



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

## **Tattershall Thorpe, North Road Farm**

*NGR: TF 222 608*

*Site Code: NRFT04*

*LCNCC Museum Accn. No.:2004.1*

## **Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

**Report prepared for**

**Woodhall Spa Sand and Gravel Ltd**

**by**

**G. Tann**

**LAS Report No. 720**

**February 2004**

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# **Tattershall Thorpe, North Road Farm Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment**

NGR: TF 222 608

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## **Summary**

*Land intended for future sand and gravel extraction is known to have contained a complex of archaeological features, although no artefacts have been reported. The cropmarks of at least one enclosure, pits and a field system, were recorded in 1979 close to a small stream, but there are indications that the archaeological site extended across most or all of the proposed quarry extension. The undated site is assumed to be of prehistoric, or possibly Romano-British date. The area lies in the Bain Valley, close to the River Witham, in a zone which has produced several significant Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age sites. Ploughing of the sandy soils within the study area may have truncated or removed archaeological horizons, and the extent of any survival needs to be determined before preservation or mitigation aspects can be considered.*

## **Introduction**

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in November 2003 by Woodhall Spa Sand and Gravel Ltd to prepare an archaeological desk-based assessment of land in Tattershall Thorpe affected by proposed future sand and gravel extraction (Figs. 1 and 2).

The purpose of the desk-based assessment is to identify the archaeological potential of the proposed quarry extension by collating available existing information, and to recommend any necessary mitigation.

## **The Proposed Quarry Extension**

LAS was asked to assess a block of land to the north of North Road Farm, located to the west and the north of an existing active quarry. The western limit of most of the area is a small stream, flowing on the eastern edge of Fox Covert and a thinner plantation belt to its south. Land to the east of Fox Covert is included within the assessment, but gravel deposits there are thought to be thinner. All the land assessed is at present farmland.

## **Planning Background**

The archaeological desk-based assessment was requested by Woodhall Spa Sand and Gravel Ltd for internal consideration. At present, most of the land assessed is not owned by Woodhall Spa Sand and Gravel Ltd, but purchase is being considered.

## **Methods and Sources**

A desk-based assessment of the site, within the context of a 0.5km radius, was undertaken in order to identify and assess archaeological constraints. Research was conducted by G. Tann between

December 8th 2003 and January 7th 2004. The following sources were consulted and available information researched:

- Lincolnshire County Council County Archaeology Office (Sites and Monuments Record, National Mapping Programme overlay of cropmarks, parish files, previous reports)
- Lincolnshire Archives Office (Manuscript maps, Ordnance Survey maps, other documentary and published sources)
- Lincoln Central Library Reference Department, Local Studies Collection (published sources, Ordnance Survey maps)
- LAS collection of air photographs

### **Topography and Geology**

Land levels vary between about 11m OD on the western edge of the proposed quarry extension, to about 12m OD beside the farm track. A deep-cut minor watercourse flows southwards along the western edge of the area. There are indications from field boundary arrangements that a smaller NE-SW aligned watercourse has been partially culverted at the SW corner of the area. Land to the east of the site has been quarried and is at a lower level.

A borehole survey was conducted across the site in 1989 by Site Investigation Services (borehole logs supplied by the client). The boreholes were 7m deep, and encountered sands and gravels above clay, with chalky gravel beneath. Topsoil deposits were thickest at the NW corner of the proposed extraction area, where 0.7m of 'dark brown sandy topsoil with traces of gravel' was recorded in Borehole 12. Elsewhere, the topsoil thickness was about 0.3-0.4m.

### **Archaeological and Historical Background (Fig. 3)**

Previously recorded sites and findspots are listed in the Lincolnshire Sites and Monuments Record. These have been allocated Primary Record Numbers (PRNs) and these are used in the text.

#### ***Prehistoric***

The gravel soils beside the River Bain are known to have been exploited throughout the prehistoric period, and the angle between the Rivers Bain and Witham contains several occupation and farming sites. Gravel working in Kirkby on Bain and Tattershall Thorpe parishes has exposed archaeological remains, and since the late 1970s various archaeological investigations have been undertaken prior to quarry extensions. This work has included air photographic reconnaissance, in July 1976 and 1979, which recorded marks in the ripening crops. Within the area of the proposed quarry extension is a series of rectangular enclosures with rounded corners, which appears to be a field system pre-dating the medieval period, east of the plantation belt. Other cropmarks, of smaller curvilinear and circular enclosures and post-hole/pit arrangements, seem to be earlier than the field system, and probably mark a prehistoric or Romano-British occupation site with hut circles. The recorded features lie on the lower ground near the stream, but extend partly up the slope (Pls. 1-3). Cropmarks of archaeological



features are also recorded on the quarried land east of the farm track. The palimpsest of cropmarks is confused by features which are probably of geological origin, and others from post-medieval drainage and ploughing.

Four archaeological excavations have provided an indication as to the type of archaeological features which are present in this area, and the potential for recovery of artefacts and environmental remains.

The nearest excavation was 200m SE of North Road Farm, in 1979, when the site of an early/middle Iron Age ovoid enclosure with two concentric ditches (SMR 43556) was being removed by quarrying (Chowne 1980). This enclosure had first been recorded in July 1977, extending over an area 220m x 170m, and crossing the northern end of Annpasture Lane (Everson 1980). The 5m wide ditches were about 2m deep, and about 16m apart. They produced quantities of organic material, including a peat layer in the outer ditch. The few artefacts found were all above the peat, and included pottery and a triangular loomweight. Part of a beehive quern was found nearby during topsoil stripping. Further excavations were conducted here in 1986, east of Annpasture Lane (Seager Smith 1998). Remaining parts of this site have been designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

During December 2003, a fieldwalking survey and evaluation trenching exercise was conducted by LAS on a 8ha site SE of Annpasture Lane, slightly further from the North Road Farm proposed quarry extension. Analysis of the results of this evaluation is in progress, but the finds have included one Mesolithic flint flake, and 31 Neolithic/Bronze Age worked flints (Britchfield 2004).

