

**Perrins Cottages, High Street
Fiskerton
Lincolnshire**

An Archaeological Assessment

for

D. Perkins & Associates Limited

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May 1994

1.0 NON TECHNICAL SUMMARY

D. Perkins & Associates Limited, on behalf of their Clients, commissioned Pre-Construct Archaeology to undertake an archaeological assessment of an area of land immediately south of the High Street Fiskerton, a short distance east of the parish church (Fig. 1).

Following a review of the major sources of information, it has been concluded that the archaeological potential of the site may be high, though verification is dependant on the results of a field evaluation, the methodology for which has already been established (below).

The archaeo-environmental potential of the site is considered to be high.

The central National Grid Reference is TF 0485 7191

2.0. INTRODUCTION

This assessment was commissioned by D. Perkins & Associates Ltd., on behalf of their Clients, in advance of housing development on land to the south of High Street, Fiskerton. The Client has been advised by the County Archaeological Officer that a field evaluation must take place on the site before planning permission will be granted. It is a further requirement of the planning authority that, prior to field evaluation, an assessment of the archaeological potential be undertaken. It is understood that a full desk-top study is unnecessary and that the assessment is to comprise a review of the major sources of information only.

This report was prepared between Sunday, May 15th and Tuesday, May 17th, 1994 by Colin Palmer- Brown of Pre-Construct Archaeology. Research included a visual inspection of the site; inspection of the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) held at the City & County Museum, Lincoln. Aerial photographic cover-searches were requested from Cambridge University Dept. of Aerial Photography and published and unpublished information was examined from records held by Pre-Construct Archaeology and the Local Studies Library, Lincoln. The National Monuments aerial photographic library in Swindon was not consulted as field work on the site was due to commence before the information could be obtained, and because this information was supplied by Lindsey Archaeological Services, to whom thanks are expressed.

3.0. THE PROPOSED SCHEME.

3.1 Location and description

The Site lies on the west side of the village of Fiskerton, less than 50m east of the church. Its overall area measures approximately 4276m². In plan, the land unit is basically L-shaped and, for the most part, is in an over-grown, derelict state. The northern part of the area lies beneath modern concrete and tarmac associated with the Five Mile Hotel, a disused structure fronting the High Street. Immediately south of the tarmac/concrete is a series of irregular hummocks which appear to be dumped building debris and other material.

Within the area, where four detached dwellings are to be sited, the land undulates slightly and there is a noticeable, though gradual, north-south slope which starts at a point c. 20m north of the southern boundary of the proposal area. This line may demarcate the edge of the Witham flood plain (the modern course of the river lies approximately 400m further south).

The land is approximately 10m OD.

3.2 The Proposed Scheme

The proposed development comprises four detached houses and garages with associated access, service trenches etc. (Fig. 2). Detailed plans incorporating foundation designs, depths of services etc. have not been provided. A full impact assessment is not possible before evaluation procedures have been fully implemented.

4.0. REPORT OBJECTIVES

This report aims to identify and assess archaeological deposits which may be threatened by construction works associated with development at the Fiskerton site. It will, in essence, gather sufficient information to provide interested parties with data from which a reasoned judgement may be made regarding a programme of field evaluation. The assessment is the first stage in a process of archaeological investigation and may be procedurally followed by further assessments and exploratory trial work.

5.0 GEOLOGY

The proximity of the River Witham has greatly affected post-glacial sediment development, and parent material is intermittently overlain with alluvial deposits and peat, sometimes masking archaeological features.

The primary geological units comprise Kellaways Sand and clay but the site lies close to known deposits of peat and silt. These deposits were recorded in 1981 when an Iron Age timber causeway/jetty was excavated on the north side of the river, approximately 300m south of the proposed development. At that time, a record was made of the limit of peat development which was thought to lie south of the present scheme (it is not always possible in a complex environment, however, to draw universal conclusions from data derived from only one study area).

6.0 THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Fiskerton, a small village approximately 8km east of Lincoln on the north bank of the Witham, is recorded as *Fiscartone* in the Domesday Book of 1086. Three fisheries are described in the latter document and the settlement name translates 'farmstead or village of the fishermen' (Mills, 1993).

The parish church, St Clements, which lies very close to the proposed development, was much restored in 1863, though traces of Norman masonry are preserved within the nave and chancel (Mee, 1970). It was given to Peterborough, apparently by Edward the Confessor, and the living is still in the gift of the Dean and Chapter of that city.

