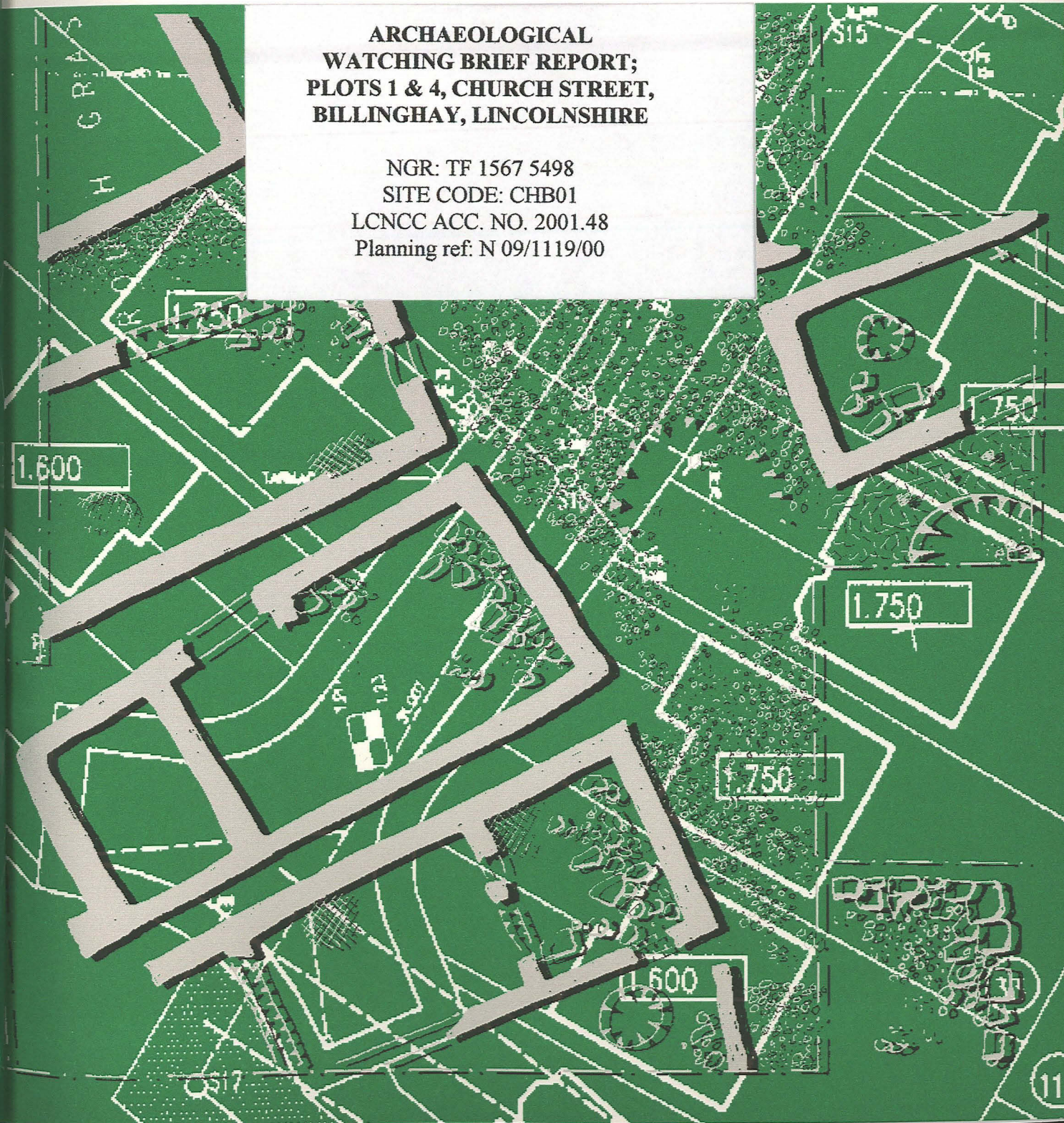
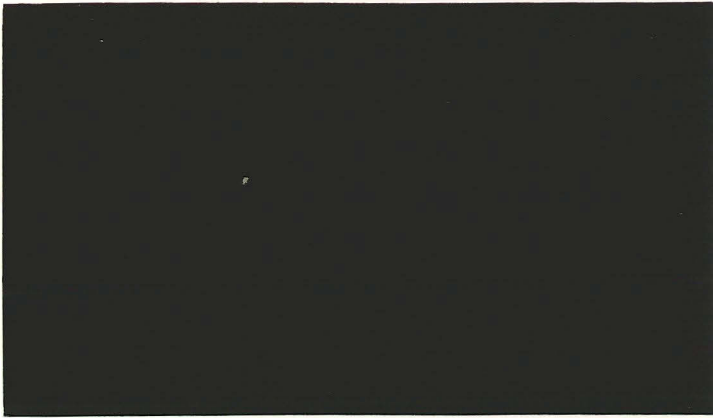


# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;  
PLOTS 1 & 4, CHURCH STREET,  
BILLINGHAY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 1567 5498  
SITE CODE: CHB01  
LCNCC ACC. NO. 2001.48  
Planning ref: N 09/1119/00





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Report prepared for  
Mr D. Evans (Stoneacre Developments Ltd.)  
by Chris Clay  
April 2001

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**Plate 4: Shot of plot 4 foundations, looking south-west**

*Summary*

- *An archaeological watching brief was undertaken in February 2001, during the groundworks for plots 1 and 4 on land off Church Street, Billingham.*
- *The site is adjacent to the parish church and within the core of the medieval settlement. However, no archaeological deposits of significance were exposed.*

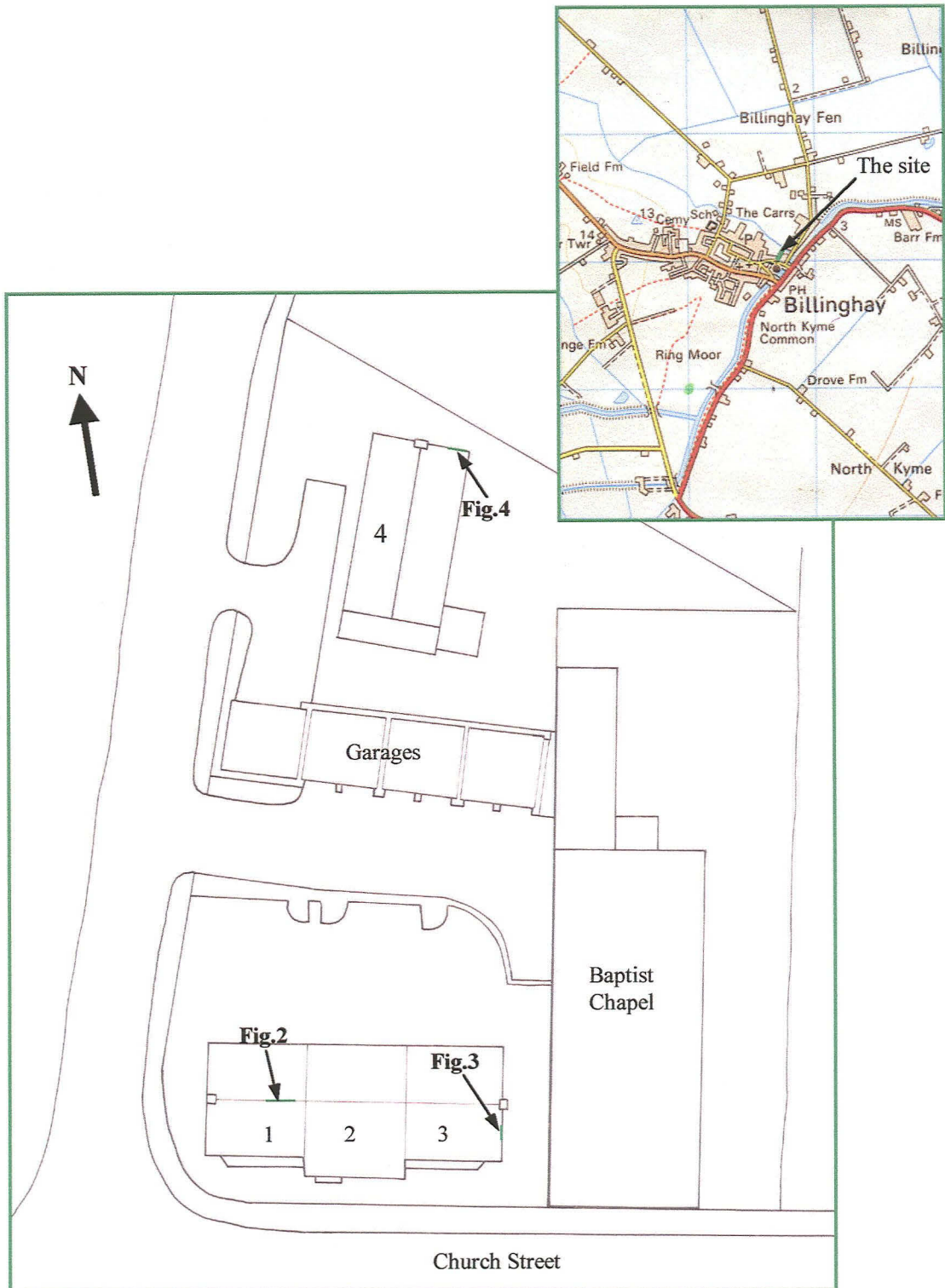


Fig.1: Site location, showing location of drawn sections (Scale 1:400, inset 1:50,000)

## **1.0 Introduction**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Mr D. Evans to undertake an archaeological watching brief during the groundworks for two house plots on land off Church Street, Billingham. This was undertaken to fulfil a planning requirement issued by North Kesteven District Council.

This report details the results of the fieldwork. It is written to reflect the requirements of a project brief issued by the North Kesteven Heritage Officer, and to conform national and local guidelines, as set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice (LCC, 1998).

## **2.0 Site location and description**

Billingham is situated on the western edge of the Lincolnshire fens, in the administrative district of North Kesteven. It is approximately 22km south-east of Lincoln and 7km north-east of Ruskington.

