

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION AT SPALDING ROAD, DEEPING ST JAMES, LINCOLNSHIRE (DJSR 10)

Work Undertaken For Larkfleet Homes

June 2010

Report Compiled by Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons)

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land at Spalding Road, Deeping St James, Lincolnshire. This was in order to determine the archaeological implications of proposed development at the site.

The site lies close to where a Neolithic (4000-2200 BC) stone axe was found and within an area of Bronze Age (2200-800 BC) funerary activity. Romano-British (AD 43-410) settlement, identified from chance finds and aerial photography, is known from the general area. During the medieval period (AD 1066-1540), the site lay within the open fields of Deeping St James. Medieval pottery was previously found on the north side of the development area.

The evaluation identified a sequence of natural, undated and recent deposits. Above natural clays, sands and gravels were a small number of natural channels. These were probably active watercourses in the prehistoric period and a flint of the period was recovered from one. A subsoil of varying thickness may indicate the presence of ridge and furrow, while an undated ditch and a linear feature are likely to be associated with more recent agricultural activities at the site. A refuse pit is also undated but is sealed by alluvium and is probably of some antiquity.

The finds retrieved from the investigation include a prehistoric flint, medieval pottery and fired clay.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of an Evaluation

An archaeological evaluation is defined as 'a limited programme of non-intrusive

and/or intrusive fieldwork 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 1999).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by Larkfleet Homes to undertake a programme of archaeological investigation in advance of proposed development at Spalding Road, Deeping St James, Lincolnshire, as detailed in Planning Application S08/0747/25. The evaluation was undertaken between the 24th and 27th May 2010 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Deeping St James is located 12km east of Stamford and 15km southwest of Spalding in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 640m north of the centre of the village as defined by the parish church of St James at National Grid Reference TF 1563 1023 (Fig. 2). Situated in the north side of Spalding Road, the site lies at a height of c. 4.8m OD on generally level ground with a slight slope down to the south, towards the River Welland. The site encompasses some 1.03 hectares.

Local soils are of the Fladbury 1 Association, typically pelo-alluvial gleys (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 194). These overlie a drift geology of silty clay alluvium which seals sands and gravels of River Terrace

Deposits (Booth 1983, 114). Below this is a solid geology of Jurassic Oxford Clay with Kellaways sands to the immediate west (BGS 1984).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

Deeping St James is located in an area of known archaeological remains dating from the Neolithic to the present day. A Neolithic polished stone axe was found to the southwest of the site. A Bronze Age funerary urn and other evidence for funerary activity of this period is known from alongside Linchfield Road and a possible barrow lies 450m to the south of the site.

During the Romano-British period an extensive settlement was established to the south of Frognall, immediately east of Deeping St James. Aerial photographs indicate that the site was around 9 hectares in extent and finds from the area include ritual crowns, coin hoards and scatters of pottery (Hayes and Lane 1992, 190). This settlement appears to be linked to an artificial channel which can be traced to the east (*ibid*.). Pottery of the period has also been found in several locations in closer proximity to the site.

Deeping is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as *Depinge*, the name is derived from the Old English and means 'the deep place' (Cameron 1998, 37). The Domesday Survey records that Alfred of Lincoln and Godfrey of Cambrai were the principal landowners with 183 acres of meadow and two fisheries (Foster and Longley 1976).

Deeping St James has been suggested as a later settlement which resulted from the drainage of the fen in the later 11th century (Hayes and Lane 1992, 191). However, the references suggest that the planned settlement of this period is likely to have been Market Deeping (Riley 1893, 156).

The extant remains of the period include St James' church which is the only surviving element of a priory established in 1139 (DoE 1987, 34). Associated with the priory was a tithe barn which was demolished in the 1960s. A medieval market cross, reset into a 19th century lock-up, represent the only other extant structure of the period.

Medieval finds have been retrieved from several locations within the village and include pottery and silver coins. Additional pottery was retrieved during fieldwalking immediately adjacent to the site (Allen 2005, 8). The remains of a medieval house were uncovered during building work north of the church.

Aerial photographs held by Heritage Lincolnshire show remnant traces of ridge and furrow of the medieval field system.

A watching brief undertaken 500m northeast of the site identified a boundary ditch, a linear feature and two pits, all of which were undated but possibly postmedieval (Peachey 2009, 1). A watching brief to the south revealed only natural, subsoil and topsoil (Cope-Faulkner 2001, 1)

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 South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist to formulate a policy for the management of archaeological resources present on the site.

4. METHODS

Five trenches, each measuring 25m by 1.5m were excavated to the surface of the

underlying natural geology. The trenches were located to give random coverage of the site, though were located away from the course of a modern sewer (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 all contexts and their interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was also compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20 and 1:50. Recording of deposits encountered was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Environmental sampling was undertaken at the discretion of the site supervisor using guidelines established by English Heritage (2002). The subsequent processing of the samples revealed no environmental indicators.

The location of the excavated trenches was surveyed in relation to fixed points on boundaries and on existing buildings.

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 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 (Fig. 4)

The earliest deposit encountered in this trench was a layer of orange brown sandy silt and gravel (107). This measured in excess of 0.36m thick.

Cutting natural at the western end of the trench was a northwest-southeast aligned gully (102) of probable natural origin. This was 1m wide by 80mm deep (Fig. 4, Section 5) and contained a single fill of brown silty clay (103).

