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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
LAND WEST OF SOUTHFIELD PLACE, HORNCastle

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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT
LAND WEST OF SOUTHFIELD PLACE, HORNCastle

00/10

Site Code: SPH99
Planning Ref.: S/086/1341/99
NGR: TF 2597 6905
LCNCC Acc. No.: 248.99

Report prepared for Mr D Hargrave
by AM Hardwick

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Summary

- An archaeological watching brief took place on groundworks for a residential development (one dwelling) on land west of Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire, on 25 January 2000
- Foundation trenching exposed several linear features including a possible boundary ditch and a large pit. Pottery sherds and animal bone were recovered from an overlying soil horizon and from several of the features
- The watching brief concludes, in contrast with earlier fieldwork, that Roman occupation recorded immediately northeast of the site appears to continue into the present development area

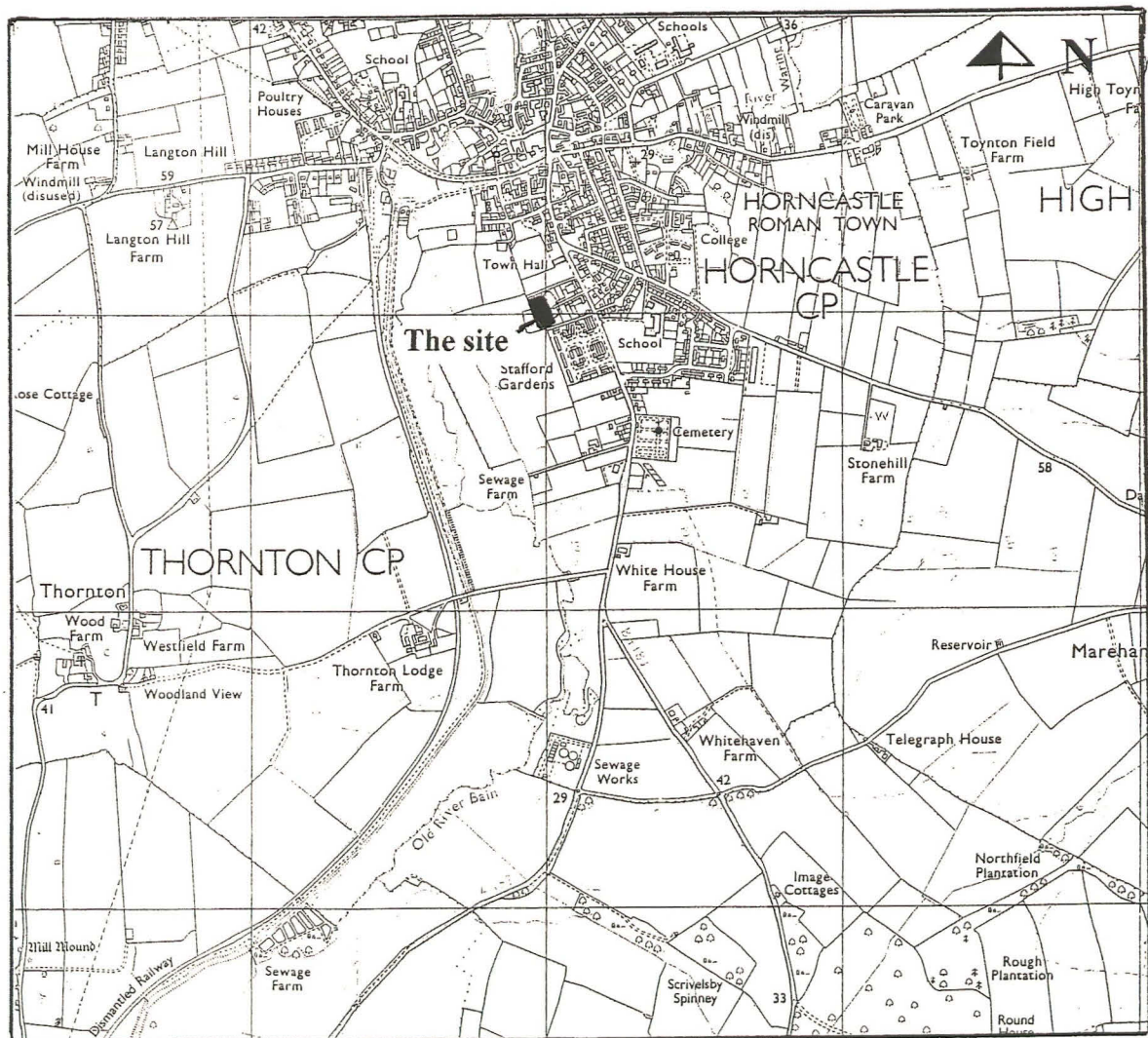


Fig. 1 Site location, scale 1: 25 000

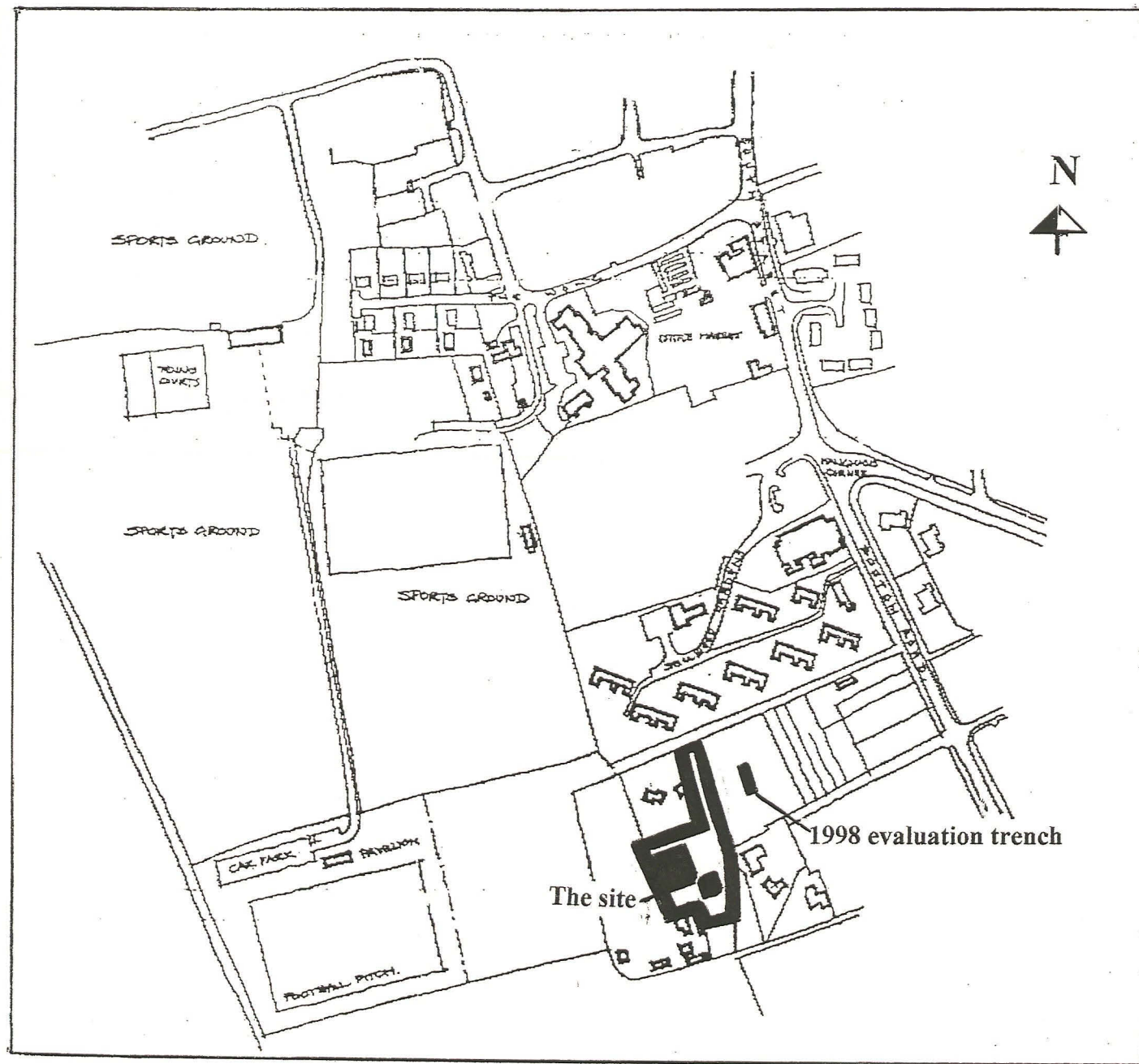
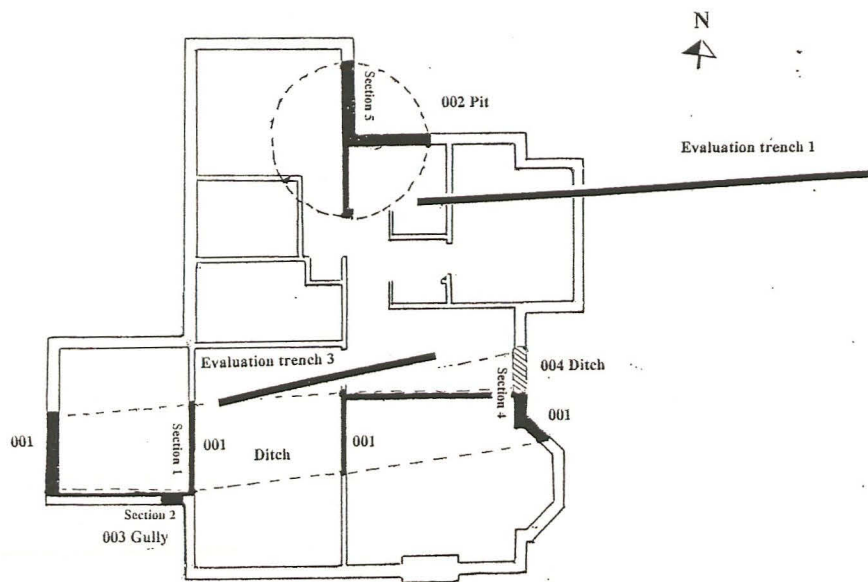


