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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF A DEVELOPMENT AT  
THURLBY ROAD,  
BILSBY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(BTR 01)**



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

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Source L17528

L17529

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L15560

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
OF A DEVELOPMENT AT  
THURLBY ROAD,  
BILSBY,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(BTR 01)**

Work Undertaken For  
Mrs J. Croney

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

December 2001

Planning Application No: N/016/01526/00  
National Grid Reference: TF 4709 7648  
City and County Museum Accession No:2001.395

A.P.S. Report No: 155/01





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## 1. SUMMARY

*An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Archaeological Project Services on land at Thurlby Road, Bilsby, Lincolnshire to monitor the excavation of foundation trenches for a new dwelling.*

*The watching brief condition was imposed because the site lay within an area of possible Romano-British (AD 50-410) settlement and adjacent to a probable medieval (AD 1066-1500) moated enclosure.*

*An east-west aligned wall was exposed and recorded. Although undated, it may be associated with Vine House, located west of the site, which dates to c. 1700. No artefacts were retrieved.*

## 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 Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Mrs J. Croney to undertake an archaeological watching brief during construction of a new dwelling at Thurlby Road, Bilsby, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of Planning Application N/016/01526/00. Permission was granted subject to a standard condition for archaeological recording. The watching brief was undertaken in accordance with a

specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1) and agreed to by the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council. The fieldwork was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> November 2001.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Bilsby is located 16km northwest of Skegness and 18km southeast of Louth in East Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 500m southeast of Holy Trinity parish church and centred on National Grid Reference TF 4709 7648 (Fig. 2). The site lies on gently undulating ground immediately east of the Wolds at heights of c. 5m OD.

Local soils are of the Holderness Association, typically loamy soils (Hodege *et al.* 1984, 214). These soils have developed over chalky boulder clay which seals a solid geology of Cretaceous chalk (BGS 1996).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Bilsby is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic period to the present day. A stone axe of the Neolithic period has been found within the parish.

Findspots of Romano-British pottery to the north and south of the development site indicate a possible settlement of the period in the vicinity and cropmarks north of the village may also date to this period. There are 19<sup>th</sup> century reports of a Romano-British tessellated pavement existing in the vicinity of Bilsby Hall which may indicate the site of a villa (White 1856, 498).

Bilsby is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Billesbi* the name is derived from the Old Norse



personal name 'Billi' and the Old Danish 'by', meaning village or farmstead (Cameron 1998, 14). At the time of the Domesday Survey the land is recorded as being owned by Earl Hugh and was sokeland of Greetham (Foster and Longley 1976).

The only extant remains of the medieval period is Holy Trinity church which has elements dating to the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the base and cross shaft of a 14<sup>th</sup> century cross (DoE 1989, 32). The earthworks of a medieval moated enclosure which may have contained a castellated mansion lie southwest of the site. A second moat is located west of this but was ploughed down in the 1960s and only survives as cropmarks. Other earthworks and cropmarks indicate closes and ditches associated with the medieval settlement of Bilsby.

A third moat is located adjacent to the development site. This may also be medieval in date although contains a mid 17<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse (DoE 1989, 34). Vine House, located west of the site dates to c. 1700 (*ibid.* 33).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the watching brief, as outlined in the specification (Appendix 1), was to locate surviving archaeological deposits and, if present, record them in detail to enable their date, function and origin to be determined.

### 4. METHODS

Foundation trenches were excavated by machine to depths of between 1.1m and 1.2m as required for the development. Following excavation, the sides of the trench was cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were partially or fully excavated by

hand to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual material, if present. The depth and thickness of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each archaeological deposit or feature 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 and features recognised during the watching brief were then examined. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 2. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

## 5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis two phases were identified;

- Phase 1     Natural deposits
- Phase 2     Undated and Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed and described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

### Phase 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposits encountered were sequences of yellowish brown sands and silty clays (005, 009 and 011) or pinkish brown silty sands, silt with chalk and silty clays (006, 007, 008 and 010). Combined these deposits measured at least 0.75m thick and were identified as the underlying boulder clay.



