

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF REPORT:
LAND BETWEEN 53 AND 59
QUEEN STREET, LINCOLN**

NGR: SK 97400 70026
SITE CODE: QNSL03
ACC. NO.: 2004.107
Planning ref.: 2003/0447/F

Report prepared for K Walsh Construction

by

Simon Savage & Chris Clay

May 2004



Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln)
Unit G
William Street Business Park
Saxilby
Lincoln
LN1 2LP
Tel. & Fax. 01522 703800
e-mail colin.pca@virgin.net

©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	3
5.0 Methodology	4
6.0 Results	5
7.0 Discussion and conclusion	5
8.0 Effectiveness of methodology	6
9.0 Acknowledgements	6
10.0 References	7
11.0 Site Archive	7
Appendix 1: Colour plates	8
Appendix 2: Pottery and tile report	9
Appendix 3: List of archaeological contexts	11

List of Figures

- Fig. 1:** General site location (scale 1:25,000)
Fig. 2: Site location, showing the monitored foundation trenches and features exposed. Main scale 1:100, inset 1:2500
Fig. 3: East facing section through [005]
Fig. 4: East facing section through [007]

List of Plates

- Pl. 1:** General view of the development area, looking south-south-east
Pl. 2: Section showing ditch [005], looking west
Pl. 3: Section showing quarry pit [007], looking south-south-east

Summary

- An archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for a residential development on Land between 53 and 59 Queen Street, Lincoln.
- The site lies close to the High Street, which marks the route of the Roman Ermine Street. This area was an important suburb of the city in the Romano-British and medieval periods, and hence has the potential to contain archaeological remains of this date.
- The fieldwork identified a linear drainage/boundary feature of early medieval date, and a probable Victorian quarry pit.

