

# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT LAND OFF GREEN LANE, WOODHALL SPA, LINCOLNSHIRE

NGR: TF 1840 6297  
SITE CODE: GLWS'00  
LCNCC ACC. NO. 2000.230



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Report prepared for  
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### *Summary*

- *A programme of archaeological evaluation took place on land in Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, bounded on the north-west by Green Lane and on the south-west by The Viking Way.*
- *This evaluation was required to assess the nature of two linear anomalies detected during a gradiometer survey of the area.*
- *The data from both the geophysical survey and the trial excavation, coupled with information from a watching brief on adjacent land, suggests that the site of the proposed residential development is of very limited archaeological potential.*
- *A single trench was placed across these anomalies, which were revealed to be eighteenth/nineteenth century ceramic land drains.*



## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Hugh Bourn Developments (Wragby) Ltd. to undertake a programme of archaeological work on an area of land to the south-east of Green Lane, Woodhall Spa. This work was carried in out in advance of planning permission for a residential development (planning ref: S215/1354/00).

This report details the results of an intrusive archaeological evaluation, subsequent to gradiometric survey of the proposed development area. It is written to conform to both national and local guidelines (Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998)).

## **2.0 Planning background**

Planning consent is sought from East Lindsey District Council by Hugh Bourn Developments Ltd. for a residential development. The Built Environment Team at Lincolnshire County Council advised East Lindsey District Council that the client should commission a field evaluation to assess the archaeological potential of the site. This was initiated in the form of a gradiometer survey carried out earlier in the year (Bunn and Hardwick, 2000).

## **3.0 Location and description**

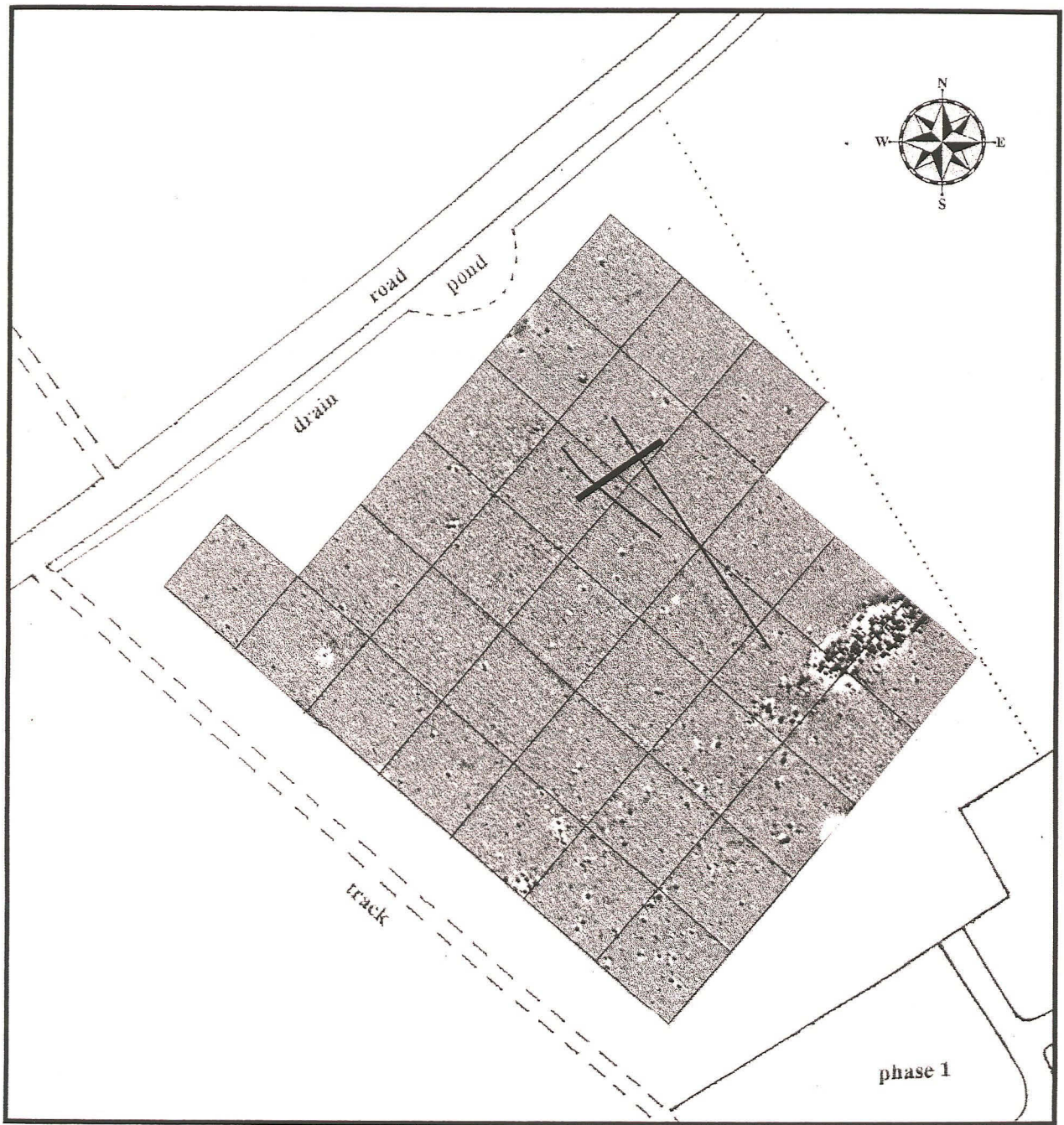
Woodhall Spa, in the district of East Lindsey, lies approximately 25km south-east of Lincoln and 5km south-west of Horncastle. The site itself measures approximately 4.1 hectares and is located on agricultural land on the west side of the town, centred on NGR TF 1840 6297. The boundaries of the site are Green Lane to the north-west, The Viking Way to the south-west and recent residential developments to the north-east and south-east.