Developed upon the boulder clay was a naturally formed subsoil comprising yellowish brown silty clay (002). This measured 0.2m thick.

## **Phase 2 Undated and Recent deposits**

Cut into the subsoil was a linear east-west aligned feature (004). This was over 1.4m long and 0.25m deep. Within this feature was a brick structure (003) identified as a foundation to a former wall. The bricks measured 110mm by 50mm by 40mm and were laid in a header bond.

This was sealed by the modern topsoil (001), a 0.2m to 0.25m thick deposit of greyish brown silty clay. A pit containing modern glass was also noted but not formally recorded.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

Natural deposits (Phase 1) of sands, silts and clays represent the underlying drift geology of boulder clay formed during the last glaciation.

An east-west aligned brick wall (Phase 2) was recorded. No dateable artefacts were retrieved from this feature, although it is probably of post-medieval date and may well be associated with former outbuildings attached to Vine House to the west.

No artefacts were retrieved during this investigation.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Archaeological investigations on land at Thurlby Road, Bilsby, were undertaken as the site lay within an area of known Romano-British settlement and in close proximity to a medieval or post-medieval

moated enclosure.

A single wall was identified but remains undated due to a lack of artefactual material. However, its proximity to existing buildings may indicate a post-medieval date and the size of the bricks are comparable to those within Vine House. No bricks were retained and no other artefactual material was retrieved during this investigation. The nature of 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 would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs J. Croney who commissioned the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was kindly provided by Mark Bennet of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council. Dave Start permitted examination of the relevant parish files and the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## **9. PERSONNEL**

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor  
Site Supervisor: Barry Martin  
Photographic Reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