Fig. 2 Development location/footprint (scale 1:25 00)



Main residential foundations

Garage foundations

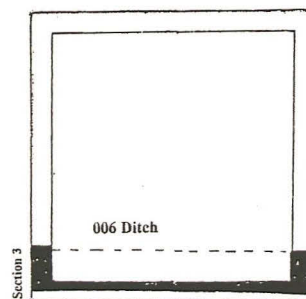


Fig. 3 Development plan incorporating feature locations, scale 1:200.

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) undertook an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a residential development on land west of Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire. The work was commissioned by Mr D. Hargrave.

The work was carried out in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Lincolnshire County Council Archaeology Section publication *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice, 1998* and within the guidelines of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA 1994).

2.0 Location and description

Horncastle lies within the administrative district of East Lindsey, on the south-west edge of the Lincolnshire Wolds, approximately 28 km east of Lincoln and 30 km west of the coast. The development site is immediately south-west of the town, 20m west of Southfield Place, and comprises an irregular unit of approximately 200m², with adjacent garage foundations approximately 50m². It is centred on national grid reference TF 2597 6905.

Medieval ridge and furrow is evident in the northern part of the development area, and the site slopes down to the west, towards the River Bain, and is contained by modern fences.

3.0 Planning background

Planning permission has been granted for the construction of one dwelling (Planning Ref. S/086/1341/99). In response to the initial application, East Lindsey District Council required the undertaking of an archaeological field evaluation, which was completed in 1999. The watching brief described below constitutes the final mitigation strategy on assessment of the evaluation results, and was agreed by East Lindsey District Council and the client.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Horncastle is a town of high archaeological significance, principally with regard to the Roman period, but with important evidence of earlier occupation.