Remains of considerably earlier periods have been recorded in the large parish of Fiskerton; most notably an early Iron Age causeway/jetty which lies approximately 350m south of the proposed development, and was the subject of a large scale excavation in 1981 (Field, unpublished). A double row of vertical and horizontal timbers lay preserved in peats of the Witham Fen, these being

set almost perpendicular to the modern course of the river. Preserved amongst the timbers were no fewer than five swords (some within scabbards), metal axes, hammers and files. Other metallic objects were also recovered during the excavation and it is possible that these finds were discarded as part of a religious or votive gesture (during the Iron Age, ritual seems usually to have been directed towards natural features such as rivers). Two, almost complete, ceramic jars were found crushed, *in situ*, beneath horizontal timbers, the only complete examples of such early regional pottery to date (Elsdon 1993).

It is not clear whether the causeway/jetty was constructed merely to serve local needs, affording access to the river in what would have been a difficult and marshy environment, or if it connected with a more widely-used north-south trackway - a crossing point for travellers. However, the fact that it was orientated in the direction of the modern village (though east of the present development) suggests the possibility that early Iron Age settlement remains may lie within/amongst the modern settlement itself, protected from the pre-canalised threat of seasonal flooding.

The causeway/jetty is just one feature set amongst a complex prehistoric landscape which has been recorded in the form of cropmarks, chance finds and systematic archaeological investigations. Only 45m south of the proposed development, a buried hoard of four Bronze Age axes was discovered in 1890 [2]. Less than 30m south-west of the site, two barrows (burial mounds) of the same period have been recorded, [11], and further barrows have been recorded south of the river in Washingborough Parish. Not far from the 1981 excavations of the Iron Age jetty/causeway, a Bronze Age dagger was dredged from the river in 1890 {8}.

Finds dating to within the Neolithic period have also been recorded in the parish, some relatively close to the proposed development area [1].

Roman and medieval finds are also well-represented in the area. Roman pottery and other artefacts were recorded during excavations of the Iron Age jetty/causeway, probably reflecting the continued importance attached to a crossing of the Witham at this point. A coin of Constantine II was discovered in 1969 on the west side of the village, approximately 300m west of the proposed development area {4}.

Medieval finds, usually pottery sherds and scatters, have been picked up at various points around the village and, in 1954, a Viking sword was recovered from the Witham, [9], though the weapon has been subsequently lost. Approximately 650m west of the point where the discovery was made, three silver-gilt, disc-headed ornamental Anglo-Saxon pins were dredged from the Witham, [7].

Other significant, and often unique, finds made in the area include a prehistoric dug-out canoe, which was found east of the village preserved in peat at Short Ferry. Wood from the boat which was submitted for radiocarbon dating suggested it was late Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date. A section of an Iron Age war trumpet, or *Carnyx*, was dredged from the river in 1768. The find was made at Tattershall Ferry; thought to refer to a ferry crossing at Fiskerton rather than Tattershall (May, 1976).

River-based finds described above are only a few in a large collection of objects which have been dredged from the Witham silts over the past two hundred years or so. Some of the richest finds have been dated to within the earlier part of the Iron Age, the most notable example being the famous 'Witham Shield, a beautifully-worked object of prestige and/or war which was recovered during dredging below Lincoln in 1826. This shield is one of the finest and most complete objects of Iron Age art and design to have been found in Europe.

It is unfortunate that many finds recorded in the parish and surrounding area occurred by chance, rather than by design. It is considered important, therefore, that sites which lie within this rich landscape, which are prone to destruction during development, are identified before they are directly threatened.

7.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEO-ENVIRONMENTAL POTENTIAL

Although it is clear that the proposed development lies within a complex historic landscape, it has not been possible to define site-specific archaeological resources during the compilation of this report. As part of the research, the aerial photographic collections at both Cambridge University and the Sites and Monuments Record at the City & County Museum, Lincoln were consulted, though neither of these institutions held any evidence. The fact that significant numbers of potential Bronze Age barrows and other monuments have been recorded from the air, not very far from the site, raises the possibility that such monuments may also lie within the proposed development area.

The archaeo-environmental potential of the site may be high, especially if peat deposits survive. The timber causeway excavated in 1981 had lain preserved within silts and peats of the Witham Fen, as did a number of prehistoric timber boats; one of which lay quite close to the proposed development, closer to the river. It is not certain whether peat deposits extend this far north of the modern course of the Witham though, if they do, such deposits will inevitably contain valuable environmental data such as pollen, snail shells, insect remains etc.

8.0 IMPACTS TO BURIED ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Precise construction details, depicting depths of foundations, services etc. have not been provided for the purposes of this report, though a 1:500 plan, provided by the Client, does indicate where the principal impact areas will be (Fig. 2). Impacts may occur during the excavation of service and foundation trenches, and during the extraction of soil for road construction.

