

# PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY LINCOLN

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
EVALUATION REPORT:  
WOOD LANE SCHOOL,  
FLEET, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: TF 3875 2370  
SITE CODE: WLSF01  
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2001.216  
PLANNING REF.: H5/0842/01





Event L12574.

Source L17168  
L17169

MON

L120434

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Report prepared for  
Hyder Business Services  
by Chris Clay  
September 2001

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### *Summary*

- *An archaeological evaluation, comprising a single excavation trench, was undertaken in advance of the construction of new school buildings at Wood Lane School, Fleet, Lincolnshire*
- *Pottery of Middle Saxon and medieval date has been recovered during past investigations at Fleet, indicating the potential for the current site to reveal settlement activity of these periods*
- *The trench exposed a series of features, closely dating to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> or early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, sealed beneath an accumulation of alluvial silt, which has been dated by ceramic evidence to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> century*



## 1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) were commissioned by Hyder Business Services to undertake a programme of archaeological trial excavation prior to the construction of a new school hall and classroom at Wood Lane School, Fleet, Lincolnshire. The purpose of this investigation was to identify, by the least destructive method, remains of archaeological potential which may be at threat from developing the site.

This report documents the results of the evaluation; the purpose of which is to inform a planning decision and mitigation strategy, if the site is deemed to be of archaeological importance. It is written to conform to 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

Fleet is situated in the south Lincolnshire fens, in the administrative district of South Holland, approximately 13km east of Spalding and 20km south-south-east of Boston. The proposed development site is within the grounds of Wood Lane School, Fleet, NGR TF 3875 2370 (fig.1).

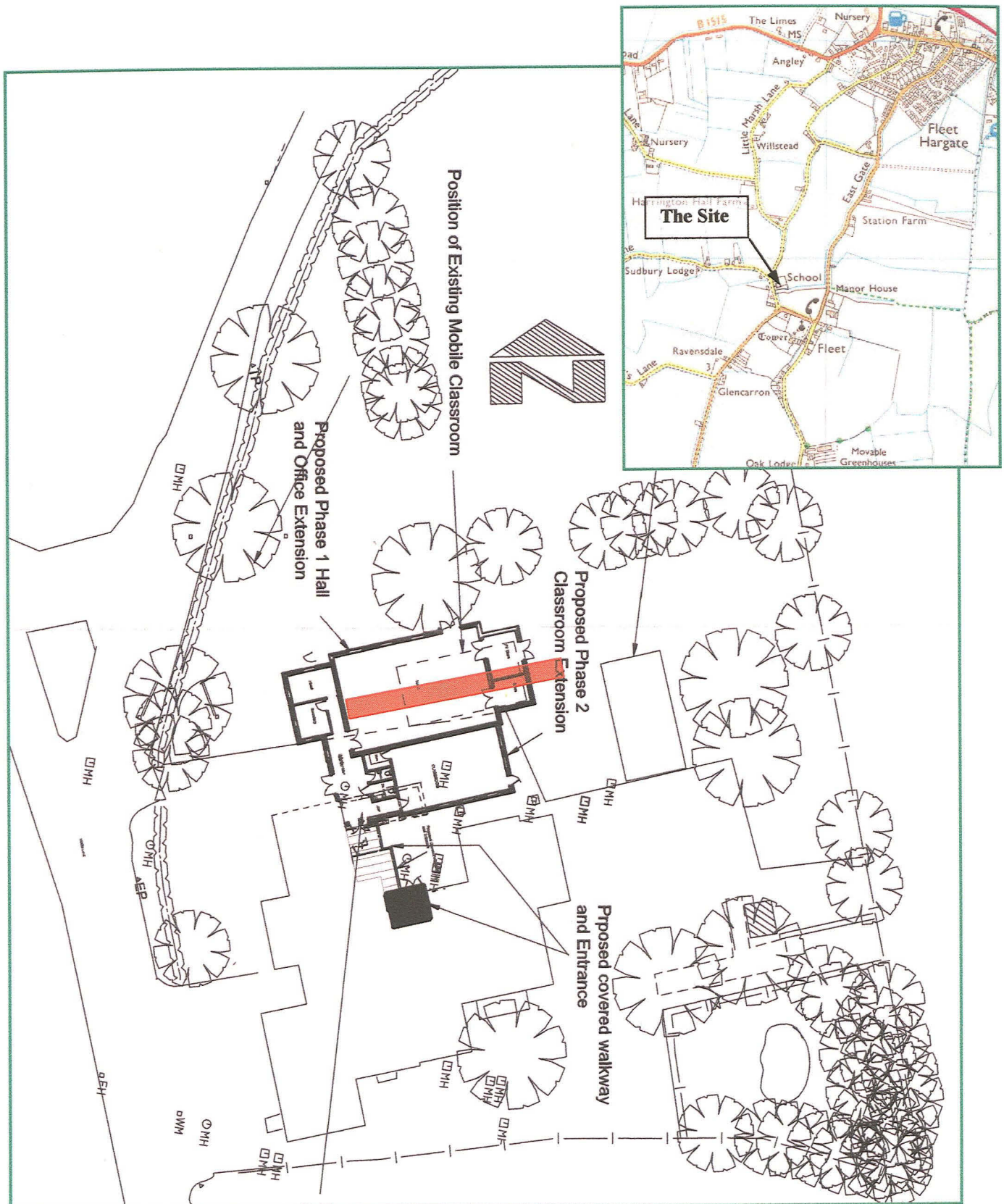
The local geology consists of Terrington Beds of younger marine alluvium, salt marsh, tidal creek and river deposits. These sands, silts and clays were laid down by a major transgression approximately 2000 to 2500 years ago, flooding much of the south Lincolnshire fen basin. This seals a solid geology of Ampthill Clay (British Geological Survey, 1992).

