

SMR
MS/3



LINDSEY ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICES

Land off Kingsdown Road, Birchwood, Lincoln

NGR: SK9281 6913

Site Code: LKRB 04

LCNCC Museum Accn Code: 2005.1

Planning Application: 2003/0871/F

Archaeological Watching Brief

Report prepared for Stamford Homes Ltd

by G. Tann

LAS Report No. 796

March 2005

25 WEST PARADE · LINCOLN · LN1 1NW
TELEPHONE 01522 544554 · FACSIMILE 01522 522211 · EMAIL las@linarch.co.uk

Lindsey Archaeological Services LLP Registered in England and Wales No. OC304247
Registered address 25 West Parade · Lincoln · LN1 1NW

VAT Registration No. 819 8029 41

EVENT: L15876

INTERVENTION: L19958

EXCAVATION: L19959

negative

List of Figures and Plates

Contents

Figures

Fig. 1 Location of Sighthorn Lincoln IC based on the 1987 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet Explorer 372. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence No. AL 10002185.

List of Figures and Plates

Fig. 2 Location of Kingsdown Road, Lincoln IC based on the 1987 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map Sheet Explorer 372. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Licence No. AL 10002185.

Summary

1

Fig. 3 Layout of the new Development (reproduced at reduced scale from Standard Infrastructure Planning (SIP) No. 2225-10)

Introduction

1

Fig. 4 BAT CLAY (Date unspecified) P. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000

The Watching Brief

2

Conclusion

3

Fig. 5 Detail of the subject site in the context of the surrounding area. (Map No. 214/4a, February 1940)

Acknowledgements

3

Fig. 6 Detail of the subject site in the context of the surrounding area. (Map No. 214/4a, February 1940)

References

4

Fig. 7 Total plan of the subject site in the context of the surrounding area. (Map No. 214/4a, February 1940)

Archive Summary

4

Fig. 8 Very mixed land. (Map No. 214/4a, February 1940)

The Figures

The Plates



Land off Kingsdown Rd, Birchwood, Lincoln
Archaeological Watching Brief

List of Figures and Plates

LCNCS Museum Arch Code: 2005.1
Planning Application: 2013/0871/F

Figures

- Fig. 1** Location of Birchwood, Lincoln (C based on on the 1987 Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map, Sheet Explorer 272. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).
- Fig. 2** Location of Kingsdown Road, Lincoln (C based on the 1987 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, Sheet SK 96 NW. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).
- Fig. 3** Layout of the new Development (reproduced at reduced scale from Stafford Infrastructure Engineering dwg. no. 8285-1E).
- Fig. 4** RAF Skellingthorpe (reproduced from an Air Ministry plan, 1945).
- Fig. 5** Detail of the airfield close to the present Development Site (extract reproduced from Air Ministry plan 314/45, February 1945).

Plates

- Pl. 1** Vegetation cover on the development site prior to clearance.
- Pl. 2** To the south of the development area, concrete areas mark the positions of wartime aircraft servicing points (looking south).
- Pl. 3** Topsoil stripping for the access road revealed no archaeological features (looking south-east towards the school).
- Pl. 4** Very mixed sand deposits were noted across the site and in the house foundation trenches. The variations were interpreted as of natural origin.

Land off Kingsdown Rd, Birchwood, Lincoln

Archaeological Watching Brief

NGR: SK9281 6913

Site Code: LKRB 04

LCNCC Museum Accn Code: 2005.1

Planning Application: 2003/0871/F

Summary

Groundworks in advance of residential development of part of the former site of RAF Skellingthorpe revealed no features or finds of archaeological interest. Land drainage pipes were seen, but no trace of World War II airfield structures, runway or infrastructure remained. A plan of the airfield indicates that the development site was beside a runway.

Introduction

Lindsey Archaeological Services (LAS) was commissioned in October 2004 by Stamford Homes Ltd to conduct an archaeological watching brief during groundworks for a new residential development off Kingsdown Road, on Lincoln's Birchwood Estate. The watching brief was required by the City of Lincoln Council to fulfil a Condition on the planning permission.