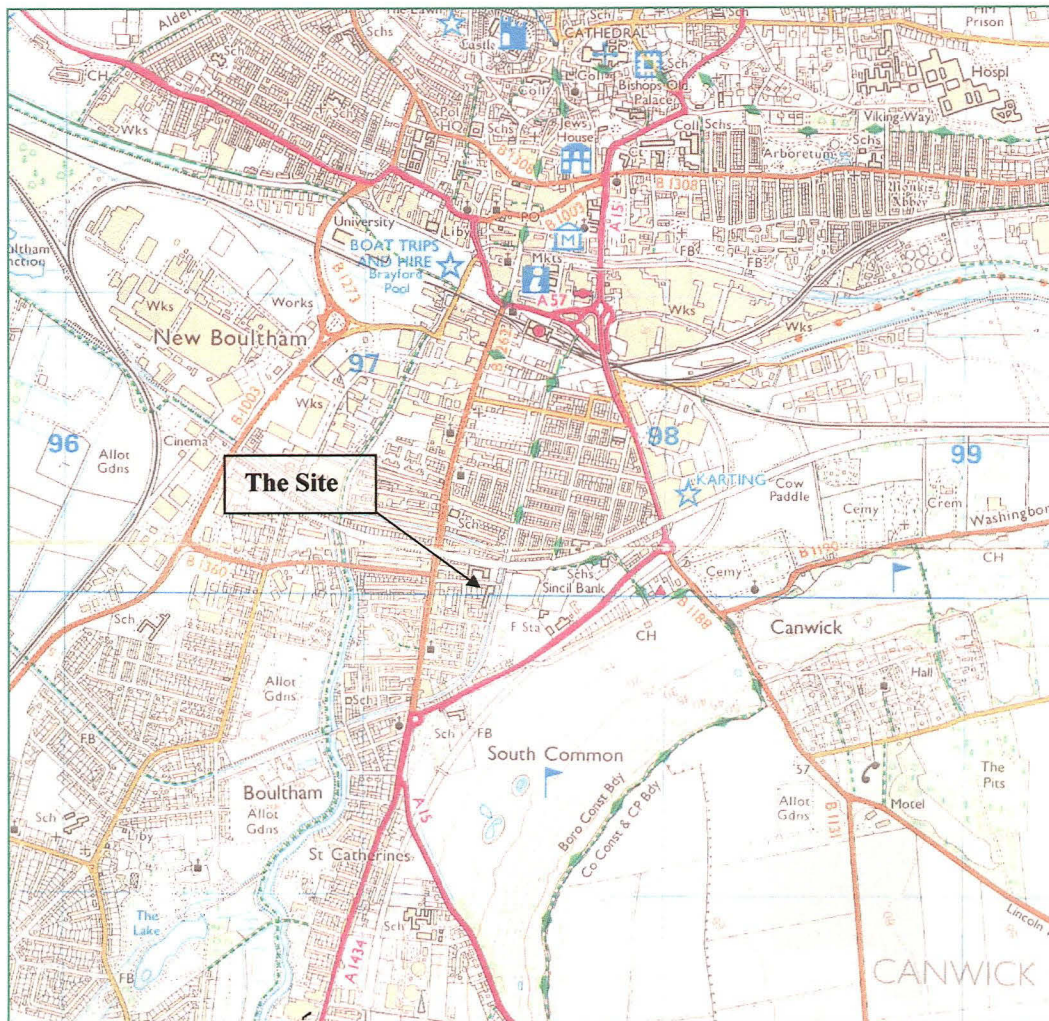


Fig.1: General site location (scale 1:25,000)
(O.S. Copyright License No. A1 515 21 A0001)

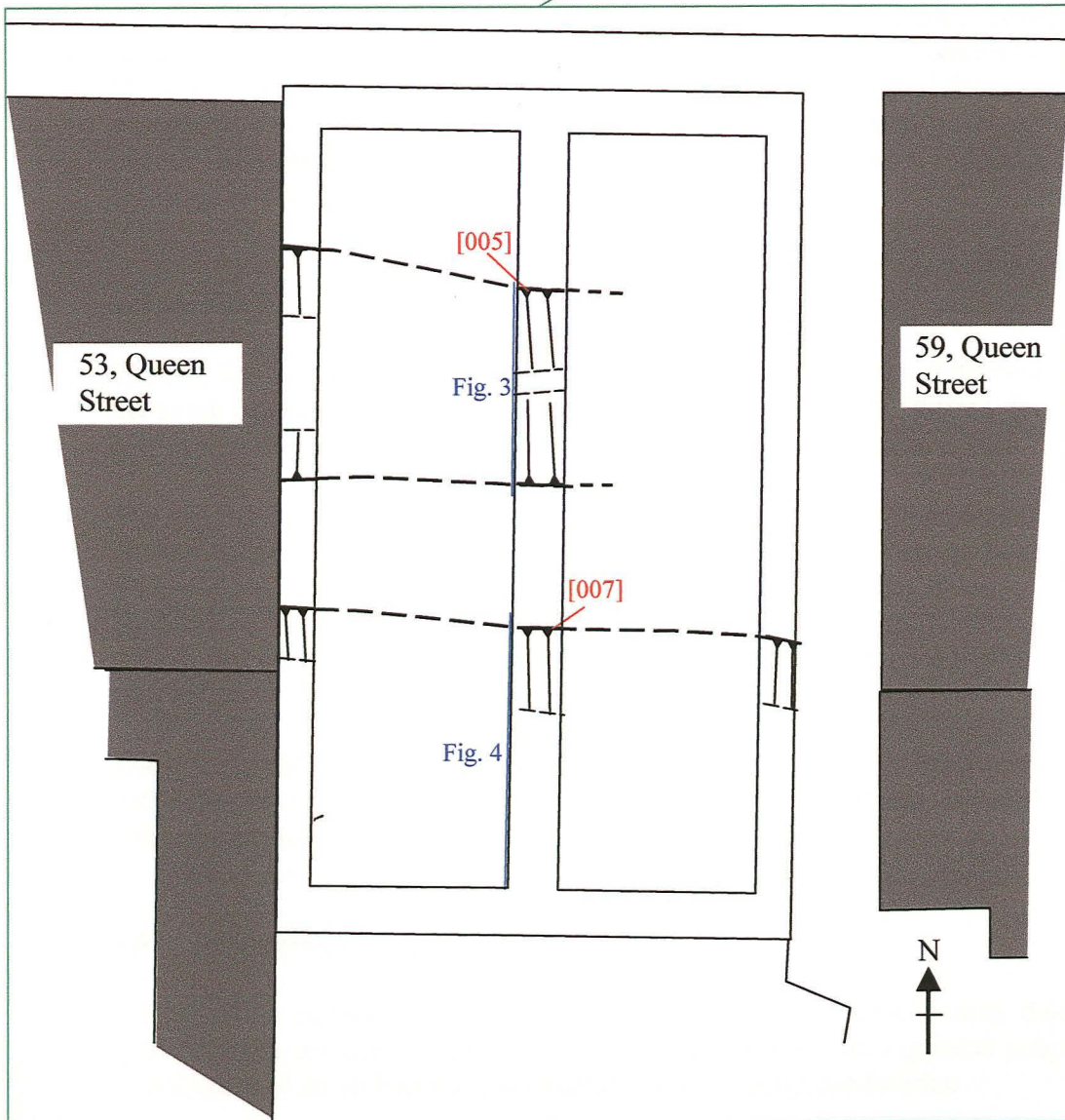
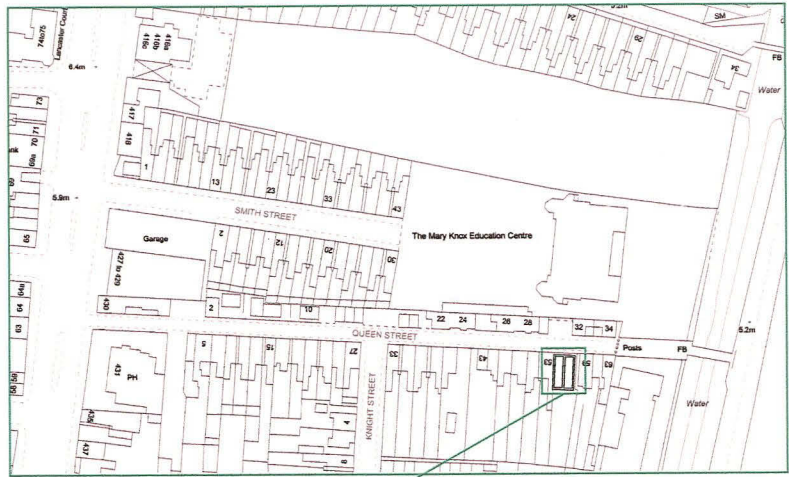