9.0 MITIGATIONS

The Department of the Environment's Planning Policy Guidance Note 16 states that, where preliminary research suggests survival of important archaeological remains, it is reasonable for the planning authority to request the prospective developer to arrange for an archaeological field evaluation to be carried out before any decision on the planning application is taken. This sort of evaluation is quite distinct from full archaeological excavation. It is normally a rapid and (relatively) inexpensive operation, involving ground survey and small scale trial trenching, to be carried out by a professionally qualified archaeological organisation or archaeologist. Evaluations help to define the character and extent of the archaeological remains that exist in an area of a proposed development, and thus indicate the weight which ought to be attached to their preservation. They also provide information useful for identifying potential options for minimising or avoiding damage. On this basis, informed and reasonable planning decisions can be taken.

10.0 CONCLUSIONS

It has been variously concluded that the archaeological potential of the site, based on existing data, may be high. However, as the site does not appear to have supported crops capable of producing cropmarks in recent times, and as there has been no site-specific survey of the area, it is necessary that an appropriate mode of evaluation be implemented as a means of clarifying the archaeological status of the site. At this time, an intrusive phase of evaluation is planned, to be undertaken in the near future.

11.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank D. Perkins & Associates Ltd. for commissioning this report. Thanks are expressed to Julia Wise, Mark Bennett and Ian George of the City & County Museum, Lincoln for providing help and assistance during the course of research. Thanks also to Padraicin Ni Mhurchu of Cambridge University Dept. of Aerial Photography and also to Naomi Field (Lindsey Archaeological Services), for providing aerial photographic data.

12.0 REFERENCES

Elsdon, S 1993 *Iron Age Pottery in the East Midlands*

Field, N 1991 *Fiskerton in the Iron Age* (unpublished booklet)

May, J 1976 *Prehistoric Lincolnshire*

Mee, A 1970 *The Kings England: Lincolnshire*

Mills, AD. 1993 *English Place-Names*

Straw, A 1969 *Lincolnshire Natural History Brochure No. 3: Lincolnshire Soils*

APPENDIX 1

Information derived from the Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) held by the City & County Museum, Lincoln (to be used in conjunction with Fig. 1)

