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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND  
RECORDING AT FEN ROAD,  
RUSKINGTON,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(RUF 10)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Chanception Homes**

November 2010

Report Compiled by  
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Planning Application No: N/52/0034/10  
National Grid Reference: TF 0883 5091  
The Collection Accession No: LCNCC: 2010.106  
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-85319

APS Report No. **105/10**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**





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## 1. SUMMARY

*A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at The Meadows, Fen Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire. The investigations monitored the excavation of foundation trenches and service trenches and the road strip for a new housing development.*

*The site is located in an area of known archaeological remains which span the prehistoric to post-medieval periods. A Palaeolithic (500,000-10,000 BC) hand axe and Bronze Age (2250-800 BC) inhumations have been found within a few hundred metres of the site, and a Neolithic (4000-2250 BC) flint axe was retrieved from the site itself. Archaeological investigations immediately to the north of the site revealed two ditches which may define a driveway, in addition to Iron Age (800 BC-AD 43) pits and ditches and a possible ring gully. Undated post-holes in a curvilinear arrangement may represent a Late Iron Age or early Roman (AD 43-410) round house. Roman ditches were also identified in addition to a late Roman grave. An Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-650) cemetery was located towards the western edge of the village. Previous evaluation of the site identified a Middle Iron Age enclosure and evidence for Middle Saxon (AD 650-850) occupation.*

*The investigations revealed a sequence of natural, undated and recent deposits. Undated deposits comprise five ditches, two pits and three furrows. One ditch accords well with an Anglo-Saxon ditch recorded previously at the site and another ditch may be of Middle Iron Age date. The three plough furrows are likely to be remnant ridge and furrow of the medieval field system.*

*Finds retrieved during the investigation include a single medieval sherd with two sherds of later date. Animal bone and a piece of coal were also retrieved.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Chanception Homes to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new residential development at the Meadows, Fen Road, Ruskington, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application N/52/0034/10. The archaeological monitoring was carried out between the 21<sup>st</sup> September and 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the North Kesteven planning archaeologist.

Plots 1 to 10 were defined as lying within an archaeologically sensitive area and required monitoring during development.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Ruskington is located 5km north of Sleaford and 23km southeast of Lincoln in the administrative district of North Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site lies 550m southeast of the centre of Ruskington as defined by All Saints' parish church at National Grid Reference TF 0883 5091 (Fig. 2). The site lies south of Fen Road and immediately east of the railway line at a height of c. 10m OD adjacent to the minor watercourse, The Beck.

Local soils are of the Ruskington Association, typically gleyic brown calcareous earths (Hodge *et al.*, 1984, 304). These soils are developed upon a drift geology of Sleaford Sand and gravel with alluvium adjacent to The Beck. These drift deposits overlie a solid geology of Jurassic Kellaways Sands and Oxford Clay (BGS 1996).

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

Ruskington village is located in an area of archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric through to the post-medieval period. A Palaeolithic hand axe was discovered c. 400m southwest of the present investigation area. Flint axes of the Neolithic period have been found within the proposed development area and adjacent areas. Two inhumation burials, accompanied by beaker pottery dated to the Bronze Age, were recorded during building work 200m west of the development site.

Cropmarks have been recorded immediately to the east of the proposed development site and apparently define an enclosure alongside a trackway, likely to be of Roman or prehistoric date.

A geophysical survey to the north of the development area identified a possible trackway, curvilinear features and pits. Subsequent trial trenching revealed several Iron Age pits and ditches, including parts of a possible ring gully. Romano-British ditches were also revealed throughout the southern half of the site, and two of the ditches were interpreted as forming a possible droveway. Later Roman ditches of a 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> century date were also identified. A late Roman grave was exposed near the southern edge of the site. Undated postholes in a curvilinear arrangement found in the southwestern part of the site may represent a late Iron Age or Early Roman round house type structure (Rayner *et al* 2000). Two pieces of briquetage container (ceramic debris from salt making) were also retrieved from a feature of probable Iron Age date during this earlier evaluation. Briquetage has not been recovered in the area before, the nearest known Iron Age salterns being located some 12km to the southeast on the fen edge in Little Hale and Helpringham. Late Iron Age and early Roman deposits were also identified during further investigations undertaken during development of the land (Hall 2004) (Figure 3).

