Specification for Archaeological Monitoring & Recording at Willow House, Bens Gate, Fleet, Lincolnshire.

Prepared for G.R. Merchant Ltd. on behalf of their client - Mr. P. White

National Grid Reference: TF 3841 2324
Site Code: BGFL21
Accession No: LCNCC: 2021.23
Planning reference: H05-0568-16

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Non-technical summary

S1 *A scheme of works comprising archaeological monitoring and recording is required during the groundworks pertaining to the construction of a new replacement residential dwelling at Willow Cottage, Bens Gate, Fleet, Lincolnshire.*

S2 *The development site is situated within an area of high archaeological potential. An artefact scatter consisting of an Elizabethan coin, post-medieval pottery and brick fragments indicative of a possible contemporary building have been found to the east of this development site. The site of a former medieval motte of a possible manorial site occurs to the south. This was excavated in 1912-13. The excavation yielded finds of pottery from the 11th-18th centuries and two sherds of Iron Age pottery from a former land surface. Further sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery have been made at this location. It is considered that further medieval and post-medieval settlement activity and finds may be encountered on this development site. The specific objectives of this archaeological monitoring will therefore be to record any archaeological features, deposits, structures or finds associated with this medieval and post-medieval settlement activity.*

S3 *The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the groundworks stage of development, which will comprise the mechanical excavation of the foundations and services for the new replacement residential dwelling. Any archaeological features, structures and/or deposits will be recorded in writing, graphically and photographically.*

S3 *On the completion of the monitoring, a report will be produced detailing the results of the archaeological investigation. The report will consist of a narrative supported by illustrations and photographs.*

1. Site location and description [Figures 1 and 2]

1.1 The development site is situated on land off the western frontage of Bens Gate and approximately 1km to the south-west of the village of Fleet at National Grid Reference TF 3843 2324 and at a height of approximately 2mAOD. The village of Fleet is located approximately 14km to the east of Spalding and some 21km to the south of the town of Boston. The village of Fleet is situated within the modern civil parish of Gedney in the administrative district of South Holland, county of Lincolnshire.

1.2 The development site is located in a flat and low-lying area within the Lincolnshire Fens. The development site is situated on deep stoneless calcareous coarse silty soils of the Wisbech Series, which have developed on marine alluvial deposits. These deposits in turn overlie the solid geology, which comprises Ampthill and Kimmeridge Clays of the Upper Jurassic.

2. Planning background [Figure 3]

2.1 This document comprises a Specification or a written scheme of works for archaeological monitoring and recording which is to be maintained during the groundworks pertaining to the construction of a new replacement residential dwelling at Willow House, Bens Gate, Fleet, Lincolnshire (Planning reference: H05-0568-16).

3. Historical and Archaeological Background

3.1 Background research sources were consulted at the Lincolnshire Archives, the Lincoln Local Studies Library and the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Record (HER). A search of the Lincolnshire HER was conducted within a 0.5km radius that was centred on the development site.

3.2 At the time of the Domesday Survey of AD1086, lands in Fleet or *Fleot, Flec* were held by the King and by Count Alan. There are also references in this Domesday entry to a fishery and to two salt houses. The place name itself is derived from the Old English *Fleot* or 'the inlet, the creek, the stream'. This topographical derived denotes that Fleet was formerly situated at the head of the sea.



Figure 1: Site location at scale 1:12,500. The site is shown in red. (O.S. copyright licence number 100048723)

3.3 The medieval settlement of Fleet was concentrated to the north and east of the 12th century parish church of St Mary Magdalene (HER 20434). Fleet was throughout the medieval period, a post on a very small scale. The medieval period also saw a gradual shift of the population and thus the focus of contemporary settlement to the north at Fleet Hargate, which was granted a market in the early 14th century (HER 20434).

3.4 An artefact scatter consisting of an Elizabethan coin, post-medieval pottery and brick fragments were found to the east of this development site (HER 20439). The brick fragments also indicate the presence of a possible building.

3.5 The site of a possible medieval motte marking a possible manorial site occurs to the north of Battle Bridge (HER 22265-6, 23005, ELI35). The site was excavated in 1912-13, but no report of the results was produced. Pottery finds from this excavation are in the

Museum of the Spalding Gentleman's Society. The pottery finds include two sherds of Iron Age pottery, which probably came from an old land surface, with the remainder of the pottery finds dating from between the 11th-18th centuries. A mound and a possible outer ditch visible as a soilmark were visible on aerial photographs. By 1947, a slight mound existed on the round, but had been mostly levelled. Much animal bone and pottery including medieval and post-medieval pottery were also observed on the ground here.

