

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS ON LAND
AT HORSEFORDS,
POPLARS FARM,
TANSOR,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
(TAHF 12)**

Work Undertaken For
Thurlow Nunn Standen Ltd

March 2012

Report Compiled by
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Planning Application No: EN/11/01853/FUL
National Grid Reference: TL 0575 9130
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-121738

APS Report No. **22/12**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



Quality Control
 Horsefords,
 Tansor
 TAHF 12

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Supervisor	Mark Peachey
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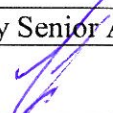
Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
 Dale Trimble	 Tom Lane
Date: 30-3-12	Date: 30-3-12

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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological investigations was undertaken on land at Horsefords, Poplars Farm, Tansor, Northamptonshire. The investigations, comprising a strip, map and sample programme, were undertaken in advance of the construction of an agricultural building.

The site lies in an area of cropmarks of probable prehistoric and Romano-British (AD 43-410) origin. The cropmarks include enclosures and trackways as well as a possible Bronze Age (2200-800 BC) ring ditch and a possible Neolithic (4000-2200 BC) causewayed enclosure. A Neolithic polished stone axe has also been retrieved from the vicinity.

The investigation revealed natural, undated and recent deposits. An undated ditch was recorded which is likely to be of some antiquity. No other features were recorded and no finds retrieved during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as “a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons. This will be within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.” (IfA 2008a).

2.2 Definition of an Excavation

An archaeological excavation is defined as, “a programme of controlled, intrusive fieldwork with defined research objectives which examines, records and interprets archaeological deposits, features and

structures and, as appropriate, retrieves artefacts, ecofacts and other remains within a specified area or site on land, inter-tidal zone or underwater. The records made and objects gathered during the fieldwork are studied and the results of that study published in detail appropriate to the project design” (IfA 2008b).

2.3 Planning Background

Planning permission (application no: EN/11/01853/FUL) for construction of an agricultural bulk store at Horsefords, Poplars Farm, Tansor, Northamptonshire was granted by East Northamptonshire Council subject to a condition requiring a programme of archaeological works. Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Thurlow Nunn Standen Limited to undertake this work. The investigation was carried out on the 20th and 21st March 2012 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services (Appendix 1) and approved by the Planning Archaeologist, Northamptonshire County Council.

2.4 Topography and Geology

Tansor is located 2.5km northeast of Oundle and 17km east of Corby in the East Northamptonshire district of the county (Fig. 1). The site actually lies within Warmington, immediately adjacent to the parish boundary with Tansor.

The site is located 500m north of Tansor, within farmland, centred on National Grid Reference TL 0575 9130 (Fig. 2). The site is on rising ground on the eastern side of the valley of the River Nene at a height of c. 23m OD close to a minor tributary of the Nene.

Local soils have not been mapped, although are likely to be of the Moreton Association, typically brown calcareous earths (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 257). These soils are developed upon a drift geology of 2nd River Terrace Sands and Gravels

which in turn seals a solid geology of Jurassic Great Oolite Limestone (GSGB 1951).

2.5 Archaeological Setting

The site lies in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic to the present day. A Neolithic polished stone axe was found to the east of the site and a possible causewayed enclosure has been identified from aerial photographs to the northwest, although it has been suggested that it may be geological in origin.

A possible Bronze Age ring ditch has also been recorded as a cropmark to the northwest. Most cropmarks in the vicinity of the site comprise enclosures and there is also a trackway running east-west to the north of the site. Although most of these features are undated, they are likely to be of the Iron Age or Romano-British periods.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of the mitigation were to preserve by record the significant archaeological remains at the site.

The aims of the investigation were to record and interpret the deposits and any archaeological features exposed.

The objectives of the watching brief were to determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered and their spatial arrangement and as far as practicable, to recover dating evidence from them, and to establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

4. METHODS

The area of the new bulk store was stripped down to natural deposits by a

mechanical excavator under archaeological supervision (Plate 2). 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 2. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20 and 1:100. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

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

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 during the investigation were layers of yellowish grey clayey silt (002), across the northern part of the site, and reddish brown silty clay (005), found in the southern portion of the stripped area (Fig. 3).

