

**Quality Control**  
Mareham Lane,  
Sleaford  
SMLW 07

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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
ALONG MAREHAM LANE,  
SLEAFORD,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(SMLW 07)**

**Work Undertaken For  
Anglian Water Services Limited**

May 2007

Report Compiled by  
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National Grid Reference: TF 0738 4494 – TF 0781 4469  
City and County Museum Accession No: 2007.80  
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES**



APS Report No. **71/07**

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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks along Mareham Lane, Sleaford, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of test pits for a new water main.*

*The site lies outside the southern extent of the medieval (AD 1066-1540) town in an area where Iron Age (800 BC-AD 43) and Romano-British (AD 43-410) settlement is known and close to an Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-1066) cemetery. Artefacts of Neolithic (4000-2200 BC) and Bronze Age (2200-800 BC) date have also been recovered in the vicinity.*

*The watching brief identified natural, undated and recent deposits. Undated deposits include subsoils and a ditch, which may suggest that Mareham Lane was once narrower. Modern deposits are nearly all associated with the road and its make-up layers. No artefacts were retrieved during the watching brief.*

## 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 Anglian Water Services Limited to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with a new water main along Mareham Lane, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.

The watching brief was carried out between the 30<sup>th</sup> April and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2007.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Sleaford is situated 28km south of Lincoln and 18km northeast of Grantham in the administrative district of North Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The area of works along Mareham Lane are located c. 1km southeast of the centre of the town as defined by the Market Place between National Grid References TF 0738 4494 and TF 0781 4469 (Figs. 2 and 3). The area of works lies at a height of c. 13m OD on generally level ground.

Local soils are primarily gleyic brown calcareous earths of the Ruskington and Aswarby Series with cambic gley soils of the Deepdales Series and cambic stagnogley soils of the Rowsham Series towards the south (George and Robson 1978, 44, 71, 74, 79). These overlie drift deposits of Fen sand and gravel to the north of the pipeline route with Jurassic Oxford Clay located to the south (GSGB 1972).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

The route of the water main lies in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic to the present day. Prehistoric flints of probable Neolithic date have been recovered from the general vicinity of the site and two Bronze Age axe heads were found to the east.

Located to the north, is substantial evidence of an Iron Age settlement. Centred on Old Place, excavations retrieved coin pellet mould fragments and high status pottery suggesting a major political centre, perhaps an *oppidum* of the *Corieltauvi*, a local tribe (Elsdon 1997, 75).

The Iron Age occupation of Sleaford was succeeded by an extensive Romano-British

settlement. It is probable that Sleaford was a small town that straddled Mareham Lane in the vicinity of Old Place. The line of the Roman Road is approximately 500m to the east, the modern road of that name along which the groundworks were undertaken being a medieval diversion.

To the northwest of the site, in the vicinity of the railway station, is a large Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery which was partly excavated in 1881 (Thomas 1882). A total of 242 burials was recorded although it was estimated that there were in the region of 600 in total, all dating to the 6<sup>th</sup> century. A further Saxon burial was found during widening of Mareham Lane in 1916, although the exact position is not clear (White 1988, 87).

Sleaford is first mentioned in AD 825 in a charter relating to the leasing of land at Sempringham by Peterborough Abbey (Hart 1966, 100) and confirmed in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (Swanton 1997, 65). Referred to as *Slioforda*, the name is derived from the Old English and means the ford over the 'sliowa', meaning muddy water (Cameron 1998, 112).

There has been some debate as to Sleaford's inclusion in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. The site lies within the former parish of Old Sleaford, which is included in the entry for Quarrington, whereas the modern town is referred to as *Eslaforde* which was held by the Bishop of Lincoln (Roffe 1979, 13).

A watching brief undertaken adjacent to the area of works identified a number of ditches, furrows and pits which, though undated, were of probable medieval origin as they were sealed by an 18<sup>th</sup> century subsoil layer (Thomson 2003, 4).

### 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 directional drilling equipment were excavated by machine at selected intervals along Mareham Lane. Due to the similarity of deposits encountered, Pits 4 and 6 were not recorded. Where trenches did not exceed the safe working depth of 1.2m, the sides of the pits 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.