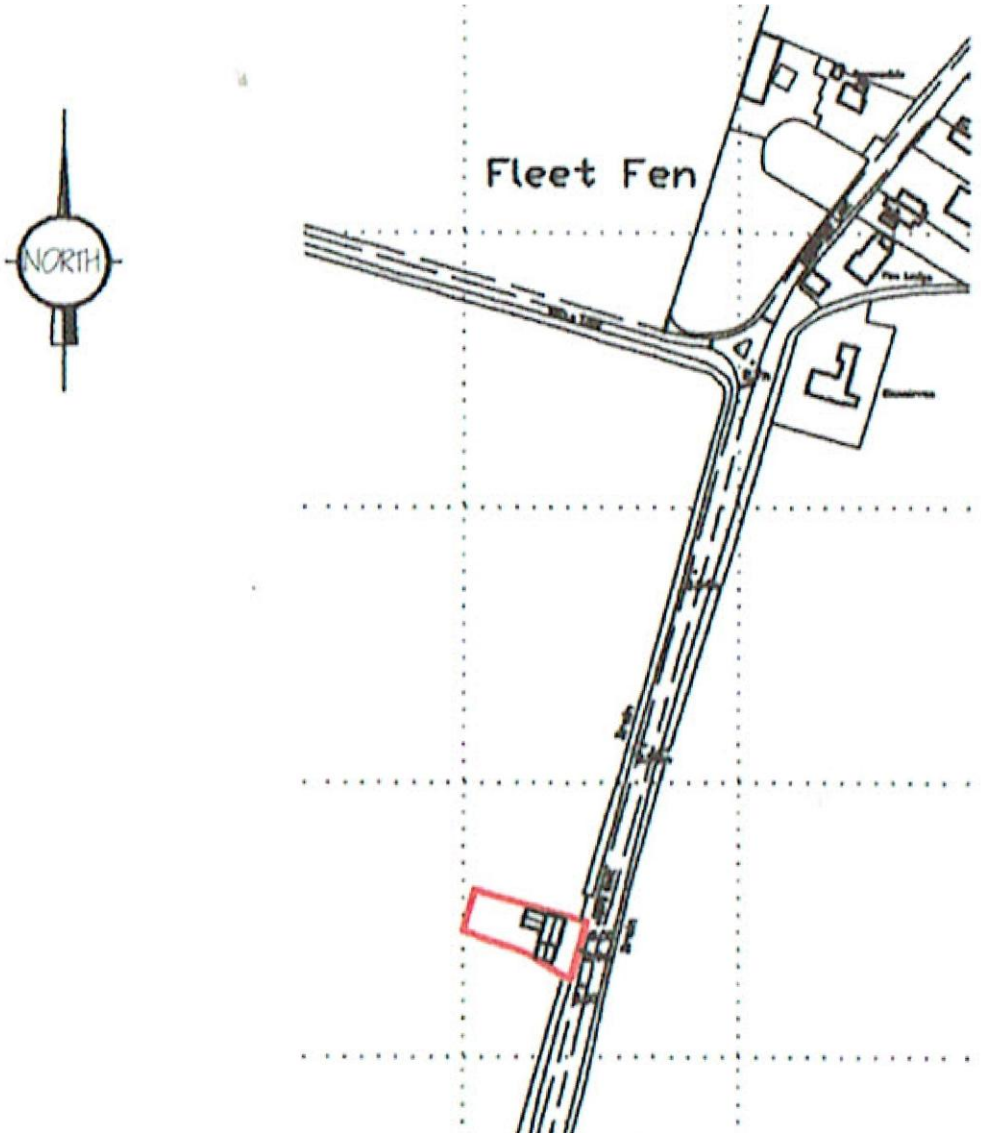


Figure 2: Site location at an original scale of 1:2,500, (extract from Architects plan). The site is shown outlined in red.

3.6 The Old Rectory on Proudfoot Lane, Fleet was built in 1854 to replace an earlier building on the site (HER 25559). This has been designated by South Holland Council as being a building of local historical interest and is thus locally listed.

3.7 The site of an unnamed farmstead occurs off Ball's Lane, Fleet (HER 26709). This is a demolished 19th century farmstead with the farmhouse attached to a range of working buildings. The farmstead was in an isolated location.