The topography of the site is unremarkable; it undulates very slightly, and has a gentle rise towards Green Lane. At the time of excavation, the ground cover consisted of the remains of a cereal crop and low grass.

The geology of the site consists of upper river terrace sand and gravel deposits, up to five metres deep. This overlies a Kimmeridge Clay formation of grey, shelly limestone and shale (BGS, 1995).

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

The earliest archaeological evidence from the area consists of Neolithic stone axes and a Neolithic pebble mace found further to the west. A Late Bronze Age spearhead was found on the east bank of the River Witham in 1964, and cropmarks located in the area are broadly dated to the prehistoric period. An Anglo-Saxon sword, dagger



**Figure 2:** Trench location plan showing geophysics grid and linear anomalies  
(Scale 1:2000)



and spearhead were also found to the west of the site in the River Witham in 1788. The remains of the twelfth century Kirkstead Abbey lie to the south of the site.

Recently, a number of archaeological investigations have taken place in the area. In 1998, University of Leicester Archaeological Services carried out a gradiometer survey immediately to the west of the proposed development, which revealed no archaeological features (Butler, 1998). A watching brief by Pre-Construct Archaeology to the east of the site (Palmer-Brown, forthcoming), as well as geophysical and trial excavations by Lindsey Archaeological Services all proved to be negative (N. Field, pers. comm.).

The most recent phase of work at the current site was a gradiometer survey by Pre-Construct Archaeology in January of this year, which revealed faint linear anomalies in the north-east half of the survey area (Bunn & Hardwick, 2000). The purpose of the current investigation was to assess the significance of these anomalies in advance of development.

## 5.0 Methodology

The recommendation of the Built Environment Team at Lincolnshire County Council was to place a single trench to locate two linear anomalies running north-west to south-east (see fig.2).

A trench measuring approximately 30m by 2m was opened using a 360 degree excavator. This machine, fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching blade was used to remove the topsoil and subsoil to the level of the archaeological deposits, taking off spits to a maximum depth of 0.2m at a time. The work was constantly monitored until the archaeological horizon was exposed.

Subsequent to this, the sides and base of the trench were cleaned by hand, in advance of sample excavation. This work was carried out by a team of three experienced excavators over a period of two days, on the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> September.

## 6.0 Results

Very little of archaeological significance was revealed in the trench. The overlying topsoil (100) was relatively uniform in depth, ranging from 0.3 to 0.4m. This lay directly on top of the natural sand and gravel geology, with no noticeable subsoil layer between the two.

At approximately 11.2m from the western end of the trench, and at the very east end of the trench, a soft sandy deposit (102), considerably disturbed by root action, was noted. In both cases, this deposit was only noticeable in the northernmost trench section.

A series of seven land drains were noted running across the trench. Six of these were ceramic, and the seventh was a drainage channel filled with subangular limestone