Fig. 2: Site location, showing the monitored foundation trenches and features exposed.
Main scale 1:100, inset 1:2500.

1.0 Introduction

An archaeological watching brief took place during the groundworks for a residential development, comprising two two-storey dwellings on land between 53 and 59 Queen Street, Lincoln (National Grid Reference SK 97400 70026). K Walsh Construction commissioned the work to fulfil a condition attached to a planning permission (Ref. 2003/0447/F).

This report documents the results of the archaeological programme that was undertaken. 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, the County Sites and Monuments Record for Lincolnshire, 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 Site location and description

The site lies towards the south side of Lincoln, on the west side of the Sincil Dyke, to the south of Queen Street (National Grid Reference: SK 97400 70026). It comprises a sub-rectangular unit of approximately 250m², fronting onto Queen Street.

The site occupies fairly level ground at an elevation of approximately 5m OD, and the underlying geology of the area is characterised as alluvium overlying base deposits of Oxford Clay, dated to the Jurassic period (British Geological Survey, 1973). It is bounded on the east side by an alley separating the site and neighbouring property, and on the west side it is defined by another neighbouring terraced property, both of which date to the Victorian period.

Prior to development, the site was occupied by a small commercial property, which had fallen into disrepair. This had already been 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 two two-storey dwellings on land between 53 and 59 Queen Street. The permission was granted subject to the undertaking of an archaeological watching brief on all groundworks.

The planning reference for this project is 2003/0447/F.

