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96/12

NAVIGATION HOUSE
CARRE STREET
SLEAFORD

WATCHING BRIEF Sept. 1996

TF 0693 4580

**SUMMARY REPORT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS
AT NAVIGATION HOUSE, CARRE STREET, SLEAFORD.**

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INTRODUCTION

Archaeological investigations were carried out during soil engineering examinations of land around Navigation House, Carre Street, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. The monitoring was of two hand dug pits and a borehole. One further pit was due to be dug to supplement the results of the first two, though this was not examined archaeologically. The work was carried out on the 25th September 1996.

PIT 1

This pit was located adjacent to the front door of Navigation House and to the north. This measured 0.7m by 0.55m in size and was examined to a depth of 1.25m. The base of this pit was a stone surface upon which a brick wall had been built to form a channel. This channel disappeared beneath Navigation House to the east and into an area of loose material to the west. Initially it was thought to be the drain but on closer examination it is believed to have housed the mechanism associated with a weighing machine formerly located outside the building.

This channel had subsequently been backfilled with loose material comprising brick and tile of late 19th and early 20th century date in a dark to mid brown silty sand matrix. A large York stone flag was found within this fill and may once have been a covering to the channel.

As ground investigations could not proceed beyond the base of the pit, this pit was abandoned.

PIT 2

Pit 2 was located at the northern end of Navigation House and was approximately 0.4m by 0.4m in size and went to a depth of 0.3m. Deposits beyond this were examined by auger and the depths are somewhat approximate. Beneath a tarmac/topsoil type layer was a thick (c. 0.4m) layer of light brown sand with small fragments of crushed limestone. Excavation of this layer exposed the foundations of Navigation House. The foundation course did not exceed 0.3m in height and consisted of a stepped out Oolitic limestone flag upon which two courses of brick took the wall to the present ground level.

Below the light brown sand deposit was a layer of dark grey sandy clay, occasionally gritty in places and containing few fragments of brick and cockle shell. This layer of made ground gave way to a blue grey natural alluvial clay at 0.9m depth. This was thought by the soil engineers to continue to a depth of 2.2m whereupon river gravels are located.

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BOREHOLE

A borehole was sunk behind the Navigation House to record the deposits to a greater depth than could be achieved by hand excavation. Recording was difficult but the following observations were made. Below a layer of recent limestone hardstanding, made ground continued to a depth of 1m below the surface. Below this alluvial sands and clays were recorded to a depth of 2.1m whereupon river gravels were encountered.

Below the river gravels a peaty clay was observed that came down on to the cornbrash of the underlying geology at a depth of c. 3m.

CONCLUSIONS

No archaeological deposits earlier than those associated with Navigation House were encountered. These earlier layers represent deposits associated with the nearby River Sleaf. Naturally formed 'marshy' made ground represents the last layer occurring before Navigation House was built in 1838 (Pawley 1996, 74). A brick lined channel was built beneath the house and was once presumably associated with a former weighbridge on the site.

REFERENCES

Hunt, W.M., 1975, *The Sleaford Navigation Office*, Lincolnshire History and Archaeology 10

Pawley, S., 1996, *The Book of Sleaford*

Fig. 1 Location of Pits and Borehole, superimposed on Ordnance Survey map of 1887

(Scale unavailable)

