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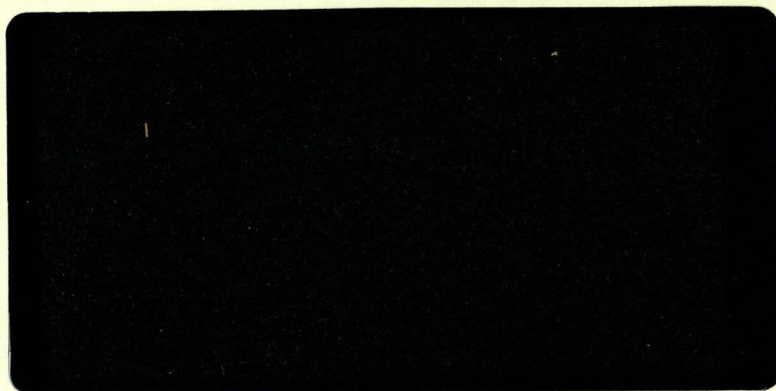
**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AT THE CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF
THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
LINCOLN,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(LCL 98)**



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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
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THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY,
LINCOLN,
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(LCL 98)**

Work Undertaken For
Dean and Chapter of Lincoln

Report Compiled by
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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the excavation of cable trenches for floodlights at Lincoln Cathedral.

The earliest recorded settlement in Lincoln dates from the late Iron Age and the city was continuously inhabited thereafter. The most impressive standing structure is the cathedral which dates from the 11th century and dominates the surrounding landscape.

Investigation of the site during development recorded a sequence of dumped deposits overlain by topsoil. A small portion of brick built wall appears to follow the route of the former Close Wall. A further wall may indicate an internal division within the cathedral grounds. Two sherds of Romano-British pottery and a collection of more recent pottery were recovered during the investigation.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as 'a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed' (IFA 1997).

2.2 Planning Background

Between the 15th and 23rd June 1998, an archaeological watching brief was undertaken during excavation of floodlight cable trenching at the north, east and western end of The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Lincoln, Lincolnshire.

Archaeological monitoring was recommended by the Cathedral Archaeologist (Dr. L. Butler) because any groundworks were likely to disturb archaeological remains.

Two areas were designated as being of particular importance, one close to the Priory Gate, had the potential to locate any continuation of the existing Close Wall.

The second area, beneath the flying buttresses of the Chapter House, was of interest in establishing whether the buttresses are freestanding or whether they are linked to the external walls of the Chapter House by hidden sleeper walls.

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned to undertake the watching brief by Mr. G. Burbidge, Clerk of the Cathedral Works Department for the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln.

2.3 Topography, Geology and Soils

The Cathedral Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary lies within the City of Lincoln, in western Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Much of the upper city, including the cathedral area, overlooks a gap in the Jurassic Limestone ridge, through which the River Witham flows.

The cathedral dominates the higher ground in the centre of the medieval city. The development is situated immediately around the cathedral at National Grid Reference ~~TF95~~^{0175 318} and lies at a height of c. 206m OD (Fig. 2).

The local soils have not been mapped within the urban area but are likely to be of the Elmton 1 Association, typically fine loamy or clayey, variably stony soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 179). The soils overlie a solid geology of Lincolnshire Limestone (BGS 1973). No

natural deposits were encountered during the watching brief.

2.4 Archaeological Background

The earliest recorded archaeological deposits within the City of Lincoln date to the later phases of the Iron Age. At the end of the 1st century AD a Roman Coloniae (town for retired soldiers) was established at Lincoln. The town continued as a major urban centre until the end of Roman administration in the early 5th century.

The place-name originated during the Romano-British Period (AD 43 - 410). Historical reference to Lincoln occurs in the second century AD, with Ptolemy referring to 'Lindon' which possibly originates from the Welsh word 'llyn' meaning lake (Ekwall 1974, 299). This element probably refers to the widening of the River Witham which is still preserved as Brayford Mere.

Lincoln lost most of its urban functions in the centuries following the collapse of Roman administration in Britain. However, the city began to emerge as a major religious centre by the 7th century following the conversion of leading families to Roman Christianity by St. Paulinus.

During the late 9th century the town grew in status under Danish settlement and became one of the Five Boroughs with a mint and successful commercial settlement in the lower parts of the city.

