



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

**Proposed Residential Development
Land West of Pinchbeck Road, Spalding**

NGR: TF 245 240 (centre)

South Holland DC Planning Application No. H16/0554/99

Site Code : SVD 99

Accession Number

Archaeological Evaluation

Report prepared for

Stamford Homes Ltd

LAS Report No. 366

October 1999

Huntington County Council
Allergy Section

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**Proposed Residential Development
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Summary

Archaeological evaluation of the proposed residential development site consisted of a machine-excavated evaluation trench. This was positioned across minor earthworks on the western side of the application site, as this was considered to be the projected course of a medieval or earlier road with adjacent ditch.

The trench exposed a small dump of post-medieval material, possibly associated with the nineteenth century brickworks; two drainage ditches, and a series of alluvial deposits. There was no evidence of earlier activity on the site.

Introduction

Following the preparation of a desk top study (Tann 1999) Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned by Stamford Homes Ltd in September 1999, to undertake an archaeological evaluation of land west of Pinchbeck Road, Spalding. The proposed development is for a residential development consisting of sixty dwellings, associated garages and estate access roads.

The purpose of the evaluation was to

- establish whether the earthworks running across the development area represent the remains of a medieval road;
- establish the presence or absence, quality and extent of any archaeological remains;
- gather sufficient information to assess the potential and significance of any archaeological remains present;
- enable any mitigatory measures to be made.

The evaluation was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the South Holland District Council and the Lincolnshire County Archaeological Officer.

The Application Site

The application site is situated north of Spalding, some 25km NE of Peterborough, and 15km west of The Wash. It comprises a triangular piece of land 5ha in extent to the west of the B1356 Boston - Peterborough road (now bypassed by the A16), and to the east of the Spalding - Sleaford railway line. Vernatt's Drain, a major artificial drainage channel, forms the northern limit. The site is currently under grass.

Planning Background

A planning application, H16/0554/99, for 60 dwellings, associated garages and estate access roads, has been submitted to South Holland District Council. The proposal envisages a public open space alongside Woolram Wygate, but with development over all the remaining area except for margins alongside the railway and Vernatt's Drain.

Topography and Geology

Spalding is sited on marine alluvium of the Terrington Beds, with Oxford Clay beneath the alluvium. Boreholes within the application site indicate that the 0.2m thick topsoil overlies brown silts or grey silts; no peat was encountered (Abatech 1999). Levels on the application site vary from about 2.25m OD to about 3.2m OD. A distinct NW-SE aligned depression and parallel slope cross the middle of the field; land to the east of this is generally lower than that to the west, although a series of linear depressions are present in the NW part of the field.

Archaeological Background

A fuller account may be found in the archaeological desk-based assessment. The modern Pinchbeck Road leads out of Spalding in a NNW direction, passing the site of the castle. Beside the application site it abruptly curves to the NNE before crossing Vernatt's Drain at Sharpe's Bridge. Vernatt's Drain was part of the works of Sir Philibert Vernatti, who was commissioned to drain the Deeping and Croyland Fens by the Earl of Bedford in 1631.

An apparently artificial linear ridge crosses the application site on the projected alignment of the road into town. Land to the west is raised on a level, with land to the east considerably lower. The abrupt deflection in the course of the road is not obviously caused by any natural feature but is explained by the position of the bridge across the Drain. The present bridge upgrades one built in 1806, which in turn replaced an earlier narrow one on the same location. The ridge may represent the eastern edge of a medieval road causeway which fell into disuse and was replaced by the modern Pinchbeck Road either when the Drain was cut in 1842, or at an earlier date. No map pre-dating the Drain was located, and the medieval road system can only be conjectured with information from later sources.

