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99/20

**Archaeological Field Evaluation Report
Land West of Southfield Place
Horncastle, Lincolnshire**

Site Code: SPH 99



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Lincolnshire County Council
Archaeology Section

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Contents

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**Archaeological Field Evaluation Report
Land West of Southfield Place
Horncastle, Lincolnshire**

Site Code: SPH 99
Planning Ref.: S/ 086/ 1341/ 99
NGR: TF 2597 6905
LCNCC: 248.99

Report prepared for Mr. D. Hargrave
By Q.Hutchinson PGDipFA, PIFA

Pre Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Tel & Fax: 01777 228155

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1.0 Introduction

A two-day programme of archaeological trial excavation was carried out on a site west of Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1). The evaluation was commissioned by Mr. D. Hargrave as part of an application for residential development.

Three trenches were investigated to assess the overall archaeological potential of the site.

The results of the investigation will assist the local planning authority and the client to further assess the archaeological potential of the site, the potential impacts which may be imposed by development and the requirement or 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*' to put this 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

Horncastle is in East Lincolnshire, in the administrative district of East Lindsey. The town is approximately 28km east of Lincoln and 30kms west of the coast. The site itself lies on the south-west side of the town and centers on NGR TF 2597 6905. It comprises an irregular unit of approximately 4500m square.

The modern land surface shows evidence of medieval ridge and furrow, as well as a possible north-south terrace feature on the east side of the site.

An application has been submitted to East Lindsey District Council for residential development of one dwelling (evaluated by Trenches 1 and 3). Further development at the site may take place in the future, although the present planning application is for one dwelling only. Trench 2 was excavated with this in mind.

3.0 Archaeological Background

Horncastle was an important Roman town with substantial walled developments in the third – fourth centuries AD. Romano-British settlement evidence is usually found in areas favoured by indigenous populations, unless such settlements were established for purely military purposes. At Horncastle, there is ample evidence for a pre-existing native settlement structure, predominantly on the south side of the town.

A recent evaluation of land, circa 40m to the east of the present site identified the remains of a Roman yard or road surface as well as a possible terrace feature. Residual worked flints were recovered suggesting earlier occupation in this area.

Aerial Photographs taken during the 1940's have revealed extensive crop marks on the lower ground to the west of the site, adjacent to the River Bain. A Romano-British cremation and an inhumation have been found to the south of the site (at Churchill Avenue), and scatters of pottery have been recovered from a broad area. Building remains have been exposed near Boston Road and Sellwood Gardens, indicating a high level of Romano-British activity in the area.

Romano-British settlement at Horncastle appears to have commenced in the first Century AD and continued through to the fourth. Inevitably, this reflects a continuum of settlement which began in the later Iron Age. At some time in the third Century AD, a walled enclosure was constructed north of this site, between the two rivers Bain and Waring. This has been interpreted as a defensive military construction serving in a similar role perhaps to the Saxon shore forts of south-east England.

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 villagers, 12 smallholders and 2 mills (Morris 1986, 1;91).

4.0 Methodology

To evaluate the site, a proposal was approved to excavate two trenches, each measuring 12m x 1.5m. A further trench measuring 5m x 1.5m was also investigated. The trenching scheme was as follows:-

Trench 1 was located at the north end of site, orientated east-west.

Trench 2 was located at the south end of the site, orientated east-west

Trench 3 was located a short distance south-west of Trench 1 and was orientated broadly east-west

The locations of the trenches are shown in Figure 2.

The purpose of the trenching scheme was to determine the nature of any archaeological features; character, date, depth, state of preservation and significance. From the information contained in this report, the District Planning Authority will be better placed to take reasoned decisions regarding the future management of the archaeological resource.

Recording was undertaken using standard context record sheets (incorporating physical descriptions, interpretations and stratigraphical relationships).

All trenches were cleaned and photographed following machining, which involved excavations to natural deposits of sand and gravel, not exceeding a depth of 1m below modern ground surface.