The site is a sub-rectangular block of land on the eastern edge of the village, bounded by Church Street to the south and the Car Dyke to the north (fig. 1). It centres on NGR TF 1567 5498, and is a brownfield site, formerly occupied by a brick built school building. The site is generally flat, and is covered with large amounts of brick and other building debris from the demolition of the school, as well as substantial areas of in situ concrete and tarmac.

The geology of the area is characterised by glaciofluvial deposits of sand and gravel, overlying Jurassic deposits of the Ancholme group (BGS, 1995).

## **3.0 Planning background**

Planning permission was granted for the erection of six dwellings, with an access road and associated services (planning ref N 09/1119/00). The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks. This report deals with plots 1 and 4.

## **4.0 Archaeological and historical background**

Information held in the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire indicates prehistoric activity in the parish of Billingham. A settlement plan has not been recorded, but there have been a number of isolated finds, including a Late Bronze Age socketed axe, three Bronze Age swords, a polished stone axe, a Bronze



Age beaker, a flint axe head and several dug out canoes; discovered on the river between Billingham and North Kyme.

Romano-British activity is also represented in the area, and a Roman cemetery is tentatively suggested by occasional finds of bones and cremation urns to the west of the village; a further ten skeletons were found in a gravel pit north of the village, associated with Romano-British pottery. A single coin of the emperor Constans (AD337-50) was also recovered from the village area. The northern boundary of the site is defined by the Car Dyke, a major artificial Roman waterway connecting the Nene and Witham.

