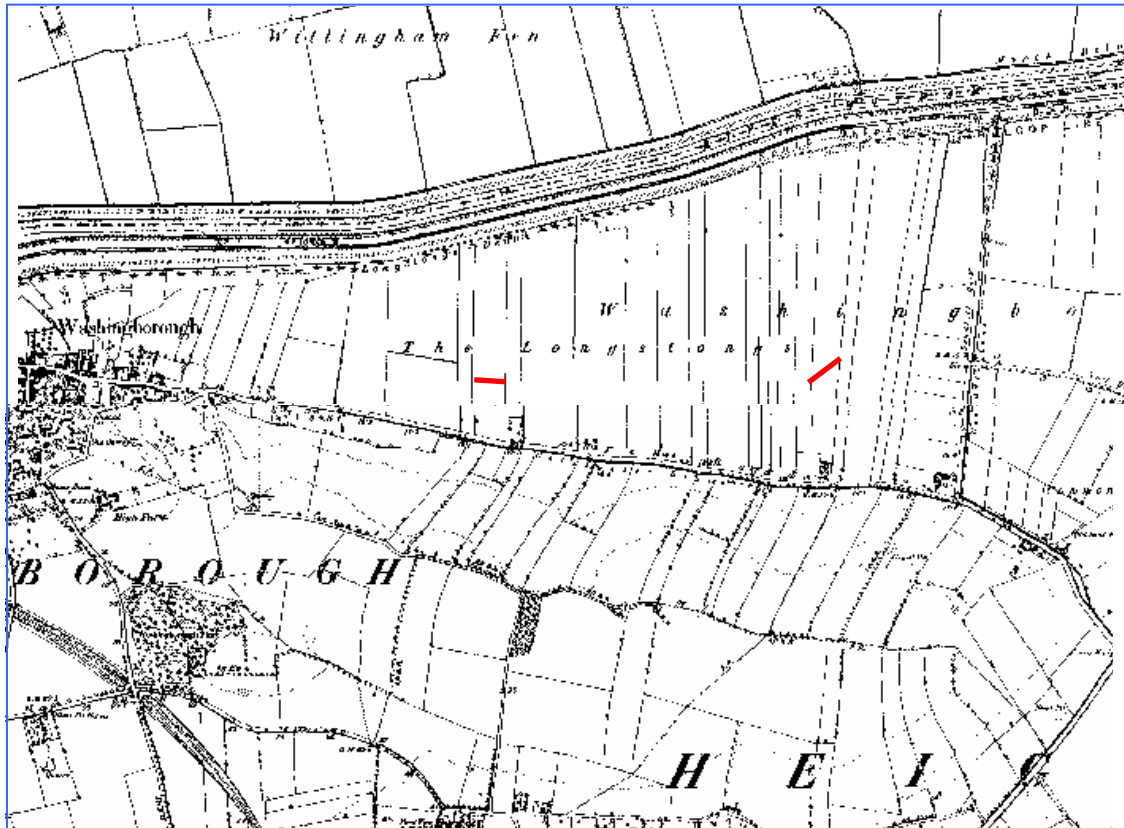


**REPORT ON AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCHEME OF WORKS:  
MANOR FARM, WASHINGBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Planning Reference: N/A  
NGR: TF 0307 7073 and TF 0388 7082  
AAA Site Code: WASM 08  
LCCM Accession Number: 2008.118  
OASIS Reference Number: allenarc1\_46578



