

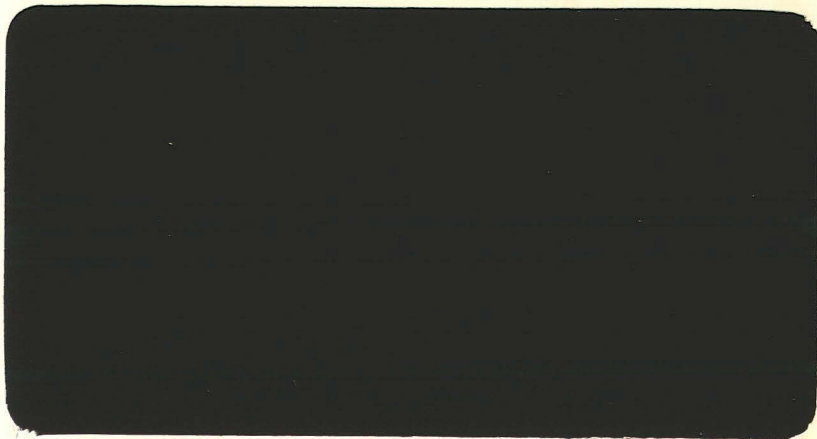
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**ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT  
LAND OFF NELSON ROAD, FISKERTON, LINCOLNSHIRE**

Site Code: NRF98  
LCNCC Acc No. 5.99  
NGR TF 0504 7190

Lincolnshire County Council  
Archaeology Section

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Report prepared for Mr P Canner  
by CPH Palmer-Brown  
January 1999

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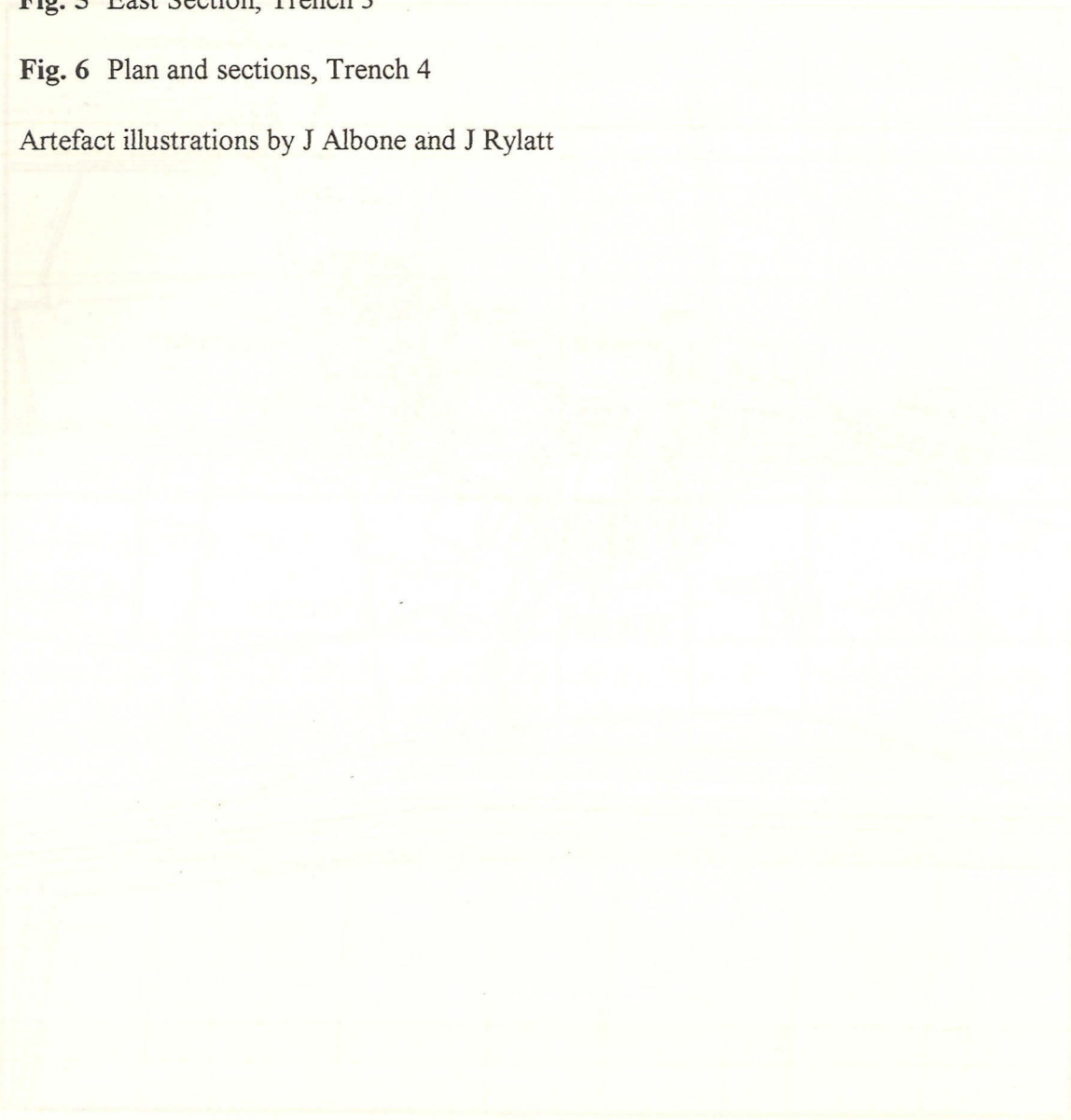
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Artefact illustrations by J Albone and J Rylatt



*Summary*

- \* *An archaeological field evaluation took place on land off Nelson Road, Fiskerton, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). Four trenches and four small trial pits were excavated to establish the overall archaeological potential of the site, which is set amongst a landscape containing important remains dating to the prehistoric and later periods.*
- \* *At least two discrete phases of archaeological activity were identified, dating a) to the late Bronze Age and b) to the medieval period*
- \* *Whilst much of the earlier archaeology appears to be relatively well protected beneath deposits of water-borne sand, medieval building remains in the south-west part of the site lie much closer to the modern ground surface*



**Fig. 1: Site location (1:10,000)**  
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## 1.0 Introduction

A five-day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on a site east of Nelson Road, Fiskerton, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The work was commissioned by the current site owner, Mr P Canner, to fulfil a planning requirement issued by West Lindsey District Council.

The results of this report will assist the client and the local planning authority to assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be caused by development, and the requirement / non-requirement for further archaeological investigation in advance of or during development.

A copy of this report will be deposited at the County SMR, and a short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*; effectively placing the information in the public domain. Reports will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

## 2.0 Location and Description

Fiskerton is approximately 8km east of Lincoln and lies on the north side of the Witham fen. The site of proposed residential development is on the south side of the village, approximately 300m north of the present course of the river. Its most recent formal use has been as a scrap yard, although for the past decade the site has been derelict pasture.

The site lies at an altitude approximately 6m OD and rests over a geology of Kellaways Sands and Clays (BGS Sheet 114).

Outline planning consent is sought from West Lindsey District Council for low density residential development consisting of four dwellings and associated access (Application 98/P/0044). In considering this application, the District Council has requested the undertaking of an archaeological field evaluation; both to assess the archaeological potential of the site, and the threat posed against such remains in the face of development. This approach is consistent with the guidelines set out in *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16: Archaeology and Planning*, November 1990.

## 3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

Previous archaeological investigations and chance discoveries in this part of the Witham fen have demonstrated that the area surrounding the medieval settlement of Fiskerton is extremely rich, both in terms of its archaeological sites and the range of environmental information associated with these sites.

In the early 1980's, an early Iron Age causeway or jetty of national importance was discovered when a metal detectorist recovered a complete Iron Age sword close to an area of vertically set wooden posts, approximately 250m south-west of the proposed

development. Investigations in 1981 revealed the plan of a double row of posts extending northwards of the present (canalised) course of the river (Field 1986). The posts, which were dated by dendrochronology to the 6th century BC, appeared to be part of a causeway or jetty. The excavations led to the recovery of further swords (some within scabbards), spearheads, axes, chisels, pottery and other finds (including a human skull fragment indented by the blow of an axe). The recovery of such finds suggests that the jetty/causeway was a focus for ritual activities.

Other finds of prehistoric date have been recovered in less controlled conditions. These include a hoard of Bronze Age axes discovered in 1890 only 100m west of the proposed development, and a range of artefacts recovered during dredging activities between Fiskerton and Lincoln. Approximately 330m south-west of the proposed development lies the site of at least two Bronze Age barrows (burial mounds) recorded as cropmarks, and there are other similar features in the surrounding area.

Earlier finds of Neolithic (New Stone Age) date have been recovered from this area, largely in the form of worked flints.

A range of archaeological and artefactual data has been recovered associated with the Romano-British period, although the context of this material is still not clear. In 1994, an archaeological field evaluation approximately 100m to the west of the present development (to the rear of the former Five Mile House public house) exposed aspects of a rubble hard which lay north of a relict course of the river (Palmer-Brown 1994). Whether this hard was associated with purely local use (eg by fishermen) is not clear, although it is possible that the feature was associated with the transference of goods from large to small vessels prior to shipping to the important market centre at Lincoln (*Lindum*): aerial photographic information indicates that Fiskerton was once close to the head of an estuarine creek, and it has been suggested that, for larger vessels, the Witham may not have been navigable between Fiskerton and Lincoln (Wilkinson 1987).