Direct evidence of settlement in the Saxon period is not known, although the place name is believed to derive from the Old English meaning 'island in the marsh of a man called Billa' (Mills, 1993). It has also been suggested that the name of the village may refer to the Billingas, a regional/family subdivision of the Mercian kingdom referred to in the seventh century AD Tribal Hidage (Sawyer 1998). By the time that the Domesday Book was compiled, the area had passed into the lordship of the Archbishop of York (Morgan & Thorne, 1986).

The current site lies within the core of the medieval settlement, adjacent to the parish church of St. Michael. The fabric of this church is largely 14<sup>th</sup> century with considerable rebuilding in the nineteenth century (Pevsner & Harris, 1989).

## 5.0 Methodology

This phase of work required the monitoring of plots 1 and 4. Plot 1 consisted of a block of three houses facing the Church Street frontage, set back approximately 3m from the road. The main foundation trenches were excavated using a JCB fitted with a 0.8m wide toothed trenching bucket, while the internal dividing walls of plot 1 were excavated with a 0.4m wide bucket.

Plot 4 was a standard single house plot. Excavation was carried out with a JCB fitted with a 0.6m wide smooth bucket.

During excavation, all plan and section surfaces were examined and periodically cleaned to clarify the shape/orientation of archaeological features. Representative sections were drawn at a scale of 1:20, and information was recorded on standard watching brief record sheets. A colour photographic record was also maintained. The work was undertaken by Mark Allen and Chris Clay of PCA on March 5<sup>th</sup> and March 14<sup>th</sup>, 2001.

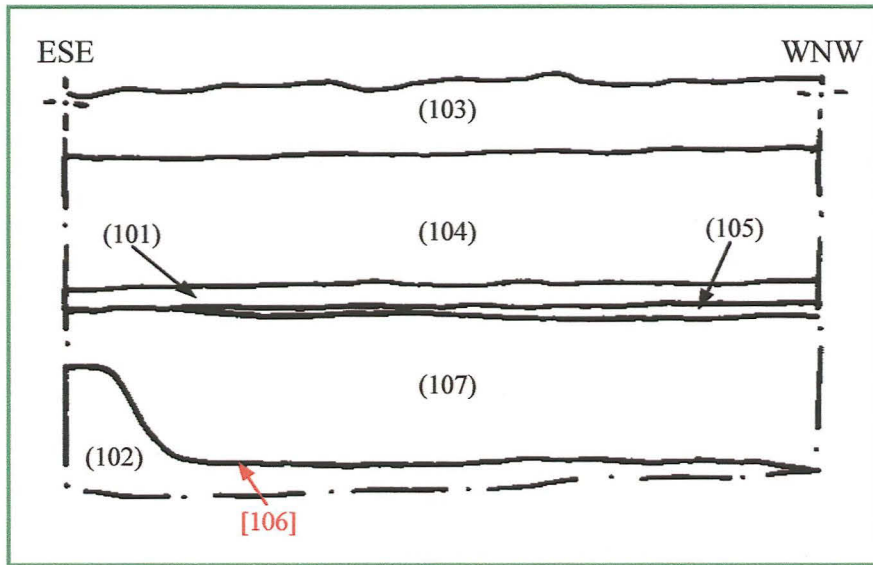


Fig.2: Section through former road, plot 1 (scale 1:20)

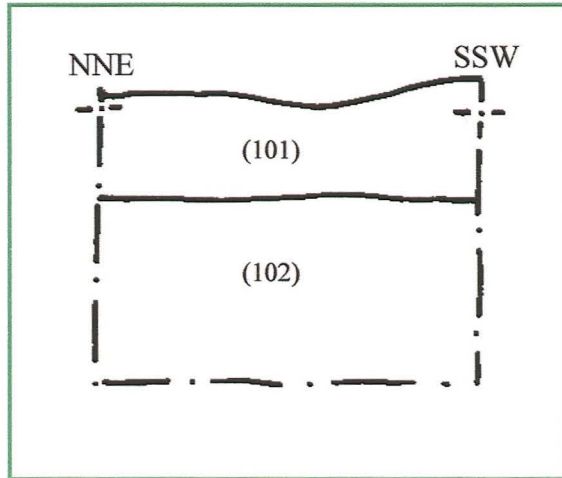


Fig.3: Representative section, plot 1 (scale 1:20)