LAS has also conducted evaluations and excavation to the west of the River Bain at Kirkby on Bain, 1.8km NE of the present study area (Field and McDaid, forthcoming). This work has established a remarkable density of prehistoric worked flint, and suggests that Neolithic features may be found in ideal conditions.

The Kirkby on Bain results add to the detail provided by excavations at the NE corner of Tattershall Thorpe parish in 1981 and 1984 (Chowne 1993). Neolithic and Bronze Age pits, post-holes and undated hearths were recorded, but no building plans were established with confidence. Irregular pits were excavated which were tentatively interpreted as either tree root disturbances or flint quarries. The difficulty in recognising archaeological features in a sandy soil disturbed by heathland root activity, rabbits and ploughing, is common to this area.

### **Roman**

The Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record contains an entry for a Roman site at Tattershall Thorpe (SMR 40130). The SMR locates the site around the farmyard of New Farm, following the lead of the Ordnance Survey Field Investigator C.W. Phillips' in 1929. Phillips had attempted to pinpoint the location of 'two summer encampments' described in some detail by John Dyer (the Rector of Coningsby, c.1752). The descriptions were recorded in Camden's *Britannia*, and in



*Archaeological Review*, but the stated location "on flat moor bordering fens in Tattershall Park" could apply to land south and east of New Farm, closer to Tattershall Thorpe village (cited in Griffiths and Collcutt 1994, 9-10). In the early 1900s, a press article in Green's *Village Life* mentioned the 'encampments' but noted "all trace of them now appears to be obliterated" .

Persistent investigation has produced very little trace of Roman activity in the area. An interim report on the 1981 excavation near the River Bain noted three pits containing small quantities of Romano-British pottery, and backfilled with a sand different in nature to that filling prehistoric features (Chowne 1981). A grave (context 19) was described as that of a Roman bronzesmith, although this was reinterpreted subsequently as of Saxon date (Chowne, in Bradley *et al* 1993). A Roman pot containing 5-7,000 Roman coins (SMR 40152) was found in July 1982 during extension of a quarry formerly owned by Bain Aggregates. An archaeological site visit found further coins, but no archaeological features; the date range of the coins is from the mid-third century (White 1983).

### ***Saxon, Medieval and Post-Medieval***

The settlement of Tattershall Thorpe was originally within the parish of Tattershall. The 1086 *Domesday Survey* distinguishes between the two communities, referring to Tattershall Thorpe by the term *torp*, an Old Danish place-name element indicating a secondary settlement (Cameron 1998, 123). In 1086, land in *Torp* was held by the Bishop of Durham, the Bishop of Bayeux, and Eudo; the recorded assets included a church and mills (Foster and Longley, 1924). In the eleventh century, Tattershall Thorpe was in the administrative wapentake of Horncastle, but was later transferred to Gartree wapentake.

A single Saxon artefact, a bone thread-picker (SMR 40134), has been reported from the vicinity of the proposed quarry extension. This was found in 1974 in a charcoal deposit, close to the ground surface, on land east of North Road Farm which has since been quarried. Archaeological watching briefs by LAS on land close to New Farm, Tattershall Thorpe (200m west of the study area), have produced no evidence of Saxon or medieval activity. Recent fieldwalking of land SE of Annpasture Lane has produced a scatter of medieval sherds which probably derives from manuring of fields; a possible medieval horizon was also noted during evaluation trenching (Britchfield 2004). The Annpasture Lane site lies close to the Iron Age hillfort site, on a ridge of higher ground, and this may have affected its past landuse.

The earliest identified map to show the affected land in detail is a plan of the estate of Earl Fortescue, surveyed by J. Lighton and Son in 1867 (LAO CHAT 6/2). Unfortunately, the available printed plan incorporates revisions of 1887, and is less detailed than the Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1887 (OS 1891). Fields are numbered, but corresponding field names were not found during research for this assessment. The two plans depict a landscape of polygonal-shaped fields, which seem to represent post-medieval formal enclosure and subsequent sub-division or amalgamation; some of these blocks are marked on the Ordnance Survey 1" map, surveyed between 1818 and 1821 (OS



1824). Several boundaries form linear features crossing much of Tattershall Thorpe, and these are assumed to reflect watercourses or farm access tracks, rather than ancient estate boundaries. A track leads to the north of North Road Farm, along the course of the existing farm track. The most dominant linear boundaries may mark periodic advances in reclamation of land to the west of the River Bain. To the north of North Road is a block of smaller but more regular fields, extending northwards to one of the linear boundaries. This block is more likely to be of medieval or early post-medieval enclosures, predating the Enclosure Act of 1796.

The 1887 Ordnance Survey map marks two small ponds in the proposed quarry extension, alongside the western stream boundary (OS 1891). To the west of the stream are larger ponds south of Fox Covert (the broad plantation to the NW of the site); these ponds probably mark earlier sand and gravel quarrying, although the smaller examples in the corners of fields may have served as a water supply for grazing cattle or sheep.

The airfield at Tattershall Thorpe (known as RAF Woodhall Spa), opened in February 1942, and was operational until October 1945. It was reopened in about 1959, and finally closed in about 1967 (Hancock 1978, 129; Hancock 1985, 68). Two separate clusters of rectangular buildings shown on an Ordnance Survey map revised no later than 1948 were probably accommodation units or sheds used in association with the airfield (OS 1951). One of the clusters was outside the proposed quarry extension, close to the southern end of the thin plantation. The other was to the west of the farm track, and was linked to the western complex by a track beside a field boundary. Within the eastern complex were 21 structures, served by an access road. This group was not marked on the Ordnance Survey map published in 1956, which states it was based on revisions prior to 1930; this detail is almost certainly incorrect, and the clearance of these structures can probably be dated to between 1948 and 1956 (OS 1956).