Report prepared for Mr Robert Applewhite

by

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Report Number 2008/045

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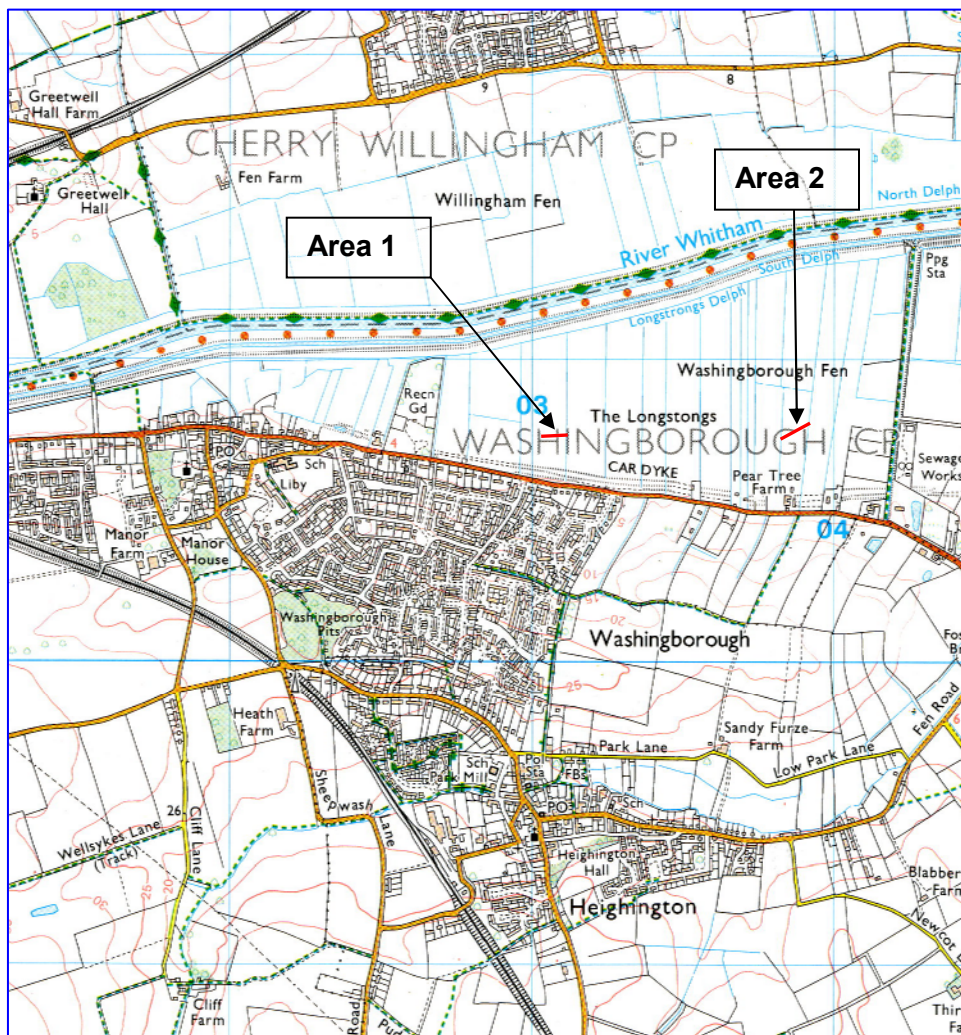
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### Document control

Element	Name	Date
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Report produced by:	AAA 2008/045	08/08/2008

## Summary

- Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Mr Robert Applewhite to carry out an archaeological scheme of works during the excavation of two ditches (Areas 1 and 2) on land at Manor Farm, Washingborough, Lincolnshire.
- The site is located within the Witham Valley floodplain in an area that has previously revealed significant archaeological remains dating from the Bronze Age to the medieval period.
- A single undated ditch following an alignment indicative of a pre-19<sup>th</sup> century phase of wetland drainage was recorded during the cutting of the new western ditch (Area 1). No other finds or features were recorded.



**Figure 1:** Site location map at scale 1:25,000, with the ditches shown in red  
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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Allen Archaeological Associates was commissioned by Mr Robert Applewhite to carry out an archaeological scheme of works during the excavation of two ditches on land at Manor Farm, Washingborough, Lincolnshire, as part of a scheme for reversion from agricultural land to wet grassland. These have been labelled Areas 1 and 2 within the report.
- 1.2 The site works and reporting conform to current national guidelines, as set out in the Institute for Field Archaeologists '*Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*' (1999) and the local guidelines in the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: a manual of archaeological practice*. (Lincolnshire County Council 1998). The scope of works has been outlined in a brief prepared by Lincolnshire County Council (2008), and a specification prepared by Allen Archaeological Associates (Clay 2008).
- 1.3 The archive will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln and archived under the LCCM Accession Number 2008.118.

