

**PROPOSED SEN SCHOOL, THE WILLIAM HARRISON SCHOOL
MIDDLEFIELD LANE, GAINSBOROUGH, LINCS.**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING

REPORT

Site code	WHSG 09
NGR:	SK 8235 8880
Lincs CC Planning Ref:	W33\124272\09
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PCA Ref:	09/582

Report prepared for

Mouchel Business Services Limited

by

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Fig. 1 Site location plan (not to scale; based on the 2000 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map, Sheet 280. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278).

Fig. 2 Location and extent of the new building, showing the positions of monitored areas and Sections 1 and 2. For inset, see Fig. 3. (© Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278).

Fig. 3 Locations of the monitored drainage trenches, with sections through deposits visible in the trench faces.

Plates

- PI. 1** Location of the new development at The William Harrison School (looking south towards the existing school buildings, with Middlefield Lane beyond the hedge to the left).
- PI. 2** The existing sports field and playing field area, with tape marking the site of the new school building (looking west from the Middlefield Lane entrance).
- PI. 3** Excavation of the sewer trench alongside the Middlefield Lane boundary (looking south).
- PI. 4** Topsoil and natural clay deposits visible in the sewer trench face (scale 1m).
- PI. 5** Much of the development area was stripped of topsoil with a bulldozer (looking south-west).
- PI. 6** The stripped surface was trampled and disturbed by the machine tracks and was not in suitable condition for the identification of archaeological features (looking west).
- PI. 7** The stripped area (looking north).
- PI. 8** Detail of the surface left after topsoil removal (looking south towards the existing school buildings).
- PI. 9** A terram membrane was laid over the stripped area, and this was covered with crushed hardcore. The foundation trenches for the new school buildings were excavated from this level, only revealing undisturbed natural clay (looking north, scale 1m).
- PI. 10** The contractors' site compound was stripped with an untoothed bucket, but even in these conditions no archaeological features were identified (looking south).

Summary

- *Archaeological monitoring and recording during contractors' reductions of ground levels and excavation of trenches identified no archaeological features.*
- *Only modern artefacts were recovered during the works, and are probably associated with levelling of the site in the past to create the playing field.*

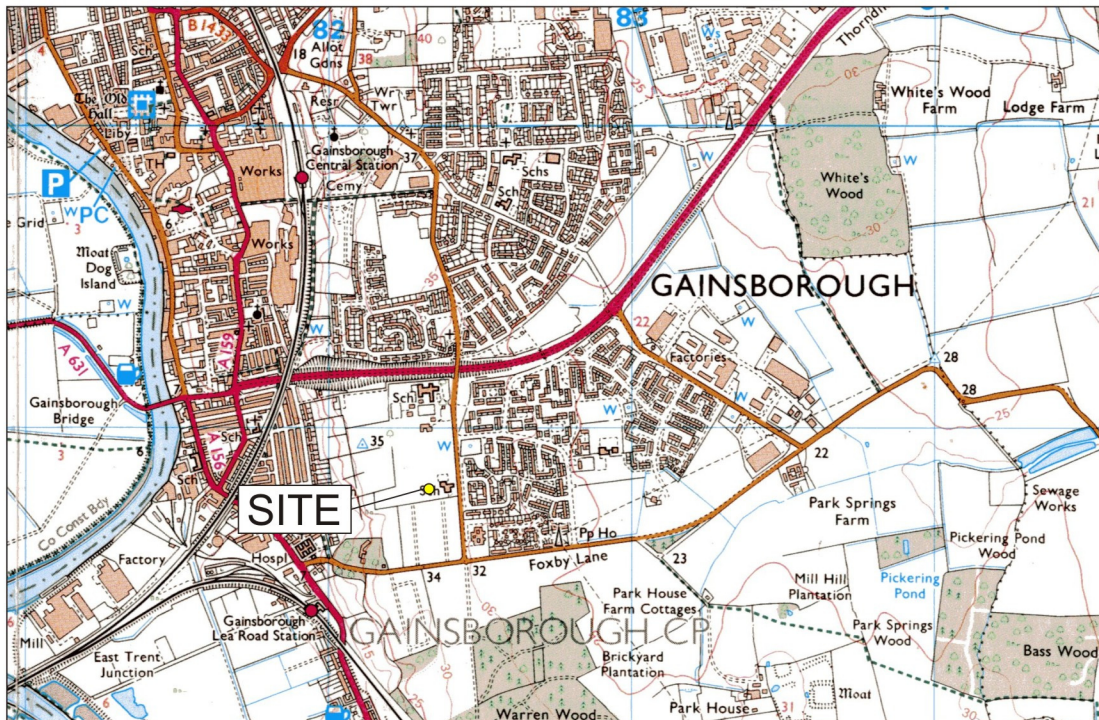


Fig. 1 Site location plan (based on the 2000 1:25,000 Ordnance Survey Explorer map, Sheet 280. © Crown copyright. All rights reserved. PCA Licence No. 100049278).