4.0 Archaeological and historical background

Excluding occasional prehistoric artefactual remains, there is little clear evidence of any sustained settlement activity in Lincoln until the later Iron Age. In earlier prehistory, the low-lying environs of the current site were subject to frequent tidal inundations, causing an extensive area of seasonally flooded marshland. Only with the falling sea levels of the later first millennium BC were new areas to become available for potential settlement (Jones, 2002). One site, lying approximately 100m to the east of the Brayford Pool, has in recent years revealed substantial quantities of Late Pre-Roman Iron Age pottery and associated structural features, suggesting that a major settlement may have existed in the Brayford East area, occupying a raised bank of sand and gravel.

The Roman geographer Ptolemy suggests that, in the Iron Age, much of Lincolnshire and the East Midlands belonged to a people called the *Corieltavi*, who had two major centres: at *Rhage* and *Lindon*, these places being equated with the Roman towns of *Ratae* (Leicester) and *Lindum Colonia* (Lincoln) (Todd, 1991). The name also derives from pre-Roman times, the stem *lindo-* meaning a lake or pool, no doubt relating to what must have been a much larger Brayford Pool.

Following the initial invasion of Britain in AD43, what became Lincoln was soon to be under the control of the Roman army. By AD47, a frontier had been established from the Humber to the River Exe in south-west Britain, with Legio IX *Hispana* subduing the northern reaches of this area (Whitwell, 1992). They soon established a presence at Lincoln, controlling the Witham and the gap in the limestone edge through which it passed, and consolidating the tribal territory of the *Corieltavi* (Jones, 2002). A fortress accommodating the entire legion was established sometime in the reign of Nero (AD54-68) on the hillside to the north of the Witham, although it has been suggested that an earlier fort was established closer to the current site. The discovery of early military tombstones in the lower part of the city may indicate that a fort was established on South Common to the south of Queens Street, overlooking the Witham Valley from the south (Todd, 1991).

In the late 1st century, Lincoln became a *colonia*; a major administrative centre, established to provide retired legionaries with land and property (Jones, 2002). This made extensive use of the walls and internal layout of the abandoned fortress, and by the 2nd century AD, it also extended downhill towards the river.

South of the lower walled city (south of the Stonebow), an extensive ribbon development extended along Ermine Street, broadly along the line of the modern High Street. The current site is a little under 30m to the east of High Street and the draft Lincoln Urban Archaeological Assessment highlights that it has the potential to be of relevance to research agendas associated with Roman dwellings, cemeteries and the possible nearby fort.

It is possible that Sincil Dyke, which runs to the east of the site, was constructed as a catch-water drain in the Roman period. This would have limited flooding of the area, and protected Ermine Street and developments along its eastern edge (Hill, 1965).

In the post-Roman era, an influx of Danish settlers in the 9th/10th centuries gave the

city an impetus for growth, bringing a new population and trade contacts, and founding workshops and kilns in the lower Roman town, and its southern suburbs, which were close to the current site. The city also served as a mint from the later 9th century, one of the largest in England by the early 11th century (Jones 1993, Sawyer 1998).

By the Norman Conquest, Lincoln was a thriving, densely occupied community of around 12,000 people (Sawyer, 1998), which extended along the former Roman road and it is probable that the development site was occupied by housing, or at least by back yards and rubbish pits associated with housing fronting onto the High street, throughout the medieval period. The wealth of the early medieval town was based largely on the production and export of cloth, and wool from the vast flocks of sheep that were grazed on the expansive heaths outside of the city. In 1367, however, the Wool Staple was transferred to Boston, which, combined with the expansion of the Flemish cloth trade in the 14th century and the advent of the Black Death in 1347, caused Lincoln to enter a period of decline (Jones, 1993). This problem was compounded by excessive taxation during the Hundred Years War (Hill, 1965).

Gradual revival and repopulation of the city did not begin until the late 17th century, a process rapidly accelerated by the arrival of the railway in 1846. This allowed the growth of a large heavy engineering industry throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, (Kemp, 1993) which resulted in the establishment of working class terraced housing estates in the area of the development site between 1850 and 1945.

