ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONITORING AND RECORDING ON LAND OFF WASHWAY ROAD, SARACEN'S HEAD, WHAPLODE, LINCOLNSHIRE (SHWR21)

Work Undertaken For
KS Contractors LTD

January 2022

Report produced by
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National Grid Reference: TF 3439 2683
Museum Accession No: LCNCC:2021.118
OASIS Record No: archaeol1-503996

APS Report No: **29/21**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES

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1. SUMMARY

A programme of archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out during development groundwork on land at Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode, Lincolnshire.

The site is archaeologically sensitive, located in an area of known saltmaking remains dating to the medieval period.

The groundworks revealed a sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil. No archaeological features were present and there were no finds.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Project Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by KS Contractors Ltd to undertake archaeological monitoring and recording during groundworks associated with the development of a site at Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode, comprising two detached dwellings (Plots 2 and 3). A third plot to the immediate west of Plot 2, will be developed at a later date (Plot 1, Fig 3). The archaeological monitoring and recording was carried out on the 29th and 30th of June 2021.

2.2 Topography and Geology

Whaplode is located 8km east of Spalding and 19km south of Boston in South Holland District, Lincolnshire. The small hamlet comprising Saracen's Head lies a further 3km northeast with Whaplode, close to the parish boundary of Holbeach (Fig. 1).

The development site is located on the eastern side of the village, south of Washway Road, at National Grid Reference TF 3439 2683 (Fig 2).

The site is situated at a height of *c*. 4m AOD on the generally level ground. Local soils are of the Wisbech Association, typical calcareous alluvial gley soils (Hodge et al. 1984, 361). These soils overlie a drift geology of marine alluvium, which seal a solid geology of West Walton Formation mudstone and siltstone (BGS 2021).

2.3 Archaeological Setting

Evidence for prehistoric activity in the Holbeach region is scarce as the prehistoric land surface lies several metres below a series of later flood deposits. The marshland stabilised during the Romano-British period, which then made agricultural and salt making activities possible. Finds of Romano-British pottery recorded in Holbeach were made at a depth of *c*. 1m indicating that the Roman land surface may also be buried (Cope-Faulkner 1997).

Saracen's Head lies on the on the edge of Holbeach Marsh on the course of the Roman Bank medieval seabank (HER 90831), the course of which is preserved by the road of that name which runs approximately west-east through the north part of the village.

The earliest reference to the seabank is from a charter of 1182-8 which states that Ranulph, chaplain of Sibsey, was to repair 'half a perch' of sea bank in consideration for land given to him by Prior Garinus of Spalding (Hallam 1954, 4). Other references indicate that holders of 'bovates' (*c*. 20 acres of arable land) were responsible for the repair of the bank. The association of 'bovates' with the seabank suggests a possible pre-Norman conquest origin *(ibid,* 5). The traditional method of saltmaking in the area relied on the tide flowing over sandacres from which the salt-makers would collect the salt-saturated sand. The salterns, which are particularly numerous around the mouth of the River

Whaplode to the west of the village (HER 20015 and HER 20379), are located outside the seabank, suggesting an early date for the seabank.

The Domesday Survey of *c*. 1086 records salterns around Fleet (*c*. 5.5km to the southeast) pre-dating the conquest (Foster and Longley 1976, 19), and this may suggest a similar date for the salterns at Saracen's Head, which is not named in the survey. The Roman Bank appears to have been the general seabank by the 13th century, with disputes relating to the salterns documented from the late 12th-15th centuries (HER 20379).

The settlement derives its name from the Saracen's Head Inn, which was in the northwest part of the village, but was demolished during the 1960s. The Inn is likely to have been late medieval or post-medieval in origin.

Bryant's map of 1828 is the first cartographic evidence of Saracen's Head, depicting both the Old Saracen's Head Inn and the New Saracen's Head Inn (at the southwest extent of the village). West of the development is Pipwell Manor Farm (HER 94340), the probable site of a medieval manor house. The Ordnance Survey map of 1903 shows the current development area as occupied by fields.

