

PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY

L I N C O L N

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;
PHASE D RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: SK 9905 5735
SITE CODE: CHHN01
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2002.92
Planning ref.: N/40/0960/00



Conservation
Services

05 DEC 2002

Highways & Planning
Directorate



Event - 413777
Source - 48420
48421
negative

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL
WATCHING BRIEF REPORT;
PHASE D RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
CHAPEL HEATH, NAVENBY, LINCOLNSHIRE**

NGR: SK 9905 5735
SITE CODE: CHHN01
LCNCC ACC. NO: 2002.92
Planning ref.: N/40/0960/00

Report prepared for
NDC Group
by Chris Clay and Colin Palmer-Brown
December 2002

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
61 High Street
Newton on Trent
Lincoln
LN1 2JP
Tel. & Fax. 01777 228155

© Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)

CONTENTS

Summary	1
1.0 Introduction	2
2.0 Site location and description	2
3.0 Planning background	2
4.0 Archaeological and historical background	2
5.0 Methodology	3
6.0 Results	4
6.1 Plots D1-D3	4
6.2 Plots D28-D37	4
7.0 Discussion and conclusion	5
8.0 Effectiveness of methodology	5
9.0 Acknowledgements	5
10.0 References	6
11.0 Dissemination and Site Archive	6
Appendix 1: Colour plates	7
Appendix 2: List of archaeological contexts	8

List of Figures

Fig 1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)

Fig.2: Site location, showing the stripped areas and house plots monitored in red. The house plots outlined in blue were constructed before the required monitoring took place (main scale 1:1000, inset 1:5000).

List of plates

Pl. 1: Plot D1, looking west

Pl. 2: Plot D2, looking north

Pl. 3: Plot D3, looking west

Pl. 4: Stripped area, Plots D34-D37, looking west-south-west

Summary

- *Two archaeological watching briefs were undertaken during groundworks associated with Phase D of the Chapel Heath residential development by Ploughsound Ltd.*
- *The general area has yielded substantial evidence for archaeological activity between the Neolithic period and the present day, including an extensive Romano-British roadside settlement centred on Ermine Street.*
- *The two sites that form the subject of this report were peripheral to the Romano-British settlement, and fall within a broad zone where dispersed, but important, Late Bronze Age pits are known to occur.*
- *Both phases of watching brief were negative, and no archaeological features of any period were exposed.*

