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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND  
RECORDING ALONG THE ROUTE OF THE  
PROPOSED WESTERN RELIEF ROAD,  
SPALDING,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SPRW 11)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Mouchel  
On behalf of  
Lincolnshire County Council**

October 2011

Report Compiled by  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**



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## 1. SUMMARY

*A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken along the proposed route of the Western Relief Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire. The investigations monitored the excavation of geotechnical test pits.*

*The proposed routes of the western relief road traverse an area rich in cropmarks that date to the Romano-British period (AD 43-410). These cropmarks include areas of settlement, salt-making, fields and the Baston Outgang, a minor Roman road connecting Baston to Spalding. Unusual enclosures defined by cropmarks to the east of the road routes may be of Saxon (AD 410-1066) origin. The earthworks of a medieval (AD 1066-1540) grange of Spalding priory lie near to the northern end of the proposed route.*

*The investigations revealed sequences of marine alluvium in all of the test pits. Two pits contained layers suggestive of a former land surface which may equate with the Romano-British phase of occupation of this area. A layer of ballast associated with a former railway was encountered adjacent to Horseshoe Road. No other archaeological features were identified and no artefacts were retrieved during the investigation.*

*Results of the test pitting for the Spalding Relief road confirm the known data from the general area that an intact Roman land surface lies beneath shallow post-Roman flood deposits. Excavation in the area is likely to encounter c. 0.3m of topsoil over c. 0.4m of post-Roman flood silts, often interpreted as 'natural', but overlying an intact Roman land surface. Furthermore, the presence of Roman-style cropmarks in the area need not equate to the absence of post-Roman flood silts.*

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### 2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Mouchel on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring and recording during the excavation of geotechnical pits along the proposed western relief road at Spalding, Lincolnshire. The works were carried out on the 26<sup>th</sup> September and 7<sup>th</sup> October 2011 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services.

### 2.2 Topography and Geology

Spalding is located 23km southwest of Boston and 30km southeast of Sleaford, in the administrative district of South Holland, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The proposed western relief road is to be located 3km to the southwest of Spalding town centre, crossing Spalding Common. The route describes two sinuous courses from just north of Charinton Farm, on the east side of West Road, at National Grid Reference TF 2255 2025, heading northwards to the north side of Bourne Road at National Grid Reference TF 2295 2200 (Fig. 2). The proposed route traverses generally level ground at a height of c. 4m OD.

Local soils are of the Wisbech Series, typically coarse silty calcareous alluvial gley soils (Robson 1990, 36). These soils are developed on younger marine alluvium, with older marine alluvial deposits outcropping near Charinton Farm. Both types of alluvium overlie a solid geology of Jurassic Oxford Clay (BGS 1992).

### 2.3 Archaeological Setting

The proposed western relief road crosses an area of known archaeological remains



dating from the Iron Age to present day. A late Iron Age/early Romano-British saltern and associated settlement was partially excavated immediately east of the northern end of the proposed route (Herbert 1997, 9) and further salterns and settlement of the same period have been excavated to the northeast.

Romano-British activity is also represented by the Baston Outgang, a gravel road that starts in Baston and has been traced by cropmarks to cross the line of the proposed relief road south of Horseshoe Road (Hallam 1970, 30). There is a change in direction of the Baston Outgang immediately west of the route. One reason for this may be to align it with a crossing point over the River Welland, although an alternative is that it follows a roddon or infilled creek, thus raising it above the surrounding land (Hayes and Lane 1992, 171).

Cropmarks have also revealed trackways and settlements aligned on the Baston Outgang. The settlement features comprise regular enclosures and larger field systems with particular concentrations around Pode Hole to the west of the proposed routes (Phillips 1970, 288; Palmer 1998, 4).

Archaeological investigations along the course of the Pennygate Drain, to the north of the area, revealed a significant number of Romano-British ditches and gullies. Finds of pottery, animal bone and slag were recorded and indicate a high status settlement that was occupied from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries (Herbert 1996, 7).

To the east of the proposed routes, cropmarks have defined enclosures which are not typically Romano-British in appearance and it has been suggested that they may be Saxon in origin (Palmer 1998, 4).