## **2.0 Site location and description**

- 2.1 Washingborough is situated c.5km east of central Lincoln, to the south of the River Witham, in the administrative district of North Kesteven. The two proposed ditches are to the north-east of the historic core of the village, on the north side of Fen Road. Area 1 is located at NGR TF 0307 7073 and Area 2 is located at NGR TF 0388 7082.
- 2.2 The area is low-lying, at c.4m OD, and is situated on recently cultivated arable land in the floodplain of the River Witham. The local geology comprises drift deposits of riverine alluvium, overlying Lincolnshire Limestone (undivided) (British Geological Survey 1973).

## **3.0 Planning background**

- 3.1 The proposed scheme of groundworks falls outside the usual planning process; however the land has been entered into the Higher Level Stewardship Scheme, coordinated by Natural England.
- 3.2 The scheme required the excavation of two new ditches to aid the flooding of the sites, allowing them to revert to wet grassland. One of the objectives of this scheme was to protect the sensitive buried archaeological resource that is known to exist in the area, so the Historic Environment Countryside Advisor at Lincolnshire County Council recommended a programme of monitoring and recording during the excavation of the new ditches.

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

- 4.1 The Witham Valley has proved to be a focus of ceremonial and subsistence activities throughout prehistory, until rapid peat growth and climatic deterioration from the later Bronze Age resulted in rising water levels and abandonment of low-lying areas of the valley.
- 4.2 There are numerous examples of Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds in the Witham Valley floodplain, on both sides of the river, both to the east and west of the current site.
- 4.3 Evidence for settlement within the valley was also encountered during an excavation in 2004, carried out in advance of flood defence work at the pumping station c.300m north-east of the

site of Area 2. This site revealed a series of timber posts and platform with an artefactual assemblage that included bronze casting materials and occupation debris, along with human remains, all dating to the Late Bronze Age (Pre-Construct Archaeology forthcoming).

- 4.4 During the Roman period, probably in the 2nd century AD, the Car Dyke was constructed, connecting the River Witham at Washingborough to the River Nene at Peterborough (Simmons and Cope-Faulkner 2004). It is likely to have had a principal function as a drainage feature, due to its location along the boundary between wet and dry land, although portions of the dyke would have been navigable (*ibid.*). The remnants of this earthwork form the southern boundary of the site.
- 4.5 The valley floor remained a largely uninhabitable and unworkable wetland throughout the post-Roman and medieval periods, until it was drained in the 19th century. Prior to drainage it would have provided a rich resource for wild fowl and fishing, with grazing of seasonal carr lands during summer months.
- 4.6 The current site has been in use as arable land until 2007, when it was reverted to pasture for grazing cattle.

## 5.0 Methodology

- 5.1 The groundworks were carried out using a specialist ditch-cutting machine provided by the RSPB. The ditch locations were determined by the landowner and plotted onto the 1:10,000 Ordnance Survey Map of the area (Figure 2). The author was present throughout the scheme of groundworks to determine the presence/absence of archaeological features as the work progressed. The fieldwork was carried out on Thursday July 10<sup>th</sup> 2008.
- 5.2 The ditch surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned, in order to determine the stratigraphic sequence. A full written record of the work was maintained with plans and sections drawn at appropriate scales (1:10, 1:20 and 1:50) and pro-forma context recording sheets used to record each individual context.
- 5.3 A photographic record was maintained throughout the scheme of works, including general site shots and photographs of the sequence of deposits with appropriate scales and a north arrow. The spread of spoil created by the ditching machine (see Appendix 1: Plates 2 and 3) was scanned for artefacts by eye and with a metal detector.

## 6.0 Results

### 6.1 Area 1

- 6.1.1 The Area One ditch was aligned east to west, and extended westwards from an extant north – south aligned drain. The new ditch was 92.5m long and 5.5m wide, with a maximum depth of 0.95m. The modern ground surface cut by the new ditch was represented by a 0.30m thick ploughsoil layer 100, consisting of black/brown peaty silt. At the base of this layer were numerous residual tree roots and partially desiccated fragments of timber (known locally as bog oak) that were yet to be fully incorporated into the ploughsoil by modern ploughing.
- 6.1.2 Sealed below the ploughsoil was a 0.25m thick layer of dark grey sand 101. This layer represents the interface between the black peaty ploughsoil and the underlying geological deposits of sand. The colour of this layer is due to staining caused by water percolation through the ploughsoil.