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

5.0 Methodology

The site was visited on September 5th 2003, when the foundation trenches were excavated for the new building. This work was undertaken using a mini-excavator fitted with a 0.65m wide bucket. Work began at the north side of the site and continued southwards, followed by the trench for the south wall.

The foundation trenches were generally 0.7m wide and between 0.8 and 1.9m deep. This work was monitored continuously to ensure that any archaeological features exposed were identified and recorded. Simon Savage carried out the fieldwork.

The archaeological fieldwork entailed the cleaning by hand of 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

Over the majority of the site, the excavations for footing trenches did not exceed 1m in depth. The uppermost layer of material was a very dark greyish brown dirty sand material (001), which contained occasional brick and tile and pottery of a Victorian or modern date, as well as a single sherd of 16th/17th century Frechen stoneware. The upper part of this material was mixed with very modern material, which had been left over from the recent site clearance. Layer 001 was generally 0.5-0.6m in thickness and was interpreted as a Victorian levelling layer.

Layer 001 sealed a buff coloured fine silty sand (002), 0.2-0.3m in thickness, which was interpreted as a buried topsoil. This produced a fragment of 12th/13th century roof tile and a sherd of Lincoln Glazed Ware of 13th/14th century date

Layer 002 in turn sealed a mid orange/brown mottled sand interpreted as the underlying natural in this area, 003.

Two large cut features were seen within the footprint of the new development. The first of these was [005], a ditch some 3m in width and 0.8m deep, which crossed the site from west to east and was seen in the western wall foundation trench and also in that for the partition wall. It seems likely that this feature was linear as its sides were parallel in the two places exposed, however it was not seen in the trench for the eastern wall, suggesting that it terminated in this area. Ditch [005] contained two fills separated by a thin sand lens. The primary fill was 006; a very dark grey silty sand containing occasional charcoal flecks, brick and tile fragments and some limestone chunks. This deposit appeared to rest primarily against the south side of the feature, possibly indicating deliberate dumping of waste from this side of the ditch. Pottery from this context dated 12th to 14th centuries. The secondary fill, 004, was a dark olive brown slightly silty sand also containing charcoal flecks, brick, tile and some limestone fragments. Tile fragments dated the context to the mid 12th to mid 13th century.

On the south side of the site, a further large feature was observed. This was seen in all three of the N-S oriented foundation trenches and appeared to be a large pit. This pit, [007], occupied the southern third of the development footprint, and went beyond the foundation trenches to the south. Pit [007] was some 2m deep and as no difference could be discerned between this and 001, it appears this was all filled as part of a general levelling process. The size of this pit, and its location in a gap in the housing pattern suggest that it was probably the quarry from which sand was extracted for the construction of the Victorian terraced houses of Queen Street, and it was only filled as part of the general levelling activity in this area on completion of this housing.

7.0 Discussion and conclusion

Some features of archaeological significance were exposed by the watching brief. The ditch [005] dates from the 12th - 14th century and appears to cut a buried soil of a similar date. This would suggest that the area was under cultivation, possibly as a garden plot associated with medieval buildings fronting onto the High Street to the west. The ditch is most likely to represent a land division feature, possibly extending



001

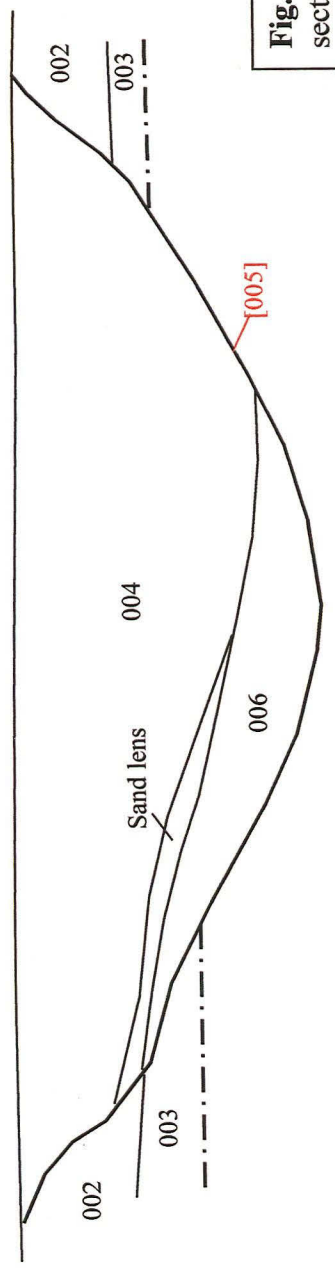
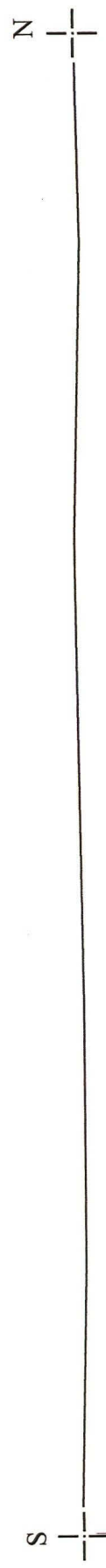