Medieval remains are represented by Monk's House 215m east of the north end of the proposed route. This is the site of a

moated grange belonging to Spalding Priory which was in existence at least by the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Hallam 1965, 177). The moat still survives as an earthwork and the building occupying the site is of 16<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> century date (Cope-Faulkner 1997, 6).

### 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

Geotechnical test pits were excavated by machine to depths required by the engineers. The excavations exceeded the safe working depth for entry and all observations were made from the sides of each trench. 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 them.

### 5. RESULTS

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

#### *Test Pit 101*

The earliest deposit encountered in this

trench was a layer of grey silty clay with frequent organic remains (026). This measured in excess of 1.96m thick. This was sealed by a 1.4m thick layer of greyish brown silty clay (025).

Sealing the natural deposits was the current topsoil comprising brown silty clay (024) that measured 0.3m thick.

#### ***Test Pit 102***

At the base of this pit was a layer of light grey silt (015) which was over 0.6m thick. Above this was a layer of brown silt (014) that measured 2m thick. This was sealed by the topsoil, a mid brown silt (013), that was 0.3m thick.

#### ***Test Pit 103***

A grey silt (012) measuring over 1m thick was encountered at the base of this trench. It was sealed by a 1m thick layer of brown silt (011) followed by grey silt (010) that was 0.8m thick. A layer of dark to mid grey clayey silt (009) was next in the sequence which was sealed by brown silt (008) that was 0.4m thick.

Topsoil comprised brown silt (007) that measured 0.3m thick.

#### ***Test Pit 104***

Natural grey sandy silt (023), measuring over 1m thick, was recorded at the base of the trench. The natural was then sealed by a 1.2m thick layer of brown clayey silt (022) followed by laminated reddish brown clay and brown silt (021). This latter deposit was 0.6m thick.

The topsoil in this pit comprised brown clayey silt (020) that also measured 0.3m thick.

#### ***Test Pit 105***

A natural layer of grey silt (006) measuring over 0.9m thick was identified which was sealed in turn by a 1m thick brown silt (005) followed by grey clayey organic silt (004), measuring 0.2m thick. The natural sequence finished with a

deposit of brown silt (003) that was 0.8m thick.

Above the natural deposits was a 0.4m thick layer of reddish brown silt with frequent stones (002). This was sealed beneath the current topsoil of brown silt with gravel (001).

#### ***Test Pit 106***

The natural sequence began with a layer of grey silt (018), over 1m thick, that was sealed beneath 1.2m of reddish brown silt (017) and finally overlain by 1m of brown silt (016).

Topsoil comprised brown silt (015) that was 0.3m thick.

## **6. DISCUSSION**

Natural deposits comprise a sequence of marine alluvium, represented by the grey silts in Pits 102-106 which lie at 2m-2.67m below the current ground level. Further silts tend to overlie these in Pits 102-106 and are also likely to be of marine origin.

The sequence in Pit 101 differs by having a grey organic silty clay overlain by greyish brown silty clay which indicates a different depositional sequence, perhaps associated with a creek. Pits 103 and 105 had a thin dark grey clayey silt layer which may represent a former land surface, possibly dating to the Roman period.

Pits 103, 105 and 106 had a later marine episode (sealing the former ground level) which may relate to a Late Roman or post-Roman marine incursion. A layer of laminated silts and clays in Pit 104 suggests that this area was tidal.

Within Pit 105 a deposit of stone probably relates to the former railway that once connected Bourne to Spalding. The railway opened in 1866 and closed in 1964 (Squires 1998, 37).

### ***Comment on the Landscape***

*By Tom Lane*

The proposed Relief Road traverses a zone at the broad interface where the Roman land surface shelves gently west-east beneath later, post-Roman, silting (Fig. 4). Moreover, the proposed lengths of road span former saltmarsh deposits at the southern end (TP 101, Figs. 3 and 5) and rise northwards onto the silty estuarine deposits of the former seaward course of the combined rivers Welland, Glen and Bourne Eau.

Added to this complexity of ancient landscape formation the intensive arable use of the area over the past decades has resulted in cropmarks of ditches that are part of the shallow buried Roman landsurface, beneath the later silts, now being visible from the air (eg. Fig. 81; Crowson *et al* 2005), whereas few were seen during the extensive plotting undertaken by Sylvia Hallam in the 1950s (Hallam 1970).