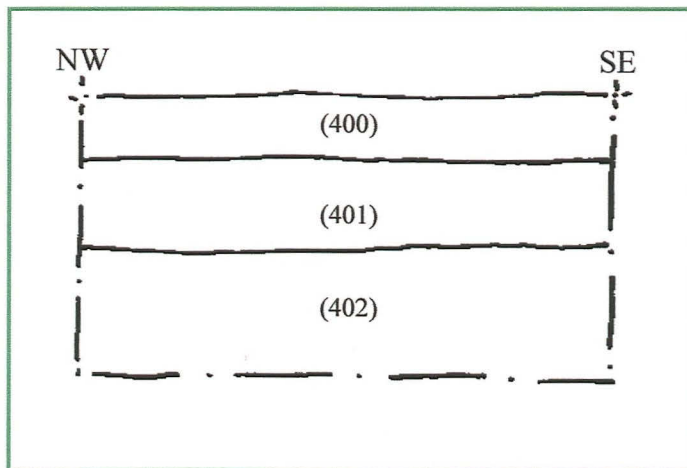


Fig.4: Representative section, plot 4 (scale 1:20)

## 6.0 Results

### 6.1 Plot 1

Predominantly, the uppermost deposit on this plot was a very dark grey silty sand, approximately 0.3m deep (101). It contained small amounts of brick, concrete and other building debris, resulting from the demolition of the former school. On the eastern side of the plot, deposit (101) lay directly over the natural geology, (102), consisting of a slightly silty orange sand containing small amounts of gravel (fig.3).

On the western side of the plot, (101) was almost completely absent; replaced by a thin deposit of tarmac (103) and an underlying bedding of sand (104), representing the former school access from Church Street. Approximately 0.1m of topsoil survived beneath the road surface. This sealed a thin layer of limestone dust and small subangular limestone chunks, (105), which had a maximum depth of 0.1m. Below this was one side of a steep sided feature, [106], cut into natural geology. It was very closely aligned with the existing gatepost that marked the former access from Church Street. It was approximately 0.4m deep, and extended beyond the limit of the foundation trench, 5.6m to the west. The feature was filled by a dark grey deposit (107) very similar to the topsoil (fig.2).

### 6.2 Plot 4

The whole of plot 4 was overlain by deposit (400), consisting of brick rubble and tarmac, to a depth of approximately 0.2m. This sealed a 0.2m thick buried soil of mid grey/brown silty clay, (401). Beneath this was the natural geology, consisting of orange sand containing small amounts of gravel, (402) (fig.4). No archaeological features were exposed in this plot. The depth of the foundation trenches varied between 0.8 and 1.4m.

Between plots 1 and 4, foundation trenches for a block of four garages were excavated. The stratigraphy revealed was identical to that in plot 4: again, no archaeological features were exposed.

## 7.0 Conclusion

No archaeological features or artefacts of significance were exposed during this watching brief. Feature [106] on plot 1 is likely to represent a former trackway which ran across the site and appears on the first edition Ordnance Survey map of the area. This would have been levelled and resurfaced prior to the construction of the school.

It could be that former school building and subsequent demolition work has obliterated any earlier activity, although this seems unlikely. A previous watching brief on the access road and services also failed to locate any significant archaeological remains (Clay, 2001). Therefore, despite its location within the heart

of the traditional settlement, it is concluded that the site has a very low archaeological potential.

### **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

The methodology was appropriate to the development. A more intensive form of investigation was not required: the watching brief demonstrated that the site was disturbed by previous building activities. Consequently this development has had no impact on the archaeological resource.

### **9.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr. D. Evans for this commission and for cooperation during the groundworks.