Fig. 3: East facing section through [005]



001

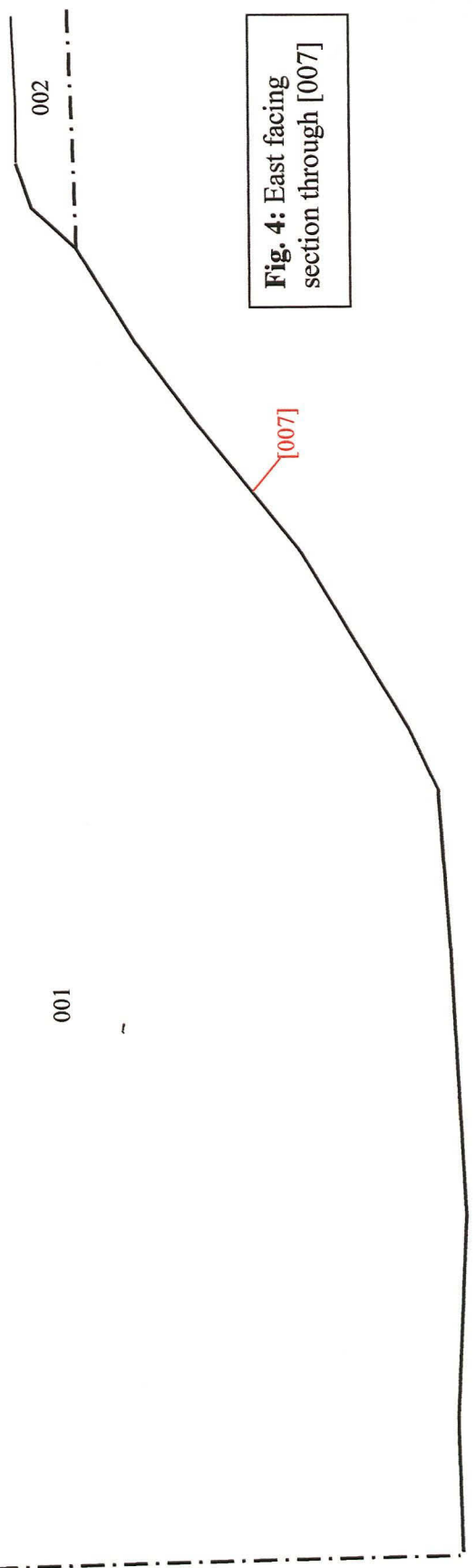


Fig. 4: East facing section through [007]

eastwards from High Street, approximately 150m to the west, and terminating within the development area.

The watching brief also exposed a large pit, which was interpreted as a sand extraction pit associated with the construction of Victorian terrace housing along Queen Street, as it had been filled by levelling deposit 001, the uppermost deposit on the site.

8.0 Effectiveness of methodology

The methodology employed allowed the presence/absence, the depth and dating of archaeological features to be ascertained, albeit limited to deposits seen within narrow foundation trenches.

9.0 Acknowledgements

Pre-Construct Archaeology (Lincoln) would like to thank K Walsh Construction for this commission and the assistance provided by the groundworkers of K & A Builders (Lincoln) Ltd. during the course of the watching brief.