The shelving of sites beneath later deposits is demonstrated on Figure 4 where a considerable density of late Iron Age and Roman sites was found on the field surface during fieldwalking to the east of Deeping Fen (the left hand side of Fig. 4; Hayes and Lane 1992) while the high density of surface sites diminishes to the east and all the known Iron Age and Roman archaeology in the vicinity of Spalding, for example, comes from buried deposits.

Examples of the Roman land surface shelving beneath later silts have been recorded on several sites. At Pennygate Drain (Herbert 1996) a west-to-east section of drain widening revealed ditches, showing as cropmarks, at the field surface in the west of the drain while other ditches were buried by up to c. 0.5m of silt to the east. Nearby, at Wygate Park, Spalding, a considerable Roman settlement and saltern was revealed beneath some 0.4m of later silting (Trimble and Wood, forthcoming).

Dates for the flooding are broadly post-Roman (post 4<sup>th</sup> century AD) at Wygate Park but at Holland Park, Spalding (TF 230205), near the northern limit of the road, a peat buried by shallow silts was dated to cal AD 530-680 (2 Sigma, Beta - 143278) (Rackham *et al*, 2000).

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

Archaeological investigations were undertaken during geotechnical examinations along the proposed routes of the western relief road, Spalding, as the site lay in an area of important Romano-British settlement and salt-making sites.

However, no Romano-British or earlier remains were identified during the investigation due largely to the size and distribution of the test pits. A sequence of natural deposits was encountered which are largely of marine origin and also includes a possible land surface, possibly equating to the Romano-British period. One test pit revealed ballast associated with the former Bourne to Spalding railway. No artefacts were observed or retrieved during the investigation.

## **8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Sally Randall of Mouchel for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Lincolnshire County Council. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## **9. PERSONNEL**

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Site Supervisor: Dale Trimble  
Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth

Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Steve Malone  
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

