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RESULTS OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRIAL TRENCH EVALUATION: ON LAND OFF NETTLEHAM ROAD, LINCOLN, LINCOLNSHIRE



PLANNING APPLICATION: PRE-PLANNING EVALUATION

SITE CODE: NRL03 ACCESSION NO.: LCNCC 2003.374 MOULP 1153 NGR: SK 9890 7394 May 2004

COMMISSIONED BY:

LINDSEY SECURITIES LTD. 465 High Street Lincoln LN5 8JB

PREPARED BY

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Conservation Services

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Highways & Planning Directorate

CONTENTS

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SUM	SUMMARY			
2.0	SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION	.3		
3.0	PLANNING BACKGROUND	.3		
4.0	ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND	.4		
5.0	AIMS	.5		
6.0	METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS	.6		
7.0	CONCLUSIONS	.9		
8.0	FIGURES	10		
9.0	PLATES	11		
APPE	NDIX A: CONTEXT SUMMARY	12		

SUMMARY

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- 1.1 Lindsey Securities of Lincoln are proposing to develop 9ha of agricultural land adjoining the Safeway store off Nettleham Road, Lincoln. The site is located within the boundaries of Lincoln City Council and West Lindsey District Council. Prior to applying for planning consent, Lindsey Securities have commissioned a pre-planning archaeological investigation of the site.
- 1.2 Following discussions with Lincoln City Archaeologist and the Archaeological Advisor to West Lindsey District Council, a programme of archaeological work is to be undertaken prior to the submission of an outline planning application.
- 1.3 The first stage of fieldwork proposed was field-walking, geophysical survey and an augur survey. The geophysical survey identified that there are a number of anomalies, some of which are considered to be of archaeological potential. The type of features represented were a sub-rectangular enclosure, possible field boundaries and possible track way. In comparison, the field walking survey suggested that there was a dearth of pottery material. However, this may indicate rural, isolated settlement rather than high status occupation.
- 1.4 The augur survey showed fairly shallow deposits. Results suggest that the Roaring Meg may have changed course slightly over time which may be attributed to drainage in the early 19th century.
- 1.5 The trial trench evaluation recorded a number of linear ditches and some postholes. The date range for these features suggests that the site was occupied possibly from the Iron Age through to the medieval period. Sherds of Iron Age pottery were recovered from the site, along with Roman greyware from one archaeological feature. The amount of cultural material recovered from the fills of features suggests low level occupation. The use of deep ploughing to a depth of 0.5m appears to have destroyed many of the features alluded to by the geophysical survey.

2.0 SITE LOCATION & DESCRIPTION

2.1 The site is located on the northern side of Lincoln approximately 5km northeast of the city centre. The site lies partially within the boundaries of West Lindsey District Council with the majority of the site within Lincoln City Councils' boundary. The site is located on the southern side of the A46 bypass with agricultural land to the south (see Figure 1). The development area is centred on NGR SK 9890 7394 and lies at an approximate altitude of between 40-45m AOD. Surface soils at the site are well drained brown calcareous earths over limestone brash.

3.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

3.1 Lindsey Securities Ltd. is seeking to develop approximately 9ha of agricultural land off Nettleham Road, Lincoln. Following discussions with the City Archaeologist, Lincoln City Council and the Archaeological Advisor to West Lindsey District Council, a programme of archaeological works was proposed to prior to the submission of an outline planning application. This included field-

walking, geophysical survey and augur survey. The results of the first stage archaeological evaluation suggested that remains relating possibly to the prehistoric and to the Roman period were present.

- 3.2 Following discussions with the relevant archaeological advisors to the District/City Council, a second stage trial trench evaluation was undertaken in order to define the date, depth, condition, nature and concentration of archaeological features identified by the previous surveys.
- 3.2 A specification was prepared for the fieldwork and the subsequent reporting on the results was undertaken according to the specification agreed and within nationally recognised archaeological guidelines including:

Management of Archaeological Projects (English Heritage 1991); Code of Conduct (Institute of Field Archaeologists 1999); Standard and Guidance for Archaeological Field Evaluation (IFA 1994); Lincolnshire Archaeological Handbook (LCC 1998).

3.3 The fieldwork was undertaken by Martin Griffiths BA (Hons), AIFA and Mark Chambers FRICS in April 2004. This report has been written and prepared by both parties.

4.0 ARCHAEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The earliest archaeological remains identified close to the site are prehistoric in date. Archaeological evaluation immediately adjacent and to the south of the site has recorded prehistoric flint tools ranging from Mesolithic to Bronze Age date (Trimble 1999, SMR 70267 & 70268).
- 4.2 In addition, two circular crop marks interpreted as round barrows are recorded and are located within the western part of the site itself (SMR 70068 & 70069). A prehistoric barbed and tanged arrowhead has been recorded 500m to the west (Hockley 1992). All these remains suggest a human presence during the Bronze Age.
- 4.3 A watching brief undertaken during development to the south recorded an eastwest aligned ditch thought to be of Roman date or earlier (SMR 70228).
- 4.4 Archaeological evaluation and excavation to the south of the site has suggested continuity of settlement through the Iron Age (SMR 70271) along with the presence of Roman remains. Of most interest were the excavations undertaken in 1950-2 along the line of the Roman aqueduct (SMR 70013) which is thought to lead to the spring known as the Roaring Meg. Ten stone piers along with a platform were identified along with a pool fed by the Roaring Meg spring. The range of artefacts retrieved suggested a long established period of activity, dating from the late 1st century AD through to the late 4th century AD.
- 4.5 Prior to construction of the Safeway supermarket to the southwest, an archaeological evaluation was undertaken in 1993. The evaluation rediscovered the Roman aqueduct and two undated ditches (Donel 1993a). The subsequent

watching brief maintained during ground works did not record any further archaeological remains (Donel 1993b).

- 4.6 Evaluation undertaken to the immediate south and adjacent to the development site, recorded activity related to occupation during the Roman period, adjacent to the aqueduct and Roaring Meg spring (Trimble 1999). Elsewhere within the site trial trench investigation of anomalies identified through geophysical survey and aerial photography generally failed to locate any evidence of archaeologically significant remains (Trimble 1999, p.1). Later remains dating to the Saxon and medieval periods were also recorded (SMR 70270 & 70269).
- 4.7 Archaeological evaluation undertaken to the east of Nettleham Road recorded no archaeological features. Anomalies highlighted by geophysical survey were found to be natural undulations in the subsoil or agricultural activity (M & M Archaeological Services 2003)
- 4.8 Historically the site lies within Nettleham parish, although at present it straddles Nettleham parish (West Lindsey District) and Longdales (Lincoln City). The name Nettleham derives from the Old English *netel* and *hām*. 'Netel' represents nettles, which is thought to be indicative of a place past human settlement and 'ham' meaning settlement (Cameron 1998).
- 4.9 Nettleham is first mentioned historically in the Domesday Survey of 1086AD. Queen Edith, Gilbert of Ghent and Bishop Remigius are listed as holders of land. Twenty-eight villagers, 12 smallholders and 1 freeman resided in the parish (Morris 1986).
- 4.10 Cartographic evidence suggests that the site has generally been agricultural land during the post-medieval period. The enclosure plan and award for Nettleham parish dated 1777 & 1778 respectively show that the majority of the site was once part of a larger field divided by a stream and pond at the eastern extent, under the ownership of Robert Obbinson Gen. (see Figure 3).
- 4.11 By 1816, a drain had replaced the stream (Roaring Meg) as shown on a survey of this date (Figure 4). A plantation is shown at the western extents.
- 4.12 By the early 20th century, the Ordnance Survey 2nd Edition 6" Series shows the site much the same.