#### **Pit 1** (Section 1)

The earliest deposit encountered in this pit was a layer of greyish brown clayey silt (002) identified as made ground. This measured in excess of 0.56m thick.

This was sealed by rubble make-up and the tarmac surface of the current road (001).

**Pit 2** (Section 2)

The sequence of layers in this pit began with a natural deposit of reddish brown silt and sand (005), measuring over 0.46m thick. Above this was a 0.35m thick deposit of greyish brown clayey silt (004).

This was in turn sealed by yellowish brown limestone and silty sand (003), a probable make-up layer for the current road surface (001).

**Pit 3** (Section 3)

At the base of this pit was a natural deposit of brownish yellow sand (007) which was sealed by a 0.44m thick subsoil of brown sand and silt (006). Modern road deposits (001) sealed the subsoil.

**Pit 5** (Section 4)

The earliest deposit encountered in the base of this trench was a layer of greyish brown clayey sand (015) which was over 0.23m thick. This was subsequently sealed by reddish brown clayey sand with frequent limestone (014), perhaps a make-up deposit.

Above this was a layer of grey stone fragments (013) which was a make-up layer for a 50mm thick tarmac layer (012) of a former road surface.

The sequence was completed with make-up layers comprising yellowish brown limestone fragments (011), pinkish white limestone fragments (010) and coarse black and dark brown tarmac (009) upon which was the current road surface (008).

**Pit 7** (Section 6)

The basal layer within this pit comprised natural mixed brown silty sands (026), which measured in excess of 1m thick. This lay beneath a 0.18m thick deposit of yellow silty sand (025) which, along with a layer of black and dark brown coarse tarmac, provided the make-up for the current road surface (023).

**Pit 8** (Section 5)

A sequence of natural layers was encountered in this pit and began with a deposit of yellowish brown silty sand and gravel (022). This was overlain by greyish brown silty sand (021), followed by yellowish brown silty sand (020) and yellow silty sand (019). A layer of grey silty sand (018) lay above this.

Sealing all deposits was road make-up (017) and the current tarmac surface (016).

**Pit 9** (Section 7)

Natural deposits at the base of this pit comprised a layer of yellowish brown sand and gravel (035) and was overlain by a 0.4m thick reddish brown silty sand (033) subsoil.

Cut into the subsoil was an east-west aligned ditch (034). This was over 2m long by 0.4m wide and 0.3m deep. A single fill of grey silty sand (032) was identified.

Sealing the ditch and subsoil were make-up deposits of yellowish brown silty sand with limestone (031), limestone fragments (030) and grey stone (029). Tarmac (027) of the modern road completed the sequence.

**Pit 10** (Section 8)

The earliest deposit encountered in this pit was a layer of yellowish brown sand and gravel (041). This was sealed by a 0.7m thick subsoil comprising yellowish brown silty sand (040). Sealing this was a dumped deposit of yellowish brown silty sand with frequent gravel (039) that was 0.12m thick.

Overlying the dumped deposits were make-up layers of grey stone (038) and coarse tarmac (037) for the modern road surface (036).

**Pit 11** (Section 9)

Natural comprised yellowish brown silty sand (047) that measured over 0.33m thick. Above this was a layer of grey clay



(046) which was sealed by a 0.27m thick subsoil layer of yellowish brown silty sand (045). This was sealed by brick rubble with limestone fragments (044) representing hardstanding for properties to the south.

Road make-up of coarse tarmac (043) was encountered beneath the road surface (042).

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits of silts, sands, gravel and clay relate to the underlying drift geology of Fen sand and gravel. These were encountered outside of the mapped limits and indicate it was once more extensive. No deposits relating to the solid geology of Oxford Clay were encountered.

Undated subsoils were located along the east-west stretch of Mareham Lane and suggest that the road was once narrower. An undated ditch was also encountered and may have served a drainage function to an earlier road.

Most of the deposits encountered relate to the make-up and surface of Mareham Lane. It is possible that resurfacing has occurred on a number of occasions which may have removed traces of earlier road surfaces, although one was recorded within Pit 5.

No finds were recorded or retrieved during the investigation.

## 7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken along Mareham Lane as the groundworks lay in close vicinity of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery and remains of prehistoric to medieval date.

