

40 MONSON STREET, LINCOLN

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SAMPLING REPORT**

Site code	MOSL 03
NGR:	SK 97511 70460
LCCM Acc No:	2003.116

Report prepared for Mr G Longhurst

by

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 Vertical scale 1:20, Horizontal scale – none.

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief and programme of environmental sampling took place during the groundworks for a residential development on land situated to the south of Monson Street and to the east of Nelthorpe Street, Lincoln.
- The brief identified some features of archaeological significance, including deposits dated to the medieval, post-medieval and industrial periods.
- The environmental sampling evaluated a sequence of wetland and riverine deposits in the area

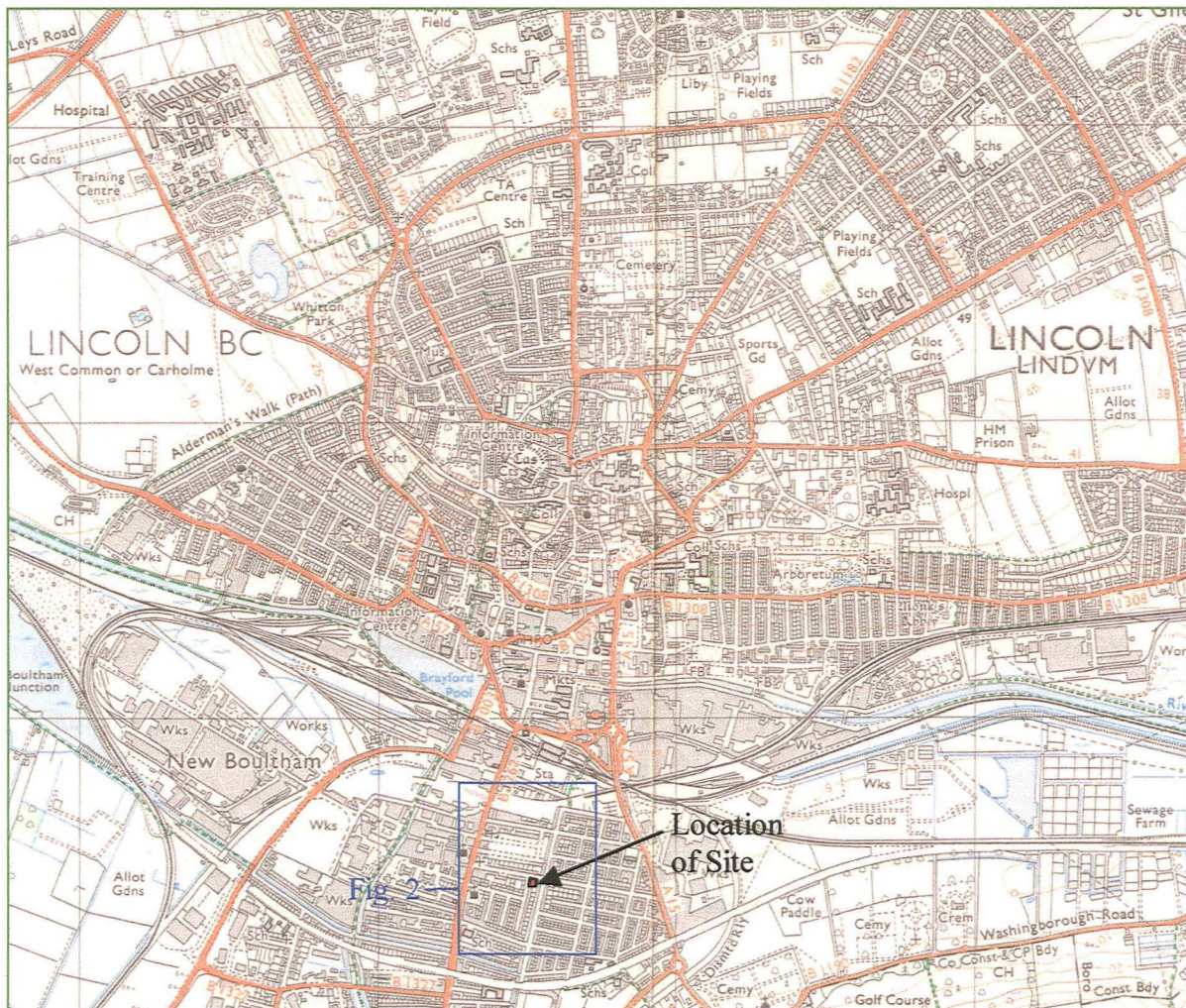


Fig. 1: Site location. Area highlighted in red is the development plot, the blue square is that seen in fig. 2. (Scale 1:25000; OS copyright ref AL 515 21 A0001)

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief and associated programme of environmental sampling took place during the excavation of footing trenches for six self-contained flats at 40 Monson Street, Lincoln (National Grid Reference SK 97511 70460). Mr G Longhurst commissioned this work to fulfil a condition attached to a planning permission (Ref. 2003/0152/F).

This report documents the results of the archaeological programme that was undertaken on 24.6.2003. 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, 1999).

Copies of this report will be deposited with the commissioning body, the City Archaeologist of Lincoln City Council, the County Sites and Monuments Record, and the Planning Authority. 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. 1-3)

The site lies towards the south side of Lincoln, on the west side of the Sincil Dyke, to the south of Monson Street and to the east of Nelthorpe Street (National Grid Reference: SK 97511 70460). It comprises a rectangular unit of approximately 95m², fronting Nelthorpe Street.

The site occupies level ground at an altitude below the 5m contour, where the underlying geology of the area is characterised as undifferentiated river terrace sands and gravel overlying base deposits of Oxford Clay, dated to the Jurassic period (BGS 1973). It is bounded on the east side by an alley separating it from the 'Chequers Club', and on the south side it is defined by a neighbouring Victorian terraced property.

Prior to development, the site was occupied by a commercial property of 19th century date which had fallen into disrepair. The property had been recently demolished and, when the watching brief was undertaken, the site had been cleared.

3.0 Planning Background

