

M2/35

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
DURING MAINLAYING AT  
SLEAFORD ROAD,  
ANCASTER  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(ASR02)**



**A P S**  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES

Event: L15713

INTERVENTION L19859  
EXCAVATION L19860

36572 Undated

CON: L17518

*actually arrived  
much earlier  
date but unknown*

Conservation  
Services

06 DEC 2002

Highways & Planning  
Directorate

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
DURING MAINLAYING AT  
SLEAFORD ROAD,  
ANCASTER  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(ASR02)**

**Work Undertaken For**  
Anglian Water Services Limited

October 2002

Report Compiled by  
James Snee BSc. (Hons)

LCNCC: 2002.243  
National Grid Reference: SK 984 434

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES**

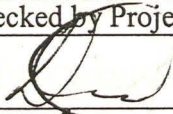
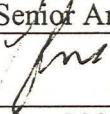


APS Report No. 215/02



**Quality Control**  
Sleaford Road, Ancaster  
ASR 02

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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during mainlaying at Sleaford Road, Ancaster, Lincolnshire (NGR SK 984 434).*

*The area is archaeologically sensitive, being close to the scheduled Roman town.*

*The aim of the watching brief was to record and interpret the archaeological remains exposed during the excavation of the pipe trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.*

*The investigation revealed an undated ditch that may be associated with the Roman town, and a spread of stone rubble, possibly the site of a demolished building of Roman or later date.*

*No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief and no evidence was revealed of burials of any date.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as:

*"... a formal program of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits maybe disturbed or destroyed."* (IFA 1999).

### 2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services (APS) was commissioned by Anglian Water Services Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during

mainlaying at Sleaford Road, Ancaster, Lincolnshire.

The watching brief was carried out between the 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> June 2002, in accordance with a Institute of Field Archaeologists guidelines.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Ancaster is situated 27km south of Lincoln in the administrative district of South Kesteven (Figure 1). The route of the pipeline follows Sleaford Road on the eastern side of Ermine street, to the south of the village (NGR SK 984 434).

Soils in the area are Elmton 1 Association shallow, well-drained, brashy, calcareous fine loamy soils developed on Lincolnshire Limestone (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 179).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

Ancaster is situated in an area of significant known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic to the post-medieval period.

Stone artefacts of Neolithic date (3500-2000 BC), and evidence of later settlement during the Iron Age (600 BC- AD43), have been recorded in the area (May 1976).

During the Romano-British period Ancaster was the site of an early temporary Roman fort, situated to the northwest of the present village. The site lies to the east of Ermine Street, a major Roman road that connected London, Lincoln and the Humber Estuary. In addition, the site is located a short distance to the north of the Romano-British walled town, established in 280 AD. Archaeological excavations in and around Ancaster (Todd 1975 & 1981), have uncovered evidence of the town's earthen rampart and walled defences and extensive stone buildings with fragments of



tessellated pavements. Coins and coin moulds, stone sculpture and inscriptions, brooches and pottery have been found, together with a possible pottery kiln and cemeteries outside the town walls (APS 1995).

Anglo-Saxon activity is represented by a cemetery to the south of the village. This suggests that occupation of the Roman town continued into the Anglo-Saxon period, but that as yet, no settlement evidence has been recovered.

Ancaster is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086, however, nearby West Willoughby is recorded as having two churches, one of which may have been located at Ancaster (Morris 1986). Ancaster is first referred to by name in the mid 12<sup>th</sup> century. The name is Old English and means 'Ana's Roman station' (Cameron 1998).

The church of St. Martin has a Norman chancel and northern arcade and a possible fragment of an Anglo-Saxon window. The tower is 14<sup>th</sup> century. A medieval chapel of St. Mary stood in the field opposite (Pevsner & Harris 1989).

Various 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings can be found in the village (*ibid.*). Ancaster became a parish in its own right in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Recent investigations in the area (Snee 2001a and b, 2002) have revealed post-medieval activity, but have not exposed any medieval or earlier remains.

### 3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to record and interpret the archaeological remains exposed during the excavation of the pipe trenches and other areas of ground disturbance.

## 4. METHODS

The pipe trench was machine excavated to a maximum depth of 1.1m. The sides of the trenches were inspected and hand cleaned at intervals. The depth and thickness of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each deposit or feature was allocated a unique reference number (Context Number) with an individual written description. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and annotated sketch plans were produced. A photographic record was compiled, depicting the setting of the site and the nature of recorded features and deposits.

