ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND
ADJACENT TO SILVER STREET,
CONINGSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(CMC 00)



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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
OF DEVELOPMENT ON LAND
ADJACENT TO SILVER STREET,
CONINGSBY,
LINCOLNSHIRE
(CMC 00)

Work Undertaken For IPS Construction

Report Compiled by Paul Cope-Faulkner BA(Hons) AIFA

May 2000

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1. SUMMARY

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken during development on land adjacent to Silver Street, Coningsby, Lincolnshire. The watching brief monitored the excavation of the foundation trenches for a new building.

The Bain Valley has been the focus of settlement since the Neolithic (4200-2250 BC) and flint tools of this and the Bronze Age (2250-800 BC) have been found in the vicinity. Coningsby may have been a Saxon (AD 410-1066) royal centre, although no evidence for this has been found. The medieval (AD 1066-1500) church and vicarage are the earliest extant remains in the village.

The investigation identified three quarry pits of the later medieval period. A fourth quarry pit and boundary gully were also revealed and, although undated, are thought to be contemporary with the other quarries. A range of medieval pottery as well as more recent ceramics, a flint tool, glass and animal bone were retrieved.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 Definition of a Watching Brief

An archaeological watching brief is defined as a formal programme of observation and investigation conducted during any operation carried out for non-archaeological reasons within a specified area, where there is a possibility that archaeological deposits may be disturbed or destroyed.' (IFA 1997).

2.2 Planning Background

Archaeological Project Services was commissioned by IPS Construction to undertake an archaeological watching brief during construction of a new mediecal centre on land adjacent to Silver Street, Coningsby, Lincolnshire. The watching brief was carried out between the 16th and 21st of March 2000.

2.3 Topography and Geology

Coningsby is situated 12km southwest of Horncastle and 17km northwest of Boston in East Lindsey District, Lincolnshire (Fig. 1).

The development site is located 120m southeast of the village centre as defined by the parish church of St. Michael (Fig. 2). Situated at a height of c. 7.5m OD, the site is centred on National Grid Reference TF 2230 5798. The village is located on a north facing slope overlooking the River Bain.

Local soils are of the Blackwood Association, typically sandy gley soils (Hodge *et al.* 1984, 127). These soils overlie a drift geology of river and glaciofluvial deposits comprising sand and gravel which in turn overlie a solid geology of Jurassic Ampthill Clays (BGS 1995).

2.4 Archaeological Setting

The development site lies within an area of known archaeological remains dating from the prehistoric period to the present day. Well-defined areas of flint tools and burnt stone were revealed during fieldwalking southwest of Coningsby and are typical of a number of sites known from the Bain valley (Chowne 1994, 27). Other prehistoric tools, including a stone axe hammer and a Bronze Age socketed axe, are known from south of the development site. A Romano-British cremation is known from northeast of the village.

Coningsby is first mentioned in the Domesday Survey of c. 1086. Referred to as

Cuningesbi, the name is derived from the Old Scandinavian Kunungsbŷr, meaning 'the homestead or village of the King' (Ekwall 1974, 120). The place-name evidence has suggested to some that Coningsby was also an important Anglo-Saxon fortified site (Cox 1994, 41). The Domesday Survey records that the land was owned by the King, Earl Hugh, Drew de Beurre. Robert the steward and Chetelbern and contained 180 acres of woodland, 76 acres of meadow and 17 fisheries (Foster and Longley 1976). In the subsequent Lindsey Survey of c. 1115, the land was owned by Earl Richard, Roger Marmion and Stephen of Albermarle (ibid.).

Medieval finds are known from the village and also include extant monuments of this period. St. Michael's church dates to the 13^{th} century and the former rectory encompasses a timber framed hall which was built c. 1345 (DoE 1987, 2). Mention is also made of a castle in Coningsby (White 1856, 762), although no trace of this survives.

3. AIMS

The requirements of the watching brief were to record and interpret archaeological deposits, if present, and to determine their date, sequence, function and origin.

