

**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:
A 1073 SPALDING TO EYE BYPASS
CROWLAND AND WHITEPOST ROAD COMPOUNDS**

Site Codes: THCC 08
NGR: TF 244 096
TF 214 034

LCNCC ACC. NO: 2008.115

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Report prepared for Morgan Est

by

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Summary

- *An archaeological watching brief was carried out to monitor a programme of works associated with the construction of two contractors' compounds along the route of the new A 1073 Spalding to Eye Bypass.*
- *Despite the proximity of both sites to areas where past human activity has been documented, commencing in the early prehistoric period, no finds or deposits of archaeological significance were recorded during the brief.*

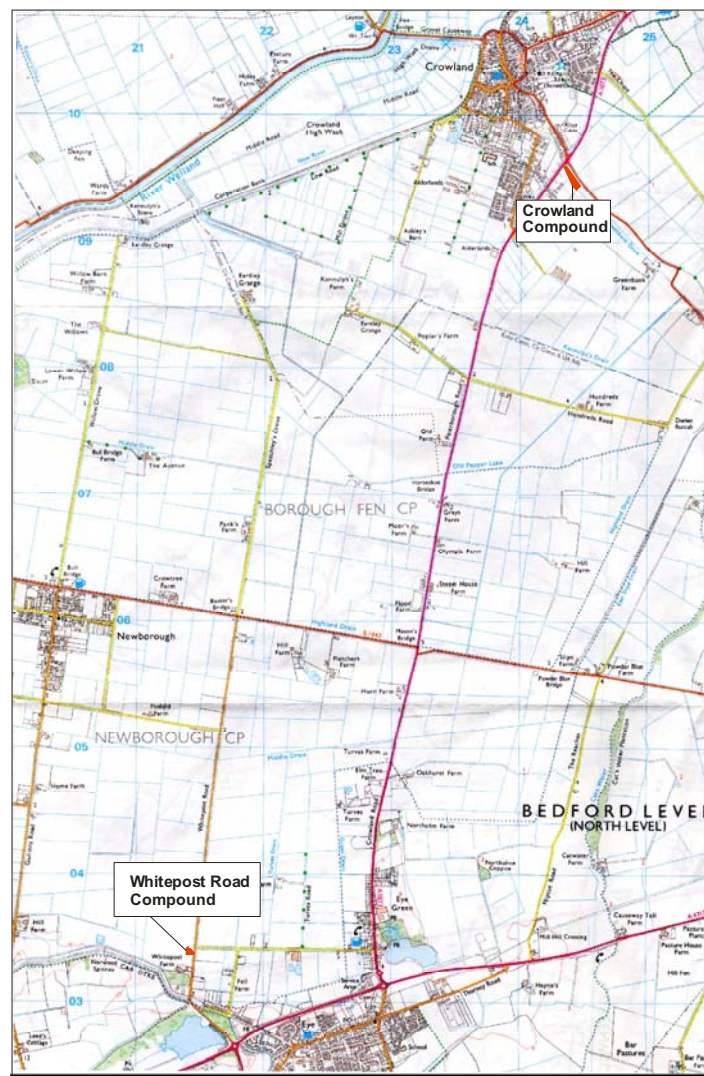


Fig 1: General location map showing both compounds at scale 1:50 000 (OS Copyright Licence no; AL 515 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

This report details the results of an archaeological watching brief undertaken by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) on behalf of Morgan Est to monitor all ground works associated with the installation of two contractors' compounds at Crowland and Whitepost Road, Eye along the route of the new A1073 Spalding to Eye Bypass.

The watching brief, which ran concomitantly for both compounds, was carried out between 20th February and 22nd April 2008. This was to fulfill a recommendation by the Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team.

The fieldwork and reporting methodologies described in this report are consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage 1991), *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs* (IFA, 1999) and the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: a manual of archaeological practice* (LCC, 1998).

2.0 Location and description

2.1 Crowland Compound

The site is located at the junction of the A1073 Spalding to Eye Road and the B1040 Thorney Road, immediately south-east of the medieval town of Crowland. It is centred on TF 244 096 and comprises a sub-rectilinear plot of arable land measuring approximately 4.50m x 19m. The B1040 forms the northern boundary, and there is an open field and waste ground at the south. At the east it fronts onto the A1073 and at the west is a trackway (Berbers Drove South).