There is evidence of local activity throughout much of the prehistoric period. Mesolithic and Neolithic worked flints have been recovered from 27 High Street, and a possible Late Iron Age settlement site has been uncovered in the Mareham Road area, close to the current development site. Iron Age pottery has been found on the south side of town.

The name Horncastle is recorded as meaning 'Roman station or fortification on a horn-shaped piece of land'. Horncastle became a walled town some time in the 3rd century. Its probable military defences enclosed the current Market Place and extended between the Rivers Bain and Waring. Sections of the wall still stand.

There is evidence to suggest, however, that Roman occupation of the area was considerably more extensive than is indicated by the fortifications.

The development site lies within the unwallled area of town to the south, where discoveries suggest the earliest Roman occupation took place (presumed continuity: Iron Age to Romano-British).

There seems to have been extensive settlement south of the River Bain since at least the 2nd century. Roman building remains have been recovered from the Boston Road area adjoining Southfield Place, burials are recorded just north of the site, and a Roman cremation and inhumation are known in Churchill Avenue, south of the site.

Aerial photographs show extensive cropmarks to the west of the site closer to the river. These have been interpreted as enclosures or trackways of uncertain date.

An archaeological evaluation approximately 40m north-east of the current site in 1998 identified the remains of a possible Roman yard or road surface, and a layer believed to be a terrace feature, sealed by 4th century deposits. The terrace feature was recorded as a cut sloping down from south to north, and there was speculation as to whether it might continue beyond the excavation depth as a ditch or similar feature. Significant quantities of Roman artefactual remains, including a fragment of a jet bracelet, were recovered, and additionally three residual worked flints.

The evaluation of the current site exposed no *in situ* archaeological features of note. Roman pottery was recovered from a dark earth deposit below the topsoil, and a linear terrace feature orientated north-south was exposed on the east side of the site. It appeared to consist of a dump of redeposited natural sand, probably intended to raise the ground surface. This terrace was identified running at modern ground level as an earthwork.

Although significant occupation took place in the locality, particularly in the Roman period, archaeological investigations to date have retrieved limited information regarding its extent and character. The dark earth deposit and the terrace feature have not yet been adequately explained.

5.0 Methodology

The watching brief was undertaken by the writer on 25 January 2000.

Foundation trenches were typically 0.6m wide and 0.7m deep, occasionally deeper where deposits other than natural sand were exposed.

The programme of archaeological recording was required to take place during all groundworks associated with the development. In accordance with the aforementioned guidelines the fieldwork consisted of: -

- the cleaning and inspection with a trowel of all exposed plan and section surfaces.
- limited rapid excavation for dating evidence and clarification of the nature of deposits.