Cut into the natural clayey silt was a north-south aligned ditch (004). This measured 16.5m long by 0.5m wide and was 0.14m deep (Fig. 3; Fig. 4, Sections 1 and 2; Plates 3 and 4). A single fill of brown clayey silt (003) was recorded.

Sealing all deposits was the current topsoil, comprising a 0.35m thick (Fig. 4, Section 3) layer of greyish yellow clayey silt (001).

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprise silts and silty clays and are likely to be associated with river terrace deposits.

A single undated ditch was the only archaeological feature revealed during the investigation. It does not share common alignments with existing field boundaries and may, therefore, be of some antiquity.

No finds were retrieved during the investigation.

7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological strip, map and sample investigation was undertaken on land at Horsefords, Poplars Farm, Tansor, Northamptonshire, as the site lay close to a concentration of cropmarks of probable prehistoric and Romano-British date.

However, only a single undated ditch was recorded during the investigation. Its alignment is not paralleled to existing boundaries and it may be of some antiquity. No other archaeological features were recorded and no finds were recovered during the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Thurlow Nunn Standen Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble
Site Supervisor: Mark Peachey
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Photographic reproduction: Mark Peachey
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Mark Peachey
Post-excavation analyst: Paul Cope-

Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IfA Institute for Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General Location Plan