Two adjoining structures are marked alongside the farm track 400m north of the eastern complex only on the 1956 map, but there is no indication as to their function (OS 1956). A different building is shown on the revision of 1971-3, one field further north (OS 1975). This building was probably a shed. Although the 1975 map does not mark the western airfield buildings complex, its access road and the sites of demolished buildings are visible on air photographs taken in July 1976. By July 1979, air photographs show that the site had been reinstated as cultivated land.

#### **Site Visit**

The area of the proposed quarry extension is accessed along the surfaced farm track leading from North Road through the farmyard of North Road Farm. Beyond the farm buildings, land to the east of the track has been removed by continuing quarrying by Woodhall Spa Sand and Gravel Ltd. Part of the hedgerow to the east of the track remains, with infrequent mature oak trees beside a hawthorn hedge. To the west of the track are cultivated fields.



The northern end of the area was not inspected, as gravel deposits there are shallower and less viable. The northern limit of identified commercially useful gravel deposits was under a leek crop, but no flint or pottery artefacts were seen during inspection of sample exposures of topsoil (Pl. 4). To the south of the leek field was a hedgerow of birch saplings and oaks, with a shallow dry ditch, with sugar beet growing in the field to the south. At the SW corner of the leek field was an area of rough vegetation, separating the field from a small stream which flows north-south alongside a narrow linear plantation which extends southwards (Pls. 5 and 6). To the NW of the rough ground was a larger wood (mapped as Fox Covert in the late nineteenth century). At the southern edge of this wood, and outside the proposed quarry extension, was a partly backfilled pond.

A depression at the western side of the area, in the sugar beet crop, was thought to be the remains of a smaller backfilled pond (Pl. 7). The field slopes up irregularly from damp ground along its western edge. The topography seen on the site visit suggests that the preponderance of recorded cropmarks along the western side of the proposed quarry extension may reflect protective alluvium cover alongside the watercourse. This part of the area did not seem favourable to occupation, and features here may be peripheral to an archaeological site on higher ground to the east.

To the south of the field with sugar beet is a flatter field with stubble to the east, and a band of uncropped land around its edge. In its SE corner are the remains of a brick and concrete building, apparently associated with the adjacent airfield (Pl. 8). A building in this position is not recorded on the mid-twentieth century Ordnance Survey maps which show a group of structures here. A contemporary concrete access road leads to the west, south of the open field boundary ditch (Pl. 9).

To the south of the access road was a field with a potato crop. The topsoil was readily visible, but no artefacts were seen (Pl. 10). Along the western edge of the proposed quarry extension, south of the access road, was a mature hedgerow with frequent oak trees; this continued for a short distance around the northern edge of the field (Pl. 11). To the south of the field, the irregular boundary incorporated willows, suggesting that parts have fossilised a former watercourse.

### **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**

The nearest scheduled ancient monument is the part-excavated site of a small multivallate fortified enclosure (SAM 29725; SMR 43556), SE of North Road Farm, and about 400m from the proposed quarry extension. The only listed building in the vicinity is the Grade II Blue Bell Inn, to the south of the village.

### **Hedgerows**

None of the hedgerows within or adjacent to the proposed quarry extension can be demonstrated on the basis of available documentary or cartographic evidence to predate the late nineteenth century.



### **Archaeological Potential of the Proposed Quarry Extension**

Air photographs from the 1970s show a complex of ditched features and pits within the proposed quarry extension, immediately east of the plantation belt. The recorded features lie on the lower ground near the stream, but extend partly up the slope. As cropmarks of archaeological features are also recorded on the quarried land east of the farm track, it is probable that other features were present but have been removed by ploughing.

Some of the cropmark features may be of geological or peri-glacial origin, and others are probably indicative of post-medieval drainage and ploughing. There are some cropmarks of undoubted archaeological interest (including a circular enclosure, which is of a different phase from a visible field system). On the basis of existing information, the cropmark complex probably represents a small part of a farming settlement which may have extended east of the farm track.

The visible cropmarks are on the lower, wetter part of the proposed quarry extension, where alluvium cover or heavy soils are most likely. These conditions are thought to have preserved features, while plough action in thinner and lighter soils higher up the slope has been more destructive. There remains limited potential for archaeological features to survive beyond the area of recorded cropmarks, but artefacts and enhanced magnetism from disturbed feature fills could be present.

### **Potential Archaeological Impact of the Proposed Quarry Extension**

Sand and gravel extraction will cause the total loss of any archaeological remains within the quarry, and the impact on the local water-table could affect waterlogged organic artefacts and environmental deposits in features close to the quarried area.

### ***Suggested Mitigation Measures***

The air photographic evidence of enclosures, ditches, and occupation features across the proposed quarry extension demonstrates that the site has been rich in archaeological features. It is unclear how much of this has survived farming over the past thirty years. A staged programme of investigation will be needed to quantify the extent of survival of both features and artefacts, and to assess the significance of the remainder.

A geophysical survey of the proposed quarry extension appears essential, as this should demonstrate where features are present, and provide a plan for interpretation. A targeted series of evaluation trenches will examine selected geophysical anomalies, seeking to recover dating material and to establish the extent of previous truncation. The results of the evaluation may prompt the exclusion of certain areas from any extension of the quarry (preservation *in situ*), or result in archaeological excavation of threatened features (preservation by record).

## Conclusion

Archaeological features are known within part of the assessed area, forming a small part of an extensive busy local prehistoric landscape. This assessment suggests that the cropmarks visible on 1970s air photographs are of enclosures, pits and field systems dating between the Neolithic and Romano-British periods, which have been protected from twentieth century plough damage by alluvium cover and wetter conditions. They appear to be associated with other cropmark features recorded on the land to the east which has since been quarried.

The complex of ditched features and pits may have extended across the assessed area, and evidence of this could still remain. Before targeting archaeological study to the western side of the area, geophysical survey and/or evaluation trenching should be used to establish if anything survives over the remainder of the area. The results of that assessment will allow the significance of this site to be gauged.

## Acknowledgements

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Illustrations were prepared by Mick McDaid. The report was collated and produced by Naomi Field.