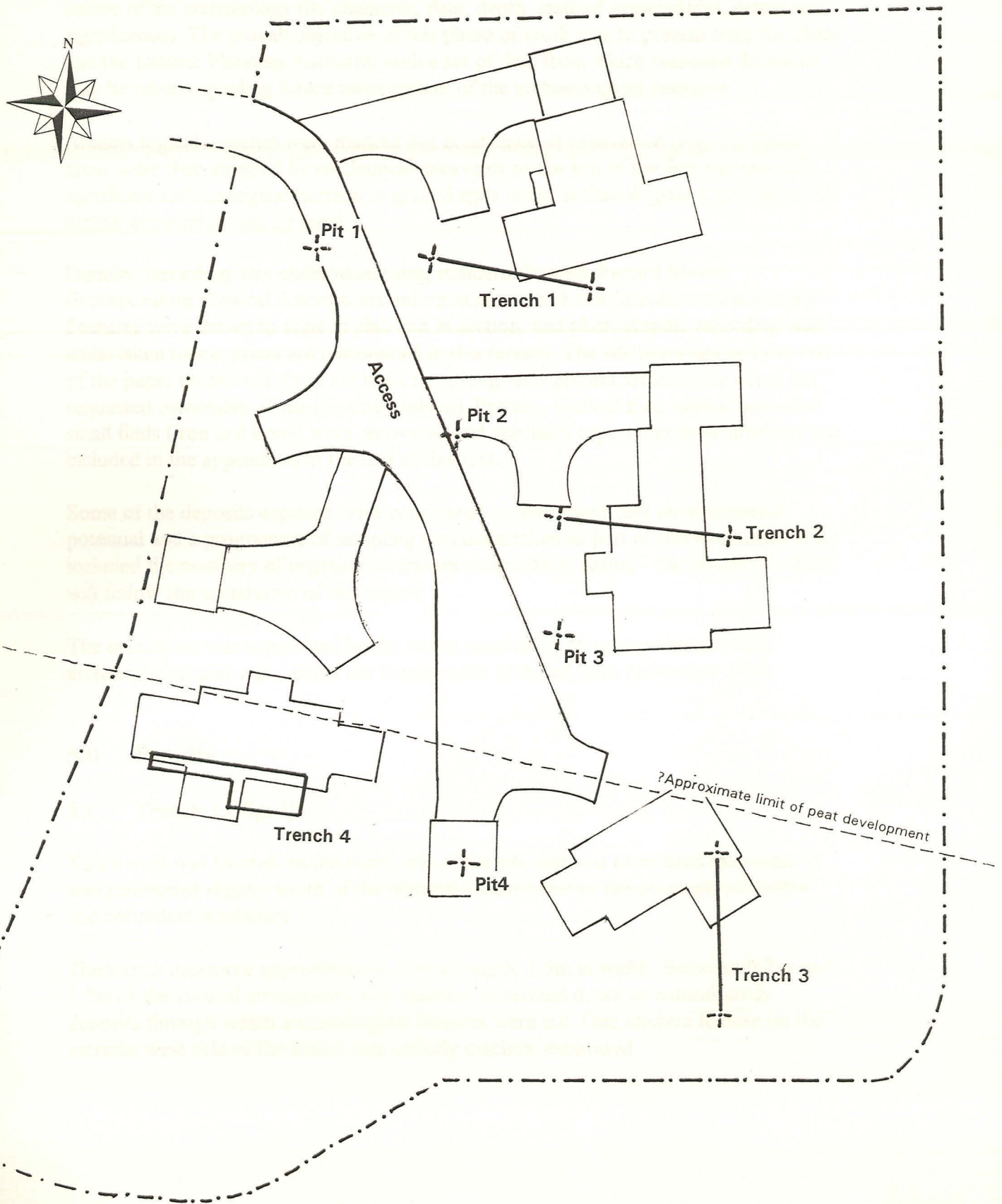
The place-name Fiskerton translates to 'farmstead or village of the fishermen' and derives from the Old English word *fishcere* (Mills 1993). At the time of the Domesday Survey in 1086, the manor was held by St Peter's of Peterborough (Morris 1986), and incorporated a church and 3.5 fisheries. The parish church, dedicated to St Clement, possesses a number of unusual features, the earliest of which date to the Norman period (Pevsner and Harris 1989). In characteristic style, the church is the only surviving medieval structure within the modern settlement.

#### 4.0 Objectives and Methodology

The site lies close to the area evaluated in 1994 on the south side of the modern settlement. It is also broadly established on the projected line of the Iron Age causeway/jetty excavated in 1981. Given this background, the broad objectives of the evaluation programme were to establish whether or not such remains extended into the area of proposed development and to assess the presence/absence of any other archaeological or environmental remains that could be at risk as a result of development.



Fig. 2: Proposed development outline incorporating location of archaeological trenches (scale = 1:500)



Archaeological trial trenching was considered to be the most appropriate method of evaluating the site, and the Assistant County Archaeologist for Lincolnshire approved a specification for four archaeological trenches and a series of test pits to determine the nature of the archaeology (its character, date, depth, state of preservation, extent and significance). The overall objective of this phase of work was to present both the client and the District Planning Authority with a set of data from which reasoned decisions may be taken regarding future management of the archaeological resource.

Archaeological trenches were marked out in advance of excavation (Fig. 2). These areas were then stripped by mechanical excavator to the top of the first recognisable significant archaeological horizon in graded spits under archaeological supervision. All further excavation was by hand.

Detailed recording was undertaken using standard Context Record Sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations, and stratigraphic relationships). Features were drawn to scale in plan and in section, and photographic recording was undertaken (some prints are reproduced in this report). The site drawings and the rest of the paper record will form the basis for a long-term project archive (the client has requested ownership of the physical archive). Pottery, worked flint, animal bone and small finds (iron and bone) were recovered and specialist reports on these artefacts are included in the appendices at the end of this text.

Some of the deposits exposed were considered to hold significant environmental potential and a programme of sampling was undertaken as part of this evaluation. This included the recovery of organic remains for radiocarbon dating - the results of which will follow the submission of this report.

The evaluation was supervised by the writer assisted by three experienced field archaeologists and was carried out between the 16th and 20th November 1998.

## **5.0 Results**

### **5.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)**

This trench was located on the north side of the site and was orientated east-west. It was positioned slightly south of the planned location due to the proximity of rubble and redundant machinery.

The trench measured approximately 13m in length, 1.5m in width. Between 0.7m and 1.0m of the vertical stratigraphy was machine excavated down to natural sandy deposits through which archaeological features were cut. One modern feature on the extreme west side of the trench was entirely machine excavated.

### 5.1.1 Vertical stratigraphy

The lowest exposed stratum, 103 (the top of which was approximately 5.3m OD), comprised natural yellow/grey sandy clay merging with patches of grey/brown fine sand. These deposits, it is assumed, represent the Kellaways sands and Ampthill clays that are common to this area beneath the post-glacial sediment sequence (BGS Sheet 114 1:50,000). A series of archaeological features had cut through these deposits and are described below in Section 5.1.2.

Sealing the above was an extensive layer of light grey fine sand, 102, incorporating orange mottles (leached iron). This material had a soft texture and incorporated occasional very small stones. It has been interpreted as a wash deposit, probably representing the accumulation of material derived from the slightly higher ground to the north (which rises to approximately 10m OD). A date for the accumulation, which measured approximately 20cm in thickness, was not established.

Deposit 102 was sealed by a similarly extensive deposit, 101. This was approximately 20cm thick and comprised mottled light brown soft silty sand. It too has been interpreted as a wash deposit, the accumulation of which resulted from the erosion of material further to the north. No dating evidence was recovered.

The uppermost horizon, 100, consisted of dark brown humic silty sand, the top of which supported grass/weed vegetation. This topsoil horizon was in effect the same as the material beneath it, with the addition of an organic component. It measured approximately 25cm in thickness and incorporated various modern artefacts associated with the recent use of the site as a scrap yard.

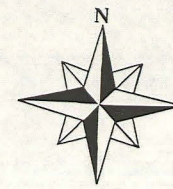
### 5.1.2 Archaeological features

Excluding the modern intrusion cut through at the west end of the trench, seven discrete earth-cut archaeological features were exposed in the east and central areas. Most of these (excluding post hole 107) were filled with similar soil matrices, and it is possible that these represent a structural group. All of the features were sealed beneath horizon 101, although their relationship to horizon 102 was less clear (in section, two features appeared to have been cut from within this layer) Moving westwards, the features are described as follows:-

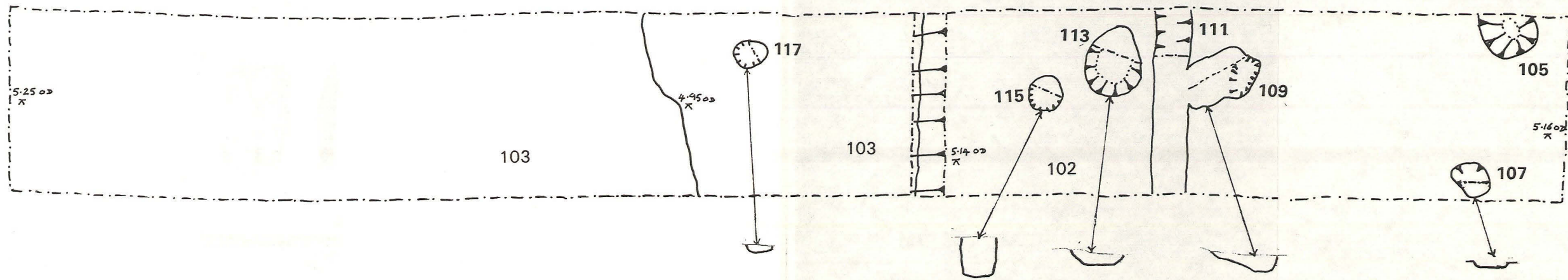
**Pit/post hole 105.** This small ?sub-circular pit or post hole was exposed on the extreme east side of the cutting and continued beyond the north section face. Its depth was approximately 28cm and its diameter was estimated at 50cm. Its fill, 104, consisted of light/mid-grey silty sand, and included one small basal pottery sherd which has been dated to the late Bronze Age or early Iron Age (see Appendix 6).

**Post hole 107.** This lay opposite the above, close to the south section face. A small part of its upper surface had been truncated during machine excavation, leaving only c. 5cm of the feature intact. This was sub-circular in plan, measuring approximately 31cm in diameter. The void was filled almost entirely with pure degraded charcoal, suggesting possibly that a post had once burnt *in situ*. Not surprisingly, there were no associated finds.

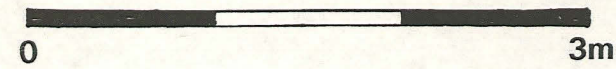
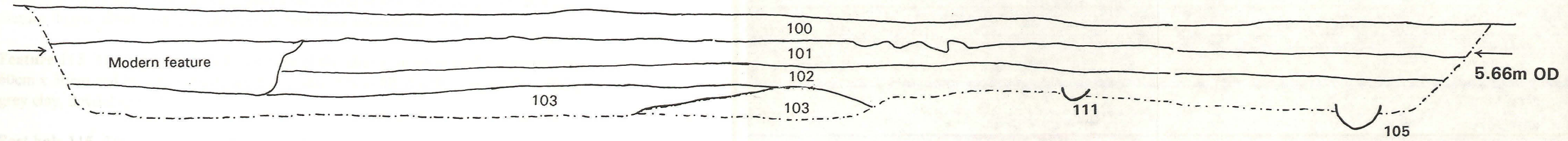
Fig. 3: Plan and section, Trench 1



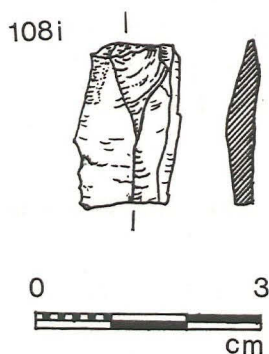
Plan



North Section



**Feature 109.** This was shallow and of irregular form. In plan it measured 60cm x 44cm and its maximum surviving depth was 15cm - there was a slight depression on the east side of the feature, perhaps marking the site of a post, although this was not clarified. The void was filled with an homogenous light grey silty sand, from which a single worked flint was recovered (a broken tertiary blade with limited use wear or retouch on both lateral edges).