Passing through the western edge of the village in an approximately north-south direction is the important Roman Road, Mareham Lane. Aerial photographs have located field systems and enclosures of probable Roman date in the vicinity of Mareham Lane. Roman coins have been recovered from various locations in the vicinity of the proposed development area and a sherd of Roman pottery was found immediately to the west.

An Anglo-Saxon cemetery containing at least 180 burials was located at the western edge of the village, approximately 1.2km west of the proposed development site. Iron spearheads, also of Anglo-Saxon date, have been found at several places to the east and southeast of the cemetery. A single sherd of Early Saxon pottery was retrieved immediately to the west of the investigation area. Middle to Late Saxon settlement features and part of a Bronze Age Beaker cemetery were identified during archaeological investigations at 29 Station Road (Palmer-Brown 1995). An archaeological evaluation also at Station Road identified a gully containing Roman pottery and a Middle to Late Saxon ditch (JSAC 2000).

Ruskington is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086. Referred to as *Riscintone* and *Reschintone* the name is derived from the Old English *riscen* meaning 'rushy' with the suffix indicating a homestead or village (Cameron 1998, 104). At the time of the Domesday Survey, Ruskington was held principally by Geoffrey Alselin and contained 60 acres of meadow, 240 acres of wood for pannage, a church, a priest and 3 mills (Foster and Longley 1976). No standing remains of 11<sup>th</sup> century date are recorded at the present church, suggesting that the Domesday Book is referring to an earlier precursor.

The Medieval period is represented by All Saints' church which contains a Norman tower arch and an Early English chancel

and chancel arch (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 617). Medieval pottery has been recorded immediately to the west of the development site.

The site underwent a programme of archaeological trial trenching in 2004 which revealed a Middle Iron Age enclosure suggestive of settlement along with a Middle Saxon post-built structure, also indicating settlement (Mellor 2005, 1).

### 3. AIMS

The aim of the archaeological investigation was to ensure that any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks should be recorded and, if present, to determine their date, function and origin.

### 4. METHODS

Foundation and service trenches were excavated by machine to depths required by the development. The route of a road serving the development was also stripped of topsoil. Following excavation the sides of the trenches were cleaned and rendered vertical and the base of the stripped area examined for archaeological features. Selected deposits were excavated further to retrieve artefactual material and to determine their function. Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix

produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

## 5. RESULTS

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of the trenches was a layer of bluish grey gravelly clay (102). This measured over 0.65m thick and was sealed beneath orange brown sand and gravel (101).

Within the southern part of the road strip area, were three northwest-southeast aligned furrows (Plate 3). The first (103) was 2.4m wide, the second (105) was 2.45m wide and the third (107) was 2.6m wide (Fig. 3). These were filled with greyish brown sandy silt (104, 106 and 108).

Located to the north of the furrows and recorded within a new cable trench was an east-west aligned ditch (113). This measured 1.9m wide and 0.67m deep (Fig. 4, Section 4; Plate 5) and contained brown sandy silt (114).

Aligned east-west through Plot 1/2 was ditch (124) measuring over 10.86m long, 1.98m wide and over 0.6m deep (Fig. 6, Sections 10 and 11; Plate 11). A single fill of brownish yellow silty sand with frequent gravel (125) was recorded.

Also aligned east-west through Plot 9/10 was ditch (110). A visible length of 15.57m was recorded along with a width of 3.6m and a depth of 0.5m (Fig. 4, Section 3; Plate 6). Greyish brown silty sand (111) was identified as the fill that produced animal bone.

Situated 2.8m north of ditch (110) was pit (115) that measured over 0.9m wide and 0.47m deep (Fig. 5, Section 5; Plate 7). The pit contained a fill of brownish grey clayey sand (116).

A second pit (118) was located in Plot 3/4 and was 1.05m wide and 0.45m deep (Fig. 5, Sections 6 and 7; Plate 8). This was filled with brown sandy silt with frequent gravel (117).

Located within the western corner of Plot 7/8 were two northeast-southwest aligned ditches. The first (121) was over 1.17m wide and deeper than 0.2m (Fig. 5, Section 8; Plate 9) and contained a fill of light brown sandy silt (120). The second (123) was 1.06m wide and 0.2m deep with a fill of brown sandy silt and gravel.