- 6.1.3 Cut into layer 101 toward the centre of the excavated area was linear feature [102]. This ditch conformed to a shallow bowl-shaped profile that was 5.7m in width and crossed the newly excavated area following a broadly north-north-east to south-south-west alignment.
- 6.1.4 Ditch [102] was filled by grey/black peaty silt 103 that was indicative of gradual silting and peat growth in a perpetually waterlogged environment.
- 6.1.5 The underlying geological deposit consisted of fine grained yellow/orange sand, 104.

## **6.2 Area 2**

- 6.2.1 The new ditch in Area 2 was 116m long, 4.5m wide and up to 1.05m deep. It extended south-westwards from an existing north – south aligned drain. The matrix of the ploughsoil layer cut by this area of works, 200, was the same as that in Area 1, consisting of black/brown peaty silt with numerous timber and root fragments, although this deposit was noticeably thicker, at up to 0.60m.
- 6.2.2 Layer 200 sealed a 0.20m thick layer of peat-stained sand, 201 similar to layer 101 in Area 1. The underlying geological deposit comprised a yellow/orange fine grained sand, 202.
- 6.2.3 No artefactual material was recovered from either of the ditches or the spoil upcast.

## **7.0 Discussion and conclusion**

- 7.1 Only a single undated linear feature was recorded during this scheme of works, running on a broadly north-north-east to south-south-west alignment in Area 1. This feature corresponds with a former field boundary and drain that is shown on the 1834 Enclosure Map of the area (Figure 5). Prior to this date, the area comprised open fen, with some piecemeal drainage works occurring within the valley following the Witham Act of 1762.
- 7.2 In the parish of Washingborough, the Enclosure Act of 1834 allowed for the draining of the floodplain by means of a number of north – south aligned drains, which served to reduce flooding and parcel the land into a series of narrow linear strip fields.
- 7.3 The Enclosure Map shows the new drains running broadly north – south, whereas linear [102] recorded during the fieldwork appeared to be aligned north-north-east to south-south-west. The slightly differing alignment recorded during the fieldwork is likely to be a result of the shallow profile of the new ditch and the lack of clarity in the excavated area due to the use of the ditch cutting machine, making it difficult to accurately identify the precise orientation of the feature.
- 7.4 The field boundary is not evident on the 1889 Ordnance Survey map of the site, suggesting that it had been removed to consolidate two Enclosure plots into a single larger field. Similarly, the ditch excavated in Area 2 is shown crossing two field boundaries on the 1834 map, neither of which are visible by 1889. These features were not identified during the fieldwork, and given the shallow depth of the ditch recorded in Area 1, it seems likely that they have since been destroyed by ploughing, or were too shallow to observe due to the nature of the machinery used to excavate the new ditches.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

- 8.1 The application of an archaeological scheme of works has proven to be an appropriate level of mitigation for the scale of the ground works. It made provision for preservation by record of any archaeological features encountered and has demonstrated that the intrusive groundworks have had only a limited impact upon the archaeological resource. The expansive release of spoil by the ditch-cutting machine was however not best suited to the requirements of an archaeological scheme of monitoring and recording, as it proved impossible to identify any loose artefacts that may normally be recovered from spoil heaps generated by excavation of ditches.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

- 9.1 Allen Archaeological Associates would like to thank Mr Robert Applewhite for this commission.

## **10.0 References**

Clay, C., 2008, *Specification for an Archaeological Scheme of Works: Manor Farm, Washingborough, Lincolnshire*, Allen Archaeological Associates

British Geological Survey, 1973, *Lincoln. England and Wales Sheet 114. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50000 Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey

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Lincolnshire County Council, 2008, *Archaeological scheme of works at Manor Farm, Washingborough*, Lincolnshire County Council, Conservation Services

Simmons, B. B. and Cope-Faulkner, P., 2004, *The Car Dyke. Past Work, Current State and Future Possibilities* Lincolnshire Archaeology and Heritage Reports Series No. 8. Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

## **Cartographic reference**

1834 *Plan of the parish of Washingborough and the township of Heighington in the County of Lincoln, inclosed according to an Act of Parliament passed in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> years of the reign of his late majesty King George IV.* (Lincolnshire Archives reference KEST 82)