Drawing by JD Rylatt

**Slot 111.** This linear feature merged with the above and stratigraphic separation was not possible. The slot, which measured approximately 30cm in width, was orientated north-south and extended beyond both section faces. Its surviving depth was just 15cm, but its profile and form suggested a structural origin - a beam slot or similar feature. It was filled with grey silty sand, devoid of artefactual remains.

**Feature 113.** This was less than 10cm west of the above. In plan, its dimensions were 60cm x 50cm and its surviving depth was 11cm. It was filled with characteristic light grey clay, devoid of finds.

**Post hole 115.** This was a well defined and deep post hole (maximum surviving depth 33cm). Its sides were vertical, and it too was filled with light grey silty sand. There were no associated artefacts, excluding a fragment of calcined bone that was recovered from an environmental sample.

**Post hole 117.** The post hole was truncated during machining and the surviving depth was just 5cm. The top of the void was circular in plan, and this was filled with grey silty sand. Again, there were no associated artefacts.

## 5.2 Trench 2 (Fig. 4)

The trench was orientated east-west and was positioned over the possible siting of a dwelling. Its dimensions were 15.3m x 1.5m.

### 5.2.1 Vertical stratigraphy

The vertical stratigraphy resembled that exposed in Trench 1. The earliest archaeological features were cut through natural sands at the base of the trench, with a later (medieval or post-medieval) ditch being cut through sealing deposits.

The lowest stratum 212 (at a height approximately 5m OD) consisted of pale orange/brown silty sand, incorporating patches of clay. This was sealed beneath up to 20cm of mottled orange-brown silty sand 205: a wash deposit containing a high proportion of iron resulting from post-depositional leaching. 205 itself was beneath a layer of mid-grey silty sand 204, the average depth of which was 15cm. Above this was 202; a deposit consisting of soft pale grey silty sand. 202 was beneath 201; a mid-brown subsoil resembling 101 in Trench 1. The overlying topsoil was common to the entire site (= 100 in Trench 1).

Most of the above shared a common texture and were therefore separated largely on the basis of colour characteristics. It is acknowledged that some of the coloration present may have derived as a result of post-depositional processes (eg it may be that 205 and 204 represent the same deposit, with the former being modified as a result of soil leaching over a prolonged period). That said, the identification of a discrete archaeological event (a small pit-like feature in the north section face - see Fig. 4) between layers 202 and 204 does indicate some phases of archaeological intervention between sedimentary units.

### 5.2.2 Archaeological features

A group of earth-cut features (none of which has been dated by way of associated artefacts) were exposed in the base of the trench. Each of these features was cut through the basal deposit 212 and appeared to be sealed by 205 (presumed to be the earliest post-glacial sedimentary deposit). Working from east to west, each of these features is described as follows:-

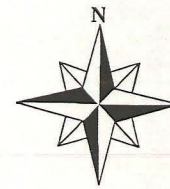
**Pit 207.** In plan, this oval-shaped feature measured 58cm x 30cm. It had a broadly bowl-shaped profile and was filled with mid-grey silty sand. Its maximum recorded depth was 20cm.

**Pit 208.** This was a shallow sub-rectangular feature which extended beyond the south section (and alternatively may have been the terminal end of a gully). It was filled with mid-grey silty sand and its maximum surviving depth was 20cm. Its width was approximately 55cm.

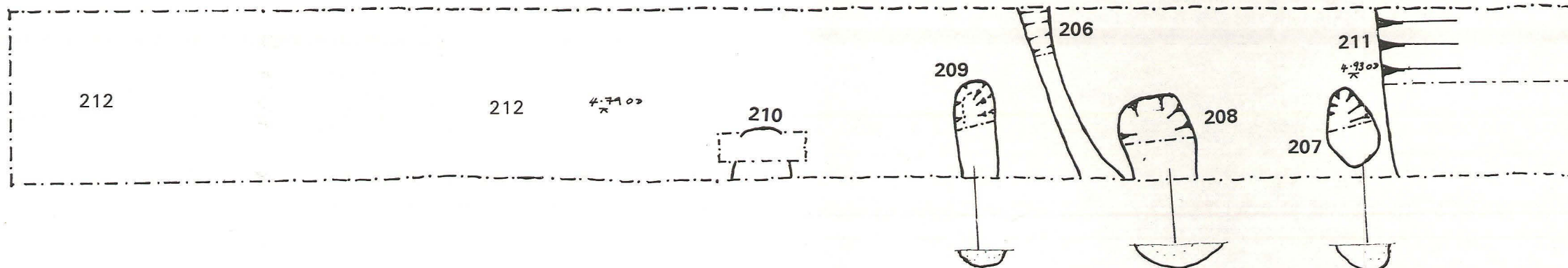
**Curvilinear gully 206.** Although initially thought to represent the line of a decayed tree root, partial excavation of this feature revealed an archaeologically convincing profile and yielded a single animal tooth - a cattle incisor. The narrow profile exposed was quite steep and contained a familiar mid-grey silty sand.

**Linear gully 209.** The gully terminal was orientated north-south and extended approximately 75cm north of the south section face. It measured approximately 28cm in width and was filled with mid-grey silty sand.

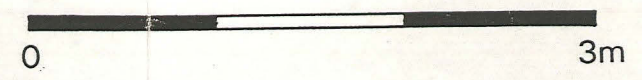
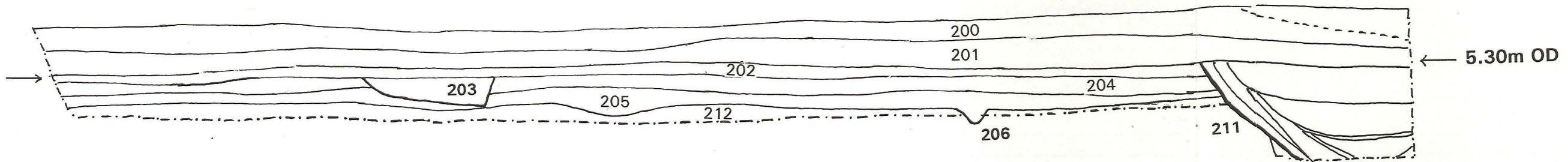
Fig. 4 Plan and section, Trench 2



Plan



North Section



**Feature 210.** This was of dubious form and the excavator suggested an interpretation as a possible tree root bowl. The sides of the feature were poorly defined, although the void contained a familiar grey silty sand.

All of the above were stratigraphically contemporary and represent the earliest group of features in Trench 2. On the basis of stratigraphy alone, it is suggested that they date to the same phase of activity as the features exposed in the base of Trench 1.

Two later features are described as follows:-

**Ditch 211.** This was located at the extreme east end of the trench (and extended beyond its limits). Conservatively, the full width of the ditch may be estimated at 2.8m. Its depth was not established, although this exceeded 1.0m beneath the top of the cut. The uppermost fill of the ditch was sealed beneath the subsoil layer 201, and appeared to be cut from the top of 202. The ditch was recut on at least one occasion.

Lower deposits were waterlogged and contained an interesting range of organic remains (see Appendix 2). Secondary fills comprised a series of lenses; derived as a result of localised erosion during periods of rainfall or flooding.

The date of the ditch is a problem. No pottery was recovered from the excavated fills, only tile. This has been dated between the Romano-British period (residual) and the post-medieval period (see Appendix 4). However, the lowest (and earliest) associated fills were not sampled due to depth limitations. There is a distinct possibility therefore that the ditch was first cut in the medieval period.

### 5.3 Trench 3 (Fig. 5)

This trench was located closer to the southern boundary of the site. It was orientated north-south; both to take in the possible footprint of a proposed dwelling, and to assess whether or not the former river channel sampled at the Five Mile House in 1994 extended into the current site.

Features of an exclusively archaeological nature (ie pits, ditches etc) were not recognised, although the remnants of a buried soil and overlying peat horizon were. One worked flint was recovered from a deposit underlying the peat, suggesting that the latter was a prehistoric accumulation at the edge of the marshland.

For the most part, the trench was excavated to a depth approximately 85cm beneath the modern ground surface, although a deeper sondage was dug at the south end. The deposit sequence is described in chronological sequence, commencing with the lowest levels examined in the sondage.

Standing water was a problem at approximately 4m OD. Above the water line, the earliest deposit exposed, 313, was a thick layer (more than 35cm) of pale yellow/brown sandy silt, incorporating orange/grey mottles and occasional small rounded stones. This was exposed only within the sondage at the south end, and was



truncated by the north edge of a 'feature' with a very shallow profile, 312. This was filled with mid-grey-brown sandy silt and is assumed to represent a natural water channel within the wider floodplain environment. It was capped with a narrow and localised lens of natural sandy silt, 311, which was sealed beneath up to 20 cm of dark grey/brown (organic) sandy clay-silt, 310. This layer yielded a single broken tertiary flake that was probably made from a river gravel.

Sealing the above was an extensive layer (ie it was exposed within and to the north of the sondage) of mid-brown soft sandy clay-silt, 305. This measured up to 14cm in thickness and, close to the north end of the trench, was over what appeared to be a natural shallow channel that was orientated east-west, 307. The channel was filled with mid-brown soft sandy clay-silt.

Layer 305 was beneath 304, a distinctive and extensive deposit of very dark brown peat-like material consisting of slightly sandy silty clay mixed with degraded organic material (roots, twigs etc). At the south end of the trench, 304 measured approximately 12cm in thickness, thinning to 7cm at the north end. A counterpart to this deposit was not seen in Trenches 1 or 2, but it was exposed in Trench 4, as well as in Test Pit 4. The top of the layer occurred at approximately 4.8m OD, and the material is interpreted as representing the edge of the marshland associated with the Witham valley. As this sealed a lower deposit containing worked flint (one flake from context 310), it is suggested that these peaty deposits accumulated in the prehistoric period. Clarification of this point should be possible, given that a sample of the material has been submitted for radiocarbon determination (results to follow the submission of this report).

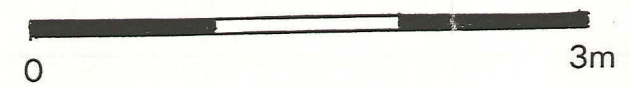
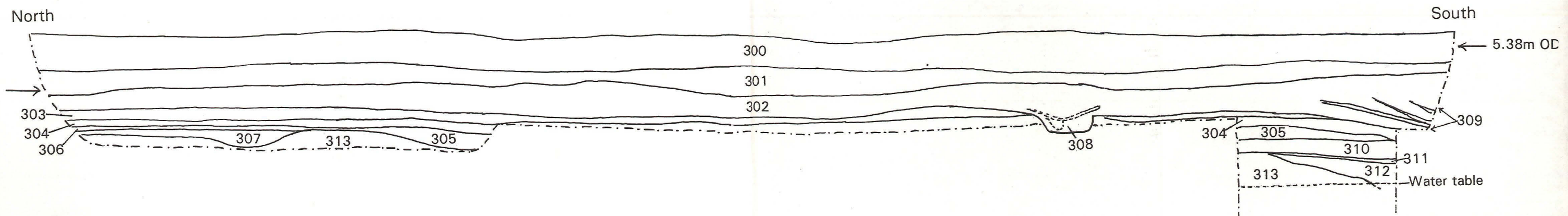
The peat was beneath a loose deposit of mid-grey silty sand, 303. This was approximately 10cm thick and was interpreted as a flood horizon.

