

**EARTHWORK SURVEY REPORT:**

**LAND OFF TILLBRIDGE ROAD, STURTON BY STOW, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Application: Pre-planning

NGR: SK 89333 80166

AAL Site Code: SSTL 12

OASIS ID: allenarc1-131515



Report prepared for  
Obam Lift Services Limited

By  
Allen Archaeology Limited  
Report Number AAL2012073

August 2012



Allenarchaeology



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**Document Control**

<b>Element</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date</b>
Report prepared by:	Robert Evershed	20/08/2012
Illustrations prepared by:	Robert Evershed	19/08/2012
Report edited by:	Gavin Glover	21/08/2012
Report produced by:	AAL 2012073	22/08/2012

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## **Executive Summary**

- An earthwork survey was undertaken by Allen Archaeology Limited for Obam Lift Services Limited, in advance of a planning application for an extension to the existing business premises.
- The surveyed site was a grassed field adjacent to the current premises of the business, to the southeast of Sturton by Stow village and to the south of Tillbridge Road.
- The earthworks surveyed at the site largely consisted of the ridges and furrows formed by ploughing, most likely during the medieval period. The ridge and furrow earthworks were organised into two distinct sets, differentiated by their orientation, one set broadly orientated north to south, the other broadly east to west. A relatively prominent bank between the two sets of strips most likely represents the remains of a headland.
- The purpose of the earthwork survey was to allow the preservation by record of the earthwork remains within the proposed development area prior to their partial loss should planning be approved for the construction of an extension to the current business premises.

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Allen Archaeology Limited (hereafter AAL) was commissioned by Obam Lift Services Limited to carry out an earthwork survey on land off Tillbridge Road in Sturton by Stow, Lincolnshire. These works have been instigated in advance of a planning application for an extension to the existing business premises.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conform to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Archaeologists '*Standard and guidance for archaeological field evaluations*' (IfA 1994, revised 2001 and 2008), English Heritage document '*Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment*' (English Heritage 2006), and the local guidelines in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (LCC 2011). A specification was also prepared by this company (AAL 2012), based on a brief for the works (LCC 2012).

## **2.0 Site Location and Description**

- 2.1 The village of Sturton by Stow is situated approximately 12.8km northwest of central Lincoln, in the administrative district of West Lindsey. The proposed development area is to the southeast of the village, to the south of Tillbridge Road and is centred on NGR SK 89333 80166 (Figure 1). At the time of the survey the proposed development area was under pasture.
- 2.2 The local bedrock geology comprises Lower Jurassic deposits of Scunthorpe Mudstone, with no superficial geology recorded (British Geological Survey 1999).

## **3.0 Planning Background**

- 3.1 Obam Lift Services Limited wishes to extend their business premises into the proposed development area. No planning application has yet been submitted for the development, and the earthwork survey detailed in this report will form part of the planning application for the proposed development.
- 3.2 This approach is consistent with the recommendations of Chapter 12: Conserving and Enhancing the Historic Environment of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2012). This superseded Planning Policy Statement 5 (PPS5) (Department for Communities and Local Government 2010) in March 2012.

## **4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background**

- 4.1 Tillbridge Road, which lies immediately to the north of the site, is believed to lie on the line of a Roman road that ran between Lincoln and Littleborough (Whitwell 1970, 50).
- 4.2 The settlement is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of 1086 AD as *Stratone*, meaning 'the farmstead, the village near or on the Roman road' (Cameron 1998).
- 4.3 The field that is the subject of the survey contains extant ridge and furrow earthworks that are remnants of strip farming, the area most likely being peripheral to the settlement itself.

- 4.4 Prior to the Stow Enclosure Act, passed by Parliament between February and June 1803, '*An Act for Dividing, Allotting, and Inclosing the Open and Common Fields, Ings, Meadows, Stinted Pastures, Moors, Commons, Wastes, and other Unenclosed Lands and Grounds, within the Township of Stowe, and the Hamlets of Sturton and Bransby, in the Parish of Stowe....*', the site was located within one of the open fields belonging to Bransby and known as Bransby North Field. Enclosure was completed and the award signed on 6 May, 1808, and the current boundaries of the site were formed by this process (Russell and Russell 1987).