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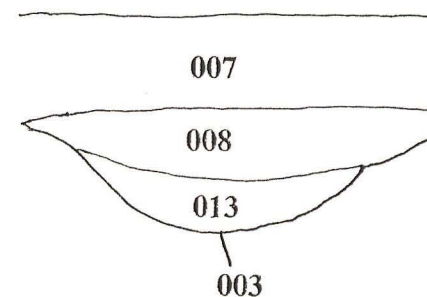
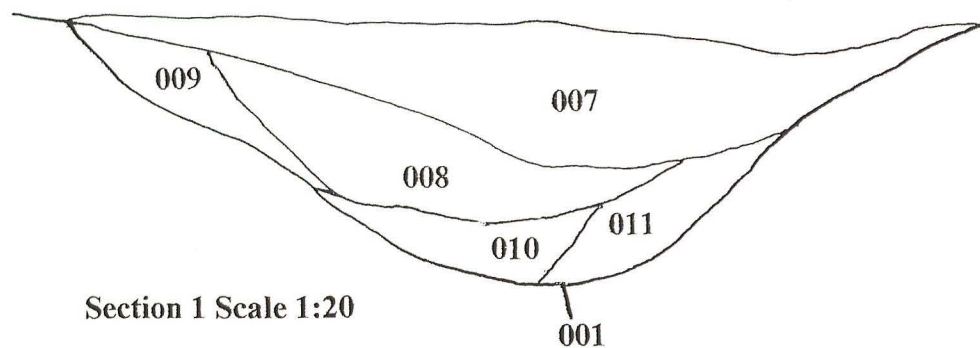
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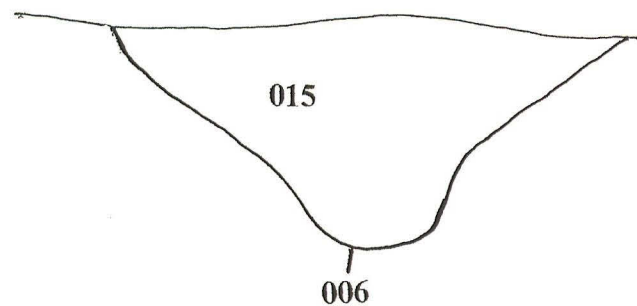
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S

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change of orientation

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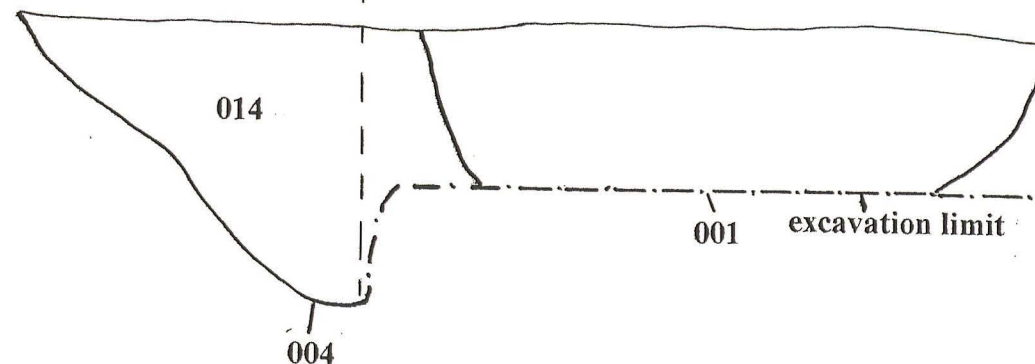


Fig. 4 Section drawings

Section 4 Scale 1:20

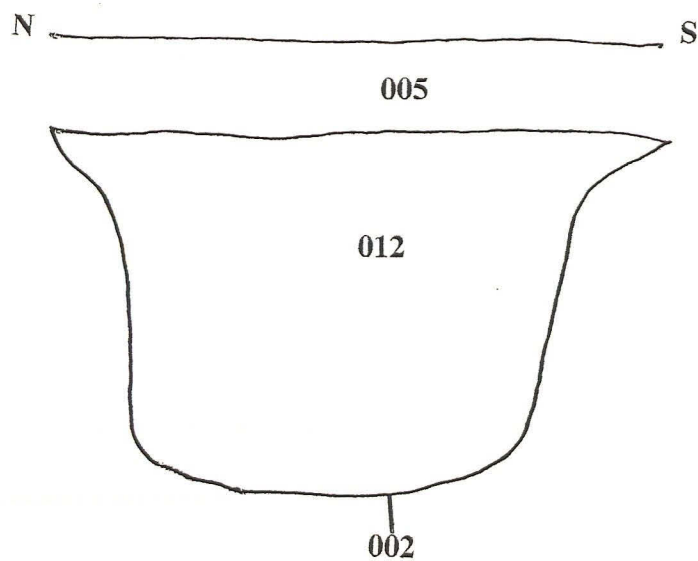


Fig. 5 Section 5 Scale 1:50

- scale section drawings of archaeological features at 1:20 or 1:50, as appropriate.
- location of groundworks monitored on a 1:50 development plan.
- the recording of deposits on standard watching brief record sheets.
- a colour photographic record.