To a large extent, the upper stratigraphy resembled the deposit sequence described for Trenches 1 and 2. The above was beneath 40cm+ of pale grey/brown silty sand, 302. For the most part, the colour and texture of this deposit was constant across the trench, although at the south extreme (in the area of the deeper sondage) 302 had an interleaving relationship with a series of dark lenses that extended beyond the excavation. These lenses, 309, comprised laminations of dark grey and very pale grey-brown sandy silt. Their interleaving relationship with 302 suggested that the two sets of deposits accumulated simultaneously. The siting of 309 over the edge of the earlier dip 312 confirms the proximity of much wetter deposits immediately to the south of the current investigation.

In the base of 302, again on the south side of the area, was a narrow linear channel orientated east-west, 308. It is not clear whether this channel was natural or man-made. It was filled with very pale grey-brown silty sand, incorporating some darker grey lenses. No finds were recovered.

The topsoil in this area was up to 43cm thick. It sealed a subsoil deposit measuring between 10cm and 30cm in thickness.

Fig. 5 East Section, Trench 3



#### 5.4 Trench 4 (Fig. 6)

The fourth main trench was located on the south-west side of the site. It was orientated east-west to incorporate a fourth possible dwelling footprint.

Much of the general stratigraphy resembled the sedimentary layers described in Trench 3. One completely unexpected, but significant, find was the remains of a potentially substantial medieval stone building.

##### 5.4.1 Vertical stratigraphy

The lowest deposits were difficult to interpret, largely because they were sampled only within a much-reduced cutting confined to the north-central area. A series of water-borne deposits within this small sondage appeared to be contained within a 'cut', possibly reflecting accumulations within a former palaeochannel. This channel, 420, was 'cut' through natural orange/yellow fine sand that was exposed in the base of the trench at approximately 4.15m OD, 1.9m beneath the modern ground surface. The channel was represented only by part of its north edge which sloped southwards and was therefore orientated east-west. This feature contained a series of seven, largely similar, fills, and these are described below in the order of deposition:-

**419:** basal fill consisting of 23cm of mid-grey fine sand incorporating occasional flint, including a single worked (broken) tertiary flake. Occasional flecks of charcoal and wood fragments were noted.

**418:** up to 22cm of orange/light grey fine sand, heavily iron-panned; contained one worked flint, a complete tertiary flake.

**417:** 5 - 10cm of light grey, slightly silty, fine sand incorporating occasional unworked flint fragments.

**416:** 5cm lens of stiff orange/grey clay

**415:** 10cm of light grey silty sand; very similar to 417, separated only by 416.

**414:** 1 - 5cm of very light grey fine sand (lenses)

**413:** 5 - 8cm of light grey fine sand representing the upper fill of the possible channel; contained one complete secondary flake. 413 ii



Drawing by JD Rylatt

As noted, the association of these deposits with the extinct east-west channel 420 is tenuous. However, they did appear to be contained within 420 which, on the basis of the worked flints recovered, may have been filled in at some time between the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods.

The above sequence was beneath a distinct and level horizon of grey-brown peaty clay, 412. This layer measured 14 - 20cm in thickness and was exposed in all four section faces on the west side of the trench. There is little doubt that this was the same as 304 in Trench 3 and represents the edge of an early marshland development.

The peat was beneath 30cm of soft dirty white fine sand, 411. Like similar deposits in Trenches 1, 2 and 3, this material appears to have accumulated as a result of erosion from higher ground to the north, perhaps during periods of rainfall. It lay beneath up to 35cm of subsoil-type deposit 409/410. This subsoil appears to have been the level from which a potentially substantial medieval building was first built.

#### 5.4.2 The medieval building

Traces of this structure were in fact exposed immediately beneath/within the topsoil: during initial machine clearance - large chunks of limestone were disturbed on the east side of the trench, and this area was extended southwards to allow as much recording of the structure as possible. Cleaning and sampling of the area revealed the south wall of the building, as well as two other walls (in the form of robber trenches) extending northwards from it. In effect, part of one room fell within the excavated area, with the remainder of the building presumably lying further to the north and east.

A construction trench for the south wall, 422, was cut through the top of the subsoil deposit 409. Traces of this trench were identified only on the south side of the wall, where its side was vertical and at least 35cm in depth; breaking to a flat base. Lining the bottom of this trench was a thin deposit of fine sand, 407, which was interpreted as a bedding for the base of the wall. The wall itself, 406, was represented by an east-west line of masonry measuring approximately 4.0m in length, although its easterly continuation was represented by the line of a backfilled robber trench 404. At best, the foundation survived to three courses of limestone blocks (with the core being made from limestone rubble set in yellow sandy material). The foundation was off-set on both sides, with the north (inner) off-set being more pronounced - one suggestion was that this was used to support a suspended wooden floor, although this could not be proved.

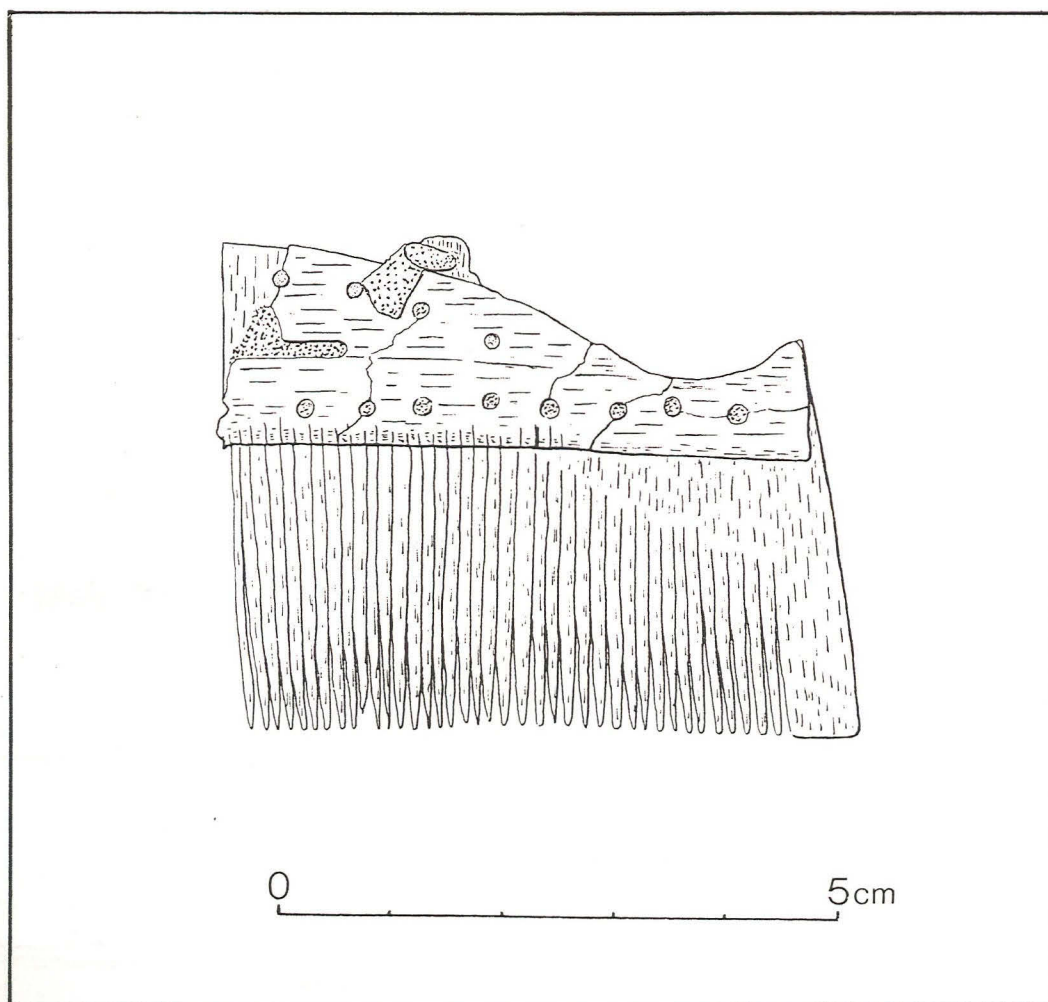
One feature associated with the foundation was that it leaned significantly towards the south. This leaning may actually have caused the collapse of the wall, and would explain the presence of a destruction horizon (layer 403, consisting of limestone rubble set in dark brown soil), exclusively on its south side.

The west wall of the building (same context number apparently allocated) was not as well preserved than the south wall and was disturbed slightly during initial machine clearance. Despite this, its north-south alignment was represented by the corner stones

of the south wall face, and traces of the wall (largely robbed) appeared to survive in the north section face.

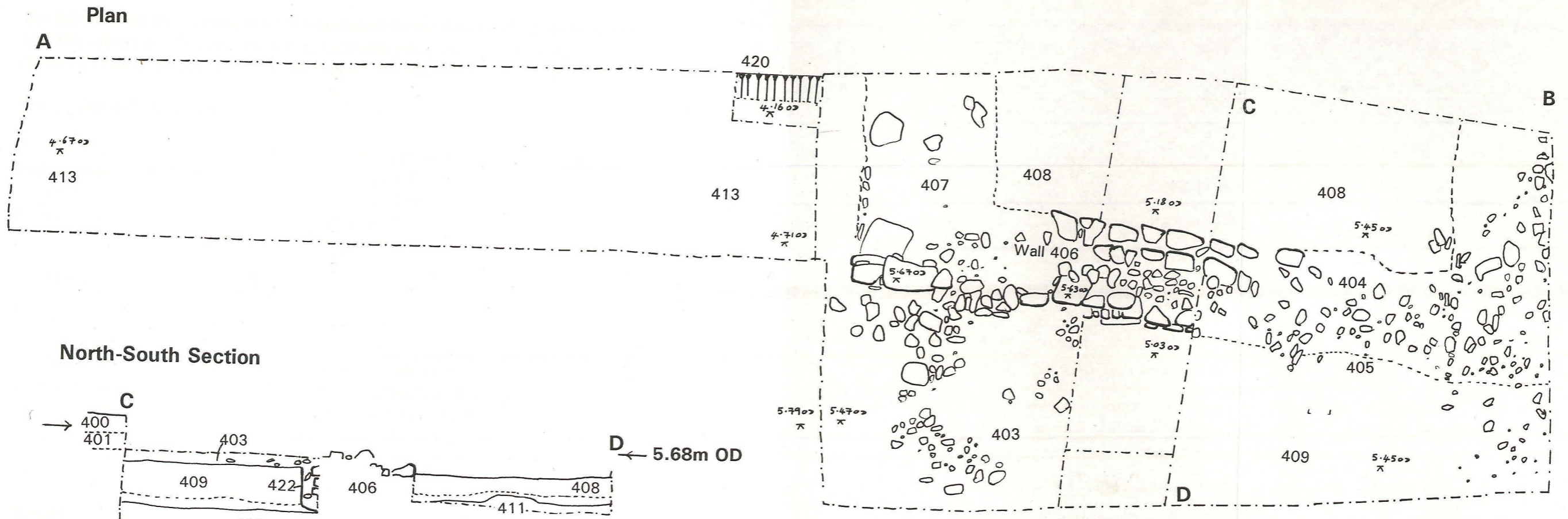
The line of a further north-south wall was represented by robber trench backfill at the east end of the excavation (continuation of 404). It is assumed that this was an internal partition wall, although the limited area available precluded any detailed investigations.