## **11.0 Site archive**

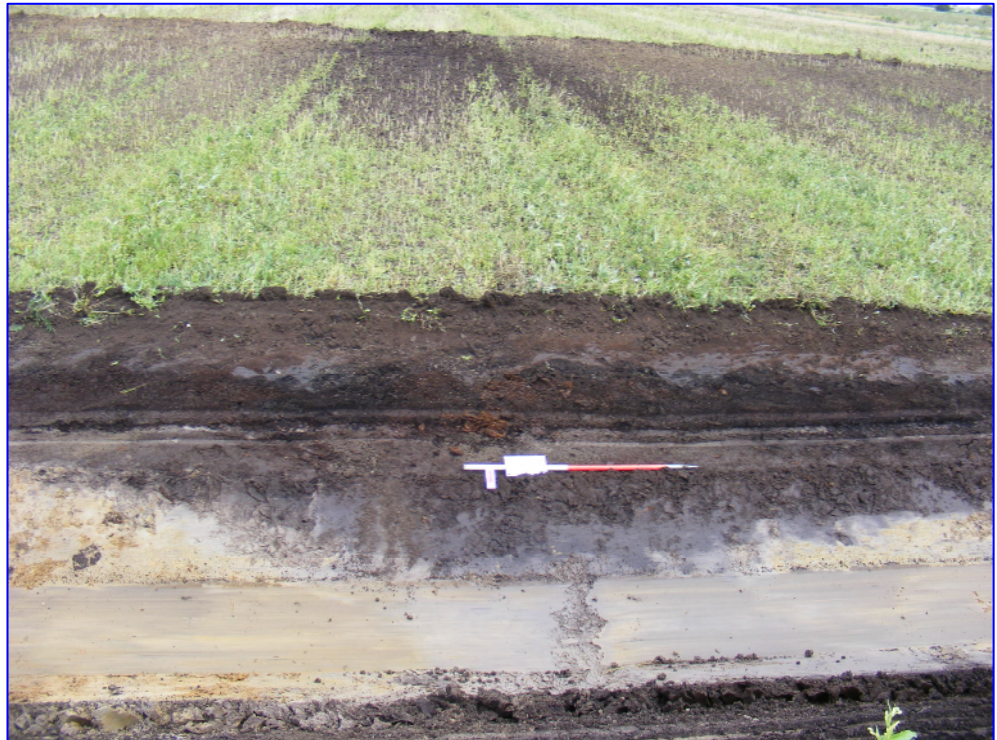
- 11.1 The documentary archive is currently in the possession of Allen Archaeological Associates. It will be submitted to The Collection, Lincoln within six months, where it will be stored under the unique archive Accession Number 2008.118.



**Appendix 1: Colour Plates**



**Plate 1:** A shot looking east along Area 1, showing the RSPB ditch-cutting machine at work



**Plate 2:** South facing section through ditch [102] in Area 1. Note the extent of the spread of excavated spoil in the background





**Plate 3:** A view looking north across the flat expanse of the Witham floodplain from the rear of Pear Tree Farm toward the location of Area 2



