ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING AT TOLL BAR ROAD, MARSTON, LINCOLNSHIRE

(MTBR 11)

Work Undertaken For
Lark Energy Limited

July 2011

Report Compiled by
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National Grid Reference: SK 879 422
Planning Application No: S11/0548/MJNF
The Collection Accession No: LCNCC: 2011.112
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-105834

APS Report No: **83/11**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES

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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at Toll Bar Road, Marston, Lincolnshire. The investigations monitored the excavation of trenches associated with a new solar farm.

The site lies in an area of cropmarks which include a possible Bronze Age (2200-800 BC) barrow cemetery and a number of enclosures of prehistoric or Romano-British (AD 43-410) origin. Ridge and furrow of the medieval (AD 1066-1540) field system has also been recorded in the area.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural, undated and modern deposits. Undated features include two ditches, a channel and a furrow, perhaps associated with the medieval open fields. No finds were retrieved during this investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Lark Energy Limited to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the construction of a new solar farm on land off Toll Bar Road, Marston, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application S11/0548/MJNF. The watching brief was carried out between the 4th and 8th July 2011 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Senior Historic Environment Officer, South Kesteven District Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Marston is located 8km north of Grantham and 18km west of Sleaford, in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The proposed solar farm lies approximately 2km southwest of the village centre at National Grid Reference SK 879 422 (Fig. 2). The site lies on the west side of Toll Bar Road at a height of *c*. 30m OD on land that slopes gently down to the west, towards the valley of the Foston Beck which forms the western boundary to the site.

Local soils are of the Blackwood Association, typically sandy gley soils (Hodge *et al*. 1984, 127). These soils are developed upon drift deposits of alluvium, associated with the Foston Beck, and River Terrace Gravels which in turn seal a solid geology of Jurassic Brant Mudstone Formation (BGS 1996).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Marston is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Bronze Age to the present day. Located northeast of the site are a number of ring ditches identified from aerial photographs which may define a barrow cemetery of Bronze Age date.

Numerous other cropmarks occur in the vicinity and include a number of enclosures with internal features which may indicate structures and pits. Though undated, Romano-British pottery and building material have been recovered from the general area indicating that some are Roman in date and may possibly be associated with a villa.

Marston is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of *c*. 1086. Referred to as *Merestune*, *Merestone* and *Mereston* the name is derived from the Old English and means 'the farmstead, village (*tūn*) in the marsh' (Cameron 1998, 87). The Domesday Survey records that the land was held by Count Alan, Colsuain, Alfred of Lincoln, Osbern the priest, Ralph the

Sewer and Guy of Craon and contained 5 mills and 156 acres of meadow (Foster and Longley 1976).

The only extant remains of the medieval period is the church of St Mary which dates to the 13th century and is located in the village centre (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 557). Earthworks of ridge and furrow of the medieval field system survive to the south of the site.

A watching brief undertaken to the northeast of the site recorded two undated ditches and a post-medieval wall (Parker 2004, 3).

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

Trenches for the cable runs were excavated by machine to depths required by the development. Foundation trenches for structures at the site had been done prior to archaeological supervision and so adjacent cable trenches were monitored. The sides of the trenches were then cleaned and rendered vertical. 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 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

Following excavation, the records were checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between.

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 in the trenches was a layer of orange brown clayey sand and gravel (002) that measured in excess of 0.5m thick.

Overlying the natural were discrete areas of brownish grey clay (003) and greyish green clay (013). Also identified as natural, they measured 0.36m and 0.24m thick respectively.

Situated towards the centre of the site was an east-west aligned ditch (005). This measured 1.17m wide by 0.5m deep (Fig. 4, Section 3; Plate 3) and contained a single fill of brownish grey silty sand (004).

Aligned northwest-southeast, northeast of ditch (005), was a broad linear feature (009) that measured 4.3m wide by 0.55m deep (Fig. 5, Section 6; Plate 4). A single fill was recorded comprising grey clayey sand with frequent gravel (008).