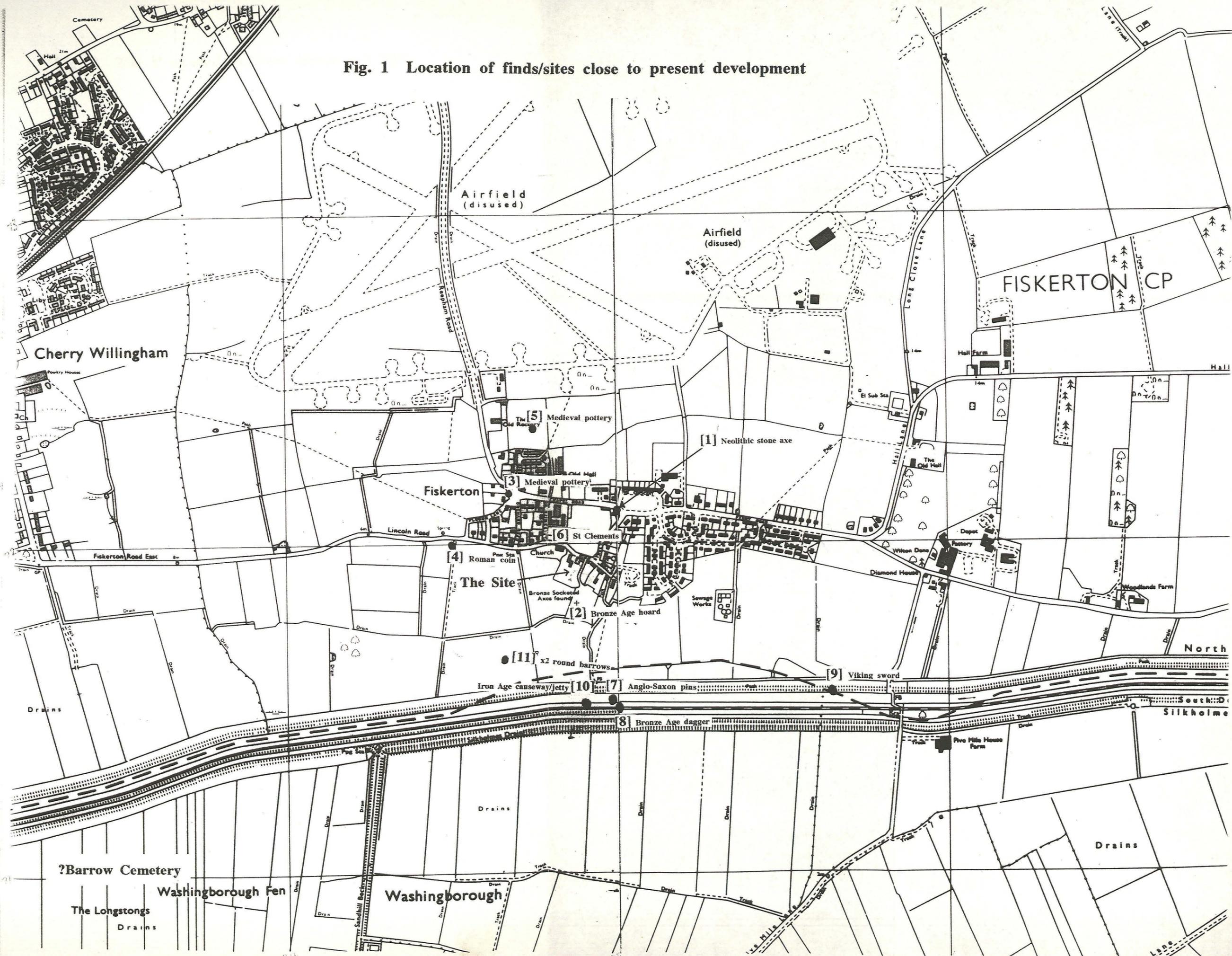
National Grid Reference	Description of sites or artefacts	No. on Fig. 1
TF 065 738	Neolithic polished stone axe (discovered 1957)	**
TF 08967120	Monoxylous dug-out canoe (Fox Type 11B). Discovered 1952 in peat below silt.	**
TF 0965 7134	R-B, med. and post-med. pottery scatters at Short Ferry	**
TF 0965 7134	Traces of wattle & daub buildings associated with 14th century pottery; excavations by A. J. White. ?Trans-shipping point from R. Witham to Barlings, Bardney or Stainfield monastic sites.	**
TF 095 714	Med. pottery scatter (1975)	**
TF 0937 7166	Double-edged sword: discovered 1872 when cleaning Barlings river	**
TF 0935 7167	Stonework (door, window and column mouldings) in wall of barn. ?Origin = Stainfield Priory.	**
TF 077720	?Site of Fiskerton Bronze Age hoard No. 2 4 socketed axes.	**
TF 094 711	Med. + later habitation site - defined by pot scatter	**
TF 094 714	Neolithic flint leaf-shaped point; discovered during dredging at Short Ferry Marina	**
TF 050 721	Neolithic polished stone axe (Langdale type). Discovered during levelling operations at Fiskerton school.	[1]
TF 0936 7163	Coin of Edward the Confessor (BMC type 3)	**
Unlocated	Flint dagger (Fiskerton)	
TF 0487 7182	Hoard of 4 Bronze socketed axes (possibility of 1 further axe from the same site). Discovered 1890.	[2]
TF 0468 7220	Medieval pottery in Chapel Field (1953)	[3]
TF 045720	Coin of Constantine II (discovered 1969).	[4]
TF 0475 7235	Body sherd + handle of 13th century jug	[5]

Map 07SW	Unlocated French medieval Jetton	**
TF 0483 7199	St Clements Church	[6]
TF 04987152	3 silver-gilt, disc-headed, ornamental Anglo-Saxon pins (?9th century). Discovered in R. Witham; now in British Museum.	[7]
TF 050 715	Middle Bronze Age dagger. Dredged from R. Witham in 1890.	[8]
TF 0472	Poorly-provenanced Early Bronze Age (Beaker) flint dagger. Found in R. Witham near Fiskerton.	**
TF 0564 7155	Viking sword, discovered 1954. No other details	[9]
TF 049 715	Early Iron Age timber causeway/jetty (excavated 1981 by F. N. Field	[10]

Cropmarks

Museum Ref. No.	National Grid Reference	Details	
5160-33	TF 0371/1	Possible barrow cemetery	
5160-32	TF 0471/3	Possible barrow cemetery	
??	TF0465 7165	x2 barrows (information supplied by Naomi Field; derived from NMR, Swindon)	[11]

Fig. 1 Location of finds/sites close to present development



Cherry Willingham

Airfield (disused)

Airfield (disused)

FISKERTON CP

Fiskerton

The Site

St Clements

Church

Iron Age causeway/jetty

[11] x2 round barrows

[10] Iron Age causeway/jetty

[7] Anglo-Saxon pins

[8] Bronze Age dagger

[9] Viking sword

[2] Bronze Age hoard

[4] Roman coin

[5] Medieval pottery

[3] Medieval pottery

[1] Neolithic stone axe

?Barrow Cemetery

Washingborough Fen

Washingborough

The Longstons

Drains

Drains

Lane

Fig. 2 The Proposed Scheme (Scale = 1:500)