Previous archaeological work in the vicinity has included a watching brief *c*. 550m to the northwest which revealed a number of undated pits and a dumped layer. A Methodist chapel had been extant on the site, one wall of which was recorded (Cope-Faulkner 2002). An undated ditch and pit were recorded during a watching brief *c*. 280m to the northwest of the current site. Burnt clay, representing the remains of hearth linings, was recovered (JSAC 2000). A watching brief *c*. 270m to the northwest recovered unstratified 14th-16th century pottery, but no archaeological features (Thomson 2001). A watching brief to the west of the New Saracen's Head, recovered 19th and 20th century finds but no associated features (M&M Archaeological Services 2002).

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the investigation was to record and interpret the deposits and any archaeological features exposed during the groundworks.

The objectives of the investigation were to:

- Determine the form and function of the archaeological features encountered;
- Determine the spatial arrangement of the archaeological features encountered;
- As far as practicable, recover dating evidence from the archaeological features; and
- Establish the sequence of the archaeological remains present on the site.

4. METHODS

The excavation of the development area was carried out by a 360° mechanical excavator with a 0.7m wide toothless ditching bucket. Following excavation, the base and sides of the foundation trenches were examined for potential archaeological features.

Each deposit was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of contexts and their descriptions appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled, and sections were drawn. Recording was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services' practice.

5. RESULTS

Context numbers assigned in the field are listed and described below.

Plots 2 and 3 (Figures 3 and 4; Plates 1-4)

The earliest deposit was a firm dark yellowish brown clayey silt (003). This layer was 0.38m thick, but continued beyond the limit of excavation (LOE). Overlying natural (003) was subsoil (002), a 0.17m thick friable mid greyish brown clayey silt. Above this was topsoil (001), a 0.33m thick friable dark greyish brown silty sandy soil with occasional rooting.

6. DISCUSSION

The excavation of Plots 2 and 3 revealed a sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil. There were no archaeological finds or features.

Plot 1, to the immediate west of Plot 2, will be developed at a later date, with the results of the archaeological monitoring of this work to be reported separately.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks in advance of the construction of three houses on land off Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode, Lincolnshire.

The site is archaeologically sensitive, located within the medieval village. Remains of medieval salt production have been identified within the village.

The groundworks revealed a sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil. No archaeological features were present and there were no finds.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services wishes to acknowledge KS Contractors Ltd for commissioning the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis. The work was coordinated by Paul Cope-Faulkner, who also edited this report. Greg Pickup kindly allowed access to the library and parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinators: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Site Staff: Peter Fitzer
Photographic reproduction: Kathryn Blythe
Illustration: Kathryn Blythe
Post-excavation Analyst: Kathryn Blythe
Archiving: Denise Buckley

10. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

AOD At Ordnance Datum

HER Lincolnshire Historic Environment Record

NGR National Grid Reference

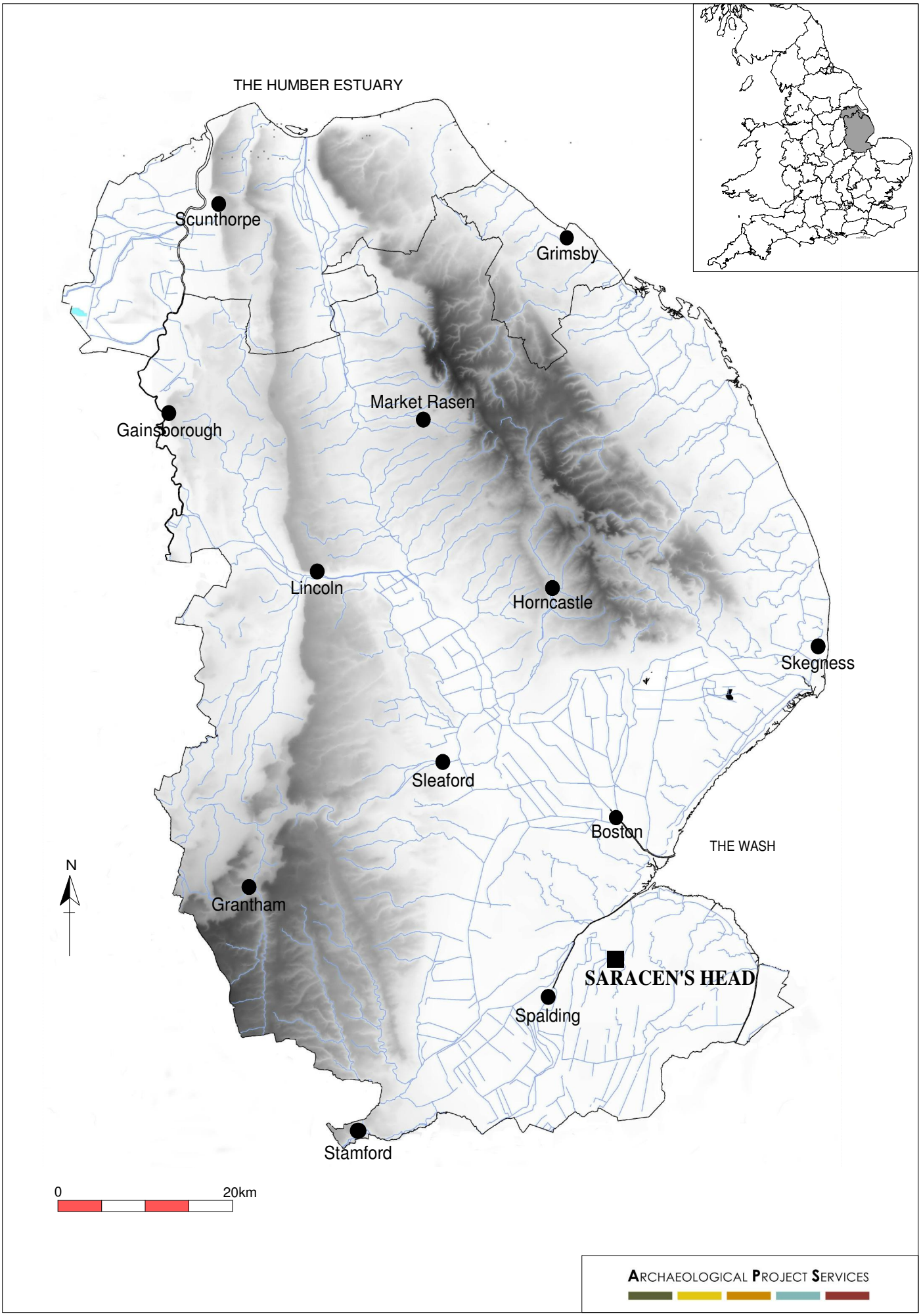
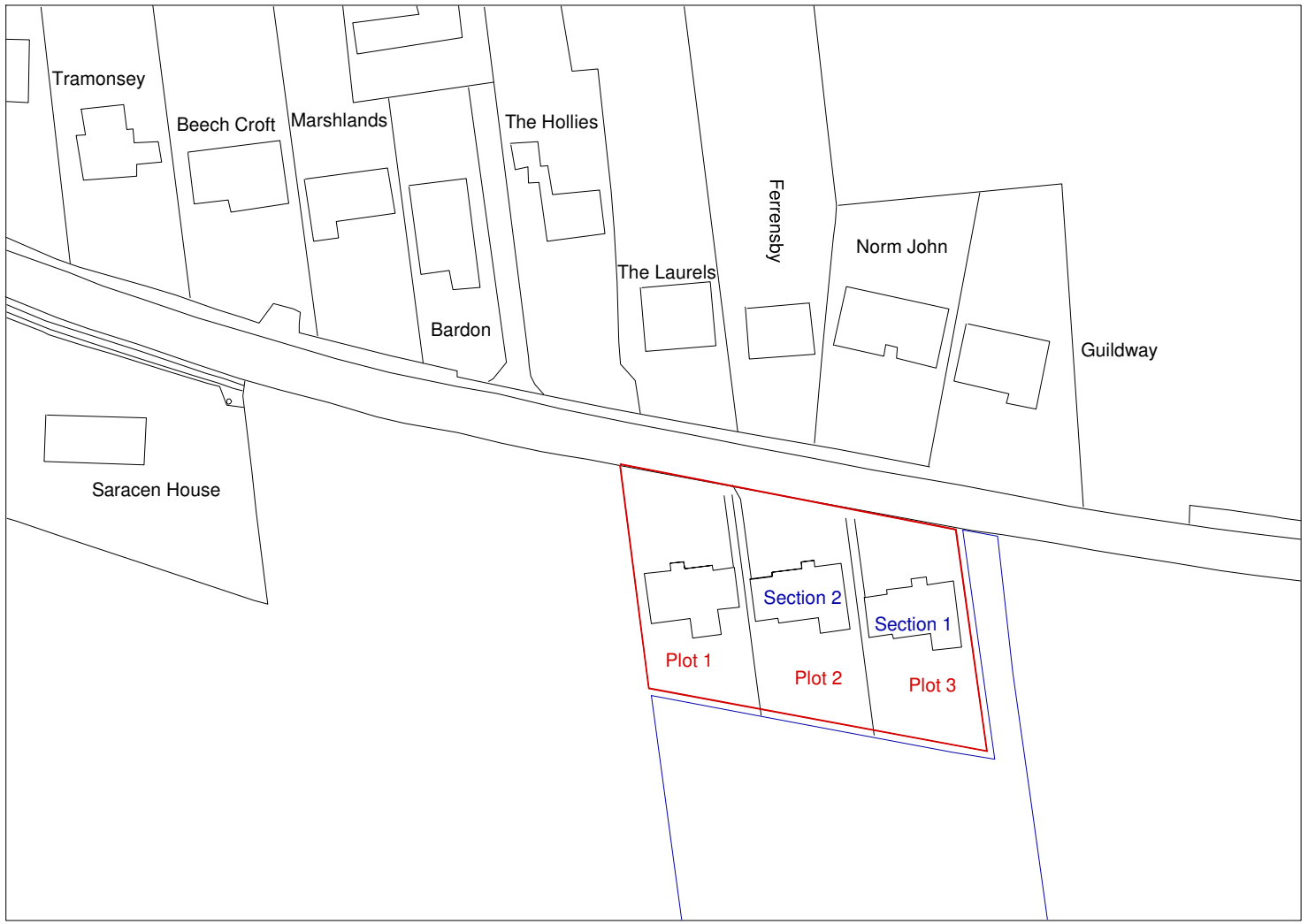