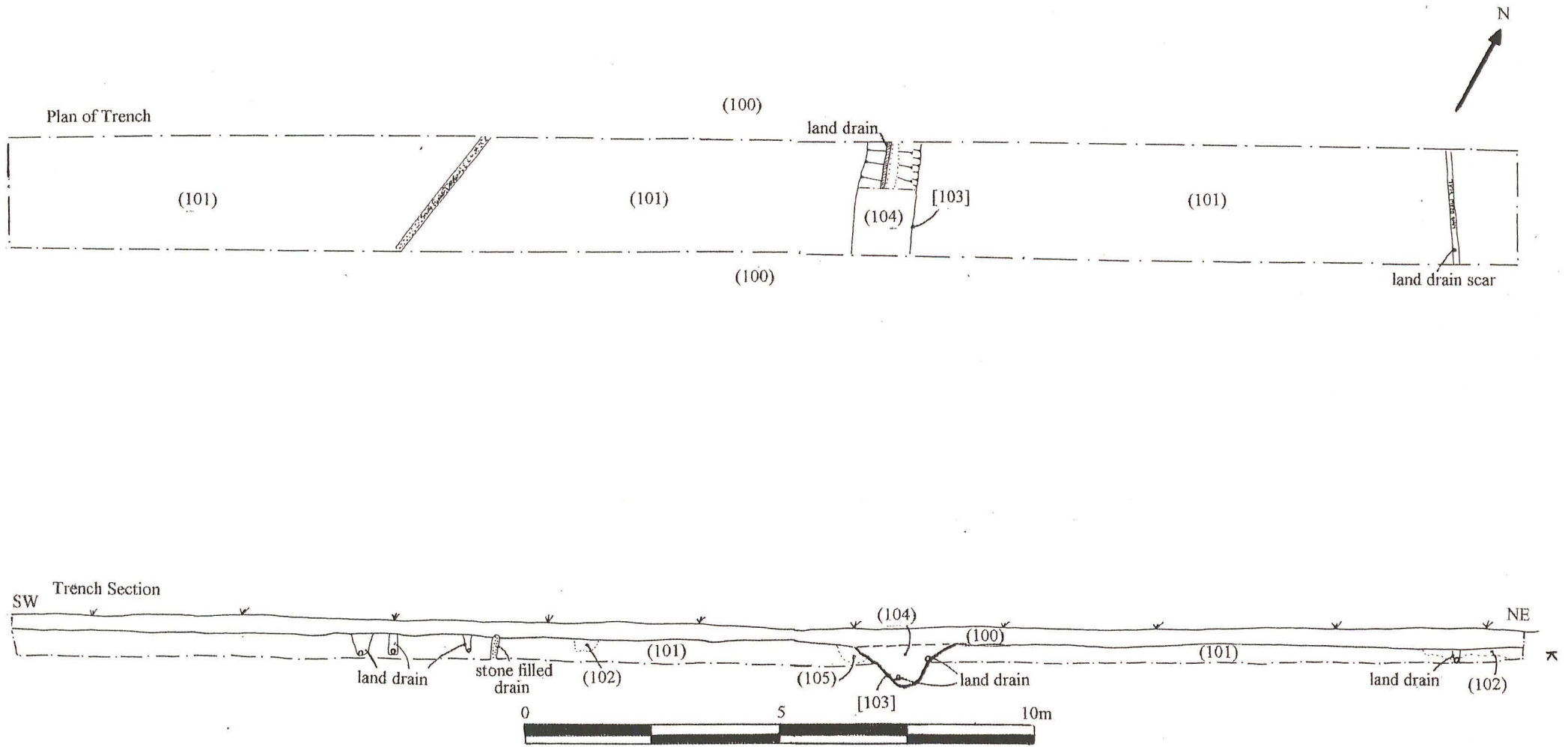


Figure 3: Trench plan and section

fragments. Two of the ceramic drains lay within a ditch [103] which was cut into the natural from directly below the overlying topsoil. The dark humic ditch fill (104) revealed a single sherd of eighteenth/nineteenth century pottery, which was sent to a pottery analyst for verification (Jane Young, Lindsey Archaeological Services). The western side of the ditch truncated a grey sandy gravel deposit (105) which only appeared in section on the northern side of the trench.

## **7.0 Discussion and conclusion**

In effect, no significant archaeological remains were revealed by this evaluation. The only feature worthy of excavation, the north - south ditch [103] was clearly for the purpose of drainage, considering the ceramic horseshoe drain on the western side of the ditch and the circular drain running along its eastern edge. The single sherd of pottery, the proximity of the ditch cut to the topsoil, and the dark humic nature of its ditch fill all suggest a relatively modern date for this feature.

The ditch was complemented by the other land drains, all of which were following broadly the same alignment. Indeed, it would seem that any agricultural use of this land would require such drainage, as two days of heavy rain prior to the commencement of the evaluation resulted in standing water both in the trench and the surrounding field.

Deposits (102) and (105) appeared to be natural geological features with no archaeological value. At the eastern end of the trench, (102) was on the same alignment as a very shallow dip in the field running north-north-west to south-south-east, and may have accumulated during episodes of waterlogging in this dip.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

Although no substantial archaeological remains were exposed by this evaluation, it can be concluded that the methodology employed was sound. The lack of archaeology compares well with other intrusive and non-intrusive projects undertaken in the area. The evaluation trench also served to indicate the nature of the linear anomalies produced by the gradiometer survey of the site. The easternmost anomaly ties in well with the excavated ditch, while the second anomaly is very likely to be one of the three ceramic land drains west of ditch [103].

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeology would like to thank Hugh Bourn Developments Ltd. for their co-operation during this evaluation.

## 10.0 References

British Geological Survey, 1995. *Horncastle. England and Wales Sheet 115. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50000 Provisional Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey.

Bunn, D. & Hardwick, A.M., 2000. *Fluxgate Gradiometer Survey, Land off Green Lane, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire*. Pre-Construct Geophysics (unpublished report).

Butler, A., 1998. *A Geophysical Survey of Land North of Witham Road, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire (TF 185 628)*. ULAS (unpublished report).

## 11.0 Site archive

Primary records are currently with Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). The paper and photographic records will be deposited with the City and County Museum, Lincoln, within six months.

## 12.0 Appendix

### 12.1 Colour plates



Plate 1: General view of trench, looking north towards Green Lane.



Plate 2: Pre-excitation shot of trench, looking south-west



Plate 3: Shot of ditch [103], looking north

**12.2 List of archaeological contexts**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>
100	Topsoil
101	Natural
102	Natural silting
103	Ditch cut
104	Fill of [103]
105	Natural deposit