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A REPORT TO
THE
CITY OF LINCOLN COUNCIL

October 2008

INNOVATION CENTRE
RUSTON WAY
LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF

PREPARED BY
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MJAS REPORT No.: 551

INNOVATION CENTRE RUSTON WAY LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

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INNOVATION CENTRE RUSTON WAY LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- *Between the 3 January and 4 February 2008, Mike Jarvis Archaeological Services undertook an archaeological watching brief on behalf of the City of Lincoln Council, during groundwork on the site of the proposed Innovation Centre, Ruston way, Lincoln (hereafter the site). The site forms part of the Ruston Way Brayford Enterprise Park for which outline planning permission was granted on 31 July 2006 (Application No.: 2006/0626/RG3).*
- *The site is located towards the south-west end of the city to the south of Brayford Pool. The site lies on the south side of Ruston Way at its west end (National Grid Reference SK 9653 7110 – centre).*
- *At the time of the watching brief preliminary groundwork on the site had already commenced and the site was covered with an extensive (up to 2m thick) layer of stone/rubble, levelling the site prior to the commencement of construction.*
- *Monitoring undertaken during the piling of the site (flight auger) revealed deposits of brick rubble, semi-organic alluvial silt and clean natural sands in the resulting up-cast, however, it was not possible to establish at what level these deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered.*
- *Monitoring the excavation of groundbeam trenches revealed that they did not penetrate through the recently imported levelling material and were, for the most part, constructed above ground level and as a result no archaeological deposits were encountered during this element of the construction. Similarly, surface and foul-water drainage connections were contained within the upper (recent) levels of the site and did not impact on undisturbed deposits.*
- *In conclusion, although recent investigations to the east and west of the site have established that this site lies on the very southern edge of a prehistoric sand island that may have been utilised during the prehistoric period, the limited nature of the watching brief resulted in a failure to reveal archaeological deposits and as a result provided no information relating to the presence of activity associated with earlier periods of the sites occupation. This information, whilst negative, will be of value in future decision making in the management of the archaeological resource in this part of Lincoln.*

INNOVATION CENTRE RUSTON WAY LINCOLN

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Between the 3 January and 4 February 2008, Mike Jarvis Archaeological Services (MJAS) undertook an archaeological watching brief on behalf of the City of Lincoln Council, during piling and groundbeam excavation on the site of the proposed Innovation Centre, Ruston way, Lincoln (hereafter the site). The site forms one element of the Ruston Way Brayford Enterprise Park (RWBEP) for which outline planning permission was granted on 31 July 2006 (Application No.: 2006/0626/RG3).

2.0 SITE LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The site is located towards the south-west end of the city to the south of Brayford Pool. The site lies at the western end of Ruston Way on the south side. To the north of the site lies accommodation blocks associated with Lincoln University and to its south by Green Lane & commercial premises. To the east lies an area of open ground earmarked for residential development as part of the RWBEP and to its west a further area of open grass land designated for development into office/retail units (National Grid Reference SK 9653 7110 – approximate centre). At the time of the watching brief preliminary groundwork on the site had commenced and the site was completely covered with an extensive (up to 2m thick) layer of stone, levelling the site prior to the commencement of construction.

Brayford Pool was formed after the last glacial period (c. 10,000 BC) by the convergence of the Rivers Witham and Till and formed an expanse of slow-moving water and although little understood, recent discoveries indicate that the area was much larger than we see today and was subject to fluctuating water levels and comprised a landscape of river channels and marshes that flooded during the winter and exposed a series of meres and pools during the warmer summer months. The Fosdyke Canal (believed to have been originally dug during the Roman Period) lies slightly north of, and roughly parallel to, the now obscured course of the River Till.

The precise location of dry ground to the south of the Brayford Pool has proved somewhat elusive to establish for any given period (especially the prehistoric) although our understanding of the topography continues to improve as more information is gathered (see Fig. 1).

During 2006 an archaeological excavation carried out 400m to the east of the site, during the digging of a floodwater storage pond associated with the development of Lincoln University, revealed nearly 800 pieces of struck or modified flint on a north-south orientated sand ridge (highest point 3.43m OD). The majority of the flints were dated to the Mesolithic period and suggested that the finds probably formed a flint preparation area associated with a hunting camp.

