequent watching brief and evaluation of this area confirmed the interpretation of the linear features as boundary ditches, and it exposed numerous waste storage pits, indicating settlement activity from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, and subsequent levelling of the area and reorganisation of land use in the post-medieval period (Allen & Palmer-Brown, 2001).

## 5.0 Methodology

Prior to the commencement of the groundworks, the low wall running across the site was demolished, and the tarmac surface adjacent to the existing school buildings was stripped. The foundation trenches were excavated to approximately 0.8m wide, and between 0.8 and 1m deep, using a JCB fitted with a 0.6m wide toothed bucket.

All exposed plan and section surfaces were cleaned by hand, and examined to determine the presence of archaeological features/deposits. Section drawings were made at a scale of 1:20. Context information was recorded on pro-forma watching brief record sheets, and a colour photographic record was maintained, selected prints of which have been included in this report. The fieldwork was carried out on December 19<sup>th</sup>, 2001, and monitored at all times by the author.

## 6.0 Results

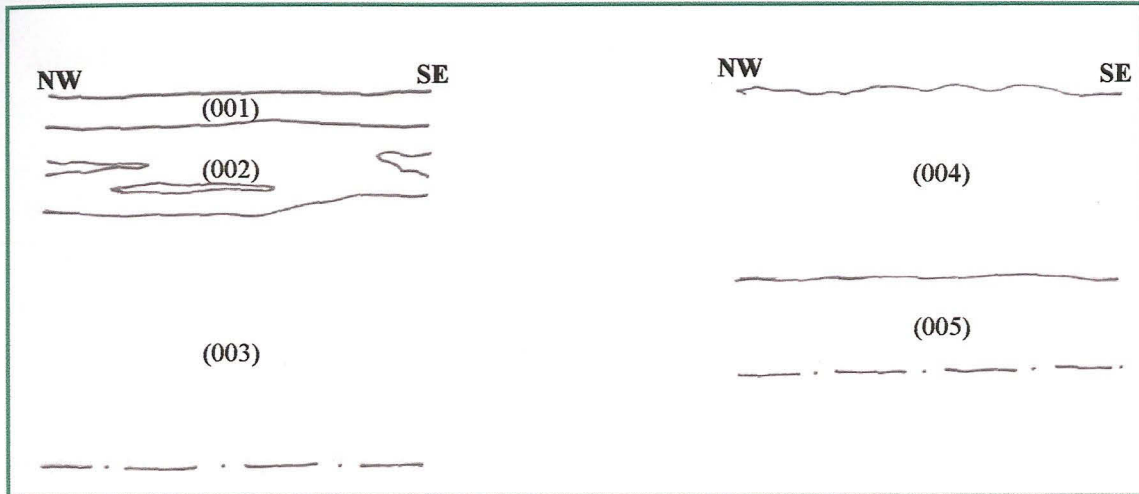
Two distinct areas of activity were recognised, divided by the former garden wall, which ran across the centre of the site.

To the north-west of the wall, and adjacent to the school buildings, the uppermost deposit, (001), was a 0.1m thick concrete and tarmac layer, representing the former playground surface. This sealed (002), a 0.2m thick layer of pale yellow chalk chunks with the occasional lens of orange sand, and small fragments of brick rubble. This was a bedding layer for (001).

Below (002), and extending to the limit of excavation was a very dark grey compact silty clay deposit, (003), containing occasional fragments of ceramic building material. This was interpreted as a levelling or make up horizon associated with the construction of the original school buildings. None of these deposits produced any dating evidence.

To the south-east of the wall, the uppermost deposit was (004), a 0.5m deep dark grey silty clay, with abundant root disturbance, interpreted as topsoil. This sealed (005), a dark grey silt/clay matrix. This deposit extended to the limit of excavation, and contained occasional charcoal flecks and lenses of orange and grey silt. It produced 2 sherds of pottery, dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> or 14<sup>th</sup> century (Young, Appendix 2).





**Fig.4:** Representative section of stratigraphic sequence (scale 1:20)

**Fig.5:** Representative section of stratigraphic sequence (scale 1:20)

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Two separate areas of activity are represented on this site, clearly delineated by the garden wall. To the north-west of the wall, there has been considerable ground disturbance during the construction of the original school buildings, as evidenced by the abundant building rubble within (003).

On the other side of the wall, deposit (005) was dated to the 13/14th century by two sherds of pottery. This may have been partially truncated during the construction of the garden and sealed by an imported garden soil represented by (004). This deposit can be related to features exposed during the watching brief and evaluation on the adjacent site. Although a focus of activity for the 15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century was represented, several pits, ditches, a pond and a redeposited slity clay layer all contained pottery of 13<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> century date (Allen & Palmer-Brown, 2001). Indeed, it is possible that this deposit was formed by the same activity represented by (005) within the current site.

