99/18

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT LAND BETWEEN HOLT LANE AND BANNOVALLUM GARDENS, HORNCASTLE, LINCOLNSHIRE

Site Code: BVH99
LCNCC Acc No. 184.99
NGR TF 2660 6940

EVENT 112419
SOURCES 117060 117061
43803 180547
43307
43248
43167
44053 152101

99/18

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELD EVALUATION REPORT
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Report prepared for Robert Bell and Co. Ltd.
by James Albone BSc. PIFA.

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Contents

Summary

* *An archaeological field evaluation was undertaken on land between Holt Lane and Bannovallum Gardens, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).*

* *Six trenches were excavated to investigate anomalies identified by an earlier geophysical survey.*

* *A number of post-medieval/modern gravel extraction pits and land drains were identified but no earlier archaeological features were observed.*

* *A single sherd of Roman pottery and three flint-working waste flakes were recovered from unstratified or subsoil contexts.*

* *In view of the lack of archaeological evidence and the extent of the gravel extraction, it is suggested that the site has a limited archaeological potential.*

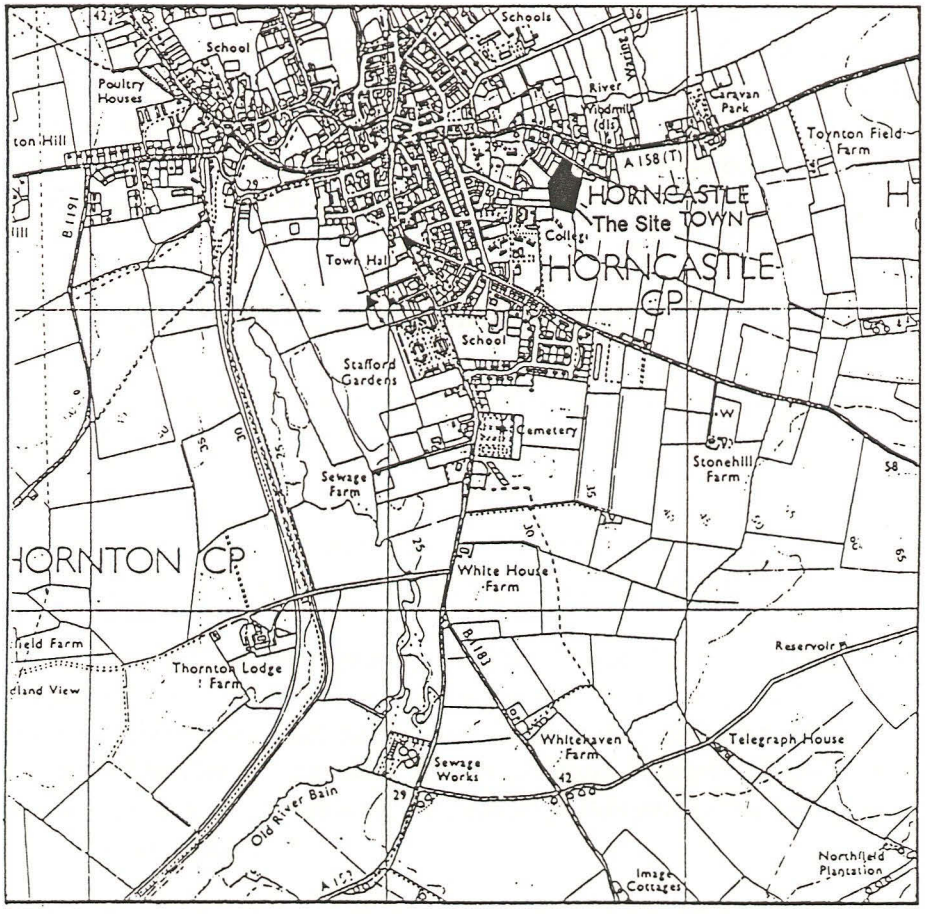

Fig. 1: Site location. (1:25,000)
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1.0 Introduction

A four day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on a site between Holt lane and Bannovallum Gardens, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by Robert Bell and Co Ltd. to fulfil a condition attached to planning permission for a residential development. The trial trenching followed an earlier geophysical survey (Snee 1999) the results of which formed the basis for the evaluation.

