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PRE-CONSTRUCT ARCHAEOLOGY L I N C O L N

NAVIGATION LANE, CAISTOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVALUATION REPORT

Site Code: NACA03
NGR: TA 1131 0103.
Planning Ref. MS02/P/1091
Accession No. 2003.19.



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Report prepared for Mrs Wilkinson
by
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Summary

- *An archaeological evaluation took place in advance of a proposed development on land to the rear of 7 Navigation Lane, Caistor, Lincolnshire.*
- *Two trial excavation trenches identified only two archaeological features; these being in Trench 2, situated towards the west side of the proposed development area.*
- *A single sherd of medieval pottery was recovered from a wind blown sand horizon, and this horizon sealed the linear features in Trench 2, which themselves could not be dated by any associated artefacts.*
- *Overall, it is concluded that the archaeological potential of the site is limited, and that development of the area is unlikely to affect any significant archaeological remains.*

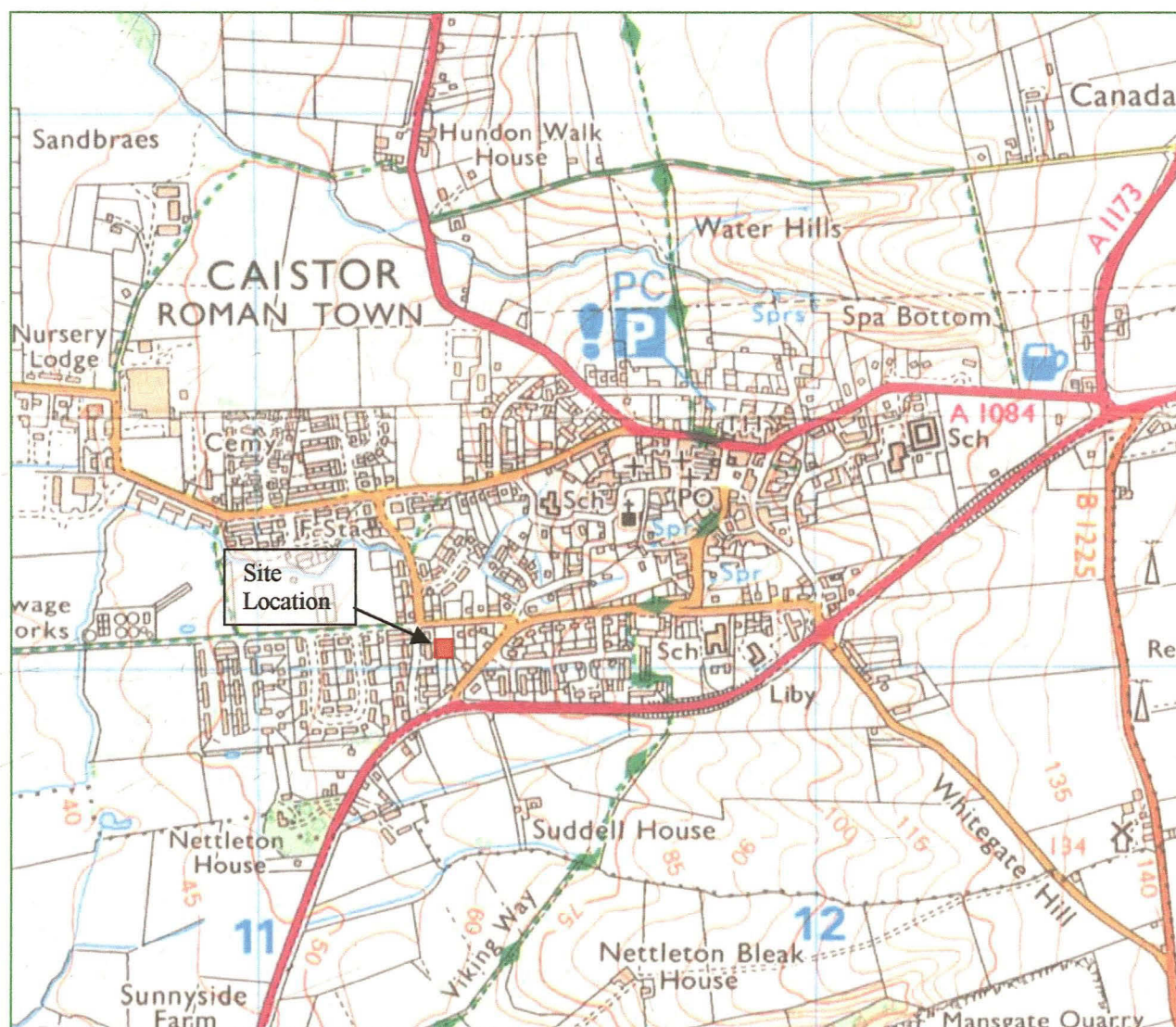


Fig.1: General site location (scale 1:12,500)
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1.0 Introduction

An archaeological trial excavation took place to assess the impact of a proposed development on land to the rear of 7 Navigation Lane, Caistor, Lincolnshire (National Grid Reference TA 1134 0103). The work was commissioned by MG Wilkinson, to fulfil a recommendation attached to an outline planning application for residential development (Ref. S02/P/1091).

This report documents the results of archaeological investigations undertaken over the 13th / 14th January, 2003. It has been prepared to meet the requirements of current local guidelines (Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook: A Manual of Archaeological Practice, 1998); and a formal project specification prepared by this company. This approach complies with the recommendations of *Archaeology & Planning: Planning Policy Guidance Note 16*, (Department of the Environment, 1990), *Management of Archaeological Projects* (English Heritage, 1991), and *Standards and guidance for archaeological watching briefs*, (IFA, 1994).

