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LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

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**Airmens Married Quarters
RAF Digby
Archaeological Desk Top Study**

July 1993

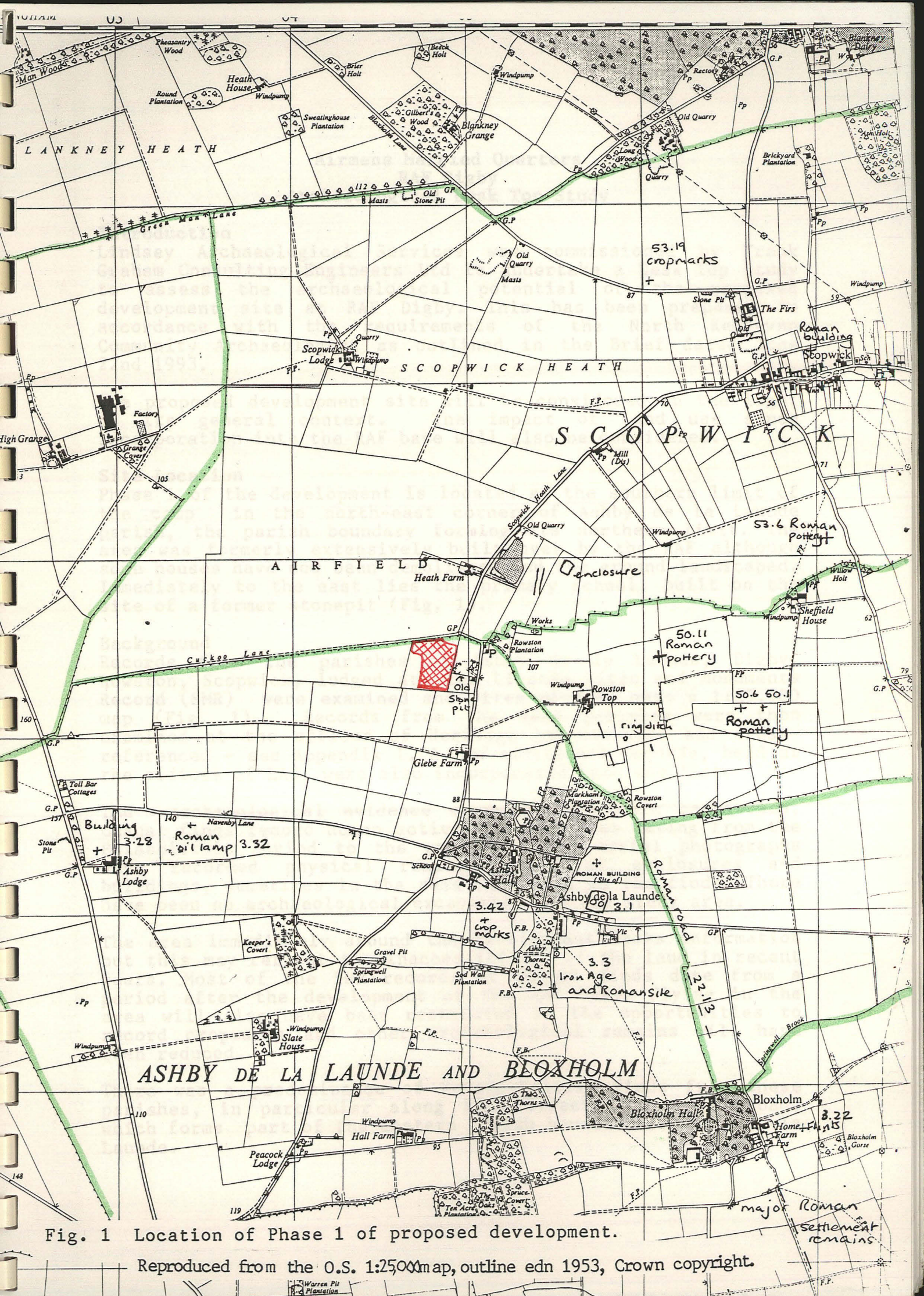


Fig. 1 Location of Phase 1 of proposed development.

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**Airmens Married Quarters
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Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services was commissioned by Frank Graham Consulting Engineers Ltd to undertake a Desk Top Study to assess the archaeological potential of the proposed development site at RAF Digby. This has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the North Kesteven Community Archaeologist as outlined in the Brief dated June 22nd 1993.