An intermittent subsoil sealed the features and comprised brownish grey silt (109) and brown sandy silt (119). This measured between 0.26m and 0.28m thick, though was absent from the eastern part of the site and the centre of Plot 3/4. Pottery of 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century date was retrieved from (109).

Sealing all deposits was the current topsoil consisting of greyish brown sandy silt with frequent gravel (100). A single sherd of 14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> century date along with a 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century piece was collected from the topsoil.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprise sand, gravel and gravelly clay and can be related to the underlying drift geology of Sleaford Sands and Gravel.

Five ditches, three plough furrows and two pits were recorded during the investigation and remain undated due to a lack of artefactual evidence. However, an east-west ditch through Plot 9/10 is on the same alignment as ditches recorded in Trenches 11 and 12 of the evaluation which was

dated to the 6<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> centuries (Mellor 2005, 17). Furthermore, the plough furrows recorded from the road strip are likely to relate to medieval ridge and furrow. The intermittent subsoil is also characteristic of ridge and furrow. Middle Iron Age features were recorded in Trench 11 within the footings of Plot 1/2. It is possible that the east-west ditch recorded here is of the same date.

Finds retrieved from the investigation comprise pottery of medieval and later date along with animal bone and coal.

## 7. CONCLUSION

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at Fen Road, Ruskington, as previous trial trenching at the site had revealed remains of Iron Age and Saxon date.

A probable Saxon ditch and a possible Middle Iron Age ditch were recorded and are so dated due to their association with previously excavated features. A further three ditches and two pits are undated due to a lack of artefactual material. Three plough furrows were also identified which relate to medieval ridge and furrow.

Medieval and later pottery, animal bone and coal were recovered during the investigation.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr NJ Allen of Chanceoption Homes for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Jenny Young, the North Kesteven planning archaeologist, kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.



## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble  
 Site Supervisors: Alex Beeby, Bob Garland, Lavinia Green, Bob Hamilton  
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

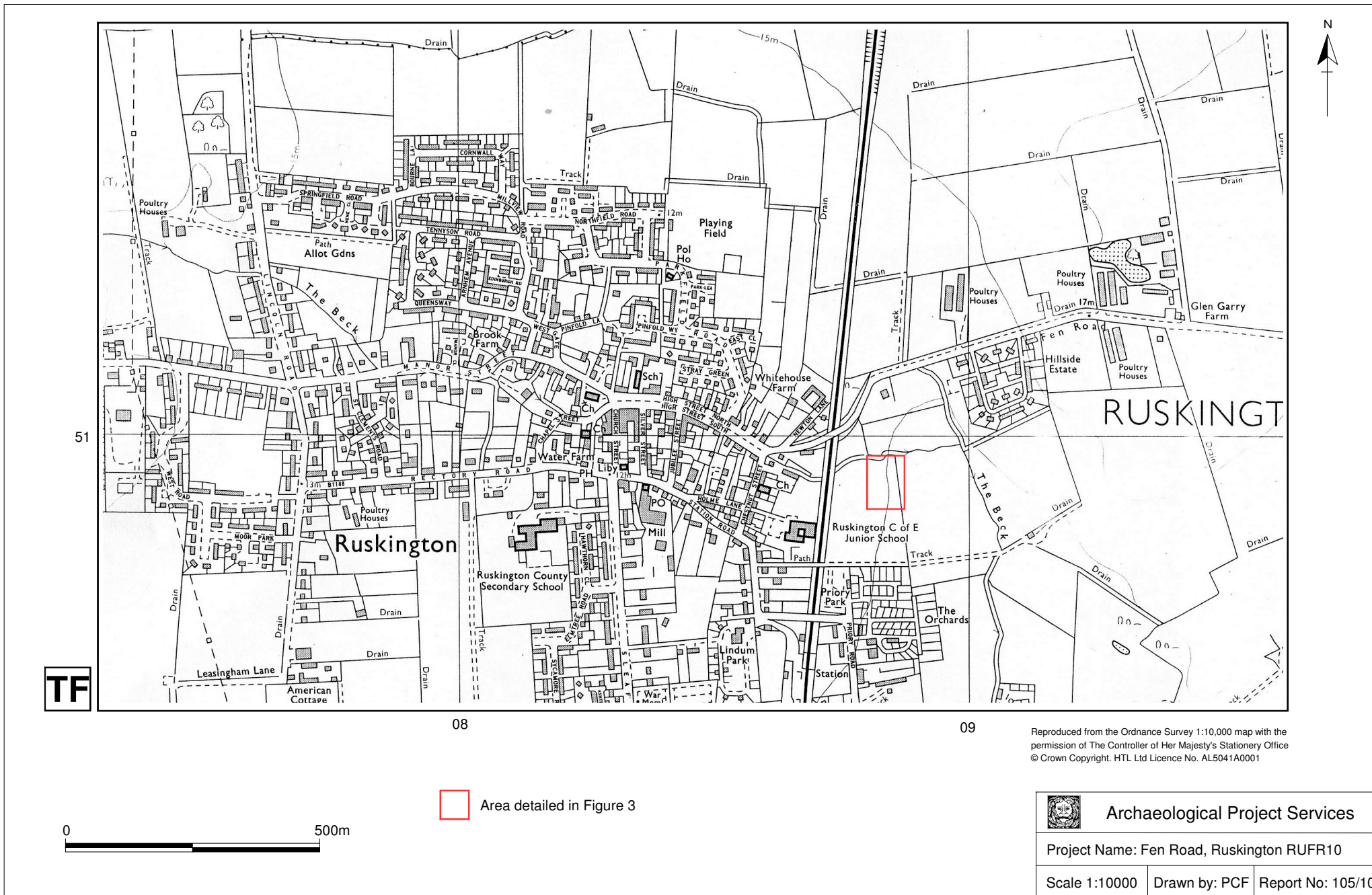
APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

