
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT THE WATER TREATMENT WORKS,
WATTON ROAD,
LITTLE MELTON,
NORFOLK
(50209)**

**Work Undertaken For
Anglian Water**

April 2008

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

Planning Application No: 2007/2088
National Grid Reference: TG 1685 0754
OASIS Record No: archaeo11-41220

APS Report No. **49/08**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
PROJECT
SERVICES**



Quality Control
 Water Treatment Works
 Watton Road
 Little Melton
 50209

Project Coordinator	Gary Taylor
Supervisors	Vicky Mellor, Mary Nugent
Finds Processing	Denise Buckley
Illustration	Paul Cope-Faulkner
Photographic Reproduction	Sue Unsworth
Post-excavation Analyst	Paul Cope-Faulkner

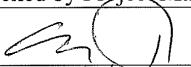

Checked by Project Manager	Approved by Senior Archaeologist
 Gary Taylor	 Tom Lane
Date: 25/4/08	Date: 25-04-08

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Plates

1.	SUMMARY	1
2.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
2.1	DEFINITION OF A WATCHING BRIEF.....	1
2.2	PLANNING BACKGROUND.....	1
2.3	TOPOGRAPHY AND GEOLOGY.....	1
2.4	ARCHAEOLOGICAL SETTING	1
3.	AIMS	2
4.	METHODS	2
5.	RESULTS	2
6.	DISCUSSION	3
7.	CONCLUSION	3
8.	ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	3
9.	PERSONNEL	3
10.	BIBLIOGRAPHY	3
11.	ABBREVIATIONS	4

Appendices

1. Context descriptions
2. The Finds *by Dr Anne Boyle, Barry Bishop and Gary Taylor*
3. Glossary
4. The Archive

List of Figures

- Figure 1 General location plan
- Figure 2 Site location plan
- Figure 3 Plan showing the location of the monitored area
- Figure 4 Plan of ditch (004) and pit (006)
- Figure 5 Plan of ditch (008)
- Figure 6 Sections 1 to 4

List of Plates

- Plate 1 View showing the stripping of the site
- Plate 2 Undated ditch (004)
- Plate 3 Medieval pit (006)
- Plate 4 Undated ditch (008)

1. SUMMARY

A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks on the site of a new water treatment plant, Watton Road, Little Melton, Norfolk. The watching brief monitored the removal of overburden deposits prior to the construction of the treatment plant.

The site lies close to Late Bronze Age (1000-800 BC) features that were exposed during the construction of the adjacent bypass. Earlier Bronze Age features were also identified and a probable round barrow lies to the northwest. A Neolithic (4000-2250 BC) hammerstone has also been retrieved from the vicinity.

The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural, undated, medieval and recent deposits. Undated deposits comprise two ditches that may be prehistoric in origin. A medieval pit was also identified. Finds include pottery, prehistoric flint and burnt stone.

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 to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with a new pipeline to a water treatment plant at Little Melton, Norfolk. Approval for the

development was sought through the submission of planning application 2007/2088. The watching brief was carried out between the 22nd and 27th November 2007.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Little Melton is located 7.5km southwest of Norwich and 18km southeast of East Dereham, Norfolk (Fig. 1).

The site is located 1.2km northeast of the centre of Little Melton at National Grid Reference TG 1685 0754 (Fig. 2). The site lies to the south of Watton Road and immediately east of the A47 on a slight ridge of higher ground at a height of c. 32m OD.

Local soils are of the Burlingham 1 Association, typically stagnogleyic argillic brown earths (Hodge *et al.* 1984). These soils are developed over a drift geology of glacially derived sands and gravel which seals glacial till and in turn overlies a solid geology of Cretaceous Upper Chalk (GSGB 1975).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Little Melton is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic to the present day. A Neolithic hammerstone is known from the immediate vicinity.

During the construction of the Norwich Southern Bypass, which forms the boundary to the site, a number of features were identified and examined. The earliest yielded Beaker pottery with the majority producing a range of Late Bronze Age types, perhaps indicating a dump from a kiln (Ashwin 2000, 211).

Little Melton is first mentioned in wills during the mid 11th century. Referred to as *Middilton*, *Methelton* and *Lithle Meddetone*, the name is derived from the Old English and means ‘middle town’

(Ekwall 1989, 321). One will details the granting of an estate at Little Melton by Eadwine to St Benedict's abbey (Sawyer 1968, S1516), the abbey better known as St Benet's of Hulme. By the time of the Domesday Survey of c. 1086, the manor had passed to Godric the Steward and contained 3 acres of meadow (Brown 1984).

The only extant remains of the medieval period is the 14th century church of St Mary and All Saints which lies to the west of the village (Pevsner 1990, 248).