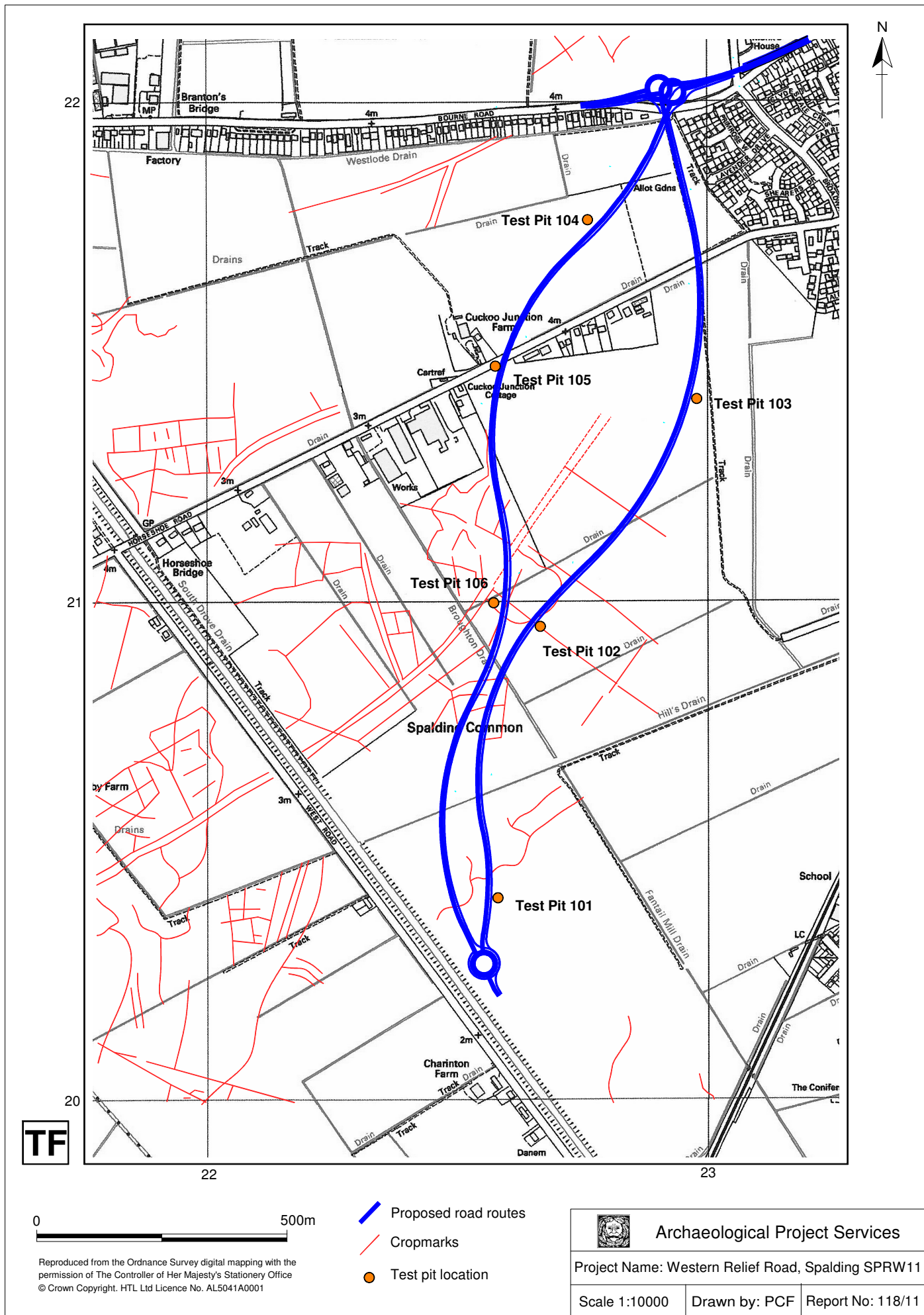


Figure 2 - Site location plan showing proposed road routes and test pit locations