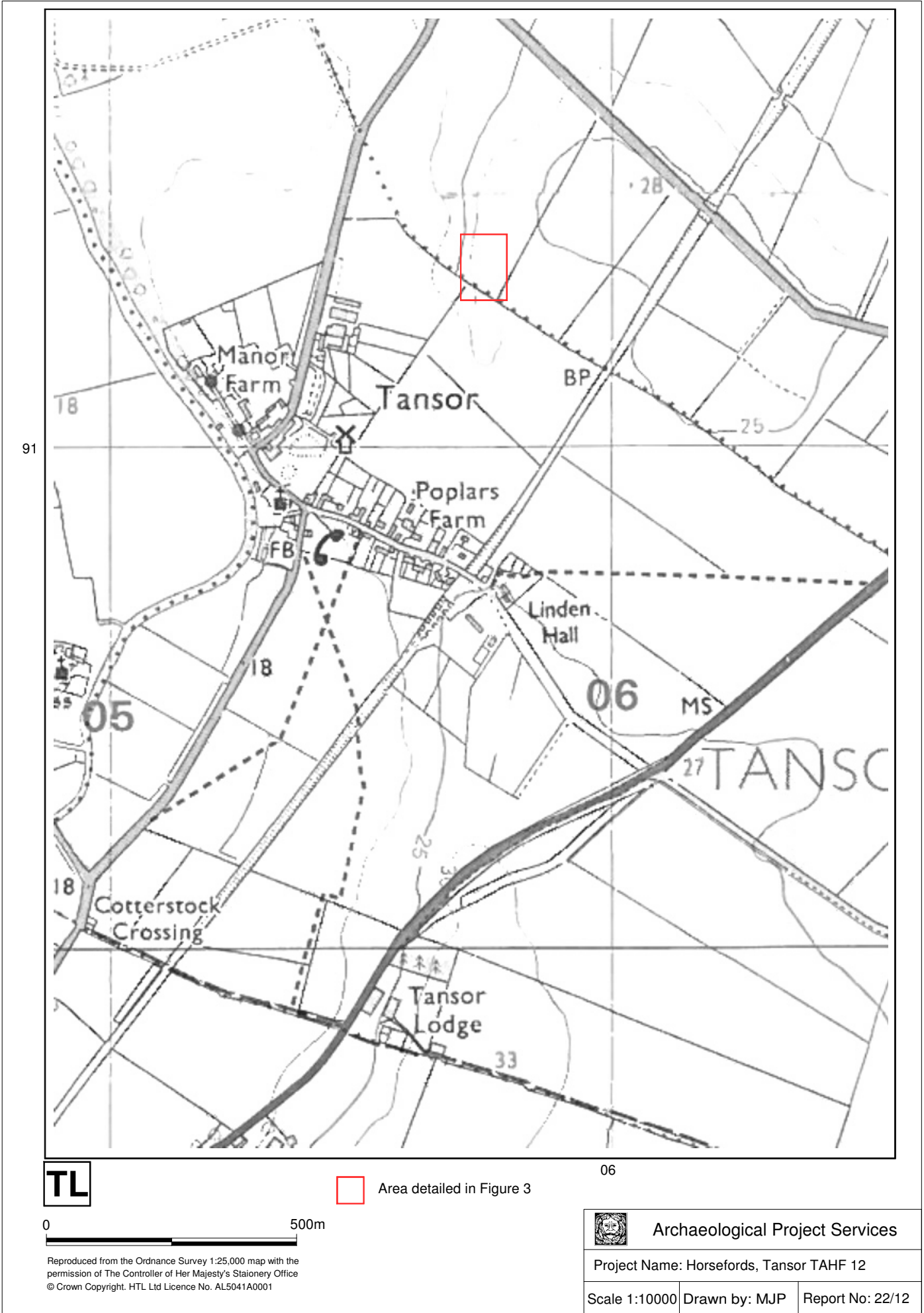


Figure 2 - Site location plan

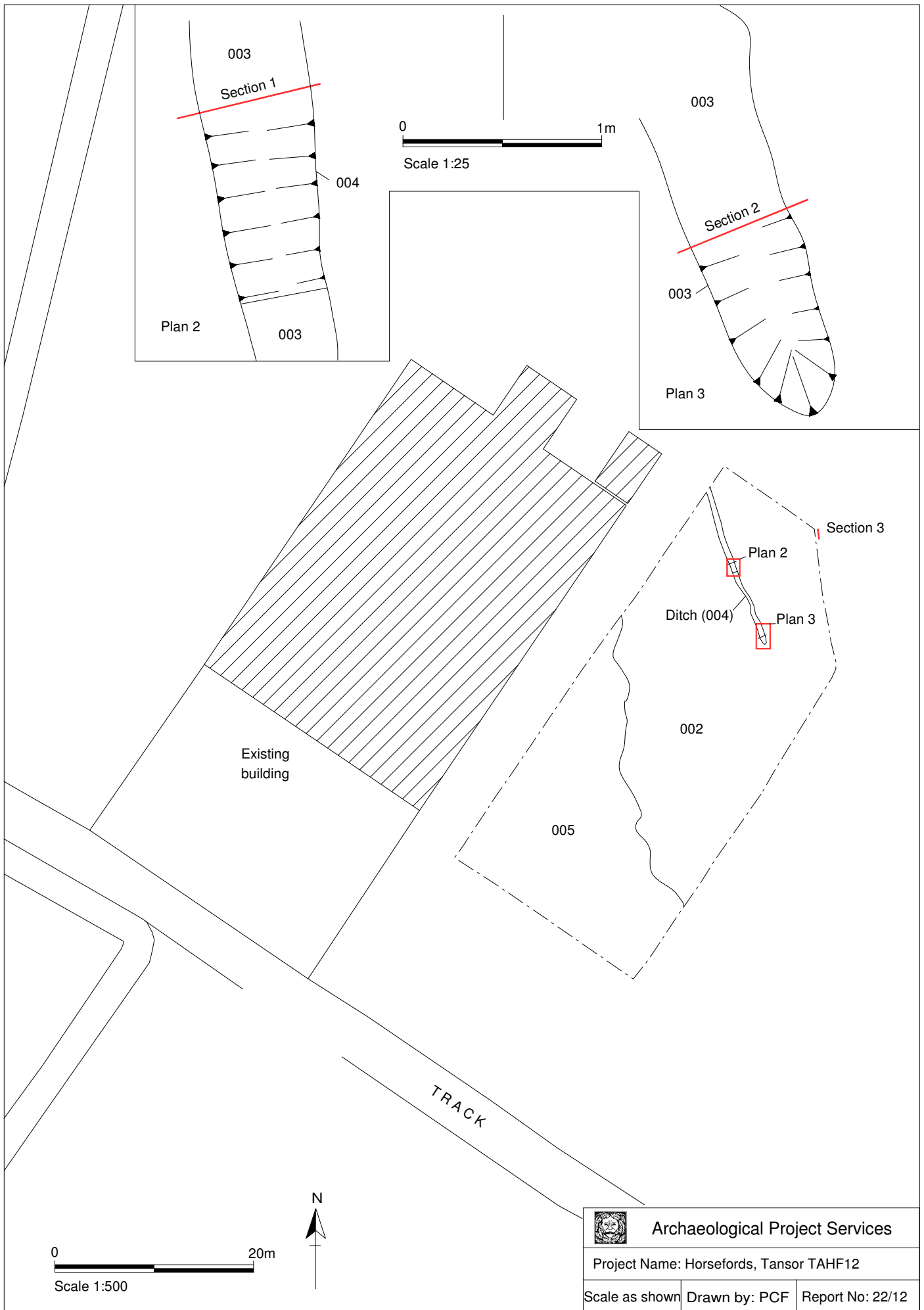
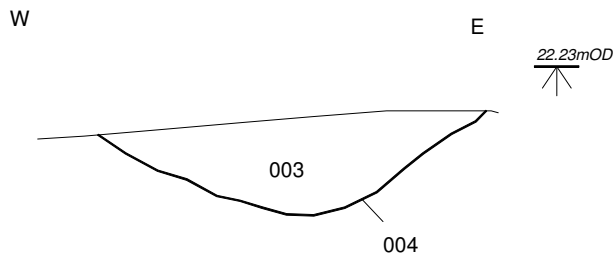
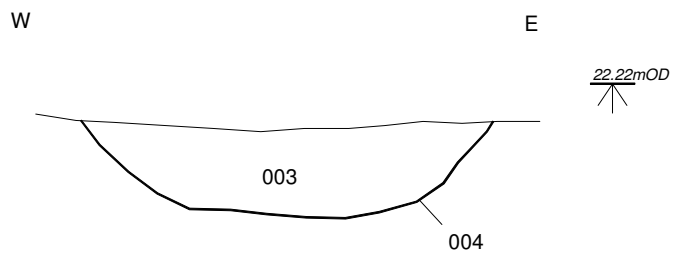