Copies of this report will be deposited with the commissioning client, the Assistant Built Environment Officer of Lincolnshire County Council, the County Sites and Monuments Record, and West Lindsey District Council. A short text will be submitted to the editor of the county journal, *Lincolnshire History and Archaeology*; and this will feature as a short note in due course. Reports will also be deposited at the City and County Museum, Lincoln, accompanied with an ordered project archive.

2.0 Location and Description (Figs 1 and 2)

Caistor lies in the administrative district of West Lindsey, approximately 12.5km south-east of Brigg and 12.5km north of Market Rasen. The development site is located on the south-west side of the town, approximately 400m south-west of the parish church. (National Grid Reference: TA 1134 0103). It comprises an area of approximately 0.14ha.

The site lies at an altitude approximately 64m above modern sea level, and the underlying geology of the area is characterised as windblown sand (drift) over Elsham Sandstone (solid) of the Late Jurassic period. (BGS 1982).

The site lies towards the base of the west-facing slope of the Lincolnshire Wolds, consequently the ground slopes from east to west by approximately 1.2m over the whole development area. The area was formerly used as private allotment gardens, and the ground cover is mix of bare topsoil and cropped grass. A mixture of boundary features including hedges, post and wire fences, and wooden panel fences delimit the area.

3.0 Planning Background

An outline planning application has been submitted to West Lindsey District Council for a residential development over approximately 0.14ha. Because of the archaeological potential of this area of the town, the Assistant Built Environment Officer recommended that an archaeological field evaluation should be undertaken in advance of development to determine the overall archaeological potential of the site.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

There is relatively limited evidence for prehistoric activity in the immediate area of the proposed development site. However, a Bronze Age urn, possibly part of a cremation burial, was discovered during construction work on houses directly to the west of the site (Sites and Monuments Record reference no. 52677). Although only one urn was retrieved, ash, burnt clay and additional pottery were observed by the finder, indicating the possible presence of a cemetery.