The proposed development site will be considered in the light of its general context. The impact of land use since incorporation into the RAF base will also be considered.

Site Location

Phase 1 of the development is located at the southern limit of the camp in the north-east corner of Ashby de la Launde parish, the parish boundary forming its northern limit. The area was formerly extensively built over by the RAF although some houses have now been demolished and the ground landscaped. Immediately to the east lies the primary school, built on the site of a former stonepit (Fig. 1).

Background

Records from the parishes of Ashby de la Launde, Digby, Rowston, Scopwick, lodged at the Lincoln Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) were examined and sites plotted onto a 1:25,000 map (Fig. 1). Records from the same parishes were then examined at the offices of Heritage Lincolnshire and cross-referenced - see Appendix I. A few additional records, held at the offices of LAS, were also incorporated into the list.

The archaeological evidence comprises two main categories. Casual finds record human activity in the area dating from the Palaeolithic period to the recent past. Aerial photographs have recorded physical remains, such as enclosures and buildings, sometimes in the same locations as the finds. There have been no archaeological excavations in the study area.

The area immediately around the development lacks information but this may reflect the inaccessibility of the land in recent years. Most of the SMR records of casual finds date from a period after the development of the RAF base. Flying in the area will also have been restricted so the opportunities to record cropmarks and other archaeological remains will have been reduced.

There was a predominance of Romano-British finds from these parishes, in particular along King Street, the Roman road, which forms part of the eastern parish boundary of Ashby de la Launde.

The Ordnance Survey records a Roman building on its map at TF058 553 (LM ref. AK,AJ and AL; NK 3.12) and finds have included a tessellated pavement, usually indicative of a high status building, if not a villa. Aerial photography recorded cropmarks in this field in 1991. A second zone of intense activity has been recorded flanking the Roman road south of Bloxholm, with numerous enclosures and other cropmarks recorded from the air together with quantities of pottery collected from the same fields.

There is much less information for the area north of Ashby de la Launde deserted medieval village although aerial photographs taken in 1957 show a rectangular enclosure and possible linear ditches. The photograph is poor but the linear ditches may represent a continuation of King Street (LM ref.H; NK 53.11). Further small enclosures have been found across the parishes (eg 50.9, 50.10, 53.16, 53.18), which show a densely occupied landscape.

Material from earlier periods has also been recorded but, as is characteristic elsewhere in Lincolnshire there is far less evidence of settlement remains. The mid-Acheulean hand axe from Scopwick (53.2, LM ref. B) is of interest and the Palaeolithic site south-west of Bloxholm is potentially the most important site in the area, for its rarity value alone, if indeed the material is truly of that date (NK 3.10). Fifteen flint and stone axes have been found in the four parishes and indicate human presence in the Neolithic period. There is an apparent concentration of flint scatters south of Bloxholm, in the same area as the later Romano-British activity, together with at least two round barrows. It is quite likely that this reflects the fieldwork carried out in the area on the Roman sites and does not indicate a true pattern of distribution. Possible barrow sites are recorded elsewhere at NK 3.8, 3.9, 53.5, 53.14 and possibly 53.15. There is little one can do to interpret individual finds of Bronze Age metalwork except to record that they denote a presence in the area, possibly of further barrows.

Anglo-Saxon and medieval remains tend mostly located in or close to present settlements although there is more than a sprinkling of monastic granges in the area (e.g. NK 22.1/22.7), east of the area shown on Fig.1. There is a ploughed out moated site in Kirkby Green (NK 53.17).

The position of the proposed development adjacent to the parish boundary means that substantial medieval discoveries are unlikely. Examination of maps at the Lincolnshire Archives Office confirms this view. A parish map of 1789 (Par.23/1) shows that much of the parish, including the present development site was already enclosed. Part of the site lies on land which was named simply First, Second and Third fields. The southern part of the site (unnamed) belonged to a Dr Willis. (The stonepit, marked on modern O.S. maps, now under

the primary school was labelled Stonepit Close). The village of Ashby was already reduced to a few houses.

Parliamentary enclosure was completed in 1815 (Kesteven Award 3). The map accompanying the schedule shows that the proposed development site was part of a larger block of land allocated to the Vicar of Ashby for tithes, glebe and common right.

Recent History of the Site

The presence of archaeological remains from the prehistoric and Roman periods is high in the surrounding area but consideration must be given to the recent history of the site in question.