3.8 An unnamed farmstead off Bens Gate, Fleet is a 19th century farmstead (HER 26710). This was arranged around a regular courtyard in an 'L'-plan with detached buildings to the third side of the yard. The farmhouse is detached from the main working complex. The farmhouse is the only surviving historic structure. The farmstead was in an isolated location.

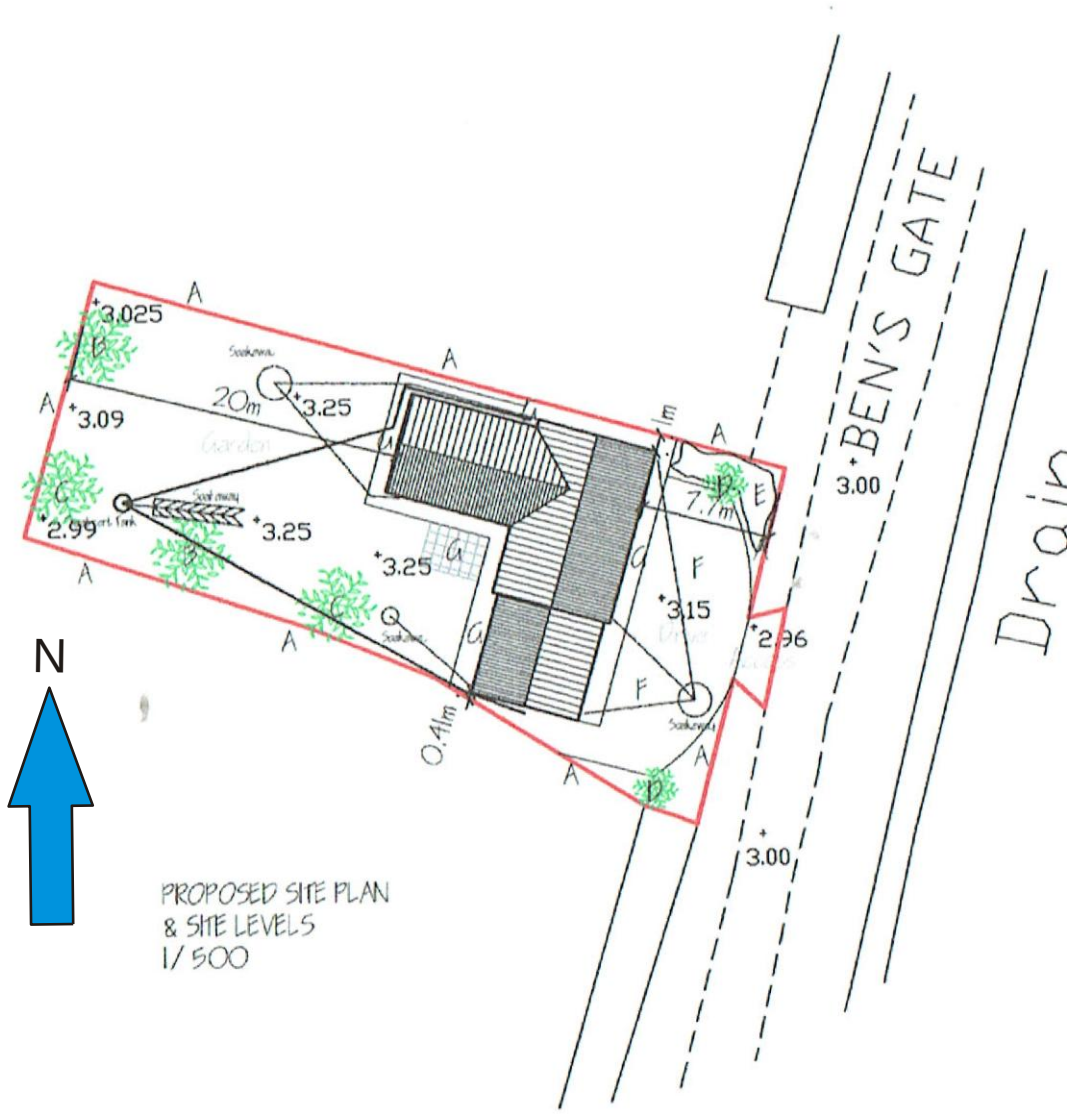


Figure 3: Block plan showing the proposed layout of the development site at an original scale of 1:500, (extract from Architects plan). The site is shown outlined in red.

3.9 There have been several previous archaeological investigations within the search area. In 2001, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken on the groundworks for a new bungalow at Hallgate, Fleet (HER 23691,ELI2009, Site code: FLE01). This identified an undated ditch that was aligned from east-west and was interpreted as a land boundary ditch. A gully of post-medieval date, which was also orientated from east-west was also found. This was probably one of the boundaries featured on the local tithe map of 1840 (HER 23692).