## 3.0 Planning background

Planning permission has been granted for the erection of a new hall and classroom block (planning ref: H5/0842/01). This permission is subject to the completion of an archaeological field evaluation that must assess the archaeological potential of the site, and the potential threat to the archaeological resource, if present. The information may be used to inform a mitigation strategy that will safeguard the interests of the archaeology and the development, and this approach is consistent with the recommendations of *Archaeology and Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* (1990).

## 4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Settlement of the Lincolnshire fens prior to widespread land reclamation in the post-medieval period was punctuated by repeated marine transgressions and regressions. A major transgression towards the end of the British Iron Age has resulted in the



**Fig.1:** Site location, showing position of evaluation trench (main scale 1:500, inset 1:25,000) (OS Copyright License No. A1 515 21 A0001)



concealment of earlier settlements that were established on the elevated sites of Barroway Drove Beds and outcrops of Nordelph peat (British Geological Survey, 1992).

Evidence of Iron Age salt working has been investigated at Holbeach, less than 2km west of Fleet, in the form of fire trenches and stakeholes, representing kiln-like structures that supported evaporation pans (May, 1976).

Romano-British activity is poorly represented in the vicinity of the current site, although this, again, may reflect concealment associated with repeated post-Roman marine incursion and sediment deposition. The Ordnance Survey Map of Roman Britain shows a dearth of find spots around Fleet and northwards to The Wash, suggesting that it was close to, or beyond the Roman coastline. However, a small amount of material is known from the area, and this includes a stone altar and building debris at Whaplode, indicative of a high status Roman building (Whitwell, 1992).

There is a hiatus in the archaeological record at the end of the Roman period. The earliest post-Roman activity is evidenced by scatters of Ipswich Ware and other Middle Saxon pottery dating from the 7<sup>th</sup> century AD. Such finds have been recovered to the south of Fleet, and from a field that lies adjacent to the current site. This has been taken to suggest a date for the commencement of post-Roman resettlement of the area (Healey, 1979).

By the time of the Domesday Survey, Fleet was a royal estate with 1 fishery, 2 salthouses and 500 acres of meadow (Morgan & Thorne, 1986). It possessed a church, which was given to Castle Acre Priory by Jocelyn de Fleet in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century (Cope-Faulkner, 1999). By the late 12<sup>th</sup> century, the town held a regular Sunday market (Sawyer, 1998).

The location of Fleet, close to the Saxon coastline, allowed it to function as a port for the trans-shipment of goods to small scale river-going vessels. The place name evidence suggests that it was well connected with communities further inland, Fleet being derived from the Old English *Fleot*, meaning inlet, stream or creek (Cameron, 1998).

The settlement continued to develop throughout the medieval period, and the number of tenants increased from 89 in 1086 to 490 in 1315, suggesting a total population for the parish of approximately 3000 (Cope-Faulkner, 1999). Much of this population was presumably reliant on the port, the significance of which diminished by the 16<sup>th</sup> century due to gradual reclamation of the fenland, which effectively shifted the coastline northwards. The construction of the King's Lynn to Spalding turnpike road, which ran through Fleet Hargate was also a significant factor (*ibid.*).

