

**UTILITIES SCHEME, SITE OF ST. MARY'S PRIORY, GREENFIELD,
NEAR ALFORD, EAST LINDSEY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

**REPORT OF A SCHEME OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL
MONITORING, CONTROL AND RECORDING**

NGR: TF 4327 7798
PCAS Job No. 1438
Site code: SMPM15
Planning ref. N/001/02018/14
Scheduled Monument
Consent Ref.: S00096617
Archive acc. no.: 2015.82

Prepared for

ADAS UK Ltd.

by

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Summary

A scheme of archaeological monitoring, control and recording took place during the replacement of overhead power lines with underground services across the Scheduled Ancient Monument of St. Mary's Priory, at Greenfield Farm in the parish of Aby with Greenfield in the East Lindsey district of Lincolnshire.

The scheduled monument includes the remains of the medieval priory of St Mary, Greenfield, a Cistercian nunnery founded before 1153 and dissolved in 1536; the remains consist of a moat enclosing a raised platform and other earthworks. The site is currently occupied by Greenfield Farm.

The List Entry Description for the monument notes that the priory of St Mary, Greenfield, has never been excavated archaeologically; later remains largely overlie, rather than cut into, earlier deposits, and finds of building material beneath the present farmhouse, and the survival of earthworks in the adjacent paddock indicate the preservation of below-ground features.

This document describes the methodology and results of the scheme. The report will be presented in order to satisfy conditions associated with Scheduled Monument Consent and planning permission for this project. The results were largely negative; the archaeological monitoring revealed little in the way of identifiable medieval activity, and material finds were limited to a 19th century brick wall and three possible ditches, along with two sherds of medieval pottery.

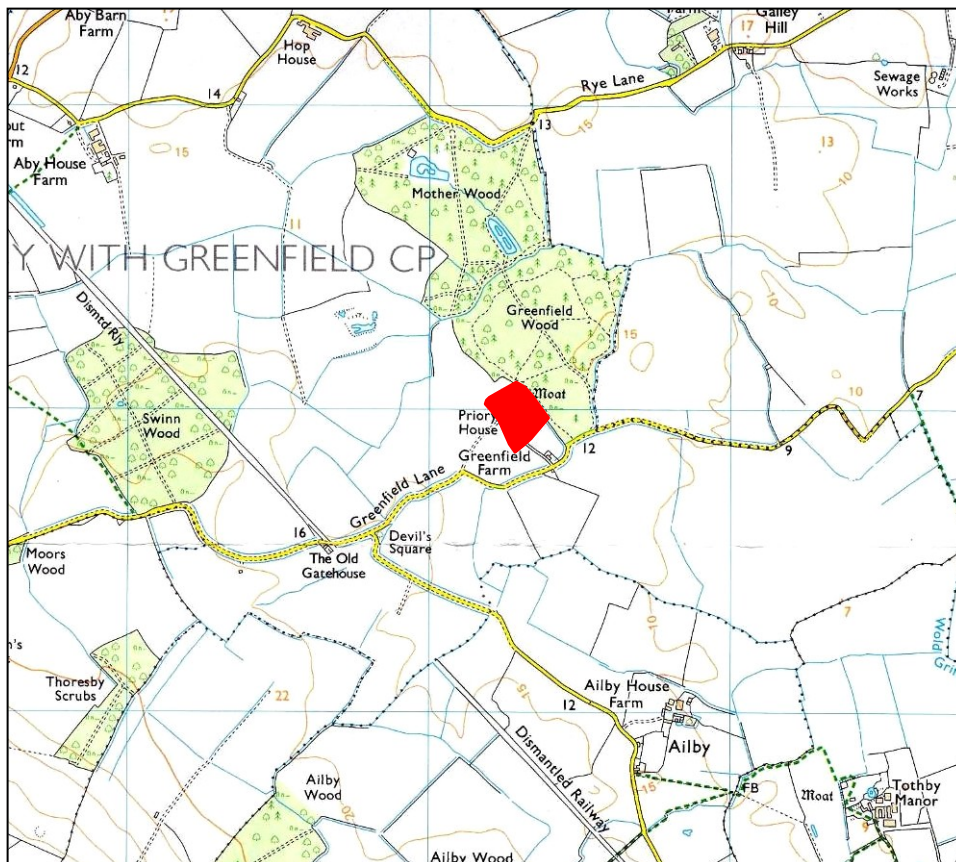


Fig. 1: Location plan of the site at scale 1:25,000. The area of the Scheduled Ancient Monument is marked in red. OS mapping © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCAS licence no. 100049278.

1 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd. (PCAS) was commissioned by ADAS UK Ltd. to undertake a scheme of archaeological monitoring, control and recording during groundworks for the replacement of existing overhead power lines with underground services within and adjacent to the site of the former St. Mary's Priory. Few nunnery sites have been examined in detail and as a rare and poorly understood medieval monument type, all examples exhibiting survival of archaeological remains are considered worthy of protection: the priory is a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

This document details the methodology and results of a programme of archaeological monitoring, control and recording. It follows current best practice and appropriate national guidance including:

- NPPF, National Planning Policy Framework, 2012;
- CIFA Code of Conduct (2008 as revised);
- CIFA Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs (2008);
- Management of Research Projects in the Historic Environment (MoRPHE ver. 1.1, 2009)
- Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook (Lincolnshire County Council, 2012).