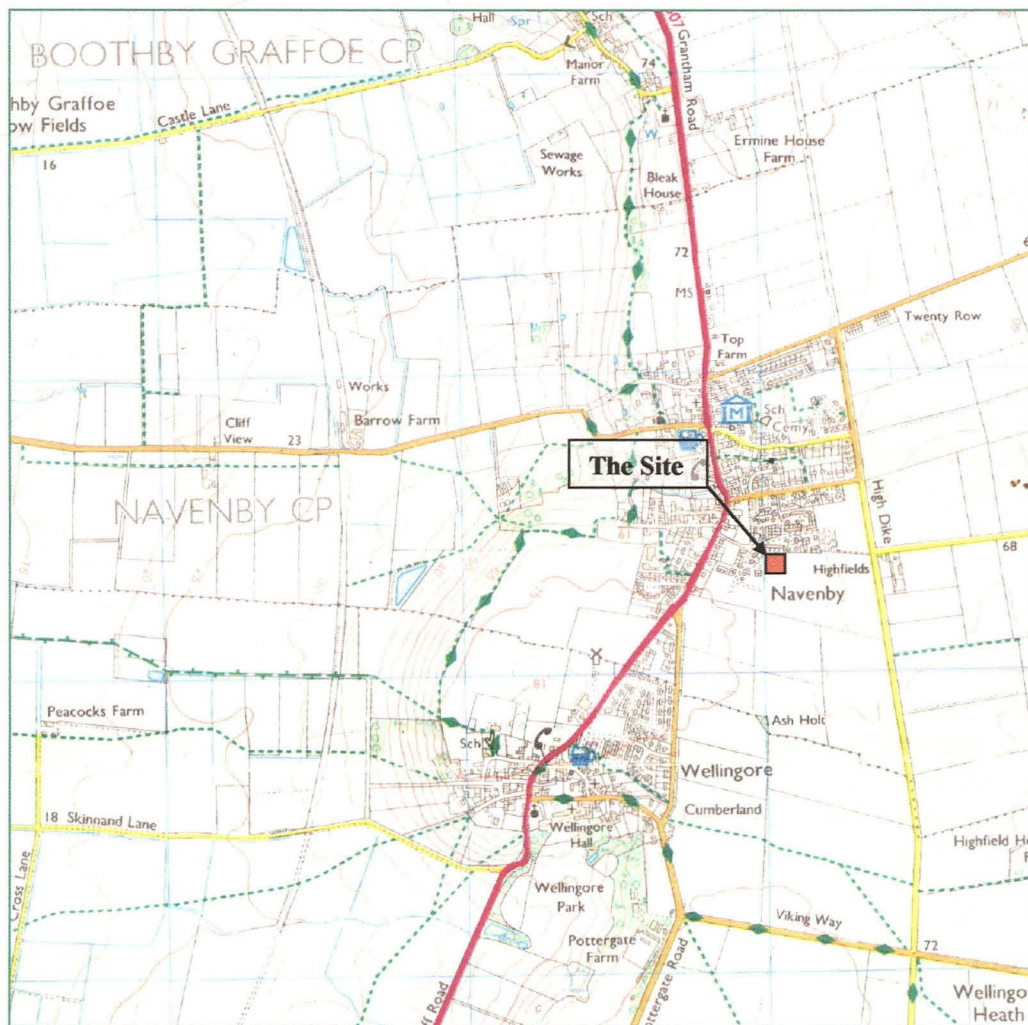


Fig.1: Site Location. (Scale 1:25000)
(O.S. Copyright License No. A1 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) was commissioned by Ploughsound Ltd. (now NDC Group) to undertake archaeological watching briefs during residential development (Phase D) on land at Chapel Heath, Navenby (Plots D1 – D3 and Plots D28 – 37). This work was undertaken to fulfil the planning requirements of North Kesteven District Council.

This report details the result of two programmes of observation and recording. It is written to conform to both national and local guidelines, as set out in the Lincolnshire County Council document *Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice* (LCC, 1998). A project brief for Plots D28 – 37 was issued by the Heritage Officer of North Kesteven District Council, and specifications were prepared by Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln).

2.0 Site location and description

Navenby is in the administrative district of North Kesteven, and is approximately 10km south of Lincoln, towards the western scarp of the limestone Jurassic Edge. The sites that are the subject of this report fall within a sub-rectangular block of land on the south-eastern periphery of the village, and form part of the Phase D residential development by Ploughsound Ltd (see fig. 2). They are situated at an elevation of approximately 70m OD.

3.0 Planning background

Full planning consent was granted for the Phase D residential development (planning ref N/40/0960/00). This permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an intensive archaeological watching brief on Plots D28-37, and a standard archaeological watching brief on Plots D1 – D3.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

It was back in the mid-1960's that a large Roman settlement was identified at Navenby, centred on both sides of Ermine Street; and discovered largely due to the efforts of the local primary school. Since then, there has been considerable speculation concerning the origins and development of this settlement. However, very limited fieldwork has taken place at Navenby prior to the introduction of *Planning Policy Guidance Note 16* in 1990.

Since 1994, there has been a series of developer-funded investigations towards the south-east side of the settlement, with most of these resulting from developments by Ploughsound Ltd. to the south of Chapel Lane.

Work in the 1990's exposed aspects of a substantial Romano-British roadside settlement or 'small town' on the west side of Ermine Street, and there is little doubt that similar remains survive to the east. Roman occupation of the area may have been