However, no early archaeological deposits were encountered, although an undated

subsoil and ditch were recorded. Most deposits identified were associated with the current road and its relevant make-up deposits. No artefacts were identified during the investigation.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mrs K Clarke of Anglian Water Services Limited for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Steve Malone and the report edited by Gary Taylor and Tom Lane. Jo Hambly, the North Kesteven Heritage Officer, kindly allowed examination of the relevant parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

## 9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Steve Malone  
 Site Supervisors: Bob Garland, Vicky Mellor, Fiona Walker  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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## **11. ABBREVIATIONS**

APS Archaeological Project Services

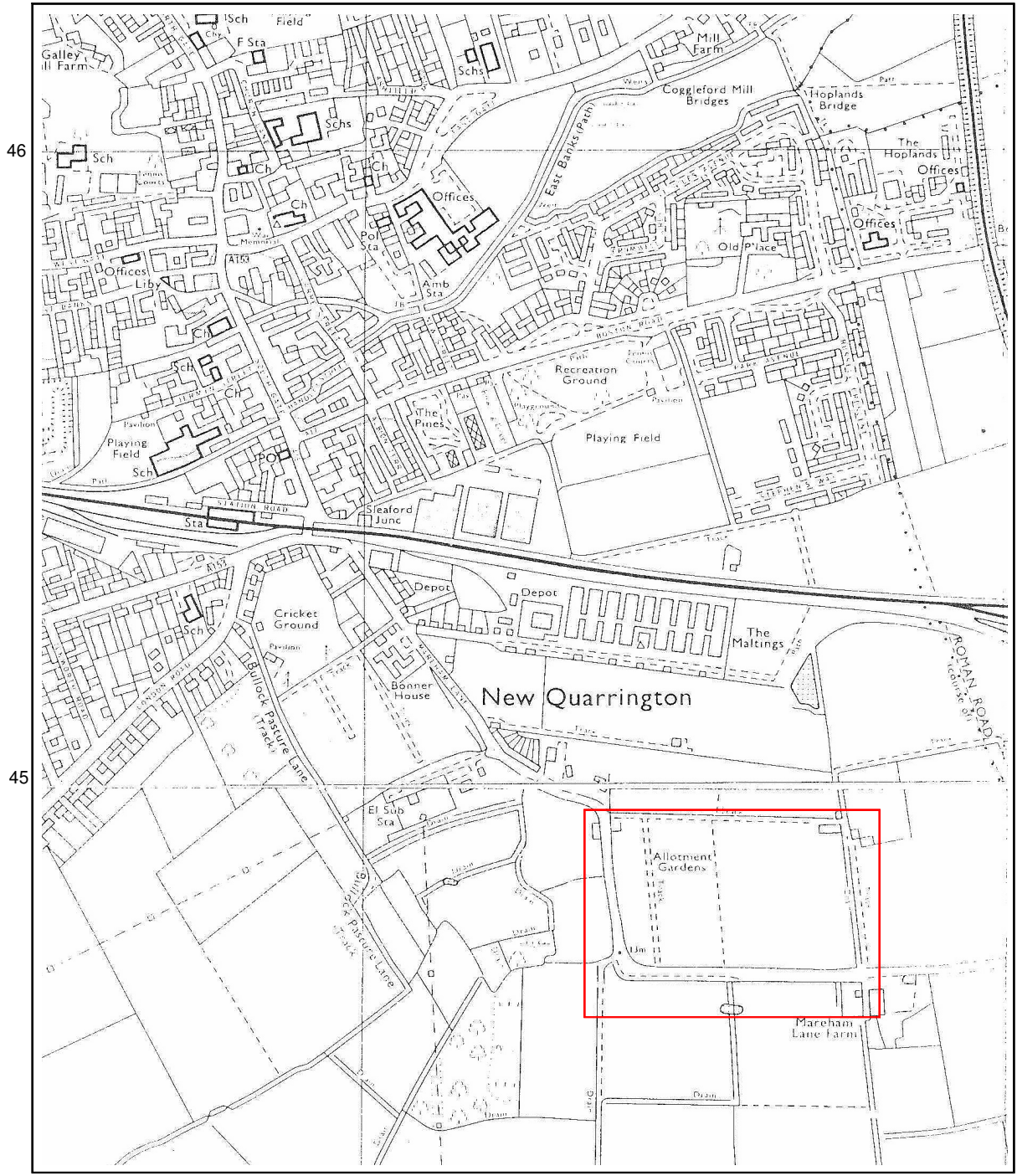
GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General location plan