BGS British Geological Survey

DoE Department of the Environment

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

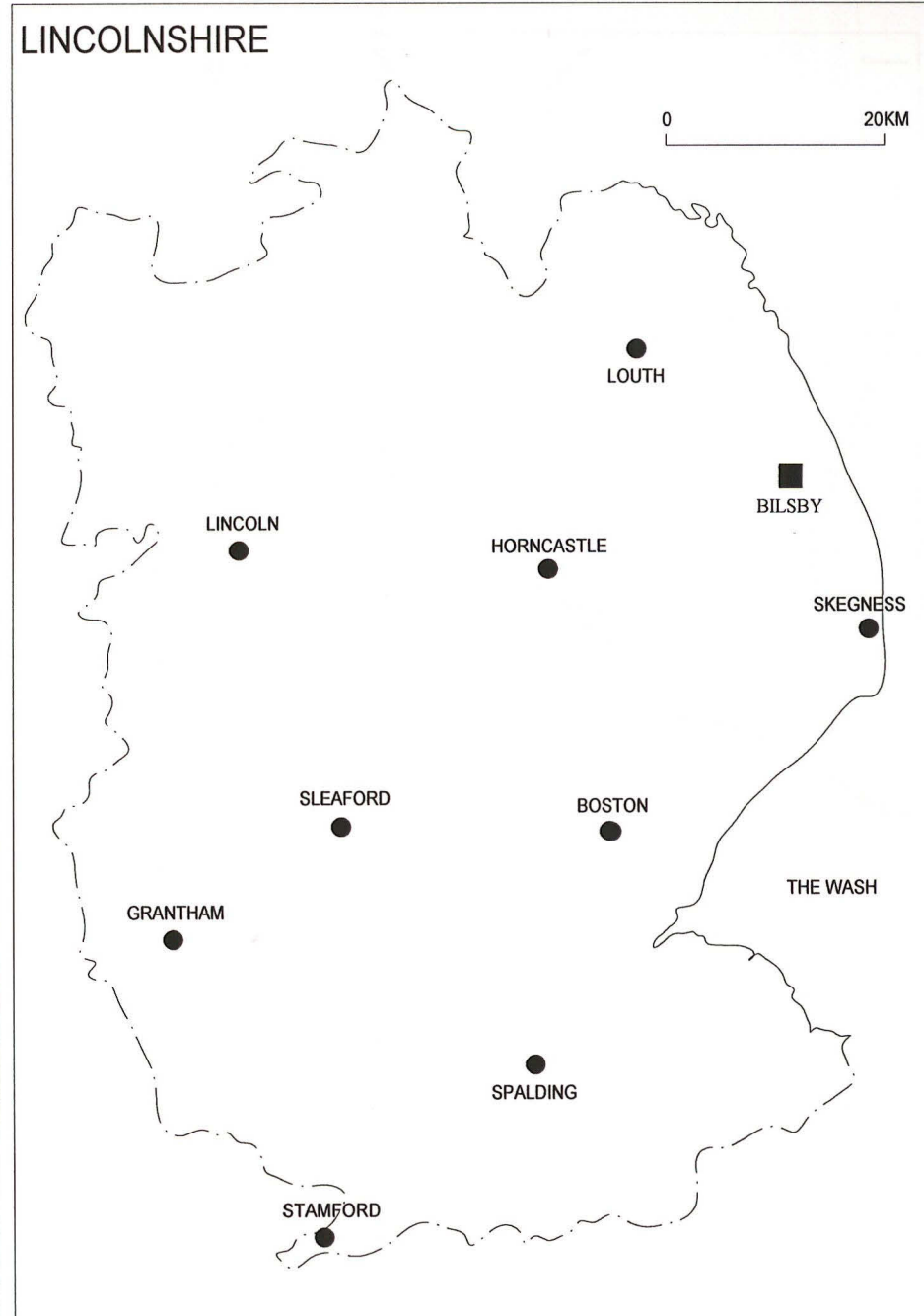


Figure 1 - General location plan

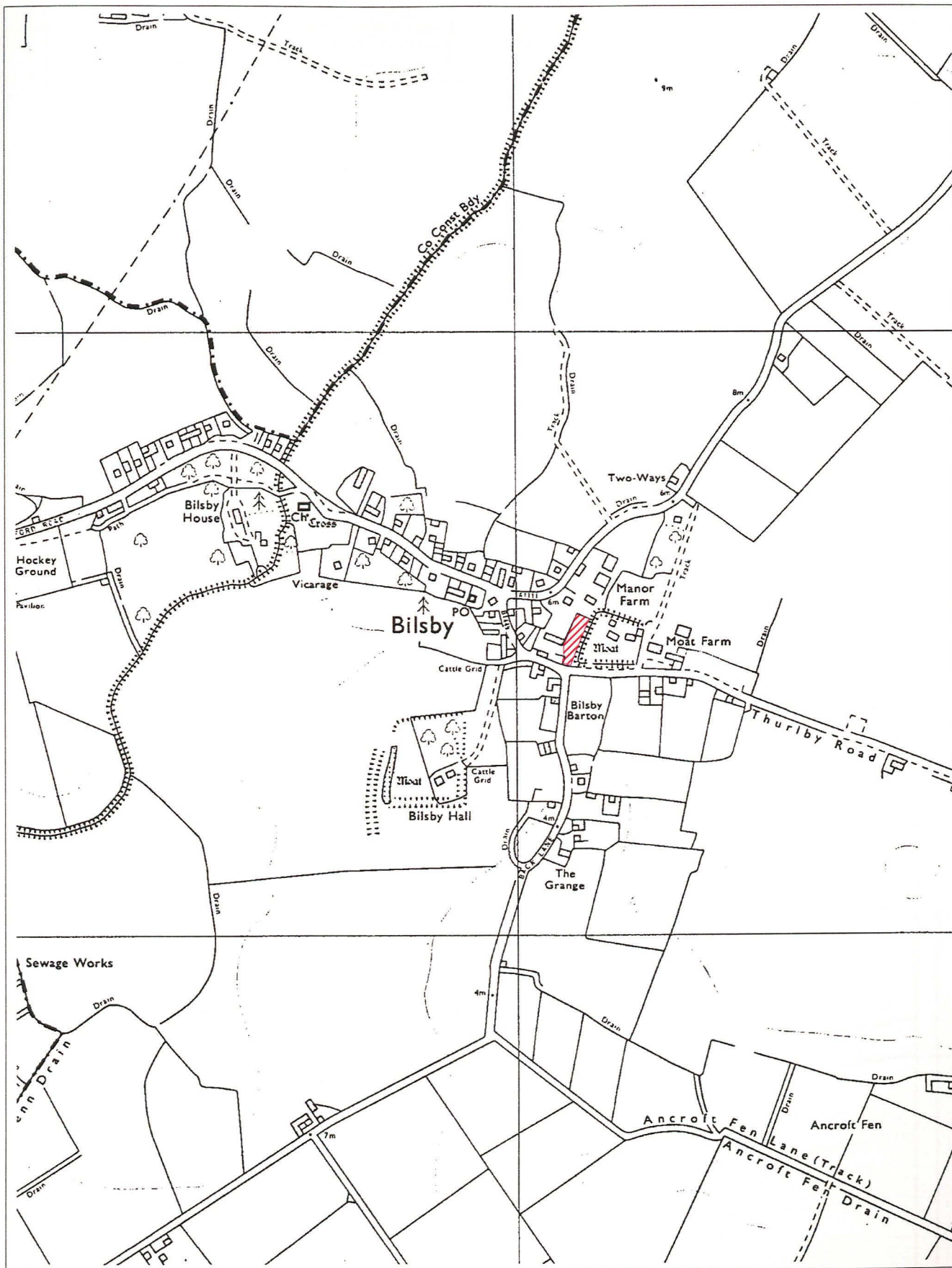


Figure 2 - Site location plan