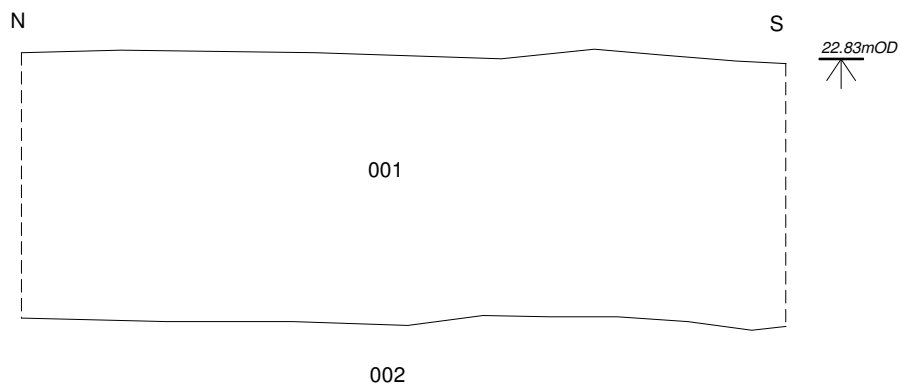
Figure 3 - Plan of the stripped area



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3




 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Horsefords, Tansor TAHF12		
Scale 1:10	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 22/12