5.0 AIMS

The aims of the evaluation trenching were to:

- a) to identify past human activity on the site;
- b) to confirm and investigate areas of geophysical anomalies and blank areas, as well as assess the archaeological potential on the site;
- c) to report on the results of the evaluation trenches and place them within their Local, Regional or National context

6.0 METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

- 6.1 Fourteen trenches were located over anomalies recorded in the geophysical survey and apparent blank areas (see Figures 2 & 2a). The location and size of the trenches was defined during a meeting with the appropriate archaeological advisors to the District and City Councils.
- 6.2 A mechanical excavator fitted with a toothless ditching bucket was used. The topsoil removed during soil stripping was kept separate and mounded at a safe distance away from the trench. The soil excavated from the trenches was used to backfill them following completion of the fieldwork. No specialist reinstatement was undertaken. Topsoil removal was monitored by a qualified archaeologist and excavation ceased once the first archaeological horizon was reached. The trenches were cleaned by hand and photographed prior to any hand excavation.

6.3 TRENCH 1 – 20m x 1.6m (Figure 5 & Plate 3)

- 6.3.1 Trench 1 was located to investigate two parallel northeast-southwest aligned linear features identified by the geophysical survey. The earliest recorded material comprised a yellow brown natural degraded limestone (102) which was considered to be natural geology. Cut into the natural geology were feint traces of tracks, probably created from agricultural machinery sinking into the underlying soils. These had caused the anomaly recorded.
- 6.3.2 The topsoil (101) sealed these features and was a dark grey brown silty loam measuring 0.5m in depth. No archaeological features were recorded.

6.4 TRENCH 2 - 20m x 1.6m (Figure 5 & Plate 4)

6.4.1 Trench 2 was located over a feint circular anomaly which enclosed a square enclosed area identified by the geophysical survey. On excavation, it was revealed that this response was caused by the presence of a series of plough marks cutting into the natural geology, located 0.5m below the present ground surface. The furrows had been cut through the natural geology of a grey white degraded limestone (202). Topsoil (201) comprised a dark grey brown silty loam 0.5m in depth. No archaeological features were present.

6.5 TRENCH 3 - 20m x 1.6m (Figure 6 & Plate 5)

- 6.5.1 Trench 3 was excavated across a geophysical anomaly shown on the survey as being similar in shape and form to the anomalies located within Trench 2. The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.55m whereupon a grey white degraded limestone (302) with occasional orange sand deposits present in natural undulations was encountered. This represents the natural geology.
- 6.5.2 The natural geology was sealed by a layer of topsoil (301), consisting of a dark grey brown silty loam and showed evidence of deep ploughing. No archaeological features were present.
- 6.6 TRENCH 4 20m x 1.6m (Figure 6 & Plate 6)
- 6.6.1 Trench 4 was located to investigate the western edge of a large enclosure type anomaly and a smaller circular anomaly. The trench was excavated to a depth

of 0.5m where a light/mid brown sandy limestone (402) was found. This was considered to be the natural geology. A natural fissure of red orange firm clay silt (403) lying north south was recorded and this natural feature was the probable reason for the geophysical anomaly recorded. The natural was covered by dark grey brown silty loam topsoil (401).

- 6.7 TRENCH 5 40m x 1.6m (Figure 7 & Plate 7-10)
- 6.7.1 Trench 5 was aligned parallel with the spring in order to investigate linear anomalies identified by the geophysical survey.
- 6.7.2 The trench was excavated to a depth of 0.45m, through the plough soil and down onto the yellow brown natural limestone (502). A large, possibly circular, ditch [503] was recorded in the western half of the trench and the area was widened to reveal the shape of the ditch as far as possible. A single fill of a grey brown silty soil (504) containing late 3rd to 4th century Roman grey ware pottery was recorded in the two sections (A,A1 & B, B1). These were excavated to reveal the profile of the ditch and obtain dating material. A 0.45m layer of dark grey brown silty loam made up the topsoil (501) and sealed the fill of [503]. A feature confirmed as a geotechnical test pit [505] was seen in Trench 5. Partial excavation revealed modern material redeposited during 2003.
- 6.8 TRENCH 6 20m x 1.6m (Figure 8 & Plate 11)

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- 6.8.1 Trench 6 was 20m x 1.6m and contained no archaeological features. It has been located to investigate a circular and linear anomaly identified by the geophysical survey.
- 6.8.2 It was excavated to the natural geology, comprising the grey white limestone (602) at a depth of 0.48m. The top-soil (601) was a grey brown silty loam. The only features recorded were modern plough marks seen clearly below the top-soil.
- 6.9 TRENCH 7 20m x 1.6m (Figure 8 & Plate 12-13)
- 6.9.1 Trench 7 was located within an area which had not been surveyed. It was excavated to a depth of 0.45m through the plough soil. The natural geology (703) was reached at this depth. At the western end of the trench, an area of sandy sub-soil (702) filled a natural depression in the limestone. The sand (702) was sealed by dark grey brown topsoil (701) which showed evidence of deep ploughing.
- 6.9.2 A series of possible post holes were recorded cutting through the natural geology and were sectioned (A, A1 B, B1 C, C1 &D, D1). The post holes all contained similar deposits of a grey brown silty soil. No dating evidence was recovered from these deposits.
- 6.9.3 A linear stone filled field drain [704] lay north west south east across the trench, downhill towards the stream. This was filled by broken limestone pieces (705). There was no dating evidence found in the material to suggest a date for this field drain and there was no sign of it cutting the top-soil.

However, this could be explained by the extensive depth of ploughing across the site.

- 6.10 TRENCH 8 20m x 1.6m (Figure 9 & Plate 14)
- 6.10.1 Trench 8 was excavated to a depth of 0.6m where the natural geology of yellow brown limestone (802) was reached. Dark grey brown silty loam topsoil (801) lay directly onto the natural limestone.
- 6.10.2 The trench was located to investigate a small square enclosure within a larger four sided enclosure. However, no archaeological features were found although the top-soil contained an old roll of barbed wire.
- 6.11 TRENCH 9 20m x 1.6m (Figure 9 & Plate 15-16)
- 6.11.1 Trench 9 was excavated to investigate an area not covered by the geophysical survey. The earliest deposit recorded, was reached at a depth of 0.5m and comprised white fine silty clay (902). A sondage was excavated to a depth of 1.5m below top-soil. This material suggests a period of extended flooding possibly a pond or shallow depression.
- 6.11.2 The natural was sealed by a grey brown silty loam top-soil (901).
- 6.12 TRENCH 10 20m x 1.6m (Figure 10 & Plate 17-18)
- 6.12.1 Trench 10 was excavated to investigate a northeast-southwest aligned linear anomaly. Plough soil was removed to a depth of 0.5m onto the natural geology which comprised a red brown limestone (1002).
- 6.12.2 The natural limestone was cut by an L shaped feature [1003] which under excavation bore strong suggestions of an animal burrow. The feature was bowl shaped in section and contained a single fill of a grey silty soil (1004). The feature contained no archaeological material.
- 6.13 TRENCH 11 20m x 1.6m (Figure 10 & Plate 19-20)