3.10 An archaeological watching brief was carried on the groundworks for a new extension to an existing building at The Crooked Billet, Hallgate in 2001 (HER 20434, Site code: FCE01). This revealed a probable channel that may have run parallel and to the west of Hallgate. The channel was thought to have been open during the medieval period. The channel fill produced four sherds of 12th-14th century pottery. Four sherds of post-medieval pottery were also found.

3.11 An archaeological watching brief was carried out on the groundworks for a new extension to an existing building at Church End, Fleet in 2005 (Site code: FCE05). This revealed a sequence of dumped and levelling deposits overlying natural silts. The levelling deposit were associated with the construction of the existing dwelling on the site. The finds from this watching brief comprised sherds of late19th-early 20th century pottery.

3.12 In 2006, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken on land off Hallgate, Fleet (Site code: FLGH06). This identified a roadside ditch, of possible medieval date, which had been backfilled in the post-medieval period. A post-medieval pit and a modern pit were also found. The finds ranged in date from the 10th-20th centuries. Significant amounts of medieval pottery were residual, but were present in sufficient quantities to indicate settlement activity of that date in close proximity to this site.

3.13 In 2002, an archaeological watching brief was carried out during the rebuilding of a collapsed part of The Cottage, Hallgate, Fleet (HER 20434, Site code: FHC02). This identified a sequence of medieval and post-medieval ditches, which were land divisions, though on different alignments. Two medieval ditches produced pottery of 12th-14th century date and a beam slot, which yielded 13th-14th century pottery. A further ditch that contained medieval and post-medieval pottery, a fragment of smithing slag, an undated ditch and three undated pits were also found. The single fragment of smithy slag, indicated post-medieval metal working in the vicinity.

3.14 An archaeological watching brief was carried out in 2001 on a new extension to The Cottage at Hallgate, Fleet (HER 20434, Site code: FLGH01). This located part of a possible timber beam slot for a timber building. Its fill produced finds of early 13th century pottery. An undated itch was also found, but was not examined as it lay below the depth of the foundations.

3.15 In 2001, an archaeological evaluation comprising the excavation of a single trench in advance of the construction of a new building at the Wood Lane School, Fleet (HER 20434, Site code: WLSF01). This exposed a series of archaeological features that included pits, ditches and a channel that were closely dated to the end of the 12th century or early 13th centuries. These were sealed below an accumulation of alluvial silts dated by pottery finds from the 15th-16th centuries. Modern features found included a brick structure, most likely associated with 19th century school buildings.

3.16 This evaluation was followed by an excavation on this site (HER 20434, Site code: WLSF01). The initial phase of archaeological activity in the site was defined by a series of pits and ditches. The ditches appeared to be property or boundary divisions. A fragment of a 12th century floor tile was recovered from a ditch. Some domestic refuse indicating settlement was recovered from the features including late 12th-early/middle 13th century pottery and a spindle whorl. From the late 13th century through to the 14th-15th centuries, archaeological activity on the site intensified. A large number of pits were recorded. Many of these pits contained large amounts of domestic refuse, iron nails, pottery, charcoal, animal bone, and shells. Sampling of the site revealed the presence of hammerscale and a large blooming slab, indicating a smithy. Further evidence of industrial activity here was provided by leather off-cuts or scraps from leather working and spindle whorls suggesting spinning. Some isolated postholes were found, but no firm conclusions could be reached as to their purpose. It appeared that the site was

abandoned, possibly only for a short period of time Reoccupation appeared to have occurred in the late 15th century, and was defined by further refuse pits.

3.17 Copies of published Ordnance Survey maps were obtained from the Lincolnshire Archives and from the local studies collections of the Lincoln Central Library. The earliest map consulted comprised an extract from the First Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S map of 1888. This map shows Willow House off the western frontage of Bens Gate with a north wing attached to it and a small outbuilding to the rear. To the rear of these is a large farm outbuilding, so it would appear that Willow House was originally a farmhouse.

3.18 The extract from the Second Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S map of 1904 shows the same layout to the site of Willow House. To the rear, the former large farm outbuilding has been replaced by new outbuildings which are arranged around four sides of a yard with one further small outbuilding further to the rear.

3.19 The extract from the 1931 Edition 25 inch to one mile scale O.S map shows the same layout to the site of Willow House. To the rear, the range of farm outbuildings has now been reduced so that it is arranged around three sides of the yard. Further to the rear, are three additional new and small outbuildings.