Site Location and Description

The c.1.7ha development site is located east of the A46 Lincoln Relief Road, and north of its junction with Doddington Road (Figs. 1 and 2). Access to the site is from Kingsdown Road, on its north-east corner. The site was overgrown with saplings and rough vegetation, which were cleared when development began (Pl. 1).

Planning Background

Full planning permission was granted for residential development of the site, comprising 78 houses, with associated services and access road (Fig. 3). A condition attached to the Consent required an archaeological watching brief during groundworks.

A project design was prepared by LAS (dated October 14th 2004), which included provision for limited documentary research, and watching brief visits at intervals during groundworks.

Archaeological Background

The Lincoln Archaeological Research Assessment notes that there is no evidence for prehistoric or Roman activity in the Birchwood vicinity, but suggests that the area would have provided a managed resource of timber and other natural materials for local industries and settlement sites (Stocker 2003).

The Ordnance Survey map of 1887-9 shows the development site area as at the edge of fields to the east of a plantation belt around the Doddington Hall Estate. A zone of scrub occupied land between the plantation and the fields.

The site was formerly part of RAF Skellingthorpe, constructed in 1941 on a pasture area known as Black Moor, and opened in November that year (RAF website). The main runway was extended in 1942, and clusters of ancillary buildings were constructed along Boultham Road (now Skellingthorpe Road), and Doddington Road (Figs. 4 and 5). Ammunition was stored to the north-west of the airfield in woodland on Skellingthorpe Moor.

An Air Ministry plan of Skellingthorpe Airfield, dated February 1945, shows that the area of the present development site was open land, between the western runway and a perimeter taxi-ing road with aircraft servicing bays around the edge of the airfield (Pl. 2; Air Ministry 1945). No structures are marked on that plan. Airfield plans may not record all the structures which were erected and dismantled to suit varying requirements throughout the life of the airfield, and although it was thought that this area did not have much by way of buildings there was potential for ancillary buildings such as Nissen huts and Laing huts (R. Thomas, English Heritage, pers. comm.).

Resident squadrons had been dispersed by September 1945, but the airfield remained in occasional use by local airfields. There was a proposal in 1948 that the site should be converted to civilian use to serve Lincoln, but this did not proceed. The airfield was closed in 1952, with use of the airfield being restricted to storage in hangars. The airfield plan was declassified in January 1958. Although the runways were shown on an Ordnance Survey 1:2,500 map published in 1972, much of the concrete from the runways may have been cleared by the late 1960s. The site was returned to farmland and open land between some surviving taxi-ing roads. With the residential development of much of the airfield site as the Birchwood Estate from the 1970s, pressures on the peripheral farmland increased and farming eventually ceased. The development site, along with surrounding ground, was gradually colonised by vegetation from the adjoining plantations.

The Watching Brief

Monitoring was undertaken by Geoff Tann, on four occasions between October 26th and November 22nd 2004. These visits inspected site clearance, access road groundworks, house foundations, and a short length of sewer trench (Pls. 3 and 4). Across the site, the 0.25m thick topsoil covered sand deposits of very mixed appearance. Localised discolouration of the sand may have marked natural features, such as the backfilled root systems of wind-blown saplings. Clay land drains were seen, and these were suspected to relate to wartime use of the land, but may have been associated with the earlier farming use. As no artefacts or features were seen, the City Archaeologist's office was contacted and the watching brief was ended.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to Stamford Homes Ltd and their contractors. LAS is grateful to R. Thomas (English Heritage), staff at the RAF Museum at Hendon, and staff at the Birchwood Leisure Centre, for their assistance in locating material concerning the wartime use of the site. Further help was received from Mick Jones (Lincoln City Archaeologist) and John Herridge.

References and Background Sources

Air Ministry 1945a *Skellingthorpe: Record Site Plan, Site No. 1 (Airfield Site)*. February 1945.
Declassified January 1958. RAF Museum, Hendon.

Air Ministry 1945b *Skellingthorpe: Record Site Plan, Dispersed Sites*. March 1945. Declassified
January 1958. RAF Museum, Hendon.

Hancock, T.N. 1978 *Bomber County*.