Full planning consent was granted for the erection of six self-contained flats at 40, Monson Street. The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief and a programme of environmental sampling. This report documents the results of the archaeological programme.

4.0 Archaeological and Historical Background

The redevelopment is adjacent to the Sincil Drain, which has affected the habitation of the area throughout the historical era. From the prehistoric period to the high medieval periods, the area comprised a series of valley floor, riverine and wetland deposits, now formalised by the Sincil Drain.

Archaeological investigations on the north side of Monson Street, less than 200m to the west of the current site, revealed four Roman cremation burials and the foundations of a rectilinear stone building (possibly a *mausoleum*); all dating to the 1st century AD. Roman legionary tombstones were also found nearby in the 19th century. The site is also close to the putative early Roman military fort.

Following abandonment of the province by the Roman administration in the early 5th century AD, the area may have been utilised for settlement and agriculture.

By the medieval period the site lay within the suburb of Wigford (along its eastern shoreline). The location of the site in relation to the High Street however, suggests there is unlikely to be evidence of occupation of this date.

Working-class housing estates were built throughout Lincoln during the industrial (Victorian) period, and the Monson Street area was no exception. Cartographic evidence of 19th century date indicates that the line of the medieval 'town wall' lay close to the site, although there is some doubt as to its existence.

The line of the modern Sincil Drain runs north – south to the east of the site. It is possible that a former course of the drain ran beneath the site.

5.0 Methodology

The site was visited on 24.6.2003, when foundation trenches were begun as part of the redevelopment. This work was undertaken using a mini-excavator employing a 0.65m wide bucket. The foundation trenches were generally 0.7m wide and 1.2m deep. This work was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features or deposits exposed were identified and recorded.

Work commenced at the south end of the site for the east wall of the building and continued northwards, terminating with a trench for the north wall. Some reservations had been expressed about the load-bearing capabilities of the ground, and soon after the foundation trench for the dividing wall to the south of the latter was begun, the site engineer visited and decided to abandon this construction method. The trenches were subsequently backfilled and a less-intrusive raft-based foundation strategy was then employed.