2 Site Location and Description (Figs. 1 and 2)

The former priory of St. Mary is situated within the parish of Aby with Greenfield, in the district of East Lindsey, Lincolnshire; it lies approximately 2km to the east of Aby village and 2.5km to the north-west of Alford. The former hamlet of Greenfield is now represented only by Greenfield Farm, whose buildings occupy the priory site.

The remains of the priory consist of a moat enclosing a raised platform and other earthworks. The moat, averaging 10m in width, encloses a roughly rectangular area of approximately 2ha, currently occupied by the farmhouse and associated farm buildings of Greenfield Farm with its yards, garden and paddock.

Central National Grid Reference: TF 43291 77979.

3 Topography and Geology

Greenfield Farm lies within an artificially drained fenland landscape, near the point where the foot of the east-facing slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds levels out into the coastal marsh. The topography of the general area is a very shallow seaward slope; the site lies between the 15m and 10m above sea level contour lines.

The drift geology on and around the site is glacial Till, a chalk-rich sandy gravelly clay; the underlying solid geology is Cretaceous Ferris Chalk (BGS, 1996).

4 Planning Background

Planning permission under Section 37 of the Electricity Act 1989 to rebuild approximately 6km of existing electrical overhead line distribution network was granted in October 2014. A condition of the planning permission was the provision of a scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording during works on the section of the route that is to be moved underground, including the Scheduled Ancient Monument of St. Mary's Priory (planning application ref. N/001/02018/14). Scheduled Monument Consent was granted in December 2014 for the dismantling of existing overhead power lines and replacement with underground services within the scheduled area (SMC ref. S00096617).

5 Archaeological and Historical Background

The site of a possible Bronze Age round barrow has been recorded in woodland approximately 300m to the north of the priory. In the surrounding area, flint flakes and cores, a fragment of sandstone quern and a whetstone were found in 1929 (HER ref 42429). The Lincolnshire HER records no other sites, monuments or findspots within 500m of the priory site.

The List Entry Description for the Scheduled Ancient Monument of St. Mary's Priory notes that 'A nunnery was a settlement built to sustain a community of religious women. Its main buildings were constructed to provide facilities for worship, accommodation and subsistence. The main elements are the church and domestic buildings arranged around a cloister. This central enclosure may be accompanied by an outer court and gatehouse, the whole bounded by a precinct wall, earthworks or moat. Outside the enclosure, fishponds, mills, field systems, stock enclosures and barns may occur. The earliest English nunneries were founded in the 7th century AD but most of these had fallen out of use by the 9th. A small number of these were later refounded. The 10th century witnessed the foundation of some new houses but the majority of medieval nunneries were established from the late 11th century onwards. Nunneries were established by most of the major religious orders of the time, including the Benedictines, Cistercians, Augustinians, Franciscans and Dominicans. It is known from documentary sources that at least 153 existed in England, of which the precise locations of only around 100 are known' (SAM ref. 1008687).

The scheduled monument includes the remains of the medieval priory of St Mary, Greenfield, a Cistercian nunnery founded before 1153 and dissolved in 1536. The remains consist of a moat enclosing a raised platform and other earthworks. The moat, averaging 10m in width, encloses a roughly rectangular area of approximately 2ha currently occupied by a farmhouse, farm buildings, yards, garden and paddock; further rectilinear enclosures area attached to its north and south sides, and the ditches defining these enclosures may also serve as a water management system for the moat. The moat varies in depth and has been partly filled-in along its south-eastern arm, where dumping has taken place, although it survives as a buried feature. In the southern corner it has been completely filled-in for a length of about 40m where the farmyard has been extended approximately 27m to the south along an access road. There is a break of about 20m in the circuit of the moat on its south-western arm which is considered to be the original entrance to the conventual enclosure. Immediately to the north-west of this, the moat has been cut by the creation of an equestrian cross-country water jump. Enclosed by the moat is the area of the conventual precinct, raised approximately 1m above the surrounding farmland. At the centre of the enclosure is a raised platform roughly 70m square, partly covered by the present farmhouse and its outbuildings. The discovery of sandstone blocks beneath the house when it was rebuilt in the 1960s indicates that the platform is the site of the conventual buildings. The platform is at its highest immediately east of the house and is covered by low earthworks; Historic England notes that these represent drainage channels and surface quarrying, with no remains identifiable as medieval. The north-eastern edge of the platform terminates in a bank approximately 15m from and parallel with the edge of the moat. The raised area is bounded on the north-west by a linear depression approximately 7m wide which runs roughly parallel with the edge of the moat. At its eastern end it takes the form of a deep ditch, approximately 15m long, recently re-cut. At its western end it joins the moat where it is cut by the water-jump. Beyond this depression is an area of pasture, enclosed by the northern part of the moat, with no apparent above-ground features (National Heritage List for England; Historic England PastScape).