4. METHODS

Prior to the excavation of trenches the site was stripped of topsoil to the surface of the underlying subsoil. Foundation trenches were then excavated by machine to a depth of c. 0.5m. Following excavation, the sides of all trenches were cleaned and rendered vertical. Selected deposits were partially or fully excavated by hand to determine their nature and to retrieve artefactual material. The depth and thickness of each deposit was

measured from the ground surface. Each archaeological deposit or feature revealed was allocated a unique reference number (context number) with an individual written description. A list of all contexts and interpretations appears as Appendix 1. A photographic record was compiled and sections were drawn at a scale of 1:10 and plans at 1:20. Recording of deposits encountered during the watching brief was undertaken according to standard Archaeological Project Services practice.

Finds recovered from excavated deposits were examined and a period date assigned where possible (Appendix 2). Records of the deposits and features recognised during the watching brief were examined. Phasing was assigned based on artefact dating and the nature of the deposits and recognisable relationships between them.

5. RESULTS

Following post-excavation analysis, four phases were identified;

Phase 1 Natural deposits

Phase 2 14th - 16th century deposits

Phase 3 Undated deposits Phase 4 Recent deposits

Archaeological contexts are listed below and described. The numbers in brackets are the context numbers assigned in the field.

Phase 1 Natural deposits

The earliest deposit encountered at the base of the trenches was light yellowish brown sand (005 and 010), identified as the underlying drift geology.

Developed upon this natural sand was a subsoil of brown and brownish yellow sand (029) that was c. 0.15m thick.

Phase 2 14th - 16th century deposits

Cutting subsoil (029) were several large pits. Located at the southern end of the eastern trench was a sub-rectangular feature (018), probably a quarry pit. This had a visible extent of 4m and contained a single fill of dark brownish grey sandy clay (017). Although this feature was not excavated, four sherds of Toynton/Bolingbroke pottery, dating to the 14th - 16th centuries, was retrieved from the fill.

At the north end of the eastern trench was a second quarry pit (027), with a visible extent of 3.78m. Dark greyish brown clayey sand (021) filled this feature from which a single sherd of Toynton All Saints pottery, 14th - 15th century, was recovered.

Immediately west of pit (027) was a third quarry (026). This had a minimum length of 6.8m and was c. 4m wide. This pit was also filled with dark greyish brown clayey sand (023) from which a single sherd of 14^{th} - 16^{th} century Toynton/Bolingbroke pottery was retrieved.

Phase 3 Undated deposits

Located in the southern trench of the development was an east-west aligned linear feature (004 and 009). An overall length of c. 6.8m was ascertained and a width of 0.5-0.6m and depth of 0.4m was recorded (Fig. 5, Sections 1 and 2). This feature, probably a gully, was filled with greyish brown silty sand (003 and 008).

Located south of the medieval quarry pit (026) was a linear feature (025), also identified as a quarry pit. Cutting subsoil (029), this was aligned north-south and was 2.1m wide and deeper than 0.3m. A single fill of greyish brown clayey sand (024) was identified and contained fragments of animal bone.

Phase 4 Recent deposits

Overlying the medieval and undated features was a transformed subsoil (002), comprising mottled brown sand and almost indistinguishable from (029). This layer was c. 0.3m thick. Pottery of 12th - 18th century date was retrieved from the deposit as well as a worked flint.

Cut into the undated gully (004 and 009) was a sub-rectangular refuse pit (007). This was 1.3m wide and contained 19th century pottery as well as a residual late medieval tile fragment.

Situated along the westernmost trench was a rectangular feature (016), possibly a pit. This feature was 0.56m wide and was deeper than 0.3m (Figure 5, Section 3). Slumping of the sides created two fills, both greyish brown silty sand (014 and 015) with a final fill of greyish brown sandy silt (013).

Located 2.5m north of pit (016) was a linear feature (012), also identified as a refuse pit. This was over 2m long and 0.7m wide and contained greyish brown silt (011) from which 20th century material was recovered.