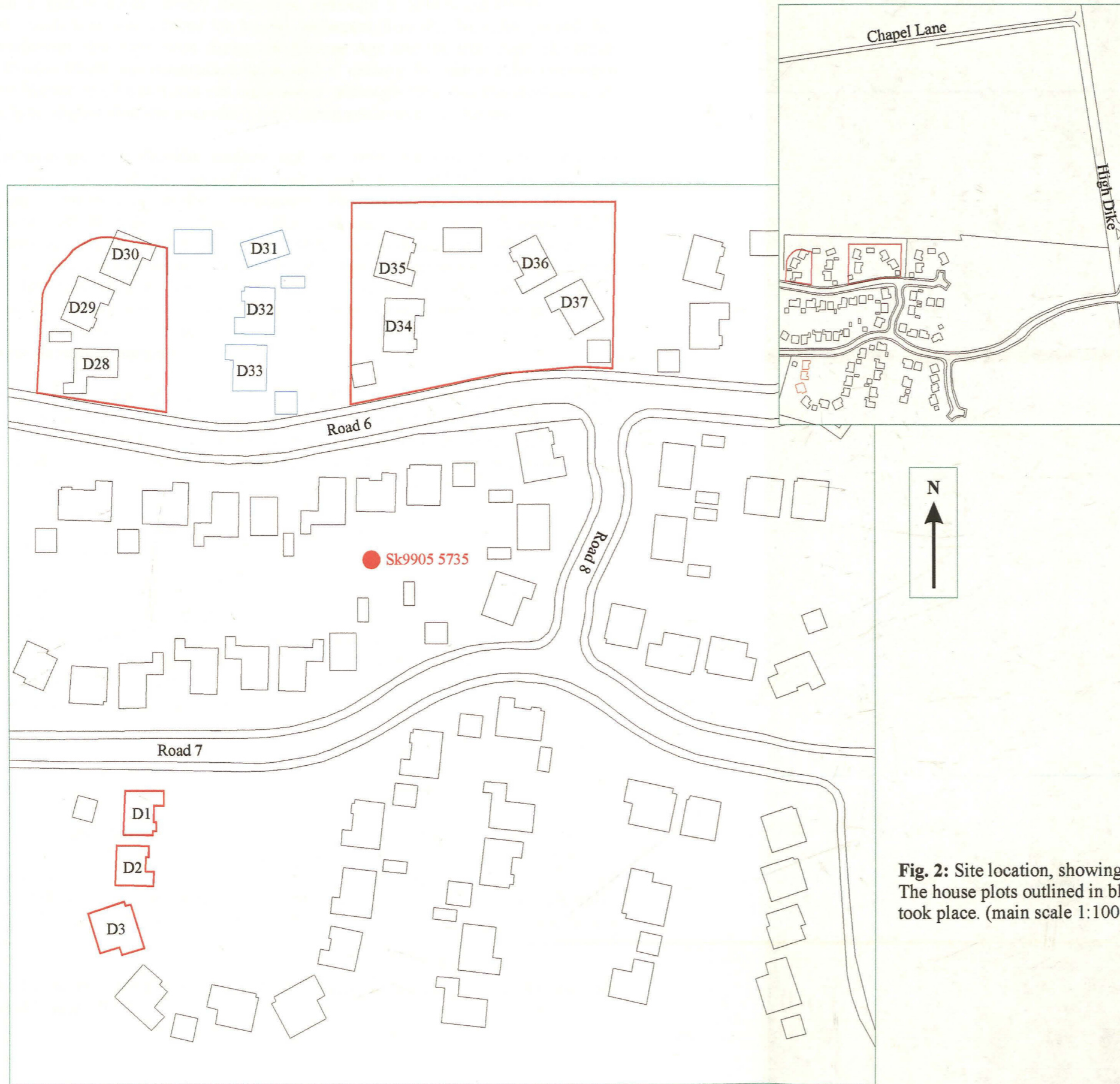


Fig. 2: Site location, showing the striped areas and house plots monitored in red. The house plots outlined in blue were constructed before the required monitoring took place. (main scale 1:1000, inset 1:5000)

associated with a small military installation, although it is now established that the Chapel Heath area was a focus for human settlement from the Neolithic period, and that settlement also took place during the Bronze Age and the Iron Age. Therefore, when Ermine Street was constructed in the mid-1st century AD, the site that developed into the Roman small town was not uninhabited, although there is no current evidence available to suggest that the immediate pre-Roman settlement substantial.

An archaeological evaluation carried out in 1999 involved a programme of geophysical survey and trial excavation over a wide area, and this incorporated the area that is the subject of this investigation (Palmer-Brown & Rylatt 1999). The evaluation clarified that the Phase D zone was peripheral to the Romano-British settlement centred on Ermine Street. However, trial excavation did identify a small number of dispersed elongated pit-like features that contained burnt stones, animal bones, charred seeds and distinctive Late Bronze Age post-Deverel Rimbury pottery. The real significance and function of these features is highly speculative, although it is possible that they were associated with some form of ritual feasting; perhaps following the annual harvest.

Despite the potential significance of these Late Bronze Age pits, they are difficult to locate using standard evaluation techniques: known examples were not detected by gradiometer survey, but were identified only in random archaeological trial trenches. For this reason, the archaeological watching brief was the most appropriate means of identification, where such remains were threatened by development.

5.0 Methodology

The archaeological project brief that was issued by the Heritage Officer of North Kesteven District Council required the presence of an experienced archaeologist during all groundworks associated with the development of Plots D1 – D3, and Plots D28-37. With regard to the former, this was to comprise a standard watching brief during foundation trench excavations; an enhanced watching brief on the latter during soil stripping in advance of construction.

For Plots D1 – D3, all excavations were undertaken using a JCB fitted with back actor and standard trenching bucket. For Plots D28 – 37, all excavation was carried out using a 360° tracked excavator fitted with a 2m wide toothless ditching blade.

In each area, any potential archaeological features were cleaned by trowel, and were subjected to limited rapid excavation to retrieve dating evidence and to clarify the shape and orientation of features. Archaeological recording was carried out on pro-forma watching brief record sheets, and a colour photographic record was maintained throughout both phases of investigation. Selected prints have been reproduced in this report.

The fieldwork was undertaken by C Clay, C Palmer-Brown and A Brett between July 2000 and January 2002.

6.0 Results

6.1 Plots D1 – D3

Three separate site visits took place during the excavation of footing trenches: on the 12/7/00, 17/7/00 and 19/7/00, with each of the plots being monitored by C Palmer-Brown. In each of these areas, the results were entirely negative, and a summary of the stratigraphy for each area is presented as follows:-

Plot D1: 10 – 15cm of truncated topsoil (vegetation layer removed)
/
Solid limestone/weathered limestone brash

Construction trenches for the house footing were shallow: 30 – 50cm in depth.