The local topography typifies a fen landscape; very flat and open, where the underlying geology consists of Older Marine Alluvium (Barroway Drove Beds) (BGS 1985).

2.2 Whitepost Road Compound

The Whitepost Road site covers an area of approximately 90 x 80 x 30m and is situated within an area of flat open arable fields fronting onto Whitepost Road. It is less than 2 kilometers north-west of Eye and immediately south of the Car Dyke. The underlying geology is Nordelf Peat (BGS 1984) and the central NGR is TF 214 034.

3.0 Planning background

These works form part of a scheme associated with the construction of the A1073 Spalding to Eye Bypass. A recommendation was made by the Lincolnshire County Council Built Environment Team for an archaeological watching brief to be carried out during all intrusive ground works associated with the installation of two contractors'

compounds at Crowland and Whitepost Road, Eye, to preserve by record archaeological remains if exposed.

4.0 Archaeological context

4.1 Crowland Compound

Crowland is situated on a long narrow gravel promontory immediately east of the River Welland. Extensive fieldwork in the area has identified human activity occurring from the Neolithic period, exemplified by stone axes, flint tools and pottery. These were recorded to the north of the town (immediately north-west of the present site).

During the Bronze Age, Crowland was part of an important ritual landscape evidenced by a barrow cemetery constructed along the axis of the promontory. This extended from the Abbey to Anchorage Field at the north-east and Steam Mill Lot at the south-west (Hayes & Lane, 1992).

Extensive flooding during the later Bronze Age suggests that the area was abandoned until the mid-late Iron Age when occupation again became viable on the periphery of the silts and gravels to the north east of the present site. Here, domestic as well as industrial activity was recorded in the form of pottery, animal bone and *briquetage* (the latter being associated with salt making).

The Iron Age sites on the silt margins formed a skeletal pattern of settlements and salterns which the Romano-Brits later expanded (Hayes & Lane 1992). Although, there is little evidence of Roman occupation from Crowland itself, it has been suggested that a system of roads, droves and water-courses covered the area, with the town at the centre of a network of artificial water-courses (Hallam 1970). Finds from the periphery of Crowland include a cinerary urn recovered from a Bronze Age barrow at Steam Mill Lot and twenty or more querns from Crowland Common at the north-west.

The Saxon and medieval history of the area is largely centred on the abbey. It was originally founded in 714AD as a Benedictine monastery, and destroyed by fire in 870. It was rebuilt in 947 as an abbey.

There is no entry pertaining to Crowland in the Domesday Survey, although the abbey is named as a landholder in other areas.

Testament to Crowland once being at the heart of a system of watercourses is Trinity Bridge. Built in 1360-1390 by the Benedictine brethren to span the tributaries of the rivers Nene and Welland, it now stands high and dry near the market place.

Crowland's position as a main routeway across the fens became crucial during 1643 when inhabitants armed with 'fennish weapons of scythes and pitchforks' held out for four months against the Parliamentary Army (Rogers 1985).

4.2 Whitepost Road Compound

The compound at Whitepost Road is situated within an historic landscape where human activity has been documented since the Mesolithic period. A layer of buried soil was noted during the South-West Fen Dyke Survey (immediately east of the site) containing cut features which suggested seasonal exploitation of the area during the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods.

Bronze Age barrows and a late Bronze Age axe have also been recorded to the south east of the site.

Iron Age settlement in the area is evidenced by a round house, ditches and pits excavated in advance of a residential development along Crowland Road, to the north-east.

To the south of the site is the Car Dyke, one of the most enigmatic of Britain's ancient monuments. Traditionally, it has been interpreted as a 122km long watercourse, starting 4km east of Lincoln at Washingborough, continuing south to Peterborough (Simmons, Cope-Faulkner 2004). Constructed in the Roman period, there is some debate regarding its exact date and function. Originally, it was thought to have been utilized as a canal to transport trade goods, however more recent thinking suggests that it may have been a 'catchwater drain' constructed to divert the east flowing waters away from the fens. On the west bank of the Car Dyke at Dogsthorpe, the remnants of a villa were identified by fragments of *tegulae*, hypercaust and box-flue tiles spread over an acre.