The results of this report will assist the local planning authority and the client to further assess the archaeological significance of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed 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

The town of Horncastle is situated in the administrative district of East Lindsey, approximately 28 km. east of Lincoln and 19 km. south-south-west of Louth. The site is located on the eastern side of the town at NGR TF 2660 6940 and lies at c.32 m. OD. It consists of an irregular unit of land measuring approximately 1.3 hectares which is divided into two by the Thunker Drain.

3.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The earliest finds which have been made in the Horncastle area are of prehistoric date. These include Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints from 27 High Street and a perforated basalt axe-hammer from The Wong.

Iron Age pottery has been found on the south side of the town. This includes a possible late Iron Age settlement site in the Mareham Road area.

Horncastle was an important Roman town and has recently been discussed in detail by Field and Hurst (1983). The earliest Roman settlement commenced in the first and second centuries AD on the south side of the modern town, in the South Street, Boston Road and Mareham Road areas. Numerous finds of pottery, building remains and burials have been made in this area. Settlement in this part of the town continued throughout the Roman period.

At some point after the late third century a sub-rectangular walled enclosure was constructed between the rivers Bain and Waring around what is now the Market Place area of the town. Sections of wall are still standing and others have been excavated.

This enclosure has been interpreted as having been a military construction serving a defensive role similar to the Saxon shore forts. Scatters of domestic Roman pottery and at least three cremation burials have been found to the west of the site.

A number of Saxon finds have been made in the town. These include part of a sixth century small long brooch and a ninth century strap end and hair pin from excavations in the High Street. Horncastle is recorded in the Domesday Survey of 1086 as belonging to King William. Before the conquest it had belonged to Queen Edith. It was recorded as having 29 villager, 12 smallholders and 2 mills (Morris 1986). A market was granted in 1230 and the town remained prosperous throughout the medieval period. After a period of decline in the seventeenth century the town regained its importance with the opening of the Horncastle Navigation Canal in 1802 connecting it to Lincoln and Boston, and the arrival of the railway in 1855 (Pevsner Harris and Antram 1995, 394).

A fluxgate gradiometer survey was carried out over most of the site in April 1999 (Snee 1999). A limited number of anomalies were detected which may have been of archaeological significance.

4.0 Methodology

Information held at the County Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) and the results of the earlier geophysical survey suggested that a potential existed for archaeological remains within the area of the proposed development (as outlined above).

The Assistant County Archaeologist for Lincolnshire approved a project specification for the excavation of six archaeological trenches located to investigate anomalies identified during the geophysical survey. The trenches were excavated as follows;

Trench 1 (10m x 1.6m) was located in the west of the site, close the Thunker Drain, in an area not covered by the geophysical survey to investigate the possible continuation of a linear geophysics anomaly.

Trench 2 (25m x 1.6m) was situated in the north western area of the site to identify a group of intersecting linear geophysics anomalies.

Trench 3 (15m x 10m) was located in the north eastern area of the site to identify two intersecting linear geophysics anomalies.

Trench 4 (10m x 1.6m) was located in the centre of the site close to the Thunker Drain in an area not covered by the geophysical survey. It purpose was to identify the continuation of a linear geophysics anomaly.

Trench 5 (15m x 1.6m) was placed across two linear geophysics anomalies in the south west corner of the site.