Recovered artefacts were washed and sent for specialist examination, and a report is included at the end of this text.

6.0 Results

On arrival, topsoil approximately 0.3m deep had been stripped from the area, and gravel had been deposited on the area adjacent to the foundation footprint.

The watching brief exposed a number of archaeological features sealed by a thick dark brown sandy silt (005). Pottery and animal bone was recovered in quantity from the spoil associated with this layer, and from several of the features.

Archaeological features exposed were as follows:-

001 A linear ditch orientated east-west which extended across the middle of the foundation for the main dwelling.

002 A large pit approximately 4m in diameter and 2.7m deep at the northern extent of the main foundation. This was quickly partially backfilled with concrete in the interests of health and safety.

003 A possible shallow gully orientated north-south, and truncated by 001, exposed at the south-east extent of the main footprint.

004 A probable ditch orientated approximately east-west and truncated by 001. This was only visible at the eastern extent of the excavations.

006 A ditch orientated east-west at the southern limit of the garage foundations. Several sherds of pottery were recovered from the fill.

These features were cut into a light yellow/ white mixed sand. The excavation of pit 002 revealed that this layer extended to an approximate depth of 2.5m, overlying a grey/blue boulder clay.

7.0 Discussion

The results indicate that the site of development contains a number of archaeological remains broadly dating to the Roman period. These are sealed beneath a thick dark brown sandy silt, in turn overlain by medieval ridge and furrow.

Ditch 001 extends beyond the east and west extent of excavation. It appears to have a linear orientation, but despite the location of Trench 3 it was not found during the 1999 evaluation. Given that the ditch seems to be bearing to the north-east, it is possible that the earlier trench just missed it. Alternatively its edge may have been exposed longitudinally, which would have made it difficult to detect as anything other than one or two soil horizons in section.

The earliest deposits within ditch 001 (009-011) are a mixture of redeposited sand and darker brown soils. They appear to be deliberate backfill, probably part of the same dumping episode. They are succeeded by a very dark, almost black, loamy layer 008. This seems similar in description to the 'dark earth' found during the evaluation, though differs in being significantly shallower and in producing no artefactual material. The layer is also restricted to cut 001. It is very characteristic of a turf line, formed by decayed vegetation from a former land surface.

001 cuts ditch 004 with its northernmost edge. The ditch proved impossible to trace more than 3m to the west, apparently merging with 001. This suggests that the later ditch is a recut of 004, on a slightly different orientation.

The breadth of ditch 001 suggests that it was some form of boundary, given the north-east curvature, containing a large area to its north. If 001 represents a recut, then the boundary may have been longstanding. There is a possibility that the interface between fills 008 and 009-011 represents a further re-cut (**Section 1**), and the possible formation of a turf line suggests subsequent abandonment to overgrowth.

It is interesting to note that the 1998 evaluation, 40m to the northeast, speculates about the possibility of there being a ditch cut below its excavation limit, given that three ditch cuts 001, 004 and 006 extend east beyond the current foundation trenches. 001 and 004 particularly are on an approximately suitable orientation to continue into that area.

There is little evidence to determine the function of pit 002. Animal bone and pottery was recovered from the fill in moderate quantities, but possibly not enough to suggest use as a rubbish pit. The true shape of the pit is uncertain, given that fieldwork was restricted to observation of narrow intersecting foundation trenches. It was clearly very deep and roughly circular. It would also have been rather unstable, given that it was cut through loose, soft sand and therefore possibly originally only open for a limited period. In that time, natural sand was dug out and the pit backfilled with dark brown soil.

It is possible to conclude that pit 002 results from sand quarrying. This correlates with the dump of redeposited sand identified during the 1999 evaluation immediately east of the current site.

Possible gully 003, like ditch 004, is cut by ditch 001 and is further evidence of longevity of occupation at the site.