The List Entry Description for the monument further notes that 'The priory of St Mary, Greenfield, has never been excavated archaeologically. Later remains largely overlie, rather than cut into, earlier deposits. Finds of building material beneath the present farmhouse, and the survival of earthworks in the adjacent paddock, indicate the preservation of below-ground features' (SAM ref. 1008687).

The hamlet of Greenfield and the church are located on the site of the medieval priory and, therefore, must have originated after the Dissolution of the Monasteries in the late 1530s. However there is little surface indication of desertion and no local tradition of a hamlet (HER ref. 42433).

6 Methodology

The scheme of archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during all construction groundworks associated with the section of the route of the underground cable. This consisted of the machine excavation of cable trenches measuring approximately 0.3m in width (allowing for some minor variation due to ground conditions), centred on the dashed lines shown on Figure 3. The scheme consisted of two runs, which were monitored in turn:

- i) A trench from Pole 1 up the driveway past the White Cottage towards the farm
- ii) A trench from Pole 3 into the monument area, and in between the farm buildings

Where there was concrete or hardcore, a toothed bucket was used to break through the surface, otherwise a toothless bucket was used for topsoil stripping and for excavating service trenches.

The entire site was drawn at a scale of 1:1000 from a map supplied by the contractor, and individual section profiles were drawn at a scale of 1:100 for the length of the service run trenches, and 1:20 for the representative soil section profiles. Each significant stratigraphic horizon and archaeological feature was assigned an individual context number and recorded on standard PCAS context sheets. A digital photographic record was kept throughout the intervention, along with conventional colour film photography where necessary. A site diary supplied a narrative account of each day's events, and the monitoring was carried out by Julian Sleaf from 27th May to 4th June 2015.

7 Results (Figs. 3 - 5)

i) Trench from Pole 1 up the driveway past the White Cottage towards the farm. (Plates 1-3)

The trench was 90m in length and 0.3m wide, with two 5m elements branching towards the White Cottage. Three layers of material were revealed: modern tarmac and redeposited topsoil, overlying compacted chalk; some 0.6m below the present surface natural glacial till (002) was exposed. Nothing of archaeological interest was noted.

ii) Trench from Pole 3 into the monument, and in between the farm buildings (Plates 4-11)

The trench was 120m in length and 0.3m wide, running north-east and then dog-legging to the north-west between two farm buildings. The trench went through the area where the moat had been backfilled, but no obvious cut for the moat was observed. Several deposits may have represented backfilling events, but this was far from clear. Two features which appeared to be ditches aligned east to west were uncovered; the southernmost of these [016] was 2.5m wide, and the other [019] slightly wider. Neither ditch base was reached, but both exceeded 0.6m in depth. No finds were recovered from either feature.

The northern part of the trench ran into the gardens of Priory House, revealing a 1m-wide stretcher-coursed brick wall (024) at its southern end, 0.5m into the ground. The wall was oriented north-west to south-east, made of red bricks typically 220 x 110 x 70mm held together with a buff coloured mortar. The western part of the trench went through garden turf overlying a crushed limestone and mortar demolition layer, which was possibly related to the wall. Beneath this was a layer of dark greyish brown sandy silt soil (028); both layers were cut by a ditch [029] running north to south - 1m wide and 0.8m deep (to the limit of excavation).

Finds were scarce; only two sherds of pottery were recovered, dated between the late 13th and 14th centuries. These were both handles, almost certainly from decorated vessels, and came from the dark grey soil (028) beneath the turf, and the demolition level (005) which covered the surface of the open farmyard.

8 Conclusion

The utilities scheme revealed very little in the way of identifiable medieval activity. The main cut across the length of the backfilled moat at the south-western corner only revealed dense layers of modern demolition material, and the trench did not penetrate into the earlier backfill deposits of the moat.

Two undated features [016] and [019] were possibly ditches, located in the farmyard and cut into what appeared to be made ground. This suggests that these features did not pre-date the post-medieval period.

The service run up into the gardens of Priory House revealed a brick wall (024) above the only possible medieval layer (028) encountered during the course of the monitoring. A ditch [029] cut into this layer was almost certainly of a modern date and related to the farm. The form of the wall and mortar suggests that it was of 19th century date and also probably related to the farm buildings.

9 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed during this project achieved its primary objective, ensuring that any significant archaeological remains that might have been present on the site would not have been destroyed unrecorded, while causing the minimum of disruption to the cable trenching process.

10 Acknowledgements

PCAS Ltd would like to thank ADAS UK Ltd. for this commission.

11 Site Archive

The project archive is currently held at the offices of PCAS Ltd. in Saxilby, Lincolnshire while being prepared for deposition. The prepared archive will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln in or before October 2015; following deposition, it will be available for public consultation under the LCNCC archive accession number 2015.82.