No associated floor levels were identified during the investigation, although there was ample evidence of occupation in the form of domestic pottery sherds and other artefactual remains. A small excavation to the north of the wall exposed up to 18cm of light brown/yellow silty sand mixed with occasional charcoal flecks and limestone fragments. It would be tempting to interpret this as a construction deposit, were it not for the presence of a substantial body of shell-tempered pottery sherds dating somewhere between the C13th and C15th. The recovery of these finds, and part of a rare antler comb dating between the C12th and C13 suggests that they were associated with the occupation of the building.

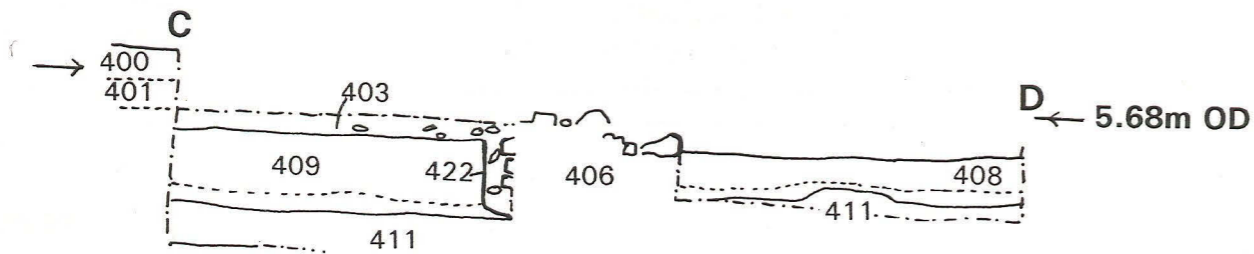


Drawing by J Albone

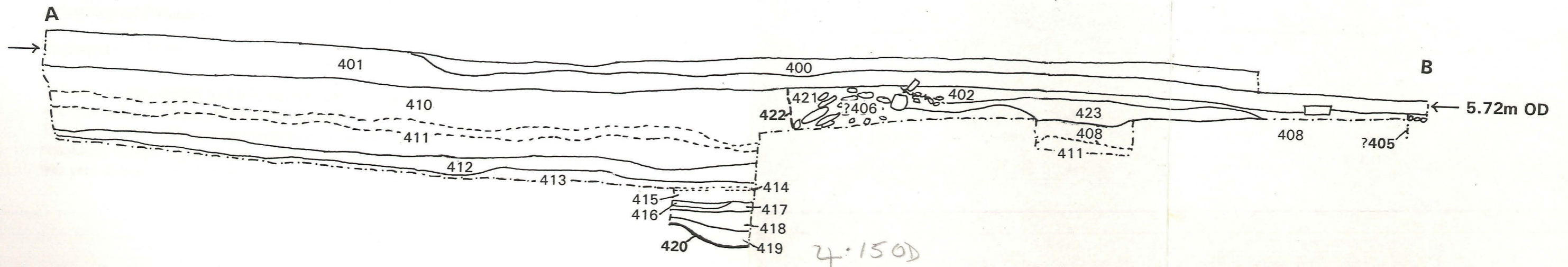
Fig. 6 Plan and Sections, Trench 4



**North-South Section**



**Main North Section**



The full extent of the building was not determined during the investigation. However, wall 106 was quite substantial and it is loosely suggested that the structure, which appears to have stood alone, was of reasonably high status in the medieval period.

### **5.5 Test pits A - D (Fig. 2)**

A series of four small test pits were investigated as part of this evaluation. Initially, each of these was to be positioned within the proposed access road. However, as this would have involved partial closure of an existing site access, some relocation was necessary, and the position of each pit can be seen in Fig. 2.

#### **Test Pit 1**

The pit was entirely machine excavated to approximately 1.1m beneath the modern ground surface. Natural silty sand was exposed at approximately 5.6m OD. This was cut through by a steep-sided trench-like feature, exposed in the south-west section face, and possibly continuing into the south-east section face (see Photo. 7, Appendix 1). This feature, which was not dated, was filled and sealed by a thick deposit of grey/orange mottled silty sand (total depth 58cm). Above this was a much darker deposit; interpreted as a buried (modern) topsoil. It was covered by up to 30cm of modern brick and stone rubble.

#### **Test Pit 2**

An apology is offered to the client and the curator for the fact that no records relating to this test pit could be found in post-excavation.

#### **Test Pit 3**

The pit was excavated to a depth 1.0m beneath the modern ground surface. In the base of the cutting was natural orange/grey silty sand, heavily stained as a result of iron leaching. The top of this deposit was approximately 5.05m OD. It was sealed beneath c. 40cm of light grey silty sand, and this was beneath 20cm+ of subsoil-like material. The upper soil horizon consisted of vegetated topsoil (see Photo. 8, Appendix 1). No archaeological features were identified.

#### **Test Pit 4**

This also was excavated to 1m beneath modern ground surface. Light grey fine sand was exposed in the base of the trench at approximately 4.65m OD (similar to 413 in Trench 4). Above this was approximately 10cm of peat-like material: the same marshland deposit exposed in Trenches 3 and 4. Above this horizon, the stratigraphy was very similar to the sequence in Trench 4 (see Photo. 9, Appendix 1).

## 6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the evaluation demonstrate that the site was important in the prehistoric and in the medieval periods.

For the early phase of occupation, it is difficult on the basis of the information gathered to determine exactly what the site was used for, although the identification of post holes and other potentially structural remains in Trench 1 suggests the possibility that some form of direct habitation was taking place on the edge of the former marshland. The remains do not appear to be substantial and may represent just one phase, although this cannot be proved, and it would seem equally possible that some form of seasonal activity was taking place, perhaps involving exploitation of the natural habitat in conjunction with farming on the dryer land.

The flint artefactual remains recovered from Trenches 1, 3 and 4 do not constitute a large assemblage and cannot therefore be closely dated. However, the forms present would suggest a date in the Neolithic or Bronze Age periods (see Appendix 5). Further clarification may be possible following receipt of the radiocarbon determination on the peat horizon (Trench 3).

As noted above, the medieval building remains exposed in Trench 4 would appear to be substantial. Unfortunately, the dating of the occupation of this structure is not tight due to the fact that the relatively large assemblage of shell-tempered pottery present is not particularly diagnostic (Appendix 4). The building could date from as early as the C12th, and the antler comb recovered from ?occupation deposits has been dated between the C12th and C13th (Appendix 3). Overall, the pottery assemblage ranges between the C10th and the late medieval period, suggesting perhaps destruction of the building in the latter.

There is not enough information available to determine the function of the building, although the quantity of coarse ware suggests that the section excavated may have fallen within or close to a kitchen area. One assumes that the majority of contemporary buildings at Fiskerton would have been made out of less durable materials than stone (eg timber, wattle and daub; eventually brick). As such, it is suggested that the structure exposed in Trench 4 was of relatively high status. It may further be tenuously proposed that the large ditch exposed at the east end of Trench 2 was a moat that surrounded this building, although it was not possible to investigate the origins of this feature, which may have been re-cut on several occasions.

Clearly, it is the medieval building remains that are most at risk from development. These remains are barely covered by the topsoil and will be vulnerable to any disturbance in the south-west part of the site. However, the earlier remains are reasonably well protected beneath a series of sandy deposits that were laid down subsequent to occupation of the area in the later Bronze Age or early Iron Age.



## 7.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express sincere thanks to the commissioning client, Mr P Canner. Thanks are also expressed to Mr P King (acting on behalf of the client), and to the specialists who have contributed towards the production of this report. Finally, thanks are due to the site team; Wayne Livesey, Jim Snee and Miles Ridsdale.

**8.0 Appendices:**

**Appendix 1 Colour photographs**

**Appendix 2 Environmental Archaeology Assessment by DJ Rackham**

**Appendix 3 Assessment Report on the Registered Finds by J Cowgill**

**Appendix 4 Post-Roman Pottery Assessment by J Young**

**Appendix 5 Lithics Assessment by J Rylatt**

**Appendix 6 Assessment report on a single prehistoric pottery sherd by  
Dr D Knight**

**Appendix 7 References (main text)**

**Appendix 1: Colour Photographs**



**P1.** General view of site looking south-west (Trench 2 in foreground)



**P2.** General view of features exposed in base of Trench 1, looking west



P3. General view of features exposed in Trench 2, looking east



P4. Section through ditch 211, looking north



P5. General view of Trench 3, looking north



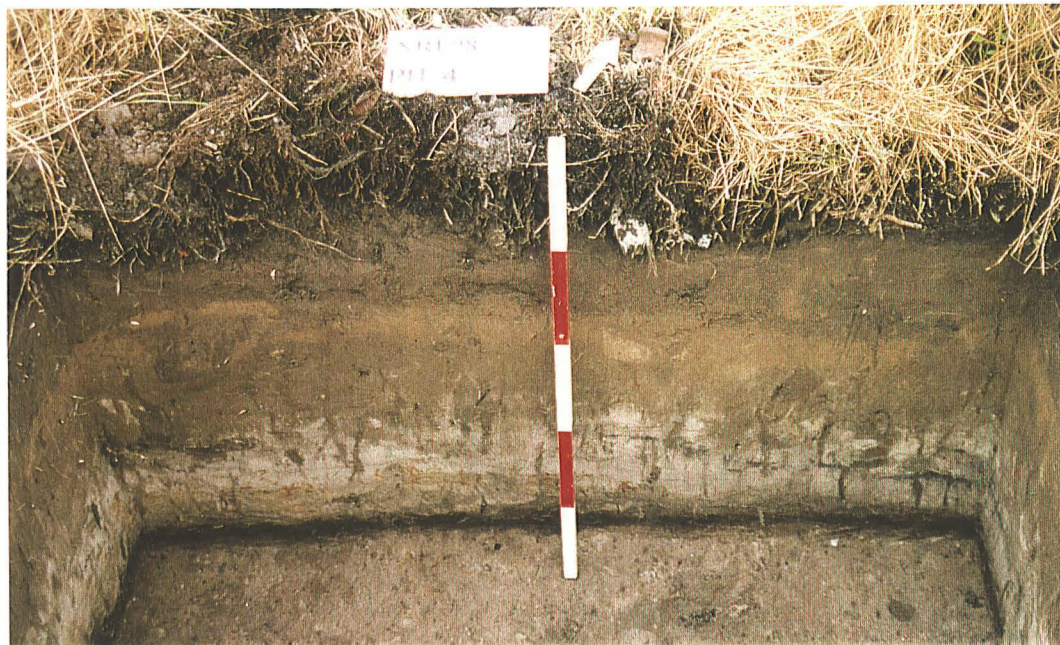
P6. General view of Trench 4, looking north-west (medieval building remains in foreground; buried peat horizon in background beneath later wash deposits)



P7. Test Pit 1, looking south



P8. Test Pit 3, looking north



P9. Test Pit 4, looking north-west

## Nelson Road, Fiskerton, NRF98

## Environmental Archaeology Assessment

Five samples were submitted for environmental analysis and a small collection of animal bones. In addition a sample was taken from an organic horizon in trench 3 for radiocarbon dating, and a column sample through these organic deposits. The samples, apart from sample 2 (see Table 1) derive from presumed prehistoric features or natural sediments. Sample 2 was taken from a ditch of probable medieval date.