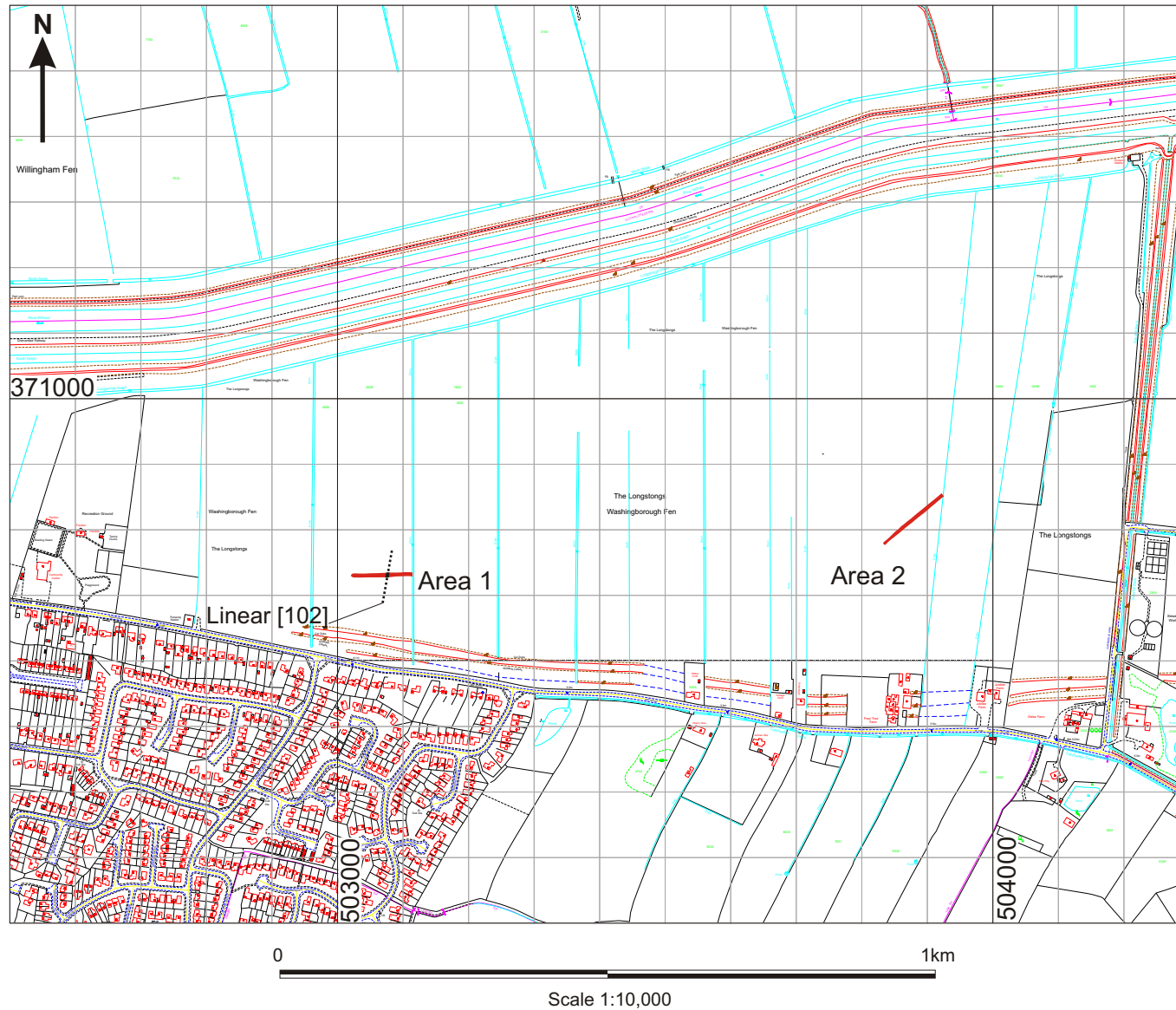
**Plate 4:** Shot looking north-east along the eastern half of Area 2.