Situated 0.7m to the east was a second probable natural gully (100). Broadly parallel to (101), this was 0.93m wide by 0.2m deep (Fig. 4, Section 4). A single fill of greyish brown silty clay (101) was recorded.

Located towards the eastern end of the trench was linear feature (108) that was aligned northeast-southwest. Measuring over 12.41m long, 1.33m wide and over 0.36m deep (Fig. 4, Section 3), it contained a single fill of orange brown silty clay (106) from which a sherd of medieval pottery was retrieved.

Sealing all the features was a subsoil comprising a 0.14m thick layer of brown clayey silt (105). This was sealed by the current topsoil of brown clayey silt (104) that measured 0.4m thick.

Trench 2 (Fig. 5)

Exposed at the base of an excavated feature was a 50mm thick layer of yellow sand with gravel (205). This was overlain by a brownish yellow sandy silt that was 0.3m thick.

Cut into this was a north-south aligned ditch (203). This was 1.1m wide by 0.35m deep with a stepped side to the west. A

single fill of greyish brown silty clay (202) was recorded.

Sealing the ditch was a subsoil comprising a 0.22m thick layer of brown clayey silt (201). This was in turn sealed by the current topsoil of grey clayey silt (200).

Trench 3 (Fig. 6)

Natural was identified as a layer of greyish brown silty clay (304). Developed upon this was a greyish brown silt subsoil (303) that measured 0.45m thick.

Cut through the subsoil was a rectangular machine-cut trench (302), presumably a test pit. This was over 2.7m long by 0.82m wide and over 0.42m deep. A mixed fill of natural sand and gravel and topsoil was recorded (301).

Topsoil comprised a 0.29m thick layer of brown silt (300).

Trench 4 (Fig. 7)

Natural deposits of compacted sand and gravel (405) were recorded within this trench. Cut into this was a natural channel (400) that was over 7.21m wide and was 0.45m deep. A single fill comprising bluish grey sandy and silty clay (401) was recorded that contained a prehistoric flint flake.

Sealing the channel was a natural layer of brown and bluish grey clay (402) that measured 100mm thick. This was sealed by brown clayey silt subsoil (403), measuring 0.2m thick, which was in turn overlain by a 0.3m thick topsoil of brown clayey silt (404).

Trench 5 (Fig. 8)

Recorded at the base of Trench 5 was a layer of orange grey clayey silt (505) which measured in excess of 0.13m thick.

Cut into the natural was a possible gully or pit (504). This measured over 0.35m long,

was 0.47m wide and 0.2m deep. A single fill of grey clayey silt with charcoal and fired clay (503) was recorded.

Sealing the feature was a possible alluvial layer of brownish grey clayey silt (502) over which a subsoil of brownish grey silt (501) had developed. Topsoil of greyish brown silt (500) sealed all deposits within this trench.

6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprise a lower layer of sands and gravels deposited within the outwash of the Rivers Welland and Glen. This is overlain by a finer alluvium formed during flood episodes of the nearby Welland. Natural channels were recorded in Trenches 1 and 4 beneath and above the alluvial deposit. These channels are likely to have been open at various times during the prehistoric period. One of them (400) yielded a single prehistoric flint flake.

A number of features remain undated due to a lack of artefactual material and comprise a ditch in Trench 2 and a gully or pit in Trench 5. The ditch in Trench 2 is perpendicular to the road and may be a field boundary. A linear feature in Trench 1 contained medieval pottery. However, this feature is parallel to the Spalding Road and may be associated with agricultural activities, perhaps as recent as the planting of the orchard that formerly occupied the site. As such both these features are likely to be relatively recent.

The gully/pit in Trench 5 is buried beneath an alluvial deposit suggesting it is of some antiquity. Containing charcoal and burnt silt, it may have been used for the disposal of fire remains.

Subsoil was evident across the site and was between 0.14m and 0.45m thick. This varying thickness may indicate the

presence of former ridge and furrow which showed faint traces across the site on an aerial photograph dating to 1965 (Code: HSL UK 66 475).

A sherd of 12th to 14th century Ely type ware was retrieved from the fill of a linear feature and a probable Prehistoric flint recovered from the fill of a natural channel represent the only finds retrieved from the investigation.

7. CONCLUSIONS

An archaeological evaluation was undertaken at Spalding Road, Deeping St James, as the site lay in an area of known archaeological remains of prehistoric, Romano-British and medieval date.

However, no prehistoric or Romano-British remains were encountered during the evaluation. Instead, a probable recent ditch and linear feature, both associated with agriculture were revealed along with a pit or gully of some antiquity. Varying thicknesses of subsoil may indicate the presence of ridge and furrow of the medieval field system. Natural channels were also revealed.

