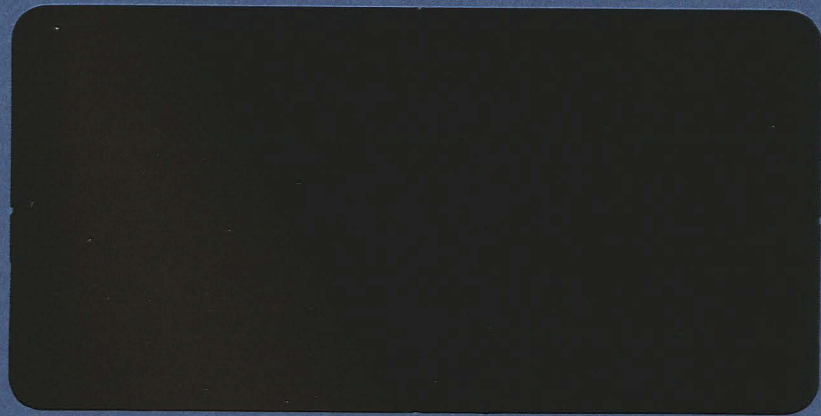


**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
LAND SOUTH OF BACK LANE,
HEIGHINGTON, LINCOLNSHIRE.**

99/10

Site Code: BLH97
LCNCC: 150.97
NGR: TF 0320 6940
Planning Ref: N/32/0447/96



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Report prepared for J.A. Andrew (Metheringham) Ltd.,
by James Albone BSc PIFA.
May 1999

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Summary

- * *An intermittent archaeological watching brief was undertaken during the construction of eight detached houses on land to the south of Back Lane, Heighington, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).*
- * *A two phase kiln or oven structure of probable medieval date was exposed and excavated during work on plot 2.*
- * *Undated features, consisting of a ditch, a gully and a pit were recorded. A well of possible post-medieval date was also exposed.*
- * *A small quantity of Roman, early, mid and late Saxon and medieval pottery was recovered from the topsoil and subsoil across the site area.*



Fig. 1: Site location incorporating principal entries from the County Sites & Monuments Record (1:10,000)
 (OS Copyright Licence No: AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief was carried out on a site to the south of Back Lane, Heighington, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1) during the construction of eight detached houses. The work was commissioned by J. A. Andrew (Metheringham) Ltd. in accordance with a condition of the planning (Ref. N/32/0447/96).

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

The village of Heighington is situated in the administrative district of North Kesteven approximately 5km. east south east of Lincoln. The underlying geology consists of Jurassic clays and limestones of the Upper Estuarine series.

The site is adjacent to Back Lane which lies on the south side of the historic core of the settlement. It consists of a triangular area of land which slopes towards the north and lies between 13m. and 17m. OD. The northern boundary of the development area is Back Lane. The grounds of Heighington Hall lie to the west and there is open space and existing development to the south and east respectively. The site is centred on NGR TF 0320 6940.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The earliest archaeological evidence from Heighington parish dates to the Neolithic period. Worked flints of this date, including a fragment of a sickle, a scraper and a waste flake, have been found c.150m. to the south of the development. Numerous other prehistoric artefacts, including polished stone axes, worked flints and pottery, have been found within the parish but the exact find-spots are uncertain.

Tile kilns of Roman date have been located 1.5 - 2km. to the east of the village. One of these, which lay only 200m. south of the Car Dyke, was excavated during the mid 1970s and found to be associated with fourth century pottery (Wood and Darling 1977, 74). A Roman occupation site has been found in the same area as the kilns.

The place-name Heighington is probably of Old English origin meaning 'Hyht's farmstead or village' (Cameron 1998, 62). The settlement was not mentioned in the Domesday survey in 1086 (Morris 1986). It is first referred to, as *Hyctingeton*, in the mid thirteenth century (Cameron 1998, 62).

