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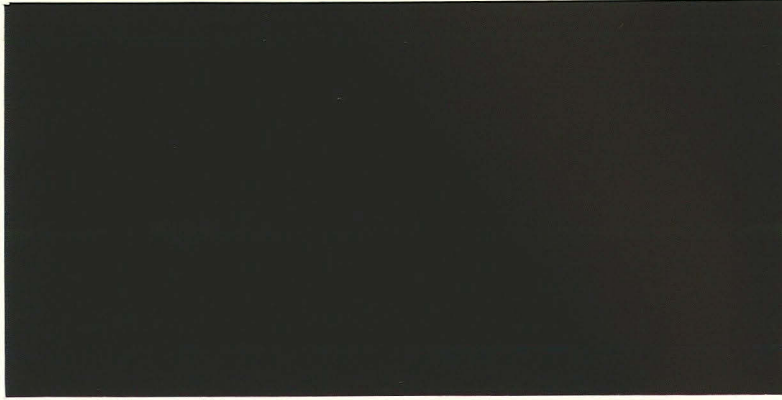
**39-43 Silver Street
Gainsborough**

Archaeological Evaluation

negative evidence



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Archaeology Section
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18.3.96



Event 43336
Source 48047

Negative

96/2

**39-43 Silver Street
Gainsborough**

Archaeological Evaluation

negative evidence

January 1996

(Accession No 172.95)



**West Yorkshire
Archaeology Service**

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West Yorkshire Archaeology Service
14 St John's North, Wakefield WF1 3QA

WYAS R305, 29th January 1996

39-43 Silver Street, Gainsborough Lincs.

Archaeological Evaluation

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Archaeological Evaluation of 39-43 Silver Street, Gainsborough, Lincs.

1.0 Summary

Client

Building Design Group,
6 Albert Road,
Tamworth.
B79 7JN

Objectives

To determine the origin, nature and extent of potential archaeological deposits within the perimeter of the site, bordered by Bridge Street to the west, Silver Street to the north, a car park to the south and the modern bus station to the east. The extent of modern intrusions into underlying subsoil deposits was also assessed.

Method

After demolition of the existing buildings, an archaeological watching-brief of the machine excavated foundation trenches was undertaken. Archaeological deposits or features observed within these trenches were recorded by scale drawings, written context sheets and sketches, and, photographically, using colour transparency and monochrome film.

Results

Although very extensive deposits were observed - at least to the depth of the foundation trenches - these appeared to consist wholly of alluvial river deposits. Some animal bone was recovered, but the origin of this material remains unclear. Evidence of significant modern disturbance was also encountered.

2.0 Introduction

The proposal (Ref. W33/562/95) to develop the site of 39-43 Silver Street, Grid Ref. SK815 897, see Fig. 1, Gainsborough resulted in a condition to undertake trial archaeological work to assess the archaeological potential of the site. Subsequent negotiations between the archaeological contractor, West Yorkshire Archaeology Service (WYAS), and representatives of the local Sites and Monuments Records Office allowed a Scheme for Archaeological Investigation to be prepared and agreed.

This document noted that the site of the proposed development potentially lay within the core of medieval Gainsborough, but that significant disturbance of archaeological deposits was not anticipated.

3.0 Methodology

An officer of the WYAS was on site to oversee the excavation of the foundation trenches from 5th-7th December 1995. A JCB mechanical excavator, with toothed digging bucket was used to excavate foundation trenches and a number of square pits for stanchions (hereafter referred to as 'stanchion-bases'), see Fig. 2, with the provision that excavation should cease if archaeological deposits were observed.

Any significant archaeological deposits or features were excavated by hand, and thereafter recorded, using the standard procedures set out in WYAS Context Recording Manual (Boucher 1995). Where deposits were thought to be of significant archaeological interest, samples were taken and sieved for ecofactual/environmental remains.