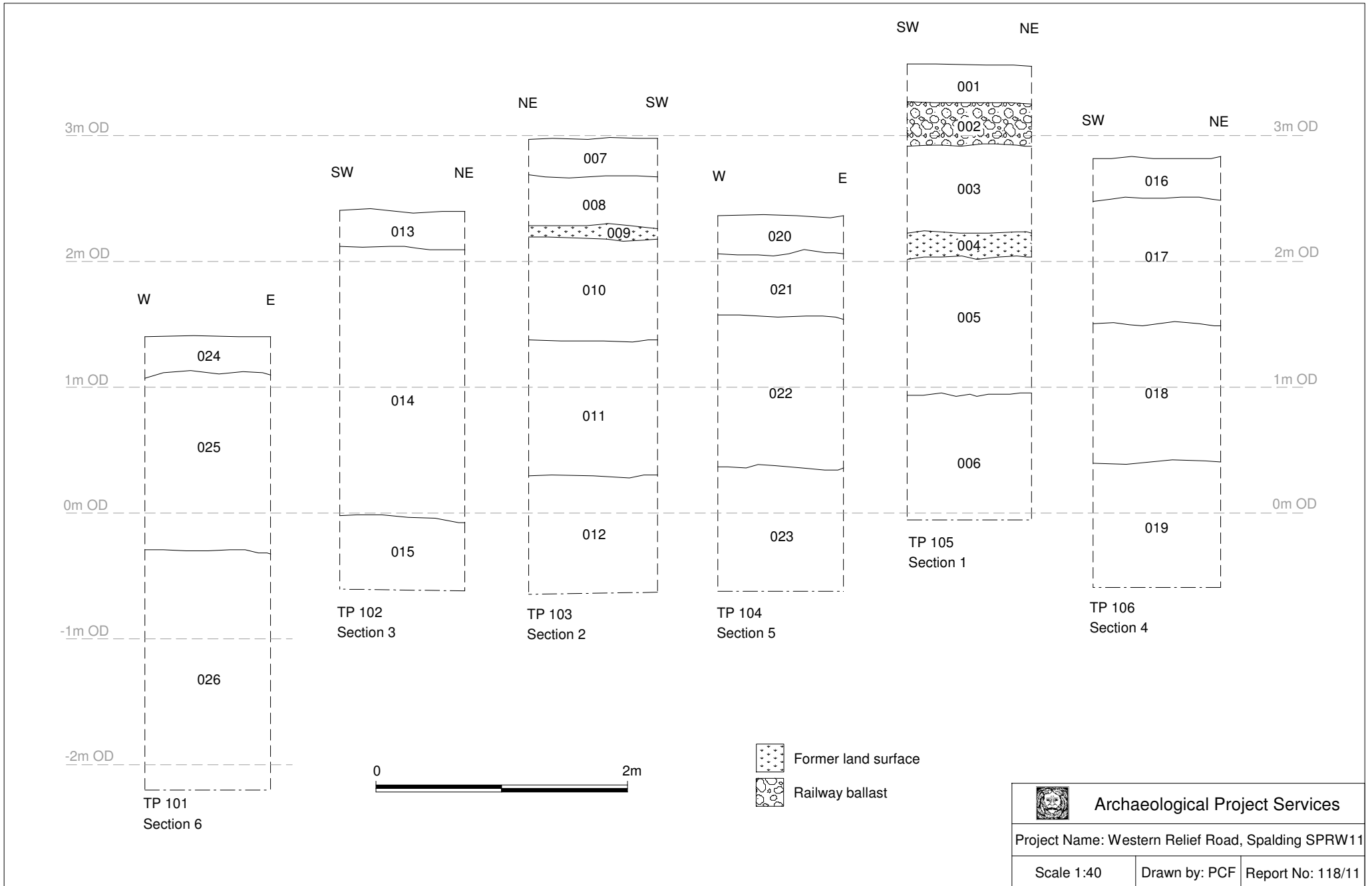


Figure 3 - Test Pit sections



