

Quality Control
St Mary's Church,
Marston
MSMC 07

Project Coordinator	Gary Taylor
Supervisor	Mary Nugent
Illustration	Paul Cope-Faulkner
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Paul Cope-Faulkner

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
Gary Taylor	Tom Lane
Date:	Date:

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH,
MARSTON,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(MSMC 07)**

**Work Undertaken For
Tim Benton Chartered Architect**

March 2007

Report Compiled by
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons) AIFA

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES



APS Report No. **18/07**

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1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at St. Mary's church, Marston, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of drainage trenches and a new soakaway.

The church is of the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) with the earliest portions dating to the late 12th century. Further additions to the structure were made during the 13th, 14th and 15th centuries with additional work undertaken in the 19th century.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of graveyard soils, a subsoil and the current topsoil. No archaeological remains were encountered and no artefacts were retrieved.

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 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Tim Benton, Chartered Architect, to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new drainage works at St. Mary's Church, Marston, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out on the 5th February 2007.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Marston is situated 8km north of Grantham and 19km west of Sleaford in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

St. Mary's church is located towards the northern end of the village at National Grid reference SK 8929 4372 (Fig. 2). The church lies at a height of c. 30m OD on land that slopes gently down to the river Witham.

Local soils are of the Blackwood Association, typically sandy and coarse loamy soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 152). These soils overlie a drift geology of glacial sands and gravels which in turn seal a solid geology of Jurassic Lower Lias clays and sandstones (GSGB 1972).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Marston is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Merestune*, *Merestone* and *Mereston*, the name is derived from the Old English *mersc* and *tūn* and means ‘the village in the marsh’ (Cameron 1998, 87). At the time of Domesday the land was held by Count Alan, Colsuain, Alfred of Lincoln, Ralph the Sewer, Osbern the Priest and Guy of Craon and contained four mills and 156 acres of meadow (Foster and Longley 1976).

St. Mary's church largely dates from the 12th century with 13th, 14th and 15th century additions with 19th century work also apparent (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 557).

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

A trench for the new drain and a soakaway were excavated by machine to a maximum depth of 1m. 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 a section was 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.

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of the soakaway trench was a layer of greyish brown sandy silt (003). Identified as a graveyard soil, this measured in excess of 0.48m thick (Fig. 4, Section 1).

Developed upon the graveyard soil was a 0.17m thick subsoil comprising greyish brown silty sand with yellowish brown sand (002). Sealing all deposits was the topsoil of greyish brown sandy silt (001) that was 0.32m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

Graveyard soils was the earliest deposit encountered and was formed through the

continued use of the site for burial since at least the 12th century. The presence of a subsoil may imply that burials have not occurred within the vicinity of the drainage trench for a period of time. No artefacts were identified or retrieved during the watching brief.

7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was carried out at St. Mary's church, Marston, as the possibility existed of archaeological remains being disturbed by the drainage works.

However, no such remains were encountered and only a sequence of graveyard soil, subsoil and topsoil were identified. No artefacts were retrieved during the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