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeological Services Ltd (PCA), (formerly Pre-Construct Archaeology [Lincoln]), conducted archaeological monitoring and recording for Mouchel Business Services Limited at the site of the proposed Special Educational Needs School, The William Harrison School, Middlefield Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire. The work was undertaken during groundworks for the construction of a replacement school building. Archaeological monitoring was undertaken by Jeremy Mordue (8/9 – 11/9/2009) and Linda Hamilton (14/9 – 18/9, 21/9 – 23/9, 25, 28, 29/9/2009).

The archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out to fulfil a condition of planning permission, in accordance with an agreed Archaeological Works Specification, dated September 2009. The work followed the standards recommended in *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy and Guidance Note 16* (Department of Environment 1990), *Standards and Guidance for Archaeological Watching Briefs* (IFA 2008) *Lincolnshire Archaeology Handbook* (Lincolnshire County Council, 2009).

2.0 Site location and description

The site is within the parish of Gainsborough, 23km north-east of Lincoln and within the southern-most suburbs of the town; approximately 1.5km south-east of the historic core of the town. It is situated immediately west of Middlefield Lane, 250m north of its junction with Foxby Lane and 400m south of the A631 Thorndike Way, centred on NGR: SK 8235 8880.

Prior to development, the area of interest was part of a mostly level grassed field, used until recently as a sports pitch and playing field (Pls. 1 and 2).

3.0 Planning Background

Mouchel Business Services Ltd commissioned an initial archaeological desk-based assessment of the site in 2008 as part of a pre-planning consideration of the potential development impact (Rowe 2008). The proposal was to construct a Special Educational Needs (SEN) School on the playing field of the existing school; to replace existing school buildings.

Lincolnshire County Council granted planning permission for the development, with an attached condition requiring archaeological monitoring and recording during all groundworks.

4.0 Geology and topography

The site is within the Lower Trent Valley, approximately 1km east of the modern course of the river. It lies on the eastern side of high ground (known as the Gainsborough Bluff) that overlooks the river, and at the western edge of the broad undulating vale that flanks the modern course of the River Trent.

The site lies at an elevation of c.30m AOD and is mostly flat with slight undulations. The solid geology of the area is recorded as Keuper Marl (Mercia Mudstone) of the Permo-Triassic Era (BGS 1971). Overlying this are sandy and coarse loamy soils of the Blackwood Association (Hodge *et al.*1984).

5.0 Archaeological Background

The site is approximately 1.5km from the historic core of the town. There is some very limited evidence for occupation along the Bluff, dating at least from the Roman period.

Within the immediate vicinity of the school, also situated on top of the Bluff, there are two recorded sites of archaeological interest; a cropmark c. 400m to the northwest of the development site (now believed to have been largely destroyed by the creation of the A 631), and two earthwork mounds, possibly of medieval origin, c. 300m to the west.

The site of the Civil War Battle of Gainsborough (1643) is believed to have taken place between the village of Lea to the south and the historic town to the north, around the area in which the proposed development site is located.

The land lay within the medieval Middlefield open field, and there was some potential for evidence of medieval ridge and furrow cultivation, despite previous levelling for the sports field grounds.

The desk-based assessment noted a marked change in levels along the southern side of the site and recorded that the playing field was lower than the adjacent land to the south near to the existing school building, but higher than the adjacent allotments to the north (Rowe 2008). It was suspected that some truncation of deposits had already occurred.

6.0 Methodology

The contractors created a site entrance into the former school playing field from Middlefield Road, to the north of the existing school grounds. The eastern part of the field had been landscaped, with concrete-lined sand bunkers and sand pits for long-jump tracks.

A 25m x 55m area was stripped of turf and topsoil using a 360° excavator and untoothed bucket, but the majority of the area for the new school buildings was stripped of turf and topsoil using a tracked bulldozer type machine. The operating method resulted in a surface that was partly stripped in several stages, but which was immediately obscured by track marks and redeposited soil. For safety reasons it was not practical to observe the stripping closely.

