

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT GRANTHAM ROAD, SLEAFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE (SLGR 14)

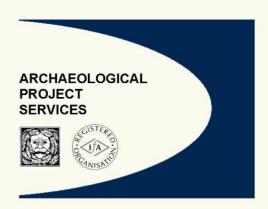
Work Undertaken For **Larkfleet Homes**

September 2014

Report Compiled by Andrew Failes BA (Hons) MA

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The site lies in an archaeologically sensitive area. Prehistoric artefacts have been recovered from the immediate vicinity. Saxon remains, including a settlement to the east and a cemetery to the west, have also been found nearby. Previous geophysical survey of the site did not identify any distinct archaeological remains, however, this survey was compromised by magnetic disturbance which may have masked any potential archaeological signals.

The evaluation identified a sequence of natural clays overlain by topsoil across the whole of the site.

Three undated feature were identified in the eastern area of the site. A discrete probable post hole, the base of a roughly north to south aligned ditch and a substantial pit which contained evidence for a structure in the form of a rough stone with mortar adhered to it.

A single pit dated by a fragment of land drain was recorded in the western area of the site.

The reason for the magnetic anomaly observed across the western half of the site in the previous geophysical survey was probably due to the incorporation of magnetic material which may have been introduced alongside a large amount of gypsum which was incorporated into the topsoil in the western half of the site as a soil conditioner.

No finds were retrieved during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as 'a limited programme of non-intrusive intrusive fieldwork and/or which determines the presence or absence of archaeological features, structures, deposits, artefacts or ecofacts within a specified area or site. If archaeological remains are present Field Evaluation defines their character and extent, quality and preservation, and it enables an assessment of their worth in a local, regional, national or international context as appropriate' (IfA 2008).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services commissioned by Larkfleet Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of proposed development on land off Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire (Fig. 2). evaluation was undertaken between the 3rd and 5th of September 2014 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological **Project** Services and approved by the Senior Historic Environment Advisor. The site is the subject of a pre-planning enquiry for residential development. Following an earlier geophysical survey, recommended that a programme archaeological evaluation by trial trench be undertaken.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Sleaford is located 27km south of Lincoln in the administrative district of North Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig 1)

The investigation area lies at the western edge of the town and comprises an agricultural field located south of Grantham Road (Fig 2), with the A15 demarcating the western boundary of the site.

The field is on fairly level ground that slopes gently down to the northwest. The site is centred on National Grid Reference TF 0513 4488 (Fig. 2) and situated at a height of *c*. 20-25m OD.

The site is mapped as Aswarby Association calcareous soils developed on chalky till (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 119).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Prehistoric remains, including a possible flint axehead and a flint scraper have been found in the immediate vicinity of the site.

Saxon remains have been found nearby, including a settlement a short distance to the east and a cemetery to the west.

Roman remains were also identified at the area of the Saxon settlement.

A geophysical survey of the site (Failes 2013) did not reveal any distinct archaeological remains, however, the majority of the site was affected by severe magnetic disturbance (Fig 3), possibly related to construction of the adjacent bypass which may have masked potential archaeological signals.

3. AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to gather information to establish the presence or absence, extent, condition, character, quality and date of any archaeological deposits in order to enable the Senior Historic Environment Advisor for North Kesteven to formulate a policy for the

management of archaeological resources present on the site.

4. METHODS

A total of eight trenches, each measuring 50m by 2m were excavated to the surface of the underlying natural geology. Trenches 1 to 3 were located in the eastern half of the field, while trenches 4 to 8 were located to the west where previous geophysical survey had identified modern/magnetic disturbance (Fig. 3).

Removal of topsoil and other overburden was undertaken by mechanical excavator using a toothless ditching bucket. The exposed surfaces of the trenches were then cleaned by hand and inspected for archaeological remains.

Each deposit exposed during the evaluation was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections and plans were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and 1:20 respectively. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

The location of the excavated trenches was plotted using a survey grade differential GPS.

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

5. RESULTS

The results of the archaeological

evaluation are discussed in trench order. Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Trench 1

The earliest deposit encountered in this trench was natural in origin and consisted of firm mid yellowish reddish brown clay (101) with yellowish brown gravel and limestone brash patches (Figs 4 & 6, Section 1) (Plate 1).