Table 1: Samples taken for environmental analysis

site	sample	context	volume in l.	description	date
NRF98	1	208	10	fill of sub-rectangular shallow pit	prehistoric?
NRF98	2	211	10	fill of steep sided linear ditch, unprocessed sub-sample retained	medieval?
NRF98	3	104	2.5	fill of small pit/post-hole	prehistoric?
NRF98	4	114	3	fill of truncated post-hole	prehistoric?
NRF98	5	106	1.5	fill of shallow post-hole	prehistoric?
NRF98		305/310		organic horizon for C14 dating	prehistoric?
NRF98		304-312		column sample through peats	prehistoric?

*Methods*

Soil sample volume and weight was measured prior to processing. The samples were washed in a 'Siraf' tank (Williams 1973) using a flotation sieve with a 0.5mm mesh and an internal wet-sieve of 1mm mesh for the residue. Both the residue and the flot were dried, except in the case of sample 2 which contained quantities of waterlogged material, and the residues subsequently re-floated to ensure the efficient recovery of charred material. The residue and second flot were then re-dried. The dry volume of the flots was measured (wet volume in the case of sample 2), and the volume and weight of the residues recorded. A total of 27 litres of soil was processed.

The sample residues were sorted by eye, and environmental and archaeological finds picked out, noted on the assessment sheet and bagged independently. A magnet was run through each residue in order to recover magnetised material such as hammer scale and prill. The residue was then discarded. The flot of each sample was studied under a low power binocular microscope. The presence of environmental finds (ie snails, charcoal, charred seeds, bones etc) was noted and their abundance and species diversity recorded on the assessment sheets. The flot was then bagged. The flots and finds from the sorted residues constitute the material archive of the samples. The individual components of the samples were then preliminarily identified and the results are summarised below in Tables 2.

The radiocarbon sample has been dispatched to Beta Analytic, Florida for analysis, and the column sample has been retained for possible analysis in the future depending upon the results of the dating.

An archive catalogue of the animal bone was prepared following the procedures of the Environmental Archaeology Consultancy and this catalogue is attached (Appendix).

### Results

The probable prehistoric features were singularly lacking in material.

Sample 1, context 208. The sample was composed of slightly silty sands the bulk of which passed through the 1mm residue sieve leaving a residue of mineralised soil concretions, root pseudomorphs and a small amount of coarse sand and small pebble and flint gravel. No archaeological finds were recovered and environmental material was very limited. The flot was small including a little comminuted charcoal, a few shells of the burrowing blind snail *Cecilioides acicula*, an indeterminate calcined fragment of bone and tooth enamel, a small number of uncharred seeds of *Chenopodium* sp. and *Polygonum* sp. and some modern rootlets. The identifiable components of this assemblage are probably of recent origin and not contemporary with the deposits.

Sample 3, context 104. This small sample collected from a pit or posthole produced a residue composed almost entirely of mineralised soil concretions, with only a little sand and pebble gravel. No archaeological finds were recovered and the environmental material was limited to a few comminuted fragments of charcoal, a few shells of the blind snail, seeds of *Chenopodium* sp and *Polygonum* sp., and a small quantity of preserved waterlogged material containing ephyppia (egg cases) of *Daphnia* sp (waterflea) and other invertebrate remains. These latter are likely to be contemporary with the deposit and indicate that the original feature contained standing water or that water was washed in, perhaps suggesting a pit rather than a posthole.

**Table 2:** Finds from the samples

sample	cont	vol in l	residue vol in ml.	flot vol ml	Char coal *	ch'rd grain *	unch'rd seed */#	insect */#	snails *	bone *	
1	208	10	200	2	3		1/1		1	1	indet bone, <i>Cecilioides acicula</i>
2	211	10	650	800		2	5/4	5/3			very organic, with wood, leaves, stems, twigs, cherry, plum, wheat, blackberry, goosefoot, dock, carabids, weevils, water beetles, fly puparia, <i>Daphnia</i> ephyppia, etc
3	104	2.5	250	1	2		1/1	2/2	1		<i>Cecilioides acicula</i> , <i>Daphnia</i> , some waterlogged remains
4	114	3	100	1	3	1	1/1	2/1		1	<i>Daphnia</i>
5	106	1.5	100	35	5+		1/1				<i>Chenopodium</i> sp.

\* frequency of items: 1=1-10; 2= 11-50; 3=51-150; 4=151-250; 5=>250

# diversity of uncharred seeds and insects as follows: 1=1-3; 2=4-10; 3=11-25; 4=26-50 taxa.

Sample 4, context 114. This feature, interpreted as a truncated posthole, produced a residue composed largely of mineralised soil concretions with a small proportion of coarse sand and



small flint gravel. Archaeological finds included tiny pieces of brick or tile and coal, all of which are small enough to have moved down through the soil as a result of soil processes and worm action, and are unlikely to be *in situ*. An indeterminate fragment of calcined bone was also recovered from the residue. The flot was small and included comminuted charcoal, some of it with mineral deposition in the pores, a few uncharred seeds, insect fragments and *Daphnia* ephippia. The latter suggest contemporary waterlogging of the feature when it lay open. A single fragment of charred cereal grain or large grass seed was recovered in this flot.

Sample 5, context 106. This fill of a possible posthole base produced a residue composed largely of mineralised charcoal with no archaeological finds. The large flot is almost entirely charcoal, most of it apparently from wood or timber, rather than small roundwood or twigs and may derive from the burning *in situ* of a timber post. One or two uncharred seeds of *Chenopodium* sp, probably of recent origin, were also recorded in the flot.

One sample, sample 2 - context 211, derived from a steep sided ditch is tentatively dated to the medieval period. In contrast to the others this sample is rich. The residue is composed largely of organic remains with considerable quantities of small wood, twigs, plant stems, leaf fragments and other vegetable matter. The residue produced two tiny fragments of glass and a similar sized fragment of brick. Although these could have moved down through the soil the sediments they were recovered from were waterlogged, much finer textured than elsewhere on site, and much deeper, all of which reduce the likelihood of this material moving down through the deposits above. The glass is certainly post-medieval but accidental contamination from material on the surface of the site cannot be ruled out. Two pieces of wood have a shape and surface texture that suggests they may be chips from woodworking.

The flot from this sample includes many uncharred seed and insect fragments, fly puparia and *Daphnia* ephippia. The seeds include blackberry/raspberry, cherry, plum and charred cereal grain, including wheat. A very high proportion of the environmental material in this sample will be identifiable to species.

The small collection of excavated animal bone derives from a possible prehistoric gully and deposits associated with the medieval building in Trench 4. A single cattle incisor was recorded from the gully. The finds from the medieval layers included bones of cattle, sheep, pig and goose. A complete humerus of sheep indicates a small gracile animal typical of unimproved medieval stock.

### *Discussion*

The prehistoric samples have produced little information. A small amount of the material in these samples, such as some of the seeds, the rootlets and coal is intrusive. Archaeological finds were lacking and very little can be done with the environmental material. It should be possible to confirm that the charcoal in context 106 probably derives from a single post, and if so the species of tree from which it was cut can be identified. There is sufficient charcoal in this sample for a radiocarbon date should this be required. Contexts 104 and 114 in Trench 1 have a very small amount of waterlogged material which includes the ephippia of *Daphnia* sp, small freshwater crustacea, and suggests that these features contained standing water when they were open. This could have been washed in as a result of floods or indicate a high water table at the time. No other information of note can be gleaned from this material.

The possible medieval context, 211, may be of more recent date if the glass is not a contaminant. This sample contrasts with the others in that organic survival is excellent and a large proportion of the environmental remains can be identified. Full analysis of the biological remains in this sample would permit a reconstruction of the local environment around the feature and pollen analysis of the retained sub-sample would allow the extension of this reconstruction to a wider regional perspective.

### *Recommendations*

Unless there is an archaeological imperative to date the prehistoric (?) features on site there is no further work recommended on the prehistoric samples taken during the evaluation. In fact if undiscovered features on the site produce no more than these evaluation samples they hold little potential for the economic and environmental analysis of the prehistoric archaeology at the site.

The supposed medieval sample in contrast has a very high palaeo-environmental potential. However in the absence of more precise dating further work on this sample cannot be recommended. The presence of charred and uncharred plant food species in this sample, and the possible evidence for woodworking waste does suggest that there may be contemporary human activity in the immediate vicinity of the ditch and should further archaeological excavation be undertaken at the site dating this feature through additional excavation should be considered, along with further sampling for full post-excavation analysis if appropriate.

### *Acknowledgments*

I should like to thank Alison Foster for the sample processing.