From the later Bronze Age (c. 1200 BC) onwards water levels generally rose and reed peat deposits formed in the area. Little evidence for Roman activity has been found in the vicinity of the site due mainly to the fact that the area to the south of Brayford Pool would have been marshland during this time (the main focus of Roman settlement lay on the east side of the River Witham, closer to the present day High Street on slightly higher ground). Evidence for later Saxon through to Post-medieval land use of the area is similarly elusive although it is almost certain that the area would have been utilised for hunting and fishing.

Map evidence (pre-1848) indicates that the area to the south of the Brayford Pool (then known as Holmes Common – Marratt's *Map of Lincoln* of 1817) remained largely undeveloped until the construction in 1849 of the Great Northern Railway's Loop Line. By the 1920's the area to the south of Brayford Pool had become intensely occupied by both the railways and factories associated with heavy industry.



Plate 1: General view of the site looking west during the excavation of ground beams for the Innovation Centre.

3.0 AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were:

- To produce an archive record of deposits and remains generally within the constraints of the groundwork contractors' programme and working methods with due regard to current health and safety legislation.
- To produce a report on the archaeological importance of the discoveries.
- To produce a project archive from which the potential for further study and academic research could be assessed.
- To provide information for accession to the Historic Environment Record (HER) and the Lincoln Urban Archaeological Database (UAD).

The watching brief required the monitoring and recording of deposits exposed during the excavation of ground beams associated with the construction of the Innovation Centre. The archaeological record was secured by means of trench-side notes, scale drawings and photographs.

4.0 ANALYSIS AND RESULTS (Fig. 1 & Pl. I)

This archaeological watching brief was commissioned after preliminary groundwork on the site had already commenced and as a result no indication as to the topographical nature of the area prior to the levelling of the site was made. Discussions with the site manager and operatives working on the site concluded that for the most part ground level was substantially lower (between 1-2m) and required the importation of a large amount of material in order to provide a suitably level area for the construction. It is believed that the area prior to the remodelling of the site was similar in level and description to the site that lay immediately to its east (proposed residential development) and comprised areas of rough grassland and dense vegetation lying at approximately 3m to 3.50m OD.

Deposits of brick rubble, semi-organic alluvial silt and clean natural sand were revealed during the piling of the site, however, it was not possible to establish at what level these deposits were encountered and no finds were recovered. It would appear likely that the sequence of deposits revealed during piling are the same as those revealed during the archaeological investigation of the sites lying to the east and west of the Innovation centre. These investigations concluded that the alluvial deposits were in all likelihood formed during the late post-medieval period and buried sometime after the mid 19th century during the formation of the railways and/or industrial occupation of the area.

Monitoring the excavation of groundbeam trenches revealed that they did not penetrate through the recently imported levelling material and were, for the most part, constructed above ground level and as a result no archaeological deposits were encountered during this element of the construction. Similarly, surface and foul-water drainage connections were contained within the imported levelling material and did not impact on undisturbed deposits.

In conclusion, although recent investigations to the east and west of the site have established that this site lies on the very southern edge of a prehistoric sand island that may have been utilised during the prehistoric period, the limited nature of the watching brief resulted in a failure to reveal archaeological deposits and as a result provided no information relating to the presence of activity associated with earlier periods of the sites occupation.

This information, whilst negative, will however be of value in future decision making in the management of the archaeological resource in this part of Lincoln.

5.0 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

MJAS would like to thank Mr P North (Lincolnshire City Council) for commissioning the watching brief and post-fieldwork analysis. Thanks are also extended to the City Archaeologist (Mr M J Jones) for his advice and guidance. Access to the City of Lincoln Council archaeological records was provided by Mr J Herridge.