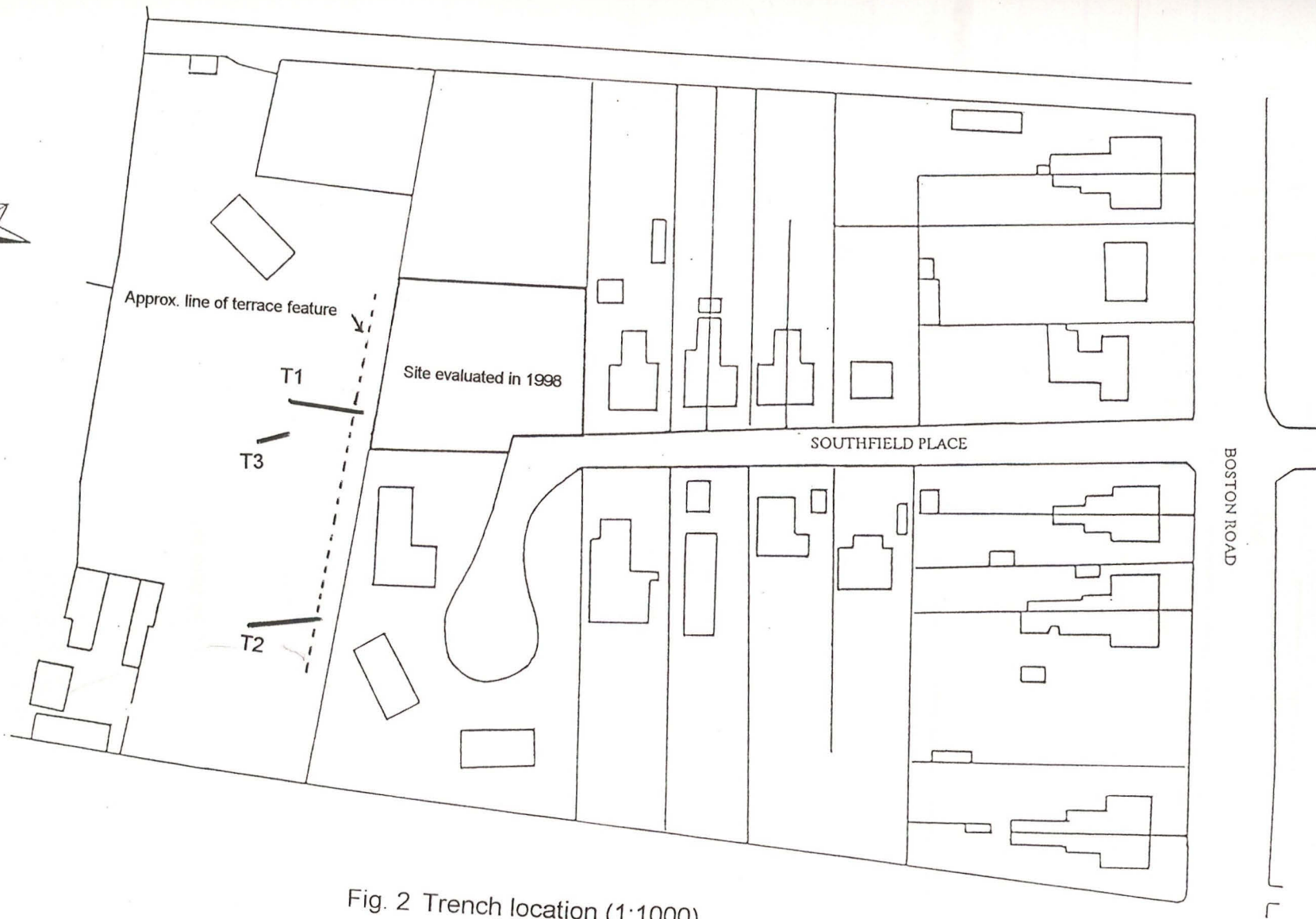
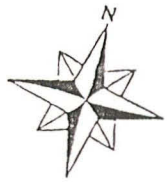


Fig. 2 Trench location (1:1000)

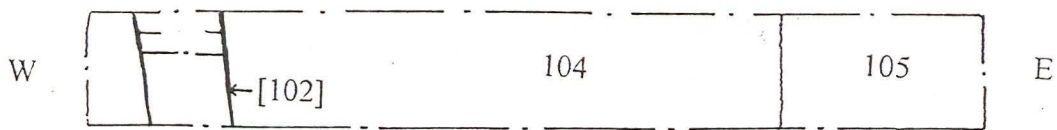


Fig. 3 Plan, Trench 1 (1:100)