## 5. RESULTS

The records of deposits excavated during development and the finds recovered were examined. A list of contexts appears as Appendix 1. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and their stratigraphic relationships. Three phases were identified during the investigation.

Phase 1	Natural Deposits
Phase 2	Undated Deposits
Phase 3	Post-medieval and Later Deposits

### 5.1 Phase 1: Natural Deposits

The earliest deposit revealed was an outcrop of limestone bedrock (012) at the east end of the pipe trench (Figure 5, Sections 8 & 9). Overlying this was up to 0.30m of reddish brown silty sand (003 = 005 = 010), that extended along the entire length of the trench (Figure 4 & 5) and represent natural drift deposits.

### 5.2 Phase 2: Undated Deposits

In the centre of the pipeline, sandy drift (005) was cut by an undated north-south oriented ditch (006), 0.90m wide and more than 0.35m deep and filled with reddish



brown sand (007) (Figure 4, Section 4). At the west end of the trench was a 3.5m long spread of limestone fragments and rubble (002), up to 0.25m thick (Figure 4, Section 1).

### 5.3 Phase 3: Post-medieval and Later Deposits

Sealing fill (007) was a layer of fine limestone rubble (004 = 008 = 011) up to 0.30m thick and extending along the majority of the pipeline (Figures 4 & 5). In the centre of the trench it contained a 21m spread of brick rubble (009) (Figure 5, Section 5). Overlying both of these deposits was up to 0.30m of road makeup (001) (Figures 4 & 5).

At the east end of the trench bedrock (012) was overlain by 0.30m of dark brown silty sand (014) and 0.20m of dark grey-brown silty sandy topsoil (013) (Figure 5, Section 9).

Sealing road makeup (001) and topsoil (013) was the tarmac surface of the road (Figures 4 & 5).

## 6. DISCUSSION

The earliest deposits revealed (Phase 1) showed that the soils in this part of the village probably belong to the Cranwell series which is found as part of the Elmtown 1 association where there are the remnants of high level gravels. At the east end of the trench, where the road begins to rise, was an outcrop of limestone bedrock on which the drift deposits had developed.

The undated remains (Phase 2) included a north south ditch (006), which may relate to the known Romano-British remains to the north. A spread of limestone fragments (002) may represent demolition rubble, possibly indicating the presence of a building which once fronted onto Ermine Street. Stone buildings of Romano-British

and later date are known to have existed in the immediate vicinity.

The post-medieval and later deposits include a transformed subsoil (014), sealed by topsoil (013) and a number of road makeup deposits (004 = 008 = 011), (009) and (001) sealed by recent tarmac.

## 7. CONCLUSION

A watching brief was undertaken during mainlaying at Sleaford Road, Ancaster, Lincolnshire.

The area is archaeologically sensitive, being close to the scheduled Roman town.

The investigation revealed an undated ditch which may be associated with the Roman town, and a spread of building stone, possibly the site of a demolished building of Roman or later date.

No artefacts were recovered during the watching brief and no evidence was revealed of burials of any date.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Anglian Water Services Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Steve Malone coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Gail Smith, the Community Archaeologist for South Kesteven District Council, kindly permitted examination of the relevant parish files.

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## 10. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