In the eastern end of the trench the natural was truncated by a post hole cut [102] which was sub-circular in shape measuring 0.41m long by 0.31m wide by 80mm deep with moderately steep sides breaking gradually to a concave tapered point (Figs 4 & 6, Section 2) (Plate 2). The fill of the post hole consisted of firm mid greyish brown clay (103) containing small rounded pebbles.

The post hole was overlain by a 0.27m thick topsoil (100) deposit of soft dark greyish brown slightly silty clay, with frequent limestone fragments.

Trench 2

The natural at the base of Trench 2 consisted of plastic mid yellowish brown clay (201) with some greyish yellowish brown patches (Figs 4 & 6, Section 3).

A linear ditch [202] cut through the natural oriented on a north to south alignment, approximately 10m from the eastern end of the trench and extended in length through the width of the trench, measuring 0.93m wide by 0.13m deep with irregular sides breaking gradually to a flat base (Figs 4 & 6, Section 3) (Plate 3). This feature was filled with firm greyish brown clay (203) containing frequent small limestone fragments.

A large, probably circular pit cut [204] was located approximately 22m from the

eastern end of Trench 2 where it truncated the natural. The cut measured 2.03m in diameter by 0.70m deep with steep sides breaking gradually to a concave base (Figs 4 & 6, Section 5) (Plate 8). The pit contained a sequence of mottled clay indicate which probably deposits deliberate backfilling with redeposited natural clays. The basal fill consisted of soft dark purplish brown clay (205) with orange patches, up to 0.22m thick, containing occasional medium size limestone fragments. This was overlain by firm, yet pliable dark purple and brownish orange clay (206) up to 0.55m thick, with frequent limestone fragments and flecks of mortar. Within fill (206) was a lens of firm mid dark brown clay (207) up to 0.33m thick. The next deposits in the sequence overlay (206) and were assigned context numbers (211) and (208). Fill (208) was composed of 0.28m thick firm mid brownish blue clay. Deposit (211) comprised firm light brownish orange clay, up to 70mm thick containing sand. This in turn was overlain by firm dark purplish blue clay (212), up to 0.18m thick. Overlying these two fills was a deposit of firm to hard mid brownish blue clay (209), up to 0.33m thick, containing moderately sized limestone fragments and mortar flecks. The final fill in the sequence consisted of firm light yellowish brown and purple grey clay, up to 0.18m thick with fine grains of gravel and sand.

The features in this trench were overlain by firm mid to dark brown silty clay topsoil (200), 0.35m thick, with occasional limestone fragments.

Trench 3

The natural in this trench comprised plastic dark greyish yellowish brown clay (301) which was overlain by a 0.35m thick deposit of firm mid greyish brown clay (300) topsoil, with moderate small limestone fragments (Figs 4 & 6, Section 6) (Plate 4).

Trench 4

The earliest deposit encountered in Trench 4 was natural in origin and consisted of slightly plastic mid reddish brown sandy clay (401) (Figs 4 & 6, Section 7) (Plate 5).

A 0.40m thick layer of topsoil (400) sealed the natural and comprised firm mid greyish brown silty clay with limestone pebbles and frequent small gravel and pea grit size fragments of gypsum.

Trench 5

The natural deposit in Trench 5 consisted of plastic mid yellowish greyish brown clay (501) (Figs 4 & 6, Section 8).

At the southeastern end of the trench a sub-rectangular cut [504] with rounded corners was identified, measuring 0.76m long by 0.73m wide by 0.58m deep, with steep and somewhat irregular sides breaking gradually to a fairly flat base (Figs 4 & 6, Section 4) (Plate 7). The primary fill of this pit consisted of soft mid grey to greenish grey silty clay (503), up to 0.27m thick, with frequent charcoal flecks and fragments. The upper fill comprised firm mid grey clay with light brown patches, up to 0.44m thick, containing occasional organic inclusions, decayed organic material and frequent charcoal, along with a fragment of modern field drain which was discarded.

The pit was sealed by 0.35m thick topsoil (500) composed of firm mid greyish brown silty clay with frequent small gravel and pea grit size fragments of gypsum and moderate sub-angular stones (Figs 4 & 6, Section 8).

Trench 6

The deposit at the base of Trench 6 was natural in origin and composed of plastic mid yellowish brown clay (601) (Figs 5 & 6, Section 9).