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- 6.13.1 Trench 11 was excavated to investigate the eastern side of a large enclosure with a smaller enclosure within. The earliest deposit encountered was the natural geology which comprised yellow brown degraded limestone (1102) at a depth of 0.6m.
- 6.13.2 Cutting the natural geology, a northwest-southeast aligned ditch [1103] was revealed. This ditch was 2.25m wide and 1m deep; the eastern slope of the trench was steeper than the west side. The single fill of this feature was brown stony silty sand (1104). Pottery retrieved from this feature has been identified as Iron Age (Jane Young, pers. comm.).
- 6.13.3 The ditch feature was sealed by the grey brown silty loam top-soil.
- 6.14 TRENCH 12 20m x 1.6m (Figure 11 & Plates 21-22)
- 6.14.1 Trench 12 was excavated to investigate the western side of a large enclosure with traces of a smaller enclosure within. This was also investigated by Trench

11. The earliest deposit encountered was the natural geology which comprised a yellow brown limestone (1202) at a depth of 0.55m. A linear feature [1203] was lying northwest – southeast, cutting through the natural geology. On excavation the ditch was found to be 1.1m in depth with the western edge steeper than on the east side. The ditch contained a single fill of an orange sandy limestone mix (1204). No dateable finds were recovered from this material. The feature was sealed by a grey brown silty loam top-soil (1201).

6.15 TRENCH 13 - 30m x 1.6m (Figure 11 & Plate 23)

6.15.1 Trench 13 was excavated to investigate a square enclosure and largely blank area. The earliest deposit encountered was the natural geology which comprised orange brown limestone (1302) at a depth of 0.5m. No archaeological features were found in this trench although there were obvious signs of modern ploughing at regular intervals across the trench. The natural was sealed by a grey brown top-soil (1301).

6.16 TRENCH 14 - 30m x 1.6m (Figure 12 & Plate 24)

6.16.1 Trench 14 was excavated to investigate the western side of a large rectangular enclosure with a smaller enclosure adjacent. The earliest deposit encountered was the natural geology which comprised orange brown limestone (1402) at a depth of 0.5m below the plough-soil (1401). The only signs visible were of modern plough marks seen in many of the trenches.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS

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- 7.1 The geophysical anomalies recorded during the survey were investigated and recorded. They were found to be of either natural origin, or made by animal or modern human intervention on the site. Some of the anomalies appeared to be as a result of agricultural activity.
- 7.2 The geophysical survey had suggested that the site was densely covered by archaeological features comprising enclosures and linear features. However, this has not been proven by the field walking or the subsequent trial trench evaluation. Magnetometry survey can detect anomalies up to a depth of 1m; however, the anomalies can not be defined as true archaeological features until excavated.
- 7.3 On excavation the topsoil showed signs of deep ploughing in all trenches to an average depth of around 0.5m. The plough soil contained a substantial amount of the underlying natural limestone geology and therefore considered likely that modern ploughing to this depth had encroached on and destroyed shallow underlying archaeological remains.
- 7.4 The geophysical survey had suggested that dense remains existed across the site, although in their interpretation, these features were indicated as being of possible archaeological origin. It is considered most likely that the Magnetometry survey picked up the remnant magnetism that was left of archaeological features that had been ploughed away.

8.0 FIGURES

Figure 1. Site location plan.

Figure 2. Trench location plan.

Figure 2a. Trench location plan and suggested features seen in Geophysics results.

Figure 3. Enclosure plan for Nettleham Parish (1777).

Figure 4. Survey of 1816.

Figure 5. Trench 1 & 2 plan and section.

Figure 6. Trench 3 & 4 plan and section.

Figure 7. Trench 5 plan and section.

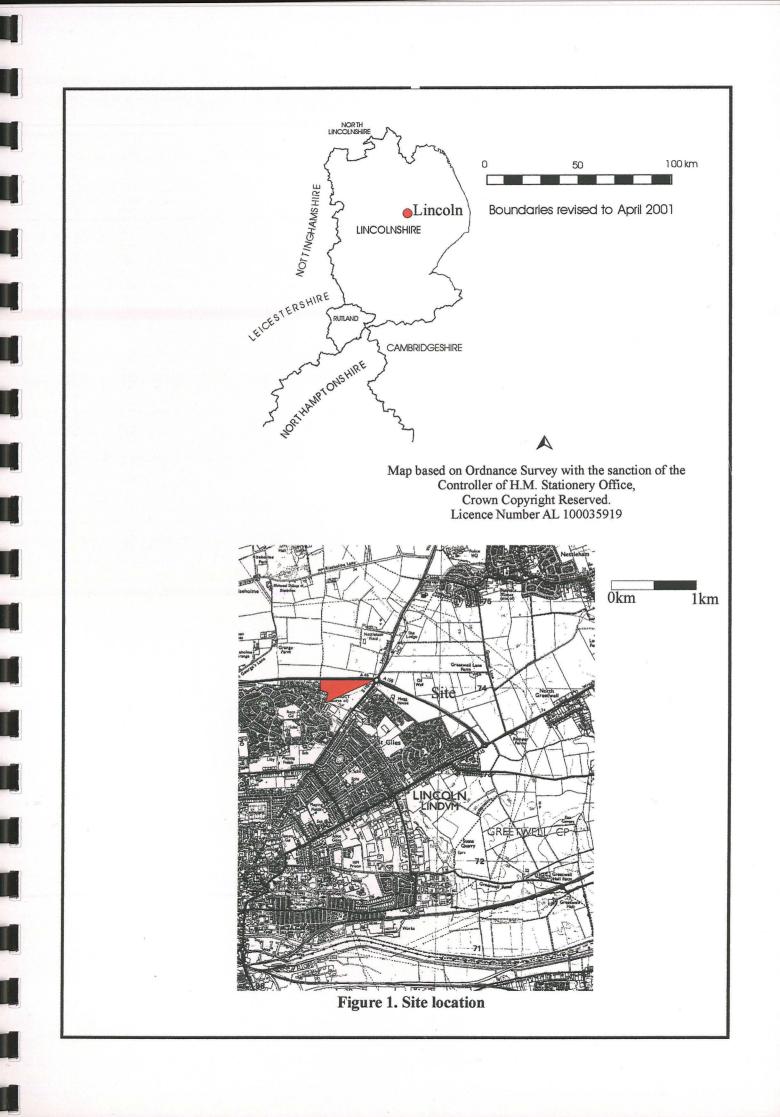
Figure 8. Trench 6 & 7 plan and section.

