

97/15

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT BRIDGE FARM,
HORSESHOE ROAD, SPALDING,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SHR97)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT BRIDGE FARM,
HORSESHOE ROAD, SPALDING,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(SHR97)**

Work Undertaken For
Mr T. Ball

December 1997

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner

National Grid Reference: TF 2175 2113
City and County Museum Accession No: 306.97

A.P.S. Report No. 64/97

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken prior to the excavation of a rain water reservoir on land adjacent to Horseshoe Road, Spalding. The watching brief monitored the excavation of four test trenches.

The development site lies to the west of the town of Spalding in an area where sites and remains of the Romano-British period (AD 43-410) are known. In particular, cropmarks showing the route of a probable Roman road and outlying settlement and field systems are recorded in close vicinity to the site.

The investigation revealed deposits associated with recent activity on the site, notably the nursery and farm buildings. Apart from natural alluvial deposit, no early features were encountered.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

On the 1st November 1997, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of a rain collection reservoir on land adjacent to Horseshoe Road, Spalding. The archaeological work was commissioned by Mr T. Ball and carried out by Archaeological Project Services in accordance with a specification agreed by the Assistant Archaeological Officer, Lincolnshire County Council (Appendix 1).

An archaeological watching brief is defined as *'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological purposes within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed*

or destroyed.' (IFA 1994, 1).

2.2 Topography and Geology

Spalding is situated 23km southwest of Boston and 30km southeast of Sleaford, within the fenland of south Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The proposed development site is located c. 4km west of Spalding town centre as defined by the Market Place (Fig. 2). Situated at a height of 4m on land alongside the South Drove Drain (National Grid Reference TF 2175 2113), the proposed development measures 24m by 11m and is on relatively flat ground.

Local soils are of the Wisbech Association, typically coarse silty calcareous soils (Robson 1990, 36). These soils are developed on young marine alluvium, usually salt marsh, tidal creek and river deposits, that overlie a solid geology of Oxford Clay (BGS 1992).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Spalding is situated in an area of known archaeological remains. Since at least 2000 BC the area has been subjected to a series of freshwater and marine inundations, resulting in the deposition of several metres of alluvium (peats, silts and clays). It is believed that two prehistoric stone axes recorded in Spalding area are recent imports into the area rather than local losses.

During the Late Iron Age and Romano-British period the former marshland stabilized, enabling settlement, agricultural and salt making activities. Cropmarks from around the Spalding district reveal a number of Roman road systems that appear to centre on Spalding, suggesting the likelihood of a settlement in the vicinity.

The Roman road system is best represented by the Baston Outgang, a gravel road that extends from Baston and has been traced by cropmarks to within 400m of the development (Hallam 1970, 30; Margary 1973, 235). Cropmarks have also revealed trackways and settlements branching off from the Baston Outgang road. The settlement features comprise regular enclosures and larger field systems with particular concentrations 400m to the north (Phillips 1970, 289).

At present no Saxon remains have been identified in Spalding. However, the place-name is derived from the 'Spaldas', a Saxon tribe referred to in the Tribal Hideage, an early taxation document, of the 7th century (Ekwall 1974, 432).

Medieval activity is largely restricted to the centre of Spalding 4km to the east. However, Monk's House, a former Grange of Spalding Priory is located 1.6km northeast of the development (SMR 22356).

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief, as outlined in the specification (Appendix 1), were to locate and record archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

The proposed development required the excavation of a single reservoir measuring 24m by 11m. Prior to the reservoir construction, four test trenches were excavated and monitored for archaeological deposits and features. Three trenches measured 17m in length (Trenches B, C and D) and a single trench was 8m long (Trench A). Following excavation by

mechanical excavator, the sides of all trenches were cleaned and rendered vertical. The depth of each deposit was measured from the ground surface. Each deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (Context number) with an individual written description. Sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. A photographic record was also compiled.

5. DESCRIPTION OF THE TRENCHES

Records of the deposits and features identified during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A list of all contexts with interpretations appears as Appendix 2. Two periods of activity were recognised:

- Group 1 Natural deposits
- Group 2 Modern deposits

The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Group 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposit was a layer of light brown sandy silt (004). This deposit was recorded for the base of all four trenches and identified as natural alluvium.