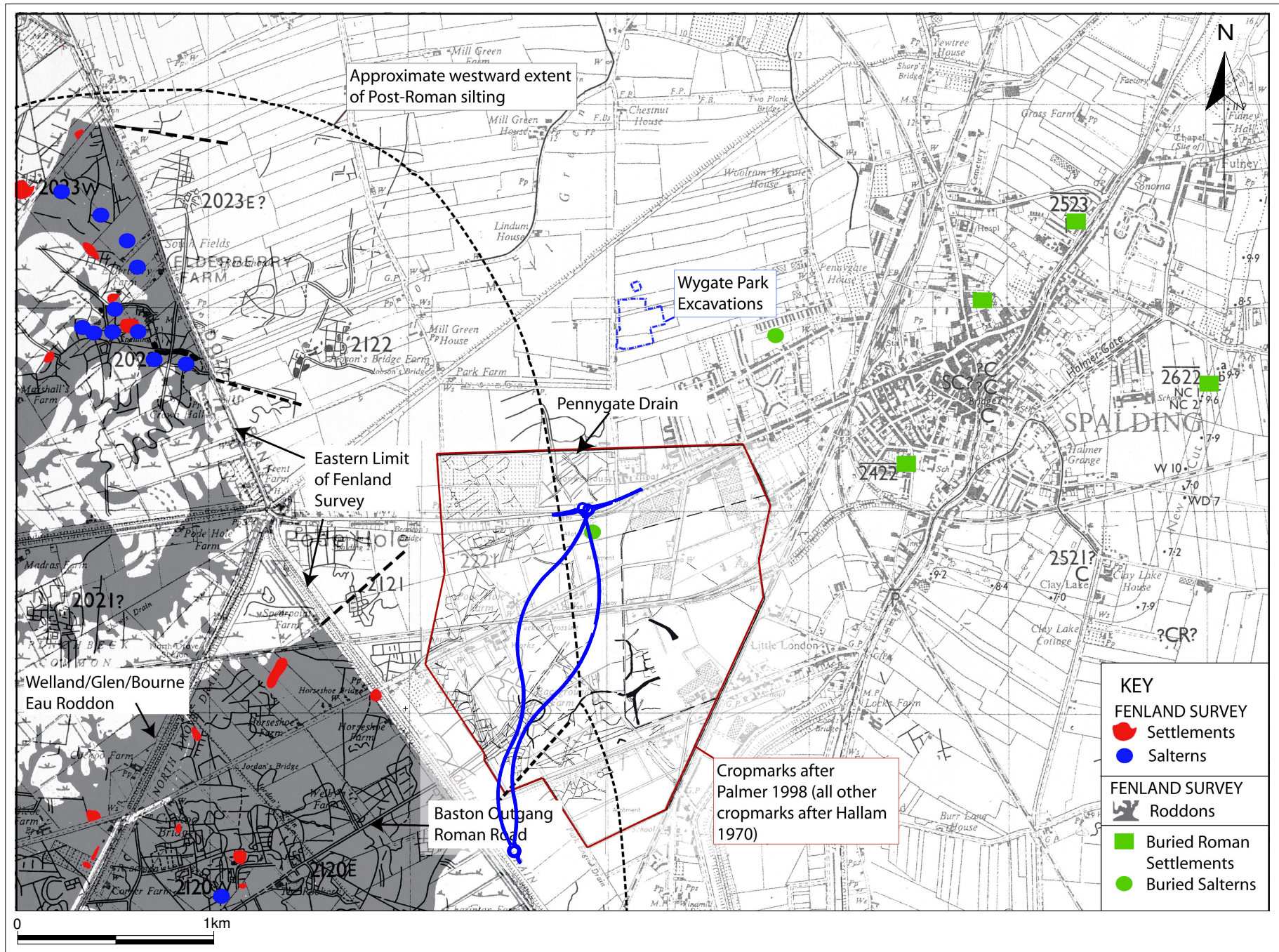
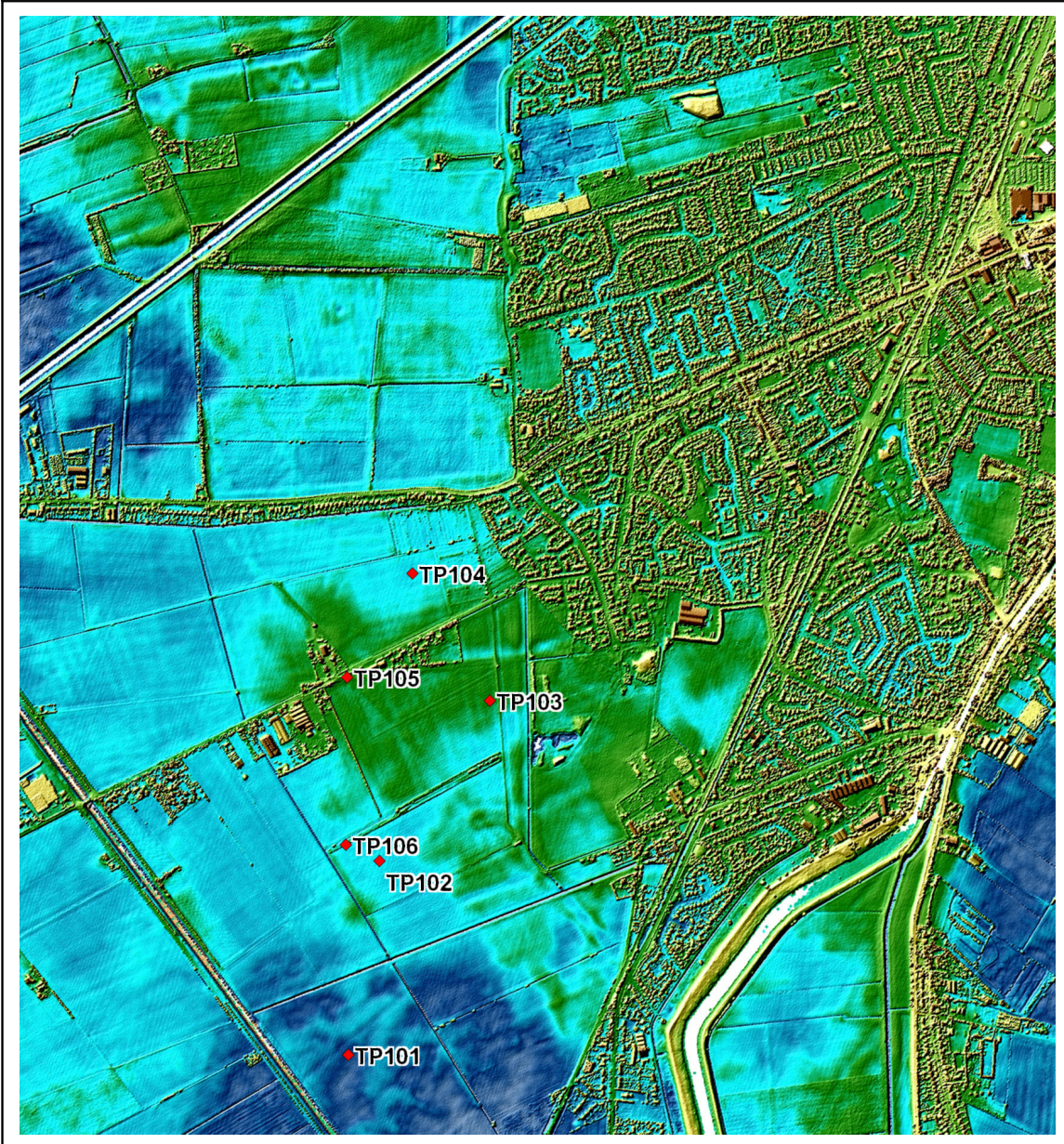


