



prospect archaeology

**Client:** Mr R. Linguard

# **Watermill Leisure Park Station Rd, Moortown, Lincs.**

**Archaeological Observation and Recording**

**Site Code:** MWLP 18

**LCNCC Accn No.:** 2018.2

**Local Planning Authority:** W. Lindsey District Council

**Planning Reference:** 136324

**NGR:** TF 08308 99317

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## **Watermill Leisure Park, Station Rd, Moortown, Lincs. Archaeological Observation, Monitoring and Recording**

### **1. Introduction**

Prospect Archaeology was commissioned by to undertake a programme of archaeological observation and recording by Watermill Leisure Park Ltd. The work was undertaken on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2018, under the terms of the written scheme of investigation approved by the planning archaeologist for West Lindsey District Council and complies with the *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, (Chartered Institute for Field Archaeologists 2014b) and the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Jennings 2016).

### **2. Site Location and Description**

Watermill Leisure Park is situated east of Moortown and the railway line, on the south side of the B1205 (Fig. 1). The proposed works to the leisure park lie some 400m south of the road, close to Black Wood and the parish boundary between South Kelsey and Holton le Moor. The site is in the Ancholme valley and was formerly part of the Caistor Moor. The ground was more recently agricultural land and is now rough grass, with two man-made ponds less than 30 years old.

### **3. Planning Background**

Planning permission was granted in November 2017 by West Lindsey District Council for the change of use of cafeteria/bar to office accommodation, change of use from touring caravan area to siting of 37 static caravans and 4 holiday homes. Four bio Klargestar units will be installed along an existing field boundary and it is the groundworks for the installation of these units that required archaeological monitoring and are subject to a number of conditions. Condition 3 was to be agreed before the development commenced:

*No development shall take place until a written scheme of archaeological investigation has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The local planning authority shall be notified in writing of the intention to commence the archaeological investigations in accordance with the approved written scheme, at least 14 days before the said commencement*

Conditions which apply or are to be observed during the course of the development:

*The archaeological site work shall be undertaken only in full accordance with the written scheme required by condition 3.*

*Following the archaeological site work referred to in condition 4 a written report of the findings of the work shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority within 3 months of the said site work being completed.*

*The report referred to in condition 5 and any artefactual evidence recovered from the site shall be deposited within 6 months of the archaeological site work being completed in accordance with a methodology and in a location to be agreed in writing by the local planning authority.*

#### **4. Archaeological Background**

Moortown is a hamlet in the civil parish of South Kelsey situated 3 miles south-west of Caistor which expanded around the Caistor Canal at the beginning of the 19th century. The Caistor Canal was built under an Act of Parliament of 1793 and opened in about 1794. It ran from the River Ancholme Navigation eastward towards the town of Caistor, but for financial reasons only about half was constructed and it terminated at the village of Moortown, a distance of about four and a half miles. 19th century Ordnance Survey maps show six locks, five of which survive. The highest of these, near the basin at Moortown, had totally disappeared by the 1960s together with any other remains of a wharf, basin, or buildings there might once have been at the village end. The Market Rasen Branch Railway was built as part of the wider Great Grimsby and Sheffield Junction Railway scheme, and opened in November 1848, with a station at Moortown east of the hamlet and west of the Watermill Leisure Park. This was a major factor in the cause of the closure of the canal in about 1860.

The sandy light soils of the Ancholme Valley were particularly attractive to prehistoric communities, and in the 1950s and 1960s local amateur archaeologists recorded and collected artefacts ranging in date from the Mesolithic through to the Neolithic periods.

North of Station Road, and north-west of the site, at TF 07539995 sherds of Beaker pottery, the chevron-incised rim of a food vessel, part of a pot with finger nail pinching, two barbed and tanged arrowheads, a large transverse arrow-head and several small scrapers were found in 1956 by C.A. Moulton, the local stationmaster. Other finds from this site include four leaf-shaped arrowheads.

The potential for further prehistoric remains to be found on the site of the leisure park was considered to be high. The potential for remains from later periods was considered to be very low.