The Norman Conquest established Lincoln as a major town. In 1086, a royal castle was constructed incorporating the whole of the upper Roman town.

The cathedral lies partly within and partly outside the outer bailey of the original castle. Construction of the cathedral began sometime between 1072 and 1075 (Pevsner

and Harris; 1989, 444) and by 1092, the cathedral was consecrated. The cathedral is Norman in origin, but with major constructional phases occurring in the 12th - 13th centuries and 14th - 15th centuries. The cathedral originated as a cruciform building with a main apse at the east end and apses to chancel aisles. Later phases included the vaulting of the building during the mid 12th century and the addition of towers and further alterations during the 14th - 15th centuries. During the 17th century a library and cloister walk was added followed by minor repairs and restoration during the 18th - 19th centuries.

The Domesday Survey of 1086, mentions a total of 970 occupied residences existing within the city before 1066. In the later Lindsey Survey, dating from c. 1115, inhabited residences are mentioned existing in the city, with the destruction of 166 residences to clear a site for the castle (Foster and Longley 1976). A further 74 had decayed through 'misfortune, poverty and fire'.

Previous excavation at the cathedral identified that the line of the Roman and subsequent medieval town wall lay beneath St. Hugh's Choir, which was constructed c. 1195 (Stocker 1985, 16). This indicates that the easternmost cable trench would be located outside of the early city. The excavation also found that it was only when the choir had been built that the ground south of the cathedral was used for burial. The line of the city wall possibly formed the western extent of the burial ground, although no boundaries to the cemetery are known. This practice continued until the early 18th century (*ibid.* 19).

3. AIMS

The aims of the watching brief were to

locate and record any archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, function and origin.

4. METHODS

All groundworks were observed, as required by the recommendation from Dr. L. Butler the Archaeological Consultant for the Dean and Chapter of Lincoln.

Groundworks comprised the excavation of four cable trenches for floodlighting to a depth and width of *c.* 0.4m. These were excavated partly by hand and partly with a small mechanical excavator. However, the shallow depth of the trenches limited the exposure of any underlying deposits.

All cable trenches were allocated a letter ranging from A - D (Fig. 3). Trenches A and C followed the route of existing cable trenches.

Colour photographs were taken during groundworks, depicting the setting of the site and recording deposits exposed by development.

5. RESULTS

5.1 The Stratigraphic Sequence

Finds recovered during excavations were examined and a date was assigned where possible. Records of deposits exposed by groundworks were also examined. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. Phasing was assigned based on artefact dating and the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them. A stratigraphic matrix of all identified deposits was produced. Two phases were identified:

Phase 1: Undated deposits

Phase 2: Topsoil deposits

Archaeological contexts are described below. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

5.2 Phase 1: Levelling Deposits

The earliest deposits recorded in Trench B comprised mid brown humic sandy silt containing limestone, brick and tile (003). These were exposed at a depth of 0.3m below the present ground surface and continued beyond the limit of excavations. Large limestone blocks were also noted within this deposit but did not form any coherent structure. This deposit was interpreted as a levelling layer and contained a glazed medieval roof tile and 18th or 19th century tile.

Located 32m south of the junction box (C7 on Fig. 3) was a brick structure aligned northwest to southeast (005). A width of 0.32m was established, although this brick wall also continued beyond the limit of excavations.

A spread of brick and mortar was located 1m further south (006). Measuring 0.26m in extent, it was impossible to ascertain whether this was a collapsed wall or disturbed surface.

Excavation of cable trenches C and D exposed a deposit of mid yellowish brown sandy silt containing large limestones and burnt stone (004). Visible for a depth of 0.2m, this deposit, probably a dump layer, continued beyond the limit of excavation. Two sherds of pottery were recovered, both Nene Valley colour coated ware of the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. However, these finds are considered to be residual.

A patch of concrete (007) was encountered

1m east of the northeastern buttress to the Chapter House (marked '3' on Fig. 3). Located at a depth of 0.25m its extent was no more than 0.46m along the trench. As the cable trench was only excavated to the surface of this deposit, interpreting the nature of this concrete was impossible.

Situated at the east end of the cathedral and southeast of the Minster Well was an area of brickwork (008). This brickwork was situated at a depth of 0.3m and was recorded for a length of 0.9m. Interpreted as brick foundations, it is unsure as to whether they relate to a former wall or surface.

