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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF  
AT ANGEL COURT,  
ANCASTER,  
LINCOLNSHIRE  
(ANAC 10)**

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**Work Undertaken For  
Mr D Shakespeare**

June 2010

Report Compiled by  
Paul Cope-Faulkner BA (Hons)

Planning Application No: S08/1321  
National Grid Reference: SK 9830 4383  
The Collection Accession No: LCNCC: 2010.85  
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APS Report No. **54/10**

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
PROJECT  
SERVICES**





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## 1. SUMMARY

*A watching brief was undertaken during groundworks at Angel Court, Ancaster, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of foundation trenches for a new detached dwelling.*

*The site lies in an area of considerable Roman (AD 43-410) activity, some 250m north of the defences of the late Roman town at Ancaster. A Roman votive stone, perhaps of the goddess Minerva, was previously found close to the site. To the east of the site is Ermine Street, a major Roman thoroughfare that connected London to Lincoln and beyond to the Humber. Extensive Iron Age (800 BC-AD 43) settlement is also known from the vicinity. During the medieval period (AD 1066-1540) the site lay north of the main focal point of the village, though close to a stone cross, itself a re-used Roman milestone.*

*The watching brief revealed a sequence of natural, undated and recent deposits. An undated drainage channel was recorded beneath a subsoil or dumped deposit of probable post-medieval date. A recent track was also identified across the site. No other features were recorded and no archaeological finds 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 Mr D Shakespeare to undertake an archaeological watching brief during groundworks associated with new residential development at Angel Court, Ancaster, Lincolnshire. Approval for the development was sought through the submission of planning application S08/1321. The watching brief was carried out on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> June 2010 in accordance with a specification prepared by Archaeological Project Services and approved by the South Kesteven Planning Archaeologist.

### 2.3 Topography and Geology

Ancaster is situated 10km west of Sleaford and approximately 10km northeast of Grantham in the administrative district of South Kesteven, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The site is located 300m north of the centre of the village as defined by the parish church of St Martin at National Grid Reference SK 9830 4383 (Fig. 2). The site lies north of Angel Court, west of Ermine Street, at a height of c. 42.5m OD within the valley of The Beck.

Local soils are of the Ruskington Association, typically deep permeable fine and coarse loamy and sandy soils, with sandy and coarse loamy soils of the Blackwood Association to the north and south of the site (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 179; 127). These soils are developed on a drift geology of Belton Sands and Gravels which in turn seal a solid geology of Jurassic Lincolnshire Limestone Formation (BGS 1996).

### 2.4 Archaeological Setting

The site lies immediately west of Ermine Street, a major Roman road between London and Lincoln and extending to the Humber estuary, and is located approximately 200m north of the Roman

town (Scheduled Monument No. 105), and 400m southeast of a Roman marching camp (Scheduled Monument No. 295).

Evidence of Iron Age settlement has been identified to the south and east of the village. During the Romano-British period a marching camp, or temporary fort, was established to the northwest of the present village during the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. A more permanent fort was then constructed to the south and later became the focus of settlement, developing into a walled town in the third century.

Romano-British cemeteries have been found in and around Ancaster, including one containing nine inhumations discovered immediately south of the site centred on Angel Court. In this same area, a carved figure, perhaps of Minerva, was found which may indicate the position of a shrine (Stevens and Shotter 1996, 14).

Previous investigations have revealed building remains, surfaces, and ditches of Romano-British date outside the town defences and Romano-British material has been found to the north of the application area suggesting that Ermine Street was settled for at least part of its route to the north of the town.

There is little evidence for Anglo-Saxon settlement within Ancaster, although a cemetery was found to the south of the town.

Ancaster is first mentioned in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. Referred to as *Anacastro*, the name is derived from the Old English personal name *Ana* and *cæster*, meaning a Roman town (Cameron 1988, 3). Ancaster is not mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086, however, nearby West Willoughby is recorded as having two churches, one of which may have been located at Ancaster (Foster and Longley 1976).

Extant remains of the medieval period include the church of St. Martin, which has a Norman chancel and northern arcade and a possible fragment of an Anglo-Saxon window, and a Roman milestone re-used as a medieval cross (Pevsner and Harris 1989, 100). A medieval chapel and associated hermitage dedicated to St Mary once stood in the field opposite the church (Trollope 1872, 485).

An evaluation undertaken immediately north of the site did not identify any Roman features, though did record a post-Roman peat deposit indicating that this site had been low-lying and marshy, due to the proximity of The Beck (Malone 2001, 6).