Roman Caistor was a small fortified town (the name Caistor derives from the Latin *castra*, a military fort): the proposed development site is approximately 100m south-west of the Roman town boundary, and activities which would normally have taken place outside the town walls may be anticipated in this area. Indeed, two pottery kilns are known; one directly south-west of the site and one on the edge of the town boundary, approximately 125m to the north (SMR refs. 50869 and 52684). Both kilns were producing grey wares in the 3rd - 4th centuries AD. A hearth site approximately 250m north-west of the proposed development (SMR ref. 50876) may have been associated with Roman industrial processes, but no associated dating evidence was recovered.

Four burials were found in the 1960s, directly opposite the site, on the north side of Navigation Lane (SMR ref. 50585). No grave goods or associated artefacts were recovered, but their location, on the edge of the Roman town boundary, indicates that the burials may have been part of a contemporary cemetery, as Roman law forbade burial within the walls of a town.

There is virtually no evidence of activity in this area during the Anglo-Saxon and Viking periods, although agricultural regimes at least must have continued. The Domesday Survey of 1086 valued Earl Morcar's manorial lands in Caistor, with a church, a priest and four mills, at a prosperous £50. The Sites and Monuments Record refers to a pre-Norman inscribed stone found within Caistor, approximately 200m north-east of the proposed development site (SMR ref. 52681).

Traces of medieval ploughing can be seen as 'ridge and furrow' in fields outside of Caistor, to the north-west of the site (SMR ref. 52718). A series of artificial fishponds, connected by leats and dams, exist to the north of Navigation Lane, and these are believed to be of medieval origin (a regular supply of fish was required for medieval fast days, when no meat could be eaten).

5.0 Methodology

The field evaluation was carried out by a team of two archaeologists. It involved the excavation and subsequent recording of two trenches. The initial excavation work was undertaken with a JCB 3CX excavator employing a 1.6m wide, flat bucket. Both trenches were 15m in length. The trenches were excavated under direct archaeological supervision, ensuring that all archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded.

The archaeological fieldwork entailed the cleaning by hand of all exposed surfaces, followed by a thorough inspection. All archaeological deposits exposed by this method were subjected to sample excavation to assess their nature/dimensions and to attempt to recover datable materials. These investigations resulted in the production of written descriptions of each layer on standard context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings complement these accounts.

6.0 Results

6.1 Trench 1 (Fig. 3)

This was 15m x 1.6m in area, oriented east-west, and was located in the eastern half of the plot, approximately 12m from the southern property boundary. The trench was excavated from east to west, but the presence of a shallow, active field drain at the east end prevented the easternmost 1.75m of the trench from being stripped beneath the topsoil.

The topsoil itself, context 100, was a very dark grey friable, humic coarse-sandy silt, containing frequent brick and tile fragments, modern pottery and other domestic/garden refuse (there was also heavy root growth present in this material). Beneath 100, which was approximately 0.3m thick, lay a subsoil – context 101. This was 0.3m in thick and was distinguishable from 100 only in that it incorporated no root growth, and occasional small, rounded pebbles.

The subsoil sealed mid-brownish grey compact slightly silty fine sand, containing occasional flecks of charcoal, occasional small flint fragments, and the odd larger flint (up to 140mm in size). This layer, 102, was interpreted as wind-blown sand, locally deposited at the foot of the Wolds. One sherd of pottery from a small jug was recovered from this context, and this has been dated between the 13th/14th century. Beneath the wind-blown sand, only the underlying natural geology was exposed. This consisted of a mottled mid-yellow/ light greyish-yellow medium sand - 103.

6.2 Trench 2 (Figs. 4-8)

This trench was 15m x 1.6m in area, oriented north-south, and was located in the western half of the plot, approximately 10m from the western property boundary. The trench was excavated from south to north, but the presence of an active sewer meant that a baulk of windblown sand was left approximately in the centre of the trench.

The modern topsoil, context 200, was in all respects the same as that in Trench 1. There was heavy root growth present in this material. Beneath 200, which was approximately 0.3m thick, lay a subsoil – 201. This layer was 0.25m thick and, again, was only distinguishable from 200 in that it contained no root growth, and moderate small, rounded pebbles.