The natural was sealed by a 0.35m thick layer of friable mid to dark greyish brown silty clay (600), with frequent white to pink flecks of gypsum (Figs 5 & 6, Section 9).

Trench 7

The natural in Trench 7 consisted of plastic light to mid yellowish brown clay (701) (Figs 5 & 6, Section 10) (Plate 9).

This was overlain by a topsoil deposit (700) of friable mid brownish grey silty clay, 0.30m thick, with frequent white small fragments and flecks of gypsum (Figs 5 & 6, Section 10).

Trench 8

The natural deposit at the base of Trench 8 comprised plastic to firm mid greyish yellowish brown clay (801) (Figs 5 & 6, Section 11).

Overlying the natural was a 0.30m thick deposit of firm greyish brown silty clay topsoil (800), with frequent pinkish white flecks of gypsum

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits at the site comprise clays for the most part with some gravel content at the eastern end of the site.

Trenches 3, 4, 6, 7 and 8 did not contain any archaeological features.

The feature in Trench 1 represents a discreet (probable) post hole and as such its function remains difficult to determine.

Trench 2 revealed two features, a very shallow roughly north south aligned linear cut, which probably represents the base of a ditch and a substantial pit. The pit contained a sequence of mixed and mottled clay deposits which probably indicate

deliberate backfilling with redeposited natural. Within the pit was evidence of mortar and a rough stone with mortar adhered to it was also observed, suggesting that there may have been a structure of some type in the area. The low density of archaeological remains in the area and the absence of artefacts suggest that if a structure existed it may have had an agricultural use rather than denote settlement.

A single pit in Trench 5 was deemed to be recent as its upper fill contained a fragment of modern field drain.

It was noted that during the previous geophysical survey, the western portion of the site was compromised due to heavy magnetic disturbance. It was suggested that this may have been connected with the construction of the adjacent road and roundabout, however this appears not to have been the case. Across the whole of the site the sequence of deposits was characterised by topsoil directly overlying natural clays. No dumped deposits or deposits of made ground were identified that could account for the magnetic disturbance. Instead there was a correlation between the magnetic disturbance and gypsum content discovered in the topsoil in the western area of the site. Gypsum is sometimes used as a soil conditioner and although the gypsum itself would not account for the disturbance, it seems probable that when the gypsum was incorporated into the topsoil, material which was responsible for the magnetic disturbance may have been incorporated at the same time.

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, as the site lay in an archaeologically sensitive area where

prehistoric, Saxon and Roman remains have been identified. A previous geophysical survey at the site did not identify any distinct archaeological signals, however, a large portion of the survey (Fig 3) was compromised due to magnetic disturbance, most of this in the western half of the site.

Very few features were revealed during the investigation, none of which could be dated to these periods. The investigation revealed three undated features and a modern pit in the eastern area of the site. The three undated features consisted of a discrete post hole, the probable base of a north to south oriented ditch and a substantial pit.

A fragment of modern field drain from the upper fill of a sub-rectangular pit was observed but not retained in the western end of the site in Trench 5.

A previous geophysical survey was compromised due to magnetic disturbance across the western half of the site. This was probably due to the incorporation of magnetic material which was probably introduced alongside a large amount of gypsum which was incorporated into the topsoil in the western half of the site as a soil conditioner.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wish to acknowledge the assistance of Larkfleet Homes for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. Thanks are also due to Mowbray Mountain who permitted access to the site. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Denise Drury. Elizabeth Bates allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor Site Staff: Andrew Failes, Maria Gale Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth

Illustration: Andrew Failes

Post-excavation Analyst: Andrew Failes

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Failes, A., 2013 Land at Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire (SLGR13) Geophysical Survey, APS Report No. 39/13

Hodge, C.A.H., Burton, R.G.O., Corbett, W.M., Evans, R. and Seale, R.S., 1984 *Soils and their use in Eastern England*, Soil Survey of England and Wales **13**

IfA, 2008 Standard and Guidance for Field Evaluation.