### 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

Prior to the excavation of foundation trenches, topsoil was stripped from the area of the development. Foundation trenches were then excavated to depths of up to 1.3m below the ground surface. Following excavation, 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 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.

The earliest deposit encountered in the base of the foundation trenches was a natural layer of bluish grey sandy clay (107). This measured in excess of 0.25m thick. Overlying this was a layer of yellow-orange sand (103) which was in turn sealed by natural gravel (104). Natural deposits tended to slope down towards the north.

Cut into the natural gravels was a northeast-southwest aligned channel (105 and 108). This measured at least 6.5m long, up to 1.2m wide and 0.3m deep (Fig. 4, Sections 1 and 2). The channel contained a fill of grey sandy silt (106 and 109).

Sealing the channel was a layer of greyish brown silty sand (102). Identified as a subsoil derived from dumping, this measured 0.8m thick. A linear band of rubble (110), aligned east-west and measuring 1.5m wide by 0.4m thick, was identified as a former track across the site.

Sealing all deposits was a topsoil of greyish brown silty sand (101) that was 0.4m thick.

## 6. DISCUSSION

Natural deposits comprise sands, gravels and clays of the underlying drift geology of Belton Sands and Gravels.

Cut into the natural was a channel that remains undated due to a lack of artefactual material. It was, however, sealed beneath a subsoil derived from dumping. To the north of the site, a similar dumped layer was dated to the post-medieval period (Malone 2001, 6). The channel is parallel to The Beck and may have aided drainage of the area.

A more recent track was also recorded beneath the present topsoil.

No artefacts were retrieved from the watching brief.

## 7. CONCLUSION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken at Angel Court, Ancaster, as the site lay in close proximity to Roman remains, particularly a cemetery of the period.

However, no Roman deposits were securely identified. An undated drainage channel was recorded beneath a probable post-medieval dumped deposit/subsoil and a more recent track was also identified.

No finds were recorded or retrieved from the investigation.

## 8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Mr D Shakespeare 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 Supervisor: Bob Hamilton  
 Photographic reproduction: Sue Unsworth  
 Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner  
 Post-excavation analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner

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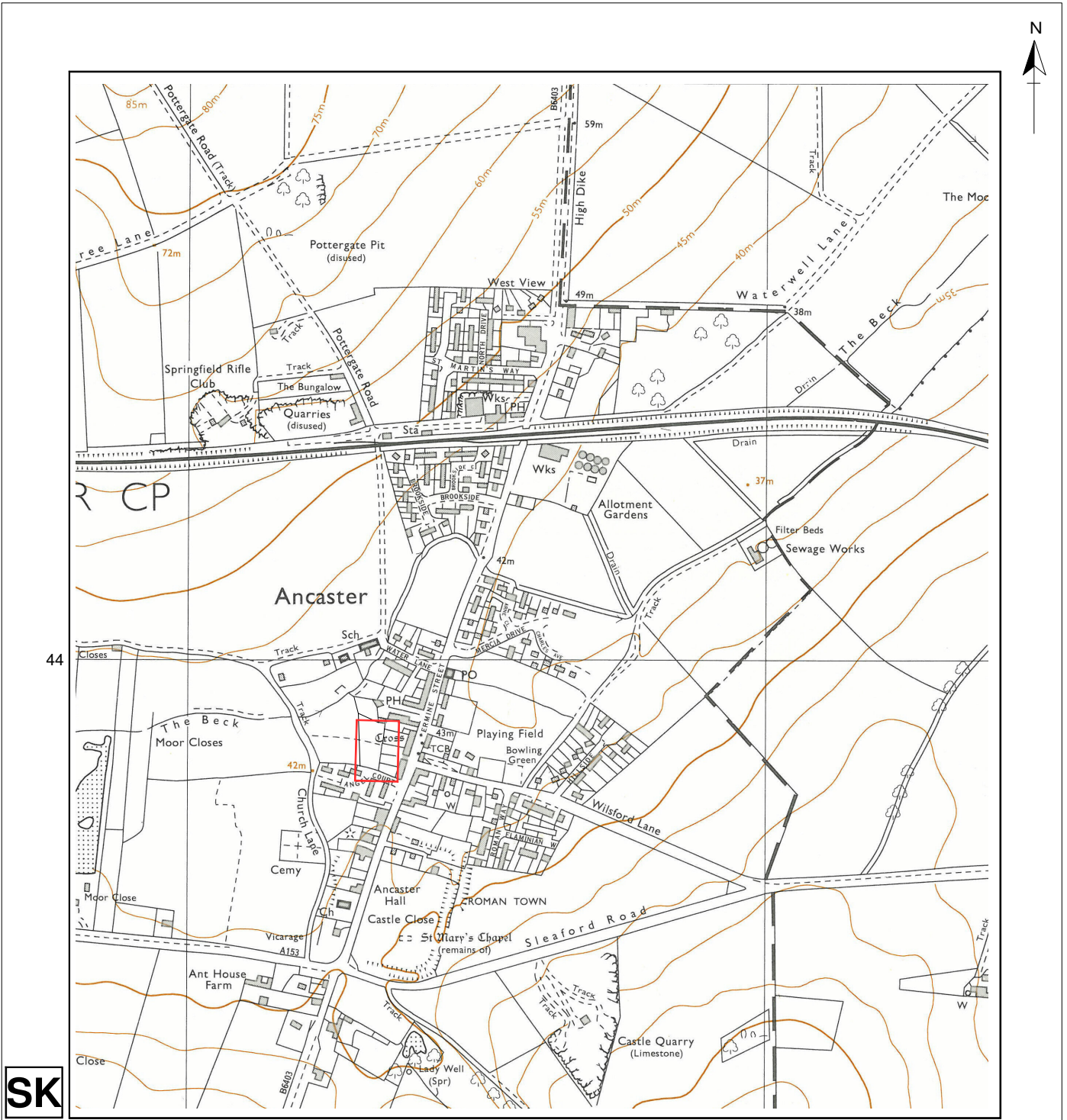
## 11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services  
 BGS British Geological Survey  
 IfA Institute for Archaeologists