5.0 Methodology

5.1 Crowland Compound

The entire site was stripped of ploughsoil to the base of the crop (approximately 0.07m deep) using a mechanical digger with a 1.80m smooth bucket.

Two trenches were also machine excavated; a cable trench at the east of the site (this did not exceed the depth of the ploughsoil) and an exploratory trench at the north, 1.10m deep.

Post-holes for the wooden hoarding fence around the perimeter of the site were excavated by hand and the majority of these did not exceed the depth of the ploughsoil.

Following excavation, all relevant section surfaces (those that penetrated the substrata) were cleaned and examined to determine the presence/ absence of archaeological deposits and to assess the general stratigraphy of the site. Spoil upcast was also monitored for artefactual remains.

Sample sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20 and 1:10 and a plan was prepared at a scale of 1:500. Context information was recorded on standard pro-forma context record sheets.

5.2 Whitepost Road Compound

The area of the compound was stripped of ploughsoil to the base of the crop (approximately 0.05m deep) using a mechanical digger with a 1.80m smooth bucket. A causeway entrance was constructed across the ditch from Whitepost Road.

Spoil upcast was monitored for artefactual remains.

A colour photographic record of both sites was maintained throughout the scheme of works, examples of which are appended to this report.

6.0 Results

6.1 Crowland Compound (Figs 2 and 4)

The excavation of an exploratory trench (Figs 2 and Section 1) revealed a geological profile reflecting the episodic periods of flooding that are typical of this fenland landscape. It was not established if this sequence continued to the east of the site due to the fact that the topsoil depth dramatically increased in this area (Fig 4, Section 3).

Context (105) was the earliest deposit exposed in Section 1 and comprised a 0.20m+ thick layer of blue-grey alluvial silts and clays. Overlying (105) was a 0.06m thick layer of peat. This sequence was superficially replicated with context (103), which paralleled (105) and was sealed by a second layer of peat (102) (Fig 4). Sealing context (102) was a layer, 0.25m thick, of mid orange brown silty clay subsoil, (101).

A layer of ploughsoil (100) formed the modern ground surface, which varied in depth from 0.30m at the west to over 0.60m at the east. This was evident in the profiles of the post holes (Figs 2 & 4) and the cable trench along the eastern boundary, which was excavated to a depth of 0.50m and did not at any point penetrate the ploughsoil.

6.2 Whitepost Road Compound (Fig 3)

The only context encountered during groundwork at Whitepost Road was a layer of dark brown silty-clay plough soil (200).

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Despite the proximity of both sites to areas where past human activity has been documented, commencing in the early prehistoric period, no finds or deposits of archaeological significance were exposed.

7.1 Crowland Compound

The geological sequence evidenced at the west of the site is typical of much of the landscape around Crowland. The deposits resemble those identified during the Fenland Project (Vol. Number 5); surface soils derived from Flandrian sediments (ie clays and silts) accumulated during periods of marine inundation or standing fresh water (Hayes & Lane 1992).

The increased depth of plough soil at the east of the site could reflect an artificial build up of soil deposits associated with the periodic clearance of Green Bank drain.

7.2 Whitepost Road Compound

The stripped area at Whitepost Road did not exceed the depth of the plough soil.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology applied was commensurate to the scale of this scheme of development. It allowed a rapid appraisal of the archaeological potential to be established, which was deemed to be high in both areas.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Morgan Est for this commission.

10.0 References

British Geological Survey, 1985, *Peterborough Sheet 158* Solid and Drift Edition

Hall D., & Coles J., 1994, *Fenland Survey*, English Heritage

Hayes P., & Lane T., 1992, *The Fenland Project Number 5, Lincolnshire Survey, The South-west Fens*, Fenland Project Committee, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

Simmons B., & Cope-Faulkner P., 2004 *The Car Dyke*, Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire

<http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/search/fr.cfm?rcn=NMR>

11.0 Site Archive

The documentary archive for the site is currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). This will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln within six months. The global accession number for this scheme is LLN CC: 2008. 115