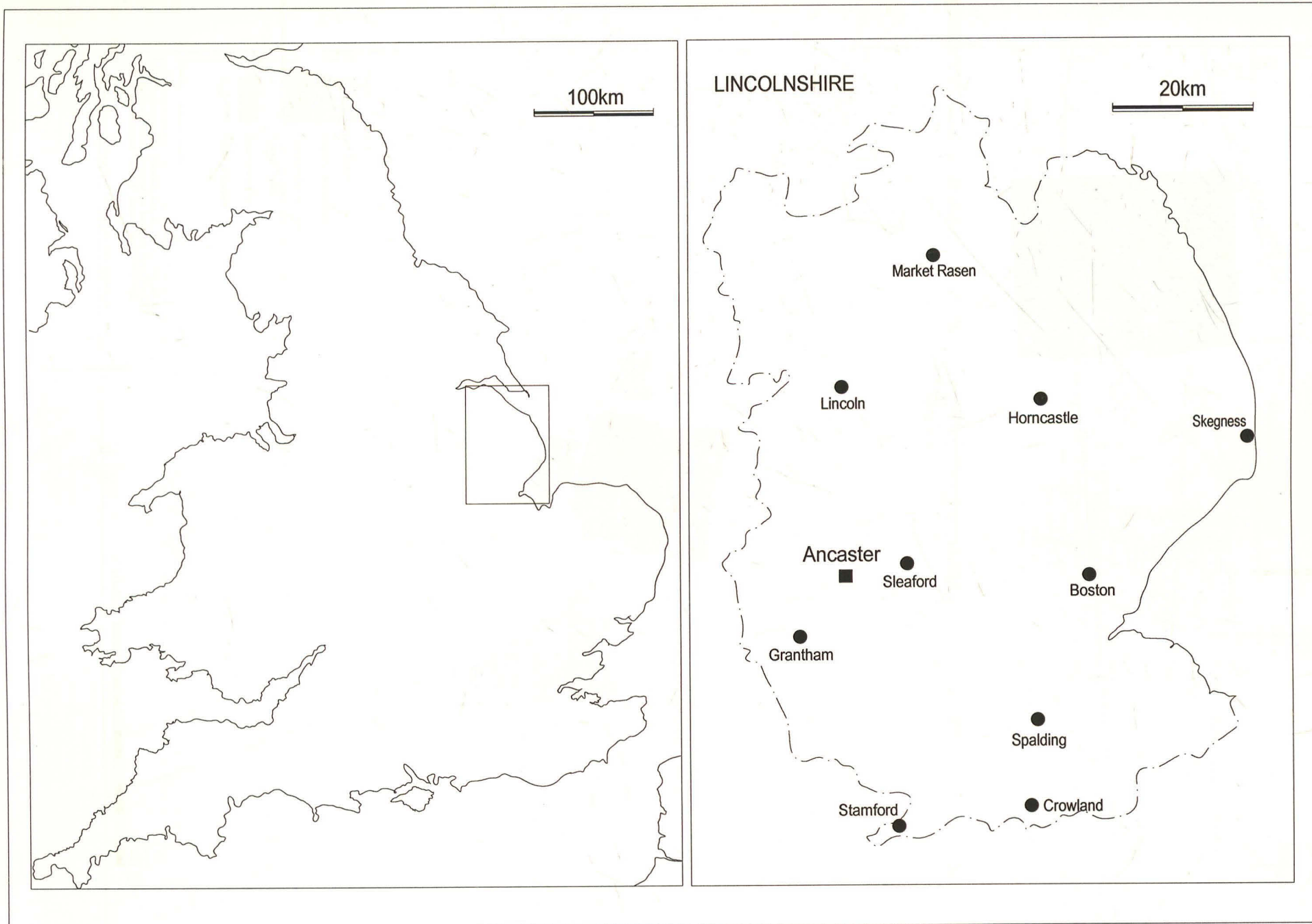


Figure 1: General Location Plan



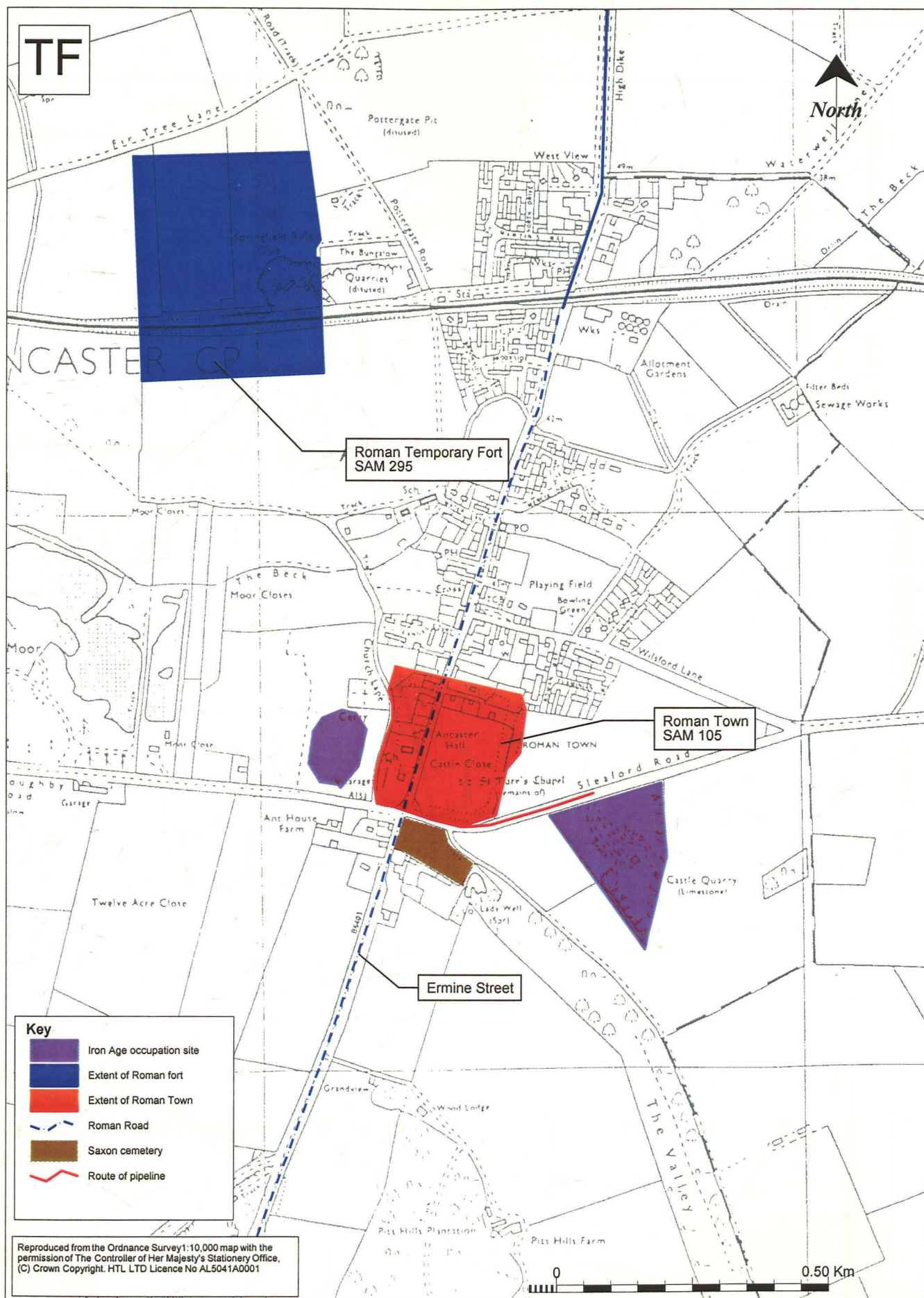


Figure 2 Location plan and archaeological setting

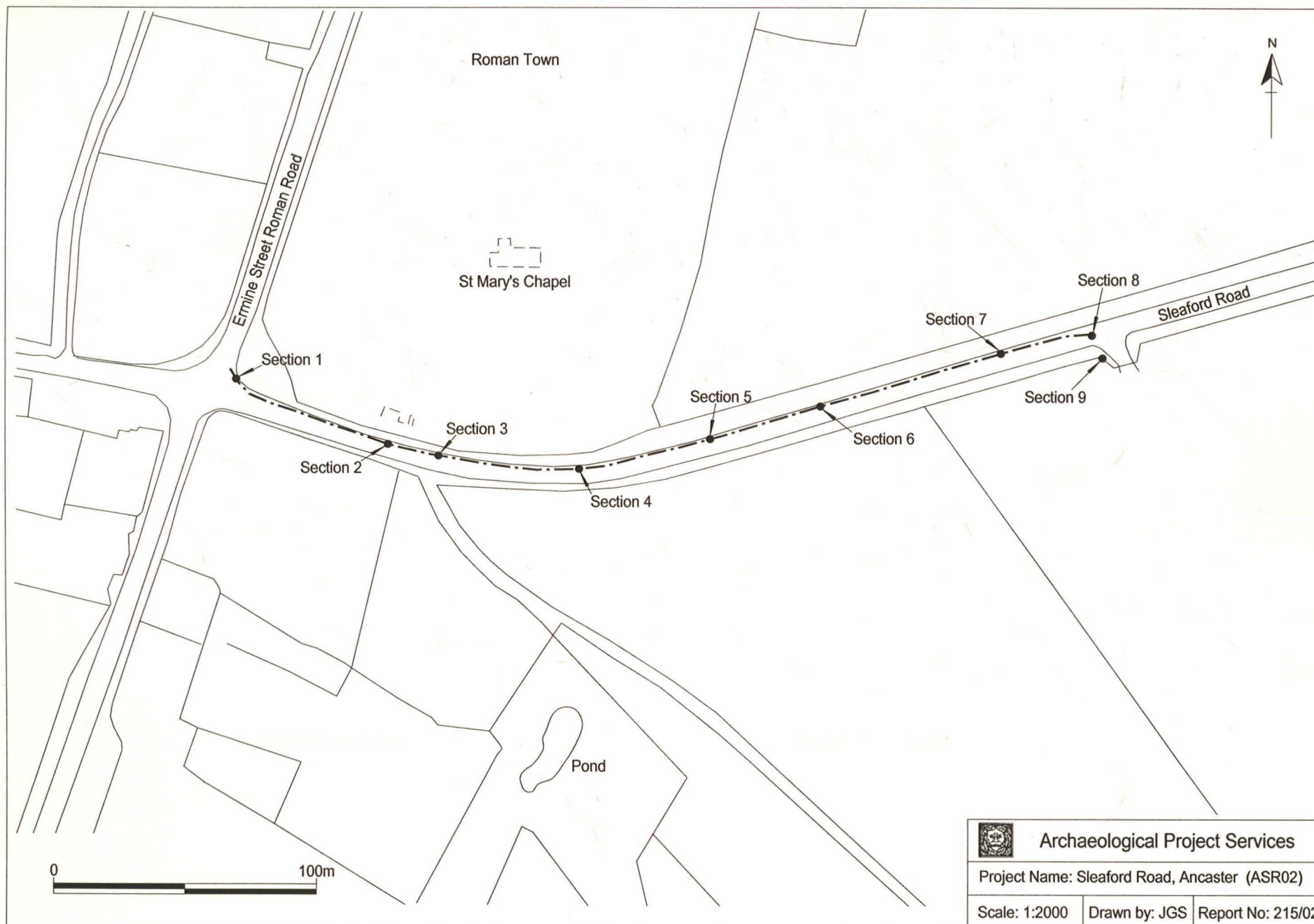
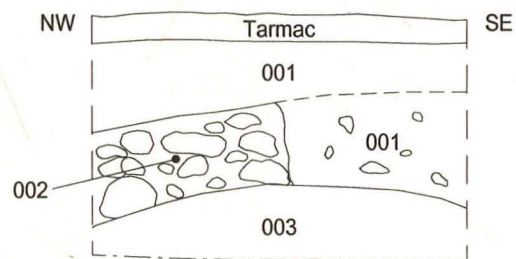