Hancock, T.N. 1985 *Bomber County 2*.

National Archives catalogue ref: AIR2/16901 RAF Skellingthorpe, Lincs., land requisition, works,
compensation, derequisitioning, etc. (Source not consulted).

webpages and websites:

<http://www.raf.mod.uk/bombercommand/s77.html>

http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/specColl/dob/nonai_full_r.cfm?id=1239

<http://raf-lincolnshire.info/skellingthpe/skellingthpememorial.htm>

<http://raf-lincolnshire.info/skellingthpe/skellingthpe.htm>

<http://haib.50g.com/skellingthorpe.htm>

<http://www.old-maps.co.uk/> [birchwood, Grid Ref: 492328,368732]

Archive Summary

Correspondence

Developer's site plans

Photographs: digital prints 2004/1474-1486; 1824-1826; 1930-1933.

THE FIGURES

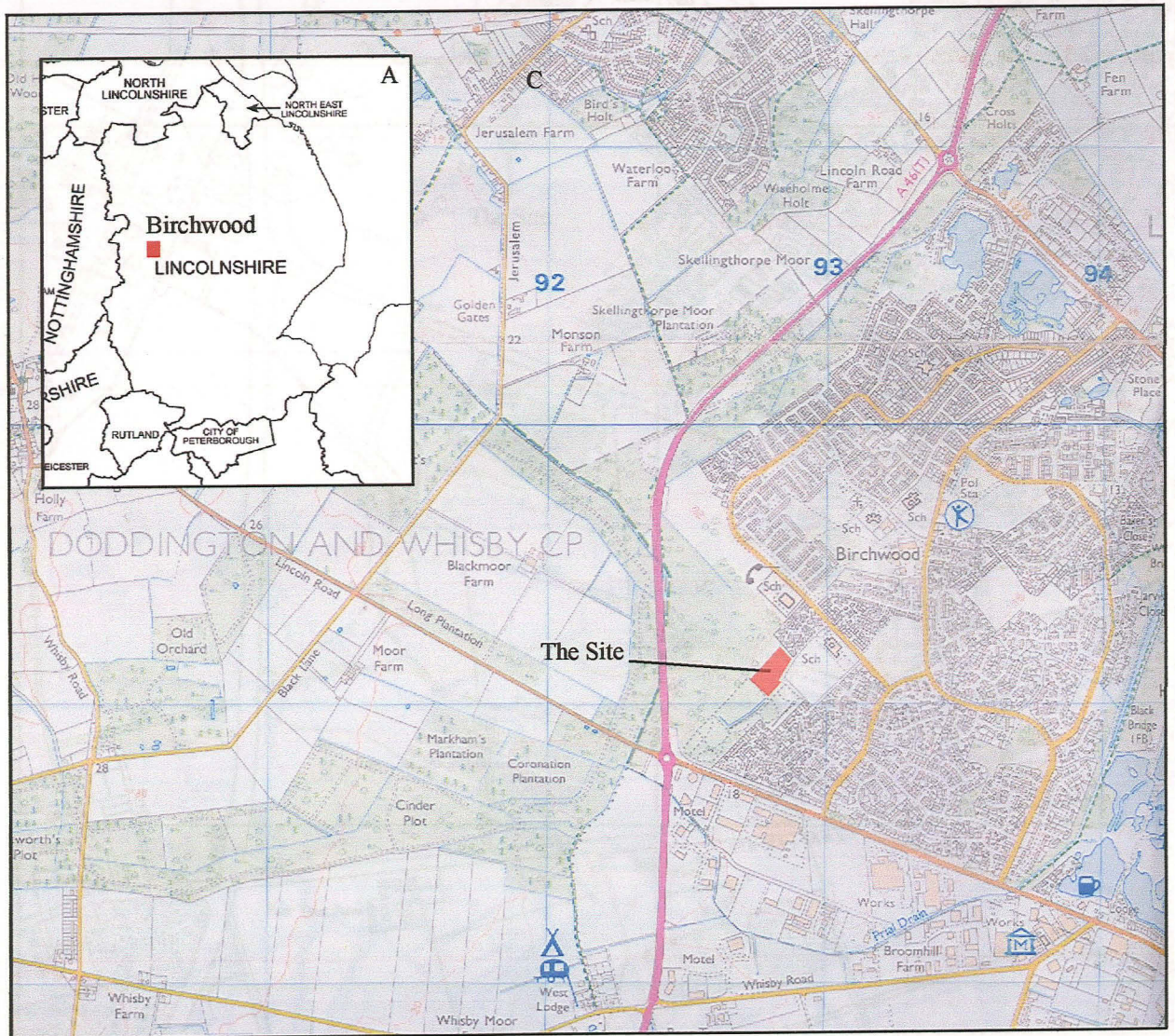
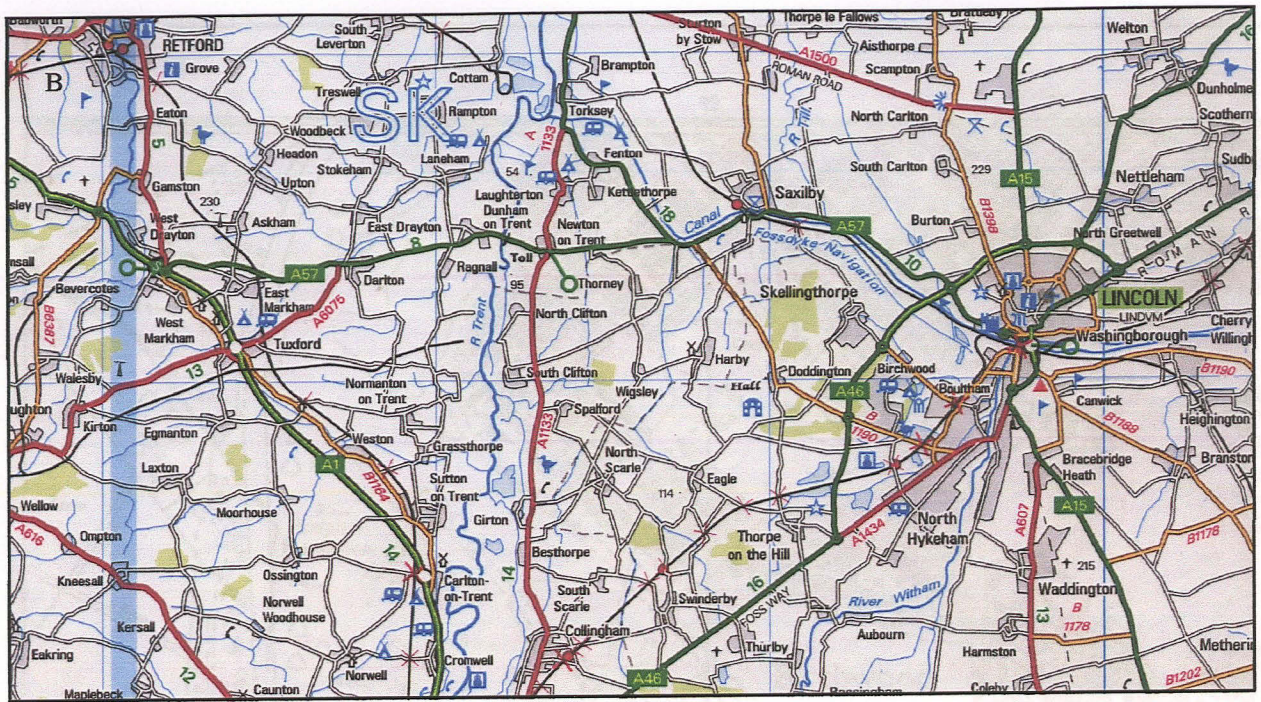


Fig.1 Location of Birchwood, Lincoln (inset C based on the Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 Explorer map 272 19. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence no. AL 10002165.