## 5. Scope of Work

Four bio Klargestar tanks were to be installed at intervals along the field boundary north of the new static caravan park (Figs 1 and 2). The largest of these was 3.34m x 2.45m and 2.50m deep. The other 3 tanks were smaller but of unknown dimensions. It was proposed to strip all four sites to an extent measuring 3.50m x 2.50m in area, removing topsoil and subsoil to examine the area for surface finds and possible archaeological features.

The trench for the largest tank was to be excavated in spits down to the required depth, stopping at any point if an archaeological horizon was observed to enable the necessary recording. If no archaeological remains were present then, subject to the agreement of the heritage team at Lincolnshire County Council the excavation of the remaining three tank locations would not be further monitored. In the event a gully was found in the first trench and all trenches were monitored.

## 6. Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the programme of observation and recording was to record any archaeological deposits disturbed during groundworks at the above site and to provide results for accession to the Lincolnshire HER. The aims were

- To identify all features and artefacts exposed
- To determine the form and function of archaeological features encountered
- To recover dating evidence from the archaeological features
- To establish the sequence of archaeological deposits encountered
- To retrieve environmental evidence relating to the environment and economy of the site
- To interpret the archaeological remains encountered in the context of the known archaeology of the site and the surrounding area

## 7. Results (Fig. 3)

The topsoil and subsoil were removed by a mechanical excavator, fitted with a toothless ditching bucket under archaeological supervision. The machined surface was cleaned by hand to identify and establish the presence and extent of archaeological remains, and then excavated by hand. The trenches were numbered 1-4 from west to east. The soil layers and features were allocated context numbers, for ease of reference starting at 100 for Trench 1, 300 for Trench 3 and 400 for Trench 4. These are also shown on the accompanying figures.

### Trenches 1 and 2 (Plates 1-4)

The two westernmost trenches were excavated as a single operation, measuring a total of 5m in length by 2m wide, for the installation of the larger digester and one of the smaller tanks. The west end of Trench 1 was located 20m east of the road, and the east end of Trench 2 was 3m west of a new fence line. The trenches ran parallel with, and 3.4m south of the drain.

The whole of this area had been disturbed by moles. Topsoil 100 was a firm grey-brown silty sand, with pockets of lighter sand and up to 0.45m deep. It overlay subsoil 101, which 0.3m deep. Beneath this was a natural yellow sand 102, through which a north/south aligned drainage channel 103 was cut. It measured c.1.1m in width and c.0.3m in depth and its fill, 104, comprised a beige-grey sand within which were inclusions of modern plastic rubbish.

### Trench 3 (Plates 5-8)

Trench 3 was located 43m to the east of the new fence line and east of an old footbridge across the drain. The topsoil 300 comprised c.0.3m of mid-brown silty sand, heavily rooted and with some inclusions of plastic. Beneath this was subsoil 301, c.0.3m deep, comprising a compact dark grey silty sand with flecks of blue clay towards the bottom of this layer. Beneath the subsoil was 302, a 0.05m thick band of iron pan, below which was 303 a natural bright orange mottled sandy silt, c.0.3m thick but continuing beyond the limit of excavation. No archaeological features were present in this trench.

### Trench 4 (Plates 9-10)

Trench 4 was located 54m to the east of Trench 3. This contained a heavily rooted topsoil 400 comprising a mid-brown/yellow sand c.0.3m thick. This overlay a dark grey sandy silt 401, c.0.4m thick, beneath which was the natural 402, a bright orange mottled sandy silt. Cut through the natural sand 402 was an east-west aligned gully 403 measuring 0.8m wide on the east side of the trench, tapering to 0.45m wide on the west, perhaps terminating beyond the edge of the excavations. It was 0.3m deep and its fill 404, was a mixture of layer 401 and the natural 402. A possible small pit 405 was recorded in the north-east corner of the trench. There were no finds from either feature, and a heavy presence of rabbit disturbance was noted in this area.

## 8. Conclusions

Excavation of the three trenches for the bio Klargestar tanks revealed no features of archaeological significance, the gullies in Trench 1 and 4 being of modern origin. Despite the high potential of the area, there was no evidence for prehistoric features or artefacts.

## 9. References

CifA 2014a *Code of Conduct*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

CifA 2014b *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists

DCLG 2012 *National Planning Policy Framework*, Department of Communities and Local Government

Jennings, L. 2016 *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook*. Lincolnshire County Council.