Located towards the north of the site was a linear feature (010), perhaps a natural channel. This measured over 20m long by 0.6m wide and over 0.5m deep (Fig. 4, Section 4). Two fills were recorded, a lower of dark grey clay (007) and an upper of greenish grey clay (006).

A final feature (012), possibly a ditch, was recorded towards the south of the site. Measuring 1.1m wide and 0.25m deep

(Fig. 5, Section 7) it contained a single fill of grey silty sand (011).

Sealing all deposits was the current topsoil of brown silty sand (001). This measured 0.3m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits of sand and gravel relate to the underlying drift geology of river terrace deposits. More clayey deposits are likely to represent nothing more than variations in this deposit.

A number of undated features were recorded across the site. Representing linear ditches and channels, some of these are likely to be natural and perhaps associated with former courses of the Foston Beck. The ditches perhaps represent elements of the former field systems. The broad feature may represent a survival of ridge and furrow and could, therefore, be medieval in date. No finds were retrieved during the course of the investigation.

7. CONCLUSION

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken at Toll Bar Road, Marston, as the site lay in an area of cropmark enclosures and close to the site of a Romano-British villa.

However, no remains could be assigned a Romano-British or earlier date. Instead a number of undated features were revealed which include natural channels, ditches and a possible furrow of the medieval field system. No finds were recovered from the work.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Jo Wall of Lark Energy Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Jenny Young, the South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist, kindly allowed examination of the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Chris Moulis
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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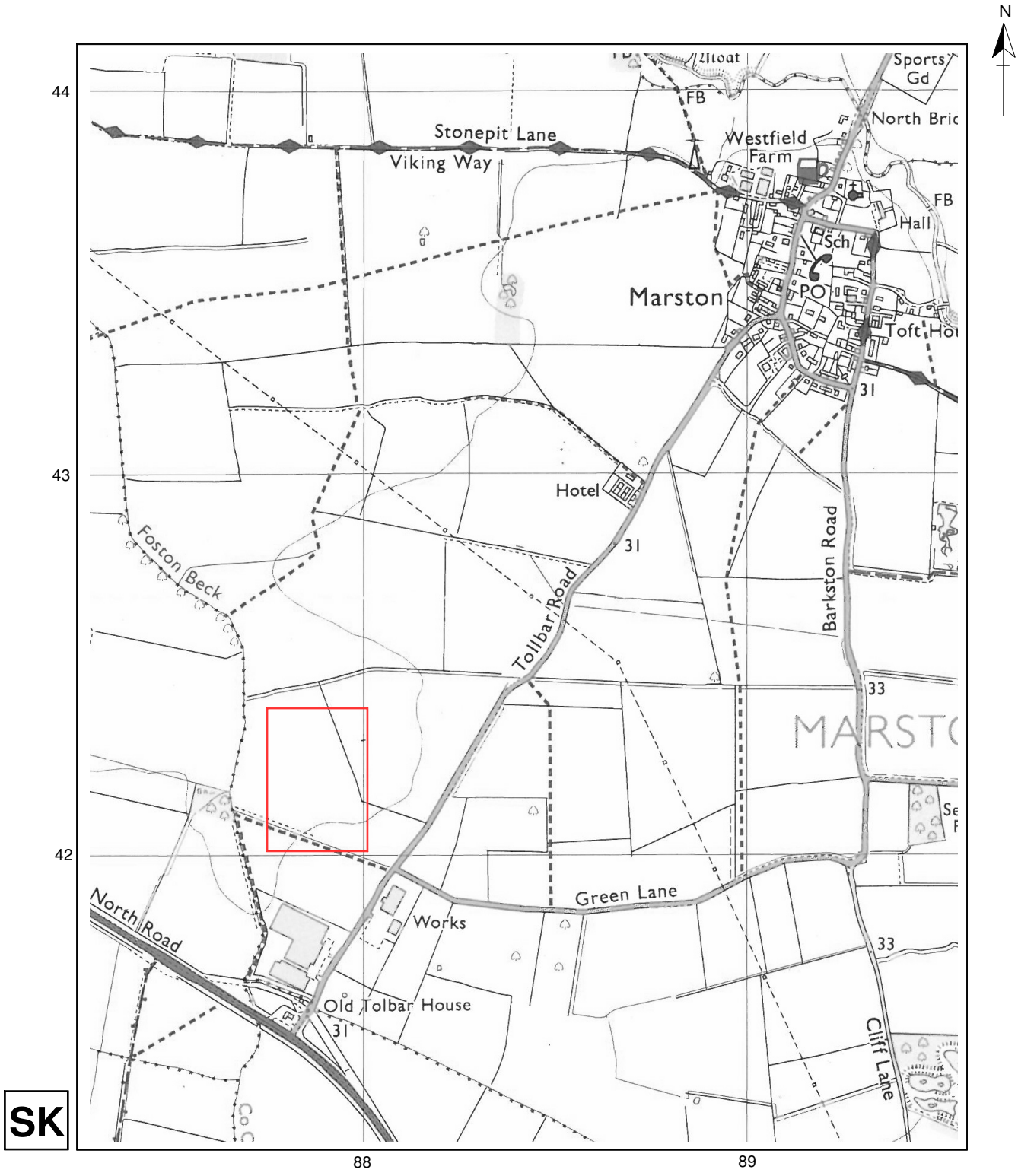
11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