Although the 1824 map shows two features, possibly buildings, on the application site, no information about these has been obtained from other sources. The 1890 Ordnance Survey map shows field boundaries (probably ditched) sub-dividing the application site, in addition to a complex of drains and small ponds in the NW (Fig. 7). Examination of the map suggests that the latter features may be associated with the brickworks with Huntingdon kiln marked to the west of the railway. The brickworks was opened after 1819, but the 1848 railway embankment seems to clip the NE corner of a large rectangular clay extraction lake, suggesting that the brickworks occupied the site first. In 1899, it was stated that a Mr C. Brett had until recently owned a brickyard at Spalding near the

Pinchbeck Road (Leveritt and Elsdon 1986, 107). Within the application site, the visible depressions coincide with the mapped drains (and the field divisions of the 1819 map).

Method

A single trench was machine-excavated under archaeological supervision using a 1.8m toothless bucket, removing the topsoil to a level where archaeological horizons were visible. The trench position was agreed with the County Archaeological Section, with the topography taken into consideration on site so that it crossed the raised ground. The trench measured 30m in length.

After the machine removal of the topsoil, subsoil, and alluvial deposits to a depth of 1m, the trench was cleaned and recorded using colour photographs, scale plans and sections. Two large drainage ditches located in the trench were also machine excavated. A machine slot was excavated at the eastern end of the trench to try to establish the depth of alluvial deposits, and whether these masked earlier features. At the eastern end of the trench, Oxford Clay was visible at a depth of approximately 2.8m below the surface.

Archaeological features and deposits were assigned context numbers by LAS for recording purposes. These context numbers are referred to in the following report and illustrations.

Results

The trench was orientated approximately east-west across the earthworks. Following the removal of the mid grey-brown clayey silt topsoil (**100**), a yellow-brown silt subsoil, **101**, was exposed across the majority of the trench. The topsoil was shallow (0.25m), but of uniform thickness, overlying undulating subsoil and natural. Below the subsoil, at the western end of the trench was a light brown clayey silt (**104**), which, on removal, revealed Oxford Clay.

Towards the eastern end of the trench, where the land was lower, a series of silty alluvial deposits were revealed (**112**, **113** and **114**). These comprise the marine alluvium noted in this area, together with an accumulation from the almost annual flooding of the application site.

At the eastern end of the trench two former drainage ditches (**105**, **109**) were visible, cut into the alluvial deposits below. These were visible as linear depressions on the surface of the field, and may have acted both as land division boundaries and drainage ditches. These extended north-south across the application site, continuing as far as Vernatt's drain, although it does not appear that they were associated. These were backfilled by natural silts and apparent rubbish deposits, consisting of broken fragments of brick and tile, and bottles. The presence of brick and tile fragments within these ditches indicates that refuse was disposed of here while the ditches were silting up.

Ditch **105** was located to the east of the embankment (Pl. 2). This measured approximately 1.75m in width, with a depth of 1.25m. A grey silty deposit filled the ditch (**106**), and represents the silting of this feature. This ditch had been recut on a later occasion (**107**), and has subsequently been backfilled by a combination of natural silting and rubbish disposal (**108**).

Ditch **109** was located approximately 5m to the east of ditch **105**. This was considerably wider, measuring 4.45m in width and 1.50m deep. The initial fill of this ditch feature, **110**, was a mid grey silt, representing the silting of the ditch. The upper fill of this ditch, **111**, was a grey-brown silt, containing fragments of broken brick and tile.

At the western end of the trench, directly below the topsoil, was a spread of modern material (**103**) (Pl. 3). This consisted of broken fired clay and brick fragments, and a dark charcoal rich silt. This layer measured approximately 0.05m in depth, and extended for a width of 7m. It is possible that this material represents rake out debris from the nearby brickworks.

Discussion

The location of the evaluation trench had the potential to provide evidence of a medieval road or trackway, or nineteenth century brickworks. As no previous archaeological investigation had been carried out however, this could not be substantiated. The evaluation trench was therefore positioned to investigate this site.

The land through which the evaluation trench was excavated is prone to flooding, and this was evident from the nature of the archaeological remains, and the geological layers encountered in the trench.

