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**LAND OFF NORTHOLME,
GAINSBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE :
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION**

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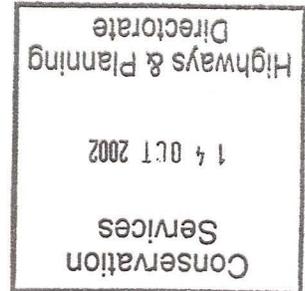
LAND OFF NORTHOLME,
GAINSBOROUGH, LINCOLNSHIRE :
ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION

for

Gainsborough Trinity Supporters Club
North Street
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire
DN21 2HU

SK 8166 9028 NGB02 2002.322

September 2002



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SYNOPSIS

An archaeological evaluation was carried out before determination of an application for residential development. Rapid desktop assessment was followed by the excavation of two trenches each 15 x 1.5m. No archaeological features were encountered, but four potsherds suggested Saxo-Norman and later medieval occupation in the vicinity.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** This report has been prepared by the *Tony Sumpter Archaeological Consultancy* (the archaeological consultant) for Gainsborough Trinity Supporters Club (owners and developers). It describes an archaeological evaluation carried out in advance of proposed development on land off Northolme, Gainsborough (SK 8166 9028).
- 1.2** A planning application (no. M02/P/0229) was submitted for residential development (one detached, two semi-detached and four town houses).
- 1.3** The local planning authority (LPA), West Lindsey District Council, acting on the advice of the District Archaeologist for Lincolnshire County Council, requested an archaeological evaluation before determination of the application, to conform with a written scheme of investigation approved by the District Archaeologist.
- 1.4** The developers retained the archaeological consultant to implement the archaeological evaluation.
- 1.5** The evaluation is intended to accord with the *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook* (Lincolnshire CC 1998). It is based on the requirements of *Planning Policy Guidance 16* (DoE 1990). It conforms with the *Code of Conduct*, takes account of the appropriate *Standards and guidance* issued by the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1997, 1999a, 1999b), and is designed to follow current best archaeological practice.

2. PROCEDURE

- 2.1 The objectives of the evaluation were to establish whether archaeological remains were present which might be affected by the proposed development; and if so, to establish their character, extent, condition, dating and importance.
- 2.2 Plans were provided by the architect, Graham Smith Design of Bawtry.
- 2.3 The application area and environs were inspected.
- 2.4 A rapid desktop assessment was carried out using information from the County Sites & Monuments Record (SMR) supplied by the District Archaeologist, and the literature.
- 2.5 A site code (NGB02) and accession number (2002.322) were obtained from the City & County Museum at Lincoln.
- 2.6 A specification was prepared (Sumpter 2002), and duly approved by the District Archaeologist as an appropriate written scheme of investigation.
- 2.7 The application area, which is normally in daily use, was closed and secured for safety reasons and the field evaluation was implemented as described in Section 6 below.
- 2.8 The District Archaeologist was kept in touch with progress.

3. EXISTING HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3.1 General

Gainsborough has been much more important in the past than the present, mainly because of the Trent which has served both as a frontier and a means of transport.

3.2 Roman

The nearest major Roman settlement is 4½ miles south at Littleborough, now in Nottinghamshire. In Roman times the Trent may have run west of Littleborough, which probably originated as a fort on the east bank to guard the crossing of the road from Lincoln to Doncaster. A fort is also known at nearby Marton (OS 1991). Later in the Roman period a pottery industry developed along the east bank with kilns at Lea, Knaith and Torksey to the south of Gainsborough, and Wildsworth to the north (Whitwell 1982, 135-36; Swan 1984, 21).

3.3 Saxon and Danish

The Trent was the frontier of the kingdom of Lindsey which came alternately under Mercia and Northumbria during the conflicts of the 7th century (Rogers 1971, 18). When Danish raids began, the Humber and Trent gave easy access to the Midlands. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* records that in AD 873 the Danish army established winter quarters at Torksey. Subsequently in 1013 the Danish king Sweyn Forkbeard sailed up the Trent to Gainsborough, leaving his son Canute in charge of the fleet while he raided the South. On Sweyn's death in February 1014 Canute succeeded and remained at Gainsborough until Easter, but before he could resume plundering was driven off by the English king Ethelred (Ingram 1912, 112-13).

3.4 Medieval

The Domesday survey of 1086 indicates that Gainsborough, in Corringham wapentake, was a hamlet with no church. The manor, comprising arable, meadow and coppice woodland, was awarded to Geoffrey de Wirce after the Conquest, and changed hands repeatedly throughout the Middle Ages (Foster & Longley 1924, 191, 242; White 1842, 502).