12 References

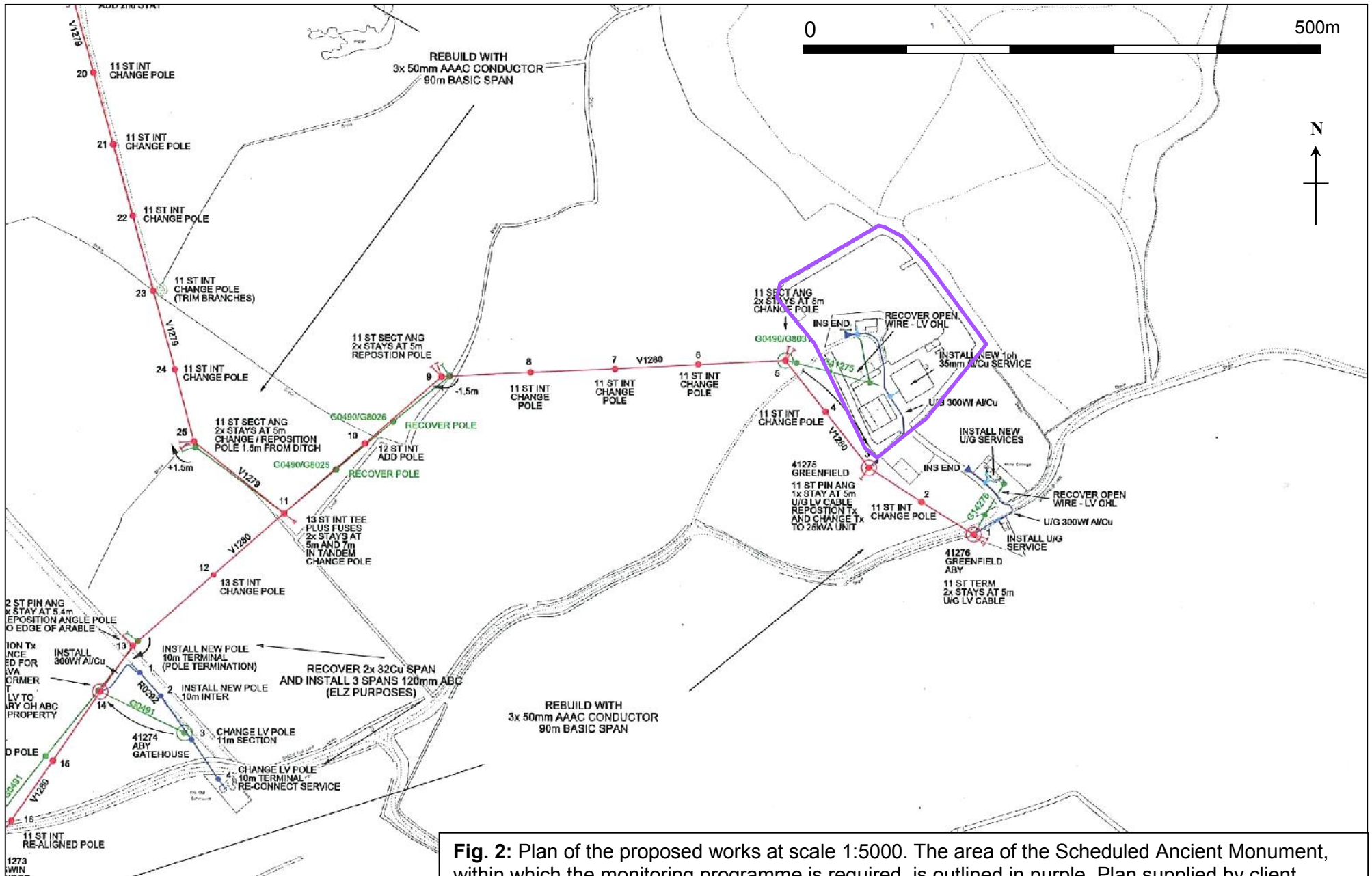
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Legend

- O: E543270, N377958 ∇ 11.295mOD
- P: E543287, N377963 ∇ 10.811mOD
- Q: E543289, N377949 ∇ 11.456mOD
- R: E543316, N377906 ∇ 10.904mOD

- S: E543280, N377858
- T: E543313, N377891 ∇ 10.706mOD

- U: E543392, N377854
- V: E543383, N377853
- W: E543402, N377833
- X: E543407, N377842
- Y: E543417, N377814 ∇ 11.183mOD
- Z: E543384, N377797 ∇ 10.712mOD