Figure 1 - General location plan



Area detailed in Figure 3

0 800m

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Figure 2 - Site location plan

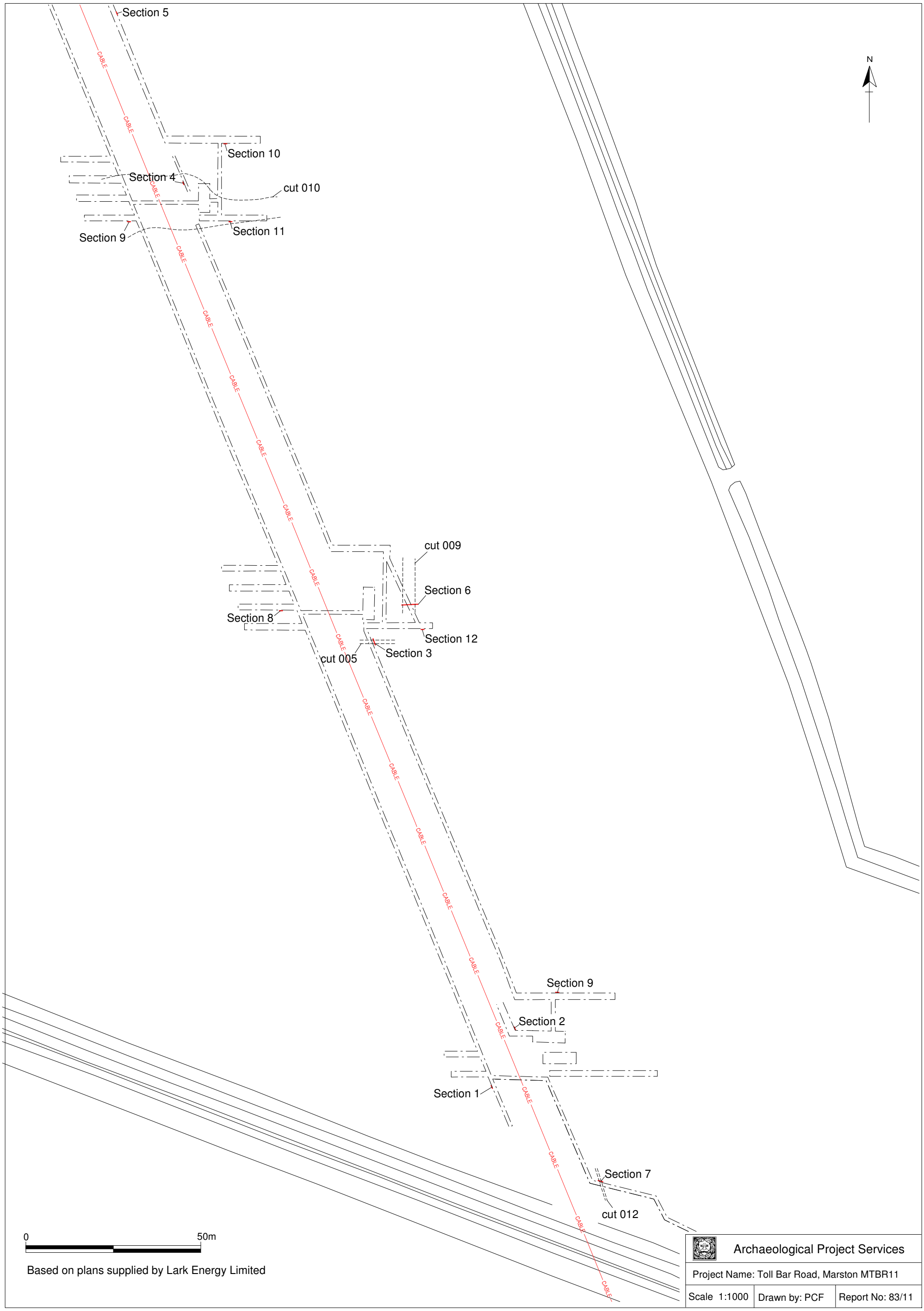