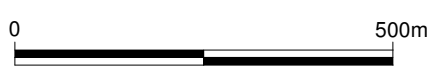


**TF**

07

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

 Area detailed in Figure 3




 <b>Archaeological Project Services</b>		
Project Name: Mareham Lane, Sleaford SMLW07		
Scale 1:10000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 71/07

Figure 2 - Site location plan



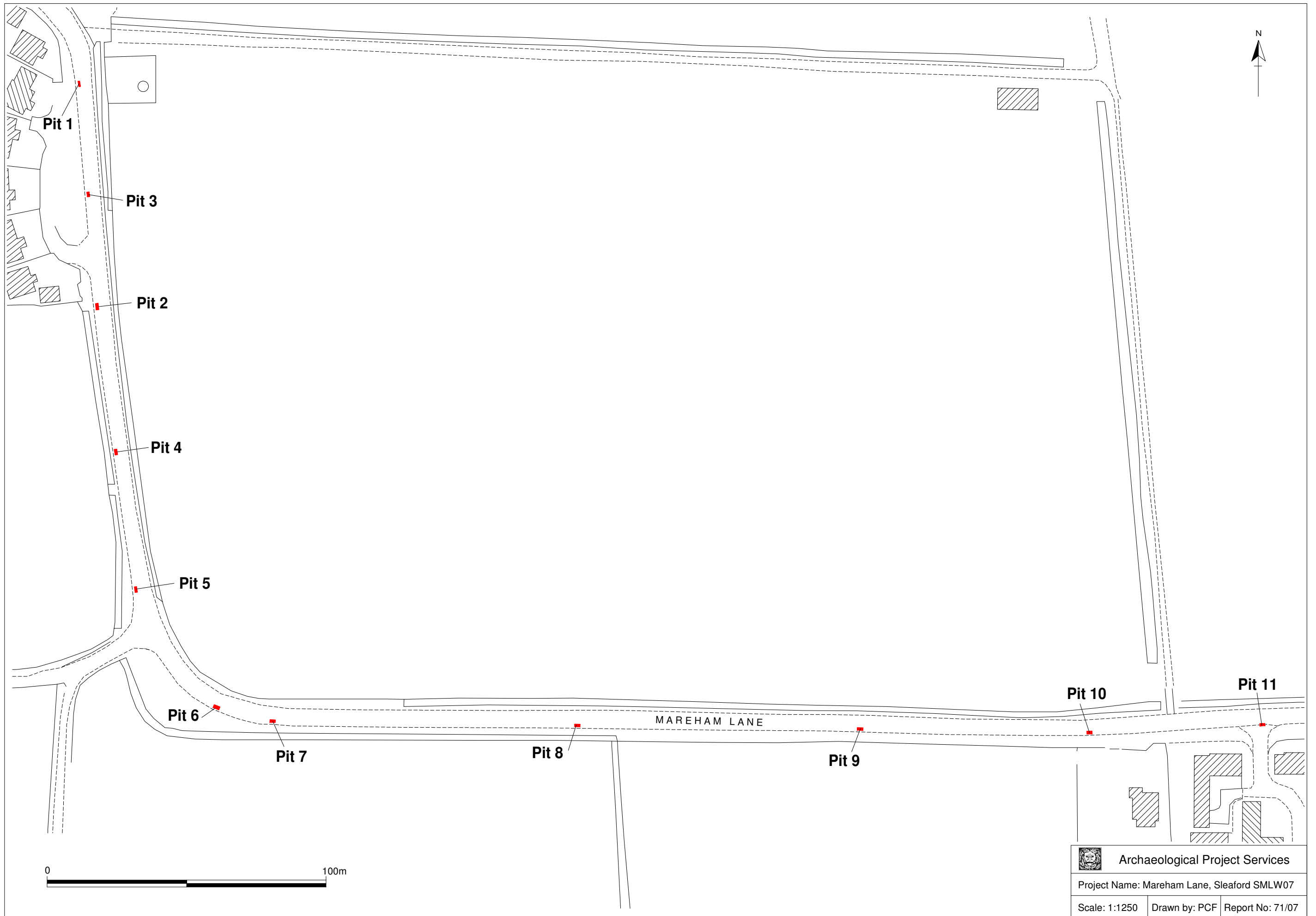
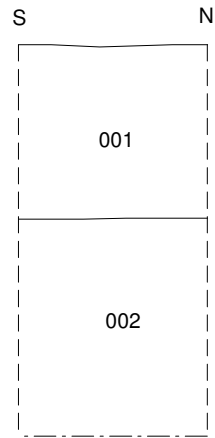