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The survey was a Level 2 record (English Heritage 2007) of the extant earthworks and followed a specification (AAL 2012) for the works.
- 5.2 The survey was undertaken by the author on 19<sup>th</sup> July 2012. Data was gathered using a Leica GS08 GPS unit receiving RTK corrections, and all captured data was transformed to Ordnance Survey coordinates. Illustrations of the survey data were produced using a combination of Progecad 2012 Professional and CorelDRAW and following English Heritage conventions (English Heritage 2007, 34). Numbers in square brackets within the text (See Sections 6.1 – 6.5 below) refer to earthwork features shown on Figure 2.

## 6.0 Results (Figure 2)

- 6.1 The results of the earthwork survey can be broadly divided into two areas, both characterised by alternating shallow linear hollows and low linear mounds which are characteristic of the ridges and furrows created by strip farming in an open field agricultural system. The northern three quarters of the site were dominated by ridges and furrows running approximately north to south [1], the distance between the centre line of each furrow measuring between 7.5m and 9.5m. The survey also indicated a slight curve to the ridges and furrows in this area, which may be traces of a reversed 'S' shape, characteristic of ridges and furrows created by ploughs pulled by teams of oxen rather than horse drawn (Muir 2000, 205 and Table 8.3).
- 6.2 The ridges and furrows in the southern quarter of the site [2] ran perpendicular to those in the northern three quarters. The distance between the centre lines of each furrow in this area measured between 7m and 8.5m.
- 6.3 An east to west orientated bank [3] which was slightly more pronounced than the ridges, separated the two sets of differently orientated ridges and furrows. The bank most likely represents the remains of a headland at the southern end of the north to south orientated ridge and furrow earthworks. The southern slope of the headland is narrower than its northern side and this is almost certainly through encroaching ploughing represented by the east – west ridge and furrow group [2].
- 6.4 At the northern end of the site, the ridges and furrows became gradually less pronounced until the ground surface became level [4], possibly a reflection of poor survival of the earthworks close to the line of Tillbridge Road, whilst elsewhere on the site earthworks appear to have been denuded by the effect of vehicle use [5].

- 6.5 A small east to west orientated gully [6] was recorded running for a short distance close to the eastern boundary of the site and had been cut through the remains of ridges and furrows. The earthwork was later in date than the ridge and furrow however its function remains unknown.
- 6.6 Across the majority of the site the earthworks were relatively pronounced with the average difference in height between the top of the ridges and the base of the furrows being 0.3m – 0.5m. The possible headland was the most pronounced of the earthworks, lying at the higher end of this range of heights.

## **7.0 Discussion and Conclusion**

- 7.1 The earthwork survey has shown that the site is dominated by shallow ridge and furrow earthworks indicative of strip farming in an open field system. The ridges and furrows are most likely to be of a broadly medieval date but further chronological precision is problematic as strip farming probably originates in Britain some time around 900 AD (Muir 2000, 205) and continued in many places until the Enclosure Acts of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries divided up the large open fields into smaller units not suitable for strip agriculture (Hall 1982). That said, post-medieval ridge and furrow is often fairly closely set, with the distance between furrows less than 5m, or it is found in marginal areas such as moorland, often brought into use following the agricultural depression after the Napoleonic wars of the early 19<sup>th</sup> century (Rackham 2000 and Hall 1982). Given that the ridge and furrow recorded during the present survey was set at an average spacing of approximately 8m and was not on marginal ground a medieval origin seems most likely.
- 7.2 An east to west orientated gully, which cut through the ridge and furrow, is likely to be a much more modern feature although its function or origin is unknown.
- 7.3 Little information regarding the relationship between Tillbridge Road to the north of the site and the surveyed earthworks can be gleaned from the survey, largely because the earthworks did not appear to extend fully to the northern boundary of the site and had either become much denuded in the northernmost ten metres of the site or perhaps had never been particularly pronounced in this area. If the line of Tillbridge Road follows that of a Roman road however; it seems likely that a road or track existed along this line during the medieval period and would have marked the northern extent of the field containing the surveyed ridge and furrow.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology**

- 8.1 The earthwork survey methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It has allowed for a permanent record of the existing earthworks on the site to be made prior to any future building work on the site.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeology Limited would like to thank Obam Lift Services Limited for this commission.