The subsoil sealed a mid-brownish grey compact silty fine sand, containing occasional flecks of charcoal and small flint fragments. This layer, 202, was wind-blown sand, locally deposited at the foot of the Wolds. Beneath it was the mottled mid-yellow/ light greyish-yellow natural sand - 203.

Sealed below the windblown sand, and cut into the natural sand, were several linear features. Feature [204] was a 1m wide shallow gully which took an irregular, although generally NW-SE, route across the southern half of Trench 2. It was filled with mid-grey, silty compact sand, to a depth of 0.15m, 205. This incorporated significant amounts of redeposited natural sand, and this, coupled with the 'jagged' nature of the edge of the gully, suggests that the sides had slumped.

In the northern part of the trench, gully [204] intersected a deeper linear feature – ditch [206]. This was aligned approximately east-west, although it was also irregular in plan. The fill of [206] was a mottled grey/black compact silty sand – 207. No relationship could be established between these features, although they were both sealed by the windblown sand 203.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Very little archaeological evidence was identified in Trench 1, excluding a single sherd of medieval pottery; recovered from a windblown sand deposit. The evidence from Trench 2 indicates that some form of activity has taken place in this area, and this occurred prior to the deposition of the windblown sand (possibly in the 13th/14th century). This activity appears only to be connected with the establishment of boundaries (ditch [206]) and perhaps the control of surface water in the vicinity. Given that no datable material was recovered from these features, it is difficult to speculate further regarding the context of these features.

No evidence relating to occupation of the area in the Romano-British period has been identified by the evaluation; not even residual or unstratified sherds of pottery. It is concluded, therefore, that the overall archaeological potential of this site is limited, and that development of the area is unlikely to destroy any significant archaeological remains. However, the proximity of known archaeological resources (eg pottery kilns) cannot be ignored.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed allowed the presence/absence, the depth and (to a significantly lesser extent) the broad dating of archaeological features to be determined. The examination of features in Trench 2 was somewhat hampered by the wet conditions, however, and the presence of sensitive drains prevented the full excavation of Trench 1.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mrs Wilkinson for the commission and their assistance during the evaluation. Thanks are due to R D Gardner for assisting on-site, and to J Young for the specialist pottery archive.