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

Overburden was stripped from the easement of the new pipeline by machine to a depth of c. 0.5m. The exposed surface was then examined for archaeological features which were then cleaned and 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 and plans at a scale of 1:20. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Following excavation finds were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). The records were also checked and a stratigraphic matrix produced. Phasing was assigned based on

the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them and supplemented by artefact dating.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis four phases were identified;

Phase 1	Natural deposits
Phase 2	Undated deposits
Phase 3	Medieval deposits
Phase 4	Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposit encountered during the watching brief was a layer of yellowish brown sand with frequent gravel (003). This measured in excess of 0.25m thick.

Phase 2 Undated deposits

Located towards the eastern part of the monitored area was a northeast-southwest aligned ditch (004). This was over 7m long (the southern part having been truncated during the machining (Fig. 4)) by 0.45m wide and 0.16m deep (Fig. 6, Section 2). A single fill of greyish brown sand (005) was recorded from which two flint flakes were retrieved.

Some 40m to the west of this ditch, at the western end of the monitored area, was a second ditch (008). Again partly truncated during machining (Fig. 5), this measured over 6.5m long, 0.65m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 6, Section 4). A greyish brown sand with gravel (009) was recorded as the fill from which a flint flake and burnt stones were retrieved.

Phase 3 Medieval deposits

Located 2.2m northwest of the undated ditch (004) was a sub-circular pit (006). This was 2.5m long, over 1.3m wide and 0.25m deep (Fig. 6, Section 3). A single fill of light grey sand (007) was recorded from which a single sherd of 13th – 15th century pottery was retrieved as well as residual flint flakes.

Phase 4 Recent deposits

Sealing all archaeological deposits was a layer of subsoil comprising a 0.2m thick layer of yellowish brown sand with frequent gravel (002). This was in turn sealed by a topsoil of greyish brown silty sand with frequent gravel (001) that was 0.25m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits (Phase 1) comprise sands and gravels of the underlying drift geology of glacially derived sand and gravel.

Two ditches remain undated (Phase 2) due to a paucity of artefactual material. Both contained flint flakes, which would suggest a prehistoric date, though in insufficient quantities to confirm an absolute date. Both may have served a boundary or drainage function.

A medieval pit (Phase 3) was identified and probably represents nothing more than casual waste disposal.

Finds retrieved from the watching brief comprise locally produced pottery, flint and burnt stones.

7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Little Melton as the site lay in close proximity to previously examined remains of Bronze Age date.

However, the watching brief identified two undated ditches and a medieval pit. The ditches may be prehistoric, but a paucity of artefacts cannot support this.

Pottery, flint and burnt stones were retrieved from the investigation.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Jean Cayless for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis on behalf of Anglian Water. Mr J Cooper of Balfour Beatty allowed access to the site. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor who edited this report along with Tom Lane. Dave Start kindly allowed access to the library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
 Site Supervisors: Vicky Mellor, Mary Nugent
 Finds processing: Denise Buckley
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ashwin, T, 2000 'Norwich Southern Bypass Watching Brief: Prehistoric Features and Finds from Cringleford and Little Melton', in Ashwin, T and Bates, S, *Excavations on the Norwich Southern Bypass, 1989-91. Part 1: Excavations at Bixley, Caistor St Edmund, Trowse, Cringleford and Little Melton*, East Anglian Archaeology **91**

Brown, P, 1984 *Domesday Book: Norfolk (Part Two)*, **33**

Ekwall, E, 1989 *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-names* (4th edition)