Finds retrieved from the evaluation comprise a prehistoric flint waste flake, medieval pottery and fired clay.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr D Smith of Larkfleet Homes 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 access to the parish files and library maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor

Site Staff: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Bryn

Leadbetter

Surveying: Steve Malone

Finds Processing: Denise Buckley

Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth

Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner

Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-

Faulkner

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

DoE Department of the Environment

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists



Figure 1 - General location plan

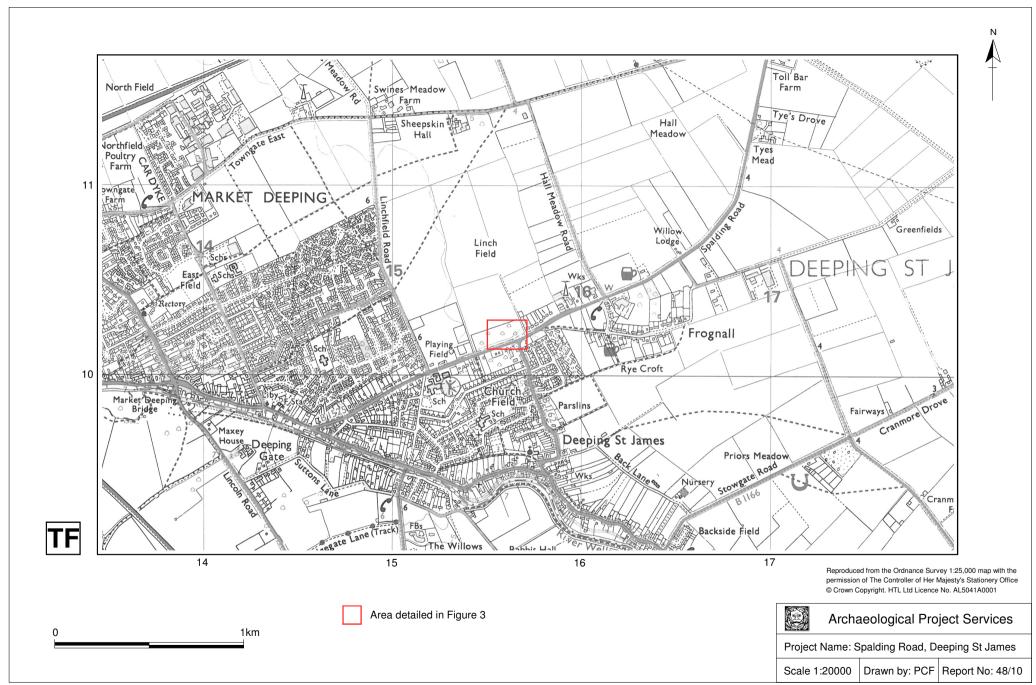


Figure 2 - Site location plan

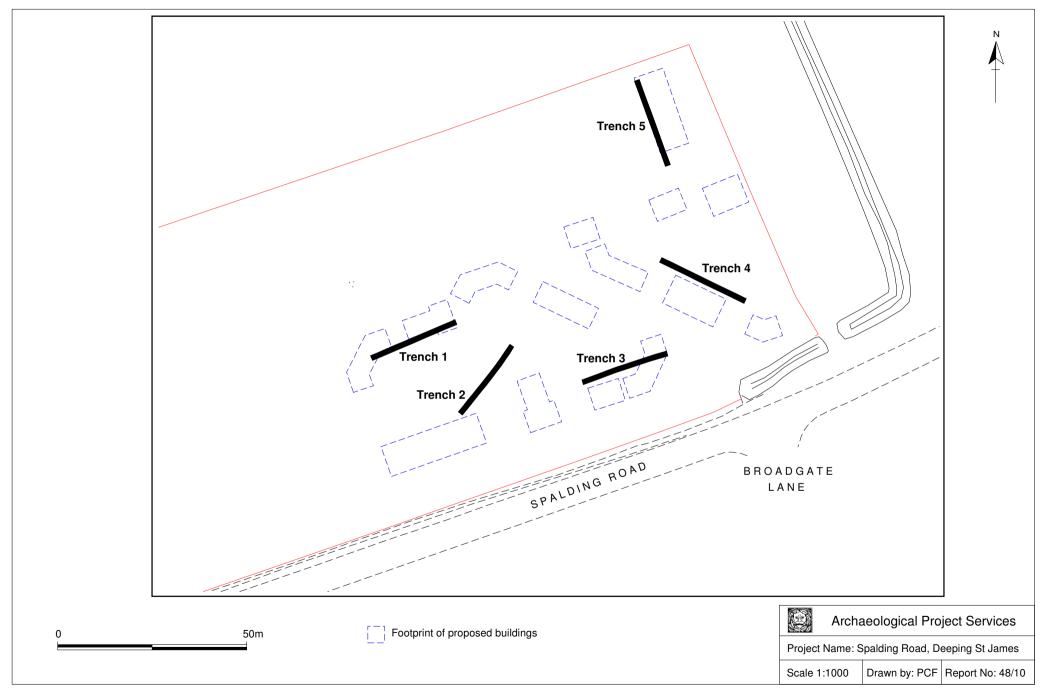


Figure 3 - Trench location plan

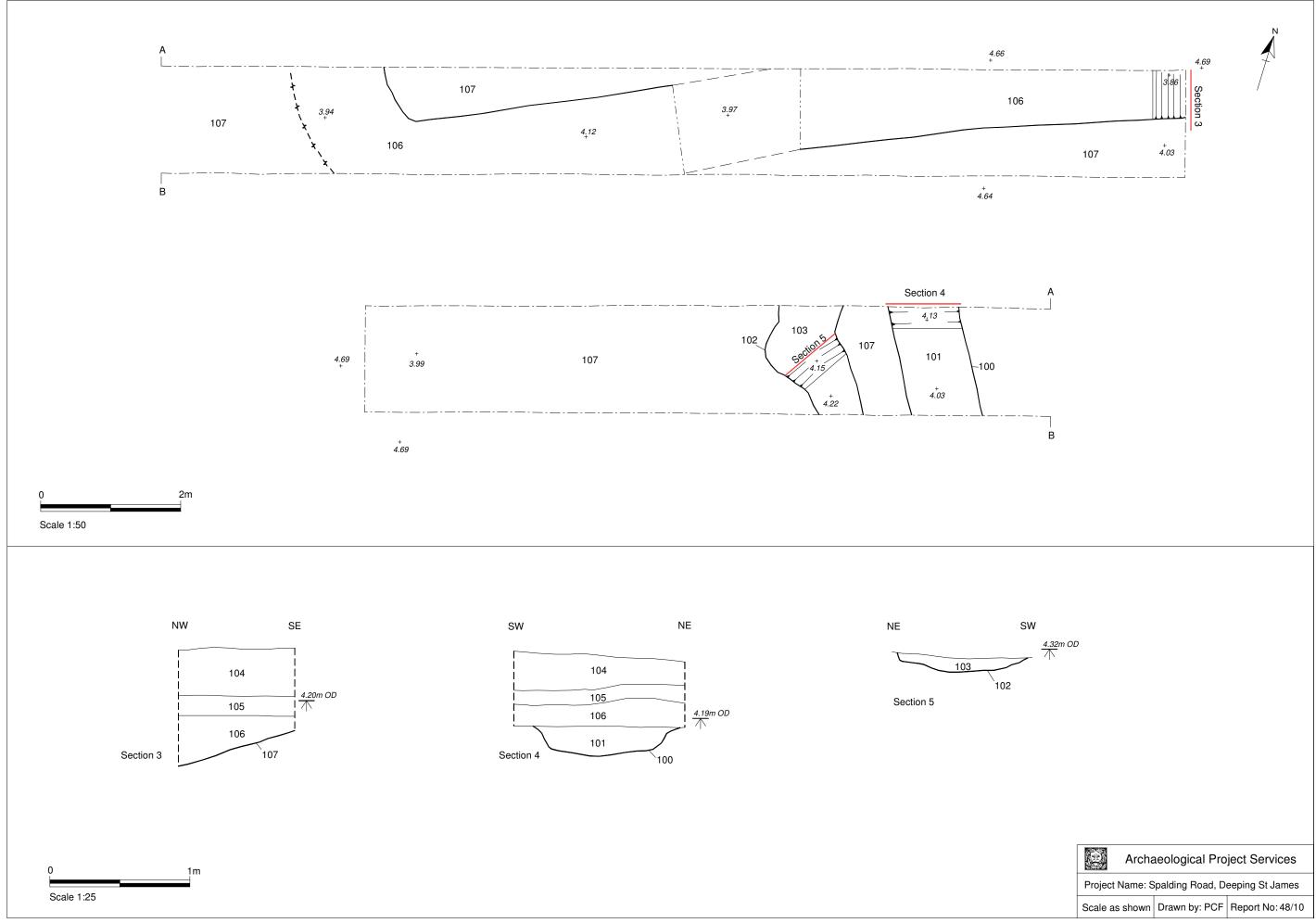


Figure 4 - Trench 1: Plan and sections

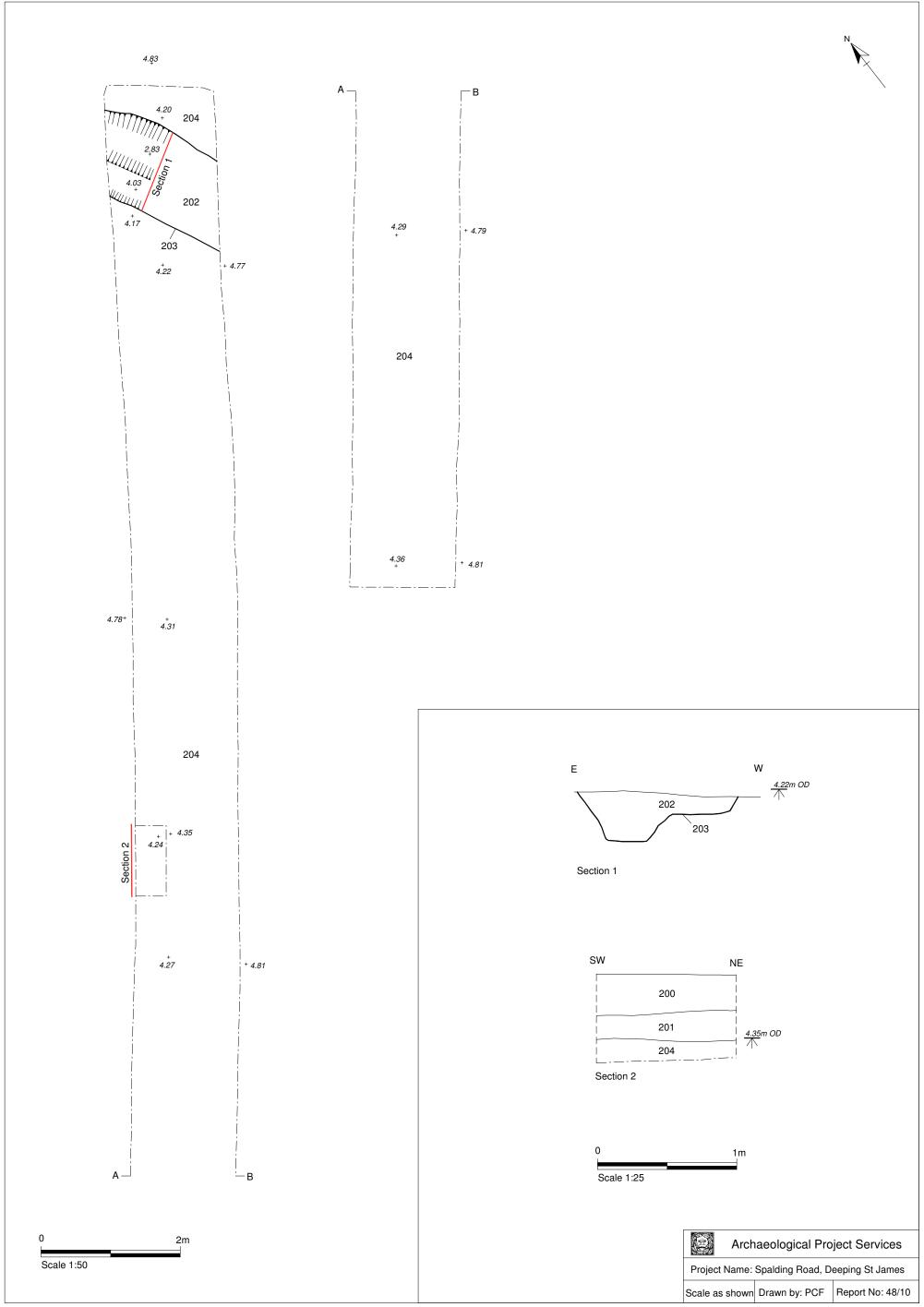


Figure 5 - Trench 2: Plan and sections

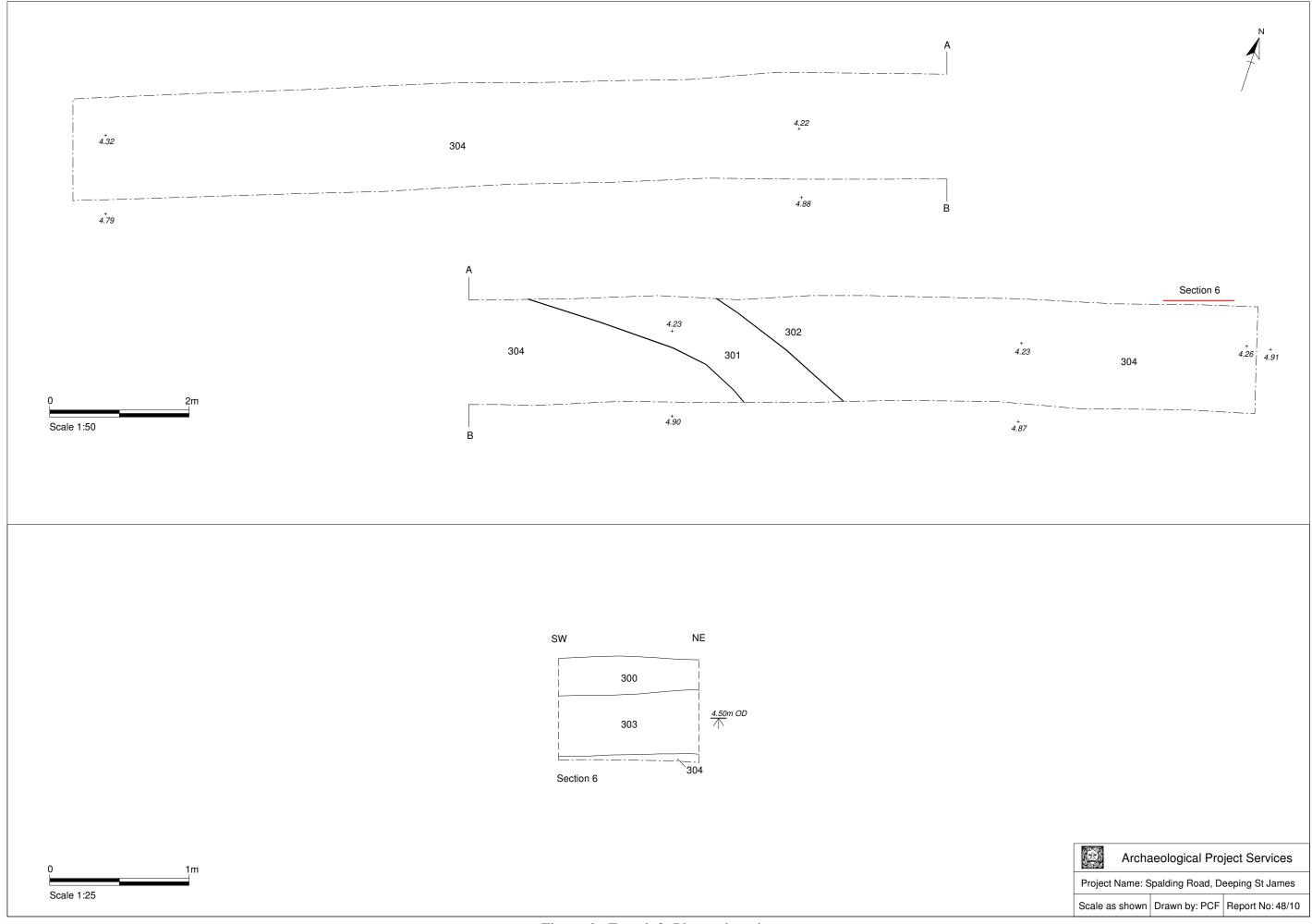


Figure 6 - Trench 3: Plan and section

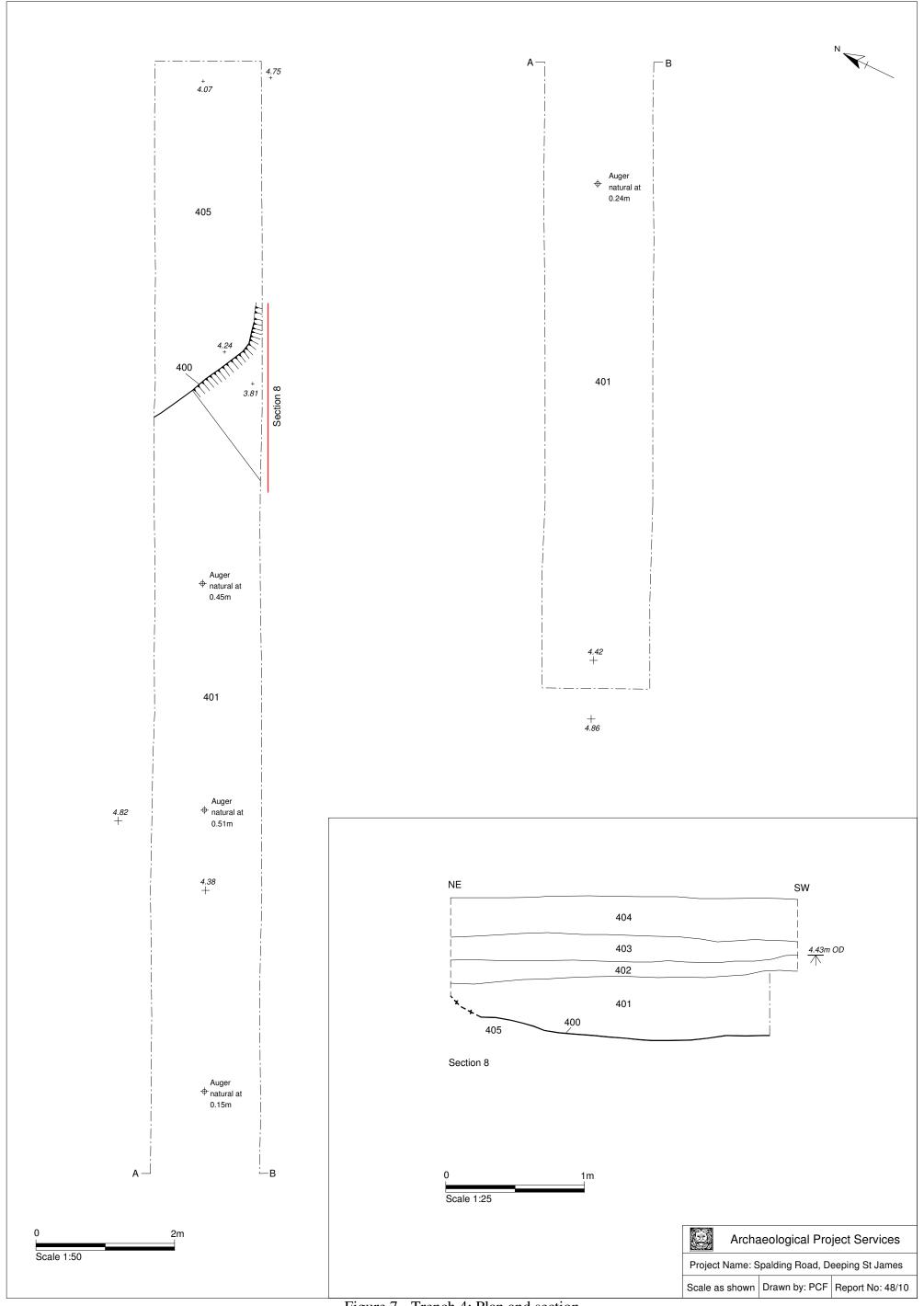


Figure 7 - Trench 4: Plan and section

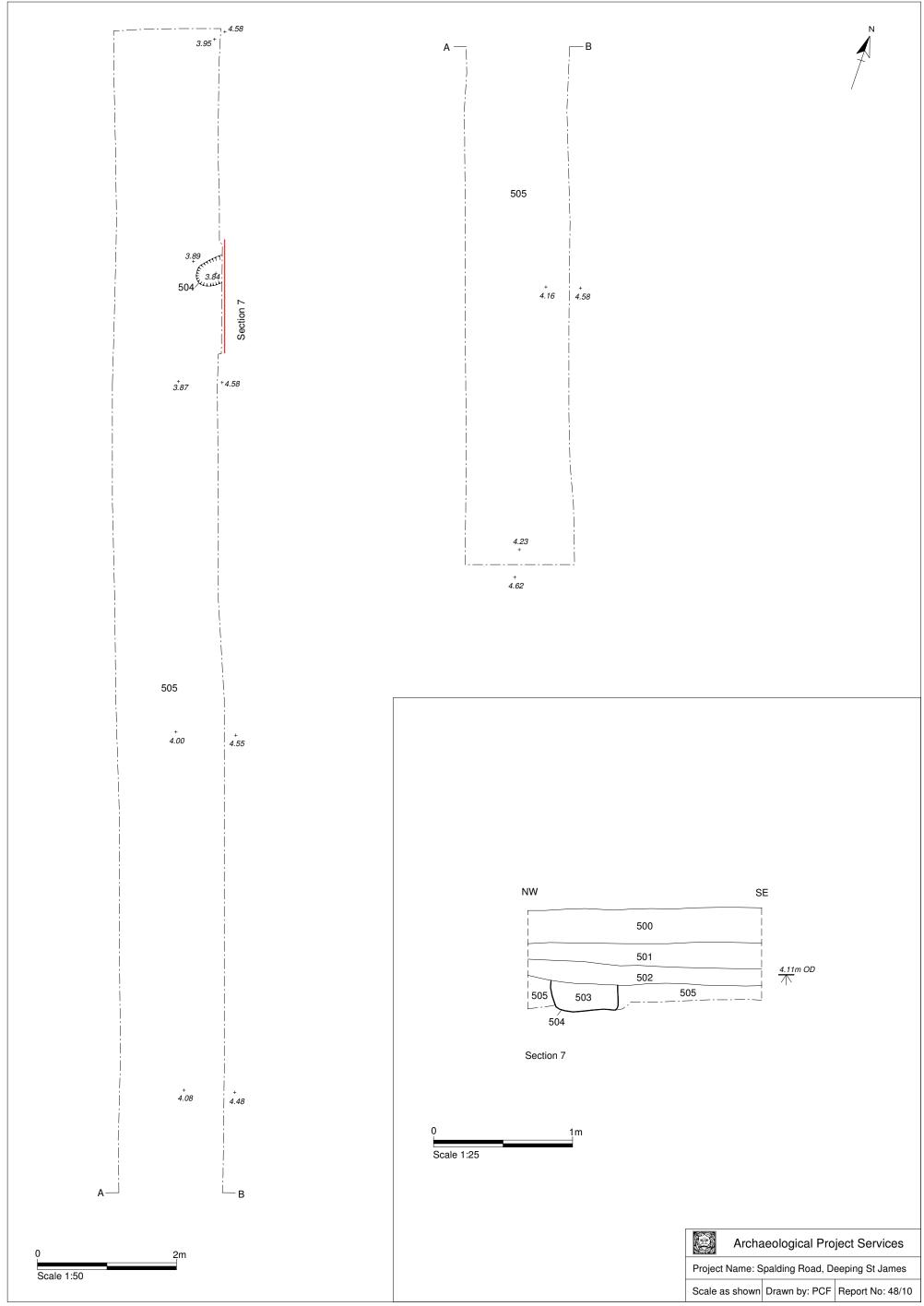


Figure 8 - Trench 5: Plan and section



Plate 1 – General view looking northeast over the development area



Plate 2 – Trench 1, looking southwest