The church, which lies c.200m. to the west of the site, retains some Norman work. It had fallen out of use by the early seventeenth century and became the village school before returning to its original use (Mee 1949, 177). Immediately to the west of the

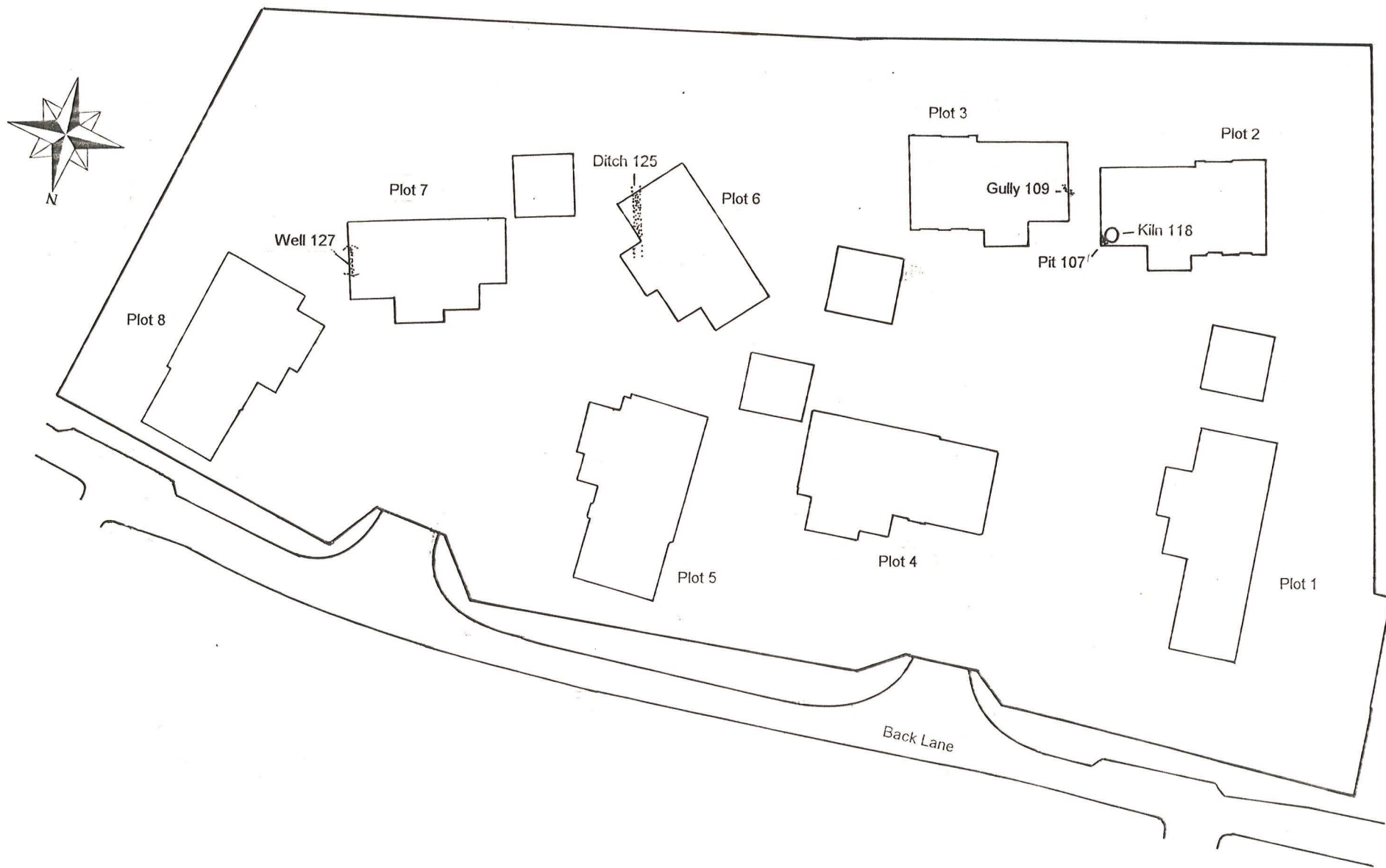


Fig. 2: Site plan showing the location of archaeological features (1:500)

site lies Heighington Hall which was constructed before 1872 (Pevsner, Harris and Antram 1995, 378). A blacksmiths is shown at the west end of the site on the c.1950s edition of the Ordnance Survey map.

4.0 Methodology

On the basis of the prehistoric finds in the vicinity of the development and its proximity to the historic core of the village, an archaeological project brief was issued by the North Kesteven District Heritage Officer. This required a watching brief during the groundworks of the development.

Recording was undertaken using standard watching brief record sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations, and stratigraphic relationships). Features were planned and drawn to scale in section, and photographic recording was undertaken (some prints are reproduced in this report). The drawings, and the rest of the paper record, will form the basis for a long-term project archive. A small quantity of pottery was recovered and specialist reports are included as appendix below.

The watching brief was carried out by the writer, Mr. S. Johnson and Mr. J. Snee between June 1997 and March 1999.