In addition to Ditches **105** and **109**, a number of similar depressions were visible in the application area. It is possible that these are also former drainage ditches, dug in an attempt to drain the field. These are all orientated north-south, terminating in the vicinity of Vernatt's drain. Vernatt's drain can be seen cutting these ditches at the northern end of the application area, indicating that they predate the drain. The infill however, indicates that they were backfilled more recently. Ditches **105** and **109** may have had dual functions, acting as field boundaries as well as drainage ditches. Ditch **105** is located in approximately the same position as a field boundary marked on the 1890 OS map.

The spread of material (**103**) in the western end of the trench appears to be of modern date. It is located directly below the topsoil and consists of burnt material, fired clay and broken bricks. The existence of brickworks in the vicinity suggests that this material may be debris from the brick kilns.

The ridge which runs through the application area predates the construction of Vernatt's drain, which cuts it. The nature of the deposits which form this ridge do

not appear to indicate artificially raised ground. It is possible that this was a natural ridge which has become more defined due to subsequent activity, for example, the cutting of drainage ditches. It is possible that this may have been used as a trackway, as the ground would be drier and more firm than the surrounding lower land. No evidence of a road surface however survives. This ridge may have been utilised as a land division boundary, as earlier maps show extant field boundaries in the application area.

Conclusion

All of the features encountered during the evaluation of the development site were modern in date and require no further investigation. The potential impact of the residential development is negligible on the archaeological remains recorded in the evaluation trench.

Claire Angus
October 20th 1999

Reference

Tann, G., 1999 *Proposed Residential Development Land west of Pinchbeck Road, Spalding. Archaeological Desk-Based Assessment.* LAS Report 362.

Appendix 1: Context Summary

Context Number	Context Type	Description	Relationship
100	Layer	Topsoil	above 101, 103
101	Layer	Subsoil	above 104
102	Layer	Natural	-
103	Deposit	Modern Debris	above 101
104	Layer	Layer	above 102
105	Cut	Drainage Ditch	below 100
106	Fill	Fill of 106	within 105
107	Recut	Drainage Ditch	recut of 105
108	Fill	Fill of 107	within 107
109	Cut	Drainage Ditch	below 100
110	Fill	Fill of 109	within 109
111	Fill	Fill of 109	within 109
112	Layer	Alluvium	above 112
113	Layer	Alluvium	above 102
114	Layer	Alluvium	above 102