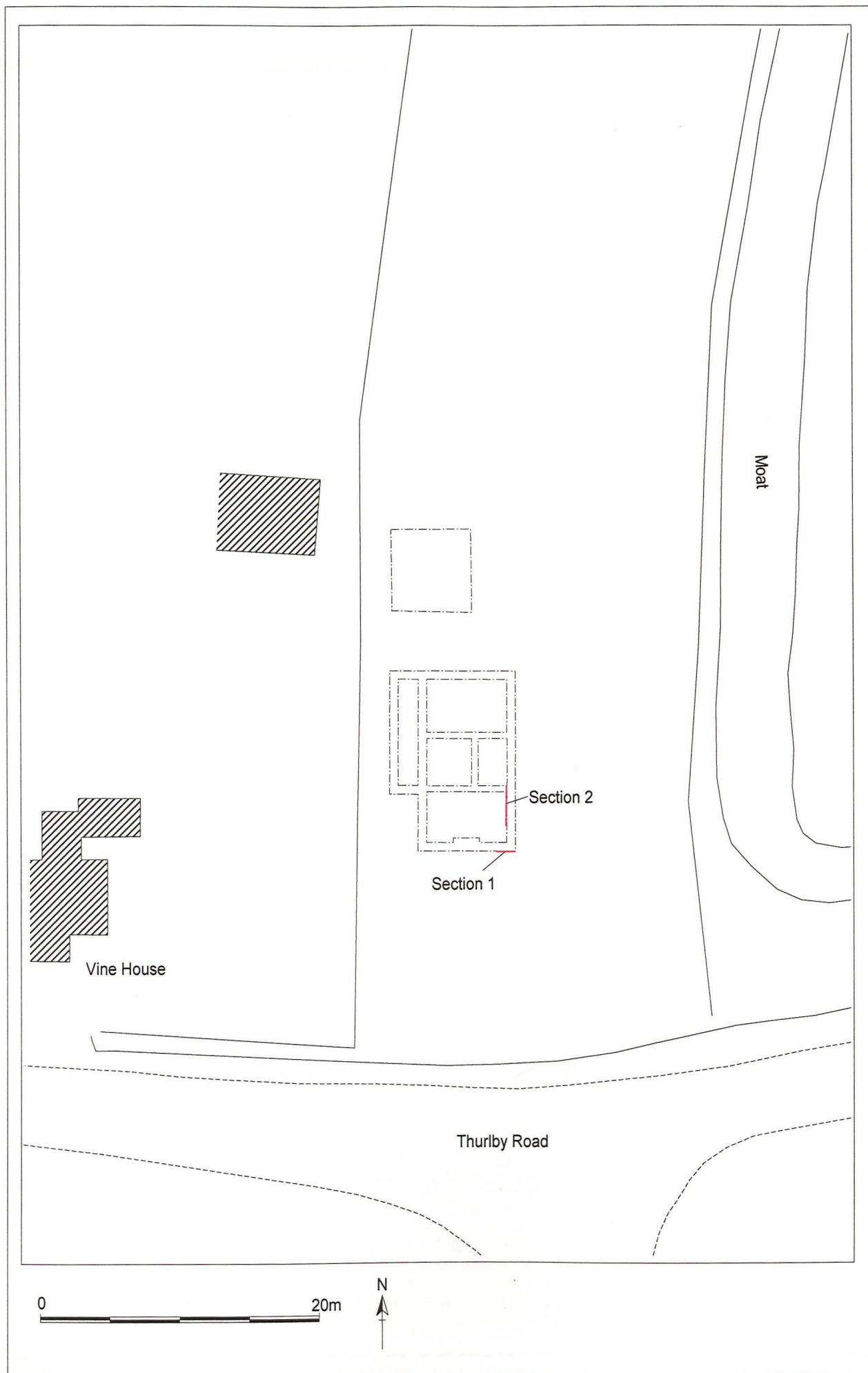
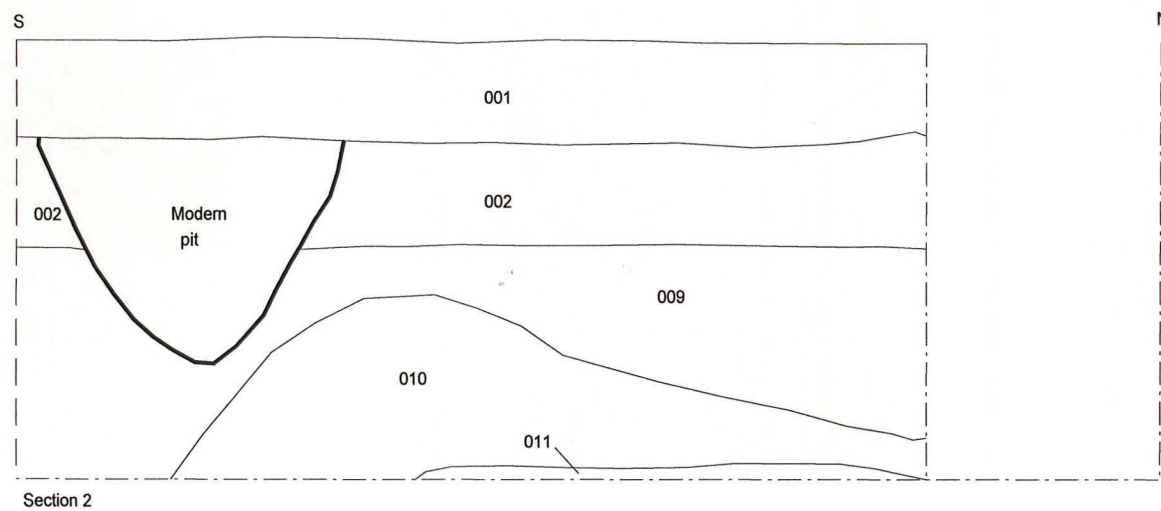
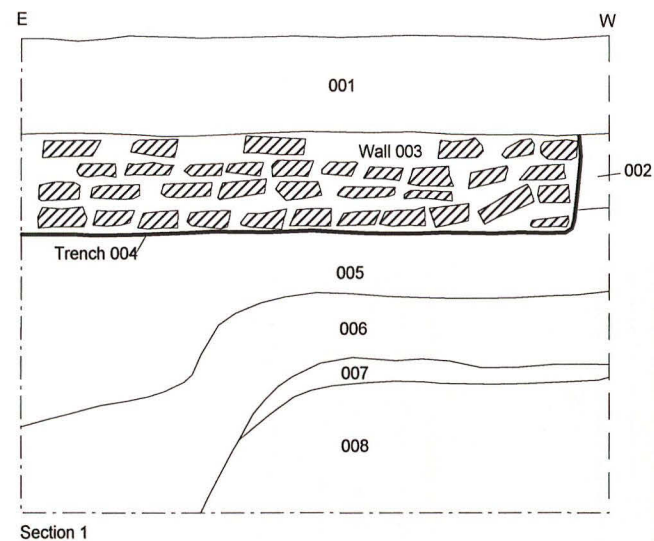


Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing section locations



0 1m



Figure 4 - Sections 1 and 2





Plate 1 - General view of the development area, looking south



Plate 2 - Section 1, looking northeast



Plate 3 - Section 2, looking east



## Appendix 1

### LAND AT THURLBY ROAD, BILSBY, LINCOLNSHIRE - SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 *A watching brief is required during the construction of a house and detached garage on land off Thurlby Road, Bilsby, Lincolnshire.*
- 1.2 *The area is archaeologically sensitive, lying adjacent to a medieval moated site that encloses a 17<sup>th</sup> century building. A second moat is close-by.*
- 1.3 *The watching brief will be undertaken during groundworks associated with the development. The archaeological features exposed will be recorded in writing, graphically and photographically.*
- 1.4 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the investigation. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

#### 2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for an archaeological watching brief during groundworks connected with construction of a house and detached garage at Thurlby Road, Bilsby, Lincolnshire, National Grid Reference TF 471 765.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
  - 2.2.1 Overview.
  - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
  - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
  - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

#### 3 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 Bilsby is located 2km northeast of Alford in the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire. The works are to take place on the eastern edge of the village, on the north side of the Thurlby Road, opposite Back Lane, at National Grid Reference TF 471 765.

#### 4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 A planning application (N/016/01526/00) was submitted to East Lindsey District Council for the proposed construction of a house and detached garage. Permission is subject to a condition requiring the implementation of an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

#### 5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.1 Located within an area of gently undulating land, the site lies on a very slight slope down to the south at approximately 5m OD. Local soils are the Holderness Association loamy soils over chalky till and glaciofluvial drift (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 214).

#### 6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 6.1 Immediately adjacent to the development site on its east side is a former homestead moat of medieval origin. Within the moated circuit is Moat House, a mid 17<sup>th</sup> century brick building listed grade II. It is

likely that this structure replaced an earlier building.

- 6.2 Bilsby has a place-name of Scandinavian derivation and the parish is recorded in the Domesday Book of 1086. A second medieval moat, encircling Bilsby Hall, lies about 200m to the southwest of the investigation site.

## 7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The aims of the watching brief will be:

7.1.1 To record and interpret the archaeological features exposed during the excavation of the foundation trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.

- 7.2 The objectives of the watching brief will be to:

7.2.1 Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;

7.2.2 Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;

7.2.3 As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features, and

7.2.4 Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

## 8 SITE OPERATIONS

### 8.1 General considerations

8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the watching brief.

8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIFA). Archaeological Project Services is IFA registered organisation no. 21.