Figure 1 - General location plan



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 Area detailed in Figure 3




	<b>Archaeological Project Services</b>	
Project Name: Angel Court, Ancaster ANAC10		
Scale 1:10000	Drawn by:PCF	Report No: 54/10

Figure 2 - Site location plan

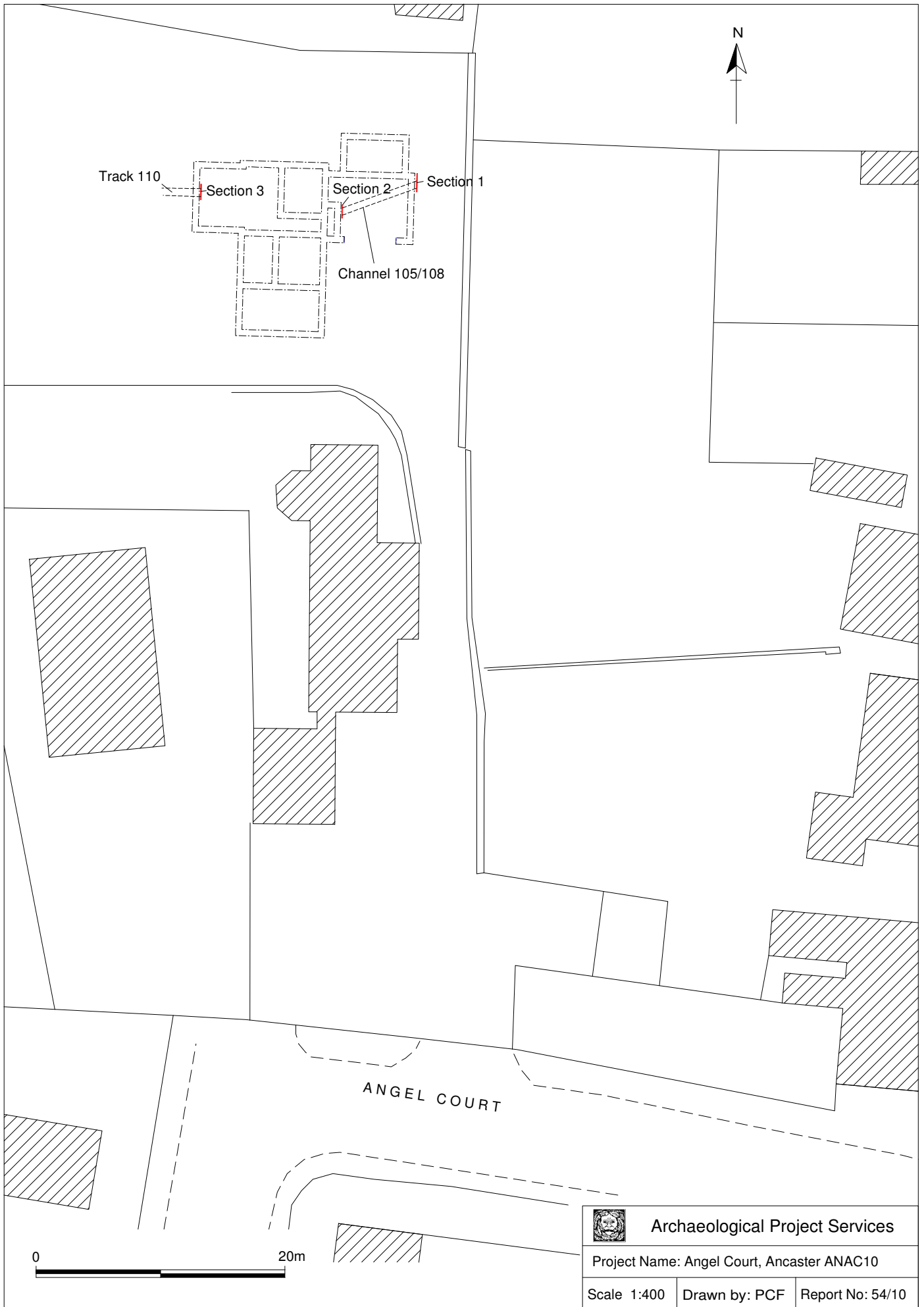
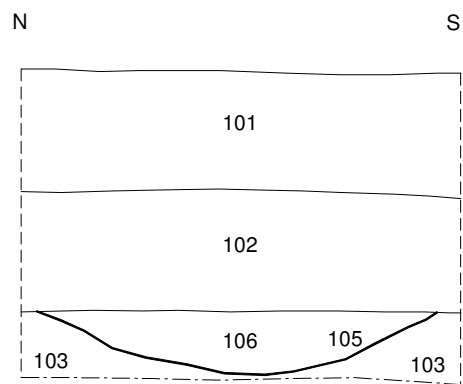
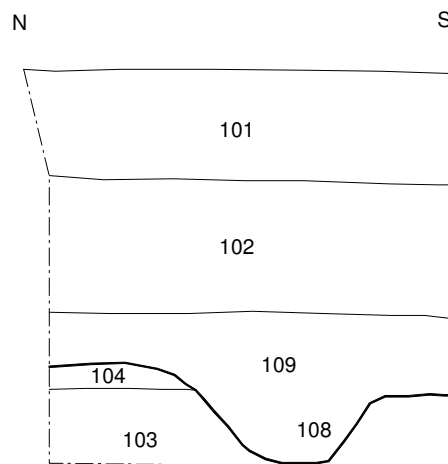