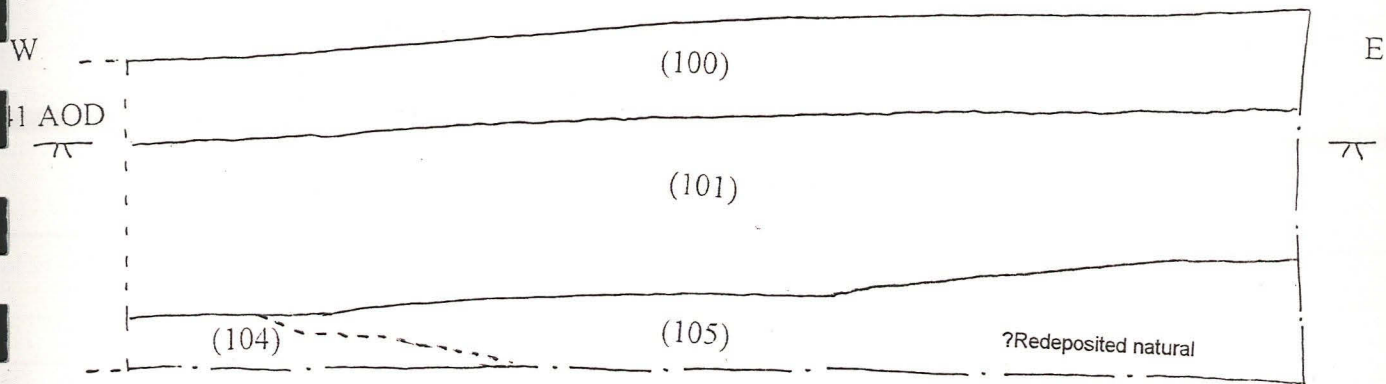


Fig. 4 Section, east end of Trench 1 showing possible terrace feature 105 (1:20)

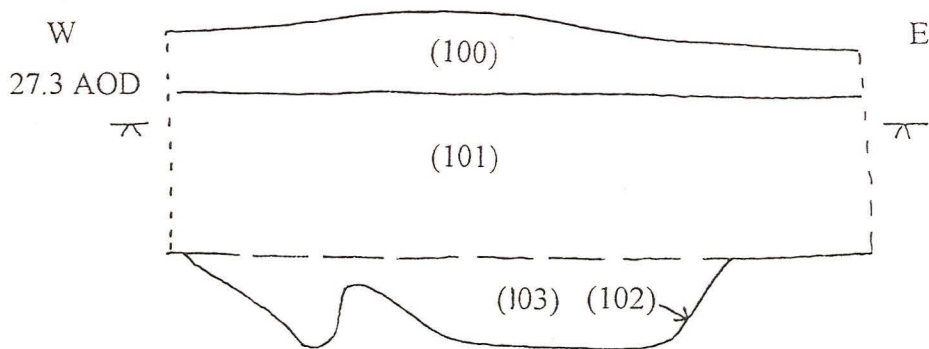


Fig. 5 Section through feature 102, west end of Trench 1 (1:20)

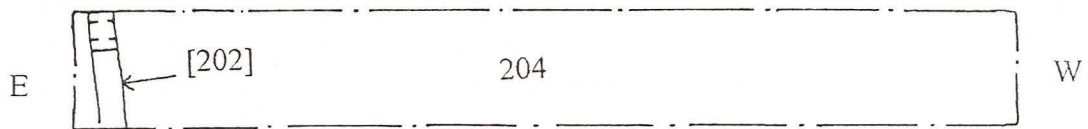


Fig. 6 Plan, Trench 2 (1:100)

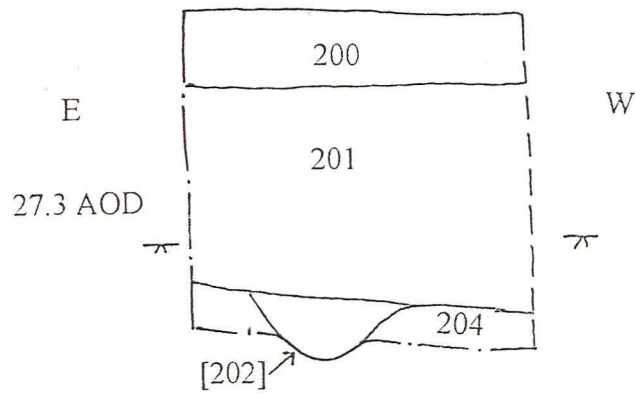


Fig. 7 Section, east end of Trench 2 incorporating gully 202 (1:20)

The drawings, records and finds from the site will form the basis of a long-term project archive.