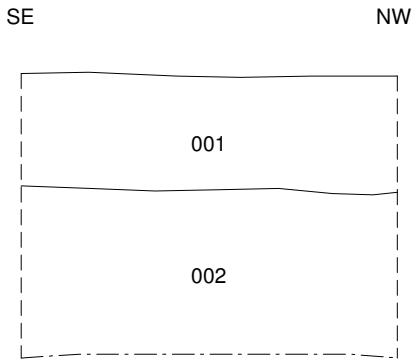
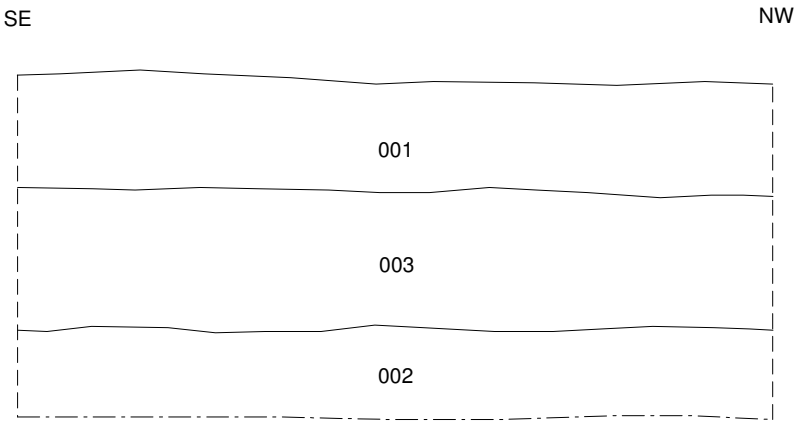


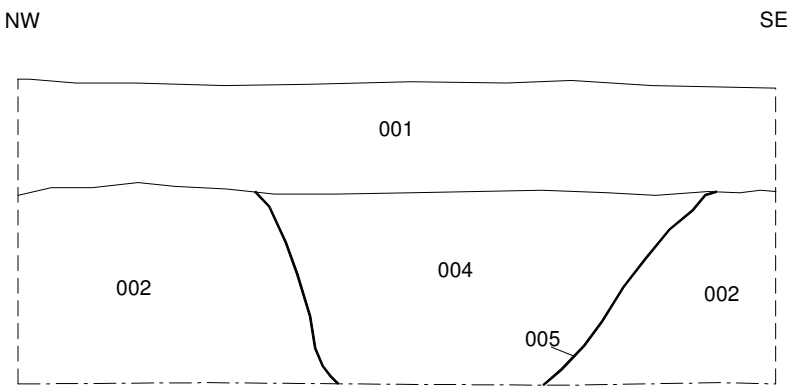
Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing section locations