Plate 3 – Section 3, looking east



Plate 4 – Section 4, looking north



Plate 5 – Section 5, looking northwest



Plate 6 – Trench 2, looking southwest



Plate 7 – Section 1, looking south



Plate 8 – Section 2, looking northwest



Plate 9 – Trench 3, looking west



Plate 10 – Section 6, looking northwest



Plate 11 – Trench 4, looking southeast



Plate 12 – Section 8, looking northeast



Plate 13 – Trench 5, looking southeast



Plate 14 – Section 7, looking northeast

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

Trench 1

No.	Description	Interpretation
100	Linear feature, aligned northwest-southeast, 0.93m wide by 0.2m deep, steep sides and rounded base	Natural gully
101	Firm mid greyish brown silty clay	Fill of (100)
102	Irregular feature, aligned north-south, 1m wide by 80mm deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Natural gully
103	Firm mid brown silty clay	Fill of (102)
104	Friable mid brown clayey silt, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
105	Compact mid brown clayey silt, 0.14m thick	Subsoil
106	Firm mid orange brown silty clay, 0.35m thick	Fill of (108)
107	Loose mid orange brown sandy silt and gravel	Natural deposit
108	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, >12.41m long by 1.33m wide by 0.36m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Indeterminate feature

Trench 2

No.	Description	Interpretation
200	Firm dark grey clayey silt, 0.3m thick	Topsoil
201	Firm mid brown clayey silt, 0.22m thick	Subsoil
202	Firm to plastic mid greyish brown silty clay	Fill of (203)
203	Linear feature, aligned north-south, 1.1m wide by 0.35m deep, steep side to E, stepped on W, flat base	Ditch
204	Firm to plastic mid brownish yellow sandy silt, 0.3m thick	Natural deposit
205	Firm dark yellow sand with moderate gravel, >50mm thick	Natural deposit

Trench 3

No.	Description	Interpretation
300	Firm dark brown silt, 0.29m thick	Topsoil
301	Firm to friable mid yellow sand and gravel and mid greyish brown silt	Fill of (302)
302	?rectangular feature, >2.7m long by 0.82m wide by >0.4m deep, vertical sides, not fully excavated	Test pit
303	Firm dark greyish brown silt, 0.45m thick	Subsoil
304	Firm slightly plastic mid greyish brown silty clay	Natural deposit