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

If A Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1: General Location Plan

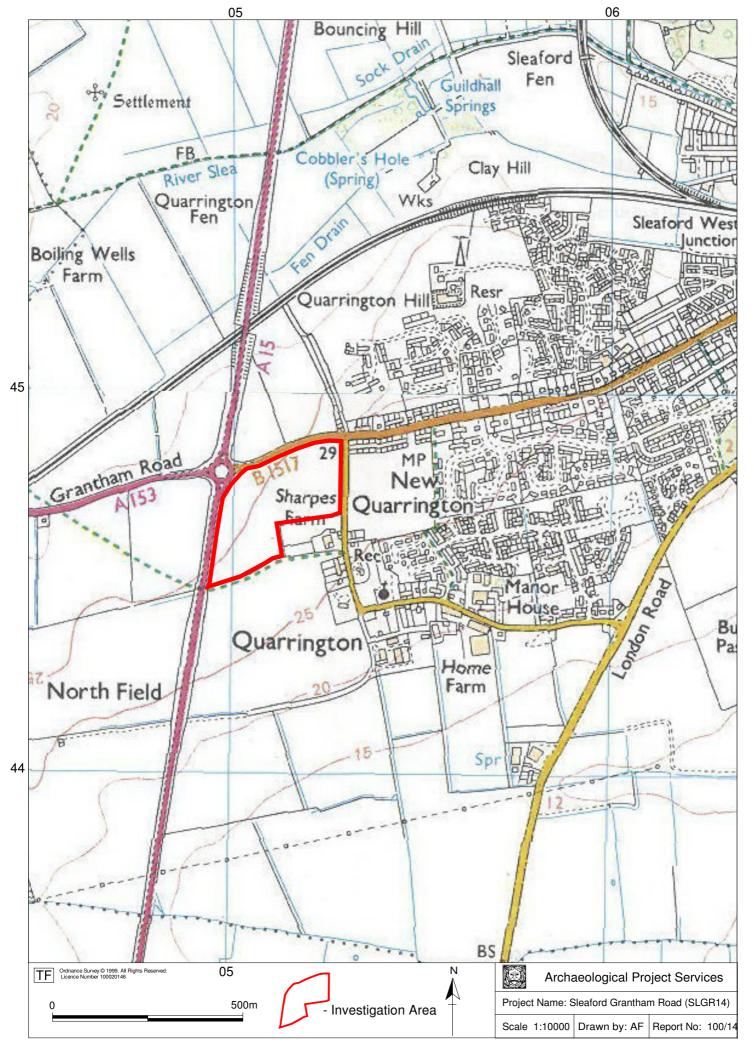


Figure 2 - Site location

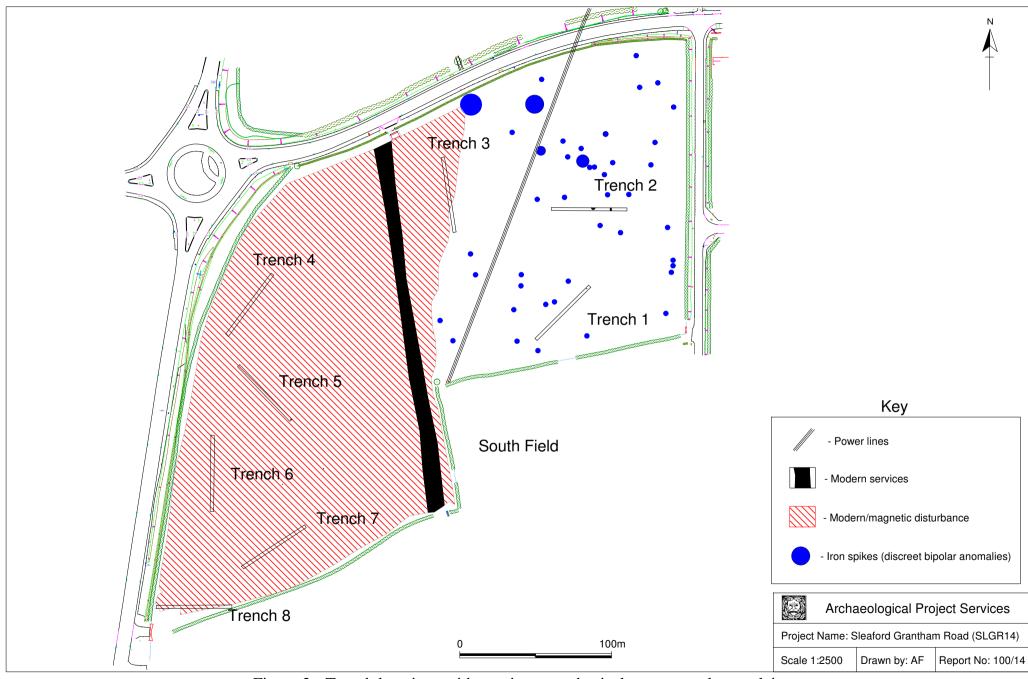


Figure 3 - Trench locations with previous geophysical survey results overlain

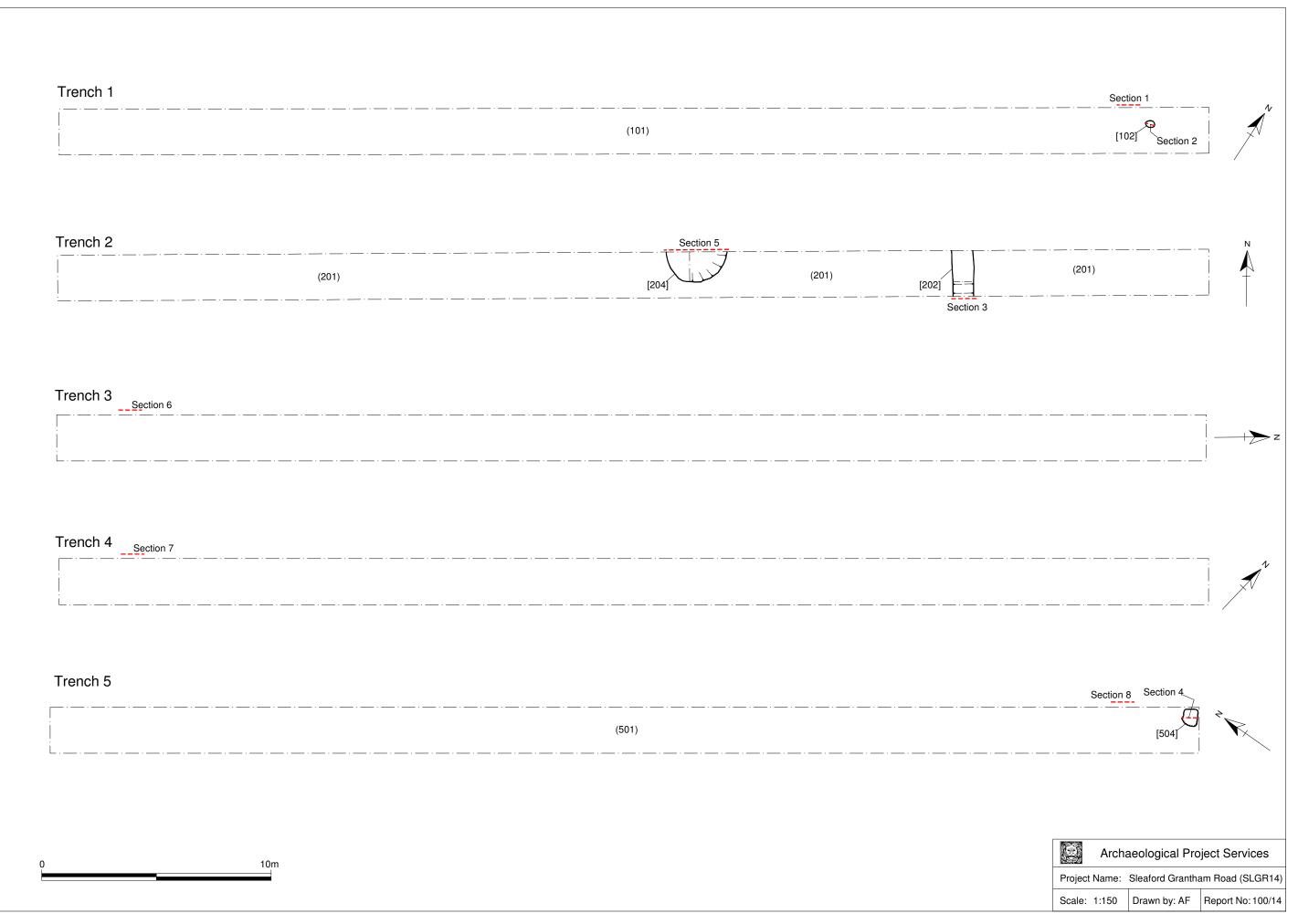


Figure 4 - Plan of Trenches 1-5

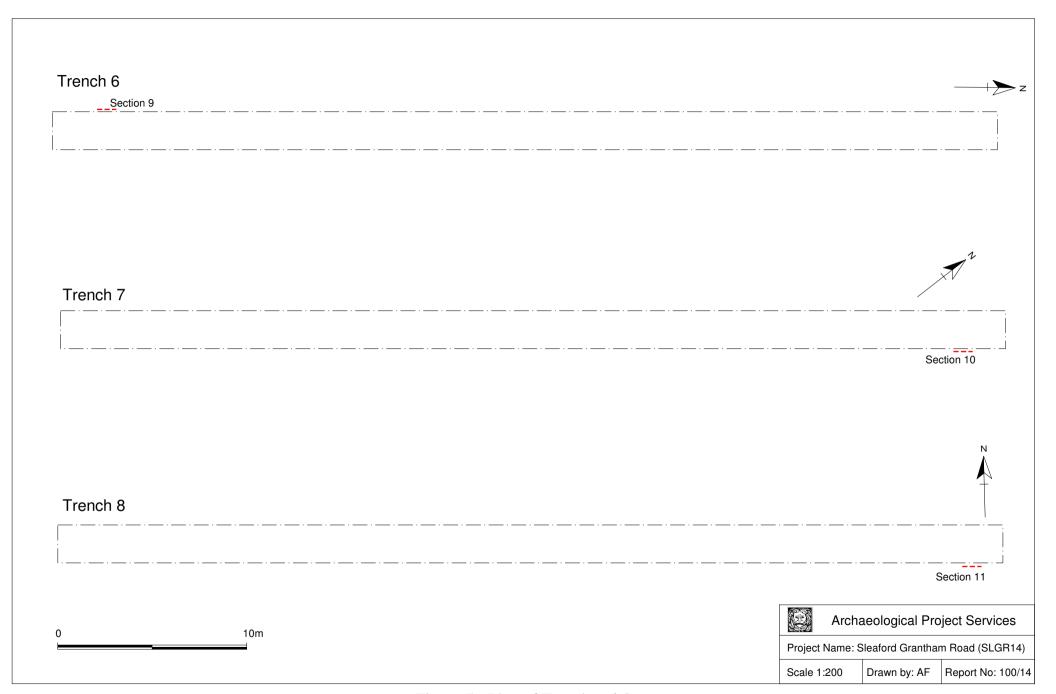


Figure 5 - Plan of Trenches 6-8

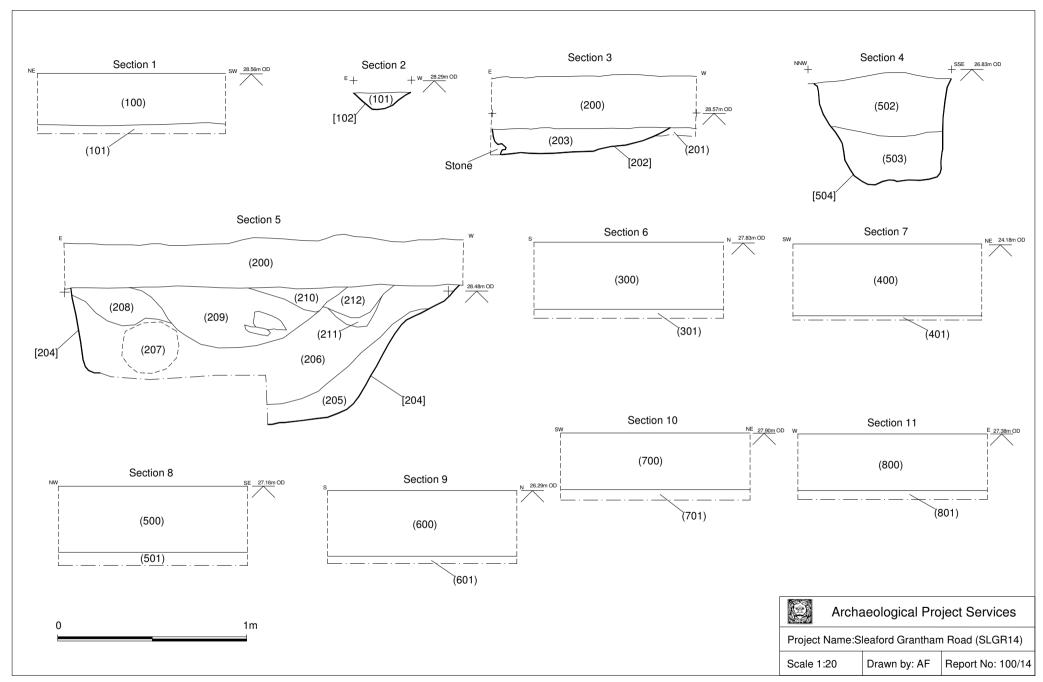


Figure 6 - Sections 1-11



Plate 1 – View of Trench 1 plan looking southeast showing clay natural with limestone/gravel patches



Plate 2- Post hole [102], Section 2



Plate 3 – Ditch [202], Section 3



Plate 4 – View of Trench 3 plan looking south, showing clay natural



Plate 5 – View of Trench 4 looking southwest, showing reddish clay natural