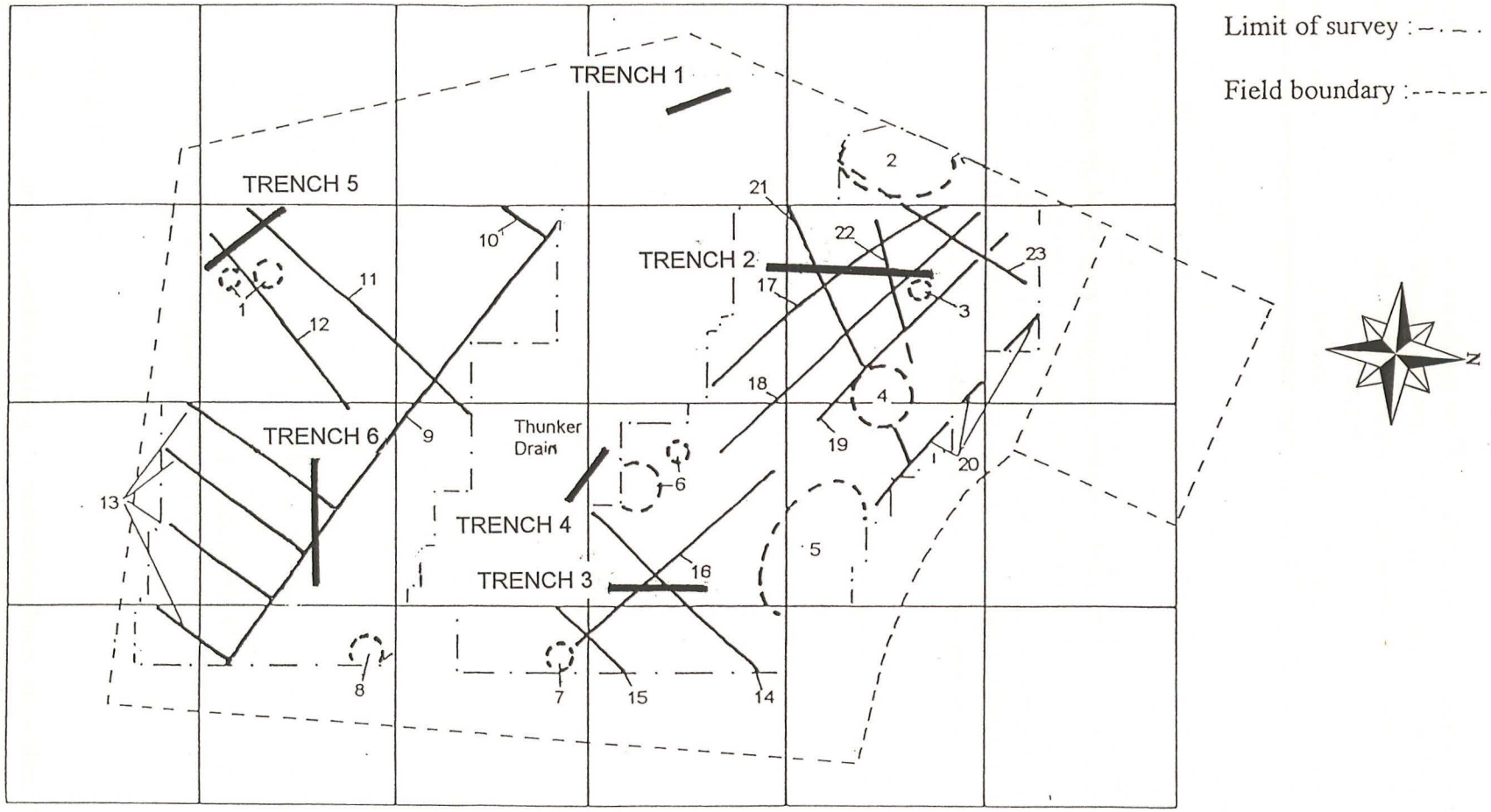

Fig. 2: Site plan showing the location of the archaeological trenches and the geophysical anomalies (after Snee 1999). Scale 1:1000.

Trench 6 (20m x 1.6m) was placed in the south eastern part of the site to identify a group of apparently related linear geophysics anomalies.

The locations of the trenches are shown on Fig. 2 along with an interpretation of the geophysical survey results. The aim of these trenches was 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, therefore, was to present 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.

Recording was undertaken using standard context 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. Only a small number of artefacts, principally post-medieval pottery and undiagnostic flint-working waste, were recovered. Only one deposit with the potential for environmental remains was encountered; a peaty layer contained within the natural gravel in Trench 3. As this deposit was undated and appeared to be part of the natural stratigraphy no sampling was carried out.

The evaluation was supervised by the writer assisted by three experienced field archaeologists and was carried out between the 17th and 20th of August 1999.

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1 (Figs. 3 & 4)

This trench was placed close to the Thunker Drain in the western part of the site in an area not covered by the geophysical survey.

Channel 102 was aligned north-east to south-west at the northern end of the trench. Although it was not fully excavated it appeared to have a broad profile with a gently sloping southern side. The main fill of this feature (108) contained fragments of post-medieval/modern brick and tile. It is likely that this feature represented an earlier natural stream channel which was straightened to form the Thunker Drain.

Pits 103 and **105** were located at the southern end of the trench. Both of these features were shallow and contained only one fill which was sealed by a subsoil layer (101). No finds were recovered from any of these deposits. It is likely that these two small pits had been excavated for gravel extraction.