8.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

### 8.2 Methodology

8.2.1 The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development, and includes the archaeological monitoring of all phases of soil movement. It is expected that ground works will involve mechanical excavation of foundation trenches for a house (strip foundations, minimum 1m deep) and detached garage and associated services and the stripping for an access driveway.

8.2.2 Stripped areas and trench sections 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.

8.2.3 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.

8.2.4 Throughout the watching brief a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

8.2.4.1 the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.



8.2.4.2 groups of features where their relationship is important

8.2.5 Should human remains be located they will be left *in situ* and only excavated if absolutely necessary. Should removal be required the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained before the exhumation of the remains. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate.

## 9 POST-EXCAVATION

### 9.1 Stage 1

9.1.1 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 and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.

9.1.2 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.

### 9.2 Stage 2

9.2.1 Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.

9.2.2 Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

### 9.3 Stage 3

9.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.

9.3.2 This will consist of:

9.3.2.1 A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.

9.3.2.2 A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.

9.3.2.3 Description of the topography of the site.

9.3.2.4 Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.

9.3.2.5 A text describing the findings of the watching brief.

9.3.2.6 A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.

9.3.2.7 Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.

9.3.2.8 Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.

9.3.2.9 Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.

9.3.2.10 Specialist reports on the finds from the site.

9.3.2.11 Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

## 10 REPORT DEPOSITION



Copies of the report will be sent to the client; East Lindsey District Council Planning Department; and to the County Council Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record.

## **11 ARCHIVE**

- 11.1 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**

- 12.1 A report of the findings of the watching brief will be presented to the editor of the journal *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**

- 13.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section. They will be given written notice of the commencement of the project.

## **14 VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES**

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.
- 14.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator (*Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* 1998, Sections 5.7 and 18).
- 14.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.
- 14.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

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

- 15.1 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.
- 15.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.
- 15.3 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 person-day) will require a post-excavation day (equal to one-and-a-half person-days) for completion of the analysis and report. If the fieldwork lasts longer than about four days then there will be an economy of scale with the post-excavation analysis.

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

- 16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle 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 - Trent & Peak Archaeological Trust
	Roman - B Precious, Independent Specialist
	Anglo-Saxon - J Young, Independent Specialist
	Medieval and later - H Healey, Independent Archaeologist
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, Independent Specialist
Animal Bones	Environmental Archaeology Consultancy
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, Independent Specialist

## 17 INSURANCES

- 17.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

## 18 COPYRIGHT

- 18.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 18.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- 18.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.
- 18.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

## 19 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	Friable dark greyish brown silty clay, 0.2m-0.25m thick	Topsoil
002	Firm mid yellowish brown silty clay, 0.2m thick	Subsoil
003	Brick (110mm x 40mm x 50mm) structure, header bond aligned east-west, 1.4m long by 0.25m high	Wall foundation
004	Linear feature, aligned east-west, >1.4m long by 0.25m high, vertical sides and flat base	Foundation trench for (003)
005	Firm light yellowish brown sand, 0.48m thick	Natural deposit
006	Firm light pinkish brown silty sand, 0.5m thick	Natural deposit
007	Firm light pinkish brown silt with chalk fragments, 50mm thick	Natural deposit
008	Firm light pinkish brown silty sand, >0.32m thick	Natural deposit
009	Firm light yellowish brown silty clay, 0.6m thick	Natural deposit
010	Firm light pinkish brown silty clay with chalk fragments, 0.5m thick	Natural deposit
011	Firm light yellowish brown sand, >100mm thick	Natural deposit

## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Boulder Clay</b>	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as till, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.
<b>Context</b>	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).
<b>Cropmark</b>	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
<b>Cut</b>	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, <i>etc.</i> Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
<b>Fill</b>	Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Neolithic</b>	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	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 1 <sup>st</sup> century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.



## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

11	Context records
2	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: 2001.395

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: BTR 01

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.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.