4.0 Results

4.1 The Site Layout (Fig. 2)

The location of the foundation trenches and stanchion-bases, denoted by the characters A-Y, is given in Fig. 2. The overall dimensions of the building under construction were 49.4 by 27.8 metres. The stanchion-bases were excavated to varying depths of c.1.0-1.5m, with dimensions in plan of c.1m x 1m up to c.1.2 x 2m. The footing trench was excavated to 0.4m in width and 0.5m depth.

4.2 The Recorded Deposits

The deposits identified within the exposed sections, contexts 001-008, below modern make-up material, were observed to consist mostly of gently sloping bands of silt, sand and clay. A number of the stanchion-bases, particularly E and F exposed the backfilled rubble of modern cellars. The foundation trench along the west side of the site also showed significant modern disturbance, due to service trenches.

The deposits, contexts 002-006, appeared to be very homogeneous in character with only moderate compaction, suggesting waterborne deposits of silt. Contexts 007 and 008 comprised bands of pure clay and sand clay which were observed between the more silted deposits 005 and 006. The present course of the River Trent, some 50m to the west of the site, clearly suggests the likely origin for this material. Nevertheless, a summary of the observed deposits was made by written contexts and sketches and contexts 001-008 are further summarised below:-

Context	Description
001	Pale orange brown, compact silt clay with sparse sandstone and iron-pan flecks
002	Mid greyish brown, compact clay silt sand with sparse charcoal flecks and pebbles
003	Dark greyish brown, friable silt sand with common charcoal flecks
004	Mid orange brown, compact sandy silt clay with frequent sandstone and charcoal flecks
005	Pale orange brown, compact silt with occasional small limestone and charcoal flecks
006	Dark greyish brown, compact silt sand with occasional charcoal flecks and iron-panning
007	Compact sand/clay banding with occasional small pebbles
008	Pale green, moderately plastic sand clay with sparse charcoal flecks.

5.0 Discussion

With the exception of context 001 (which was later identified as modern backfill), all the deposits identified in the above appeared to have resulted from earlier river activity. Deposit 006 appeared to lie at the base of the excavated sequence and was apparently the most extensive, with observed dimensions equivalent to that of the building under construction with a depth exceeding 0.7m. The deposits above this layer were observed to rise to the east ie. away from the course of the modern river to the west, and suggesting movement of the course of the river to the west.

Deposits 007 and 008, comprised a series of bands of sand and sand-clay, and appeared to represent an intermediate phase between periods of silting, with a build-up of river-bed deposits. The form of these deposits did not indicate any method of deliberate construction, such as might be expected for banks or flood defences.

Deposits 003, 004 and 006 contained disarticulated animal bone including a horse skull and sheep fragments. It was not possible to ascertain the source or date of this material, which appears to have resulted from past tipping into the river.

6.0 Conclusion

A sequence of deposits was observed to the depth of the excavated trenches consisting, essentially, of water-borne and lain deposits. The presence of animal bone suggests tipping in antiquity, but this is unsurprising, given the proximity the medieval town. In any case, this material can, by association with river movement, be considered to be *ex situ*. The archaeological significance of these deposits is therefore deemed to be low.

Acknowledgements

Project Management	C Moloney BA MIFA
Fieldwork	R Holbrey BSc
Report	R Holbrey BSc
Figures	S Frankland HND & R Holbrey BSc.