5.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 5 & 6)

This trench was situated to identify a group of intersecting linear anomalies. A land drain, possibly corresponding to anomaly 17, was identified at the western end of the trench and two parallel ditches may have represented anomaly 18 (Fig. 2). A medium

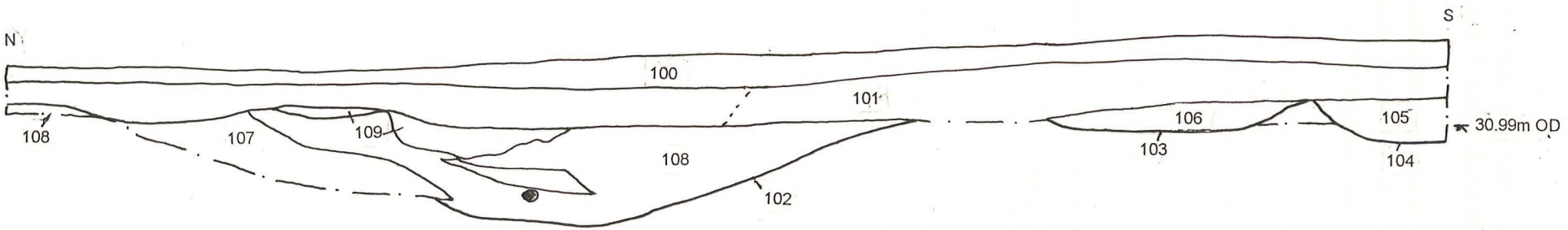

Fig. 3: South-west facing section of Trench 1. Scale 1:40.

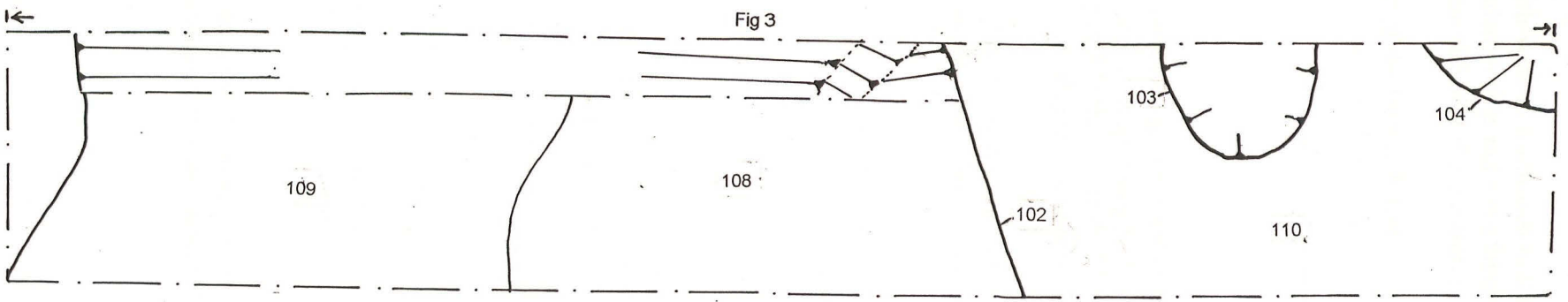

Fig. 4: Plan of Trench 1. Scale 1:40.

brown silty sand subsoil (201) was present below the topsoil at the eastern end of the trench. A single sherd of Roman pottery was recovered from this layer.

Ditches 203 and **204** were aligned north-west to south-east in the central area of the trench. These features both had a rounded profile and were filled by the subsoil layer (201). No artefacts were recovered from either of these features.

Pit 205 was located at the western end of the trench. It had a broad shallow profile with an irregular base. No artefacts were recovered from its fill (208) which was similar to the subsoil layer (201).

5.3 Trench 3 (Figs. 7 & 8)

This trench was placed to identify two intersecting linear geophysics anomalies (Fig. 2). A 'horseshoe' type land drain, probably corresponding to anomaly 16, was exposed at the southern end of the trench. It is possible that anomaly 14 corresponded to a land drain which was deeply buried and not identified in this trench (see 5.4 below).

Pits 301 and **302** had a shallow, rounded profile and were situated at the southern end of the trench. Although no dateable finds were recovered from these features, pit 302 was cut by the land drain.

Two undiagnostic waste flint flakes were recovered during the cleaning of this trench although it was uncertain whether these had derived from the topsoil (300) or the river gravels (308).

