

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING ON LAND NORTH OF BOSTON ROAD, KIRKBY LA THORPE, LINCOLNSHIRE (KTBR 12)

Work Undertaken For Western Power Distribution PLC

November 2012

Report Compiled by Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons)

Planning Application No: 11/0850/OHL National Grid Reference: TF 0872 4605 – TF 0897 4604 The Collection Accession No: LCNCC: 2012.83 OASIS Record No: archaeol1-137763

APS Report No. 90/12



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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken on land to the north of Boston Road, Kirkby La Thorpe, Lincolnshire. The investigations monitored the excavation of foundation pits for a new overhead pylon and a cable trench to a new power plant.

The site lies to the west of a Romano-British (AD 43-410) small town which may have developed from a Late Iron Age (100 BC-AD 43) tribal centre. To the east are the medieval (AD 1066-1540) settlements of Kirkby and Laythorpe. Late Saxon (AD 850-1066) stonework is known from Kirkby and both are mentioned in the Domesday Survey. Flints of Mesolithic date onwards are known from the general vicinity and cropmarks indicate the presence of enclosures of Iron Age to Roman date lying south of Boston Road.

The investigations revealed sequences of natural sands, silty sands and gravel over which topsoil had developed. No archaeological features were observed.

Fragments of fired clay, perhaps from a poorly fired pottery vessel, were the only artefacts retrieved from the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned Western Power by Distribution PLC to undertake a programme of archaeological monitoring recording during groundworks and associated with a new cable trench on land north of Boston Road, Kirkby La Thorpe, Lincolnshire, as detailed in planning application 11/0850/OHL. The investigations were carried out between the 21st May and 16th October 2012 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the Senior Historic Environment Officer, North Kesteven District Council.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Kirkby La Thorpe is located 3km east of Sleaford in the administrative district of North Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The works were undertaken 1km west of the centre of Kirkby La Thorpe as defined by the parish church of St Denis between National Grid References TF 0872 4605 and TF 0897 4604 (Fig. 2). Situated on land to the north of Boston Road, the site lies on generally level ground at a height of c. 11m OD.

Local soils are of the Ruskington Series, typically gleyic brown calcareous earths (George and Robson 1978, 79). These are developed upon a drift geology of Sleaford Sand and Gravel which overlies a solid geology of the Peterborough formation of the Jurassic Oxford Clay BGS (1996).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Kirkby La Thorpe is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Mesolithic to the present day, Flint tools of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age date are known from areas within the general vicinity.

To the south of Boston Road, aerial photographs have identified a number of cropmark enclosures which, though undated, are of typical Iron Age to Romano-British form.

The focus of Later Iron Age settlement is located south of the River Slea, *c*. 1km west of the site. High status pottery and a significant collection of coin pellet mould fragments were found adjacent to Old Place and has led to speculation that at this time Sleaford was an important centre or *oppidum* of the *Corieltauvi*, the local tribe (Elsdon 1997, 75). However, recent work has demonstrated that the late Iron Age settlement was not as large as previously thought, encompassing only 4 hectares (Taylor 2010, 114).

Following an apparent absence of occupation at the beginning of the Roman period, a small town was established on the site of the Iron Age settlement thoroughfare, alongside the Roman Mareham Lane, that once connected Bourne to Sleaford and beyond to Lincoln (Margary 1973, 234). Work undertaken to the immediate west of the site revealed evidence for Romano-British funerary rites, both cremation and inhumation, which were subsequently replaced by domestic settlement in the mid 2nd to 3rd century (Rowe 2008, 18).

Located within the fabric of the tower of St Denis' church are two fragments from the same Late Saxon grave cover (Everson and Stocker 1999, 191).