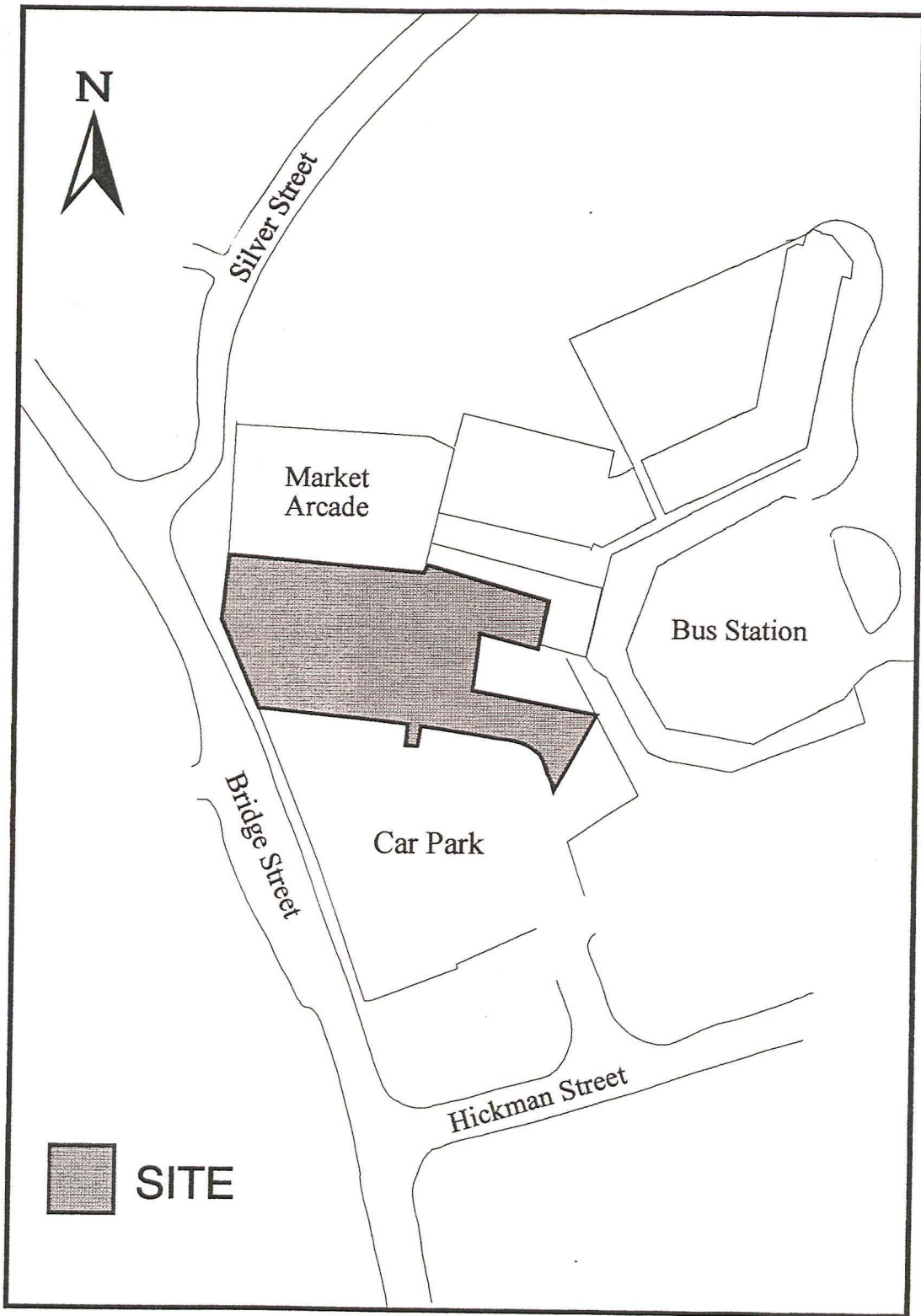
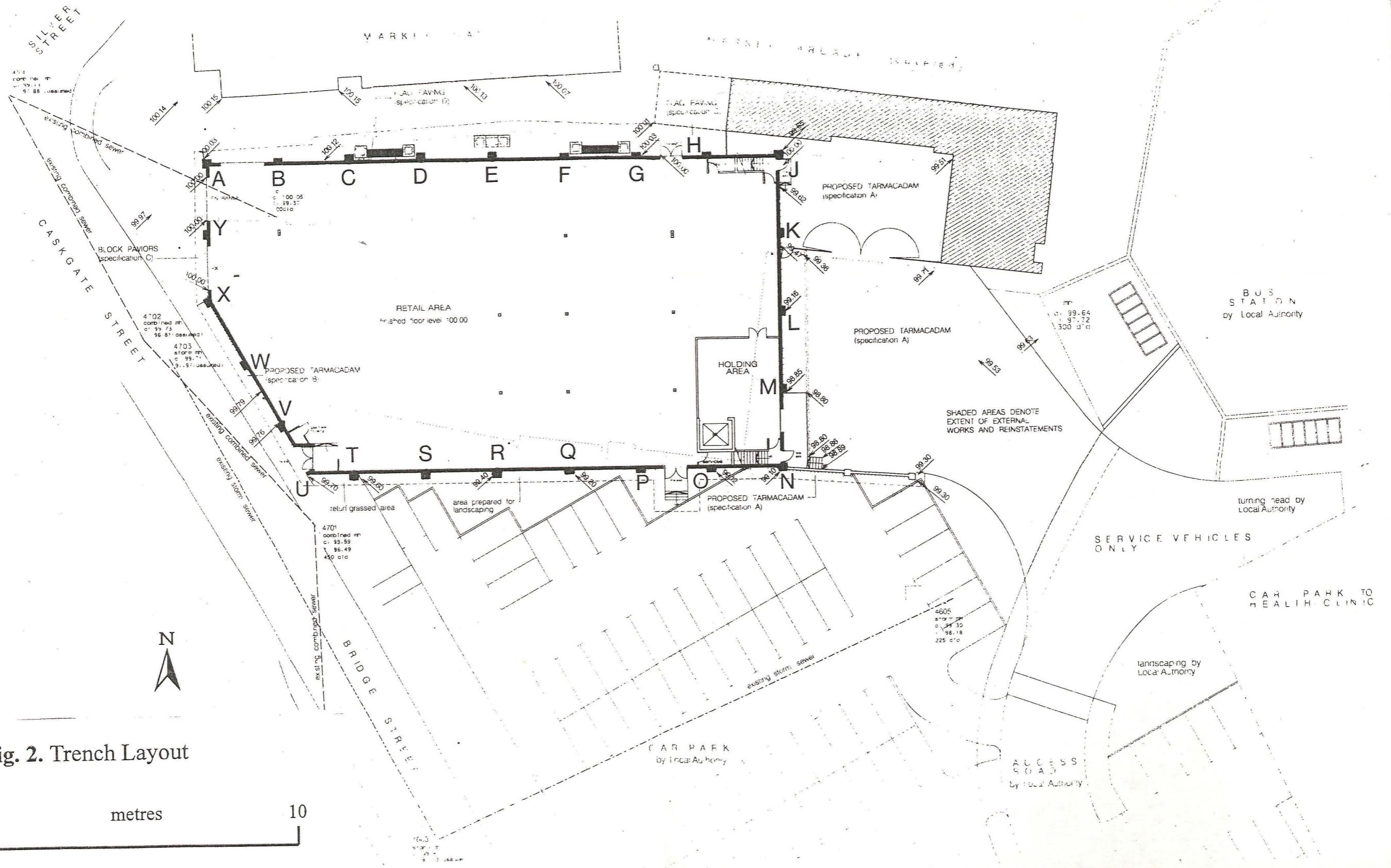
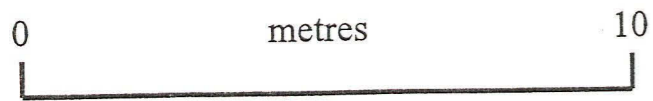


Fig 1. Location Plan (1:1250)

Fig. 2. Trench Layout



Appendix A

39-43 Silver Street, Gainsborough Lincs.

Summary Archive Report

A Watching Brief, undertaken at the above site, during the December, 1995, exposed a series of deposits thought to be connected with river activity. No archaeological deposits were identified. Nevertheless, eight written context sheets, contexts 001-008, were used to describe the deposits encountered on the site. These are summarised within the body of the main report and need not be further described here.

The site archive also contains a colour transparency (positives) and a monochrome contact strip; respectively Film Nos. 3259 and 3263. Photographic sheets, giving locational information for each frame are enclosed with these.

As no archaeological features were encountered, no drawings were made on site, and, as a consequence, the archive contains no hand-drawn plans or sections.