5.0 Results

A dark greyish brown sandy silt topsoil (100) was present across the whole site and contained modern finds. In addition, single sherds of early, mid to late and late Saxon pottery and two sherds of medieval pottery were recovered from the topsoil in the area of plot 4. Below the topsoil was a mid orange-brown clay-sand subsoil (101). This layer produced three sherds of mid to late third century Roman pottery from plot 8, two fragments of Roman tile from plot 2 and two fragments of medieval tile from plot 4. Beneath the subsoil was natural orange-yellow to light grey clay-sand (102) which contained bands of dark grey clay.

Kiln / Oven Structures 118 and 119 (Figs. 3,5,6 & 7., Pls. 1 - 4.)

Two superimposed circular kilns or oven structures were identified in the north east corner of plot 2. These had an external diameter of c1.5m. and survived to a total height of 0.35m. The latest kiln /oven was constructed of unfired light yellow clay with occasional courses of small flat pieces of limestone (118). The interior surface was baked to a pinkish red. Above the level of the floor were red, dark brown and yellow clay fragments and limestone pieces (116) from the collapse of the structure. There were no deposits or artefacts above the floor to indicate the function of this structure. The floor of the later kiln /oven (117) consisted of pinkish red fired clay with a dark brownish grey surface. Below the floor level was a foundation of flat limestone pieces (120). An opening in the wall of the structure remained on the north side and adjacent to this was a U-shaped pit (124), probably used for stoking or raking out. This contained mid brown silty clay (123) with fragments of the structure's fabric and an intermittent layer of charcoal in the base.