A row of three boreholes was sampled, located in the foundation trench for the north wall of the building (this trench being the only one meeting the specifications laid out in the brief: the row being perpendicular to the course of the Sincil Drain).

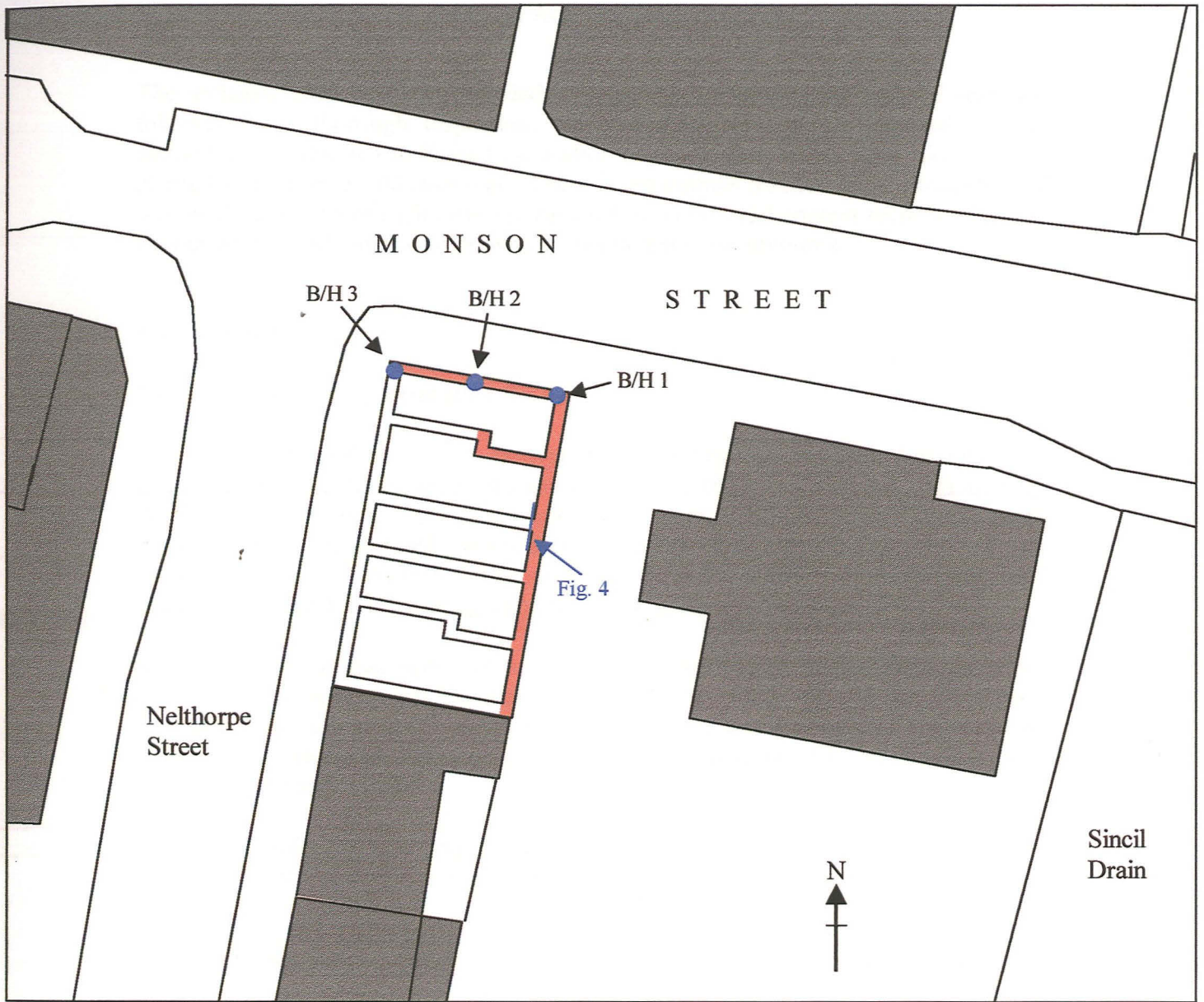


Fig. 3: Plan showing the foundation trenches for the new development and the positions of the auger holes. The area shaded red shows the trenches excavated before the foundation strategy changed. Scale 1:250