## 5.0 Methodology

A single evaluation trench was excavated, measuring approximately 20m in length. This was aligned approximately east to west, within the footprint of the proposed



development (see fig.1, red). Machining was carried out using a JCB fitted with a 1.6m wide toothless ditching blade. The topsoil and subsoil was removed in spits of approximately 0.2m, until archaeological deposits were encountered. Further excavation was then carried out by hand to establish the profile, orientation, depth and (where possible) date of features/remains.

Archaeological deposits were drawn in plan and in section, and a colour photographic record was maintained throughout the project, from which selective prints are reproduced in this report (Appendix 12.1). A standard system of context recording was used during the investigation, which took place over two days; the 30<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August, 2001. The personnel involved were the writer and M Allen of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

## 6.0 Results (figs.2-5)

The uppermost deposit was a topsoil of mid-grey silty loam, the depth of which was between 0.2-0.3m, (001). This sealed several modern features; a drain pipe at the eastern end of the trench, and a sewer pipe in the western half, which cut through fragmentary remains of a 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century brick structure, probably associated with the school buildings. A further sub-rectangular dark grey/black deposit, again indicative of modern disturbance, was exposed approximately 3m to the west of the sewer pipe.

Cut from directly beneath topsoil (001), and visible only in the south facing section was a pit-like feature, [020], with a slightly concave base and moderately sloping sides. It measured approximately 1.8m wide by 0.4m deep. Its fill, (021) was a dark brown silt mixed with occasional flecks of charcoal and small pieces of coal. The pit was cut through two deposits, (018) and (019). (018) was an orange/brown silt, which contained occasional fragments of coal and 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century brick. This was interpreted as a former topsoil horizon associated with the 19<sup>th</sup> century school buildings. The interpretation was reinforced by three small pointed strips of lead, each approximately 0.1m long, and used as pencils in the early history of the school. This deposit sealed (019), a brown/grey silt containing occasional charcoal flecks and small fragments of burnt silt. It was 0.15m deep at the western end of the trench, increasing to 0.95m. Several fragments of animal bone and ten sherds of pottery were recovered from this deposit. Three of these were of 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century date, and may have been intrusive material from an overlying layer. The other seven sherds may date the formation of the deposit between AD 1450-1550 (Appendix 12.2).

The above sealed a series of earth-cut archaeological features. At the west end of the trench was a linear feature, [016], which was recorded in section only. It was approximately 3.3m across by 0.25m deep, with gently sloping sides and a flat base. The feature was filled with blue-grey silt, (017). To the west of [016] was a yellow and orange lens of silt, (024), that sloped gently eastwards. Taken together, these features are interpreted as a former channel. The fill, (017) was an alluvial deposit, while (024) was a silt bank deposited on the outside edge of the channel, formed by the scouring action of water.