### *Bibliography*

Williams, D. 1973 Flotation at Siraf, *Antiquity*, 47, 198-202

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18 January 1999

## THE ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY CONSULTANCY

Key to codes used in the cataloguing of animal bones

SPECIES		BONE		SIDE	FUSION
BOS	cattle	SKL	skull	W - whole	Records the fused/unfused condition of the epiphyses
CSZ	cattle size	TEMP	temporal	L - left side	P - proximal; D - distal; E - acetabulum;
SUS	pig	FRNT	frontal	R - right side	N - unfused; F - fused; C - cranial; A - posterior
OVCA	sheep or goat	PET	petrous	F - fragment	
OVI	sheep	PAR	parietal	<b>TOOTH WEAR</b> - Codes are those used in Grant, A. 1982 <i>The use of tooth wear as a guide to the age of domestic animals</i> , in B.Wilson, C.Grigson and S.Payne (eds) <i>Ageing and sexing animal bones from Archaeological sites, 91-108</i> .	
SSZ	sheep size	OCIP	occipital	Teeth are labelled as follows in the tooth wear column:	
EQU	horse	ZYG	zygomatic	h ldp4/dup4	f ldp2/dup2
CER	red deer	MAN	mandible	H lpm4/up4	g ldp3/dup3
CAN	dog	MAX	maxilla	I lm1/um1	
MAN	human	ATL	atlas	J lm2/um2	
UNI	unknown	AXI	axis	K lm3/um3	
CHIK	chicken	CEV	cervical vertebra	<b>ZONES</b> - zones record the part of the bone present.	
GOOS	goose, dom	TRV	thoracic vertebra	The key to each zone on each bone is on page 2	
LEP	hare	LMV	lumbar vertebra	<b>MEASUREMENTS</b> - Any measurements are those listed in A.Von den Driesch (1976) <i>A Guide to the Measurement of Animal Bones from Archaeological Sites</i> , Peabody Museum Bulletin 1, Peabody Museum, Harvard, USA	
UNB	indet bird	SAC	sacrum	<b>PRESERVATION</b>	
MALL	duck, dom.	CDV	caudal vertebra	1 - enamel only surviving	
GULL	gull sp.	SCP	scapula	2 - bone very severely pitted and thinned, tending to break up teeth with surface erosion and loss of cementum and dentine	
FISH	fish	HUM	humerus	3 - surface pitting and erosion of bone, some loss of cementum and dentine on teeth	
UNIB	bird indet	RAD	radius	4 - surface of bone intact, loss of organic component, material chalky, calcined or burnt	
UNIF	fish indet	MTC	metacarpus	5 - bone in good condition, probably with some organic component	
GSZE	goose size	MC1-4	metacarpus 1-4		
BEAV	beaver	INN	innominate		
CORV	crow or rook	ILM	ilium		
		PUB	pubis		
		ISH	ischium		
		FEM	femur		
		TIB	tibia		
		AST	astragalus		
		CAL	calcaneum		
		MTT	metatarsus		
		MT1-4	metatarsus 1-4		
		PH1	1st phalanx		
		PH2	2nd phalanx		
		PH3	3rd phalanx		
		LM1-LM3	Lower molar 1 - molar 3		
		UM1-UM3	upper molar 1 - molar 3		
		LPM1-LPM4	lower premolar 1-4		
		UPM1-UPM4	upper premolar 1-4		
		DLPM1-4	deciduous lower premolar 1-4		
		DUPM1-4	deciduous upper premolar 1-4		
		MNT	mandibular tooth		
		MXT	maxillary tooth		
		LBF	long bone		
		UNI	unidentified		
		STN	sternum		
		INC	incisor		
		TTH	indet. tooth		
		CMP	carpo-metacarpus		

## ZONES - codes used to define zones on each bone

SKULL -	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. paraoccipital process</li> <li>2. occipal condyle</li> <li>3. intercornual protuberance</li> <li>4. external acoustic meatus</li> <li>5. frontal sinus</li> <li>6. ectorbitale</li> <li>7. entorbitale</li> <li>8. temporal articular facet</li> <li>9. facial tuber</li> <li>0. infraorbital foramen</li> </ol>	METACARPUS -	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. medial facet of proximal artciulation, MC3</li> <li>2. lateral facet of proximal articulation, MC4</li> <li>3. medial distal condyle, MC3</li> <li>4. lateral distal condyle, MC4</li> <li>5. anterior distal groove and foramen</li> <li>6. medial or lateral distal condyle</li> </ol>
		FIRST PHALANX	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. proximal epiphysis</li> <li>2. distal articular facet</li> </ol>
MANDIBLE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Symphyseal surface</li> <li>2. diastema</li> <li>3. lateral diastemal foramen</li> <li>4. coronoid process</li> <li>5. condylar process</li> <li>6. angle</li> <li>7. anterior dorsal ascending ramus posterior M3</li> <li>8. mandibular foramen</li> </ol>	INNOMINATE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. tuber coxae</li> <li>2. tuber sacrale + scar</li> <li>3. body of illium with dorso-medial foramen</li> <li>4. iliopubic eminence</li> <li>5. acetabular fossa</li> <li>6. symphyseal branch of pubis</li> <li>7. body of ischium</li> <li>8. ischial tuberosity</li> <li>9. depression for medial tendon of rectus femoris</li> </ol>
VERTEBRA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. spine</li> <li>2. anterior epiphysis</li> <li>3. posterior epiphysis</li> <li>4. centrum</li> <li>5. neural arch</li> </ol>	FEMUR	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. head</li> <li>2. trochanter major</li> <li>3. trochanter minor</li> <li>4. supracondyloid fossa</li> <li>5. distal medial condyle</li> <li>6. lateral distal condyle</li> <li>7. distal trochlea</li> <li>8. trochanter tertius</li> </ol>
SCAPULA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. supraglenoid tubercle</li> <li>2. glenoid cavity</li> <li>3. origin of the distal spine</li> <li>4. tuber of spine</li> <li>5. posterior of neck with foramen</li> <li>6. cranial angle of blade</li> <li>7. caudal angle of blade</li> </ol>	TIBIA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. proximal medial condyle</li> <li>2. proximal lateral condyle</li> <li>3. intercondylar eminence</li> <li>4. proximal posterior nutrient foramen</li> <li>5. medial malleolus</li> <li>6. lateral aspect of distal articulation</li> <li>7. distal pre-epiphyseal portion of the diaphysis</li> </ol>
HUMERUS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. head</li> <li>2. greater tubercle</li> <li>3. lesser tubercle</li> <li>4. intertuberal groove</li> <li>5. deltoid tuberosity</li> <li>6. dorsal angle of olecranon fossa</li> <li>7. capitulum</li> <li>8. trochlea</li> </ol>	CALCANEUM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. calcaneal tuber</li> <li>2. sustentaculum tali</li> <li>3. processus anterior</li> </ol>
RADIUS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. medial half of proximal epiphysis</li> <li>2. lateral half of proximal epiphysis</li> <li>3. posterior proximal ulna scar and foramen</li> <li>4. medial half of distal epiphysis</li> <li>5. lateral half of distal epiphysis</li> <li>6. distal shaft immediately above distal epiphysis</li> </ol>	METATARSUS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. medial facet of proximal artciulation, MT3.</li> <li>2. lateral facet of proximal articulation, MT4</li> <li>3. medial distal condyle, MT3</li> <li>4. lateral distal condyle, MT4</li> <li>5. anterior distal groove and foramen</li> <li>6. medial or lateral distal condyle</li> </ol>
ULNA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. olecranon tuberosity</li> <li>2. trochlear notch- semilunaris</li> <li>3. lateral coronoid process</li> <li>4. distal epiphysis</li> </ol>		

## Archive catalogue of animal bone from Nelson Road, Fiskerton.

site	cont.	species	bone	no.	side	fusion	zone	butch'ery	gnaw'ing	measurement	comment
NRF98	206	BOS	LI	1	L						ROOT LOST-SLIGHT WEAR
NRF98	408	CSZ	RIB	1	F						SHAFT FRAG-SL POROUS
NRF98	408	GOOS	ULN	1	R						COMPLETE- IN 2 PIECES
NRF98	408	OVCA	HUM	1	R	PFD	12345 67890			GL1-139 GLC-122.5 Bp-35.8 SD-13.6 BT-27.3 HT-12.4	COMPLETE-SMALL-GRACILE
NRF98	408	SUS	SKL	1	L						PARIETAL FRAG
NRF98	409	BOS	MAN	1	L			CH	DG		POST VENTRAL ASC RAMUS-DORSAL CHOPPED-VENTRAL CHEWED
NRF98	409	BOS	SCP	1	R				DG		PROXIMAL BLADE AND SPINE FRAGMENT-PROX CHEWED
NRF98	409	CSZ	VER	1	F		1	CH			SPINE-POSS AXIS- CHOPPED VENTRALLY- SPINE UNFUSED
NRF98	409	OVCA	RAD	1	R		3		DG		MIDSHAFT-DISTAL CHEWED
NRF98	409	OVCA	TIB	1	L				DG		DISTAL HALF SHAFT- DIST END CHEWED

### Appendix 3: Assessment Report on the Registered Finds by J Cowgill

#### ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR THE REGISTERED FINDS FROM THE NELSON ROAD, FISKERTON EVALUATION (NRF98: LCCM 117.98)

##### **Context 408; RF1; Antler and copper alloy comb.**

###### *Description*

The comb was found amongst internal floor or accumulation deposits within a medieval stone building.

This type of single sided composite comb was constructed by sandwiching together a series of antler tooth plates between a pair of side or connecting plates, all of which are held together with a series of copper alloy rivets. This comb belongs to the extremely rare group of combs known as 'false-ribbed combs with arched backs (MacGregor 1985, 91) on account of the presence of a false rib along the base of the connecting plate and the high arched back. The decoration on the plates is in the form of closely spaced copper-alloy rivets that lie flush with the surface of the plates and what is probably part of a T-shaped opening which pierces the central flat area on both connecting plates. A sheet of copper alloy is clearly visible behind one of the openings which would have given the comb a highly decorative appearance with the brass or bronze colour of the metal contrasting beautifully with the natural colour of the antler (assuming it was not painted). The technique of backing open-work ornamentation with metal sheeting is very rare on combs found in Britain but is sometimes found on casket mounts and gaming pieces (MacGregor 1985, 91). Combs of this type are dated to the 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> century on the basis of British, and more importantly North European, evidence.

The teeth of the comb are very finely sawn with what must have been a very fine saw blade. The distance between the teeth suggest that it was perhaps a nit comb although the general high quality of the piece may indicate that it was done as another indicator of the craftsman's skill. Only one tooth is broken and there is no great evidence of wear on the teeth.

A unique feature of this comb is the suspension loop that has also been carved out of the antler. The loop is carved out of one end of the second tooth plate and through it is a probable copper-alloy wire link with another piece of copper-alloy sheet perhaps functioning as a strapend linking the comb to perhaps a thin strap of leather or braid. Combs were often worn by both men and women and were commonly suspended from a belt or girdle at the waist. A specially made suspension loop is possibly a unique feature in this country (pers. comm. I. Riddler), the more normal method is to simply drill a hole through the comb and to use that to suspend it. This time consuming detail and refinement would have added to the cost of what is already evidently an expensive comb.

The majority of contemporary combs found in England are made from wood, often box wood (*Buxus* sp.). Antler combs persist for a much longer period in Northern Europe, particularly in Scandinavia and other areas within Viking influence, where the majority of the parallels for this comb have been found (pers. comm. I. Riddler). None-the-less this still represents one of the less common types of European comb, which means that it being found in Fiskerton is all the more interesting and intriguing.

In any debate regarding whether there was a medieval port or landing place at Fiskerton, an object such as this which was evidently imported or perhaps even owned by a Scandinavian merchant, must have some significance.