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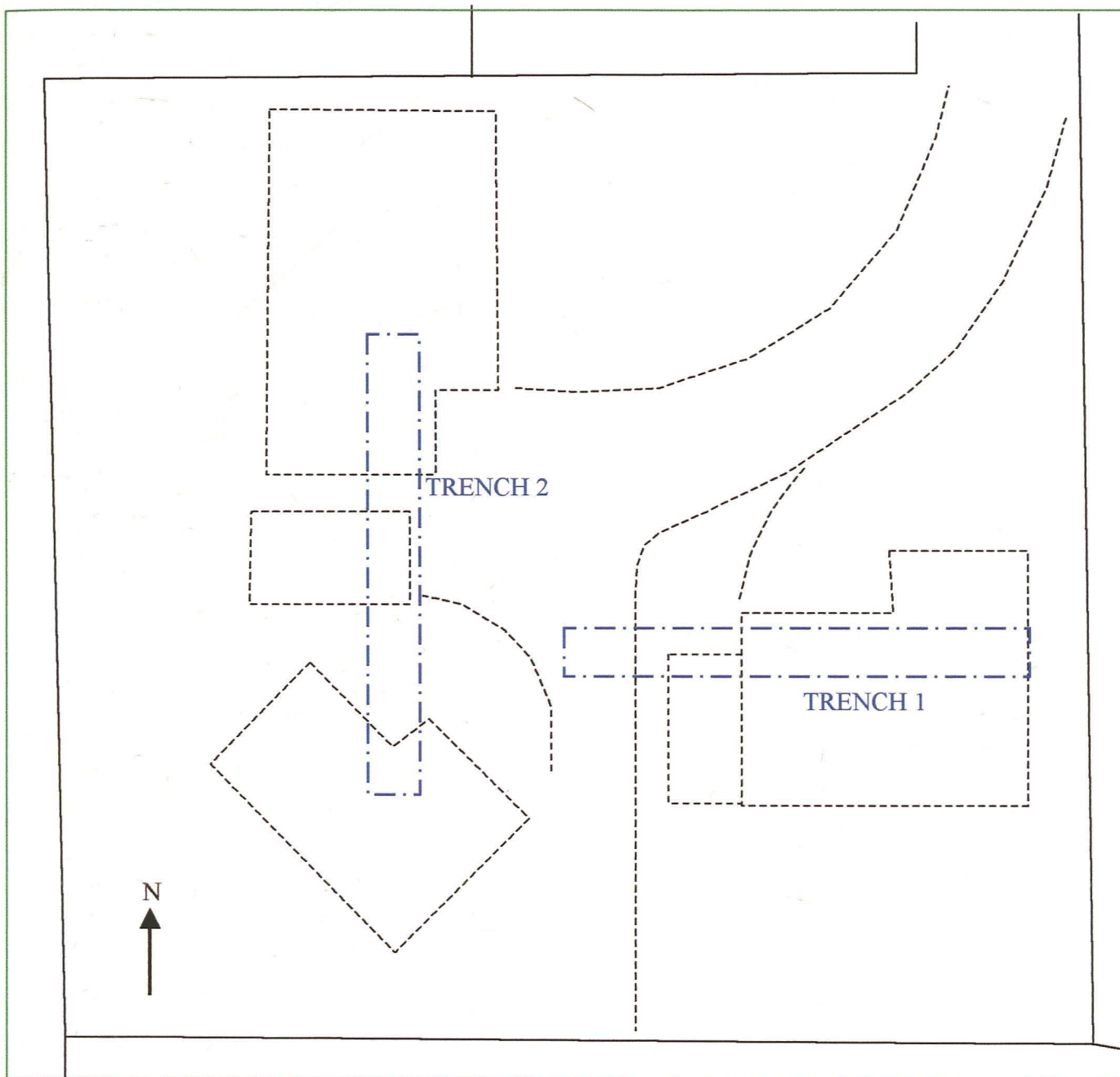


Fig. 2: Plan of the development area, showing the proposed development (dotted lines), and the position of the evaluation trenches (blue). Scale 1:200.