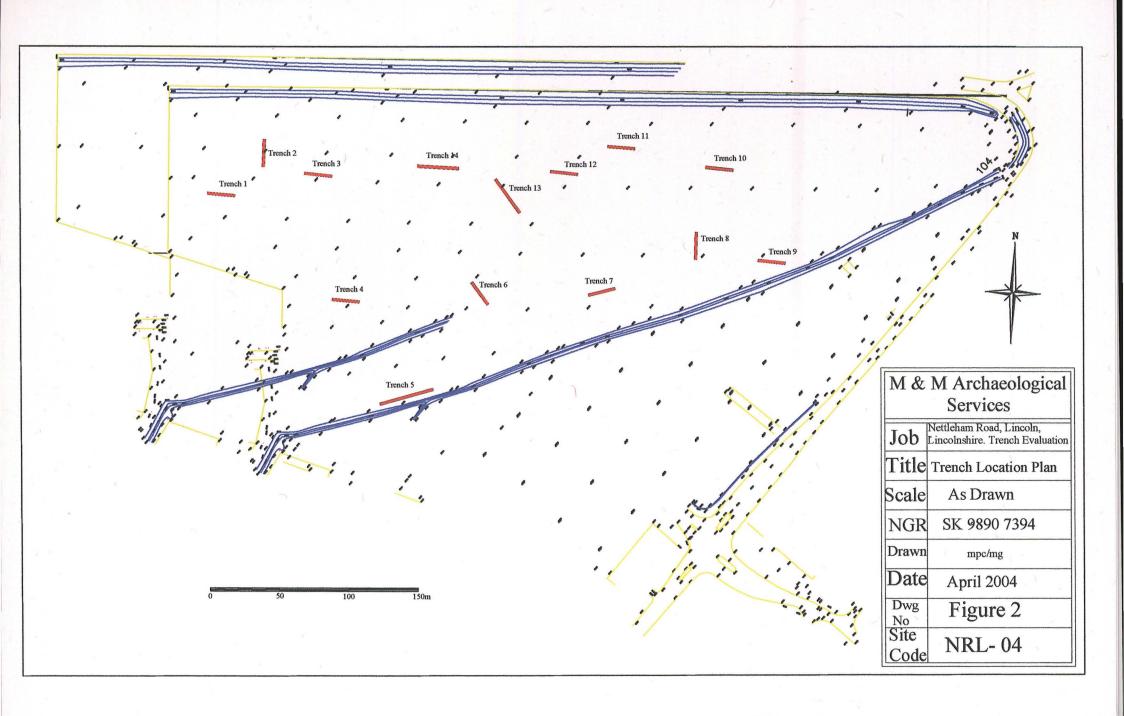
Figure 9. Trench 8 & 9 plan and section.

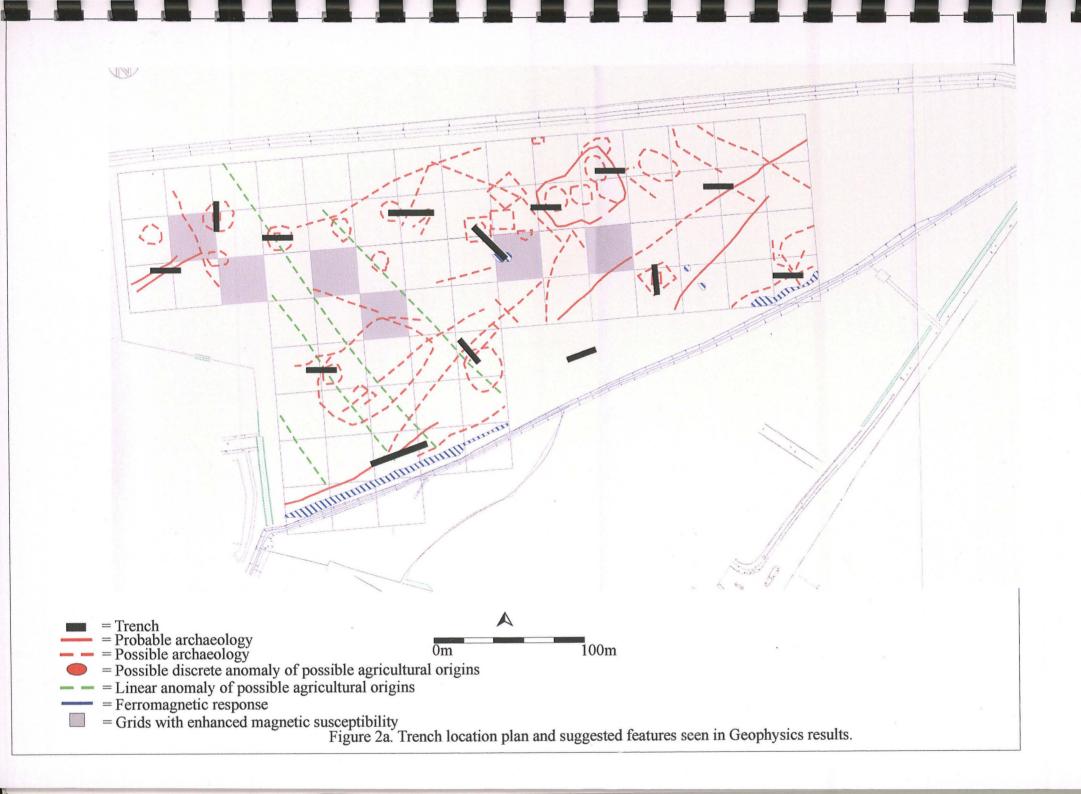
Figure 10. Trench 10 & 11 plan and section.

Figure 11. Trench 12 & 13 plan and section

Figure 12. Trench 14 plan and section.