5.3 Phase 2: Topsoil Deposits

The only deposit encountered in Trench A was a 0.35m thick layer of topsoil (001), comprising dark brown humic sandy silt. To the east of the cathedral, topsoil was also sandy silt, but slightly lighter in colour (002).

6. DISCUSSION

Archaeological investigations within the cathedral grounds have recorded a number of undated features and deposits (Phase 1). A brick wall was encountered west of Priory Gate, with an area of brick and mortar rubble to the south. These two deposits are located in the vicinity of the conjectured line of the Close Wall (Fig. 4). The Close Wall would originally have been a substantial limestone wall, although repairs to the wall are known to have utilised bricks (Mouraille and Trimble 1998, 4).

Adjacent to the flying buttresses of the Chapter House was an area of concrete. The small size of the cable trench makes interpretation difficult, although it is unlikely that it is related to the medieval construction of the cathedral. It may

represent a later support to the buttress. Between the flying buttresses and the Chapter House there were no indications of hidden sleeper walls. However, the depth of the trench precludes against this being firm evidence for freestanding structures, as sleeper walls may exist at depth.

The brick foundation or surface, located immediately east of the cathedral, may represent an early path or boundary within the cathedral grounds. Such boundaries within this area are depicted on the 1938 6" Ordnance Survey map (Sheet LXX).

Other Phase 1 deposits are likely to represent dumping layers or upcast from grave digging. As such, they are likely to be very mixed in content and uniform across the area. Finds from this phase includes Romano-British pottery, medieval and post-medieval tile, probably all residual in nature.

The majority of artefactual material came from the topsoil east of the cathedral and comprised 18th - 19th century pottery and two animal bones.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological examination of cable trenches at Lincoln Cathedral was able to identify two brick walls, one of which may confirm the former route of the cathedral Close Wall. An area of concrete adjacent to a flying buttress may indicate a repair to the structure. Other deposits may represent dumping within the cathedral grounds, perhaps as a result of grave digging. Due to the depths of the trench, no archaeological features associated with the medieval construction of the cathedral or the earlier Romano-British town, were identified during the watching brief.

A range of finds were recovered, including

pottery and tile of the Romano-British period. However, these, and later finds, are believed to be residual in nature. The nature of the local site conditions would suggest that few environmental indicators (seeds, wood, shells *etc.*) would survive, other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr. G. Burbidge who commissioned the watching brief on behalf of the Cathedral Works Department. The work was coordinated by Gary Taylor and this report was edited by Gary Taylor and Tom Lane. Paul Cope-Faulkner and Neil Herbert kindly commented on the pottery and other finds. Background information was obtained from the library and records of the Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Gary Taylor
Site Supervisor: Fiona Walker
Finds Processing: Denise Buckley
Illustration: Paul Cope-Faulkner
Post-Excavation Analysis: Paul Cope-Faulkner, Jenny Young

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Pevsner, J. and Harris, J., 1989, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, (2nd Edition, revised Antram, N.)

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services
BGS British Geological Survey
IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