Group 2 Modern deposits

Overlying the natural silts (004) was a subsoil of brown clayey silt (003) with a thickness of 0.19m.

Sealing this subsoil in the four trenches was a layer of dark brown clayey silt (002). This layer, a topsoil, was 100mm thick and contained decomposing grass and charcoal fragments. This was overlain by 0.4m of brown clayey silt (001) that has been

interpreted as imported topsoil.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits (Group 1) indicate former alluvial sediments developed on reclaimed marshland.

Modern deposits (Group 2) begins with the development of a subsoil beneath a topsoil. This has since been buried by imported topsoil, possibly as an attempt to improve the ground for the nursery buildings now occupying the site.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations at land adjacent to Horseshoe Road, Spalding were undertaken as the site is located within an area of known archaeological activity, notably a complex Romano-British landscape, including fields, settlement and industrial sites.

No archaeological features were recorded. Deposits encountered suggest a limited amount of, mostly modern, activity at the site. Much of this is possibly associated with nursery and farm buildings now occupying the land.

No artefacts were recovered and the local site conditions would suggest that few environmental indicators would survive, other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish acknowledge the assistance of Mr T. Ball of Bridge Farm Nursery for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Gary Taylor coordinated the work and Tom Lane edited this report. Access to the County Sites and Monuments Record was

kindly provided by Mark Bennet of the Archaeology Section, Lincolnshire County Council.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Rene Mouraille
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