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 3



Plate 1 – General view of the site prior to works, looking southwest



Plate 2 – The site after stripping, looking northeast



Plate 3 – Ditch (004), Section 1, looking north

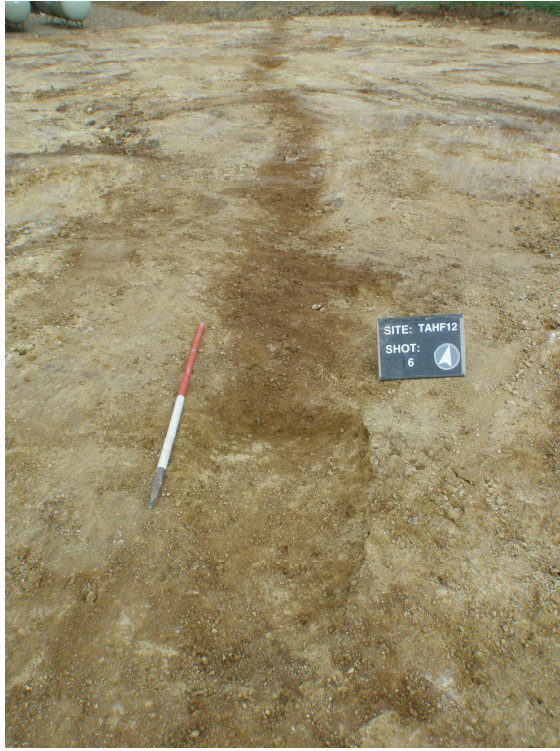


Plate 4 – Ditch (004), Section 2, looking north



Plate 5 – Section 3, looking northeast

Appendix 1

SPECIFICATION FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION (STRIP, MAP & SAMPLE) ON LAND AT HORSEFORDS, POPLARS FARM, TANSOR, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 *A programme of mitigation and archaeological investigation is required prior to development at Horsefords, Poplars Farm, Tansor, Northamptonshire.*
- 1.2 *The application site is located to the north of the village of Tansor. The fields surrounding the site contain a number of cropmarks recorded from aerial photography including prehistoric trackways and enclosures.*
- 1.3 *Potential impact to any archaeological remains will be addressed by a programme of investigation.*
- 1.4 *Archaeological investigations will involve a programme of strip and plan recording of any remains revealed during machining in the specified area. The archaeological features exposed will be recorded in writing, graphically and photographically.*
- 1.5 *On completion of the fieldwork a report will be prepared detailing the results of the investigation. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This document comprises a specification for archaeological mitigation and investigations prior to development at Horsefords, Poplars Farm, Tansor, Northamptonshire.
- 2.2 This document contains the following parts:
 - 2.2.1 Overview.
 - 2.2.2 Stages of work and methodologies.
 - 2.2.3 List of specialists.
 - 2.2.4 Programme of works and staffing structure of the project

3 SITE LOCATION

- 3.1 Tansor is situated 16km southwest of Peterborough and 17km east of Corby in the East Northamptonshire district of Northants. The site is located c. 500m north of the settlement, within farmland at National Grid Reference 505750 291300.

4 PLANNING BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Planning Application (EN/11/01853/FUL) for construction of an agricultural bulk store has been granted by East Northamptonshire Council, subject to conditions including the undertaking of a programme of archaeological works in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, submitted to and approved by the Planning Authority. The present document constitutes a written scheme for the investigation.

5 SOILS AND TOPOGRAPHY

- 5.1 The site lies at c. 20m OD on rising ground on the south side of the valley of the Rive Nene. Solid geology is Blisworth Formation Limestone with overlying river terrace sand and gravel mapped just to the west (BGS 50000 scale digital geology: accessed 14/03/12).

6 ARCHAEOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

- 6.1 The fields surrounding the site contain a number of cropmarks recorded from aerial photography. These include a trackway running across the field to the north of the development site, turning northeast to run alongside a large rectangular enclosure thought to be prehistoric, either a settlement or funerary site. A number of other cropmarks are recorded, also thought to be prehistoric. There is potential for these or similar features to extent into the development site.