Situated partway along the east trench was a third refuse pit (020) with a single fill of greyish brown silty sand (019) and also containing 20th century material.

On the east side of the site, within the foundation trench for the proposed porch was a feature (028) partly visible within the trench. It was filled with dark brownish grey silty sand (022) that contained abundant, large fragments of corrugated iron.

Sealing the site was a topsoil of dark brown sand (001) that was 0.7m thick.

6. DISCUSSION

The earliest deposits encountered (Phase 1), comprising sand and gravel, is probably of river or glaciofluvial origin and represents the underlying drift geology.

Later medieval features (Phase 2) comprise three quarry pits, designed presumably to extract the underlying sand and gravel for use in roads or buildings. A fourth quarry pit was recorded (Phase 3), although no dating material was retrieved. However, it is likely they are contemporary. An undated gully was also recorded and may also be of a similar date. This gully lies parallel to, and 5m from, the southern limit of the site and may have served as a boundary.

A transformed subsoil overlies these features (Phase 4) through which 19th and 20th century features, mainly rubbish pits, have been inserted.

The earliest artefact retrieved during this investigation was a flint scraper of possible Bronze Age date. Although residual, it supports known evidence of activity of this date in the vicinity. Two earlier medieval types of pottery were encountered, from Bourne and Potterhanworth, dating to between the 12th and 14th century, and indicate activity of this date in the vicinity. Later medieval and early post-medieval pottery, produced at Toynton and Bolingbroke during the 14th to 16th centuries was also retrieved. Modern pottery, animal bone and a number of glass vessels were likewise recovered.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Archaeological investigations were undertaken at Silver Street, Coningsby as the site lay within an area of known archaeological remains, notably the

medieval core of the village.

The investigation identified three, probably four, later medieval quarry pits cut to extract naturally occurring sand and gravel deposits. An undated gully, possibly marking a former boundary, was also recorded and may also be late medieval in date. Modern refuse pits were also recorded

A probable Bronze Age flint and earlier medieval pottery was retrieved but was residual in nature. Later medieval pottery of a type produced at Toynton and Bolingbroke was recovered as well as more modern fragments. Animal bone and glass was also recovered. The nature of the local site conditions, particularly the presence of acidic sands, would suggest that few environmental indicators (seeds, wood, shells *etc.*) would survive, other than through charring.

8. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Archaeological Project Services would like to acknowledge the assistance of Mr D. Mitchell who commissioned the fieldwork and post excavation analysis on behalf of IPS Construction. The work was coordinated by Dale Trimble and this report was edited by Tom Lane. Dave Start allowed access to the library and the relevant parish files maintained by Heritage Lincolnshire.