5.4 Trench 4 (Figs. 9 & 10)

This trench was placed close to the Thunker Drain in an area not covered by the geophysical survey and a group of gravel extraction pits were identified.

Pits 403, 404, 405 and **406** all contained single fills and were sealed by a layer of sandy silt (410) and clay silt (409). A clay land drain, aligned north-east to south-west, cut across pit 403 and it is likely that this represented continuation of linear geophysics anomaly 14 (Fig. 2). The drain was of the 'horseshoe' type with a separate base tile both of which were stamped 'DRAIN'. Tiles were subject to a tax from 1784 to 1850 but land drains were exempted after 1826 provided that they were stamped (Harvey 1976, 23). The presence of this drain shows that these gravel pits were backfilled by or during the second quarter of the nineteenth century.

Pits 408 cut **Pit 407** and was situated at the north-west end of the trench. A single sherd of late medieval/early post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fill of these features (415).

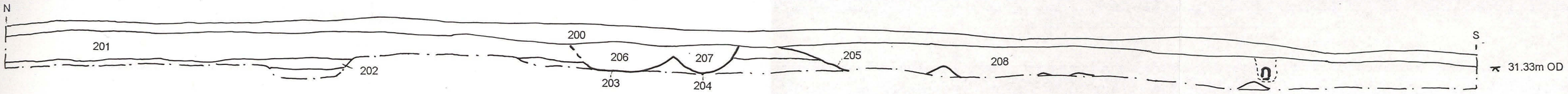

Fig. 5: West facing section of Trench 2. Scale 1:50.

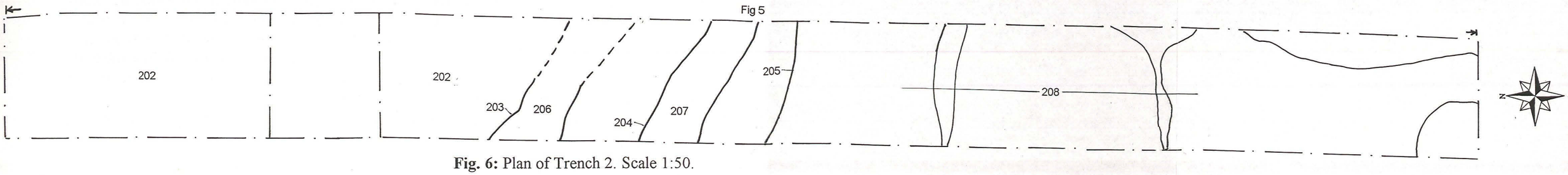

Fig. 6: Plan of Trench 2. Scale 1:50.

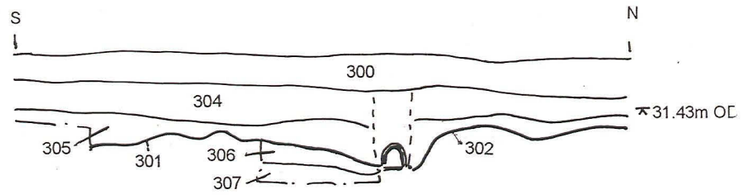

Fig. 7: Section of Pits 301 and 302. Scale 1:50.

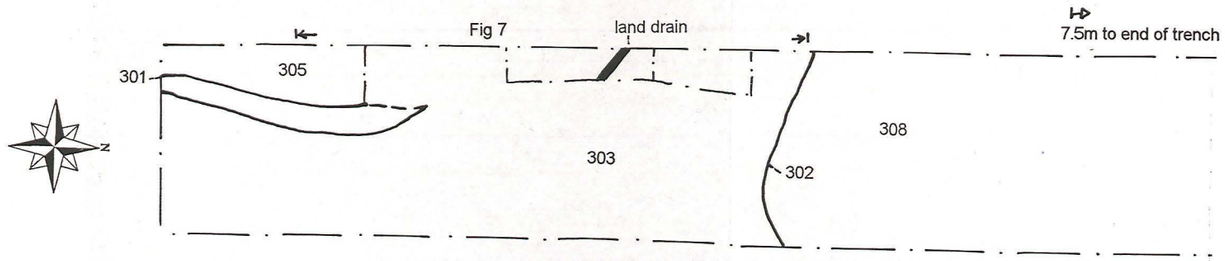

Fig. 8: Plan of the south end of Trench 3. Scale 1:50.