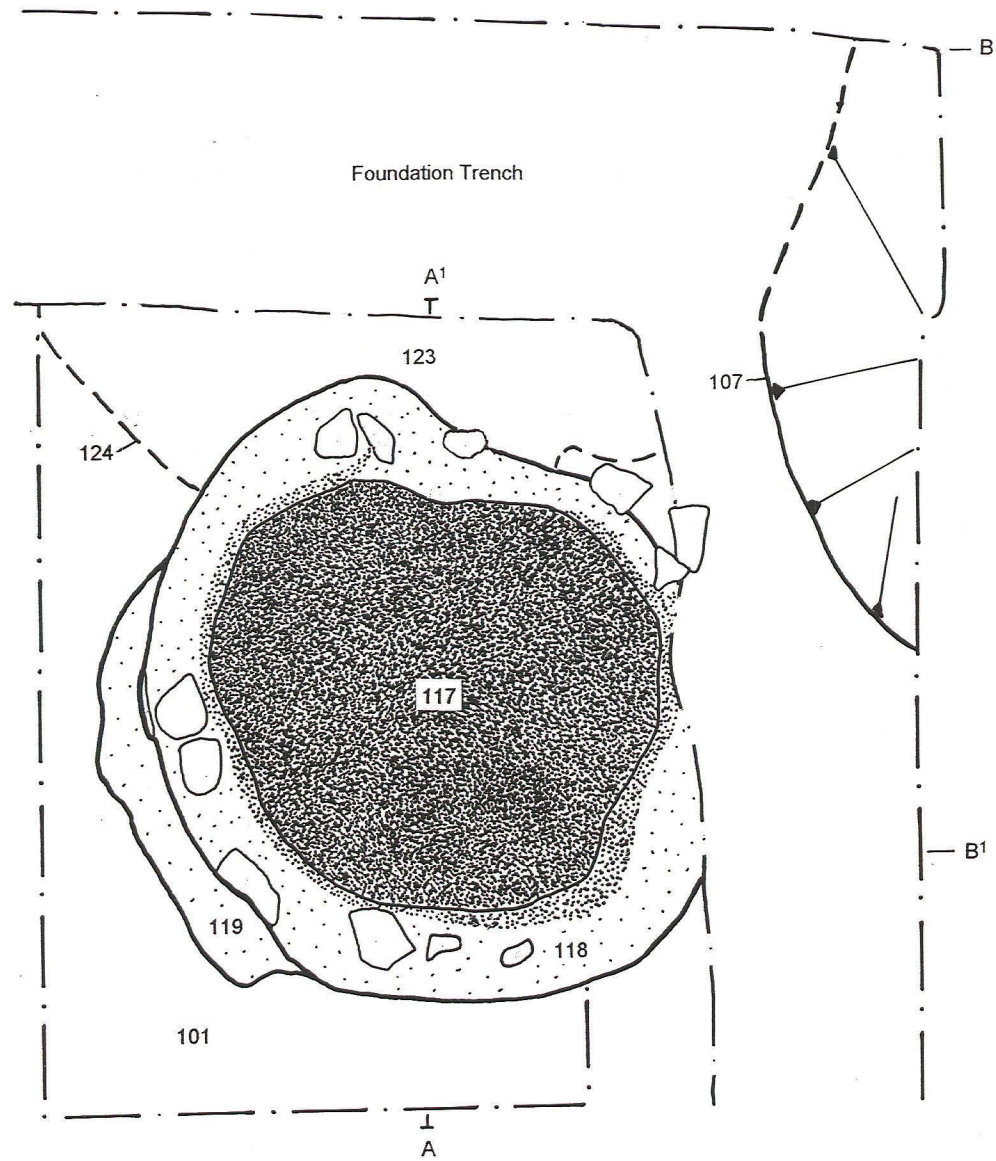


Fig. 3: Plan of kilns 118 and 119 with pit 107 in the adjacent foundation trench (1:20)

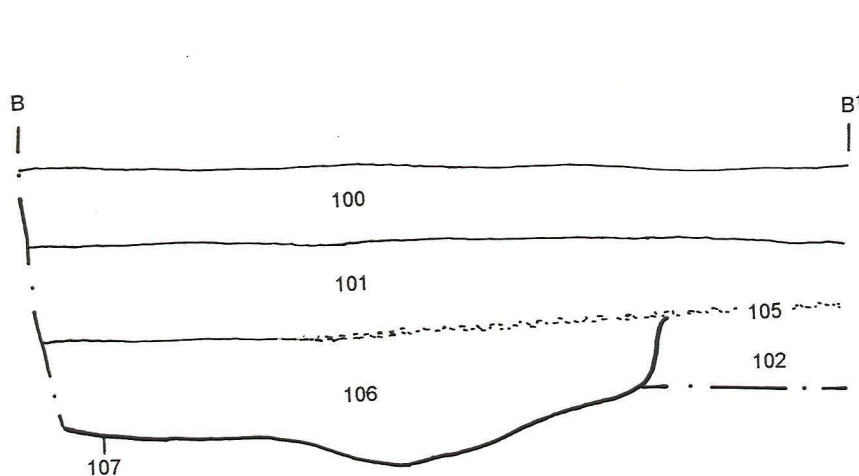


Fig. 4: Section of pit 107 (1:20)

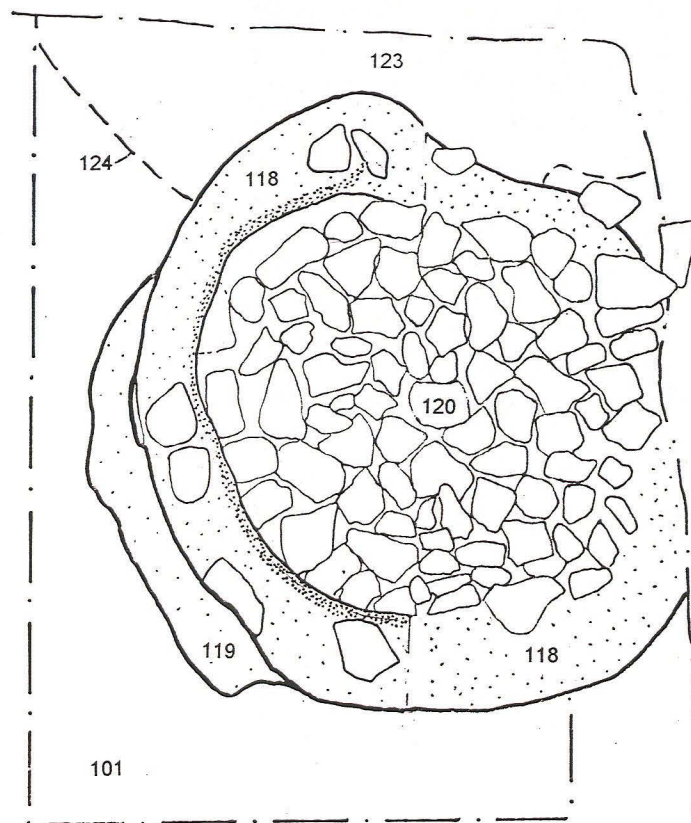


Fig. 5: Plan of kiln 118 with floor 117 removed, showing limestone foundation 120 (1:20)