The watching brief results have not produced clear evidence of the continuation of the possible dark earth dump deposit, noted in the preceding evaluations, into the development area. Layer 005, also below the topsoil, is more brown in colour, but in

places similarly thick and contains pottery and bone. This could perhaps correlate with the dark earth.

8.0 Conclusions

Several linear features and one large possible quarry pit were identified as a result of the watching brief. Contrasting with the largely negative results of the associated 1999 evaluation, they provide evidence of Roman settlement extending some way south-west of remains identified previously.

Characterisation of the archaeological deposits is limited by the amount of information it was possible to retrieve as a result of the watching brief. Interpretation of the nature and extent of the archaeology is therefore speculative.

The deposits suggest more than one phase of pre-medieval site use, and the probable continuation of features to the south and west. There is also a possibility of further remains being present immediately north/ northwest of the site.

Little new information was retrieved that can answer questions raised by previous work. It is possible to suggest a source for the redeposited sand recorded in 1999 as terrace material, and to speculate on the continuation of at least one possible boundary ditch into the area examined in 1998.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr D. Hargrave for this commission.

10.0 Bibliography

Hutchinson, Q. 1999 *Archaeological field evaluation report, land west of Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire*. Unpublished PCA report. 99/20

Albone, J. 1998 *Archaeological field evaluation, land adjacent to 5 Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire*. Unpublished PCA report. 98/10

Palmer-Brown, C.P.H. 2000 *Specification for an archaeological watching brief, land west of Southfield Place, Horncastle, Lincolnshire*

Mills, A.D. 1991 *Oxford dictionary of English place names*. Oxford University Press

Appendix I
List of contexts

No.	Type	Description
001	Cut	E-W ditch
002	Cut	Large pit
003	Cut	N-S gully
004	Cut	E-W ditch
005	Layer	Dark brown sandy silt
006	Cut	E-W ditch
007	Fill	Dark grey/brown sandy silt
008	Fill	Very dark brown/black silty loam
009	Fill	Light brown silty sand
010	Fill	Very dark brown silty sand
011	Fill	Mottled dark brown/yellow silty sand
012	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt
013	Fill	Mid brown silty sandy, yellow sand mottling
014	Fill	Dark brown silty sand, yellow sand mottling
015	Fill	Dark brown sandy silt, 2% charcoal flecks