GSGB, 1975 *Norwich, Solid and Drift geology*, 1:50 000 map sheet **161**

IFA, 1999 *Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs*

Pevsner, N, 1990 *North-West and South Norfolk, The Buildings of England*

Sawyer, PH, 1968 *Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography*

11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

GSGB Geological Survey of Great Britain

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

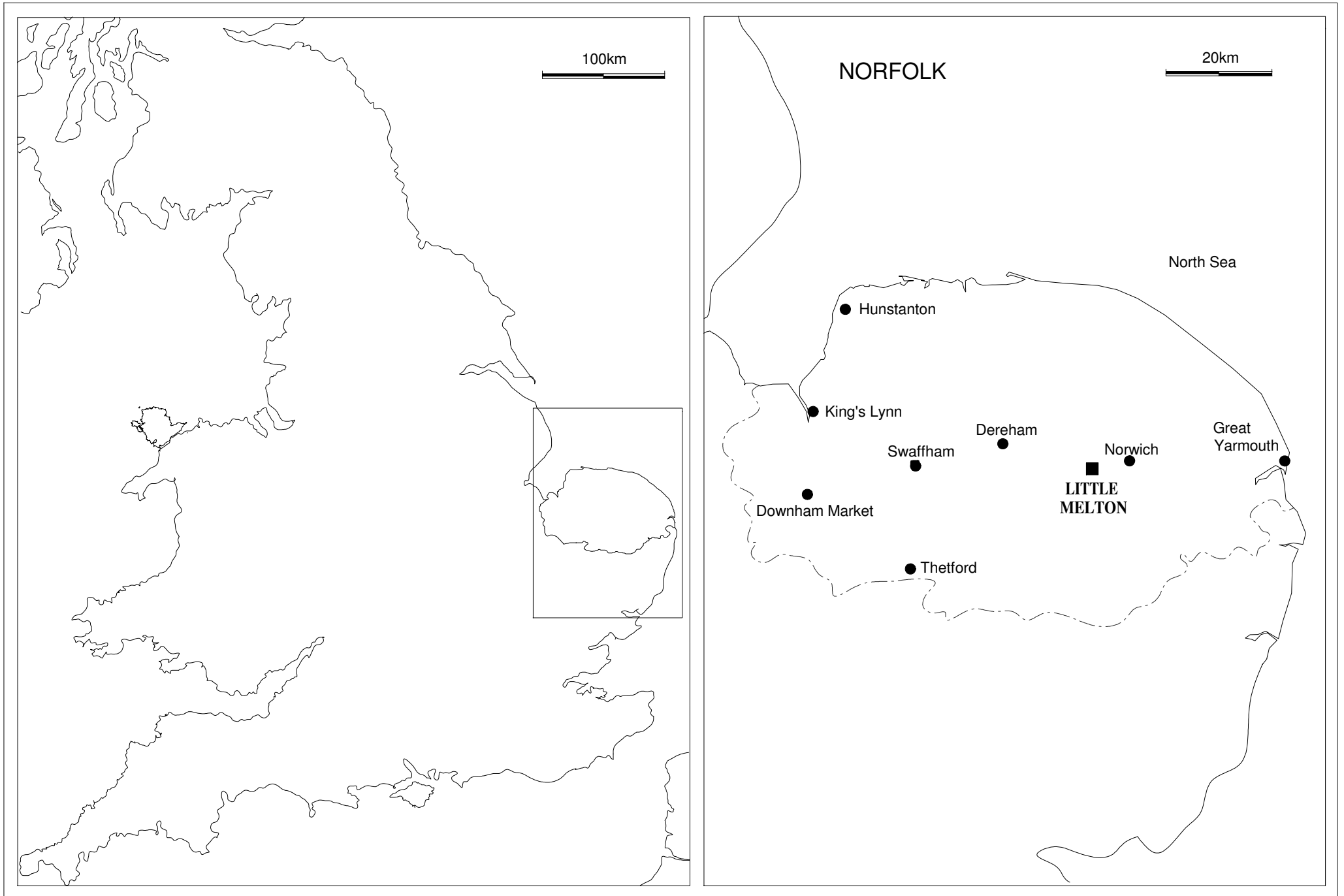
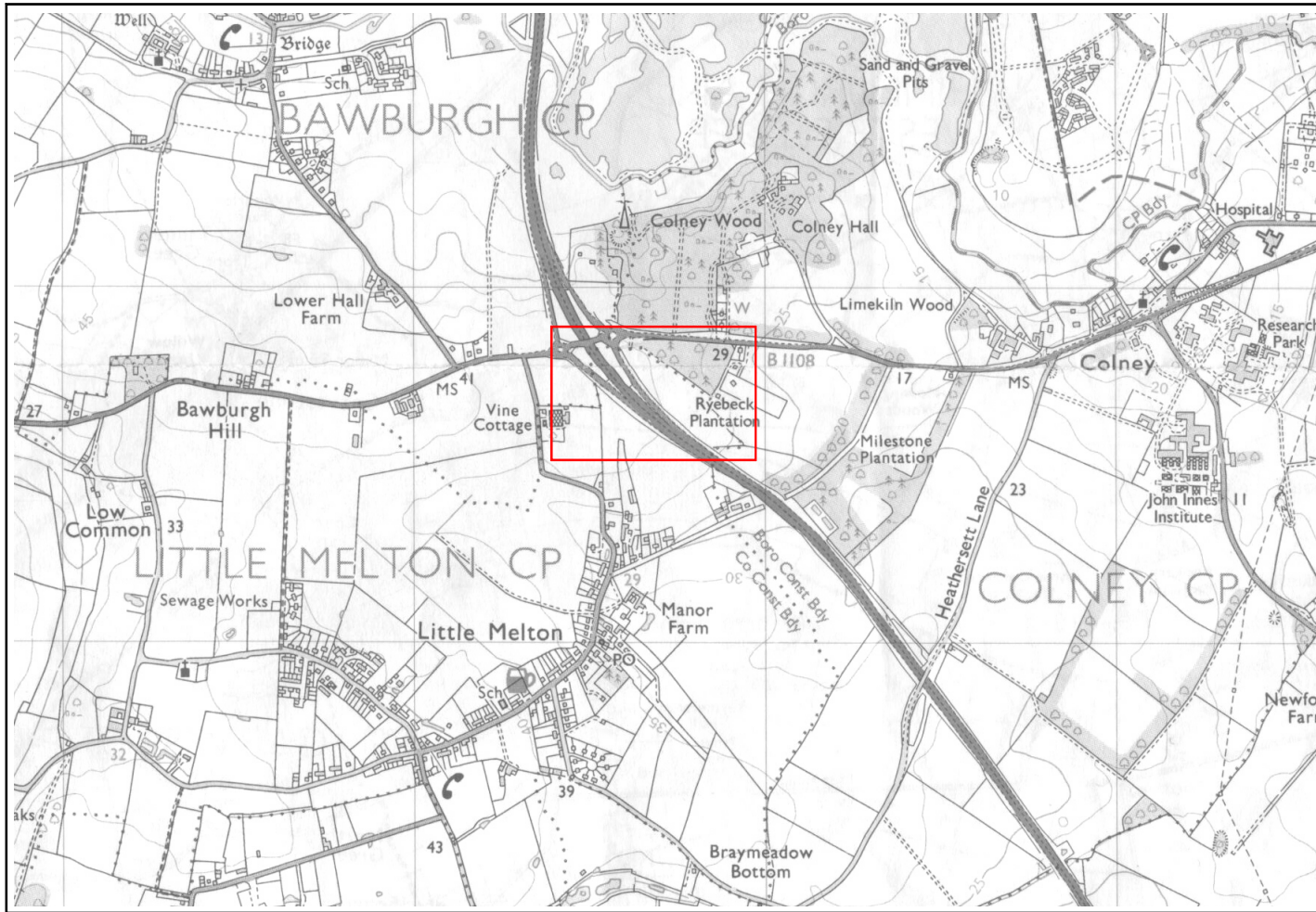