Figure 1 - General location plan



ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES		
Project Name: Washway Road, Saracen's Head		
Scale 1:8000	Drawn by: KLB	Report No: 29/21

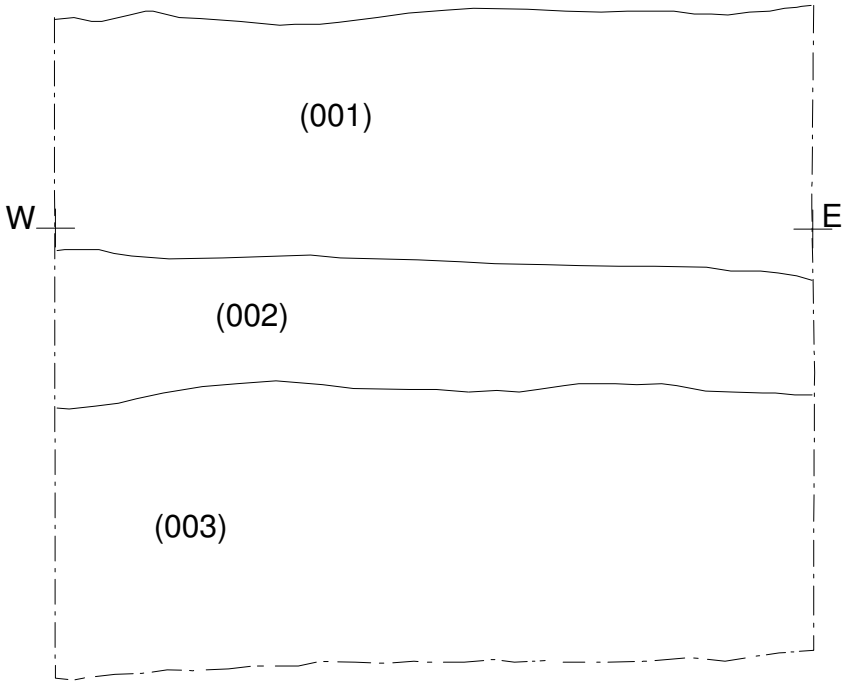
Figure 2 Site location



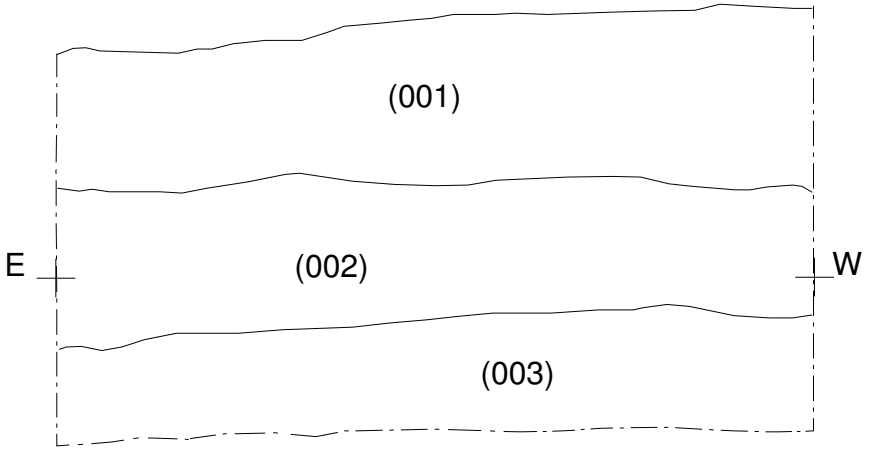
ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROJECT SERVICES

Project Name: Washway Road, Saracen's Head		
Scale 1:1000	Drawn by: KLB	Report No: 29/21

Figure 3 Location of groundworks



Section 1



Section 2



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Scale 1:10	Drawn by: KLB	Report No: 29/21

Figure 4 Sections 1 and 2



Plate 1 Plot 3, fully excavated, looking south



Plate 2 Section 1 in Plot 3, looking north



Plate 3 Plot 2, fully excavated, looking north



Plate 4 Section 2 in Plot 2, looking south

Appendix 1

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Description	Interpretation
001	Friable dark greyish brown silty sandy soil with occasional rooting. 0.33m thick.	Topsoil
002	Friable mid greyish brown clayey silt. 0.17m thick.	Subsoil
003	Firm dark yellowish brown clayey silt. 0.38m thick but extended beyond the LOE.	Natural

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY

Alluvium	Deposits laid down by water. Marine alluvium is deposited by the sea, and fresh water alluvium is laid down by rivers and in lakes.
Context	An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretation of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, *e.g*. [004].
Cut	A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded**.**
Domesday Survey	A survey of property ownership in England compiled on the instruction of William I for taxation purposes in 1086 AD.
Dumped deposit	A layer of material, often rubble, deliberately dumped in order to level up an area.
Layer	A layer is an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut
Medieval	The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.
Natural	Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity
Norman	Architectural style current in the 11th-12th centuries. Also known as Romanesque.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Prehistoric	The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.
Saltern	Saltmaking site where salt is obtained from sea water through evaporation.
Unstratified	Not related to definable layers (strata).

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

1	Context register sheet
3	Context record sheets
2	Daily record sheets
1	Photographic record sheet
1	Section record sheet
1	Sheet of scale drawings

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services
The Old School
Cameron Street
Heckington
Sleaford
Lincolnshire
NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

The Collection
Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire
Danes Terrace
Lincoln
LN2 1LP

Accession Number:	LCNCC:2021.118
Archaeological Project Services Site Code:	SHWR21
OASIS record number	archaeol1-503996

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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Summary for archaeol1-503996

OASIS ID (UID)	archaeol1-503996
Project Name	Archaeological Intervention at Land off Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode. Lincolnshire
Activity type	Archaeological Intervention
Project Identifier(s)	Archaeological monitoring and recording
Planning Id	H23-0231-18
Reason For Investigation	Planning requirement
Organisation Responsible for work	Archaeological Project Services
Project Dates	29-Jun-2021 - 30-Jun-2021
Location	Land off Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode. Lincolnshire NGR : TF 34390 26830 LL : 52.8222562844222, -0.0070512881639 12 Fig : 534390,326830
Administrative Areas	Country : England County : Lincolnshire District : South Holland Parish : Whaplode
Project Methodology	Archaeological monitoring and recording was undertaken during groundworks associated with the development of a site at Washway Road, Saracen's Head, Whaplode, comprising two detached dwellings. The excavation of the development area was carried out by a 360° mechanical excavator with a 0.7m wide toothless ditching bucket. Following excavation, the base and sides of the foundation trenches were examined for potential archaeological features.
Project Results	The groundworks revealed a sequence of natural, subsoil and topsoil. No archaeological features or finds were present.
Keywords	
HER	Lincolnshire HER - unRev - STANDARD
HER Identifiers	
Archives	Documentary Archive, Digital Archive - to be deposited with The Collection: Art and Archaeology in Lincolnshire