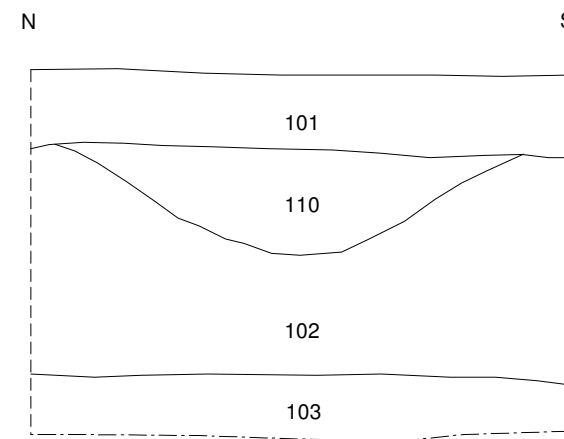
Figure 3 - Plan of the development showing section locations



Section 1



Section 2



Section 3




	Archaeological Project Services	
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Scale 1:25	Drawn by: PCF	Report No: 54/10

Figure 4 - Sections 1 to 3



Plate 1 – General view across the site, looking northeast



Plate 2 – Section 1, looking east



Plate 3 – Section 2, looking east



Plate 4 – Section 3, looking east

## Appendix 1

### CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
101	Loose dark greyish brown silty sand, 0.4m thick	Topsoil
102	Loose dark greyish brown silty sand, 0.8m thick	Subsoil
103	Soft mid yellow-orange sand	Natural deposit
104	Loose light grey small gravel, 70mm thick	Natural deposit
105	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, 1.2m wide by 0.2m deep, gradual sides and rounded base	Channel
106	Loose dark grey sandy silt	Fill of (105)
107	Loose light bluish grey sandy clay, >0.25m thick	Natural deposit
108	Linear feature, aligned northeast-southwest, 0.65m wide by 0.3m deep, moderate sides and rounded base	Channel
109	Loose dark grey sandy silt	Fill of (108)
110	Loose light orange-yellow rubble, 0.4m thick	Track

## Appendix 2

### GLOSSARY

<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>Post-medieval</b>	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
<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:

10	Context records
1	Photographic record sheet
4	Sheets of scale drawings
1	Stratigraphic matrix

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: 2010.85

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: ANAC 10

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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