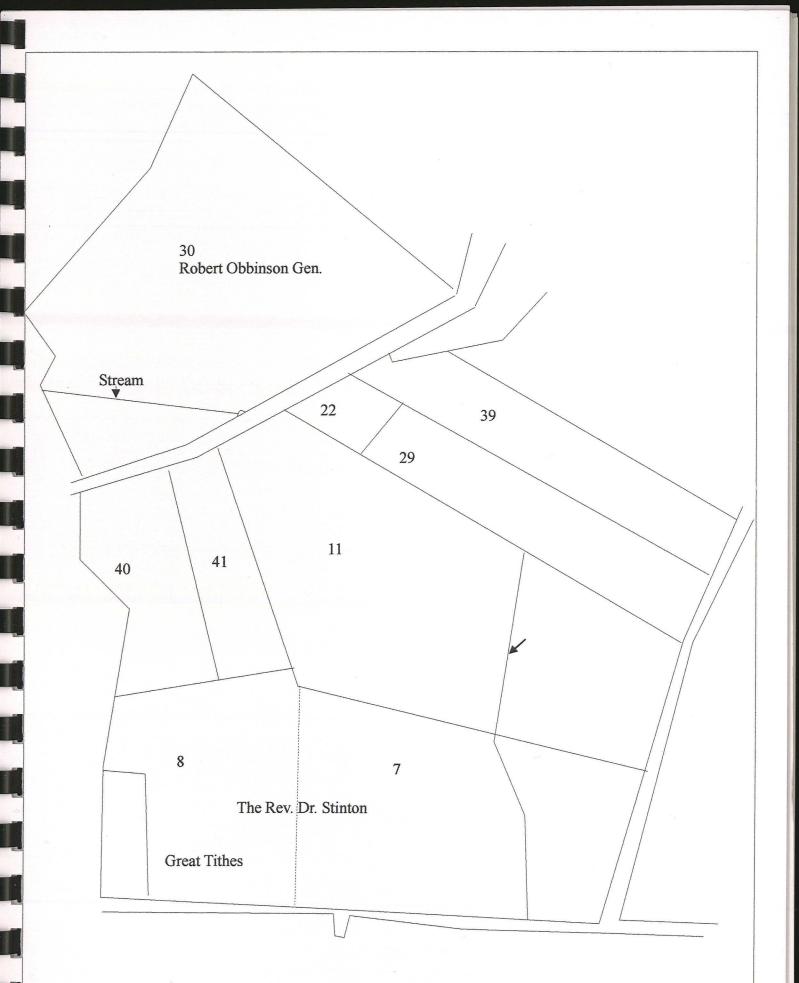
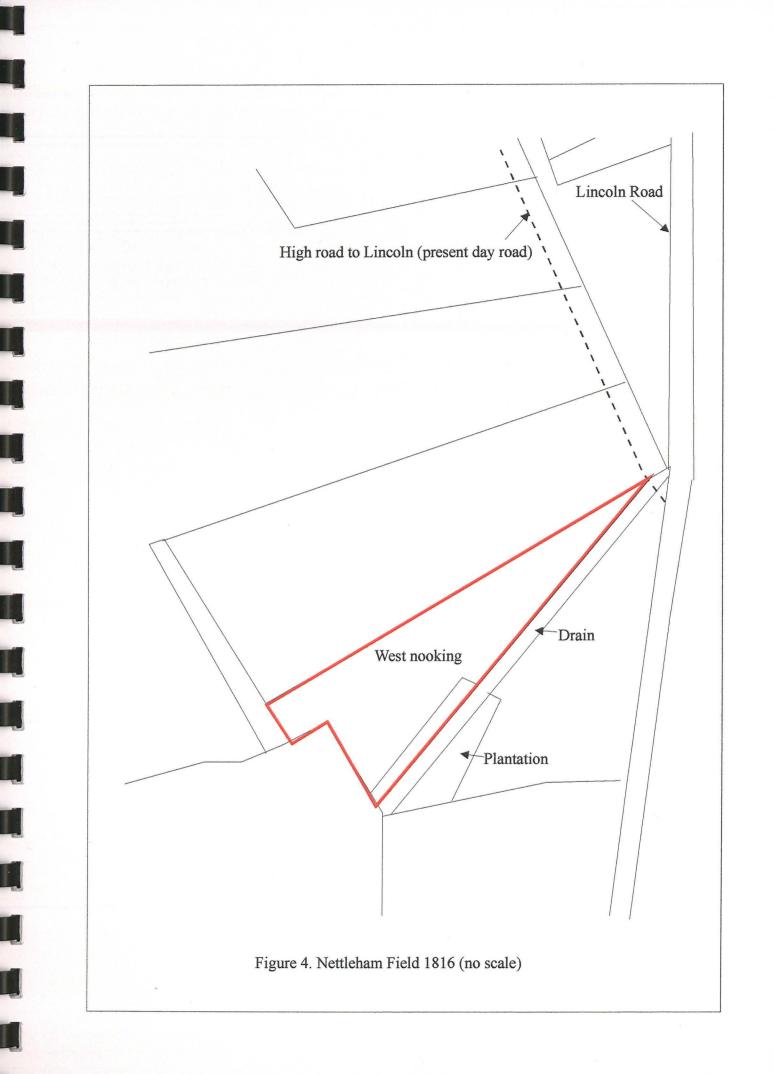
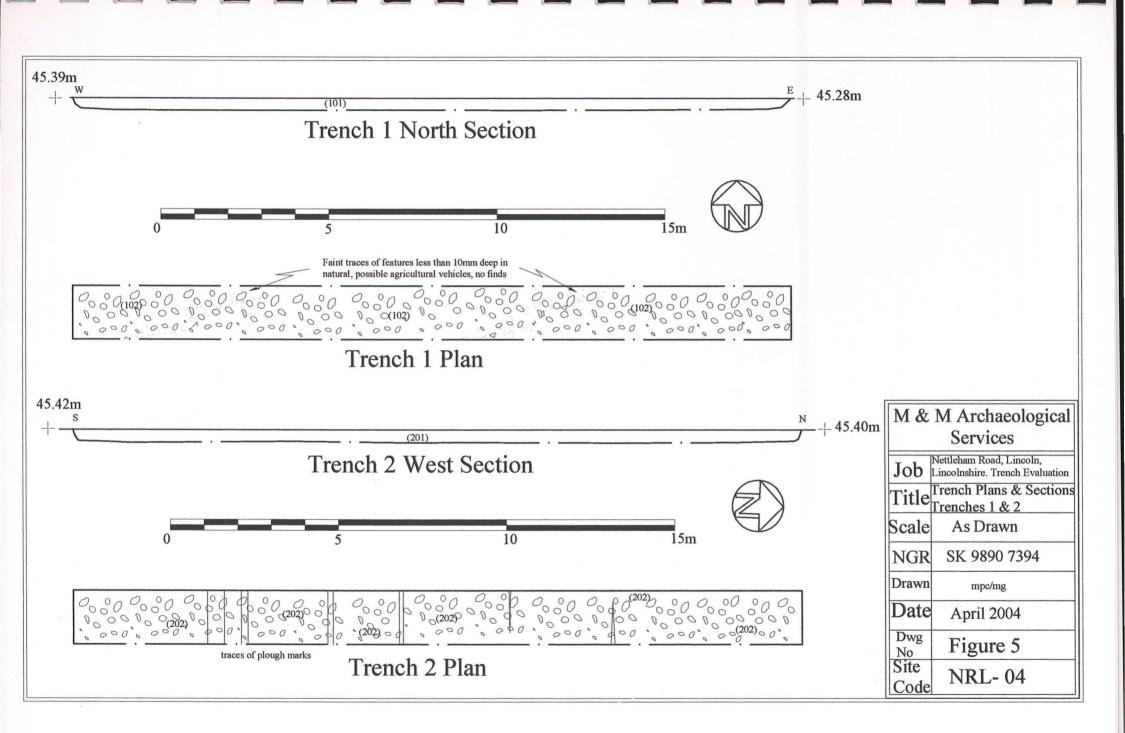