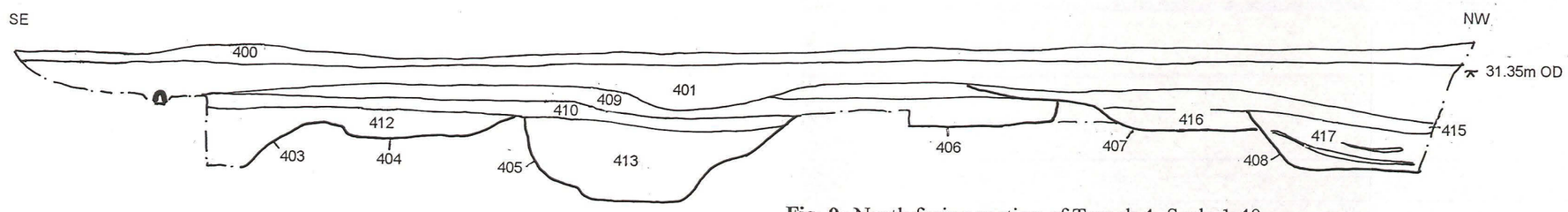

Fig. 9: North facing section of Trench 4. Scale 1:40.

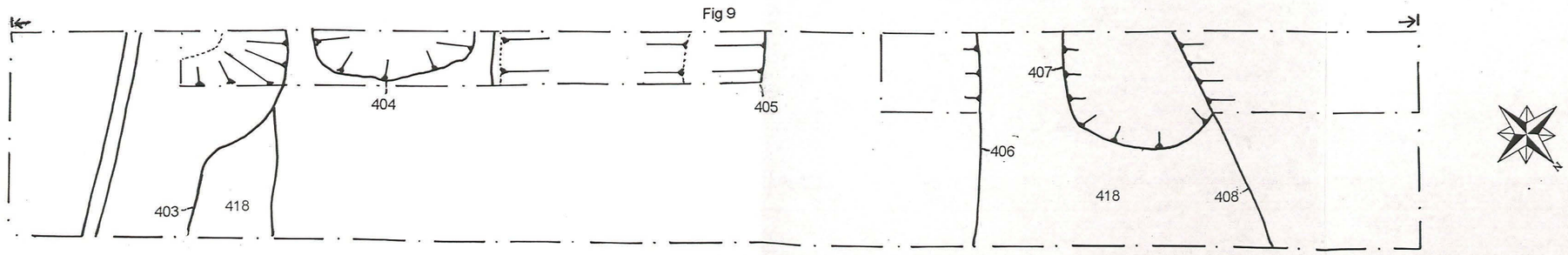

Fig. 10: Plan of Trench 4. Scale 1:40.

5.5 Trench 5 (Figs. 11 & 12)

This trench was located to investigate two linear anomalies identified by the geophysical survey (Fig. 2). A number of possible archaeological features were identified during the machine excavation of the trench. Further investigation showed that areas of orange-yellow sand and gravel (502) overlay deposits of medium brown silty sand (501). Three slots were excavated across the trench to confirm that these were dumped deposits and that disturbance, probably gravel extraction, had occurred to a depth of 0.6m below the current ground surface. Sherds of modern pottery were recovered from the silty sand backfill (501). Beneath the dumped deposits was yellow natural sand (503). No features relating to the two geophysical survey anomalies were identified.

5.6 Trench 6 (Figs. 13 & 14)

Two north-west to south-east aligned land drains were identified in this trench. It is likely that one of these features corresponded with geophysics anomaly 9 (Fig. 2). The most westerly of these (LD1) consisted of a modern round clay pipe. The other drain (LD2) was a rubble filled trench which contained nineteenth century brick and pantile fragments. Both of these drains cut through undated pits which had not been identified by the geophysical survey.

Pit 602 was located at the western end of the trench and was the only feature which could be dated. This feature was nearly square in plan and had steep sides which suggested that it had been backfilled shortly after excavation. A single sherd of nineteenth century pottery and a piece of clay pipe stem were recovered from the upper of the two fills of this feature (601).

Four undated pits were also identified. The largest of these was **Pit 608** which contained four fills including redeposited natural gravel. It had a broad, shallow profile which suggested that it had remained open for a long time. This pit was cut by both of the land drains. **Pits 604, 611** and **613** were irregular in plan and all contained one or two fills. Pit 604 was also cut by one of the land drains.