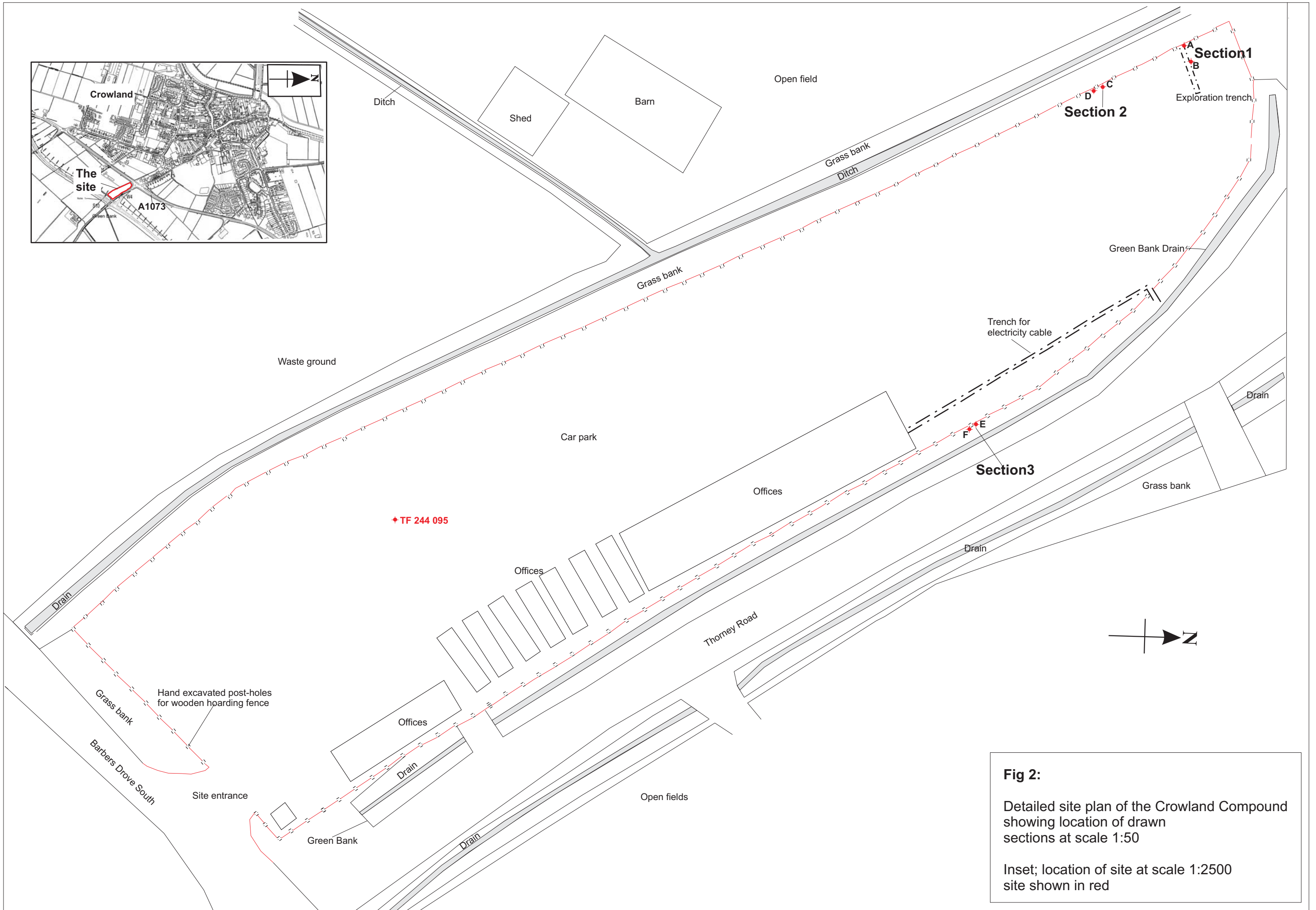


Fig 2:
 Detailed site plan of the Crowland Compound showing location of drawn sections at scale 1:50
 Inset; location of site at scale 1:2500 site shown in red