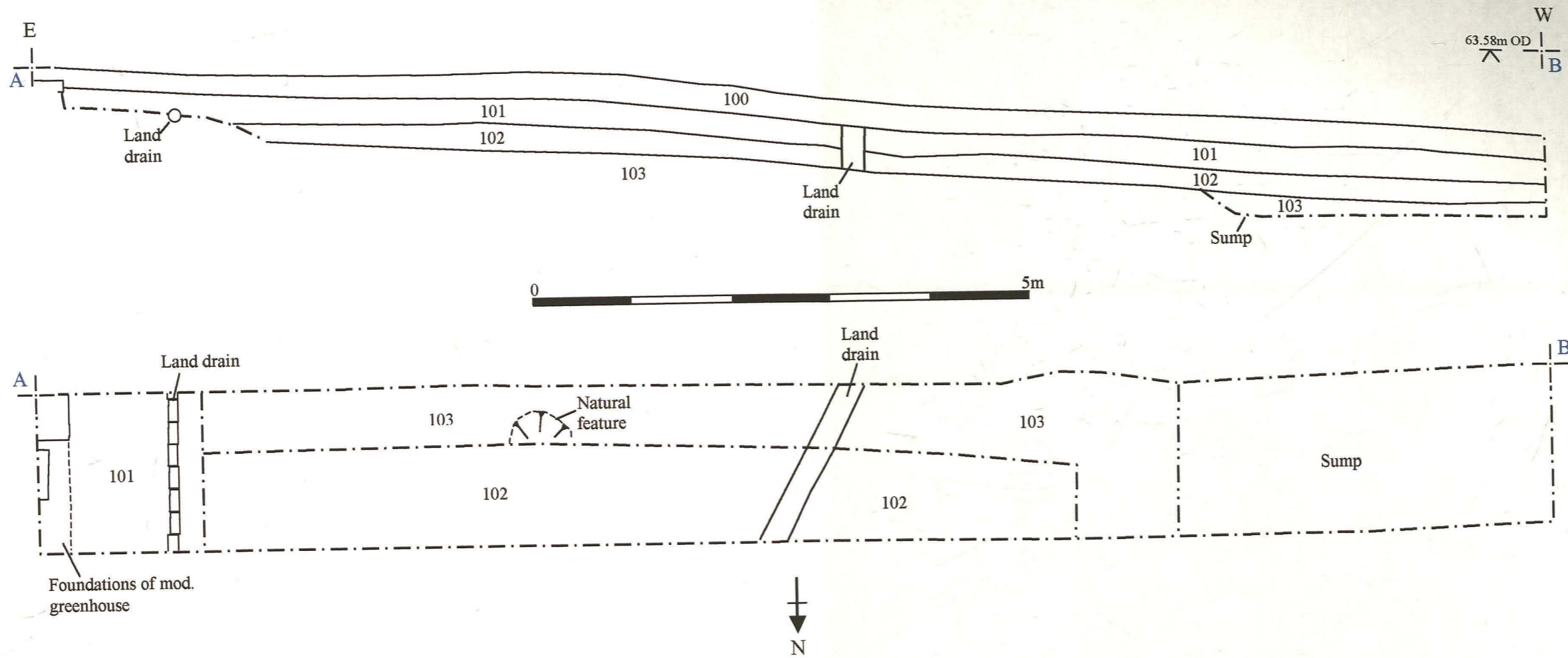


Fig. 3: North facing section and plan of Trench 1. Scale 1:50

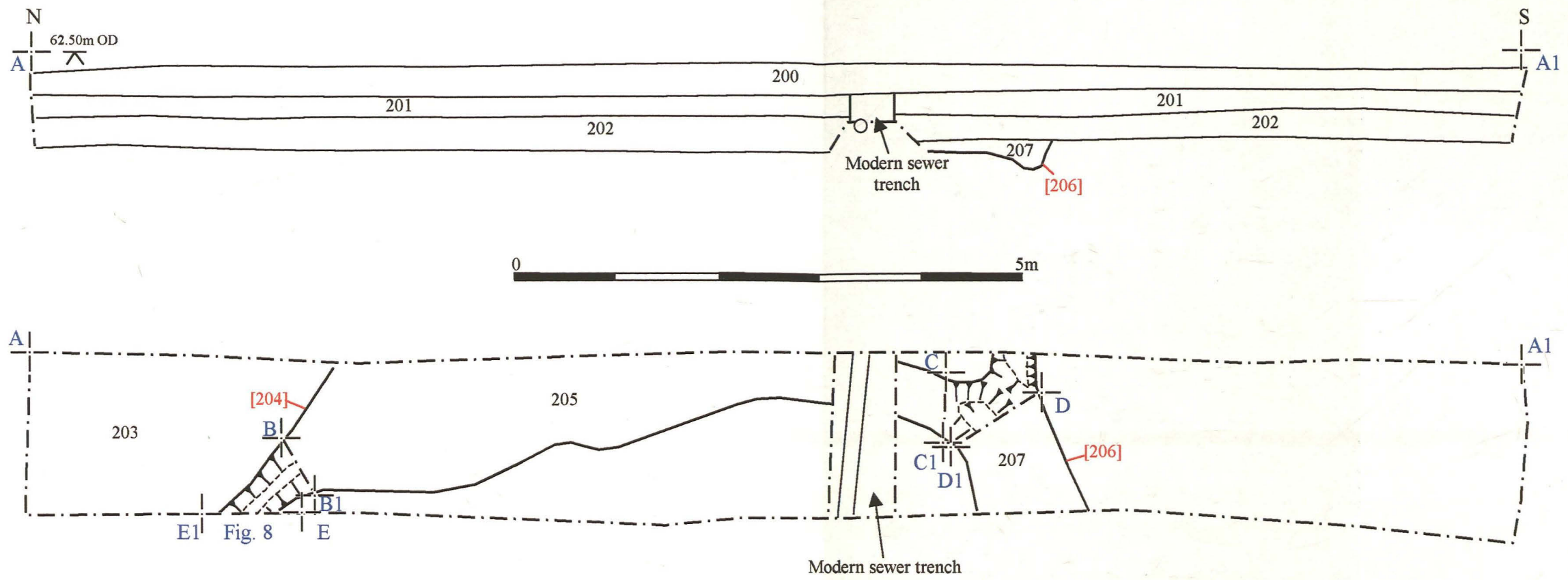


Fig. 4: North facing section and plan of Trench 2, showing locations of subsidiary sections. Scale 1:50.

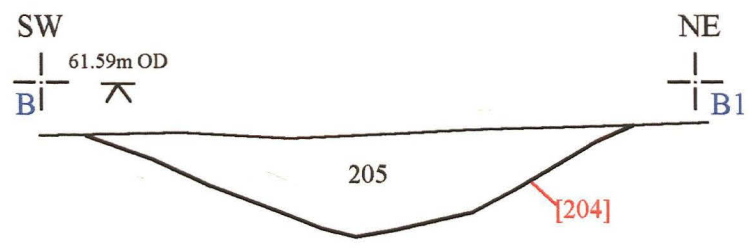