Figure 4 - Roman sites and landscape west of Spalding






|  |                                 |                   |
|--|---------------------------------|-------------------|
|  | Archaeological Project Services |                   |
| Project Name: Western Relief Road, Spalding SPRW11                                   |                                 |                   |
| Scale 1:20000  | Drawn by: SJM                   | Report No: 118/11 |

Figure 5 - Location of test pits on Lidar plot





Plate 1 – Working shot in the vicinity of Test Pit 101



Plate 2 – Test Pit 101 after excavation



Plate 3 – Test Pit 102 after excavation





Plate 4 – Test Pit 103  
after excavation



Plate 5 – Test Pit 104  
after excavation



Plate 6 – Test Pit 105  
after excavation



Plate 7 – Test Pit 106  
after excavation

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

| No. | Test Pit | Description   | Interpretation       |
|-----|----------|---|----------------------|
| 001 | 105      | Loose mid brown silt with frequent small gravel, 0.3m thick                     | Topsoil              |
| 002 | 105      | Indurated mid reddish brown silt with frequent stones, 0.4m thick               | Ballast              |
| 003 | 105      | Loose to soft light brown silt, 0.8m thick                                      | Natural deposit      |
| 004 | 105      | Soft mid to dark grey clayey silt, 0.2m thick                                   | ?former land surface |
| 005 | 105      | Loose to soft light to mid brown silt, 1m thick                                 | Natural deposit      |
| 006 | 105      | Loose mid grey silt, >0.9m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 007 | 103      | Loose mid brown silt, 0.3m thick  | Topsoil              |
| 008 | 103      | Loose light brown silt, 0.4m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 009 | 103      | Soft dark to mid grey clayey silt, 0.15m thick                                  | ?former land surface |
| 010 | 103      | Loose mid grey silt, 0.8m thick   | Natural deposit      |
| 011 | 103      | Loose light to mid brown silt, 1m thick   | Natural deposit      |
| 012 | 103      | Loose light grey silt, >1m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 013 | 102      | Loose mid brown silt, 0.3m thick  | Topsoil              |
| 014 | 102      | Loose light brown silt, 2m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 015 | 102      | Loose light grey silt, 0.6m thick   | Natural deposit      |
| 016 | 106      | Loose mid brown silt, 0.3m thick  | Topsoil              |
| 017 | 106      | Loose light brown silt, 1m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 018 | 106      | Loose mid reddish brown silt, 1.2m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 019 | 106      | Loose light grey silt, >1m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 020 | 104      | Soft mid brown clayey silt, 0.3m thick  | Topsoil              |
| 021 | 104      | Soft laminated mid reddish brown clay and light brown silt, 0.6m thick          | Natural deposit      |
| 022 | 104      | Soft light brown clayey silt, 1.2m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 023 | 104      | Loose mid grey sandy silt, >1m thick  | Natural deposit      |
| 024 | 101      | Firm mid brown silty clay, 0.3m thick   | Topsoil              |
| 025 | 101      | Firm mid greyish brown silty clay, 1.4m thick                                   | Natural deposit      |
| 026 | 101      | Soft and sticky mid grey silty clay with frequent organic remains, >1.96m thick | Natural deposit      |

## Appendix 2

### 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>Briquetage</b>     | A term given to fragments of ceramic equipment and hearth/oven remains from the processing of salt.   |
| <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>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>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>Saltern</b>        | Salt producing site typified by ash, derived from fuel needed to evaporate sea water, and briquetage.   |
| <b>Saxon</b>          | 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:

|    |                            |
|----|----------------------------|
| 26 | Context records            |
| 1  | Photographic record sheets |
| 2  | Daily record sheets        |
| 5  | Sheets of scale drawings   |

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: 2011.411

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SPRW 11

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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