Figure 1 General Location Plan



TG

Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 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




 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Water treatment works, Little Melton		
Scale 1:20000	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 49/08

Figure 2 - Site location plan

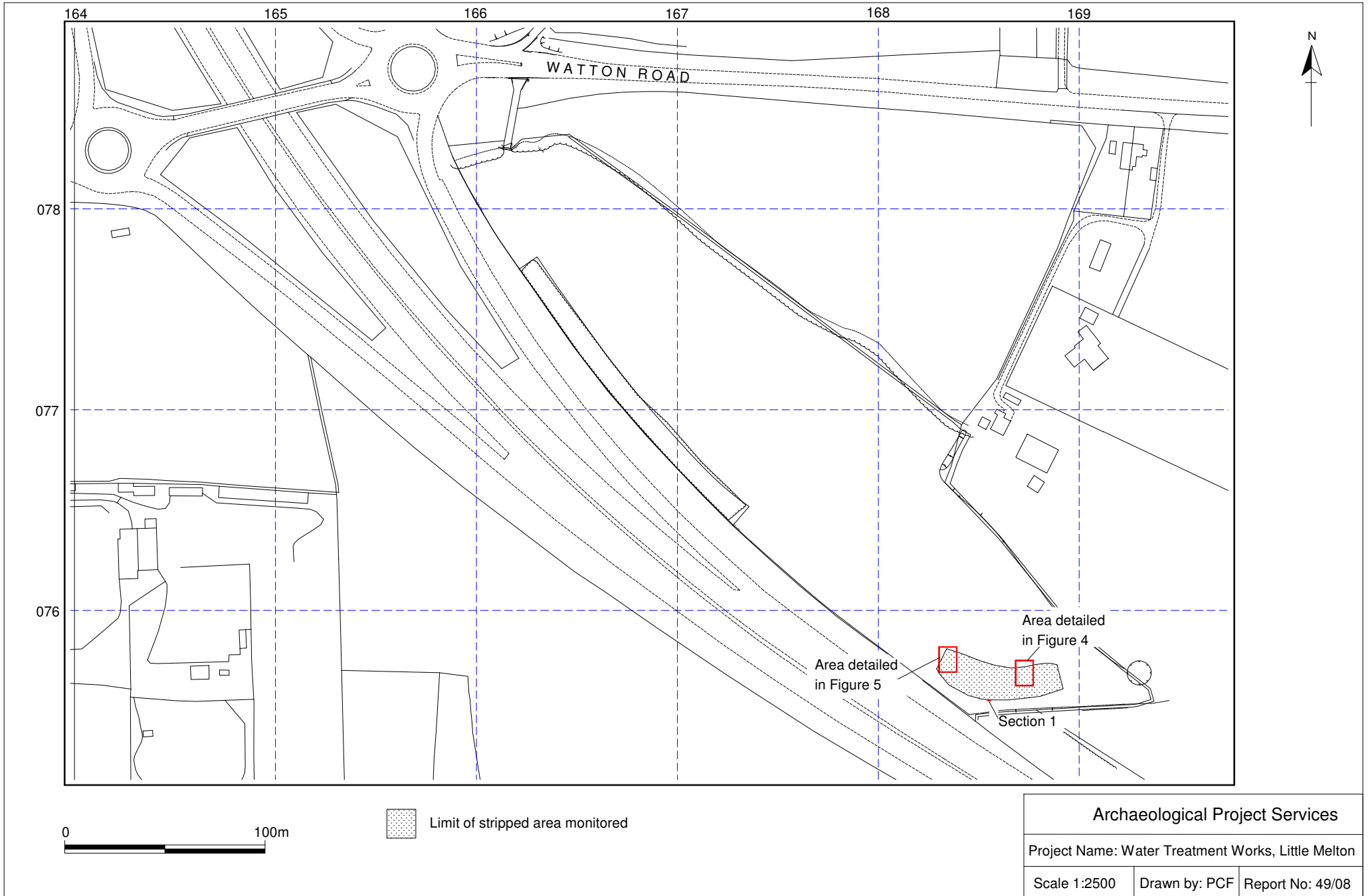
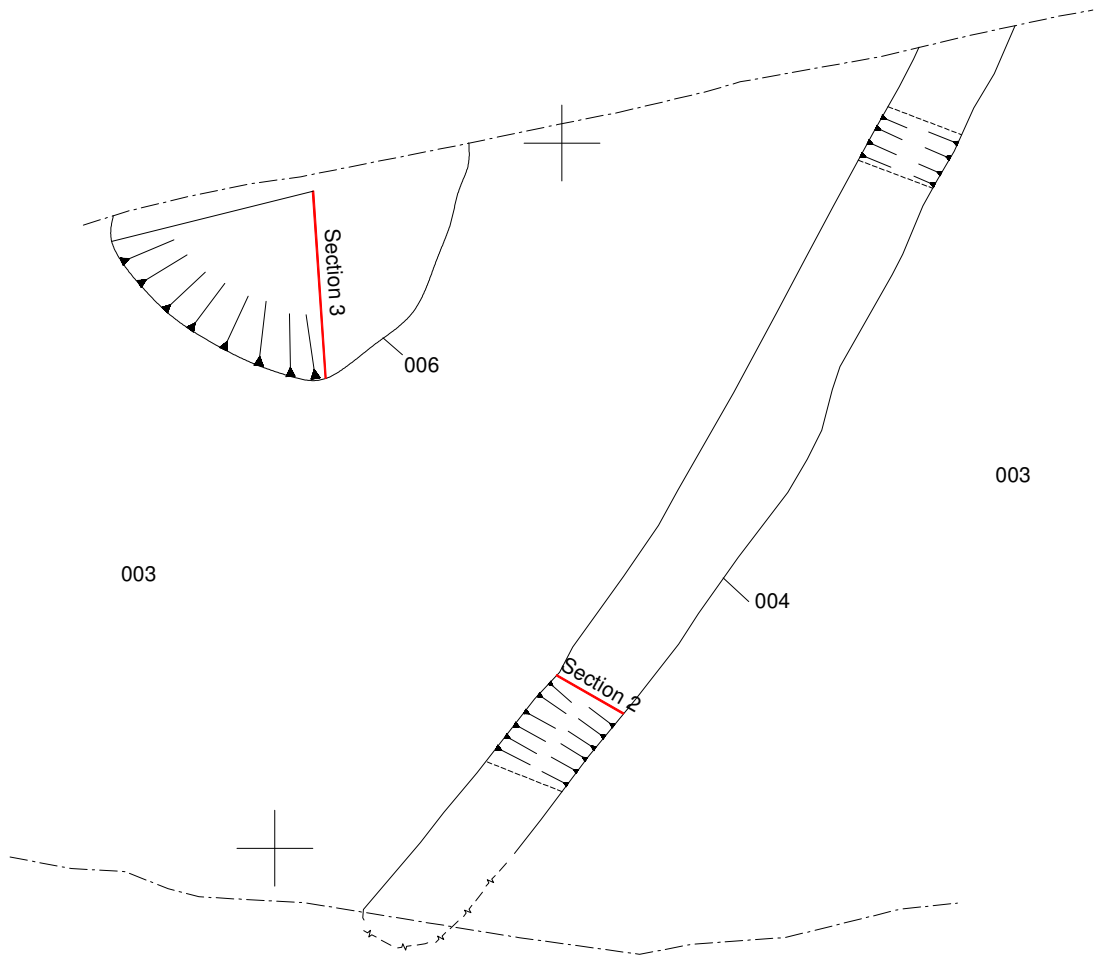