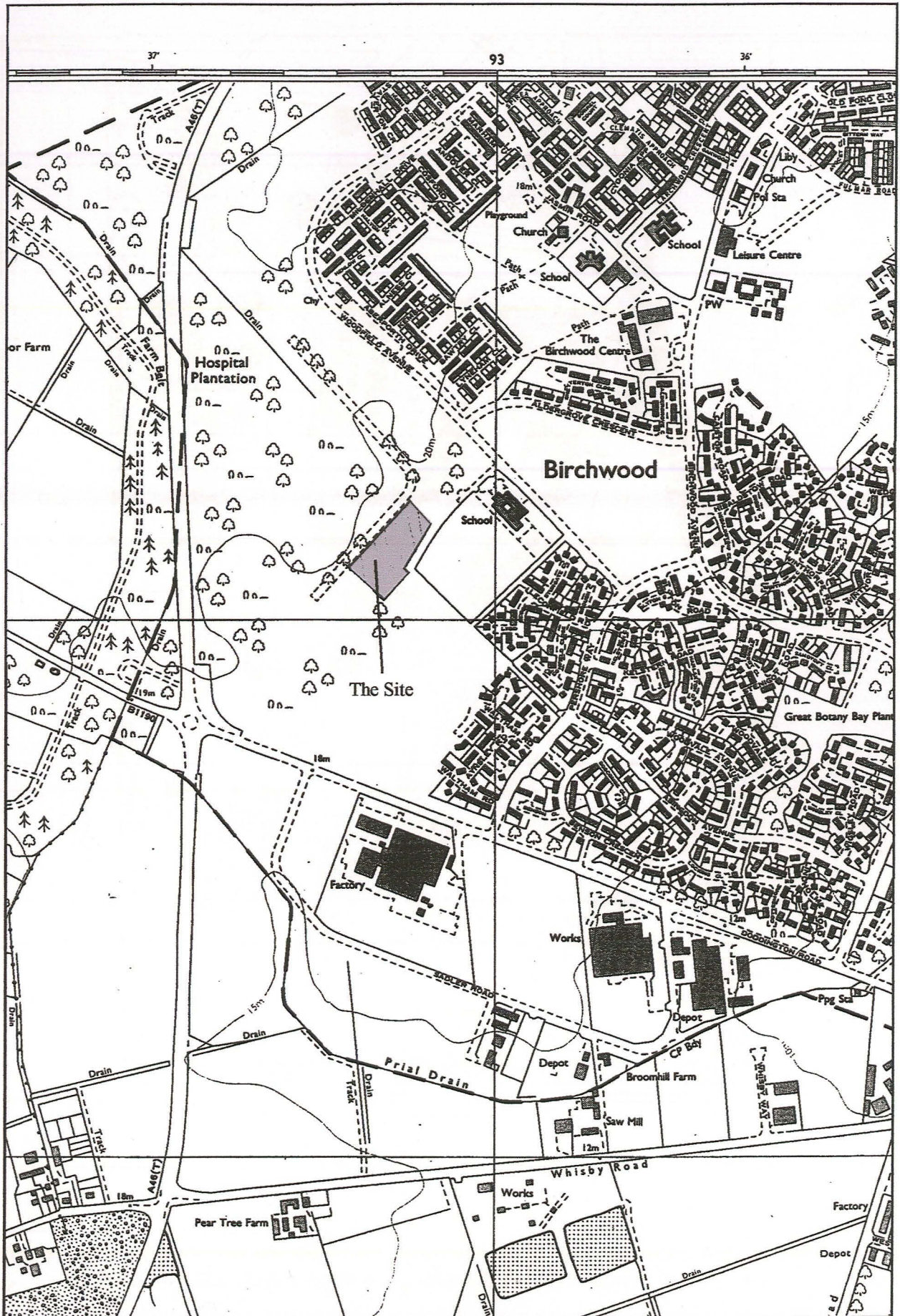


Fig. 2 Location of Kingsdown Road, Lincoln (C based on the 1987 Ordnance Survey 1:10,000 map, Sheet SK 96 NW. Crown Copyright, reproduced with the permission of the Controller of HMSO. LAS Licence No. AL 100002165).