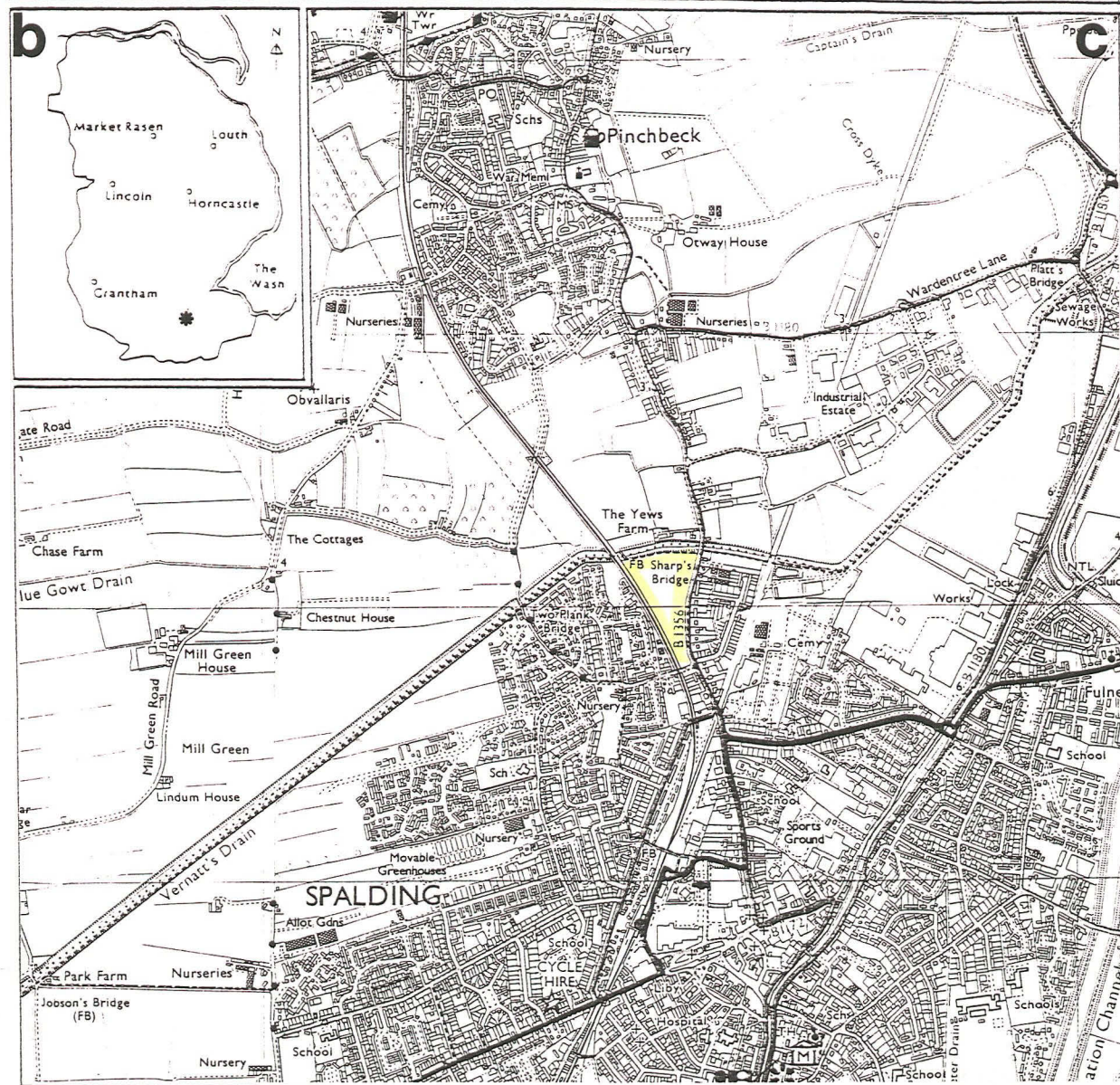
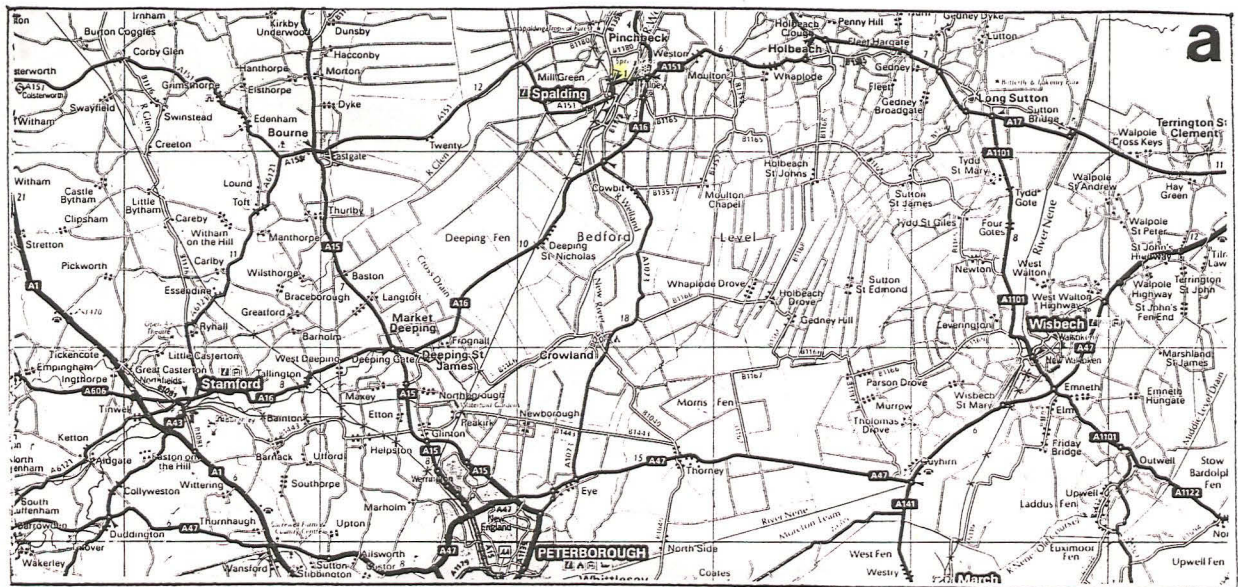