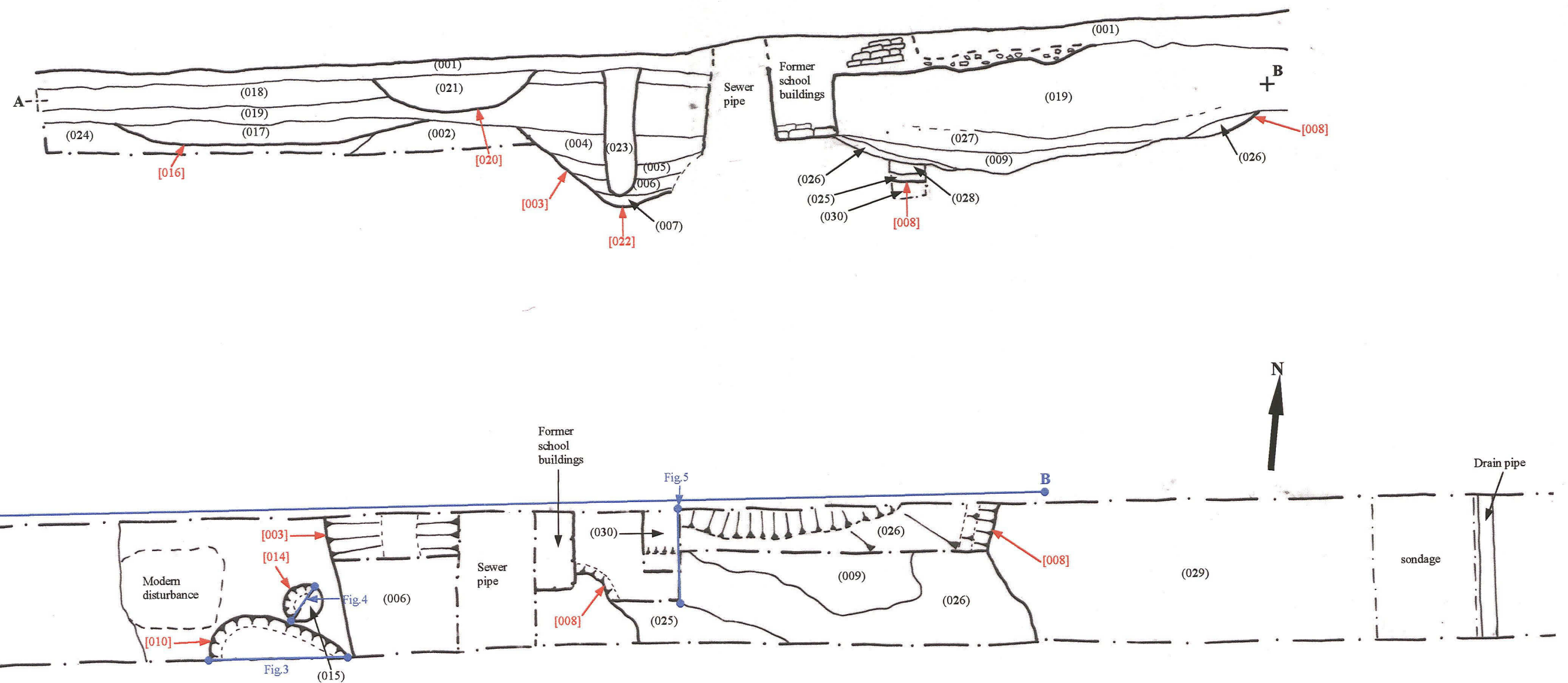


Fig.2: Trench plan and section (scale 1:50)

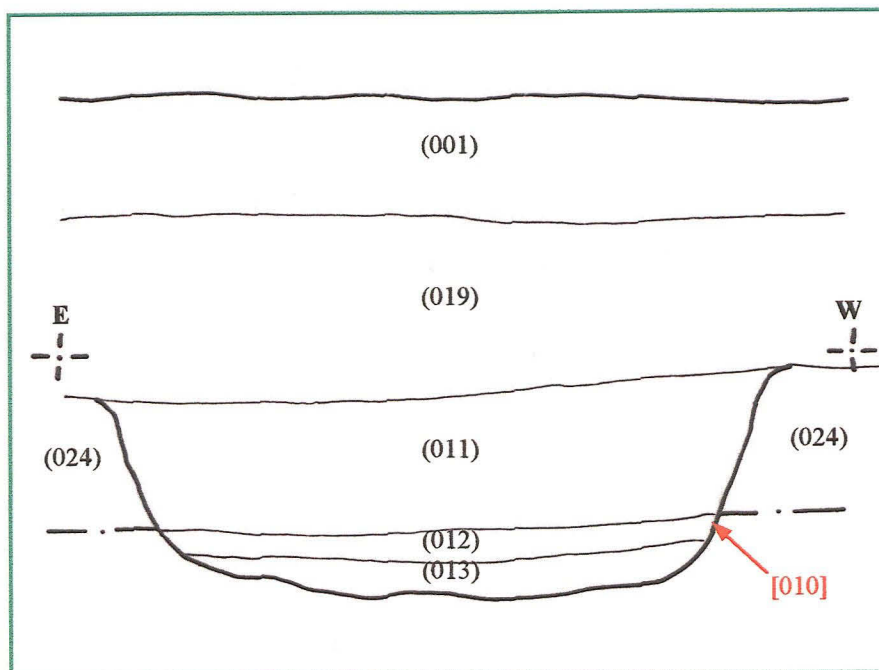


Fig.3: Feature [010], north facing section (scale 1:20)

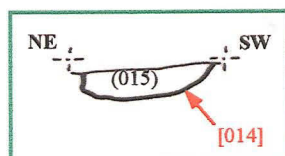


Fig.4: Posthole [014], north-west facing section (scale 1:20)