Section 1



Section 2



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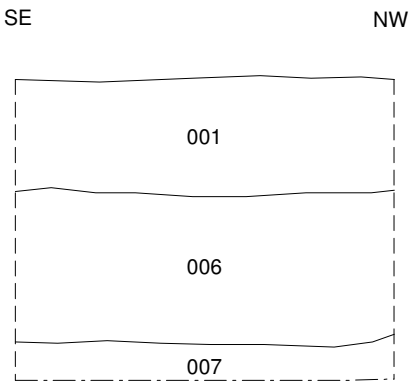
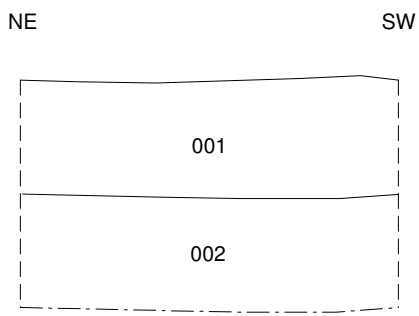


Section 4



Section 5

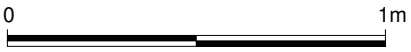


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Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 5

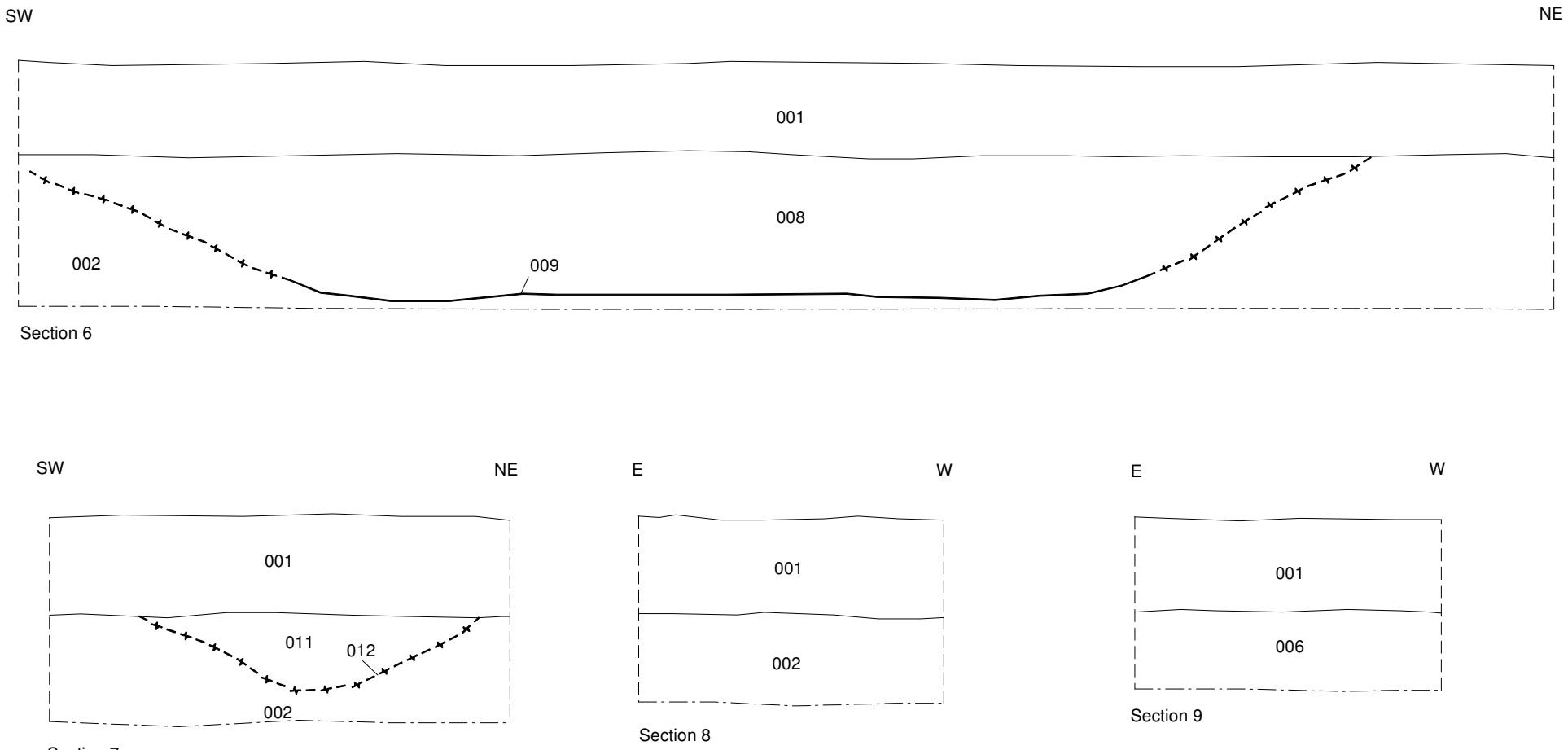

Figure 5 - Sections 6 to 9

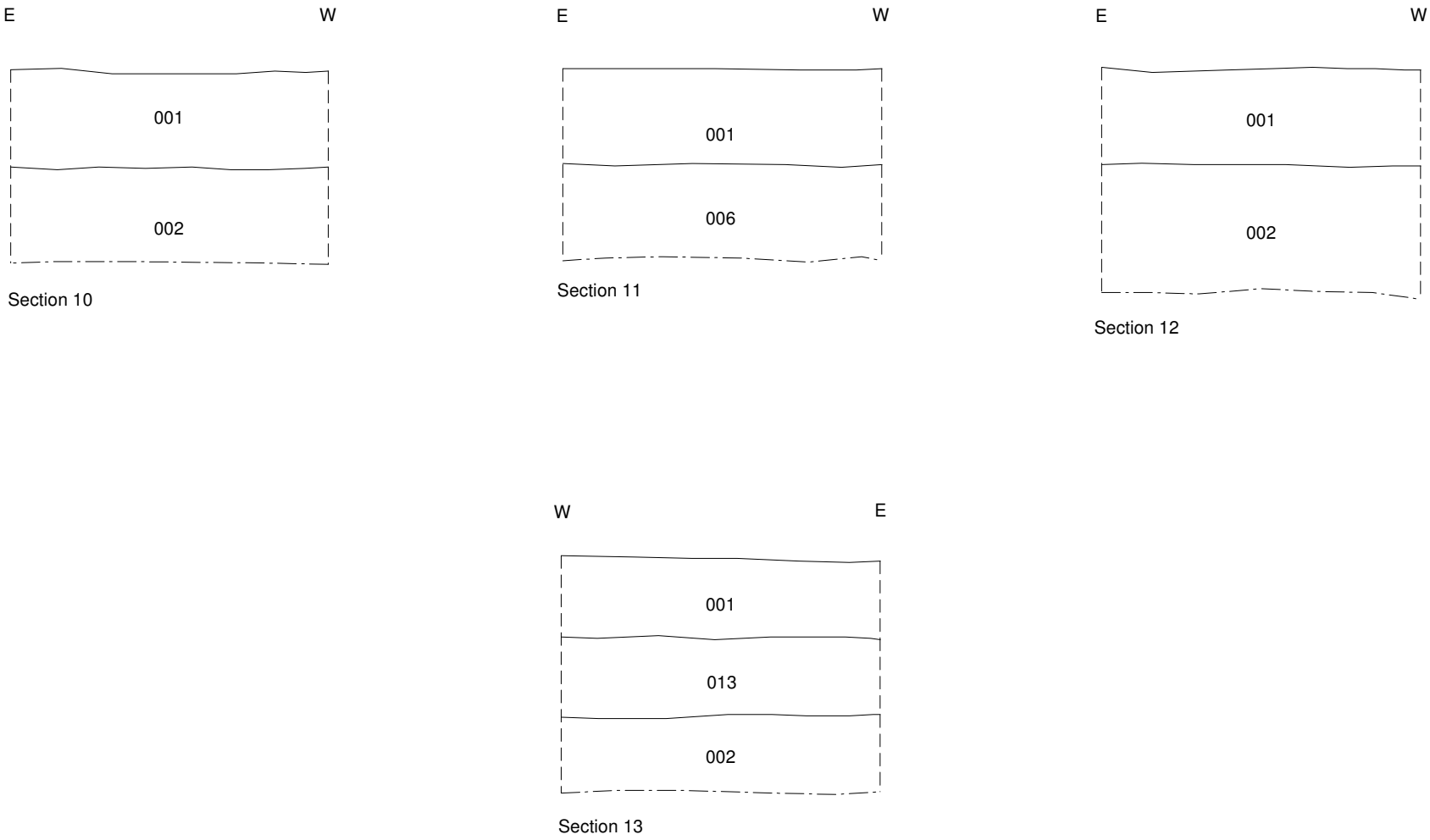

Figure 6 - Sections 10 to 13

Plate 1 – General view across the site, looking northeast

Plate 2 – Section 1, looking southwest

Plate 3 – Section 3 showing ditch (005), looking southwest

Plate 4 – Section 6 showing feature (009), looking north

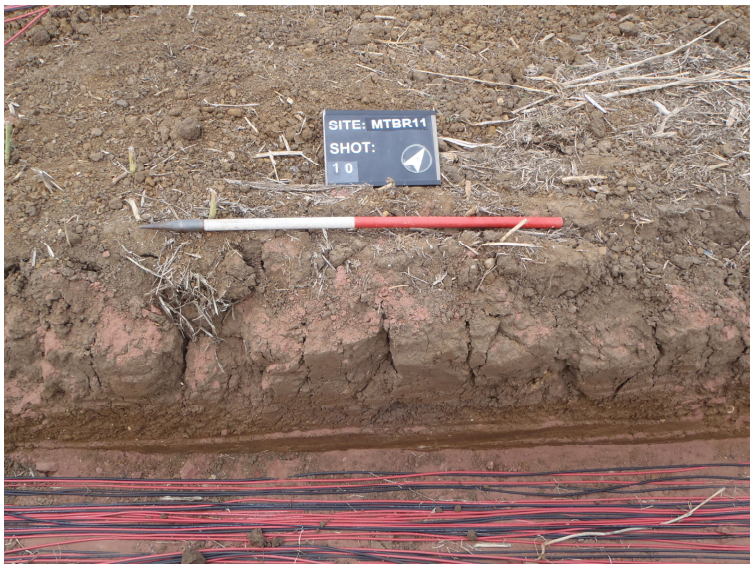

Plate 5 – Section 7 showing feature (012), looking northwest

Plate 6 – Section 8, looking southwest

Plate 7 – Section 12, looking north

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Firm mid to dark brown silty sand, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