The site of RAF Digby was first used by RNAS Cranwell as a Relief Landing Ground during the First World War and by mid-1917 the site was enlarged to accommodate cadets from Cranwell. Work commenced on aircraft sheds and domestic accommodation and Scopwick aerodrome was officially opened in March 1918. With the formation of the Royal Air Force on April 1st 1918 Scopwick became a Training Depot Station.

The main part of RAF Digby lies in Scopwick parish but in order to avoid possible confusion with the RAF station at Shotwick in Flintshire, the name of Scopwick aerodrome was changed to Digby in 1920 (Blake et al. 1984, 65).

An aerial view of the aerodrome taken c.1928-30 shows the northern part of the proposed development site with domestic housing (Fig. 2) in the northern third of the development site. The layout of the housing is the same as that shown on the 1:2500 O.S. survey and belongs to the earliest phase of RAF development. The same houses were recorded on a series of vertical air photographs taken by the RAF in 1947 (Fig. 3). After the war the rest of the area was covered with more domestic accommodation between 1955 and 1962. Some of these houses were demolished between 1986-1989 and the ground landscaped.

Fig. 4 shows the location of services to the underground services to the houses from plans supplied by the PSA and through Frank Graham Consulting Engineers. This may be incomplete but demonstrates those areas of land which will have been disturbed as a result of past housing development.

Fig. 5 is a sketch diagram which amalgamates the data from Fig. 6 and identifies those parts of the proposed development site which may remain undisturbed. The largest area lies at the south of the development area and is a tarmac area, formerly a playground.

Discussion

Archaeological remains in the vicinity of the proposed development site, and in surrounding parishes reflect intense activity during the prehistoric, Roman and medieval periods. However, nothing has been recorded from the site itself. Furthermore, the site has been extensively disturbed over the last 70 years as a result of several phases of building construction, demolition and landscaping. Although the development site covers a large area the chances of finding undisturbed archaeological remains are considered to be low. It may be possible to pinpoint small areas of undisturbed ground for evaluation but it has to be considered whether it would be possible to place surviving remains in any context.

Naomi Field
July 12th 1993

Acknowledgements

The PSA ECW kindly supplied plans of services to the buildings and further maps were supplied by Mr K.Philip of Frank Graham. I am grateful to Mike Hodgson for permission to reproduce Fig. 2

References

Blake R., Hodgson M. & Taylor B, 1984. The Airfields of Lincolnshire since 1912.