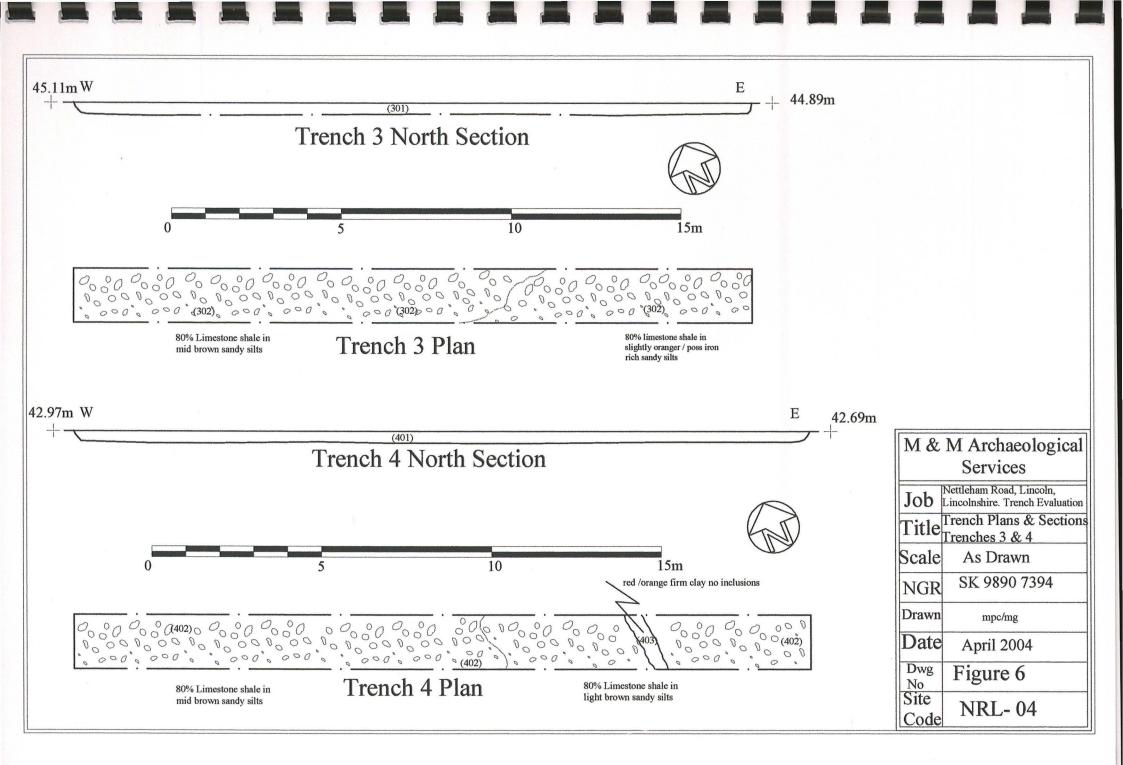
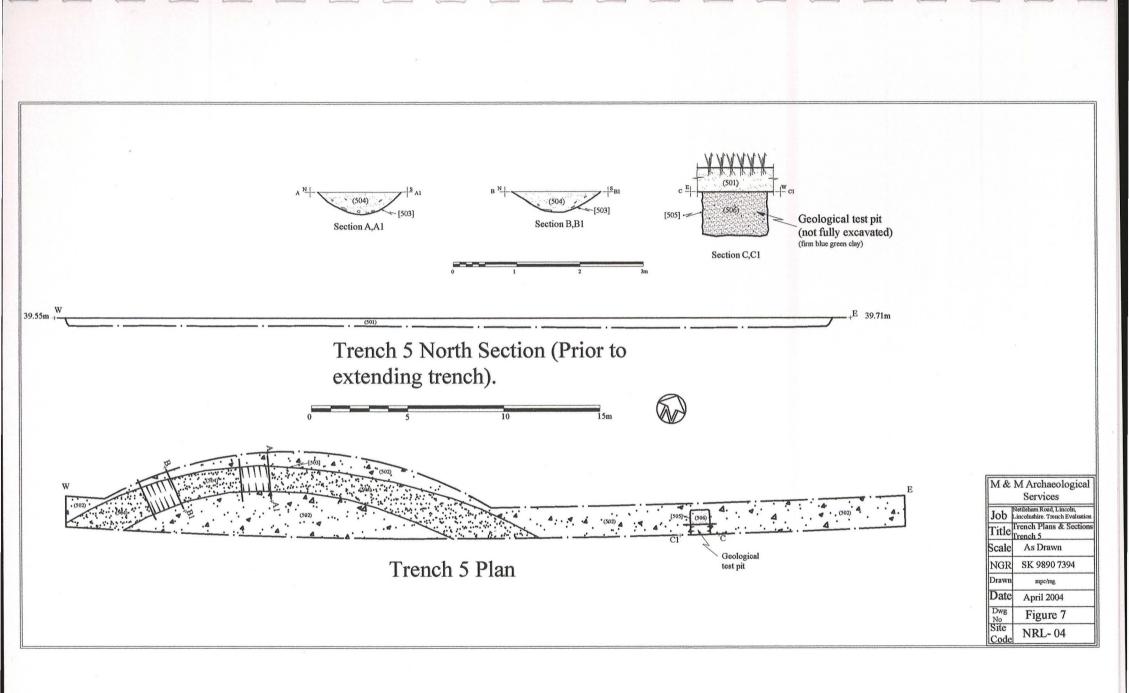