9. PERSONNEL

Project Coordinator: Dale Trimble Supervisors: Tobin Rayner, Gary Taylor

Finds Processing: Denise Buckley

Illustration: Rachael Hall

Photographic Reproduction: Sue Unsworth Post-excavation Analyst: Paul Cope-

Faulkner

IFA Institute of Field Archaeologists

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11. ABBREVIATIONS

APS Archaeological Project Services

BGS British Geological Survey

DoE Department of the Environment



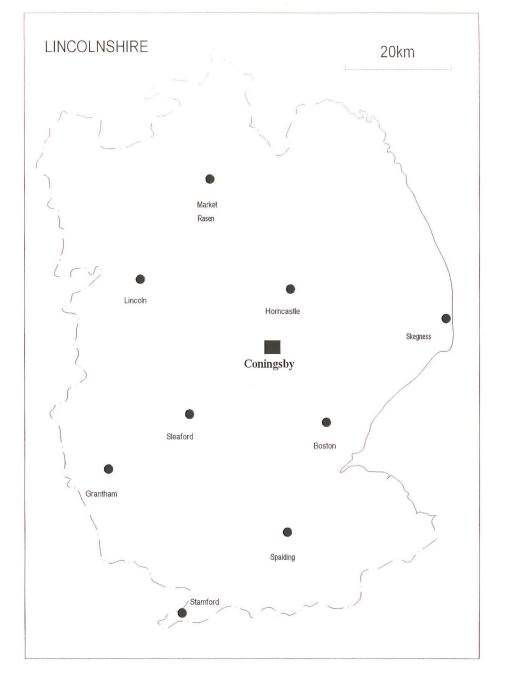


Figure 1 General Location Plan

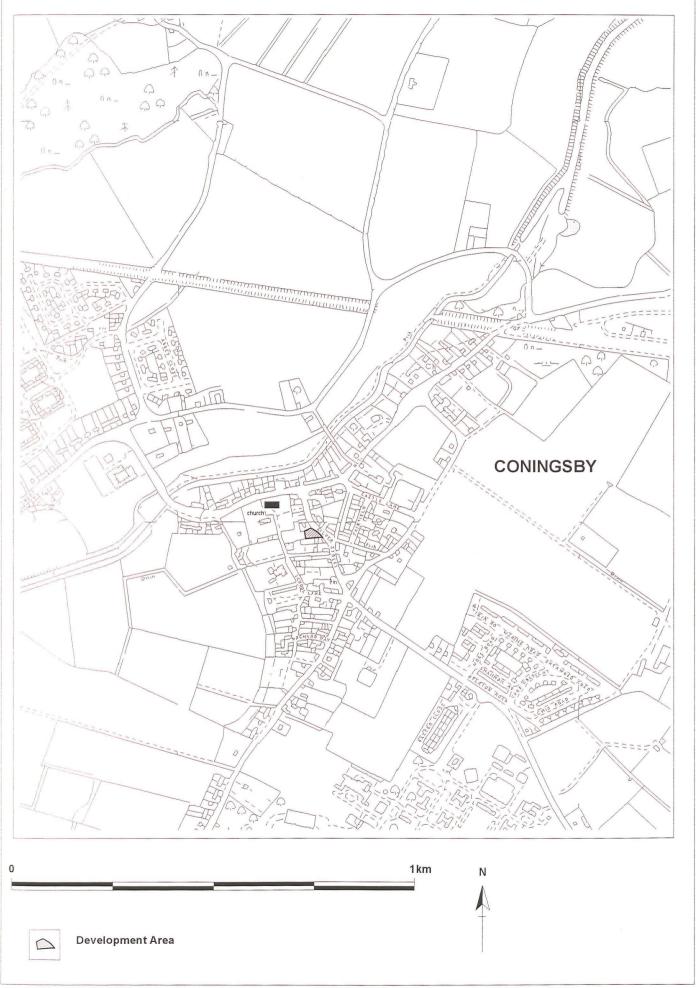


Figure 2 - Site Location Plan

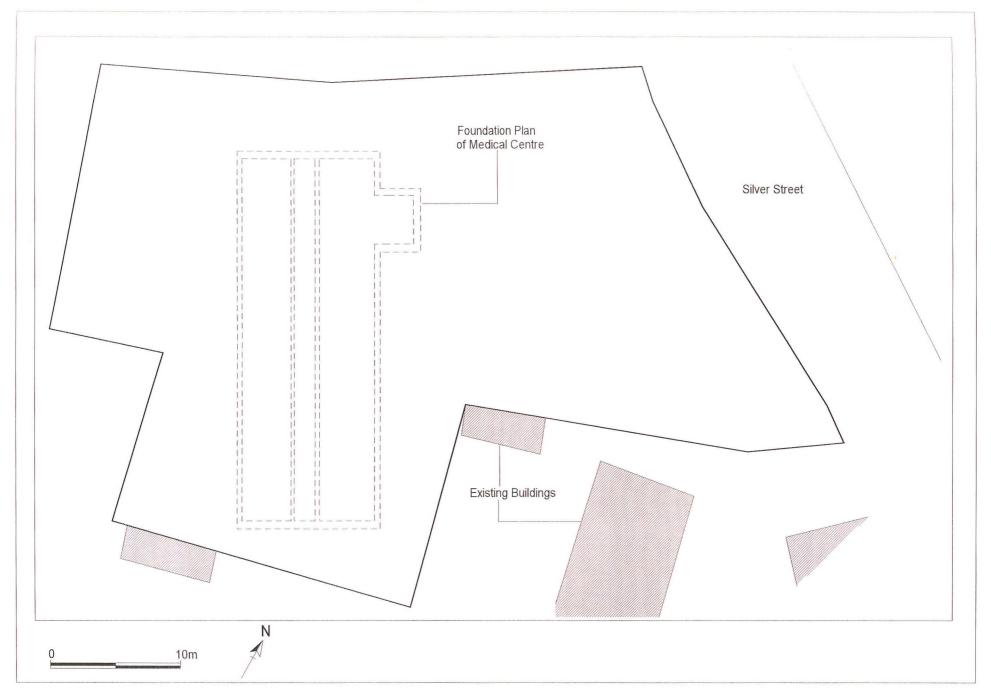


Figure 3 - Extent of Site and Foundations

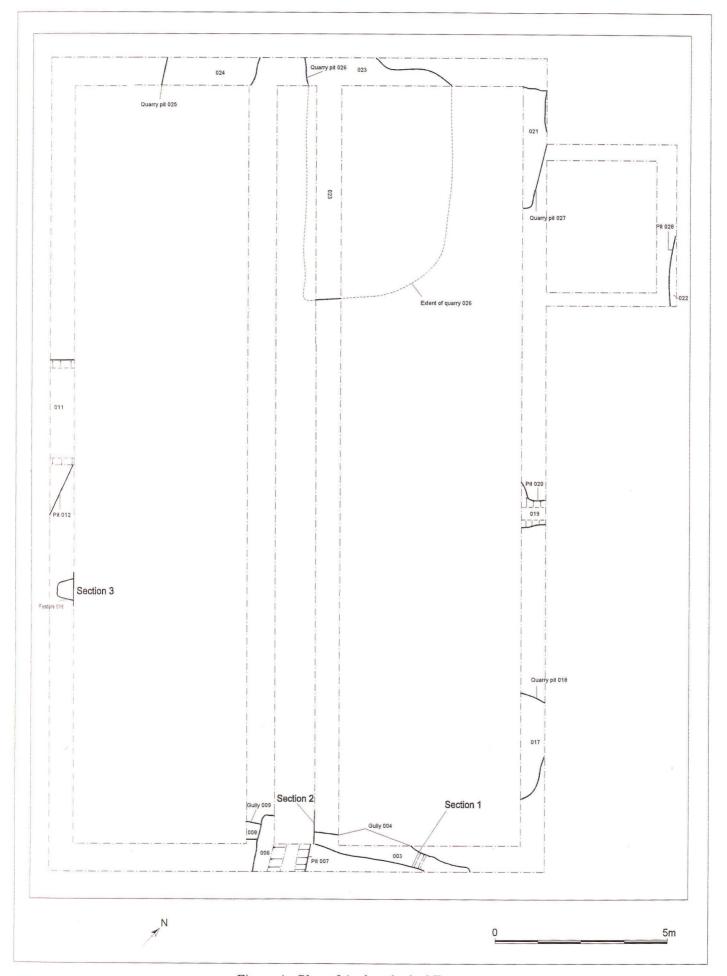


Figure 4 - Plan of Archaeological Features

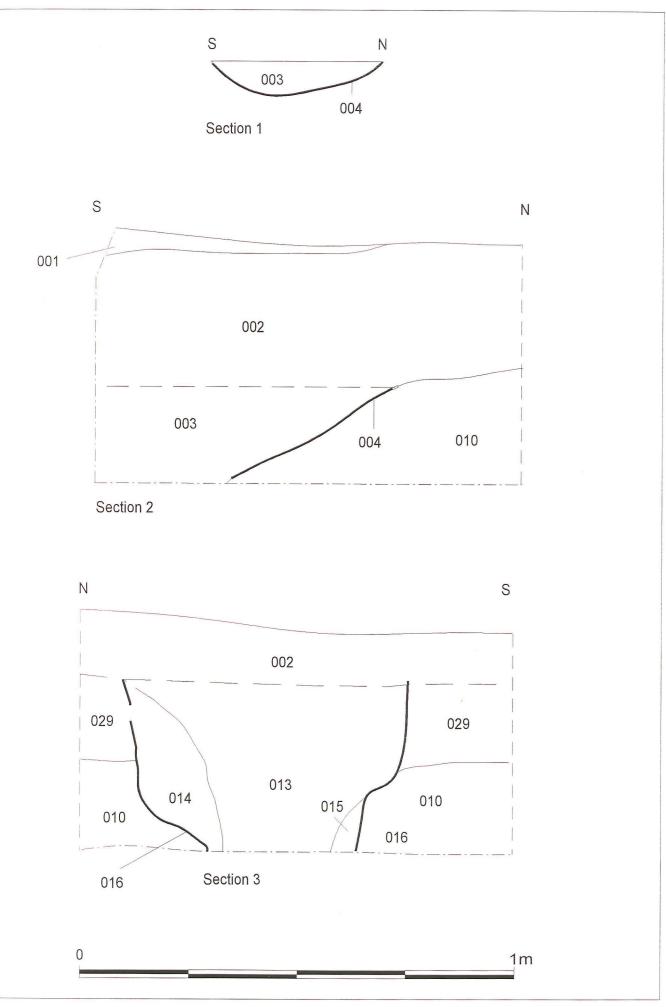


Figure 5 - Sections 1, 2 and 3



Plate 1 - General view of the development, looking north towards the church

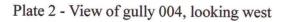