Figure 3 - Plan showing the location of the monitored area




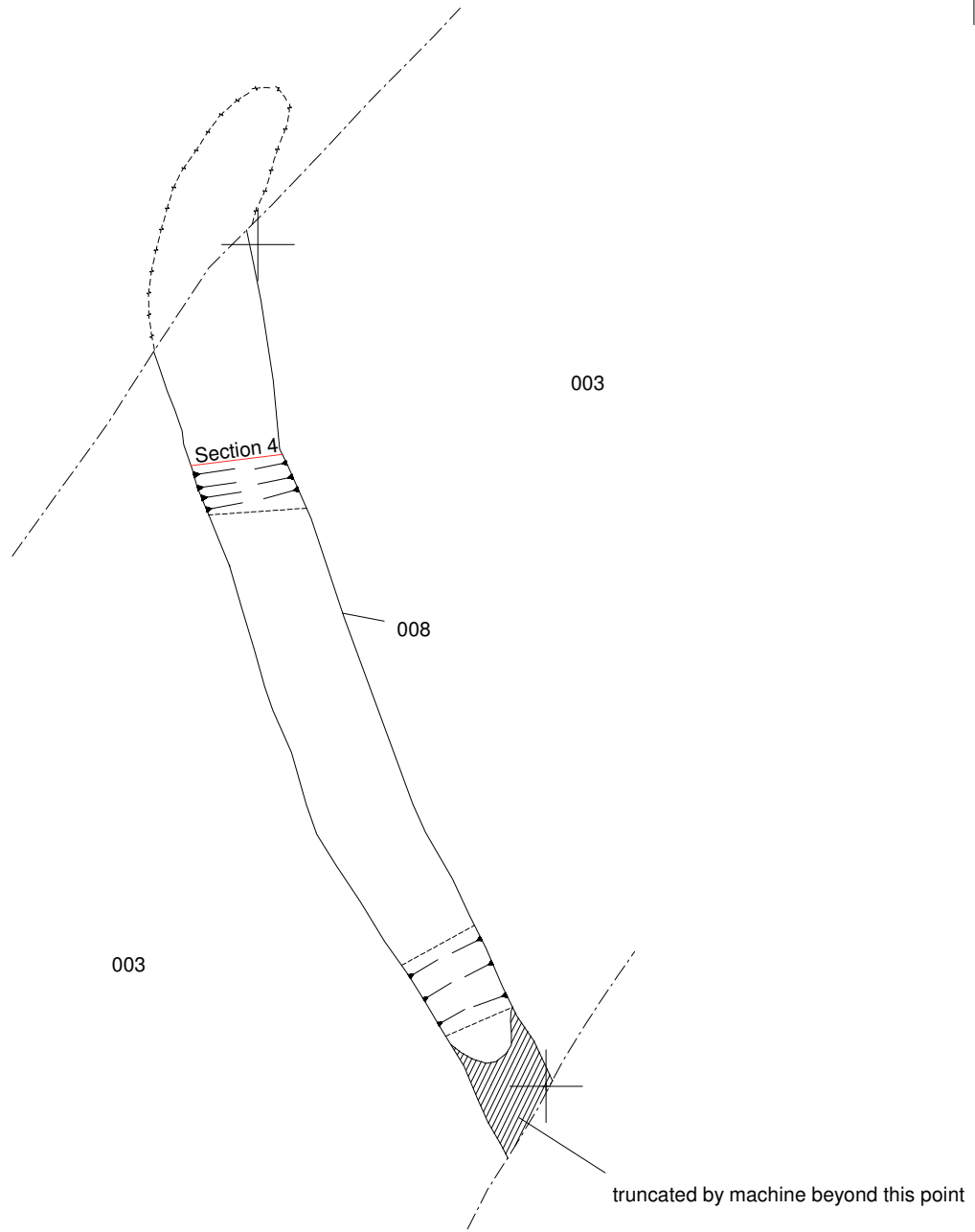
	Archaeological Project Services	
Project Name: Water treatment works, Little Melton		
Scale 1:50	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 49/08

Figure 4 - Plan of ditch (004) and pit (006)



Archaeological Project Services

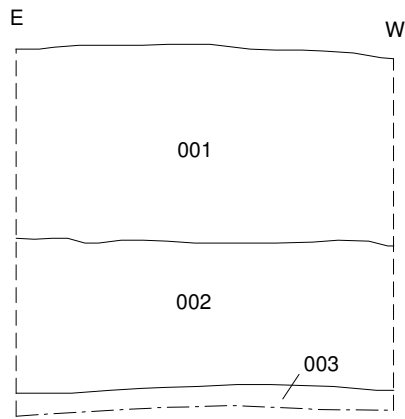
Project Name: Water treatment works, Little Melton

Scale 1:50

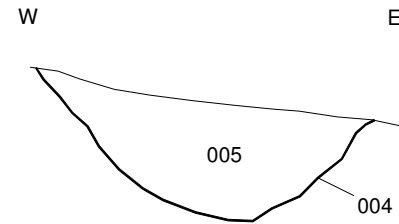
Drawn by: PCF

Report No: 49/08

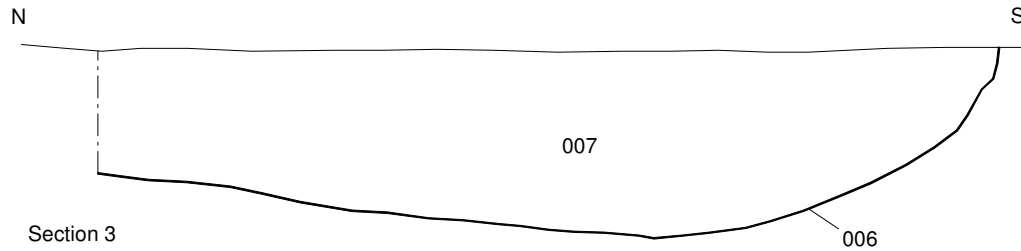
Figure 5 - Plan of ditch (008)