JSAC John Samuels Archaeological Consultants



Figure 1 - General location plan




 <b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: Fen Road, Ruskington RUF10		
Scale 1:10000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 105/10

Figure 2 - Site location plan

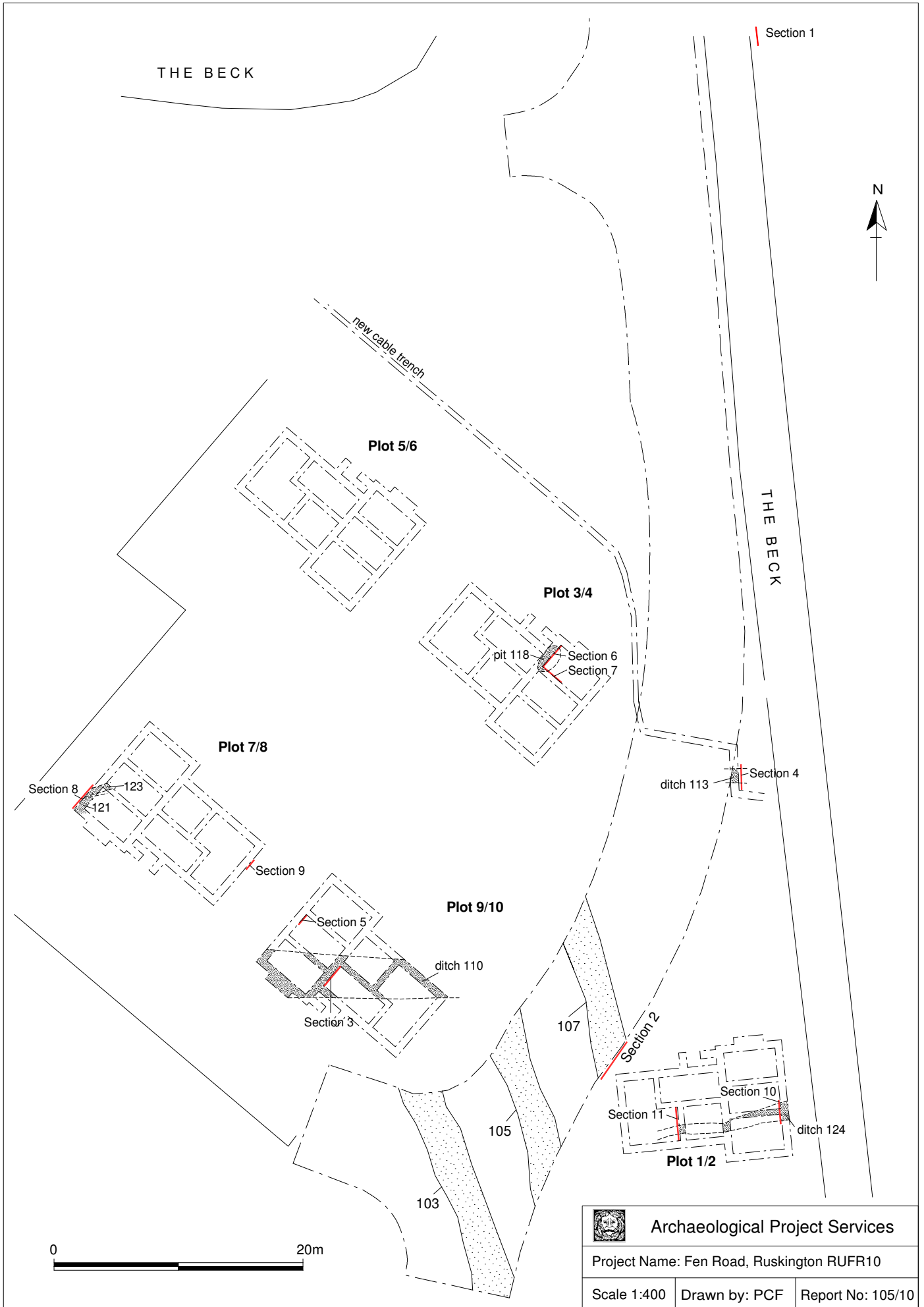
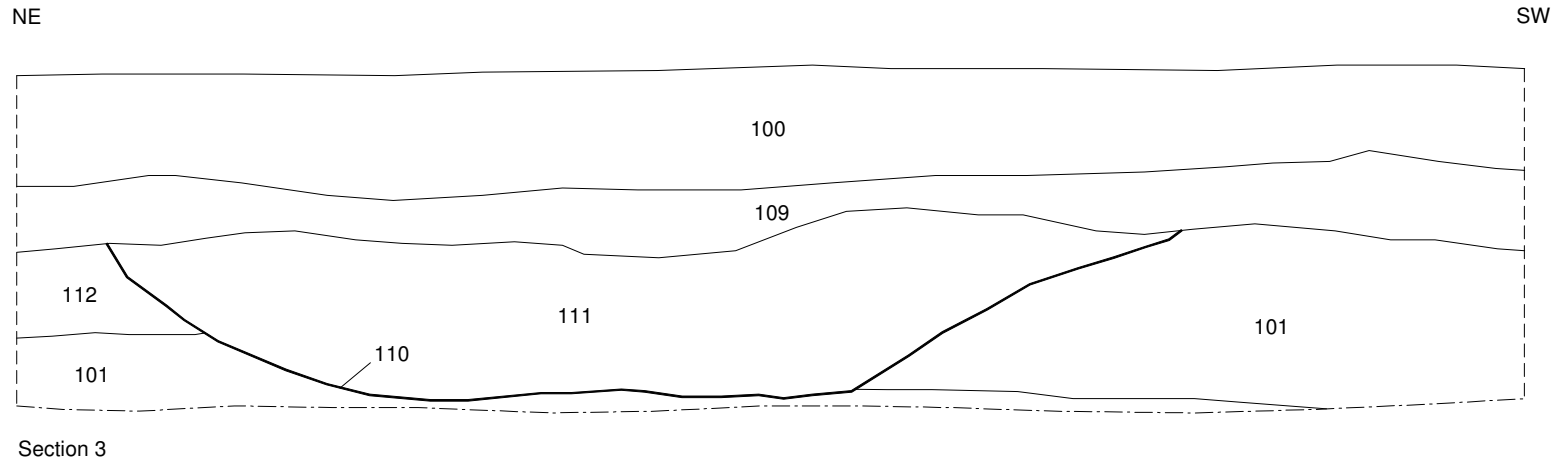
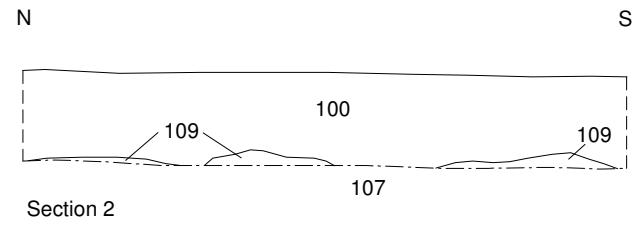
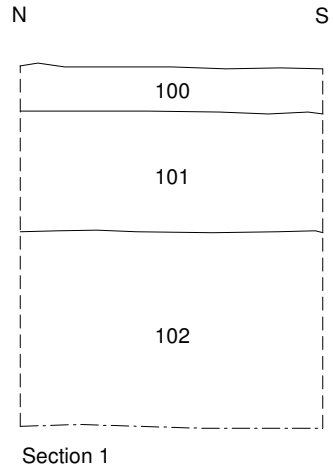


Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing principal features and section locations



Archaeological Project Services

Project Name: Fen Road, Ruskington RUF10

Scale 1:25

Drawn by: PCF

Report No: 105/10

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 3

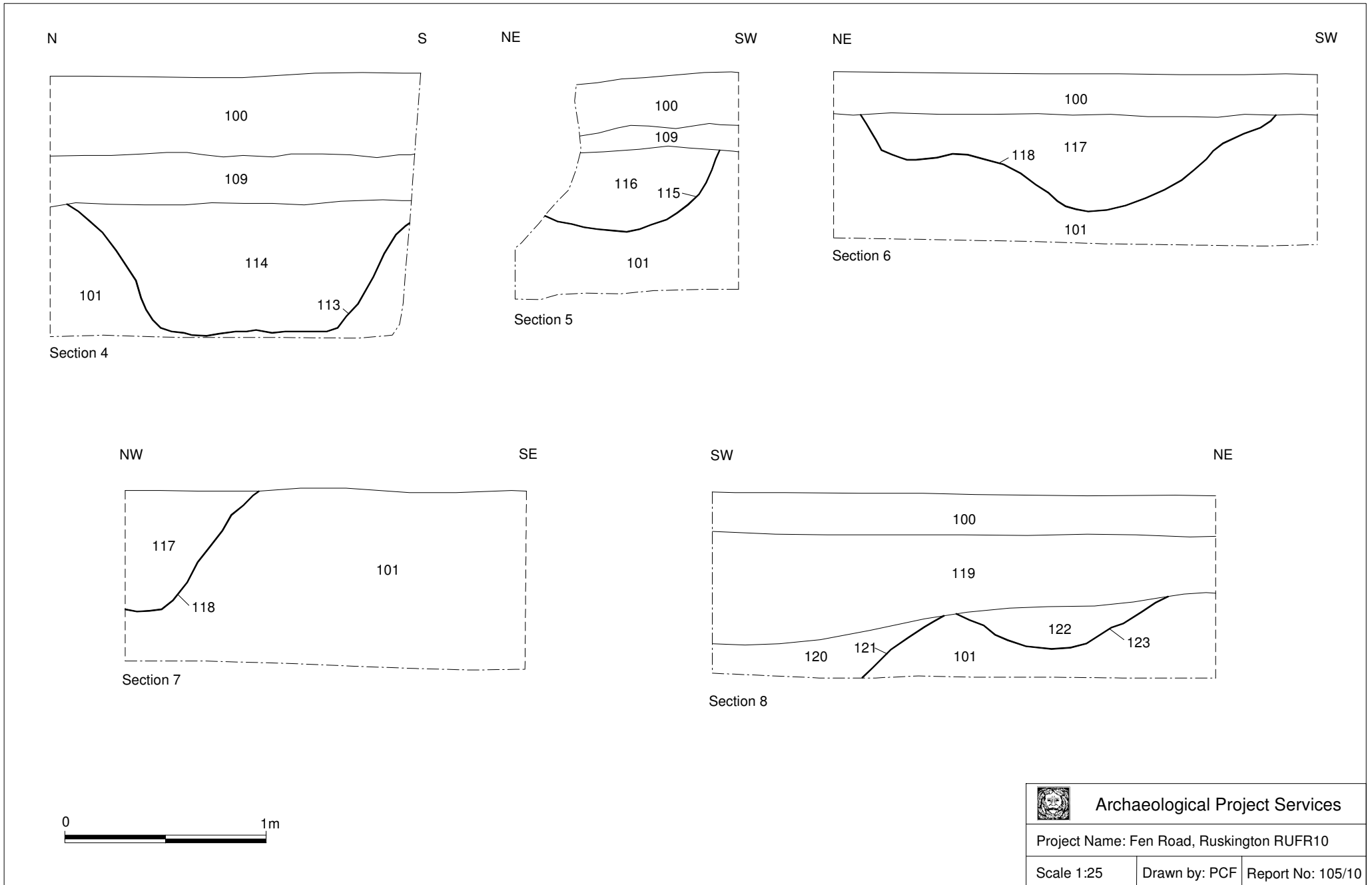
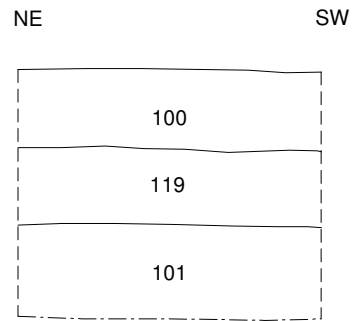