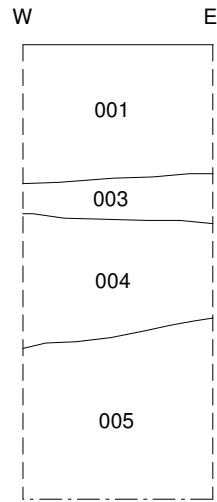
Figure 3 - Plan showing the location of the test pits



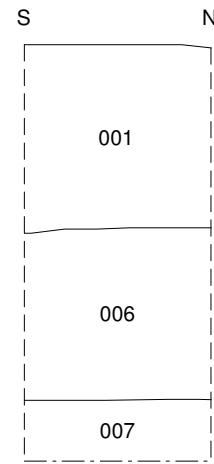




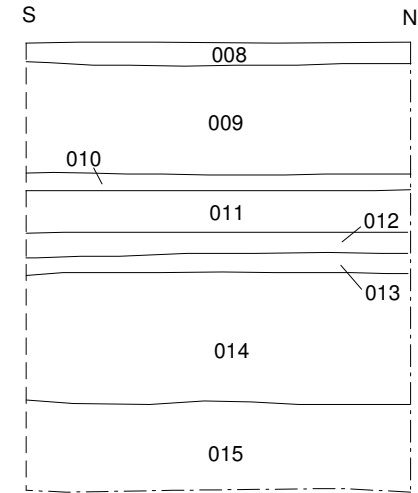
Section 1  
East facing section Pit 1



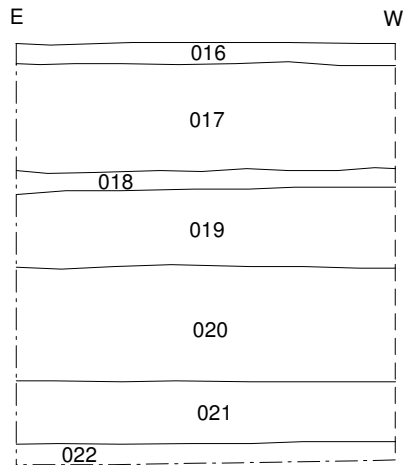
Section 2  
South facing section Pit 2



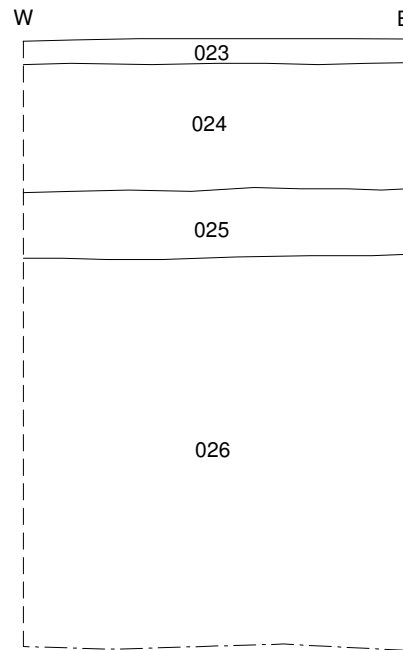
Section 3  
East facing section Pit 3



Section 4  
East facing section Pit 5



Section 5  
North facing section Pit 8



Section 6  
South facing section Pit 7




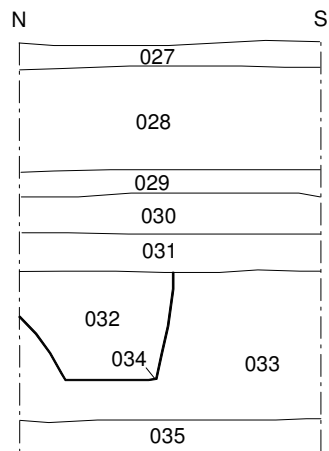
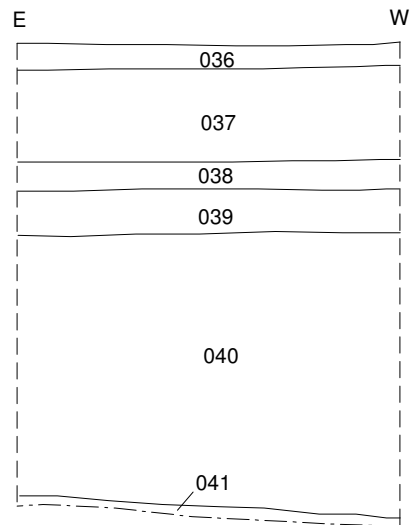
		
Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Mareham Lane, Sleaford SMLW07		
Scale 1:20	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 71/07