Charters were granted for an annual fair in 1242 and a market in 1383 (White 1842, 502; Cox 1924, 133).

Gainsborough flourished as an entrepôt, particularly from the wool trade.

3.5 Post-medieval

The grammar school was founded in 1589, though now in 20th century buildings. During the Civil War Gainsborough was twice captured by the Royalists and twice by the Parliamentarians. The only serious fighting was a skirmish at Lea in 1643 in which Cromwell took part (Moor 1904, 132-41; Rogers 1970, 53-56).

Prosperity apparently declined between the 16th and the 18th century, but there was enough Georgian affluence to rebuild the parish church and erect large town houses (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 241, 245).

The parish was enclosed in 1795 (White 1842, 503).

3.6 Recent

Gainsborough has for centuries been a market town serving a wide hinterland. In the late 18th century it became increasingly prominent as an inland port following the widespread development of canals linked to the Trent.

In 1791 the ferry across the river was replaced by a three-arched stone bridge (widened in 1964), with two toll-houses on the Lincolnshire side which still stand. The 19th century saw enhanced prosperity with the growth of a range of light industries including engineering, shipbuilding, coachbuilding, corn milling, linseed milling, malting and brewing, and plaster manufacture.

The introduction of steam navigation between Gainsborough and Hull in 1814 cut the journey time for the 56 miles from two or three days to five hours. There were daily steam packets to Hull and sailings to London, Newcastle and inland ports.

Stagecoaches ran to Lincoln, Retford, Nottingham, Derby, Doncaster and Sheffield. International trade also flourished and the Trent became lined with wharves and substantial warehouses, some of which survive. By 1834 transhipment had reached 158,000 tons and in 1840 Gainsborough was granted the right to a Customs House (White 1842, 503, 518; Moor 1904, 16 (photo)).

By 1841 the town had a variety of shops, 43 hotels and inns, and 11 beerhouses (White 1842, 510-20). Six new churches and chapels were created in the 19th century (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 242-43).

In 1849 the railway arrived, later aiding the success of Marshall's Britannia Works, founded in 1855 to make agricultural and other machinery. It expanded to cover 19 acres with 5,000 employees and became synonymous with Gainsborough. During both World Wars it produced armaments. The works closed in the second half of the 20th century but much remains including the imposing Beaumont Street façade (Moor 1904, 248-51, 240 (photo.); Cox 1924, 133).

The population of Gainsborough grew from 4,500 in 1801 to 19,200 in 1901 (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 241). But river transport was supplanted by the railways and ultimately the roads, the town's economy stagnated, and by 1961 the population had decreased to 17,000. Pevsner (1964, 245) called it 'a decayed town with great slum clearance problems'. Since then rebuilding has begun to regenerate its economy, with new supermarkets and notably the re-routed A631 Thorndike Way serving light industrial and residential estates on the higher ground to the west.

3.7 Literary works

Descriptions of the 19th century town are provided in *The Mill on the Floss* (1860) by George Eliot, which is set in Gainsborough (disguised as St Ogg's); and *Our Old Town* (1857) by local author Thomas Miller (1807-74), recalling the Gainsborough of his childhood.

3.8 Northolme

Until the late 20th century expansion in Gainsborough was mainly to the north and south. As at Newark, the next town upstream, there was little settlement west of the Trent; and from the mid-19th century the railway acted as a constraint to the east. Northolme, though only 250m from the parish church, is close to the railway and was therefore on the fringes of the Victorian town. Before the Diamond Jubilee building surge of 1897, few residents are noted in White's Directory (1892).

4. EXISTING ARCHAEOLOGICAL INFORMATION

4.1 General

Despite the history of Gainsborough, visible remains of antiquity are limited. There has been little archaeological investigation and few recorded finds.

4.2 Medieval pottery

Medieval pottery and tile were found in the general area of Gainsborough Trinity football ground (no exact provenance : Lincolnshire County SMR).

4.3 Roman coin

A base tetradrachm of Probus, struck in AD 281 at Alexandria, was found in Gainsborough in 1961 (no exact provenance : Petch 1962, 104).

4.4 Thonock (c. 1 mile north-east)

Roman features were found in 1994 during evaluation (John Samuels, pers. comm.).

4.5 Castle Hills, Thonock (1.3km north)

A Norman ringwork castle between two baileys was retrospectively licensed by King Stephen in 1142 (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 245).