Geoff Tann  
Lindsey Archaeological Services  
25th February 2004

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LAO CHAT 6/2 Plan of the estate at Tattershall Thorpe and Kirkby Super Bain owned by the Rt Hon. Earl Fortescue, surveyed by J. Lighton and Son 1867, revised 1887. Lincolnshire Archives.

OS 1824 Ordnance Survey 1:63,360 map Sheet 83. Surveyed 1818-21.

OS 1891 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map Sheet Lincs. 89 NW. Surveyed 1887.

OS 1906 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map Sheet Lincs. 89 NW. Surveyed 1887. Revised 1904.

OS 1951 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map Sheet Lincs. 89 NW. Surveyed 1887, revised 1904, with additions in 1946, 1947, 1948.

OS 1956 Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 map Sheet TF 26 SW. Revised pre 1930.

OS 1975 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map Sheet TF 26 SW. Surveyed 1971-2, revised 1973.

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#### **Air Photographs**

2957/30, 37-40 TF 224 603; PE 21.7.1979

2918/1, 2, 4-6 TF 221 608 - TF 221 604; PE 24.7.1976

#### **Archive Summary**

Correspondence

Photographs: colour prints, LAS film nos. 03/162/00a - 11a; 03/163/25-36



**APPENDIX 1**



## APPENDIX 1

### Previously Reported Archaeological Sites and Findspots

(Source: Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record)

SMR No.	NGR (all TF)	Description
40127	2270 6043	Mammoth and other Pleistocene period fossil remains
40129	2163 6022	Neolithic stone axe, found 1966
40130	2150 6080	Supposed site of Roman earthworks, recorded 1806 and 1929
40131	2140 6010	Neolithic stone axe, found pre 1973
40132	2180 6040	Neolithic stone axe, found pre 1973
40133	2143 6020	Neolithic flint axe, found pre 1973
40134	2258 6012	Saxon bone point thread picker, found 1974 in charcoal deposit
40136	2300 6040	Neolithic/Bronze Age flint
40143	2280 5990	Clay pits and bricks. Possible site of post medieval brick kilns
40144	2240 5930	Clay pits, post medieval pottery, bricks and tiles
40147	2310 5985	Dense scatter of Neolithic/Bronze Age flint, and cropmarks of ringditch
40152	2250 5980	Roman coin hoard in greyware jar, found during gravel extraction 1982
40429	2204 6070	Undated cropmarks of small rectangular enclosures
40430	2235 6032	Undated cropmarks of polygonal enclosure, and rectangular enclosure
40432	2054 6013	Undated cropmark of linear ditch system and enclosures. ?Field system
43332	2120 6055	Scatter of Neolithic/ Bronze Age flints
43397	215 612	RAF Woodhall Spa airfield
43472/43473	2137 6109	Neolithic/Bronze Age flint
43474	2117 6116	Post medieval enclosure
43556	2231 5982	SAM 29725; small multivallate hillfort/Iron Age defended enclosure, partly removed by gravel extraction. Partially excavated in 1979.
44043	214 606	Three worked Neolithic/Bronze Age flints from evaluation trench, 2001
44213	2278 6036	Cropmark of ?Bronze Age round barrow
44214	2271 6012	Cropmark of ?Bronze Age round barrow