Plate 6 – Section 9, showing sequence of topsoil and natural with gypsum flecks in topsoil



Plate 7 – Modern pit [504], Section 4



Plate 8 – Pit [204], Section 5



Plate 9 – View of Trench 7 plan, looking north showing yellowish brown clay natural

APPENDIX 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench	No.	Description	Interpretation	
1	100	Soft dark greyish brown slightly silty clay,	Topsoil	
		0.27m thick with frequent limestone fragments	T	
1	101	Firm mid yellowish reddish brown clay with	Natural clays and	
		yellowish brown gravel and limestone brash	gravels	
		patches		
1	102	Sub-circular cut measuring 0.41m long x 0.31m	Possible post hole	
		wide x 80mm deep with moderately steep sides	cut	
		breaking gradually to a concave tapered point		
1	103 Firm mid greyish brown clay containing small		Fill of possible	
		rounded pebbles	post hole [102]	
2	200 Firm mid to dark brown silty clay, 0.35m thick,		Topsoil	
		with occasional limestone fragments		
2	201 Plastic mid yellowish brown clay with some		Natural	
		greyish yellowish brown patches		
2	202	Linear cut extending in length through the width	Possible ditch cut	
		of the trench and measuring 0.93m wide x 0.13m	base?	
		deep with irregular sides breaking gradually to a		
		flat base		
2	203	Firm greyish brown clay containing frequent	Fill of [202]	
		small limestone fragments		
2	204	Probable circular cut measuring 2.03m in	Pit cut	
		diameter x 0,70m deep with steep sides breaking		
		gradually to a concave base		
2	205 Soft dark purplish brown clay with orange		Fill of [204]	
		patches, up to 0.22m thick, containing occasional		
		medium size limestone fragments		
2	206	Firm yet pliable dark purple and brownish	Fill of [204]	
		orange clay up to 0.55m thick, with frequent		
		limestone fragments and flecks of mortar		
2	207	Firm mid dark brown clay up to 0.33m thick	Fill of [204]	
2	208	Firm mid brownish blue clay, up to 0.28m thick	Fill of [204]	
2	209	Firm to hard mid brownish blue clay, up to	Fill of [204]	
		0.33m thick, containing moderately sized		
		limestone fragments and mortar flecks, one large		
		piece of limestone had mortar adhering to one		
		surface		
2	210	Firm light yellowish brown and purpley grey	Fill of [204]	
		clay, up to 0.18m thick with fine grains of gravel		
	211	and sand	T11 C 500 42	
		Firm light brownish orange clay, up to 70mm	Fill of [204]	
	212	thick containing sand	E11 C 500 43	
2	212	Firm dark purplish blue clay, up to 0.18m thick	Fill of [204]	
3	300	Firm mid greyish brown clay, 0.35m thick, with	Topsoil	
		moderate small limestone fragments		