Plot D2: 10 - 15cm of truncated topsoil (vegetation layer removed)
/
Compact limestone brash (occasional orange-red areas of soft silty clay reflecting periglacial activity)

Construction trenches for the house footing were 30 – 50cm in depth.

Plot D3: 10 – 15cm of truncated topsoil (vegetation layer removed)
/
Weathered limestone brash

Construction trenches for the house footing were 30 – 50cm in depth.

Given the total absence of archaeological remains in this area, recording was minimal; comprising written accounts and colour photographs (see plates 1 – 3).

6.2 Plots D28 – D37

Prior to the archaeological fieldwork, construction of Plots D31-33, and a double garage, had commenced. This effectively divided the D28 – 37 zone into two uneven blocks of the land, consisting of Plots D28-30, and D34-37 and their associated garages.

The groundworks commenced with the stripping of topsoil from Plots D31-33, beginning at the north-east corner of this area. The topsoil, (001), consisted of a dark brown silty loam, containing moderate inclusions of sub-angular limestone chunks. This deposit was 0.3m deep at the north-east corner of this area, increasing to 0.55m in the south-west corner. No subsoil was observed beneath this layer: it sealed a natural deposit, (002); limestone brash of orange/brown silty sand and sub-angular limestone chunks. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were encountered.

The same pattern was apparent during the topsoil stripping of Plots D34-37. The topsoil (001), was relatively even across the site, with a depth of 0.3-0.4m. Again, this sealed natural limestone brash, (002).

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

As noted above, both areas of investigation were beyond the primary reaches of the Romano-British settlement focus on Ermine Street: indeed, in the Roman period this zone was almost certainly utilized as agricultural/grazing land.

With regard to all of the major periods, there is no existing evidence to suggest that either of the watching brief areas were directly occupied: this, it would appear, has always been agricultural land which, only now, has been brought into the village envelope. It is against this backdrop that the prehistoric pit-like features witnessed in earlier investigations should be viewed.

Evaluation has shown that the pit-like features that occur on this part of the heath (in a poorly-defined hinterland between Grantham Road and High Dyke/Ermine Street) cannot be predicted. They are found on a random basis; in small clusters or in isolation, and they are not associated with any other archaeological features such as building remains. This suggests that the pits were situated within an otherwise homogenous landscape that was beyond any contemporary settlement zone. Their contents are interesting: consisting mainly of burnt stones, charcoal, charred and uncharred bone, charred grain and fragments of pottery; often from more than one vessel. It is impossible not to suggest that these features were in some way associated with activities, which can generically be termed ritual.

In the later Bronze Age, the two areas that were monitored were situated within an unoccupied zone, which was presumably utilised for mixed agriculture, and served the dietary requirements of a nearby settlement or series of settlements. To archaeology, this landscape will always be a largely 'sterile', even though it must have been at the heart of the production zone.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

Without doubt, the watching brief methodology was appropriate: it was proportionate to the requirements of the developer and the archaeological body, and it did not require the use of substantial funding in the face of negative evidence. In a long term attempt to map the social geography of this area, the negative evidence is extremely useful, and it confirms the results of all previous investigations; that this area was not a focus for human settlement, but a farming zone; upon which successive generations must have relied.

9.0 Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Ploughsound Ltd. (now NDC Group) for this commission. Thanks are also expressed to the North Kesteven Heritage Officer, Jo Hambley, for providing an archaeological project brief and assisting the programme of works.

10.0 References

Palmer-Brown CPH., 1997, *Archaeological watching brief report: Grantham Road, Navenby*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report

Palmer-Brown CPH. & Rylatt J., 1999, *Archaeological field evaluation report: Land at Chapel Heath, Navenby, Lincolnshire*, Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln), unpublished report

11.0 Dissemination and site Archive

Copies of this report will be deposited with the commissioning body, the Lincolnshire County Sites & Monuments Records, North Kesteven District Council and the City & County Museum, Lincoln. Deposition with the County SMR will ensure public access, and the entire project archive will be transferred to Lincoln City & County Museum, where it will be available upon request, using the global accession number 2002.92.

A short summary on the results of this investigation will be submitted to the editor of the journal *Lincolnshire History & Archaeology* for inclusion in a future edition.

APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



Pl. 1: Plot D1, looking west



Pl. 2: Plot D2, looking north



Pl. 3: Plot D3, looking west



Pl. 4: Stripped area, Plots D34-D37, looking west-south-west

APPENDIX 2: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Topsoil, Plots D28-D37: dark brown silty loam
002	Layer	Natural, Plots D28-37: orange/brown limestone brash