The evaluation was supervised by the writer, assisted by two experienced field archaeologists, and it took place between the 20th– 21st of October 1999.

5.0 Results

5.1 Trench 1. Excavations in this area did not expose any discrete archaeological cut features, although they did expose a possible terrace feature on the east side, 105, consisting of redeposited bleached white sand (see Fig. 4). No finds were recovered from this deposit, although it was sealed beneath layers containing Romano-British pottery: one sherd. This feature was evident on the surface as a rise or subtle step in the ground level, extending north-south across the site, close to the east boundary.

A feature interpreted as ploughing disturbance 102 was noted at the west end of the trench. It contained no finds and its fill was identical to the layer 101 above.

5.2 Trench 2. Only one feature, a gully orientated north-south, 202, was identified at the east end of the cutting. The excavated section was devoid of any dating evidence, although several sherds of Romano-British pottery were recovered from overlying deposits during machine stripping (considerably more than in Trenches 1 or 3). Feature 202 was cut through deposits of natural sand and gravel and was sealed beneath a thick dark earth deposit 201. It would seem likely that the gully dates somewhere within the Romano-British period of occupation, although its function and its wider significance is uncertain.

There was no conclusive evidence of a terrace features in this area, even though the surface topography indicated southerly continuation.

5.3 Trench 3. This trench was aligned east west in the centre of the proposed development footprint, a short distance south-west of Trench 1. Machining was carried out to a depth approximately 60cm below the modern ground surface. No features were exposed and only one sherd of unstratified Romano-British pottery was recovered.

The topsoil 300, which measured approximately 30cm, merged with an underlying deposit of soft dark grey sandy silt 301. This in turn rested over clean orange/white natural sand 302.

6.0 Discussion and Conclusions

The results of the evaluation present a rather confusing and unhelpful assessment of the archaeological landscape, when viewed against the known backdrop of archaeological data. Despite the superficially negative result, it is known from investigations only a short distance east of the present site (Albone 1998) that some form of sustained occupation

was taking place in this area of Horncastle. This earlier investigation also identified evidence of terracing in the Romano-British period, and (although largely unquantified) it is now emerging that this particular area situated to the east of the Old River Bain may have been purposefully terraced, perhaps to prevent the Bain floodwaters from threatening settlement areas. However, there are some problems with this interpretation; namely that some of the lower ground to the west of the site contains extensive cropmark evidence associated with the occupation of the area in the Iron Age and Romano-British periods (see p. 77 in Field and Hurst 1984). Coins and pottery have also been recovered over the general area.

The terrace feature exposed in Trench 1 corresponded with a north-south alignment of indeterminate extent, and the evidence from this one trench indicated ground raising in the region of at least 0.5m. This height difference was the same in Trench 2, though the stratigraphic evidence for purposeful terracing was not clear in this location.

The evaluation has raised questions of considerable academic interest, but has identified few discrete archaeological remains, suggesting overall that the archaeological potential of the site is relatively limited. In this context, the monitoring of building construction trenches during construction work may be of relatively little value. The real problem to be resolved at this site may be to determine the date and function of the terrace features which appear to survive as earthwork remains even to the present day. In this respect, some form of earthwork survey of the extant remains would be desirable, as would a long section (east-west) through the whole of the site so that a detailed record could be made of the associated stratigraphy. Whilst it has been postulated that the terracing may constitute some form of flood protection, this interpretation is inconsistent with the settlement features expressed as cropmarks to the west of the site. Further investigations to address this problem would be desirable.

7.0 Acknowledgments

Pre Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) express thanks to the Client Mr. D. Hargrave for this Commission. Thanks also to Beryl Lott of Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section, and to the Site team Andy Kirkham and Jim Snee.