**Appendix 2: Context Summary List****Area 1**

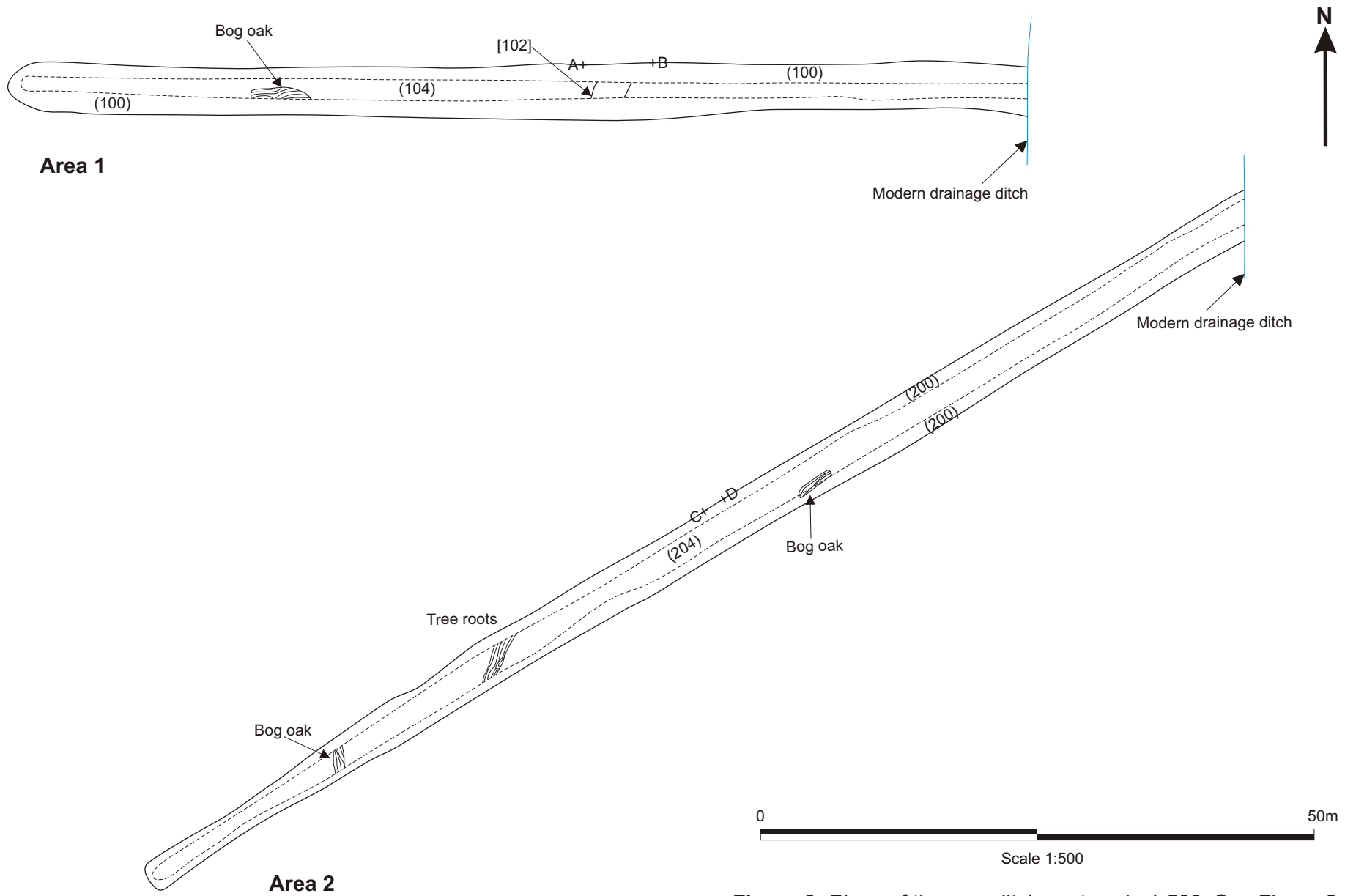
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
100	Layer	Blackish brown, peaty silt with frequent branches and roots	Topsoil, ploughed-out peat deposits
101	Layer	Greyish orange mottled silty sand	Peat-stained layer at interface between layers 100 and 104
102	Cut	Shallow N-S running, bowl shaped cut of a ditch. Contains 103	Linear boundary ditch, undated
103	Fill	Greyish black peaty silt	Natural silting of ditch 102
104	Layer	Mottled orangey grey sand	Natural sand