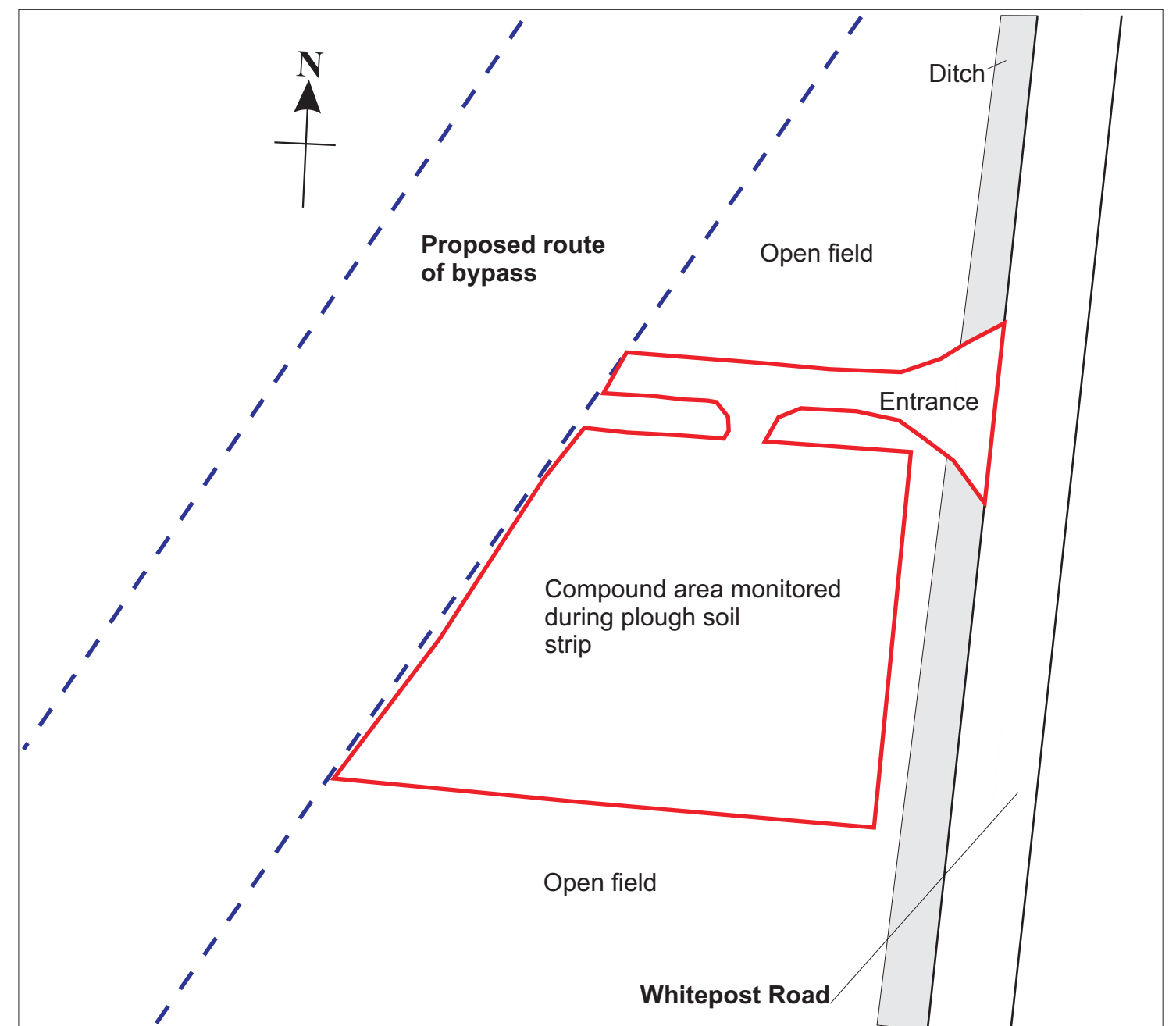
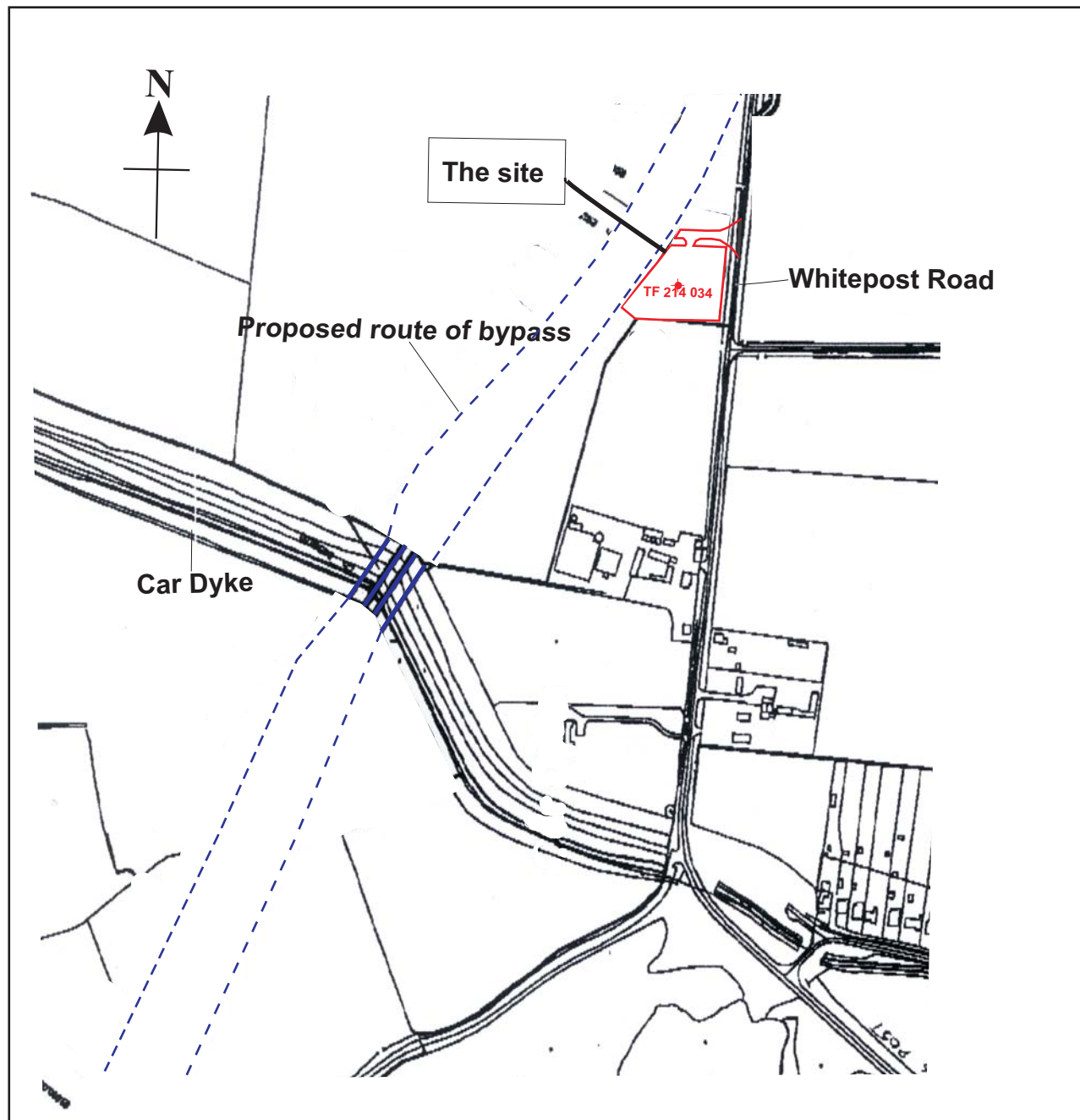