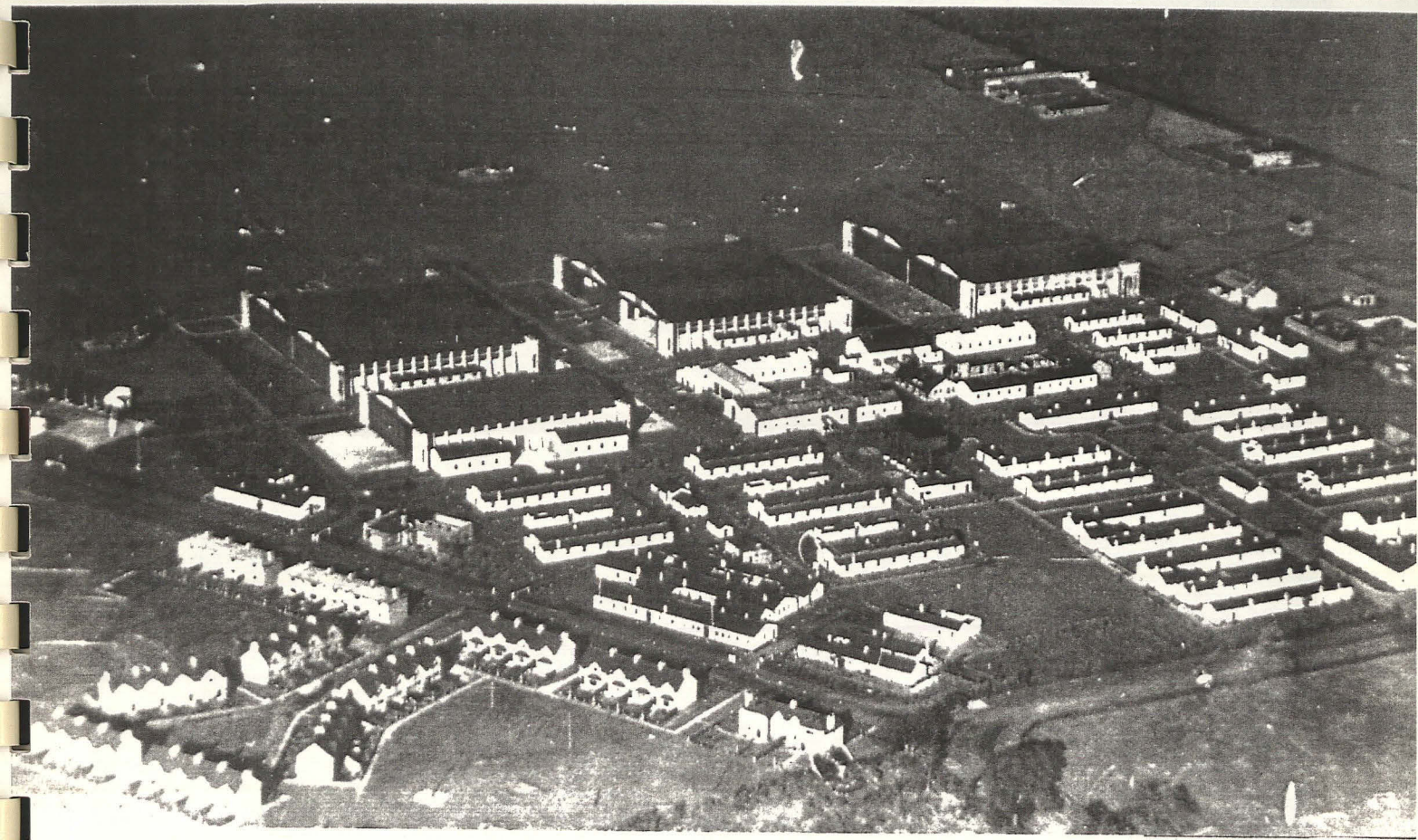


Fig.2 Aerial view of RAF Digby, taken 1928-30, showing development site already built over. (From The Airfields of Lincolnshire Since 1912, by permission.)

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Fig.3 Aerial view of RAF Digby, with development site at top (April 16th 1947). By permission, Station Security Officer, RAF Digby