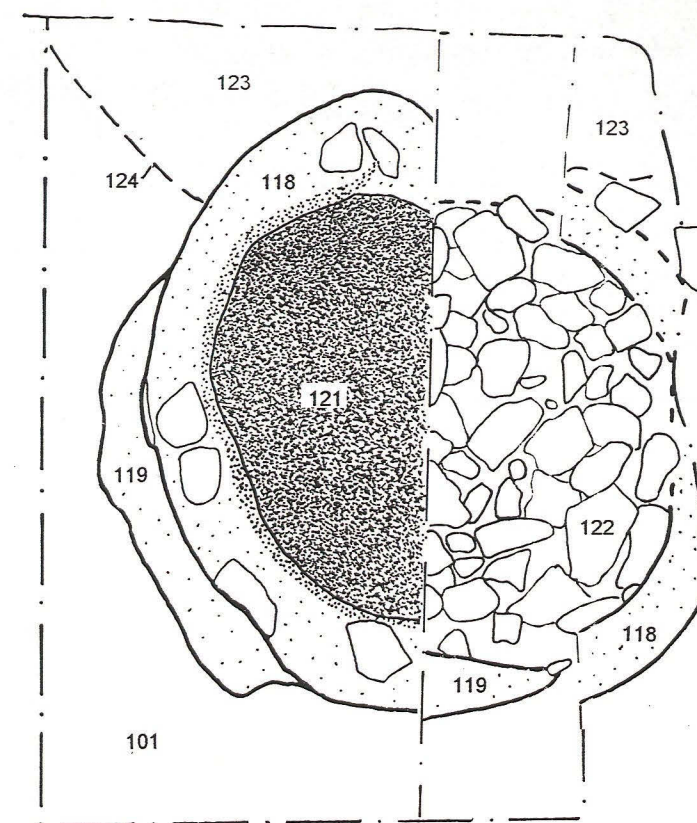


Fig. 6: Plan of kiln 118 with foundation 120 removed, showing the floor 121 and foundation 122 of kiln 119 (1:20)

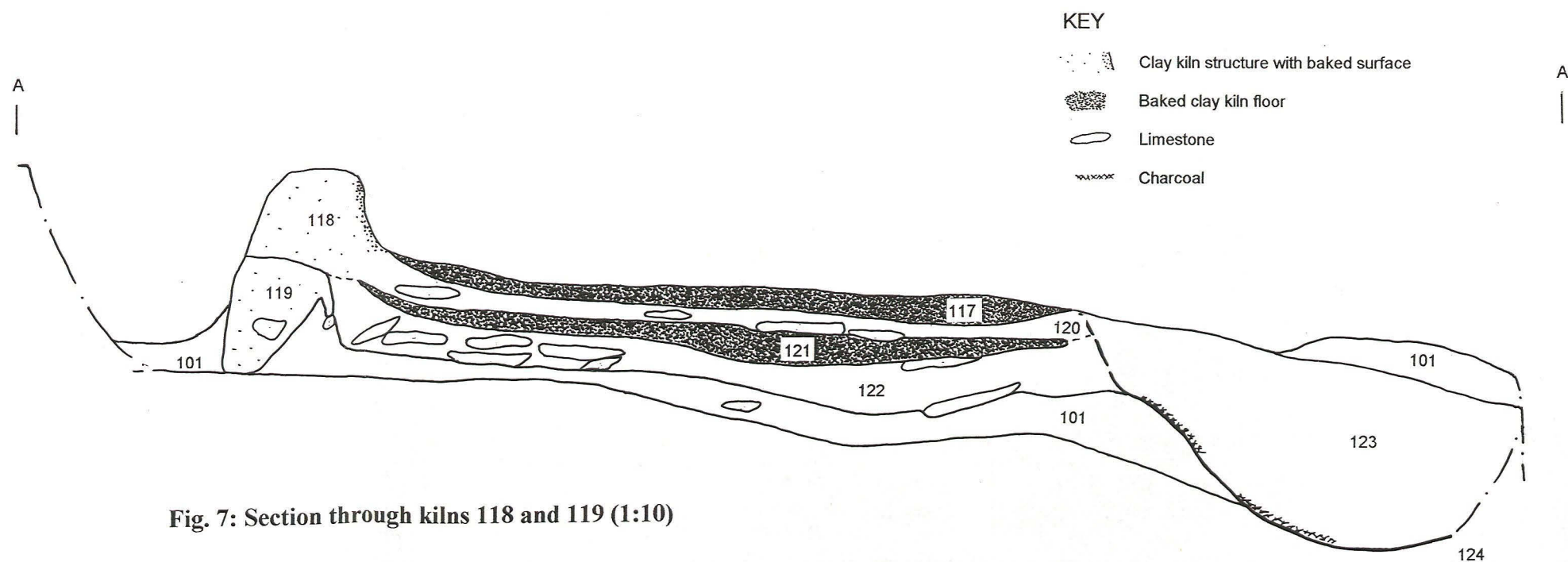


Fig. 7: Section through kilns 118 and 119 (1:10)