**THE FIGURES**



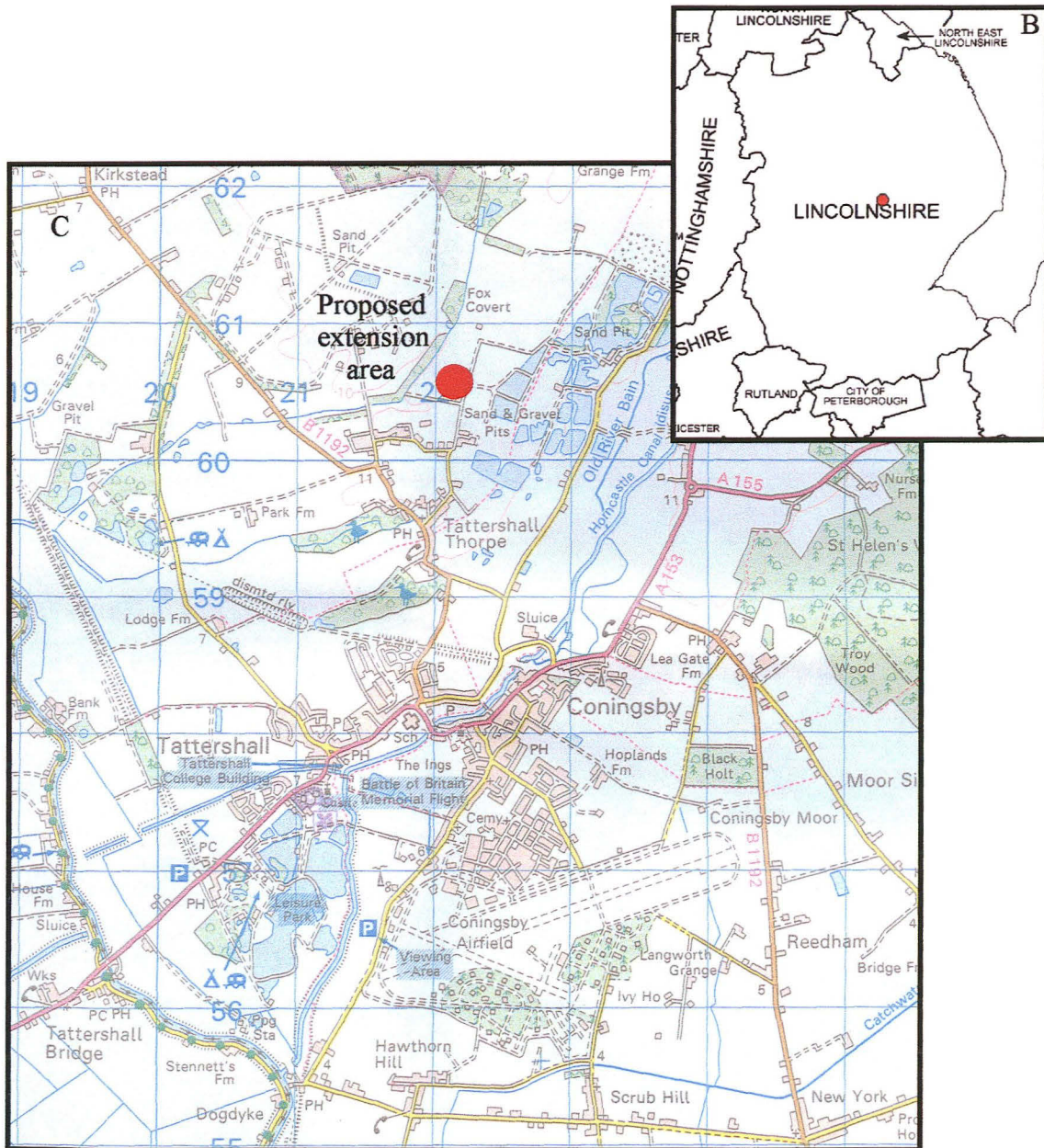
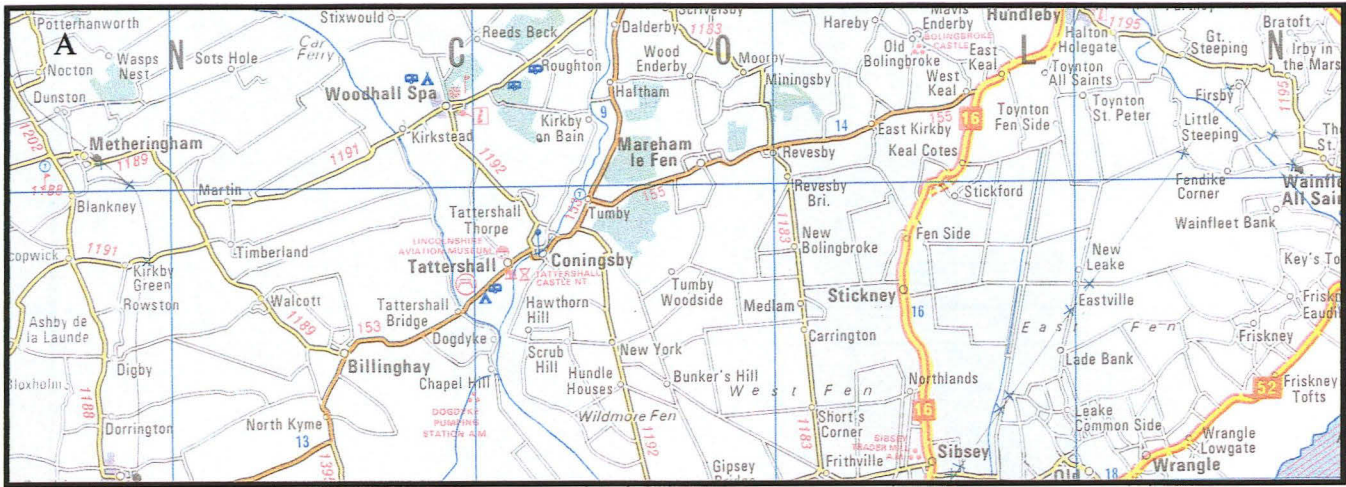
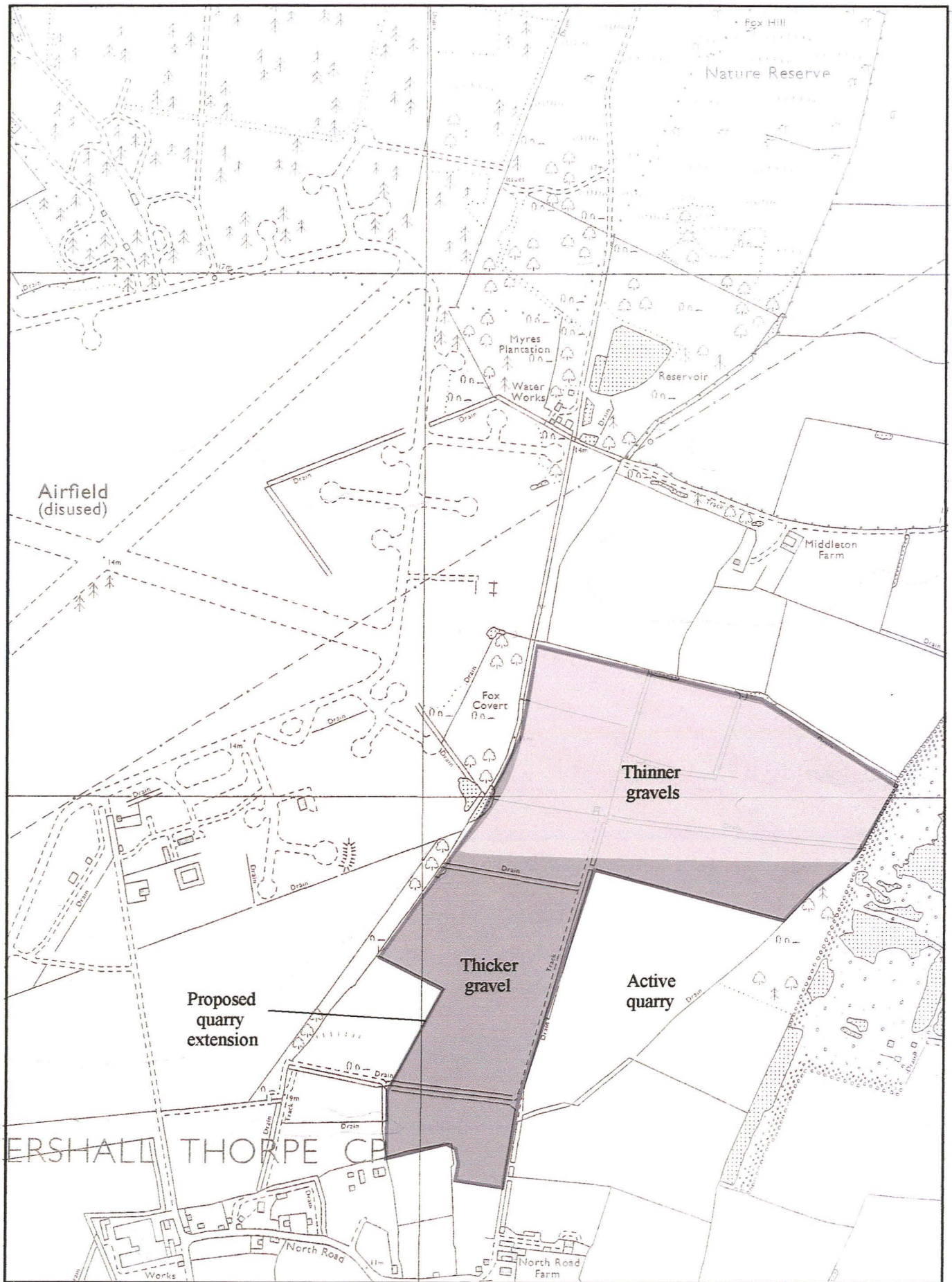