Following topsoil stripping and levelling, a terram membrane was laid across the surface and then covered with imported crushed rubble. The foundation trenches for the new building were excavated through this hardcore.

7.0 Results

7.1 Construction area (Pls. 3-7)

No archaeological remains or features were observed on the stripped surface, and it appeared that it had been stripped to undisturbed natural deposits.

Where an untoothed bucket was used, traces of a subsoil (101) were observed in places, but not at the southern side of the site.

Below the terram membrane, no archaeological features were observed in the trench faces.

7.2 Eastern sewer trench (Pls. 8-9)

Topsoil was stripped from a 4m wide area along the eastern edge of the school grounds to the south of the new access, using a 360° excavator and smooth bucket. Within this area, an approximately 33m long and 0.55m wide trench was excavated with a toothed bucket to a depth of between 0.9m and 1m. The trench was aligned southwards, past the existing school buildings to a new manhole trench (MH 1), which was intended to replace an existing manhole (MH 2). The existing drains were connected to the new drain. Two further drains were excavated from these manholes to new MH3 and MH4 to the south-west of the new site entrance. The trench beside the eastern site boundary was extended a further 30m north of the access.

These trenches were excavated through the 0.3m – 0.4m thick topsoil (100) into natural Mercia Mudstone deposits (102), (103) and (104), with no evident intervening layer. The uppermost 0.4m of the mudstone was orange/brown (rather than the dark red material (103) below) and probably represented weathered natural. No archaeological features were observed, other than several north-west/south-east aligned 20th century field drains, at approximately 10m spacings to the north of the new access.

7.3 Contractors' compound area (Pl. 10)

An area to the north of the contractors' site entrance was stripped of topsoil using a 360° excavator and smooth bucket. The area was stripped in stages and covered with hardcore, for use as a site compound. No archaeological remains were identified in this area.

8.0 Conclusion

Any archaeological remains that may once have existed on this particular site appear to have been removed in the past, probably during levelling of the playing field area.

9.0 Bibliography

BGS 1967 *British Geological Survey of Great Britain (England and Wales); Solid and Drift; Sheet 101: East Retford*. Scale 1:50,000.

Rowe, M. 2008 *Land at the William Harrison School, Middlefield Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire: Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment*. PCA (Lincoln) Job No. 488, September 2008.

PCA 2002 *Archaeological Desk-based Assessment and Metal Detector Survey: Land of Foxby Lane, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire*. Typescript report.

10.0 Acknowledgements

PCA would like to thank Mouchel Business Services for this commission.

11.0 Site Archive

Acc No: 2009.159

The archive is currently held at the offices of PCA, Saxilby, Lincolnshire and will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln (LCNCC 2009.159).

Appendix 2

Context Summary (WHSG 09)

Context No.	Type		Description	Finds/Dating
100	Layer	Below 105; above 101 and 104	Topsoil: grey/brown silty clay. 0.2m – 0.4m; thickest to east and west.	Modern
101	Layer	Below 100, above 102	Orange/brown sandy clay subsoil, 0.2m thick; intermittent survival.	?Medieval - post-medieval
102	Layer	Below 101, above 103; ?same as 104	Pale yellow/white sandy clay, 0.28m thick. Intermittent restricted patches.	Natural
103	Layer	Below 102 and 104	Red/brown clay - natural keuper marl	Natural
104	Layer	Below 100, above 103; ?same as 102	Yellow sandy clay, 0.45m thick, only seen at southern end of drainage trench. ?Natural.	Natural
105	Layer	Above 100	Crushed rubble hardcore, recently laid above a terram membrane where topsoil removed.	Modern

Appendix 3:

OASIS DATA COLLECTION FORM: England

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Proposed SEN School, The William Harrison School, Middlefield Lane, Gainsborough, Lincs - Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

OASIS ID - preconst3-73749

Versions

View	Version	Completed by	Email	Date
View 1	1	LAURA	laura@pre-construct.co.uk	9 March 2010
View 2	2	laura	laura@pre-construct.co.uk	9 March 2010

Completed sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	1/1

Validated sections in current version

Details	Location	Creators	Archive	Publications
No	No	No	No	0/1

File submission and form progress

Grey literature report submitted?	No	Grey literature report filename/s
Boundary file submitted?	No	Boundary filename
HER signed off?		NMR signed off?