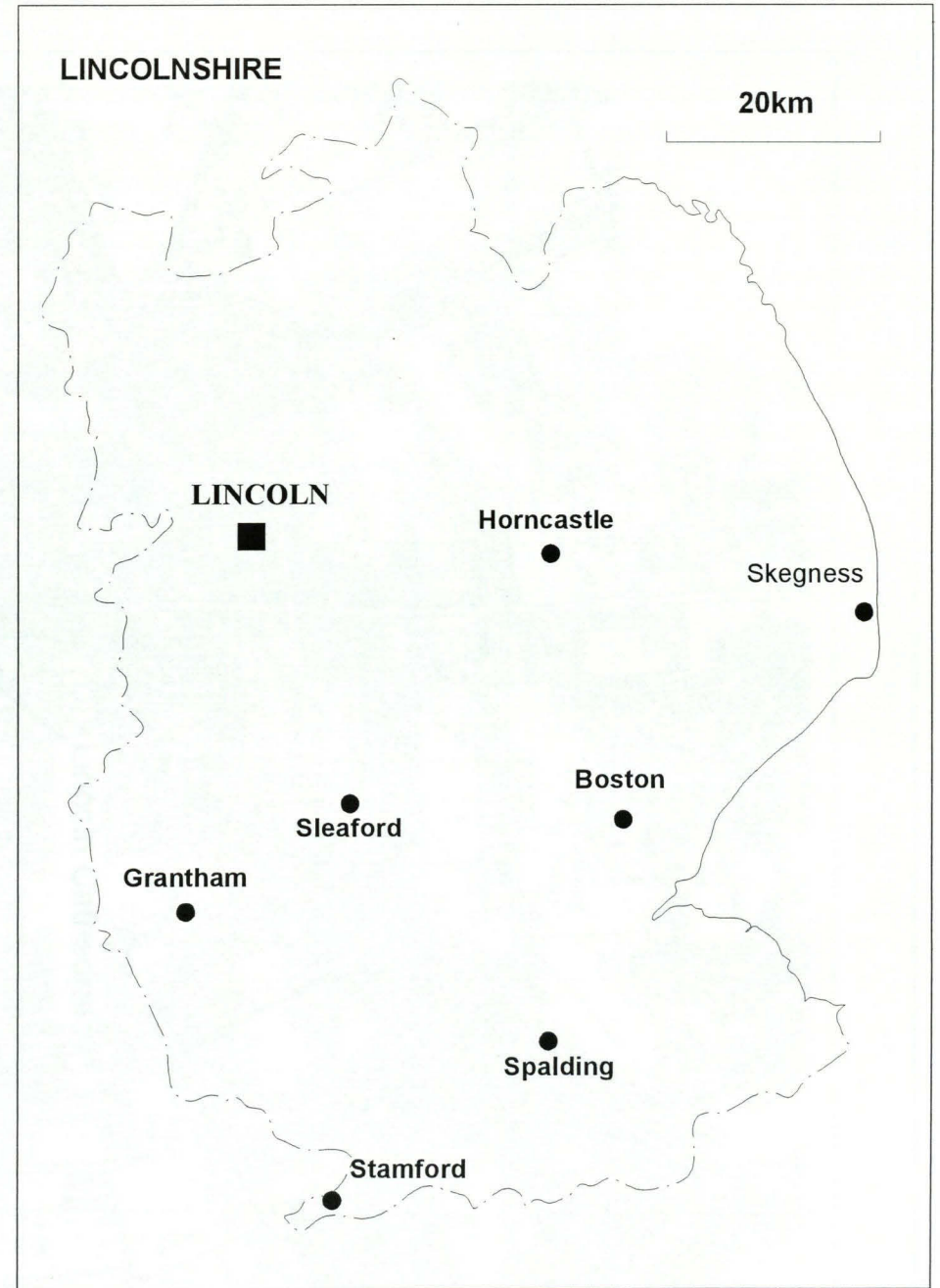