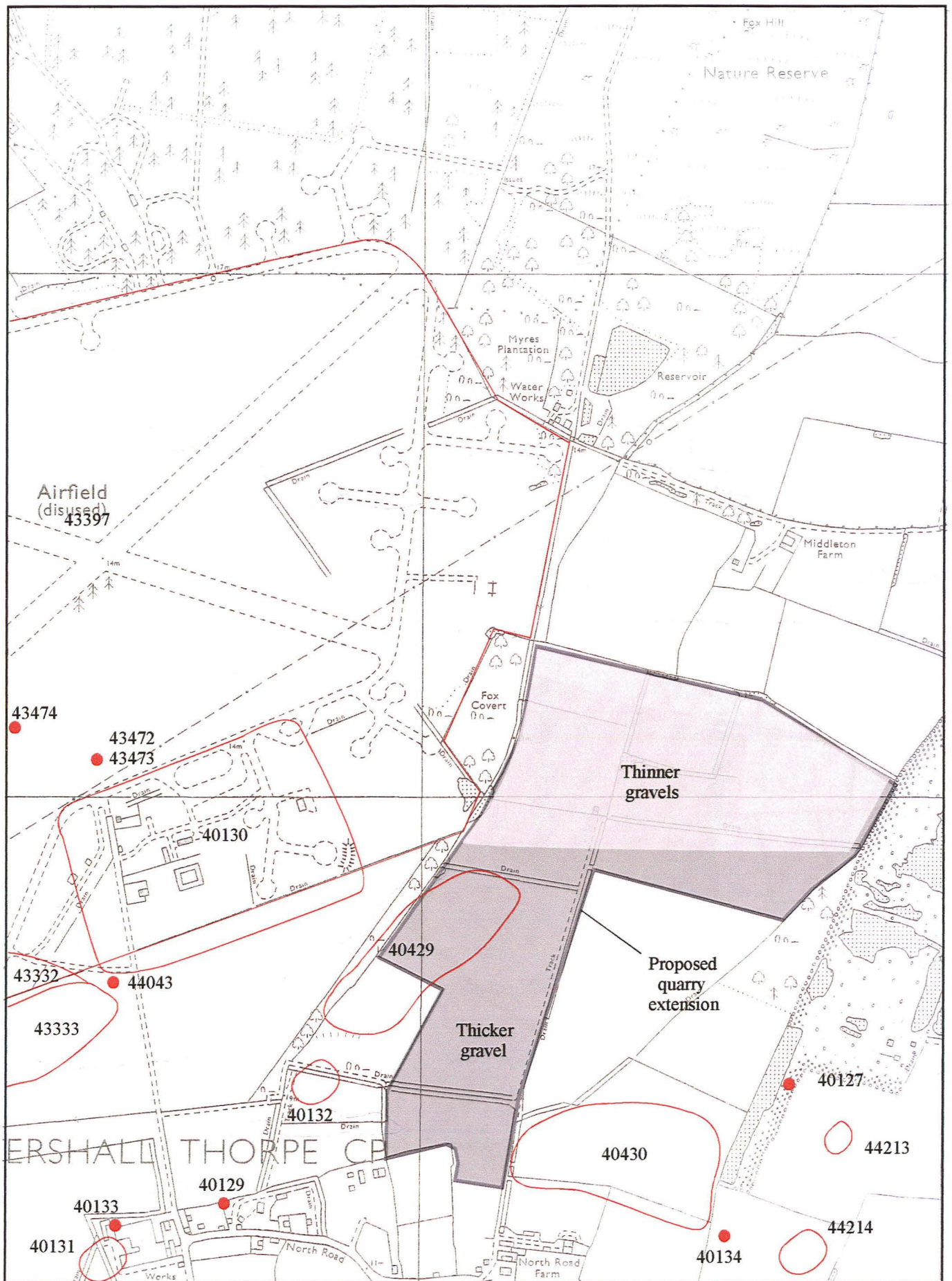
Fig. 1 Location of Tattershall Thorpe, based on the 2002 Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 Landranger map, Sheet 122. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 10002165).





**Fig. 2** Extent of the proposed Quarry Extension (based on the 1975 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey map, Sheet TF 26SW, using information supplied by the client. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).





**Fig. 3** Previously reported archaeological sites and findspots. (Information from Lincolnshire County Sites and Monuments Record, based on the 1975 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey maps, Sheets TF 25NW and TF 26SW. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).