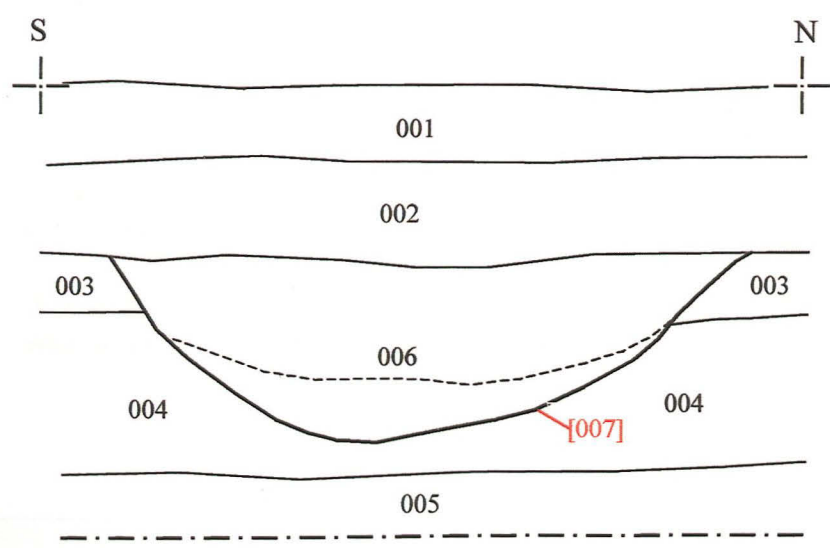


Fig. 4: East facing section showing pit [007]. Scale 1:20

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 limited 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 watching brief context recording sheets. Colour photographs and scale drawings compliment these accounts.

6.0 Results

6.1 The Watching Brief (figs. 3,4)

Over the majority of the site, the excavations for footing trenches did not exceed 1.2m in depth. The uppermost layer of material, context 001, was a mixed layer of very dark greyish brown sandy clay, containing a mixture of broken brick and stone fragments which constituted the remains of the site clearance, including the vestiges of the foundations of the demolished structure. These foundations, up to six courses of brick, were present in the footing trenches on the north and east sides of the site.

Below 001, was a clean light brown slightly clayey sand layer, 0.1m thick at the south end of the site, becoming 0.3m thick at the north end, (002). Due to the disturbance associated with the removal of the old footings, only one fragment of tile could be securely associated with this deposit, and this was a fragment of 13th-15th century peg or nib tile, probably residual.

Layer 002 sealed 003, a very dark greyish brown compact sandy clay containing occasional charcoal flecks, and very small pieces of broken brick/tile.

Sealed below 003 was a layer of mottled dark brown/grey clayey sand, containing no inclusions, (004). This yielded one sherd of a 14th /15th century tall necked jug, which was probably a waster as it had cracked during firing.

Beneath 004, was a layer of grey homogenous silty clay, containing occasional charcoal flecks. The foundation trenches were excavated into the top of this layer, which was quite wet, and consequently not suitable for building formation.

Only one feature was seen in the sections of the foundation trenches, and this was pit [007]. It was located towards the centre of the east wall foundation trench, in the western section. It had shallow sides, breaking gently to a 'U'-shaped base and was filled by 006: a dark greyish brown sandy clay with a lens of mid-yellow clean sandy clay at the base. This fill yielded fragments of a 19th /20th century stoneware flagon.

6.2 Environmental Sampling (figs. 3,5)

A row of three boreholes was sampled, located in the foundation trench for the north wall of the building, the row being perpendicular to the course of the Sincil Drain.