## 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
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- Pevsner N., & Harris J., 1989, *The Buildings of England: Lincolnshire*, second edition, Penguin, London
- Sawyer P., 1998, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln

## 11.0 Site archive

The primary records for the site are currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology. This will be deposited at Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive may be gained by quoting the global accession number 2001.48.

## 12.0 Appendices

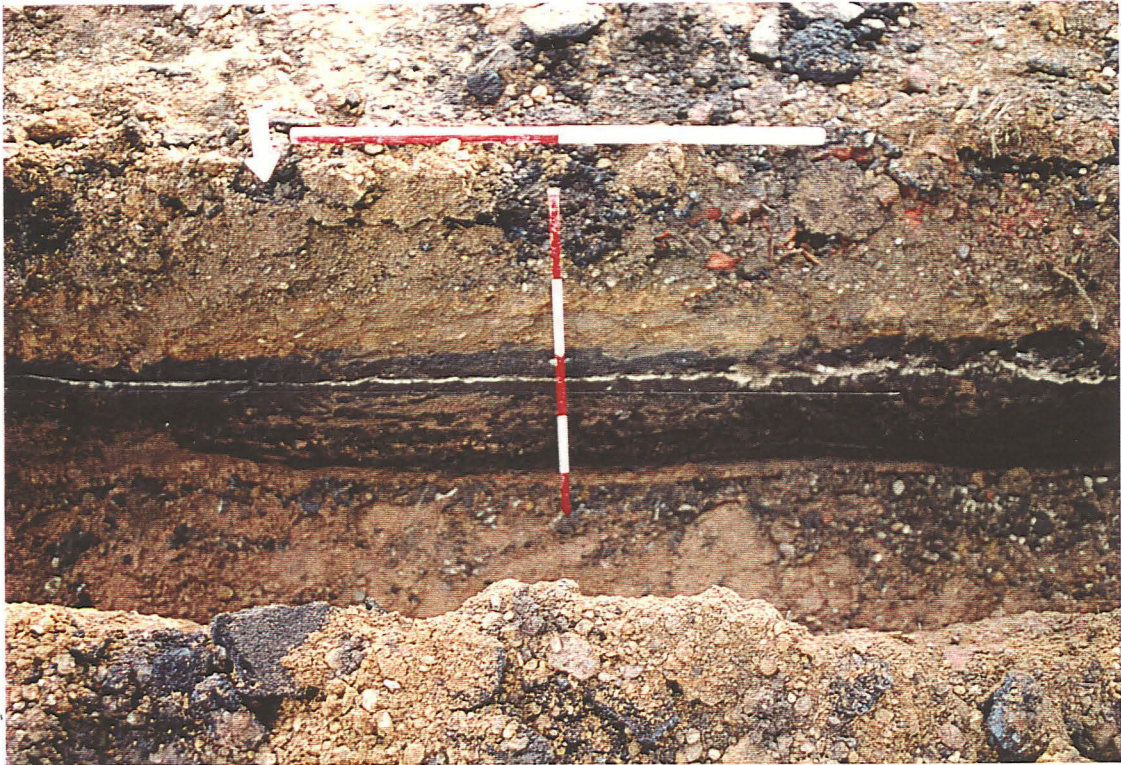
### 12.1 Colour plates



**Plate 1:** General view of the site, looking north



**Plate 2:** Representative shot of stratigraphy, plot 1 (looking east-south-east)



**Plate 3:** Former trackway, plot 1 (looking south- south-west)



**Plate 4:** Shot of plot 4 foundations, looking south-west

## 12.2 List of archaeological contexts

Context	Description
<b>Plot 1</b>	
101	Mixed topsoil/demolition deposit
102	Natural
103	Tarmac road surface
104	Sand bedding layer
105	Limestone & limestone dust deposit (former road surface?)
106	Cut for former trackway
107	Fill of [106]
<b>Plot 4/garages</b>	
400	Demolition deposit
401	Buried topsoil
402	Natural