Trench 4

No.	Description	Interpretation
400	Linear feature, aligned north-south, >7.21m wide and 0.45m deep, steep sides and flat base	Channel
401	Firm light bluish grey sandy and silty clay	Fill of (400)
402	Firm light to mid brown and light bluish grey clay, 100mm thick	Natural deposit
403	Friable mid brown clayey silt, 0.2m thick	Subsoil
404	Friable mid brown clayey silt, 0.3m thick	Topsoil

No.	Description	Interpretation
405	Compacted mid orange brown sand and gravel	Natural deposit

Trench 5

No.	Description	Interpretation
500	Firm dark greyish brown silt, 0.25m thick	Topsoil
501	Firm dark brownish grey silt, 0.17m thick	Subsoil
502	Firm slightly plastic light brownish grey clayey silt, 0.15m thick	Subsoil/alluvium
503	Firm dark grey clayey silt with frequent charcoal and burnt silt	Fill of (504)
504	Feature, >0.35m long by 0.47m wide by 0.2m deep, near vertical sides and flat base	?gully/pit
505	Firm slightly plastic light orange grey clayey silt, >0.13m thick	Natural deposit

THE FINDS

POST ROMAN POTTERY

By Alex Beeby and Anne Boyle

Introduction

All the material was recorded at archive level in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski *et al.* (2001) and to conform to Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeology Handbook*. The pottery codenames (Cname) are in accordance with the Post Roman pottery type series for Lincolnshire, as published in Young *et al.* (2005). A total of two sherds from a single vessel, weighing 9 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. The pottery was examined visually and using x20 magnification. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the pottery is included in Table 1 below. The pottery dates to the medieval period.

Condition

The sherds are fragmentary and slightly abraded.

Results

Table 1. Post Roman Pottery Archive

Tr	Cxt	Cname	Full Name	Form	NoS	NoV	W (g)	Part	Comment	Date
1	106	ELY	Ely-type ware	Jug or Jar	2	1	10	BS	Joining pieces; slightly abraded	ML12-M14

Provenance

All of the pottery was recovered from a one context (106), within a single linear feature of an indeterminate nature [108], in Trench 1.

Range

There are two sherds from a single Ely-type ware jug or jar. Although this type is not common in this area, neither is it rare. This vessel maybe a product of the Ely ware industries at Ely in Cambridgeshire, although this site would be on the very furthest extent of this ware type's distribution (Spoerry, 2008, 67-69). It may be also be a locally produced imitation.

Potential

This assemblage poses no problems for long term storage and should be retained as part of the site archive. There is little scope for further work.

Summary

Two small sherds from a single vessel dating to the medieval period were recovered during the evaluation.

FIRED CLAY

By Alex Beeby

Introduction

All 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 in context order. Fragments of fired clay were counted and weighed within each context. This information was then added to an Access database. An archive list of the fired clay is included in Table 2 below.

Condition

The assemblage is comprised of small, abraded, rounded and sub-rounded pieces of fired clay with no diagnostic features.

Results

Table 2, Fired Clay Archive

Tr	Cxt	Sub type	Fabric	NoF	W (g)	Description
5	503	FCLAY	Dull ox; medium coarse sandy; soft rounded Fe; Mica	4	5	Poorly mixed clay; poss post Roman BRK frags; abraded

Provenance

The fired clay fragments were recovered from fill (503) within possible gully or pit feature [503].

Range

None of the fragments have any diagnostic features, although they have been fired to a fairly high temperature, suggesting that they are perhaps from a piece of ceramic building material, probably a brick.

Potential

There is little potential for further work. The material should be retained as part of the site archive.

Summary

A small group of fired clay fragments, in a similar fabric, was recovered from Trench 5. The material is in poor condition but may be from a brick.

WORKED FLINT

By Tom Lane

Introduction

A single flint flake was retrieved.

Results

Table 3, Worked Flint Archive

Cxt	Description	No	Wt (g)	Date
401	Waste Flake. 45 x 10 x 5mm	1	2	prehistoric

Potential

The item is not readily dateable but probably belongs in the later part of prehistory. It indicates no more than a human presence in the area at one point in later prehistory. As such, it offers little in the way of increased understanding of prehistoric communities.

Summary

A single undated flint flake was retrieved from Trench 4.

SPOT DATING

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

Table 4, Spot dates

Cxt	Date	Comments		
106	ML12-M14	Based on joining sherds from a single vessel		
401	Prehistoric	Based on a single flint		
503	Uncertain, ?post-Roman	Based on fired clay		

ABBREVIATIONS

ACBMG Archaeological Ceramic Building Materials Group

BS Body sherd

CBM Ceramic Building Material

CXT Context

LHJ Lower Handle Join
NoF Number of Fragments
NoS Number of sherds
NoV Number of vessels

PCRG Prehistoric Ceramic Research Group

TR Trench

UHJ Upper Handle Join W (g) Weight (grams)

REFERENCES

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GLOSSARY

Alluvium A deposit (usually clay, silts or sands) laid down in water. Marine alluvium is deposited

by the sea and freshwater alluvium by streams, rivers or within lakes.

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, e.g.(004).

Cropmark A mark that is produced by the effect of underlying archaeological features influencing

the growth of a particular crop.

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) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as

its fill(s).

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 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.

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 32 Context records
- 2 Photographic record sheets
- 15 Sheets of scale drawings (sections and plans)
- 4 Daily record sheets
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix
- 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: 2010.81

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