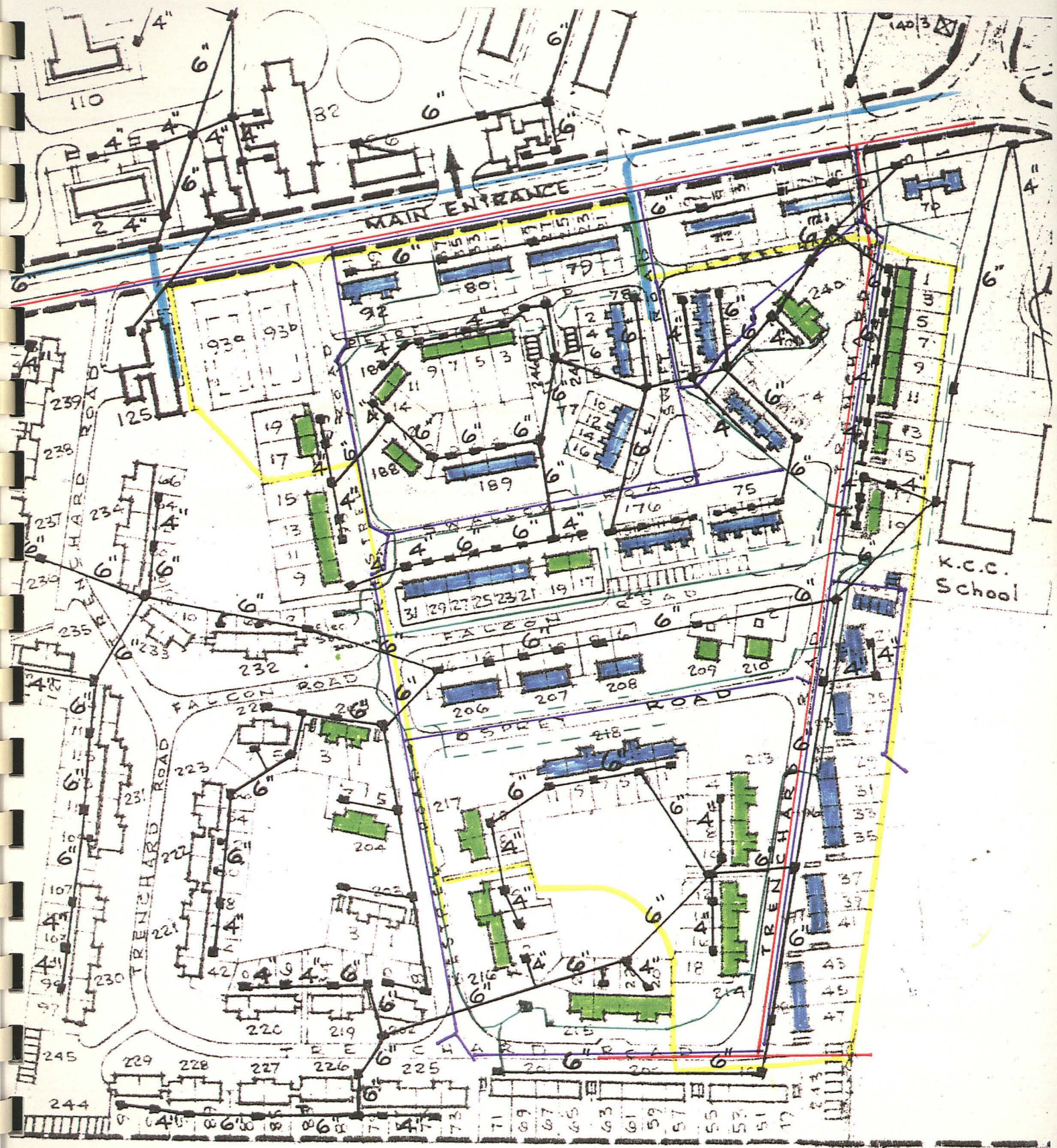







Fig. 4 Plan of development area (1962) showing location of services

- | | |
|---|--|
|  Watermains |  Telephone |
|  Foul drainage |  Standing buildings |
|  Electricity |  Demolished buildings |
|  Gas | |