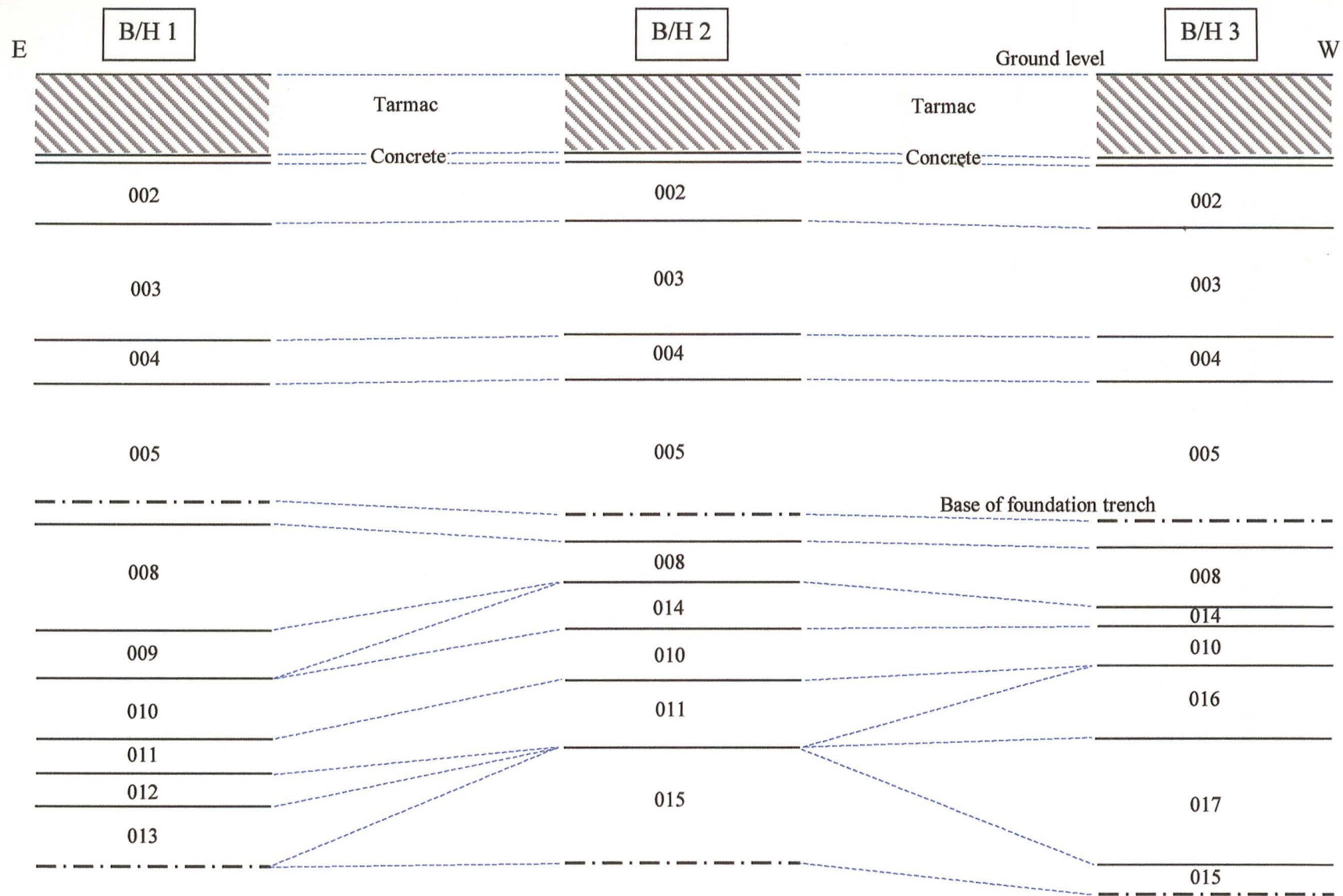


Fig. 5: Interpreted east-west soil profile across the site, showing the results of the auger holes (B/H 1-3) in black. Vertical scale 1:20, Horizontal scale – none.

Borehole 1

As the boreholes were cut from the base of the foundation trench, the uppermost layer seen in all three was context 005. In borehole 1, this layer sealed 008, a very dark brown/black laminated silty peat 0.35m in thickness, which in turn lay over 009, a 0.16m thick layer of sandy dark brown peat containing occasional charcoal flecks.