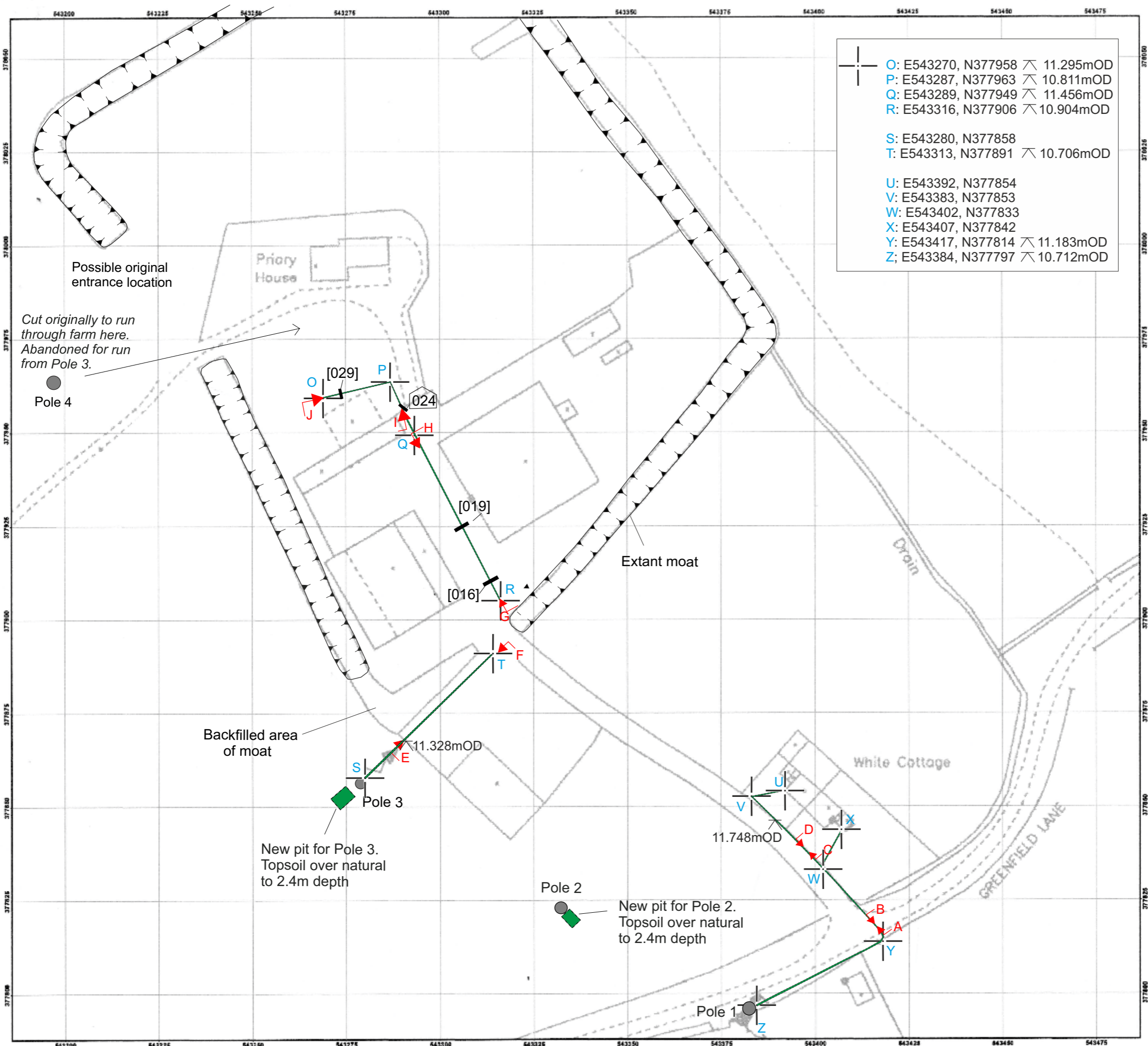
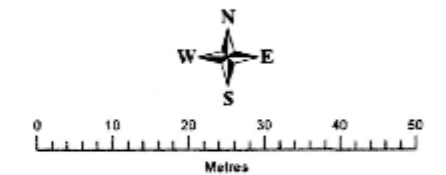


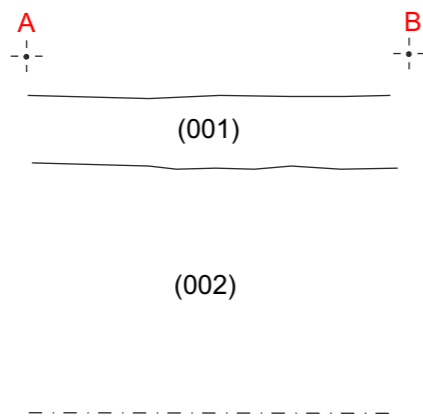
Fig. 3: Plan of Scheduled Monument showing monitored groundworks. Based on 1:1000 plan of site provided by ADAS UK Ltd.

Drawn by: Diarmuid O Seaneachain Date: 04/09/2015

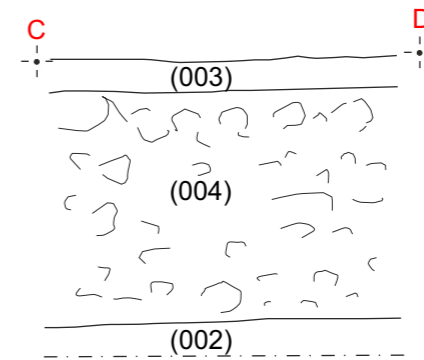


Scale 1:1,000 at A3 size
 Based on the Ordnance Survey Map with the sanction of the controller of HM Stationery Office Crown copyright reserved.
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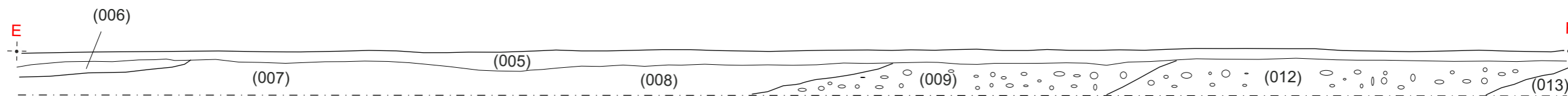
a) Section through road