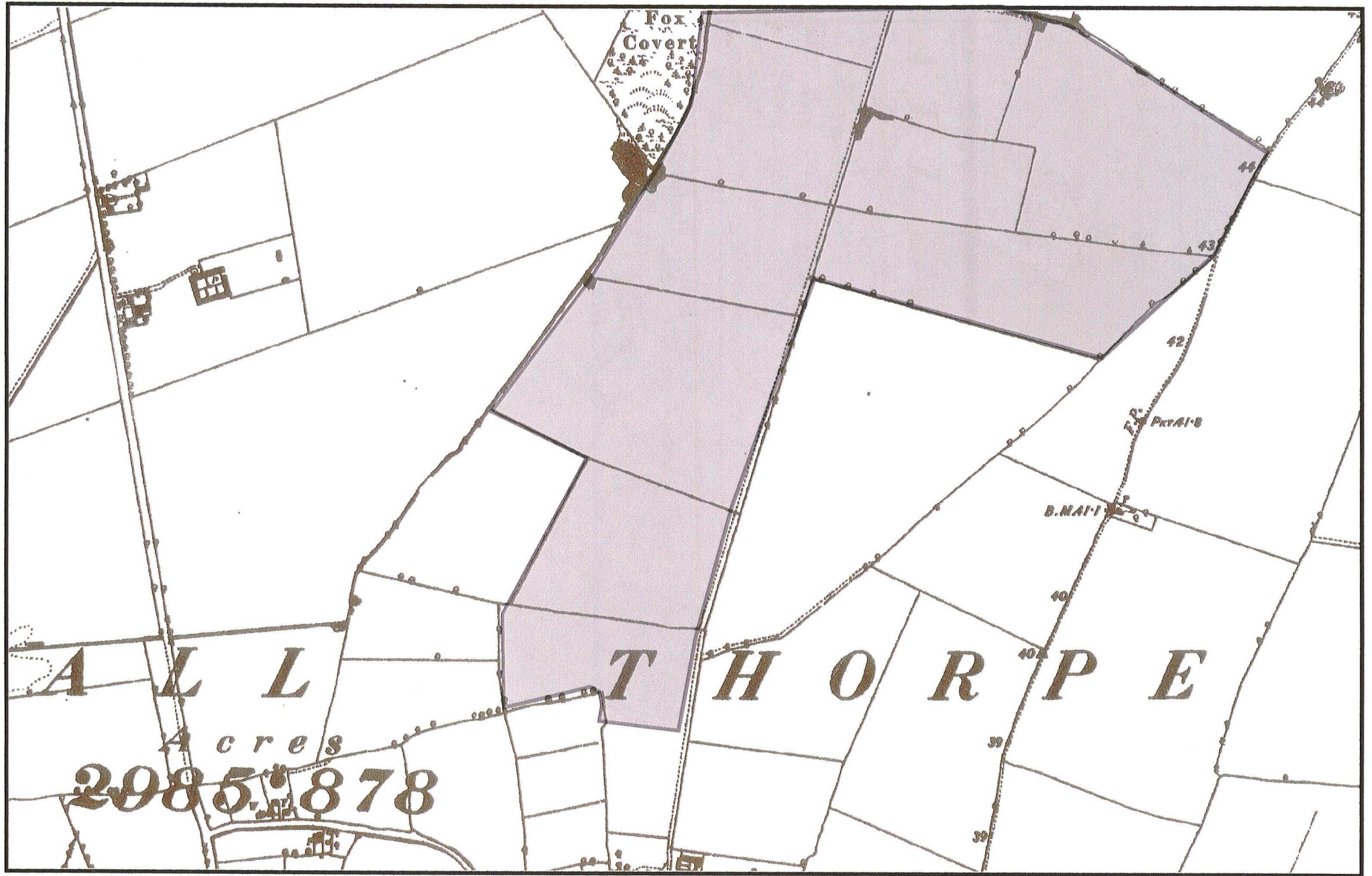


Fig.4 Extract from the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map surveyed in 1887 (OS 1891, reproduced at enlarged scale).