8.0 Appendices

8.1 References

Albone, J 1998 Archaeological Field Evaluation Report: Land adjacent to 5 Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire

Field, N. and Hurst, H. 1984 Roman Horncastle,

Morris, J. 1986 '*Lincolnshire*' *Domesday Book*.

Pevsner, N. , Harris, J., 1995 *The Buildings of England : Lincolnshire*
Antram, N.

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. They can be accessed by quoting the reference No. LCNCC 248.99.

The site archive contains:

- 1 x A4 file of site records
- 1 set of colour prints
- 4 sheets of site drawings
- 2 bags of artefacts

Appendix 8.3 Colour photographs



P1. General view of site looking east



P2. General view, Trench 1, looking west



P3. East end of Trench 1 showing ?redeposited white natural sand, looking north-east



P4. General view of Trench 2, looking east



P5. Gully 202 looking north-west



P6. General view of Trench 3, looking east

REPORT 53 ON THE POTTERY FROM LAND AT SOUTHFIELD PLACE, HORNCastle, SPH99

for PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

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

27 October 1999

QUANTITY AND CONDITION

The pottery came from a single context 201 and a single unstratified sherd, and amounted to 15 sherds. The sherds are in moderate condition with some abrasion; no weighing was considered necessary. No problems are anticipated for long term storage. The pottery has been archived according to the guidelines laid down for the minimum archive by *The Study Group for Roman Pottery*. A copy of the database is attached (and can be supplied on disk), and will be curated for future study.

DISCUSSION

Context 201 included a single post-Medieval sherd. The remaining 14 sherds are mostly grey with three shell-gritted sherds. The grey sherds include a collared rim storage jar with a fingered frill at the neck as the type made at the Lincoln Swanpool kilns (Webster & Booth 1947, fig 3, C41-2) and a rim from a small bowl with a triangular or grooved-flange rim. One of the shell-gritted sherds is a type of dales ware jar, although in a hard dark grey fabric with very sparse shell inclusions, and there is also a fragment from a bowl or dish with a triangular rim. These suggest a date in the late 3rd to 4th century, the latest sherd being 4th century. The single unstratified sherd is a rim with conjoined handle from a Nene Valley colour-coated jug, and fits a similar range, later 3rd to 4th century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Webster, G. & Booth, N., 1947 The excavation of a Romano-British pottery kiln at Swanpool, Lincoln, *Antiq J*, 27, 61-79.

Cxt	Fabric	Form	Manuf+	Ves	D?	DNo	Details	Links	Shs	Wt
201	GREY	BTR	-	-	-	-	RIM;F.NR BGF TYPE	-	1	-
201	GREY	JCR	NOTC	-	-	-	RIM ONLY;FINGERED FRILL	-	1	-
201	GREY	JBK	-	-	-	-	BS SMALL STRONG CURVE SHLDR	-	1	-
201	GREY	-	-	-	-	-	BSS	-	5	-
201	GREY	-	-	1	-	-	BASE PLAIN	-	2	-
201	SHSM	JDW	-	-	-	-	RIM HARD WHEEL MADE;V SPARSE SHELL	-	1	-
201	SHMM	BDTR	-	-	-	-	RIM/PT WALL WM	-	1	-
201	SHSM	-	-	-	-	-	BS WM;L'SCALE INT	-	1	-
201	PRO	-	-	-	-	-	PM BLUE/WH GLAZE	-	1	-
201	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	L3-4/POST MED	-	-	-
US	NVCC	JUG	-	-	-	-	RIM COMBINED HDLE	-	1	-
US	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	L3-4	-	-	-

Appendix 8.5 List of archaeological contexts

Context	Description
100	Topsoil
101	?Cultivation horizon
102	Linear gully
103	Fill of linear gully
104	Natural orange ?glacial sand
105	Bank of ?redeposited white natural sand/gravel
Trench 2	
200	Topsoil
201	Layer of dark grey sandy silt below topsoil
202	Gully/plough furrow
203	Fill of gully/plough furrow
204	Orange natural sand
Trench 3	
300	Topsoil
301	Layer of dark grey sandy silt below topsoil; interface unclear
302	Orange natural sand