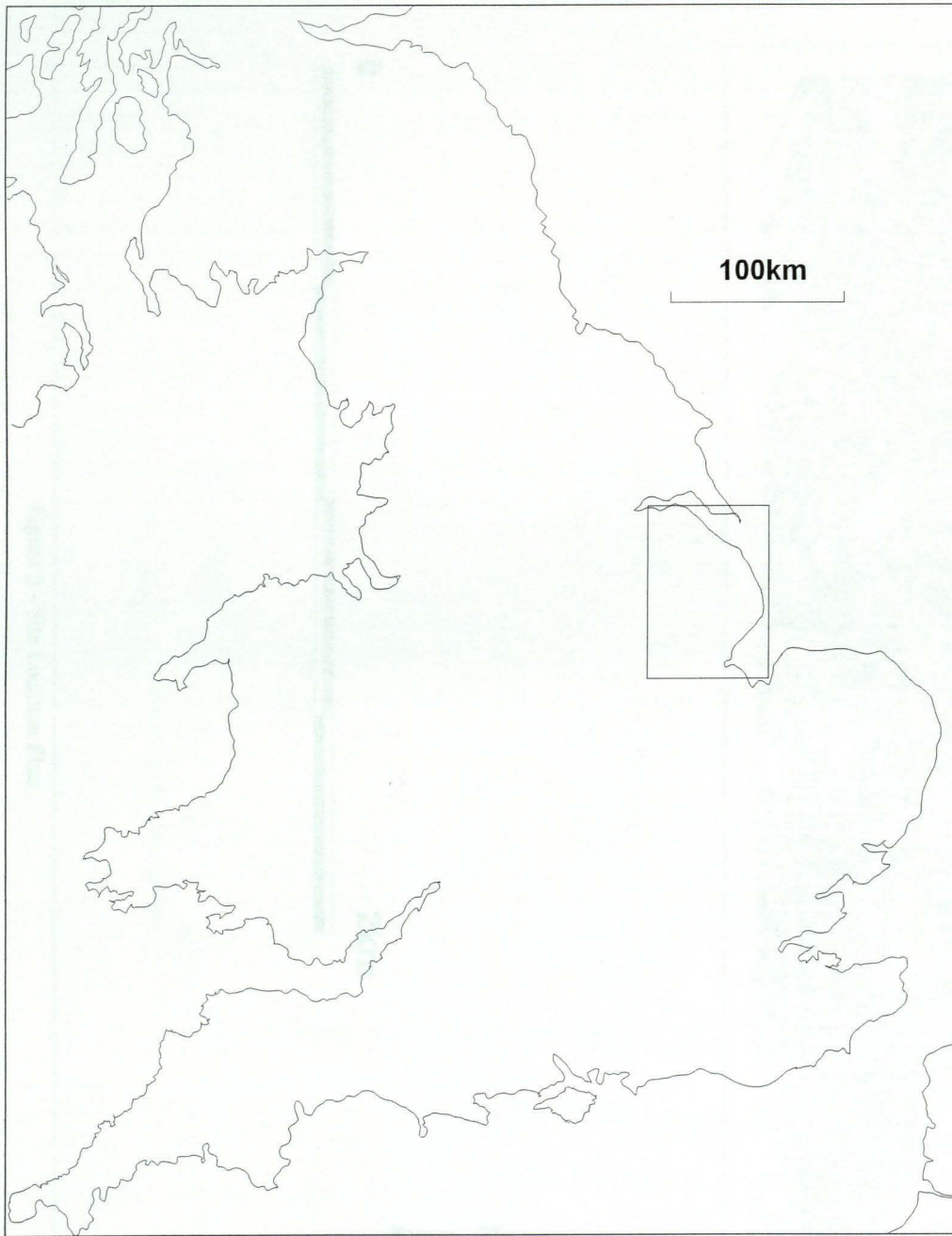