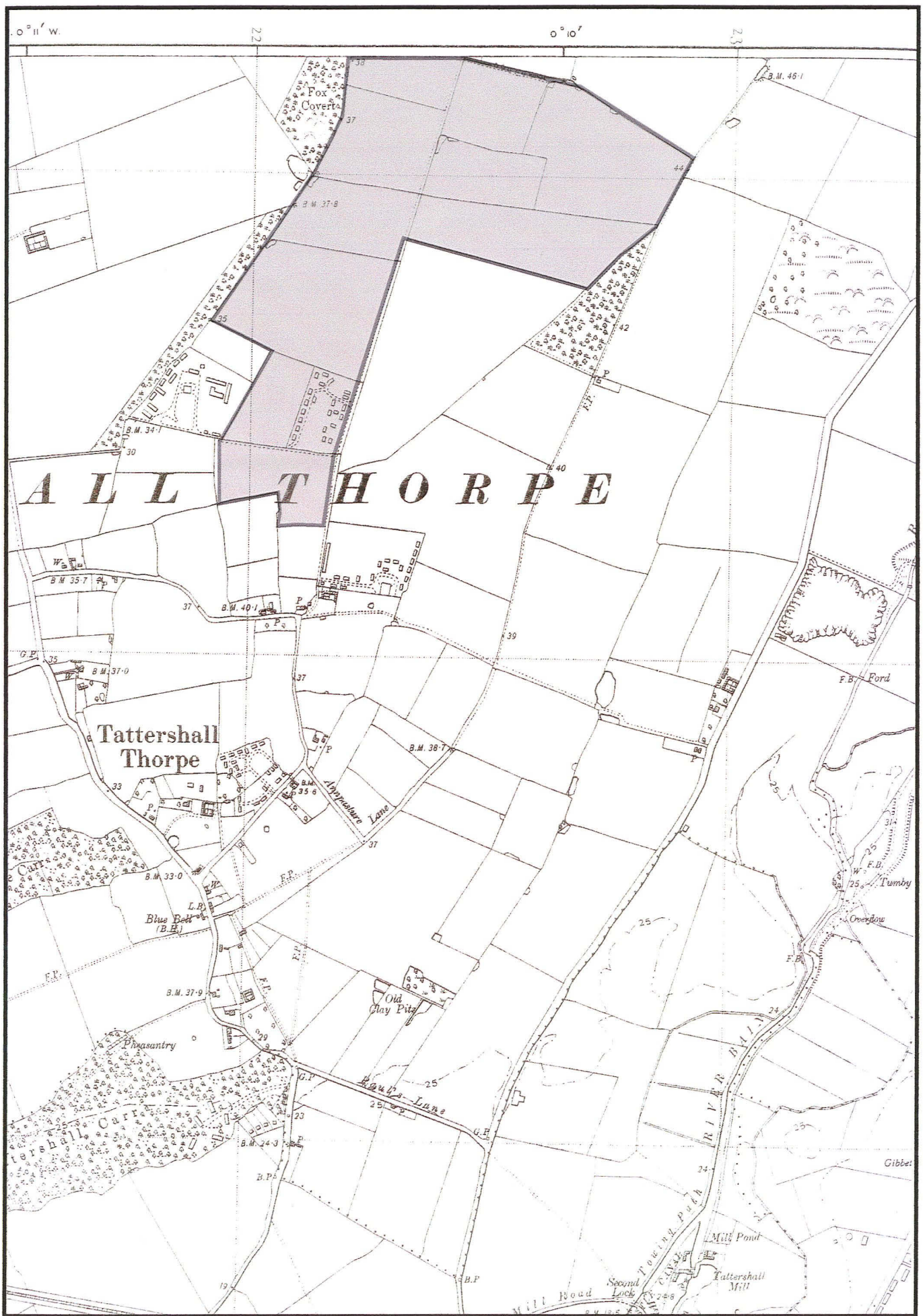
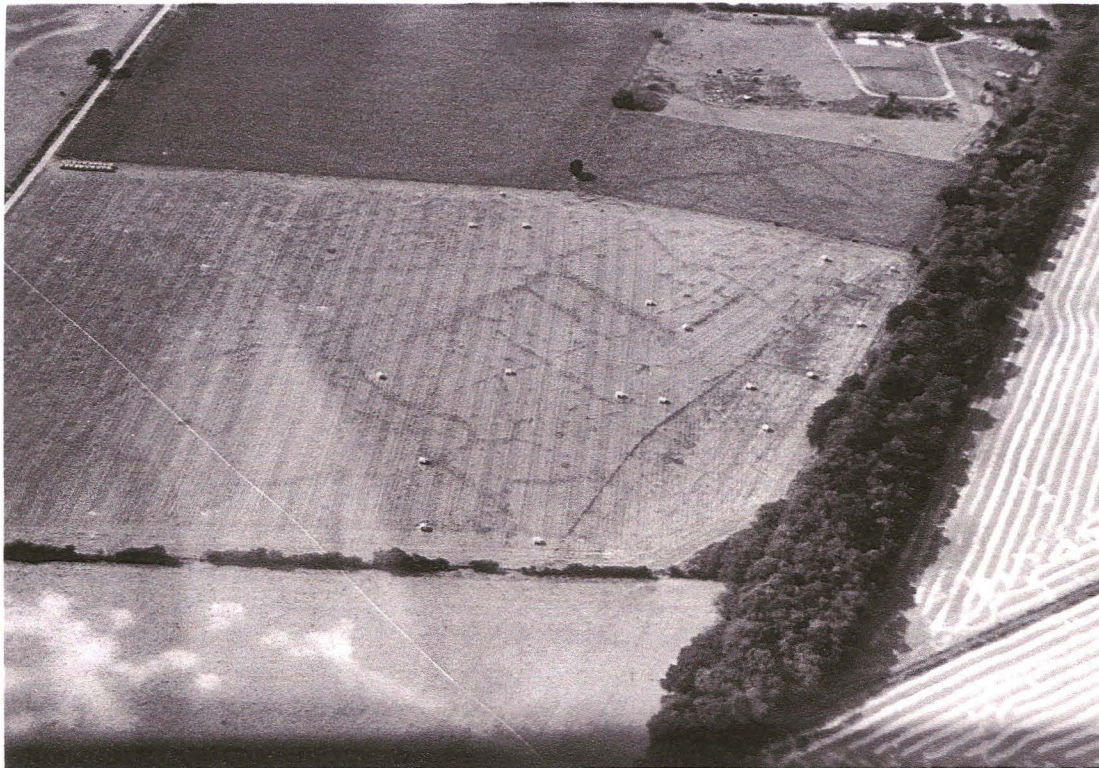


Fig. 5 Extract from the 1:10,560 Ordnance Survey map revised in 1904, with additions in 1946-8 (OS 1951).



**THE PLATES**





**PI. 1** Air photograph showing the centre of the proposed quarry extension, July 1976, looking south. The remains of a demolished cluster of brick huts is visible, top right. To the north and NE are cropmarks of ditches forming a field system, and pits. (TF 221 608; 2918/1, 24.7.1976, P. Everson. Copyright reserved).



**PI. 2** Air photograph showing the centre of the proposed quarry extension, July 1979, looking east, with Fox Covert bottom left. In addition to cropmarks of ditches forming a field system, and pits, at least one circular ditched enclosure is visible. (TF 220 607; 2957/40, 21.7.1979, P. Everson. Copyright reserved).





**PI. 3** Air photograph showing cropmarks of archaeological features east of the farm track (looking SE). These features have since been removed by the existing quarry. (TF 224 603; 2957/38, 21.7.1979, P. Everson. Copyright reserved).



**PI. 4** Land east of Fox Covert (looking north).





**Pl. 5** Rough ground south of Fox Covert (looking NW).



**Pl. 6** Watercourse at the western edge of the area, alongside a plantation belt (looking west).





**PI. 7** Depression at western side of the proposed quarry extension (looking north, with Fox Covert visible upper left).



**PI. 8** Brick shed, probably associated with RAF Woodhall Spa airfield (looking NE across the farm track).





**PI. 9** Concrete road, linking two demolished groups of wartime buildings, probably associated with RAF Woodhall Spa airfield (looking west towards the plantation belt).



**PI. 10** Panoramic view of the southern part of the area, looking SE towards North Road Farm (right).





PI. 11 Mature hedgerows around the western edge of the area (looking NW).