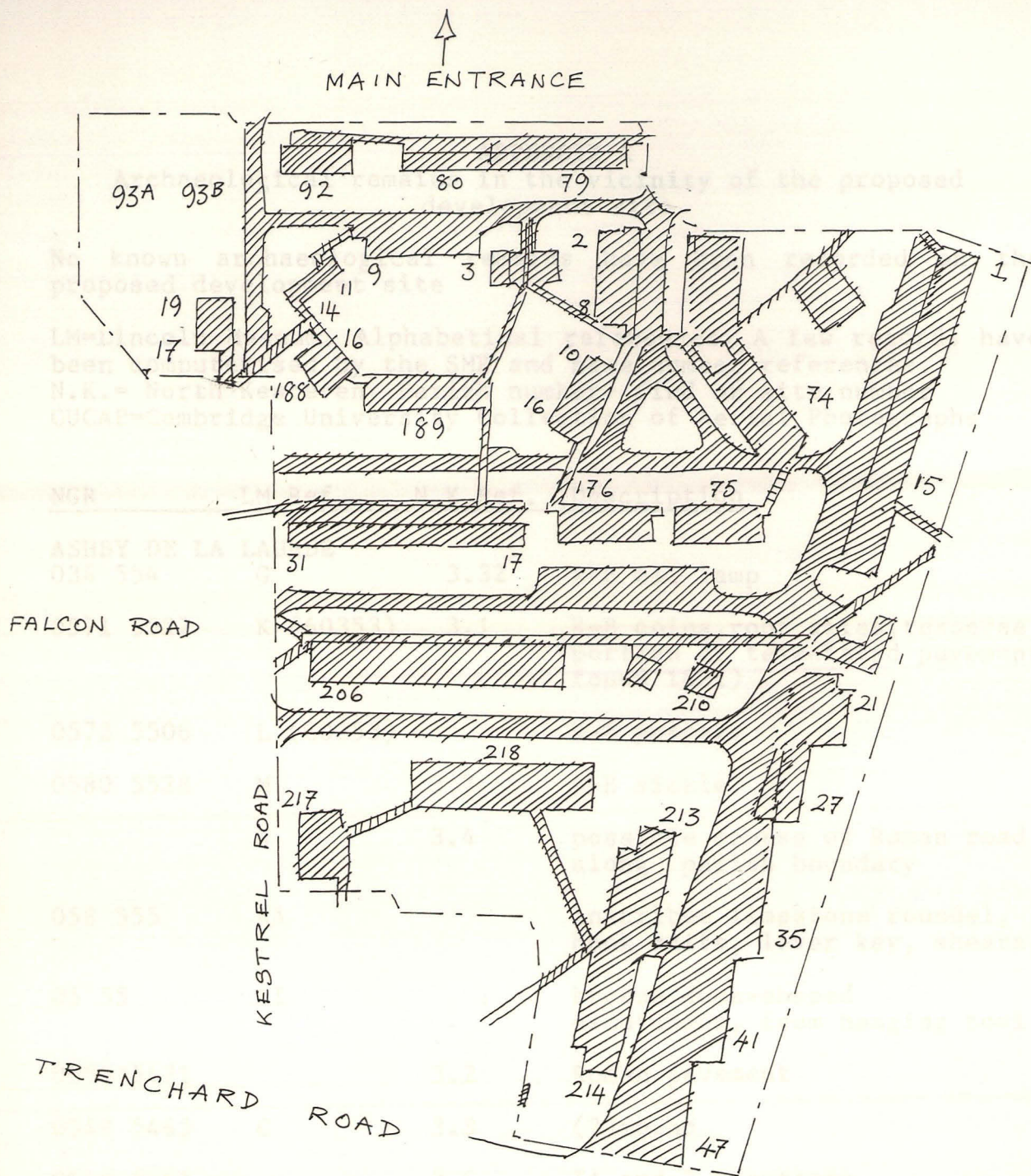


Fig. 5 Sketch plan of proposed development. Hatching shows those areas where there is probable disturbance from service and foundation trenches

- 3.0 borrow
- 3.10 Paleolithic site
- 3.11 Flint axe
- 3.12 R-B Settlement 3/4th century
- 3.14 cropmarks, slide (B. Simons)

APPENDIX 1

Archaeological remains in the vicinity of the proposed development site

No known archaeological remains have been recorded on the proposed development site

LM=Lincoln Museum. Alphabetical references. A few records have been computerised by the SMR and have number references.

N.K.= North Kesteven. Parish number+ find or site number

CUCAP=Cambridge University Collection of Aerial Photographs

<u>NGR</u>	<u>LM Ref.</u>	<u>N.K Ref.</u>	<u>Description</u>
ASHBY DE LA LAUNDE			
034 554	G	3.32	R-B oil lamp
0571 5527	K (60353)	3.1	R-B coins, roof tiles, tesserae (portion of tessellated pavement found 1831)
0572 5506	L (60353)		R-B pottery
0580 5528	M	3.7	R-B sickle
	N	3.4	possible course of Roman road along parish boundary
058 555	AA		inscribed limestone roundel, hook knife, lever key, shears,
05 55	AI		bronze duck-shaped escutcheon, from hanging bowl
0558 5471		3.2	Roman pavement
0549 5465	C	3.3	(?)mound
0549 5465		3.6	IA and R-B pottery
064 521		3.8	barrow
065 519		3.8	worked flints
0647 5193		3.9	barrow
0522 5273		3.10	?Palaeolithic site
0683 5239		3.11	flint axe
0694 5269	AK,AJ,AL	3.12	R-B Settlement 3/4th century
064 534		3.14	cropmarks, slide (B.Simmons?)

NGR	LM Ref.	N.K Ref.	Description
057 531		3.15	cropmarks, slide (B.Simmons?)
0642 5223		3.16	worked flints
065 525	AF	3.17	silver penny (Edward I)
0692 5240	AL	3.18	R-B pottery, lead cistern, column frag.
0750 5352	AI	3.19	flints
069 525		3.20	R-B settlement, cropmarks (T. Hayes)
0642 5381	AH	3.21/7	Bloxham deserted village
068 537		3.22	worked flints, scraper, blade, knife
0752 5349	AI	3.23	worked flints
0707 5202	AE	3.24	flint axe
071 524		3.25	R-B pottery
075 529	AO	3.26	kiln in 'Bricknell field'
029 553		3.28	soilmarks, stone walls of bldg (CUCAP, AWX 7-8)
071 518		3.30	cropmarks, enclosure (CUCAP & T. Hayes)
071 522	AM	3.31	cropmarks (CUCAP)
053 554		3.36	ewks, deserted village (CUCAP, AWX 9-11)
066 521		3.37	cropmarks (J.Pickering 1991)
070 524		3.38	enclosures (J.Pickering 1991)
071 526		3.39	cropmarks (J.Pickering 1991)
071 530		3.40	enclosures (Pickering 1991)
059 552		3.41	enclosures (Pickering 1991)
052 548		3.42	cropmarks (Pickering 1991)
066 536		3.43	BA palstave, R-B pottery
056 547	B (60354)		Roman Site