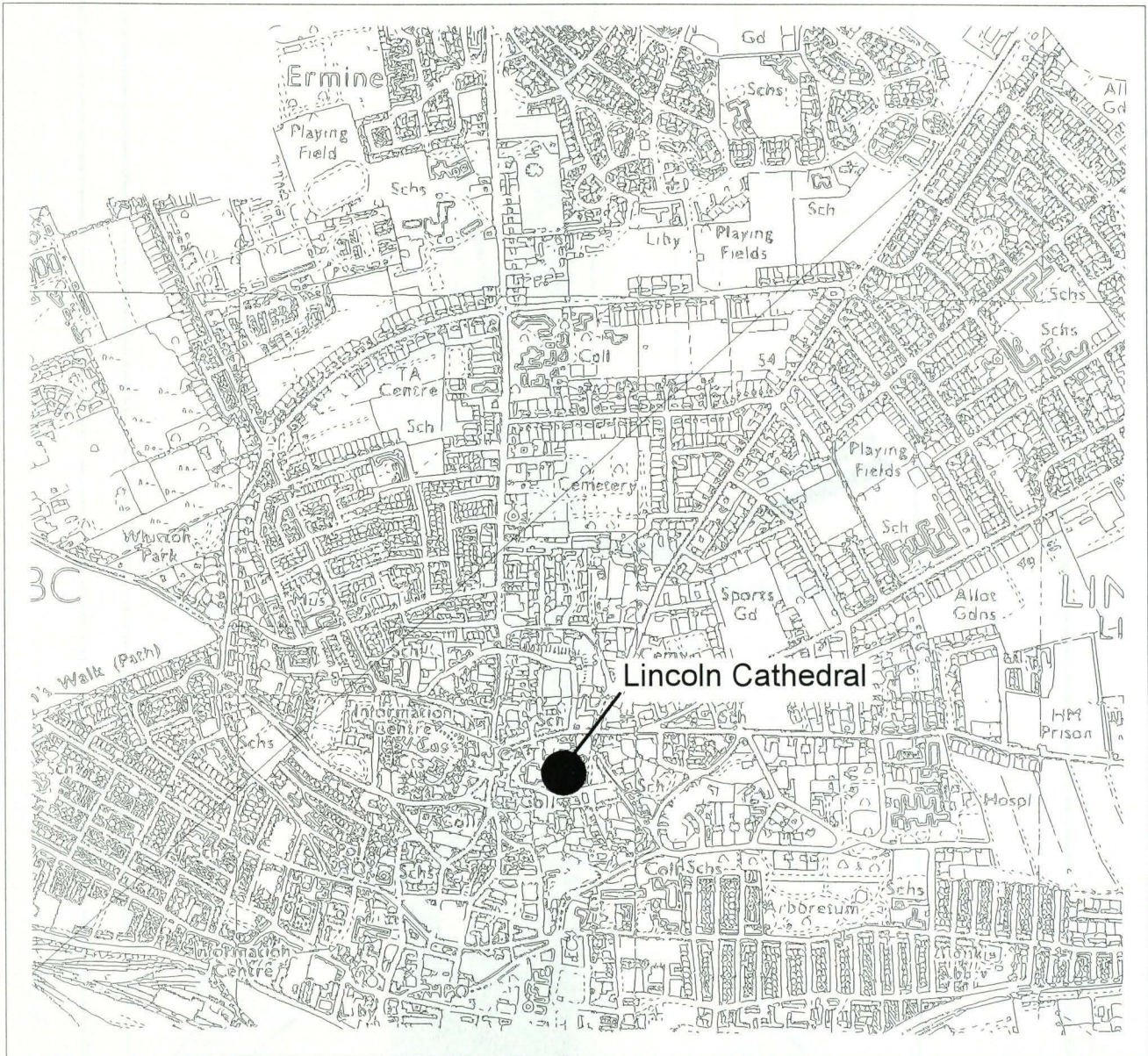