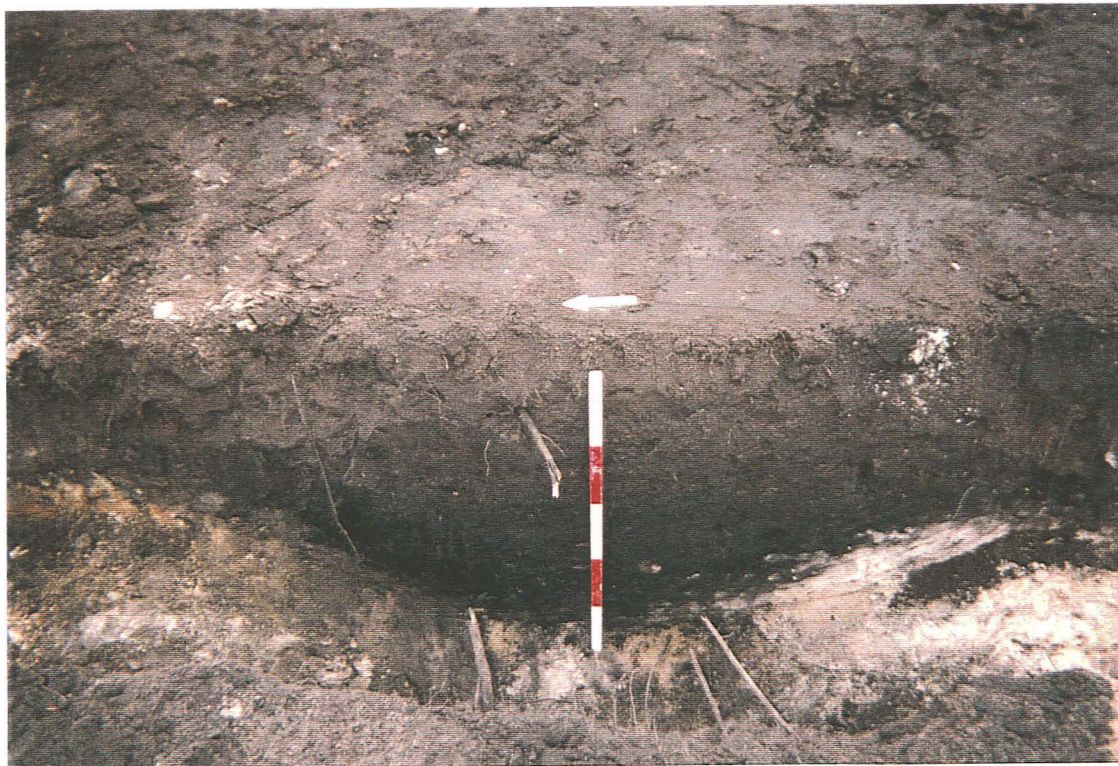
Appendix II
Colour photographs



P. 1 General shot of site, looking north



P.2 General shot of foundation trenching, looking north



P. 3 Ditch 001, as drawn in Section 1, looking east



P.4 Pit 002, looking east



P.5 Gully 003, looking north



P.6 Ditch 004 cut by ditch 001 (drawn as section 4) looking east



P. 7 Ditch 006, looking west

REPORT 57 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.

4 February 2000

QUANTITY AND CONDITION

A small additional group of pottery from the above site came from 3 contexts, and amounted to nine sherds weighing 246g. The sherds are in generally good condition. 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

Three sherds each came from contexts 001, 002 and 006. The best dating is from 001 which can be dated to the late 3rd-4th century on the basis of a Nene Valley colour-coated fragment from the base of a bowl. There can be no certainty as to the precise form, which could either be a triangular-rimmed bowl, a type starting in the later 3rd century, or a bead-and-flanged bowl of 4th century date. Context 002 produced a grey plain-rimmed dish which is distorted, and may be simply a "second" or could be evidence of local pottery production. This is probably of 3rd century date rather than earlier. Dating from context 006 is similarly later Roman, based on a wheel-made copy of a dales ware jar in a very sandy grey fabric, fired to a light red-brown exterior; the fabric contains fairly abundant rounded and sub-rounded quartz. The prototype dales ware jars in shell-gritted fabrics derive from production areas probably located about the Humber estuary, and do not seem to appear further south until the mid 3rd century and later; copies are likely to have similar dating.

As with the earlier small group (*Report 53*, 27 October 1999), a later Roman date is indicated, although this group does not have the more positive evidence for 4th century date found in the first group from context 201.

Cxt	Fabric	Form	Manuf+	Ves	D?	DNo	Details	Links	Shs	Wt
001	NVCC	B	-	-	-	-	BASE DIAM 9;LTBN FAB	-	1	65
001	GREY	BD	-	-	-	-	BASE FRAG	-	1	16
001	GREY	CLSD?	BWL	-	-	-	BS ZONE BWL OVER BH ZONE	-	1	21
001	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	L3-4	-	-	-
002	GREY	JEV	-	-	-	-	RIM-FLAKED SHLDR;DKGRY SURF LTER FAB	-	1	35
002	GREY	DPR	-	-	-	-	RIM/WALL;DISTORTED;BURNISHED	-	1	33
002	GREY	JB?	LA?	-	-	-	BS BASAL ZONE;LA OR SCRIBBLE?	-	1	42
002	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	3C PROB	-	-	-
006	GREY?	JDW	-	-	-	-	RIM;LTRB EXT SURF;SANDY SUB-R QTX;GRYISH INT	-	1	14
006	GREY	-	-	-	-	-	BSS	-	2	20
006	ZDATE	-	-	-	-	-	M3+	-	-	-
									9	246