7 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The aims of the mitigation will be to preserve by record the significant archaeological remains at the site.
- 7.2 The aims of the investigation will be:
- 7.2.1 To record and interpret the deposits and any archaeological features exposed.
- 7.3 The objectives of the investigation will be to:
- 7.3.1 Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
- 7.3.2 Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- 7.3.3 As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features;
- 7.3.4 Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

8 SITE OPERATIONS

8.1 General considerations

- 8.1.1 All work will be undertaken following statutory Health and Safety requirements in operation at the time of the investigation.
- 8.1.2 The work will be undertaken according to the relevant codes of practise issued by the Institute for Archaeologists (IfA), under the management of a Member of the institute (MIfA). Archaeological Project Services is IfA registered organisation no. 21.
- 8.1.3 Any and all artefacts found during the investigation and thought to be 'treasure', as defined by the Treasure Act 1996, will be removed from site to a secure store and promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.
- 8.1.4 All work will be carried out with consideration for national and regional research objectives (Cooper 2006).

8.2 Methodology

- 8.2.1 Mitigation of potential impact to archaeological deposits will be by a programme of strip and map recording, with sample excavation of significant features. Should significant archaeological remains be revealed then it may be necessary to contact the NCC Assistant Archaeological Advisor and client to establish an appropriate level of investigation.
- 8.2.2 The investigations will be undertaken prior to the groundwork phase of development and includes the archaeological supervision of stripping of the site. Archaeological remains will be mapped by survey-grade dGPS and sampled by excavation to determine their date and nature.
- 8.2.3 Stripped areas will be observed to identify and record archaeological features that are exposed and to record changes in the geological conditions. Sections will be recorded at a scale of 1:10. Features recorded in plan will be drawn at a scale of 1:20 or by

dGPS. Written descriptions detailing the nature of the deposits, features and fills encountered will be compiled on Archaeological Project Services pro-forma record sheets. Samples will be taken from appropriate deposits.

- 8.2.4 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for later analysis.
- 8.2.5 Throughout the investigation a photographic record will be compiled. The photographic record will consist of:
- the site during work to show specific stages, and the layout of the archaeology within the examined areas.
 - groups of features where their relationship is important
- 8.2.6 Should human remains be located they will be left *in situ* and only excavated if absolutely necessary. Should removal be required the appropriate Ministry of Justice licence will be obtained before the exhumation of the remains. In addition, the Local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate.

9 POST-EXCAVATION

9.1 Stage 1

- 9.1.1 On completion of site operations, the records and schedules produced during the investigation 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 and labelled, the labelling referring to schedules identifying the subject/s photographed.
- 9.1.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork 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 Lincoln.

9.2 Stage 2

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

9.3 Stage 3

- 9.3.1 On completion of stage 2, a report detailing the findings of the investigation will be prepared.
- 9.3.2 This will consist of:
- A non-technical summary of the results of the investigation.
 - A description of the archaeological setting of the investigation.
 - Description of the topography of the site.
 - Description of the methodologies used during the investigation.
 - A text describing the findings of the investigation.
 - A consideration of the local, regional and national context of the investigation findings.

- Plans of the archaeological features exposed. If a sequence of archaeological deposits is encountered, separate plans for each phase will be produced.
- Sections of the trenches and archaeological features.
- Interpretation of the archaeological features exposed, and their chronology and setting within the surrounding landscape.
- Specialist reports on the finds from the site.
- Appropriate photographs of the site and specific archaeological features.

9.4 Stage 4

- 9.4.1 Post-excavation assessment may establish that fuller reporting and publication is required (English Heritage 2009). If such is the case, the format, nature and extent of such publication will be determined by review of the assessment in consultation with the archaeological curator. Costs for such publication would be negotiated with the client as a separate piece of work, following the completion and submission of the assessment.

10 **REPORT DEPOSITION**

- 10.1 Copies of the report will be sent to: the client and to Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Record.

11 **ARCHIVE**

- 11.1 The documentation and records generated during the investigation will be sorted and ordered into the format acceptable to Northamptonshire Museums. This will be undertaken in accordance with local and national guidelines for long-term storage and curation.

12 **PUBLICATION**

- 12.1 Details of the investigation will be input to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS).
- 12.2 Notes on the investigation will be submitted to the journal *Northamptonshire Archaeology*.
- 12.2 If appropriate, notes on the findings will be submitted to the appropriate national journals: *Britannia* for discoveries of Roman date, and *Medieval Archaeology* for findings of medieval or later date.