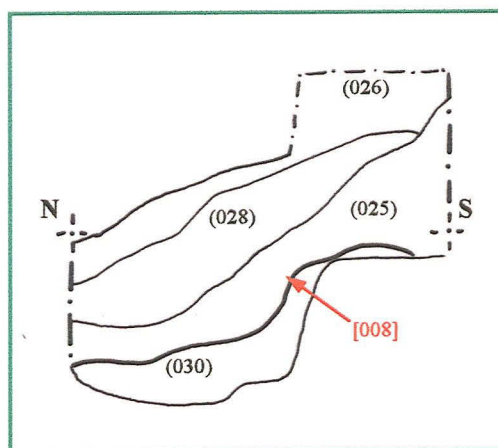


Fig.5: West facing section through feature [008] (scale 1:20)



Approximately 0.75m east of [016], was part of an oval-shaped pit, [010]. The area exposed in plan measured approximately 1.55m by 0.55m, and was 0.52m deep, with steep sides and a flat base. The feature contained three distinct fills of brown and grey silt, (011), (012), and (013). The basal fill, (013), contained one small indeterminate fragment of animal bone and four sherds of pottery (including wares from Stamford and St. Neots), dating this deposit to the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Appendix 12.2).

Approximately 0.1m from the north-east edge of [016] was a circular feature (?posthole), [014], approximately 0.4m in diameter, and surviving to a depth of only 0.08m. No dating evidence was recovered from its fill, (015).

A sizeable ditch, [003], ran on a north-south alignment, very close to the eastern edge of pit [010]. Although the eastern edge of the ditch was obscured by the cut for a modern sewer pipe, it was possible to discern a moderately sloping side (approximately 40° from horizontal) on the western edge, merging into a concave base. The recorded dimensions of the ditch were 1.95m wide and 0.8m deep. It contained primary and secondary fills of orange and brown silt, (006) and (007), representing natural accumulations. The tertiary fill, (005) was a blue/grey silt. This was very similar to the alluvial deposit within the suspected channel, [016], leading to the suggestion that (005) was a flood deposit related to this channel. It was sealed by a fourth fill of brown silt, (004).

The three upper fills were cut by a deep posthole, [022]. This was 1.4m deep and 0.4m wide. Its position, directly below the topsoil, (001), and the black silty loam fill, (023), which contained complete modern bricks at its base, strongly suggested that this was a modern feature.

The final feature exposed was a large pit, [008], measuring approximately 4.5m wide. This contained five distinct fills, (009), (025), (026), (027) and (028), ranging in colour from a pale cream through to grey, brown and black. The two uppermost fills, (009) and (027) produced dating evidence. (009) was a black compact silt, containing charcoal flecks, numerous fragments of animal bone, cockle and mussel shells, and two sherds from a locally made jar, dating to the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Appendix 12.2). The assemblage within this fill suggested it was a dump of domestic waste. Overlying (009), (027) was a brown silt deposit that incorporated several fragments of animal bone and two sherds of Toynton Ware and a sherd of Nottingham glazed ware, placing the formation of the deposit in the 13<sup>th</sup> century (Appendix 12.2).

All of the above features were cut into a series of natural alluvial silts, ranging in colour from a pale orange/grey to dark orange/brown. To the eastern end of the trench, deposit (029), contained small fragments of burnt silt, indicative of human activity during the formation of this deposit.

## 7.0 Discussion and conclusion

The features exposed within the evaluation trench represent three discrete phases of activity. The earliest phase comprises a series of features sealed beneath an alluvial deposit (019). The pits [008] and [010], and ditch [003] all produced pottery dating to

the late 12<sup>th</sup>/early 13<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is possible that the posthole [014] belongs to this phase, and it is further possible that the suspected channel, [016] was active at this time and prone to flooding.

The exact function of these features is uncertain. Fill (009), within pit [008] is strongly indicative of a dump of domestic material, suggesting a close proximity to settlement activity. This is not surprising, given the historical context of Fleet as a thriving community in the medieval period.

The second phase of activity is represented by the alluvial deposit overlying these features. Pottery from this dates its formation to the 15<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The final phase of activity is represented by modern features that are situated directly beneath the topsoil, which relate to the construction of the 19<sup>th</sup> century school buildings and more modern activities.

## **8.0 Effectiveness of methodology**

The methodology was appropriate to the development. The single trench has allowed a rapid and accurate assessment of the archaeological deposits in the area of the proposed development. The information that has been made available by this fieldwork will inform any future mitigation strategy that will serve the interests of both the archaeology and the development.

## **9.0 Acknowledgements**

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to express thanks Hyder Business Services for this commission, and to the staff and governors of Wood Lane School for their cooperation and interest during the fieldwork.