SMR Sites and Monuments Record

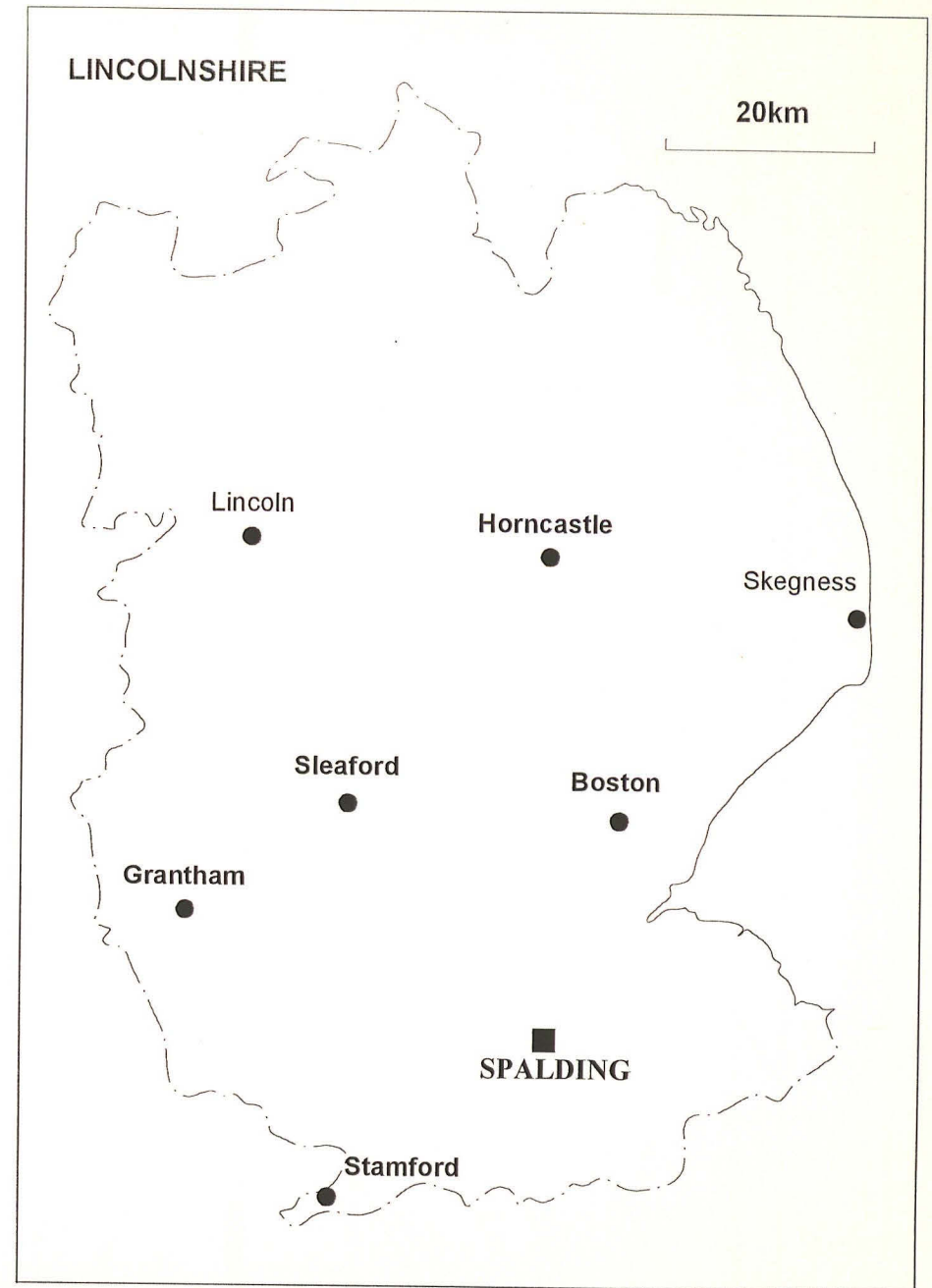