Kirkby and Laythorpe were two separate settlements and are both mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Kirkby is referred to as Cherchebi and Chirchebi, the name deriving from the Old Danish kirkju-bý, meaning 'village with a church (Cameron 1998, 74). Laythorpe is Ledulftorp and Leduluetorp and means 'Leithulf's secondary settlement' and is of Old Danish and Old Norse extraction (*ibid*. 79). At the time of Domesday, the land in both villages was held by the King, the Bishops of Durham and Lincoln, Gilbert de Gand and Colsuain and contained a church (shared between the two) with a resident priest (Foster and Longley 1976).

During the medieval period, the site lay away from the main settlement areas, within the open fields of the parish.

Prior to these works, a geophysical survey was undertaken along the proposed route of the cable trench. This revealed possible curvilinear features in the centre of the area (Fig. 3) though most of the anomalies were probably due to the natural geology (Malone 2009, 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 new pylon base were excavated by machine to depths of c. 0.5mbelow the current ground level (Plate 1). The new cable trench was excavated at a later date to depths of up to 1.4m below the ground surface. Following excavation, the selected portions of 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 1:10. 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. At the eastern end of the works (Fig. 4), there was a general sequence of natural deposits comprising reddish brown sand and gravel (003, 006, 009 and 012), overlain by greyish brown silty sand (002, 005, 008 and 011). These had combined thicknesses of up to 0.38m (Fig. 5, Sections 1 to 4; Plates 3 and 4).

A little to the north, a deeper sequence of natural deposits was revealed. The lowest comprised grey sand (016) which was overlain by orange gravel with sand (015) followed by yellow sand (014). These had a combined thickness of 0.9m (Fig. 5, Section 5; Plate 5).

Approximately 30m northwest, within the cable trench (Fig. 3) the natural sequence consisted of orange sand and gravel (020), overlain by grey sand (019) followed by orange sand (018) with a combined thickness of 1m (Fig. 5, Section 6; Plate 6).

Further west, natural comprised a single homogenous deposit of orange brown sand (022) which measured in excess of 0.85m thick (Fig. 5, Section 7; Plate 7).

Sealing the natural deposits was the current topsoil comprising brown silty sand (001, 004, 007, 010 and 021) and brownish grey silty sand (013 and 017). This measured between 0.3m and 0.4m thick. Fragments of fired clay, or possibly poorly fired pottery, were retrieved from the topsoil (021).

6. **DISCUSSION**

Natural deposits comprise sands, silty sands and gravel which relates to the underlying drift geology of Sleaford Sand and Gravel.

Developed upon the natural was the current topsoil. No archaeological deposits were encountered during the investigation and the previously identified geophysical anomaly may also be interpreted as a probable geological feature. However, the only finds retrieved during the investigation were made in proximity to the curvilinear anomalies. It is possible, therefore, that the remains responsible for the geophysical anomalies had been ploughed away and only survived as undetectable otherwise bands of magnetically enhanced soil in the plough zone.

7. CONCLUSION

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at Boston Road, Kirkby La Thorpe, as the site lay close to the western fringes of a Romano-British town and in an area where prehistoric remains have been identified.

However, only natural sands and gravels were encountered during the investigation with no archaeological deposits recorded. Fragments of fired clay, perhaps a poorly fired pot, were retrieved from topsoil deposits.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Western Distribution PLC Power for commissioning the fieldwork and postexcavation analysis, following initial enquiries by Mr A Tuplin of Bruton Knowles. Geoff Oakes of Balfour Beatty kindly allowed access to the site. The work was coordinated by Steve Malone 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

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone Site Supervisors: Alex Beeby, Paul Cope-

Faulkner

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
- PCA Pre-Construct Archaeology