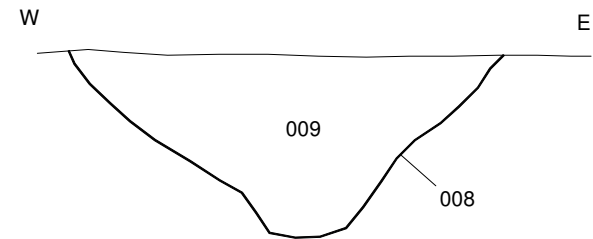
Section 1



Section 2



Section 3



Section 4




 Archaeological Project Services		
Project Name: Water treatment works, Little Melton		
Scale 1:10	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 49/08

Figure 6 - Sections 1 to 4



Plate 1 – View showing the stripping of the site, looking northwest



Plate 2 – Undated ditch (004), looking northeast



Plate 3 – Medieval pit (006), looking northeast

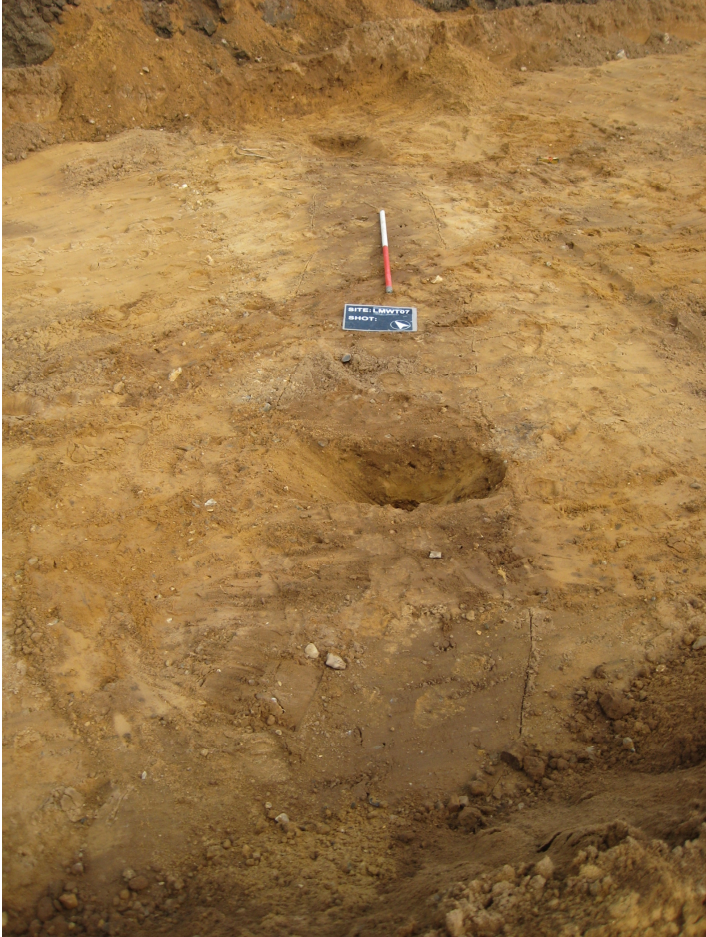


Plate 4 – Undated ditch (008), looking northeast

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Soft dark to mid greyish brown silty sand with frequent gravel, 0.25m thick	Topsoil
002	Soft mid yellowish brown sand with frequent gravel, 0.2m thick	Subsoil
003	Soft light yellowish brown sand with frequent gravel, >0.25m thick	Natural deposit
004	Linear feature, aligned north-south, >7m long by 0.45m wide and 0.16m deep, steepish sides and rounded base	Ditch
005	Soft mid greyish brown sand	Fill of (004)
006	Possible sub-circular feature, 2.5m long by >1.3m wide and 0.25m deep, gradual sides and uneven base	Pit
007	Soft light grey sand	Fill of (006)
008	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, >6.5m long by 0.65m wide and 0.25m deep, steepish sides and rounded base	Ditch
009	Soft mid greyish brown sand with frequent gravel	Fill of (008)

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

INTRODUCTION

Finds, pottery, flints and stone, comprising 7 items weighing over 264g, were recovered from 3 separate contexts.

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Dr. Anne Boyle

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* 2005 and for Norfolk, as published in the EAA volumes. A single sherd weighing two grams was recovered from the site.

Methodology

The material was laid out and viewed in context order. Sherds were counted and weighed by individual vessel within each context. This data was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in table 1.

Results

Table 1, Post Roman Pottery Archive

Context	Lincs Cname	Full Name	Norfolk Cname	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Date
007	GRIMT	Grimston-type ware	GRIM	Jug?	1	1	2	BS	13 th to 15 th
Abraded; ?ID as coarse									

Provenance

Pit [006] produced a single sherd of locally produced Grimston-type ware.