- KEY
- Clay kiln structure with baked surface
 - Baked clay kiln floor
 - Limestone
 - Charcoal

A1

124



Pl. 1: Kiln 118 after removal of fill, showing floor 117.



Pl. 2: Kiln 118 with floor 117 partly removed exposing the stone foundation 120.



Pl. 3: Kiln 118 with foundation 120 partly removed exposing floor 121 of kiln 119.



Pl. 4: Kiln 118 with floor 121 removed showing stone foundation 122 of kiln 119.

Underlying the limestone foundation of the second kiln / oven was the floor of the earlier structure (121). Like the later floor, this consisted of pinkish red fired clay with a dark grey surface. This floor also lay on a foundation of flat limestone pieces (122). This earlier kiln / oven (119), the walls of which were made of light grey clay, had been demolished to floor level prior to the construction of the second structure.

The base of the earliest structure was cut into the subsoil 101. However it appeared that this deposit had continued to build up around and over both structures after they had been abandoned. It is likely that the subsoil was mixed by plant and animal activity over time to such an extent that it now appears homogenous, and any traces of features or surfaces within it have been destroyed. Unfortunately no dateable artefacts were recovered in association with the structures.

Pit 107 (Fig. 4.)

This feature was located in the north east corner of plot 2. It was steep sided with a slightly dished base and contained light orange brown sandy clay (106). No finds were recovered. The fill of the pit was sealed by a thin, intermittent band of black and pinkish red sand and clay (105) which continued to the south between the subsoil (101) and the natural (102). It seems likely that this deposit was associated with the adjacent kiln / oven (118). This would suggest that pit 107 had been back-filled by the time the kiln / oven was in use, thereby ruling it out as a continuation of the stoking pit 124. It is however possible that pit 107 represented the stoking pit for the earlier kiln / oven structure (119) or that it related to another similar structure which lay beyond the area exposed during the brief.

Gully 109 (Fig. 8., Pl. 5.)

A small U-shaped gully was located on the west side of plot 3. It was aligned north west to south east and may have been associated with pit 107. It contained a grey-brown clay-sand (108) which produced no finds.

Ditch 125 (Fig. 9., Pl. 6)

This feature was located on the south side of plot 6. It had a broad U-shaped profile and was aligned north north west to south south east. It contained a medium brown clay-sand (126) which was very similar to the subsoil (101). It was only possible to identify the feature where it cut into natural deposits and the level from which it was cut could not be established. The foundation trenches on the north side of the plot were shallower and did not cut into the natural sandy clay. Consequently, it was not possible to trace this feature across the whole of the plot. No dateable artefacts were recovered.

Well 127

A steep sided feature, interpreted as a well, was identified during the excavation of the foundation trench for the east wall of plot 7. It contained pinkish red clay with limestone rubble (128) above a mid brown silty clay (129). The feature was excavated by the machine to a depth of c.2m. to remove all loose and unstable material. No detailed recording of this feature was carried out for safety reasons and, due to the method of excavation, no finds were recovered. However, the feature was cut through the subsoil layer (101), so a post-medieval date is suggested.