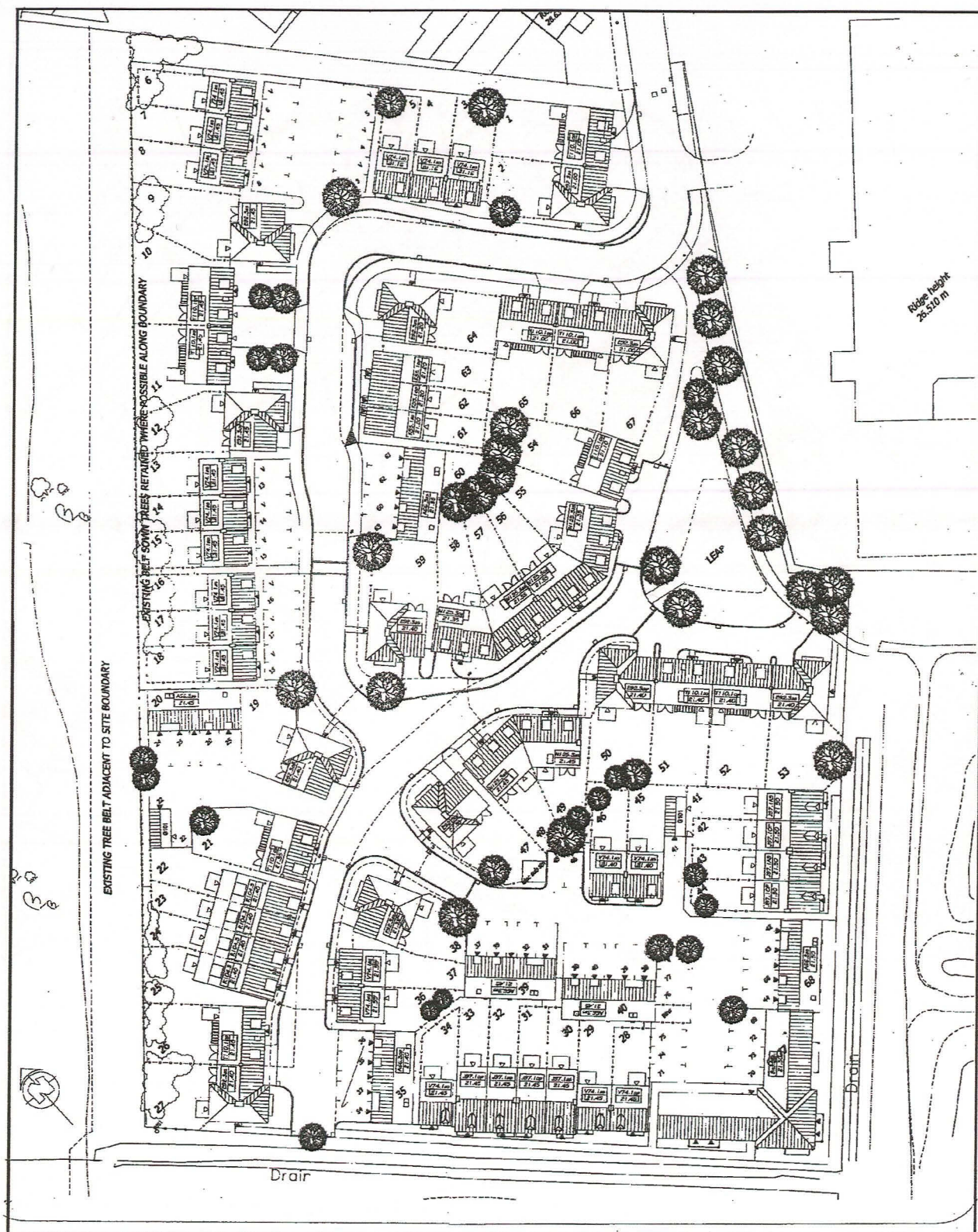


Fig. 3 Layout of the new development. Reproduced at reduced scale from drawing by Stafford Infrastructure Engineering (No. 8285-IE), supplied by the client.