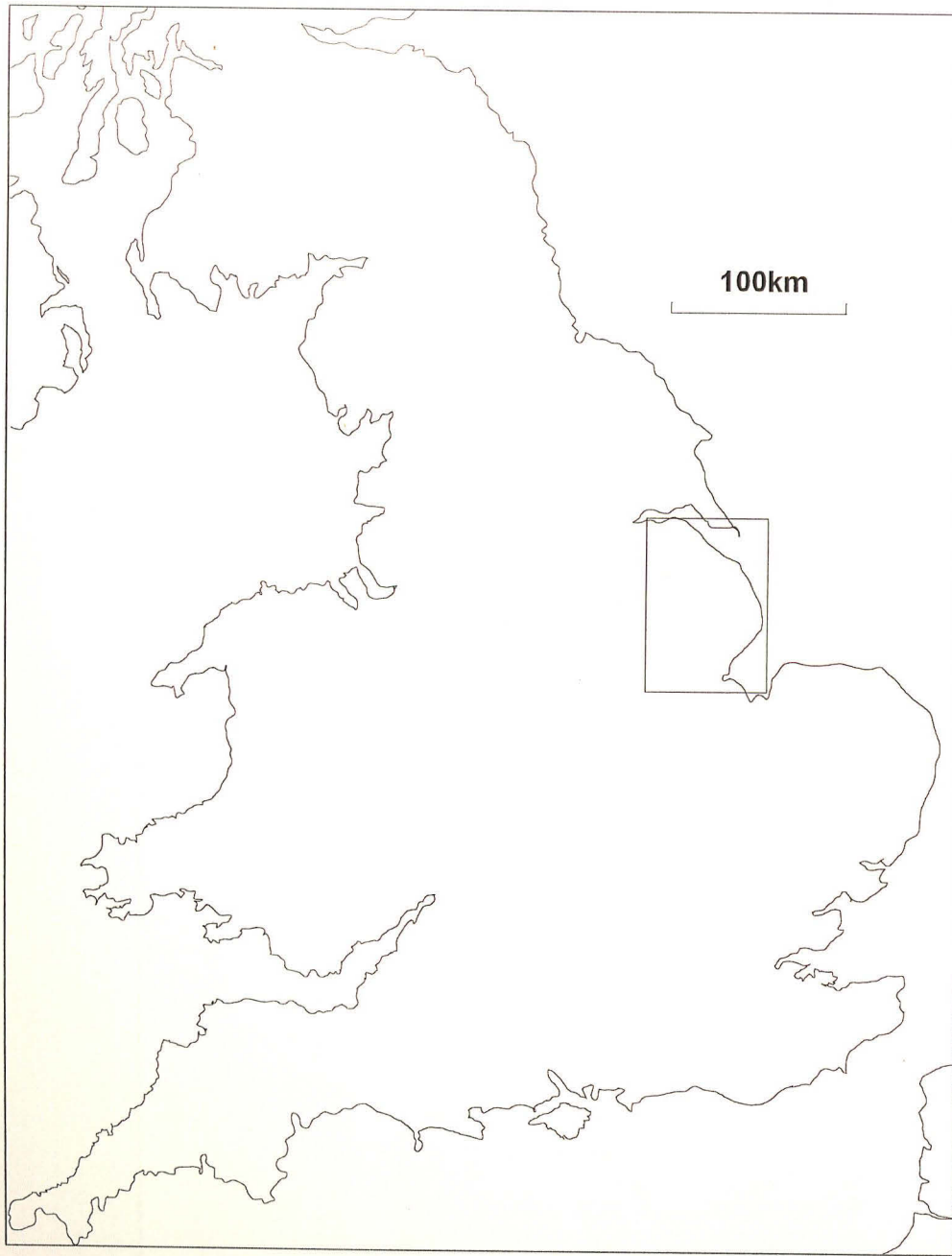