Plate 3 - Quarry pit 018, looking south

CONTEXT DESCRIPTIONS

No.	Descriptions	Interpretation
001	Loose dark brown sand, 0.7m thick	Topsoil
002	Loose mottled brown sand	Transformed subsoil
003	Moderate mid greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 004
004	Linear feature, >5.4m long by >0.5m wide by c . 0.4m deep, convex sides rounded base, aligned east-west	Gully
005	Moderate light yellowish brown sand	Natural deposit
006	Moderate dark brownish grey sandy silt	Fill of 007
007	Sub-rectangular feature, 1.3m wide by >1.3m long by >0.45m deep, stepped, near vertical sides, not excavated	Cess/Rubbish pit
008	Moderate mid brownish grey silty sand	Fill of 009
009	Linear feature, c . 0.6m wide by >0.6m long by >0.3m deep, convex sides, aligned east-west	Gully
010	Moderate light yellowish brown sand	Natural deposit
011	Moderate dark greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of 012
012	Linear feature, $\geq 2m$ long by c . 0.35m wide by $\geq 0.5m$ deep, steep sides, aligned north-south	Refuse pit
013	Moderate dark greyish brown sandy silt	Fill of 016
014	Moderate mid greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 016
015	Moderate mid greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 016
016	Sub-rectangular feature, 0.4m wide by >0.45m long by >0.3m deep, steep stepped sides, not fully excavated	Indeterminate feature
017	Moderate dark brownish grey sandy clay	Fill of 018
018	Sub-rectangular feature, >4.4m long by >0.6m wide by >0.3m deep, steep sides, not fully excavated	Quarry pit
019	Firm dark greyish brown silty sand	Fill of 020
020	Sub-rectangular feature,>1.2m long by >0.6m wide, steep sides, depth not determined	Refuse pit
021	Moderate dark greyish brown clayey sand	Fill of 027
022	Firm dark brownish grey silty sand, with frequent corrugated iron fragments	Fill of 028
023	Moderate dark greyish brown clayey sand	Fill of 026
024	Moderate dark greyish brown clayey sand	Fill of 025