3	301	Plastic dark greyish yellowish brown clay	Natural
4	400	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay, 0.40m thick,	Topsoil
•		with limestone pebbles and frequent small gravel	100011
		and pea grit size fragments of gypsum	
4	401	Slightly plastic mid reddish brown sandy clay	Natural
5	500	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay,0.35m thick,	Topsoil
		with frequent small gravel and pea grit size	1
		fragments of gypsum and modeate sub-angular	
		stones	
5	501	Plastic mid yellowish greyish brown clay	Natural
5	502	Frim mid grey clay with light brown patches, up	Fill of [504]
		to 0.44m thick, containing occasional organic	
		inclusions, decayed organic material and	
		frequent charcoal along with a fragment of	
		modern field drain	
5	503	Soft mid grey to greenish grey silty clay, up to	Fill of [504],
		0.27m thick, with frequent charcoal	looked like there
			was cess content
5	504 Sub-rectangular cut with rounded corners		Pit cut, purpose
		measuring 0.76m long x 0.73m wide x 0.58m	unclear
		deep with steep and somewhat irregular sides	
		breaking gradually to a fairly flat base	
6	600	Friable mid to dark greyish brown, 0.35m thick,	Topsoil
	601	with frequent white to pink flecks of gypsum	N T (1
6	601	Plastic mid yellowish brown clay Natural	
7	700	Friable mid brownish grey silty clay, 0.30m	Topsoil
		thick, with frequent white small fragments and	
7	701	flecks of gypsum	NT 1
7	701	Plastic light to mid yellowish brown clay	Natural
8	800	Firm greyish brown silty clay, 0.30m thick, with	Topsoil
0	001	frequent white to pink flecks of gypsum	NT 1
8	801	Plastic to firm mid greyish yellowish brown clay	Natural

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

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 interpretation 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].

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) that become contained by the 'cut' are

referred to as its fill(s).

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.

Layer A layer is a term used 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

Post hole The hole cut to take a timber post, usually in an upright position. The hole

may have been dug larger than the post and contain soil or stones to support the post. Alternatively, the posthole may have been formed through the

process of driving the post into the ground.

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:

- 16 Context records
- 8 Trench sheets
- 2 Photographic record sheets
- 4 Sheets of scale drawings
- 3 Daily record sheets
- 1 Section register
- 1 Plan register

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:2014.142

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SLGR14

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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OASIS ID: archaeol1-190028

Project details

Project name Archaeological Evaluation at Grantham Road, Sleaford, Lincolnshire

Short description of the project

Evaluation undertaken on land off Grantham Road as the area is archaeologically sensitive with prehistoric artefacts and Saxon remains known in the vicinity. Previous geophysical survey of the site was compromised by magnetic

disturbance. The evaluation revealed three undated features. A discrete post hole, a shallow linear ditch cut and a substantial pit containing evidence for a structure in the form of a rough stone with mortar adhered to one side. A single recent pit was also identified. The cause of the magnetic disturbance was unclear but probably associated with dumping of deposits containing large amounts of gypsum in the field as soil conditioner. Natural clavs were overlain directly by topsoil

throughout the site.

Project dates Start: 03-09-2014 End: 05-09-2014

Previous/future work

Yes / Not known

Any associated project reference codes

SLGR14 - Sitecode

Any associated project reference codes

archaeol1-190028 - OASIS form ID

Type of project Field evaluation

Site status None

Current Land use Cultivated Land 2 - Operations to a depth less than 0.25m

Monument type PIT Uncertain

Monument type PIT Modern

Monument type DITCH Uncertain

Monument type POST HOLE Uncertain

Significant Finds NONE None

Methods & techniques

"Sample Trenches"

Development type Housing estate

Prompt Pre-planning enquiry

Position in the Pre-application

planning process

Project location

Country **England**

Site location LINCOLNSHIRE NORTH KESTEVEN SLEAFORD Grantham Road, Sleaford,

Lincolnshire

Study area 78020.00 Square metres

Site coordinates TF 0513 4488 52,9906067868 -0.433611035811 52 59 26 N 000 26 01 W Point

Project creators

Name of Organisation Archaeological Project Services

Project brief originator

Archaeological Project Services

Project design originator

Gary Taylor

Project

Gary Taylor

director/manager

Project supervisor Andrew Failes

Type of

sponsor/funding

body

Developer

Project archives

Physical Archive

Exists?

No

"none"

Digital Archive

recipient

The Collection

LCNCC:2014.122 Digital Archive ID

Digital Contents

Digital Media

available

"Images raster / digital photography", "Survey", "Text"

Paper Archive

recipient

The Collection

LCNCC:2014.122 Paper Archive ID

"none"

Paper Media

Paper Contents

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available

sheet","Diary","Drawing","Photograph","Plan","Report","Section","Unpublished

Text"

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