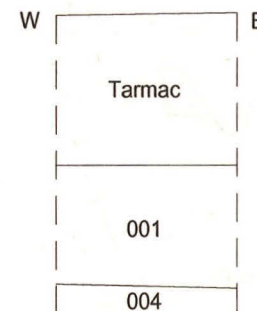


Figure 3 Plan of the pipeline showing section locations.

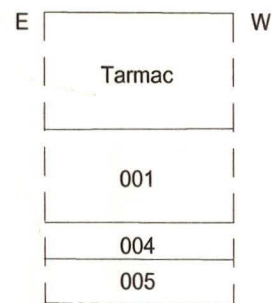




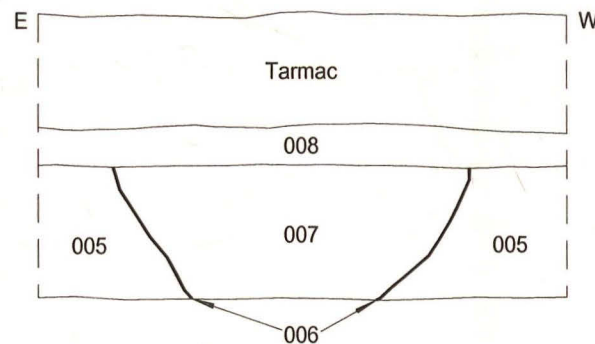
Section 1 Northeast Facing



Section 2 South Facing



Section 3 North Facing



Section 4 North Facing




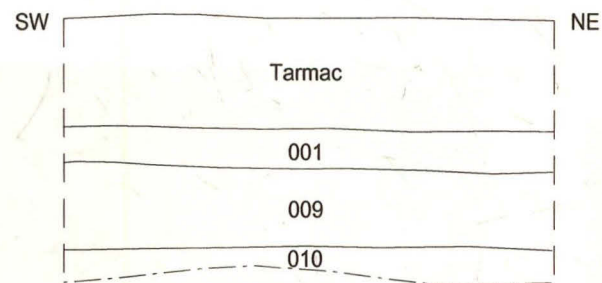
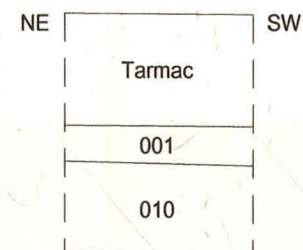
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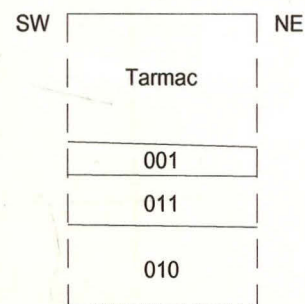
Figure 4 Sections 1 to 4.