## 10.0 References

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## Appendix 1: Colour Plates



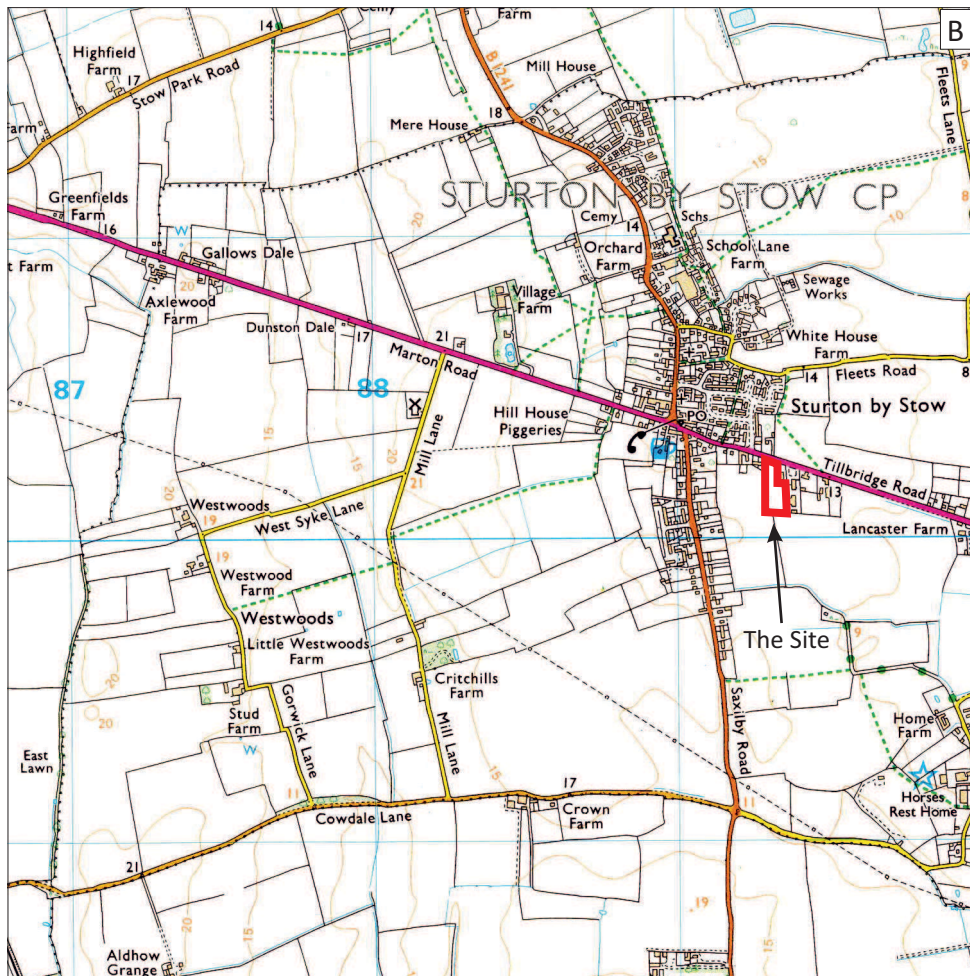
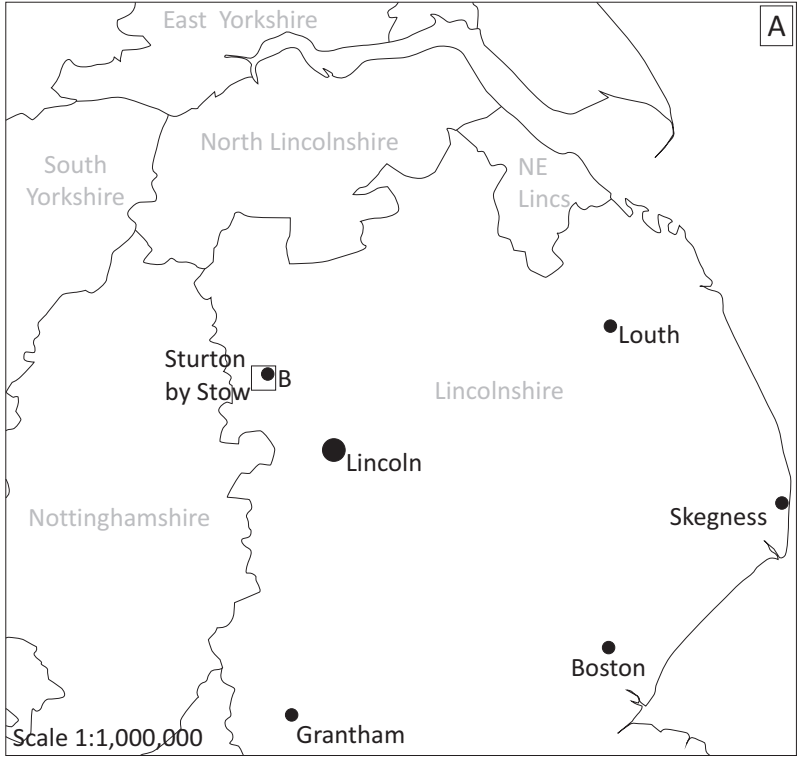
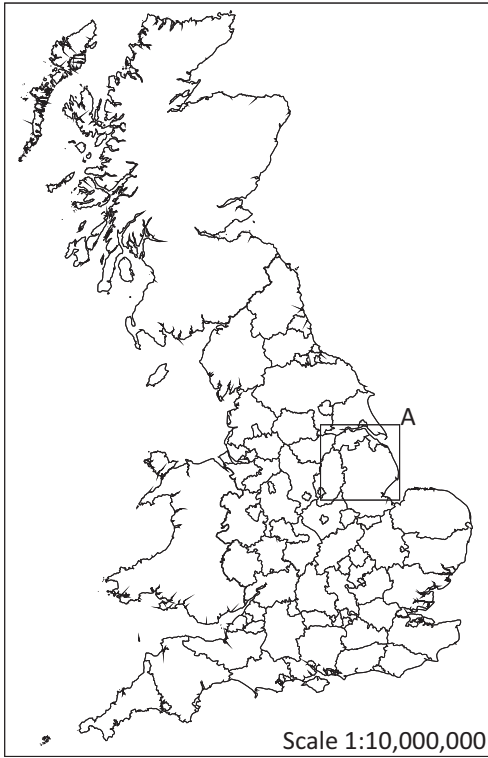
**Plate 1:** General view of the site, looking south from the northeast corner of the site