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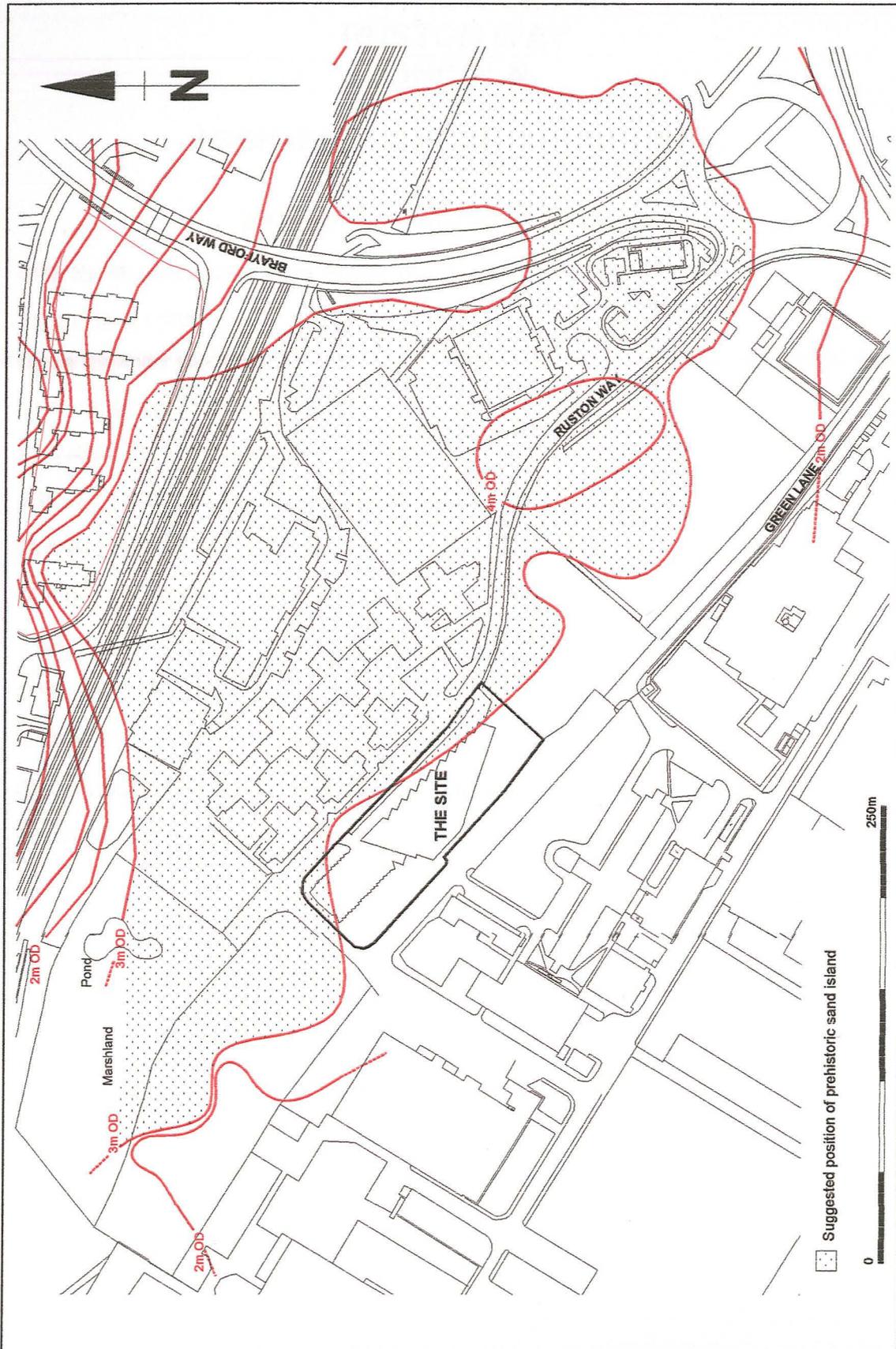


Fig. 1: Site location Map with superimposed contour plot showing the upper surface of the natural glacial sands & gravels lying within the Brayford pool basin (not to scale).

**INNOVATION CENTRE
RUSTON WAY
LINCOLN**

ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF

APPENDIX 1 – ARCHIVE SUMMARY

SITE NAME: Innovation Centre, Ruston Way, Lincoln

SITE CODE: LIRWC08

MJAS REPORT No: 551

NGR: SK 9653 7110 – centre

PROJECT TYPE: Watching Brief

PROJECT DATE: 3 January – 4 February 2008

PLANNING APPLICATION No.: 2006/0626/RG3

CLIENT: City of Lincoln Council

SMR No.: N/A

CIVIL PARISH: Lincoln

MUSEUM ACCESSION No.: 2008.156

ARCHIVE PRESENT LOCATION: MJAS, 1 Torrington Road, Lincoln, LN2 2DP

ARCHIVE FINAL LOCATION: The City and County Museum, Friars Lane, Lincoln