10.0 References

- British Geological Survey, 1973. *Lincoln. England and Wales Sheet 114. Solid and Drift Geology. 1:50000 Series*. Keyworth, Nottingham: British Geological Survey
- Hill J.W.F., 1965, *Medieval Lincoln*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge
- Jones M.J., 1993, 'Anglo-Saxon Lincoln', in Bennett S. & Bennett B., *An Historical Atlas of Lincoln*, pp.24-5, The University of Hull Press, Hull
- Jones M.J., 2002, *Roman Lincoln. Conquest, Colony & Capital*, Tempus Publishing Ltd., Stroud
- Kemp S.J., 1993, 'Evolving Lincoln', in Bennett S. & Bennett B., *An Historical Atlas of Lincoln*, pp.132-3, The University of Hull Press, Hull
- Sawyer P., 1998, *Anglo-Saxon Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire III, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln
- Todd M., 1991, *The Coritani*, Duckworth, London
- Whitwell J.B, 1992, *Roman Lincolnshire*, History of Lincolnshire Committee, Lincoln

11.0 Site archive

The documentary archive for the site is 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 2004.107.

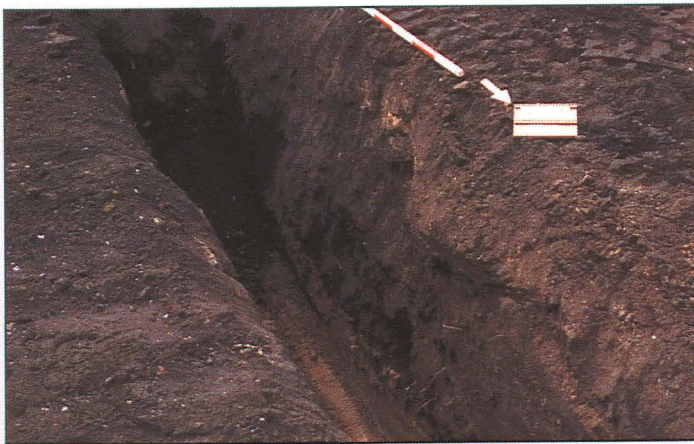
APPENDIX 1: Colour Plates



Pl. 1: General view of the development area, looking south-south-east



Pl. 2: Section showing ditch [005], looking west



Pl. 3: Section showing quarry pit [007], looking south-south-east

APPENDIX 2: Pottery and tile report

Pottery Archive QNSL03

Jane Young

context cname	full name	form type	sherds	weight	decoration	part	description	date
001	FREC Frechen stoneware	drinking jug	1	17		handle		late 16th to 17th
002	LSW2/3 13th to 15th century Lincoln Glazed Ware	small jug	1	67	all round basal thumbing	base	white internal deposit	mid 13th to early/mid 14th
006	LSW1 12th century Lincoln Glazed ware	jug	1	5		BS		mid 12th to early/mid 13th
006	LSWA Lincoln Glazed ware Fabric A	jug?	1	25		base		12th to 14th

Tile Archive QNSL03

Jane Young

context	cname	full name	fabric	sub type	frags	weight	description	date
002	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	7		1	87	medieval flat roofer	mid 12th to early/mmid 13th
004	NIB	nibbed tile	1	1/2	1	128	left corner	mid 12th to early/mmid 13th
004	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	7		1	131	medieval flat roofer	mid 12th to early/mmid 13th
004	PNR	Peg, nib or ridge tile	7		1	294	medieval flat roofer;mortar	mid 12th to early/mmid 13th
004	STILE	Stone tile			1	131		-

APPENDIX 3: List of archaeological contexts

<i>Context</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
001	Layer	Early modern deposit – Victorian levelling deposit, also fills quarry pit 007
002	Layer	Medieval buried soil horizon?
003	Layer	Natural sand
004	Fill	Upper fill of ditch 005
005	Cut	Cut for probable boundary ditch, contains 004, 006
006	Fill	Primary fill of ditch 005
007	Cut	Probable Victorian sand extraction pit