Figure 1 - General Location Plan

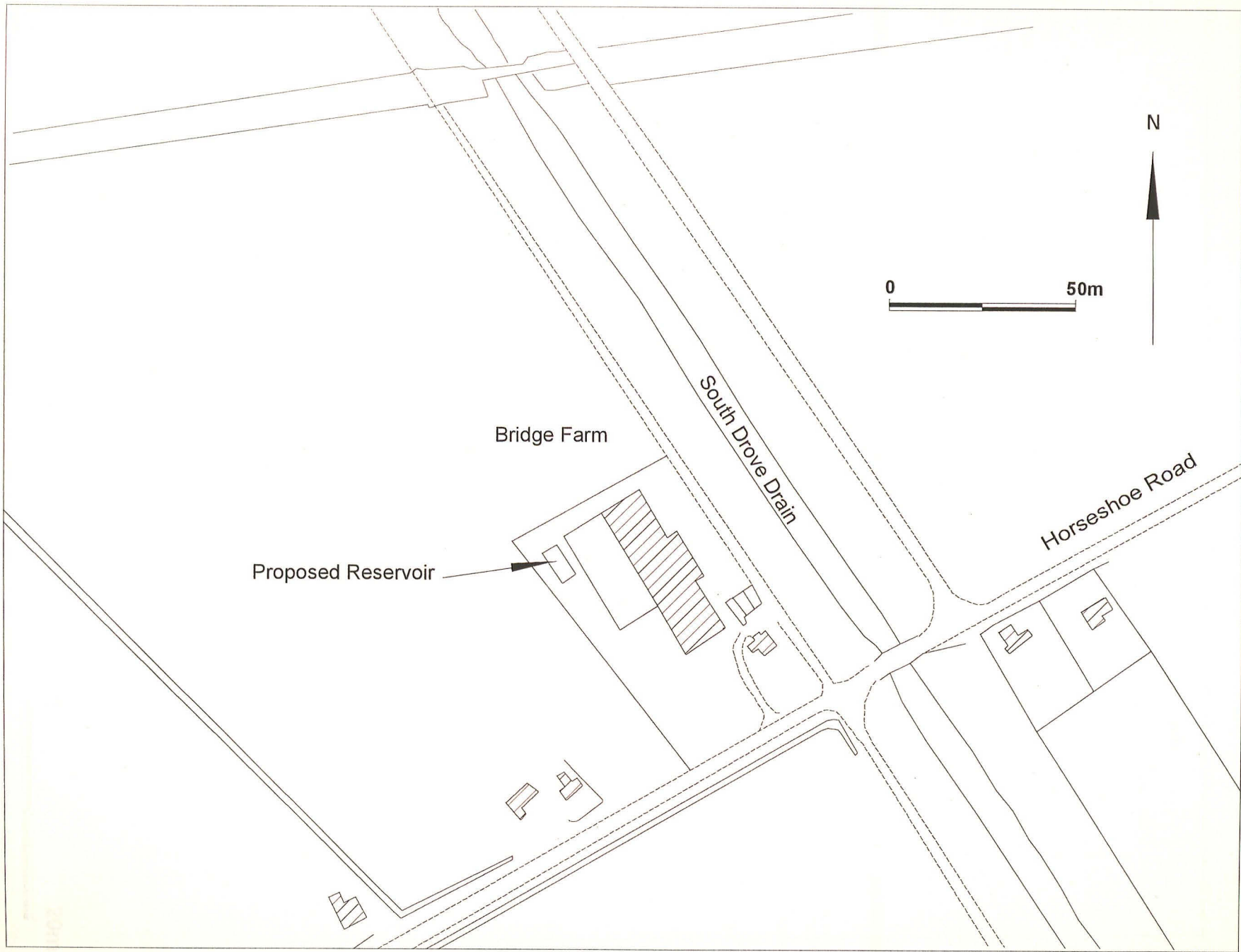


Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