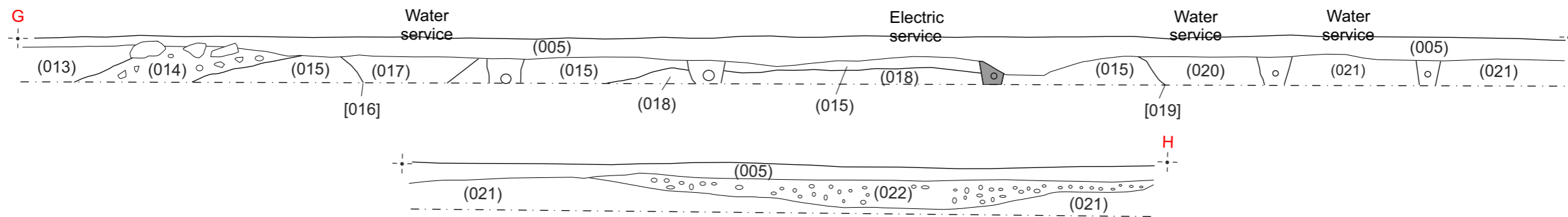
b) Section adjacent to the White Cottage



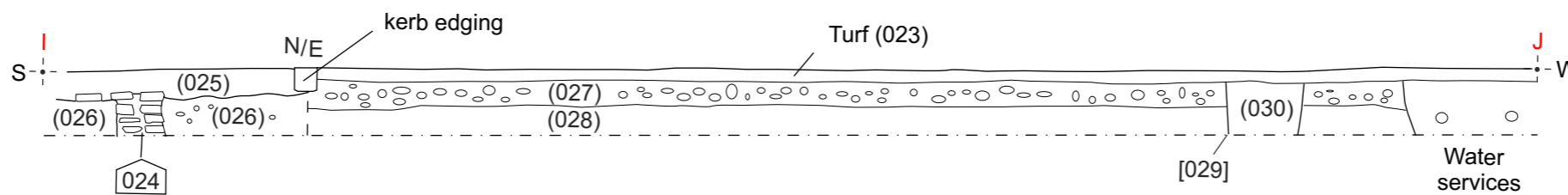
Fig. 4: Representative sections through service runs



a) NE-SW service run through the farm



b) N-S service run through farm and drive towards Priory House



c) E-W Run through garden turf in Priory House Gardens



Fig. 5: Sections through service runs of utility cable trenches

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: The south end of the trench adjacent to the White Cottage, looking north.

Plate 2: Representative section through Greenfield Lane, looking east.