9. PERSONNEL

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

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

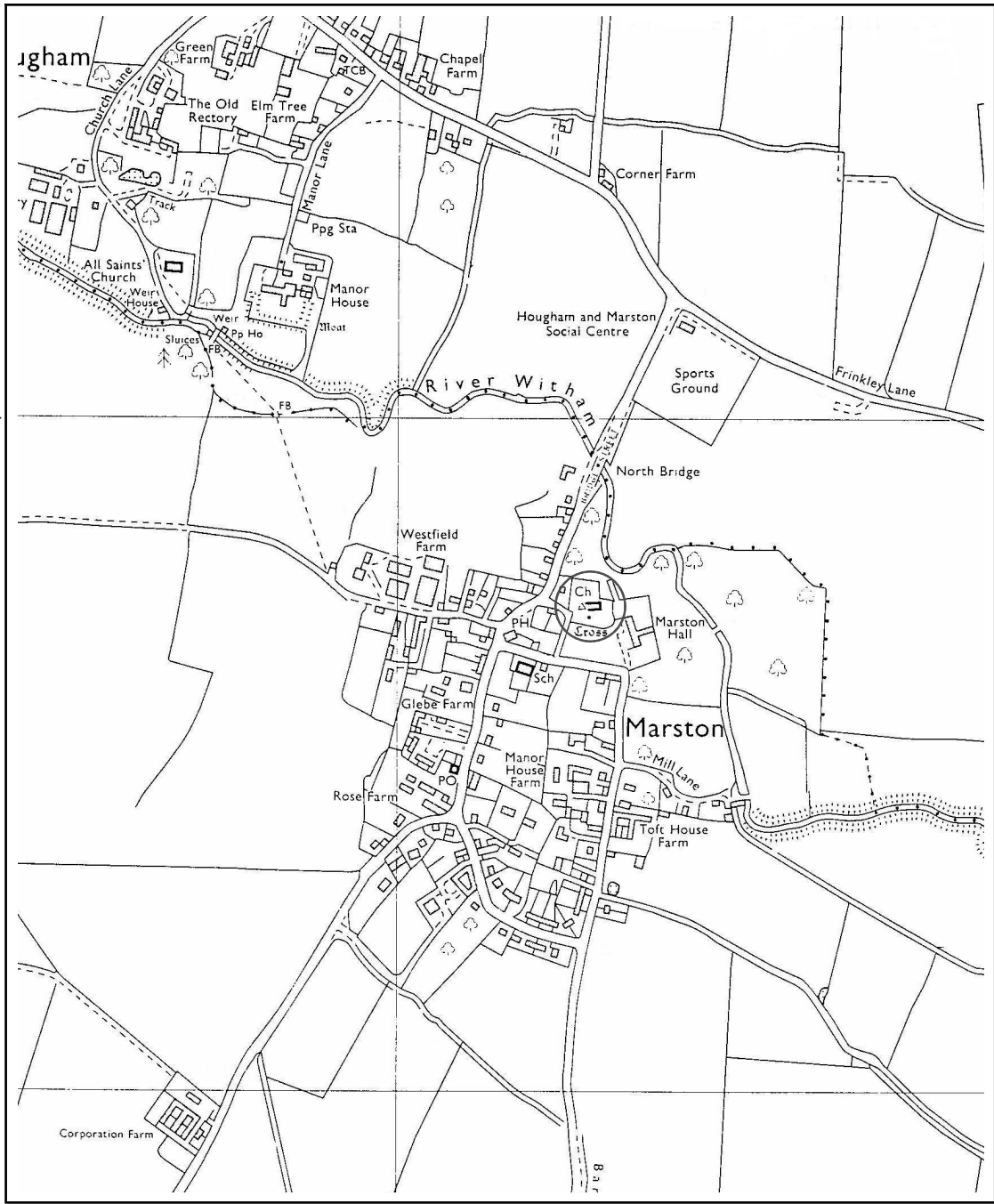
APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General location plan



SK

89

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, (C) Crown Copyright. HTL Ltd Licence No. AL5041A0001




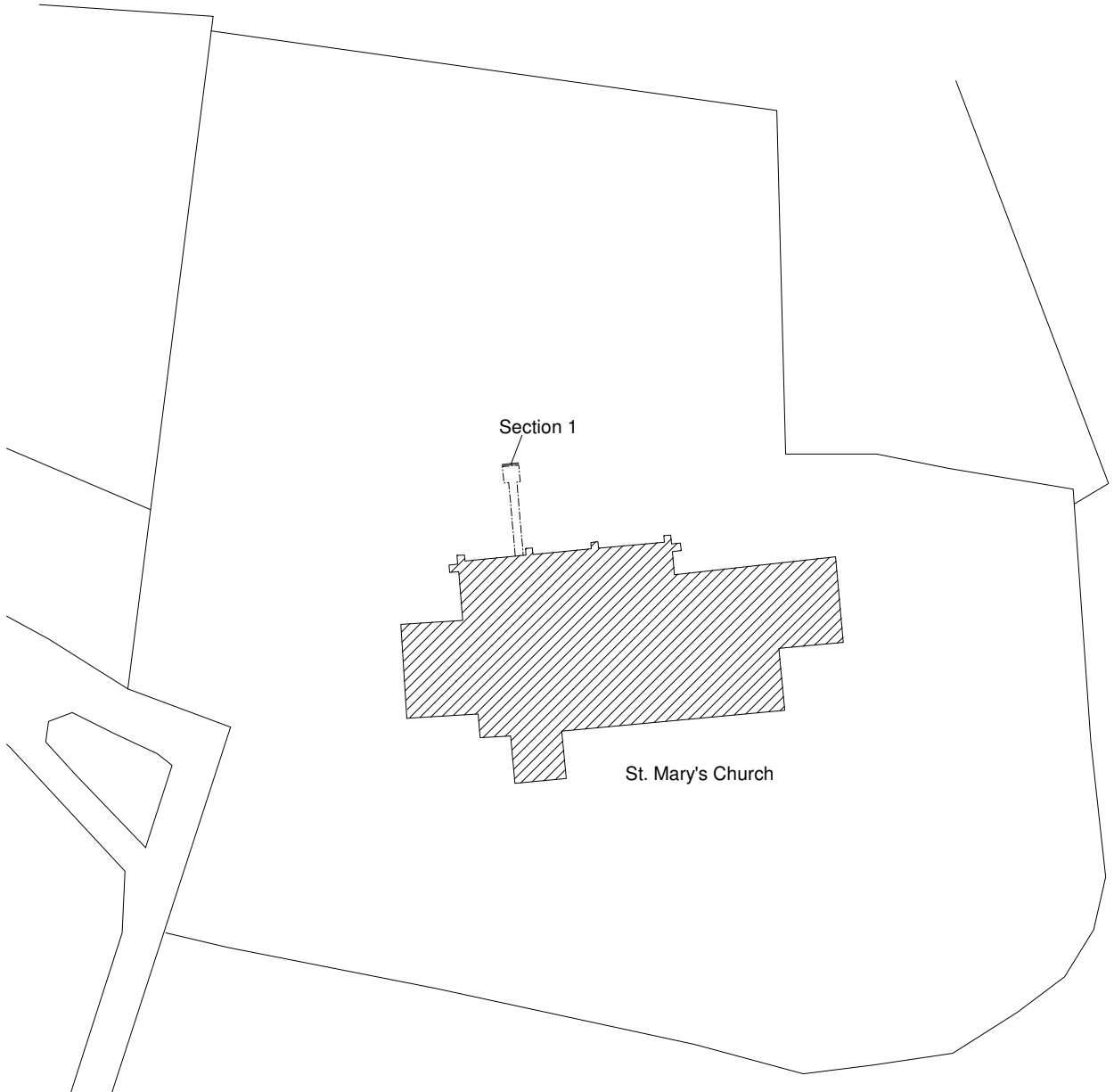
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Project Name: St Mary's Church, Marston MSMC07		
Scale 1:10000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 18/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan



Section 1

St. Mary's Church

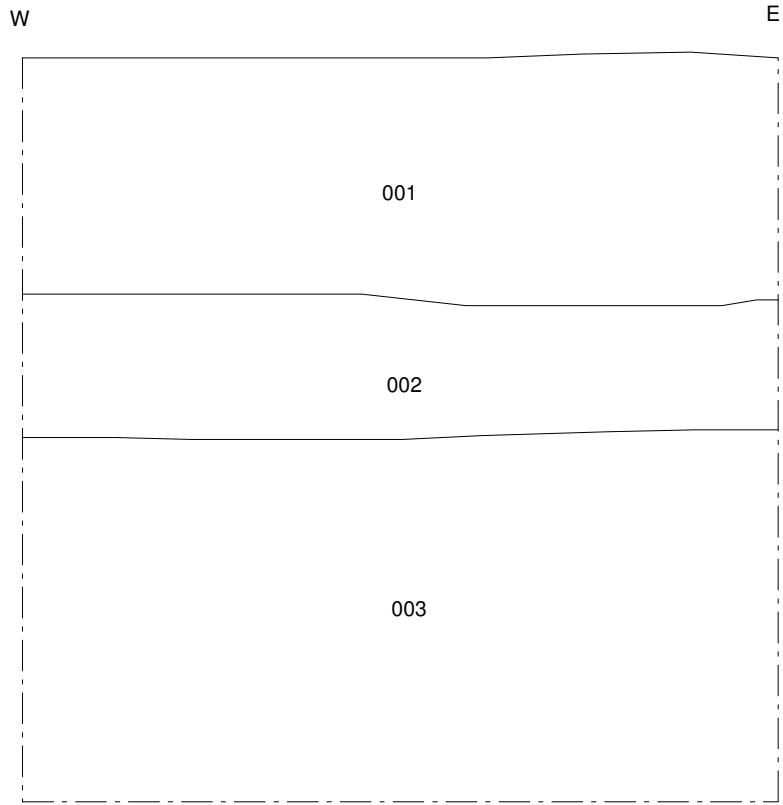


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Figure 3 - Plan showing the drainage trenches and section location



Section 1




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Figure 4 - Section 1



Plate 1 - View of the drainage trench during excavation, looking north



Plate 2 - Section 1, looking north

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft dark greyish brown sandy silt, 0.32m thick	Topsoil
002	Firm mid greyish brown silty sand with yellowish brown sand, 0.17m thick	Subsoil
003	Firm mid greyish brown sandy silt, >0.48m thick	Graveyard soil

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 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).
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.

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

3	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Sheet of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

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: 2007.31

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: MSMC 07

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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