002	Firm mid orange brown clayey sand and gravel, >0.5m thick	Natural deposit
003	Stiff mid brownish grey clay, 0.36m thick	Natural deposit
004	Firm mid brownish grey silty sand	Fill of (005)
005	Linear feature, aligned east-west, 1.17m wide by 0.5m deep, steep sides and rounded base	Ditch
006	Stiff mid greenish grey clay, 0.4m thick	Fill of (010)
007	Stiff mid to dark grey clay, >100mm thick	Fill of (010)
008	Firm mid grey clayey sand with frequent gravel	Fill of (009)
009	Linear feature, aligned north-south, 4.3m wide by 0.55m deep, gradual sides and flattish base	?Furrow
010	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, >20m long by 6m wide and >0.5m deep, gradual sides not fully excavated	Channel
011	Firm mid grey silty sand	Fill of (012)
012	Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 1.1m wide by 0.25m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	?Ditch
013	Firm to stiff mid greyish green clay, 0.24m thick	Natural deposit

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	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.
Bronze Age	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
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 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, *e.g.*(004).
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, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.
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 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.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	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 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

13	Context records
2	Photographic record sheets
2	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix
5	Daily Record Sheets

All primary records 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
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire
Danes Terrace
Lincoln
LN2 1LP

Accession Number:	LCNCC: 2011.112
Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	MTBR 11
OASIS Record No:	archaeol1-105834

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.