No.	Descriptions	Interpretation
025	Linear feature, 2.1m wide by $c.~0.3 \text{m}$ deep, steep sides, not fully excavated	Quarry pit
026	Irregular feature, >6.2 m long by $> c$. 3.5m wide, steep sides, not fully excavated	Quarry pit
027	Sub-rectangular feature, 3.8m long by >0.7m wide, steep sides, not fully excavated	Quarry pit
028	Feature, >1.1m long by > 100mm wide by >0.4m deep, near vertical sides, not fully excavated	Pit
029	Loose mottled brown and yellowish brown sand, c. 0.15m deep	Subsoil

THE FINDS

by Paul Cope-Faulkner, Rachael Hall, Hilary Healey, Tom Lane, Phil Mills and Gary Taylor

Provenance

The material was recovered from the subsoil (002) and the fills of recent pits and older quarries.

Most of the pottery fragments were probably made locally at Toynton All Saints, 17km to the northeast, or related kilns at the southern end of the Lincolnshire Wolds. There are also medieval fragments from Potterhanworth, 19km to the northwest and Bourne, 40km southwest of Coningsby. The later pottery fragments are probably products of Staffordshire in the Midlands.

Range

The range of material is detailed in the table.

Fragments of pottery of probable 12th-14th century date is the earliest material recovered. However, the majority of the assemblage is provided by pottery of probable 14th-15th century date. In addition to the pottery, glass, tile, flint and animal bone was retrieved.

Context	Description	Context Date
002	1x Staffordshire slipware, 18 th century 2x ?Potterhanworth ware, 13 th -14 th century 9x Toynton All Saints/Bolingbroke-type ware, including 2 pancheons and 1 tripod cooking pot, 14 th -16 th century 1x Bourne A/B ware, 12 th -14 th century 1x flint flake with edge damage, ?BronzeAge 1x flint pebble, burnt/crazed 1x cattle phalange 1x sheep astragalus, heavily eroded 2x sheep molar 1x rib fragment, unidentified species	18 th century
006	1x red painted earthenware, dark brown glazed, Staffordshire, 18 th century 1x blue and white transfer printed tableware, 19 th century 1x pearlware/underglaze blue tableware, late 18 th -mid 19 th century 1x pearlware/blue painted tableware with appliqué figure, 19 th century 1x ceramic tile probably 14 th -16 th century 1x unidentifiable bone fragment	19 th century
011	1x complete brown screw top jar, embossed 'Virol' on body, Fully automated mould produced, punt mark '3673 CTC', medicine jar 1x complete colourless jar, embossed herringbone decoration on body with flat panels for advertising, Fully automated mould produced, Oxo jar, punt mark 'RC No 764042'	20 th century
017	4x Toynton All Saints/Bolingbroke-type ware, 14 th -16 th century 1x cattle astragalus 1x sheep sized metacarpus/metatarsus fragment	14 th -16 th century
019	1x complete colourless square jar with rolled rim, fully automated mould produced, punt mark 'FBC RYF 7' 1x complete colourless cylindrical jar with rolled rim, neck applied later, punt mark 'JL & Co Lo A IIL20'	20 th century

Context	Description	Context Date
021	1x Toynton All Saints ware, 14 th -15 th century 1x sheep sized tibia fragment	14 th -15 th century
023	1x Toynton All Saints/Bolingbroke-type ware, 14th-16th century 1x cattle tibia, juvenile	14 th -16 th century
024	1x cattle sized vertebra 1x cattle calcaneus	

Two vesicular sherds were recovered from (002). Shell-tempering survives at the core of the larger of these and indicates that the pieces are probably Potterhanworth ware. Shell-tempering can be lost from pottery by higher firing during manufacture, or due to acidic burial conditions. It is likely that acidic conditions, generated by the local sands, are responsible for the decalcification of the pottery. The same acid conditions have also affected the bone material and some of the collection is quite chalky in appearance.