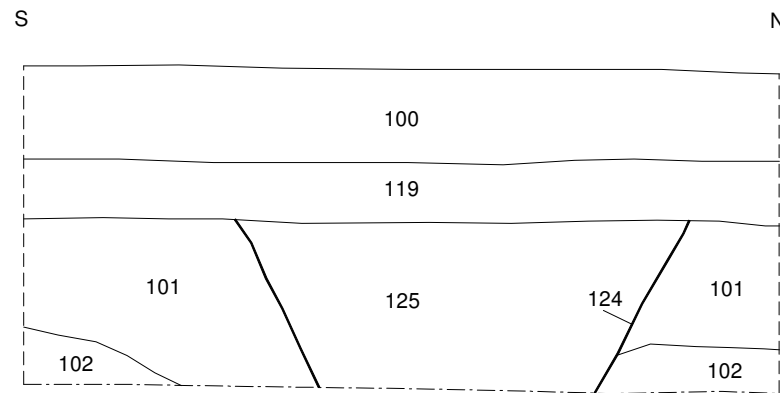
Figure 5 - Sections 4 to 8



Section 9



Section 10



Section 11




		
Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Fen Road, Ruskington RUF10		
Scale 1:25	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 105/10

Figure 6 - Sections 9 to 11



Plate 1 – General view looking north over the development site



Plate 2 – Section 1 showing the general sequence of deposits, looking east



Plate 3 – View showing the road strip area and plough furrows, looking northeast





Plate 4 – Section 2, looking southeast



Plate 5 – Section 4 showing ditch (113), looking east



Plate 6 – Section 3 showing ditch (110), looking west



Plate 7 – Section 5 showing pit (115), looking southeast



Plate 8 – Section 6 showing pit (118), looking southeast



Plate 9 – Section 8 showing ditches (121) and (123), looking northwest



Plate 10 – Section 9 showing the general sequence of deposits, looking southeast



Plate 11 – Section 10 showing ditch (124), looking west

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Area	Description	Interpretation
100	All	Loose dark greyish brown sandy silt with frequent gravel, 0.35m thick	Topsoil
101	All	Friable mid orange brown sand and gravel, 0.4m thick	Natural deposit
102	All	Friable light bluish grey gravelly clay, >0.65m thick	Natural deposit
103	Road	Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 2.4m wide, not excavated	Plough furrow
104	Road	Friable dark greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of (103)
105	Road	Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 2.45m wide, not excavated	Plough furrow
106	Road	Friable dark greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of (105)
107	Road	Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 2.6m wide, not excavated	Plough furrow
108	Road	Friable dark greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of (107)
109	Road	Friable mid to dark brownish grey silt	Subsoil
110	9/10	Linear feature, aligned east-west, >15.57m long by 3.6m wide by 0.5m deep, gradual sides and flat base	Ditch
111	9/10	Friable mid greyish brown silty sand	Fill of (110)
112	9/10	Loose mid greyish brown clayey sand, 0.3m thick	
113	cable trench	Linear feature, aligned east-west, 1.4m wide by 0.67m deep, steep sides and flattish base	Ditch
114	cable trench	Friable mid brown sandy silt	Fill of (113)
115	9/10	?circular feature, >0.9m wide by 0.47m deep, steep sides and rounded base	Pit
116	9/10	Friable mid brownish grey clayey sand	Fill of (115)
117	3/4	Soft mid brown sandy silt with frequent gravel	Fill of (118)
118	3/4	Rectangular feature, 1.05m wide by 0.45m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Pit
119	7/8	Friable mid brown sandy silt, 0.25m thick	Subsoil
120	7/8	Loose to friable light brown sandy silt	Fill of (121)
121	7/8	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, >1.17m wide by >0.2m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Ditch
122	7/8	Loose to friable mid brown sandy silt and gravel	Fill of (123)
123	7/8	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, 1.06m wide by 0.2m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Ditch
124	2	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, >10.86m long by 1.98m wide by >0.6m deep, gradual becoming near vertical sides, not fully excavated	Ditch
125	2	Friable mid brownish yellow silty sand with frequent gravel	Fill of (124)

## Appendix 2

### THE FINDS

#### POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby

##### Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001) and to conform to Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeology Handbook*. The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005). A total of three sherds from three vessels, weighing 41 grams was recovered from the site.

##### Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1. The pottery ranges in date from the medieval to the early modern period.

##### Results

Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Decoration	Part	Comment	Date
100	ENPO	English Porcelain	Flat?	1	1	2		BS		19th-20th
100	TOY	Toynton Type	Conical Jug	1	1	29		BS	Ribbed wall	14th-15th
109	LERTH	Late Earthenware	Garden Pot	1	1	9		BS		18th-20th

##### Provenance

Pottery was recovered from topsoil layer (100) and subsoil layer (109).

##### Range

There are two pieces of early modern pottery (LERTH and ENPO) and a single sherd from a medieval or late medieval conical jug in Toynton type ware (TOY).

##### Potential

The pottery should be retained as part of the site archive and should pose no problems for long term storage.

##### Summary

Three sherd of pottery were recovered from top/subsoil layers during the watching brief. One sherd is medieval in date.

#### FAUNAL REMAINS

By Paul Cope-Faulkner

##### Introduction

A total of 3 (9g) fragments of animal bone were recovered from stratified contexts.

##### Provenance

The bone came from a ditch fill (111) and the fill of a pit (116).

##### Condition

The overall condition of the remains was relatively poor.

**Results***Table 2, Fragments Identified to Taxa*

Cxt	Taxon	Element	Number	W (g)	Comments
111	large mammal	long bone	1	1	
	large mammal	mandible?	1	1	
116	pig	astragalus	1	7	

**Summary**

As a small assemblage, the animal bone is of limited potential though should be retained as part of the site archive.

**OTHER FINDS**

*By Gary Taylor*

**Introduction**

Two other items weighing a total of 7g were recovered.

**Condition**

The other finds are in good condition.

**Results***Table 3, Other Materials*

Cxt	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
100	coal	Coal/cinders	2	7	

**Provenance**

The other finds were recovered from the topsoil (100).

**Range**

Two pieces of coal, both part burnt and cindery, were the only other finds retrieved.

**Potential**

The other finds are of very limited potential and could be discarded.

**SPOT DATING**

The dating in Table 4 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

*Table 4, Spot dates*

Cxt	Date	Comments
100	19th-20th	Topsoil
109	18th-20th	Subsoil

**ABBREVIATIONS**

ACBMG	Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group
BS	Body sherd
CBM	Ceramic Building Material
CXT	Context
LHJ	Lower Handle Join
NoF	Number of Fragments
NoS	Number of sherds
NoV	Number of vessels
UHJ	Upper Handle Join
W (g)	Weight (grams)

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## Appendix 3

### GLOSSARY

<b>Alluvium</b>	A deposit (usually clay, silts or sands) laid down in water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea and freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or within lakes.
<b>Bronze Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
<b>Context</b>	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 interpretations 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> (004).
<b>Cropmark</b>	A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological features influencing the growth of a particular crop.
<b>Cut</b>	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.
<b>Fill</b>	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).
<b>Iron Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
<b>Layer</b>	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
<b>Medieval</b>	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
<b>Natural</b>	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
<b>Neolithic</b>	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.
<b>Palaeolithic</b>	The earliest part of the 'Stone Age' dating from the first period of human occupation to the end of the last ice age (approximately 10,000 years ago). It is usually sub-divided into lower, middle and upper, each characterised by differing stone tools and sub-species of humans.
<b>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<b>Prehistoric</b>	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1 <sup>st</sup> century AD.
<b>Romano-British</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
<b>Saxon</b>	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.



## Appendix 4

### THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

26	Context records
2	Photographic record sheets
14	Sheets of scale drawings
6	Daily record sheets
1	Stratigraphic matrix
1	Bag of finds

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:

The Collection  
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Lincoln  
LN2 1LP

Accession Number:

LCNCC: 2010.106

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The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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