Figure 1 - General location plan



Figure 2 - Site location plan



Figure 3 - Plan showing the extent of works overlain on the geophysical survey



Figure 4 - Plan of the new pylon base showing section locations



Figure 5 - Sections 1 to 7



Plate 1 – View showing the pylon foundations, looking southwest



Plate 2 – View of the cable trench works in progress, looking west



Plate 3 – Section 1, looking southwest



Plate 4 – Section 3, looking northeast



Plate 5 – Section 5, looking northwest



Plate 6 – Section 6, looking south



Plate 7 – Section 7, looking south

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Loose mid brown silty sand, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
002	Loose mid greyish brown silty sand, 0.1m thick	Natural deposit
003	Loose mid reddish brown sand and gravel, >20mm thick	Natural deposit
004	Loose mid brown silty sand, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
005	Loose mid greyish brown silty sand, 0.36m thick	Natural deposit
006	Loose mid reddish brown sand and gravel, >30mm thick	Natural deposit
007	Loose mid brown silty sand, 0.35m thick	Topsoil
008	Loose mid greyish brown silty sand, 0.3m thick	Natural deposit
009	Loose mid reddish brown sand and gravel, >20mm thick	Natural deposit
010	Loose mid brown silty sand, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
011	Loose mid greyish brown silty sand, 0.15m thick	Natural deposit
012	Loose mid reddish brown sand and gravel, 20mm thick	Natural deposit
013	Firm mid brownish grey silty sand, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
014	Loose dark yellow sand, 0.15m thick	Natural deposit
015	Firm dark orange gravel with sand, 0.36m thick	Natural deposit
016	Loose to friable light grey sand, >0.45m thick	Natural deposit
017	Firm mid brownish grey silty sand, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
018	Firm mid orange sand, 0.4m thick, 0.4m thick	Natural deposit
019	Soft light grey sand, 0.4m thick, 0.4m thick	Natural deposit
020	Firm mid orange sand and gravel, >0.2m thick	Natural deposit
021	Firm mid brown silty sand, 0.35m thick	Topsoil
022	Friable mid orange brown sand, >0.85m thick	Natural deposit

THE FINDS

FIRED CLAY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

The material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeology Handbook*.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed before being counted and weighed. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the fired clay is included in Table 1 below.

Condition

The fired clay is friable and fragmentary.

Results

Table 1, Fired Clay Archive

Cxt	Fabric	Sub type	NoF	W (g)	Description
021	Reduced; medium sandy; Ca; Al; clay pells; chaff	POTTERY?	6	13	Low fired; extremely friable; single flat rough surface with slight curve on one side; poorly sorted moderate well rounded to subrounded quartz up to 0.7mm; sparse rounded clay pellets up to 2.0mm; sparse chaff and rounded calcareous (oolite?) grits; single fragment of acid igneous rock; pottery?

Provenance

The fired clay came from the topsoil (021).

Range

There are six fragments from a single object in a dark reduced clay fabric. The fabric is unusual it that it has a wide range of inclusions the most notable of which are chaff and acid igneous rock. Although this material could be prehistoric in date these are more commonly constituent elements of pottery vessels of the Early to middle Saxon period. Despite this the low fired and friable nature of these pieces along with the rough unfinished surface suggest it is perhaps more likely to derive from an object rather than a pot.

Potential

There is no potential for further work. The pieces should be retained as part of the site archive and should be well wrapped in acid free paper to prevent further degradation.

Summary

Six pieces of fired clay from a single item were recovered from the topsoil. These pieces cannot be dated with any real confidence but could be of prehistoric or Saxon date.

SPOT DATING

The dating in Table 2 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Cxt	Date	Comments
021	Undated	Topsoil

ABBREVIATIONS

CXT	Context
NoF	Number of Fragments
W (g)	Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

~ 2003, *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* [internet]. Available at <u>http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/</u> section.asp?catId=3155

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).
Geophysical Survey	Essentially non-invasive methods of examining below the ground surface by measuring deviations in the physical properties and characteristics of the earth. Techniques include magnetometry and resistivity survey.
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.
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Mesolithic	The 'Middle Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 8200-4500 BC.
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.
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 prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 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.
Saxon	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 410-1066 when England was largely settled by tribes from northern Germany.

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 22 Context records
- 8 Daily record sheets
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 8 Sheets of scale drawings
- 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 Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire Danes Terrace Lincoln LN2 1LP

Accession Number:

LCNCC: 2012.83

Archaeological Project Services Site Code:

KTBR 12

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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