Beneath these peat layers was a series of sand deposits, the uppermost of which was 010, a light grey fine sand layer containing occasional fragments of wood, which was 0.2m thick. Beneath this layer was a thin (0.1m) layer of mid/ light brown mottled sand – 011, below which lay 012, a 0.1m thick dark grey medium sand. Layer 012 lay above 013, mid-brown medium sand.

The ground water content of these layers increased with depth, and at a depth of 1.2m below the base of the foundation trench, the material was so wet that it flowed out of the auger before it could be withdrawn from the hole.

Borehole 2

The sequence of layers in this borehole more or less mirrored those seen in borehole 1. Peat layer 008 was much thinner here (0.15m), and layer 009 was not present; instead a 0.25m thick layer of mid-grey sand containing occasional small patches of orange clay (014) separated 008 from 010. Layer 011 was thicker in this borehole (0.25m) and below this lay 015, a mixture of clean mid-orange sand and gravel.

Borehole 3

Again, the sequence of layers in this borehole resembled that observed in borehole 2. However, below layer 010 lay 016 – a mottled yellow/grey slightly silty sand, 0.25m in thickness, beneath which lay 017, a 0.45m thick mid brown medium sand similar to 013, but grittier.

7.0 Discussion and Conclusions

Few features of archaeological significance were exposed by the watching brief. However, the environmental sampling did determine the depth and nature of deposits in the area.

Boreholes 1-3 displayed basal deposits of river derived sands and clays (010-017) followed by peat horizons (008, 009) and the bulk fill (005); probably dumped to raise the ground level in this area after the draining of the marshy ground.

The layers exposed in the watching brief (002-004) complete the sequence, associated artefacts indicating some form of later medieval and post medieval activity within the immediate environs of the site.

8.0 Effectiveness of Methodology

The methodology employed allowed the presence/absence, the depth and dating of archaeological deposits/features to be ascertained, albeit limited to deposits within narrow foundation trenches. The auguring (or borehole) method of environmental sampling proved effective in this case, as it could be carried out in the base of the foundation trenches below any concrete or compacted layers, which may have prevented penetration.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank Mr Longhurst for this commission and the assistance provided by the groundworkers of Equus Construction. Thanks are also expressed to Jane Young for the pottery/tile archive

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Appendix 1: Colour Plates



Plate 1(left): General view of the site, looking south-east.



Plate 2(left): General view of the site, looking north along the east wall foundation trench.

Plate 3(above): East-facing section showing Pit [007].

Plate 4(right): General view of the site when the foundation strategy was changed, looking south. The North wall footings trench is in the foreground



Appendix 2:

Pottery Archive MOSL03

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	form type	sherds	vessels	weight	decoration	part	description	date
004	LSW3	14th to 15th century Lincoln Glazed Ware	tall necked jug	2	1	17	multiple neck grooves	neck	probable waster;overfired;cracked in kiln as glaze over one break	14th
006	ENGS	Unspecified English Stoneware	jar/flagon	1	1	271		base		19th/20th

Appendix 3:

Tile Archive MOSL03

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	fabric	frags	weight	description	date
002	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	1	1	85	flat roofer,mortar	13th to 15th

Appendix 4: Context Summary.

Context	Description
001	Modern overburden, including remains of previous structure
002	Clean light brown clayey sand layer below 001
003	Dark greyish brown compact sandy clay below 002
004	Mottled dark brown/grey clayey sand below 003
005	Grey homogenous silty clay below 004, at base of foundation trenches
006	Fill of pit [007]
007	Pit in west section of east wall foundation trench
008	Very dark brown/black laminated silty peat in B/H 1-3
009	Sandy dark brown peat in B/H 1
010	Light grey fine sand layer in B/H 1-3
011	Mid/ light brown mottled sand in B/H 1,2
012	Dark grey medium sand in B/H 1
013	Mid-brown medium sand in B/H 1
014	Mid-grey sand containing with small patches of orange clay in B/H 2,3
015	Clean mid-orange sand and gravel in B/H 2,3
016	Mottled yellow/grey slightly silty sand in B/H 3
017	Mid brown gritty medium sand in B/H 3