J. Cowgill  
December 1998

### *Condition*

Slightly under a half of the comb survives and there are a number of significant structural cracks through the connecting plates which are slowly expanding. These types of composite objects are notorious for disintegrating and the rapid rate at which this can occur.

### *Recommendations*

Considering the uniqueness of this object it is suggested that precautions are taken to ensure an adequate record of it is obtained. These need not, however, add significantly to the costs. Simple measures such as ensuring that it is transported over a minimum distance to be drawn and conserved will aid its survival.

This object should be drawn, X-radiographed and conserved before being published – perhaps as a note in the *Antiquity Journal*. It is suggested that a pencil drawing is made of the object in the conservation laboratory before conservation in case it does not fully survive the drying process. An X-radiograph is required to examine the copper alloy fittings that exist around the suspension loop with possible additional investigative cleaning to clarify the X-ray results. The comb should then be dried in solvents and an appropriate acrylic compound, the latter to give it a final structural consolidation. The last stage is to package the object to enable it to be accessible without the need for excessive handling thus ensuring the long-term integrity and preservation of the object (pers. comm. R. White).

### *Storage recommendations.*

Antler objects, if they are to survive, need to be stored in a cool slightly moist environment away from direct sunlight. The dryness created by central heating systems will encourage the antler to crack and split and if the object is placed near a radiator this could occur rapidly and will be irreversible. This comb is a composite object and the combination of a metal and an organic material causes a dilemma because each material requires totally contrasting methods of storage. The antler, as stated above, requires a moist cool environment while the copper alloy should be kept extremely dry (with the aid of silica gel) to inhibit corrosion. In this instance the antler takes priority because the moistness may not destroy the copper alloy element but dryness will definitely terminally damage the antler. The copper alloy rivets will have already introduced weak points in the antler and these can be clearly seen in the cracks and breaks that are already present.

### **Context: Trench 4 Unstratified; RF2. Fragment of lava stone quern.**

Worn pecked surface, thickness incomplete, probably the remains of an upper stone. Maximum dimensions: 91 x 75 x 40mm.

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks are due to Ian Riddler for detailed discussions concerning the comb.

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Jane Cowgill©  
December 1998

## Appendix 4: Post-Roman Pottery Assessment by J Young

Nelson Road, Fiskerton (NRF98)

Post-Roman pottery archive: ware types by context

By Jane Young

Context	Ware	Sherds	Form	Comments
403	NSP	1	JUG/PITCHER	BASE
	TOY	2	JUG	BASE
	TOY	1	JUG	THUMBED BASE
	LSW2/3	1	PIPKIN	BASE
	HUM	1	JUG	THUMB DEC; ?LHJ
	LMLOC	1	?	INT & EXT GLZE; ?TB OR LLSW
	LEMS	1	ODD VESS	BASE; WIDE & SPLAYED
	LSH	1	?	BS; ?ID
Date: Very mixed; latest pot prob L14-15TH; MH8-MH10				
408	THETT	1	LSV	BASE; FABRIC S?
	NSP	1	JUG/PITCHER	BS; X2
	NSP	2	JUG/PITCHER	BS
	LFS	2	JAR	RIM; M/L11TH+; LARGE FRAG
	LFS	1	JAR	BS; LARGE FRAG; SOOT INT & EXT
	LFS	1	JAR	BS; LARGE FRAG; SOOT; INT LEACHED
	LFS	1	JAR	BS; INT LEACHED; SOOT EXT; X3
	LFS	1	JAR	BS; LEACHED; SOOT; X2
	LFS	1	?	BS; INT DEP; SOOT
	LFS	1	BOWL	BS; SOOT
	LFS	1	JAR	BASE; SOOT; X2
	LFS	1	JAR	BASE; SOOT; INT & EXT; LARGE FRAG; X2
	LFS	1	JAR	BASE; SOOT; INT LEACHED; LARGE FRAG
	LFS	1	BOWL?	BASE; SOOT; INT DEP
	LFS	1	?	BASE
	LFS	1	?	BASE; LEACHED; X2
	LFS	1	JAR	SMALL; RIM; SOOT; L11+
	LFS	1	BOWL	TRIANGULAR RIM; 12TH
	LFS	1	BOWL	RIM; LEACHED
	LEMS	1	BOWL	TRIANGULAR RIM; ?ID OR LFS
LEMS	1	BOWL	RIM	
WEMS	1	JAR	RIM; ?ID	
WEMS	1	BOWL	RIM; ?ID	
POTT	1	BOWL	BS; JOINS (409): INTRUSIVE	
Date: MH1-2; E/M-M12TH. Good group +1 intrusive med				
409	POTT	1	BOWL	RIM
	POTT	6	BOWL	RIM & BS; LARGE FRAGS; JOINS (408); SOOT
	POTT	1	COOKPOT	BS; X2



BOU	1	JUG	BS; ?INTRUSIVE
NSP	1	JUG/PITCHER	BS; LARGE FRAG; SMOOTH FABRIC; BASE
LFS	1	JAR	BASE
LFS	1	?	BASE; SOOT

Date: Hard to date if BOU sherd is not intrusive then MH10 (ie mid to late 15TH). Otherwise POTT is only dateable to 13-15TH

413	MEDLOC	1	?	13-15THC BS
Date: 13-15TH				
421	LEMS	1	?	BASE; SOOT
	LEMS	1	BOWL	RIM; SOOT
	POTT	1	?	BS; SOOT
	POTT	1	COOKPOT	RIM
	LSW2/3	3	JUG	BASE & BS; ODD; BRITTLE FABRIC; NO GLZE

Date: MH4-MH9; 13-15TH or MH4-MH7; 13-M14

### Tile

211	PNR	1	TILE	?DATE; FLAKE
	PNR	1	TILE	?DATE; COULD BE ROMAN?; TRIMMED

Date: ROM-MOD

409	PNR	2	TILE	SAME TILE; FLAT
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Date: MED/PMED

### Comments

An unusual assemblage, most of the pottery is either E/M-M12TH or medieval. It is impossible to date the medieval material precisely as almost all of the pottery is undiagnostic shell-tempered POTT (ie 13-15TH). The high amount of coarse ware sherds may indicate material from a kitchen thus explaining the low number of jug sherds. The pottery ranges in date from the 10th century to the late medieval period, a single tile fragment may be Roman. If the identification of 2 sherds as WEMS is correct, this is an unusual occurrence as previous finds in the county have been limited to the Horncastle area. The high percentage of domestic wares also precludes any identification of the status of the material.

**Nelson Road, Fiskerton**  
**NRF98**  
**Lithic Materials: Catalogue and Assessment**

Report by Jim Rylatt – December, 1998

Catalogue

Seven pieces of flint were recovered during excavation:

- |     |    |                           |  |
|-----|----|---------------------------|--|
| 108 | i  | Broken tertiary flake:    | Proximal fragment of a blade, with limited use-wear or retouch on both lateral edges. Brown translucent flint.   |
| 310 | i  | Broken tertiary flake:    | Proximal fragment of a flake with a small prepared platform. Orange/brown opaque flint with frequent inclusions (?river gravel).   |
| 413 | i  | Complete secondary flake: | Core removal flake, scars indicate working from opposed platforms. ?Possible use-wear along opposing lateral edges at either end of flake. Mottled translucent flint. 56 x 18mm. |
|     | ii | Broken tertiary flake:    | Proximal fragment of a blade, with limited use-wear or retouch on one lateral edge. Brown translucent flint.   |
| 418 | i  | Complete tertiary flake:  | Orange/brown opaque flint with chalky inclusions (?river gravel). 27 x 29mm.   |
| 419 | i  | Broken tertiary flake:    | ?Possible fragment of a core rejuvenation flake, with hinge fracture. Brown translucent flint.   |
|     | ii | Complete tertiary flake:  | Small flake with (?)possible retouch on distal end. Lightly patinated, brown translucent flint. 13 x 11mm.   |

*NB:* Measurements are given only for complete flakes. They were taken at right angles to the platform; the first figure relates to length, the second to breadth.

## Discussion

Of the 7 pieces of flint recovered from Nelson Road, Fiskerton, 5 were produced from varieties of translucent flint. In summary, the assemblage comprises:

	Number	Percentage	Trench No.
Secondary flakes	1	(14.3%)	4
Tertiary flakes	3	(42.9%)	3, 4
Core rejuvenation	1(?)	(14.3%)	4
Blades	2	(28.6%)	1, 4

This is a very small assemblage, and as such it is difficult to establish its character and chronology. Additionally, the flakes are generally quite small. Consequently, the possibility of re-deposition by a variety of taphonomic processes should temper any interpretation. However, the presence of 2 blade fragments allows a tentative dating of at least part of the assemblage, being suggestive of an earlier Neolithic industry.

Most of the lithic material (71.4%) was recovered from trench 4, but the presence of a blade fragment in trenches 1 and 4 suggests that there may be a very low-to-low density of datable lithic material across much of the site.

## Acknowledgements

The analysis of this material was carried out under the supervision of Dr Mark Edmonds, senior lecturer at the Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield, as a component of an MA in Landscape Archaeology. I would like to extend my thanks to him for unstinting support and advice. Illustrations were executed by the author.

Appendix 6 Assessment Report on a Single Sherd of Prehistoric Pottery by  
Dr D Knight

A small base angle (9g) from a vessel of unknown form was recovered from context 104. The sherd is soft, with a hackly fracture, and incorporates moderate (10-20%) mainly subrounded medium (0.25-1mm) quartz inclusions. Small vesicles observed in the section suggest the leaching out of sparse fine shell inclusions, but no shell has survived. The fabric is unoxidised (black exterior, core and interior). The sherd preserves evidence of a flat base, pinched out slightly around the circumference, but the body profile cannot be determined. The uneven surfaces would be consistent with modelling by hand. The inner and outer surfaces are smoothed, with traces on the exterior of burnishing, but no traces of decoration may be discerned. Close dating is not possible, but the fabric and surface finish invite comparison with pottery dating in this region from the Late Bronze Age or Iron Age periods. Precise parallels cannot be suggested in view of the lack of diagnostic formal or decorative features, but comparable quartz-gritted fabrics with sparse fine shell, probably crushed as temper, have been recorded at Lincolnshire sites spanning the first millennium BC (for example at Dragonby: May, J. 1996. *Dragonby*, 416-22 ; notably D-ware). I have recorded further examples of comparable fabrics during analyses of the LBA and IA pottery obtained during excavations of south Lincs. sites such as Dowsby and Market Deeping (details in Lane, T.W. forthcoming: *Prehistoric Sites from the Fenland Mangement Project in Lincolnshire*. Lincs. Heritage Report Series).

## Appendix 7 References

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## Appendix 8 Site archive

Primary records are currently with PCA (Lincoln). An ordered archive of both paper and object elements is in preparation, and the paper element will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months. The object element is to remain (by request) with the site owner, although the ivory comb may be submitted with the paper element. Access to the archive may be gained at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, by reference to the global accession number, 5.99.