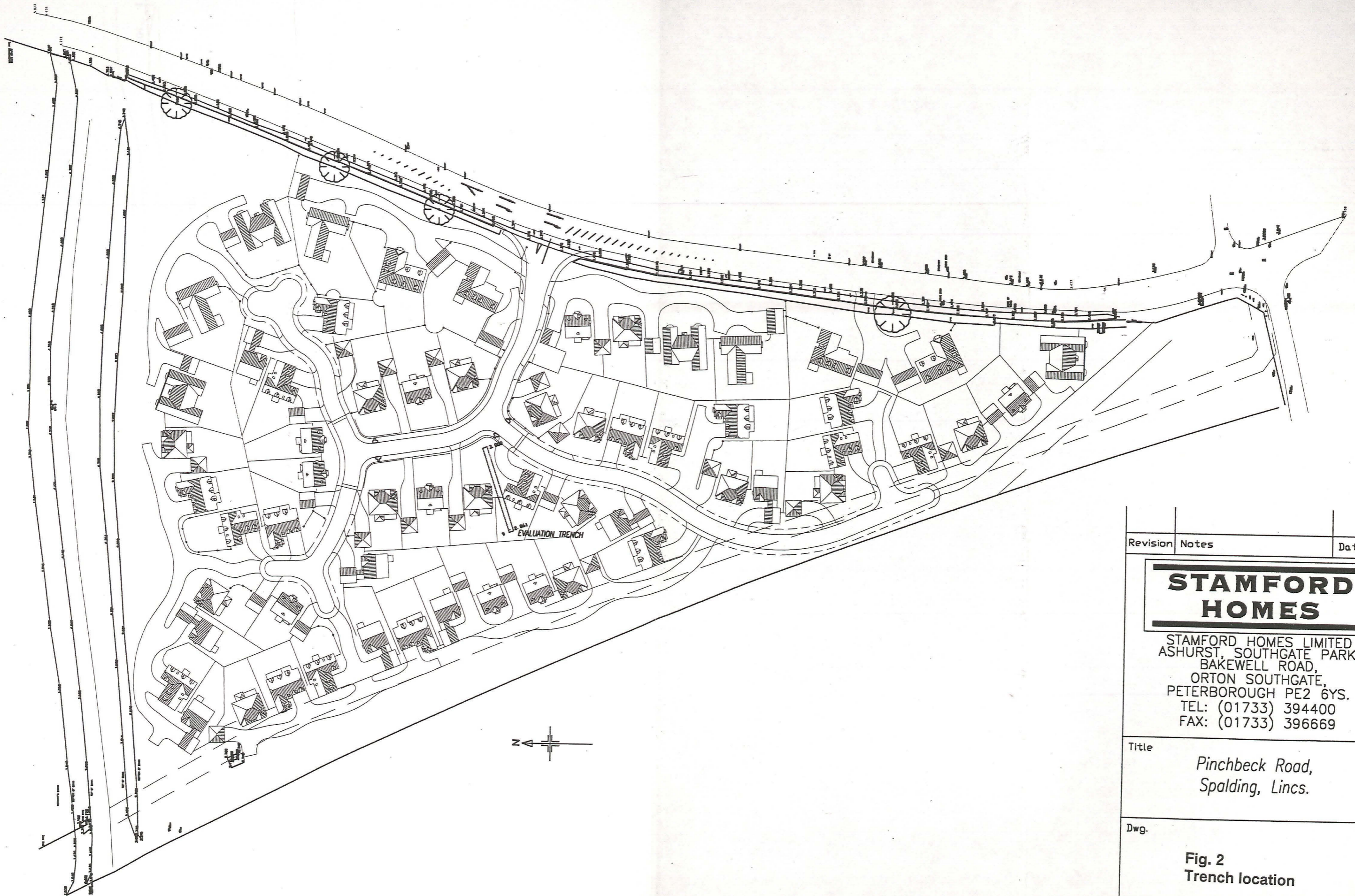