Fig. 5: South-east facing section through gully [204]. Scale 1:10.

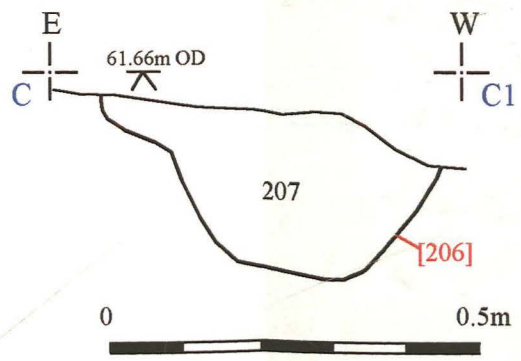


Fig. 6: North facing section through ditch [206]. Scale 1:10.

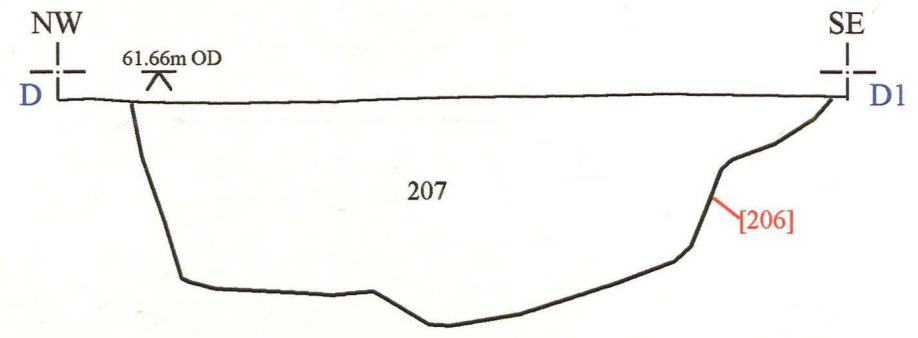


Fig. 7: South-west facing section through ditch [206]. Scale 1:10.