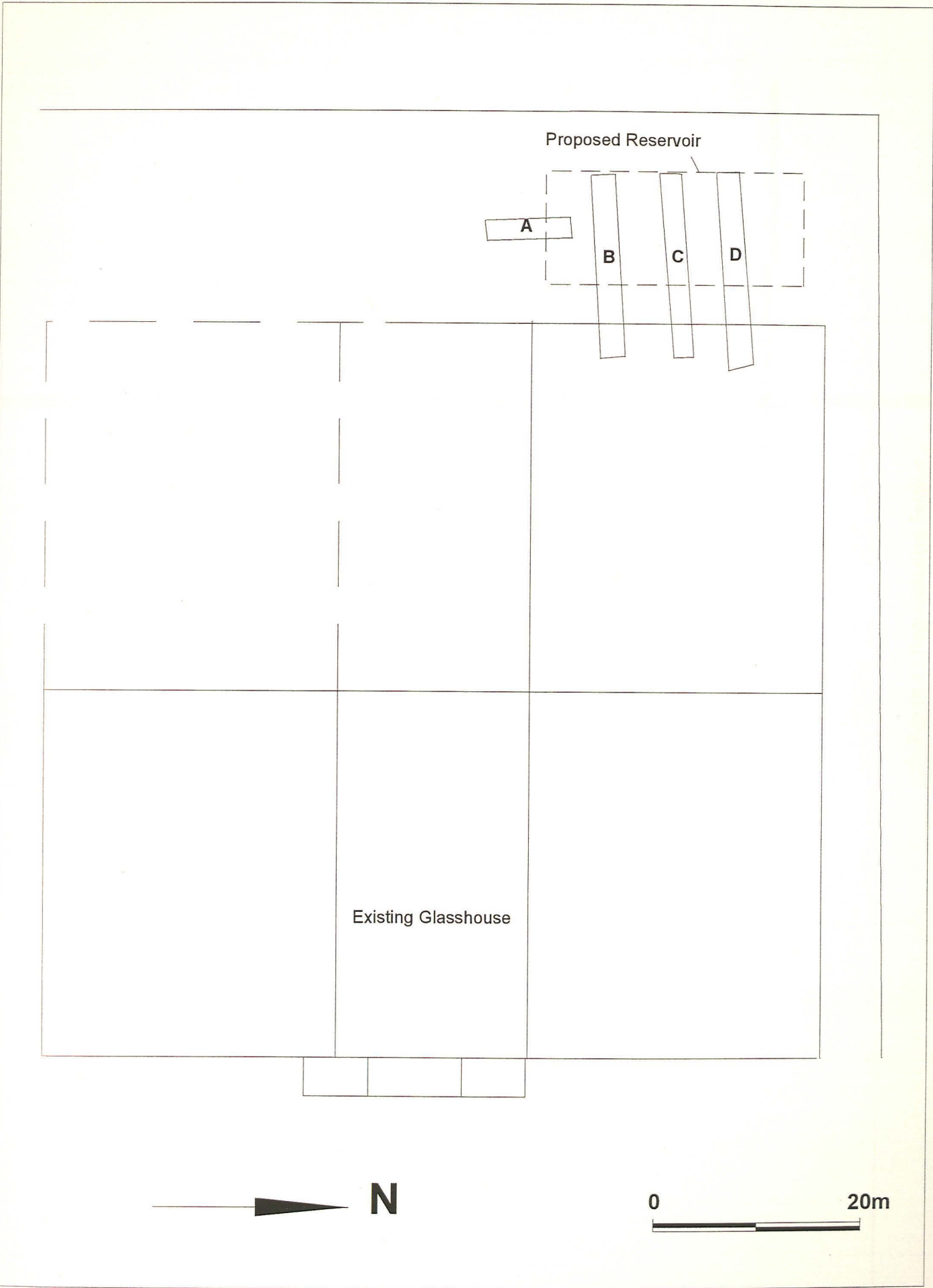
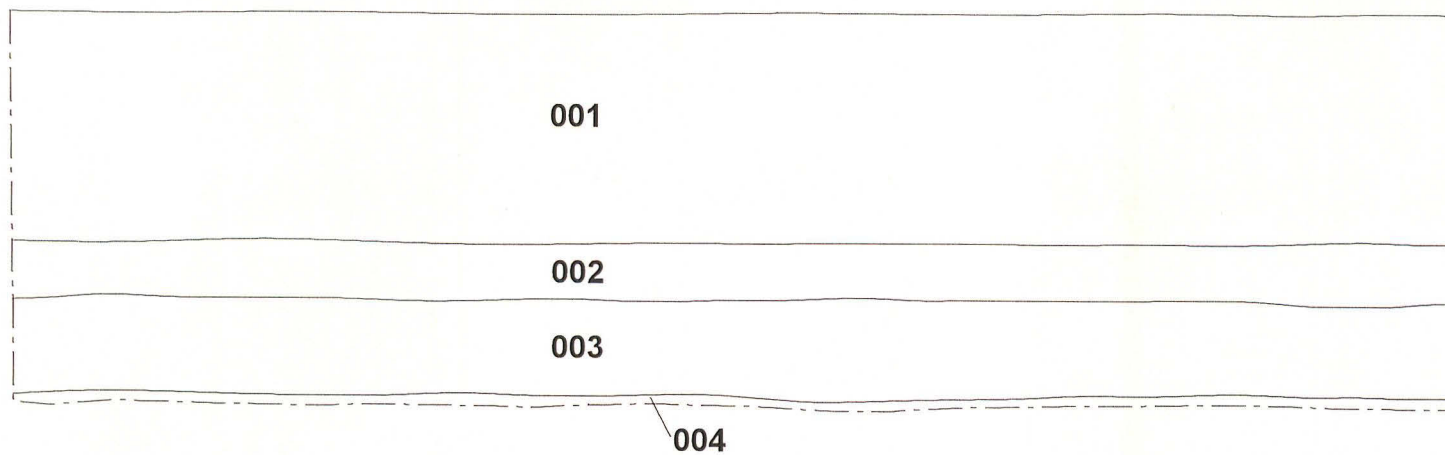