13 **CURATORIAL RESPONSIBILITY**

- 13.1 Curatorial responsibility for the archaeological work undertaken on the site lies with Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Team. They will be given written notice of the commencement of the project to enable them to make monitoring arrangements.

14 **VARIATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES**

- 14.1 Variations to the proposed scheme of works will only be made following written confirmation of acceptance from the archaeological curator.
- 14.2 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the archaeological curator and client.
- 14.3 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation additional resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.

- 14.4 Any contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the archaeological curator and the client.

15 PROGRAMME OF WORKS AND STAFFING LEVELS

- 15.1 The strip, map and sample investigation will precede the programme of construction. The duration of the site works is difficult to determine as it is to a large extent reliant on the speed of stripping and spoil removal, and also depending on the quantity and complexity of archaeological remains encountered. Post-excavation work is likewise dependent on the quantity and complexity of archaeological remains encountered.
- 15.2 An archaeological supervisor (and assistants if necessary) with experience of investigations of this type will undertake the work.
- 15.3 Post-excavation analysis and report production will be undertaken by the archaeological supervisor, or a post-excavation analyst as appropriate, with assistance from a finds supervisor, illustrator and external specialists.

16 SPECIALISTS TO BE USED DURING THE PROJECT

- 16.1 The following organisations/persons will, in principle 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 – D Trimble, APS/ Trent & Peak Archaeology Roman – A Beeby, APS/B Precious, Independent Specialist Post-Roman - A Irving, Independent Specialist/G Taylor, APS
Non-pottery Artefacts	J Cowgill, Independent Specialist/G Taylor, APS
Animal Bones	M Holmes, Independent Specialist/P Cope-Faulkner, APS
Environmental Analysis	J Rackham, Independent Specialist
Human Remains Analysis	R Kendall, University of Durham

17 INSURANCES

- 17.1 Archaeological Project Services, as part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire, maintains Employers Liability Insurance of £10,000,000, together with Public and Products Liability insurances, each with indemnity of £5,000,000. Copies of insurance documentation can be supplied on request.

18 COPYRIGHT

- 18.1 Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.
- 18.2 Licence will also be given to the archaeological curators to use the documentary archive for educational, public and research purposes.
- 18.3 In the case of non-satisfactory settlement of account then copyright will remain fully and exclusively with Archaeological Project Services. In these circumstances it will be an

infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 for the client to pass any report, partial report, or copy of same, to any third party. Reports submitted in good faith by Archaeological Project Services to any Planning Authority or archaeological curator will be removed from said planning Authority and/or archaeological curator. The Planning Authority and/or archaeological curator will be notified by Archaeological Project Services that the use of any such information previously supplied constitutes an infringement under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 and may result in legal action.

- 18.4 The author of any report or specialist contribution to a report shall retain intellectual copyright of their work and may make use of their work for educational or research purposes or for further publication.

19 **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Cooper, NJ (ed), 2006 *The Archaeology of the East Midlands: an archaeological resource assessment and research agenda*

English Heritage, 2009 *Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*

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**

Appendix 2

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Loose mid greyish yellow clayey silt, 0.35m thick	Topsoil
002	Friable light yellowish grey clayey silt	Natural deposit
003	Friable mid brown clayey silt	Fill of (004)
004	Linear feature, aligned north-south, 16.5m long by 0.5m wide by 0.14m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Ditch
005	Firm dark reddish brown silty clay with small rounded pebbles	Natural deposit

Appendix 3

GLOSSARY

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, <i>e.g.</i> (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, <i>etc.</i> 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).
Iron Age	A period characterised by the introduction of Iron into the country for tools, between 800 BC and AD 50.
Layer	A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.
Neolithic	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.
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 1 st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
5	Context record sheets
1	Photographic record sheets
1	Plan record sheet
1	Section record sheet
2	Daily record sheets
3	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 Northampton Museum

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: TAHF 12

OASIS Record No: archaeo11-121738

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.

Archaeological Project Services shall retain full copyright of any commissioned reports under the *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* with all rights reserved; excepting that it hereby provides an exclusive licence to the client for the use of such documents by the client in all matters directly relating to the project as described in the Project Specification.