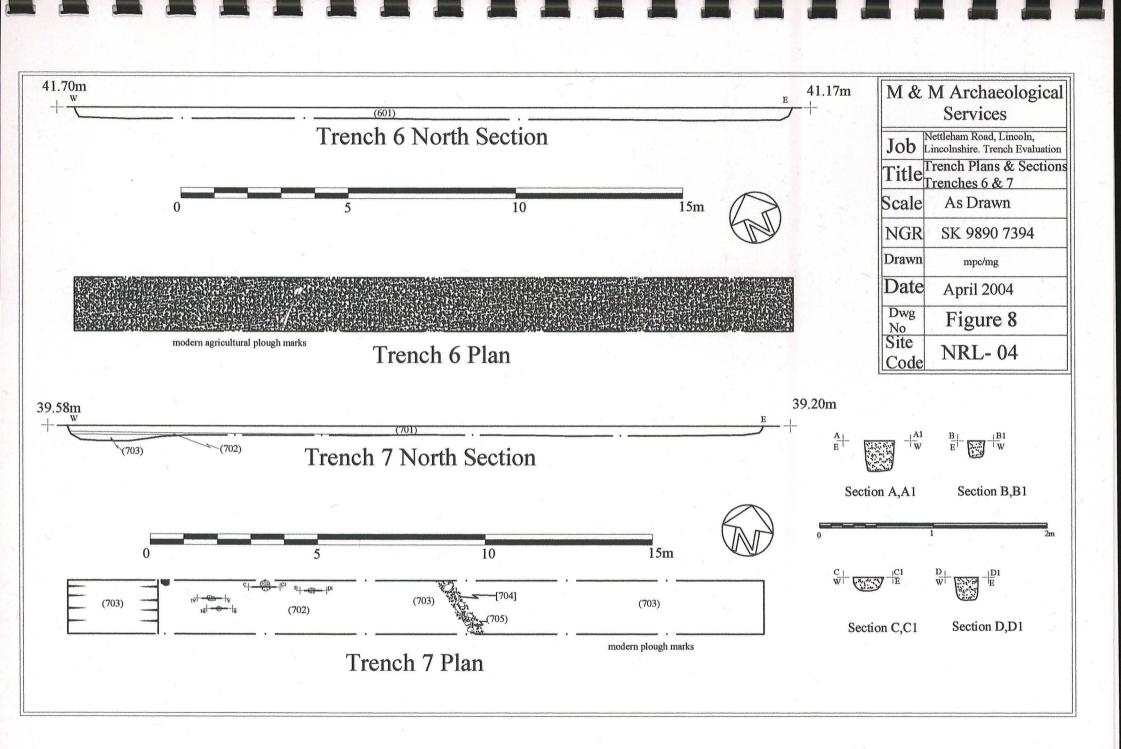
Figure 3. Nettleham Enclosure 1777

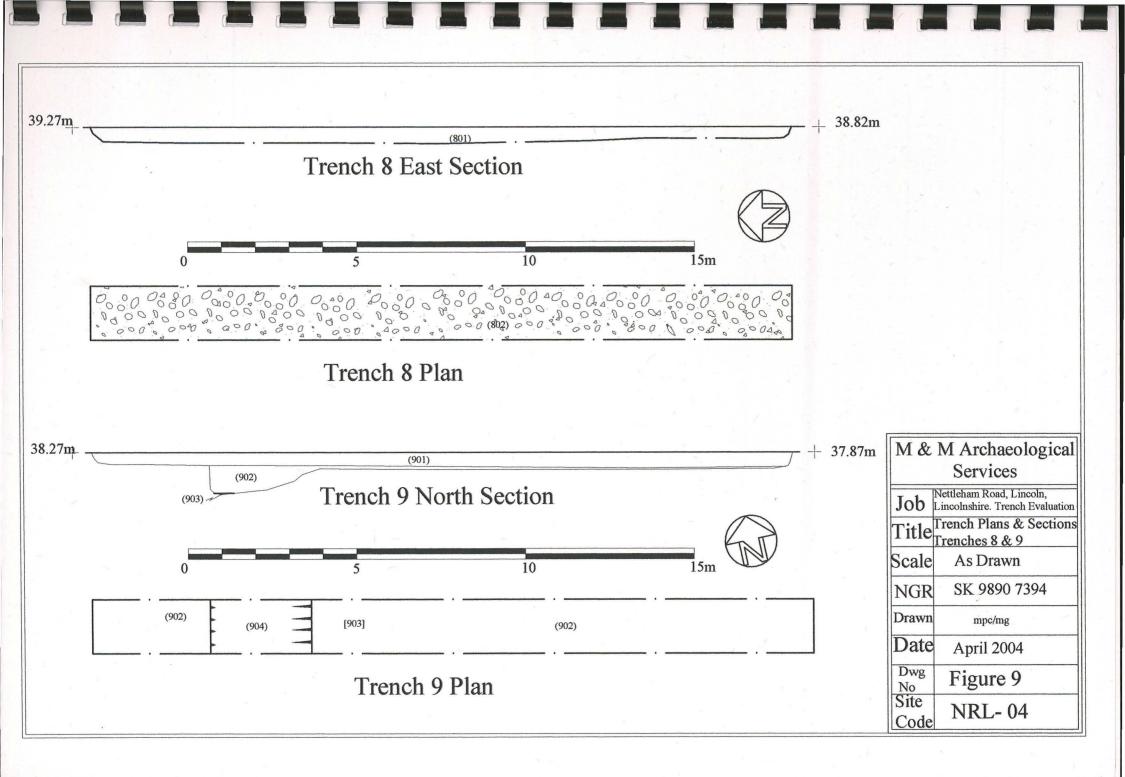


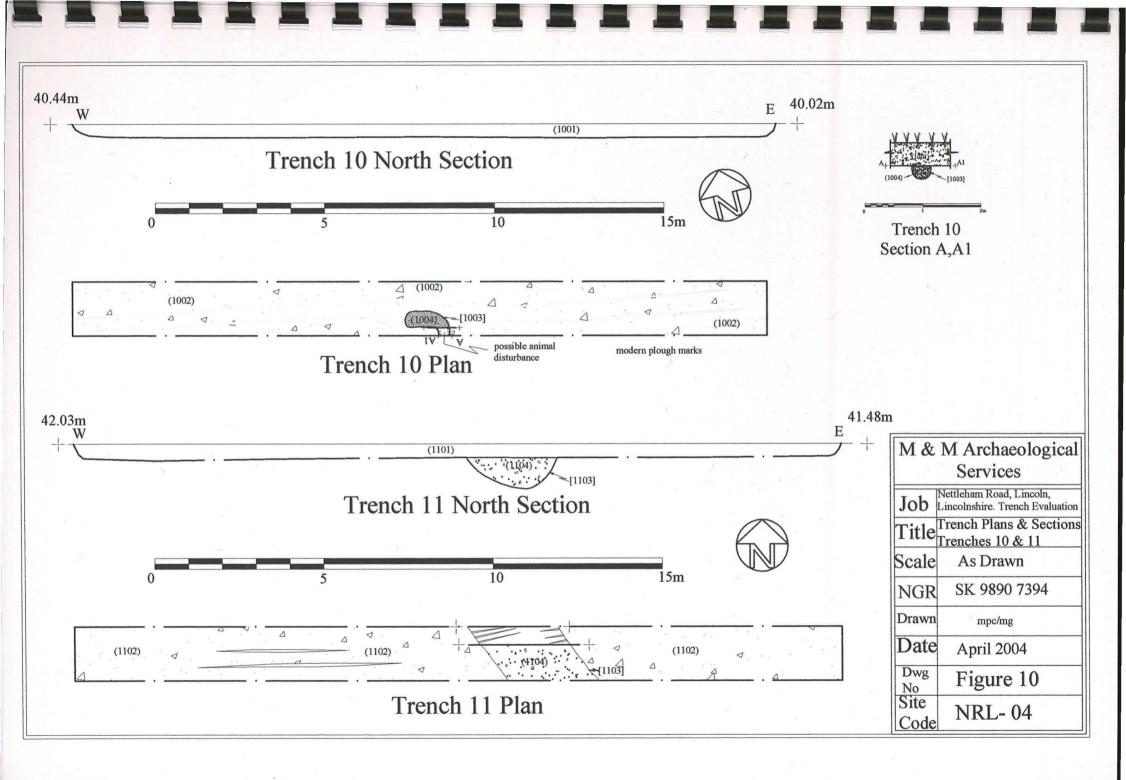


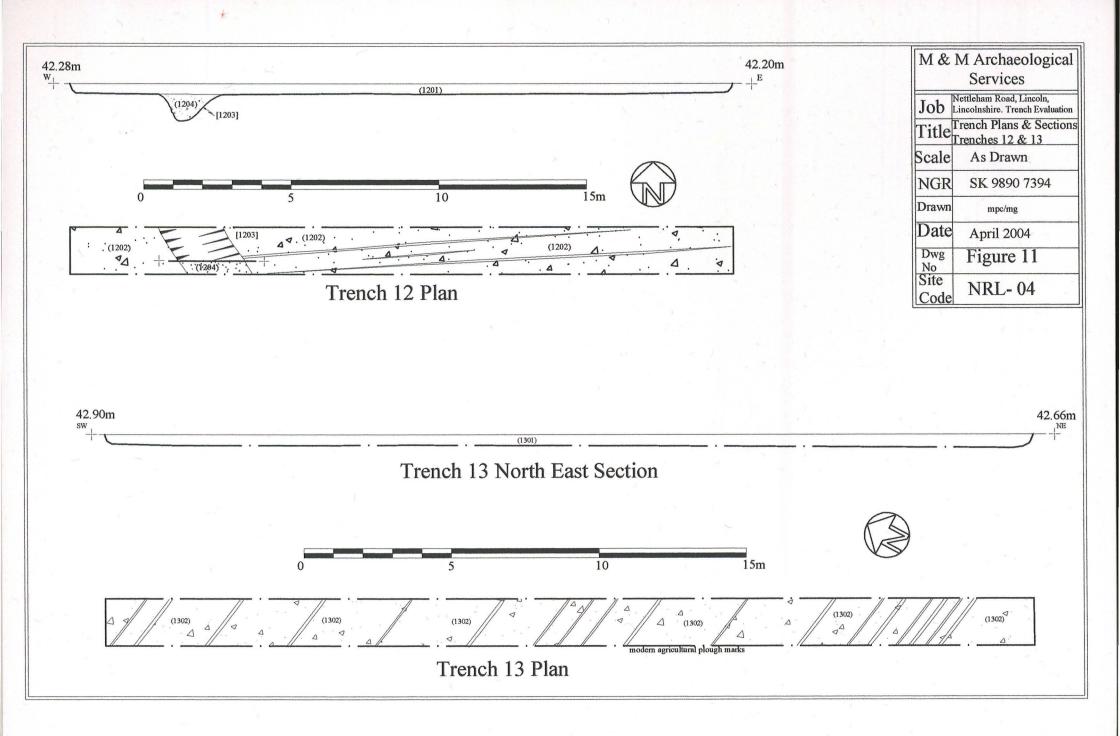


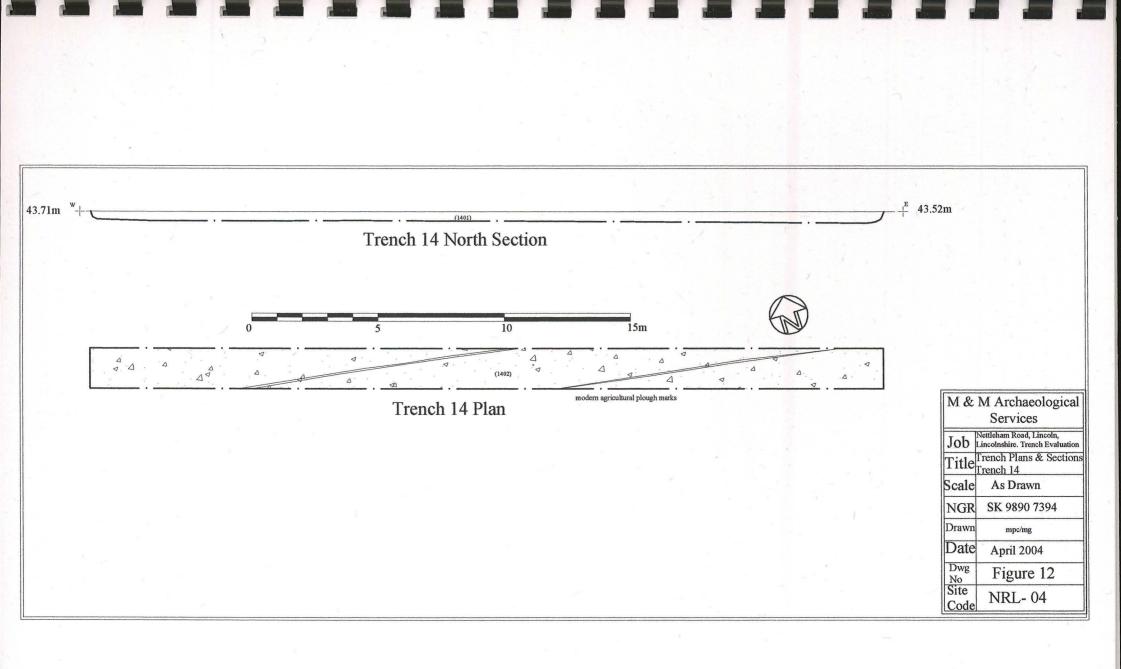












9.0 PLATES

Plate 1. Site looking northwest

Plate 2. Site looking northeast

- Plate 3. Trench 1
- Plate 4. Trench 2
- Plate 5. Trench 3
- Plate 6. Trench 4
- Plate 7. Trench 5, looking east

Plate 8. Trench 5 after extending showing linear feature

Plate 9. Trench 5 showing section through ditch A, A1

Plate 10. Trench 5 showing fill of cut [503]

Plate 11. Trench 6

Plate 12. Trench 7

Plate 13. Trench 7 looking west showing possible postholes

Plate 14. Trench 8 looking north

Plate 15. Trench 9 looking southeast

Plate 16. Trench 9 showing sondage

Plate 17. Trench 10 looking southeast

Plate 18. Trench 10 showing animal disturbance

Plate 19. Trench 11 looking east

Plate 20. Trench 11 showing section of linear [1103]

Plate 21. Trench 12 looking east

Plate 22. Trench 12 showing cut [1203]

Plate 23. Trench 13 looking southeast

Plate 24. Trench 14 looking southeast



Plate 1. Site looking north west.



Plate 2. Site looking north east.



Plate 3. Trench 1

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Plate 4. Trench 2





Plate 7. Trench 5 looking east.



Plate 8. Trench 5 after extending showing linear feature.



Plate 9. Trench 5 showing section through ditch A,A1.



Plate 10. Trench 5 showing fill of [503].



Plate 12. Trench 7 looking east.



Plate 13. Trench 7 looking west showing possible post-holes.



Plate 14. Trench 8 looking north.



Plate 15. Trench 9 looking south east.

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Plate 16. Trench 9 showing sondage.



Plate 17. Trench 10 looking south east.



Plate 18. Showing shallow feature, probably animal disturbance.



Plate 19. Trench 11 looking east.

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Plate 20 Trench 11 showing section of linear [1103].



Plate 21. Trench 12 looking east.



Plate 22. Trench 12 showing Cut [1203].



Plate 23. Trench 13 looking south east.

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Plate 24. Trench 14 looking south east.

APPENDIX A: CONTEXT SUMMARY

Context No.	Location	Description	Interpretation
101	Trench 1	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
102	Trench 1	Yellow brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology
201	Trench 2	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
202	Trench 2	Grey-white degraded limestone	Natural geology
301	Trench 3	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
302	Trench 3	Grey-white degraded limestone	Natural geology
401	Trench 4	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
402	Trench 4	Light, mid brown sandy limestone	Natural geology
403	Trench 4	Red-orange clay silt	Natural fissure
501	Trench 5	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
502	Trench 5	Yellow brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology
503	Trench 5	Linear cut	Ditch
504	Trench 5	Grey brown silty soil	Single fill of [503]
505	Trench 5	Square shaped cut	Geotechnical test Pit
506	Trench 5	Single fill	Backfill of [505]
601	Trench 6	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
602	Trench 6	Grey white degraded limestone	Natural geology
701	Trench 7	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
702	Trench 7	Brown sand	Subsoil
703	Trench 7	Yellow brown limestone	Natural geology
704	Trench 7	Linear cut	Field drain
705	Trench 7	Crushed limestone	Fill of [704]
801	Trench 8	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
802	Trench 8	Yellow brown limestone	Natural geology
901	Trench 9	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
902	Trench 9	White fine silty clay	?Pond/flood deposit
1001	Trench 10	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
1002	Trench 10	Red-brown limestone	Natural geology
1003	Trench 10	Shallow bowl shape cut	Animal burrow
1004	Trench 10	Grey silty soil	Single fill of [1003]
1101	Trench 11	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
1102	Trench 11	Yellow brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology
1103	Trench 11	Linear cut	Ditch
1104	Trench 11	Brown stony silty sand	Single fill of [1103]
1201	Trench 12	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
1202	Trench 12	Yellow brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology
1203	Trench 12	Linear cut	Ditch

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Context No.	Location	Description	Interpretation
1204	Trench 12	Orange sandy limestone	Single fill of [1203]
1301	Trench 13	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
1302	Trench 13	Orange brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology
1401	Trench 14	Dark, grey brown silty loam	Plough soil/topsoil
1402	Trench 14	Orange brown naturally degraded limestone	Natural geology