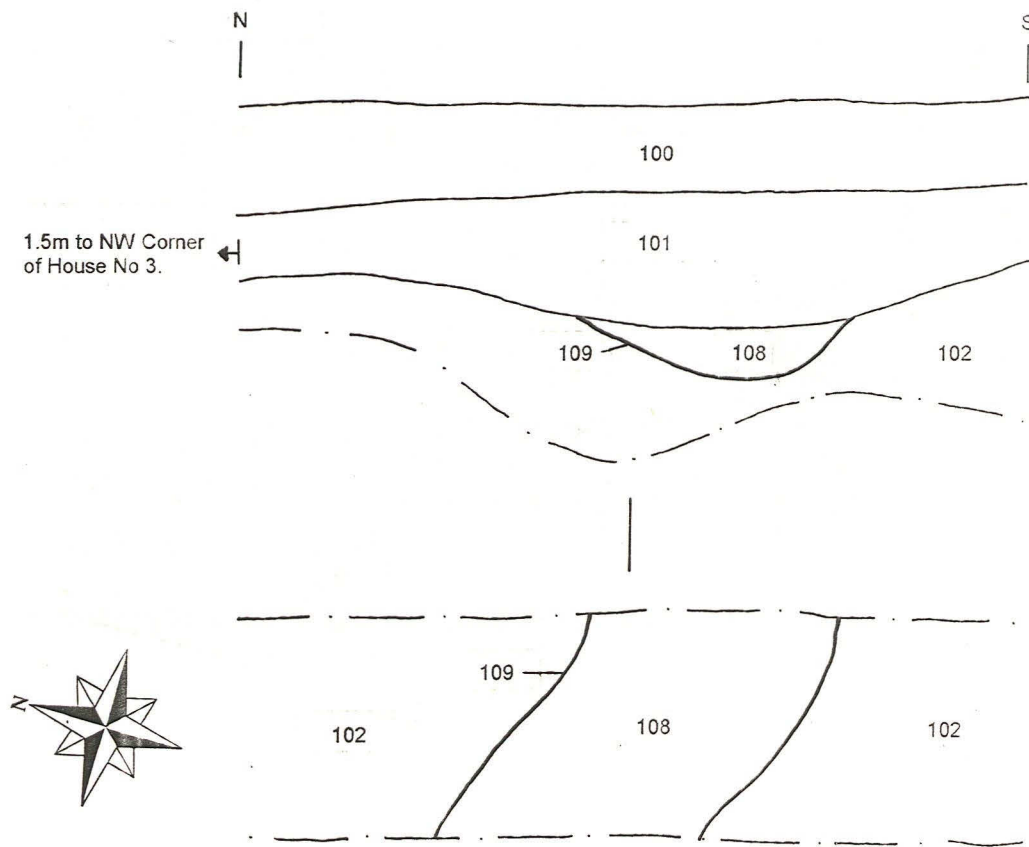


Fig. 8: Plan and section of gully 109 (1:20)

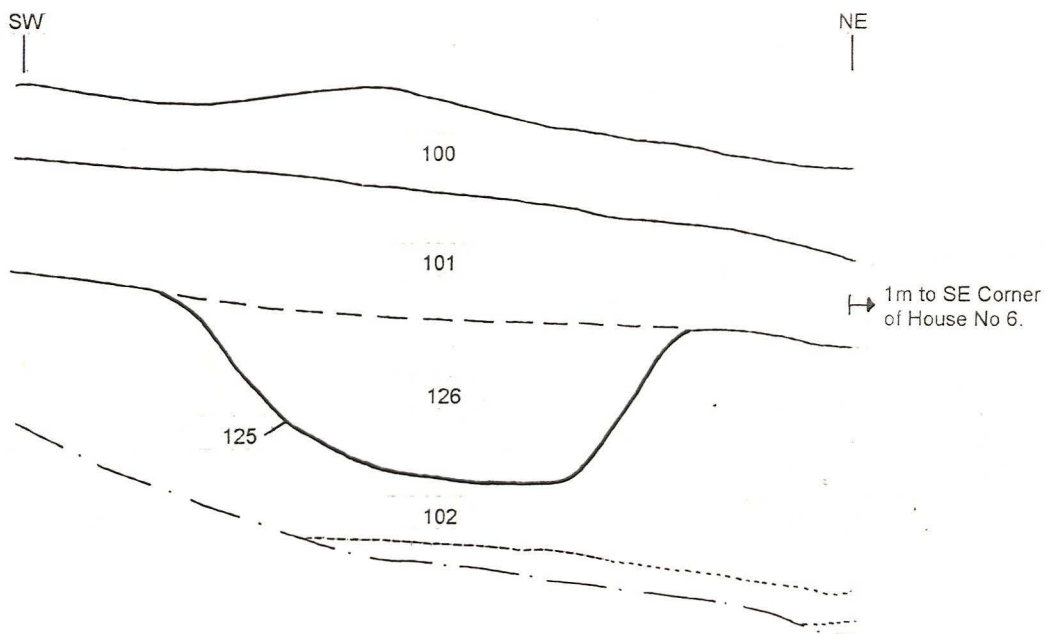


Fig. 9: Section of ditch 125 (1:20)



Pl. 5: Gully 109 looking north west.



Pl. 6: Ditch 125 looking north west.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusion

Although only a small number of archaeological features were identified during the watching brief, the results are very interesting.