4.6 Dog Island (900m south-south-west)

A medieval moated site lies on the west bank of the Trent.

4.7 Parish church of All Saints, Church Street (250m south-west)

Mee suggests there was a 12th century church, but the earliest visible part is the 15th century tower in Perpendicular style. The remainder was demolished and rebuilt in classical style in 1736-44, with two vestries added in the 20th century. The 15th century chancel extended further than the present apse and is marked out on the ground (Moor 1904, 260-77; Pevsner & Harris 1964, 241; Mee 1949, 139).

4.8 Gainsborough Old Hall, Gladstone Street (450m south-west)

The timber-framed and brick hall of this mansion was built on the site of an earlier version some time between 1470 and 1484, when Richard III was entertained. East and west ranges of brick were added in 1597-1600; the south range has disappeared. After a chequered life this famous building has been restored and opened to the public (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 243-44, plate 36; Mee 1949, 138-39, 385 (photo)).

4.9 Friends' Meeting House, Market Street (400m south-south-west)

A Quaker chapel was built 1704-05 & altered in 1876 (Pevsner & Harris 1964, 242).

4.10 The Old Shipyard (1km west)

The Old Shipyard lies on the west bank. Its date of origin is unknown.

5. SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

(See Location Plan and Site Plan, below)

5.1 Location

The application area lies north of Gainsborough town centre at SK 8166 9028. It is bounded to the north and east by Northolme, to the south by Handel House School (19th century) on Charles Street, and to the west by the east end spectator terraces of Gainsborough Trinity Football Club (founded in 1875).

The surrounding houses are late Victorian with the exception of two 1930s semi-detached pairs to the north-east.

The river Trent flows 600m to the south-west.

5.2 Description

The application area is triangular. The longest side, on Northolme, measures 71m and the total extent is c. 1,900m² (c. 0.5 acre). Much of it is occupied by a row of 20 sectional concrete lock-up garages of mid-20th century type, with gravelled forecourt. The eastern angle is lawn with semi-mature trees, protected by chain-link fencing and concrete bollards and used as a play area by the adjacent school.

The surrounding land dips slightly from south to north and from east to west.

The application area has a mean elevation of 9m (30ft) OD and is flat and horizontal indicating it has been artificially levelled, perhaps when the garages were built.

5.3 Geology

The underlying solid geology is Mercia Mudstone of Triassic origin. Gypsum occurs as multiple thin beds in the mudstone and the thickest horizon, near the top of the group, was formerly exploited near Gainsborough. To the east, deeply-buried Upper Carboniferous sandstones deposited in the Lower Carboniferous Gainsborough Trough are a source of oil and natural gas. The glacial geology is marked by tills (boulder clay deposits) east and north of Gainsborough, with some associated sand and gravel. Also to the north are spreads of blown sand, extensively wooded.

The town lies on the east bank of the Trent within its tidal zone and both banks are alluvial (Kent *et al.* 1980), though more obviously on the lower ground to the west. Periodic flooding has occurred since records began.

6. FIELD EVALUATION

(See Site Plan and Section Drawings, below)

6.1 The plant in use was a JCB 3CX hydraulic digger-loader fitted with a 1.5m toothless bucket on the back-actor.

6.2 Two trenches were excavated in the garage forecourt as designated in the specification. Each was 15 x 1.5m and taken down in horizontal spits initially of 100mm, reducing to 50mm and then to 25mm until the natural sand was exposed throughout. Manual cleaning was undertaken as required. After final recording the trenches were backfilled and compacted by the JCB to restore a level surface.

6.3 Trench 1

Strata : 100mm hardcore, comprising gravel over limestone chippings and pieces of 20th century 3-inch brick

700mm medium-brown earth, increasing to 1.0m at the north end

Natural firm yellow-brown sand sloping gradually to the north.

The medium-brown earth appeared uniform in colour and consistency. Near the north end, however, isolated 3-inch bricks occurred down to 400mm below ground level, and tree roots had penetrated to a depth of 1.0m.

No features of antiquity were observed.

At 400mm from the north end and a depth of 400mm, two potsherds (1) & (2) were found in the medium-brown earth.

At 1.0m from the north end and a depth of 1.0m, three sherds (3) - (5) were found at the interface of the medium-brown earth and natural sand.

At 9.0m from the north end and a depth of 700mm, two fragmentary sherds (6) & (7) were found at the interface of the medium-brown earth and natural sand.