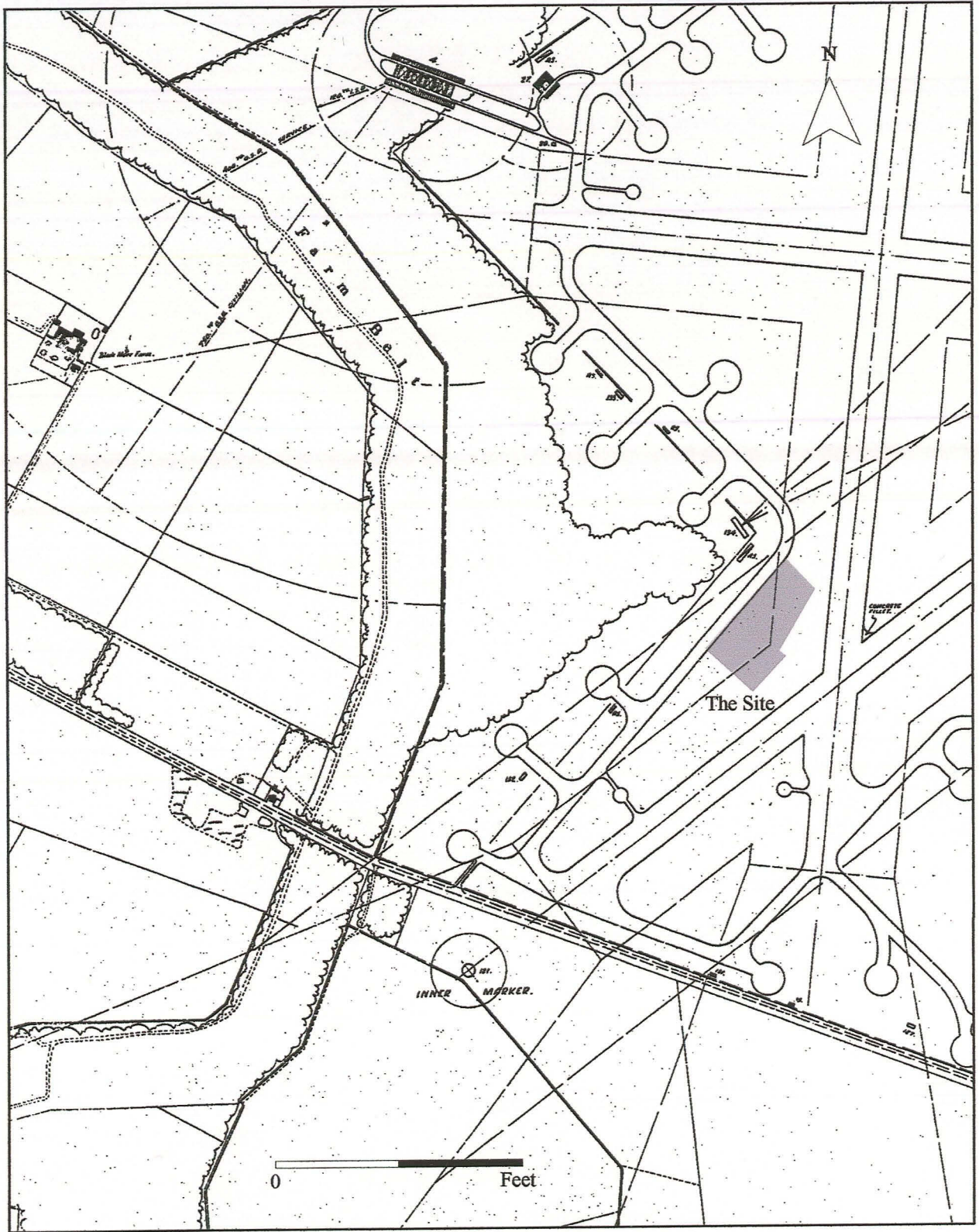


Fig. 5 Detail of the airfield close to the present Development Site (extract reproduced from Ministry plan 314/45, February 1945).

THE PLATES



Pl. 1 Vegetation cover on the development site prior to clearance



Pl. 2 To the south of the development area, concrete areas mark the positions of wartime aircraft servicing points (looking south).



Pl. 3 Topsoil stripping for the access road revealed no archaeological features (looking south-east towards the school).



Pl. 4 Very mixed sand deposits were noted across the site and in the house foundation trenches. The variations were interpreted as natural in origin.