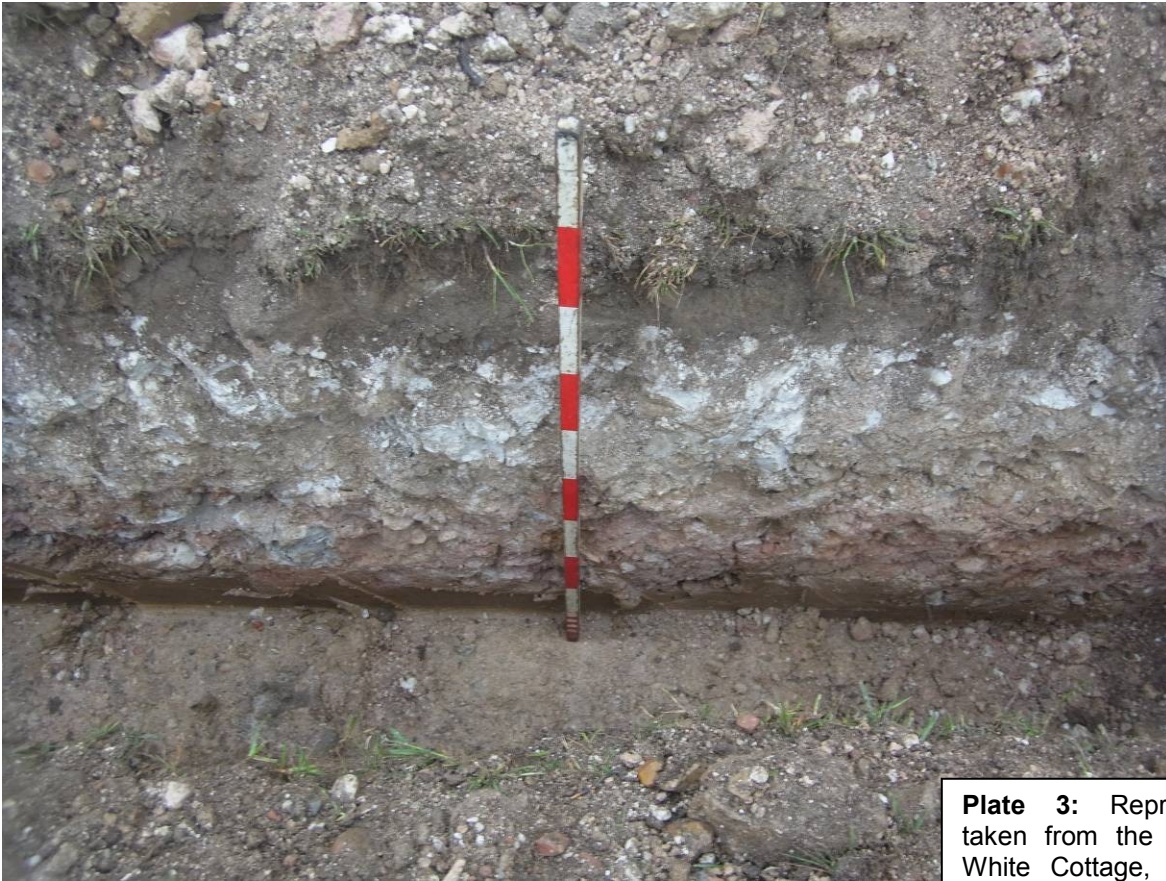


Plate 3: Representative section taken from the trench outside the White Cottage, looking west. The appearance is typical of much of the service trenching.



Plate 4: The farm buildings viewed from the south, with Pole 3 to the west. The trench will run along the road between the buildings.



Plate 5: The trench as it heads north-east over the backfilled moat. There was no indication of any cut in the section.



Plate 6: Section through a probable ditch [016], looking east.



Plate 7: Possible moat near Pole 3, looking north.



Plate 8: The southernmost end of the service run through the farm and ditch [016].

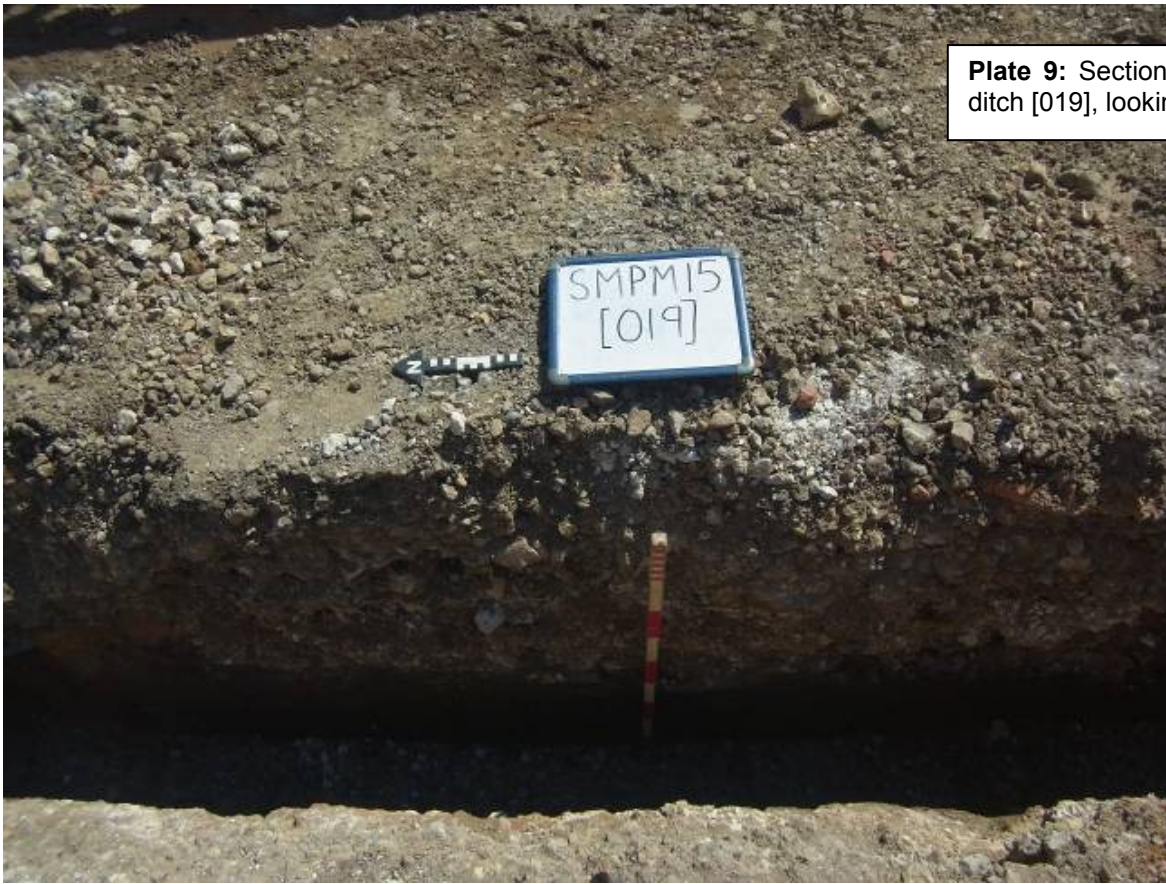


Plate 9: Section through a probable ditch [019], looking east.