Trench 2

Strata : 100mm hardcore, comprising gravel over limestone chippings and numerous 20th century 3-inch bricks

600mm medium-brown earth, increasing to 700mm at the north end

Natural firm moist yellow-brown sand sloping gradually to the north.

In the southernmost 10m of the trench there were many bricks in the medium-brown earth to a depth of 400mm below ground level.

The natural sand was moister than in Trench 1 and stained darker towards the mid-point; olfactory evidence suggested a leaking drain nearby.

No features of antiquity were observed.

No artefacts were found other than the 3-inch bricks noted above.

7. ARTEFACTS

(Pottery identification and dating by courtesy of Mr Malcolm Dolby, Curator of Bassetlaw Museums, Nottinghamshire)

7.1 Pottery from Trench 1

- (1) Foot-ring base of earthenware vessel, 19th century.
Hard off-white fabric; clear glaze slightly crazed, internal blue underglaze.
Foot-ring diameter *c.* 90mm. Unabraded fractures.

- (2) Rim of pancheon, 19th century
Hard pink fabric, surfaces smoothed darker; internal treacly black glaze.
Rim diameter *c.* 430mm. Unabraded fractures.

- (3) Basal sherd of jug in Humber ware, probably 14th century.
Hard pink fabric with grey reduced core, turned after removal from wheel;
spots of dark brown glaze on underside outside firing ring from jug stacked above.
Basal diameter *c.* 180mm. Unabraded fractures.

- (4) Basal sherd of jug in Humber ware, probably 14th century.
Hard pink fabric, turned after removal from wheel; spots of dark brown glaze on
underside. Basal diameter *c.* 160mm. Unabraded fractures.

- (5) Rim of Saxo-Norman cooking pot in Torksey-type ware.
Everted rim with slight lid-seating in hard pink fabric, externally sooted.
Rim diameter *c.* 130mm. Unabraded fractures. Form comparable to a Torksey-type
ware cooking pot from York dated *c.* 850-1100 (Holdsworth 1978, fig. 5, no. 24).

- (6) Basal fragment of cooking pot in shelly gritted ware, 12th century.
Coarse pale pink fabric with greyish-pink surfaces, pitted where small mineral grits
dissolved out. Slightly abraded fractures.

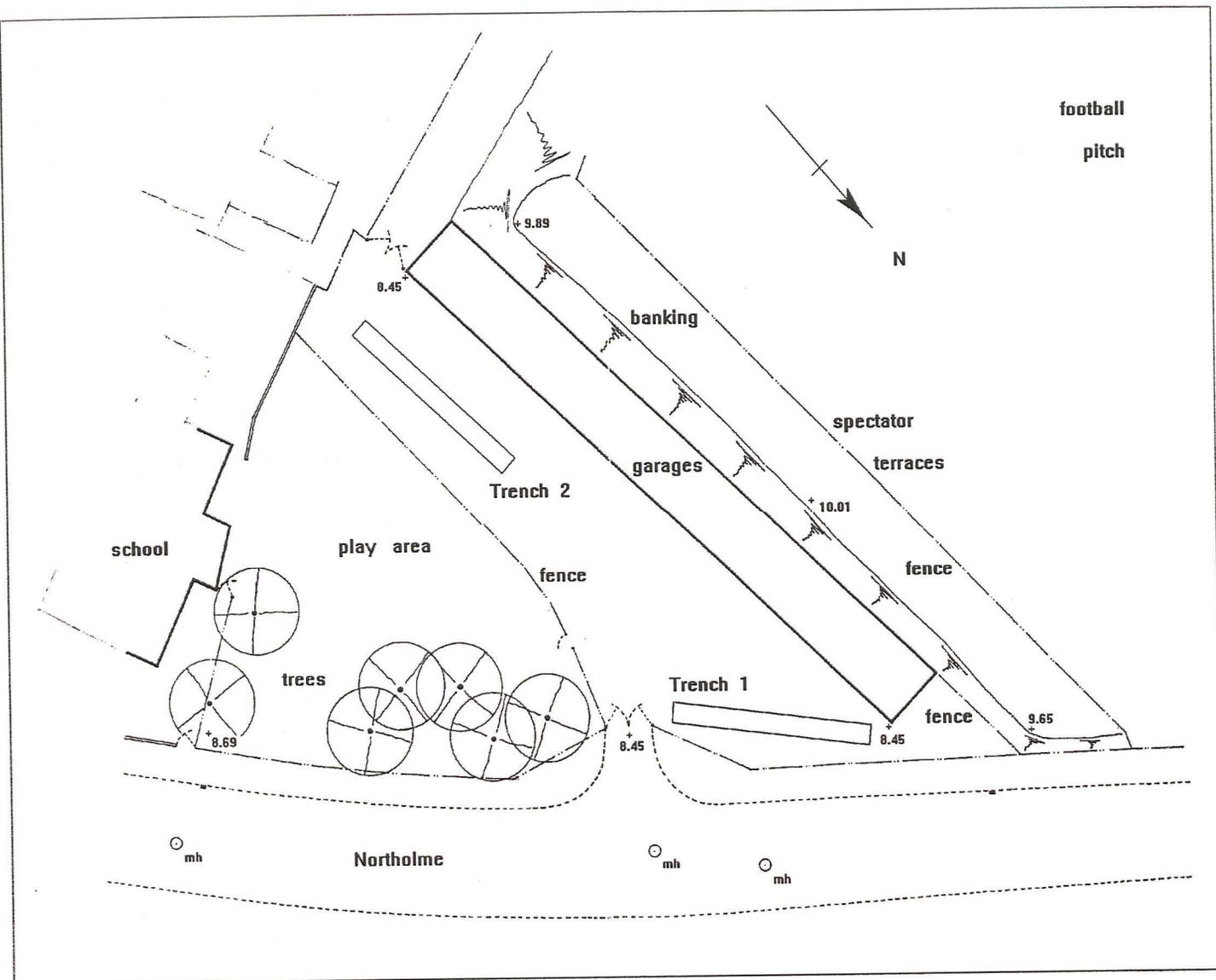
- (7) Unassignable rim fragment.
Coarse medium-grey fabric with sparse mineral grits. Too small to identify form.