Figure 3 - Plan of Trenches



Representative section through deposits at Bridge Farm, Horseshoe Road



Figure 4 - Representative Section



Plate 1 : General site shot,
looking east



Plate 2 : Section 1

Appendix 1

LAND AT BRIDGE FARM NURSERY, HORSESHOE ROAD, SPALDING, LINCOLNSHIRE. SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 *A watching brief is required during the construction of a reservoir at Bridge Farm Nursery, Horseshoe Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire.*
- 1.2 *Cropmarks of possible Roman field systems surround the development site and a Roman settlement is known only 350m to the north.*
- 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 findings of the work. 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 the creation of a rain collection reservoir at Bridge Farm Nursery, Horseshoe Road, Spalding, national grid reference TF218211.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
- 2.3 Overview.
- 2.4 Stages of work and methodologies.
- 2.5 List of specialists.
- 2.6 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project.

3. SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 Spalding is located approximately 22km southwest of Boston and in the fens of south Lincolnshire. The site is located adjacent to Horseshoe Bridge to the southwest of the town and is bounded on the south by Horseshoe Road and to the east by South Drove Drain. The area is general agricultural land. The national grid reference is TF 218 211.

4. PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 It is proposed to construct a rain collection reservoir at the site. The County Council Archaeology Section have specified that an archaeological watching brief be undertaken during the groundworks.

5. SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.1 Spalding is situated in the fens of south Lincolnshire. The site and surrounding area is on fairly flat and level land and lies at approximately 3m OD. Soils at the site are Wisbech Association calcareous alluvial gley soils on stoneless marine alluvium (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 361).

6. THE ARCHAEOLOGY

- 6.1 Cropmarks of archaeological remains surround Horseshoe Bridge and occur elsewhere in the area. These

cropmarks probably represent field systems, with, in addition, a trackway only 250m east of the development area. Although undated, these field systems are likely to be of the Roman period and perhaps relate to a number of known Romano-British settlements in the area. The nearest known settlement, dating from the mid 2nd to early 4th century, lies only 350m north of the development area (Phillips 1970, 289; Map 4).

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 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

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

The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists.

8.2 Methodology

The watching brief will be undertaken during the ground works phase of development. In the first instance, three evenly-spaced strips, each *c.* 1.5-2m wide will be excavated by machine across the 20m length of the development area. If archaeological remains are encountered in these then the full development area will be stripped of overburden to allow archaeological recording.

The sections of the trenches will be observed regularly to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. The plans of the trench and features will be drawn at a scale of 1:20. Section drawings of the trenches and features will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets.

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

Throughout the watching brief a photographic record consisting of colour prints will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:

1. The site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the trench.
 2. groups of features where their relationship is important
- A. Should human remains be located the appropriate Home Office licence will be obtained before their removal. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department and the police will be informed.

9. POST-EXCAVATION

9.1 Stage 1

- A 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: the colour prints will be labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.
- B 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

- A Detailed examination of the stratigraphic matrix to enable the determination of the various phases of activity on the site.
- B Finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

9.3 Stage 3

- A On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the watching brief will be prepared.
- B This will consist of:
 - 1. A description of the archaeological setting of the watching brief.
 - 2. Description of the topography of the site.
 - 3. Description of the methodologies used during the watching brief.
 - 4. A text describing the findings of the watching brief.
 - 5. A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the watching brief findings.
 - 6. Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
 - 7. Sections of the archaeological features.
 - 8. Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
 - 9. Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
 - 10. Appropriate photographs of specific archaeological features.

10. REPORT DEPOSITION

- 10.1 Copies of the report will be sent to the client; the County Council Archaeological Sites and Monuments Record; and to South Holland District Council Planning Department.

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 published in Heritage Lincolnshire's Annual Report and a note presented to the editor of the journal of the Society for 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 Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council. They will be given seven days notice in writing before the commencement of the project.

14. VARIATIONS

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the Archaeology Officer, Lincolnshire County Council.

15. PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

- 15.1 The watching brief will be integrated with the programme of construction.
15.2 An archaeological supervisor with experience of watching briefs will undertake the work.

16. SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

- 16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principal 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 Saxon - City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit Medieval and later - H Healey, independent archaeologist
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, independent specialist
Animal Bones	Environmental Archaeology Consultancy
Human Remains Analysis	R Gowland, independent specialist

17. 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

Phillips, CW (ed), 1970 *The Fenland in Roman Times*, Royal Geographical Research Series 5

Appendix 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Context	Description	Interpretation
001	Firm mid brown clayey silt, containing charcoal, modern glass and plastic. 0.4m deep.	Imported topsoil/ levelling deposit
002	Firm dark brown (with a greenish grey tint) clayey silt, with charcoal flecks and decomposed grass, 100mm thick	Former topsoil
003	Firm mid brown clayey silt with occasional charcoal flecks, 0.19m deep	Subsoil
004	Firm light brown (with a white tint) sandy silt. No depth ascertained	Natural deposit

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 4 Context records
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 2 Scale drawings
- 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: .97
Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SHR97

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Appendix 4

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Saxon	Pertaining to the early part of the Saxon period and dating from approximately AD 450-650.
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> (4).
Cropmark	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological 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.
Droeway	Area between two parallel ditches that was designed specifically for the corralling of livestock.
Enclosure	Area bounded by a ditch along the majority of its perimeter.
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) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).
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.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.