Figure 1 - General Location Plan



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2km



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Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

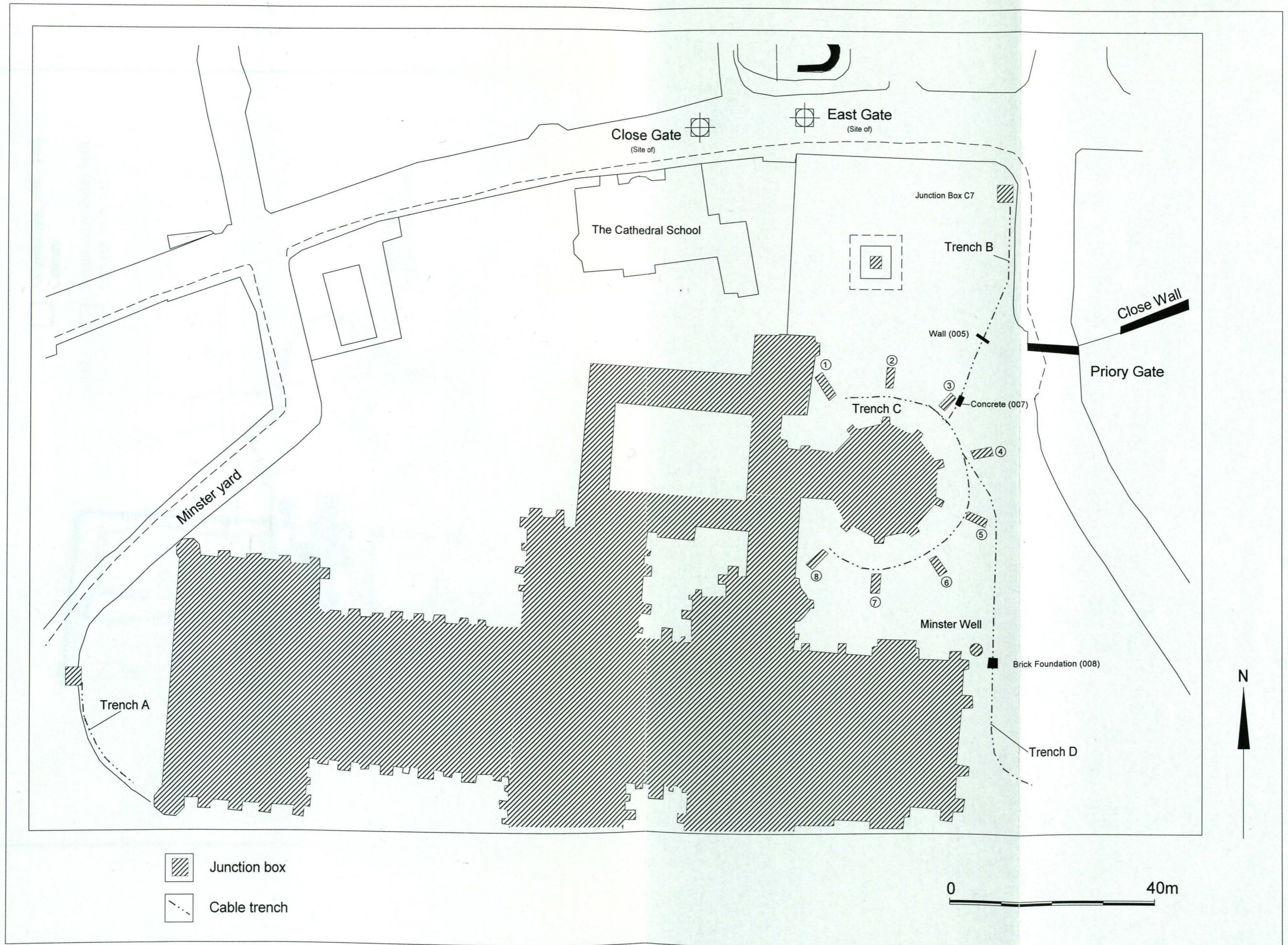


Figure 3 - Lincoln Cathedral, showing cable trench layout

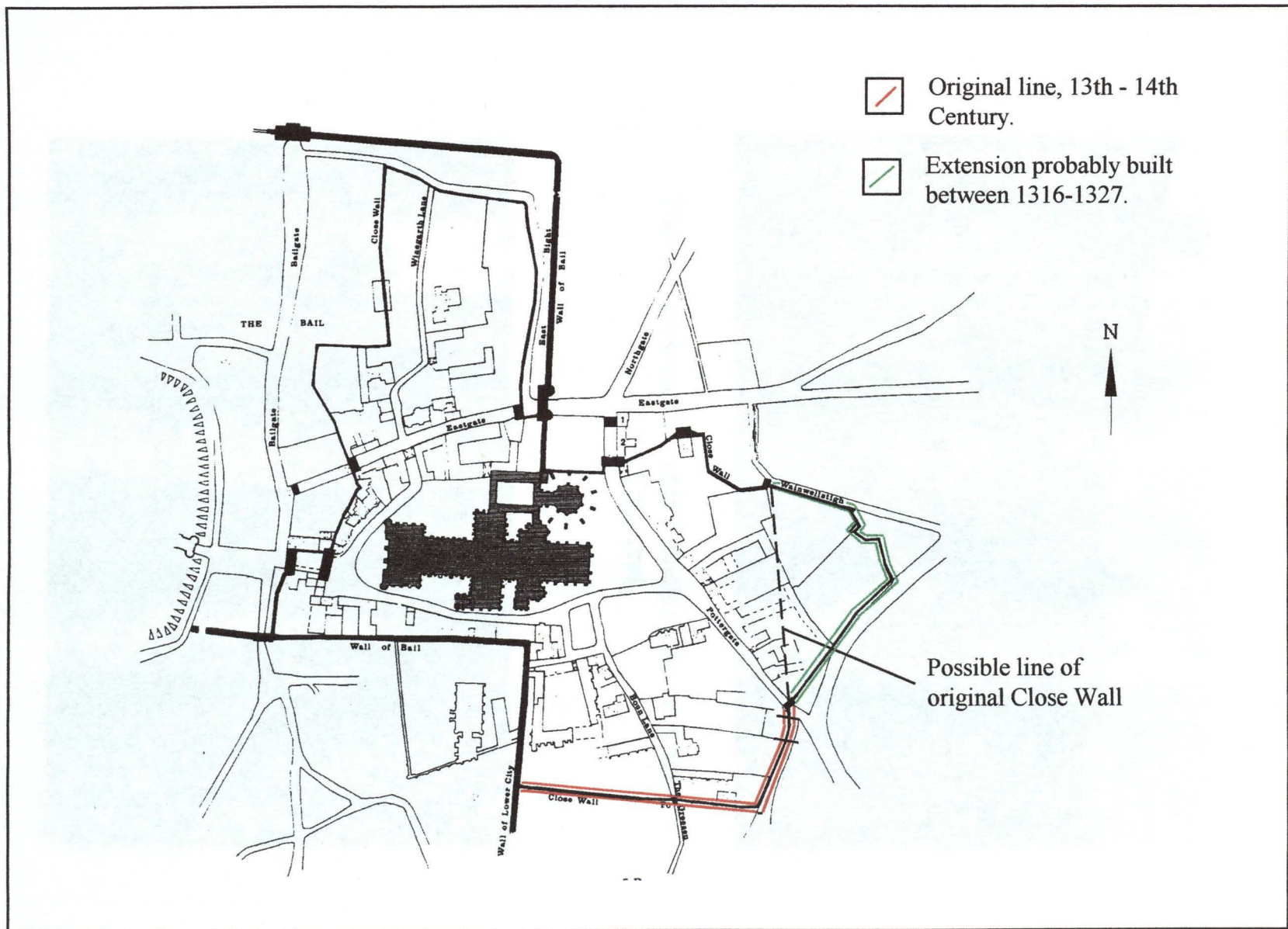


Figure 4 - Location of Close Wall



Plate 1 - View of the Cable Trench, at the west end
of the Cathedral



Plate 2 - View of the Cable Trench, adjacent
to the Chapter House

Appendix 1

CONTEXT SUMMARY

CONTEXT NO.	TRENCH	DESCRIPTION	INTERPRETATION
001	A	Moderate, dark brown humic sandy silt containing occasional limestones.	Topsoil.
002	B, C, & D	Moderate, mid dark brown humic sandy silt containing occasional limestones.	Topsoil.
003	B	Moderate, mid brown humic sandy silt containing frequent limestone fragments, brick and tile.	Dumped deposit.
004	C & D	Moderate, mid yellowish brown sandy silt containing limestone fragments and occasional burnt stone.	Dumped deposit.
005	B	Brick structure, aligned northwest-southeast, 0.23m wide	Wall.
006	B	Brick and mortar spread	Collapsed wall/surface.
007	C	Concrete deposit, 0.46m extent	Possible buttress support.
008	D	Brick structure, 0.9m extent	Brick foundation, possible wall or surface.

Appendix 2

THE FINDS

Paul Cope-Faulkner and Neil Herbert

Provenance

The majority of the material was recovered from three contexts, probably highly mixed dump and topsoil levels. It is likely that all finds are residual in nature. Topsoil deposit (001) produced no finds.

The earliest finds are the Romano-British roof tile and the two sherds of Colour Coated pottery. The pottery originated from the Nene Valley in the region around Peterborough. Roman tile production is known from west Lincoln and Heighington.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the tables.

Table 1: Artefacts

Context	Description	Date