8. DISCUSSION

- 8.1 The natural gravel-free sand is probably part of the wind-blown deposits occurring to the north of Gainsborough and covering the underlying Mercia Mudstone. Within the application area it was seen to slope from 600mm below ground level at the south end to a depth of 1.0m at the north end, following the lie of the surrounding land.
- 8.2 The application area was levelled in the mid-20th century, if not before. This was probably done by excavating material from the higher southern end and spreading it to build up the area to the north, with profuse 3-inch bricks as ballast especially at the south end, before surfacing with chippings and gravel. The extent to which this took place is unknown as no tip lines were visible, but in both trenches the presence of intrusive bricks down to 400mm below ground level showed that the uppermost 300mm of medium-brown earth was disturbed.
- 8.3 No structural remains were located, though the sand was an ideal matrix for the recognition of cut features.
- 8.4 The paucity of artefacts was striking with only seven potsherds from Trench 1, and none from Trench 2.
- 8.5 The provenance of the two 19th century vessels was probably within the disturbed zone of the medium-brown earth. Speculatively, they might represent rubbish disposal behind Victorian houses on Charles Street and could have been moved northward during levelling.
- 8.6 The four medieval sherds were all in the same stratigraphic position, at the base of the medium-brown earth and just above the natural sand. At this depth they were probably below the disturbed zone, and their unabraded condition suggests they had been discarded here or hereabouts.
- 8.7 Taken in conjunction with the medieval pottery and tile from the football ground recorded on the SMR, the implication is that there was Saxo-Norman and later medieval occupation in the near vicinity. From the absence of structural remains, the low artefact density and its concentration towards the north end, this may have been adjacent to rather than within the application area.

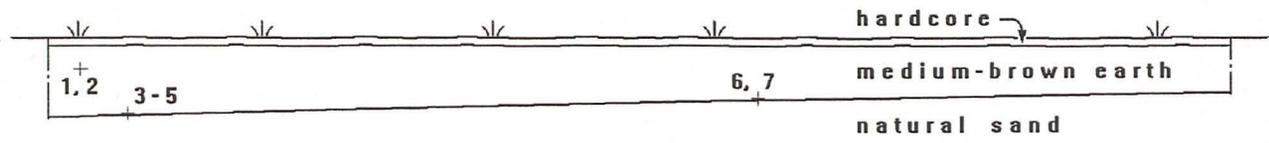
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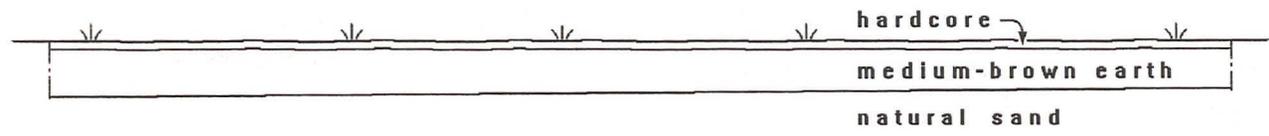