## 10.0 References

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- Sawyer P., 1998, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire III, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln

## 11.0 Site archive

The primary records for the evaluation are currently in the possession of Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln). The paper, finds, and photographic element of this archive will be deposited with Lincoln City and County Museum within six months. Access to the archive can be gained by quoting the global accession number 2001.216.

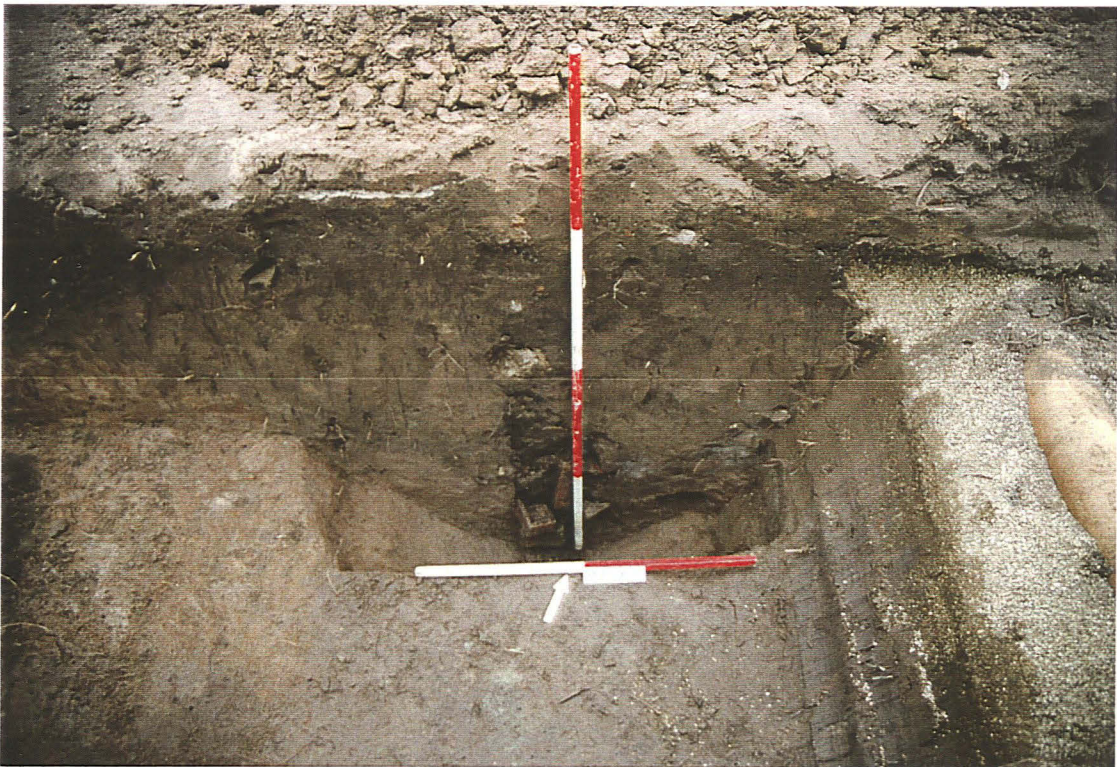


## 12.0 Appendices

### 12.1 Colour plates



**PL1:** Pre-excavation shot of the trench, looking north-east



**PL2:** Pit [010] and posthole [014], looking south-south-east





PL3: Ditch [003] and posthole [022]



PL4: Pit [008], after the excavation of (027), looking north-east



## Archive Report on the Pottery from an Evaluation at Wood Lane School, Fleet, Lincolnshire (WLSF01)

Jane Young  
Lindsey Archaeological Services

### Introduction

A total of 57 sherds of pottery representing 28 vessels were recovered from the site. The material ranges in date from the 12th to 19<sup>th</sup> or possibly 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. The pottery was examined both visually and using a x20 magnification, then recorded on an Access database using locally and nationally agreed codenames.

### Condition

The pottery recovered was in variable condition with most sherds showing some small degree of abrasion. Four vessels have cross context joins. Most of the coarse ware vessels have exterior soot residues and two vessels have a carbonised deposit on the interior. Calcareous inclusions have been leached from the interior surface of one vessel suggesting usage for containing, or heating acidic liquids.

### Overall Chronology and Source

A range of 15 different, identifiable pottery ware types were found on the site, the type and general date range for these fabrics are shown in Table 1. A limited range of vessel types was recovered including examples of jugs, jars and bowls.