Naomi Field and Kathryn Blythe

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## 10. The Figures



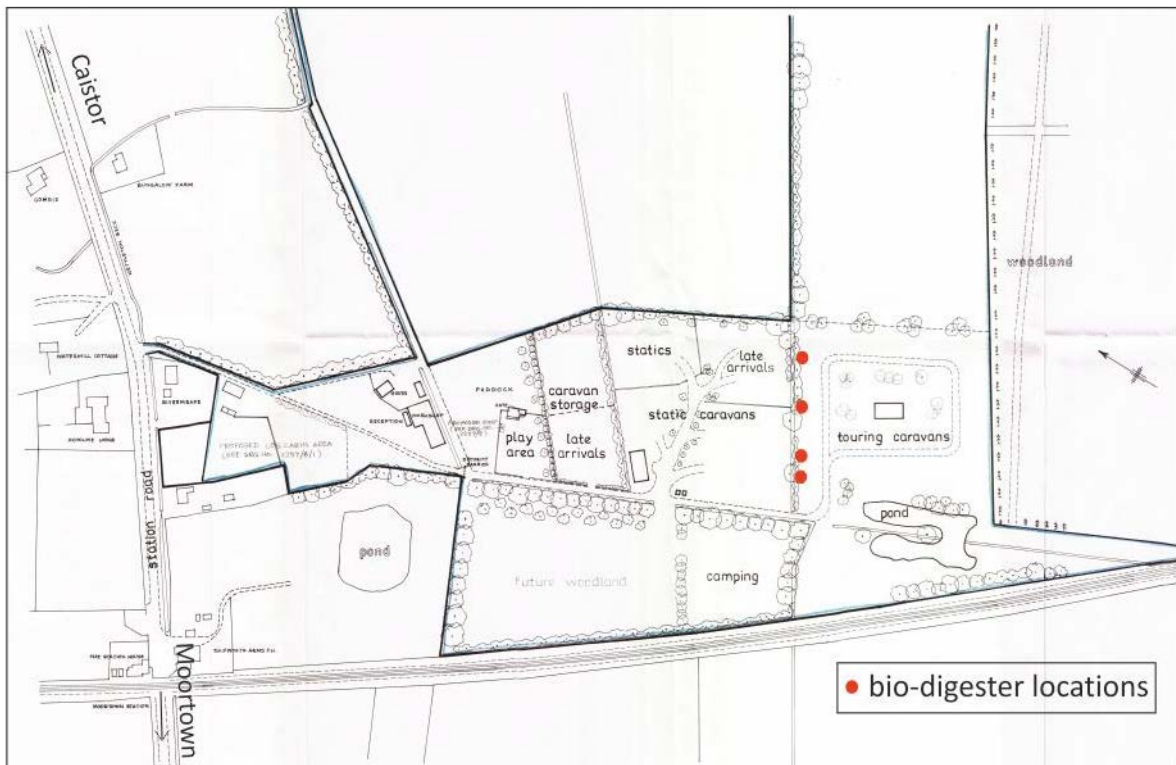


Fig. 1 Watermill Leisure Park, Moortown, site location

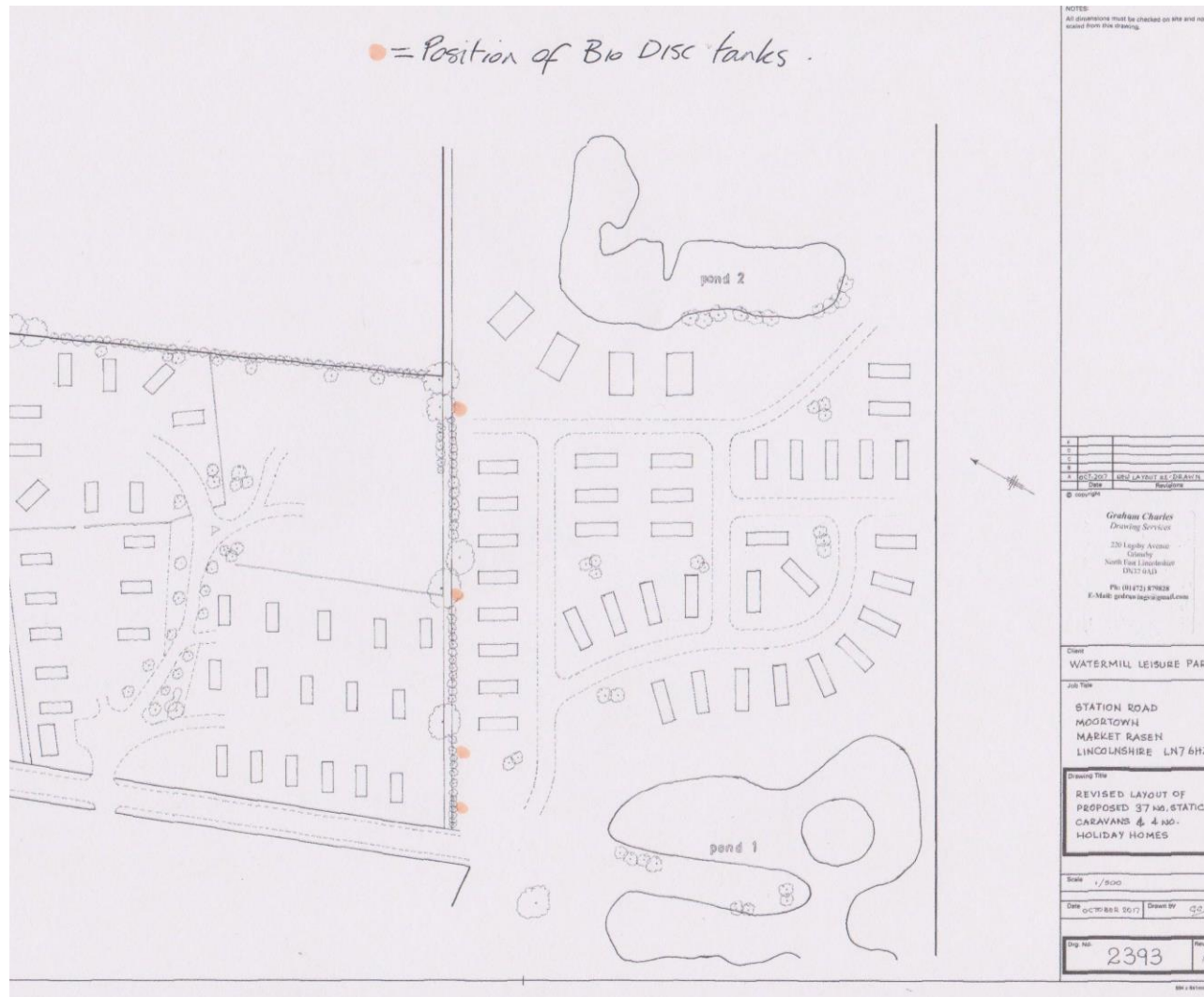


Fig. 2 Location of the bio Klargestier tanks

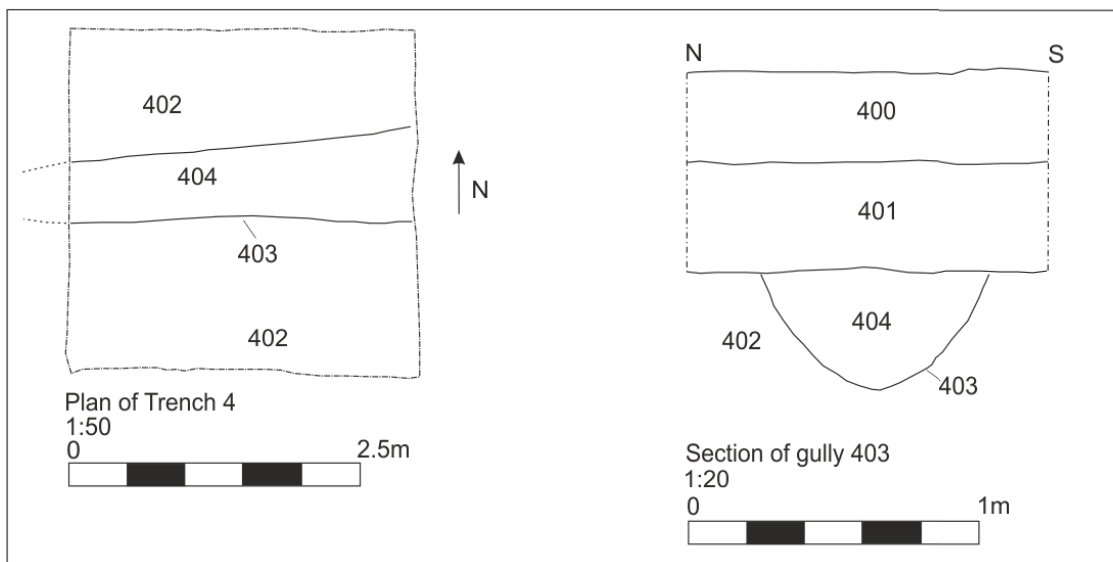
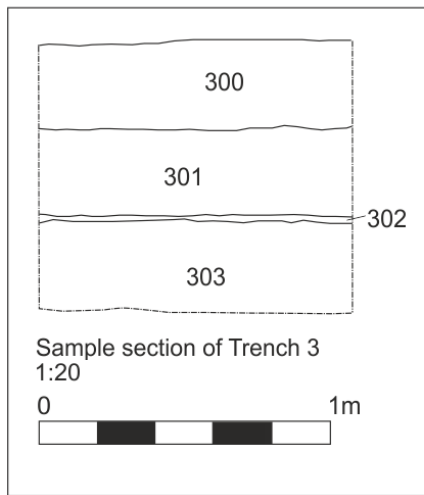