Fig. 1 Location of Spalding and Pinchbeck. Inset C shows the Application Site (based on the 1999 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map, Sheet 249. © Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 50424A).



Revision	Notes	Date
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**STAMFORD
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Title
*Pinchbeck Road,
Spalding, Lincs.*

Dwg.
**Fig. 2
Trench location**

Date	Drawn	Scale	Checked
22/09/99	MC	1:1250	

Dwg. No.
SH/313/31

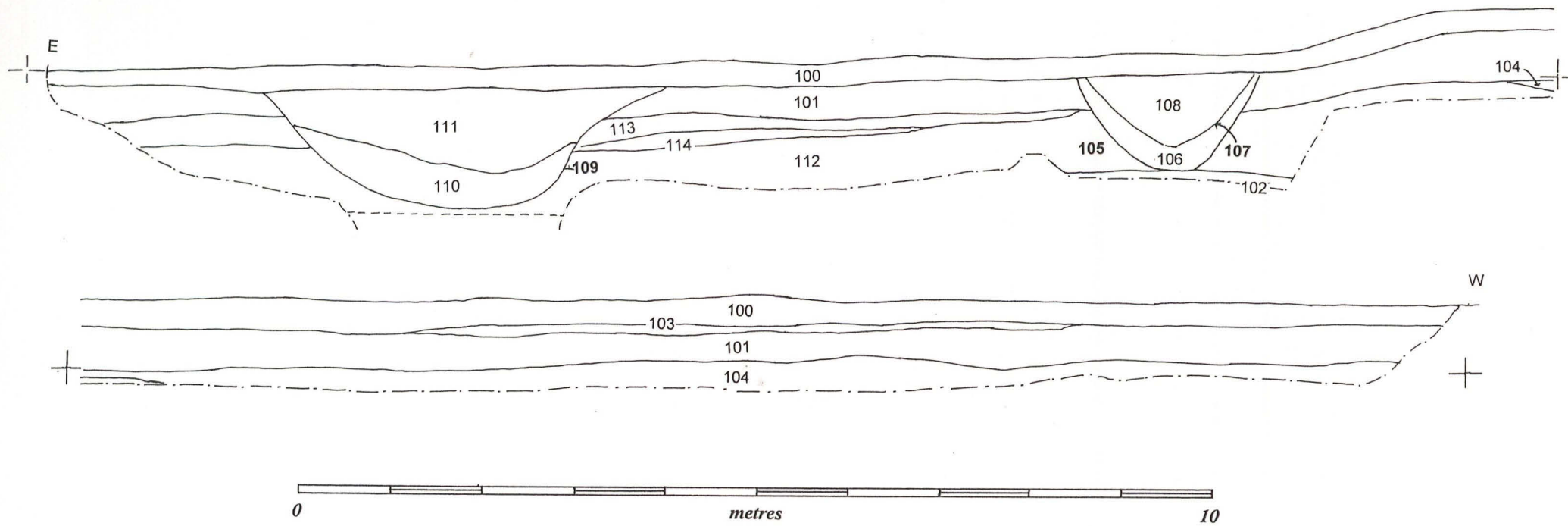


Fig. 3 North facing section of evaluation trench, 1:50



Pl. 1 General view of the evaluation trench looking east



Pl. 2 Drainage ditch 105 (Scales 2m)

Pl. 3 Layer 103 below the turf line, fired clay and brick debris above black ash (Scales 2m and 1m)

