

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the groundworks for the construction of a multi-use games area at Carre's Grammar School, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.
- The site is situated on the north edge of the historic core of the medieval town. In the wider area, Sleaford has revealed extensive evidence of Iron Age, Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon activity.
- The watching brief failed to expose any evidence of archaeological activity predating the 20th century.



Figure 1: Site location (scale 1:25,000)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Hyder Business Services, on behalf of their client, to carry out an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for a multi-use games area at Carre's Grammar School, Sleaford, Lincolnshire.
- 1.2 The site monitoring, recording and reporting conforms to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Field Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (IFA 1999), and a specification prepared by this company (Allen 2006).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln, within six months of the completion of the report.

2.0 Site location and description

- 2.1 Sleaford is in the administrative district of North Kesteven, approximately 26km south-south-east of central Lincoln. Carre's Grammar School is to the north of the town centre, on the east side of Northgate. The development area occupies the former playing field to the west of the school buildings and to the south of Millfield Terrace.
- 2.2 The development area is a predominantly flat grassed area representing the former school playing field. It centres on NGR TF 0690 4624 and lies at a height of approximately 20m above Ordnance Datum.
- 2.3 The local geology map depicts a solid geology of Kellaways sand on the site (British Geological Survey 1996). However, the watching brief suggested that the local geology was of Cornbrash formation, shown to the north of the site on the local geology map.

3.0 Planning background

- 3.1 Planning permission was granted for the construction of a multi-use games area with associated floodlighting and fencing. The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all associated groundworks (planning ref. N/57/0752/06).

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

- 4.1 In the Iron Age, Sleaford was a major centre for the local Corieltavi tribe. The focus for this activity was on the east side of the town, around Old Place, where a large number of coin pellet moulds have been recovered, evidencing the production of silver coinage in the Late Iron Age. Excavations at the site have also revealed agricultural enclosures, trackways and buildings (Elsdon 1997).
- 4.2 Romano-British activity was also focussed on this area, where a series of excavations have identified extensive field systems, burials, agricultural buildings and a high status late Roman buildings (Clay 1998).
- 4.3 Anglo-Saxon activity is also well-attested in Sleaford. An Early Anglo-Saxon settlement has recently been excavated at Holdingham roundabout, approximately 1km to the north-west. Middle Saxon settlement activity has been identified in Quarrington, to the south-west of the town, as well as in the market square, to the west of St. Deny's church. A large Saxon cemetery

was excavated in 1882, prior to the construction of the railway station, revealing over 600 inhumations of probable 7th century AD date (Elsdon 1997).

- 4.4 In the early medieval period, Sleaford was divided into two parishes, Old and New Sleaford. Old Sleaford was centred to the east of the modern town, and in the Domesday period, was owned by Ramsey Abbey. New Sleaford appears to have developed in the later Saxon period, as evidenced by the excavations in Sleaford market place. The parish was a holding of the Bishops of Lincoln for much of the Middle Ages from the Domesday period onwards. Bishop Alexander of Lincoln built a castle in Sleaford c.1130, and the parish church of St. Denys was built c.1180 (Pevsner & Harris 1989).
- 4.5 Carre's Grammar School was founded by Robert Carre, a prominent member of the local gentry in 1604, but only moved to its present site on Northgate in 1835.

5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The groundworks entailed an initial topsoil strip of the whole development area, carried out using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless dykeing bucket. Subsequently, a series of narrow trenches (0.4m wide) were excavated across the site for surface water drainage, connecting to a main drainage channel along the south edge of the stripped area, which in turn fed into an existing drain at the south-east corner. The groundworks were monitored at all times by an experienced field archaeologist, and were undertaken between January 2nd and January 10th 2007.
- 5.2 During excavation, all exposed plan and section surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned, in order to determine the stratigraphic sequence. Context information was recorded for each individual deposit on standard watching brief record sheets, and sample sections of the stratigraphic sequence were completed at a scale of 1:20.
- 5.3 A photographic record was maintained throughout the watching brief, including general site shots and photographs of the sequence of deposits with appropriate scales and a north arrow.

6.0 Results

- 6.1 The uppermost deposit across the site was a dark grey silty loam, 001, containing frequent fragments of brick and tile, as well as modern pottery and glass. This deposit varied between 0.2m and 0.4m deep, and was deepest in the south-west corner of the development area. In the south-east area of the site, machine stripping exposed a topsoil layer, 004, which contained large quantities of modern demolition material, including brick, tile, concrete and mortar that may represent waste material dumped to level the area prior to its use as a playing field.
- 6.2 The excavation of the drainage trenches exposed two different natural geological deposits. The western two-thirds of the site was typified by an orange/yellow clayey silt, 002, while the eastern third of the site was characterised by a limestone brash, 003.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

- 7.1 No archaeologically significant features, deposits or artefacts were identified during the fieldwork. The watching exposed a modern topsoil deposit relating to the former use of the site as a school playing field, which directly overlay the natural geology.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

- 8.1 The watching brief methodology was appropriate to the scale and nature of the development. It demonstrated that the development has had a negligible impact on the archaeological resource.

9.0 Acknowledgements

- 9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Hyder Business Services for this commission.

10.0 References

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Elsdon S., 1997, 'Old Sleaford Revealed. A Lincolnshire settlement in Iron Age, Roman, Saxon and medieval times 1882 - 1995', *Nottingham Studies in Archaeology Volume 2*, Oxbow Monograph 91, Oxbow Books, Oxford.

Pevsner N., & Harris J., 1989, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire, second edition*, Penguin, London

11.0 Site archive

- 11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln within six months, where it will be stored under the unique archive code 2006.263.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Pl. 1: General view of the stripped area, looking south-west from the north-east corner.



Pl. 2: View along north-south drainage channel at west side of site. Looking north



Pl. 3: Section of north – south drainage channel (figure 3). Looking east.



Pl. 4: Section of east – west drainage channel (figure 4). Looking north.

Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Dark grey silty loam, occasional brick and tile. Topsoil
002	Layer	Orange/yellow clayey silt. Natural alluvium
003	Layer	Yellow limestone brash. Natural geology
004	Layer	Dark grey silty loam, frequent demolition rubble. Topsoil/levelling deposit for former playing field.