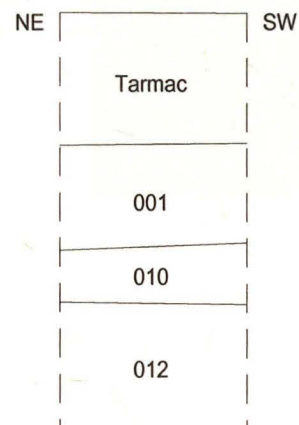
Section 5 Southeast Facing



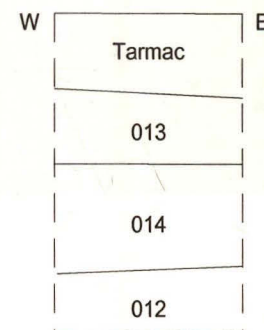
Section 6 Northwest Facing



Section 7 Southeast Facing



Section 8 Northwest Facing



Section 9 South Facing



Archaeological Project Services

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Scale: 1:20

Drawn by: JGS

Report No: 215/02

Figure 5 Sections 5 to 9.





Plate 1 General view of pipe trench, looking east.



Plate 2 Northwest end of limestone spread (002), looking southwest.





Plate 3 Southeast end of limestone spread (002), looking northeast.



Plate 4 Ditch (006), looking south.



## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Number	Section	Description	Interpretation
001	1, 3, 5 & 6	Mixed Tarmac and stone fragments.	Road makeup.
002	1	Compact, light grey/yellow limestone rubble, c. 0.25m thick and extends for 3.5m.	Possible demolished building.
003	1, 3, 4, 5 & 6	Soft, mid reddish brown silty sand, more than 0.30m thick.	Natural drift.
004	2 & 3	Compact, light yellow-grey limestone rubble, c. 0.10m thick and c. 60m in extent.	Possible road makeup.
005	3 & 4	Soft to firm, mid reddish brown silty sand, with occasional limestone fragments, c. 0.01m thick and c. 28m in extent.	Natural drift.
006	4	Linear cut, 0.90m wide and more than 0.35m deep, with sloping sides, oriented approximately north-south.	Ditch.
007	4	Soft, mid reddish brown sand, with occasional small pebbles.	Fill of (006).
008	4	Very compact, light whitish yellow, limestone gravel and powder, c. 0.10m thick.	Possible road makeup.
009	5	Compact, light yellowish brown brick rubble, with frequent limestone fragments, c. 0.20m thick and up to 21m in extent.	Possible road makeup.
010	5, 6, & 7	Soft, light to mid yellowish brown silty sand, with occasional limestone fragments, 0.25m thick.	Natural drift.
011	6, 7 & 8	Compact, light whitish yellow limestone gravel and powder, up to 0.30m thick.	Possible road makeup.
012	8	Compact, light whitish yellow limestone.	Possible natural bedrock.
013	9	Soft, mid to dark blackish brown silty sand, with occasional tarmac fragments, c. 0.20m thick.	Topsoil.
014	9	Soft, mid blackish reddish brown, silty sand, with occasional limestone fragments, c. 0.3m thick.	Subsoil.

## Appendix 2

### GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the period when Britain was occupied by peoples from northern Germany, Denmark and adjacent areas. The period dates from approximately AD 450-1066.
Bronze Age	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
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 interpretation 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].
Crop mark	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological or geological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
Cut	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.
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Fill	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) that become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
Iron Age	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
Huvvers	The space between the land of different proprietors or occupiers, an unenclosed field the grass of which is mown for hay.
Layer	A layer is a term used 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
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
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.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.
Tilth	Land which had been ploughed in the previous autumn and was ready for sowing in early spring.



## Appendix 3

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- |    |   |                            |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| 14 | - | Context records            |
| 1  | - | Photographic record sheets |
| 2  | - | Drawing sheets             |
| 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:

LCNCC : 2002.243

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:

ASR02

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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