The kiln / oven structures are important despite the fact that their purpose and date remain uncertain. A number of possible functions could be suggested for these structures. Early medieval pottery kilns of similar construction are known. However the complete lack of any pottery wasters associated with the structures makes this seem unlikely. It is possible that they were used as domestic ovens or corn dryers but the general lack of pottery in the subsoil did not suggest that any amount of domestic activity was taking place on the site during the medieval or earlier periods.

Although the overall quantity of pottery and tile recovered was low, the diversity of the assemblage is significant. The presence of small quantities of Roman and Saxon pottery suggests that some activity was taking place in close proximity to the site during these periods.

The homogenous nature of the subsoil, and its presence above and below the kiln / oven structures, suggested that it had been extensively disturbed by plant and animal action. As a result of this it was only possible to identify features where they cut into the natural deposits. It was impossible to determine the level from which they had been cut. Other features within the subsoil may have been completely destroyed by the biological activity, which may partly explain the lack of features on the site. The excavation of foundation trenches on the north side of the site (plots 1,2,5 and 8) did not cut through the subsoil into the natural deposits, making the identification of any features impossible.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express their thanks to J.A. Andrew (Metheringham) Ltd. for this commission. Thanks are also extended to Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy of the County Sites and Monuments Record Office, and the specialist contributors to this report; Jane Young and Margaret Darling.

8.0 Appendices:

Appendix 8.1: References

- | | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| Cameron, K. | 1998 | <i>A Dictionary of Lincolnshire Place-Names.</i> |
| Mee, A. | 1949 | <i>Lincolnshire.</i> |
| Morris, J. | 1986 | <i>'Lincolnshire' Domesday Book.</i> |
| Pevsner, N. Harris, J. & Antram, N. | 1995 | <i>The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire.</i> |
| Wood, K.F. & Darling, M.J. | 1977 | Heighington, in <i>Lincolnshire History and Archaeology</i> , Vol. 12. p74. |

Appendix 8.2:

**REPORT ON THE ROMAN POTTERY FROM BACK LANE,
HEIGHINGTON, BLH977**

for PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

by Margaret J. Darling, M.Phil., F.S.A., M.I.F.A.

28 April 1999

The sole Roman pottery from the watching brief consists of three large joining sherds from a single wide-mouthed grey bowl, weight 393g, from unstratified material.

This is a bowl of the type made at the Rookery Lane kiln in Lincoln, and can be paralleled there (Webster 1947, fig 3, No 43).

The dating is therefore in the latter half of the 3rd century, and is unlikely to extend into the 4th century.

© M.J. Darling, 1999

pottery archive blh97

<i>context</i>	<i>cname</i>	<i>form</i>	<i>nosh</i>	<i>nov dec</i>	<i>part</i>	<i>description</i>	<i>date</i>
<i>101 near kiln</i>							
	MISC		1	1	BS	very worn;orange quartz fabric	? Date
<i>101 plot 4</i>							
	MISC		1	1	BS	shell fabric;handmade	msax to lsax
	MISC		1	1	BS	oxid quartz fabric;no surfaces	? Date
	MEDLOC	?	1	1	BS	tiny frag;int glaze	13-15th
	LSLOC	jar?	1	1	BS	shell & quartz fabric	10-11th
	MEDLOC	?	1	1	base	light orange sandy;no glaze	12-15th
	SST		1	1	BS	edge of boss	mixed fabric;common fine sst lumps esax
<i>103</i>							
	LPM		1	1	BS	trans print	19th
<i>110</i>							
	LPM		2	1	BS	plain	19th

tile archive blh97

<i>context</i>	<i>cname</i>	<i>no frags</i>	<i>description</i>
<i>101 plot 2</i>			
	RTIL	1	tegula or box
	RTIL	1	? Brick
<i>101 plot 4</i>			
	PNR	1	flat roof;med
	PNR	1	flat roof;med

Appendix 8.3: Post-Roman Pottery Archive by Jane Young

LCNCC 150.97

8.4: Site Archive

Primary records are currently with PCA (Lincoln). An ordered archive of the paper element is in preparation and will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months.

The site archive consists of :

Paper Element:

- x 1 Project Brief
- x 1 Project Specification
- x 14 Watching Brief Record Sheets
- x 6 Sheet of site drawings
- x 2 Development plan showing foundation layout
- x 6 Colour print films

Object Element:

- x 1 Bag of Roman / medieval pottery and tile.