## 8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology was appropriate to the scale of development. It allowed a rapid assessment of the archaeological potential of the site, and a more detailed level of archaeological intervention was not necessary, as suggested by the limited range of the archaeological deposits exposed.

## 9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Hyder Business Services for this commission. Thanks also go to the staff and pupils of Sibsey Free School and to the site contractors (Priestley Civil Engineering Ltd) for their cooperation during the recording brief.

## 10.0 References

- Allen M. & Palmer-Brown C., 2001, *Archaeological evaluation and watching brief report: Old Main Road, Sibsey, Lincolnshire*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) unpublished report
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- Morgan P., & Thorn C., (eds.), 1986, *Domesday Book: vol.31: Lincolnshire*, Phillimore & Co. Ltd, Chichester

## 11.0 Site archive

The documentary and physical archive for the site is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. This will be deposited at Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive may be gained by quoting the global accession number 2001.447.

APPENDIX 1 Colour plates



Plate 1: General view of the site, looking south



Plate 2: General shot of stratigraphic sequence, looking north-east

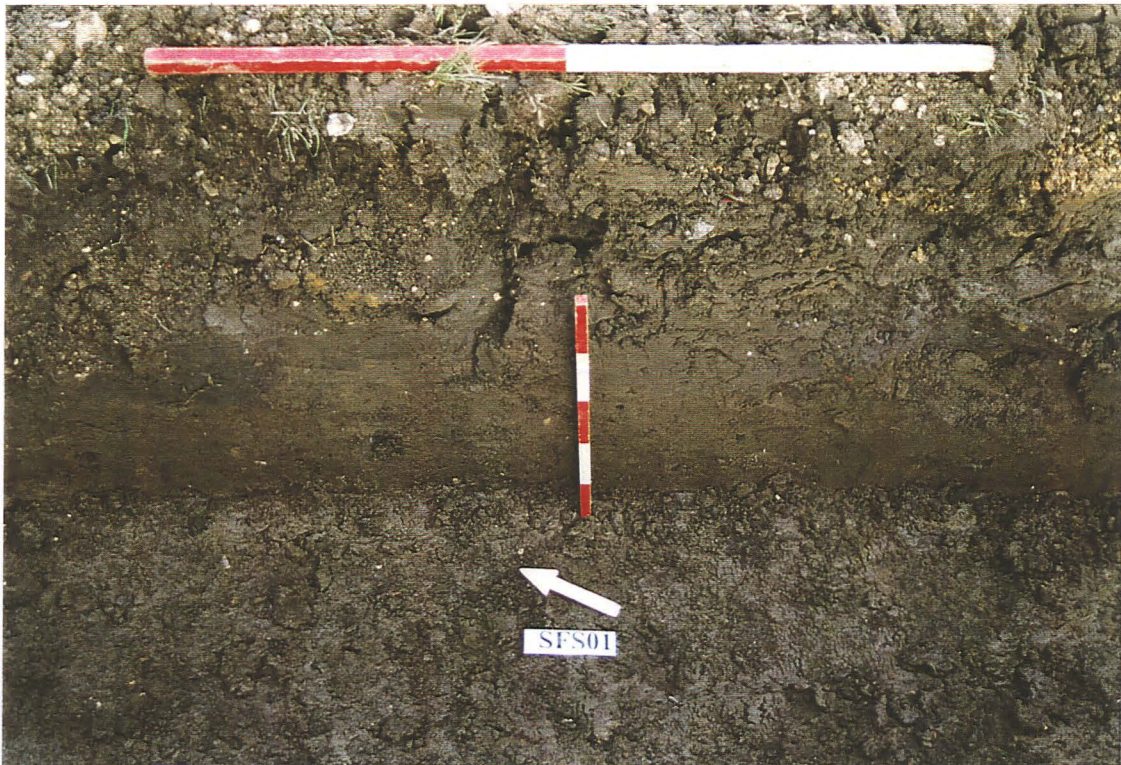


Plate 3: General shot of stratigraphic sequence, looking north-east

## APPENDIX 2: Post Roman pottery report

*Jane Young Lindsey Archaeological Services*

<b>context</b>	<b>cname</b>	<b>full name</b>	<b>form type</b>	<b>sherds</b>	<b>part</b>	<b>description</b>	<b>date</b>
005	BOSTTT	Boston Glazed ware - Toynton type	small jug	1	base	sooting on base and up over body for c.10mm;probably heated on charcoal	13th to 14th
005	POTT	Potterhanworth-type Ware	large jar	1	BS	soot	13th to 14th

## APPENDIX 3: List of archaeological contexts

<b>Context</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Layer	Tarmac playground surface
002	Layer	Levelling deposit of chalk chunks & sand
003	Layer	Dark grey silty clay: make up layer
004	Layer	Dark grey topsoil deposit
005	Layer	Grey/brown silt/clay mix: medieval buried topsoil