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 6

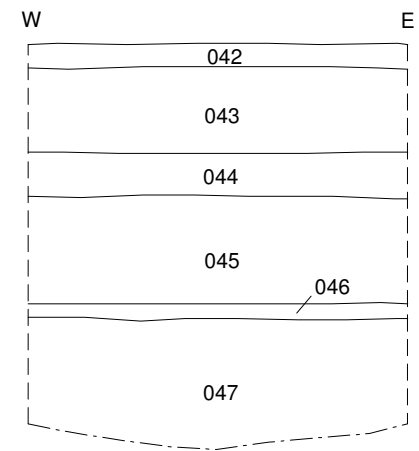




Section 7  
West facing section Pit 9



Section 8  
North facing section Pit 10



Section 9  
South facing section Pit 11



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Scale 1:20

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Figure 5 - Sections 7 to 9





Plate 1 - View looking north along Mareham Lane with Pit 5 in the foreground



Plate 2 - View showing the general sequence of deposits in Pit 1, looking west

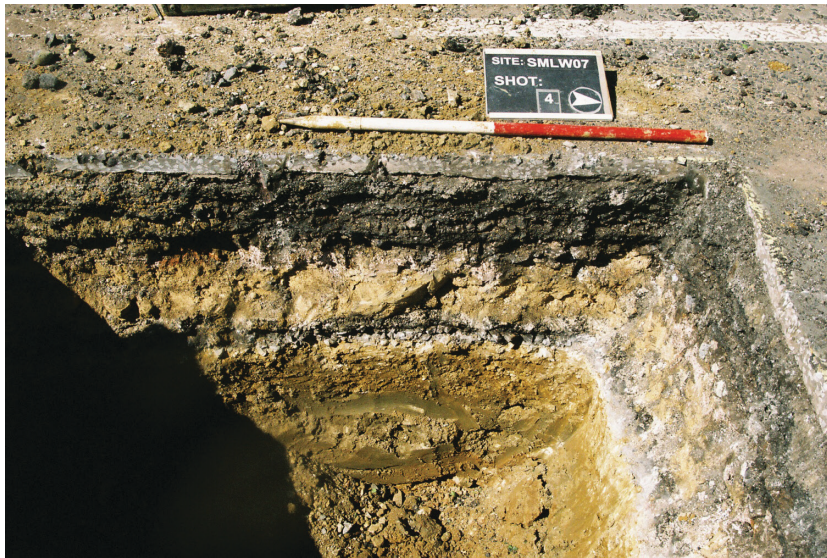


Plate 3 - View showing the former road surface in Pit 5, looking west



Plate 4 - View showing the undated ditch (034) in Pit 9, looking northeast



## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Pit	Description	Interpretation
001	1-3	Solid dark grey tarmac with rubble make-up, 0.47m thick	Road surface
002	1	Firm light to mid greyish brown clayey silt, 0.56m thick	Made ground
003	2	Firm mid yellowish brown limestone and silty sand, 0.3m thick	Make-up for (001)
004	2	Firm light to mid greyish brown clayey silt, 0.35m thick	Made ground
005	2	Firm mid reddish brown silt and sand, >0.46m thick	Natural deposit
006	3	Firm mid brown sand and silt, 0.44m thick	Subsoil
007	3	Firm light to mid brownish yellow sand, >0.15m thick	Natural deposit
008	5	Indurated mid to dark grey tarmac, 50mm thick	Road surface
009	5	Firm black and dark brown coarse tarmac, 0.29m thick	Make-up for (008)
010	5	Firm light pinkish white limestone fragments, 40mm thick	Make-up for (008)
011	5	Firm light to mid yellowish brown limestone fragments, 0.12m thick	Make-up for (008)
012	5	Firm black tarmac, 50mm thick	Former road surface
013	5	Firm light to mid grey stone fragments, 50mm thick	Make-up for (012)
014	5	Firm mid reddish brown clayey sand with frequent limestone fragments, 0.34m thick	Make-up for (012)
015	5	Firm mid greyish brown clayey sand, >0.23m thick	Natural deposit
016	8	Indurated dark grey tarmac, 60mm thick	Road surface
017	8	Firm black and dark brown coarse tarmac, 0.29m thick	Make-up for (016)
018	8	Soft light to mid grey silty sand, 50mm thick	Make-up for (016)
019	8	Soft light to mid yellow silty sand, 0.2m thick	Natural deposit
020	8	Soft mid yellowish brown silty sand, 0.3m thick	Natural deposit
021	8	Soft mid greyish brown silty sand, 0.17m thick	Natural deposit
022	8	Loose mid yellowish brown silty sand and gravel, >50mm thick	Natural deposit
023	7	Indurated dark to mid grey tarmac, 60mm thick	Road surface
024	7	Firm black and dark brown coarse tarmac, 0.34m thick	Make-up for (023)
025	7	Soft light yellow silty sand, 0.18m thick	Make-up for (023)
026	7	Soft mixed reddish, yellowish and greyish brown silty sand, >1.03m thick	Natural deposit