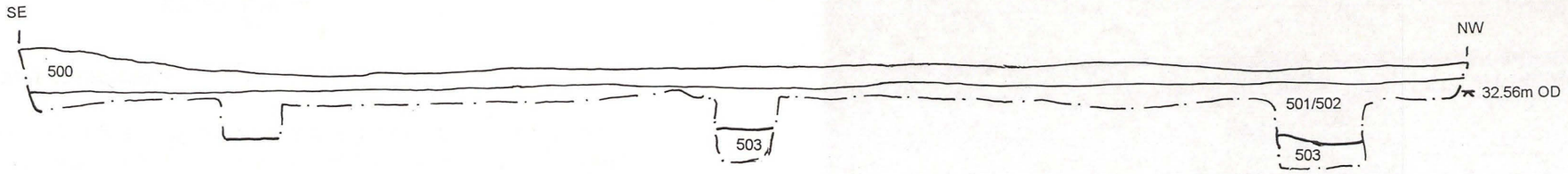

Fig. 11: North-east facing section of Trench 5. Scale 1:50.

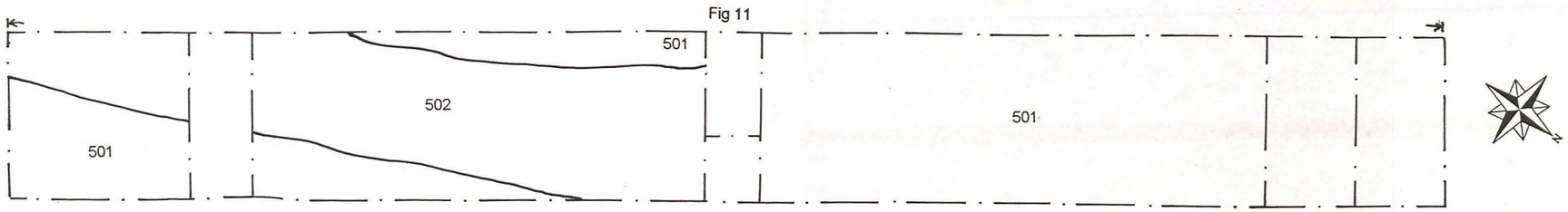

Fig. 12: Plan of Trench 5. Scale 1:50.

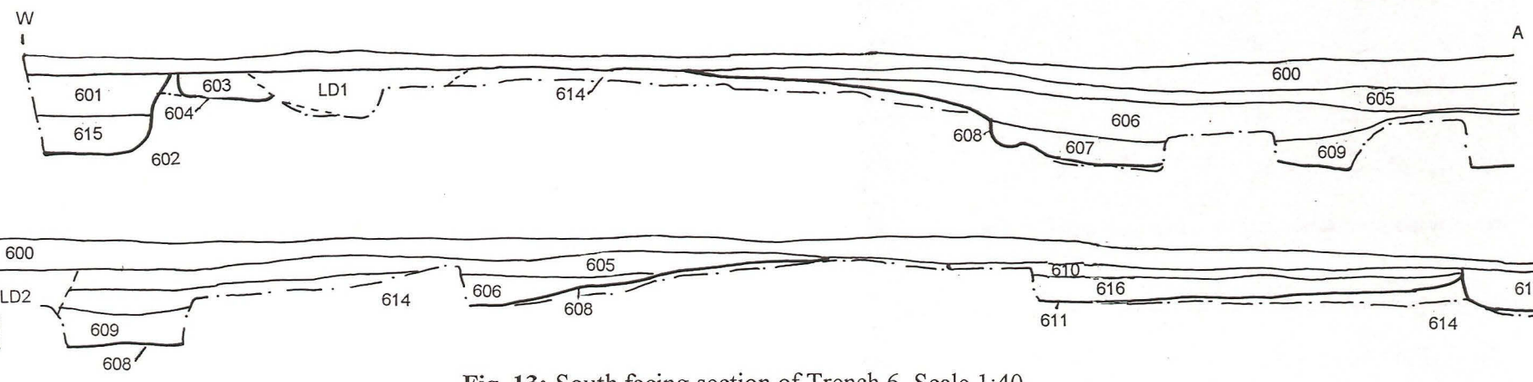

Fig. 13: South facing section of Trench 6. Scale 1:40.