**Table 1: Pottery codenames and date range with total quantities by sherd and vessel count**

codename	full name	earliest date	latest date	sherds	vessels
BOU	Bourne D ware	1450	1650	1	1
DST	Developed Stamford ware	1150	1230	14	1
EMHM	Early Medieval Handmade ware	1100	1250	10	9
ENGs	Unspecified English Stoneware	1750	1900	2	1
LERTH	Late earthenwares	1750	1900	1	1
MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	1150	1450	2	1
NOTG	Nottingham glazed ware	1200	1500	1	1
PMLOC	Post-medieval Local fabrics	1450	1700	1	1
SLSF	South Lincolnshire Shell & Iron	1150	1300	1	1
SLSHCW	South Lincolnshire Shell-tempered Coarseware (generic)	1150	1500	1	1
SNEOT	St Neots-type ware	870	1200	11	1
ST	Stamford Ware	970	1200	5	3
TB	Toynton/Bolingbroke wares	1450	1750	1	1
TOY	Toynton Medieval Ware	1250	1450	5	4
TOYII	Toynton Late Medieval ware	1450	1550	1	1



Almost all of the material dates either to the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century or to the late medieval to early post-medieval period (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Vessel counts by chronological period**

Ceramic period	sherds	vessels
Early medieval (12 <sup>th</sup> )	42	16
Medieval to late medieval (13 <sup>th</sup> to 16 <sup>th</sup> )	8	6
Late medieval to early post-medieval (mid 15 <sup>th</sup> to mid 16 <sup>th</sup> )	4	4
Early modern	3	2
Total	57	28

A suggested date for the deposition of each context is shown in Table 3.

**Table 3: Suggested deposition date of pottery groups from stratified contexts**

context	date	sherds	vessels represented in context	comments
004	mid/late to late 12th	3	2	multi context vessels
005	mid/late to late 12th	13	8	multi context vessels
006	mid/late to late 12th	6	4	multi context vessels
007	mid/late to late 12th	16	7	multi context vessels
009	13th to 16th	2	1	
013	mid/late to late 12th	4	4	multi context vessels
019	19th or mid 15th to mid 16th	10	8	? Intrusive
027	13th	3	3	

### Early medieval

At least fourteen vessels date to the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century; two other vessels in context 13 (both Stamford ware) are of 12<sup>th</sup> century date but may be earlier than the rest of the group. The Stamford ware vessels present (DST and ST) are, with one exception jugs (or possibly pitchers), probably intended for table use. The Developed Stamford ware jug found on the site is similar to examples found at the Stamford School Kiln in 1874 (Mahany, Burchard and Simpson 1982, fig 73). The twelve coarse ware vessels present are mainly handmade globular jars in quartz-tempered fabrics (EMHM); no sources can be identified for these vessels although they are common in South Lincolnshire and East Anglia. Three of the coarse ware vessels are in shell-tempered fabrics, one of which is in a St. Neots-type fabric.

## Medieval to Post-medieval

Overall, ten of the pottery vessels recovered from the site can be dated to the period between the 13<sup>th</sup> and mid 16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Three of these vessels, from context 013, are of 13<sup>th</sup> century date and include vessels from Toynton All Saints and Nottingham. The other vessels from the site probably all date to between the mid 15<sup>th</sup> and mid 16<sup>th</sup> centuries and include a deliberately worn down handle stub from a large Toynton/Bolingbroke-type jug.

Two vessels are of early modern (probably 19<sup>th</sup> century) date.

### ***Summary and Recommendations***

This is a small but important assemblage of post-Roman pottery. The ceramic assemblage suggests that although there may be continuous occupation in the area there are two main peaks of activity, one in the last quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century and one in the mid 15<sup>th</sup> to mid 16<sup>th</sup> century. The small 12<sup>th</sup> century assemblage is important as it includes a range of contemporary local and regional fabric types that are as yet un-sourced. The presence of a high proportion of globular handmade jars (EMHM) may reflect the function of the site during the early part of the medieval period.

The assemblage should be kept for future study, especially as part of any characterisation of the fabrics and forms for a type series. Four vessels could be drawn for the archive record; these vessels are listed as drawable in the archive list.