Condition

The sherd is abraded and is likely re-deposited.

Potential

The assemblage holds limited potential for further work.

Summary

A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from Pit [006]. The assemblage is too small to draw any conclusions about the nature or scope of activity on the site during this period.

THE FLINTS

By Barry Bishop

Introduction

Seven pieces of struck flint were recovered during a Watching Brief at the above site from three separate features. This report quantifies, describes and discusses this material and recommends any further work that may be required for it to realise its full research potential.

Quantification

Table 2: Quantification of Lithic Material by Context

Context	Decortication Flake	Flake	Flake Fragment	Core Fragment	Comments
005		2			One flake is a small trimming flake
007	1	1	1	1	
009		1			Possible flake that fractured following a thermal flaw but may just be a natural angular spall

Description and Discussion

The raw materials used consisted of variably coloured flint occurring in the form of small rounded pebbles and cobbles with a rough but weathered cortex, most probably obtained from alluvial terrace deposits. The struck pieces were all in a good and mostly sharp condition and, although likely to be residual, were probably recovered from close to where they were originally discarded.

The assemblage consisted of six flakes and a fragment from a thermally disintegrated core. The flake from context [009] may actually be a natural, thermally fractured, spall but the six pieces from the other contexts have been deliberately struck and are indicative of prehistoric activity at the site. The presence of a decortication flake from context [007] and a small trimming flake from [005] suggests that lithic reduction was practiced although there was no evidence of this occurring *in situ* within any of the contexts from which they were recovered. No retouched or other chronologically diagnostic pieces were present and the only core was fragmentary and of an uncertain technological tradition. The assemblage can be therefore only assigned with confidence to the broad prehistoric period. Nevertheless, the flakes were narrow, thin and competently produced which may tentatively suggest that they were more likely to belong to Mesolithic or Neolithic, rather than Bronze Age or later, industries.

Recommendations

The small size of the assemblage and the lack of diagnostic pieces means the assemblage has only limited interpretational value and no further analytical work is recommended. It is, however, indicative of prehistoric activity at the site, which lies within a region extensively occupied throughout the prehistoric period and may therefore contribute to the wider understanding of landscape use in the region. The assemblage should therefore be noted in the Norfolk Historic Environment Record and a short description included in any published accounts of the investigations.

OTHER FINDS

By Gary Taylor

Introduction

Two items, burnt or probably burnt stone, weighing 262g, were recovered from a single context.

Results

Table 3, Other Materials

Context	Material	Description	NoF	W (g)	Date
009	Stone	Burnt? Stone	1	235	
	Stone	Flint, burnt and crazed	1	27	

Provenance

The burnt stones were recovered from a ditch fill.

Condition

The stones are in good condition and present no long-term storage problems.

Potential

Other than indicating human activity, the burnt stones are of very limited local potential. They may suggest cooking or sauna-type activities near to the site.

SPOT DATING

The dating in table 4 is based on the evidence provided by the finds detailed above.

Table 4, Spot dates

Context	Date	Comments
005	prehistoric	Date on flint
007	13 th to 15 th	Date on a single sherd
009	undateable	

ABBREVIATIONS

BS Body sherd
NoS Number of sherds

NoV Number of vessels
W (g) Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

Slowikowski, AM, Nenck, B and J Pearce, 2001 *Minimum Standards for the Processing, Recording, Analysis and Publication of Post-Roman Ceramics*, Occasional Paper **2**, London: Medieval Pottery Research Group

Young, J, Vince, AG and V Nailor, 2005 *A Corpus of Saxon and Medieval Pottery from Lincoln*, Oxford: Oxbow

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).
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).
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.
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.
Till	A deposit formed after the retreat of a glacier. Also known as boulder clay, this material is generally unsorted and can comprise of rock flour to boulders to rocks of quite substantial size.

Appendix 4

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

9	Context records
3	Sheets containing scale drawings (plans and sections)
1	Photographic record sheet
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:

Norfolk Museums Service
Union House
Gressenhall
Dereham
Norfolk
NR20 4DR

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *County Standards for Field Archaeology in Norfolk*, produced by Norfolk Landscape Archaeology.

Norfolk HER No: 50209

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.

Archaeological Project Services can provide

Pre-Planning Advice

*Desk-Based
Assessments*

Consultancy

*Environmental Impact
Assessments*

*Topographic and
Landscape Surveys*

Evaluation

Watching Briefs

Excavation

Illustration/CAD

*Building
Surveys*

*Desktop
Publishing*

Ceramic Analysis

Osteoarchaeology

Archaeological Project Services

The Old School - Cameron Street -
Heckington - Sleaford - Lincs - NG34 9RW
Tel (01529) 461618 Fax (01529) 469444
Email info@apsarchaeology.co.uk

Archaeological Project Services is part of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire,
a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity.
Charity No:1001463 Company No: 2554738 (England)

www.apsarchaeology.co.uk