002	1 red glazed earthenware 3 white glazed stoneware sherds 1 flowerpot fragment 1 brown glazed drainage pipe 1 Romano-British tile (<i>tegula</i>) fragment 1 19 th century pantile 1 sheep molar 1 bird limb bone	20 th century
003	1 glazed medieval roof tile 1 18 th - 19 th century roof tile	19 th century
004	1 black Nene Valley Colour Coated (NVCC) base, 3 rd - 4 th century 1 red NVCC body sherd, 3 rd - 4 th century	Residual

Condition

All the artefactual material is in good condition and presents no long-term storage problems. Additionally, the animal bones are in fair condition. Archiving of the assemblage should be by material class.

Documentation

Investigations of Nene Valley wares have been reported on *e.g.* Howe *et. al.* 1980 and assemblages from Lincoln have previously been recorded. Medieval and later tiles and pottery in Lincoln has also been documented.

Potential

The assemblage has limited potential.

References

Howe, M.D., Perrin, J.R. and Mackreth, D.F., 1980, *Roman Pottery from the Nene Valley: A Guide*, Peterborough City Museum Occasional Paper No. 2

Appendix 3

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

- 4 Context records
- 1 Photographic record sheet
- 1 Annotated plan
- 1 Bag of finds
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix

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:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum
12 Friars Lane
Lincoln
LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 161.98

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: LCL98

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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Appendix 4

GLOSSARY

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, <i>e.g.</i> (004).
Layer	A layer is a term used to describe 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.
Post-medieval	The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.
Romano-British	Pertaining to the period from AD 43-410 when Britain formed part of the Roman Empire.