**Area 2**

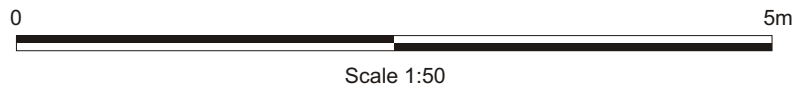
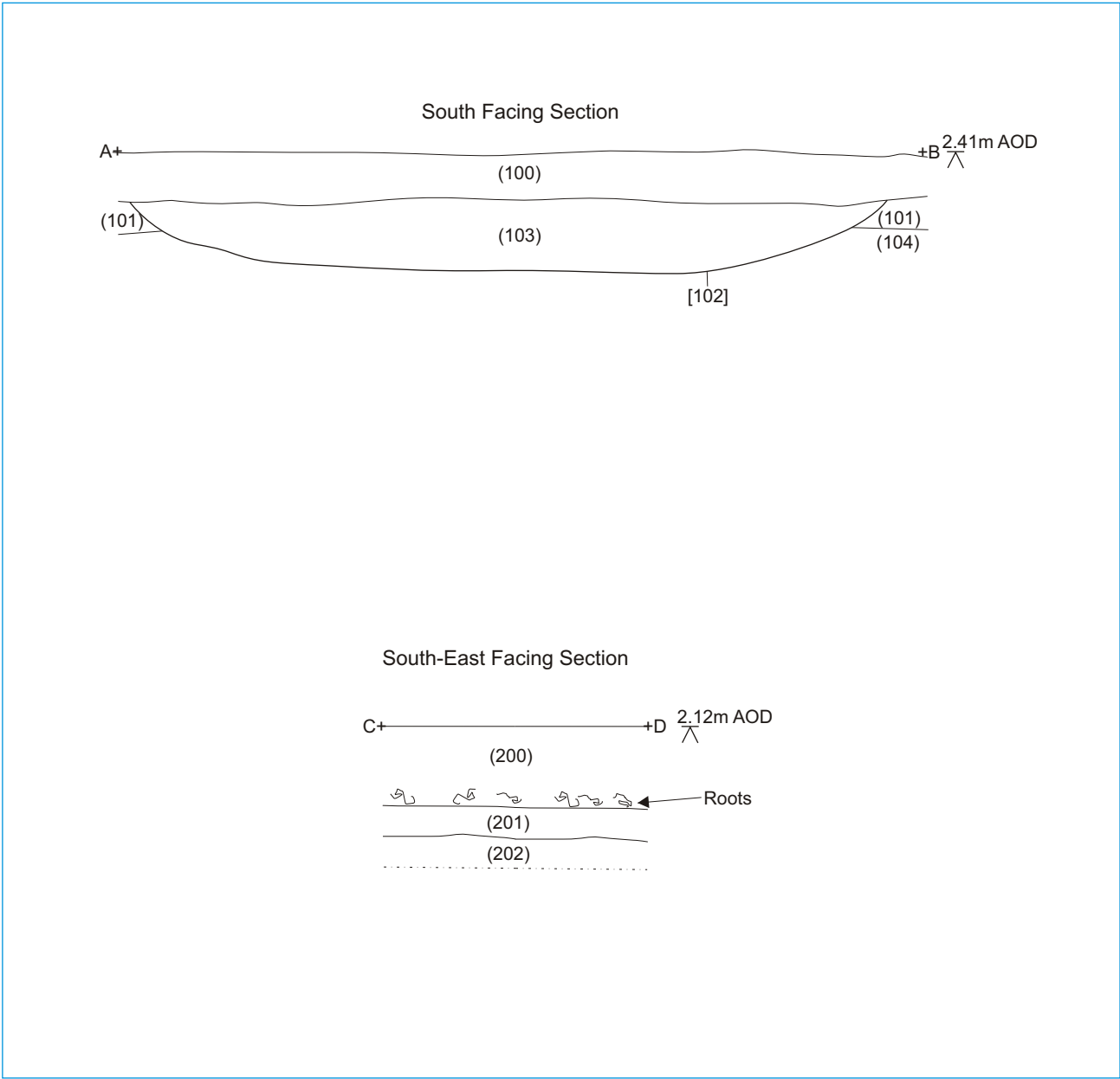
<b>Context No.</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
200	Layer	Blackish brown, peaty silt with frequent branches and roots	Topsoil, ploughed-out peat deposits
201	Layer	Greyish orange mottled silty sand	Peat-stained layer at interface between layers 200 and 202
202	Layer	Mottled orangey grey sand	Natural sand



**Figure 2:** Site location plan showing the new ditches (Areas 1 and 2) in red at scale 1:10,000. The probable alignment of linear [102] is shown as a dashed line across Area 1.



**Figure 3:** Plans of the new ditches at scale 1:500. See Figure 2 for ditch locations and Figure 4 for section drawings A-B and C-D



**Figure 4:** Section drawings at scale 1:50, located on Figure 3



**Figure 5:** Extract from the 1834 Enclosure Map of Washingborough, with the new ditches (Areas 1 and 2) shown in red at scale 1:10,000