SITE PLAN (1 : 475)

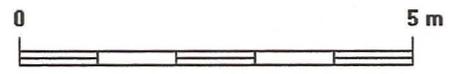
Showing locations of evaluation trenches
 (Based on a plan supplied by courtesy of Graham Smith Design)



Trench 1



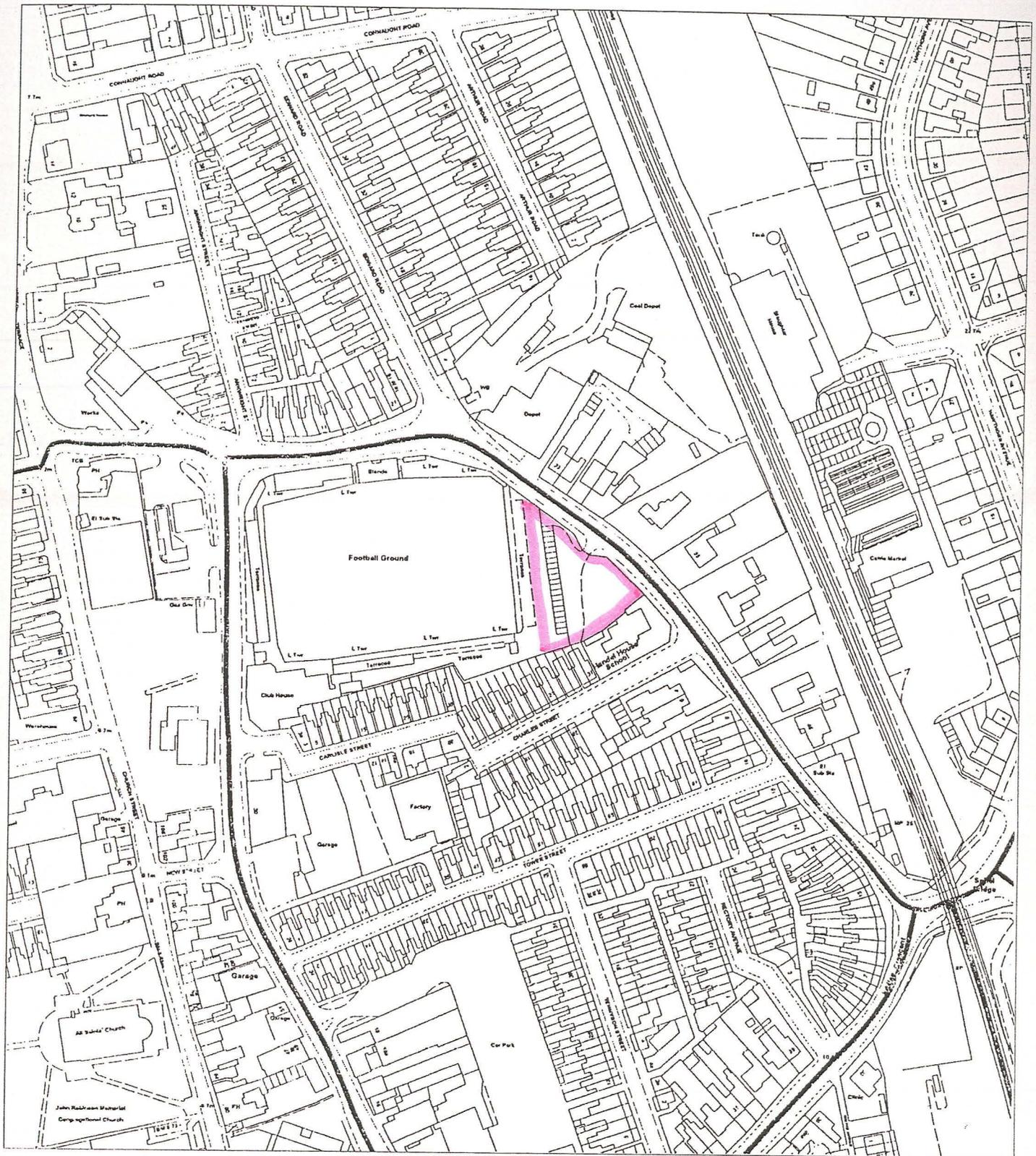
Trench 2



SECTION DRAWINGS

Trench 1 with pottery findspots, looking north-east

Trench 2, looking east



LOCATION MAP (1 : 2,500)

(Supplied by courtesy of Graham Smith Design)