NGR	LM Ref.	N.K Ref.	Description
0647 5193	H (60318)		? round barrow
071 520	AE		flint Axe
065 537	AH		original site of village
071 524	AJ		side road leaving King Street
072 522	AN		King Street revealed as parallel ditches, other rectangular marks, ? R-B
DIGBY			
108 555		22.1	soilmarks, ploughed out moat (CUCAP AQR 4-6 and others)
097 555	W	22.2	2 bronze BA flat axes
088 555		22.3	flint arrowhead
090 553	A	22.4	stone axe
0895 5546		22.4	barbed and tanged arrowhead.
111 554		22.5	axe
111 554		22.8	polished flint axe *same as 22.5?
1116 5480		22.11	barbed and tanged arrowhead
1109 5439	H	22.12	polished flint axe
103 555		22.6	medieval pottery
107 554	G (60277)	22.7	Digby Grange, moat and other ewks, ploughed out 1960s
08 55	D	22.14	Sestertius of Hadrian
-----		22.16	flint axe (noted 1872)
115 560	S		polished flint axe
0678 5493			Roman beehive quern
1107 5439			axe
ROWSTON			
057 561		50.1	R-B settlement

NGR	LM Ref.	N.K Ref.	Description
0840 5637	P	50.2	BA basal looped spearhead
0840 5630	AK (60399)	50.3	15th century cross base and shaft.
109 557	A/F	50.4	polished greenstone axe
066 561	I	50.6	R-B pottery, no bldg material
065 560	J (60360)		ewks in grass field, R-B bldg material and pottery.
078 563	AM	50.7	fishpond and ewk complex (levelled, 1948)
079 564		50.8	med. ewks
088 558		50.9	cropmarks (CUCAP, AJC 45-6)
088 563		50.10	cropmarks (CUCAP, AFP 19)
067 565		50.11	R-B pottery
087 564	T	50.12	R-B coin, 4th C
091 564	V	50.13	late R-B pot sherd
0934 5649	R		whetstone ? Roman
-----		50.15	polished stone axe (Group VI)
-----	Y		4 stone axes from East side of parish, no location.
0765 5635	Q		tiles (found when breaking grassland, ? no date)
108 558	W		R-B potsherd
SCOPWICK			
085 589	A	53.1	Middle Bronze Age urn
083 584	B	53.2	Middle Acheulian hand axe
0726 5810	C	53.9	R-B 3-4th century flagon
070 580	D	53.10	R-B brass of Trajan
070 580	E	53.10	R-B 4th century pottery, skull, in mains sewer dug for new housing estate, 1959

NGR	LM Ref.	N.K Ref.	Description
066 583	F	53.5	Bronze Age barrow (destroyed in the 1920s)
058 570	H	53.11	rectangular enclosure and linear cropmarks (air photo, 1959, T.Hayes)
092 576	S	53.3	perforated ovoid hammer stone
075 581	U	53.8	Medieval gritty pottery
0839 5764	AD	53.7	R-B urn
0696 5813	AH		IA and R-B pottery & bldg foundations, found during bldg construction, 1976
070 581		53.12	R-B 4th C burial
087 585	AE	53.13	R-B pottery
083 586		53.14	double ring ditch cropmarks (CUCAP, AFP 22-23)
084 582		53.15	2 adjacent ring ditch cropmarks (CUCAP, AFP 21)
087 572		53.16	2 enclosures + trackway, cropmarks (CUCAP, AAA 66-68)
088 578		53.17	cropmarks, moat (CUCAP, AFP 20)
089 576		53.18	2 enclosures, cropmarks (CUCAP, AAA 65)
060 585		53.19	cropmarks, slide (B.Simmons?)
044 582	B		grange of St Katherines priory
	O		human bones ? connected with Holy Cross Church Kirkby green
067 583			human skeleton, no skull