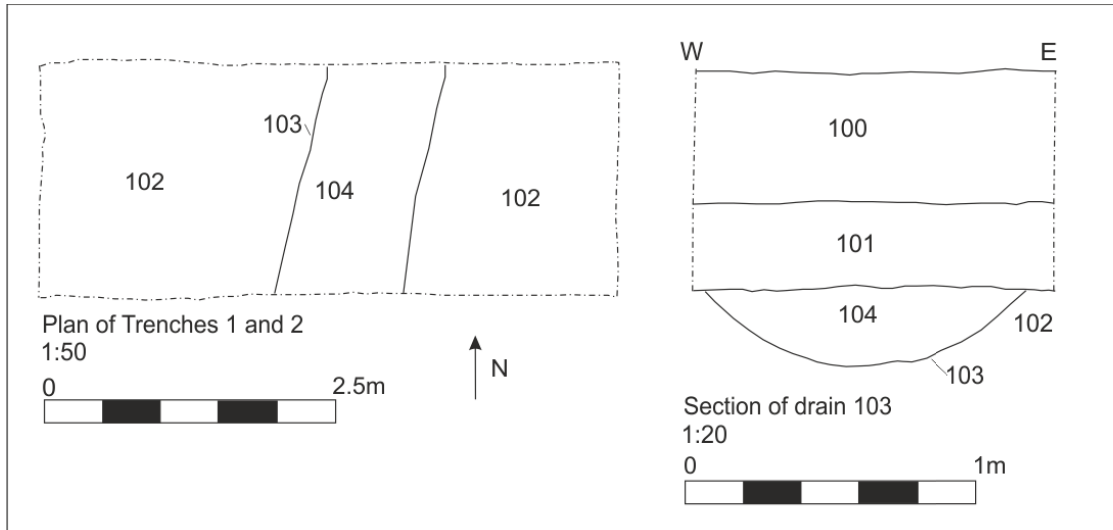


Fig. 3 Trench plans and sections

## 11. The Plates





Plate 1: General view of area of Trenches 1&2, looking north



Plate 2: Excavation of Trenches 1&2, looking north-west





Plate 3: Drainage channel 103 in Trench 1&2, looking north



Plate 4: Drainage channel 103 in Trench 1&2, looking west





Plate 5: General view of Trench 3, looking north-east



Plate 6: Excavation of Trench 3, looking south-east





Plate 7: Excavation of Trench 3, looking east



Plate 8: Excavation of Trench 3, looking north





Plate 9: Excavation of gully 403 and pit 405 in Trench 4, looking north-east



Plate 10: Excavation of gully 403 in Trench 4, looking west