3.20 The extract from the 1:2,500 scale O.S. map of 1969 shows the same layout to the site of Willow House. To the rear, all of the farm outbuildings here have gone.

4. Aims and objectives of the project

4.1 The aims of the project will be the continual archaeological monitoring of all site groundworks during the construction stage of development, which will comprise the mechanical excavation of foundations and services for the new replacement residential dwelling.

4.2 The objectives of the project are:

To establish the presence/absence of archaeological remains within the area of the development site.

To determine the extent, condition, nature, character, quality and date of any archaeological remains encountered.

To allow the preservation by record of archaeological deposits.

4.3 The development site is situated within an area of high archaeological potential. An artefact scatter consisting of an Elizabethan coin, post-medieval pottery and brick fragments indicative of a possible contemporary building have been found to the east of this development site. The site of a former medieval motte of a possible manorial site occurs to the south. This was excavated in 1912-13. The excavation yielded finds of pottery from the 11th-18th centuries and two sherds of Iron Age pottery from a former land surface. Further sherds of medieval and post-medieval pottery have been made at this location. It is considered that further medieval and post-medieval settlement activity and finds may be encountered on this development site. The specific objectives of this archaeological monitoring will therefore be to record any archaeological features, deposits, structures or finds associated with this medieval and post-medieval settlement activity.

5. Methodology

5.1 The archaeological monitoring will be undertaken during the groundworks phase of development, and will include the **continual monitoring** of any topsoil stripping, of the

excavations of foundations and service trenches, and of any other ground disturbances. The mechanical excavations will be undertaken using a toothless bucket.

5.2 All work will be carried out according to the Chartered Institute of Field Archaeologists (CHIfA) standards.

5.3 All work will be undertaken following all statutory Health and Safety requirements and legislation in operation at the time of the monitoring.

5.4 A Risk Assessment will be prepared for the site.

5.5 Stripped areas and trench sections will be continually observed to identify any archaeological features and/or deposits which may be exposed.

5.6 Section drawings at a scale of 1:10 will be made of any archaeological features identified in the course of the groundworks, including representative sections of trenches at appropriate intervals. These will be related to a site plan drawing at a scale of 1:50, which may also record archaeological features and/or deposits identified. Any significant archaeological features in plan will also be recorded at a scale of 1:20.

5.7 Written descriptions detailing the nature of archaeological features and/or deposits encountered will be compiled on pro-forma context record sheets.

5.8 Any finds recovered will be bagged and labelled for further analysis. All relevant finds will be ordered into an archive. Most modern material will not be retained, although notes will be made of the appropriate context. An appropriate sample of materials such as ceramic building materials will be made.

5.9 Any and all artefacts found during the monitoring and thought to come under the provisions of the *Treasure Act* (1996), will be removed from the site to a secure location, and will be promptly reported to the appropriate coroner's office.

5.10 Throughout the monitoring a digital photographic record will be compiled, and will comprise an overview of the site prior to work starting, and during as well as after completion of the work, and will include any excavated features, sections and other relevant details that aid interpretation.

5.11 Should human remains be encountered, they will be left *in situ*, and only excavated if absolutely necessary. Proper respect will be accorded to these remains, which will be cleaned to allow positive identification. Should removal be required, the appropriate Ministry of Justice Licence will be obtained prior to the removal of the remains. In addition, any remains will be reported to the local Environmental Health Department, coroner and the police will be informed, where appropriate.

5.12 The fieldwork will be undertaken by Neville Hall. Additional personnel may be appointed if required.

6. Post-fieldwork methodology

6.1 On the completion of the fieldwork, all of the written, drawn and photographic records produced by the archaeological monitoring will be checked, ordered, labelled (where appropriate) and catalogued to compile a distinctive site archive.

6.2 All finds recovered during the fieldwork will be washed, marked and packaged according to the deposit from which there were recovered. They will also be ordered into (and form part of) the site archive.

6.3 An assessment of significant finds will be made in light of general site information.

6.4 Any finds requiring specialist treatment and/or conservation will be sent to the Conservation Laboratory at The Collection, Lincoln, and in consultation with the relevant curator.

6.5 The site archive will be examined to enable the determination of various phases of activity on the site (if appropriate).

6.6 Relevant finds will be sent to specialists for identification and dating.

7. Monitoring arrangements

7.1 Provision will be made for the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team on behalf of South Holland District Council, (the Local Planning Authority) to monitor the works during the fieldwork stage and any other aspect of the archaeological project as required including the post fieldwork analysis and report preparation stages of the project.