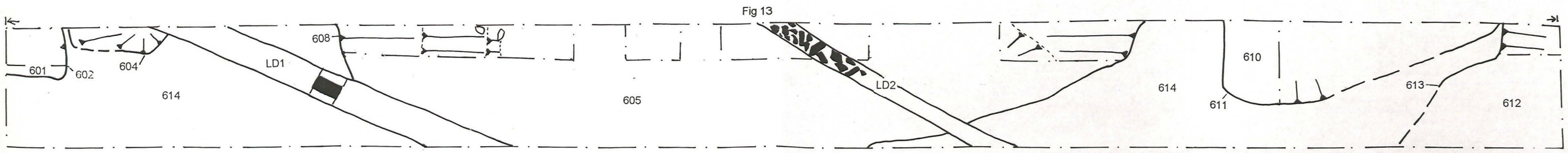

Fig. 14: Plan of Trench 6. Scale 1:50.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusion

The evaluation did not identify any significant archaeological remains. Many of the geophysical anomalies were identified as clay land drains. Features were not located to correspond to all of the anomalies, although some deeply buried land drains may not have been identified. A large number of undated pits were exposed on both sides of the Thunker Drain. These features were not identified by the geophysical survey due to their fill not being magnetically different from the natural sand and gravel.

Local information suggested that these pits related to gravel extraction which had taken place around this part of the town 'about a hundred years ago'. The archaeological evidence seems to support this interpretation. Only a very small number of artefacts were recovered from the pits, which suggested that they had not been dug for refuse disposal.

However the date of the pits must be earlier than has been suggested as several of the pits were cut by land drains which could be dated to the second quarter of the nineteenth century. Only two of the pits produced dateable artefacts; late nineteenth century pottery and clay pipe stem was found in the upper fill of pit 602 and a single abraded sherd of late medieval/early post-medieval pottery was recovered from the upper fill of pit 408. None of these finds help to provide a date for the main period of gravel working on the site, although the late nineteenth century finds show that pits were still being excavated on the site after some of the land drains had been laid. In the absence of other evidence it is suggested that the gravel pits were of post-medieval to modern date.

The presence of the single sherd of Roman pottery is not surprising given the close proximity to the Roman town and the scatters of pottery found to the west of the site and is of little significance. The three undiagnostic flint-working waste flakes were also recovered. The presence of small numbers of these artefacts is only to be expected given the large resources of flint gravel in the area.

The general lack of archaeological remains and artefacts encountered during the evaluation suggest that the potential of the site is limited. This situation is reinforced by the extent to which the site has been disturbed by gravel extraction pits. These would have resulted in significant damage to any archaeological remains had any been present.

7.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express their thanks to Robert Bell and Co Ltd. for this commission. Thanks are also expressed to; the specialist contributors to this report, James Rylatt and Jane Young; Mark Bennet and Sarah Grundy of the County SMR; and to the site team, David Bunn, Quentin Hutchinson, Katie Kenyon and Andrew Kirkham.

8.0 Appendices:

8.1 References

Field, N. and Hurst, H.	1983	Roman Horncastle, in *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology* 18. pp47-88
Harvey, N.	1976	*Fields, Hedges and Ditches*. Shire Album 21.
Morris, J. (gen. ed.)	1986	'Lincolnshire' *Domesday Book*.
Pevsner, N., Harris, J. Antram, N.	1995	*The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*
Snee, J.	1999	Fluxgate gradiometer survey. Land off Holt Lane and Banovallum Gardens, Horncastle, Lincs.

8.2 Site archive

Primary records are currently with PCA (Lincoln). An ordered archive of both paper and object elements is in preparation and will be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months. It can be accessed by quoting the reference number: LCNCC 184.99

The site archive contains:

x1 A4 file of site records
x2 Colour print films
x3 Sheets of site drawings
x1 Bag of artefacts

8.3 Colour photographs

P.1 General view of the site from the south-west corner, looking north-east.

P.2 General view of the site from the eastern side, looking north-west.

P.3 Trench 1, looking north-west.

P.4 Trench 2, looking north-west.

P.5 Pits 301 and 302, looking north-west.

P.6 Trench 4, looking south-west.

P.7 Trench 5, looking north-west.

P.8 Trench 6, looking east.