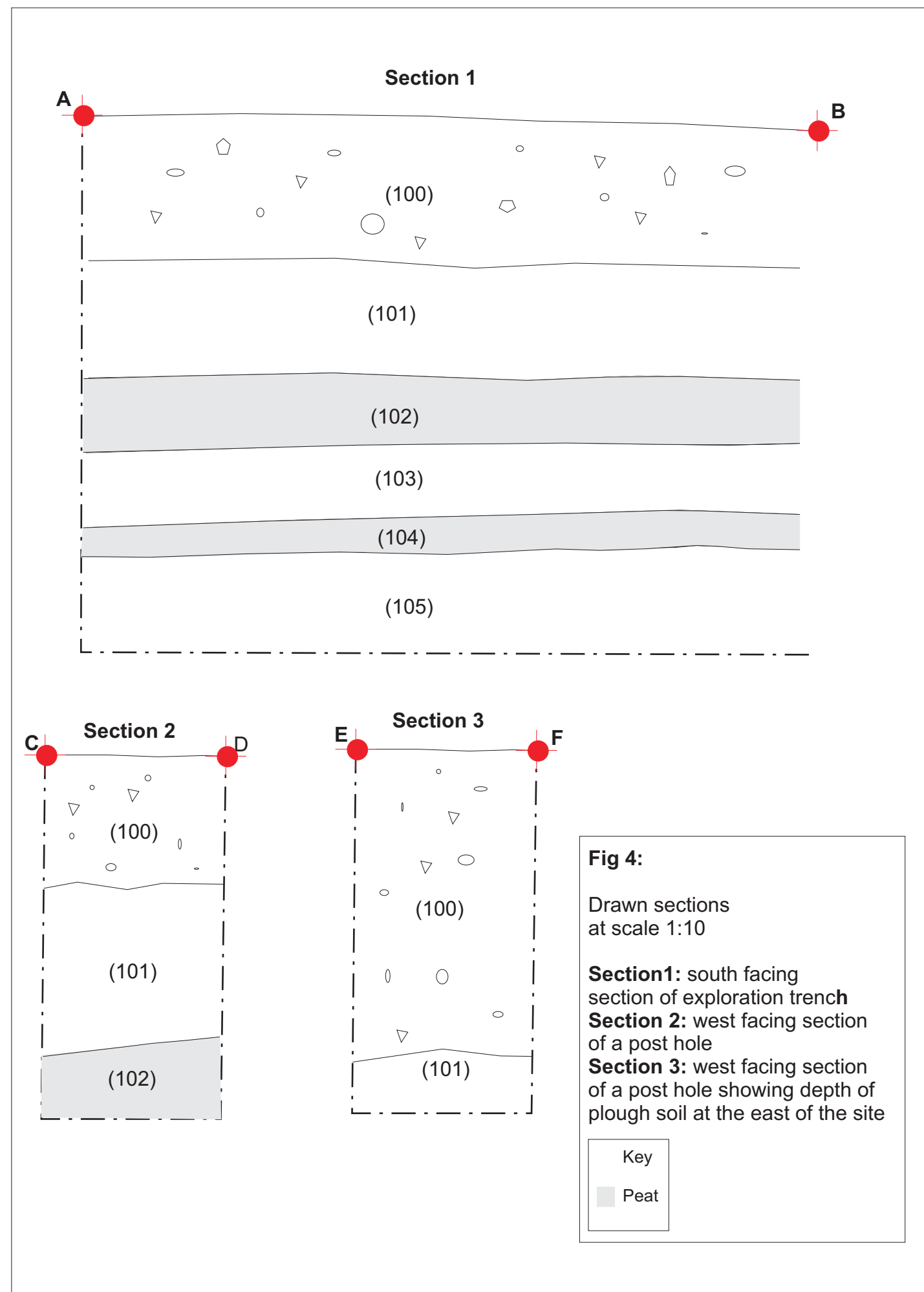