7.2 A minimum notification period of not less than fourteen days of the start date of works on the site will be given to the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

7.3 All aspects of the archaeological programme will be undertaken in accordance with this project specification.

7.4 Any variation to the project programme in terms of works or recording on or off site will be fully discussed and agreed with the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

7.5 Arrangements will be made for the representative of the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team for access to the site to undertake monitoring visits, and such visits will be accounted for in the final report preparation.

7.6 The Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team shall be kept fully informed of any unexpected or unforeseen discoveries made during the course of the archaeological monitoring and recording programme.

8. Archive preparation and deposition

8.1 The documentation and records generated by the archaeological monitoring will be sorted and ordered in the format acceptable to The Collection, Lincoln, and to the standards and requirements as laid out in their Guide Book.

8.2 A unique accession number will be obtained from The Collection for the site archive.

8.3 The archive will be deposited at The Collection, Lincoln by December 2021.

9. Reporting procedures

9.1 A report detailing the findings of the archaeological monitoring will be completed within two months after the finalisation of the fieldwork. Any delays will be related to the relevant authorities.

9.2 The report will consist of:

A title page, with project name and location, national grid reference, planning reference, site code, accession number, client name, author and date;

A contents page listing report sections, illustrations and appendices;

A non-technical summary of the results of the monitoring;

An introduction, site description and location;

Planning background to the project;

A section on the archaeological and historical background to the project;

A description of the methodology used in the project;

A section describing the results of the monitoring;

A section on the discussion and results of the project including a consideration of the findings of the project in a local and regional context;

A consideration of the effectiveness of the project methodology and a confidence rating of the results;

Illustrations including plans showing monitored areas, all archaeological features and sections thereof (including trench sections); and

Appendices comprising appropriate photographs of the site and of specific and significant archaeological features and representative sections, a list of contexts, any specialist reports on finds from the site, a list of the site archive, a photographic register and a copy of this document.

An electronic copy of the report will be deposited with the OASIS project (On-line Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations) http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/project/oasis/index.cfm.

10. Publication and dissemination

10.1 Copies of the final report will be deposited with the clients, the local curator (on behalf of the local planning authority), South Holland District Council and with the Lincolnshire Heritage Environment Record (including a digital copy in a .pdf format).

10.2 A note will be placed in 'Lincolnshire History and Archaeology' describing the results.

10.3 The deposition of the site archive will be in accordance with guidelines outlined in the Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook (LCC, 2020).

10.4 Should the results of the archaeological investigation merit it, a note will also be placed in appropriate national journals e.g. *Medieval Archaeology.*

11. Other factors (including contingency)

11.1 In the event of the discovery of any unexpected remains of archaeological importance, or of any changed circumstances, it is the responsibility of the archaeological contractor to inform the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team.

11.2 Where important archaeological remains are discovered and deemed to merit further investigation, additional financial resources may be required to provide an appropriate level of investigation, recording and analysis.

11.3 Any additional financial contingency requirement for additional fieldwork or post-excavation analysis outside the scope of the proposed scheme of works will only be activated following full consultation with the Lincolnshire County Council Historic Environment Team and the client.

12. Variations to the proposed scheme

12.1 Variations to the proposed scheme will only be made following written confirmation with the archaeological curator.

13. Resources

13.1 The monitoring will be undertaken by Neville Hall using standard archaeological field techniques.

13.2 Post-excavation analysis will be undertaken by Neville Hall and where available specialist analysis from:-

Jane Young	Medieval and Post-medieval Ceramics
Ian Rowlandson	Iron Age and Roman Ceramics
Val Fryer	Environmental
Carol Allen	Neolithic and Bronze Age
Malin Holst	Osteoarchaeology
Jane Cowgill	Metallurgy

13.3 Small finds requiring conservation will be conserved by the City and County Museum Laboratory.

13.4 Recognised specialists will be sought in the event that other data are retrieved in the course of the monitoring.

14. Insurance statement

14.1 Public indemnity of £2,000,000 and private indemnity insurance of £250,000 with Towergate Insurance.

15. Copyright

15.1 Copyright will remain that of the author. Licence will be given to the client to present any reports, copyright of the author, to the planning authority in good faith of satisfactory settlement of account.

16. Ownership

16.1 It will be asked of the client, at the outset, that the ownership of any portable objects discovered in the course of the monitoring be donated along with the archive.