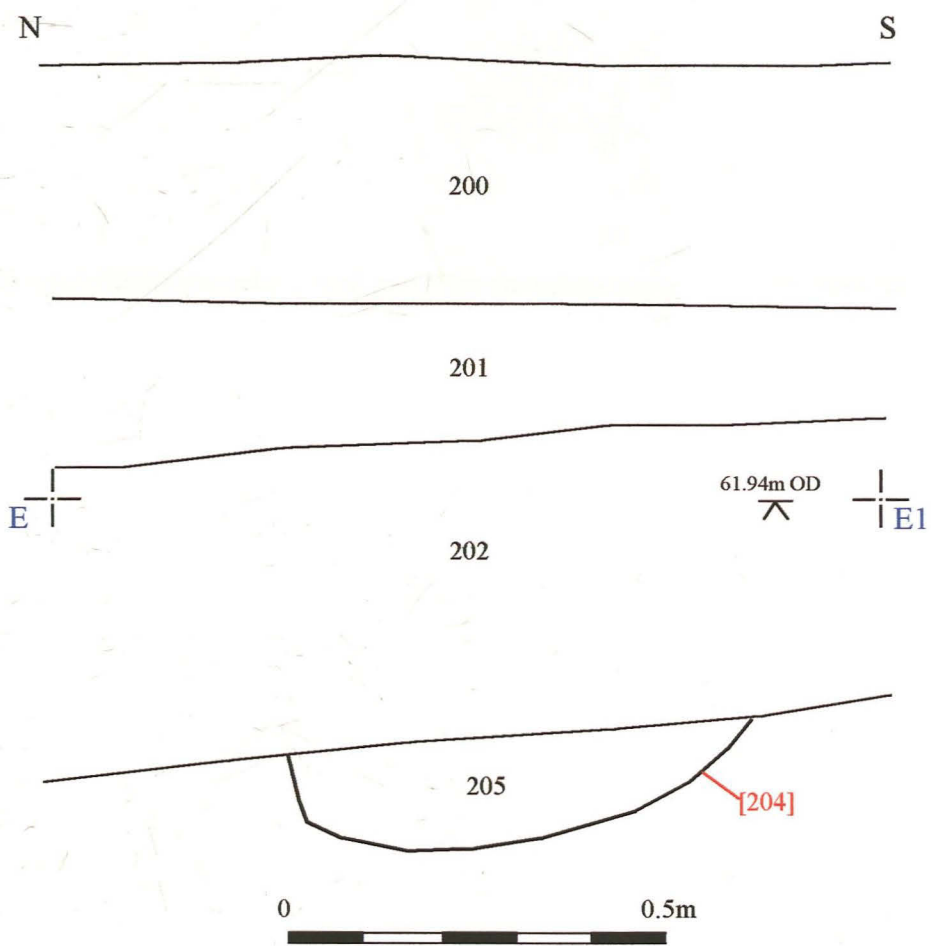


Fig. 8: West facing section through gully [204]. Scale 1:10.

Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1: General shot of site with JCB at work, looking NE.



Plate 2 (left): Machining underway in Trench 1, looking west.



Plate 3 (right): View of Trench 1 after cleaning, looking south-east.

Plate 4 (right):
View of Trench 2
after cleaning,
looking north-east.



Plate 5 (above): Gully [204], looking East.

Plate 6 (right): Ditch
[206], looking north-
east.



Appendix 2: Context summary.

Trench 1

Context	Description
100	Topsoil
101	Subsoil below 100
102	Windblown sand deposit
103	Natural sand

Trench 2

Context	Description
200	Topsoil
201	Subsoil below 200
202	Windblown sand deposit
203	Natural sand
204	Shallow gully
205	Fill of 204
206	Ditch
207	Fill of ditch 206

APPENDIX 3: Pottery archive report by Jane Young

context	cname	full name	sub fabric	form type	sherds	weight	part	description	date
102	MEDLOC	Medieval local fabrics	OX/R/OX; fine-med sandy & fe; hard	small jug	1	9	neck	abraded; thin walled; reduced glaze	13th to 14th