Fig 3:

Whitepost Road Compound
and area of ploughsoil strip
outlined in red.

Proposed route of bypass
outlined in blue at scale 1:1000

Inset plan showing site location at scale 1:5000



Appendix 1: Colour plates

Crowland



Plate 1: General view of the site looking north



Plate 2: General view of ploughsoil strip looking north-west



Plate 3: General view of cable trench looking north



Plate 4: South facing section of the exploration trench looking north



Plate 5:
General
view showing
the hand
excavation
of the post
holes for the
wooden
hoarding
fence looking
south



Plate 6:
General view
of compound
showing
offices looking
south

Appendix 2: Colour plates

Whitepost Road



Plate 7:
General view
showing the
site to the west
of Whitepost
Road looking
north-west



Plate 8: General
view of site
looking south



Plate 9: General view of the site after ploughsoil strip from the entrance looking west



Plate 10: General view showing depth of ploughsoil stripped from the site looking

Appendix 3: List of archaeological contexts

Crowland Compound

Context	Type	Description
100	Layer	Dark brown silty clay ploughsoil
101	Layer	Orange brown silty clay sub-soil
102	Layer	Peat
103	Layer	Mid blue-grey silty clay alluvium
104	Layer	Peat
105	Layer	Mid blue-grey silty clay alluvium

Whitepost Road, Compound

Context	Type	Description
200	Layer	Dark brown silty clay ploughsoil