### ***Bibliography***

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# Pottery Archive WLSF01

Jane Young

Lindsey Archaeological Services

context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	action	ref no	description	date
004	DST		jug	2	1	combed edges to handle	rim & BS		vessel 1	flaked glaze;triangular rim;handle low on rim	
004	ST	B/C	jug	1	1		BS		vessel 2	glaze	
005	DST		jug	5	1	incised horiz grooves	BS		vessel 1	cu mottled spalled glaze	
005	EMHM		bowl ?	1	1		BS			reduced;mixed fine-med subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone;soot; wheelthrown;post firing small drilled holes	
005	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS			oxid;mixed fine-med subround quartz + aggregated sst incl fe cemented + occ flint;micaceous	
005	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS			reduced;mixed fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint	
005	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS			oxid;mixed fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint	
005	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		rim			reduced;mixed fine-med subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone;soot;c arb dep int	

context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	action	ref no	description	date
005	SNEOT		jar	2	1		base & BS		vessel 3	soot;? ID as other odd shell present with occ punctuated brachiopod;wheelthro wn;thin walled	
005	ST	B/C	jug	1	1	incised horiz grooves	BS		vessel 2	glaze	
006	DST		jug	2	1		BS		vessel 1	flaked glaze	
006	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		neck			soot;fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone;reduc ed	
006	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS		vessel 4	soot;fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone;reduc ed	
006	SNEOT		jar	2	1		BS		vessel 3	carbonised deposit on interior base;faint soot ext	
007	DST		jug	5	1	incised horiz grooves	BS		vessel 1	spalled glaze	
007	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS			reduced;fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone + occ fe	
007	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS		vessel 4	reduced;fine-coarse subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone	
007	SLSHC		dish	1	1		profile	drawable		soot on sides not on base	
007	SNEOT		jar	6	1		rim & BS	drawable	vessel 3	soot	



context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	action	ref no	description	date
007	ST	B/C	jar/pitcher/jug	1	1		BS			glaze	
007	ST	B/G	jar	1	1		BS			unglaze;soot	
009	MEDLO	oxid;med sandy + occ shell;hard	jar	2	1		BS			could be odd Bourne/Toynton;white skin	13th to 16th
013	EMHM		globular jar	1	1		BS			soot;fine-med subround quartz + occ flint + occ chalk/limestone;mica ceous	
013	SLSF		?	1	1		base			reduced;coarse-med shell;interior surface leached	
013	SNEOT		jar	1	1		rim		vessel 3	soot	
013	ST	B/C	jug	1	1	incised horiz grooves	BS		vessel 2	glaze	
019	BOU		?	1	1		base				
019	ENGs		jar	2	1		rim & base				19/20th
019	LERTH		flowerpot	1	1		BS				19/20th
019	PMLOC	oxid;fine-med;hard	jar ?	1	1		base			? Id;? Early GRE;abraded	
019	TB		large jug	1	1		LHJ	drawable		? Handle delib smoothed down after breakage	
019	TOY		jug	2	1		BS			? TOYII	
019	TOY		jug	1	1	applied stip	neck			? TOYII	
019	TOYII		jug	1	1		BS			soot	
027	NOTG	Early	jug	1	1		BS			thick cu glaze;thin walled;? ID	

context	cname	sub fabric	form type	sherds	vessels	decoration	part	action	ref no	description	date
027	TOY		bowl	1	1		rim	drawable		int glaze;? ID	
027	TOY		jug	1	1		BS			spots of glaze	



# Tile Archive WLSF01

*Jane Young*

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context	cname	full name	frags	description	date
019	BRK	Brick	1	handmade;glazed with thin green glaze ? Industrial	15th to 16th
019	DRAIN	Drain (general)	1	? ID;white fabric	18/19th

**12.3 List of archaeological contexts**

<b>Context</b>	<b>Description</b>
001	Modern topsoil
002	Natural alluvium
003	Ditch cut
004	Upper fill of [003]
005	Tertiary fill of [003]
006	Secondary fill of [003]
007	Primary fill of [003]
008	Pit cut
009	Upper fill of [008]
010	Pit cut
011	Tertiary fill of [011]
012	Secondary fill of [011]
013	Primary fill of [011]
014	Post hole cut
015	Fill of [014]
016	Possible channel
017	Fill of [016]
018	Former topsoil horizon
019	Alluvial deposit
020	Modern pit
021	Fill of [020]
022	Post hole cut
023	Fill of [022]
024	Silt bank
025	Primary fill of [008]
026	Tertiary fill of [008]
027	Final fill of [008]
028	Secondary fill of [008]
029	Natural alluvium
030	Natural alluvium