027	9	Indurated dark grey tarmac, 70mm thick	Road surface
028	9	Firm black and dark grey coarse tarmac, 0.26m thick	Make-up for (027)
029	9	Firm light grey stone fragments, 60mm thick	Make-up for (027)
030	9	Firm light yellowish brown limestone fragments, 100mm thick	Make-up for (027)
031	9	Soft mid yellowish brown silty sand with frequent limestone fragments, 100mm thick	Make-up for (027)
032	9	Soft mid grey silty sand	Fill of (034)
033	9	Soft mid reddish brown silty sand, 0.4m thick	Natural deposit
034	9	Linear feature, aligned east-west, >2m long by >0.4m wide and 0.3m deep, near vertical sides and flat base	Ditch
035	9	Loose light to mid yellowish brown sand and gravel, >80mm thick	Natural deposit
036	10	Firm dark grey tarmac, 60mm thick	Road surface

<b>No.</b>	<b>Pit</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
037	10	Firm dark grey coarse tarmac, 0.33m thick	Make-up for (036)
038	10	Firm to friable mid grey stone fragments, 80mm thick	Make-up for (036)
039	10	Firm to friable mid yellowish brown silty sand with frequent gravel, 0.12m thick	Dumped deposit
040	10	Friable dark yellowish brown silty sand, 0.7m thick	Subsoil
041	10	Friable mid to light yellowish brown sand and gravel, >30mm thick	Natural deposit
042	11	Firm dark grey tarmac, 70mm thick	Road surface
043	11	Firm dark grey coarse tarmac, 0.34m thick	Make-up for (042)
044	11	Firm to friable brick rubble with light brown limestone fragments, 0.11m thick	Hardstanding
045	11	Friable dark yellowish brown silty sand, 0.27m thick	Subsoil
046	11	Firm light grey clay, 40mm thick	Natural deposit
047	11	Friable mid yellowish brown silty sand, >0.33m thick	Natural deposit



## Appendix 2

### GLOSSARY

<b>Bronze Age</b>	A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.
<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>Cut</b>	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.
<b>Dumped deposits</b>	These are deposits, often laid down intentionally, that raise a land surface. They may be the result of casual waste disposal or may be deliberate attempts to raise the ground surface.
<b>Fill</b>	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).
<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>Neolithic</b>	The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.
<b>Oppidum</b>	Large permanent settlement of the Late Iron Age, often complex enough to be regarded as a town.
<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>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:

47	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
4	Sheets 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: 2007.80

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: SMLW07

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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