**Plate 2:** General view of the site, looking northeast from the southwest corner of the site



**Plate 3:** View of the east – west running ridge and furrow from the south-eastern boundary of the site



**Figure 1: Site location with development site shown in red**  
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Figure 2: Plan of earthworks in green

Site Code	SSTL 12
Scale	1:1000 @ A4
Drawn by	R. Evershed
Date	21/08/12

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Allen Archaeology Limited  
Website: [www.allenarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.allenarchaeology.co.uk)

Company Registered in England and Wales No: 6935529

**Lincoln**  
**Unit 1C**  
**Branston Business Park**  
**Lincoln Road**  
**Branston**  
**Lincolnshire LN4 1NT**

**Birmingham**  
Arion Business Centre  
Harriet House  
118 High Street  
Birmingham  
B23 6BG

**Cambridge**  
Wellington House  
East Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 1BH

**Southampton**  
International House  
Southampton International Business Park  
George Curl Way  
Southampton  
SO18 2RZ

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1522 794400  
Email: [info@allenarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:info@allenarchaeology.co.uk)

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 800 610 2545  
Email: [birmingham@allenarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:birmingham@allenarchaeology.co.uk)

Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 800 610 2550  
Email: [cambridge@allenarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:cambridge@allenarchaeology.co.uk)

Tel: +44 (0) 800 610 2555  
Email: [southampton@allenarchaeology.co.uk](mailto:southampton@allenarchaeology.co.uk)