A tripod cooking pot in Toynton/Bolingbroke fabric is represented by a sooted vessel foot in (002).

The discovery of the Bourne ware fragment, from (002), is slightly unusual, given the proximity of several other contemporary kilns much closer to Coningsby. The fragment is abraded.

The tile fragment from (006) is of an abundantly sandy and black iron stone fabric, similar to a type recovered at King's Lynn with material dated from 1350 to 1600. The fragment still retains a lot of mortar.

Condition

All the material is in good condition and present no long-term storage problems. Archive storage of the collection is by material class.

Documentation

There has been limited previous archaeological investigation at Coningsby but details of archaeological sites and discoveries in the area are maintained in the Lincolnshire County Council Sites and Monuments Record.

Potential

The assemblage has moderate potential in that much of the medieval material derives from large quarry pits, and provides a date for these features. Moreover, the artefacts from the quarries suggest the general contemporaneity of the features of this extractive industry.

GLOSSARY

Bronze Age

A period characterised by the introduction of bronze into the country for tools, between 2250 and 800 BC.

Context

An archaeological context represents a distinct archaeological event or process. For example, the action of digging a pit creates a context (the cut) as does the process of its subsequent backfill (the fill). Each context encountered during an archaeological investigation is allocated a unique number by the archaeologist and a record sheet detailing the description and interpretations of the context (the context sheet) is created and placed in the site archive. Context numbers are identified within the report text by brackets, *e.g.* (004).

Cut

A cut refers to the physical action of digging a posthole, pit, ditch, foundation trench, *etc*. Once the fills of these features are removed during an archaeological investigation the original 'cut' is therefore exposed and subsequently recorded.

Fill

Once a feature has been dug it begins to silt up (either slowly or rapidly) or it can be back-filled manually. The soil(s) which become contained by the 'cut' are referred to as its fill(s).

Layer

A layer is a term to describe an accumulation of soil or other material that is not contained within a cut.

Medieval

The Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1066-1500.

Natural

Undisturbed deposit(s) of soil or rock which have accumulated without the influence of human activity.

Neolithic

The 'New Stone Age' period, part of the prehistoric era, dating from approximately 4500-2250 BC.

Post-medieval

The period following the Middle Ages, dating from approximately AD 1500-1800.

Prehistoric

The period of human history prior to the introduction of writing. In Britain the prehistoric period lasts from the first evidence of human occupation about 500,000 BC, until the Roman invasion in the middle of the 1st century AD.

Romano-British

Pertaining to the period dating from AD 43-410 when the Romans occupied Britain.

Transformed

Soil deposits are sometimes changed by the water table increasing and decreasing continually, by worms moving through the soil, or by roots. This process normally takes several hundred years to transform a soil, and serve to homogenise it, removing any original textural or colour changes.

THE ARCHIVE

The archive consists of:

29	Context records	
6	Scale drawings	

- Photographic record sheets
- 1 Stratigraphic matrix
- 2 Bags of Finds

All primary records and finds are currently kept at:

Archaeological Project Services The Old School Cameron Street Heckington Sleaford Lincolnshire NG34 9RW

The ultimate destination of the project archive is:

Lincolnshire City and County Museum 12 Friars Lane Lincoln LN2 1HQ

The archive will be deposited in accordance with the document titled *Conditions for the Acceptance of Project Archives*, produced by the Lincolnshire City and County Museum.

Lincolnshire City and County Council Museum Accession Number: 2000.12

Archaeological Project Services Site Code: CMC 00

The discussion and comments provided in this report are based on the archaeology revealed during the site investigations. Other archaeological finds and features may exist on the development site but away from the areas exposed during the course of this fieldwork. *Archaeological Project Services* cannot confirm that those areas unexposed are free from archaeology nor that any archaeology present there is of a similar character to that revealed during the current investigation.

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