Plate 10: East facing section through a 19th century brick wall (024), which was related to the farm buildings



Plate 11: Section through a probable ditch [029], looking south-east.

Appendix 2: Context Summary

Context	Type	Description	Finds/dating
001	Layer	Tarmac and hardcore for road. Thickness 0.3m.	Modern
002	Layer	Mid red brown silty clay natural glacial till. Thickness 0.66m +	Natural
003	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt redeposited topsoil. Thickness 0.1m.	Modern
004	Layer	Chalk hardcore farm track. Thickness 0.6m.	Modern
005	Layer	Hardcore/rubble for general farm surface	Modern
006	Layer	Light orange brown sandy silt, possible subsoil remnant or levelling. Thickness 0.25m.	Modern
007	Layer	Mid orange brown sandy silt, possible backfill for moat (recent). Thickness 0.6m.	Post medieval or modern
008	Deposit	Mid-dark brownish grey clay silt. Made ground or upper backfill of moat Thickness 0.7m.	
009	Deposit	Dark grey sandy silt, mixed soil and rubble, over moat. Thickness 0.7m.	Modern
010	Layer	Mid orange brown natural silt clay. Over 2m deep.	Natural
011	Layer	Dark brown sandy silt topsoil. Thickness 0.4m.	Modern
012	Layer	Mid brown sandy silt, demolition material over moat. Thickness 0.8m.	Modern
013	Layer	Dark grey sandy silt, dump over moat. Thickness 0.8m.	Modern
014	Layer	Mid greyish brown sandy silt, demolition/dump. Thickness 0.6m.	Modern
015	Layer	Mid orange brown clay silt, made ground. Thickness 0.6m.	Modern
016	Cut	Possible E-W ditch cut, moderately steep. Width 2.5m, depth >0.6m.	
017	Fill	Upper fill of ditch [016]. Dark grey sandy silt.	
018	Layer	Mixed brownish grey clay silt. Contaminated soil. Thickness 0.3m +	Modern
019	Cut	Possible E-W ditch cut, moderately steep. Width 2.5m +, depth 0.5m +	
020	Fill	Fill of ditch [019]. Dark brownish grey sandy silt.	
021	Layer	Mid orange brown sandy clay. Redeposited natural or made ground. Thickness 0.5m +	
022	Layer	Dark grey clay silt. Made ground. Thickness 0.3m.	Modern
023	Layer	Turf layer in garden of Priory house.	Modern
024	Structure	Brick wall NW-SE. Bricks 220 x 110 x 70mm with buff coloured mortar. Wall 1m wide by 0.5m deep.	19 th century?
025	Layer	Greyish brown sandy silt drive surface. Thickness 0.5m.	Modern
026	Fill	Mixed brown/grey sandy silt backfill for wall (024)	19 th /modern
027	Layer	Mid orange brown sandy silt. Crushed demolition layer. Thickness 0.33m.	
028	Layer	Dark greyish brown sandy silt. Possible buried medieval soil. Thickness 0.4m.	Medieval
029	Cut	Pit/ditch, sides almost vertical. Width 1m, depth 0.8m.	

030	Fill	Fill of [029]. Dark brown sandy silt.	
031	Layer	Dark-mid brown sandy silt. Topsoil in Aby gatehouse field. Thickness 0.2m.	Modern
032	Layer	Mid orange brown clay silt. Natural in Aby gatehouse field.	Natural

**THE POST ROMAN POTTERY FROM A UTILITIES SCHEME, SITE OF ST. MARY'S
PRIORY, GREENFIELD, NEAR ALFORD, LINCOLNSHIRE (SMPM 15)**

JANE YOUNG CERAMIC CONSULTANT

INTRODUCTION

Two medieval jug handles were presented for examination. The pottery was examined both visually and where necessary using a x20 binocular microscope, then recorded using the fabric codenames (CNAME) of the City of Lincoln Archaeology Unit (Young, Vince and Nailor 2005). The assemblage was quantified by three measures: number of sherds, vessel count and weight and the resulting archive entered onto an Access database (Appendix 3). Recording of the assemblage was in accordance with the guidelines laid out in Slowikowski, *et al.* (2001) and complies with the Lincolnshire County Council's *Archaeological Handbook* (sections 13.4 and 13.5).

CONDITION

The pottery is in a fresh and stable condition with fragments weighing 162 grams and 203 grams.

THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF MATERIALS

The slightly twisted grooved rod handle fragment recovered from deposit 028 comes from a large Scarborough ware jug (SCAR) of 13th to 14th century date. The handle has a thick bright copper-green coloured glaze and may have come from a highly decorated jug. The other handle is a grooved strap handle with partial reduced glazing. This handle also comes from a large jug, but is of medieval Toynton-type (TOY) dating to between the late 13th and 14th centuries. Again this vessel is likely to have been decorated.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The two recovered sherds suggest medieval activity of 13th to 14th century date in the area of the site. The large size and fresh condition of the pieces argues for undisturbed primary deposition.

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